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Mindfulness Program for Student Athletes

Daniel J. Savory

University of San Diego, savoryd@sandiego.edu

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Applied Project Written Paper

University of San Diego

LEAD 589 – Capstone Seminar

Spring 2017

Daniel Savory

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to explain the Mindfulness Program that I have created to help benefit student athletes throughout their time at college, and offer support to athletic departments in meeting the needs of their students.

Student athletes face challenging situations during their time at college which can cause their experience to be a negative one if they are not fully supported. This can be due to several factors; most athletes face an immense amount of pressure to succeed in the classroom as well as in their sport. Also, many athletes are moving away from home for the first time and this can be a daunting feeling. They are expected to manage all of these challenges, and if mishandled, it can lead to an overwhelming amount of negative stress resulting in an unsuccessful time as a student athlete. Furthermore, the intensity and pressure of their sport can be detrimental to other areas of their life. Many of these young athletes do not possess the leadership skills necessary to manage these tasks and remain in a healthy state of mind.

My recommendation is not to take away these challenges, but rather offer support systems which empower student athletes to be able to manage the struggles they encounter in university settings. This mindfulness program enables people to be present and aware of themselves, acknowledge what their body is saying to them, and take action in a calm focused way to move into a healthy state of mind. My program offers communication at the individual and group level, techniques to be present, manage stress, and motivate positive thoughts which create pathways for successful experiences.

Mindfulness practices are new to sports and are not currently applied to college athletics; however, the stress and challenges associated with being a student athlete are ever present. Therefore, I argue that college programs/coaches need to provide support systems which help

their students be successful. This would then become a platform whereby they could succeed athletically, academically, personally, and prepare them for life outside of college.

Background and introduction of the topic

Within the past few years, mindfulness-based interventions have become increasingly popular in organizational settings, education, traditional medicine, psychotherapy, and counselling to help clients, patients, employees, coaches, athletes, and students focus their attention on the present moment. It has been said that these interventions help participants identify and take responsibility for their own feelings, biases, and emotions; and develop empathy, compassion, and understanding for themselves and others. Mindful practices are beginning to present themselves in professional sports as well. I maintain that mindful practices in team environments create an avenue for members to express their issues or concerns and address them in a healthy manner. This allows for team members to return their focus to their performance and can ultimately lead to increased chemistry within the team.

This paper is a written document that explains an applied mindfulness program that I created and piloted with the University of San Diego men's soccer program. As an aspiring collegiate athletic coach, I wish to apply mindfulness training to student athletes. Based on previous classes, assignments, and research conducted throughout my two-year experience at the University of San Diego (USD) as a graduate student of Leadership Studies in the School of Leadership and Educational Sciences (SOLES); I have used the men's soccer program at USD to critically analyze how they can become better; and in a more general scale, how college athletics can support their student athletes. In summary, this mindful project aims to benefit the entirety of an athletic department and more specifically, the student athletes.

The topic of mindfulness is very important as it has evidence supporting positive results of performance. Therefore, I have used a mindful approach to build practices for self-care, awareness building, and focus for coaches and student athletes. In challenging environments, student athletes need to feel connected to purpose and intention. This enables them to overcome the pressures of their daily challenges to ensure that they can perform to the best of their ability in all areas of life. College student athletes are a unique group in terms of being at increased risk for emotional and behavioral difficulties (Steven L. Proctor, 2010) Not only do college athletes have to juggle academic responsibilities, interpersonal relationships and athletic endeavors, they are also under pressure to present the idealized public image of a college student athlete. (Parham, 1993)

As an aspiring collegiate coach, it is essential that coaches are providing a platform for their student athletes to perform to the best of their abilities. If a student is not performing in the classroom and has fears of failure, this can be replicated during their performance in their sport. Having problems in distinct areas of one's life can give an overwhelming amount of stress and coaches need to be aware of this to provide their athletes with the support necessary to ensure they are able to succeed in all areas of life. An interview with Seamus McFadden (USD Men's Soccer Head Coach) taught me that his measure of success is "student athlete experience." As a coach in a sporting environment, he shared "results are a priority or you are out of a job; however, as I enter my 39th season as head coach of USD, I receive greater satisfaction from hearing about the positive experiences student athletes have had from being in the program than I do looking at my competitive record." (McFadden, 2016)

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a Buddhist-based contemplative practice that involves being mindful of all of the aspects of one's Self by employing self-awareness, focused attention on the present moment, and unconditional and nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts, feelings and perceptions of oneself and others. (What is Mindfulness?, 2016)

As described in *Contemplative Mind in Life* (What is Mindfulness?, 2016), mindfulness is a skill, trait, state, and process “that functions to maintain a continuous state of non-conceptual awareness and meta-awareness with discernment – rooted in an ethical framework.” In essence, being present and having the ability to remain in that calm present state is what mindfulness training is aiming to do. Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the developer of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, was the first person recognized to bring this Buddhist practice to Western eyes. In my early months of working with a mindfulness practice, I learnt that mindfulness is more about being and “non-doing” than it is about doing something specific or performing a particular task.

Mindfulness training offers a wide range of techniques and tools that allow athletes to be more focused and calm in stressful situations. Studies have found that training mindfulness can have the following benefits:

- Mindfulness is good for our bodies: A seminal study found that, after just eight weeks of training, practicing mindfulness meditation boosts our immune system's ability to fight off illness. (Davidson RJ, 2003)
- Mindfulness is good for our minds: Increases positive emotions while reducing negative emotions and stress. Indeed, at least one study suggests it may be as good as antidepressants in fighting depression and preventing relapse. (Shian-Ling Keng, 2011)

- Mindfulness changes our brains: Increases density of gray matter in brain regions linked to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and empathy. (Marsh, 2011)
- Mindfulness helps us focus: Tune out distractions & improves memory and attention skills. (Marsh, 2011)
- Mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism: Training makes us more likely to help someone in need and increases activity in neural networks involved in understanding the suffering of others and regulating emotions. Might boost self-compassion as well. (Simon-Thomas, 2013)
- Mindfulness enhances relationships: Training makes couples more satisfied with their relationship, makes each partner feel more optimistic and relaxed, and makes them feel more accepting of and closer to one another. (James W. Carson, 2004)
- Mindfulness helps schools: Teaching mindfulness in the classroom reduces behavior problems and aggression among students, and improves their happiness levels and ability to pay attention. Teachers trained in mindfulness also show lower blood pressure, less negative emotion and symptoms of depression, and greater compassion and empathy. (Jennings, 2010)
- Mindfulness helps health care professionals cope with stress, connect with their patients, and improve their general quality of life. Helps mental professionals by reducing negative emotions & anxiety, and increasing their positive emotions and feelings of self-compassion. (Irving JA, 2009)
- Mindfulness help nutrition: Practicing “mindful eating” encourages healthier eating habits, helps people lose weight, and helps them savor the food they do eat. (Suttie, 2012)

In his book ‘Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment – and your life’ Jon Kabat-Zinn says “mindfulness is awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” (Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the present moment- and your life, 2012) When it is cultivated intentionally, states Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is referred to as “deliberate mindfulness” and when we deliberately practice, we are connecting our heart, body, mind, and world. The key part of what Jon Kabat-Zinn says is intentionally engaging in mindfulness and this can be done in two ways; formally and informally. Formally involves making time each day to practice some kind of mindfulness exercise. Informal mindfulness is when an exercise spills over into every aspect of life and is taken everywhere naturally. These two approaches work hand in hand and essentially will support each other. When a person is in need of being more mindful, they can formally engage in a practice which, overtime with consistent and deliberate training will spill over into all areas of life. In fact, it is the consistent, intentional training or practice of mindfulness that forms the effectiveness of mindfulness. The longer and more consistently one practices mindfulness, the more one develops the ability to be present and maintain a healthy state of mind. In neuroscientific terms, the left hemisphere is associated with analytical, rational and logical processing, whereas the right hemisphere is associated with abstract thought, nonverbal awareness, visual & spatial perception and the expression and modulation of emotions. In the western world, most individuals navigate through their everyday life in a fashion dominated by left brain thinking. Missing out on right brain activity results in too much thinking going on: too much frantic doing, not enough time being. Practicing mindfulness can bring about neural pathways in the brain that make it easier to become

completely in the present moment, maintain calmness, stilling the brain chatter, and help us shift towards right brain mode. (The neuroscience of mindfulness, 2016)

What Are the Components of Mindfulness?

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, "mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." (Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the present moment- and your life, 2012) Mindfulness practitioners learn how to pay attention on purpose by practicing specially developed meditation practices & movements. With practice, practitioners learn to slow down or stop brain chatter and automatic or habitual reactions, experiencing the present moment as it really is. The practice of mindfulness involves three components: 1) paying attention in a particular way, on purpose by practicing specially-developed mindfulness meditation practices and mindful movements (self-awareness); 2) slowing down or quieting mental activity and automatic or habitual reactions and focusing on the present moment; and 3) acknowledging distracting thoughts and letting them go without judgment. (Applications and uses of Mindfulness, 2016) While this is incredibly challenging and frustrating in the beginning, as it is with all new skills, the more one practices mindfulness, the more spontaneous and efficient the process and practice of being mindful becomes. Mindful practice can also enhance sporting results, as illustrated by George Mumford in his book "The Mindful Athlete" in describing Kobe Bryant's desire to become the highest point scorer in an NBA season. Through his training, Kobe completed 1,300 3-point-shots every day in practice. Bruce Lee once said "I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times." (Mumford, 2015) Therefore, practice is an essential part of having mindfulness training be effective in everyday life.

The Program

The applied project that I created is a mindfulness based program called “Mindful Athletes” for collegiate athletic programs. I was able to pilot part of this program with freshman and transfer athletes of the men’s soccer program at the University of San Diego. I began by looking at the issues and challenges student athletes encounter when they begin at a university. From here I was able to create a program that would help address the issues of new student-athletes and help them settle into college life. Even though this has only been piloted on male freshman and transfer soccer student athletes, the program is applicable to the entire collegiate athletic departments.

Mindful Athletes, aims to build character for all members of the program, including coaching staff and student athletes, and create an environment that is a platform for success in all areas of life. The purpose of this project was to bring awareness to student athletes in the present moment. The structure included guided meditations, which incorporated benefits of mindfulness tailored to athletes, and imagery techniques, which prompted intentional thoughts for performance enhancement. The final goal of this pilot was to meet the needs of both new and transfer athletes. Challenges do not suddenly disappear for athletes after their freshman year and therefore, this is a program that can be carried out throughout their entire college career.

In his book ‘The Mindful Athlete’ George Mumford talks about ‘The Zone.’ “This tunnel-vision phenomenon is a hard concept to explain; however, usually athletes, creatives, and psychologists report that zone feels like a hyper-focused, sometimes spiritual, state of mind where anything is possible.” (Hill, 2016) ‘The Zone’ is where we become most productive, creative, and powerful selves. The question most often ask is how do we get there? Most people say, “When you’re there, you just know.” But this isn’t good enough and the question now

becomes, can we train ourselves to be in 'The Zone' more often to be at our highest performing self.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a leader in positive psychology and author of 'Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience' describes flow as "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skill to the utmost." (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004) Flow and zone are very similar; however, flow is a state of mind that allows the ability to stay in the present moment. The ability to stay in the present moment is what fosters the Zone experience. Training athletes to be present with themselves will help generate more moments in flow and in the zone and this is where they will find pure performance.

The program itself offers training of mindfulness techniques, including meditations which focus on being present. Being in the present moment is an extremely hard skill to learn, and one that needs practice just like practicing sport specific skills. George Mumford writes- "the mind is a muscle. You need to take care of it through daily practice. It's that simple and that profound." (Mumford, 2015) Frequently the mind will engage in a dialogue that focuses on future goals, or past experiences. None of which have any particular benefit to what is happening in the present moment. Training young athletes to be present is going to benefit them in competitive play as they will be more focused and experience time in the zone more often. This leads to composure in critical moments to make the correct decision.

It is incredibly important to remember that in competitive play there are a tremendous amount of distractions and student athletes can bring outside stresses from academic or personal life to their athletic part of their life; just like any professional athlete. Therefore, building

awareness of self is a crucial part of being mindful. Once we can identify what is going on and the thoughts that are being experienced, we can practice accepting these thoughts without judgement and let them go. This program allows athletes to recognize what is happening in the present moment without saying “okay I am now doing this.” Instead it intends to work in a space and allow what is, to actually happen. This a sense of being. Kobe Bryant, 5-time NBA champion quoted - “George helped me understand the art of mindfulness. To be neither distracted or focused, rigid or flexible, passive or aggressive. I learned just to be.” (Mumford, 2015)

‘Mindful Athletes’ is broken down into eight sessions which would span over the course of one semester. An academic year would allow for two eight session programs to be implemented. This program has only been tested on male soccer players at the University of San Diego; however, it is not limited or restricted to soccer players or male athletes as mindfulness is applicable to all sports and genders. All athletes can benefit from this program as they will improve their self-awareness and focus during their respective sporting season as well as academic and university life. The program was met with some challenges. As I am process of exploring mindfulness, I still have a limited approach in working with athletes to achieve their goals and mindfulness is a relatively new concept to the sporting world. However, the benefits are substantial, particularly for college athletes. In an age that full of competition, tasks to complete, and challenges to overcome, it is essential to maintain a healthy state of mind. Collegiate student athletes are forced to deal with incredible pressure during their time at university.

One key element to consider throughout this program is to meet people where they are at, and with acceptance. Often student athletes are referred to as “the athlete’ and this can take

away part of their identity. This facilitation of this program is hugely important as participants need to be treated like a human being and not just an athlete. By doing it, rapport will develop and participants will feel connected with the program and the facilitator who encourages them to trust themselves and the mindful experience. The objectives for 'Mindful Athletes' are the following:

- Meet people at their current self
- Accept thoughts through a non-judgmental lens
- Build community and team chemistry between team members.
- Bring focus to the present moment
- Build practice towards working in 'Flow' being in 'The Zone'
- Develop trust between athletes, physical therapists, and coaches to enhance overall performance
- Promote mental, physical, and emotional well-being in all areas of life
- Identify and being aware of core values
- Learn how to respond instead of react

Gap/need/challenge/opportunity

In my own experience as an international student athlete, I have seen many different occasions where new and continuing students have become victims of an unhealthy amount of stress from college life. It causes them to have negative experiences as a student athlete and can even result in withdrawal from the team and or school. In my opinion, being a college athlete brings so many benefits and opportunities if managed appropriately. It is challenging for me to

witness these benefits not fully utilized and therefore, support efforts that minimize that from happening.

This year I had the distinct opportunity to intern with USD Men's Soccer program. This opportunity allowed me to engage with coaching staff on a deeper level, as well as gain insight into the extent that student athlete struggle. In the Fall season of 2016, the team experienced a situation where a player left the team due to a number of reasons that could have been prevented if we were aware of that person's situation. It was very detrimental to the team and as a result, ended in a season with a below 500 record. Debates between the coaches intensified when the results of this incident became visible and sparked discussions about how to prevent similar scenarios in the future. Not all was a loss for the men's program at USD, this created an opportunity to bring change where student athletes require more support.

One of the biggest constraints in incorporating mindfulness into Western cultures is that societies are individualistic, which means that they place more emphasis on the individual than the collective team. "Individualism is characterized by engagement in competitive tasks, by public situations, and by an emphasis on what makes the individual distinct." (Basu-Zharku, 2011) In particular, individualism is mostly seen in the cultures of Western Europe and North America, whereas collectivism is mostly seen in the cultures of Asia, Africa, and parts of Europe and Latin America. (Basu-Zharku, 2011) It can be said that a western society supports the ego, rather than espousing its suspension for the greater good of the collective.

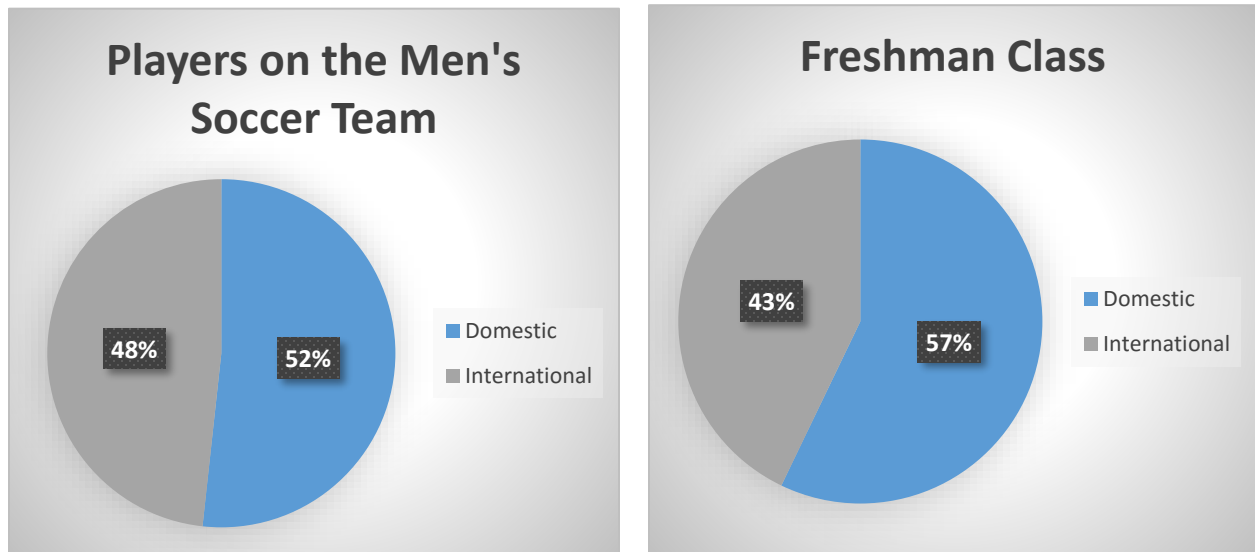
Mindfulness is a Buddhist concept that lets go of ego. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, "mindfulness is universal. Its applicable to anybody who is motivated to optimize his or her well-being." (Kabat-Zinn, Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the present moment- and your life, 2012) Building off Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindful practices and programs can be

incorporated into "individualistic" cultures as long as participants are committed to their well-being and consistently practice. In fact, it is the consistent, intentional training or practice of mindfulness that forms the biological basis for its effectiveness. The longer and more consistently one practices mindfulness, the more developed the neural pathways in the brain associated with being mindful, and the easier it becomes to completely remain in the present moment. (What is Mindfulness?, 2016)

The opportunity therefore, is available to use a mindfulness based program with athletes who according to studies, have more stress and challenges to deal with during their college experience. For athletic programs that have a strong international presence, as is the case with the University of San Diego Men's soccer team, it is vital to provide support programs that reduce negative stress levels, help improve awareness, and enable positive student athlete experience.

While mindfulness projects exist at universities in the United States, there is not currently a program in the University of San Diego. Recently the NCAA gave five schools a grant to study a mindfulness intervention program with athletes; however, this data will not become available until 2018 at the NCAA Coaching Convention. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity for me. With no current mindfulness programs in place, it can be difficult for administrators and coaches to see the need. I anticipate that mindfulness programs will become part of collegiate athlete programs in the future, and therefore, this allows me to be on the forefront of developing one of first programs in the industry. Taking this proactive approach to provide current student athletes this program could result in better grade point average (G.P.A.) and a higher level of athletic performance as student athletes will become more present, focused and self-aware.

Analysis of existing literature/programs/environmental scan



(See Appendix A for Environmental Scan)

In their 2016 Fall Season, the men's soccer program at the University of San Diego had 14 international players in their squad of 29. Of these 14 internationals, 6 of them were freshman athletes out of 14 in the freshman class. After seeing a troublesome first week at USD for two members of the team, a questionnaire was given to the freshman and transfer students to understand their feelings towards their new team and university. After reviewing questionnaires from other institutions, I noticed that Duke University gave incoming freshman a pre-college questionnaire. I see value in this method as it provides some data on expectations and can sometimes predict challenges that will be presented when new students arrive. The pre-college questionnaire was not used in this program; however, it is one that will be used in future years.

There is very little research on student athletes and their challenges during university life and therefore a necessity. However, recent evidence suggests that athletes may experience even greater levels of stress due to the dual demands of athletics and academics placed on them during

their freshman year. “Stress is the negative feeling that occurs when an individual feels unable to cope with the demands placed upon them by their environment. For the matriculating freshman student athlete, these demands may at times seem overwhelming.” (Gregory S. Wilson, 2005) The USD men’s soccer program is made up of many freshman and international athletes. An assessment would help to capture this international student experience, and support the need to create systems to properly address dual demands.

A study was conducted in 2011 by Jenny Lee and Thomas Opio at the University of Arizona to discover the challenges and difficulties faced by African student athletes in the United States. “Many of the serious issues affecting the student athletes were matters related to the host environment's underestimations about the African student athletes’ desires to learn, misunderstandings about their culture and religions and other negative assumptions that undermined their academic success. We also found that the vast majority of these student athletes experienced negative stereotypes and discrimination based on their race and their region of origin.” (Jenny Lee, 2011) Even though this study focuses on African international student athletes, their challenges are like other internationals as they bring stereotypes and can be discriminated based of region of origin.

It can be said that the majority of international student athletes are coming to the U.S. for different reasons than domestic students. “International student-athletes rated amount of athletic scholarship and personality of the head coach as the two most important items, while domestic student-athletes rated a degree from the school leading to a good job and the overall reputation of the school as the two top items.” (Nels Poppa D. P., 2011) More than likely, international students are joining American collegiate athletic programs to improve their performance and the sport is their main priority. With this information, it is critical to offer support for international

student athletes as they have the potential for added stress and challenges when experiencing juggling academic tasks as being a student and athlete simultaneously.

Studies show that student athletes, especially at highly competitive levels, tend to engage in riskier behaviors (such as binge drinking or drug use) than their non-athlete counterparts.

(Matthew P. Martens, 2006) Because stress unrelated to sports can have a significantly negative impact on student athletes' performance, mindful interventions can be particularly useful for this group. Therefore, interventions based on mindfulness and acceptance should be performed to internally create healthy states of mind in order to facilitate positive behavioral outcomes.

“Alternative or supplemental approach to the enhancement of athletic performance may be achieved through strategies and techniques that target the development of mindful (non-judgmental) present-moment acceptance of internal experiences such as thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, along with a clarification of valued goals and enhanced attention to external cues, responses, and contingencies that are required for optimal athletic performance.” (Frank L. Gardner, Z., 2004)

Having interventions can help the mental well-being of athletes, but studies have also found that with more acceptance and focus, it is also preventing injury- “67% of the players in the mindfulness group remained injury free in comparison to 40% in the control group. This result implies that an intervention program focusing on strategies for improving attention could decrease injury risk. Recommendations include applying mindfulness exercises in athletes' daily training to help lower injury risk.” (Andreas Ivarsson, 2015)

Current Programs in College Athletics

There are few programs in college athletics that use mindfulness as part of their training to improve performance; however, a study was conducted in 2014 to explore how members of a

Division I women's soccer team experienced a 6-week, 12 session mindfulness meditation training for sport (MMTS) program. The study included coaching staff and entire team participated in the MMTS program. Following the program- "most participants reported difficulty understanding the process of meditation at the start of the MMTS program. Post-MMTS, they reported an enhanced ability to accept and experience a different relationship with their emotions, both on and off the field. They also noted the importance of creating a phrase of care for self and team for cohesion purposes. Enhanced mindfulness, awareness, and acceptance of emotional experiences were attributed directly to the mindfulness training." (Amy Baltzell, 2014)

The NCAA- "The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life." (About the NCAA, 2016) They have begun to issue funding for research in the benefits to adding mindfulness to collegiate programs. "USC Athletics has been awarded a \$25,000 grant through the NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice Grant Program to develop and evaluate a mindfulness training program that will enhance student-athlete mental health." (Moore, 2017) This is very recent information and USC is one of five research teams awarded an NCAA grant this year as part of a program aimed at funding projects that will bring tangible benefits to college athletes, specifically in the field of psychosocial well-being and mental health. My intention is that with the NCAA recognizing this as an area to build upon, a program like mine will be supported by other collegiate programs. "The other grant recipients are Rowan University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Western Kentucky University and Sonoma State University. They will produce work that includes career development, promoting

resiliency, and mental health support for injured student-athletes. A total of \$100,000 is being awarded this year.” (Moore, 2017)

Dr. Robin M. Scholefield and Dr. Dylan M. Firsick, noted in their research proposal that “the severity and number of mental health symptoms are increasing on college campuses. Many student-athletes report overwhelming distress as time demands and performance pressure contribute to this group being ‘at risk’ for psychological and academic difficulties. Time-limited, evidenced-based interventions for coping and distress tolerance are greatly needed.” (Moore, 2017) Having studies like this one that focus on mindfulness-based training program with three primary goals: improve mindfulness skills, increase overall well-being, and reduce anxiety within student-athletes will increase the overall well-being of student athletes and in turn create an opportunity for higher levels of performance.

Program Creation

Design

The design of the program is an eight-session course. Each session leads onto the next and each one becomes more challenging in regards to complexity of the meditation, exercise, or task for that particular session. The program includes guided meditations, exercises to identify individual core values, visualization techniques in sporting environments, and practices to remain still in the midst of activity. Each participant will take a pre-program and post-program questionnaire.

(See Appendix B for the full Eight Session Program)

Models Used

For this project, I worked with the FUEL Framework Model that was written by John H. Zenger and Kathleen and finds itself in the book ‘The Extraordinary Coach: How the Best Leaders Help Others Grow.’ “This model is a coaching is a framework that does not tell you how to coach but, rather, it's the underlying structure that you can use when you're coaching someone or teams.” (Ramakrishnan, 2013) This model is very versatile as it can be used in a variety of way; and even though this is a coaching model, I find this useful in presenting my mindfulness program in a way that relevant and applicable to athletic departments and for my pilot- the men’s soccer team at USD. As there are very few mindfulness programs in college athletics, and it was difficult to show there is a need for this program. However, by using FUEL and identifying current issues within the soccer program at USD, I was able to make a connection with the coaching staff that provided an opportunity to pilot this program. I was able to frame the conversation in a way that helped show the soccer coaches how we could move the program, team, and student athletes from where they are now to where they want to be. The model is a high-level strategy that allows me to "see the battlefield," therefore increasing my ability to respond adequately to the situation.

The four steps in the FUEL model are:

- **Frame the conversation** - Set the context for conversation by agreeing on purpose, process, and desired outcomes of the discussion.
- **Understand the current state** - Explore the current state and expand the awareness of the situation to determine the real issue
- **Explore the desired state** - Articulate the vision of success and explore multiple alternative paths before prioritizing methods of achieving this vision.

- **Lay out a success plan** - Identify Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) goals or action steps to be taken to achieve the desired results.

Theoretical Material Used

When I was identifying ways to support student athletes, I began thinking of leadership theories that would give me guidance on how to approach my project. Transformational Leadership, Path-Goal Theory, and Servant Leadership are three that I have worked with to ensure the program is meeting the needs of others.

Transformational Leadership is a style where a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and execute the change in tandem with committed members of a group. In this instance, I worked closely with the coaching staff within the soccer program as an intern to identify improvements. Even though we are not looking to completely change the identity of the soccer team or athletic departments, there are changes in terms of the approach (mindfulness) to dealing with challenges that arise throughout student's time as an athlete. Gregory Stone wrote an article on Transformational leadership: a difference in leader focus, and he says - "transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organization." (A. Gregory Stone, 2004) This quote represents how a collegiate athlete coach needs to be able to raise the level of athletic performance while developing student athletes and connecting them to their own values as well as the team's identity.

The Path-Goal model is a theory that "specifies leader behaviors that enhance subordinate empowerment and satisfaction and work unit and subordinate effectiveness. It addresses the effects of leaders on the motivation and abilities of immediate subordinates and the effects of

leaders on work unit performance.” (House, 1996) This theory has a goal to increase employee motivation, empowerment, and satisfaction so they become productive members of the organization. This is very relevant to a university coach as each year new members are entering the team and their goal is to effectively nurture new athletes into the team and motivate them in a way that has a positive effect on the performance of the collective. The mindfulness program allows coaches to understand the struggles of current team members and in turn provides space for connection and positive thoughts towards a common goal.

Servant Leadership is the next theory that applies to this program. It is where the leader is servant first. Robert K. Greenleaf wrote a book called ‘Servant Leadership’ and says “servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world.” (Greenleaf, 1977) Bringing these words to a mindfulness program is important for followers to see and trust that their leader (or coach in this project) is there to serve for the student athletes and will build the team to suit all needs.

The primary difference between transformational leadership and servant leadership is the focus of the leader. The transformational leader’s focus is directed toward the organization or team, and their behavior builds follower commitment towards objectives from the organization, while the servant leader’s focus is on the followers. In servant leadership, the achievement of organizational objectives is not the primary concern; however, the work from followers will be for the organization. “The extent to which the leader is able to shift the primary focus of leadership from the organization to the follower is the distinguishing factor in classifying leaders as either transformational or servant leaders.” (A. Gregory Stone, 2004) I believe that this program needs both theories present in a leader. Currently there are no mindfulness programs in

college athletics and therefore a transformational leader is needed. However, the primary purpose of this program is to support student athletes and provide them with tools to have the best experience possible throughout their time in their sporting program; therefore, servant leadership is required as the focus is mainly for follower experiences, which later positive impact the organization or sporting program.

(See Appendix C For more theories that can be used with this program)

Other Materials Used

Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) is one program that was originally developed by Frank Gardner and Zella Moore, which is specifically for athletes. It teaches ways to be more mindful and accepting of negative thoughts and emotions, while identifying values and committing to behaviors that are in line with those values. “As such, the MAC approach to performance enhancement would be expected to promote both the competitive (in the moment) self-regulation necessary for optimal competitive performance as well as the valued goal commitment necessary for quality practice, intense training, and long-term development of athletic skill.” (Frank L. Gardner Z. E., 2004) In their article ‘A Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment-Based Approach to Athletic Performance Enhancement: Theoretical Considerations’ the authors write “in contrast, behavioral theorists in professional psychology have recently begun to advocate and demonstrate empirical support for interventions that emphasize acceptance, rather than direct change.” (Frank L. Gardner ,. Z., 2004) Rather than prompting direct change, I am presenting a program that builds off Frank Gardner and Zella Moore’s study – ‘MAC’ to offer support for student athletes through mindfulness.

George Mumford and his book ‘The Mindful Athlete’ gave me many ideas on how to make this program relevant to the population that I am trying to work with- collegiate student athletes.

Mumford shares his experience with athletes being in ‘The Zone’ and the benefits to being in this space. The meditation techniques that I have included are ones that allow athletes to be in ‘The Zone’ in competitive or non-competitive play and this helps to improve performance in critical moments.

Rational for the methodology/approach/materials used

Approaching this program in the same way that we approach athletic training-practice in terms of regular practice to use positive results is how this program is designed. I am using meditation practices and having a purpose for each session, which overtime will enable student athletes to be present and in the ‘zone’ when they are experiencing stressful situations; whether that be in competitive play, classroom settings, or in other environments.

Each session will last for one hour and there will be small breaks to hear feedback and allow group sharing. This will encourage team chemistry and cohesion – members of the team can share thoughts and feel listened too by others, as well as connecting with each other. Breaks also allow for short reflection and hearing others voices can spark emotions in others which can bring a deeper level of understanding and reflection in that moment.

Prototyped the design of the program

Pilot – November 23rd 2016

In November 2016, I conducted a pilot program for ‘Mindful Athletes’ with the University of San Diego Men’s Soccer Program and their freshman student athletes. This session was nearly two hours long and very foreign to many individuals as it took time for them to understand the purpose/benefit of practicing mindfulness. My intention was to offer a

workshop that had small pieces of each of the eight sessions planned throughout the whole program.

While I recognize that this workshop may have been rushed, I wanted to give participants as much information as possible without overwhelming them with mindfulness techniques. At this time, I was being challenged by the coaching staff and they were unsure of the benefits to the team. Therefore, I needed something that was broad and general to allow members to have a variety of options when working with a mindfulness practice.

(See Appendix D for the session plan)

Pilot - February 8th 2017

In February 2017, the soccer team had welcomed two new players on the team and I proposed another mindfulness session for the team to help integrate them into college life. This session was more detailed and went deeper into an introduction of what mindfulness is and how someone can begin a practice on their own. To keep the session relevant to soccer, I included a team building exercise which was called ‘The Maze,’ an activity focused on being aware of one’s own movements as well as other team members. This exercise along with guided meditations brought very positive mindsets to the group and I sensed a calmness from everyone present in the room.

(See Appendix E for the session plan)

Pilot Delimitations

One delimitation of this study is that it has only been tested on freshman athletes and not every class in the team. The selection of this audience was intentional. The struggles of being freshmen students and athletes, exacerbated by a busy schedule, indicated that they needed this work the most. Therefore, it can be argued that this program may not produce results that may

not be generalizable to the other teams. However, I maintain that mindfulness is applicable to all areas of life and athletics, and all athletes have struggles throughout their college career; therefore, this program will be relevant to them. Another delimitation is that the program is the sample group itself.

Pilot Limitations

A major limitation of this study is the sample size. Even though the freshman class was a group of 14 this is still a small sample size. Another limitation is that the program was not tested until November and not at the ideal time of when the team arrives for pre-season. This is where the majority of new players find it tough to settle in their new environment. Several factors contributed the study being delayed until November. One factor was the timing of my request, as there was not sufficient time for coaches to evaluate the program and to respond. Also, I experienced resistance from coaches who did not want players participating, be it for lack of interest in the subject or in the method of delivery. The NCAA has time restrictions for how many hours' student athletes can be together as a team; and during this pre-season period, coaches are trying to form their team and want to spend as much time as possible on the training field. The final limitation of this program is that not every session has been fully tested. In pilot #1 on November 23rd 2016, I compile the eight-session program into a two-hour session. Also, the session in February was the first of eight sessions; therefore, the remaining seven sessions have not been fully executed and no feedback can be collected.

Incorporating documentation of the applied feedback

(See Appendix F for Pre-Program Questionnaire & Appendix G for Post-Program Questionnaire)

Focus group

The focus group consisted of four freshman athletes who participated in both workshops; two of them were international students and two of them were domestic students. The overall feedback was positive; however, these student athletes expressed their struggles during their first semester and this tells me how important this program can be and why it needs to be conducted as soon as the season begins. This goes for all sports even if their season begins in the spring. The program needs to be conducted as soon as they begin the semester. With that being said, participants shared how they felt much more relaxed, aware, and stress free after the session was conducted. Along with that, this group said that they were more clear about expectations of the program, themselves, and others. They also felt much better about tackling challenges throughout the day as they gave themselves time to mentally prepare and calm the brain.

I did receive some constructive criticism from these two workshops however. Two members said they felt isolated from the rest of the team as it was only a group of freshman. This became a good topic of discussion among this group and they shared that having members from other classes (sophomore, junior, and senior) would have helped them understand more of the challenges they will be facing as student athletes. Mentorship from upperclassmen was also a topic that was spoken about and one where some people feel having an older athlete who has been through the process before could help settle the new players in quicker.

Having said that, all members recognized that this type of work needs to be practiced on a regular basis to see the full benefits of mindfulness. Comments were made about feeling in a more relaxed state of mind prior to the session, however, they would feel their old self again a few days later or a week after the session. Throughout this calm mind state, participants shared that they appreciated the space for self-reflection. One member said that even though it was

challenging to be present as mindfulness is a new concept to them; they felt disciplined, focused, and in control of what was happening.

One participant gave a great example that is very relevant to my program. They said that doing the two workshops gave their brain time to prepare future events and it felt like doing homework and then going to class. You are more prepared for what is coming and focused to the learning. This can be replicated in sports too, by understanding the role you have as an individual, on the team, and also the team's objectives for what is to come. Overall, this group saw benefits from the two workshops and felt that it has a place in their team as it helps academically, athletically, and in all areas of their life.

(See Appendix I for full focus group transcript)

Connection to personal leadership philosophy

As an athlete, I always saw myself as a leader on the team. Many of the teams that I represented, I had the opportunity of being captain. To me a captain embodies certain characteristics. 1) Care – being someone on the team who genuinely looks out for others and cares for their well-being. 2) Courage – showing strength in difficult times of need at both the individual and team level. I believe a captain will take calculated risks to fight for their team's success. 3) Consistent – a leader must be consistent in many ways. Firstly, how do they conduct themselves as a professional. Secondly, in their performance as an athlete. And finally, their interactions with others. Being named a team captain is a tremendous honor and the position of captain is given to those whom the rest of the team trust and respect to lead the team in the right direction.

With that being said, my leadership can be seen as very different on and off the field. Throughout my time at USD and SOLES has changed dramatically I have been challenged to

explore my relationships with others outside of sports and how I can be compassionate with them to develop our relationship further. My reasoning for creating this mindfulness program was not only to increase the athletic performance of team members, but also the depth of their relationships with one another to provide an environment where pure performance could flow. For this intention to exist, I had to do this work myself and I have found that engaging with compassionate, warmth, and empathy have given me an opportunity to gain deeper relationships with people. In turn, I have experienced positive results when going back to athletics and sports as I am in a healthier state of mind.

“I aim to create an environment that encourages and allows others to learn and develop tools which fosters growth. I mold individuals, groups and teams to communicate, be responsible, and hold themselves and others accountable for their actions. Leading by example and modeling the high standards I expect in myself is a habit ingrained in me through discipline and focus. I empower others to create their own expectations and constantly provide them with a solid foundation as they progress. Being exposed to challenging but yet supportive situations, is a way that I believe effective decision making, competency and confidence can be developed. I hope to inspire others by leaving a positive mark and supporting their journey of growth.”

The above paragraph is my philosophy. Mindfulness techniques help to form my leadership and be fully invested in my philosophy. Being mindful helps to improve emotional intelligence – “the ability to accurately perceive your own and others’ emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage your own and others’ emotions.” (Peter Salovey, 1990) Having a better understanding of my emotional intelligence through practicing different mindfulness techniques, I am able to embody my philosophy and allow others to see a successful execution of my leadership. Working with mindfulness has been

a twofold relationship. 1) It benefitted my personal leadership style by allowing me to be in a healthy mental state. 2) I have also used my leadership to bring mindfulness to my followers and provide them with opportunities to be mindful and find their own connection with mindfulness.

A crucial part of this program is maintaining a healthy state of mind. In order for me to provide support and this information to student athletes, I must also deal with the stress and challenges that come with being a graduate student and athlete. In general, leader's emotional states have a huge impact on how followers perform. Therefore, when leading and facilitating this program, I need to have a positive mindset and embody all of the benefits to mindfulness. My energy and attitude will be transmitted to participants. In short, a positive emotional state will empower and encourage my followers to fully commit to a mindfulness practice and trust that results will come to them, and in turn increase their level of performance.

Since my introduction to mindfulness, I have made a conscious effort to be present and focus on my intention in all areas of my life. In terms of this program, ensuring I am fully present and prepared for my participants puts me in a position where I am ready to facilitate my program in a way that positively impacts the participants and allows them to work on all of the objectives of 'Mindful Athletes.'

Mindfulness is a practical tool for me to become a better leader. My leadership presents itself on a personal level since it requires me to show up with my true self. It also allows me to bring this work to a population in need. Head Soccer Coach Seamus McFadden informed me that his personal measurement of success as a coach and as leader of the soccer program is – "hearing the positive experiences that student athletes have during their time in the program." Seamus values the experiences more than his record as a coach. (McFadden, 2016) I resonate with Seamus on this matter because I believe in sports, coaches can get caught up in the results

and forget about the impact they are having on others. I aim to leave a positive impact on others and inspire them to grow while working with positive results. In order for positive stories to exist and for athletes to have those positive experiences, I must be true to my philosophy and work in alignment with my personal values. This program has the ability to inspire others, provide techniques which increase tolerance of stress, and support others who are looking to grow. Nurturing the positive experience of student athletes is an objective of ‘Mindful Athlete’ and one that links to my leadership philosophy.

Anticipated outcomes/implications/utility in the field

Following the program, I estimate the members of the athletic team will report greater awareness, greater mindfulness, greater focus and goal-directed energy, with less perceived stress than before taking the program. Mindful Athletes aims to provide student athletes the opportunity to tolerate higher levels of negative experiences (for example: greater comfort with discomfort, stress, and anxiety). Several athletes will express that mindfulness exercises and meditations are some of the most powerful parts of the program. Through mindfulness exercises, members of the team will learn to allow their experiences, thoughts, sensations, and emotions to occur without judgment and accept them as they naturally unfold.

Jon Kabat-Zinn says that “learn to cultivate an open and receptive attitude that promotes the acceptance of negative states” (Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living, 1990) In sporting and academic environments; such openness is important for student athletes as it helps them navigate the fluctuating demands of the competitive environment they are present in. They will report lower levels of perceived stress once regular practice of this training has occurred. This is crucial as it can replicate in terms of athletic performance because athletes will be equipped with an improved ability to cope with negative events that are unexpected during competitive play.

Mindfulness also has the ability to give participants an increased level of importance of values in all areas of life. Since college athletes are at an age where they need to prepare for their future career, having their core values identified can be helpful in clarifying their personal identity and a desired future. Channeling more energy to athletic performance goals is an intention of Mindful Athletes and this can also replicate into the personal area of student athletes lives as they can develop goals into the life domains that they value the most.

In conclusion, I anticipate that with regular intentional practice, student athletes will have more positive experiences during their in their athletic program. The exercises and techniques presented in this program will be beneficial in all areas of life, but for the purpose of this program, participants will experience positive results as a student academically and athletically in their sport.

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Appendix A – Environmental Scan

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Mindfulness helps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our bodies • Our minds • Focus • Fosters compassion and altruism • Enhances relationships • School • Nutrition <p>Bring more awareness to present moment feelings and emotions</p> <p>Well planned mindfulness program which specifically works with individual needs of current members of the soccer team</p> <p>University and athletic department that supports a positive and health environment for all student athletes</p>	<p>Only one facilitator to hold mindfulness sessions</p> <p>Knowledge of all Mindfulness techniques</p> <p>Small amount of research available- creating as I go</p> <p>Room availability – dependent on a supervisor who isn't part of the athletic department</p> <p>Came up with this program after the ideal time it should be conducted</p> <p>Former athlete of the team – how do others view me?</p> <p>Current role as intern on the team – how do others view my position?</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Create higher levels of soccer performance</p> <p>Allow student athletes to reduce stress levels and anxiety</p> <p>More focus to both academic and athletic side of being a student athlete</p> <p>No other Mindfulness Program</p> <p>Bring the team closer together</p>	<p>Facilitator's graduate program finishes in May 2017 - sustainability</p> <p>Earning trust of the coaching staff to support the program and players participating</p> <p>First time program</p>

Creates an opportunity to grow and mature as a person	Immigration rules and regulations which facilitator needs to consider as is on an F-1 Student Visa NCAA time allowance with the team Other student athlete obligations Current role as intern on the team
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“The increase of challenges on freshman and transfer student athletes tasks to begin college and athletic life, is changing their ability to manage all of the stresses and have a high level of performance in their sport.”

SOAR Analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>1. What can the men’s soccer program build on? Relationships between athletics and academics Developing young athletes to become hard working human beings</p> <p>2. Program’s proudest moment? 1986 team had the best record in NCAA Division 1 without having athletic scholarships</p> <p>3. What makes the program unique? Bringing alumni back to USD and hearing about their experiences as a student athlete A team full of culture and players from all over the world Able to broaden young athlete’s horizons in both athletic and academic careers Ability to build team chemistry and create lifelong friendships</p> <p>4. Proudest moment in the last six months? The balance of team chemistry on and off the field. Seeing student athletes happy</p>	<p>1. How can the program meet the needs of the current athletes? More communication and dialogue between coaching staff and then with team members on both an individual and collective level</p> <p>2. How can current challenges become opportunities? Time management is a challenge currently but has the potential to give athletes the opportunity to make better use of their time and commit to improving themselves on the field in terms of overall performance as well as fitness.</p> <p>3. What new skills do we need to move forward? Continue working hard to plan each training session and giving the team objectives as well as individuals their own personal goals. Facilitators to help with paperwork and recording data to track information of team results. Graduate Assistant</p>

<p>5. What else does the program have to offer?</p> <p>An environment of good people Very talented group of freshman and transfer athletes Successful history Experienced coaches Beautiful university and campus University that has a very good academic reputation</p>	
<p>Aspirations</p>	<p>Results</p>
<p>1. What does the program deeply care about?</p> <p>When it was first created, winning was the most important. Currently, the program cares mostly about creating a wonderful journey for all members involved. A journey that is the beginning of adulthood and becomes a platform for the rest of people’s lives. Positive experiences at this university and as a student athlete Tough love – creating challenges that make people better Getting results academically and athletically</p> <p>2. What are the program’s core values?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrity b. Do What You Say You Are Going To Do!!! (DWYSYAGTD) c. Leadership, Teaching, and Direction <p>3. What does the program want to become?</p> <p>National Championship Winner</p> <p>4. What is the program’s most compelling aspiration?</p> <p>Positive impact on ALL members of the program</p> <p>5. What projects need to be put into place in order to achieve this aspiration?</p>	<p>1. How does the program know if it is successful?</p> <p>Feedback from alumni and current players on their experiences Body language of current athletes and their feedback of experiences Results</p> <p>2. Measure success:</p> <p>Student athlete’s experiences</p> <p>3. Define success for the current 2017 team.</p> <p>Growth as a person. Growth as a student – graduate with a GPA of above a 3.0 WCC Championships NCAA Tournament Appearances</p>

<p>Mindfulness – bringing awareness, focus, and presence to our athletes</p> <p>Recruiting visits to bring better players into the program and the university</p>	
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Appendix B – Eight Session Mindfulness Program

Session 1 – Introducing mindfulness and ‘The Zone’

Objectives:

- Explanation of the fundamental concepts of mindfulness and practicing mindful breathing

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Welcome Meditation**

“Start this meditation by sitting in a comfortable position with both feet flat on the ground, back straight and head up. Now tilt your chin 1 inch to the ground and close your eyes. Relax your shoulders and place your hands in a comfortable position.

Start to notice your breath. Slowly breathing in and out. Notice the air entering your body, abdomen rising and now falling as you exhale.

Begin this meditation with dignity and purpose. Ensuring you’re are fully committed to this time you have taken to be here and present today. To nurture your wellbeing and cultivate your own happiness.

Meditation is not about reaching a goal or trying to get somewhere else. It is simply an opportunity for you to focus on your breath and the present moment. Notice your feelings of tension, stress, or pain throughout the body. Notice your breath entering and leaving the body. The mind may wander during this time, and that’s okay. A natural dialogue of things you need to do. Experiences of the past and goals for the future. This is perfectly normal and the key is to

acknowledge them thoughts without judgement and let them go, bringing your thoughts back to your breath every time.

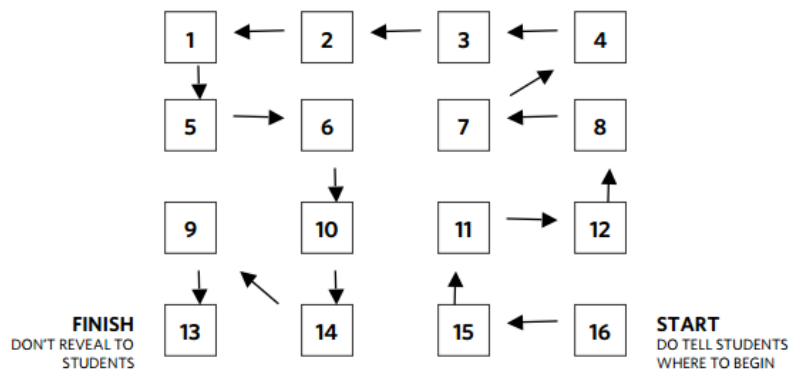
In the last few moments of this meditation. Notice how relaxed you feel; calmer and more focused. Whatever stress or adversity is awaiting you today, be mindful of your reactions and try to bring your current calmness to these situations.”

- **Reading from “The Mindful Athlete”**

The Five Superpowers are mindfulness, concentration, insight, right effort, and trust. These spiritual superpowers are interconnected and they work together. Buddhism sometimes calls the first three powers—mindfulness, concentration, and insight—the threefold training. Our unconscious mind contains the seeds of all these energies. You can cultivate these three energies throughout the day, in whatever activity you’re engaged. Mindfulness, concentration, and insight contain each other. If you’re very mindful, then you have concentration and insight in your mindfulness. Generating these energies is the heart of meditation practice. They help you live every moment of life deeply. They bring you joy and happiness and help you to handle your own suffering and the suffering in the people around you. The fourth power, right effort or diligence, is the energy that makes us steadfast in our practice. **Cognitive function improves when we have a positive state of mind. Bringing diligence to our practice of mindfulness is a great way to cultivate positive mind-states.** But when we practice sitting or walking meditation in a way that causes our body or mind to suffer, that isn’t right effort because our effort isn’t based on our understanding. The last of the Five Powers is trust. It can also be seen as faith or confidence; it can be looked at as courage. Having the courage to delve into the unknown and trust what is found there makes the practice of mindfulness and the other powers possible.

- **Check-in**

- a. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - b. No cross talk or conversation.
 - c. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.
- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
 - **Reading of the activity for this session – The Maze**



1. In front of you is a maze. The group’s goal is to get through the maze without making any mistakes. The pathway out of the maze has been pre-determined and the facilitators are the only ones who know the path.
2. The path is comprised of connecting boxes.
3. The whole team must go through the maze one member at a time
4. If anyone makes a mistake as they travel through the maze the whole group must start over again.
5. When a mistake or misstep occurs, participants should leave the maze and go to the end of the line.

6. There is to be NO COMMUNICATION regarding movement to fellow teammates once a member is in the maze. Silence is required when somebody is in the maze.
This includes all kinds of communication – verbal/non-verbal
7. Once you have started in the maze you cannot turn back
8. No maps can be used or created
9. The team must establish an order and remain in that order throughout the exercise
10. Members must remain behind the maze at all times, until it is their turn to enter the maze
11. **MISSTEP:** When a teammate fails to discover the next step in the maze
12. **MISTAKE:** When any person incorrectly steps on a square that is not part of the path on the way out of the maze that has already been learnt by the team. The sequence must begin again if this happens
13. Facilitators must keep track of each step to ensure the correct path is being taken

Questions:

- a) How would you evaluate the team's process?
- b) What factors contributed/hindered the success of the team?
- c) What was most challenging? Why?
- d) How did it feel when inside the maze vs. outside?
- e) At what points were you focused/not focused during this exercise and how did this impact the team's performance?
- f) How were you able to contribute to the team's performance when you were not in the maze?
- g) How can you relate this to the USD Men's Soccer Program?

h) Any other connections?

- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 2 – Body Scan

Objectives:

- Continuation of the fundamental mindfulness meditations and practicing breathing
- Introduction of scanning the body and being aware of stress, tension, or pain inside the body. Noticing all parts of the body and being aware of the information that it is sending

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Welcome Meditation – Three minutes each, three meditations.**

“Begin by thinking of one thing that you are grateful for. Feel in your body why you are grateful for that one thing. Experience it like it is happening to you now. Feel the emotion that it has one you. Feel that gratitude in your body. Say thank you for that moment and slowly bring yourself back to the room.”

Repeat one more time.

“What is one intention you have for today? Think about how you are feeling about this intention. Start preparing yourself for this experience. Breathing slowly and feeling the air enter your body. Sense any tension in your body and release it with your breath. Begin to smile and excited for this encounter. Slowly bring yourself back to the room.”

- **Check-in**
 - d. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - e. No cross talk or conversation.
 - f. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.

- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
- **Body Scan Exercise – Jon Kabat-Zinn**

“Find a position on the floor that is comfortable for you. You may begin with your eyes closed, but this practice is to make us fall awake, not fall asleep. Therefore, if at any time you need to open your eyes to stop feeling drowsy please do so. Let us now begin. Let’s keep with the principle of mindfulness, as long as you are breathing there is more right with you than wrong; no matter what the condition of your body is or its history, past experiences you have had, or what you are feeling in this moment. So right now, as you lie here, simply feel the sensations of contact by all the places your body is being supported. Feeling the air float around the room and touching your body. Feeling the breath and air enter the body, the belly rising with each in breath and falling with each out breath. Or maybe the nostrils, wherever the breath feels more vivid to you. Feel the body relax and rest with each breath. Feel the body sink into the floor with each out breath, feeling the muscles relax in your body and loosen. Noticing if the mind is wandering away, recognize the thought and slowly let it go from the mind, bring your attention back to the breath and feeling the body once more. Keep in mind throughout this time, the mind is going to wander a lot and that’s okay. Ensure you recognize this and accept that it will do this but always bringing yourself back to the present moment. Now when you are ready, let go of the body as a whole, shift the attention to the toes in one foot. Distinguish each toe and sense the contact between the toes, tingling, numbness, or any other sensation in the toes. Be aware of these sensations, good bad, frustration, boredom, anger, or happiness. Just recognize this and be aware of that feeling in the mind. As we lie here, can you sense the blood taking oxygen to the toes, can you sense the journey of the breath. Sense the out breath too, and the journey that the

breath will take to leave the body. And now, when you are ready, breathing down towards the toes, and exhaling out, let go of this part of the body - bringing our attention to the top of the foot. How does this area feel? With each breath notice and soreness, stiffness, looseness in this part of the body. Feel the breath in this region and release any tension with your breath. Now take your mind to the shin, back of the calf and the lower part of your leg. Let your mind take up residency in this area and accept it for its current state. Notice its current state and then accept it for what it is. And now here too, on an out breath let go of this area. Taking your mind to the knee with your next in breath, feeling the knee cap, inside and outside of the knee; feel the back of the knee. Stay here for a few moments and acknowledge the knee for what it is and the information it is giving you. In your next out breath release that feeling and move your attention now to the upper region on your leg. Recognize the air traveling into these large muscle groups and hear the message being relayed back through the breath. What are you feeling? Do not judge this area of your body, just listen and in the next out breath let it go and move into the belly. Your mind may begin to wander and that's perfectly normal, bring your focus into the belly and notice it rise as you inhale. Release any tension here with your out breath and fully relax the core muscles. Take a few more breaths here and watch your body sink into stillness and awareness while you are totally present. Let's direct our attention to the lower back. This area can be particularly prone to tension, stress, and soreness. Let the breath support this area and take out the tension within on the next out breath. Continuing to notice any feedback from this area without judging it. Let the breath relax the lower back and feel the air between the bones in your spine. Slowly move up the back with each breath, notice each bone and your spinal cord, watching the breath move with your mind and into the upper

back. Feel the release in tension and muscles soften. Allow the back to sink lower to the floor and widen with each breath. Ensure you are loose. In your own time, take the breath into the chest area. Feeling your rib cage and recognizing the thoughts, emotions, and feelings as they enter the mind and then pass away. Feel the pectoral muscles through a deep intentional breath. This area housing the heart and our lungs. Watch the breath protect this area and feel the heart contract with each breath. Release these thoughts or emotions on the next breath as we lie here. When you are ready, slowly hold the breath and slowly release at the same time as the mind releases its focus of this area. Turning the attention now into the arms. Feeling the air inside the arms and the air floating on top. Notice any thoughts or feelings here with. In your own time, move down the arms towards the hands and fingers. Noticing if they are sticky or sweaty, dry, or clammy. Notice what the hands are telling you about their current state and without judgement release that information with your breath. Take an intentional breath up the body into the neck as we lie here. Feel the air entering your neck and inside the neck. Feel timeless here and experience yourself lying here, resting in your awareness. Notice anything here that is here to be felt. Rest with this entire region in each moment, in each breath. And when you're ready, on an out breath let go of the next. Move into the face, experience it is as it is. Feel the whole of your face, feel the muscles in your face and release the tension in your cheeks and jaw. Feel the entirety of the face and head. Breath with your awareness and cradle this moment. Recognize how well you have been doing, recognize the emotions and feeling that you are having. Letting them go as you slowly breath. Enter a peaceful place now and hold the body in your awareness. Embrace this moment, embrace the body complete, just as we are, whole just as we are. Embrace your well-being and rest here in this stillness, in your awareness. As this

practice enters its conclusion, congratulate yourself for attending to this time and recognize the sense of time. Bring your mind to a realization that this acceptance and focus is portable, it can be taken with you in all parts of your life. In all areas, you are able to access this space, fully awake and fully aware, you are able to enter this calm space. Lay here for a few more breaths and in your own time bring yourself back to the room.”

- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 3 – Introducing personal values and values-based behavior

Objectives:

- Deeper level of meditation and challenging athletes to work in presence for longer
- Values-driven behaviors are behaviors in line with one’s values (30 minutes of cardio training to improve conditioning even when fatigued), whereas emotion-driven behaviors are actions in response to emotions and may not be in line with one’s values (avoiding training because it is difficult)

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Check-in**
 - g. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - h. No cross talk or conversation.
 - i. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.
- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
- **Exercise - How would you define your values?**

Before you answer this question, you need to know what, in general, values are. Your values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work. Determine your

priorities, and, deep down, they're probably the measures you use to tell if your life is turning out the way you want it to. When the things that you do and the way you behave match your values, life is usually good – you're satisfied and content. But when these don't align with your personal values, that's when things feel... wrong. This can be a real source of unhappiness.

Therefore, making a conscious effort to identify your values is so important.

How Values Help You

“Values exist, whether you recognize them or not. Life can be much easier when you acknowledge your values – and when you make plans and decisions that honor them. If you value family, but you have to work 70-hour weeks in your job, will you feel internal stress and conflict? And if you don't value competition, and you work in a highly competitive sales environment, are you likely to be satisfied with your job? In these types of situations, understanding your values can help. When you know your own values, you can use them to make decisions about how to live your life.

Defining Your Values

When you define your personal values, you discover what's truly important to you. A good way of starting to do this is to look back on your life – to identify when you felt really good, and really confident that you were making good choices.

Step 1: Identify the times when you were happiest - Find examples from both your career and personal life. This will ensure some balance in your answers.

What were you doing? Were you with other people? Who? What other factors contributed to your happiness?

Step 2: Identify the times when you were most proud - Use examples from your career and personal life.

Why were you proud? Did other people share your pride? Who? What other factors contributed to your feelings of pride?

Step 3: Identify the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied - Again, use both work and personal examples.

What need or desire was fulfilled? How and why did the experience give your life meaning?

What other factors contributed to your feelings of fulfillment?

Step 4: Determine your top values, based on your experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfillment

Why is each experience truly important and memorable? Use the following list of common personal values to help you get started – and aim for about 10 top values. (As you work through, you may find that some of these naturally combine. For instance, if you value philanthropy, community, and generosity, you might say that service to others is one of your top values.)

Accountability	Curiosity	Fluency	Loyalty	Quality-
Accuracy	Decisiveness	Focus	Making a	orientation
Achievement	Democraticness	Freedom	difference	Restraint
Adventurousness	Dependability	Fun	Mastery	Results-
Altruism	Determination	Generosity	Merit	oriented
Ambition	Devoutness	Goodness	Obedience	Rigor
Assertiveness	Diligence	Grace	Openness	Security
Balance	Discipline	Growth	Order	Self-
Being the best	Discretion	Happiness	Originality	actualization
Belonging	Diversity	Hard Work	Patriotism	Self-control
Boldness	Dynamism	Health	Resourcefulness	

Calmness	Economy	Helping Society	Selflessness	Reliability
Carefulness	Effectiveness	Holiness	Self-reliance	Strength
Challenge	Efficiency	Honesty	Sensitivity	Structure
Cheerfulness	Elegance	Honor	Serenity	Success
Clear-mindedness	Empathy	Humility	Service	Support
Commitment	Enjoyment	Independence	Shrewdness	Teamwork
Community	Enthusiasm	Ingenuity	Simplicity	Temperance
Compassion	Equality	Inner Harmony	Soundness	Thankfulness
Competitiveness	Excellence	Inquisitiveness	Speed	Thoroughness
Consistency	Excitement	Insightfulness	Spontaneity	Thoughtfulness
Contentment	Expertise	Intelligence	Stability	Timeliness
Continuous	Exploration	Intellectual	Strategic	Tolerance
Improvement	Expressiveness	Status	Perfection	Traditionalism
Contribution	Fairness	Intuition	Piety	Trustworthiness
Control	Faith	Joy	Positivity	Truth-seeking
Cooperation	Family-	Justice	Practicality	Understanding
Correctness	orientedness	Leadership	Preparedness	Uniqueness
Courtesy	Fidelity	Legacy	Professionalism	Unity
Creativity	Fitness	Love	Prudence	Usefulness
				Vision
				Vitality

Step 5: Prioritize your top values

This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself. It's also the most important step, because, when making a decision, you'll have to choose between solutions that may satisfy different values. This is when you must know which value is more important to you.

Write down your top values, not in any particular order.

Step 6: Reaffirm your values - Check your top-priority values, and make sure they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

Do these values make you feel good about yourself? Are you proud of your top three values? Would you be comfortable and proud to tell your values to people you respect and admire? Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice isn't popular, and it puts you in the minority?

When you consider your values in decision making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right, and approach decisions with confidence and clarity. You'll also know that what you're doing is best for your current and future happiness and satisfaction. Form the first letters of each word into a memorable acronym to make it personal.

Key Points

“Identifying and understanding your values is a challenging and important exercise. Your personal values are a central part of who you are – and who you want to be. By becoming more aware of these important factors in your life, you can use them as a guide to make the best choice in any situation.

Some of life's decisions are really about determining what you value most. When many options seem reasonable, it's helpful and comforting to rely on your values – and use them as a strong guiding force to point you in the right direction.”

- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 4 – Introducing activity to a meditation

Objectives:

- Continuation of more challenging mindfulness meditations and practicing breathing
- Adding distractions to challenge participants to be present without allowing outside noise to interrupt being in the moment

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Meditation – Intention & Purpose in the present moment.**

“When you quiet the mind and give it one thing to focus on, you quiet your body. When you quiet your body, you quiet your mind. When the mind and body are quiet, there is synergy that feeds pure performance.”

Practice concentrating on an intention for the day. This is not an activity to visualize how you are going to achieve or complete that intention, but simply an exercise to purely focus on what the intention is. Start by doing this for one minute. If you can do this without your mind wondering, try two minutes, and then three. Each time bring more detail to that intention. The sensations that you are feelings, emotions, etc.

- **Check-in**
 - j. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - k. No cross talk or conversation.
 - l. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.
- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**

- **Priming exercise – Tony Robbins**

Quick shoulder press with deep loud breaths and truly focus on two things.

- **Repeat Meditation – Intention & Purpose in the present moment.**

Add loud music, noise, and distractions to their intention meditation.

“When you quiet the mind and give it one thing to focus on, you quiet your body. When you quiet your body, you quiet your mind. When the mind and body are quiet, there is synergy that feeds pure performance.”

Practice concentrating on an intention for the day. This is not an activity to visualize how you are going to achieve or complete that intention, but simply an exercise to purely focus on what the intention is. Start by doing this for one minute. If you can do this without your mind wondering, try two minutes, and then three. Each time bring more detail to that intention. The sensations that you are feelings, emotions, etc.

- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 5 – Enhancing positive mindsets

Objectives:

- Growth mindset refers to an orientation toward embracing challenges, moving through setbacks and learning from experiences. In contrast, a fixed mindset is an orientation to avoid challenges, giving up easily and ignoring feedback.

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Check-in**

- m. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
- n. No cross talk or conversation.

- o. Acknowledge each person's contribution with brief words of "Thank you" before moving on to the next person.

- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
- **Positive thoughts – certain that you can do something**

"Stand up with your feet firmly on the floor in a good stance. Put your index finger up, arm straight out in front of you. Twist clockwise with your arm and finger pointing out. Twist until you are uncomfortable."

"Now stand in the same stance, arms by your side and visualize yourself twisting. Repeat only this time twist further, see yourself twisting further. Repeat again, and again."

"Do the exercise for real this time. Every person should be able to twist further. Why? Because you were certain that you could go further in your mind."

- **Exercise- acknowledge to the group something that you don't do but you should**

Stand up and get with a partner. Each person will share again. Their partner will offer a suggestion. Without any cross conversation, the person receiving feedback will reply with a thank you. Change rolls. Find a new partner. Repeat four times.

Come back to the circle and share one thing that you can do to make you think more positively about that topic.

- **Hear from a few voices to talk about how they can become more positive about some challenges or obstacles that they face**
- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 6 – Enhancing imagery & visualization with positive purpose, intention, and focus

Objectives:

- Adding intention to the practice, continuing to practice breathing technique throughout the meditations
- Exercises to learn how to redirect attention from internal processed to an external task (e.g.: if one was avoiding lifting weights, creating a plan to lift even more weights by focusing attention on the task instead of negative emotions)

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **5 Minute imagery meditation**

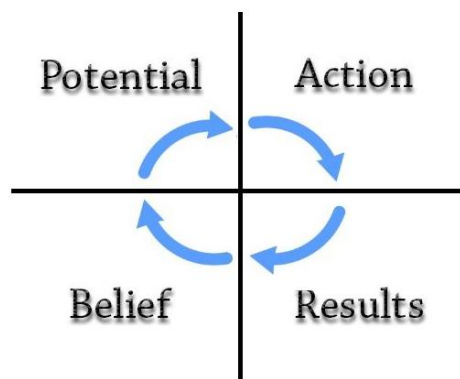
“Begin with a skill of your sport in mind. Take yourself through the technique and technical aspect of performing that skill. Once you have finished, begin again until the time is up.”

- **Check-in**

- p. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
- q. No cross talk or conversation.
- r. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.

- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**

- **Tony Robbins – Law of Attraction**



- **Why Imagery?**

“Researchers are finding that not only the words you tell yourself affect your physiology but so do your mental images. If you picture the worst-case scenario, then chances are you are ramping up your stress chemicals. This is not good imagery!

Use imagery to manage performance anxiety and to see what wants to have happen rather than fear of what will happen. Add breathing with imagery because deep breathing stimulates the brain to reduce stress and allow more ease in the mind and body. After you've deepened your awareness through mindful breathing, visualization—the practice of seeking to affect the outer world by altering your thoughts and expectations—is the next step. This technique requires you first to be mindful but also to cultivate the ability to think positively.

"It's all about exploring what's possible," What is in your control and invest in that. Whether the ball is caught or not is not in your control. First articulate what it feels like and what it sounds like inside of you when you're at your best.

- **Exercise**

“Simply writing four or five things on a notecard—going into competition that you need to do, that will allow you to be successful, or to have a good game. Going into his world-record-setting 200-meter race, Michael Johnson had four things written down: "Keep my head down, pump my arms, explode, react like a bullet."

Visualize your points in your mind, over and over with all your senses.

“Do this exercise again, but this time with every movement take a breath, slow down what is happening. Calm deep breaths. Every movement is connected with your breath.”

This visualization can be altered to your sport by picking a **specific** part of your performance that you want to improve and use imagery and breath work.”

- **Resource** - The tool of heart breathing is in the book, *Transforming Stress*.
- **One Breath** -something that you are thankful for or this experience.

Session 7 – Remaining still in the midst of activity

Objectives:

- Working with intention to the practice mindfulness and going deeper into being present
- Different types of attention necessary in sports are discussed along with exercises to envision a sporting situation and identifying how to best direct attention

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Check-in**
 - s. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - t. No cross talk or conversation.
 - u. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.
- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
- **Group discussion on pressure and noise during competition**
- **Priming exercise – Tony Robbins**

Quick shoulder press with deep loud breaths and truly focus on two things.

- **Visualization Meditation – Similar as session 6**

Add loud music, noise, and distractions to their intention meditation.

“Simply writing four or five things on a notecard—going into competition that you need to do, that will allow you to be successful, or to have a good game. Going into his world-record-setting 200-meter race, Michael Johnson had four things written down: "Keep my head down, pump my arms, explode, react like a bullet."

Visualize your points in your mind, over and over with all your senses.

“Do this exercise again, but this time with every movement take a breath, slow down what is happening. Calm deep breaths. Every movement is connected with your breath.”

This visualization can be altered to your sport by picking a **specific** part of your performance that you want to improve and use imagery and breath work.”

- **Group discussion on pressure and noise during competition and ways around it**
- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Session 8 – Maintaining and enhancing mindfulness, acceptance, and commitment

Objectives:

- Working with an understanding that the program is coming to an end and ensuring that there is a commitment to continue the practice being mindful
- Setting performance goals and action plans to achieve them

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Check-in**
 - v. One highlight from each person’s day or week, or one opening thought.
 - w. No cross talk or conversation.
 - x. Acknowledge each person’s contribution with brief words of “Thank you” before moving on to the next person.

- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made**
- **Guided meditation**

These tips will help you integrate mindfulness into your life.

1. Feel Your Body

This might sound obvious, but many people approach their day and don't slow down long enough to truly feel what's going on in their bodies. In some cases, people suffer through a day ignoring aches, pains, and objections from the body. This disconnection from your body sets the stage for distractions, stress and injuries. Before beginning any day, pause and bring awareness to your physical form. Feel your bones, muscles, organs, tissues, and even skin. Maybe give yourself time for a body scan an act accordingly.

- **Group discussion**

2. Notice Your Environment

Expand the awareness you brought inward, out to your environment. Allow your awareness to fill up the space that you're going to be moving through. Ideally, your space should be distraction-free so as to help localize your attention on the experiences ahead.

No matter what space you're in, notice the temperature, lighting, odors, and any additional sensory perceptions that may influence your experience. The point isn't to become compulsive about your space; it's meant to help you finely tune your awareness for the work you're about to do.

This is your time.

- **Group discussion**

3. Always Use Correct Posture

Posture affects every move you make. Through correct posture you create the optimal spinal alignment for positive thoughts. Without a neutral spinal position, you throw off your body's power chain and interfere with the natural flow of energy and information through your nervous system. Correct posture ensures that your energetic body is functioning optimally and thereby providing an adequate supply of energy throughout the day or activity.

- **Group discussion**

4. Make Your Breath the Anchor

The key to creating a mindful practice is your breath. The repetitive inflow and outflow of your breath creates a rhythm that can help anchor you into the present moment. This breathing rhythm also serves as a bridge between your mind, body, and soul; the more deeply you breathe, the deeper that connection becomes. In a very practical sense, steady and even breathing efficiently infuses your body with the oxygen and *Prana* (life force) it needs to function under the strain of physical exertion.

- **Group discussion**

5. Clear Intention

Before beginning your day, pause briefly to form a clear intention for what you are about to do. This doesn't need to be verbalized, but you should make note of what you plan to accomplish. Intention has organizing power, so by clearly creating the intention, you lay the groundwork for its manifestation. In addition, intention focuses your mind on what you're doing, thereby increasing your chances of success. Remember that where attention goes, energy flows, so plant the seed of intention and the exercise will perform itself.

- **Group discussion**

6. Stay on Target

As you move through your day, your mind will wander and your awareness will drift. This is a natural part of training. As in meditation, the mind will get pulled away to other thoughts, sensations, and distractions in the environment. Your job is to come back to the present moment, the breath, and the activity. It doesn't matter how many times your attention drifts, just keep coming back to the practice of mindful movement.

As you become more adept at this process, you grow less attached to those thoughts and distractions and can begin to simply witness them with compassion. You can separate yourself from the temptation to indulge in distractions of the ego. You'll start to see those distractions for what they are—scenery that comes and goes in the field of your awareness. But the real you, the ever-present witness within, remains stable, steady, and rooted in the eternal present.

These are the steps to take your daily routine from the realm of the unconscious to the conscious and into the experience of higher awareness. With them you can transform your life into a mindful practice.

- **Group discussion on ways to maintain mindfulness without this program**
- **One Breath -something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Appendix C – Leadership Theories and Styles

There are as many different views of leadership that can be involved in conducting a mindfulness program such as mine. Current leadership views have shifted from traditional trait or personality-based theories to a situation theory. My mindfulness program is very situational because it is designed to support the needs of its participants and each year those needs will be different. Therefore, situational leadership is exercised and determined by the leadership skills and characteristics of the leader.

Steve Wolinski said, “all contemporary theories can fall under one of the following three perspectives: leadership as a process or relationship, leadership as a combination of traits or personality characteristics, or leadership as certain behaviors or, as they are more commonly referred to, leadership skills. In the more dominant theories of leadership, there exists the notion that, at least to some degree, leadership is a process that involves influence with a group of people toward the realization of goals.” (Wolinski, 2010) With this being said, I use this quote to provide a program that empowers and influences a group of student athletes to have the tools necessary to succeed with their goals during their university life.

The following leadership theories are all ones that I believe are relevant and applicable to the process of creating my program, the facilitation of each session, and the future for the program to ensure the needs of all participants are being met.

- Contingency Theories of leadership “focus on particular variables related to the environment that might determine which style of leadership is best suited for a particular work situation. According to this theory, no single leadership style is appropriate in all situations. Success depends upon a number of variables, including leadership style, qualities of followers and situational features.” (Cherry, 2016) Contingency theory states that effective leadership depends on the fit between a leader’s qualities, leadership style, and that demanded by a specific situation. Even though my program has pre-planned session plans, the leader/facilitator needs to understand the situation and participants and therefore, needs to be able to work with this in order to successfully support followers.
- Situational Theory proposes that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational conditions or circumstances. Different styles of leadership may be more

appropriate for different types of decision-making. For example, in a situation where the leader is expected to be the most knowledgeable and experienced member of a group, an authoritarian style of leadership might be most appropriate. In other instances where group members are skilled experts and expect to be treated as such, a democratic style may be more effective.

- According to Behavioral Theory of leadership, people can learn to become leaders through training and observation. I believe that it is particularly important to be flexible as a leader and therefore learning new ways to lead people is something that I want to be open too. In regards to my program, learning different techniques that fit the necessary requirements to meet the needs of my participants is a way that I can improve my own leadership qualities, but also the design of the program.
- Participative Leadership Theories suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. Participative leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members to feel relevant and committed to the decision-making process. I will facilitate this program in a way that uses participative leadership, rather than making all the decisions myself, I will seek to involve other student athletes. I believe that this will improve the commitment and collaboration of the group, which leads to better relationships and improves the quality of decisions being made by others.
- Relationship/Transformational Theory, also known as transformational theory, the focus is on the connections formed between leaders and followers. Leadership is the process of creating connections with others and that results in increased motivation in both followers and leader. In terms of the mindfulness program, healthy relationships have trust and this

type of work requires trust to fully commit. Relationship or transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. These leaders are focused on the performance of group members, but also on each person to fulfilling their full potential. I believe that this theory has a big role to play in the program as all participants need to have a relationship with the facilitator of the program to ensure they are performing to their highest ability.

- Skills Theory is where learned knowledge and acquired skills/abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership. Skills theory argues that learned skills, a developed style, and acquired knowledge, are the real keys to leadership performance. In order for a program like mindfulness to be implemented and facilitated effectively, the leader must learn the skills to do so. I am still a learner of mindfulness; however, I have been educated and practice mindfulness regularly enough to have the skills to create this program and implement it to student athletes.

Leadership Styles are also particularly important to pay attention to, as it is key the leadership styles are the approaches used to motivate followers. Leadership is not a “one size fits all” phenomenon. Leadership styles should be selected and adapted to fit the ones in need.

Therefore, it is useful to possess an understanding of the different styles that will be effective to lead a mindfulness program such as the one I have created. The following leadership styles are ones that I believe can be related to the process of creating my program, the facilitation of each session, and the future for the program to ensure the needs of all participants are being met.

- Charismatic Leadership Style theory inspire eagerness in their followers and teams. They are energetic in motivating others to move forward. Mindfulness needs an atmosphere that is calm and allows people to be present; however, being a charismatic leader creates

excitement and commitment from teams and is an enormous asset to the productivity of goal achievement. Having this style in my program can get people to fully commit and thus they will experience the positive benefits of mindfulness.

- A Democratic/Participative Leader is one to make the final decisions, but include team members in the decision-making process. For the purpose of this program, it is essential to hear others feedback and know what needs have to be met in order to serve followers. This leadership style encourages creativity, and team members are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. In organizational settings team members tend to have high job satisfaction and are productive because they are more involved. I aim to also have high engagement from followers as they will feel valued and involved with the program. This style also helps develop participant's skills and they feel a part of something larger, something more meaningful, and so are motivated to be part of the bigger picture. In this case, the program is intending to support the needs of individuals, which in turn creates healthier members of athletics teams and healthier programs.
- Laissez-Faire Leadership Style can be a style that is the best or the worst. It is where leaders who allow people to work on their own. My program is an eight-session program but encourages others to continue a mindfulness practice on their own. It is like practicing a specific skill whereby it needs to be worked on daily. A mindfulness practice should be the same and therefore, it is essential that the leader uses their relationships with others to encourage them to work on their own with their daily practice. If participants do not do this, then this style can become ineffective as the work is not being done.

Appendix D – November Pilot Session Plan

The Mindfulness Practice Workshop:

Bring You're "A" Game

Wednesday, November 23rd 2016

What is mindfulness?

1. Paying attention to a particular thing in the moment non-judgmentally
2. Aware or conscious of something. Observing experiences- feelings and relating to purpose
3. Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.
4. Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there's a "right" or "wrong" way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

Why Practice Mindfulness?

The ability to be AWARE of your thoughts and to redirect your mind will support your mental program in exponential ways. This is the foundation of mindfulness training and the key component that will support your mental growth as a performer. This short, 10-minute sitting meditation seems simple to do, but what you learn quickly is that it is difficult and requires much practice to master. Practicing this exercise daily will strengthen your mental discipline.

Studies have shown that practicing mindfulness, even for just a few weeks, can bring a variety of physical, psychological, and social benefits. Here are some of these benefits, which extend across many different settings.

- Mindfulness is good for our bodies: A seminal study found that, after just eight weeks of training, practicing mindfulness meditation boosts our immune system's ability to fight off illness.
- Mindfulness is good for our minds: Several studies have found that mindfulness increases positive emotions while reducing negative emotions and stress. Indeed, at least one study suggests it may be as good as antidepressants in fighting depression and preventing relapse.
- Mindfulness changes our brains: Research has found that it increases density of gray matter in brain regions linked to learning, memory, emotion regulation, and empathy.
- Mindfulness helps us focus: Studies suggest that mindfulness helps us tune out distractions and improves our memory and attention skills.
- Mindfulness fosters compassion and altruism: Research suggests mindfulness training makes us more likely to help someone in need and increases activity in neural networks involved in understanding the suffering of others and regulating emotions. Evidence suggests it might boost self-compassion as well.
- Mindfulness enhances relationships: Research suggests mindfulness training makes couples more satisfied with their relationship, makes each partner feel more optimistic and relaxed, and makes them feel more accepting of and closer to one another.
- Mindfulness is good for parents and parents-to-be: Studies suggest it may reduce pregnancy-related anxiety, stress, and depression in expectant parents. Parents who practice mindfulness

report being happier with their parenting skills and their relationship with their kids, and their kids were found to have better social skills.

- Mindfulness helps schools: There's scientific evidence that teaching mindfulness in the classroom reduces behavior problems and aggression among students, and improves their happiness levels and ability to pay attention. Teachers trained in mindfulness also show lower blood pressure, less negative emotion and symptoms of depression, and greater compassion and empathy.
- Mindfulness helps health care professionals cope with stress, connect with their patients, and improve their general quality of life. It also helps mental health professionals by reducing negative emotions and anxiety, and increasing their positive emotions and feelings of self-compassion.
- Mindfulness helps prisons: Evidence suggests mindfulness reduces anger, hostility, and mood disturbances among prisoners by increasing their awareness of their thoughts and emotions, helping with their rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Mindfulness helps veterans: Studies suggest it can reduce the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of war.
- Mindfulness fights obesity: Practicing "mindful eating" encourages healthier eating habits, helps people lose weight, and helps them savor the food they do eat.

How to Get Started with Mindfulness Training

How to Practice?

The first step of physical mindfulness training is practicing breathing on a daily basis. This consists of sitting for 10 minutes and simply focusing on being aware of your breathing. The

intention is simply to be with your mind and observe the thoughts that come and go without judgement.

Sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair and set a timer. Begin with 3 centering breaths—deep inhale and slow exhale. Then begin to name your inhale as “breathing in” and name your exhale as “breathing out”. Each and every breath you name “in” and “out”. Quickly you will begin to notice thoughts arising. The practice is to simply name the thoughts, “I am thinking” and bring your attention back to your breath and name the in and out breath. Continue for 10 minutes.

It is suggested those new to mindfulness begin by focusing on their breathing. Start with as little as two or three minutes in the morning, the evening or before competition. Sit in a quiet place in a comfortable seat and focus on your breath by closing your eyes, inhaling slowly, and feeling your belly rise. Then exhale and feel the air leaving your body. "Begin with a commitment to just 10 breaths a day, and then move to 15 breaths in a row per day, then 20,"

As thoughts and emotions enter your mind—as well as physical sensations and external sounds—try to simply acknowledge them with no judgment and let them pass. When you notice your attention drifting or you become too caught up in your thoughts, bring your attention back to your breath. With practice, this exercise should bring you to a clearer and calmer state of mind. As you get more practice, consider going for as long as 5 minutes, then 10 and so forth.

Practicing Mindfulness Exercise:

A second physical mindful training tool is specific moment awareness exercises. For example, brushing your teeth and focusing only on brushing your teeth for those few minutes.

Here is how this works:

Decide that for the time it takes to brush your teeth you will only focus on the action of brushing. Become very curious about the action of brushing, how long you brush in one area,

what does it feel like, taste like, sound like. Then, when a thought or thoughts enter your brain that are NOT about teeth brushing, simply name the thoughts and bring your attention back to your action of brushing. Just to make a disclaimer here-you will think many thoughts that have nothing to do with brushing your teeth-this is normal! Just keep noticing and being gentle with yourself as you begin to train your mind to focus on the task of just brushing your teeth.

Why Practice Awareness?

This is specific mindfulness training that teaches you how to stay in the moment and focus on the task at hand. It is a self-study experiment that reveals how quickly your mind wanders away from a task. This will apply directly to your sport or performance when task-orientated mental tools are needed.

Your “A” Game:

Awareness, Acceptance and Action.

Awareness of your thoughts and breathing is step number one in learning how to use mindfulness in sport and performance.

Practicing these two mindful exercises will begin training your brain and body to be aware and it brings forth the following principles:

- YOU are responsible for your thoughts
- YOU are not your thoughts
- YOU can redirect your thoughts by simply naming the situation: “I am thinking. Refocus on the task.”

Bring Your “A” Game!

Awareness – Knowing where you are focused

- What others think of you

- Struggling thoughts
- Nervous about future events

Acceptance – Accept when you waste energy and move on

- Dwelling on past events
- Judging yourself
- Being too hard on yourself

Action – Getting back into the present moment

- Positive self-talk
- Focusing on the breath
- Going through the mechanics of a particular action

Practicing Meditation is Key

The most basic thing an athlete does to get better is practice. So, if you're an athlete yourself, then choose a meditation practice that works for you and do it daily. This is a way for athletes to practice focus and mind and emotional management. It can be really tough in the heat of the moment to suddenly know what to do to get psyched up or more calm. But if you have practiced being in the moment daily chances are you can do it better in competition.

Meditation is becoming popular for many reasons, especially related to health. Athletes are also taking up the practice more and more because research has shown that meditation can be used as a tool to manage pain, decrease anxiety and improve focus. Therefore, meditation and athletes shouldn't be such an uncommon pairing anymore. But meditation can also offer some time to simply consolidate and slow down.

Staying in the present moment

Reading about meditation is one thing but taking action and creating a meditation practice is what makes the real difference. Practicing gently nudging your mind to the present moment is important for using it in high stress situations.

The Next Step: Visualization

Why Imagery?

Researchers are finding that not only the words you tell yourself affect your physiology but so do your mental images. If you picture the worst case scenario, then chances are you are ramping up your stress chemicals. This is not good imagery!

Use imagery to manage performance anxiety and to see what wants to have happen rather than fear of what will happen. Also encourage to add some breathing techniques with imagery because deep breathing stimulates the brain to reduce stress and allow more ease in the mind and body.

After you've deepened your awareness through mindful breathing, visualization—the practice of seeking to affect the outer world by altering your thoughts and expectations—is the next step.

This technique requires you first to be mindful but also to cultivate the ability to think positively.

"It's all about exploring what's possible," What is in your control and invest in that. Whether the ball is caught or not is not in your control. First articulate what it feels like and what it sounds like inside of you when you're at your best.

Simply writing four or five things on a notecard—going into competition that you need to do, that will allow you to be successful, or to have a good game. Going into his world-record-setting 200-meter race, Michael Johnson had four things written down: "Keep my head down, pump my arms, explode, react like a bullet."

Whether your list is to "communicate with my teammates," "make my free throws," or whatever, the notes should be as specific as possible and positive in their expression. Visualize your points in your mind, over and over with all your senses.

Use Both Imagery and Breathing Tools

Breathing is something we all do but many times it happens with little or no awareness.

Breathing and tension are related so it is important to use both deep breathing and imagery together to help decrease tension or stress as needed. Athletes and others often hold their breath or have shallow breathing when they are uptight. Encourage athletes to work on deep belly breathing or heart breathing to ease tension in their body.

The tool of heart breathing is in the book, *Transforming Stress*.

The idea is to learn to drop your breath and breathe deeper, from your chest area and to assist yourself to use this method to calm yourself as your breathing and heart rate are connected.

Using breath and imagery can help athletes be **more present** focused and **reduce worry** thoughts. Use these tools because they help athletes have an action focus they can control.

So how would athletes link breath work with imagery?

Example: Tennis Serve Using Visualization and Breath Work

Imagine yourself at the baseline. See yourself bounce the ball and your opponent on the other side of the net. Bounce the ball and take a breath. Imagine breathing in from your heart area as you do this. Bounce the ball and take another breath. Now see where you want to place the ball.

Take a breath. Serve.

This happens quickly but give your mind a present focus. Use these steps to replace negative images with images of what you **WANT** to occur:

- Practice these ideas prior to using them on the court.

- Then use them in practice sessions and work on the rhythm.
- Finally, when ready, add them to your game.

This visualization can be altered to your sport by picking a **specific** part of your performance that you want to improve and use imagery and breath work.

Abstract Images Work Too!

First, images are very personal so take some time to ponder what images might give you a visual of what you want, or a feeling of what you want. I know water and beaches of many different meanings for people with some finding beach images to be soothing while others would not have that same response.

Second, decide how the image can help you and give it meaning. Make it vivid as well as meaningful.

Third, bring it to your sport. Use it in practice prior to competitions. This way you are more ready to use it when you need it most.

Understanding and Using Self Talk

We talk with ourselves constantly throughout the day. Some of this dialogue is negative, some neutral, and some positive. One main point about self-talk is some of it sets us up for success while other types of self-talk set us up more for failure, or at least high anxiety.

We have constant self-talk chatter in our heads every day. There is a great deal we are not even aware of telling ourselves:

- I'm not sure I can do this.
- What happens if I screw up?
- What is someone gets mad at me?

Many athletes engage in very similar self-talk but either do not know it (unaware) or think this is normal so they don't question it and therefore don't know to change it. But, when athletes are playing really well they change their self-talk to include more statements such as:

- Just focus
- Give me the ball
- I can do this
- I like competing

Self-Talk, Mindfulness and Athletes

Three components of mindfulness are awareness, acceptance and actions. The challenge to athletes is to grow your awareness by creating some worksheets and getting to know what you are telling yourself when you are successful.

Make a Word document and keep some data about your self-talk.

Pregame

1. What am I saying to myself pre practice or pre game?
2. Are these statements helpful?
3. Do these words positively energize me or help me get into a good zone?
4. Do these statements help me be successful?

During the Game

1. What am I saying to myself while I am playing when I am successful?
2. Are there are few words or statements that I repeat?
3. What words do you use to help myself stay focused?

The key is for you to become more *aware* of your self-talk and use positive self-talk on purpose. I consider this a skill which means you can develop it and make changes. In this way it is like building muscle; the more you do it the stronger you get.

After you have gathered some “data” you might start to see a pattern that certain self-talk seems associated with helping you perform the way you want than begin to rehearse (repeat in your head or write on card you see) and visualize those words on purpose. This is how you begin to manage some of that self-talk. Change it when needed and know you can improve the skill in doing this. That is what makes good athletes even better.

Stimulus | Response – S|R = Reactive or S [] R = Respond

Appendix E – February Pilot Session Plan

Mindful Athletes

Group Meeting #1

Wednesday, February 8th 2017

Quiet music playing while people arrive

- **Welcome Meditation**

“Start this meditation by sitting in a comfortable position with both feet flat on the ground, back straight and head up. Now tilt your chin 1 inch to the ground and close your eyes. Relax your shoulders and place your hands in a comfortable position.

Start to notice your breath. Slowly breathing in and out. Notice the air entering your body, abdomen rising and now falling as you exhale.

Begin this meditation with dignity and purpose. Ensuring you’re fully committed to this time you have taken to be here and present today. To nurture your wellbeing and cultivate your own happiness.

Meditation is not about reaching a goal or trying to get somewhere else. It is simply an opportunity for you to focus on your breath and the present moment. Notice your feelings of tension, stress, or pain throughout the body. Notice your breath entering and leaving the body. The mind may wander during this time, and that's okay. A natural dialogue of things you need to do. Experiences of the past and goals for the future. This is perfectly normal and the key is to acknowledge them thoughts without judgement and let them go, bringing your thoughts back to your breath every time.

In the last few moments of this meditation. Notice how relaxed you feel; calmer and more focused. Whatever stress or adversity is awaiting you today, be mindful of your reactions and try to bring your current calmness to these situations.”

- **Reading from “The Mindful Athlete”**

The Five Superpowers are mindfulness, concentration, insight, right effort, and trust. These spiritual superpowers are interconnected and they work together. Buddhism sometimes calls the first three powers—mindfulness, concentration, and insight—the threefold training. Our unconscious mind contains the seeds of all these energies. You can cultivate these three energies throughout the day, in whatever activity you're engaged. Mindfulness, concentration, and insight contain each other. If you're very mindful, then you have concentration and insight in your mindfulness. Generating these energies is the heart of meditation practice. They help you live every moment of life deeply. They bring you joy and happiness and help you to handle your own suffering and the suffering in the people around you. The fourth power, right effort or diligence, is the energy that makes us steadfast in our practice. **Cognitive function improves when we have a positive state of mind. Bringing diligence to our practice of mindfulness is a great way to cultivate positive mind-states.** But when we practice sitting or walking meditation in a

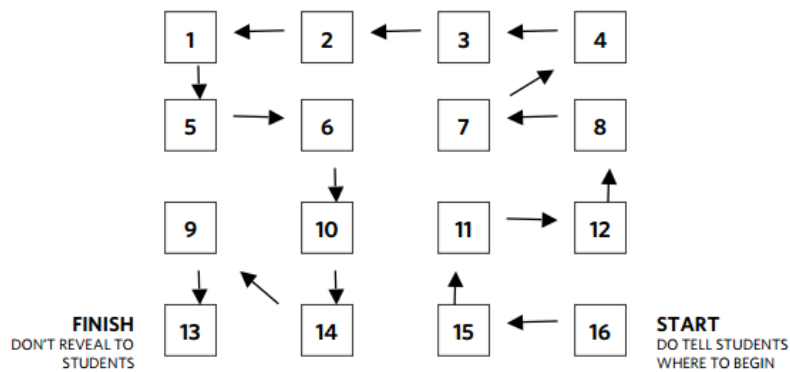
way that causes our body or mind to suffer, that isn't right effort because our effort isn't based on our understanding. The last of the Five Powers is trust. It can also be seen as faith or confidence; it can be looked at as courage. Having the courage to delve into the unknown and trust what is found there makes the practice of mindfulness and the other powers possible.

- **Check-in**

- y. One highlight from each person's day or week, or one opening thought.
- z. No cross talk or conversation.
- aa. Acknowledge each person's contribution with brief words of "Thank you" before moving on to the next person.

- **Group business - Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made.**

- **Reading of the activity for this session – The Maze**



14. In front of you is a maze. The group's goal is to get through the maze without making any mistakes. The pathway out of the maze has been pre-determined and the facilitators are the only ones who know the path.

15. The path is comprised of connecting boxes.

16. The whole team must go through the maze one member at a time

17. If anyone makes a mistake as they travel through the maze the whole group must start over again.
18. When a mistake or misstep occurs, participants should leave the maze and go to the end of the line.
19. There is to be **NO COMMUNICATION** regarding movement to fellow teammates once a member is in the maze. Silence is required when somebody is in the maze. This includes all kinds of communication – verbal/non-verbal
20. Once you have started in the maze you cannot turn back
21. No maps can be used or created
22. The team must establish an order and remain in that order throughout the exercise
23. Members must remain behind the maze at all times, until it is their turn to enter the maze
24. **MISSTEP:** When a teammate fails to discover the next step in the maze
25. **MISTAKE:** When any person incorrectly steps on a square that is not part of the path on the way out of the maze that has already been learnt by the team. The sequence must begin again if this happens
26. Facilitators must keep track of each step to ensure the correct path is being taken

Questions:

- i) How would you evaluate the team's process?
- j) What factors contributed/hindered the success of the team?
- k) What was most challenging? Why?
- l) How did it feel when inside the maze vs. outside?

- m) At what points were you focused/not focused during this exercise and how did this impact the team's performance?
- n) How were you able to contribute to the team's performance when you were not in the maze?
- o) How can you relate this to the USD Men's Soccer Program?
- p) Any other connections?

- **Meditation – Intention & Purpose in the present moment.**

“When you quiet the mind and give it one thing to focus on, you quiet your body. When you quiet your body, you quiet your mind. When the mind and body are quiet, there is synergy that feeds pure performance.”

Practice concentrating on an intention for the day. This is not an activity to visualize how you are going to achieve or complete that intention, but simply an exercise to purely focus on what the intention is. Start by doing this for one minute. If you can do this without your mind wondering, try two minutes, and then three. Each time bring more detail to that intention. The sensations that you are feelings, emotions, etc.

- **One Breath on something that you are thankful for or this experience.**

Appendix F – Student Athlete Questionnaire (Pre-Program)

Part I: Demographic Questions

1. What is your age? ___18 ___19 ___20 ___21 ___22 ___Other (____)
2. Where were you born? _____
3. If you were not born in the United States, when did you move to the United States?

4. What is your class? ___Freshman ___Sophomore ___Junior ___Senior ___Graduate

5. Did you attend a community college before this University? ___Yes ___No
6. Are you an: International Student-Athlete _____ Domestic Student-Athlete_____
7. Sport _____
8. Are you on an athletic scholarship? ___Yes ___No
9. Are you on an academic scholarship? ___Yes ___No

Part II: Your Experience as a Student Athlete

In this section, the term “status” refers to your answer in question 6: Are you an international student-athlete or domestic student-athlete?

1. Please describe the recruitment process and your experience.
2. Think about your recruitment. Do you believe your recruitment was the same or different as someone of the opposite status? Do you believe there is a recruiting advantage for one status over the other?
3. What was the deciding factor for you to attend this university? Was this school your first choice?
4. How comfortable were you scheduling classes?
5. How comfortable were you finding housing?
6. How was the process of arranging transportation to the university?
7. How was the process of orientation and was it helpful?
8. Are you on a team with domestic and international players? What is that like?
9. Would you label your team as an international team? Why or why not?
10. What were your expectations?
11. Has the team met your expectations?

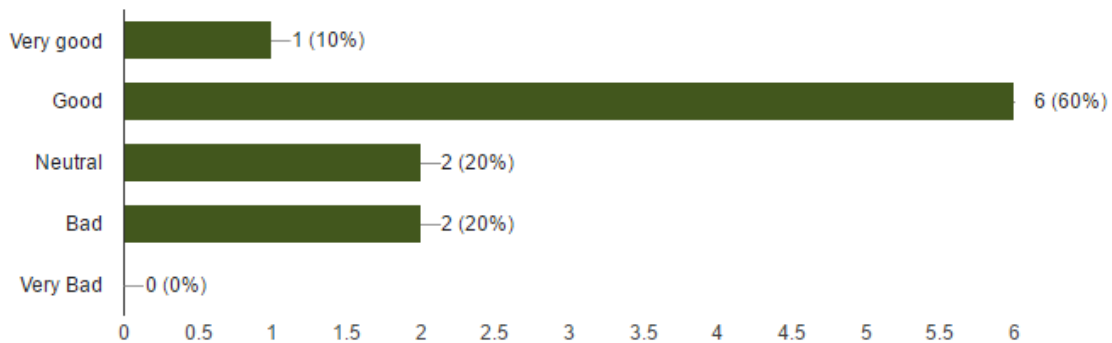
12. Has the university met your expectations? 13. Do you have any other thoughts or feelings that you would like to share? Are there any other questions that you wished you were asked or had answered before arriving?

Appendix G – Student Athlete Questionnaire (Post-Program)

1. What was your initial thoughts of mindfulness?
2. Did you find any benefits after the session? Yes No
3. If yes, how? If no, what could have helped to find benefits?
4. What did you like the most?
5. What did you like the least?
6. How can this program help you academically?
7. How can this program help you socially?
8. How can this program help you in your sport?
9. Final comments and feedback:

Appendix H – Graphs from Questionnaires

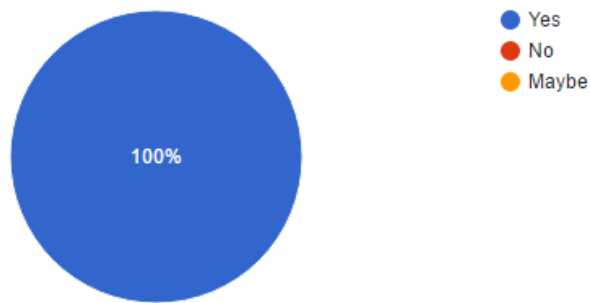
What were you initial thoughts of mindfulness? (10 responses)



What were your initial thoughts of mindfulness? (10 responses)

I believed it was extremely beneficial for student athletes. Student have to cope with a typical student's schedule, along with a D1 athlete's schedule. It is like having 2 full-time jobs, so being able to calm yourself down and control your stress is key.
Being aware of surroundings
I found it funny at first, but then began to enjoy what we were doing
Focus, Attention, active mind
I really enjoyed the sessions and found them beneficial
It was relaxing and made me think about my future
Unsure of its relevance to soccer
Thought it was like praying
No idea what it was
Focusing on breathing

Did you find any benefits after the session? (10 responses)



If yes, how? If no, what could have helped to find benefits? (10 responses)

I have done sessions like this before and I feel that the most important thing in it is focusing on your breath. When I need to relax or compose myself, like after making a mistake in a game, I take a few deep breathes and focus on them to regain my composure.

Being aware of my breathing and using that to control how I am feeling. Taking time to just sit down, relax, and focus on my surroundings and seeing how I am feeling is helpful for me in stressful times

Much more relaxed by the end of the session and motivated to handle whatever business I needed to take care of

I learned about strategies that will help me to focus on important tasks.

I felt more calm and relaxed after the session, being able to look back and see how much and how far I've come

I felt as if I could attack my problems with more calmness.

Provided an opportunity to be focused and give myself time to understand current feelings

Helps me understand what my body is telling me

Connect with other team members in a way that is not related to soccer

Remembering in stressful situations to come back to the breath and this helps to calm me down

What did you like the most? (10 responses)

I like the breathing exercises the most.

Opening up and sharing thoughts with teammates

Guided meditations

meditation

The little games were good as we were able to interact with one another and work as a team and have fun

The meditative parts

Visualizing skills that I will need in games

Giving myself time to slow down and understand information within my body

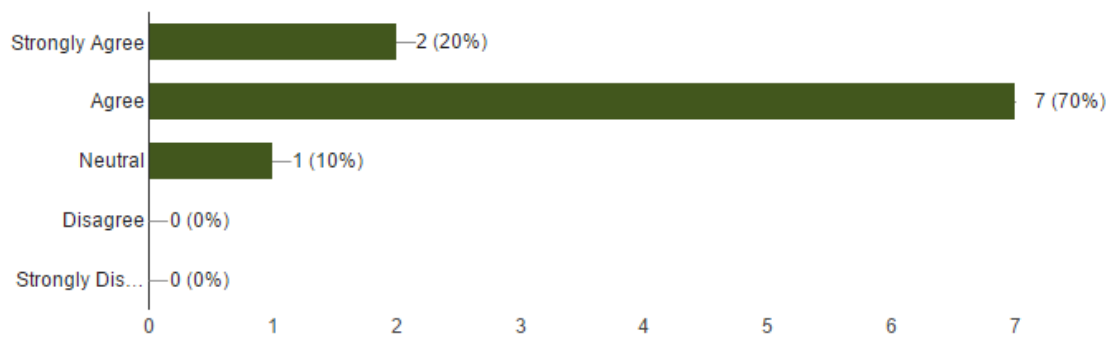
Discussing how we are managing the semester

Breathing techniques while meditating

What did you like the least? (8 responses)

Nothing
Nothing
I really can't think of anything. The exercises were beneficial and the conversations we had were as well, like when we talked about how things were going. I feel that with the small group that we had, especially since it was only freshman who are extra close to each other since we live together as well, it made it easy to really open up.
How long it was
I found the meditating fairly difficult because I'm not one who can sit still and my mind easily wanders
Check-ins. I don't see how that is related to mindfulness
Being isolated from the rest of the time
Meditating

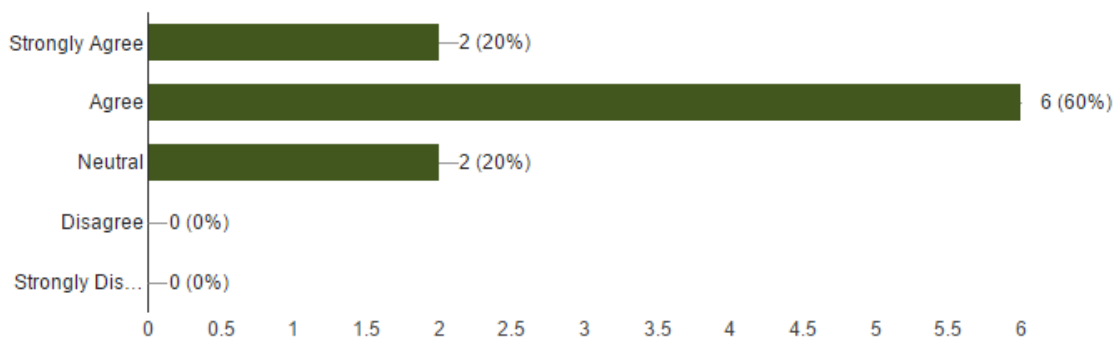
This program can help you academically? (10 responses)



How can this program help you academically? (10 responses)

When all you want to do is sleep or rest after a hard training, being mindful helps you get back on track and do your school work.
Relieve stress when I have tests and lots of homework
Keep me focused and not overwhelmed with all the work I have to do
It helps me to improve my study behaviors.
By going into classes and lectures in the correct state of mind. It also helps you reflect and become more calm but just looking over certain things you've done and realise there's no need to stress as long as you are prepared mentally and physically.
In all honesty I don't think it did
Focus before exams or papers and helps me remain in a calm state in a stressful moment
Not stress out over classes
Help me understand the content better
Keep me calm when I am stressed with work

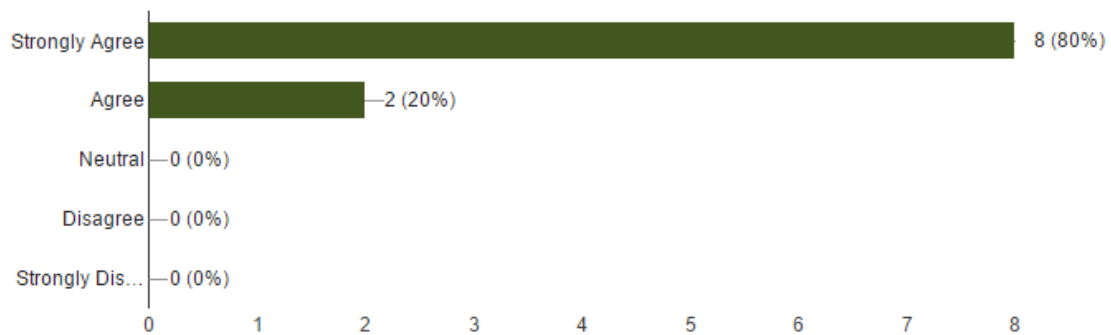
This program can help you socially? (10 responses)



How can this program help you socially? (10 responses)

Being less stressed makes you more open and relaxed, giving you more time to hang out and be social, rather than focus on the things stressing you out. Being stressed just makes you unpleasant to be around as well.
Open up to people more
Keeps a positive and happy mindset
Improve my social behavior maybe.
By being more open and easier to talk to. You will be more approachable and not as up tight and touchy so to speak.
Truly evaluate what you want from life
Be myself around others and not worry about outside factors
Be in a better mind-state when meeting new people
Build healthier relationships
Let go of school when I am with friends

This program can help you in your sport? (10 responses)



How can this program help you in your sport? (10 responses)

Like I said before, when making a mistake, it helps me regain composure. Before games it helps me focus. And during the week it helps me stay focused and unstressed.

Focus on my task and goals

Visualize what I need to do in training and in games to be a better player

It can help me to start every session with the right attitude and the right focus.

It can help you by being mentally ready for a game. If something bad happens during the game the sessions help you to keep your cool and just forget about what happened and carry on. Your team mates can often have a massive impact on you as well through their reaction and communication

Keep you mentally sharp and orientated on your goals

Intentionally picture myself and the skills I will perform vs. being the hero in a game when my position does not allow me to do this

Fully prepare my body for what it is physically going to encounter

Build better relationships with team members and in turn will create team chemistry

In intense settings I can remain calm and focused better

Final comments and feedback: (5 responses)

I want to continue sessions like this

I really enjoyed the sessions and thought they were extremely useful. I was never really into the psychological side of sport but doing these sessions has really opened my eyes to just how important it is. (Sorry for not filling out the first form!)

Enjoyable sessions

Great for team building

Good if we continue to practice

Appendix I – Transcript of Focus Group

Member 1

- Sessions need to be more often to see longer lasting results – enjoyed the two workshops; however, knowledge and practice of mindfulness was lost after a few days.
- Very good for self-reflection in all aspects of life – school work, social life, and soccer.

- Found it incredibly tough to settle in. Soccer pre-season is before the fall semester so it was very hard to get to know all the players on the team while feeling tired from practices and having to prepare for classes.
- Personally needs structure and consistency in life to do well. Having a mindfulness program can help create a structured environment; therefore, would like consistency with sessions.
- Preparation is very important. For example, “going to class after doing the homework or readings allows me to be prepared for what that class is going to be about. I feel much more comfortable in class. This is the same for my sport, if I know my role, what is expected of me in training sessions and game, I am more prepared and always play better.” This program offers clarity around expectations of both individual and team.

Member 2

- After the two workshops, viewpoint had changed. Became more focused on the present moment and what was actually happening vs. going through the motions and being swept away with other thoughts.
- An international student that found it very challenging to fit in with USD, the soccer team and found that this program would have helped relax and deal with the stress of meeting new people, being away from home, learning a new language etc. All of these factors influenced performance in a negative way.
- The whole team should have been present for the workshops as felt isolated from the other players.
- Found the visualization exercise very helpful as usually struggles with negative thoughts which cause unnecessary stress.

- Helped connect with other team members and hear where they are at in terms of college experience, mental state of mind, enjoyment of the sport, and feelings towards their social activities.
- Help clarify goals and intentions.

Member 3

- Continues to use breathing exercise in all areas of life when is feeling overwhelmed. It helps to slow down, listen to what the body is saying, and also motivates to overcome obstacles.
- Feeling more composure in stressful situations.
- Enjoyed having coaches present and them listening to what was being said.

Member 4

- First workshop was challenging because mindfulness was an unknown term. Also, was at a challenging point of the semester in terms of school work; however, feels this can be beneficial in all areas of life. Main priority is soccer, but this work will translate in to academics and social areas of life.
- Would like to have all members present and allow others to share their experience as a freshman which in turn can be a support system in itself. Just hearing others perspectives and knowing they have been through the same situation is very encouraging and inspiring to hear.
- Exercises were very good, but needs to be on a regular basis to ingrain into a daily routine