**[The Resilient Bowler](https://jamesleath.com/notes/resilient-athlete)**

**A resilient bowler is mentally tough.** Mental toughness requires you to be aware of a situation, assess the situation for lessons, then continue your journey of improvement.

Being mentally strong is not about talent; it's about maximum effort, minimizing distractions, and mastering emotions. Can you give your all even though no one is watching? Have you set yourself up in an environment that promotes success? Can you control your emotions when everyone else is in crisis mode? If you can do those things, then you are mentally tough; you are a resilient bowler.

A working definition I have come up with is as follows: A resilient bowler is "able to access their talent at the highest level they are capable on a consistent basis regardless of the situation." Let's break that down.

**"Able to access their talent..."** You can have all the talent and strength you need to be competitive, but you must be able to unleash all the hours of training you logged to make it to game day. An example of being able to access your talent, despite a tragic situation in one's personal life is Brett Favre, who played a football game the day after his father passed away. That day he passed for 399 yards and four touchdowns…he was able to access his talent. Despite the pain of losing his father, he was resilient and was able to access his talent.

**"...at the highest level..."** Whitey Bimstein, a long-time boxer and trainer, once said, "Show me an undefeated fighter, and I'll show a guy who's never fought anybody." His point was to show that an athlete should seek out the best competition even if that means losing once in a while. As a society, we often place too much emphasis on having no losses on our record. Defeat can be the seed of discontent you need to motivate you to improve your game. The resilient athlete can experience defeat and turn that loss into motivation to train harder, train more effectively, and find victory just around the corner.

**"...they are capable…"** Your level of effort has nothing to do with the competition. There is an adage: "Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard." This statement is true in sport and life. Your effort is up to you and is one of three things in your power to control. The other two are your attitude and preparation. Get in the habit of always giving full effort, choosing a positive attitude, and preparing yourself to be ready for any opponent.

**"...on a consistent basis…"** Anyone can be great in a random chance moment. History is rife with championships won on the last-ditch effort of some one-hit-wonder that only has that one exceptional performance to their name, then fades shortly after. Today's headlines are tomorrow's fish wrappings, and the resilient athlete is a consistent athlete.

**"...regardless of the situation."** The resilient bowler treats practice and pre-season competitions with the same intensity as a league match or post-season competition. In most sports, the next play or the next move is the same no matter if it's at practice or in the last few minutes of the

championship game. The resilient bower shows peak performance regardless of who is in the stands.
 **Resiliency is developed through hard work and dedication.**

Not every strategy may help you, so take the Bruce Lee philosophy of learning on your search. It's called "Jeet Kune Do," and it states:

"Adapt what is useful, reject what is not, and add what is specifically your own."
-Bruce Lee, Author of Tao of Jeet Kun Do