

Unit 9: Psychology for Sports Performance

Unit code: H/502/5508

QCF Level 2: BTEC First

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to make learners aware of the psychological factors which influence sports performance and how psychological skills can be developed.

● Unit introduction

How often do we hear sportspeople claiming that their success is down to their desire to win or to mental strength? At the top level most performers are equally talented and have trained equally hard, yet those who win seem to be those who can control their emotions best. We are becoming more and more aware of the importance of developing psychological skills, alongside physical skills, during the training period for use in competition. We are also becoming aware that there are differences between the needs of individual athletes and that psychological skills training programmes need to be tailored to the individual.

This unit is relevant for people who want to improve their understanding of the psychological factors involved in sport and who need knowledge of psychology in order to work as a sports coach, fitness instructor, or with athletes who are seeking to improve their performance.

This unit explores the subject of sport psychology and some of its key principles so learners can use these concepts to help improve sporting performance. The first part of the unit looks at the psychological demands of sports as these will differ between sports, as well as between individuals. The key psychological principles of motivation, personality and aggression and the role they play in sporting performance are then examined. Within this, learners will explore psychological skills which can be used to improve the performance of sportspeople, including the important skills of imagery, relaxation and goal setting. The final part of the unit gives learners a chance to put all their knowledge and skills together and produce a six-week training programme which addresses the psychological skills needed for a chosen sport.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the psychological demands of a selected sport
- 2 Know the impact motivation can have on sports performance
- 3 Know the effect of personality and aggression on sports performance
- 4 Be able to develop and review a psychological skills training programme to enhance own sports performance.

Unit content

1 Know the psychological demands of a selected sport

Psychological demands: the types of attitudes and psychological skills individuals need to perform at high levels eg anxiety control, self-confidence, motivation, control of aggression, competitiveness, concentration, decision-making and problem solving

2 Know the impact motivation can have on sports performance

Motivation: definition; views eg trait centred, situation centred and interactional views; different motives for sport participants eg intrinsic and extrinsic factors, achievement motivation, attribution theory

Strategies: used to maintain and increase motivation eg goal setting, imagery, self-talk

3 Know the effect of personality and aggression on sports performance

Personality: definition; trait and situational approaches; nature versus nurture; personality types eg introverts and extroverts, type A and type B; impact of personality on sports participation and sports performance

Aggression: definitions (aggression and assertion); differentiation between aggression and assertion; types of aggression eg hostile and instrumental; causes of aggression

Controlling aggression: methods eg anger management, controlled breathing exercises; ways to enhance performance through controlling aggression

4 Be able to develop and review a psychological skills training programme to enhance own sports performance

Assessment: assessing strengths and areas for improvement; methods of analysis, eg coach, self, peers, performance profiling

Programme: SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) objectives; psychological skills eg building motivation, developing self-confidence, changing concentration span, controlling anxiety, dealing with success and failure; strategies eg relaxation skills, goal setting, visualisation, imagery, self-talk

Recording progress: methods eg diary, logbook, portfolio, video, observation records, witness statements

Review: against objectives and goals; strengths and areas for improvement; strategies for attainment of future goals

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe four psychological demands of a selected sport	M1 explain four psychological demands of a selected sport	
P2 describe the impact of motivation on sports performance	M2 explain the impact of motivation on sports performance and two strategies that can be used to maintain and increase motivation	D1 analyse the impact of motivation on sports performance and two strategies that can be used to maintain and increase motivation
P3 describe two strategies that can be used to influence motivation		
P4 describe personality and how it affects sports performance		
P5 describe aggression and two strategies that can be used to control it	M3 explain two strategies that can be used to control aggressive behaviour	D2 evaluate two strategies that can be used to control aggressive behaviour
P6 assess own attitudes and psychological skills in a selected sport, identifying strengths and areas for improvement [RL1, SM2]		
P7 plan, carry out and record a six-week training programme to improve psychological skills for a selected sport, with tutor support [IE1, RL2]	M4 independently plan, carry out and record a six-week training programme to improve psychological skills for a selected sport	
P8 review the psychological skills training programme, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. [RL3]	M5 review the psychological skills training programme, explaining strengths and areas for improvement.	D3 review the psychological skills training programme, justifying strengths and areas for improvement.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit should be viewed as an introduction to sports psychology. Learners who complete this unit should be participating in sport competitively on a regular basis. Learners should also have access to a coach/coaching team. The unit will provide a basic introduction for each of the learning outcomes.

Tutor input is necessary in order to cover the theoretical aspects of the unit. However, the unit should be delivered in a practical environment wherever possible. Learners will need information on how to prepare mentally for sports performance and how this can be achieved effectively.

When assessing their own psychological skills, learners should be advised to undertake a variety of assessments to gain this information, for example using performance profiling. Assessment could be completed by the coach, peers, parents or self. Once learners have completed assessments they should be directed towards setting specific objectives and goals for their development programme. For example, the ability to focus and re-focus, maintain confidence during sports performance, adopt correct attentional focus and concentration in a match situation, maintain motivation levels, control anxiety and deal with worry, deal with success and failure, adopt a professional attitude and promote skills in teamwork.

Once these objectives have been agreed learners can then plan the programme to meet the psychological demands identified through the assessment. The plan itself should be over a period of six weeks, during which the learner must complete a diary/logbook that will show clearly their progression towards the objectives and goals.

After completing the training programme learners will review their development against the specified objectives and goals, and will be expected to set themselves long-term goals for enhancing future psychological performance in sport. Learners should identify with coaching staff, and other experts, how these goals could be fully attained and the activities that could be undertaken to ensure that they are met in full.

Tutors could ask learners to produce presentation materials to describe different types of personality and the two types of aggression. If possible, learners could use professional sportspeople as examples of people who would be extreme personality types. When describing the effect personality has on sports performance learners should again use relevant examples from the world of sport and comment on their success or failure. The presentation should also examine the role aggression can play in sport. Learners should be advised to concentrate on their own sport and possibly select sports performers who have used aggression in positive and negative ways.

When learners are completing their psychological assessments it is important that they record the methods used in a written format. After the assessment has taken place learners should then consult tutors, coaches, sports psychologists and discuss a programme that could be implemented to improve their psychological skills and attitudes during sports performance. The support learners require to put this information together will determine the overall grade awarded. The learner should then carry out the six-week programme and record the developments in their logbook or diary. This should be completed after each session providing information on the development of psychological skills and attitudes. After completing the programme, learners should review the programme, examine areas for improvement and discuss how these areas could be improved for future performance.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction and overview of the unit
Assignment 1: The Psychological Demands of a Selected Sport (P1, M1). Tutor introduces the assignment brief
Methods of identifying the psychological demands of a sport. Lecture followed by learner activity in groups
Researching how teams develop and function: learner activity
Assignment 2: The Impact Motivation Can Have on Sports Performance (P2, P3, M2, D1). Tutor introduces the assignment brief
Definitions of motivation: compare and contrast three different definitions. Learner activity
Views of motivation: in groups learners can examine different views and report back on their research
Theories of motivation: in groups learners can each examine a theory of motivation and present it to the rest of the group
Practical session on trying out methods of enhancing motivation
Assignment 3: The Effects of Personality and Aggression on Sports Performance (P4, P5, M3, D2). Tutor introduces the assignment brief
Personality and methods of assessing personality: lecture followed by learner activities
Researching the effect of personality on sports performance – learners to perform a library-based research exercise
Aggression: definition and application. Tutor-led input with learner activities
Dimensions of aggression: learner activities to find examples and differentiate between acts
Methods of controlling aggression. Practical session for learners to try out methods
Assignment 4: Preparing a Psychological Skills Training Programme (P6, P7, P8, M4, M5, D3). Tutor introduces the assignment brief
Methods of assessing psychological skills. Tutor-led input followed by practical tasks for learners
Developing a psychological skills training programme. Learner-based activities – includes time for programme review
Review of the unit

Assessment

For P1, learners need to describe the psychological demands of a selected sport. Learners need to develop a list of psychological demands and then choose which four demands are most appropriate, and to what extent, for the sport of their choice. This information could be presented as a poster, adding a visual element to accompany written descriptions.

For P2, learners need to research the topic of motivation, its definition and dimensions. Learners can then produce a report covering the impact of motivation on sports performance and describing two strategies (P3) that can be used to influence motivation.

For criteria P4 and P5, learners need to research the topics of personality and aggression and show how these affect sporting performance. This information can be presented in the form of a presentation where learners use sportspeople as examples to back up their points.

For criteria P6, P7 and P8, learners will carry out a six-week project to develop their own psychological skills. Initially, they will assess their own psychological skills and then use these assessments to set themselves goals and objectives to work towards (P6). They will then plan and carry out a six-week training programme (P7) to meet these objectives and goals. Learners will need to record their progress via a suitable method, for example using a diary or logbook. Once the six weeks have been completed they will review their progress and identify strengths and future areas for improvement (P8). Evidence for these assessment criteria can be provided through the use of a logbook which learners will maintain to show their goals and objectives, their weekly progress and their final review. To achieve a maximum of a Pass grade this work will be closely supported by the tutor.

For M1, which builds on P1, learners will explain the relevance of each of the psychological demands of their chosen sport and this can be shown on their poster. For M2, learners will need to explain how motivation impacts on sports performance and explain two strategies that can be used to maintain and increase motivational impact on the individual, and the effect that they have. For M3, learners need to explain methods used to control aggressive behaviour, providing an explanation of what they are and how they work.

For M4, learners need to independently plan and carry out the psychological skills training programme. For M5, learners will review the six-week psychological skills training programme, explaining the strengths and areas for improvement.

In progressing from M2 to D1, learners will analyse the impact of motivation on sports performance and the two strategies used to influence motivation. In their analysis they need to look at the positive and negative consequences of motivation on sports performance and the strengths and areas for improvement of the two strategies used to influence motivation. For D2, learners will evaluate the strategies adopted to control aggressive behaviour by providing evidence to support the good and bad points of the strategies, and how they will affect sporting performance.

For D3, learners will review the programme and justify the strengths and the recommendations they have made for improving the psychological skills training programme. Learners will need to provide supporting reasons for their explanations provided for M5, which show how they arrived at their conclusions.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1	The Psychological Demands of a Selected Sport	As an assistant to a sports psychologist explore the psychological demands relevant for a chosen sport.	Poster
P2, P3, M2, D1	The Impact Motivation Can Have on Sports Performance	As an assistant to a sports psychologist you are required to research the topic of motivational methods used to influence motivation.	Report
P4, P5, M3, D2	The Effects of Personality and Aggression on Sports Performance	Using your knowledge of sports psychology you are required to present to a coach your knowledge of personality and aggression and how they influence sports performance.	Presentation Witness statement
P6, P7, P8, M4, M5, D3	Preparing a Psychological Skills Training Programme	Using yourself and your own sports performance as a case study you will develop a psychological skills training programme.	Practical work and logbook Observation records/ Witness testimony

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Sport sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Sport suite and the BTEC Sport and Exercise Sciences suite:

Level 2 Sport	Level 3 Sport	Level 3 Sport and Exercise Sciences
Exercise and Fitness Instruction	Sports Coaching	Sport and Exercise Psychology
Effects of Exercise on the Body Systems	Leadership in Sport	Instructing Physical Activity and Exercise
	Instructing Physical Activity and Exercise	Sports Coaching
	Psychology for Sports Performance	Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology

This unit links with the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for:

- Coaching, Teaching and Instructing at Level 2
- Achieving Excellence in Sports Performance at Level 3.

Essential resources

Effective delivery of this unit requires access to tests used to assess psychological skills and to normative data for interpretation of test results.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit focuses on the background knowledge of and skills in sports psychology that learners need to work in coaching or fitness instruction. Centres are encouraged to develop links with sports clubs who use sports psychologists or have coaches who implement psychological techniques. They could be invited as guest speakers or to give demonstrations of psychological techniques.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Adams M, Beashel P, Hancock J, Harris B, Phillippo P, Sergison A and Taylor I – *BTEC Level 2 First Sport Student Book* (Pearson, January 2010) ISBN 9781846906220

Adams M, Beashel P, Harris B, Johnson S, Phillippo P and Sergison A – *BTEC Level 2 First Sport Teaching Resource Pack* (Pearson, April 2010) ISBN 9781846907173

Beashel P, Sibson A and Taylor J – *Edexcel Sport Examined* (Nelson Thornes, 2004) ISBN 9780748777242

Jarvis, M – *Sport Psychology: A Student's Handbook* (Routledge, 2006) ISBN 9781841695822

Websites

BBC Sport	www.bbc.co.uk/sport
British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences	www.bases.org.uk
Istadia	www.istadia.com
Mind Tools	www.mindtools.com
Youtube	www.youtube.com

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning, carrying out and recording a six-week training programme to improve psychological skills for a selected sport, with tutor support
Reflective learners	<p>assessing own attitudes and psychological skills in a selected sport, identifying strengths and areas for improvement</p> <p>planning, carrying out and recording a six-week training programme to improve psychological skills for a selected sport, with tutor support</p> <p>reviewing the psychological skills training programme, identifying strengths and areas for improvement</p>
Self-managers	assessing own attitudes and psychological skills in a selected sport, identifying strengths and areas for improvement

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching the topics of motivation and aggression
Creative thinkers	developing their psychological skills training programme
Team workers	practising psychological skills training techniques
Self-managers	carrying out their six-week psychological skills training programme

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching the effect of personality on sports performance, how teams develop and function, and theories of motivation
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	recording data from psychological skills tests
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	recording data from psychological skills tests
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	implementing psychological skills assessment tests and recording confidential data
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching the effect of personality on sports performance, how teams develop and function, and theories of motivation
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	preparing psychological skills test data
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records. 	recording data from psychological skills tests
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	preparing a psychological skills training programme interpreting psychological skills test data
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	preparing a psychological skills training programme
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	preparing psychological skills test data
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	accurately recording psychological skills test data

Skill	When learners are ...
Mathematics	
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	interpreting psychological skills test data
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	interpreting psychological skills test data
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	implementing psychological skills assessment tests
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	interpreting psychological skills test data
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	examining different views of motivation and presenting the findings of their research
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching the effect of personality on sports performance through a library-based research exercise
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	preparing a report covering motivation and methods used to maintain and increase motivation developing a logbook to record progress of mental skills training

