

# Confidence

**Pete Maunder, No Limits Basketball Services**

“You need to play with confidence” says the coach.

“How can I be confident?” says the player.

“Be confident” says the parent.

If only it were that simple. It is no secret that confident players are better players; they are more aggressive in making decisions, they don't hesitate and they do what they are good at without thinking about it. They are able to make 10 mistakes in a row and then immediately do 10 great things in a row.

Where do players get confidence from and how can they become more confident?

Confidence really comes down to two areas:

1. Preparation
2. What you focus your attention on

The first one, preparation, might be bad news for you – if you want to be confident, you have to *deserve* to be confident, and that means putting in the time.

I'm confident when I shoot the ball that it is going to go in because I've spent hours upon hours shooting and taken tens of thousands of shots, so I should be confident. However would I be confident if you asked me to kick a goal in a footy game? Absolutely not, because I don't practice kicking goals.

Confidence must be EARNED. You earn confidence by practice and repetition. If you are good at something, you'll be confident. If you aren't good at something because you haven't practiced, you won't be.

The second point is what varies greatly from person to person, but can absolutely be worked on and improved upon. Let's say in the first half of a game you shoot ten shots and make five. Some players will think about the five misses; how they clunked off the ring, how they've let their team down, how bad they are at shooting because they missed five times. Other players will be thinking about those five makes; how they swished through the net, how good they felt, how the crowd cheered when they made it and how good that felt. The latter are the ones who will be more confident going forward.

Whether a player has missed or made ten shots in a row, they are still as good (or as bad) a shooter as they were at the start of the game.

Players must focus on what they can control and the present. If they focus on negative things in the past or on things they can't control they are wasting their energy. Put all your mental energy on the controllables and the present.

Coaches play a part in players' confidence levels, especially with younger players. When a player makes a mistake, they are far more likely to move on to the next play and not lose focus if they can see their coach has done the same. If their coach is screaming at them about turning it over or missing a lay-up, chances are they are going to be dwelling on their mistake for much longer and performance will suffer.

A coaches reaction to mistakes can either completely bring a kid down or can teach him to move on and focus on the next play.

Your confidence is completely up to you; however it takes more than just telling yourself to “be confident”.

Put in the time working on your game, and focus on what you can control and the present, and you'll go a long way to playing with more confidence.

**Pete Maunder**

Skills Trainer

No Limits Basketball Services

[www.nolimitsbasketball.com.au](http://www.nolimitsbasketball.com.au)

0431 974 592

