

Stage 2A/2B Physical Education

Sports Psychology 2nd ed.



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This topic was called “Mental Skills Training” in 2009. This ppt contains the revised and amended 2010 content

Key Content

1. Introduction to Mental Skills Training
2. Motivation
3. Self – confidence
4. Concentration / Attention
5. Nideffer's Model
6. Arousal and arousal regulation
7. Stress /Anxiety
8. The Zone
9. Specificity of mental skills training
10. Imagery
11. Relaxation
12. Performance Routines
13. Self – talk
14. Goal setting
15. References

MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION

Which Type of Motivation is Better?

- Elite players play for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons - financial rewards but also self – challenge.
- Many elite players retire when the “game stops being fun” and the motivation to train hard and to make the necessary sacrifices is no longer there.
- Internal motivation can also keep players involved in the game without the same degree of extrinsic rewards that they received when they were at their peak.
- Intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation.



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Peter Bell and Jeff Farmer played at South Fremantle in 2009 for intrinsic reasons after retiring from elite level sport in 2008



MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION

An athlete who is internally driven towards self – improvement and high level performance is said to have high levels of achievement motivation.

Achievement motivation is the need to win for winnings sake.

A person with high achievement motivation has;

1. A desire to do well regardless of circumstances
2. A desire to reach self – set standards
3. A desire to reach or even exceed the expectations of others
4. A willingness to persist in behaviours that lead to improvement even if it means risking failure in the process.
5. A low fear of failure.
6. An ability to lift performance levels as task difficulty increases.

The most effective methods of improving intrinsic motivation include the use of imagery, self talk and goal setting.



MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF - CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is the belief that a performer has in their own ability to successfully perform a desired skill or behaviour.

Self – confidence is critical to successful performance as shown in the self – fulfilling prophecy diagram.

The Self – Fulfilling Prophecy

Expectation of
success



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Self – Confidence
Increases

Performance is
Successful



MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF - CONFIDENCE

A player who has no expectation of success is similarly affected by the self – fulfilling prophecy.

The Self – Fulfilling Prophecy

No Expectation of
Success



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Self – Confidence
Decreases

Performance is
Unsuccessful



MENTAL SKILL 3 – CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

- Concentration is the ability to focus on task at hand and ignoring irrelevant cues or distractions.

Concentration (attention) is selective, shiftable, divisible

Selective – focus on certain cues and ignoring irrelevant ones



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Shiftable – broad focus to narrow focus – batter scans outfield for fielders then concentrate on pitcher



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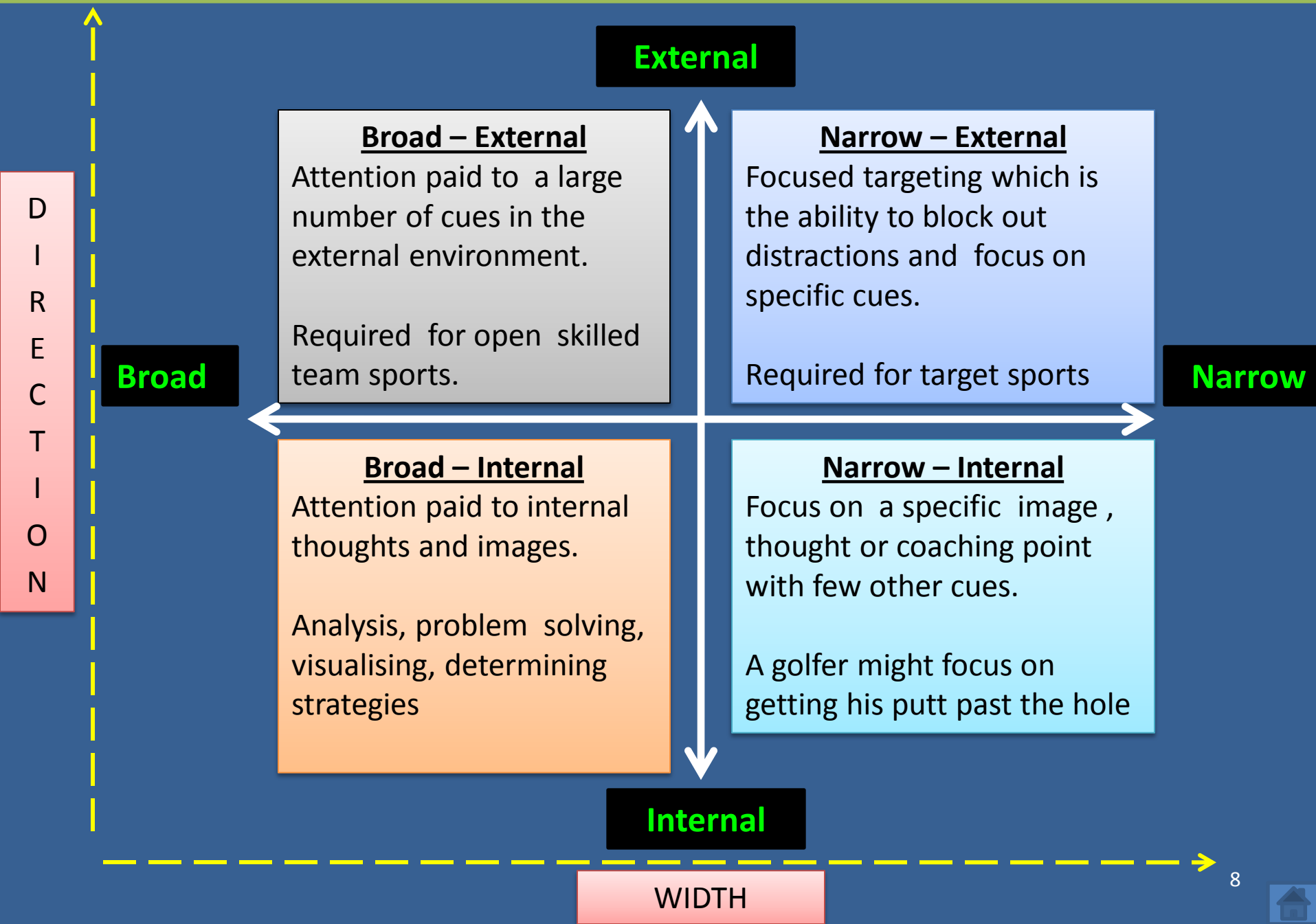
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Divisible – focus on more than one skill at a time – running, breaking a tackle and looking for team mate at same time



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Nideffer's Model of Attention



MENTAL SKILL 3 – CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

Most sports have both an external focus and an internal focus component if performance is to be successful.

A batsman in cricket starts with a broad external focus as he prepare to face the bowler. He looks around to see where the fielders are positioned, how far away they are from the bat etc and analyses this information.

As the bowler starts his run up, he switches to a narrow external focus to concentrate on the bowler and narrows his focus even further to concentrate on only one cue – the ball.

This process of refocusing is referred to as shifting attentional focus



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MENTAL SKILL 3 – CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

Concentration problems can be;

1. Internally caused
2. Externally caused

Internal Distracters

1. Attending to past events and past consequences – “last time I missed the shot.....”
2. Attending to future events and possible consequences – “if I miss this shot
3. Attending to irrelevant cues
4. Over - analysis of technique
5. Game pressure - choking



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Andy Roddick needs to maintain focus on the present to avoid irrelevant distracters which could negatively affect his performance



MENTAL SKILL 3 – CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

External Distracters

- Opponents / crowd deliberately trying to distract a performer's attention from the task at hand.
- Verbal distracters eg sledging
- Visual distracters eg the goalkeeper swaying from side to side as a player prepares to take a penalty



What external distracters would be present in this picture?

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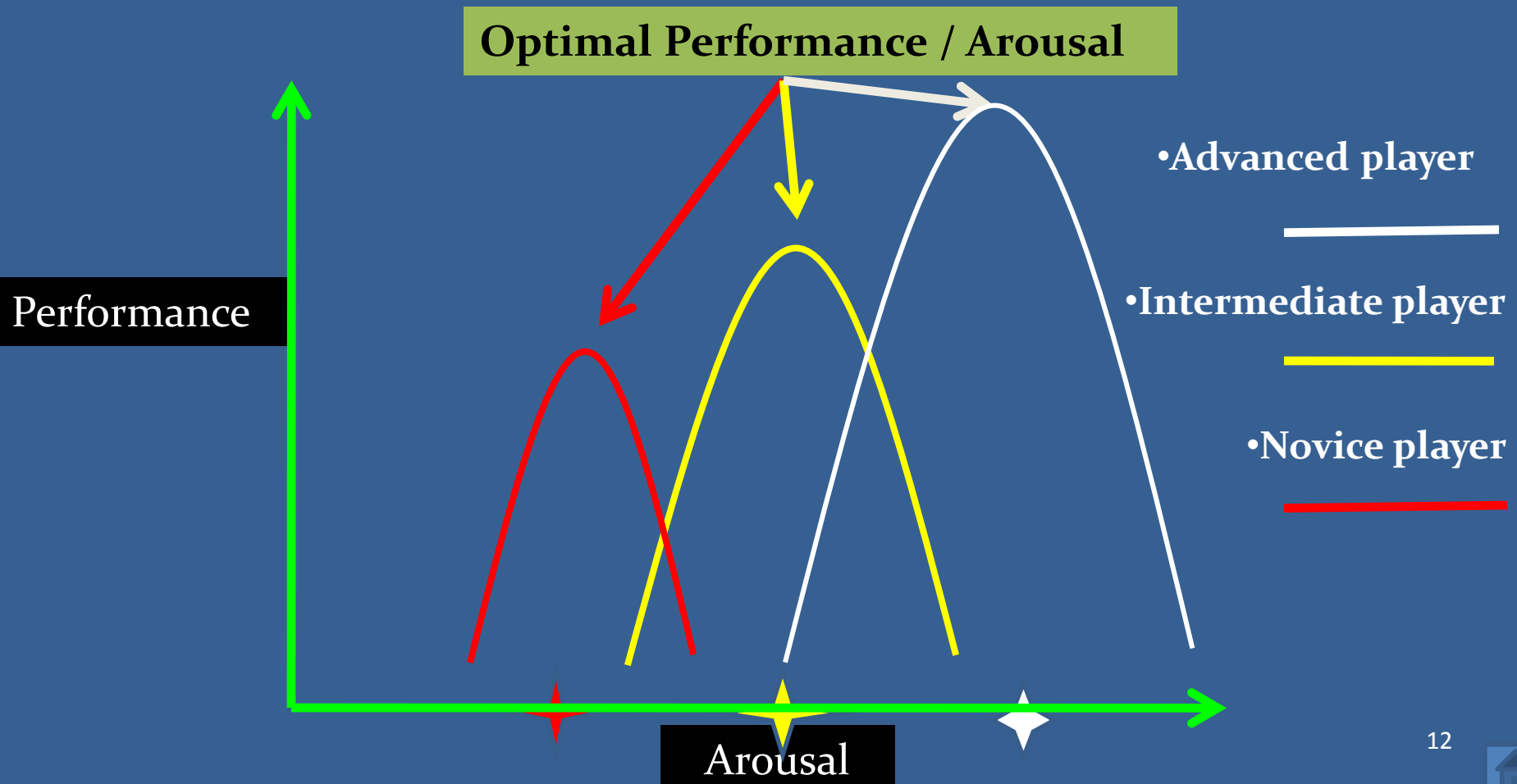
The most effective methods of improving concentration include the use of imagery, self talk, performance routines and goal setting.



Mental Skill 4: AROUSAL

Optimal arousal level is dependant on the skill level of the performer.

1. An advanced player needs higher levels of arousal to perform optimally
2. An intermediate level player needs a moderate level of arousal.
3. A novice only needs a low arousal level to perform at their peak





“I never hit a shot, even in practice, without having a sharp in – focus picture of it in my head” – Greg Norman.

Discuss internal and external imagery as it would apply to Greg Norman about to hit a tee shot.

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How might Rob Wariner, 400m champion, use imagery before competing? What senses could he incorporate in this process?

How would imagery and visualisation differ in this scenario?

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