

**Student Name: Camille Powell**

**COUN6215/7415 Applied Sport Psychology  
Final Exam (100 points)**

**Exam Instructions:**

1. Select and **complete 4** of the following 11 case studies.
2. Each case study will be worth approximately 25 points.
3. The case studies selected are up to your discretion.
4. The space provided after each question is not an indication of how long your answer for that question should be. Use the amount of space you require to provide the information requested.
5. This is a take home exam and you are allowed to use outside materials to complete the case studies; however, you are expected to complete the questions on your own without help from other students or outside practitioners.
6. **Before submitting your final exam, please delete the case studies you did not complete from this word document.**

**DUE DATE: The exam is due NO later than 11:55 p.m. Pacific time on Wednesday of Week 11.** Grades are due the following week so time is needed to grade your exams.

*Note: 10 points per day will be deducted for exams being turned in late*

### Case Study 3 - Helping Christy Experience Flow

**Promoting Passion.** Last season Christy had a basketball game where she was in the zone. Everything she did worked, and her performance was effortless and automatic. Every shot she took went in. She played great defense, including 5 steals because she seemed to know what the other team was going to do before they did it. Finally, she had 11 assists because she saw the floor so well, anticipated what her teammates and opponents would do and stayed calm and poised under pressure.

Christy has since found out that she was experiencing Flow, a peak performance experience that has greatly enhanced her passion for basketball. Christy wants to experience Flow again, as often as possible for as long as possible. She has become obsessed with basketball and with trying to experience Flow whenever she practices and competes. It has become the major reason she plays the game.

**Answer the following 5 questions about Flow. Explain your rationale for your answers in detail. Your rationale is equally important to your actual response.**

1. Review the major characteristics that define Flow for Christy? Explain each one.

The major characteristics that define Flow according to Burton & Raedeke (2008)

include:

“athletes in flow have complete confidence in their skills, which enables them to perform effortlessly and automatically, without conscious thought...Athletes in flow are completely focused and absorbed in their performance, and their heightened focus makes them aware of everything going on around them that relates to their performance. Potential distractions such as the audience just fade into the background. Because of their confidence they feel that they have complete control and that they can do no wrong. They may sense how the action will unfold ahead of time. Sport execution comes easily and naturally. Flow happens when they let it happen.” (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p. 36).

Athletes experience flow when they have complete confidence in their abilities to perform effectively, meaning they are free of doubt and worry and can trust in their process. When they can trust in their process with their high self-confidence, they are free of conscious thought (e.g. thinking about what to do and how to do it), which can inhibit flow and, in turn, allows them to experience automaticity in skill execution. When they have complete confidence, are free of conscious thought, and experiencing automaticity, they are able to be completely focused in their performance, and any potential distractions just fade away, as time and space suspends itself while they experience complete absorption in the experience.

Additionally, as mentioned in Williams & Kane (2015), athletes who experience flow, compared to those who do not, have higher pre- event self-confidence, higher perceived ability, a task goal orientation, and lower anxiety. When athletes have high self-confidence (i.e., a feeling of self-assurance), increased sense of competence (i.e., belief in one's ability to execute a specific skill or task), are focused on the tasks (i.e., the sport appropriate cues) and the process of the performance, they experience less anxiety (i.e., excessive worry), because they have complete trust in their abilities to perform and they are able to remain focused on the task relevant cues to support optimal concentration, which lowers the presence anxiety.

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), concentration and arousal level have an inverted U-shape relationship. Up to a certain point as arousal goes up concentration improves. When the athletes have a high sense of competence and confidence, they perform optimally under appropriately challenging conditions, because their arousal level

is raised to optimal levels to experience total absorption in their performance, which increases their chances of experiencing flow.

2. What strategies can Christy use to increase her chances to experience Flow? Why?

One is more likely to experience flow when they have the following characteristics, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008), “control of their attention; control of their motivation; self-regulated with their energy-management; stress management skills; and high self-confidence.” (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p. 37). A Mental skills training (MST) program would support Christy in developing the attention control, motivation control, self-regulation, energy-management, stress-management skills, and increase her self-confidence, all of which lead to experiencing flow states.

The strategies from MST that Christy can use to control her attention, motivation, self-regulation, and increase her high self-confidence include, energy-management strategies, such as relaxation and energization techniques. Relaxation and energization techniques would help Christy to establish the appropriate arousal level to support concentration to effectively direct her attention on task relevant cues as well as increase her sense of confidence in her abilities. Additionally, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008) Christy can use positive self-talk to achieve appropriate motivation levels and high self-confidence.

In addition, Diaphragmic breathing is a relaxation strategy that would be beneficial to incorporate to help Christy to lower her arousal level with other relaxation strategies such as imagery relaxation and cued relaxation. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008).

Imagery relaxation is a very effective strategy to alleviate anxiety and achieve desirable relaxation levels. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008):

“Imagery relaxation has athletes imagine a place that they already find deeply relaxing...Athletes can think of their relaxation, place the spot where they always feel comfortable and safe, to trigger deep relaxation. Athletes should picture themselves in their relaxation place as vividly as possible, hear the sounds, smell the air, feel the sand, use all their senses to envision the place. The more they can feel themselves to be in this relaxation place, the more relaxing it will be. They should regularly practice imagining this place until they create it in their mind’s eye quickly and feel the associated relaxation.” (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, pp. 87-88).

Imagery relaxation is one of the most effective strategies for achieving desirable relaxation levels in combination with diaphragmic breathing. Imagery relaxation in combination with diaphragmic breathing creates a deep relaxation state that lays the foundation for cued relaxation. Cued relaxation would be an effective strategy for Christy to incorporate in performance settings to efficiently achieve deep relaxation states and support a mindset that would allow for flow states in performance.

As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), in Cued Relaxation, “athletes develop a strong association with a chosen cue word and deep levels of relaxation, with sufficient practice, the cue word triggers a relaxation response. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p. 90). In addition, Christy could incorporate different energization strategies such as psych-up

breathing and imagery energization to raise her arousal level to support optimal concentration if her arousal level is ever too low. As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), “Psych-up breathing involves quick, shallow breathing to rapidly transport as much oxygen as possible to the working muscles.” (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p. 90). Psych up breathing could help Christy to achieve optimal arousal levels to support flow states.

In addition, Christy could benefit from using Imagery energization strategies to encourage flow states. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008) Imagery energization involves “the athletes imagining themselves reliving a competitive experience in which they were highly energized, experience little fatigue, and demonstrated great stamina while performing successfully. To promote total energization, athlete must vividly recall what they saw, felt, tasted, smelled, and touched, as well as their predominant mood and emotions.” (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p. 93). By reliving a previously energizing experience as vividly as possible in the mind’s eye, it can evoke the same or similar arousal level that was present in the previous experiences associated with flow states, which would help Christy to identify her different arousal levels that best serve flow states and decide what methods could take her to the appropriate mindset to support flow states.

In addition, Christy could benefit from using goal setting to optimize her motivation. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Goal setting gives athletes purpose, direction and provides a measure for progress, which helps create a positive mental

attitude and increase intrinsic motivations. The intrinsic motivation would optimize Christy's opportunity to experience flow states. Goal setting and the different strategies highlighted in the preceding would allow Christy to develop an optimal arousal level to direct her attention on task relevant cues and control her concentration appropriately to increase her sense of competence, confidence, and motivation, all of which are integral to experiencing flow.

3. What strategies can Christy's coach employ to help her experience Flow more often and longer? What strategies should her coach avoid that may inhibit Flow? Why?

As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), "Mental skills training can facilitate flow. Mentally tough athletes experience flow more often than others. Mentally tough athletes have more than just physical skills; they also have tremendous ability to psych themselves up for competition, manage their stress and remain in control of their emotions and concentrate intensely, and set challenging but realistic goals. They have the ability to visualize themselves being successful and then do what they visualized... They have superior mental skills." (Burton & Raedeke, 2020, p. 37). In order to experience flow more often Christy should improve her mental skills.

The strategies that Christy's coach can employ to help her experience flow more often and longer, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008), include imagery relaxation, diaphragmic breathing, goal setting and cued relaxation because they would allow Christy to have a more relaxed frame of mind to support optimal confidence levels and direct her attention on task-relevant cues to support automaticity in skill execution and allow for flow

to naturally unfold in the performance environment. In addition, the coach can employ mindfulness exercises to help Christy to experience flow more often and longer.

According to Williams & Kane (2015), “mindfulness is a form of present-moment awareness and has been linked to flow and peak performance...Mindfulness is associated with task relevant attention, loss of self-consciousness, and a sense of control, which also are characteristics of flow. Mindfulness training (which can include meditation and breathing exercises with an emphasis on awareness of body sensations, thoughts, and emotions) is associated with increased flow and improved performance.” (Williams & Kane, 2015, p. 162) Mindfulness training would allow Christy to develop more awareness of her thoughts, body, and emotions, so she can direct her experiences more efficaciously to promote flow states.

Right now, Christy is obsessed with achieving flow states, which indicates her arousal level might be too high and she is thinking too much about achieving flow, both of which can inhibit optimal concentration and automaticity in skill execution and, ultimately impede her from experiencing flow. As a result, the strategies that the coach may want to avoid right now would include energization techniques. She does not need to raise her arousal level anymore.

Christy would benefit from using relaxation strategies to support her in relaxing into her process to more easily experience flow. The different relaxation strategies the coach can employ would include, imagery relaxation, cued relaxation, diaphragmic breathing, goal setting, and mindfulness training, all of which would allow Christy to experience flow more easily.

The preceding relaxation techniques as highlighted in Burton & Raedeke (2008), help athletes to achieve deep relaxation states that support optimal concentration, lower anxiety levels, increase competence and confidence in their ability to perform, all of which support automaticity in skill execution and allow for flow states to occur organically. Goal setting would support Christy in focusing on the process and task-relevant cues of her performance and optimize her concentration and competence, increasing her confidence and increase her likelihood of experiencing flow. Mindfulness would allow her to more easily direct her experiences to optimize the features that encompass flow states.

4. Pick another sport and identify strategies to promote Flow for athletes in that sport. What is the rationale for each suggestion?

Three-Day Eventing (TDE) is the chosen sport to identify strategies to promote flow for athletes. Regardless of the sport, flow is achieved under generally the same conditions. As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), flow is experienced more often in athletes who have control over their attention, motivation, energy-management, and who have high self-confidence. However, the strategies for attaining those features and characteristics that support flow, may be different based on the sport conditions. For instance, golf requires more composure, relaxation and is a self-paced task, so the features that would support flow would be more relaxation techniques, to support lower arousal levels. On the other hand, soccer is fast paced and may require higher arousal levels (e.g., achieved through energization techniques) to support optimal concentration, to support flow states. Different sports require different arousal levels to support appropriate levels of concentration, competence and confidence to support automaticity in skill execution, minimize levels of anxiety and allow for flow states respectively.

TDE is a unique sport in that the athlete is not the only participant that allows for flow states. TDE involves an athlete and their teammate that is a horse with its own psychology and physiology that can be greatly impacted by the performance environment. In order to achieve flow states in the sport of TDE, the rider needs to focus on their process and make their process automatic, so no matter what happens around them, they can depend on their process and task relevant cues to support them and the horse in performance. The goal is to get both horse and rider in a relaxed state to allow for flow states to unfold. For instance, the horse is susceptible to being startled by the external (e.g. audience, dogs, random sounds) and internal (e.g., fears, nerves, tension) environment of the rider, which can throw the athlete out of their relaxed state and inhibit flow states. In order to optimize the chances of achieving flow states for TDE the athlete would benefit from incorporating the following strategies.

Positive imagery and imagery relaxation, cued relaxation, diaphragmic breathing, process goals, and positive talk scripts would all be effective strategies to incorporate to keep the rider relaxed, confident, and concentrated on their process to support them and their horse in achieving the right state of mind to optimize flow states. According to Williams & Kane (2015), “Athletes who learn to be confident, focus their attention on the task at hand, control their anxiety, and have appropriate and challenging goals may experience flow and peak performance more often. (Williams & Kane, 2015, p. 162) For instance, the athlete can incorporate: a process plan (task-oriented) that they use every ride to get their horse and themselves in the appropriate mindset to allow for flow to occur; positive self-talk scripts to increase their self-confidence, which is essential for flow states; positive imagery, to increase

their sense of competence and, in turn, their confidence in their ability to perform to allow for flow states to unfold; and imagery relaxation and cued relaxation would decrease any tension and allow for the rider to be more relaxed, which would support the horse's relaxation level and optimize flow states.

Applying the preceding techniques, would allow the athlete to create an image of an optimal performance to optimize their confidence and direct their attention on task-relevant cues to support their performance process and allow for automaticity, achieve optimal arousal level to have optimal concentration to allow for flow states to unfold in performance.

In addition, the riders can use The Individualized Zone of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) highlighted in Williams & Kane (2015), which identifies the emotional patterns in successful performances. Optimal performance states, which are unique to each individual athlete, can include both positive and negative emotions, which lead to flow states. The athletes would use the IZOF to identify their thoughts and experiences associated with their flow states, so they can identify the best strategies (e.g. relaxation, energization, goal setting, imagery, self-talk) to employ to achieve the mindset and conditions to allow for flow states respectively.

5. What other strategies do you find helpful to promote Flow? Why?

Other strategies that I find helpful to promote flow include, Mindfulness techniques and Focusing on my process with my horse. According to Williams & Kane (2015), Mindfulness techniques (e.g. observing my thoughts, experiences and body sensations), allow experiences to just move through the individual while they stay grounded in the present

moment. For instance, in order to effectively control my horse, I have to be totally present in the moment to take in the appropriate feedback to respond efficaciously to support my horse and my performance. I give my horse my full attention. I focus on the sound of his breath, I hear the sounds of his rhythm, I feel my horse is through and engaged in his back, I feel the impulsion and the power of his stride, I feel the quality of his connection, and I feel the balance and alignment in his body. When I focus on the feel of my horse, I am able to respond automatically to the process that I have delivered every ride in my routine to attain all of those quality features in my horse's performance. The consistency, confidence, and concentration established through my routines and strategies, allows for my flow states to unfold naturally.

When I am totally present on my horse it allows me to accurately pick up on the input from my horse and effectively coordinate my cues, which allows me to feel complete confidence in my ability to perform and I become completely absorbed in the process and anything that goes on around or within me that does not support my performance just dissipates. My process and my horse's condition in performance are my focus, I recognize that my emotions do not deserve my attention, and I appraise everything else as enhancers to my performance. For example, the audience becomes a source of motivation (i.e., I tell myself, the audience gets to observe what disciplined, systematic practice produce).

In addition, I approach every ride with the same mentality, so I step into flow regularly. My horses relax into the consistency of my approach, which allows us to be relaxed in our process, with confidence in our ability to perform effectively and allow for our skills to unfold and flow just happens. Additionally, I use imagery before every performance to allow me to feel, see, and hear myself successfully execute my desired performance, which reinforces my complete confidence in my abilities to perform efficaciously and allows me to step into flow during performance. In addition, my arousal level matches the performance environment and when I focus on my process, it allows my arousal level to achieve optimal levels to maximize my concentration. If I ever feel my arousal level gets too high, I just take a deep breath and I use positive self-talk to acknowledge that my high arousal levels serve me well, especially out on cross-country, where the intensity level is high, and it can be dangerous.

## Case Study 4 - Patrick's Mental Skills' Dilemma

**You Have It or You Don't.** Patrick is a promising offensive lineman who wants to play in the NFL. Consider these two options - one where he has a physical problem and the other a mental issue.

**Option 1** --At 6'7" and over 300 pounds, he had the frame pro scouts want, along with good feet and exceptional lateral quickness and agility. His technique was good on both run and pass blocking, and he is an intelligent student who plays smart on the field. However, the pro scouts feel he lacks the upper body strength to play in the League, so they recommend a variety of strategies to enhance his upper body strength and flexibility that will help him reach his goal of playing at the next level. They project him as a 5th or 6th round draft pick.

**Option 2** - Although pro scouts generally like Patrick's physical skills, they have real questions about his mental toughness. He gets frustrated against smaller, quicker players and often loses focus and gets holding penalties. Against big physical defenders, Patrick's lack of upper body strength is a major liability, and he often gets easily frustrated when he gets overpowered and may give up on the next play. Although his physical strength problem is correctable, scouts see Patrick's lack of mental toughness as a big problem that will hurt his consistency, attitude and resilience. The scouts suggest that Patrick does not have the mental toughness to make it in the NFL, and they believe he won't be drafted or picked up as a free agent.

These pro scouts obviously see Patrick's mental and physical problems differently.

**Answer the following three questions about mental skills. Explain your rationale for your answers in detail because it is as important as your actual response.**

1. What is the reason for this differential view of mental and physical skills? Is there a flaw in the scouts' logic? If so, what?

It appears that the scouts fail to see the connection between mental and physical skills.

Physical and mental skills contribute to the success of the other. They have a symbiotic relationship. For example, when physical skills are developed, they can increase the athletes' sense of competence and confidence in their ability to perform, which supports them both mentally and physically in performance. In addition, when competence and confidence are developed in the athletes according to Burton & Raedeke (2008) through mental skills, such as energy-management techniques that support optimal arousal levels and allow for appropriate concentration to focus on process cues and their ability to perform, it minimizes their anxiety,

increases their competence and confidence to execute physical skills effectively, and improves physical performance.

Further, the scouts' logic in doubting Patrick's mental toughness to make it in the NFL, and therefore he should not be drafted is flawed. While Patrick may currently be lacking in mental toughness, his mental toughness is not fixed. In other words, Patrick's mental toughness can be developed through mental skills training. Mental skills needed for success in sport can be developed through systematic practice. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), MST is a systematic process for developing important mental training tools, skills, and plans, to support optimal performance. Therefore, Patrick's performance can be improved and his emotional outbursts can be managed with appropriate mental skills training to allow for optimal performance worthy of being drafted in the NFL.

2. Name at least 2 other myths about mental training. What are the flaws in logic for each of these myths?

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008):

Myth 1: MST Takes Too Much time: Coaches identify time as the biggest roadblock to implementing mental skills training. Devoting 15-20 minutes several days per week may be most effective in introducing new mental training tools. As little as 5-10 minutes a day can be beneficial. Integrate it into practice. It does not take extra practice and has another benefit it enhances practice quality. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, p.42). The myth that mental skills training takes too much time is flawed with respect to Burton & Raedeke (2008), mental skills can be systematically integrated in the physical skills training for 5-10

minutes per day, during each physical practice. 5-10 minutes per physical practice not only does not take too much time but also adds to the quality of their physical training. For instance, while they practice a skill execution, they can incorporate imagery skills, such as paying attention to the sensations in their muscles as they use the skill in motion, what they see, hear, and feel, in order to maximize their imagery skills as well as improve their skill execution with their added attention on the process.

The second chosen Myth: Mental skills are innate. As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008): It is easy to believe that mental toughness is an innate characteristic that cannot be taught. Coaches may believe there is little they can do to improve the athletes' mental toughness. It is true that we are all born with certain physical and psychological predispositions and that mental skills are shaped and developed through the experiences of every-day life. Being motivated, staying calm under pressure, and maintaining confidence in the face of adversity are not simply innate qualities. They are mental skills that great athletes have learned through experience or MST. MST is a more efficient way of developing these skills (e.g., 5-10 minutes at practice). (p. 43). While many athletes may have predispositions or strengths that allow them to be more confident or mentally tough than other athletes, mental skills are not innate, and they can effectively be developed through systematic training such as through MST. As highlighted in Burton & Raedeke (2008), calmness under pressure and the resilience in confidence in challenging environments are developed through experiences. MST is the expedited method of achieving the preceding qualities that support mental toughness.

A third myth is that mental skills provide a quick fix. As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), “Mentally training ideally should begin in the off-season, or at least at the beginning of the season. Would you advise your athletes to change their physical game plan shortly before competition? Probably not, you realize that after countless hours of practice, athletes can perform a skill automatically without conscious thought. Introducing a new skill may cause them to start thinking about how to perform the skill and thus disrupt their performance. The same is true for mental skills training. It takes time and effort and is not a magical, quick-fix program. (p. 43). Mental skills are just like physical skills and they take time to develop. In other words, they should not be incorporated into an athletes training program right before a big competition with the expectation that their performance will automatically be enhanced.

3. What are the similarities in mental and physical training? How does each impact performance?

The similarities in mental and physical training include that they both can be taught and learned and take time and consistency to develop. As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), “Much like physical skills, mental skills can be taught and learned. No great athlete, no matter how physically talented, ever achieved success without endless hours of practice. Physical skills need to be learned and mastered through well-developed learning progressions and countless practice repetitions. The same is true for MST. Learning mental skills takes time, effort, and patience. MST is a skill-oriented approach that requires systematic practice. Mental skills are integral to optimal performance. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008, P.42). Both physical and mental skills can be taught, learned, and should

be practiced with consistency to maximize their potential to support the athlete in performance. In addition, they both are essential for optimal performance.

Further, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008), the process for developing mental skills is similar to teaching the physical skills of your sport. As physical skills, MST involves a three-phase process: education, acquisition, and implementation. Education involves developing an awareness of strengths and weaknesses; Acquisition involves developing skill basics; and implementation involves extensive practice, simulations in competitive environments to practice skill transfer, simulate adversity, integration of skills in competitive environments, and systematically evaluate and revise skill programs. (p. 44). Physical and mental skills are attained through the same implementation strategies, including proper education, systematic acquisition, and consistent application of the skills to optimize performance.

As mentioned, mental and physical skills are both essential to optimal performance. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008) mentally tough athletes have more than just physical skills; they also have tremendous ability to psych themselves up for competition, manage their stress and remain in control of their emotions, concentrate intensely, and set challenging but realistic goals. They have the ability to visualize themselves being successful and then do what they visualized. They have superior mental skills. (p.37). Mental skills allow athletes to control their motivation, attentional skills, stress management, energy management, and self-confidence, which allow them to execute their physical skills with precision and maximal effort and support performance success.

Mental training help athletes to more accurately execute their physical training. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008) Energy management skills help the athletes to get in optimal energy zones and the mindset that helps the athlete perform their physical skills at their best. Optimal performance can be disrupted by an arousal level that is too high or too low. Attentional skills help the athlete to focus on the right task and block out the rest. For example, as mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), self-confidence helps the athlete to believe in their ability to execute their physical skills effectively, which allows them to perform optimally and increases their confidence and reinforces the positive spiral of physical skills and mental skills supporting optimal performance.

In addition, even small adjustments in mental skills can have huge impacts on performance outcomes. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), for example, where time is a factor, a fraction of a second can make the difference in first and second. Mental skills training may be what it takes for the athlete to shave that fraction of the second. Those who train physically and mentally are the record breakers. (p. 38). Mental skills help athletes consistently execute the physical skills that they deliver in practice.

Further, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Mental skills training helps psychologically normal athletes develop the supernormal mental skills needed to excel, where a “normal” person would have difficult time handling the demands and pressures of being an athlete. (p. 42). Mental skills help athletes to develop the appropriate energy management strategies, attentional control, and confidence to support optimal physical skill execution.

## Case Study 5 – “Going for the Goal”

**Goal Dilemma.** Melanie, a young high school volleyball coach, comes to you for help motivating her athletes. She's curious if a goal setting program might be the answer to her team's motivational problems, but she doesn't know much about goal setting, particularly how to set up and run an effective program. Melanie wants her athletes to be more motivated in off-season conditioning, in the weight room, during practice and particularly in matches. Although the team has a poor work ethic, Melanie believes the girls will work hard if she organizes her program effectively. She suggests that her athletes' lack of motivation is a carryover from the previous coach's "country club" atmosphere that was more interested in having fun than in developing skills and striving to win. She hopes setting goals will re-channel her athletes' energy and help create a positive motivational climate. Is she right? Why or why not?

Based on your knowledge of goal setting, you know how goals are set is important. What are the key steps in the process of making goals work most effectively?

**Answer the following four questions that relate to essential components of effective goal setting program. Explain the rationale for your answers thoroughly, citing important information from the book and lectures. Your rationale will count as much as your actual response.**

1. What is the difference between process, performance and outcome goals? What is the **problem with outcome goals** that is hurting Melanie's team, and how can process and performance goals provide a better alternative for maximizing motivation and performance?

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), process goals focus on improving form, technique, and strategy. Performance goals address overall personal performance, such as running a faster time, throwing farther, or shooting a lower score. Outcome goals emphasize outperforming other competitors, as well as the objective outcome—that is, placing high or winning. (p. 53). The problem with outcome goals that is hurting Melanie's team, is that she is putting too much emphasis on the team gauging their success on outcomes. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), When people base their performance, self-confidence, and abilities on outcomes their self-confidence is likely to be very unstable. Think of all the variables that determine whether an athlete wins a competition: Their own performance, teammates, other competitors, officials, coaches,

situational factors such as equipment, playing fields, weather. Performance and process goals are controllable as possible. Outcome goals are not. (pp. 55-56). The following illustrates how the focus on outcome goals is a detriment to the team.

The fixation on outcome goals is decreasing the teams' sense of competence (i.e., belief in their ability to perform) because they are gaging their success and abilities on their outcomes, which is an unstable gage of success considering there are innumerable variables deciding any one outcome. The decrease in their sense of competence results in a decrease in their confidence, which elevates the teams' anxiety and interferes with their ability to perform further (i.e., increase in arousal levels impedes ability to effectively concentrate and efficaciously execute their skills (Burton & Raedeke, 2008)). The cycle of decreased competence and confidence from the focus on outcome goals as their only gage of success continues in a downward spiral and decreases their motivation to perform.

On the other hand, process and performance goals can help Melanie's team focus on the aspects that they can control, such as techniques and strategies that specifically support each team member to improve their individual performances, which will help the team to perform better as a whole. Their improved individual and team performance from established performance and process goals would help maximize their motivation. The increase in their sense of competence and ability to perform would increase their confidence, which increases their motivation to perform with an awareness that they can perform effectively.

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Process and performance goals allow for

flexibility and an optimal challenge level, which allows for optimal motivation. If goals become too challenging athletes can lose confidence in their ability to reach them, which can interfere with their ability to perform. (p. 56). Melanie's team would benefit from setting more process and performance goals as it increases their sense of competence and confidence, which optimizes their motivation.

Melanie and her team would benefit from understanding that successful athletes avoid evaluating themselves on the basis of every win or loss. They measure their progress by evaluating their own performances with performance and process goals, regardless of whether they win or lose. Athletes who use process and performance goals play with less anxiety and more self-confidence, and they concentrate, perform better, and feel more satisfied with their participation. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008). Unlike outcome goals, which are contingent on outside variables, performance and process goals allow athletes to have control over their performance success. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Process and performance goals identify specific behaviors the athlete is to achieve and attaining these goals does not depend heavily on others, which gives them opportunities to take credit for their own success, which increases their sense of competence and confidence.

Melanie could also relay the following information regarding the relationship between process, performance, and outcome goals. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), "Outcome goals require athletes to attain performance goals, such as running 100 meters in 10.22 seconds. To attain these performance goals, athletes must achieve a series of process goals that focus on improving form, technique, knowledge, or strategy,

such as getting a good start out of the blocks... outcome goals represent our ultimate destination, and performance and process goals are the paths for getting there. Disaster awaits if we focus too much on outcome without developing the “action plan” to achieve it. The action plan being the process and performance goals.” (p. 54). Understanding the preceding would help Melanie to more effectively develop individual and team process and performance goals to achieve the competence, confidence, and motivation to attain the outcome goals that she has originally projected for her team.

2. Many coaches use the **SMAART** goals approach to teaching their athletes what type of goals to set. **SMAART** stands for Specific, Measurable, Aggressive but Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Critique what is good and bad about this acronym, so Melanie can decide whether to use it or not with her team. **HINT: There are several problems here.**

The acronym provided above is incorrect. For one, the idea of goals being Aggressive is not conducive to a constructive mindset to achieve a goal, let alone support performance excellence in sport. According to Merriam-Webster (2020), Aggressive is defined: “marked by combative readiness; driving forceful energy or initiative.” (Merriem-Webster, 2020). The preceding features are generally characterized by higher arousal levels and rash decisions, whereas goal setting and attainment according to Burton & Raedeke (2008) is marked by systematic planning and optimal performance, which is achieved by appropriate arousal levels that support optimal concentration. In addition, the actual acronym was designed to reflect the following features.

According to Gilbert (2020), the actual acronym to reflect the goal approach to support athletes is **SMART** not **SMAART**. The **SMART** acronym stands for, Specific, Measurable, Attainable or Achievable (e.g., appropriate training resources, coaching support are provided),

Realistic (e.g., within the bounds of their capacities while stretching their current skill level), and Time-bound (e.g., have a due date). Looking at the actual **SMART** acronym, the good features include the following.

For one, the importance of the goals being Specific refers to giving the athlete a clear direction for what they want to see in their performance. The importance of the goals being Measurable allows for the athlete to effectively measure their progress as they strive to, and, reach their goals. The importance of goals being Attainable refers to setting goals that are reachable with the resources that they have get access in order to support them, which supports their motivation to set more goals as they achieve each preceding goal. The importance of goals being Realistic, is associated with their confidence and competence in their ability to achieve the goals that they set while still challenging them, which supports their motivation and desire to set goals going forward. The importance of goals being Time-bound helps keep the athletes on track and motivated with the understanding that they have deadlines to meet to reach their destination in their performance.

3. Many coaches and athletes don't use a systematic approach to setting and attaining goals. Briefly list the 5 steps of the **Goal Implementation Process** and identify the two most important steps Melanie needs to focus on. Make sure you explain why these steps are important.

The 5 Steps of the **Goal Implementation Process**, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008):

- 1) Set goals systematically: **Create a vision.** What long term achievements would they like to pursue? Draw a vision of their sport career and then translate their vision into 3-5 written objectives that spell out how they are going to improve their performance. **Develop a mission statement.** A mission gives meaning to training because it defines and focuses on exactly what you want to accomplish.

**Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.** Have athletes evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, with a focus on areas to be improved. They should identify three to five areas that most need improvement or that are so important that improvement is crucial regardless of their current skill level.

**Prioritize and coordinate goals.** When athletes have several goals, they need to rank them in order of importance. Some goals may need to be put on hold while athletes concentrate on others.

- 2) **Develop goal commitment:** Without goal commitment athletes will not put in the effort and strategies to achieve them. Help them have ownership.
- 3) **Construct action plans based on evaluating barriers:** Strategies to achieve goals include evaluating obstacles that may interfere with achieving them, such as understanding what is currently holding them back from achieving them.
- 4) **Give feedback and evaluate goal attainment:** Evaluate and feedback. For athletes to reach their goals they have to receive feedback. Using goals and feedback yields significantly better results than using goals or feedback alone. Adding feedback can raise goal productivity by an additional 17%.
- 5) **Reinforce goal achievement:** when an athlete achieves a goal reinforce their achievement to help them stay committed to goal achievement going forward.

The two most important steps that Melanie needs to focus on are Step 1 and Step 4. Step 1 is important because the athletes need to have clear direction for their goals, their current strengths and weaknesses to set appropriate goals, and understand which goals need to be attained first in order to maximize their performance success and goal-attainment. Step 4 is

important because feedback reinforces their process with their goals and helps the athletes to recognize if they are on the right track to both achieve their goals and maximize their performance. Further, as mentioned in the preceding, adding feedback can raise goal productivity by 17%.

4. What is a **"goal mentality"** and why is it an important in enhancing motivation on Melanie's volleyball team?

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), "A goal-mentality is a mind-set in which performers learn to love setting goals and then do so, spontaneously and systematically, in everything that they do. A goal mentality develops when setting goals becomes self-fueling, prompting high levels of intrinsic motivation and steadily increasing competence." (p. 63). A goal-mentality leads to more performance enhancing goal setting, supports intrinsic motivations, increased competence, and, in turn, confidence, which supports overall performance. It is important for Melanie's volleyball team to harness the benefits of a goal mentality because it promotes intrinsic motivations through successful goal outcomes to continue to effectively set goals which continues to increase competence, confidence, and motivations going forward.

## Case Study 6 - What You See Is What You Get

**Hitting an Ace.** Mary is a collegiate tennis player who has been struggling with her serving. Whenever she tries not to double fault, she seems to always hit the ball into the net or too deep. Mary's coach, Bill Mitchell, wants her to try imagery as a "feed forward" strategy (i.e., get information before performing to enhance success) to help her serve better. Mary has never used imagery before to enhance her sport performance, and she is skeptical about its effectiveness.

Mary tried using imagery to improve her serving after practice, but she couldn't seem to get a clear image of what she wanted to do and imagery seemed to make her serving worse rather than better.

**Based on your knowledge of imagery, answer the following five questions that relate to what Coach Mitchell can tell Mary about imagery to sell her on trying imagery as a tool to enhance her serving and to help her use imagery in ways that will maximize its effectiveness. Explain the rationale for your answers thoroughly, citing important information from the book and lectures. Your rationale will count as much as your actual response.**

1. What is "imagery" and why is it a better performance enhancement strategy for Mary to use than "visualization?"

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Imagery involves using the senses to create or re-create an experience in one's mind. Imagery of a sport skill is similar to performing the skill, except that athletes experience the action only in their minds. Imagery is a product of your memory system; pieces of information stored in your memory are used to build a meaningful image. Visualization only uses your vision, whereas imagery is a multiple sensory process involving, sight, feel (emotions and kinesthetic), touch, sound, smell, and taste. Imagery is a better performance enhancement strategy, as it involves multiple senses to create a more accurate experience in the mind's eye for Mary to more realistically rehearse and accurately execute her serve and any other performance.

2. What is the scientific explanation for why imagery would help Mary improve her serving? Is Mary's initial experience with imagery unusual? Why or why not?

The scientific explanation for why imagery would help Mary improve her serving has to do

with how our central nervous system processes brain activity from real and imagined experiences. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), “The central nervous system processes imagined information much as it does an actual experience. Imagery works by helping athletes to create a blueprint for performing a skill. Developing a strong mental blueprint helps make the skill automatic, which allows the athlete to perform the skill without having to think about technique. Imagery can also be used to program an automatic response to various situations that may arise. (p. 69). Our brains cannot discern between real and imagined experiences, therefore executing skills through imagery allows Mary to rehearse physical skills and performances ideally before actually executing them in practice and performance.

Mary’s initial experience with imagery is not unusual. Imagery is a skill and, as with any skill, needs quality time and systematic practice to develop. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), “When athletes first develop imagery, they may lack in imagery vividness and imagery control. Imagery vividness is like focusing a camera, a vivid image is sharp, clear details. Imagery control refers to what images they are choosing to image. For instance, some athletes relive their mistakes, which can be counterproductive because it engrains the poor performances.” (p. 70). Mary’s lack in imagery vividness and control is attributed to her lack of experience. Mary will develop her imagery skills to enhance vividness and harness controllability with the content she imagines with time and strategic practice.

3. What is the difference between an internal and external imagery perspective? Which should Mary use to enhance her serving?

The difference between internal and external imagery perspectives are the following. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), External imagery perspective refers to when the athlete sees and hears the image as if they are watching themselves on a screen. Internal imagery

perspectives refer to when an athlete experiences the event, seeing it through their own eyes and feeling the movements as if actually performing the skill.

Both internal and external imagery perspectives are effective at different times and for different reasons. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), “Athletes should decide which perspective helps them create the most vivid image possible. Athletes may find that internal imagery provides them with a greater kinesthetic feel than is possible with external imagery. It is difficult to feel the movements associated with perfect skill execution when viewing an external image. Internal imagery is effective in sports where the competitor must respond to a constantly changing environment. External imagery is well suited for evaluating and refining form.” (p. 70). Mary should use internal imagery perspective to enhance her skill execution, focusing on: her kinesthetic feel of her proper serve execution, such as her stance, her set, her stroke, her follow through, such as the sensations in her muscles; her sight of the perfect serving point to serve an ACE and the follow through as her racket passes through her sight line; the sounds that she hears with her perfect serve stroke; the smell of the fresh air; and her feelings of confidence as she delivers her best strokes. Following her internal imagery perspective, Mary should use her external imagery perspective to analyze her form.

4. Does Mary's imagery skill impact the performance enhancement effectiveness of imagery for her? Why? What 2 imagery dimensions does Mary need to develop to enhance her imagery skill? Explain each and give an example of a drill to develop each imagery dimension.

Mary’s imagery skill that she is currently using does not impact the performance enhancing effectiveness for her. She appears to be lacking imagery vividness, imagery control, and is not optimizing the imagery perspectives that would optimally support her, both internal imagery and external imagery perspectives. She is unaware of the preceding concepts and would benefit from

understanding their value and how she can use them to support her imagery application to enhance her performance. She would also benefit from developing internal and external perspectives to better experience the feel of her performance and relive highlights to boost her confidence. (Burton & Raedeke, 2008). She needs to develop imagery vividness and imagery control, to control her image content and provide a clear image of the performance enhancing images in order to enhance her performance and reap the benefits of imagery.

As mentioned in Burton & Raedeke (2008), “Athletes who cannot create a clear, detailed, vivid, lifelike image or who cannot control what happens in their imagery will benefit from simple imagery exercise.” (p. 71). According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), some drills to help develop each imagery dimension, include looking at a photograph, closing your eyes and attempting to recall the photo in as many details as possible. This drill would help Mary to establish vividness and controllability and an external imagery perspective. In addition, Mary can practice imagery while using a simple skill. She can execute the skill and then close her eyes and go through the same motions and attempt to recreate the sensations, sights, sounds, feelings, and touch (i.e., making sure to involve as many senses as possible). The more senses that she involves the more lifelike the image will be. This drill would help Mary to establish more controllability, vividness, and an internal imagery perspective.

5. List three strategies that will help Mary enhance her imagery ability and explain why each is important.

Different strategies that will help Mary to enhance her imagery ability include, mindfulness, the Sport arena technique, Sport equipment technique, and observations while watching video clips. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Mindfulness would be effective in supporting her imagery ability by directing her attention toward cues where

greater awareness is desired by asking her to become more mindful of her sensory experience while performing a skill. After developing more awareness, she can recall those sensory experiences from the actual performance to image her imagined performance to create a more vivid and controllable picture. The more senses athletes stimulate during imagery, the more image and lifelike the image becomes.

In addition, according to Burton & Raedeke (2008), the sport arena technique would be effective in helping Mary to develop more sensory awareness in performance environments. She can use the sport arena technique to imagine herself in the sport arena to help her imagine feelings and smells associated with her sport performance environment, which helps her to more easily place herself in that position and create a more vivid and controllable image in performance settings. She can practice both internal and external perspectives in this sport arena technique to create more accurate imagery experiences to support optimal performance.

Mary can use the sport equipment exercise to help her to develop her imagery vividness, controllability and internal imagery perspective. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), the sport equipment exercise would help Mary to experience the feelings associated with using her equipment and what it sounds like to use the equipment to help her to imagine it more vividly.

According to Burton & Raedeke (2008) Mary can use the Sport Skill imagery exercise to help her to become more aware of the different parts of her body that she feels in performance, which allows her to combine all of the senses in imagery. She can use props to help her initiate her focus on her image and use partial movements to help create the image.

Mary should also understand that when you image in a position that is different from the skill execution it can be hard to image because it is not executed from that position. The sport skill imagery exercise would help her to enhance her vividness, controllability, and internal imagery perspective.

Mary can also use observations from watching video clips before attempting to image the skill. Watching video clips help create auditory and sensory awareness. Watching video clips before attempting to imagine the skill would enhance her vividness and external imagery perspective, by creating a clear image of herself executing the same performance. Watching video clips also has the potential to enhance her internal imagery perspective and controllability by rehearsing the motions while watching the clips to more vividly imagine the experience with more skill accuracy.

All of these strategies are important because they help Mary to develop vividness and controllability, enhance her different imagery perspectives respectively, as they all address the different senses that should be included when developing her images. In addition, Mary should also understand that she needs to be relaxed when she uses imagery, especially while she is first developing the skill of imagery. According to Burton & Raedeke (2008), Mary should practice imagery in a quiet environment away from distractions. For example, she can use mindfulness techniques to achieve a more relaxed state and an optimal mindset, considering imagery is a passive process that requires relaxed attention.

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