

A high school quarterback breaks the huddle and steps to the line of scrimmage in the closing seconds of a conference championship game. Trailing by only a few points, he has led his team to the opponent's 15 yard line. Deafening cheers of "DE-FENSE" resound from the home crowd. The quarterback glances at the play clock and checks his receivers. Suddenly, the defensive backs switch to zone and the linebackers show blitz. He quickly calls an audible, looks to the sideline for the coach's signal and begins the snap count...

Years of practice and hard work have led up to this moment. Countless hours in the gym and on the track have conditioned the young athlete to be physically prepared. But with all his physical training, how he performs at this critical moment will ultimately be determined by his mind, not his body. He needs his working memory capacity.

### Working memory in sports

Athletes thrive on their ability to make split-second decisions. Working memory, which is crucial for performing under stress, is a tremendous asset on the sports field. Defined, working memory is a key cognitive function used in daily life that allows individuals to hold new information in mind—"online"—for brief periods of time. This, balanced with accessing learned information (training, skills, plays), is a basis of sports performance.



*"My thoughts before a big race are usually pretty simple. I tell myself: Get out of the blocks, run your race, stay relaxed. If you run your race, you'll win... channel your energy. Focus."*

- Carl Lewis



*"A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be."*

- Wayne Gretzky

*"Just try to concentrate on concentrating."*

- Martina Navratilova

