

Sport Psychology

AusDBF - eLearning Modules

**Please scroll through each of the pages in
this presentation**

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sport Psychology

**Welcome to AusDBF eLearning module –
Sport Psychology.**

**This presentation contains texts, graphics,
videos and an online survey questionnaire.**

**It is important that you read all the text and
instructions before you proceed to the next
page or option.**

**Any queries please contact
development@ausdbf.com.au**

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sport psychology

Sport psychology is an interdisciplinary science that draws on knowledge from many related fields including biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology and psychology.

It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors.

Sport psychologists teach cognitive and behavioural strategies to athletes in order to improve their experience and performance in sports.

In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may include work with athletes, coaches, and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career transitions.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sport psychology

Applied sport and exercise psychology consists of instructing athletes, coaches, teams, exercisers, parents, fitness professionals, groups, and other performers on the psychological aspects of their sport or activity.

The goal of applied practice is to optimize performance and enjoyment through the use of psychological skills and the use of psychometrics and psychological assessment.

There are different approaches that a sports psychologist can use while working with his clients. For example, the **social-psychological approach** focuses on the social environment and the individual's personality, and on how complex interactions between the two influence behaviour.

The **psycho-physiological** approach focuses on the processes of the brain and their influence on physical activity, and the cognitive-behavioural approach analyses the ways in which individual thoughts determine behaviour.

Generally, there are two different types of sport psychologists:

- **educational and clinical.**

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Educational sport psychologists

Educational sport psychologists emphasize the use of psychological skills training (e.g., goal setting, imagery, energy management, self-talk) when working with clients by educating and instructing them on how to use these skills effectively during performance situations.

The common goal of an educational sports psychologist is performance enhancement by teaching skills to athletes on how to manage the mental factors of sports to maximize potential.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Clinical sports psychologists

CLINICAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGISTS obtain a doctoral degree in clinical or counselling psychology.

They meet with athletes individually and in group settings. Areas of expertise include performance and clinical issues.

Performance skills include goal setting, arousal control, imagery, attention control, and self-talk.

Clinical issues include, but are not limited to, depression, eating disorders, and substance abuse.

They are able to prescribe medications or other forms of treatment to address clinical issues.

A **NON-CLINICAL SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST** might refer one of their clients to a clinical psychologist if it is thought that the athlete might need additional help beyond talk therapy.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sports Psychologists –

Overview – some areas of study, research, & concepts

PERSONALITY

One common area of study within sport psychology is the relationship between personality and performance.

This research focuses on specific personality characteristics and how they are related to performance or other psychological variables.

There are various personality characteristics that have been found to be consistent among elite athletes. These include, but are not limited to –

- mental toughness,
- self-efficacy,
- arousal,
- motivation,
- commitment,
- competitiveness,
- control.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Mental toughness

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

is a psychological edge that helps one perform at a high level consistently.

MENTALLY TOUGH ATHLETES EXHIBIT FOUR CHARACTERISTICS -

- a strong self-belief (confidence) in their ability to perform well,
- an internal motivation to be successful,
- the ability to focus one's thoughts and feelings without distraction,
- composure under pressure.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Self-efficacy

SELF-EFFICACY

- is a belief that one can successfully perform a specific task, under differing conditions.

IN SPORT, SELF EFFICACY VS SELF CONFIDENCE

- **self-efficacy** has been conceptualized as sport-confidence
- self efficacy beliefs are specific to a certain task
eg. *“I believe I can execute the new Auroras Technique”*

whereas,

- **self confidence** is a more general feeling
eg. *“I believe I will have a successful dragon boat regatta today”*

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Arousal Anxiety and Stress

Although anxiety or stress are often believed to a negative thing, they are actually a necessary response for the body to survive.

It is natural for the body to exhibit certain levels of anxiety and stress, however, it becomes a problem when it begins to inhibit activity.

Arousal is the physiological and psychological activation of the body in response to an event.

THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR THEORIES OF AROUSAL AND ANXIETY.

DRIVE THEORY

This approach considers anxiety to be a positive asset. In situations where anxiety is high, performance increases proportionally.

However, athletes can be psyched up, but they can also be psyched out. Both can impact performance.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Arousal

AROUSAL

- is the amount of readiness or activation a person experiences when faced with a task.
- refers to the intensity dimensions of motivation at a particular moment along a continuum from low to high

Research suggests the perception of arousal (whether either good or bad) is related to one's performance, as well as actual adrenaline and arousal levels.

When an athlete is over (or under) aroused their performance can be affected by these feeling of anxiety.

An experienced athlete are able to use **arousal regulation techniques** to maximise their performance level.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



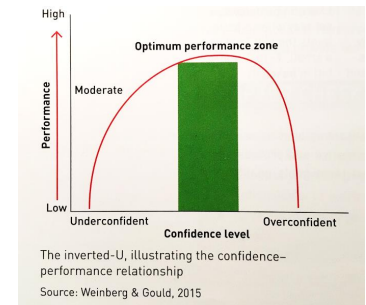
The “*INVERTED U MODEL*” theory of arousal & performance

Each athlete requires their own optimal level of stress and arousal to feel motivated and perform well.

The level of arousal entirely depends on the interpretation of the situation. Athletes who view situations, or interpret events, as more of a challenge, rather than a threat, will not have such a strong level of stress and they will be able to perform better.

ATHLETES.....

- require sufficient arousal to give high quality performance, while not being overstressed and off task
- use a variety of **arousal reduction/promotion techniques** to
- control and adjust arousal levels to ensure optimal arousal and peak performance



Examples of some techniques used include – controlled breathing, music, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), sleep, meditation, positive self talk, mental imagery, use of biofeedback, stress inoculation training (SIT) etc.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



The “*INVERTED U MODEL*” of arousal & performance

ATHLETES

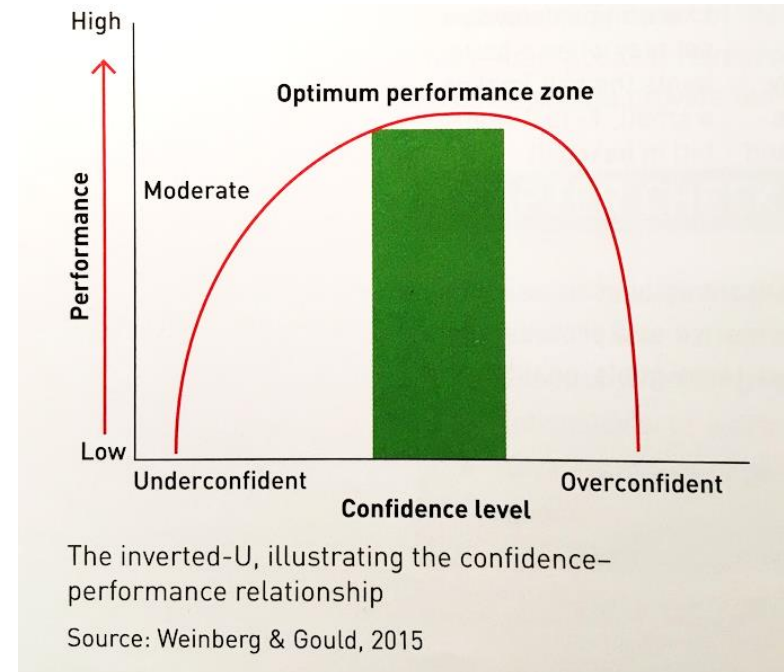
- ✓ each athlete requires their own optimal level of stress, and arousal to feel motivated and perform well. (not too high and not too low!)

AROUSAL TOO LOW

- performance likely to be poor (lower concentration, muscles heavy, apathy)

AROUSAL TOO HIGH

- performance suffers (muscles tense, movements jerky, co ordination drops)



Too nervous before a race !!!!

control those messages being sent from the brain....!

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Motivation

MOTIVATION

- can be defined as the direction, intensity of a person's effort and the will to perform a given task
- the setting of goals – using “SMARTER” goals can assist in motivation
- the use of positive reinforcement following a desirable behaviour of performance
- avoid negative reinforcement when performance below expected

MOTIVATING FACTORS CAN BE CONSIDERED - INTRINSIC

- come from within the individual
- play for internal reasons, such as enjoyment and satisfaction

EXTRINSIC

- are external to the athlete
- play for external reasons, such as money, attention from others other tangible rewards

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Commitment, Competitiveness, Control, Concentration

COMMITMENT

- refers to the dedication to continuing a sport from early development into a high level of sport expertise. eg AusDBF Athletes Pathway and Coaching Framework

COMPETITIVENESS

- is the ability to challenge opponents with an aim of success.

CONTROL

- is the ability to separate and focus on different events occurring in one's life, both within and outside of athletics.

CONCENTRATION

An athlete's attention needs to shift to meet the demands of the environment and task at hand. It is often broken down into three parts.

- Focus on relevant environmental cues
- Maintaining focus over time
- Situational awareness

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Psychological skills of an Athlete.....

There are also specific psychological skills that are ingrained in personality that are possessed at higher levels in elite athletes than the typical person.

These include arousal regulation, goal setting, mental imagery, pre-performance routines, and positive self-talk.

MENTAL IMAGERY

- is the ability of an athlete to picture the outcome of the performance or events using thoughts from the brain
- is where the athlete imagines themselves performing the skill or activity successfully
- should involve kinaesthetic, visual, auditory and tactile senses.
- the best mental rehearsal, includes the environment and the context (situation) of the performance.

Additionally, the more vivid images are, the more likely they are to be interpreted by the brain as identical to the actual event, which increases the effectiveness of mental practice with imagery.

eg. the coach or sweep taking the crew through a simulation of a 2 km race complete with race calls, whilst crew has their eyes closed and visualising the race.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Psychological skills of an Athlete.....

GOAL SETTING is the process of systematically planning ways to achieve specific accomplishments within a certain amount of time. These goals can greatly assist the athlete's motivational level.

PRE PERFORMANCE ROUTINES

- can assist athletes recognise the relationship with how they feel and how they perform
- enable athletes to use Arousal Reduction or Promotion techniques to enable performance under optimal arousal levels

Arousal Reduction techniques, examples such as....

- ✓ progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- ✓ breathing control
- ✓ biofeedback Stress inoculation training (SIT)

Arousal Promotion techniques, examples such as....

- ✓ elevate breathing rate
- ✓ act energetically
- ✓ positive self talk and use of sounds/music

POSITIVE SELF TALK

- use of words and statements to increase one's self confidence and
- self belief in being able to perform well

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Coaching

COACHING

While sport psychologists primarily work with athletes and focus their research on improving athletic performance, coaches are another avenue where intervention can take place.

Researchers in this area focus on the kinds of things coaches can say, or do, to improve their coaching technique and their athletes' performance.
eg. the use of positive and negative reinforcement

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Coaching philosophy

COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- refers to a set of beliefs intrinsic to a coach that guides their behaviour and experience.

The philosophy should facilitate **self-awareness**, prioritise **coaching objectives**, and be **athlete centred**.

Having a philosophy central to the individual will allow a coach to react more efficiently to fast-paced decisions during sports in a systematic and thoughtful way.

A coach must be **self-aware** of their own values, in order to monitor if these values align with their thoughts and actions. Often, getting feedback from trusted outside sources is helpful in developing this self-awareness.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Coaching philosophy

A coach must also determine and **prioritise coaching objectives** considering winning vs skill development and or participation.

The athlete's well-being, both at training during time outside of the sport should also being considered.

An **athlete centred** philosophy emphasises learning and improvement over winning, which puts the athlete's development first.

This philosophy should be **dynamic** as both societal and coaching experiences occur and change.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Effective coaching

EFFECTIVE COACHING practices explore the best ways coaches can lead and teach their athletes. eg, researchers may study the most effective methods for giving feedback, rewarding and reinforcing behaviour, communicating, and avoiding self-fulfilling prophecies in their athletes.

Coaches influence motivation of athletes mainly through interactional behaviour with their athletes.

Coaches can be perceived by their athletes as.....

AUTONOMY-SUPPORTING

- ✓ where the coach provides structure,
- ✓ being involved and caring towards the athletes.

CONTROLLING.

- ✓ instil less intrinsic motivation in their athletes

Motivation is maximized when a coach is perceived to be autonomy-supporting, while providing a high level of training and instruction.

The focus should be to increase autonomy-supportive behaviours of coaches.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Communication style

COMMUNICATION STYLE is an important concept for sport psychologists to develop with coaches.

Communication is a constant role for coaches directed towards athletes, parents, administrators, other coaches, media, and supporters. It mainly comes in the forms of speaking, writing, body language, and listening.

Sport psychologists focus on developing coaching communication styles that are direct, complete, immediate, and clear, while also being supportive, specific to the athlete, and verbally and non-verbally congruent.

Coaches use both....

- **Verbal Communication**
- **Non Verbal Communication**

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Communication style

Verbal communication occurs through spoken word; however, nonverbal communication contributes hugely to how people perceive a coach's communication.

Non-verbal communication comes through actions, facial expressions, body position, and gestures. Coaches must be aware of the words, tone, and behaviours that they use.

Research has found that athletes respond best to positive feedback, specific technical instruction, and general encouragement.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Motivational climate

Winning is the overall goal of sports competitions regardless of the motivational climate.

MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

- refers to the situational and environmental factors that influence individuals' goals.

There are two major types of motivational climates coaches can create.

TASK-ORIENTED

- emphasizes building skill, improvement, giving complete effort, and mastering the task at hand (eg. self-referenced goals)
- has been found to develop a greater intrinsic, self-determined motivation

EGO-ORIENTED

- emphasizes demonstrating superior ability, competition, and does not promote effort or individual improvement (eg. other-referenced goals).
- has been found to develop less intrinsic, self-determined motivation

An environment with self-improvement as the primary focus creates greater intrinsic motivation than one with winning as the focus.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Motivation in sport

MOTIVATION IN SPORT

Motivation is tied closely to personality and can be categorized as a personality trait.

GENERAL THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

- ✓ participant/trait theory,
- ✓ situational theory
- ✓ interactional theory

These theories are similar to those of personality.

PARTICIPANT / TRAIT THEORY

Motivation consists of the personality traits, desires, and goals of an athlete. eg. some athletes might be extremely competitive and have the desire to improve and win constantly.

They would be motivated by competition with themselves and others.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Motivation in sport

SITUATIONAL THEORY

Motivation depends on the situation and environment.

eg. some athletes might not feel the desire to work hard when they are on their own, but are motivated by others watching them.

Their motivation would be dependent on whether or not there are other people around.

INTERACTIONAL THEORY

This theory combines the ideas of participant / trait and situational, where the level of motivation of an individual depends on their traits and the situation at hand.

eg. if an athlete might be intrinsically competitive and feels most motivated when participating in a match against many other people.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



More on Mental Imagery

MENTALLY IMAGERY (or motor imagery) can be defined as using multiple senses to create or recreate experiences in one's mind.

Additionally, the more vivid images are, the more likely they are to be interpreted by the brain as identical to the actual event, which increases the effectiveness of mental practice with imagery.

eg. the coach or sweep taking the crew through a simulation of a 2 km race complete with race calls, whilst crew has their eyes closed and visualising the race.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Goal Setting & Pre Performance Routines

GOAL SETTING is the process of systematically planning ways to achieve specific accomplishments within a certain amount of time.

Research suggests that goals should be “SMART” goals - specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, time-based, written down, and include a combination of short-term and long-term goals.

PRE PERFORMANCE ROUTINES refer to the actions and behaviours athletes use to prepare for a competition.

This includes pre game routines, warm up routines, and actions an athlete will regularly do, mentally and physically, before they execute the performance.

Frequently, these will incorporate other commonly used techniques, such as imagery or self-talk.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sport Specific Differences - *Personality characteristics*

Research on the big five personality traits - **openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism**, - as well as some other characteristics have differentiated personalities of athletes in individual sports compared to team sports.

These traits help provide a personality profile for sport psychologist seeking to work with certain types of sports.

Individual sports athletes

- scored higher on measures of conscientiousness and autonomy.
- require athletes to be self-reliant in order to be successful.

Team-sport athletes

- scored higher on measures of agreeableness and socio-trophy.
- require group cohesion in order to be successful

Athletes participating in **both team and individual sports** score equally on measures of neuroticism, extraversion, and openness.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Sensation seeking

SENSATION SEEKING is a phenomenon where an individual participates in complex, or intense activities with higher amounts of risks in order to satisfy their personal need for arousal.

High sensation seekers tend to participate in extreme sports, such as sky diving, car racing, scuba diving, white-water sports, and skiing.

These sports involve intense speed and excitement as well as high risks.

Individuals with a **moderate level of sensation** seeking tend to participate in common sports that are unpredictable but also minimally risky.

eg basketball, baseball, volleyball, and golf.

Low sensation seekers participate in sports that require large amounts of training and consistency, such as long-distance running, gymnastics, or swimming.

This is one area of personality type that differs for different sports.

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia



Please **turn up your volume** then click on the URL link below to view two (2) short videos about Sport Psychology.

When the video is completed please return and go to the next slide in this presentation.

VIDEO 1

<https://youtu.be/0QkpxvmOl8o>

VIDEO 2

<https://youtu.be/66jpOPdDGYE>

Our Mission: To connect people with dragon boating across Australia

