

Are you committed?

Here are some of the attacks against your commitments; pressure thoughts about needing to win or fearing to lose, awareness of others' expectations, other competitors' gamesmanship, injuries, nets and edges, poor lighting and slick floors. None of the issues would matter as much to you if you weren't striving to be something greater. However the higher your game elevates, the greater the potential for distractions that can suck the commitment right out of you like a mental game undertow. The good news is that nothing can happen in your competition that can unseat you from your game, unless you let it.

Turn everything to your advantage.

After a demanding match, most competitors can tell you what they would have done better or differently. Often they can do this immediately following the competition. Curiously few players can step back from the action, while it is occurring, in order to resolve whatever is challenging them. The first step to turning any situation to your advantage is to take at least 30 seconds to ask yourself, "What is happening here, and what do I intend to do about it"? Under stress most Table Tennis Players mental processes pick up speed. You have to discipline yourself to do the opposite. Take time, make space, step back and do some self inquiry. It will save more of your games than you can believe.

You have to expect people to act differently at pressured events, total commitment means that you do not take anything that happens in competition personally. In table tennis, as in life, you have to have confidence in your own game. You know where your focus has to be. Get your attention only on the game. By the time the competition ends none of that stuff will matter, unless you are looking for excuses.

Everything that happens in table tennis competition is practice for what happens next. Committed table tennis players are learning machines. Wimpy table tennis players get hung up on problems and mistakes and never move forward. Committed players can lose a tough match, get up, assess what happened, and then put the new learning into play. All table tennis competition moves them forward. Believe it or not committed table tennis players are proud that they showed up for the competition; they do not sweat what other think of them.

Remember there are only three things that you can control: what you think, what you visualize, what you do. You can not do anything about the points you have already played. You can not do anything about your history of performance in pressure situations. You cannot do anything about the score to this point. You have to forget all of that, other than whatever learning you have gained about how to play the shot, and go for it. Have a plan for a strong mental game and work your plan. Keep positive thoughts, they become words and follow you like your shadow.