



Games Within Games

Sports are far more important in our life than they might seem at first glance. Watch the waves of emotion on the faces of players who let their feelings show: pride, shame, ecstasy, despair, joy, and anger. "Mind games" are going on in each person. They are playing for personal motives at the same time that they are playing a sport. The following are some of the mind games involved in sports. They usually occur in combinations. Many of them reflect how we participate in other activities too. Read these mind game definitions. Then follow the instructions on the next page.

One-up. "I'm good compared to you." The aim of the mind game "one-up" is superiority, not excellence. Or perhaps the only measure of excellence is winning, being the "best."

Hide-and-status-seek. "I look good at the country club." "Hide-and-status-seek" players want to hang out with the right people, or at least at the right places. How they play the game is not nearly so important as who they play with.

Mirror, mirror. "I look good." In "mirror, mirror" the aim is merely to look good, not to play well or even to win. Appearance, grace, and style are everything.

Wheel of friendship. "Friendship feels good." The aim of "wheel of friendship" is to make and keep friends. Sports are mainly an opportunity for socializing. In fact, playing too well could be a mistake if it means moving to a level of skill without friends.

Good-times square. "I feel good." In "good-times square" the aim is to have as much fun as possible by losing oneself in the intensity and the subtleties of the game. Winning, demonstrating competence, or reaching excellence are secondary considerations.

Measure-for-measure. "How good can I get?" The aim of the mind game "measure-for-measure" is to reach excellence and mastery, measured against the clock or the scoreboard. Players wish to prove themselves competent and worthy.

Looking at Motives

- ❶ Choose the sport or activity that you are involved in most seriously. On the following chart, rate each motive by circling a number.
- A **10** means that motive plays a **big part** in your reasons for doing the activity.
 - A **1** means it plays a **little part**.
- Then draw a line from left to right that connects each circled number.

More-negative Motives			More-positive Motives		
One-up	Hide-and-status- seek	Mirror, Mirror	Wheel of Friendship	Good-times Square	Measure-for- measure
10	10	10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1

- ❷ Does your chart suggest that you are highly motivated (lots of high scores)? Are your strongest motivations mostly on the positive side or mostly on the negative side? Describe your findings briefly.

- ❸ Be prepared to discuss the downside, or disadvantages, of each mind game. For example, one-up players ultimately fail because someone is always around who can beat them.