

## Art of Learning Assignment #4 (chapters 9,10, and 11)

**Explain how breathing relates to William Chen's Tai Chi Form. How could you make this work for you in our sport? Practice this technique for 5 minutes every day and let me know how it changes you.**

- He said that you usually breathe in when positive things happen and breathing with the flow of your body. He also said it should be natural. In soccer, I can practice breathing naturally when I have a second so I can refocus and also breathe in when good things happen so I recognize the things I should keep doing.
- He said breathing should be natural. Breathing should be a return to what was natural before we got stressed out. Breathe in on outward/upward movements, breathe out and let the body release.  
This isn't super practical for soccer, but during the breaks I could use Josh's technique of holding my palms in front of me a few inches apart, relaxing my shoulders and breathing in while expanding my fingers (using the deep, belly breathing technique), then breath out and relax my hands back to my sides during longer breaks.
- Breathing is natural and if you can breathe naturally and return to a calm state in a high pressure or stressful situation you will do better--- I can breathe and focus on my breathing before a race at the start area, and I could also do this before a game to better relax myself.
- Instead of breathing forcedly, Chen said breathing should be natural. For example, expansive movements go along with inhales, and exhales go with de-energizing movements. We can practice it by expanding and relaxing our fingers while breathing. I am not quite sure how this will work in soccer, which seems less rhythmic and more sporadic, but breathing can be very calming, so perhaps a breath before receiving a ball will help a first touch.

**What does Josh believe will skyrocket a student of any discipline to the top of any field?**

- He thinks that a student would be skyrocketed if they could avoid repeating the same mistake twice.
- if a student could avoid ever repeating the same mistake twice both technical and psychological they would be way better.

- He believes that if someone performs a mistake only once they would be sky rocketed to the top of any field.
- If one is to never repeat the same mistake. As this is unrealistic however, the more you can minimize repeating the mistake, the more quickly you will improve.

**Correlate Josh's experiences in dealing with Evan to the few rival teams over the years that have previously been better than our team. Think as if you had the chance to play them over again right now. If that doesn't work, then imagine playing 1 vs 1 against a rival player who you always had to deal with and correlate Josh's Evan experience to that.**

- In Josh's experience, he was constantly getting beat up on by his one opponent but then starts to get the hang of his style and eventually beats him. In soccer, if we keep playing a very good team and they keep crushing us, eventually, we will get the hang of how they play and it would hopefully improve our performance because we would be playing a team that potentially has better all around skill.
- “stop fearing the impact” “I knew I could take what he had to offer” “invest in loss”  
These three quotes from the book pretty much sum it up for me. In my mind they translate as being confident and know that you can do it. I think this will be helpful in the upcoming games just to think about how I know that we can win.
- When I know a player/ have a rivalry with a player on another team I usually visualize their movements and what their usual plays are. Since I am new to Seattle I don't really have any experience with other players here, and I was only in Cleveland for 3, however my experience relates to Josh's in that I now know how some teams play and what girls they look to pass to, so I can step up and cover them more and make them frustrated.
- Similarly to how Josh deals with Evan, we had a few games last year where we played Seattle Prep or Holy Names, and we were beat with unnecessarily high scores. Unlike Josh, who stepped up and learned from each push, or goal in our case, we kind of shut down, maybe after the fourth goal, and allowed ourselves to be beaten up. If we had the chance to play them over again, I think we have learned this season how to come at those teams with aggression, instead of being the ones who always get thrown against a wall.

**Based on the micro vs. macro discussion at the beginning of Chapter 11; explain what parts of soccer that are considered micro, should you personally, be paying much more attention to?**

- "the learning principle is to plunge into the detailed mystery of the micro in order to understand what makes the macro tick"  
 micro: 1st touch, communication, aggression, speed of play, 50/50 balls.  
 macro level: this will improve the entire game (I consider the game to be the macro level)  
 The micro aspects of soccer are those that happen off the field or the aspects that are completed mentally. For example a macro aspect of soccer would be a win or a loss and the overall result of a game versus a micro being the attention to one aspect of the game and trying to perfect that, that in turn will better the game as a whole. I should pay more attention to my stretching because I am not very flexible and I need to work on injury prevention rather than going through the motions during stretching.
- Josh talks about condensing the few things he does know, simple things, which he broke down into "micro" chunks to fully understand, into a feeling. Then he can internalize this, and become very good at these feelings and small variations on them. I would say that simple things in soccer, like a good first touch, or the variations on it into a move, are the types of things that are micro, and when done well can be very important.

**What other things did these three chapters make you think about? Whether you had fully constructed thoughts or just brief images, please share them with me.**

- It is super simple, but many things kept pointing back to being relaxed. This is something I could work on.
- These chapters made me think about relaxation for sports as a whole and thinking about the individual things I know I can control rather than my result/the teams result as a whole. I know that when I am relaxed and not worried I perform much better than when I am stressed, and I also perform better when I think about moments I can control such as winning a header, rather than if we will win or not.
- The part where Josh talked about not knowing as much as his competitors resonated with me, because I don't think I have the foot skills or amount of soccer practiced as the majority of the girls we will compete against. However, Josh said he won by using depth, not breadth, so I think that if I focus on my own best things, and make them as good as I can, I will always have something to return to.