

The background is a dark blue gradient with a starry, nebula-like texture. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular elements. A prominent one is a large circular scale with tick marks and numbers ranging from 140 to 260. Other circles are partially visible, some with dashed lines and arrows, suggesting motion or cycles. The overall aesthetic is technical and scientific.

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

11 ATAR PE STUDIES

OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE

Tactical Skills

Having the correct strategies and tactics given the strengths and weaknesses of the team

Psychological Skills

Having the appropriate level of mental skills required to succeed in sport.

Optimal Performance

Physiological Preparation

Having developed the appropriate energy systems and physical attributes

Technical Skills

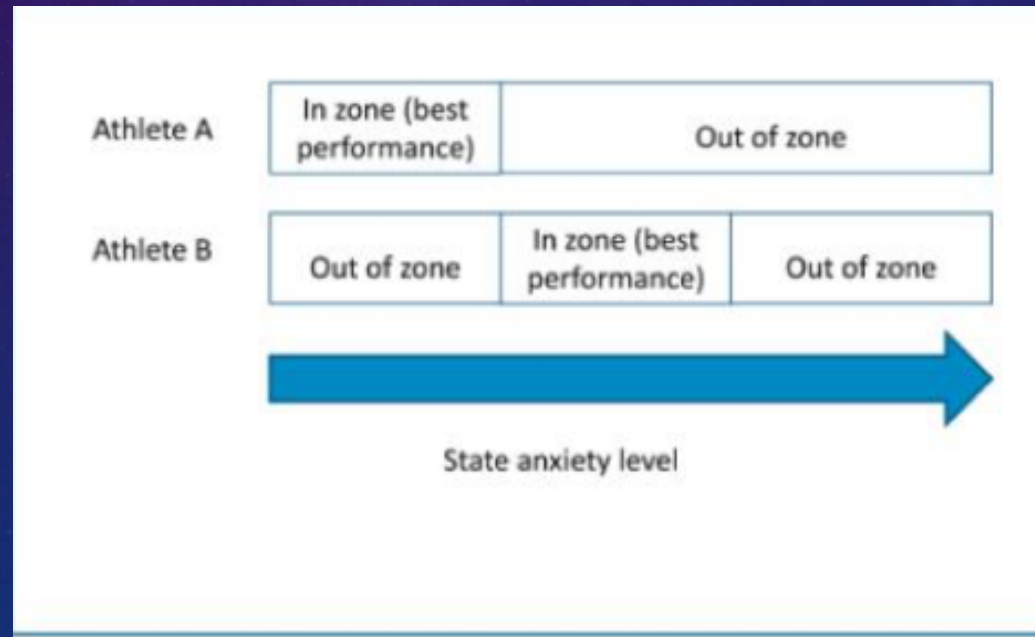
Having the necessary physical skills to play at that level

MENTAL SKILLS

- Mental preparation helps athletes to produce better performances than they would if they only developed the physiological, technical and tactical aspects of their sport.
- BENEFITS:
 - Improved self – confidence
 - Improved emotional control
 - Increased motivation
 - Improved concentration
 - Positive approach towards a given task

INDIVIDUAL ZONE OF OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING

- The IZOF model proposes that athletes react differently to the same level of an experienced emotion
- Optimal performance is more likely when the athlete's emotion falls within a specific range that is right for them



MENTAL SKILLS TRAINING

What are MENTAL skills?

1. Motivation
2. Self – Confidence and Self – Image
3. Concentration
4. Arousal Regulation
5. Stress and Tension Management

METHODS TO IMPROVE MENTAL SKILLS

1. Imagery
2. Relaxation
3. Self – Talk
4. Performance Routines
5. Goal Setting

Sports Psychology

Mental skills for improving performance & achieving ideal performance state ('the zone'):

- Intrinsic motivation
- Self-confidence
- Stress management
- Concentration or attentional control – Nideffer's model
- Arousal regulation related to individual performance
- Inverted U hypothesis

Sports Psychology

Influence of age, skill level & type of activity on mental skills in relation to motivation, arousal regulation (inverted U hypothesis), concentration

MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION (TYPES)

- Motivation is the direction and intensity of effort and relates to the athlete's willingness to engage in particular activities
 - Motivation determines why athlete's initiate and continue behaviours, and at what intensity they approach the behaviour.
- INTRINSIC MOTIVATION: internal motivations that result from the process of participation in sport
 - Playing for enjoyment
 - Social affiliation
 - Self – challenge
- EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION: external motivations that result from participation in sport
 - Money
 - Winning
 - Fame and awards

MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION (INTRINSIC)

- An athlete who is intrinsically motivated towards self – improvement and high level performance is said to have high levels of achievement motivation. Achievement motivation is the need to win for winnings sake.
- A person with high achievement motivation has;
 1. A desire to do well regardless of circumstances
 2. A desire to reach self – set standards
 3. A desire to reach or even exceed the expectations of others
 4. A willingness to persist in behaviours that lead to improvement even if it means risking failure in the process.
 5. A low fear of failure.
 6. An ability to lift performance levels as task difficulty increases

MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION (FACTORS AFFECTING)

1. AGE:

- a) Young – motivated by approval from parents/coaches, trophies, awards
- b) Mature – motivated by enjoyment, improvement, winning
- c) Old – motivated by socializing, fitness

2. SKILL LEVEL:

- a) Beginner – basic skill level, require external motivation to remain engaged
- b) Intermediate – driven by a desire to improve further and reach elite skill level
- c) Skilled – predominantly intrinsic still (some extrinsic – money, prizes)

3. TYPE OF ACTIVITY:

- a) Impact of how interesting/challenging the task is for the performer. (too easy vs. too difficult)

MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION (IMPROVEMENT)

Improving motivation in a sporting context

- **Participant & Situational factors:** pre-season vs. grand final
- **Views of success:** work rate; outcomes; winning
- **Player value – role:** knowing and valuing player's roles
- **Enthusiastic team leaders:** coaches & captains body language, feedback, facial expressions
- **Team & Individual Goals:** striving to reach individual and team targets



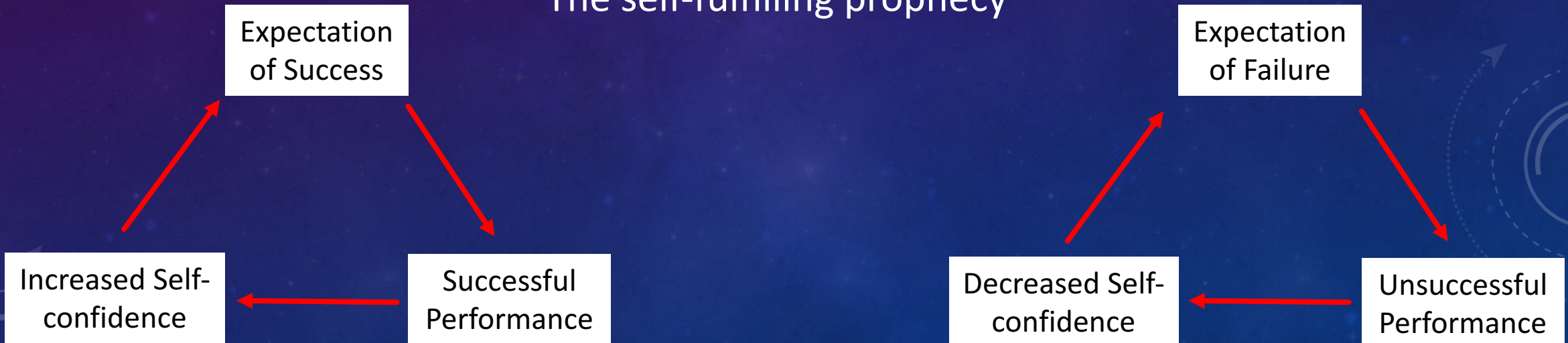
MENTAL SKILL 1: MOTIVATION (Q & A)

1. *Describe the difference between athletes that are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated?*
2. *Explain why an athlete with high achievement motivation is likely to perform at high level regardless of the circumstances?*
3. *Describe the likely difference in motivation between an 8-year old girl in her first season of netball and a 52-year old woman playing a social netball league.*

MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE

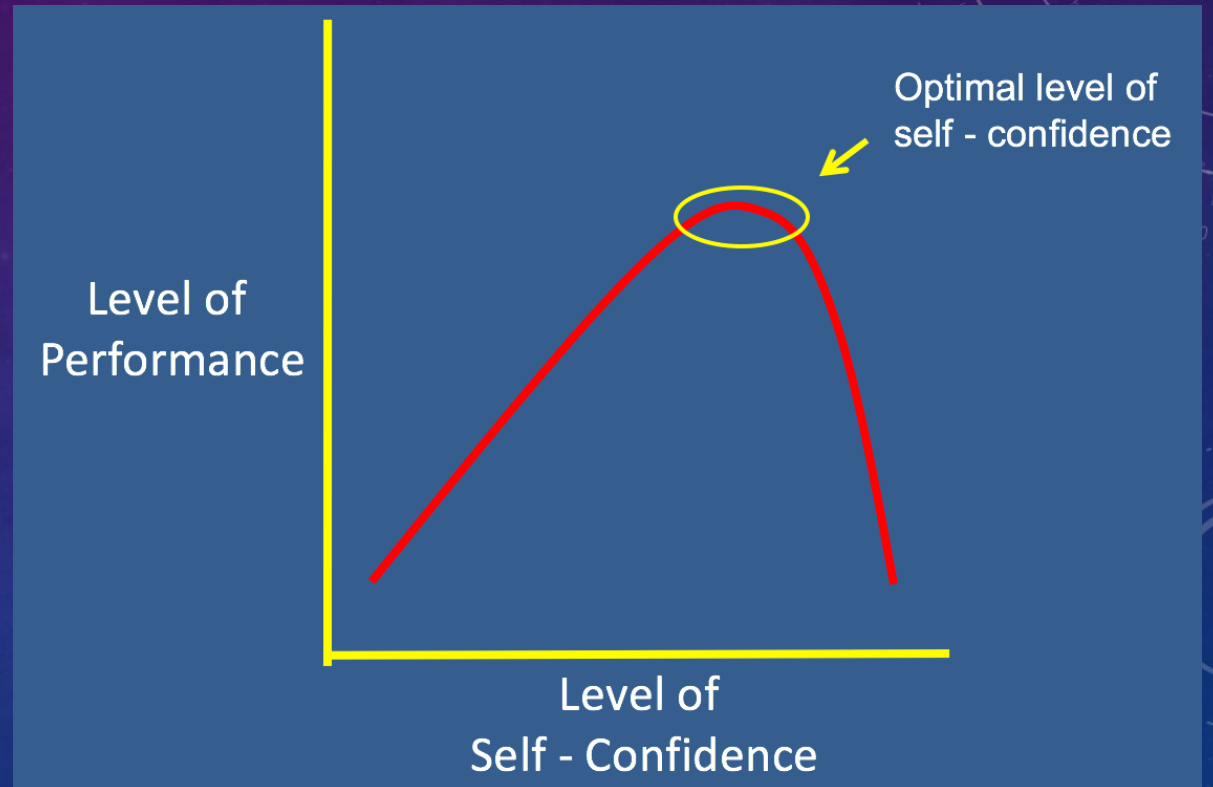
- Self-confidence is the belief that a performer has in their own ability to successfully perform a desired skill or behaviour.

The self-fulfilling prophecy



MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE

- As self-confidence increases, so does performance, until self—confidence becomes TOO HIGH, performance level will drop
- IF skill level does not match high confidence level, negative impact on performance



MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE

- What is the BENEFIT of self-confidence for athletes?
 - Control their emotions better and remain calm in stressful situations
 - Have a greater work ethic and can concentrate for longer periods
 - View stressful situations as a challenge rather than a threat
 - Are willing to take chances to win the game
- What is SELF-EFFICACY?
 - The change in an individual's self – confidence as a result of a given situation
 - E.g Tennis – court surface; Netball – court position



MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE (FACTORS AFFECTING)



- PERFORMANCE ACCOMPLISHMENT = to what extent the performer has had success in similar circumstances in the past
- PHYSIOLOGICAL STATE = injury; fatigue; arousal
- EMOTIONAL STATE = stress; anxiety; mood

MENTAL SKILL 2: SELF-CONFIDENCE (Q & A)

1. *Explain the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy, using a specific sporting example to assist your answer.*
2. *Explain why over-confidence could negatively impact performance?*
3. *Describe self-efficacy. Use a sporting example to assist your answer.*

MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION

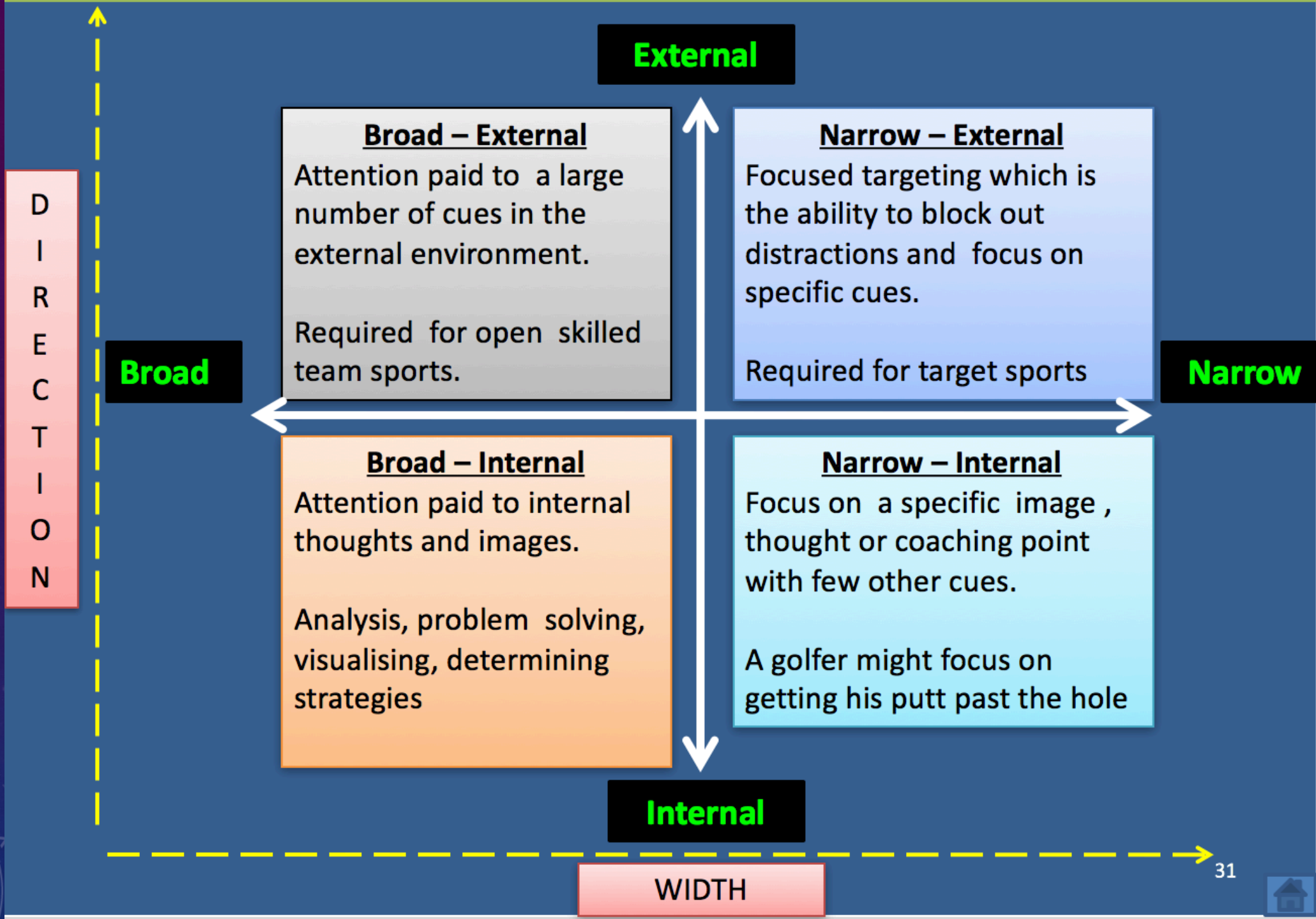
- Concentration is the ability to focus on the task at hand and ignoring irrelevant cues or distractions.
- Concentration is:
 - SELECTIVE - focus on certain cues and ignoring irrelevant ones
 - SHIFTABLE – the ability to shift from broad focus to narrow focus
 - DIVISIBLE – the ability to focus on more than one skill at a time

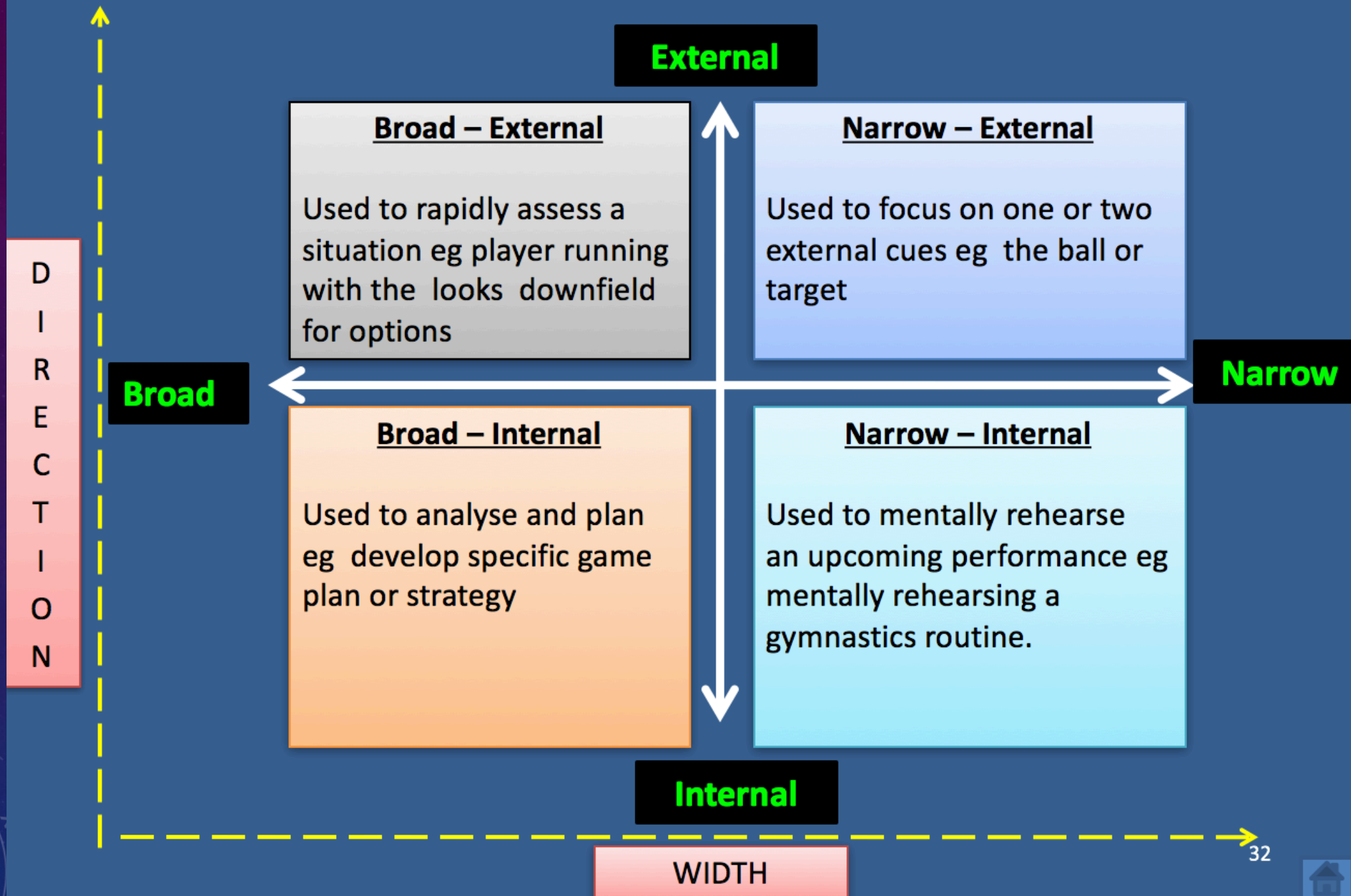


MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION

Nideffer's Model of Attention

- The theory that different sports have different attention requirements, and attention falls along two dimensions:
 - DIRECTION: Focus on whether cues are internal or external to the performer
 - WIDTH: Focus on whether cues are broad - many cues available at once – or narrow where there are limited relevant cues to attend to.





MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION (EXAMPLES)

- Shifting attention within sport – Cricket Batsman:
 - Broad External - looks around to see where the fielders are positioned
 - Narrow External – concentrate on the bowler as he runs up and then the ball
- Shifting attention within sport – Netball Shooter:
 - Broad External – movement of the ball and players up the court
 - Narrow Internal - after receiving the ball, visualise the ball going through the hoop
 - Narrow External - shooting the ball at the target

MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION

Internal Distractors

- Thinking about past and future events
- Focus on irrelevant cues
- Over-analysis of technique
- Game pressure - choking

External Distractors

- Crowd distractors
- Verbal distractors – sledging
- Visual distractors - goal keeper jumping from side to side



MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION (FACTORS AFFECTING)

1. AGE:

- Younger athletes have difficulty maintaining attention for longer periods of time
- Younger athletes have difficulty selecting relevant stimuli to concentrate on

2. SKILL LEVEL:

- Novice – only focus on one cue at a time (e.g. bounce a basketball)
- Experienced – focus on multiple cues at one time (e.g bounce a basketball and look for best pass)

3. TYPE OF ACTIVITY:

- Athlete's level of interest in the given task
- Athlete's position/level of involvement at any give time (e.g. striker vs. non-striker in cricket)

MENTAL SKILL 3: CONCENTRATION (Q & A)

- 1. Explain the attentional focus used for each of the following using Nideffer's Model:*
 - An AFL player kicking out from the goal square*
 - A swimmer about to dive off the blocks*
 - A figure skater 15-minutes before a performance*
- 2. Explain how attention can be selective, shiftable and divisible. Use a sporting skill of your choice to assist your answer.*
- 3. Describe two factors that can impact on concentration and how*

MENTAL SKILL 4: AROUSAL

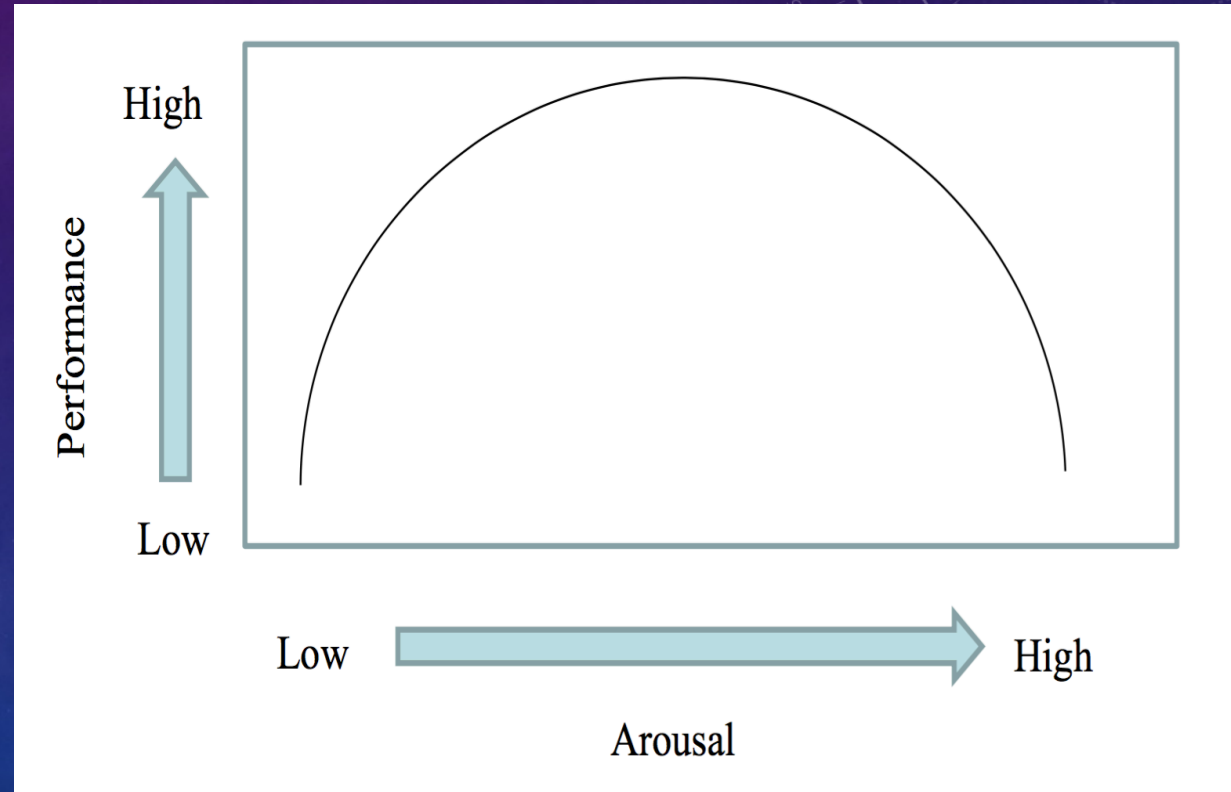


- Arousal or activation is the degree of stimulation or alertness present in a performer about to perform a skilled task. It is characterised by a heightened psychological and physiological state.
- When athletes perform at their optimal arousal level, they are able to concentrate specifically on the demands of the task without becoming either over or under aroused (THE ZONE)
- “ A performer at their optimal arousal level has an increased likelihood of successful performance. Over aroused or under aroused performers do not produce optimal levels of performance.”

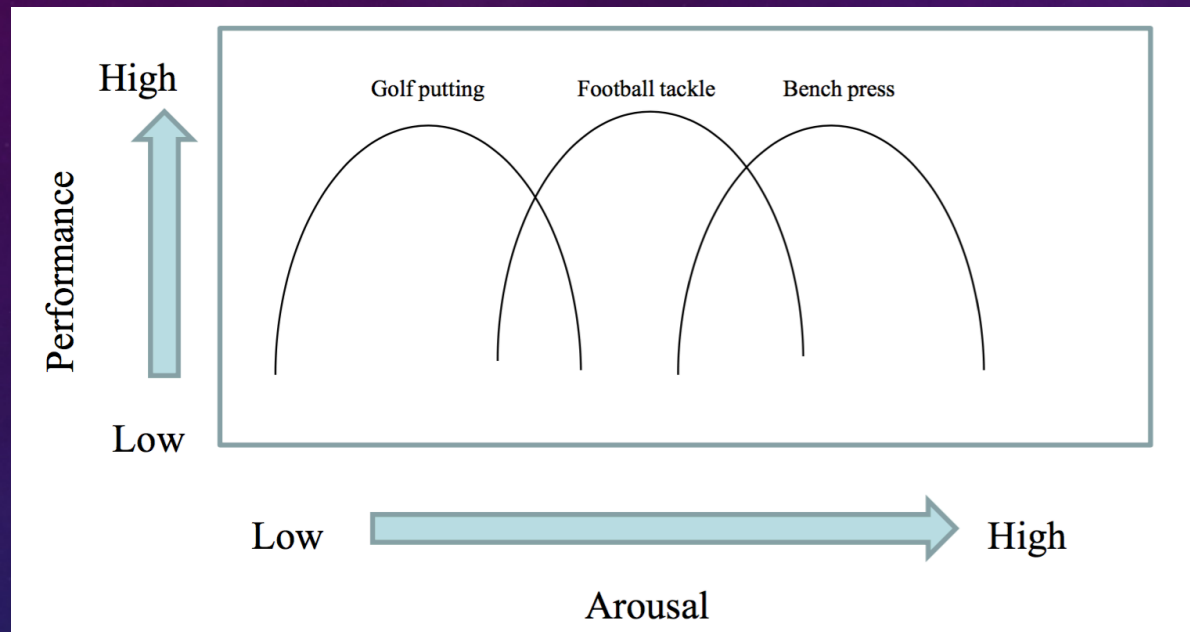
MENTAL SKILL 4: AROUSAL (LEVELS)

INVERTED U HYPOTHESIS

- UNDER AROUSED = performer lacks the intensity to attend to all the relevant stimuli in the environment
- OPTIMALLY AROUSED = performer attends only to relevant stimuli in the environment and can shift their attention quickly to meet the needs of the situation
- OVER AROUSED = performer has a decreased ability to shift their attentional focus. Athletes in this state often have narrow internally focused attention therefore can miss important cues in the environment

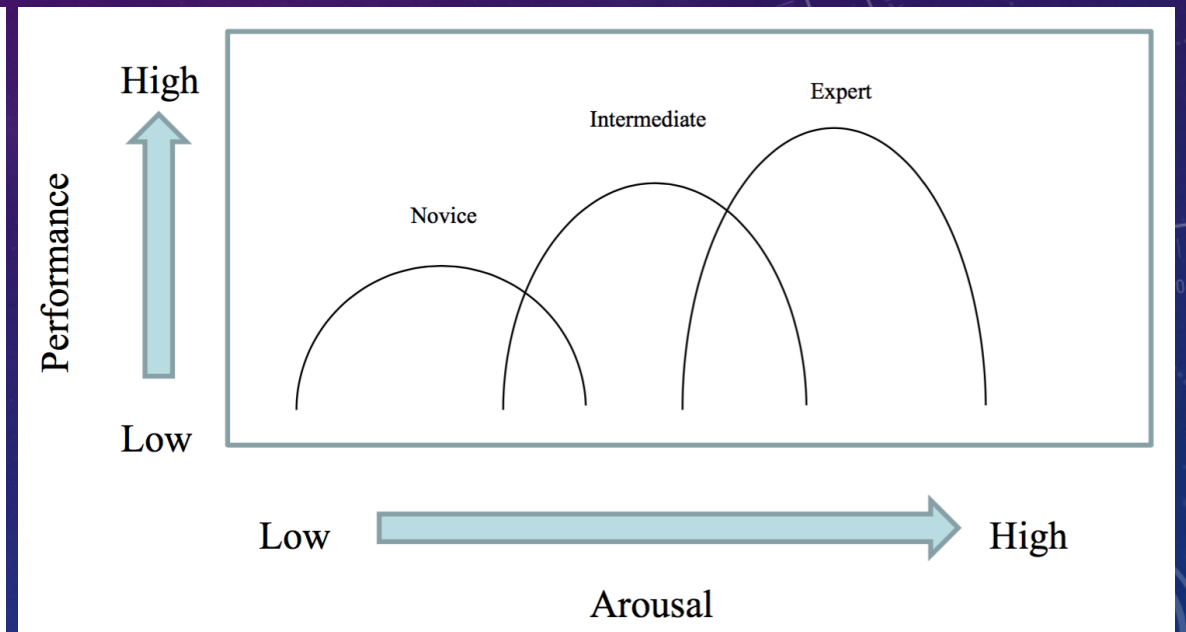


MENTAL SKILL 4: AROUSAL (FACTORS AFFECTING)



Nature of the Task

- Depending on the type of task being undertaken, different levels of arousal are optimal



Skill of the Performer

- The greater the skill level of the performer, the higher the level of arousal for optimal performance

MENTAL SKILL 4: AROUSAL (CHARACTERISTICS)

UNDER AROUSAL

- low motivation
- lethargy
- apathy
- easily distracted

INCREASING AROUSAL

- Short sharp breathing
- Positive self-talk
- Music
- Pre-game activities / warm-up



OVER AROUSAL

- nervousness / butterflies
- anxiousness
- nausea
- elevated heart rate
- reduced ability to concentrate

DECREASING AROUSAL

- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Breathing Control
- Meditation

MENTAL SKILL 4: AROUSAL (Q & A)

- 1. Explain the Inverted U Hypothesis. Using a sport of your choice, describe how the level of arousal may impact on performance.*
- 2. Two athletes you are coaching come to you with different issues regarding their performance:*
 - Athlete 1 – is flat and uninterested in games, leading to distraction*
 - Athlete 2 – is anxious and feeling nauseated from their nerves before games*

What advise would you give to the two athletes, and provide two specific strategies to assist?
- 3. Arousal can be largely dependent on the nature of the sport or skill. Explain this using examples.*

MENTAL SKILL 5: STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between the task requirements and the ability level of the performer to respond in a situation where failure has consequences.
- Stress can either be;
 - Physical which is the body's reaction to different triggers
 - Emotional which occurs when a person finds the demands placed on them become too big or difficult to manage.

Demands	Perception	Arousal	Outcome
Situation	Positive (challenge)	Eustress	Enhanced Performance
	Negative (threat)	Distress	Impaired Performance

MENTAL SKILL 5: STRESS MANAGEMENT (PROCESS)

The stress process has 4 stages;

1. **Demands of the situation.** What is the performer required to do?
2. **Athletes perception of the demand.** Do the demands present a challenge or a threat?
3. **Athletes physical and mental response to their perception of the situation.** How the performer physically and mentally responds to the demands before actual performance
4. **Impact on performance.** How the athlete's actual performance is affected by stress. Is performance improved or negatively affected?

MENTAL SKILL 5: STRESS MANAGEMENT (ANXIETY)

- Anxiety is a negative emotional state characterised by:
 - Apprehension; worry; fear of failure or judgement (COGNITIVE)
 - Feeling sick; muscle tension; increased heart & breathing rate (SOMATIC)
- Anxiety can be a natural disposition of the individual (TRAIT) OR a specific response to a given situation (STATE)
- High Anxiety levels can negatively impact performance through influencing arousal, confidence and concentration levels

MENTAL SKILL 5: STRESS MANAGEMENT (PERFORMANCE)

- When the body is under stress it releases adrenaline to initiate a physiological response (fight or flight)
 - **Positive Effects**
 - Physiological arousal
 - Increased alertness
 - Prepares the body for explosive action (start of important game)
 - Beneficial to performance in sports such as sprinting, shot putt.
 - **Negative Effects**
 - Impaired decision making
 - Impaired execution of fine motor skills
 - Execution of complex skills becomes more difficult.

MENTAL SKILL 5: STRESS MANAGEMENT (COPING)

- Keys To Managing Stress:
 - Limit the number of tasks taken on
 - Prioritise tasks
 - Make positive changes to behaviour
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Preparation
- Problem Focused Coping – managing the issue
- Emotion Focused Coping – managing your emotions

