Worksheet 9.4

Additional practice questions for Chapter 9

1. Compare two theories of motivation in sport. [22 marks]

2. Explain the role of goal-setting in the motivation of individuals and evaluate one study that investigates this. [22 marks]

3. Compare two theories relating arousal and anxiety to performance. [22 marks]

**Answer guidelines**

1. Your answer to this question should begin by explaining why motivation in sport is important and you should provide a brief definition of it. Follow this by identifying the two theories that you are going to write about: your choices include cognitive evaluation theory and achievement goal theory. Identify the ways in which you can compare the two theories. Think about the level of analysis and the principles underlying them; the type and quality of research available to support the theories; and, in particular, their usefulness in application to improve athletes’ motivation. Before you start, it may help to draw a small table that helps you plan exactly what the similarities between the two theories are.

   Remember that it is very important to show evidence of critical thinking throughout and this can best be achieved by remembering to provide evaluative points in relation to the studies you include, particularly in terms of the validity of the conclusions made and the reliability of measurement. The strengths and limitations of the empirical evidence for the two theories may have some features in common, for example if they rely on research conducted in artificial settings rather than in a more natural context.

2. Goal-setting has been proven time and again to be a very powerful motivational tool, partly because it seems to be a natural thing that people do, even without the assistance of others. Begin by explaining what goals are and the idea that behaviour can be described as goal-directed. Give a short example of how it could work in a real sporting context.

   The majority of your answer needs to focus on a study involving goal-setting. One example is Schofield et al. (2005) who used pedometers and set goals for groups of girls in an experiment to try to increase levels of physical activity. This study has a number of strengths, including the use of three different groups to account for possible demand characteristics, and an experimental approach that allowed for some isolation of cause and effect. Limitations include the non-random assignment of participants to the three groups and the lack of information about whether motivation was
genuinely increased, or what type of motivation; for example, did the activity ever become truly intrinsically motivating?

3 Begin by identifying the theories you would like to compare. Two good choices for this question are the inverted-U hypothesis and optimal arousal theory. Before writing your answer, it is a good idea to quickly draw a small table and fill in the similarities you can think of. When you have done this, you can write an introduction that explains how you are going to approach the question.

As with comparisons of theories in other areas, you can compare the theories in terms of their level of analysis and the principles that underlie them, their validity, and the possibility and quality of empirical evidence available to support them. Remember when you address research that you should be able to identify some strengths and limitations.

An ideal study to include if you have chosen these two theories is Raglin and Turner (1993), who established a zone of optimal functioning for individual athletes and used this, compared with reports of pre-competition anxiety, to predict performance. Their results provide evidence against the inverted-U hypothesis. Unlike many theories in psychology, because these two theories are quite similar in a number of ways, it is unlikely that they can exist in a complementary way: if one of them is right, the other one is probably incorrect.

A brief conclusion could be used to summarize the main similarities you found.