Compete Like A Champion - Player Lessons Learned

Hi, I'm Steven Huss, women's national coach for USTAPD and you are listening to Compete Like A Champion.

J: Welcome to the Compete Like a Champion podcast. You are here with Dr. Larry Lauer, mental skills specialist and coach Johnny Parks with USTA Player Development. Today we have got a special guest and coach Mark Lerman, part of the performance team mental skills specialist, and S&C assistant coach out of our center in New York. Mark, thanks for joining.

M: Thank you for having me.

J: Yeah, we have had you on before and had a great podcast with Dr. Bob Neff as well and talking through some mental skills elements. Today we thought we would utilize the fact that you are in Orlando for some camps we've got going on and go through some reflections from the US Open.

M: Sounds great.

L: We had a great three weeks at the Open. A lot of things were happening there and a lot of good matches. A lot of long matches. And very competitive ones, but I thought maybe we could use this podcast to reflect on some of the lessons we gained from the Open and how that might apply to our audience.

J: Absolutely. And there is so much going on there and I know, internally, as a staff we had some coaching events and obviously so much going on with the juniors and the pros.

L: Right, even the qualis week this Open, there was a large attendance of people there, right. There was something going on and they tried to make the qualis weekend event as well. So it really is a three-week event. It is not just qualis as kind of a lead-up. It really is, you're on for 3 weeks.

J: Yeah, I mean it was pretty cool. We have the 5th annual coaches symposium with various stakeholders that help us execute the camps and also coaches and players that have come to camps and things like that. And so we put on programming for them and talk about elements in the morning. You came over and talked about resiliency and adversity and we had Steven Husk come in to talk about the transition game and some numbers to that and put some videos. It was really cool. And then the afternoon they all go and watch matches and go an support all the US players and then we bring them back in to talk about what we saw. So, it was really cool connecting with all those coaches. But as you say, let's talk about a lot of the reflections we saw, because I know both of you, Larry and Mark, have sent emails about some of the things you saw. So maybe that would be a good place to starts.

M: Sure, I was focused more on the juniors playing the US Open and some of the great things I saw with the players that went deepest into the draw was a tremendous degree of professionalism in all aspects, from spending time with their physical warm-ups and cool-downs. Spending time preparing mentally in whatever way they did that on a personal level.
And then being open to reflecting about their day with the variety of coaches were in their circle. So, the professionalism was really something that stood out with, again, the players that went deepest into the draw.

L: I think I saw the same thing, Mark. I think one of the things you look for is, does a person have a consisted way of getting ready or do they change because it is a big event. We see that mistake often. We see it in Olympics too that athletes change because it is a big event. Mark, what did you see? Did you see a consistency about the work that players were putting in? Or were you seeing randomness or people changing things when they get to the Open?

M: I absolutely see randomness and some changing of things when they get to the Open, but again, the players that had the best results, and we try not to talk about results too often, but that is a measure of success, there was absolutely consistency.

L: Well, we always talk about the results or a function of the process, right. You can't ever get the results without following some form of process, so this supports that. What kind of engagement were you seeing from those players, who were doing well? Let's say in the gym, because obviously, you are a strength and conditioning coach and mental coach. What kind of engagement were you seeing so they were in there, but were there differences also when they were in there.

M: Oh, for sure. Just in terms of socialization. There is a lot of socializing going on. There's a ton of people around. Plenty of distractions and the players that we're talking about when they were in the gym attending to their needs were all business. They were taking care of what they need to take care of despite of what might have going on around them as distracting as it might have been.

L: Yeah there was a video. I think, Johnny, you just watched the Rafa video, right?

J: Ah, awesome video. I was just about to bring that up.

L: Yeah, bring that up!

J: So Larry sent us all this video. I think it was from Eurosport channel or whatever and they were just showing the whole Rafa warm up routine.

L: Actually, US Open NOW. We better get that right.

J: US Open NOW! Sorry, my bad.

L: We better give credit where it's due.

J: So with US Open NOW, the footage shows all the intricate details of his routine. But what was amazing, like he had wall sits 45 seconds, and he did six of them intermixed with other things he was doing whether it was shuffling... Eyes were locked in like he was ready to go out and fight. A boxing fight. He was ready to go, ready to rumble. But the commentators who were watching this and talking about it, they were just in amazement of the level of intensity. And it was like, well, there is Cilic over there, who's about to play, who's kind of on
the bike just rolling, doing some leg swings and Rafa is there, like, looking like he wants to kill someone. That level of intensity, focus. And at one point he closes his eyes during the wall sits the commentators are going, "Well, what's he doing there? What do you think he's doing? Maybe he is doing some visualization." So he's like closing his eyes and going through some things maybe, but the pure level of intensity was just off the charts.

L: And then he did some shadow strokes and he wasn't just, you know, you see some of the juniors do like, "Yeah, I'm doing it, but I'm not really doing it." I mean, it was intense. His feet were moving. He asked people to clear out of the way, because he was going at it. He was visualizing a ball being there and him hitting it. Clearly, because he was going after it. It was a really cool video of the professionalism. I mean, if you want to separate yourself from the group, from everyone else. There is another level you have to get to.

J: And the other thing he was doing was bands, right. So I'm that guy that sits there and I'm going to count. So, he does his routine and he's doing it fast, but he's in strong athletic position. He looks really engaged into actually doing the band work. You don't see that often, but the engagement was just really cool. And he did 16 on each arm. Whatever the exercise was, he always did 16. So, it was very methodical. I mean you can tell he's methodical.

L: That's not surprising.

J: Every time he puts his water bottle down on the court, it has to be facing the right way. It has to be on the right spot. You know, people zone in on that and he's often taking 10 seconds to actually get his water bottle in the right position. But it is those levels of details with someone like that. He's obviously built that over long periods of time, but he needs that to function well probably at this point. Almost like it's a level of OCD or it is a level of.. maybe he doesn't want to jinx himself. I don't know.

L: Well, he does talk about that fear that someone could beat if he doesn't do everything he can to be ready and I think that's a function of uncle Tony and the philosophy of.. When he came out as a pro player and Roger was number 1, uncle Tony said you have to respect Roger and you always have to respect the rest of the field. So I think there is a level that.. So, he's not going to change his preparation based on who it is. Mark, you're a native to New York and you live, I won't say where you live, here's his address. If you have any complaints. But uh, tell us a little bit about the New York environment at the Open and why maybe, you know, there was a podcast done by Becker and Wilander, and McEnroe and Lendl. They were talking about how New York is one of the tougher ones to compete in because of the environment. You live there and work there every day, what does that environment, maybe give our audience a better understanding of what our players are dealing with when they are at the Open.

M: Well, before I answer that I wanted to just address a Rafa experience. It's about three years ago when I brought a group of young juniors, that do train with us in New York on a consistent basis, during quali week and we got to go watch Rafa practice. They were blown away by his level of intensity in practice. Every ball he hit, every routine that he engaged in was very match-like. Match-speed, match-focus. There was really no difference to the observer and the kids really picked up on that and that actually made them understand why we practice what we practice. And it speaks to what you were talking about in that video, he
trains as if he is competing and there is no difference in his mind, I think, from based on my observations.

So, the environment in New York is intense to say the least. I mean, the song says it all, if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. And there is a reason for that. It's a tough city; it's a very tough city. And the fans in New York for US players will get behind you no matter what, but it can be loud, it can be rockous. There is no shortage of people watching matches.

L: Ask Medvedev, right?

M: Exactly.

L: He addressed it at the end, didn't he?

M: He did address it.

J: At least he embraced it.

L: Eventually, he embraced it. Well, he embrace it the first too when they were booing him.

M: He even took ownership of that. That was pretty open to do. That was a pretty impressive sign of his willingness to give it his all. To leave it all out there. So, in New York there are a lot of voices, we'll say voices. Everybody comes out, right, it's a hometown match. So when players are playing there, they tend to get a lot of support, family support, friend support and industry support. So there's a lot of voices in these players' ears constantly giving advice, whether it is solicited or not, and sharing ideas and telling stories and the players really just want to compete to the best of their abilities and often there's a hard time managing all of those distractions on top the intensity that the fans bring. So, how to manage that.. Well, we try to keep things as normal as possible. We practice routines in every aspect going back to what we were just talking about with Rafa. Going to the gym and doing what he does. He doesn't just do that at slams, that's how he trains, that's how prepares before he plays. Keeping things as normal as possible. We try to instill that into our athletes also. From the young athletes all the way through to the professionals. Let's do the same things consistently to the best of our abilities with the purpose of reaching our optimal performance state. By doing that on and off the court, we are guiding our players into a position where they can perform at that level and have a better chance at managing those distractions.

M: Yeah, one of those distractions are the fans, right? And the amount of involvement, especially as it gets into the night matches, right? But, let's talk about the juniors because that relates better to our audience overall. The juniors also deal with some of those things. We see matches where there are not a lot of people and they are playing in a larger venue than they are used to and it's very empty, and then people come rushing in after another match. We watched a semi-final with one of the players and after Serena and Andreescu ended, it was like a wave of fans. They want to watch tennis. They come to the Open, they don't care who it is, they're going to watch juniors, pros, anybody and there was a wave. How do players deal, sort of, with that dynamic where you're not ready for it and suddenly there's a distraction that you couldn't prepare for?
M: Yeah, talking with some of the players, it really depends on where they are in their match. If it is early on in the match, it's often a distraction and they become very aware of it. If they are deeper into the match and they are really locked in, some have expressed that they don't even notice it. Others did notice it and used it as a form of motivation. These people are here to see me. That's cool, I like this. I want to do more of this. And then it actually helps them to lock in. Other players, if things aren't going well especially, can often find it distracting and it becomes an excuse for why they didn't play well as opposed to taking ownership of their performance and doing the things they can and getting back to the simple things that they do well:

J: And the thing at the end of the day, they have to get comfortable with, if they are trying to make to a higher level, you have to get comfortable with those things. You know, so even if that is part of the reason... let's say they let it become a distraction with how they ended up playing, as long as they are not using that as an excuse for losing other than that this is a learning opportunity, right? Because I have got to get used to this. This is my first experience with this so if I'm in the same position next year or even later on this year or in other tournaments than this is just another data point, collection of data, collection of information about what I am exposed to. How I can learn from how I dealt with it and then how I can deal with it better moving forward. So even if it may not have been super productive from a results standpoint because they almost let it become a distraction, it something that can serve really well for the long term.

M: I think that is a really good point because the first time we are exposed to anything it can be uncomfortable and we may have a hard time focusing on what it is that our intention was. But second time around, third time around, the expectations are more realistic. As coaches, we can talk about what to expect but until our players actually experience it, it's pretty tough to paint that picture. New York is so big, it's so overwhelming. It has got to be experienced.

L: And it's all relative because if you're a 13-year-old and you're playing a national event or something and you have a lot of family show up.

J: That is the US Open.

L: It is their US Open experiences in terms of physiologically and psychologically is similar. It is similar. It could be the fighter flight, the rush of adrenaline, all these things, so just because we talk about the Open and the Grand Slams, junior players experience the same feelings in an environment. For them, that's a great challenge.

J: Yeah, absolutely. Kind of relating that back to we talked about with the warm-ups, you often get to these tournaments on the junior side, depending on the facility you're at, whether you can get access to practice courts or not, do you as a junior athlete let the fact that you can't get on a practice court for 30 minute deter you away for having to go through you're warm-up routine or are you that type of player that goes and finds a wall or go and ask another person to do some volley-volleys with you on a grass area. Are you that person that removes yourself a little bit in order to make sure that they're getting their warm-ups in. And that doesn't change from facility to facility. You've got to find somewhere that you can keep the constant, remain the constant being, how they are doing their warm-ups, how are
they getting engaged before they step on court. You see that a lot and you come off and you get kids that are like, "Well, I didn't start that match very well, because I couldn't get my warm-up in." Well, you couldn't or you just wouldn't, because you didn't have the ideal comfortable surroundings for you. You've got to go and find it, you have got to go and figure out how you can best prepare and keep those constants remaining.

M: Oh for sure, having the opportunity to travel to some of these tournaments and connect with players and observe them, that conversation becomes very real and when they are confronted with it, they often don't like that, because now they are being held accountable.

L: Being held accountable is so hard and I'm a bit facetious but it's true and, you know, I think part of this when you're under stress and you have this fighter flighter freeze response when you have something that comes up. Like when you don't have the facilities, you feel like you don't have what you need, it's very easy to freeze. And I think we need to communicate that to our young players that it's a natural function actually to just really almost stop moving and sit there and just wait. We see it all the time, but that's not the best way to go about it. That's that freeze response. The very thing you need is to get up and moving. Try to do things as normally as you can and then be adaptive if it's not you're normal. But going back to an environment like New York, when you look at that environment and you have family and friends coming in, one of the things we have to do, Mark, is we have to explain to the players how they create expectations for their family and their friends before they show up, right? About what it is going to look like on site, what the routines are going to be like and be willing to stick to those routines, even though maybe family and friends want to do something different.

M: 100%. And that requires a variety of things to happen, right. It requires communication skills, the player taking ownership of their tennis and being able to communicate that with their family. I need to do this, or we shouldn't go there to eat. The options aren't really what I need or I need to be on site by 7 AM and if it is okay with you guys, I would like to go by myself and I'll meet you there later. Those are the conversations that are really important, because it could attend to those details.

L: And take ownership like we were talking about.

M: So that is a message to the parents listening. Ask your son or daughter when they are going to a tournament, what is it you normally do if you are not going anymore, maybe they are an older team, maybe they have a coach that travels with them some. Ask them what they do and try to be understanding that they do this because they feel this is the best way for them to get ready to play. And that's the priority for going on this trip, I suppose, so why would you not follow into the routine that they need versus you being entertained or doing what you want to do. So, I think we sometimes forget that as adults, because we usually make the decisions, but truly when a young athlete figures out what gets them ready to play, we as the adults need to make sure that we are listening to them and actually falling into their routines versus changing them. It's so easy to change them up. I mean, even us as a staff coming in, you know, we have to be careful that we don't mess up their routines that they have been doing throughout the year.

J: Yeah, Absolutely. And that is where you see a lot of that at the junior tournaments too. Are we making choices out of convenience or do we make choice that really are in the best
interest and how we do that. Not that the intentions aren't there, but the environment can dictate our choices sometimes and we have got to try our best to make sure we are not making the wrong choices based off convenience. I know sometimes you have to take that into account and sometimes there's just not everything you need.

L: Even like a cooldown if you're at the match letting the player go for a jog, do a cooldown, stretch before you intervene, because a player needs that to come down emotionally. They need that time and actually that is one of the best times for the player to actually to start to process and reflect and deal with what's in there, right? On a pro level, the pros have their physios and strength coaches, their coaches. They have people they confide in and they spend time with after matches and mark is a part of that team. he's been in those situations a lot. It doesn't look the same on the junior level to small events, but we still need to find ways to help the kids keep these routines or develop these routines so that they can begin to focus more on the process of getting better, than "Oh my gosh, I won a big match, so I don't cool down" or "Oh my gosh, I lost so I need to have an hour lecture." No what we need to do is follow your routine and I know Mark is all about this.

M: Thinking about a conversation I had about a half hour ago with a young athlete and we talk about behavior change. Essentially that's where we are talking about following routines and we’ve talked before about behavior change occurring in one of two different scenarios. One, it has to occur or somebody wants it to occur. This young athlete was spending significantly more time warming up and then cooling down than the group that this person is training with. We got to talking and she said, "Well, I've been really badly injured a couple of times and I've learned that I need to treat my body in a certain way that I don't get injured again, because I want to keep playing this game. I love this game and that's something that I have to do." Unfortunately, it came through an injury, but it speaks to that behavior change.

L: And some people don't get that though, so that's good on that player, right, that that person would value that and make that decision, because you have to value something and make the choice before it becomes a habit, I believe. It has to be more important than other things. More important than the immediate gratification of going and hanging out with your friends or watching other matches. Powerful enough to overcome the influence of others, like - ah, come and you can leave. Let's get out of here. It's been a long day -, well, I still have my 30 minutes that I need to do the things I do after all my matches. It's a challenge for sure, but I think we all have a role in supporting the players to do these things.

J: For sure! Let's switch focus and talk about some motivations we had on court with players at the open. So, I was fortunate enough this year to help Dave Ramos out, a performance analytics guy. Dartfish Dave, do all the filming. We were recording super slow motions for technical analysis. Also, recording the players’ full games out, recording what they are doing at the change events. It was really interesting watching tennis through a lens as opposed to watching as a spectator. So, the things that I really learned were some of the things we always talk about. What do you do when you're serving. You have those less than 20 seconds in between points and what are you doing at the minute and a half change over. Are you that player that sits back looking around in the crowd, looking up at the screens that are pulling up all these little stats or they're in their sort of.. They may be focused, they may be not. They certainly maybe don't look focused all of the time, but you can't get it to gauge there and then you've got some of those athletes that are like staring at a point out on the
court across from them and their legs twitching and they sort of have that level of intensity. I'm twitching my leg right now.

L: His leg is going a 100 miles an hour.

J: Starting at Mick's badge right now.

L: His pecs I think... Oh man, not that picture.

J: Yeah, so I'm interested to see what you're thoughts are, because it was very interesting. We recorded so many different athletes and saw so many different things going on. Which athletes kept their routines when they were winning and when they were losing points. Which ones let routines just disappear? What were they doing at the change events? Were they using it as a time to prepare for the next few games or were they using it as a time to drown their sorrows from the previous two. So, it was really eye-opening to see that. It was such a mixed bag in there. I'm not sure whether you can actually define a point of right and wrong in some, because Rafa's level of intensity is a lot higher than, let's say Roger's, but then they can both come out and play with a high level of intensity. They're older and been through a lot more and they have different personalities, but what did you guys see on the court.

M: Well, start with a positive. Overall, again on the junior side, that's all I really was observing.. Attitudes and behavior were truly remarkable. Tremendous improvement from a year ago and even from the smaller tournaments that I've seen throughout the year and given the big stage, it was pretty remarkable, again, to use that word, that attitude and behavior was really positive and professional. There was a lot more use in-between-point routines, which is terrific, because that is something that has been stressed at all levels through junior tennis. And there were some areas, that, within that, were good. Others can be improved. the first area in between points was, how is someone initially responding to a point. And that is where we see an improvement in behavior. Initially, it is just a posture correction. Pulling the shoulders back, walking with more of a purpose and having an intent to the next actions. The area where we can see some more improvement, and this actually goes through the pro level as well, is recovering and using deep breathing as the tool it's intended to be to, not only bring the heart rate down, but also to quiet the mind even a little bit to be able to get some clarity of thought for the next stage in terms of refocusing and getting back to what the plan is and playing with a purpose and belief. Larry, do you have any thoughts on that?

L: No, 100% agree with that mark. I think that the players, again, who were performing well and getting deeper into the draw were very composed for the most part and one of the things I was talking about to some of our players here at the camps in Orlando, don't let how you play determine how you go about your business, right. And that happens too much at all levels that... Okay, I'm playing poorly, so therefore, I'm going to react and not follow my routines. We understand that's normal human behavior, but trying to win at this level, you're asking for the abnormal, right. You're asking for people to stay composed in this environment we've talked about with a lot of stress, a lot of pressure, but if you train for it, you can do it, but you've got to get into your routines. You have to be willing to stay in your routines, even though every part of your fiber wants to scream out, throw a racket, yell, give in, but these are the challenges that players face, right. And how are they going to deal with
that. Well, at times they deal with it very well and other times they struggle with it, but again, as Mark is suggesting, if you're getting into the start of your routine, good posture, managing your response to the point and then getting into some recovery breathing, you can find most things aren't that bad. You can recover from almost anything in a tennis match, really probably anything. But finding that clarity, there has to be a systematic to get there, because the emotions of the situation, because stress takes emotions and just puts them on fire, will hijack your mind, will take over.

M: One of the things that I think supports that is an observation that we spoke about during the US Open observing matches and something that I have noticed for a while, but it just became really clear at the Open is that we are seeing players get caught up in what they didn't like about previous points and starting to shadow the wrong swing, shadowing what was wrong. My belief is that they are trying to find out what went wrong, which I think is a good thing, but they are stopping at that point and not showing the correction. So I am seeing a shadow of the incorrect swing or what they believe was incorrect or didn't feel good or whatever the case may be. But I think where we can improve is taking that to the next step and having the players then make the correction and shadow the correction a lot like Rafa would do at match-speed, that full speed with intensity and then that is the last thing that remember before they step back up to the line getting ready to play.

J: There is not much point in reliving the wrong execution or the way that you felt like you did it wrong. You may as well look forward, and say, "Well, okay, I know I did this or I think I did this so I am just going to shadow what I want to do." Because they probably got more good reps in when they have been on the practice courts than bad reps and that was one bad rep they hit. They are not going to hit a bad rep every time of whatever shot they hit, so replicate the good hit, because that is what you know and that is what you want to do, so there is no point in dwelling and reliving it for those five seconds that they are doing it. But I thought that was an awesome observation, because that is not something that I picked up on a lot, but that happens a lot.

L: I think it's... We talk to players all the time about focusing on the next positive action. What you will do. It goes for your visualization, for your shadow strokes, for your self-talk, for everything. Because we want you to end up to committing to some positive action and when they finish with the inappropriate technique or just acting like they shanked it again. Not only, and Mark and I talked about this, their mind might be on the technical which isn't necessary performance enhancing, but also on the wrong action and everybody has done the pink elephant test right. Don't think about the pink elephant and what comes true, Mick right now is seeing a pink elephant. Always. So your brain doesn't compute the don't or the no, it computes action and so if you say don't double fault, your mind goes to seeing the ball hit the net or double faulting, right. So that's through our, whether it is shadow strokes or visualization, which is very closely connected to the shadow strokes and self-talk. As a coach or a parent really working with the players to focus on the next action. What benefit is there in just finding the blame, like why did you do that. What's wrong with you? And I've actually asked this question to the players, do you really have to fix everything that does not happen the way you want on court. And they are like, "Yes", I am like, "No, you don't."

Because guess what, you can do everything perfectly, and still miss. You can still lose the point. That is tennis. Tennis is not a perfect sport, okay? So we are not going for a 10.0 from the judges. We're just looking to find a way to win the last point and so helping them gain these perspectives and we as the adults again. I keep using the word adult. I hope we
are being adults as coaches and parents understanding that the only thing that they can truly control is how they respond in the morning. They can't control the past; they can't go into the future. All they have is this moment now. Can we be present? And the more that we focus on, "Why did you do that wrong?", and trying to fix things all the time, we never truly stay in the present.

J: Awesome. Well, we're wrapping up for time here. What is some advice we can give to our listeners. Three things we can take away from this, from our reflections at the US Open.

L: We're just pointing at each other. You go! No, you go.... I'm just trying to be nice and let our guest have the floor.

J: Mark, you go first.

M: So, one reflection that I believe is important to spend some time addressing is normalizing an environment, normalizing competition and trying to do the same things consistently. Routines, really. Building routines, preparation routines, routines during tennis, and routines post tennis. Normalizing that, making that as consistent as possible is for me a number one take-away that we can all benefit from. Primarily our players

L: We're going to ping and pong here, so I would say that secondly, to go off of you. get into your breathing, right Mark? Go to your diaphragmatic breaths. Breathing is what we're given naturally to deal with stress and to deal with this fighter flighter freeze response. So, no matter what is happening, before you react, get to your strings, get to your breath, hold your posture. It gives you the chance to deal with some of the worst adversities on the courts, which honestly aren't that bad, but feel terrible in the moment, so get to your breathing. Allow yourself to breathe and get out of those situations. I don't know how many times I've heard athletes talk about great performances and you ask them, "What were you focused on?". "I was focused on my breathing." Aaron Rodgers, many other athletes, so breathing is key and I think every single junior player at a young age, 10, 11, 12, should be taught quality breathing, not just... We all know how to breathe automatically, but actually breathing so that you're getting more oxygen, diaphragmatic breath and we can obviously share resources on that. Go, you're next

M: Got it. I agree with that 100%. Breathing is critical and as teachers and educators we follow a positive coaching model. We try catching our athletes doing right as opposed to wrong. Final take away from me would be for the athletes to start to catch themselves doing well and focus on that rather than on those errors or things that they don't like or trying to always fix something that is wrong. Spending time focusing on what is well and doing more of that or even getting better at that, I believe, will make them better competitors and tougher athletes.

L: Well, hold on. This is ping pong. I don't want it to end up on my side of the net and I lose, so I have to go one more and send it back at them.

J: Fine.

L: So, one of the things that I see, and I only bring this up cause I feel like it is very important, is that sometimes we judge ourselves for not only the performance but then the
way we are thinking out there. So, they want to think in a good way but, naturally, you have negative thoughts and doubts and fears that come up during a match, it is normal. So, instead of beating on yourself for thinking something that we all would probably thing, like, "Man, that was a terrible overhead", that's probably a natural reaction in your head. Accept it, understand that it is what it is in the past and know that you can make the next one and you can move on and move forward and get the job done. But too often, I think, players, especially these highly perfectionistic players we have in our society, not only beat themselves for the performance, but for the way they were thinking about their performance. Boom

M: Are we going to keep going, or...

L: No, we have to stop. We're getting the sign to cut it.

J: No, I love that. You guys make some unbelievably good points and I think just to reemphasize, I'm going to go with Mark's point here. Sorry, Larry. Focus on the things you do well. Don't always dwell on the things you didn't do well or maybe things you feel you're not so good at. Spend some time thinking about what you do well and really appreciate that. Did I just drop the mic? I just dropped the mic on this! Let's go!

L: You won the ping pong battle.

J: On the three-way table? Awesome, that's it for today for today's episode for Compete Like A Champion. Coach Mark, thank you so much for joining us. We always love having you down in Orlando and I'm sure we'll be up there in New York soon and come visit you. Larry, as always.

L: Thank you, JP. Thank you, Mark

M: Thank you. It was great being here. It was a great conversation.

J: Awesome. So you'll find my results. I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're going to put on that Rafa video on our show notes. That will be really cool for you to see, so until next time. That's Dr. Larrie Lauer, coach Johnnie Parks, and Coach Mark, signing out.