

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

Part Two in a Series
By Dr. Keith Henschen
University of Utah

MOTIVATION AND PSYCHING-UP

So much of athletics has directly to do with motivation. Coaches need to understand motivation both for individuals and for teams. Athletes also should shoulder some of the responsibility for their own and their teammates motivation. It has been estimated that 50-90% of what a coach does is some type of motivation. The problem is that a coach can try extremely hard to motivate his players, but be very unsuccessful. On the other hand, a coach can be exceptionally stimulating at times without even trying. The point is that proper motivation is difficult to achieve most of the time.

One of the reasons for motivation being so difficult to achieve is that there are two types of motivation, and we spend most of our time on the wrong type. There is external motivation and internal motivation. External motivation is that motivation which is caused by external rewards or situations. Examples of external motivators are letter awards, scholarships, trophies, any financial reward, and gifts of any type. Other external motivators include pre-game pep talks, posting newspaper articles in the locker-room, or any type of gimmick a coach decides to use.

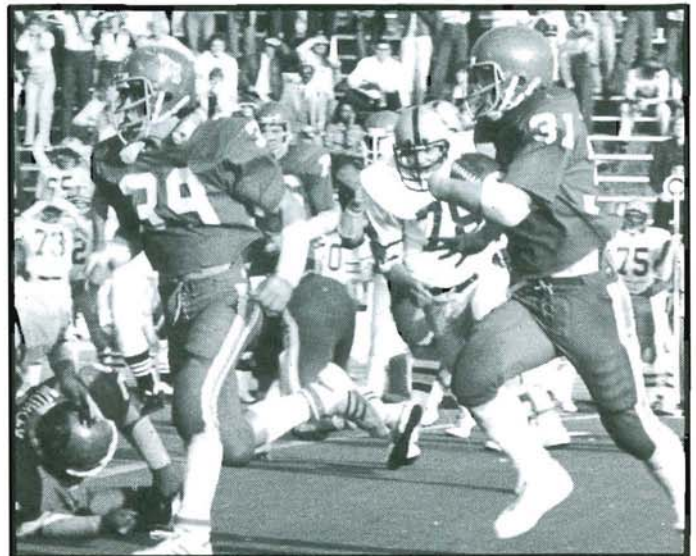
The sad truth concerning external motivation or motivators are that they are successful only so long as they hold the interest of the athlete. External motivation is very temporary and contains little lasting benefits; but this is the type of motivation used most of the time. External motivators are almost like bribes. Athletes seem to improve or get better only so long as the bribe gets larger. In athletics you can motivate young players with trophies or possibly even pep talks; but as the athlete gets older, the price goes up. Instead of trophies, it now takes cars, scholarships and eventually just hard, cold cash to motivate. It is illogical to continue this type of motivational program when another type is available which offers less expense and greater lasting benefits – Internal Motivation.

EXTERNAL MOTIVATION INHIBITS INTERNAL MOTIVATION

Internal motivators are those things which come from within and cause an athlete to try harder. Internal motivators are non-monetary and also non-materialistic. Examples of internal motivators are prestige, recognition, pride and even fear to an extent. These are all perceptions which are normally associated with pleasant feelings and emotions. Good performances do not need to be recognized by materialistic rewards; rather the athlete himself needs to internalize his good or negative feelings.

MONEY DOES NOT BUY MOTIVATION

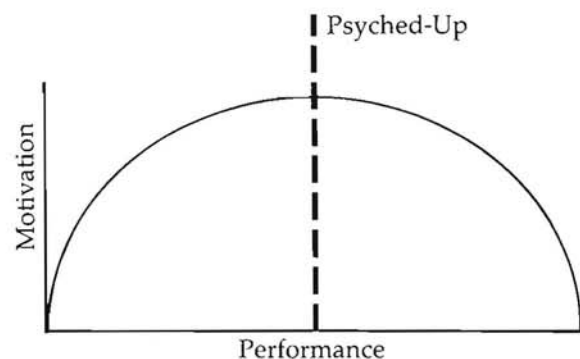
One of the problems in athletics has been that coaches have traditionally felt that to be motivated an athlete needed to be "psyched-up." We now, of course, realize that just the opposite is true. Psyching-up is synonymous with being psyched out and not being in control. For years coaches have tried almost anything to motivate their charges. Now



If An Athlete Can DREAM of Victory and Imagine Success, Then He Can MOTIVATE Himself!

we are saying that that type of emotionality is not ideal for optimal performance. Motivation has to do with wanting and trying to do well; while psyching-up is associated with raising an individuals' emotional level. Because these two phenomenon are similar, many coaches have confused the two concepts and also utilized inappropriate means for attaining them.

Actually, the more psyched-up a person becomes the less chance he has of performing well. As adrenaline starts pumping into an athletes' body, his ability to concentrate diminishes correspondingly. Remember in the last article, it was mentioned that an athlete must be **intense but not tense**. Well, we can say the same thing in another way – an athlete must be motivated but not psyched-up. Far too many coaches seem to think that "the more the better" in terms of motivation. The overly motivated or psyched up athlete is doomed to fail. The following diagram illustrates very well the relationship between motivation, performance and being psyched-up.



Continued on page 43

A little motivation is fine and even desirable, but as an athlete becomes over motivated and more psyched-up; then psychological control is lost and performances decrease.

Coaches should know each of their athletes well enough to be able to use the proper motivational technique at the right time. Internal motivators are better than external motivators. One additional point needs to be made. The athlete needs to learn how to bring about this internal, personalized, individual motivation so necessary for athletic success. Where should he begin? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Set definite, realistic goals** with deadlines for their achievement. When one is reached, set another one. Make sure the goals are not beyond reach.

2. **Use positive imagination.** A person always acts, feels and performs according to what he imagines to be true about himself. Your mental picture of yourself may be the strongest force within you.

3. **Develop an indomitable craving, ambition, zeal and desire** to reach your goals.

4. **Maintain unshakeable faith in yourself** and your ability to achieve your goals.

5. **Develop an iron-willed determination** which will blast any roadblocks from your path.

6. **Avoid a negative mental attitude.** Don't even associate with negative people. It is easier to think negatively than positively. Don't succumb to this temptation.

7. **Develop a positive mental attitude.** Think only in positive terms.

8. **Pay strict attention to self-discipline.** Part of the price of success is hard work and clean living.

9. **Budget your time.** Time is a valuable commodity, especially in athletics. Don't waste it on worthless, superfluous or mundane projects.

10. **Learn from defeat or temporary failure.** Remember, anyone who is undefeated has never met strong opposition. Temporary setbacks can be valuable teachers.

11. **Be enthusiastic by developing your own enthusiasm.** Human emotions are not immediately subject to reason, but they are immediately subject to action. Here is how to create your own enthusiasm.

To be enthusiastic, ACT enthusiastic. The secret is ACT.

12. **Develop personal self-motivators.** Here are a few. When it is difficult to complete a drill during practice, repeat this self-reinforcer 25 times: "I feel happy, I feel great, I feel terrific!" When it comes time to perform a task, repeat this self-starter 25 times: "Do-it-now, do-it-now, do-it-now," etc.

These may sound silly, but they WORK!

A great athlete is a rarity. In order to win, his toughest battle is always within himself. If an athlete can **dream** of victory and **imagine** success, then he can motivate himself. For an athlete who can motivate himself, athletic immortality may be just around the corner.

not believe it. This was the hardest thing that I have ever had to accept. Johnny had died from sleep apnea. We were going to call off the Jamboree that Friday night, but Johnny's parents would not allow it.

Our football team went on and posted a 6-4 record in 1984. All those reps that we did for Gaffney finally paid off. They came in to our place undefeated and ranked No. 2 in the state. This time we whipped them in the closing seconds. Randy Norris' one yard plunge capped an 87 yard drive with 35 seconds left in the game to seal a 17-14 long awaited VICTORY! We made the 4-A state playoffs for the first time in the school's history. Randy Norris rushed for 1505 yards and is being actively recruited by several major colleges as a junior!

Looking back, I cannot help but wonder what might have been. Knowing Johnny like I did, I believe he would have reached goals five and six. Coach Jones said of Johnny, "Johnny Tanner is a winner. He is the most dedicated young man that I have ever coached. He would have definitely been a major college prospect. He is the kind of young man that you would want your child to be like."

"Johnny Tanner is the kind of young man that you would want your child to be like"

Johnny is now gone, and we have finally come to grips with that. He left us with so much and we are very thankful that he came our way. You see, Johnny accomplished greatness far beyond what can be measured in the weight room or on the football field. He left Boiling Springs much better than he found it. His character and enthusiasm caught fire when he led his ninth grade team to a complete turnaround in 1982. This fire spread rapidly throughout our entire program, and this fire still smolders in the hearts of our young men and coaches today.

Boiling Springs has come from the cellar of 4-A football to contender status in two short years. No longer are our athletes ashamed to wear their letter jackets off campus. Just like Johnny, we believe Boiling Springs is the greatest. Those skinny little eighth graders are now awesome juniors and if I know them like I think I do, Boiling Springs will have a lot to cheer about in 1985!

JOHNNY TANNER'S STATS

Date	Squat	Bench	Power Clean	40 Time	Vertical Jump
Jan. 1, 1982	*	125	*	5.4	*
Aug. 1, 1982	*	190	*	5.1	*
Aug. 1, 1983	300	250	170	4.9	*
Aug. 1, 1984	415	315	220	4.65	33"

* Was not allowed to perform a one rep max