**Adaptation of Megan Willette’s Mental Imagery Template**

**Step 1** – Recall a time when you performed at your best (or an ideal performance you would like to have) and answer these following questions:

Key Points to Visualize Pre-Performance During Performance

Senses – what did you… See (locker room, team)? See (court, players)?

 Smell (ball, fresh socks)? Smell (sweat, gym)?

 Hear (teammates, coach)? Hear (crowd, referee’s whistle)?

 Taste (Gatorade, snack)? Taste (salty sweat, saliva)?

 Touch (snug sneakers, ball)? Touch (ball, opponent)?

Thoughts – what were you Thoughts about your Thoughts as you competed

 thinking? upcoming competition e.g., “I’m in the flow”, or

 e.g., “Today’s the day!” “I’m on fire!”

Feelings – what did you feel? Calm, excited, etc. Strong, confident, etc.

**Step 2** – Using the answers you gave above, **write a script** describing your experience before and during your peak or ideal performance game. Be sure to use 1st person narrative (“I” not “she or he”). Be very descriptive of your experience – including what you felt and thought throughout the imagery sequence – the key is to recreate what it is like during your optimal playing experience. If you are writing about an ideal (vs. actual) performance, make it believable – perhaps including how you responded well to a mistake. Since you will likely have irrelevant thoughts or other distractions while practicing mental imagery, it may help to include a sentence in your script acknowledging this and a coping response to get back on track – saying something like, *When I notice my mind wandering or get distracted, I will simply note it without judging myself, will take a relaxing breath, and refocus…*

**Step 3** – Insert **pauses** into the script, as this enables you to experience the imagery more realistically. To do so, use the following abbreviation: use P for pause, and add a number after the P to signify how many seconds you want to insert before continuing the reading of your script. For example, is you want to pause 5 seconds between the sentence you just read and the next one, you would use (P5). Consider using short phrases, separated by pauses, instead of longer sentences – this will likely help you better absorb the emotions and muscle firings associated with peak performances. It may help to underline words you want to emphasize as you rehearse with your script.

**Step 4** – **Record** yourself as you read the script. Consider practicing this many times before recording to ensure your comfort with reading, and proper intonation (not a monotone recitation of your words, but an animated recollection of a great performance). If you get too distracted by listening to your own voice on a recording, then ask someone to whom you think you would respond better as you listen. Also, consider having motivational instrumental music playing in the background to add to the emotional boost that this script will provide you.

**Step 5** – **Listen** to your mental practice recording in a comfortable space. Either lie down or stand and mimic the movements you want to reinforce that you describe in your script. This should be daily at first, then specifically on days leading up to your practices (yes, you can mentally prepare for practices too!) or games.