

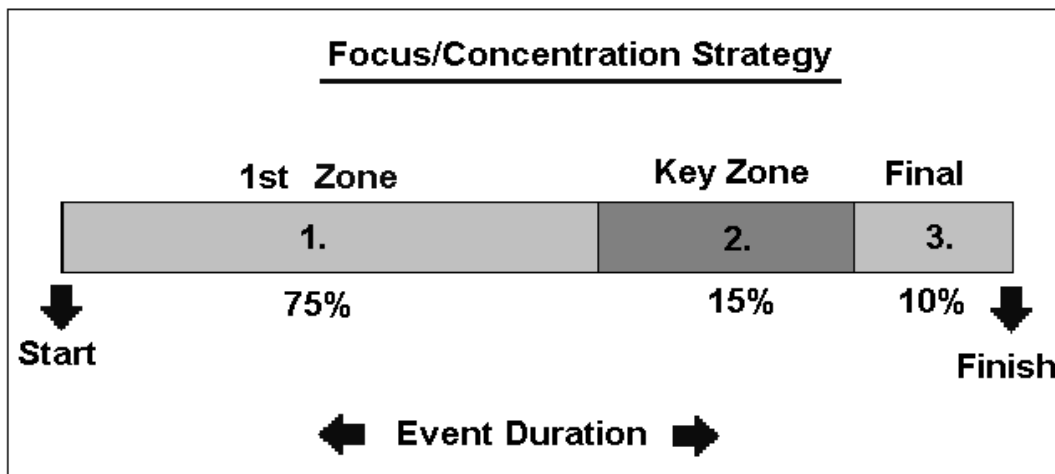
Coaches Corner Part II ~ John Magee, Assistant Coach

This excerpt, with my own added comments, is taken from Bobby Magee's presentation for the USAT Coaches Training in Chula Vista, which I attended this year. I thought it would be relevant for those doing Oceanside.

For any race, a course map is always available online which you could use to build your own mental plan (shown in the example below) as a part of your own pre-race planning.

In essence, Bobby Magee talked about the fact that 90% of all athletes **underperform** in a race. Almost all of them externalize the blame... "The course was windy"; "It was hot", etc. But, if we are brutally honest with ourselves, we would recognize that it is a mental breakdown on the part of the athlete.

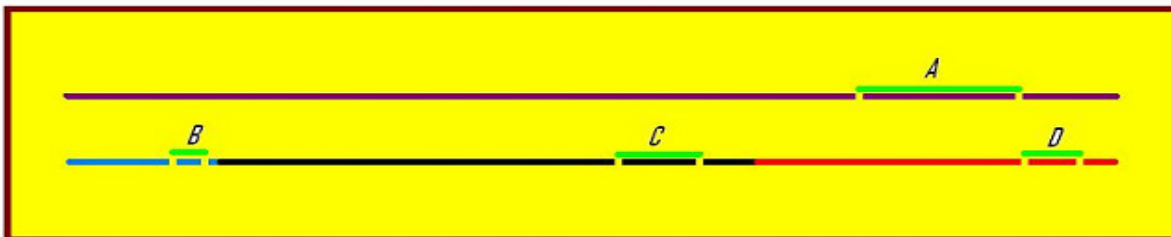
He introduced the idea of a **Focus or Concentration Strategy** and stated that essentially, there is a **KEY ZONE** in the race where athletes often "misplace" their focus. Most athletes focus well at the beginning and at the end, but the key area is the **start of that last quarter**. (Refer to the diagram below.)



He recommends you divide the race into zones – look at the chart below (which is organized for an Olympic distance race.) For a three hour race, extra effort has to go into focus for about 27 minutes.

THE CONCENTRATION ZONE--When Extra Effort Needs to go into Focus

Example: 3 Hour Olympic Distance



- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A The Overall Race Concentration Zone | 3Hours Total = 27min |
| B The Swim Concentration Zone | 30 Minute Swim = 4.5 min |
| C The Bike Concentration Zone | 90min Bike = 13.5min |
| D The Run Concentration Zone | 60min Run = 9min |

So what does this mental focus entail? Well, Pete has brought up many of these ideas before at different times. Bobby organized it as shown below:

Self Confidence – like any discipline self-confidence has to be practiced over time

- ⊙ Sincere belief in ability to succeed AND the ability to perform
- ⊙ Display Self Confident behavior
 - Think, Feel, Talk, Body Language
- ⊙ Dealing with doubt, fear & anxiety

The Contents of Mental Plan

- ⊙ Self talk – all of our feelings about ourselves stem from the thoughts we are having – if we have repetitive negative thoughts, we will feel negative.
- ⊙ Imagery – visualize yourself going through the physical process of the race
- ⊙ Attentional Focus – this is the ability to maintain focus over a long period of time and also the ability to narrow or broaden your focus based on environmental cues – road hazards, weather condition changes etc
- ⊙ Competition goals & targets
- ⊙ Energy management

Mental Strategies

- ⊙ Mental Map on actual Course Map – see example below – this is not something you are going to carry with you ☺
- ⊙ Prepared & Practiced Self Talk
- ⊙ Speak to Yourself in 2nd Person
- ⊙ Have Cues to Elicit Pre-set Strategies
- ⊙ Mental Strategies for the Unforeseen



The advantages of developing a routine of mental preparation:

1. Attain appropriate energy level
2. Attain appropriate focus
3. Rehearse competition strategy
4. Build self confidence
5. Develop competition focus & refocusing plan
6. Prepare for distractions & the unexpected
7. Handle discomfort, fatigue & frustration
8. Keep on Task