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## Rick Rosser Interview

### Free Throw Shooting Tips From a Guinness World Record Holder

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# Rick Rosser Interview

## “Free Throw Shooting Tips From a Guinness World Record Holder”

HSA: Hi this is Andy Louder with HoopSkills Academy, welcome to our phone seminar on free throw shooting. Our purpose today is to get a better understanding of how players can become dominant free throw shooters. Having the ability to shoot free throws well can make a huge difference for both players and teams, a lot of games are determined by free throws at the very end and as a player, if you can't be trusted to knock down a free throw when it counts consistently, you're probably not going to get much playing time at the funest part of the game, which I consider to be at the very end, especially when it's a tight game. Shaquille O'Neil, he is an extreme example, but he is a good example of someone who, a lot of coaches just can't have him on the floor at the end of the game and in crucial times, because they know that the opposition, all they're going to do is foul him and he's going to go on the line and he doesn't hit his free throws consistently. So, that can trickle on down to the college ranks, to the high school ranks so, the time to start becoming a good free throw shooter is when you are young and continue to develop yourself, so that that doesn't happen. Now, today specifically, I am excited for the topic because we're just going to break down a lot of the free throw shooting fundamentals. We're going to talk about form, we're going to talk about techniques, we're going to talk about the proper ways of practicing your free throw shooting. My favorite thing today is probably going to be when we talk about the pressure of free throws. I know a lot of players who are really good free throw shooters when it doesn't really matter, when they're just practicing, there's nothing on the line and then when they get into a big game situation where the free throw actually mean something, it's a completely different scenario and they don't perform the same way that they did in practice. So, we're going to talk about that, how to become better under pressure and with me today, really is the perfect guest for this topic. On the line with us right now is a gentleman by the name of Rick Rosser. Rick how are you thanks for joining us.

Rick Rosser: I'm doing great, how are you Andy?

HSA: I'm doing wonderful. Now, Rick, many may not be familiar with you, so let me take a little bit of time here and tell people about you. Rick, you're what I would consider to be a free throw maniac. I've heard people refer to you as the free throw guy, the free throw fanatic, Rick is just someone who does a lot of coaching, teaching free throw shooting, but not only that he practices what he preaches, he walks the walk. Rick I know that you own one Guinness world record for free throw shooting, is it just still one or are there more under your belt?

Rick Rosser: That's also for the Guinness record for two minutes, for 60 out of about, I think about 70 shots and I tried it a couple of times and the second time is when I made the 72 out of 72.

HSA: Wonderful. Well I don't doubt the fact that before you die there is going to be a couple more records under your belt because you're still at it very actively. In fact this is just for our listeners, a couple of things to point out. You've made 1000 consecutive free throws on twelve

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separate occasions and is your personal best still 2118 in a row?

Rick Rosser: Yes I did that a couple of years ago.

HSA: That's just phenomenal. Now, when you do these things, when you make all these free throws in a row, it's not just you hanging out in a gym all by yourself and coming out and telling people like a fish story, there is usually witnesses right?

Rick Rosser: Yeah. Several times there's been other people in the gym and I think a couple of times they're on video. I know I've videoed when I did the one hour things, there is a one hour Guinness record which now, a guy that's recently from Florida, I think did 1926 in an hour and missed 2 or 300 shots like 84% and the way I'm doing that, I don't want to miss as many as other people are missing, I'm trying to be above 95% when I finally go for it. I've made a 1000 in an hour, three times. The first time I just made a little over 1000 and missed I think, 11 second time I made about 1050 and missed 12 and the third time I've shot 1114 out of 1124. So I'm trying to do a little more under control and work my way up to a higher number while still shooting. Hope to be 98% or better when I do it.

HSA: Well congratulations, that's impressive. When you sit down and think about the time involved in really trying to stand there at the line and just the thought of hitting 100 in a row is pretty daunting for a lot of people so for you to do that, it's a great accomplishment. Tell people a little bit about what you're doing right now Rick as you visit the various YMCAs all over the country.

Rick Rosser: I've been doing this for a while. I was working for a delivery company which allowed me to go over a large part of the US and my first goal was I wanted to make 100 free throws in a row in every state and I didn't realized it at first but most times it was at YMCAs because I've got a YMCA membership and probably three or four years ago I realized all of a sudden that I've been to a bunch of YMCA so I started looking back and trying to figure out how many I'd been to and at that time it was on almost 90. So then I started thinking, well, how many Ys can I go to and make 100 in a row and on the trip I just made travelling to Alabama to Los Angeles and back, I went a few more and now my total is up to 259 YMCAs.

HSA: That's incredible. Sounds like a lot of fun as well.

Rick Rosser: Oh it is and meeting people at the different Ys and so I've met the people that have made 100 in a row and every once in a while somebody even better but that's the fun of it. It's not just going in a gym sitting there and doing my thing, it's meeting with people along the way.

HSA: So let me ask you Rick, before we dive into the juicy parts of our call here, what got you into free throw shooting, where does your passion come from?

Rick Rosser: When I was a kid my mother got me a Guinness book of world records for a Christmas present and I've always been into number and things but I read in there about Ted St. Martin and this is like 1972, his record was 200 free throws in a row and I thought, man that's cool. From then on I was trying to see how many I could make in a row and I was 12 years old then, so first I wanted to make 10 in a row, then I wanted to make 20 in a row and just kept going up from

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there.

HSA: That's neat. Alright, without further ado let's get into the good stuff here. The first question I have for you Rick is, one that I think is on a lot of people's minds, its' on my mind a lot because you just hear so many different opinions about it. When it comes to free throw shooting, do you think the form of your shot and the technique is more important or do you think the release, where you release the ball and making sure they're consistency each time in where you release the ball and how you release the ball, which do you think is more important and why?

Rick Rosser: I believe it all should be one motion. The release is part of the form and it needs to be one motion, not two things, that's the way I think of it.

HSA: Ok.

Rick Rosser: You get the ball, hold it in the pocket and then shoot it and release and I count that as one motion, the release is part of it.

HSA: Ok, and what are some things as far as the form and the release, do you think that there is one certain form that every body needs to be following their techniques or do you think it's more about muscle memory and just getting comfortable with doing the same thing every time?

Rick Rosser: Muscle memory is very important and I've tried over a million free throws in my free throw journey and my muscle memory, just because I've shot that many, I'm able to shoot better than a lot of people just because my muscle memory is so good,, even if I'm sitting there daydreaming about something else, my arm knows what to do, but my form is not perfect.. I knew it was pretty good, but when I was in Phoenix last year for the all star jam sessions, a guy was videoing me and I didn't realize that I have a little dip when I'm shooting and I'd never realized that until I say it on video from behind. First it kind of bothered me, but I've been kind of successful so if I start messing on or changing things it fouls me up. Now Ed Palubinskas is a guy who shoots with perfect form, when I watch him it is the same thing every time and it's a beautiful thing but we've been shooting together a lot recently and we'd both sit there and we might have 100 in a row before we'd miss or might not miss at all sometimes. We've got different forms and both of them are successful so, muscle memory is important like you say, being comfortable with what you're doing.

HSA: You bring up a great point; I want to hammer down on that because I definitely think that too many kids, too many players just get it in their mind that their form, their technique has to be absolutely text book perfect. They play games with themselves in their head they're thinking, oh gosh, my leg was a little bit bent over to this too much, the important thing is to get comfortable, have somebody look at your form, give you some guidelines so that you have a decent form, but then don't stress about. Get it in the habit of being comfortable and doing the same thing every single time there after and I think that's the most important thing.

Rick Rosser: Yeah exactly.

HSA: On to another topic that is extremely important. When it comes to psychology when shooting foul shots, give me your thoughts on that, how important is it?

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Rick Rosser: I think the psychology, the mental part of free throw shooting is as important as the physical part. A really good example of this is Jose Calderon for Toronto, last year he set the all time record for 98.1% and the whole season he missed 3 free throws, 151 out of 154. He was in a mental state where he knew he wasn't going to miss in every game. Now this year, he started off – well in the pre season he didn't miss a free throw until the last game, he went like 1 out of 19 or 1 out of 18 in the pre season. In the first game of the season he missed 2 free throws and it threw him off. The next game he made like 2 for 2 and the next game he missed 2 free throws again, after that, he started off, he missed like 10 free throws out of his first 50 maybe, something like that, the percentage was below 80%. It was a mental thing because he was doing the same form that he was last year, but he didn't have the confidence that he had from last year and the last 10 games or so he's hit 18 out of 19 so I think he's got the mental focus back and I figured it would come back. Like I say the form is good but just missing those 2 free throws that first game, just got him thinking about it and he gets up to the line, but that happens to everybody.

HSA: Yeah and that brings up a though here. When we talk about psychology and free throw shooting, there's two things that come to mind, you mention one of them for sure, confidence. If you're not confident when you step up to the free throw line, holy cow, all the practice is out the window because it's just as shaky as can be if you're just not confident. You've got to be confident, but the other thing is concentration. Tell me which do you think is more important, making sure your confidence is there or your concentration?

Rick Rosser: If you concentrate on doing the same thing every time and you've already got the practice time in and your muscle memory is good, you're going to make good percentage and as you're making them your confidence is going to increase.

HSA: And I like to – back when I was shooting a lot in games, the thing that to try to do was really focus on concentrating and to bring the confidence and really to bring the two together, you visualize yourself and practice or just in a gym all by yourself, wherever you're used to practicing where you can sit there and just hit free throws consecutively in a row because you're comfortable, there's no stress, that's amazing.

Rick Rosser: Yeah and it's the different things from most of the shooting I do and the shooting in a game I know that, but one thing if when you're practicing and when you're starting off, maybe you've got the goal of making 10 in a row and when you're able to do that nearly every time you want to, then when you get in the game you can think I can make 10 in a row any time, all I've got to make right now is 2 in a row, I think it relaxes you and make it that much easier.

HSA: I agree with you and so I think the take home message for young kids out there listening is, you've got to create the circumstances that you can fall back on so that when you step on the line of the game you can think about those things and remember how easy it is to hit those free throws, remember how many times you've done it in the past that's where the psychology come into it. The psychology I think gets over complicated, it sounds a little bit more intimidating than it is and all we really mean is, make sure you have good positive thoughts when you're shooting free throws. Alright, moving on to the next question, what would you say, you know, you shoot a ton of foul shots, you talk all day about foul shooting, what is – it could be one thing, it could be a couple of things but the common misconceptions that you hear about free throw shooting, are

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there any out there?

Rick Rosser: One thing is that every body can't be 90%, especially like the big guys, they're always given a break because their hands are too big or arms are too long, too much motion. Yao Ming, has a lifetime of 83%, shot 90% a couple of years ago.

HSA: A great foul shooter, yep.

Rick Rosser: An older guy Jack Sikma was 6'11", but he was a centre who lead the league in free throw shooting and one year was 92% so, big guys can shoot. You talk about Shaq, Shaq has had a lot of bad moments, but the season that did work with him I think, was 2000. On the last day of the season Shaq went 13 for 13. So, if you can do it at one game, you can do it at another game. You're still going to miss sometimes, especially in the game situation and you're running up and down the court, but there is no excuse for him shooting – what is he this year, he's 50? He's up and down; he's been up and down. If you can shot to 60 sometime then you can go up.

HSA: That's a very good point because I think a lot of post players, a lot of the big guys, sometimes they do fall back and they kind of say to themselves, well I'm expected to miss at a free throw, if I go 50% I'm ok. But gosh, young kids, if anybody thinking about going on to play college ball or getting beyond that level, even very competitive high school level, if you can hit the free throw consistently, you're going to get more playing time, you're going to get more looks, you're going to be a more respected player much better off and so get that out of your hear. That's very good misconception to bring up, are there any others you can think of, Rick?

Rick Rosser: Well, that's the most common one I think.

HSA: Talk about Shaq. What's your opinion of why he struggles so much on the line?

Rick Rosser: It looks to me like he's just fishing the ball, he squeezes it and then just kind of throws it up he doesn't shoot. Ed worked with him like I say, that one season for a while and his free throw percentage went up that year and then he let Ed go and he went up one year since then or two and the another years he's backed down. So, he was taught how to do it right and practiced with Ed, he was hitting a lot higher percentages than he does in games. So, he knows he can do it and I think with him it might just be a pride thing where he doesn't want to spend the time on it, but the rest of his game has been so good. One of the things that he's says is he doesn't want to be perfect.

HSA: Yeah, he's a character. For our listeners who might not be familiar with who you're talking about as far as Ed, bring us up to speed. Ed Palubinskas, tell us a little bit about Ed

Rick Rosser: Ed is from Australia, came over here and played college at LSU in the 70's and then went back and played in the Olympics for Australia in 1972 and 1976 and set some Olympic records that are still standing today. He's a great player, not just a great shooter, a great player but his shooting form and I just love to stand there and watching him shoot, same form every time.

HSA: Yeah and he's often times brought up, when it comes to who is the shooting gurus out there all over the country, all over the world people bring that up.

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Rick Rosser: He is definitely in my book one of the top, there are some other guys out there but the people I've met, no body is better.

HSA: Yeah, and Ed, actually if you visit our store online [www.hoopskills.com](http://www.hoopskills.com), the smart ball on the shooting page is actually a product that Ed developed, it's a ball that kind of gives you instruction on where the pocket is as far as getting your hand position on the basketball correctly to get your form and muscle going, great product. That's kind of one of the many things that Ed is known for, for his shooting knowledge. Moving on now, next question I have for you and I'm interested to hear your thoughts on this because it's just something I wonder about a lot. When you are standing around watching somebody shoot free throws, maybe somebody that's young, maybe somebody that's inexperienced and they're not very good, missing foul shots, what is the most obvious thing that you see usually, where if you were to go up to them and say, hey if I could give you one or two tips, this is what they would be.

Rick Rosser: I see a lot of kids that don't do the same things each and every time they shoot a foul shot and that really fouls them up. They're not even standing close to where they were standing on the previous shot, they don't line up the same, if you can get your feet close to where they were in every shot, your muscle memory is going to be that much sharper. So that's the first thing I'll tell them, do the same thing every time if you want to get the same results every time which is making the basket. And then the arc of the shot, I'll tell them – a lot of times you notice that right off, that they're shooting a little flat and I'd tell them raise your shot just a little bit, a little more arc and your shooting percentage should go up right away a lot of times.

HSA: Yeah, I agree. Walk us through, for yourself, every time you step up to the line, just kind of walk us through some of the things that you think about and you probably don't do much thinking because it comes so natural to you now, but as far as you step up to the line, line up your feet, bend the knees, what are kind of your three or four check points that you do every time you shoot?

Rick Rosser: If I'm just practicing sometime I'll sit there and shoot my best I'll not go into my whole routine, but if I'm in some kind of contest or doing some kind of thing where I need to make every shot and I go through my thing and the first thing I do is step up, line up my feet comfortable, I focus on the back of the rim. I guess when I was a kid I first read about that, that was the place to look and I've always done it.

HSA: Focus on the back of the rim?

Rick Rosser: I focus on the back of the rim but some people teach the front of the rim. My thoughts have always been look at the back and try to hit it or get close to it and so that's what I've always done. To me, it's like darts, in darts you're not just throwing at the target, you're either throwing for the 20 points or a specific point or you're going for the bull's eye. The more specific your target is and it's what you're practicing for, I think it's going to make you better.

HSA: Sure, sure, ok. So stepping up to the line, is there a certain place that you think lining you feet up, I've heard a lot and I agree with this myself, personally is pointing that front foot or pointing your foot right at the target, right at the front of the rim or the back of the rim.

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Rick Rosser: Yeah, I line up, I'm right handed so my right foot goes forward a little bit, I stand a little bit sideways, just a little bit sideways, some people say line up both feet straight, which if you're more comfortable with that and you can hit them, then keep doing that. But I just feel for me, that I was pushing across my body if I was lined up both feet straight and I could stand there and do it if I have to, but it works for me. Like I said, the main thing is being comfortable in what you're doing and like I said if that's working for you keep doing it, if it's not working for you, maybe you need to try something different.

HSA: Yeah good point, because watching NBA guys, college guys, even now, a lot of them you'll see will walk up to the line and put their front foot forward, so if I'm right handed that's what I do, I'll put that right foot, right in the middle of the free throw line, line it up with the rim and then my left foot is a little bit back. But then a lot of time I will watch people who don't line up at the free throw line and their feet are about shoulder width apart parallel and they bend their knees a little bit. So both techniques work, it's whatever you're most comfortable with and the worst thing that you can do is change up every game or change up every shot doing something different. You just want to get in the habit of focusing with what you're most comfortable with and getting that muscle memory.

Rick Rosser: Right.

HSA: Right, good. So, moving on now, this is what I think a lot of people struggle with. I know there's a lot of kids out there, whether they recognize it for themselves or not and hopefully, if you're a young player, having confidence is excellent but having humility, being able to recognize where you lack in strength is also very, very important so, analyze yourself and see if this is you. But player that shoot free throws well in practice or on their own with no pressure but then step into a game and really struggle. Maybe they'll go from a 98% free throw shooter in practice to 70% shooter in a game. It's a different experience, so tell me your though on this Rick, how can kids become better pressure game free throw shooters?

Rick Rosser: The way to do that is to get under more pressure. Find a free throw contest to get in or something like that or if you can't find a contest, just compete against your friends and get out there and say, whatever, you've got to make the most out of 10, make a little bet on it, just something where if I win then I'm a better gamer or something like that today. But put a little pressure on it so you've got to make them, because just practicing by yourself, there is not a lot of pressure unless you can put it on yourself, but when you're competing against somebody else, whether they're better or worst than you, that's still pressure on you and if you can find somebody better than you, don't shy away from shooting from them, that's who you need to shoot against to make you better.

HSA: Yep, yeah, that's a great point. It really is a simple solution. If you want to become a better pressure free throw shooter, you've got to start creating pressure situations for yourself rather than just going to the gym and shooting 500 free throws all alone, by yourself.

Rick Rosser: Right

HSA: One thing that I do for my son right now to help him get used to the pressure is, I'll put

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little wager on the line with him, I'll say if you hit X many free throws in a row, we'll go get a movie right after this or I'll take you to the show or we'll eat ice cream or something and it works.

Rick Rosser: Yes, yes it does.

HSA: Because all of a sudden he tenses up and its not just fun and games any more and he really concentrates and kids, when you start getting junior high, high school, make it fun, get with your friends and put something on the line, who knows. Whoever doesn't make the most, create some type of punishment or some type of reward so that it actually means something and it kind of sounds silly but when you get in those games, it's going to make a huge difference?

Rick Rosser: Another thing I do, a lot of time I might be in an empty gym and I'll just stand there and the only pressure on me is to make my 100 in a row and I know I'm going to stay at that gym until I do it and if I shoot and miss a shot I know, well I've got to stay a little longer now because I've got to make 100 before I walk out of this gym. So that puts pressure on me and you could do the same thing, your goal could be 10 or 25 in every gym you go to. Do some little thing like that and another thing I do, especially in my YMCA, I know the after school program, the kids are there about 3 o'clock and I try to go there some times when there's 50 or 75 kids running around throwing Frisbees and footballs and I stand there and shoot my free throws and I tell them get up in front of me and do all that stuff and they're going nuts and yelling doing their thing and I'm standing there trying to concentrate and throwing my free throws. I think that has helped me a lot, because then I get into a contest or something the pressure doesn't get to me.

HSA: Thank you so much for bringing that up, that's something I completely overlooked and you're so right. If you look at golf and there's a lot of people – I remember Michael Jordan used to compare, because he was and he still is a huge golfer and he would compare free throw shooting to putting. Because putting, you're just kind of there by yourself, people are watching but the thing about golf is, everybody is quiet, everybody is courteous and if you're not, you're the jerk, but when it comes to a basketball game I mean, people are all over in the stands, there's kids running all over the place, you've got distraction galore so, I agree whole heartedly with you. Young kids out there, coaches that are teaching free throw shooting, put yourself in a situation where there's lots of distractions, literally. I remember in high school, we would shoot free throw and half the team would be off to the side trying hard to distract them and you've got to practice that way, you've got to get used to being in that state championship game with 3 seconds left and there's all sort of screaming, yelling and stuff going on and you've got to be able to hit that. It's completely different from standing alone in a gym by yourself.

Rick Rosser: I've got friends that – there's a couple of friends that can distract me, I've got friends that I just say hey I'm shooting free throws, come and do this while I'm shooting. So I know they're going to get my attention and I'm still sitting there trying to make them so, that helps. Another thing that I think can help kids, can help anybody that wants to get better, we're just starting a non profit organization called the national basketball shooters association which is kind of a free throw contest. This year we're going to have at least 6 tournaments around the country and maybe more and next year we're hoping to have a lot more. But it would be where anybody can join up and come and do a free throw contest where you shoot, like maybe 10 in a row, where you shoot 10 and the next person shoots and next persons and then you shoot 15, next

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person, next person and you shot 25, so you're going to shoot at least 50 free throws in a contest settings so that's under pressure.

HSA: Good and these are all some great points. When you're talking a little bit earlier, I was remembering my high school coach creating games, competitions where half the team would line up and the other, he would split us up into two groups and we'd have free throw contest and the losing team would have to run their guts out at the end of practice. The team that won had to go in and shower or another one that I remember, this is a good idea for coaches too, at the end of practice, my coach would just randomly call one of us out and say, ok, come to the line, whoever it is, and you've got one shot, one free throw, if you make it we shower, we're done, great practice, if you miss it, we're running ladders. You talk about pressure, you'd step to the line with your whole team behind you watching, just saying please make it, please make it and so the lesson for young coaches here is to get creative and get your kids shooting in pressure situations so that it's not a new thing for them in the game, create distractions. The worst thing you can do is just say mark off on your clip board, hey we've got 15 minutes for free throw shooting, everybody line up, go do a basket while you go and talk to your assistant coach and everybody just kind of goofs around and shooting free throws,

Rick Rosser: And make it fun too, that's the thing, for a lot of people free throws are just boring just standing there and shoot big deal, but there's games you can do to make it something fun and that's one of the things I'm hoping to do.

HSA: Yeah, good stuff. Alright another thing that really, really follows up to this, riding in line with what we've been talking about, here is another thing I see all the time Rick. I see kids that shoot free throws really, really well by themselves in a gym, in practice they get in games, they struggle and it's not so much as pressure for some kids, it's the fact that in the game, they've just been busting their butt, they're tired as can be, their legs are worn out and so they go to the line, they bend their knees and they've got that jelly in their legs and they don't hit the free throws and it's a lot to do with they're tired, their legs are worn out and so, a tip here for players and coaches, make sure that a lot of practice with the free throw shooting goes into a time when you're really tired. Run ten ladders until you're just exhausted and then go to the free throw line and shoot 10 and see what happens.

Rick Rosser: That's really good; stimulate game situations like I said like running. A lot of coaches don't do the free throw practice until the end when they've already been through an hour and a half workout and that's really good. I think this too might be another reason to focus on the back of the rim, because if you're aiming to the back of the rim, you're pushing the ball further than if you're looking in front of the rim and when you're tired, that extra couple of inches can make a difference, you can still be a little short but since you're looking at the back that shot might not be quite as long but it's still further than if looking at the front.

HSA: I agree with you and if you're looking at the front, a lot of times you're going to go short on it.

Rick Rosser: Exactly

HSA: You're worried about pushing it too far.

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Rick Rosser: Yeah.

HSA: Just getting that right perfect distance, I like that, I like that a lot, good tip. So Rick, another one that I've been wanting to ask you, as far as, besides yourself, who is the best foul shooter you've ever come across?

Rick Rosser: For me this is a real tough one. Like I said Ed Palubinskas.

HSA: Ed Palubinskas, ok

Rick Rosser: He's probably got one of the best forms I've seen and like I said he hits nearly every shot. When we go out there and we can stand there for an hour and shoot 2 or 300 shots a piece and we can be separated by 1 or 2 shoots every time, for at that level.

HSA: I've heard stories of old Ed, closing his eyes at the free throw lines and just sitting there and making several free throws.

Rick Rosser: Yes, he can close his eyes and I haven't done that as much as he has but he makes me do this sometimes when we are together because he knows I can't even do it the same way and my muscle memory is good, so the ball is always going the same distance, but I sit there and I think I push it to the right sometimes. I've met Calvin Murphy recently who is a great shooter, I've met the Guinness world record holder – like I said the reason I started Ted St. Martin, he's record from 1972, it kept going up. In '77 I think he did 2036, that stayed the record for several years until Tom Amberry hit 2750, I've met Tom also, but then Ted hit 5221 in 1996 which is the record today and that's still just amazing to me. Ted is a friend now and he's encouraged me to break his record and that's a goal one day, my goal actually is to match that record. I like shooting with people but I don't like necessarily beating people, but just shooting with the different people.

HSA: Well talk about pressure, image being in the point where you tied his record and that next shot or you're one away from tying and after getting all those in a row and that next shot is the one that's going to either tie the record or break it, I'll bet that's pressure.

Rick Rosser: Yeah, well, when I practice I do things like that, in my head I'm sitting there, pretending I'm around that number already and anytime I get – say I've been shooting for a little while and I've already make 200 in a row, I'm thinking ok, I'll pretend that I'm on 5200 something like that and I'm counting down in my head, so I hope it's going to help me when I finally do it, but I do little mental games like that all the time. One thing I used to do a whole lot, my first goals when I go in the gym I want to make 100 in a row and I would sit there and the first 10 free throws, I'm acting like I'm shooting and the number 10 free throw shooter is rebounding for me, so I'm sitting there thinking, there's a number 10 right now Bill Sharman was around number 10, but the first 10 shots I'm thinking every shot I'm making Bill Sharman is throwing back to me. So, if I make every shot, then the next guy is the number 9 free throw shooter and he's throwing every shot back. So as long as I'm making it, I get to shoot against the next guy and he's standing there throwing rebounds back to me and maybe trash talk to me or something and it goes all the way up until I get to Mark Price and he's rebounding the last 10

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shots for me and if I beat him I've got my 100 in a row and then I go on to people like – maybe next I say I'm going to shoot 25 against Ed and then 25 against Ted St. Martin. It's little mental games, it can put pressure on you while you're practicing, unless you've got somebody else there, another way to work on shooting under pressure that's something you can do by yourself.

HSA: Uh huh, sure, very good Rick. I guess, my last question for you real quick is – well I've got one more after this one but, really quickly name a couple of free throw shooters, or a couple of players currently in the NBA that our younger kids would want to maybe try to watch when they see him on TV who you think are probably some of the best free throw shooters right now out there.

Rick Rosser: Steve Nash comes to mind right away, he's leading a league this year. Right around 95%, same form every time.

HSA: Yeah.

Rick Rosser: And Ray Allen, he's right there, he's in the top 10 now all-time and he's being consistent in his whole career. Those two and Jose Calderon, like I say he hit his down spot but now he seems to be back on line. Those three to me are three of the best.

HSA: Yeah I agree Ray Allan was a good one, he's great to watch.

Rick Rosser: Oh he is and I'm a big Celtics fan so.

HSA: Alright. So, Rick, as far as the takeaways, I want to hear yours, what are the two or three things or the one thing you lay out for us, that someone needs to takeaway from this call to improve their free throw shooting if they're struggling.

Rick Rosser: The first thing I teach is to focus on the back, have that specific target. There's other people that teach front of the rim, some people that say they don't look at anything, they just look at the goal and like I say, to me a specific target works better. You can try it and if it worked for you great, keep doing it and the second thing I would say is getting a good arc on the ball. There've been several studies and there's the – I don't know if you know of the Noah machine that measures your arc.

HSA: Yeah.

Rick Rosser: And I think they say around 45° is the best arc and the better arc you get on the ball, the bigger the basket is. If you're shooting flat, you've got to hit the shot perfect and if you get a little more arc, the basket is bigger and now everybody knows, two basketballs can fit in a rim. You can't always see that unless you put one on the ground, you can put two balls in it but they did. So if the balls are higher, coming down the target is bigger, you've got a little bit of a chance of making it. And the third thing I'd say is practice. Practice where you can make, if you're just starting try to make 10 in a row and then as you make 10 in a row say ok, now I want to see if I can make 15 in a row. When you do a bit of practice everyday on your own you say ok, I've got to make my 10 in a row before I go home and I'm going to stay until I do it. I'd say for me, that worked and I just kept increasing that number and lots of practice under pressure too. Do the dif-

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ferent games and stuff.

HSA: Yeah.

Rick Rosser: Because the most reason people want to get better is because they want to make their free throws in games, so if that's your goal you need to practice under pressure.

HSA: Yep and thank you very much Rick. Those would be some of the takeaways that I would really stress upon people listening. First of all the muscle memory, do the same thing every time when you step up to the line, get in a routine, if you watch Steve Nash, a guy that you brought up, every single time he goes to the free throw line he goes through the routine, he takes the same steps to the line, the same amount of dribbles, he does the same thing with his hands, it's a routine and you want to do the same exact thing, get comfortable and then once you get to the point where you're starting to get confident in your shooting, then you really want to create pressure, make it worth something, do the contest and then the distractions, do something where there is a crowd, people are screaming trying to distract you. and the other thing is make sure you're practicing a lot when you're tired, run some ladders, do some jump rope, get those legs just burn and get those lungs really tired and then go to the line, because that's what its like in a game and if you don't shoot like that, your free throws are always going to struggle in a game. Rick I can't thank you enough, this has been wonderful, thanks for your time, your information was priceless. If people out there listening want to follow you online, where can they find you?

Rick Rosser: My website right now is kind of a long name [www.focusfreethrows.spaces.live.com](http://www.focusfreethrows.spaces.live.com).

HSA: [www.focusfreethrows.com](http://www.focusfreethrows.com). – say that again?

Rick Rosser: [.spaces.live.com](http://www.spaces.live.com). If they can just remember focus free throws, it can be Googled and my website is usually the first thing that come up.

HSA: Yeah and when you Google your name too again is Rick and your last name is Rosser spelt R-O-S-S-E-R.

Rick Rosser: Right. I've got a couple of videos on youtube, I think and then there's a thing called [www.ibeatyou.com](http://www.ibeatyou.com), which has a good video of Steve Nash. He had, like a one minute free throw contest and I actually scored more then he did in the one minute but then he came back and kind of changed the rules. I was using multiple balls and the shoot away thing and I made like 28 for 28 in one minute just going slow and he used one and made 21 for 21. But it's good thing, it's a good place to watch Steve Nash's form and seeing the 21 shots, he's got the same form every time.

HSA: Yeah for sure. Are you on facebook Rick?

Rick Rosser: I am on facebook too.

HSA: So if people look you up Rick Rosser, they can friend you and just try to help any young

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coaches out there who want to network or find you places online.

Rick Rosser: Sure. I'm available, I have basketball world travel. I'll go anywhere and shoot some free throws.

HSA: Absolutely. Well Rick, again thanks for your time, this has been wonderful. Have a great day and good luck in your journey with the free throws and the YMCAs and hope you get that world record.

Rick Rosser: Thanks Andy

HSA: The other, that next world record, because you've already got one, I should say.

Rick Rosser: Yeah.

HSA: Alright, take care Rick.

Rick Rosser: Thanks.

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