



CAN A MENTAL TOUGHNESS REGIME TRANSFORM THE FORTUNES OF THIS POLISH FOOTBALL TEAM?

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Legia Warsaw is one of the most successful Polish football clubs winning a total of 10 Polish Premiership Champions titles, a record 16 Polish Cup trophies and a record 4 Polish SuperCup matches. However it had not won the Premiership since 2005 when they decided to introduce a new element – mental toughness development – into their training and preparation for matches.

The outcome: in 2011 and 2012 they win their 9th and 10th Premiership titles and acknowledge that the application of mental toughness has been significant in those successes as well as enabling them to deal with the challenge of participation in the European Champions League.

As well as embracing physical training and tactical or technical awareness coaching, the team now supplemented this with mental training. In 2009, working with 4business & people, they adopted a program called Mental Win which shapes mental toughness.

Patrick Sitek from 4business & people says:

“Today, everyone knows that to win you have to have a winning mentality. Few knew exactly what that meant and how it can be measured and grown. Our partnership with the AQR and Professor Peter Clough in the UK has given us the opportunity to fully operationalize the mental toughness approach. We started at Legia Warsaw with the Mental Win program based on the use of MTQ48 to explore mental toughness and an AQR training programme called ‘UCanWin’. Elements of this programme had already been used in clubs such as Fulham & Blackburn Rovers.”

“At the start of the programme players completed MTQ48 which measured their mindset through factors such as the approach to the challenges, a sense of control, commitment and confidence. Through feedback, this enabled the identification of specific situations in which players may uncomfortable and which affected their attitude on the pitch, training, but also in life. This led to individual development sessions normally held once a week or so.”

For the Club Directors and the coaching staff, continuing the mental training of players is one of the most important developments in the club.

CEO Leśnodorski: “Right after joining the club, director Jacek Mazurek told me about the talks with the guys offering Mental Win. I knew that this involved some risk, but we are a club open to new initiatives and I was very positive about this”.

Player X: “We are still young players, our careers are gaining momentum, we won the first title and we are aware that the demands on us are increasing. Participation in the programme helps us to focus on important things, and realize and correct errors arising in the head. The programme combined with hard work in training definitely helped us to get the League and Cup double after 18 years”

Dariusz Nowicki is one of Poland’s leading sports psychologists. He is responsible for the preparation of many outstanding Polish sportsmen including world champions. “Using MTQ48 to analyse strength and resilience, in conjunction with a feedback session with a player, saves time primarily on the specific diagnosis of possible weaknesses in performance.”

You can order Developing Mental Toughness 2nd Edition at a 20% discount when you enter code TOUGH20 at the checkout at www.koganpage.com

