

## HEAD GAMES

### How to psych out your opponent.

You may be stronger and faster than the other guy, but if you don't have a mental edge it could mean the difference between victory and failure. Here's how to intimidate your rivals, and still play by the rules:

#### The Pink Elephant Principle

"Direct your opponent's attention to their own weaknesses by counter-complimenting them," says Richard Monette, psychology consultant and executive coach for the Senior Men's Canadian Rugby Team. "In golf for example, mention to your opponent how fantastic his drives are and how glad you are that he got rid of that duck-hook he used to have. If you don't believe this will work, what's the first thing that comes to mind when I ask you *not* to think about a pink elephant?"

#### Ignore Your Opponent

"One of the worst insults for a human being is to be ignored," says Monette. "Acknowledge everyone, except your adversary. Put on your game face. Avoid eye contact. This strategy is especially effective if your opponent lacks confidence. You'll reinforce his belief that he doesn't deserve to win."

#### Control the Tempo

Monette recommends knowing your rival's techniques and then doing everything in your power to play the opposite way. "This will get your opponent out of his comfortable, natural rhythm," he says, "but it requires that you learn to adapt to different tempos yourself." Keep him off-balance by acting in unpredictable ways.

