

# Athlete Leadership: Honing Your Approach As A Top-Level Competitor



## Issue 5: Responding To Mistakes

During competition, an athlete will deal with many factors both positive and negative, from the euphoria of scoring a goal / winning a game, to the stresses and distractions of making a mistake. The best soccer players in the world, make mistakes just like the rest of us, however, they respond positively to their mistakes just about every time. Those players who are able to condition their mind through mental skills and techniques will have greater success in controlling their situations, which ultimately, allows them to execute their sporting goals more effectively.

Mistakes during competition are going to happen. Here are 3 R's that players can use, as a mental tool to help them positively move on from a negative situation.

### Recognize

Recognize what it is that has happened to create “**The Situation**”. There is usually a short window to regain focus before you need to be ready to play. Take the information from your coach, or self-correct the mistake or situation in your mind.

### Regroup

- **Take A Deep Breath**: This helps players to move from being stressed to being engaged in activity
- **Tense and Release Muscles**: Helps to remove any tension that may have accompanied the stress of the situation.
- **Identify What's Important Now (W.I.N)**: Where does your focus need to be to get back in the game?

### Refocus

Use a Trigger Word or Body Movement to solidify your focus and lock into your intentions for the next moment. e.g. ‘Focus’, ‘Relax’, ‘Play Your Game’

## Key Points to Handling a Mistake:

1. **Don't beat yourself up for one mistake.** Get on with it. Understand that mistakes happen to players of all levels.
2. **React positive!** You can't change the past, it's impossible. Once the mistake happens you can't change it. Don't waste your time being negative and letting one mistake turn into two or three.
3. **Forget about it!** Don't dwell on mistakes too long! Learn from them, forget about them and get ready for the next play!

*Game Reality – Mistakes happen all the time.*

*Goals are scored more through mistakes than through great play. Even At The Very Top Level.*