

Three Point Mentality

By: Linden Moore

The 2016 NBA Developmental League All Star weekend, part of NBA's high-profiled All-Star weekend was yet another success. Fans took in a series of events, including the Three Point contest an event where they were treated to a showdown between six of the D-League's sharpest shooters who came together to put their long range to the test.

The contest was one to remember, especially for Los Angeles D-Fenders guard Andre Ingram who completed 39 of 50 shots that won him the contest. In addition to the score that set not only and NBA D-League record but an NBA record as well.

"This score has beaten the likes of Larry Bird, Steph Curry and every NBA all time great shooters that have entered this context. By implementing this routine he has been more focused, relaxed and locked into his task at hand," said Los Angeles Sports psychologist Roger Kirtz.

While his accuracy was spot on for most of the evening, he attributes his success to his mental confidence.

"Like I said before I just let it fly, not think about it too much," Ingram said in the post-contest interview.

Training to not overthink a situation takes practice; just as training to shoot the ball fifty times takes practice, so does believing in one's individual ability.

Kirtz has been working with Ingram for about five and a half years, building his mental confidence to enhance his success on the court.

"The most important thing that I implement to my clients is an understanding of how your thoughts control your actions; there is a mental aspect to training for competing which is greatly misunderstood," Kirtz said.

This is an important part of the game that many athletes may not be aware of, and Ingram and Kirtz have been working together on pre-game routine to get him in the right mindset.

"This year we implemented a pre-game mental routine which consists of specific journaling, a relaxation breathing technique and visualization. This 10 minute routine clears the mind from distracting or negative thoughts, adds specific focus and goals, reduces heart rate to manage nerves and adds an inner monologue to control the physical actions about to take place," the Los Angeles-based instructor explained.

However, his shooting remains the same.

"Really his shooting is the same, but his mental routine has kept him focused throughout the game and Three Point contest in Toronto where he won the trophy and set a D-league AND an NBA record of 39 of 50 balls," Kirtz added.

Ingram is just one example of how the mental confidence can translate to one's performance in their chosen sport.

“Mental confidence is knowing that you have a process that you can rely on to deliver a singularly focused, relaxed performance over and over again,” Kirtz said. The value in understanding and utilizing mental skills training is the ability to use your mind to control your performance at its optimal ability. Without it, you're at the mercy of an untrained mind.”



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Ingram hoisting the Three Point Contest trophy after setting an NBA D-League record and NBA record as well at All Star weekend. (Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Lakers).