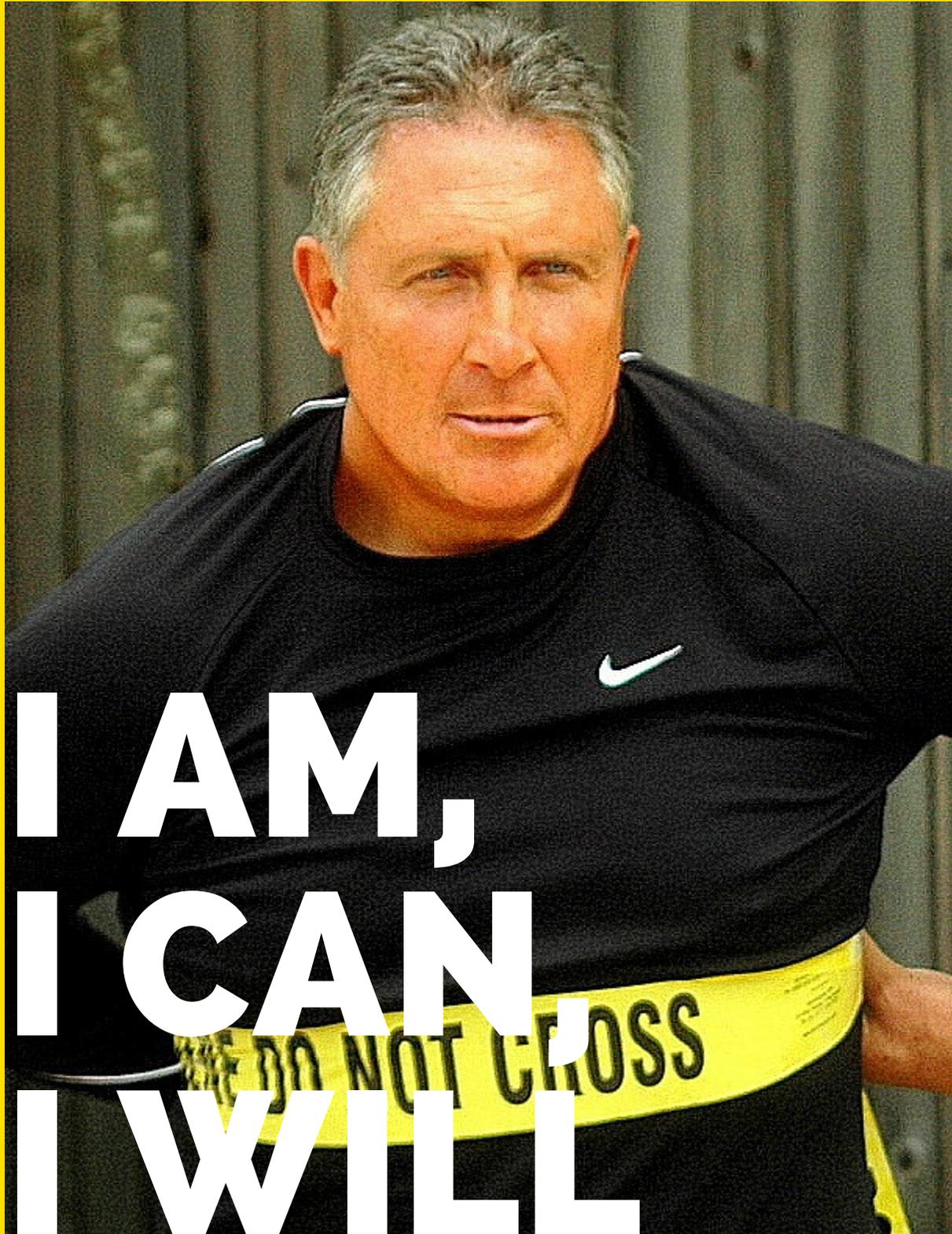




SO YOU WANT TO WIN THE PREMIER LEAGUE CRICKET?
HERE IS HOW



BY MARK DEMOS - SEE PAGE 05

SO YOU WANT TO WIN THE PLC T20

By Mark Demos

You have the best players. The league's Chris Gayle. The guy who reminds you of Jhonty Rhodes. The bowler who is tighter than Glen McGrath. Big deal. So what. Who cares!

Great physical talent and amazing technique are probably no more than 20% of what makes an exceptional player or winning team. Mental (Psychological) strength is what matters, it is the 80% factor that determines how a batsman, bowler, fielder, team and captain will win.

In this article I will discuss a number of aspects of Mental Strength as well as give you some essentials to think about. I can only focus on a few aspects I believe will help you and your team the most. If you want a more in depth version of this article, I will be happy to send you one or even come and talk with your team.

1. Team Identity – Who are we? When you are unsure of who you are and who you represent as a team, you are weak. If you want your team to play as one, a collective psyche, your team name matters. Names have power. They should motivate. They create a sense of belonging. The behavior of a team must reflect the distinctive's of the name they play under. Names create the glue for team unity and playing for a common purpose. The Romans used to have what was called a "Standard" that was carried out front of the troops as they went into battle. Your team needs a symbol, name and identity that you all identify with and march onto the field of battle under. You walk on and declare, "We are.....!!!" Choose your team name well. Look at the DNA of the name. Do some back ground. Identify three distinct characteristics of the animal (Lions), outstanding group (Gladiators) famous champions who represented the name you play under. Use those to motivate your team. Weave it into everything you do.

2. Leadership – Captain and Coaches. T20 is about pressure and crisis and the teams that win have a combination of leadership – the captain and the coach – who work together to handle that pressure. Partnerships in every aspect of T20 (not just batting) help create a winning combination. When the captain and coach are a great team, the team feels secure and free to play their best. There are three essentials for selecting a captain and coach for T20. (1) They must both be able to be exceptional at Crisis Management, (2) be excellent People Managers and (3) lastly they must create an atmosphere of FUN. There is probably no more important aspect of leadership than finding ways for players to enjoy, laugh and have a blast. I love this quote by Justin Langer, "I watched him [Tendulkar] bat in the nets during this CLT20 and he watched the ball so closely. He looked like a kid who'd tasted a chocolate for the first time. He did that for two hours, ball after ball. I told the Perth Scorchers batsmen, 'just watch that. You don't need any other lessons'. That's the essence of mental toughness for me." Fun is what permeates everything. Have FUN when you practice. Have FUN when you have team talks. Most of all have FUN when the pressure is greatest because FUN relaxes and puts endorphins into your system and that is the chemistry of winning.

Continue reading at next page >

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3. **Player Identity and Role** – I Am, I Can, I Will. Every player needs to be confident and know who he is, what he can do and have a plan to perform when given the opportunity. When any player is unsure of who they are when they walk onto the field, they are a liability both to themselves and to their team. Mental toughness is about being confident in your abilities. You know what you can do, how you fit into the team and you are focused on what your tasks are on the team. I have a simple formula for players that I get them to declare (speak loudly) to their team mates before they walk onto the field. Here it is:

- a. I Am - What individual Talent DNA do you bring to the team that defines the best of your Talent DNA _____
- b. I Can - When I perform at my best I have the ability to _____
- c. I Will – Today, if I am given the opportunity, I will _____

4. **Everything Counts.** Every ball when batting or bowling/fielding matters. The psychological strength to be in the moment for all 120 balls is vital. Being alert, alive, anticipating, knowing that every moment matters. Every ball I bowl. Every call I make (loud and clear). Every shot I play. Every ball bowled I will watch the batsman and whoever fields the ball. Applauding ever action of my fellow team mates or encouraging if something goes bad. How many games are won or lost by less than 10 runs? T20 must be viewed not as cricket as usual but as a fluid game. It is like soccer or field hockey. There is no rest or becoming stationary at any point until you walk off the field. When the picture of the reality of T20 is repeated and embedded in each players mind, focus becomes much easier.

5. **Get It Up - Keep it up.** I watched a game in Florida last year where the team I supported started the inning with five consecutive sixes. The other team had everything to be deflated about but they kept focused and the captain and leaders kept their team pumped up and focused. They won after a long up and down struggle. When teams don't have enough mental energy (blood supply) consistently through the game, they become like a man who can't sustain the ability to "perform" when it matters and embarrassment is the result. Every team I coached had at least two designated energy infusers. That is their job. They are on-field cheer leaders who keep the energy going for 20 overs. They are clapping, cheering, getting other players to continue giving their full attention to every ball. They joke, laugh, make fun of (in a nice way) act like a Bushman stalking prey or act the court juggler. They have nicknames for players and use them. They keep players engaged and focused by having fun and making a lot of noise. Find the loudmouth and the jokester on your team and designate them as cheerleaders. P.S. Please no hot pants or short skirts.

I have another 8 points that I had listed to include in this article but could not because of room. Topics like, "Psychological Warfare" and "How to Talk Your Opponents into Losing"; "Creating FLOW/Zone Play"; "Super Glue For Team Performance"; "In The Moment Psychological State"; "How To Play With 15 Players", and others. If you want to talk further call (425) 492-4300 or email me mark.demos@corp-dna.com and I would be happy to connect.