

Case Study: a Polo player who is champion of training sessions but fails in a game

One of my first clients was a polo player who came to me for help. He reported to be the world champion of training sessions. Whether he played trainings chukkers or just stick n balled – he could hit the ball really well, felt great, could take the ball easily from one end to the other at high speed and finish off with a goal. Not so much in a game though. He told me that since a while now he doesn't seem to be able to hit a single straight ball, not to mention something fancy like tails or neck shots. He couldn't point out to what his issue was, so we went on to work.

First, we had to check, whether his problem was actually mental or if he lacked some technical skills. He assured me that his technical skills were fine and, being 3 goals, he was absolutely capable to hit all shots. What followed was a short anamnesis to get a clearer picture of what was going on.

We spoke a lot about game situations and what was happening there. Clearly there was something going on in this players mind, that changed the entire situation, from a friendly practice chukker to a game "that counts", that has meaning, consequences. What consequences where those though? And were those feared consequences in reality that big and frightening as they were in his head? The next question was, whether he could reprogram his thoughts and get the fear of failing out of his system and change it to a rather positive feeling, such as excitement to be able to compete.

There are different pillars that we worked on. Amongst those was the fear of failure, the negative self talk that started right after a couple of failed shots and the answer to a detoriating performance during a game: master your A, B and C game and use it to build up your confidence again.

This polo player needed several sessions to shift his mind around but successfully got see a game or tournament now as an exciting opportunity to show the world his skills. Together with his polo coach he benchmarked his A, B and C game and is able now to shift between them, whenever needed. He doesn't gate fazed or discouraged about missed shots any longer and as he told me, just laughed off a penalty 2 he spectacularly missed.

Please note: the entire coaching process is represented in a shortened version. The entire coaching process to get to the root of the issue and change thought pattern took several sessions.



Kristin studied Economics in Germany and Italy and majored in Marketing and Global Management. She found her passion for mental coaching after having spent a year in Argentina, playing Polo. Right now she is the number 1 Mental Game Coach in the field of Polo. On her webpage, Kristin regularly conducts surveys with Polo players from different levels and collects statistics about conversion rates in Polo. She regularly publishes her findings in magazines such as Polo+10, Polo Lady Magazine or US Polo Magazine. Her advice and coaching techniques are highly sought-after by both, professionals as well as amateurs. Kristin is a Level I IMGCA Certified Mental Game Instructor, certified by the International Mental Game Coaching Association, USA and a Sports Mental Trainer, certified by the ZFU in Germany. She undergoes permanent training to gain new knowledge about the latest state-of-the-art techniques in the field of mental training.