

## Is Motivation more important than ability in a successful competitive performance?

### Introduction

Ability means that in order to learn and perform any skills, abilities are generally seen as being innate. Ability is seen as the building blocks of all sports.

Motivation can affect our learning, our performance and even our decisions in sport. If we are not in a positive state our performance will deteriorate and we will not learn at our full potential.

**Motivation = the drive to strive.**

In a competitive performance, performers must be at optimum arousal to perform at their best, a formula was recognised  $\text{Skill} = \text{Ability} + \text{Technique}$ .

In this equation where does motivation really fit in?

Motivation fits into two parts of this equation, in ability and technique. If a games player isn't motivated he/she wouldn't be at their optimum arousal so they won't apply their ability correctly. If the games player isn't at optimum arousal in training for example their attitude is to think they cannot be bothered so they don't train properly and wouldn't learn the correct techniques which will deteriorate performance which will lead to an unsuccessful competitive performance.

This is Stallings list of psychomotor abilities. Another researcher identified the characteristics of motor performance.

- Reaction time
- Response orientation
- Speed of movement
- Finger dexterity
- Manual dexterity
- Response integration.

A list of abilities needed for a football player:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Abilities needed</b>
<b>football</b>	<b>Balance</b>
	<b>Co ordination</b>
	<b>Strength</b>
	<b>Speed</b>
	<b>Reaction time</b>
	<b>CV and Muscular endurance</b>

A list of abilities needed for a badminton player:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Abilities needed</b>
<b>Badminton</b>	<b>Co ordination</b>
	<b>Reaction time</b>
	<b>Balance</b>
	<b>Speed</b>
	<b>Agility</b>
	<b>Flexibility</b>

In an individual game such as trampolining the abilities you would need are:

Sport	Abilities needed
Basketball	Strength
	Agility
	Flexibility
	Balance
	Speed
	CV endurance
	Muscular endurance

### Arousal

The Drive theory proposes that as arousal increases to meet the demands of the environment, so does the performance of a competitor. If you are an expert performing a skill the dominant habit is correct, so you will play even better as arousal levels increase.

Another approach is the Inverted U theory which proposes that up to a certain point arousal levels are too low for best performances. This means the sports person is just not psyched up enough to perform well. At the other end of the scale the sports person will play at a second standard which suggests he/she is psyched out. In between these two points is an optimum level where performers compete at their best.

Another way of looking at arousal is the Reversal theory, this states that everyone is different; everyone has different levels of preferred arousal. For example some people may find it enjoyable to play non competitive games of tennis but others will find it boring.

### Achievement motivation

This suggests that different people are motivated by different factors, when we are presented with choices, our decisions will be influenced by our level of performance. Atkinson recognised that most of us want to be challenge and are motivated by the need to achieve, **nAch**.

This type of personality will take the difficult option as they want to be challenged. While other people will take the easier option (naF), these people will do this because they are afraid of failure. For instance if there was a climbing wall, one hard, one medium and one easy, the naF person would chose the easy climbing wall whilst the nAch person would try the hardest climbing wall as they see it as a challenge.

Achievement motivation is linked to personality. In sport, someone with extrovert tendencies would have a high nAch as they want to be noticed. Therefore person with an introvert will take the easy option as they don't want to failure or be noticed.

### Different types of motivation

Intrinsic motivation arises, when an activity is pursued for its own sake, regardless what any one else says. This type of motivation is mainly used by individual games

players for example in tennis at Wimbledon no coaching is allowed while they are playing so only concurrent or terminal feedback can be given.

Extrinsic motivation stems from other people e.g. a coach in football for example; this can be through positive or negative reinforcement. This type of motivation is generally used in team games for example in football a coach trying to motivate his team from the sidelines or players such as the captain trying to motivate his team.

### Drive reduction theory

This is referred to as the drive to strive. In a football context if a team is winning the premiership like Man Utd, their drive to win the league again will be reduced due to the lack of a challenge for example when they won the Champions League in 2000, the next year they were not motivated to be successful again due to lack of a challenge. Since winning in 2000 they haven't won in since.

### Situational Factors

Atkinson stressed that there were situational factors that govern our decisions. This relates to the probability of success and the rewards available for success. Roberts suggested that individuals with high failure avoidance will not only select the easy option but the difficult option as well and high achievers will select a hard option but one with probability of success because they require rewards that go with success.

### Attribution Theory

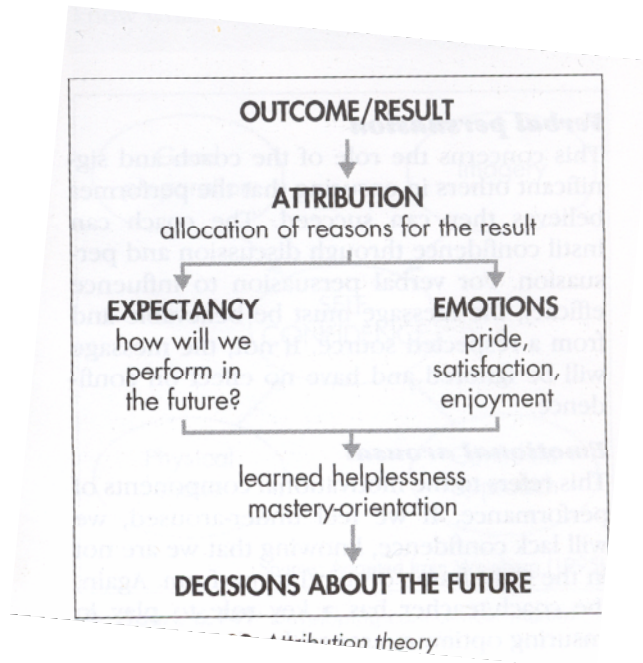
Weiner identified a number of factors being related to sporting performance. He devised a frame work by which player could create an attributional profile which would help become more motivated and improve performance. There were four constructs he identified:

- Ability
- Effort
- Task difficulty
- Luck.

Then it was divided into two dimensions, he called them locus of causality/control and stability.

If a team loses for instance they might blame it on luck for example 'the ref was on their side' or the team was far superior to ours. If they carry on losing this could cause a decrease in motivation because players might think that there is no point in trying because we don't have any luck.

## Confidence



Attribution can be given to boost confidence, so that success is likely.  
Self efficacy is defined as the

- Level of confidence in the likelihood of achieving a goal, (Coolican, 1996)
- Bandura described it as 'any given situation'.

Self confidence is essential if a performer is to achieve at the highest level of their capacity. The growth of a positive attitude will enable the achievement of the self fulfilling prophecy.

## Self motivation

We are motivated to compete in sport by a number of factors. These factors include a desire to achieve mastery, a wish for status, friendship, challenge or excitement. The motivation to participate and to succeed at a sport comes from within a performer (intrinsic) or from their coach (extrinsic).

Self motivation is the internal drive to succeed, it is the performer's intention to perform at their best.

Players have their own personal motivation factors which include:

- Personal achievement
- Challenge
- Fitness
- Contribution to the whole

## Group Motivation

In groups people tend to work less hard than they do on their own, because individuals lessen their effort when they are part of a group. This loss of performance is known as the Ringlemann effect. There are many causes of social loafing in sport for example individuals perceived that other people in the group are working less than themselves. Social loafing can be minimised in sport by performers believing that their effort is identifiable by the team and people accept their own responsibility to the team's performance as a whole. Coaches recognised this and make it public to the team about loafing and can discuss this as a general issue, and private to those individuals who have misplaced their effort.

## Conclusion

In conclusion I think that ability and motivation are as important as each other because without ability you wouldn't be able to give a successful performance and without motivation you couldn't give a good performance again. So without both you wouldn't be able to succeed at a sport.

The equation **skill = ability + technique**, doesn't involve motivation but it can be put into the equation at ability and technique because without motivation you wouldn't be able to learn the correct techniques and without motivation you wouldn't be able to apply the abilities in a games situation.