

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT: SPORTS SCIENCE
MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN SPORTS SCIENCE
SS501 SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY AND MOTOR LEARNING

DURATION: 3 HOURS

TOTAL MARKS: 100

(Plus 15 Minutes for Practical Preparation/Case Reading)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Section A is **compulsory**.

Answer **three** questions from Section B.

NOV 2024

Section A

Tashinga is a 15-year-old tennis player who has great natural ability but whose competitive performance is inconsistent, especially during matches in which he has built up a big lead and seems close to victory. In discussion with his coach, he admits that his difficulties stem from a tendency to “lose focus” when trying to close out matches in competitive situations. For example, in a recent tournament, he was leading against his opponent when serving in the final set tiebreak but made the mistake of thinking too far ahead wondering who he would be playing in the next round. This lapse in concentration led to several double faults, produced lots of negative thinking, and eventually cost him the match. Tashinga’s coach gives another example of this problem by reporting that Tashinga lost four games in a row recently when leading 5–2 in the third set. In two of these games, he served several double faults, which made him very angry with himself. Fortunately, on this occasion, Tashinga eventually won the tiebreak mainly because his opponent made even more errors than he did. But having experienced this “wandering mind” problem several times in the past few months, Tashinga and his coach wondered what can be done about it. The urgency of the consultation comes from the fact that Tashinga is about to take part in a series of trial matches for a place on the national junior elite tennis squad and is very anxious to get some help. So, with 3 weeks to go, Tashinga and his coach have approached a sport psychologist for practical advice on preparing for matches and for concentrating effectively on court.

Task:

1. What do you think happens to Tashinga to make him ‘lose focus’ in competitive situations?

How can Tashinga avoid his ‘wandering mind’ problem during crucial games.

What practical advice on preparing for matches and for concentrating effectively on court would the sports psychologist suggest?

(40 marks)

Section B

2. Chiedza a netball player has complained of finding herself clouding her mind with other things. She finds herself being affected by crowd noise and negative and irrelevant thoughts. As a result, her loss of concentration has destroyed her entire performance and even affected her results.

Task: As a sports psychologist, what guidelines and activities would you focus on to improve on site concentration. How best would you help an athlete affected by crowd noise.

(20 marks)

3. A coach has been putting too much importance on winning and this has resulted in emotional and psychological distress on athletes.

Task: As a sports psychologist, given this scenario suggest guidelines towards reducing emotional and psychological distress on athletes. How can you help coaches who put emphasis on winning?

(20 marks)

4. Imagine you are a sports psychologist who has been hired to work with a top-level athlete who has recently been “choking” in major events.

Task: what are the symptoms of ‘choking’. Outline the steps you would take in working with the athlete to attempt to overcome this impediment to his or her performance.

(20 marks)

5. You are working with a team of young athletes who are always keen on receiving feedback from you even during their practice sessions.

Task: Analyse the role of feedback and attention in the motor learning process. Explain how you can use these optimally to augment the learning process.

(20 marks)

6. You have been appointed CEO of the football association. Because of increasing concerns over fighting and aggressive play the Sports and Recreation commission has threatened to intervene in the association’s administration unless the situation improves within six months

Task: How would you curb fighting and aggression play within the six months of your appointment. How would you use positive aggressive play with your athletes.

(20 marks)

END OF PAPER