CONFIDENCE

Believe in yourself!
In soccer and life, any successful coach, player or person will tell you that one of the most important elements in reaching your potential is your level of self confidence.

When you have it you feel unstoppable. Just one goal or great play can spark your game and give you confidence to go on and achieve great results. This past weekend I witnessed the power of confidence whilst watching my own Son Tony in his U14 State Cup game. After starting the match on the bench, he came on to the field nervous and therefore gave away possession with his first few plays and then out of nowhere he scores a goal with a “Bike”. From then on he was like a completely different kid, shouting for the ball and winning tackles that he would normally not even go in for! After the game I’m talking to his Mom and she tells me “Yeah! He’s been taking my I phone into the backyard, watching you tube skills clips and trying to copy them”

When players are confident they can perform at their best level and it is very rare for successful players and people to have a persistent lack of confidence.

A player’s personal lifestyle will also affect their confidence. It is essential for players to have someone in their life to share their feelings with and someone who can help guide their journey and provide encouragement along the way.
What is Confidence?

To believe in yourself!

The belief and degree of certainty you possess about your ability to be successful.

Confident players and more likely to challenge themselves and stretch their potential.

Self confidence removes the feelings of fear and anxiety

Developing confidence is vital for withstanding and recovering from setbacks such as a defeat or a poor performance.

Confidence is a transferable Skill.

Even beyond the playing field the lifeskill of self confidence gained from playing soccer can be translated into better academic performance and better relationships with friends and family.
What Affects Your Confidence?

There are many factors both on and off the field which may affect your confidence level.

Your level of confidence will vary and losing confidence at times is going to happen such as after an injury, a poor performance or a coaching decision not to pick you. The key is to create a stable level of confidence that does not fluctuate too much based on your performance in your last game or the opinion of others. Stay focused on getting better and you will.

Believe in yourself.
Keeping the Faith

If on your journey through life and soccer you have already experienced disappointments or setbacks that’s good for you and you are not alone!

Here are a few examples of people who after disappointments could have lost confidence but kept focused and confident despite the opinion of others.

Thomas Edison

When Thomas Edison was 4 years old he came home with a note from his school teacher telling his mother that “he was too stupid to learn”

Beethoven

Beethoven’s music teacher told him that he was a hopeless composer!

Walt Disney

Was turned down by over 100 banks when he was trying to get funding to build Disneyland and was fired from his job in a newspaper for “Lacking Ideas”

Michael Jordan.

Michael Jordon was cut from his high school Basketball team! Michael Jordon Quote “I’ve failed, over and over again in my life that is why I succeed

Keep the Faith!
Break your belief barriers

Do you know the story of the four-minute mile? For hundreds of years, people held the belief that it was impossible for a human being to run the mile in less than four minutes. But in 1954, Roger Bannister broke this imposing belief barrier. He got himself to achieve the impossible not merely by physical practice but by constantly rehearsing the event in his mind.

Many people don’t realize, though, that the greatest aspect of his breakthrough was what it did for others.

It seemed no one would ever be able to break a four-minute mile, yet within one year of Roger’s breaking the barrier, 37 other runners also broke it. Did they train harder now, or where they more talented then? No, it was the belief that the feat could be done that empowered them.

His experience provided them with references strong enough to create a certainty that they too could “do the impossible” and the year after that, 300 other runners did the same thing!

When you experience a barrier that you are struggling to get over, there is more than likely someone else who has overcome what you are experiencing.

Find out about them and learn how they did it. Let it give you confidence that you are not alone and you too can break through your belief barriers.
Confidence in Soccer

All the top players perform with confidence, you can see it in the way they present and carry themselves. They know they are quality players and have the ability to do what is expected of them and more.

The Following is based on Bill Beswick’s work with top professional and international soccer players.

**Characteristics of players high in confidence**

1. High Self Belief – a real can do Attitude
2. Positive Image of themselves
3. Enjoyment & Fun – in training and games
4. No Worries – about losing or poor performance
5. Calm & Collected – under pressure
6. Don’t show off– no need to impress others
7. Accept themselves – recognize their strengths and weaknesses.
The Pirlo PK!

There a few greater examples of a player showing confidence in soccer than Andres Pirlo’s amazing penalty during the Italy v England quarter final of the 2012 European Championships.

With the two teams tied after extra time, the game was to be decided by penalty kicks and England were 2-1 ahead. Up stepped Pirlo showing tremendous poise under pressure he calmly chipped the ball over the diving Joe Hart into the center of the goal! Check it out on YouTube.

Not only did Pirlos genius penalty show incredible confidence it also provided a mental advantage for every kick that followed as Italy went on to win the game.
Growing Your Confidence

The confidence an individual player feels during training or games usually comes from one or more of the following six elements.

1. **Performance Accomplishments**

Your recollection of past successes are the strongest contributor to your confidence. Personal success breeds confidence while repeated failures diminish it. If you have done it before you can do it again. Trust your skills.

2. **Mental Imagery**

What you see is what you get! Visualize and mental rehearse your perfect game performance or correct technique in taking the shot, making the tackle, pass or save.

3. **Role Modeling**

Another way of building up confidence is to observe and imitate successful players. Watch professional players then go out and try to copy them in training or games.

Being involved with the success of others can bolster your confidence, especially if you believe that the player you are involved with (e.g. a team–mate) closely matches your abilities. If they can do it so can you!
4. Verbal Encouragement

Positive Self Talk – The most important conversation that you will have is with yourself! Ask yourself better questions.

Transform negative worries, or doubts such as “Can I?”, “What if I mess up?”

“I’m not sure if I’m good enough” into positive statements of certainty such as

“I can!” or “I’ll get the next one”

For example a common cause for young players lacking confidence is their perceived lack of playing time. When the coach announces you as not starting, you have two choices

Be Negative = You react with disappointment and self pity or

Be Positive = Your respond with determination saying “If I get in I’m going to work harder and play smarter then ever before, I will beat this feeling”. Even if you don’t play well, after a game rather than feeling sorry for yourself telling yourself

“ It’s no use he won’t play me” or “I’m going to quit” ask yourself “What positive actions can I take to get better this week?” and do it!

You need to think better and do things better to get better results.

5. Goal Setting

Plan and set short, medium and long term goals. Make your goals SMART Goals.
Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time framed.
6. Be Prepared & Committed

In School, when it comes to tests or exams which kids are the one’s that look nervous? Sure, those that haven’t put in the work and studied. In soccer if you have put in the work in training with your team and on your own and have successfully demostrated an ability to perform a skill then with confidence you can reproduce this performance in games.

**Be Confident..Be Humble**

You are the person that’s responsible for determining how confident you feel.

Stay positive and keep situations in perspective. One bad play does not make you a bad player! Don’t worry about mistakes or poor performance. Use mistakes or setbacks as an opportunity to improve your game instead of being too self critical, which will cripple your confidence. Learn back and look forward. Don’t focus too much on the past.

Determine what you need to work on. Concentrate on what positive actions you can take to improve the future, then have the responsibility and discipline to do it. If you do, your level of confidence will go up. You’ll feel better about yourself.

When you get momentum, you ride a massive wave of confidence and you feel great. Although, it is important to be confident, it is also important to be humble, keep your feet on the ground and don’t brag about how good you are. Instead, channel all your energies into simply training, playing and studying to the very best of your ability. Your confidence will build from a foundation of hard work.

Believe in Yourself!