

BY  
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PHOTO BY  
EMILY J. DAVIS

Husband and wife psychology team helps athletes, musicians and business professionals gain and maintain mental strength.



# Getting Your Head in the Game

Premier Sport Psychology works with athletes and coaches to maximize their mental and emotional potential.



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DR. JUSTIN ANDERSON is a licensed sports psychologist and owner of Premier Sport Psychology in Edina. According to Anderson, the sports psychology field is growing and becoming essential for many athletes. "Many players spend so much time on physical conditioning and training, but little on the mental and emotional side of things," Anderson says. "We give athletes and coaches strategies for focus, relaxation and game play." The psychologists at Premier Sport help

to identify which variables help each client "get in the zone," and then teach mental skills and drills to encourage their mindsets to go to that place. "If I have to break it down, what we're doing is helping people and teams thrive from the psychological, behavioral and emotional aspects of being high-functioning performers," Anderson says.

Anderson is also an athlete. He played football, basketball and baseball throughout high school, and went

on to play football for the University of Minnesota-Duluth. During his senior year of high school, he read *The Inner Game of Tennis*. "Although I wasn't even playing tennis, the tips in the book offered a mental approach to sports that helped me focus and concentrate while playing baseball."

Anderson went on to graduate school at Boston University and then attended the University of St. Thomas, where he received his doctorate in counseling psychology. In 2009 he founded Premier Sport Psychology. His wife, Carlin, joined the business two years later.

The business remains one of the only licensed psychology firms in the Twin Cities that has both sports psychologists and clinical psychologists. One area of their work is with individual athletes in middle school or high school who want to go on to play collegiate sports. "Many parents want to support their kids, but don't know the best way to go about that," Anderson says. In these cases, Premier offers joint sessions with athletes and parents.

Premier Sport also works with an array of teams from area high schools, small colleges, the University of Minnesota, local professional teams and even members of the U.S. Olympic team. Help is also offered to athletes who struggle with concussion or fear over concussion recovery. There are coaches' workshops and assistance offered for coaches individually. "We utilize a number of assessments to help teams with their drafts and use many tools to help coaches adjust their styles to work with a variety of different athletes," says Anderson.

These types of services can help more than just athletes and coaches, however. "We've counseled performers at local professional theaters as well as professional musicians," Anderson says. Their oldest client to date was a 92-year-old business owner. "All these folks are high achievers and high competitors," Anderson explains, "The skills we pull from the sports world can help executives and other performers. It requires the same energy, focus, communication and team chemistry-building skills. There is a lot we can do to help these folks, and they may not know that we're right in their backyard." //



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