

Question 22 (continued)

- (c) Analyse the psychological strategies athletes could employ to enhance performance. 10

MENTAL REHEARSAL: is a psychological technique in which the athlete places him/herself in the competition environment mentally. For example, a triple jumper may visualise themselves at the end of the runway. Mental rehearsal should always be in an encouraging, positive environment, where the athlete is successful in their activity. This technique psychologically encourages the athlete, thereby improving self-confidence and ultimately performance.



ANXIETY AROUSAL CONTROL - The inverted 'U' hypothesis (shown left), characterises anxiety control. High levels of anxiety does not necessarily mean high levels of performance. An athlete must find an element of balance, and each individual athlete will differ. Generally, activities involving gross motor skills (e.g. soccer) will involve higher levels of anxiety for optimal performance, and those with fine motor skills (e.g. Archery) will require lower levels for optimal performance.

RELAXATION → is a technique used to emotionally and physically calm an athlete, remove stress, and psychologically prepare them. In order to relax, an athlete should go through a process,

Relaxation
Goal Setting
Visualisation

Question 22 continues on page 20

Question 22 (continued)

of tensing and relaxing muscles, they should focus on feelings of heaviness and warmth. They should always remain in a positive mindset, and the relaxation should occur in a nurturing environment. This technique leads to optimal physical and psychological performance.

GOAL SETTING: These goals can be short term (next game), long term (seasonal plan), behavioural orientated (attitude toward training/competition), or performance orientated (performing a skill better). Goal setting assists in focusing an athlete, and gives them achievements to work towards. This ensures optimal performance as the athlete strives toward their goals.

VISUALISATION: is a mental rehearsal technique, where the athlete sees themselves performing the activity. The visualisation should always be carried out in full, ignore irrelevant distractions, focus on the performance, and be successful. With this psychological preparation, an athlete can fully prepare, and perform to an optimal level.

End of Question 22