

# THE ART OF WAR

By Sun Tzu



- ▶ Competition is a given in every sport, from the simple to the most sophisticated of sports. If you observe carefully, you'll notice that a lot of sports aren't very different from warfare in that strength, strategy, and victory play key parts in the outcome. And looking at the strategies and lessons of warfare can be applied to sport, in particular the ways in which it is possible to win through outsmarting the opponents.
- ▶ This Powerpoint focuses on applying *The Art of War*, a book written by the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu, to Football. The specific purpose of this book was to aid readers in winning. The book contains strategies in a series of thirteen chapters that can be applied, along with an open mind, to help you to succeed in any sports match, game, race, or other sporting pursuit that you're a part of. Taking each of the chapters individually, here are some of the lessons you can learn for your sporting success.

## OVERVIEW

- ▶ Plan for and apply three factors for better sports teamwork and for achieving great heights rather than mediocrity.... In warfare, as in athletic competition, there are three constant factors that can determine who will be more likely to win.
  - ▶ These are:
    - ▶ The Moral Law (obedience),
    - ▶ The Commander (the captain)
    - ▶ Method and Discipline (the general disposition and organization).
  - ▶ In applying these to the team situation of a sport, consider the following: Apply and expect adherence to the Moral Law to gain the respect of your subordinates or teammates, and to gain their trust.
- ▶ Take your Commander abilities to the next level by practicing the five virtues:
  - ▶ Wisdom
  - ▶ Sincerity
  - ▶ Benevolence
  - ▶ Courage
  - ▶ Strictness.
- ▶ Whether or not you are the captain or a team member, applying each of these virtues will aid your effectiveness.
- ▶ Improve on Method and Discipline by defining clearly each team member's roles and responsibilities, including your own. For larger professional teams, this includes each person knowing their rank and being adequately recompensed. Moreover, backups and others who may or may not be brought into the game or event should be kept in the loop of everything that is happening, regardless of their chances of being involved because they may be your greatest resource when least expected and it also ensures that they don't defect.

# CHAPTER I, LAYING PLANS.

- ▶ "In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns". Sun Tzu wisely counseled in this chapter to defeat your opponent fast, so that you won't become fatigued and you won't lose your strength. This means putting forth all your best efforts to defeat your opponents, so that they lose the desire or strength to win. If you center your principal objective on beating your opponent, more than anything else, you may have an ultimate, unchallenged victory.



## CHAPTER II, WAGING WAR

- The art of mastery in sports and the ability that you must practice, is the one of winning without fighting. That is: you should win without having to go to great trouble to obtain a victory, or having to break your opponent's will to win. How? You can do this with good preparation beforehand, and by using the correct strategy, such as working out when indirect approaches will be more effective and less energy-draining than direct approaches. This means knowing your sport thoroughly, learning about the tactics great players or participants in your sport have used in the years, sometimes decades, before your time in the sport, and always learning by observing during practice sessions, during games and events, and after your participation. Look for the strategies that prove most beneficial by using your intelligence and simply sheer physicality.



## CHAPTER III, ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

- ▶ "Know your enemy and know yourself", Sun Tzu warns. If you do so, then you will win a hundred out of a hundred battles, Sun Tzu promises. In the context of Football, this has exactly the same purpose – detailed knowledge of your opponent means that you know their habits, their vulnerabilities, and their limitations. But in order to not have this same tactic applied to you effectively, you must learn to grapple with your own vulnerabilities and know your own limitations and how to work with them, not against them. In that way, you render yourself invulnerable to the opponent's tactical positioning and attempts to dislodge you from succeeding. And knowing your limitations also means being flexible; able to change tactics when it's clear that your usual approach is failing.
- ▶ Sun Tzu summed this up as:
  - ▶ "He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain".



## CHAPTER IV, TACTICAL DISPOSITIONS.



- ▶ In war, this concerns directing the momentum of the army to focus its energies in the most creative and timely manner. In football, this is the practice of visualization and pacing yourself. From the point of view of visualization, this is a powerful sporting technique that can propel you to a win through mental determination and a focus on what you know you're truly capable of. In terms of pacing yourself, this is about learning when to sprint and when to hold back so that your energy is wisely conserved. Moreover, from a team perspective, a coach or team trainer knows to encourage combined energy from all of the team so that no single member of the team is worn down. The best team is one in which all the players commit to their strengths throughout the game, as recognized and encouraged by the coach or trainer in charge.

## CHAPTER V, ENERGY.



- ▶ "Strike the weak and avoid the strong", wisely advices us Sun Tzu. Again, you need to know your enemy well in order to spot their weak points, and then attack them. Or like Tzu says, imitate the rivers, that flow downside to the empty places. Moreover, being first to attack puts you in the stronger position because you lead the way according to how you have chosen (thereby imposing your will), and for your opponent, being on the back foot is much harder to recover from.

## CHAPTER VI, WEAK POINTS AND THE STRONG:

- Maneuver with intelligence. You can lead an army of 1000 soldiers the same way as one of 10 – it is only a matter of signs and communication. Establish a common language between you and your teammates and coach or trainer. Implement good communication and trust in your team. Remember that the base for a cohesive and cooperative team is clear, constant communication and mutual support.



## CHAPTER VII, MANEUVERING

- ▶ This point is very easy to understand – vary your tactics, and you win. As already stated above, remember that there are two attack methods: the direct and the indirect. **The direct method** may be used to score individual points, but **indirect methods** to secure victory as they're unforeseen, unexpected, and easily throw the confidence of your opponent. Be sure to disguise your intentions as best as possible, to avoid detection when you're about to vary your approach.



## CHAPTER VIII, VARIATION IN TACTICS.



- ▶ As the army progresses, so too does the sportsperson as the game or event unfolds. Remember to sustain all your aims on winning throughout the game. Try to understand your opponent's strategy and destroy it, and bear in mind at all times that: "The clever fighter imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him". At this point, do not relax your alertness but be on the watch for the opponent's changes in tactics and counter-attacks

## CHAPTER IX, THE ARMY ON THE MARCH



- ▶ Use the best position and tactics in relation to the environment and to your opponent. Threaten your opponent's remaining valuable strategies and positioning to prevent them from connecting their weakness with their strengths. Know how to drive your opponent into a position where their weaker self is all they have left to rely upon. Where it is clear that your opponent has failed to adequately prepare for the situation, strike fast if they let open a door and attack quickly.

## CHAPTERS X AND XI, THE NINE SITUATIONS AND TERRAIN.

- ▶ Attack your opponent with fervor, especially when the game or event is vital. Be "fast as the wind" and as "unmovable" as the forest. That means that your attack must be very quick, but your game and positioning should remain very consistent. Remember that the army who wins is the one that shares the same spirit throughout all its ranks, keeping true and remaining consistent.



## CHAPTER XII, THE ATTACK BY FIRE.

- ▶ Having previous knowledge of your opponent is very useful, as already outlined before. When you have the opportunity, inquire about your opponent's type of game, weaknesses and strengths from people in a position to know best; of course, with the advent of video playback and the publishing of both statistics and commentaries, you have the luxury of reviewing this information in the comfort of your home or club for many sports, something Sun Tzu didn't have available! Make the most of your sources of information to learn all that you can about your opponent. The secret of great princes and warriors that were regarded as geniuses was in actual fact principally only previous knowledge, noted diligently and well applied



## CHAPTER XIII, THE USE OF SPIES.



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## RESOURCES/LINKS:

[HTTP://WWW.WIKIHOW.COM/APPLY-THE-ART-OF-WAR-IN-SPORTS](http://www.wikihow.com/Apply-the-Art-of-War-in-Sports)

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=X7RHOVBK\\_EA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7RHOVBK_EA)