

"Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds."



Supporting the psychological needs of orienteers

Sports psychology
The scientific study of behaviour.
The behaviour is improved / altered so that performance is improved.

Aims

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- To review essential components of orienteering psychology: their measurement and development in athletes.
- To apply concepts of needs analysis, psychological skills training and programme design.
- To discuss and practically evaluate methods of psychological testing and training within orienteering.

Overview

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- Review pre-course tasks.
- Anxiety, nerves and arousal control.
- Imagery (uses, effectiveness, hints and tips).
- Self-talk (uses, effectiveness, hints and tips).

P4: Relevance

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1. What psychological factors did you feel impacted orienteering performance? Were there any controversial choices / ideas?
2. Once the fitness, technique and tactics are in place (e.g. by elite level), how important did you feel psychology is in determining success / failure?
3. How important is psychology in the performance (and development) of participation athletes / juniors?
4. **How well do these figures match with the amount of time / effort devoted to psychology in training?**

P5: 'Detection'

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1. What was your general impression of each analysis technique? How practical are they? And how accurate?
2. What other choices are available to a coach wishing to assess or assess someone's psychological state?
3. Which techniques do you currently use?
4. Which techniques would you consider introducing?
5. **Is there an 'ideal' approach to psychological needs analysis?**

Anxiety

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- Numerous studies, stories and experiences all link anxiety to negative effects on performance.
- But it does not have to be that way – even viewing nerves as helpful ('a good sign') seems to lead to improved outcomes.
- At least 2 types can be teased out: cognitive (worry/dwelling) and somatic (bodily jitters/nerves).
- It can also vary in terms of duration/time from moments ('arousal') to weeks/months ('stress').

Q: How would you detect anxiety in an athlete?

Anxiety

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A number of techniques are available to overcome / reduce anxiety, but the devil is in the detail...

- Self-talk and 'reframing'.
- Imagery (either of success or happy/relaxing images).
- Breathing techniques.
- "Progressive muscular relaxation" (PMR).
- Talk it out...?

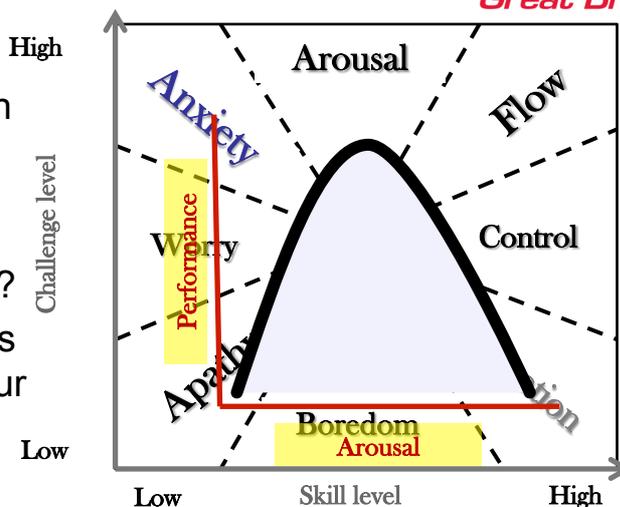
The secret is making sure you match the intervention to the 'symptoms'.

OPS Optimal performance state

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How does this impact on your athletes motivation & skill development?
How does this impact on your coaching?



Self-talk

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A **really** common intervention in sport psychology.

- What could it be used for?
- Why (how) do you think it works?
- How could you 'measure' an athlete's self-talk?

Q. How would you go about changing an athlete's self-talk?

Mental imagery

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- Another **really** common intervention in sport psychology.
- Should incorporate more than just 'visualisation' – need to include feelings, emotions, etc.
- What could it be used for?
- Why (how) do you think it works?
- How could you 'measure' an athlete mental imagery?
- How would you go about changing the athlete mental imagery?

Imagery guidance

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- The PETTLEP model was designed to offer guidance in making imagery more effective.
- **P** – physical – stimuli including clothes, noises, impacts...
- **E** – environment – specify the exact surroundings.
- **T** – task – imagine the task as accurately and correctly as possible.
- **T** – timing – can slow down or speed up, but real-time seems best.
- **L** – learning – remember to incorporate recent improvements.
- **E** – emotions – try to capture the emotions (strong in memory).
- **P** – perspective – can be 'internal' or 'external' – pros and cons to each.

Preparation for racing

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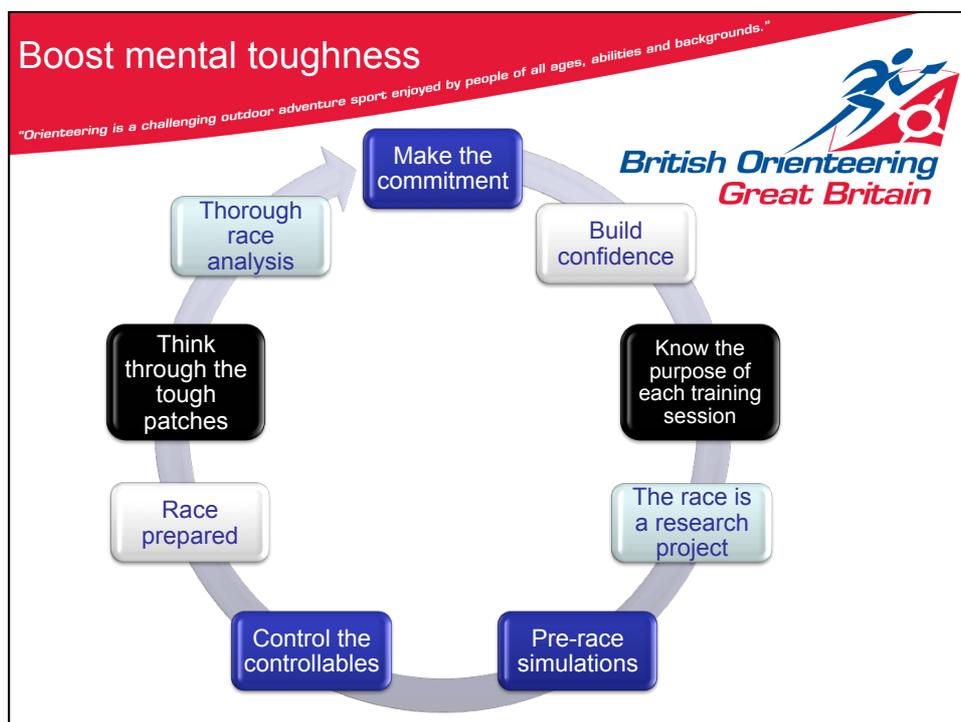
- Allow the athlete to take ownership – make things happen for themselves.
- Reactive thinking vs. Proactive thinking.
- What if?

Task: Time line for night before race to start line.

- SOL, 2 hours drive to car park. Need to collect Emit.
- 1.5km, 150m climb to start (single start); start time is 11:13.

Primacy and Recency:

- Last thing you do / practise / warm-up is the first thing you do in competition.

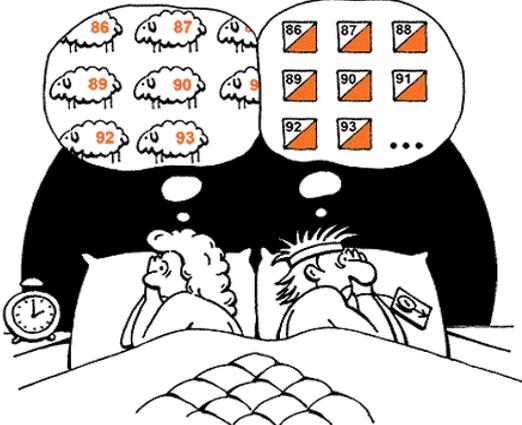


Summary

"Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds."

- Consider the psychological surface 'scratched'.
- Key readings are provided, and you are also sensitised to key issues, but there are no definitive answers.
- You will also need to try these things for yourself:
 - a) to see if they work, when and who with.
 - b) what factors maximise their chances of working.
- Onus now falls on you to keep exploring.

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The cartoon is made specially for **TAKAS-2007** (Lithuania)
www.oktakas.lt

Anxiety readings

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Confidence readings

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Imagery readings

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Self-talk readings

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