

goal setting
relaxation.

Visualisation

concentration & attentional skills (focus)
mental imagery.

Marks

Question 22 (continued)

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

Psychological strategies are required by athletes to produce optimal arousal level for performance and to manage anxiety which may be detrimental to performance. Concentration & attentional skills or focus is a skill used particularly by elite athletes in order to ignore the many irrelevant cues in the environment & focus on the relevant ones which are important to enhance performance. It is about doing, not thinking about doing and focusing on all aspects of your performance. Goal setting is used by most athletes in order to maintain motivation and give athletes a goal to aim ^{for} and attempt to beat thus improving performance. Goals should be both long and short term. Long term goals should include things such as winning a gold medal, becoming 1st in the state or completing a race in a certain time e.g. 100m in 11secs. Short term goals serve as objectives along the way to completing long term goals e.g. running 4 times a week for 2 months, losing 4kg in 3 months or beating an opponent you have never beaten. Goals must be measurable, skill orientated, attainable, and timely, and specific. Various techniques of Relaxation are used by athletes to lower anxiety & produce optimal arousal.

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Question 22 (continued)

to enhance performance. It may involve: deep breathing, meditation, ^{e.g. yoga} sports massage or be in the form of crowd support, coach pep talk, psyche up techniques or self talk. Every athlete responds differently to different relaxation techniques. Mental imagery and visualisation are very similar. Mental imagery involves creating an image of a skill in your head from previous skills that have been performed successfully. For example a gymnast pictures vault in her mind before competing as a mental practice of how the skill should be performed. ^{to create a feeling of how the skill feel when performed correctly} Visualisation involves using all bodily senses to create an image of various stages of a skill and creating a picture of how the skill should look if performed correctly. Every athlete reacts differently to different psychological techniques. Finding those suited to the individual to enhance performance is the role of the sports psychiatrist. Studies have shown when psychological techniques are used effectively they can improve performance. Increased knowledge of this effect has been determined due to the growing realisation of the importance of psychology in sport & thus the role of the sports psychiatrist has grown.

End of Question 22