

### Mental Fitness Resource - "Playing For ..."

This Mental Fitness resource is for coaches of players of all ages.

Try incorporating this Mental Fitness Warm Up into regular practice or game days.

#### Resource Objective

To encourage players to recognise their personal support 'village' - those people we care about and who care about us too - as part of their pre-game mental preparation.

#### Instructions for Coaches:

##### Introduction

Begin the physical warm-up by bringing everyone together. Let them know that today's session includes an important mental fitness exercise. If you can, share a brief story about how acknowledging our support networks or 'village' can boost our mental strength, just like warm-ups increase our physical agility.

##### Personal Reflection

During the stretching routine, invite each player to think about someone who has supported them. This person could be a mentor, family member, friend, or anyone they look up to. Remind them that drawing strength from others is a common practice for sports people and can reinforce their mental game.

##### Personal Pledge

As players continue with their warm-up, encourage them, if they feel comfortable, to dedicate their performance, saying quietly or openly, "Today, I play for [Name] because [Reason]." Emphasise that it's perfectly fine to keep this dedication private.

##### Coach's Role

Ensure the language used is appropriate for the age of the players. Support the team by respecting each player's reflection process. Ensure everyone feels comfortable participating in their own way. Highlight that this moment is about connecting with their own inner strength. Before stepping onto the field, remind players to take the intention set during their warm-up with them, allowing it to inspire their play and remind them of the community supporting them.

**Resources needed:** none

**Best time to use:** during warm-up, at the start of training or before a game

**Gotcha4Life Protective Factor:** Social Connectedness