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Exploring Experiences, Processes, and Outcomes with Recreational Golfers

by

Emma J. Stodel

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of the

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Abstract

The critical role enjoyment plays in prolonging sport participation highlights the necessity of maximising opportunities for enjoyment in sport. Extant research suggests that mental skills training (MST) may be a potentially valuable means through which this can be achieved. However, no one has specifically examined the value of a comprehensive MST program as a means of enhancing sport participants' enjoyment of the sport experience. Consequently, the purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of MST in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented.

The inquiry was qualitative in nature and conducted from a constructivist perspective. A multiple case study approach was employed to collect data from seven recreational golfers (four males, three females). Various data collection methodologies were selected for use in this inquiry to allow the participants' voices to be heard. Data sources included interviews, individual consultations, MST seminars, observations, documents, and a questionnaire. Both within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted.

Findings indicated there is a role for MST in increasing golf enjoyment for recreational golfers. All the participants indicated they enjoyed golf more after the training. They attributed the increase in enjoyment to a number of cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes of the MST. First, the MST changed the participants' attitudes, making them more confident, balanced, and disciplined. Second, the participants learned to become more relaxed when playing golf. Third, the participants felt their golf had improved. Fourth, the participants learned to derive enjoyment from diverse sources as a result of learning to switch their focus away from their

performance when appropriate. Lastly, the participants developed a sense of control over their performance and emotions.

Despite the significant impact the MST had on the participants' golf enjoyment, they reported their primary reason for engaging in the MST was to improve their golf performance. During the MST the participants were taught diverse MST techniques and guided in their mental skill development. The use of these techniques varied across participants in terms of how they adapted them to meet their needs and the degree to which they integrated them into their golf. Yet in spite of these differences in the participants' involvement with the training, they all enjoyed the experience and benefited from it in different ways. The individual consultations emerged as the most helpful aspects of the MST, but the seminars also played a critical role in the mental training experience. The social element of the seminars contributed to both the participants' enjoyment and learning. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of grounding MST for adults in the principles of effective practice for adult education. Implications of the findings for sport psychology theory and practice are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of mental skills training (MST) in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented. Until this inquiry no one had specifically examined the value of MST as a means of enhancing sport participants' enjoyment of the sport experience. This is both surprising and remiss when one considers that the primary concern of mental training consultants is to help athletes develop psychological skills that facilitate enjoyment and satisfaction as well as performance enhancement (Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, & Robinson, 2002; Bull, 1991; Cox, 2002).

In this inquiry I chose to work with older recreational golfers. Although many eminent MST consultants have stressed the importance of providing "sport psychology for all" (e.g., Gould, 1990; Weiss, 1998), it has been noted that much applied work is with elite performers (T. Orlick, personal communication, November 24, 1998) and sport psychology books seem "to be geared to the elite level" (Vealey, 1988, p. 321). However, there are many recreational athletes who regularly participate in sport and who may reap the benefits of engaging in MST just as elite athletes do. In addition, Weiss iterated that currently the sport psychology knowledge base is biased strongly towards youth athletes (8-14 years old) and college-age adults. Indeed, I was unable to find any reports on the use of MST among older adults. In order to readdress the imbalance and advance the knowledge base of the field, Weiss urged researchers "to focus more research efforts on age groups that have been understudied and underserved, as well as

individuals in varying social contexts beyond traditional competitive sport, such as school physical education, unstructured physical activity, and rehabilitation settings" (p. S20).

The decision to focus this inquiry on golfers arose in part because I was seeing so many disgruntled players in the clubhouse after a poor round of golf. A pursuit they engaged in for fun and recreation seemed to have incredible potential to immerse them into a bad mood and elicit relatively strong feelings of anger and frustration. For some, this negative affect endured throughout the day and many questioned why they persisted playing. Moreover, golf appears to be a good target to promote as a lifelong sport. Tiger Woods was playing golf at two-years-old (Strege, 1997) and it is not unusual for golfers to continue playing well into their 80's. Also, golf had the largest projected growth rate (7.01%) for sport participation from 1996-2001, behind cross-country running (7.34%), and well ahead of the next fastest growing sport (swimming, 5.55%) (Foot, 1996).

In addition, the value of MST may be particularly apparent for athletes who participate in closed skill sports such as golf. Boutcher (1990) stated that in these sports the athletes themselves determine the time of skill execution. Accordingly, these athletes may find it especially difficult to maintain performance consistency due to the numerous opportunities they are afforded to ruminate over the skill execution and consequently become distracted. Given this, the relatively sparse number of studies investigating the impact of mental training on performance and performance correlates (e.g., confidence, motivation, attention control) among golfers is surprising.

Within this modest body of research, researchers have investigated the effects of specific mental training techniques, such as goal setting, imagery, and self-talk (Gervais, 2000; Kingston & Hardy, 1997); preshot routines (McCann, Lavallee, & Lavallee, 2001); and mental training in

general (Beauchamp, Halliwell, Fournier, & Koestner, 1996; Kirschenbaum & Bale, 1984; Ulrich-Suss, 1999) on variables such as golf performance (Gervais, 2000; Kingston & Hardy, 1997; Kirschenbaum & Bale, 1984; McCann et al., 2001), concentration (Kingston & Hardy, 1997), motivation (Beauchamp et al., 1996), anxiety (Kingston & Hardy, 1997), emotional control (Kirschenbaum, Owens, & O'Connor, 1998), self-efficacy (Kingston & Hardy, 1997), positive self-talk (Kirschenbaum et al., 1998), and adherence to preshot routines (Cohn, Rotella, & Lloyd, 1990). In general, these studies revealed positive intervention effects on the variables examined, thereby highlighting the potential value of MST for golfers. However, with the exception of the Beauchamp et al. (1996) study, none looked at enjoyment. Interestingly, a significant proportion of the extant research in this area was conducted with non-golfers or individuals enrolled in beginner level golf classes, not with individuals who played golf on a regular basis (e.g., Beauchamp et al., 1996; Gervais, 2000; McCann et al., 2001). My love of golf, coupled with the reasons delineated above, solidified my decision to use a golfing population in this inquiry.

Since World War II, the discipline of psychology has focused on pathology and how people endure under conditions of adversity (Jackson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Attention to wellness, prevention, and positive emotions has been sorely lacking. To some extent, the field of sport psychology has mirrored this trend (Farres, 2002; Jackson, 2000). Abundant research on anxiety, stress, and related topics exists, yet in sport psychology there has also been attention paid to positive experiences, including enjoyment, albeit to a lesser extent. Nonetheless, Jackson voiced concern that "the growing trend toward clinical approaches within sport psychology may reinforce a focus on problems and difficulties rather than optimisation" (p. 136). In the field of psychology, Seligman is being instrumental in the push towards a positive

psychology (Jackson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Hopefully this trend will transfer to the field of sport psychology.

The study of enjoyment is important as it promises to improve quality of life and also plays an important role in prolonging sport involvement (Ebbeck, Gibbons, & Loken-Dahle, 1995; Frederick, Morrison, & Manning, 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Weiss, Kimmel, & Smith, 2001). When one considers the psychological and physical benefits associated with sport and exercise, the importance of remaining active and making "sport for life" becomes apparent. In order to do this one must first ask, "What makes sport enjoyable?" Indeed, to date, much of the research in the area of sport enjoyment has been conducted in order to determine individuals' sources of enjoyment and to determine what factors best predict enjoyment. A strong link between perceived competence and enjoyment has been manifested in the literature. Perceived competence has been found to be a source, and often a significant predictor, of enjoyment across a wide variety of sports (Bakker, De Koning, Van Ingen Schenau, & De Groot, 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan, Stein, & Ravizza, 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002). Moreover, high positive correlations between enjoyment and perceived competence have been found for both adults and children (Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995). These findings propound that by strengthening individuals' perceptions of their competence increased enjoyment may ensue. As individuals' goal involvement (task or ego involved) is predicted to determine how they assess their competence (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992), a consideration of achievement goal theory is warranted within the study of enjoyment.

Furthermore, individuals' goal involvement has been found to affect their cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses in achievement situations. There appears to be a consistent

pattern of findings indicating that task involvement fosters adaptive motivation patterns and positive affect, which may be necessary for continued sport involvement (Biddle, 2001; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Duda, 1996, 2001; Roberts, 2001; Roberts & Treasure, 1995). Based on these findings, it can be argued that strengthening task involvement will increase enjoyment and consequently extend sport participation. There is theoretical, and some empirical, evidence suggesting that task orientation may be strengthened through the use of certain MST techniques (Burton, 1989; Duda & Treasure, 2001).

In addition to the possibility of using MST to strengthen task orientation, MST has more commonly been used as a means of enhancing performance. Improved performance may also lead to increased enjoyment. Besides the plethora of anecdotal evidence attesting to the link between enjoyment and performance, Beauchamp et al. (1996) reasoned that if MST can improve performance, and therefore foster feelings of competence, engaging in MST may lead to increased intrinsic interest or enjoyment.

Enjoyment may also be enhanced by the development of a positive perspective. Orlick and colleagues (Orlick, 1996, 1998; St. Denis, Orlick, & McCaffrey, 1996) found that when individuals were encouraged to identify, record, and discuss their daily highlights through the use of highlight training they experienced more enjoyment and had more positive self-perceptions. Pinel, through the concept of enjoyment profiling (Pinel, 1999; Pinel, Enoka, Hodge, & McKenzie, 1999), made athletes identify specific strategies that would help them focus on sources of enjoyment while they are participating in their sport. Similarly, other research-practitioners (e.g., Gould, Medbery, & Tuffey, 2001) have advocated identifying athletes' sources of enjoyment so coaches can build opportunities for the athletes to experience

them into their coaching practices. These three related lines of research highlight further potential avenues through which MST may be used to heighten enjoyment.

If MST is going to be used, whether it be with the intention of increasing enjoyment, enhancing performance, or influencing some other variables which may encourage prolonged sport involvement or increase quality experiences, it needs to be examined in that regard. In an age of accountability it is important that mental training consultants assess the effectiveness of their practices (Anderson et al., 2002; Grove, Norton, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 1999; McCullagh, 1998). The popularity and use of MST among athletes is increasing (Weinberg & Comar, 1994). This is reflected in the mounting numbers of books, popular magazine articles, research publications, and more recently web-sites, which outline ways in which to enhance performance and control cognitive and affective responses through MST (e.g., Bloom, 2003; Orlick, 1986, 2000; Williams, 2001; www.competitivedge.com; www.mindtools.com; www.sportdoc.com; www.zoneofexcellence.com). Moreover, sport-specific MST books targeted towards recreational athletes are becoming more prevalent (e.g., Cogan & Vidmar, 1999; Gallwey, 1997, 1998; Murray, 1999; Rotella, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2001; Van Raalte & Silver-Bernstein, 1999). However, despite the widespread use of MST and both the empirical and anecdotal support attesting to its facilitative role in enhancing performance, the effectiveness of MST is still being questioned and calls for further research have been made (Perkos, Theodorakis, & Chroni, 2002; Thelwell & Greenlees, 2001; Straub, 1989; Weinberg & Comar, 1994; Weinberg & Gould, 1999). Vealey (1994) suggested that "many equivocal findings [regarding the effectiveness of MST may] become clearer when we begin to study the effects of various treatments on different types of individuals, instead of assuming that all individuals will be affected similarly" (p. 501). Many researchers in the field of sport psychology have supported the use of idiographic research to this

end (Smith, 1989; Vealey, 1994; Weiss, 1998). Moreover, Strean (1998) highlighted the value of "discovering and reporting performers' beliefs regarding the efficacy of interventions (e.g., with respect to who, what, where, when, and how)" (p. 340).

The question, "Do our interventions work?", which currently seems to be guiding research in the field of sport psychology, "is an old . . . one that will always be disputed" (Vealey, 1998). Vealey stated that in order to advance the field of sport psychology researchers need to ask "Why, how, under what circumstances, and in what contexts, does MST work?" It is these questions that are "at the heart of what a practitioner wants to know" (Smith, 1989, p. 171). Many practitioners in the field of sport psychology (e.g., Vealey, 1998) espouse the belief that it is the process by which the MST is delivered, and not the MST techniques themselves, that is the key to MST effectiveness. Vealey suggested that focusing more on the delivery system (e.g., how MST is developed, how mental training consultants and athletes experience MST) rather than the MST techniques, the field of sport psychology will become more relevant and successful.

Although the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of MST programs and techniques remains, Vealey (1998) noted it is also critical to gain insight into the MST experience from the perspectives of those involved. To date, little is known about athletes' experiences of MST. Over 15 years ago Orlick and Partington investigated 200 Olympic athletes' and coaches' perspectives on the characteristics of effective mental training consultants (Orlick & Partington, 1987; Partington & Orlick, 1987a, 1987b). In 1994, Brewer, Jeffers, Petitpas, and Van Raalte examined athletes' perceptions of various mental training techniques. A more recent trend in the literature has been to investigate athletes' attitudes towards seeking sport psychology consultation and examining their expectations of it (e.g., Martin, Akers, & Jackson,

2001; Martin, Kellmann, Lavallee, & Page, 2002; Martin, Wrisberg, Beitel, & Lounsbury, 1997). However, none of this research looked at how the athletes experienced the MST. I have been unable to unearth any research that examines the MST experience from the perspective of the athletes themselves.

With these gaps in knowledge and understanding in the field of sport psychology in mind, the purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of MST in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented. The following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What are the experiences of each of the recreational golfers as they participate in the MST?
2. What is the MST process for each of the recreational golfers?
3. What effects, if any, is MST having on each of the recreational golfers' affect, cognitions, and/or behaviours? Specifically, what are the changes, if any, in the golfers' enjoyment? Furthermore, from each golfer's perspective, what key factors, if any, do they perceive contributed to the outcomes of the MST?

Research Contributions

It is anticipated that this inquiry will make important contributions on practical, theoretical, and methodological levels. First, this inquiry examined the role of MST in increasing enjoyment. If sport psychology research-practitioners are to continue to espouse the use of MST in enhancing enjoyment it needed to be examined in that regard. Second, this inquiry attempted to gain insight into the MST experience from the perspective of the athletes. Not only was this an

original approach in itself, but developing an awareness of the MST experience from the perspective of those involved will allow practitioners to refine their practices and make MST more effective and enjoyable. Third, by adopting qualitative methodology this inquiry took a novel approach towards investigating MST and moved away from the positivist paradigm that currently predominates the sport psychology literature. Lastly, by exploring MST in a natural setting, this inquiry made a step towards closing the gap between research and practice.

Conceptual Framework

As a critical review of literature will later substantiate, MST may be an effective means of increasing enjoyment. The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 framed this inquiry. The value of increasing enjoyment is apparent when one considers it is important for quality of life (line 1 in conceptual framework). Furthermore, as enjoyment is a crucial element of sport participation (line 2) (Ebbeck et al., 1995; Frederick et al., 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Weiss et al., 2001) practitioners seeking to prolong sport involvement should work towards increasing sport enjoyment (Goudas, Biddle, & Fox, 1994). Furthermore, as perceived competence predicts enjoyment, and is often cited as a source of enjoyment (line 3) (Bakker et al., 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002), the value of strengthening perceived competence in order to prolong sport involvement is evident. Depending on the individuals' goal involvement (task or ego involved), their perceived competence may be strengthened or undermined (line 4) (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992).

Task involved individuals define success by improvement, learning, and task mastery. These individuals will consequently develop feelings of competence when they recognise personal improvement. Antithetically, ego involved individuals define success based on other-referenced comparisons. For these individuals, perceived competence will only be strengthened

when they win in competitive situations; as soon as they start losing, irrespective of how well they are performing, their perceived competence will be undermined. Whether individuals are task or ego involved in any given situation will depend on both their dispositional goal orientation (task or ego oriented) (line 5) and the perceptions they have of their motivational climate (mastery or performance oriented) (line 6) (Duda, Chi, Newton, Walling, & Catley, 1995; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Roberts, 2001).

MST may strengthen perceived competence, and consequently cultivate enjoyment, through two mechanisms. First, MST could be designed to strengthen task involvement (line 7) with an end to increasing perceived competence and enjoyment. Alternatively, through focusing MST on performance enhancement (line 8), perceived competence may be strengthened through the recognition of improved ability, and consequently, enjoyment may be increased. Furthermore, MST may be effective in increasing enjoyment through developing a positive perspective (line 9). There appears to be a strong argument for the use of MST in increasing enjoyment. However, there are many factors related to the development (lines 10-13) and implementation (lines 14-16) of MST that may impact its effectiveness (lines 17-18). In order to maximise the efficacy of MST it is essential that mental training consultants understand the factors involved in defining the MST experience for each of the individuals involved.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As physical activity contributes to quality of life it is important to comprehend why individuals continue to participate in, or drop out of, sport. Scanlan and colleagues (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons, & Keeler, 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986) examined factors that they hypothesised would affect sport commitment, the "psychological construct representing the desire and resolve to continue sport participation" (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt et al., 1993, p. 6).

Through their work with youth athletes in the area of sport commitment, Scanlan and colleagues (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel, & Simons, 1993; Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt et al., 1993; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Scanlan, Simons, Carpenter, Schmidt, & Keeler, 1993) developed, and successfully tested, a model of sport commitment. They found five factors contributed to sport commitment: sport enjoyment; involvement alternatives; personal investments; involvement opportunities; and social constraints. In all the studies that have been conducted to test this model, sport enjoyment has emerged as the strongest predictor of sport commitment (Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002).

Although this research on the sport commitment model was conducted with youth athletes, there is also evidence to suggest that enjoyment is an important motive for sport participation among adults (Battista, 1990; Ebbeck et al., 1995; Frederick et al., 1996). An examination of the early studies on participation motives revealed that in the majority of these studies participants ranked enjoyment as the most important reason for participating in sport (Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002). Seemingly, enjoyment is a crucial factor for prolonged sport involvement for both children and adults. Furthermore, a study investigating values in sport

revealed that young athletes perceived having fun and enjoying oneself as the most important thing in sport (Lee, Whitehead, & Balchin, 2000).

Given the role enjoyment plays in sport participation and quality of life, it seems appropriate to divert effort and attention toward understanding, and subsequently maximising, enjoyment. MST appears to be a viable means through which enjoyment may be increased (Beauchamp et al., 1996; Burton, 1989; Orlick, 1998). The following review of recent and pertinent literature will critically address the definition of enjoyment, sources and predictors of enjoyment, goal involvement and enjoyment, MST for enjoyment, and developing MST.

Definition of Enjoyment

There is much controversy and confusion surrounding the definition and construct of enjoyment (Caldwell, 1998; Jackson, 2000; Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; Kimiecik & Jackson, 2002; Wankel, 1997). Enjoyment has been construed as a positive affective response, a subjective state or experience, and/or a motivational construct. It has been likened to the concepts of fun, joy, flow, optimal experience, and intrinsic motivation. In the remainder of this section, an overview of the debate surrounding the definition of enjoyment will be presented.

Much of the controversy surrounding the concept of enjoyment appears to centre on the argument of whether enjoyment is an affect or a positive psychological state. That is, "is the positive affect the essence of enjoyment which is linked to a number of cognitions that are the sources of enjoyment, or do the various 'cognitive components comprising flow' constitute enjoyment, and they result in positive affect?" (Wankel, 1997, p.106). Both Scanlan and colleagues (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al., 1993; Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt et al., 1993; Scanlan & Simons, 1992) and Wankel (1993, 1997) subscribe to the 'enjoyment as affect' theory. Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt et al. (1993) described sport enjoyment as "a positive

affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalised feelings such as pleasure, liking, and fun" (p. 6). Similarly, Wankel (1993) defined enjoyment as "a positive emotion, a positive affective state" (p. 153) and later posited that "the positive affect or feeling is the essential underlying component common to all exercise enjoyment experiences" (1997, p. 103).

Under the conceptualisation of 'enjoyment as affect', the terms fun and enjoyment tend to be used interchangeably within the sport psychology literature (Jackson, 2000; Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al., 1993; Wankel, 1997). However, it is unclear whether the two constructs are indeed synonymous (Jackson, 2000). Research establishing clear demarcation between fun and enjoyment is necessary. Pinel (1999) argued that fun is just one aspect of enjoyment, elaborating "athletes can enjoy many different aspects of their participation, [but] some of these aspects . . . may not be fun" (p. 6). For example, he proposed that athletes might enjoy working hard to improve their fitness, attaining a personal best, or the pressure of competition, but that these aspects of the sport may not necessarily be fun for them.

It would be remiss to exclude a mention of joy while discussing positive affect. Although many regard joy as a core emotion, it has received scant attention in the field of sport psychology. However, some have argued that research investigating peak experiences indirectly covers the concept of joy because peak experiences have been defined as "intense joy" (Jackson, 2000). In sport, there appears to be a tendency to use the terms fun and enjoyment, rather than joy, when referring to positive affect.

Enjoyment has also been likened to the concept of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Dattilo, Kleiber, & Williams, 1998; Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; Kimiecik & Jackson, 2002; Stevens, Moget, De Greef, Lemmink, & Rispens, 2000). In this case, rather than emphasising an affective dimension, enjoyment is linked "with the positive psychological experience of flow"

(Jackson, 2000, p.139). Flow has been described as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). Csikszentmihalyi views enjoyment as an optimal experience and uses the terms enjoyment, flow, and optimal experience interchangeably.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) made an important distinction between the concepts of pleasure and enjoyment. He defined pleasure as "a feeling of contentment that one achieves whenever information in consciousness says that expectations set by biological programs or by social conditioning have been met" (p. 45). Csikszentmihalyi expanded on the notion of pleasure and defined enjoyment as a phenomenon "characterised by . . . forward movement: by a sense of novelty, of accomplishment" (p. 46). He stated that enjoyable events occur

> when a person has not only met some prior expectation or satisfied a need or a desire [such as in a pleasurable experience] but also gone beyond what he or she has been programmed to do and achieved something unexpected, perhaps something even unimagined before [which will lead to psychological growth]. (p. 46)

In order to gain a better understanding of the experience of 'enjoyment as flow', Csikszentmihalyi (1990) extensively interviewed a diverse group of people including individuals from different cultures (e.g., Thailand, Australia, a Navajo reservation), individuals who expended a large amount of time and effort in activities that had no obvious rewards (e.g., amateur athletes, chess players), and ordinary people (e.g., young mothers, retirees, surgeons). He found that although what these individuals did to experience enjoyment was vastly different, how they described the experience of enjoyment was very similar. From this work Csikszentmihalyi proposed eight major components of enjoyment:

> First, [an enjoyable] experience usually occurs when we confront tasks we have a chance of completing. Second, we must be able to concentrate on what we are doing. Third and fourth, the concentration is usually possible because the task undertaken has clear goals and provides immediate feedback. Fifth, one acts with a deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life. Sixth, enjoyable experiences allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions. Seventh, concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over. Finally, the sense of the duration of time is altered. (p. 49)

According to Csikszentmihalyi, enjoyment leads to psychological growth and therefore to experience enjoyment one must invest effort and attention. Clearly, Csikszentmihalyi's conception of enjoyment as flow or an optimal state "seems more exclusive and less readily achieved than good feelings during a 'fun' activity" (Jackson, 2000, p. 139).

Kimiecik and Harris (1996), like Csikszentmihalyi (1990), conceptualised and defined enjoyment as flow. They argued that defining enjoyment as affect is inaccurate and proposed that "enjoyment is more than a positive affective response" (p. 256). Kimiecik and Harris suggested that extant research on enjoyment construed as positive affect should be "viewed as work that has examined positive affect, not enjoyment" (p. 259) as they claimed they had found "enough evidence to at least question the conceptualisation of enjoyment as a positive affective experience" (p. 251). However, Wankel (1997) refuted many of their arguments claiming they were "based on a distorted, selective review of the previous research" (p. 104). He went on to iterate:

> I continue to think that our results [Wankel and Sefton (1989)] – indicating that the hockey and ringette participants' ratings of how much fun they had in a game were consistently highly correlated with their scores on a 3-item positive affect scale . . . – provide some of the best evidence that fun or enjoyment is a positive affective response to aspects of the sport experience. (p. 101)

Wankel (1997) was careful to highlight that his argument should not be construed as criticism of Csikszentmihalyi's research on flow. He agreed that the "'flow experience' is an important part of the enjoyment experience . . . [but noted] individuals' reports of enjoyment in sport or exercise go considerably beyond the flow condition" (p. 103). Wankel suggested that defining enjoyment as flow is too narrow a definition and may not be "the most useful way to define enjoyment for the purpose of understanding sport and exercise enjoyment in the applied context" (p. 105). For practitioners interested in increasing sport enjoyment, narrowing the definition of enjoyment may hinder the process as important information regarding precursors of enjoyment may be lost.

Enjoyment has also been linked to the concept of intrinsic motivation (Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; Wankel, 1993). Deci and Ryan (1991) defined intrinsically motivated behaviours as "those behaviours that occur in the absence of external controls" (p. 249). That is, behaviours are engaged in strictly for the enjoyment they provide. Along a similar vein, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described the flow experience as autotelic. The word 'autotelic' is derived from the Greek *auto*, which means self, and *telo*, which means goal. By autotelic activities Csikszentmihalyi was referring to "self-contained [activities, which are] done not with the expectation of some future benefit, but simply because the doing itself is the reward" (p. 67). There appear to be similarities between the concepts of flow and intrinsic motivation.

Yet despite the apparent similarities between flow and intrinsic motivation they are not one and the same. Kimiecik and Harris (1996) hypothesised that enjoyment "serves as the groundwork for the development of intrinsic motivation" (p. 257). They proposed that initially individuals may participate in an activity for extrinsic reasons, but eventually, enjoyable activities will be pursued for their own sake, independent of extrinsic factors (i.e., they become autotelic/intrinsically motivating). Kimiecik and Harris proposed that enjoyment (i.e., flow) leads to positive affect that enhances the development of intrinsic motivation. Conversely, Kowal (1998) suggested:

> Since the experience of flow is dependent upon the interaction between an individual and an activity . . . he/she would not engage in an activity . . . unless he/she was motivated to do so. In other words, flow would not be experienced unless an individual initially engaged in an activity. Hence, motivation may be considered to be the initial energy responsible for the individual's participation in an optimally challenging activity, whereas flow can be thought of as a positive experiential state that is experienced while engaged in the activity. (p. 33)

The relationship between flow and intrinsic motivation remains unclear.

Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) also acknowledged that "sport enjoyment shares a common base with the construct of intrinsic motivation" (p.32). High levels of perceived competence and control (self-determination) are necessary for both enjoyment and intrinsic motivation (Scanlan & Simons, 1992). However, by defining enjoyment as intrinsic motivation within the context of sport, once again researchers may be adopting too narrow a definition. Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) argued that enjoyment is a much broader construct than intrinsic motivation. By definition, intrinsically motivated behaviours are "those behaviours that occur in

the absence of external controls" (Deci & Ryan, 1991, p. 249). Yet many researchers have found that enjoyment can be derived from extrinsic as well as intrinsic sources (Bakker et al., 1993; Gould et al., 2001; Pinel et al., 1999; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002). Accordingly, Scanlan and Lewthwaite defined enjoyment as

> a broader, more inclusive construct [than intrinsic motivation] that encompasses several aspects of the multifaceted competitive sport experience, including those not directly related to personal perceptions of competence and control. The competitive sport experience includes (a) achievement and non-achievement components and (b) intrinsic and extrinsic elements that may contribute to enjoyment. This larger perspective of enjoyment provides the opportunity to account for factors such as receiving positive social evaluation and recognition, meeting affiliation needs, and experiencing pleasurable or exhilarating sensations associated with movement. (p. 32)

Based on Scanlan and Lewthwaite's (1986) more inclusive definition of enjoyment, Scanlan and Simons (1992) developed a model of sport enjoyment. They suggested that sport enjoyment can be influenced by four factors:

> *Achievement-Intrinsic Factors:* Factors relating to perceptions of competence and control that are self-reinforced, like feelings of mastery in performing a skill.
>
> *Achievement-Extrinsic Factors:* Factors relating to feelings of competence and control that are dependent on feedback from other people, such as through positive social recognition.
>
> *Non-Achievement-Intrinsic Factors:* Factors which are tied to the experience of the activity, like movement sensations or the thrill of competition.

Non-Achievement-Extrinsic Factors: Factors relating to the non-performance aspects of sport, such as social interactions with peers and significant others. (Scanlan & Simons, p. 208)

To conclude, the use of multiple terms in the literature to refer to the concept of enjoyment has created confusion and controversy. To date, little consensus has been reached as to the meaning of enjoyment and its relationship to other constructs such as fun, joy, flow, optimal experience, and intrinsic motivation. These definitional conundrums may present more of a concern to researchers than to practitioners. Wankel (1997) noted that sport and exercise participants do not seem to distinguish between these terms. He advocated simply using the term "enjoyment" as it "has meaning to both youth sport participants and adult exercisers in referring to the diverse factors that are attractive to them and facilitate their continued involvement [in the activity]" (p. 105). Moreover, the frequency with which all levels of sport participants refer to enjoyable sport experiences suggests that enjoyment is more readily experienced than would be expected if it were defined as flow.

Lastly, Caldwell (1998) voiced concern that "in a quest to conceptually and operationally define enjoyment, it has been stripped of an important essence" (p. 288). She advocated the need to consider an emotionality component in models of enjoyment, noting that often the definition of enjoyment "seems to lack personal expression, meaning, and joie de vivre at any deep level" (Caldwell, 1998, p. 288). Although it is important to have a clear understanding of terms and constructs in order to study them – indeed measurement of a construct necessitates it be operationally defined – Jackson (2000) noted, "remaining fluid in developing and evaluating definitions and associations between constructs [when knowledge is lacking] will help to ensure that the doors to discoveries remain open" (p. 154).

Sources and Predictors of Enjoyment

Considering enjoyment is an important factor for continued sport participation, the importance of maximising enjoyment in sport becomes apparent. In order to do this one must first ask, "What makes sport enjoyable?" Indeed, to date, much of the research in the area of sport enjoyment has been conducted in order to determine individuals' sources of enjoyment and to determine which of these sources best predict enjoyment.

Sources of enjoyment have been studied both inductively and deductively (Bakker et al., 1993; Gould et al., 2001; Pinel et al., 1999; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002). Scanlan et al. conducted in-depth, structured, retrospective interviews with 26 former elite national level figure skaters to determine enduring sources of enjoyment of competitive skating. The skaters had competed at different competitive levels (i.e., novice/junior, senior, and world/Olympic). Subjects were asked to recall the major causes or sources of enjoyment during the most competitive phase of their skating experience. They were asked to consider their global skating experience and not limit their answers to the performing aspect.

Scanlan et al. (1989) analysed the data using inductive content analysis. Five main sources of enjoyment emerged: social and life opportunities, perceived competence, social recognition of competence, act of skating, and special cases. The 'special cases' theme contained 'sense of specialness' and 'coping through skating' sub-themes, which were considered important themes but were unclustered. The sources of enjoyment noted by the skaters from different competitive levels were fairly evenly distributed over the five factors, leading Scanlan et al. to conclude "all levels of skaters experienced diverse sources of enjoyment" (p. 80).

Bakker et al. (1993) attempted to replicate Scanlan et al.'s (1989) study using a sample of elite speed skaters. They interviewed 15 males (mean age = 19.9 years) and 17 females (mean

age = 20.3 years) who had been on the Dutch national youth speed skating team for at least one season. The athletes were asked what made speed skating pleasurable to them. Pleasurable was defined as "feelings such as enjoyment, pleasure, [and] fun" (Bakker et al., p. 435).

The athletes' responses (198 statements in total) were coded based on four sources of enjoyment Scanlan et al. (1989) identified. Bakker et al. (1993) did not include Scanlan et al.'s theme 'special cases'. Most (32.3%) of the statements were coded into the 'act of skating' category, 25.3% of the statements into the 'perceived competence' category, 18.7% in the 'social and life opportunities' category, 4.5% in the 'social recognition and competence' category, and the remaining 19.2% of the statements were coded into a 'remaining cases' category.

Bakker et al. (1993) surmised that Scanlan et al.'s (1989) categories of sources of enjoyment were applicable to their study. However, nearly 20% of the statements made by the speed skaters in Bakker et al.'s study could not be categorised under Scanlan et al.'s themes. Bakker et al. revealed that many of these statements were sport specific, suggesting that sources of enjoyment may differ across sports in addition to some being shared. Further examination of the statements Bakker et al. coded into the 'remaining cases' category would be valuable.

More recently, Pinel et al. (1999) examined sources of enjoyment among professional rugby players. They conducted individual interviews with four players and a coach, in addition to a focus group interview with a further four players. Analysis of the data from the interviews revealed five sources of enjoyment. Ranked in order of importance they comprised social factors, process factors, external factors, performance affect, and balanced lifestyle. A comparison of the sources of enjoyment identified by Pinel et al. to those identified by Scanlan et al. (1989) and Bakker et al. (1993) reveals many similarities, indicating that these elite and professional athletes from very different sports report similar sources of enjoyment.

Besides the work of Scanlan, Pinel, Bakker, and their colleagues cited above, much of the research in the arena of sport enjoyment has been focused on youth sport. However, unlike the research above, when investigating sources of enjoyment with youth sport participants researchers have tended to provide the participants with potential sources of enjoyment and then asked them to rank the sources in order of importance (e.g., Gould et al., 2001; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985). An exception to this trend is the recent study by Yoo & Kim (2002). They took an inductive approach by asking 334 middle school athletes (mean age = 13.9 years) to identify what they enjoyed about their sport. Alternatively, researchers have investigated which factors best predict enjoyment (e.g., Boyd & Yin, 1996; Brustad, 1988; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al., 1993). This latter line of research will be discussed shortly, but first research investigating sources of enjoyment in youth sport will be presented.

Gould et al. (2001) investigated sources of fun among 277 male and female youth swimmers (mean age = 13.03 years). They found the top five ranked sources of fun were being with friends, compliments and encouragement from the coach, recognition as a good swimmer, winning races, and getting in shape. Wankel and Kreisel (1985) investigated factors underlying enjoyment among a group of 822 boys between the ages of 7 and 14 who were involved in organised baseball, soccer, and hockey programs. Ten items developed to assess sport enjoyment were incorporated into a Thurstonian paired comparison inventory that was then administered to the participants. Wankel and Kreisel found that the most important factors of sport enjoyment were comparing skills against others, excitement of the game, personal accomplishment, and improving their skills. Using an inductive approach, Yoo and Kim (2002) found winning/competition, social recognition/rewards, perceived competence, and health/fitness to be

the most frequently cited sources of enjoyment for the 334 male and female middle school athletes they studied.

The sources of enjoyment that emerged for these youth athletes were similar to those found in studies with older elite and professional athletes. Based on these results it appears that both young and older athletes from a variety of sports across different competitive levels derive enjoyment from factors associated with the process of participating (e.g., expending effort, learning, mastery) as well as the outcome of participating (e.g., rewards, special events, affiliation). Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al. (1993) indicated that these results are in contrast to the widely held idea they termed 'The Pizza Parlour Phenomenon'. The Pizza Parlour Phenomenon is "the notion that enjoyment is what occurs at the pizza parlour *after* the hard work and skill learning are over for the day, week, or season" (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al., 1993, p. 282).

Orlick (1998) also investigated sources of enjoyment, or what he termed 'highlight domains'. Orlick identified five highlight domains within which individuals may experience joy. These are human contact; nature; play, physical activity, and sport; personal growth or accomplishment; and sensual experiences. Orlick suggested that "life is full of extraordinary opportunities for embracing simple joys within ordinary experiences" (p. 4) and it is necessary for individuals to look for highlights within all the domains in order to stay healthy, reduce stress, live joyfully, and add a sense of balance and perspective to life.

Another trend in enjoyment research has been to determine what factors best predict enjoyment. Boyd and Yin (1996) adopted a goal orientation perspective in their research. They investigated the roles of goal orientation, perceived competence, years of sport participation, and learned helpless effort in sport in predicting sport enjoyment. Boyd and Yin defined learned

helpless effort in sport as "the avoidance of challenge as well as lack of persistence when confronted with difficult situations" (p. 385).

Boyd and Yin (1996) administered a battery of questionnaires to a group of 231 male high school students who had participated in organised sport for at least one year (mean age = 15.04 years). The questionnaires were developed to assess task and ego orientation, perceived competence, learned helpless affect in sport, sport enjoyment, and years of sport participation. Boyd and Yin conducted a standard multiple regression to determine which of the factors predicted sport enjoyment. They found that together the five factors (i.e., task and ego orientation, perceived competence, learned helpless affect in sport, and years of sport participation) accounted for 53% of the variance of sport enjoyment. All the factors except ego orientation were found to be significant predictors of sport enjoyment. Perceived competence accounted for the greatest amount of variance; 9% of the variance was accounted for uniquely by sport competence.

Ommundsen and Vaglum (1991) investigated the impact of soccer related self-esteem, perceived competence, and the emotional involvement of significant others (i.e., parents and coaches) on sport enjoyment and competition anxiety among a sample of 223 Norwegian male soccer players (mean age = 14.5 years). They found significant correlations ($p < .05$) between soccer enjoyment and the four predictor variables: perceived soccer related self-esteem, perceived soccer competence, perceived coach behaviour, and perceived parental behaviour. Using a stepwise multiple regression analysis, Ommundsen and Vaglum found that these four predictor variables accounted for 15% of the variance of soccer enjoyment.

Examining the ability of the individual variables to predict enjoyment, Ommundsen and Vaglum (1991), like Boyd and Yin (1996), found that perceived competence was the most

important predictor of sport enjoyment. Ommundsen and Vaglum also found that perceptions of coach and parental behaviours were significant predictors of sport enjoyment. However, even though perceived soccer related self-esteem was significantly correlated with soccer enjoyment it did not add to the explanation of variance of soccer enjoyment. In order to investigate this further they performed another multiple regression analysis and entered soccer competence and soccer related self-esteem into the equation simultaneously. Ommundsen and Vaglum found that perceived soccer related self-esteem still did not predict soccer enjoyment and concluded that "soccer self-esteem may primarily influence soccer enjoyment through its positive effect upon perceived soccer competence" (p. 43).

Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) investigated predictors of sport enjoyment among a group of youth wrestlers aged 9-14 years. They looked at interpersonal factors (age and perceived competence) and significant adult influences (parents and coaches) as predictors of enjoyment. By regressing age, perceived competence, and five "significant adult factors" on sport enjoyment, Scanlan and Lewthwaite found that age, perceived competence, adult satisfaction with season's performance, negative maternal interactions, and positive adult involvement and interactions predicted wrestling enjoyment. These five variables accounted for 38% of the variance of sport enjoyment. Once again, perceived competence was found to be a significant predictor of sport enjoyment.

Continuing this line of research, Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al. (1993) further examined sources of sport enjoyment in youth athletes in addition to investigating which of these factors would best predict sport enjoyment. Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al. (1993) administered a questionnaire developed to assess sources of sport enjoyment to 1342 youth athletes from tackle football (n = 533, mean age = 12.3 years), volleyball (n = 173, mean age = 13.0 years), and

soccer (n = 616, mean age = 15.7 years). In order to determine the underlying structure of the sources of enjoyment for this population, a principal factor analysis with oblique rotation was performed. Six factors emerged that accounted for 44.8% of the variance of the questionnaire items. These factors were labelled: perceived competence; sport enjoyment; positive team interactions and support; positive parental involvement, interactions, and performance satisfaction; effort and mastery; and positive coach support and satisfaction with players' seasonal performance.

Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al. (1993) then conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine which of these factors predicted sport enjoyment. They found that positive team interactions and support, effort and mastery, and positive coach support and satisfaction with players' seasonal performance were significant predictors of enjoyment. The fact that Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al. did not find perceived competence to be a predictor of sport enjoyment is contrary to the findings of Ommundsen and Vaglum (1991) and Boyd and Yin (1996) above.

Another study that investigated the role of perceived competence in predicting sport enjoyment was that of Brustad (1988). Brustad investigated predictors of enjoyment among 207 male and female basketball players with a mean age of 10.8 years. The hypothesised predictors of enjoyment in his study were perceived basketball competence, self-esteem, motivational orientation, perceived parental pressure, actual basketball ability (as assessed by coach rating), and team win/loss percentage. The six variables significantly predicted enjoyment and accounted for 25% of the variance for the boys and 24% of the variance for the girls. Individually, motivational orientation and perceived parental pressure were significant predictors of sport enjoyment. As in Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al.'s (1993) study, perceived competence did not make a unique contribution to explaining the variance of sport enjoyment.

The final study that investigated predictors of enjoyment to be considered here is that of Ashford, Biddle, and Goudas (1993). Their study was unique in that their subjects (336 males and females) were older (over 16 years of age), recreational athletes who exercised at a community sports centre and engaged in 1 of 14 activities, the most popular being swimming, weight-training, badminton, and squash. Ashford et al. investigated reasons for sport and exercise participation and then examined whether sport enjoyment could be predicted from these participation motives.

Ashford et al. (1993) performed an oblique factor analysis on the ratings of the participation motives. Four participation motive factors emerged, namely assertive achievement (power, aggression, independence, achievement), physical well-being (fitness, health), socio-psychological well-being (aesthetics, relaxation, affiliation, environment, eustress), and sports mastery and performance (skills, competition, excellence, learning). A stepwise multiple regression was then performed to determine which of the four factors, in addition to sports importance and perceived competence, were the best predictors of enjoyment. Ashford et al. found that socio-psychological well-being, sports mastery and performance, and sports importance were the best predictors of enjoyment and together accounted for 14.4% of the variance in sport enjoyment.

Of the studies reviewed that investigated the sources and predictors of enjoyment, the majority found perceived competence to be a significant predictor, or source, of sport enjoyment. Unfortunately, only a handful of studies (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Brustad, 1988; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991) investigated the individual contribution each of the predictor variables made to explaining sport enjoyment variance. However, for two of these studies (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991) perceived competence was found to be the single most important

predictor of sport enjoyment. Moreover, high positive correlations between enjoyment and perceived competence have been found for both adults and children (Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995). In conclusion, it appears that perceived competence plays an important role in the onset of enjoyment for both adults and children.

Goal Involvement and Enjoyment

The literature propounds that perceived competence is important for the development of enjoyment. Consequently, as individuals' goal involvement dictates how they judge their competence, an investigation into achievement goal theory seems worthy when investigating enjoyment. According to Nicholls' (1984, 1989, 1992) achievement goal theory, up until the age of 11-12 years, children are not able to differentiate the concepts of luck, effort, and task difficulty from ability; they have a less differentiated conception of competence. These younger children believe that effort leads to improvement and therefore greater effort demonstrates higher ability. For them, an increase in learning corresponds to an increase in competence. However, after the age of 11-12 years, Nicholls proposed that children are able to differentiate between ability and effort. These children recognise that an increase in the amount of effort expended may not necessarily lead to improved performance because ability may act as a limiting factor. Nicholls (1992) termed this more differentiated conception of competence "ability as current capacity" (p. 35).

Once individuals are able to conceive both the undifferentiated and differentiated conceptions of competence as described above, they are able to adopt either one (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992). The view they adopt will profoundly impact the manner in which they judge their competence and set their goals. Individuals adopting the less differentiated view are predicted to

use self-referenced judgements of competence. For these individuals success is defined, and perceived competence strengthened, by improvement, learning, and meeting the demands of the task, and they set their goals accordingly. These individuals are more concerned with improving their mastery of a task rather than comparing their ability to others and are said to be task involved. Conversely, individuals adopting the more differentiated view are predicted to use normative or other-referenced judgements of competence. These individuals consider themselves successful, and therefore their perceptions of competence are strengthened, when they demonstrate superior ability compared to others. However, if they do not win (as defined by objective outcome) in competitive situations, and are therefore unable to demonstrate superior ability, their perceived competence will be undermined. These individuals are said to be ego involved (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992).

Within this framework, it is apparent that individuals' goal involvement and the types of goals they set will play a role in strengthening or undermining their perceived competence. Based on implications from previous research, goal involvement is therefore likely to have an effect on enjoyment levels and sport participation, as well as other cognitive and affective responses in achievement situations. Indeed, empirical research bears this prediction out. Studies investigating cognitive and affective correlates of goal involvement have revealed that task involved individuals tend to engage in adaptive patterns of motivation behaviour (Biddle, 2001; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Duda, 1996, 2001; Roberts, 2001; Roberts & Treasure, 1995). Adaptive patterns of motivation behaviour include a range of cognitive and affective processes that promote prolonged involvement with the activity and a personal investment in learning (Ames, 1992). However, two distinct patterns of behaviour emerge among ego involved individuals. Those who have high levels of perceived competence are proposed to show the same adaptive

pattern of behaviour that the task involved individuals exhibit. However, ego involved individuals with low levels of perceived competence are predicted to exhibit maladaptive patterns of behaviour such as giving up in the face of difficulty (Roberts & Treasure, 1995).

Whether an individual is task or ego involved in any given achievement situation will depend on both the individual's dispositional goal orientation (task or ego orientation) and the motivational climate/situational goal structure (mastery or performance oriented) (Duda et al., 1995; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Roberts, 2001). Dweck and Leggett (1988) defined dispositions as "individual difference variables that determine the a priori probability of adopting a particular goal and displaying a particular behaviour pattern, and situational factors are seen as potentially altering these probabilities" (p. 269). Ames and Archer (1988) stated that motivational climate is a function of the salience of specific goals within the environment. They proposed eight dimensions which would differentiate between a mastery and performance oriented climate (see Table 1). In the following sections, the effect of dispositional goal orientation and motivational climate on individuals' cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses in achievement situations will be discussed. Then, the research investigating the relative impact of dispositional goal orientation and motivational climate on motivation correlates will be examined.

Dispositional goal orientation.

Individuals' dispositional goal orientations are logically associated with their outcome attributions (Duda, 1992). As task involved individuals are concerned with improving their performance, and believe that trying hard leads to improvement, one would expect them to employ effort attributions. Conversely, as ego involved individuals are concerned with normative comparisons of ability, one would expect them to emphasise ability attributions and/or downplay

the role of effort in performance (Duda, 1992; Newton & Duda, 1999). Indeed, these predictions have empirical support. Research investigating both younger and older children's beliefs about causes of success in sport showed that those children who were task involved tended to believe that high effort leads to success in sport, whereas the ego involved individuals tended to believe that high ability causes success (Duda, Fox, Biddle, & Armstrong 1992; Newton & Duda, 1999; Roberts, Treasure, & Kavussanu, 1996; Seifriz, Duda, & Chi, 1992 [see Roberts, 2001 for a review]). As task involved individuals believe trying hard, and ego involved individuals believe innate ability, causes success, one would expect task involved individuals to exert more effort when participating in sport than ego involved individuals. Once again, there is empirical support for these theoretical predictions. Task orientation has been found to be positively related to the amount of effort exerted, and to be a significant predictor of effort in terms of how hard individuals try and how long they persist with the activity (Boyd & Callaghan, 1994; Williams & Gill, 1995).

In fact, when individuals are ego involved "'merely' doing one's best . . . comes to be valued less than doing well with little effort" (Nicholls, 1992, p. 36). Therefore, if ego involved individuals are unsure of whether or not they can successfully perform a task, they are faced with the dilemma of whether or not they should exert effort. If they do, they may succeed and therefore demonstrate high ability. Yet if they fail, their lack of ability would be even more apparent than if they had not exerted any effort (Nicholls, 1992). Their decision of whether or not to try hard in the task may be based on how competent they feel. Unfortunately, few studies (Goudas et al., 1994; Vlachopoulos, Biddle, & Fox, 1996; Williams & Gill, 1995) have examined the mediating effects of perceived competence on effort and other correlates of goal involvement and these have yielded mixed results.

Goudas et al. (1994) and Vlachopoulos et al. (1996) found that perceived competence did mediate the effects of ego orientation, and that ego involved individuals with high perceived competence showed adaptive patterns of motivation behaviour and positive affect. However, Williams and Gill (1995) did not find the interaction between ego orientation and perceived competence to explain effort or intrinsic interest. Williams and Gill suggested that this may have been due to the fact that their sample was high in both task orientation and perceived competence. Certainly, further research is essential in order to ascertain the possible mediating effect of perceived competence. A clearer picture may emerge if a highly ego oriented sample with varying degrees of perceived competence was used.

Individuals' goal orientations have also been predicted to influence their levels of intrinsic motivation (Nicholls, 1984). Nicholls proposed that task involved individuals view learning as an end in itself and therefore will feel more intrinsically motivated than those individuals who are more ego involved and view learning as a means to an end (i.e., demonstrating superior ability compared to others). Several studies lend their support to Nicholls' prediction. Research has revealed the existence of strong positive relationships between task involvement and positive affect, such as enjoyment, satisfaction, and intrinsic interest, and either no relationship or a negative relationship between ego involvement and positive affect (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Duda et al., 1992, 1995; Gano-Overway, 2001; Goudas et al., 1994; Goudas, Biddle, Fox, & Underwood, 1995; Kohl, 2002; Roberts et al., 1996; Vlachopoulos et al., 1996; Williams & Gill, 1995). In addition, negative affect such as anxiety, tension, pressure, and boredom, has been found to be positively correlated with ego involvement and negatively correlated with task involvement (Duda et al., 1992, 1995; Hall & Kerr, 1997). However, as mentioned above, Vlachopoulos et al. (1996) found that for ego involved

individuals, the higher their perceptions of competence, the more likely they were to experience positive affect.

Limited research has examined the relationships between goal orientation and skill development. Nevertheless, that which does exist again indicates the benefits of being task oriented (Duda, 1996). As success is defined as improvement by task involved individuals, mistakes are not see as failure, but instead as sources of information on how to improve future performance (Papaioannou, 1995). Moreover, Papaioannou proposed:

> since no fear of failure exists in task involvement, people do not hesitate to ask for help from others or to co-operate and to help others, because they see co-operation, help-seeking, and help-giving as an effective way towards personal and collective improvement. (p. 247)

In support of this, Duda et al. (1992) found that individuals who were task involved strongly endorsed co-operation (i.e., helping others to improve), whereas ego involved individuals did not value helping their friends to improve.

Not only may task oriented individuals learn skills more efficiently due to a willingness to ask for help, but they are also more likely to persist with the task and use more effective learning strategies. Duda (1988) found that those individuals who emphasised mastery in sport (i.e., were more task involved) had participated in their sport for a longer period of time, and spent more of their free time practising their sport, compared to individuals who did not emphasise mastery. Dweck and Leggett (1988) found that when problem-solving tasks started to get difficult the more ego oriented children showed marked decrements in performance, whereas the majority of the task involved children continued to use effective problem solving strategies.

Moreover, 25% of the task involved children actually taught themselves more sophisticated strategies in order to solve the difficult problems.

In summary, positive relationships have been found to exist between task orientation and motivation correlates such as enjoyment, effort, and skill development. As enjoyment is a primary reason for sport participation among both adults and children (Ebbeck et al., 1995; Frederick et al., 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Weiss et al., 2001), it would appear that by fostering task involvement sport participation may be prolonged. Conversely, the effect of ego involvement on these same motivation correlates is less clear, perhaps due to the mediating effects of perceived competence.

Besides serving as a potential mediator, perceived competence has also been found to be a significant predictor and source of sport enjoyment (Bakker et al., 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002) and positive correlations have been found between the two constructs (Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995). Consequently, it may play an important role in sustaining sport participation. Practitioners endeavouring to maximise sport involvement may therefore benefit from facilitating the development of perceived competence of those they are working with. As high levels of task, but not ego, orientation have been associated with high levels of perceived competence (Duda et al., 1995; Seifriz et al., 1992; Williams & Gill, 1995) the advantages of being task oriented are once again highlighted. That ego orientation is not positively associated with perceived competence is not surprising as "when success is defined as winning in competition, children are given few opportunities to define their experience positively" (Roberts & Treasure, 1995, p. 76). However, if individuals assess their competence

based on personal improvement the opportunities for experiencing success and developing competence are likely to be more frequent.

Motivational climate.

Individuals' goal involvement depends not only on their dispositional goal orientation but also on their perceptions of the motivational climate. Ames (1992) highlighted the importance of considering *perceptions* of the motivational climate as "the concept of a general motivational climate or structure is not sensitive to differences in how individuals are actually treated and how they interpret their experiences" (p. 164). An individual's goal involvement may therefore vary across settings depending on how the climate is defined. For children, motivational climate may be created by peers, parents, coaches, and/or teachers. These significant others convey their goal perspectives by making certain cues, rewards, and expectations more salient (Ames, 1992). A mastery oriented climate is characterised by an emphasis on learning, personal improvement, trying hard, and viewing mistakes as learning experiences. Conversely, a performance oriented climate is characterised by interpersonal competition, public evaluation, normative feedback, a fear of making mistakes, and an emphasis on outdoing team- or class-mates (Duda, 1996; Roberts & Treasure, 1995).

In the last decade, researchers have started to investigate the cognitive, affective, and behavioural correlates of perceived motivational climate. It appears that individuals who perceive themselves to be in a mastery oriented climate tend to adopt adaptive patterns of motivation behaviour, whereas those who perceive their climate to be more performance oriented tend to adopt more maladaptive patterns of behaviour (Fry & Newton, 2003; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Papaioannou & Kouli, 1999; Seifriz et al., 1992; Solmon, 1996).

The first study to examine the impact of motivational climate on learning was conducted in the academic domain by Ames and Archer (1988). They found that children who perceived their classroom to be more mastery oriented reported greater use of effective learning strategies, a more positive attitude towards their class, and chose to participate in optimally challenging activities. A follow-up study indicated that "students' use of effective strategies and positive attitudes toward the subject matter area were enhanced by the number of years they had mastery oriented experiences" (Ames, 1992, p. 168). Not only does being in a mastery oriented climate benefit learning, but these positive effects are cumulative over time.

Inspired by the work of Ames and colleagues conducted in the classroom (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988), a rapidly increasing number of researchers have investigated correlates of perceived motivational climate in the sport setting (Fry & Newton, 2003; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Newton & Duda, 1999; Ommundsen, Roberts, & Kavussanu, 1998; Papaioannou & Kouli, 1999; Seifriz et al., 1992; Walling, Duda, & Chi, 1993). Again these studies highlighted the advantages of a mastery oriented environment. The combined results of these studies suggested that athletes possessing perceptions of a highly mastery oriented climate reported more positive affect such as higher levels of enjoyment, intrinsic motivation, satisfaction with being a team member, and satisfaction derived from mastery, and lower levels of worry. Furthermore, these individuals who perceived they were in mastery oriented climates were more likely to believe that effort causes success in sport, exert greater effort, show more persistence and willingness to learn from practice, and were less likely to avoid practice. In addition, they were more likely to hold the view that the purpose of team sport is to teach lifetime skills and they possessed more positive sportspersonlike attitudes, self-determination, perceived competence, and self-efficacy than those individuals who perceived themselves to be in less mastery oriented

climates. Conversely, individuals who perceived their climate to be highly performance oriented tended to make ability attributions and reported higher levels of tension, somatic anxiety, and performance worry and lower levels of self-confidence and satisfaction/interest than those who perceived their climate to be less performance oriented. Moreover, perceptions of a performance oriented climate were found to be positively correlated with the view that the purpose of team sport is to enhance one's social status and negatively associated with the endorsement of sportspersonlike attitudes.

Theeboom, De Knop, and Weiss (1995) did not examine individuals' *perceptions* of their motivational climate but instead examined differences in cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses of children who were taught waschu (an Asian martial art) either by a program that emphasised a mastery orientation or by a more traditional program that emphasised performance outcome. They found that children taught in a mastery environment reported higher levels of enjoyment and demonstrated superior execution of a basic skill than those children who were taught in a performance oriented climate. Similarly, Goudas et al (1995) found that when girls were taught track and field with a differentiated style of teaching (i.e., they were provided with learning choices and could dictate pace of learning) they reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation and were more task involved than when they were taught with a more direct style (i.e., the teacher dictated the learning tasks).

Papaioannou and Kouli (1999) took this line of research one step further and investigated whether changing the structure of the activities in a physical education learning environment would affect the learners' perceptions of the motivational climate. They taught one volleyball class using task involving activities and then two weeks later taught the students using ego involving activities. They defined a task involving activity as one that "absorbs students'

attention and makes them want to practice more" (Papaioannou & Kouli, 1999, p. 55) and an ego involving activity as one that "makes students wonder how competent they are in comparison with the others" (Papaioannou & Kouli, 1999, p. 55).

Papaioannou and Kouli (1999) found that manipulating the learning environment affected the learners' perceptions of their teacher's and classmates' orientations. Compared to the class taught with ego involving activities, in the lesson comprising task involving activities the learners perceived that their teacher and classmates emphasised learning and de-emphasised competition. Conversely, in the lesson comprising ego involving tasks the learners felt that the teacher placed a greater emphasis on competition. Similarly, Solmon (1996) found that students taught in a purposely designed mastery oriented climate perceived higher levels of task involvement than ego involvement in the environment, and vice versa for those taught in a performance oriented climate.

The relevance of Solmon (1996) and Papaioannou and Kouli's (1999) findings is quite significant. That is, when teachers make an effort to create either a mastery or performance oriented climate students are able to perceive, and are affected by, the different cues in the environments. Given the evidence suggesting that individuals operating within a mastery oriented climate manifest greater skill development and adaptive cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses compared to individuals who perceive their setting to be more performance oriented, it is important that teachers, coaches, and significant others are aware of the manner in which they evaluate and reward behaviour and organise activities. Every effort should be made to create mastery oriented learning climates.

Motivational climate versus dispositional goal orientation.

Evidence suggests that both perceived motivational climate and dispositional goal orientation may affect individuals' cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses in achievement situations. However, the key is to examine which has a greater impact on motivation behaviour so it can be determined whether interventions should be aimed at the individual or situational level. Unfortunately, only a few studies to date have examined both goal orientation and perceptions of the motivational climate and none have examined changes over time.

A number of researchers (Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Newton & Duda, 1999; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000; Seifriz et al., 1992) have examined the relative importance of perceived motivational climate (mastery or performance oriented) versus dispositional goal orientation (task or ego orientation) in predicting motivation correlates. Using a series of hierarchical stepwise regressions, Seifriz et al. found that, for male basketball players (N = 105, mean age = 16.5 years), task orientation was the main predictor of exerted effort, perceived competence, and the belief that effort causes success, whereas ego orientation predicted the belief that ability leads to success. Both perceptions of a mastery oriented climate and task orientation were found to be significant predictors of enjoyment. Lastly, the perception of being in a performance oriented climate was found to significantly predict tension in basketball. Seifriz et al. suggested that factors that "reflect more dispositional or behavioural/cognitive tendencies . . . [such as] beliefs, perceptions of how hard one tries, and perceived competence" (p. 388) will be best predicted by individuals' dispositional goal orientation, whereas "affective responses such as anxiety are more heavily influenced by situational factors (e.g., the motivational climate)" (p. 388).

Adopting a similar methodology with female national junior volleyball players (N = 385, mean age = 15.16 years), Newton and Duda (1999) found motivational climate was the major predictor of enjoyment/interest and pressure/tension. That is, perceptions of a mastery oriented climate were positively related to enjoyment/interest and perceptions of a performance oriented climate were positively related to pressure/tension. Conversely, goal orientation was found to be the major predictor of effort/importance. Effort/importance was negatively related to ego orientation and positively related to task orientation. Lastly, goal orientation, rather than motivational climate, significantly predicted beliefs about causes of success. Ego orientation best predicted the belief that ability causes success in sport, whereas task orientation best predicted the belief that effort causes success in sport. Newton and Duda's findings confirm those of Seifriz et al.'s (1992) presented above.

Pensgaard and Roberts (2000) investigated the role of dispositional goal orientation and motivational climate on elite athletes' (N = 69) perceptions of stress. They used regression analyses to calculate the amount of unique variance in the criterion variables (stress) accounted for by the predictor variables (task/ego orientation and mastery/performance oriented climate) regardless of their order of entry into the regression equation. Pensgaard and Roberts found that perceptions of a performance oriented climate significantly predicted overall distress, cognitive distress (e.g., negative thoughts about doing well), and coach and team distress (e.g., did not get along with coach). Furthermore, perceptions of a mastery oriented climate negatively predicted sources of distress relating to the coach and team. Dispositional goal orientations did not predict any of the athletes' sources of distress. Pensgaard and Roberts' findings, along with Newton and Duda's (1999) appear to provide further support for Seifriz et al.'s (1992) suggestion that affective responses may be influenced more by perceived motivational climate than by

dispositional goal orientation. However, Pensgaard and Roberts suggested that the motivational climate may be more salient among elite athletes because the "motivational profile of the elite athlete does not favour one disposition over the other because he or she has high scores on both [task and ego] orientations" (p. 198).

In another study that examined both goal dispositions and perceptions of motivational climate, Kavussanu and Roberts (1996) found that for males (n = 147), performance climate and task orientation predicted intrinsic motivation, and mastery climate predicted self-efficacy. For females (n = 119), performance climate predicted both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Although it is difficult to compare this study to the previous ones discussed due to the different assessments and regression analyses employed, the results appear contradictory. It appears that there may be other factors that interact with dispositional goal orientation and motivational climate in impacting these motivation correlates.

Kavussanu and Roberts (1996) suggested that perceptions of motivational climate may be more salient for females than males. However, there was a confounding variable in their study; females had lower levels of perceived competence than males. The fact that perceived motivational climate exerted more of an influence on females' responses may have been due to differences in perceived competence rather than gender. If low levels of perceived competence do indeed make perceptions of the motivational climate more salient than dispositional goal orientations, the importance of creating a mastery oriented climate where the focus is on personal improvement rather than normative comparisons, especially for individuals with low levels of perceived competence, is highlighted.

To date, findings in this area have been equivocal. The interaction between motivational climate and dispositional goal orientation is no doubt complex and dynamic and needs to be

examined further. Seifriz et al. (1992) hypothesised that over time motivational climate may have more of an impact on individuals' cognitive and affective responses, though this remains to be tested. Treasure and Roberts (1995) and Newton and Duda (1999) postulated that as long as the cues in the motivational climate are not too powerful an individual's predisposition towards one goal orientation should not be overridden. Alternatively, "if . . . the situational cues are powerful . . . predispositions may be overridden, and greater homogeneity among individuals may result" (Treasure & Roberts, 1995, p. 478). In support of this, there is preliminary evidence that suggests that significant others can affect the motivational climate so that it overrides the dispositional goal orientations of the others within it (Treasure & Roberts, 1995).

MST for Enjoyment

Enjoyment is an important construct to study within the realm of sport. Not only is it a key motive for sport participation (Ebbeck et al., 1995; Frederick et al., 1996; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002; Weiss et al., 2001), but enjoyment is also important for quality of life and is a factor in peak performance (Cohn, 1991). Consequently, it seems appropriate to divert effort and attention towards understanding, and subsequently maximising, enjoyment. However, the role MST could play in increasing enjoyment has received minimal attention in the literature. This is both surprising and remiss when one considers that "the main aim of a sport psychologist is to assist athletes in the development of psychological skills which facilitate both performance enhancement as well as enjoyment and satisfaction" (Bull, 1991, p. 179). Over fifteen years ago Vealey (1988) stated that "if sport psychologists espouse that [M]ST is designed to make sport more enjoyable for athletes (as well as to enhance performance), then it seems important to assess whether intervention is effective in that regard" (p. 332). Although there is ample research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of MST programs and individual techniques on

enhancing athletes' performance, the question of whether MST is effective in enhancing enjoyment remains unanswered.

In the remainder of this section, three theoretical mechanisms, based on the extant literature, through which MST might enhance enjoyment will be presented. In short, practitioners may be able to engender enjoyment by strengthening task involvement, enhancing performance, and/or developing a positive perspective.

As the previous review of literature substantiated, individuals' goal involvement has been found to affect their cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses in achievement situations. There appears to be a consistent pattern of findings indicating that task involvement fosters adaptive motivation patterns and positive affect which may be necessary for continued sport involvement (see Biddle, 2001; Duda, 2001; and Roberts, 2001 for reviews). Based on these findings, it can be argued that strengthening task involvement will increase enjoyment and consequently extend sport participation. Although there has been limited research investigating whether individuals' goal orientation can be changed or strengthened, there is preliminary evidence to suggest that task orientation may be strengthened through the use of MST (Burton, 1989). Duda and Treasure (2001) suggested that goal setting, self-regulation techniques, and other strategies that "encourage athletes to focus on gains in skill or knowledge, effort levels, and self-referenced criteria for success" (p. 56) may enhance task orientation. Research further suggests that teaching coaches and significant others how to create mastery oriented climates will further foster task involvement in the athletes they work with.

In addition to the possibility of using MST to strengthen task involvement, MST has more commonly been used as a means of enhancing performance. Improved performance may also lead to increased enjoyment. In line with cognitive evaluation theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985,

1991), Beauchamp et al., (1996) reasoned that if MST can improve performance, and therefore foster feelings of competence, engaging in MST may lead to increased intrinsic interest or enjoyment. Indeed, a link between perceived competence and enjoyment has been manifested in the literature (Bakker et al., 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan et al., 1989; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995; Yoo & Kim, 2002). Moreover, there is a plethora of anecdotal evidence that suggests the act of performing well in itself will increase enjoyment.

MST has also been used to increase enjoyment by facilitating the development of positive perspectives through highlight training (Orlick, 1996, 1998; St. Denis et al., 1996). Highlight training involves encouraging individuals to identify, record, and discuss their daily highlights (Orlick, 1996, 1998). Orlick (1996) described a highlight as "any simple pleasure, little treasure, joy, lift, positive feeling, meaningful experience, magic moment, or anything that has lifted the quality of the day for that person" (p. 18). Research has indicated that when individuals spend time thinking about and recording their highlights, they experience more enjoyment and have more positive self-perceptions (Orlick, 1998; St. Denis et al., 1996). It appears that highlight training, and more generally MST, may be a valuable mechanism through which to heighten enjoyment.

Enjoyment profiling (Pinel, 1999) is a similar technique that has been used as a means of increasing enjoyment with both youth and professional athletes (Pinel, 1999; Pinel et al., 1999). Although there is no empirical evidence to suggest the effectiveness of enjoyment profiling in enhancing enjoyment, its intuitive appeal is apparent. Enjoyment profiling is based on the concept of performance profiling (Butler & Hardy, 1992). In the first step of enjoyment profiling individuals brainstorm for sources of enjoyment in their sport. Next, they choose the sources that

are most important to them and rate them as to their importance on a scale of 1-10. Of these important sources of enjoyment, individuals identify those that are under their control. In the last stages of the enjoyment profiling process, individuals choose two important sources of enjoyment that are under their control and identify specific strategies that will help them focus on these sources of enjoyment while they are participating in their sport. Similarly, other research-practitioners (e.g., Gould et al., 2001) have advocated identifying athletes' sources of enjoyment so coaches can build them into their coaching practices.

In sum, although the role of MST in enhancing sport enjoyment has remained relatively unexamined in the literature, there are a number of obvious means through which MST can be employed in this regard. Given the important role enjoyment plays in prolonged sport engagement, as well as quality of life, it is time to explore how MST can be best used to increase sport enjoyment.

Developing MST

Numerous factors besides the choice of MST techniques deserve consideration when developing MST, regardless of its purpose. Successful MST is dependent on more than the validity of the training techniques themselves. Some of the key factors that should be taken into account when developing MST are presented in this section.

Paramount to the success of MST programs is the consideration of both the athletes' needs and the characteristics of the sport they participate in when choosing which MST techniques to use (Anderson et al., 2002; Boutcher & Rotella, 1987; Bull, 1989; Taylor, 1995; Weinberg & Williams, 2001). By identifying the athletes' psychological strengths and weaknesses and the psychological demands the sport places on the athlete, the mental skills that need to be taught and developed will become apparent. Consequently, the MST techniques to be

used in developing proficiency in these skills can be integrated into a MST program. The superiority of an individualised MST program over one that is "menu-driven" has been recognised by Taylor (1995).

Thomas and Fogarty (1997) suggested that not only should individuals' psychological strengths and weaknesses be taken into account when choosing techniques, but also their cognitive preferences may lead them to prefer, and profit more, from one MST technique over another. They proposed that individuals with high verbalising tendencies would derive more benefit from a MST technique that focused on changing self-talk, whereas those who were high visualisers would respond better to imagery training. However, the lack of subjects in their study who exhibited strong cognitive preferences prevented them from examining their predictions. Thomas and Fogarty concluded that until further work is conducted examining processing preferences "practitioners should not assume there is much to be gained by tailoring interventions to suit particular processing preferences" (p. 102). This is not to say that individual differences should be ignored altogether though.

Individual differences among athletes may affect the success of the MST program, but characteristics of the mental training consultant and their rapport with the athletes and coaches is also a crucial factor (Andersen, 2000; Anderson et al., 2002; Halliwell, Orlick, Ravizza, & Rotella, 1997; Petitpas, Giges, & Danish, 1999; Weinberg & Comar, 1994). Athletes' and coaches' perspectives on the characteristics of an effective consultant have been obtained through in-depth interviews and questionnaires administered to over 200 Olympic athletes and coaches (Orlick & Partington, 1987; Partington & Orlick, 1987a, 1987b). Based on this research an effective consultant was described as one who provides practical concrete strategies and is able to design sport specific programs and teach appropriate mental skills to the athlete; attends

competitions and is supportive yet discrete; is flexible and able to meet individual needs; is a good listener and easy to communicate with; is energetic, hard-working and creative; and is prepared to learn about the sport. Conversely, ineffective consultants have been depicted as "shrinks", "ivory tower researchers", "coaches", and "hot shots" (Halliwell et al., 1997, p. 43).

In addition to the factors described above, social and cultural influences (Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997) and individuals' motivation and commitment to the MST (Weinberg & Williams, 2001) may also shape the success of a MST program. Lastly, logistical factors such as time and place of MST implementation (Weinberg & Williams, 2001), the sequence the mental skills are taught (Vealey, 1988; Weinberg & Williams, 2001), and the flexibility of the program (Weinberg & Williams, 2001) are additional factors worthy of consideration when developing MST.

To summarise, a number of factors play a role in determining the success of MST. When examining the effectiveness of MST it is critical that one remains aware that it is not solely the techniques that facilitate change, but a plethora of other elements including consultant and athlete characteristics as well as logistical factors that play a role.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Inquiry

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of MST in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented. The following research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What are the experiences of each of the recreational golfers as they participate in the MST?
2. What is the MST process for each of the recreational golfers?
3. What effects, if any, is MST having on each of the recreational golfers' affect, cognitions, and/or behaviours? Specifically, what are the changes, if any, in the golfers' enjoyment? Furthermore, from each golfer's perspective, what key factors, if any, do they perceive contributed to the outcomes of the MST?

Research Paradigm

As the focus of this inquiry is on understanding MST from the perspective of recreational golfers, the adoption of the constructivist view of Lincoln and Guba (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000) was most apropos. As Schwandt (1994) stated, constructivist proponents "share the goal of understanding the complex world of the lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (p. 118). It is the ontological perspective that separates constructivism from the other paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Within the constructivist paradigm realities exist in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions which are

socially and experientially based, local and specific (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Within the context of this inquiry, it would be naïve to presuppose that each participant partaking in MST would experience and perceive it in the same manner; one must be sensitive to individual differences.

The epistemological stance of the constructivist is transactional and subjectivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Within this inquiry, knowledge was created through frequent and lengthy interactions between myself (the researcher) and the participants in the form in-depth interviews, individual consultations, observations, stimulated recalls, group seminars, and informal discussions. The participants and I were intimately linked as I held the dual role of researcher and MST consultant. By being fully integrated into the process, I was able to obtain rich and relevant information. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) cautioned that while "the dangers of bias and reactivity are great [when adopting this approach]; the dangers of being insulated from relevant data are greater" (p. 15).

In line with the methodological stance of the constructivist paradigm, the aim of the proposed inquiry was to identify each of the participants' experiences with MST rather than to establish causal relationships or predict future outcomes. This process had two aspects: hermeneutics and dialectics (Guba, 1990). According to Guba:

> the hermeneutic aspect consists in depicting individual constructions as accurately as possible, while the dialectic aspect consists of comparing and contrasting these existing individual (including the inquirer's) constructions so that each respondent must confront the constructions of others and come to terms with them. (p. 26)

Action Research

During this inquiry my role was both that of researcher and mental training consultant. As I worked to improve my consulting practices I could also be considered a participant. Throughout the process I reflected on my actions and how I was conducting the training, noting approaches that were effective and those that were not as well as ideas for how I could improve my practices. Within these capacities the inquiry displayed many of the characteristics of action research.

Despite having a long history in the field of education, action research has a limited history in physical education (Gilbourne, 1999; Tinning, 1992). However, action research has become more prevalent in the realm of sport and physical education in recent years. For example, Evans, Hardy, and Fleming (2000) used action research in a longitudinal psychological rehabilitation intervention with three injured athletes. Kidman and Carlson (1998) used action research in a coach behaviour modification project. And most recently, Barker-Ruchti (2002) adopted an action research approach to implement a coaching policy with gymnasts, improve her coaching practices, and develop an understanding of the coach-athlete relationship.

There is much confusion as to what constitutes action research and consequently definitions of action research vary (Evans, Fleming, & Hardy, 2000; Gilbourne, 1999, 2000; Noffke, 1997; Tinning, 1992). However, there is a general consensus that action research is "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 162). Indeed, there is wide agreement that action research comprises improvement and involvement (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Gilbourne, 1999; Sparkes, 1991). Elliot (1991) further noted "the fundamental aim of

action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge. The production and utilisation of knowledge is subordinate to, and conditioned by, this fundamental aim" (p. 49).

Yet despite this common understanding, a number of factors surrounding action research remain under contention, including

> the cyclical nature of action research, . . . whether and to what extent action research must be collaborative and with whom, the sources of research topics (especially whether focuses must emanate from grass-roots concerns), and the purposes for engaging in action research, including its relationship to social issues. (Noffke, 1997, p. 308-309)

No doubt the confusion surrounding these issues stems from the writings of scholars hailing from differing research traditions and disciplines and the different contexts in which action research is used (Evans, Fleming, et al., 2000; Noffke, 1997). Consequently, Noffke (1997) suggested looking at action research as a "large family, one in which beliefs and relationships vary greatly" (p. 306) rather than a particular research methodology. She expanded, "more than a set of discrete practices, [action research] is a group of ideas emergent in various contexts" (Noffke, 1997, p. 306).

The process of action research is generally seen to comprise a spiral of self-reflective cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Tinning, 1992). However, Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) emphasised that the process is rarely as neat as this, recognising that the stages often overlap and plans change as the process develops thereby giving rise to a more "fluid, open, and responsive" (p. 595) process. As a result, they noted

> The criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully, but whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their

> practices, their understandings of their practices, and the situations in which they practice. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 595)

In addition to the cyclic process mentioned above, Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) delineated seven other critical characteristics of action research. They argued that action research is a social process, participatory, practical and collaborative, emancipatory, critical, recursive, and aims to transform both theory and practice. Evans, Fleming, et al. (2000) also recognised that action research involves more than planning, acting, monitoring, and reflecting, noting that while practitioners often partake in this process they are not necessarily engaging in active research. They argued that other conditions must be present in order for action research to occur. As a result, Evans, Fleming, et al. (2000) proposed a set of "necessary conditions" or "minimal criteria" for action research, noting that while each of these characteristics is not unique to action research, all need be present in action research:

> The process involves (a) an intention and commitment to improvement and/or solving practical problems, (b) an intervention, (c) a cycle of critical reflection and action, and (d) praxis (committed action giving rise to knowledge). It is (e) systematic, (f) strategic, (g) collaborative, (h) empowering for participants, and (i) conducted within a mutually acceptable ethical framework. Additionally, it must (j) employ recognisable research methods, (k) demonstrate "conscious partiality" (i.e., an explicit awareness of the researcher's own perspective[s]), and (l) communicate findings to practitioners/researchers. (p. 299)

Research Design

Descriptions of the MST process, and of the experiences of MST from the perspective of those involved, were achieved through the adoption of qualitative methodologies with a case

study design. The case study design allows the researcher to gain an "in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Merriam suggested that case studies should be used when the researcher is interested "in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19).

The advantages of the case study design in applied fields are apparent. Merriam (1998) suggested that within this design "problems and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice" (p. 41). Smith (1988) highlighted the usefulness of case studies in the field of applied sport psychology: "The case study approach can . . . provide important insights into processes underlying athletic behaviour, and can promote the development of interventions that improve performance and enhance the psychological well-being of participants" (p. 2). He went on to state that one of the most attractive aspects of the case study is that it "can help reduce the gap between research and practice" (Smith, 1988, p. 11), an important goal in a field where the two areas are diverging (Martens, 1987; McCullagh, 1998; Vealey, 1994).

Stake (2000) identified three types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. When the researcher is intrinsically interested in a particular case and "the purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon" (Stake, 2000, p. 436) the study is considered to be an intrinsic case study. If a case is used to facilitate understanding or provide insight into another issue, Stake terms it an instrumental case study. In this instance, the case is of secondary interest and chosen based on its merits to advance understanding of the other interest. Lastly, in a collective case study, the researcher studies a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon. The cases may or may not be similar and are chosen to lead to a better understanding of a larger collection of cases.

In this inquiry a collective case study approach was adopted. The advantage of using multiple cases rather than a single case lies in the replicative nature of the method. Similarities and differences among cases can be identified and trends noted. By using multiple cases, interpretations from the inquiry are likely to be more compelling (Merriam, 1998, Smith, 1988; Yin, 1994).

Setting

La Manga Club, a 1400-acre resort located on the Southeast coast of Spain, was the setting for this research inquiry. I chose this setting because I have affiliations with the club that facilitated access to both the facilities and participants. La Manga Club is a premier sport and leisure resort that has hosted various major professional golf tournaments (e.g., Spanish Open, PGA championships, Qualifying Schools) and prestigious tennis events (e.g., Davis Cup, Federation Cup). The resort is the official winter training base of Britain's Lawn Tennis Association and serves as a noted soccer practice facility for numerous National teams and professional clubs.

There are three golf courses at La Manga Club and these were the ones regularly played on by the participants in this inquiry. The North and South courses are situated around the main clubhouse whereas the West is located a few minutes drive away. I feel that a brief description of the courses is warranted as they have their own "personalities" and the participants made mention to these at various points in the inquiry. The following golf course descriptions are based on those from the resort web-site. The South Course is the longest of the three courses with wide palm-fringed fairways and few hidden dangers. The North Course is more undulating than the South and relies on precision rather than length. The West Course, in contrast to the North and South courses, is set amid serene pine woodlands and has frequent changes in

elevation with which to contend. The West is a deceiving course that demands the occasional blind shot. Charming and elusive, those who get the better of the West Course will have played a memorable round.

The golf club offered three weekly competitions that were open to all golfers with official handicaps and rotated through the three courses described above. Every Monday there was a Fourball Betterball Stableford, an individual medal (stroke play) occurred each Wednesday, and an individual Stableford each Friday (see Appendix A for descriptions of these games). In addition to these weekly club competitions, there was the "Owners' Scramble" every Thursday for individuals who owned property at La Manga Club, the Residents' Golf Association (i.e., an elite club requiring individuals to have resided at least five months during a calendar year at La Manga Club) organised a competition in varying formats the first Sunday of each month, and the Ladies Captain organised a competition for the Lady Members of the Residents' Golf Association the first Tuesday of every month.

Participants

Although La Manga Club is primarily a golf and tennis vacation resort, a core group of individuals reside there over the winter and it is from this community that the participants for this inquiry were drawn. Participants were seven recreational golfers (4 males, 3 females) who played golf at least twice a week on a regular basis and indicated they would be in La Manga for the duration of the inquiry (see Table 2). The participants varied in the number of years they had been playing golf (2-30 years), ability (handicap 19-36), and time spent practising (0-2 hours per week). All the participants were retired expatriates over the age of 45 at the start of the inquiry, the oldest was 73.

Participants were recruited for this inquiry through an article informing individuals about a series of complimentary MST seminars designed to teach mental skills that facilitate more consistent golf performance and maximise golf enjoyment (Appendix B). The recruitment article was published in the Winter, 1998 issue of the "La Manga Club Magazine" (a magazine distributed twice annually to property owners at the resort with a circulation of about 3000 copies) and posted in the Owners' Clubhouse at La Manga Club. A request was made for enthusiastic and dedicated recreational golfers who were interested in developing their mental game to sign a list in the clubhouse or contact me directly by telephone, mail, or email.

Eighteen individuals (9 males, 9 females) indicated that they were interested in participating in this inquiry. I contacted each of them by telephone to determine a date for a preliminary meeting. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the prospective participants with a full explanation of the inquiry and their role within it. During this initial contact it transpired that five individuals (2 males, 3 females) would not be in La Manga for the duration of the inquiry and therefore did not qualify as research participants. Instead, I invited them to attend and participate in the MST seminars for the duration of the time they were in La Manga but highlighted that no data for this inquiry would be collected from them. All five individuals responded positively to this invitation.

Despite carefully choosing the night to hold the weekly seminars to minimise conflicts, two individuals (1 male, 1 female) indicated that they would be unable to participate due to prior commitments on that evening. Due to the close relationship I had with another two of these individuals (1 male, 1 female) I decided not to include them in the inquiry though one of them did attend the seminars. One woman had to unexpectedly move back to England before the start of the inquiry and one man could not be contacted despite numerous attempts. This left seven

prospective participants (4 males, 3 females). I decided to arrange meetings with all seven individuals as, due to the nature of the inquiry, attrition was expected and complete data for at least five case studies was desired at the conclusion of the inquiry to allow for cross-case comparison. In the end, although I was unable to conduct final and follow-up interviews with one woman, and one man attended less than half the seminars, I decided to present all seven case-studies as I felt the attrition in the sample reflected adherence issues in MST.

During the first meeting with each of the participants, the purpose and structure of the inquiry was explained and individuals were encouraged to ask questions if they were unsure of any aspect of the inquiry. I assured the participants that their anonymity would be maintained in any reports and publications resulting from the inquiry through the use of pseudonyms and that confidentiality would be maintained by keeping all transcripts, video- and audio-tapes, consent forms, questionnaires, and evaluation records/journals in a locked cabinet. Participants were further assured that all data collected would only be accessible to me. I advised participants that they could withdraw themselves and/or their data from the inquiry at any time without prejudice. During these meetings I made an effort to develop rapport with the individuals through light-hearted conversation. At the conclusions of the meetings all seven individuals were excited and enthusiastic about participating in the inquiry and willingly read and signed the consent form (Appendix C). At this time they were also asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) and a date was set for the initial interview at a time and location convenient to them.

One of the seven participants, Annika, was a German woman for who English was a second language. For this reason I debated whether to include her in this inquiry. I decided to proceed with the initial interview and then make my decision based on how well she was able to

convey her thoughts in English. Following the interview two factors impacted my decision to continue collecting data from her. First, although her English was not perfect, it was very good and I felt she was able to articulate what she wanted to say. Second, I thought she had an interesting philosophy towards golf, one in which she felt a personal responsibility to attain a "higher level of thinking and feeling and doing things [through golf], not to do them without any respect" (initial interview, 29/12/98). Furthermore, Annika believed you could combine golf "with a lot of feelings, with aesthetic things, . . . [and] spirituality" (initial interview, 29/12/98).

After the initial interviews had been conducted with all seven participants, the individual who I had been unable to contact (it transpired that he had been out of the country) telephoned me and expressed that he would still like to participate in the inquiry. Because his handicap (10.1) was much lower than those of the other participants, I decided to include him in the inquiry in an attempt to capture the heterogeneity in the population. An initial meeting was arranged as for the other participants and a date for the initial interview determined. Unfortunately, soon after the seminars started this individual realised that business commitments in England were going to prevent him from attending many of the seminars and therefore opted to withdraw from the inquiry, though he continued to attend the seminars when he was available.

MST

I conducted the MST, free of charge to all the participants, over a 15-week period. Practitioners have suggested that ongoing contact between the MST consultant and the athlete/client is critical if MST is to be effective (Halliwell et al., 1997; Weinberg & Williams, 2001). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that a minimum of 10-14 weeks of MST may be necessary for participants to individualise the MST and see its effects (Beauchamp et al., 1996).

The MST comprised 15 one-hour weekly group seminars and between two and four one-hour individual consultations. In addition, participants were given the option of engaging in a MST session on the golf course and/or at the practice ground in order to facilitate the integration and application of mental skills and techniques. However, only two of the participants (Tom and Lee) chose to do this.

The MST was designed with the goal of increasing golf enjoyment. Consequently, the MST was directed towards fostering task involvement (e.g., encouraging the use of self-referenced judgements of competence, defining success based on personal improvement), enhancing performance, and encouraging participants to search for highlights. Although one of the foci of the MST was strengthening task involvement, no attempt was made to decrease participants' ego involvement.

Although I developed a tentative outline of the MST seminars prior to starting the training, I wanted to remain flexible in order to meet the emerging needs of the participants. Indeed, the content and order of the seminars did change slightly over the course of the training and it is acknowledged that overlap existed between them. The seminars comprised short lectures, group discussion, and exercises. They were biased towards providing practical information that could be directly integrated and used, rather than to the presentation of theoretical research. Throughout the training I remained very aware that I was working with recreational golfers, not professional athletes, who probably did not want to devote a lot of their free time to MST. I made an effort to keep everything in simple terms and try not to overcomplicate matters nor provide an overload of information. At the end of each seminar (and each handout) I highlighted a couple of things the participants should focus on over the ensuing week.

The sequence of the MST seminars was determined based on recommendations from Vealey (1988). She emphasised a "hierarchical progression and the attainment of different types of skills" (p. 328). Vealey stated that it is important for athletes to develop foundation skills (i.e., volition, self-awareness) before they are taught MST methods (e.g., relaxation, imagery). Vealey stated that once foundation skills have been acquired, performance skills should be developed. According to Vealey, the performance skills comprise optimal physical and mental arousal, and optimal attention. The final set of psychological skills that Vealey suggested should be developed are facilitative skills (i.e., interpersonal skills [e.g., communication], lifestyle management [e.g., retirement from sport, time management]). Unfortunately, due to the relatively short nature of this MST, the acquisition of this final level of skills was not targeted. However, throughout the MST the application of the skills the individuals acquired to other aspects of their life was emphasised.

Seminars.

A summary of the MST seminars will be presented in this section. The handouts that accompanied each seminar can be seen in Appendix E. The purpose of the first seminar was twofold. First, to introduce the concept of mental training and my approach to such training. Second, to motivate the participants to commit to changing their behaviours and promote change through mental training. After welcoming the participants, I commended them on their decision to engage in mental training, highlighting that by working towards improving their mental game they would be more likely to play their best game more often. I emphasised that although there would be individualised mental training later on in the training, the majority of the tools would be presented in the seminars. Consequently, in order for them to derive the most benefit from the MST they should make the effort to personalise the experience, engage in discussions and

personal reflection, challenge themselves and their thinking, be honest with themselves and others, and be supportive. In order to motivate the participants to make a change in their behaviour I asked them to write a "contract to improve" (Appendix F) and have it witnessed by another participant.

The focus of seminar #2 was on increasing enjoyment. We brainstormed for, and then discussed, the various sources of golf enjoyment. I then highlighted three ways in which enjoyment can be increased. First, by enhancing performance through practising and developing their mental skills. Second, by increasing their perceived competence through building an enduring confidence, focusing on personal improvement, and setting realistic process oriented goals. Lastly, I introduced the concept of highlight training and the importance of developing a positive perspective and carrying it into everything they did. I requested that from now on they look for highlights in all domains of life and record them in their evaluation records/journal.

In the third seminar participants constructed performance profiles (Butler & Hardy, 1992). Performance profiling is based on Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory and in this way takes the perspective of the athlete as paramount. The purpose of performance profiling is to unearth how the athlete feels about his or her preparation for competition (i.e., his or her perception of his or her skill level) and what skills or elements of competition he or she considers important. In short, the golfers were asked to brainstorm for qualities and/or characteristics of elite golfers and then select the ten that would be most important for them to develop in order to achieve their goals. For each of these ten items, the participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (least important) to 10 (most important), how important they felt it was to develop the skill. They were then asked to rate their current skill level for each skill on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) and compare their current level to their ideal level. Through this process the participants

identified their two biggest perceived weaknesses. I then highlighted the principles for setting effective goals and guided the participants as they identified the "Action Steps" (short-term goals) they would need to take in order to improve in these areas.

In seminar #4 I introduced the concept of 'Personal Par' (Keogh & Smith, 1985) as a means of increasing confidence and improving focus. In short, participants were required to record their scores over a number of rounds and then calculate their average score on each hole, which then served as their personal par for the hole. Keogh and Smith hypothesised that having a personal par for each hole "provide[s] short-term and specific goals, enhance[s] attention to the play on each hole, and minimise[s] the tendency to remember a failure on previous holes" (p. 43, Keogh & Smith, 1985).

Also in seminar #4 I presented a number of other simple attentional control techniques. I emphasised the importance of remaining in the present and taking one shot at a time when playing golf. We brainstormed for relevant performance cues in golf and discussed potential distractions. I introduced the concept of cue words or phrases (acronyms or mnemonics) to help the participants remain focused on relevant cues. For example, the first letters in the phrase "Proper Stance Wins" serve as technical reminders for the golfer to check that 'feet are Parallel, Shoulders are to the target, and Weight is on the back foot'.

I stressed the importance of "switching off" concentration between shots so as not to "exhaust" it (Nicklaus 1993, Taylor, 1995). The participants were instructed to imagine themselves entering a bubble or cocoon as they approached their ball. Within this cocoon they should try to create feelings of being totally focused on their shot, confident, and relaxed. Outside the cocoon they should not be thinking about their shot. I told the participants to select a cue to signal when they should enter the cocoon and focus on their upcoming shot (e.g., putting

their bag down, turning their electric trolley off) and a cue for switching their focus away from golf after their shot (e.g., putting their club back in their bag). It was not until about a month later that I described this concept in terms of the circle in an article that I distributed to the participants (Appendix G).

Activation control and reducing muscle tension were the foci of seminar #5. However, I started the seminar by asking the participants to share and discuss their highlights. We then went on to discuss the importance of being able to relax while playing golf. Reasons such as relaxation makes the game more enjoyable, is a means of coping with frustration, and eliminates the sometimes unpleasant feelings of nervousness were covered. That muscle tension can impact the golf swing was also discussed. Following these discussions I led the participants through an abdominal breathing exercise and progressive muscle relaxation.

As with seminar #5, #6 started with a discussion on highlights. I re-emphasised that highlights can be small things (simple joys) and encouraged participants to continue to reflect on their golf and life to find and enjoy the highlights they experienced. I then reopened the discussion on attention control techniques we had started in seminar #4 and went on to discuss Nideffer's (1976) four attentional styles. To illustrate the different styles more clearly to the participants I led them through four different exercises that required them to use a different attentional style to successfully complete each one. I asked them to reflect on how easy they found each exercise and see if this provided any insight into focusing difficulties they experienced on the golf course. For example, if they found it hard to maintain a narrow focus of attention during the exercises in the seminar, were they easily distracted by other people while preparing to play a shot? If so, what did this tell them and what could they do to improve in this area? To finish the seminar, I asked them to identify any critical points where they frequently

had problems maintaining focus (e.g., following a double bogey, after 15 holes, hitting over a barranca[1]) and develop a refocusing plan to deal with this.

Seminars #7 and #8 were devoted to developing imagery skills. First, I explained the concept of imagery and led the participants through a couple of exercises (lemon taste test and pendulum test from Miner, Shelley, & Henschen, 1995) to illustrate how the body responds to images created in the mind. Then we discussed ways in which imagery could be used to benefit them in golf and life. Finally, I led them through a number of imagery scenarios (e.g., practising alone at the practice ground, playing exceptionally well in a competition) and asked them to rate their imagery skills using the exercises from Bull, Albinson, and Shambrook (1996).

In seminar #9 the discussion was centred on self-talk and cognitive restructuring techniques (e.g., thought stopping, parking, channel changing). In addition, I asked participants to list common negative thoughts they experienced when playing golf and then write positive counteracting statements for each. As "homework" I asked them to write a list of recent achievements, however small (e.g., making six pars on Monday, scoring 34 points) and review them on a regular basis.

In seminar #10 we reviewed and discussed approaches for increasing golf enjoyment. In the second seminar I had proposed three mechanisms through which enjoyment might be augmented, namely enhancing performance, strengthening task involvement, and developing a positive perspective. Within each of these three domains we discussed simple, practical techniques they could use. For example, performance enhancement could be achieved through adequate preparation before playing golf, engaging in quality practice, and extracting lessons from past experiences. Task involvement can be strengthened through setting task-oriented

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[1] *Barranca* is the Spanish term for ravine.

goals. And searching for highlights, focusing on personal strengths, and keeping the game in perspective can all serve to foster a positive perspective.

Up until seminar #11, the focus of the MST had been on learning new skills to help golf performance and improve golf enjoyment. In seminar #11 I encouraged participants to develop a greater understanding of the self and see that how we think can affect performance correlates. In this seminar we looked at how attributional style may impact one's golf attitude and how it might impact confidence, affect and emotion, and motivation.

Seminar #12 was an opportunity for the participants to share and discuss their experiences with the MST to date. I asked them to recount experiences where they had used techniques effectively and identify factors that had made implementation difficult. Participants were encouraged to provide suggestions to others in the group and reflect on how they might be able to use techniques more effectively in the future. In this seminar I also wanted participants to develop a "Mental Game Plan" (Bull et al., 1996) in which they would schedule their MST. However, due to the quality of the discussion I did not want to stop it and therefore was only briefly able to explain the "Mental Game Plan".

The focus of seminar #13 was on developing an unconscious, automatic, flowing swing. The idea behind this was to shift away from a mechanical swing focus to one that is more instinctual. The goal of the seminar was to provide participants with a number of simple techniques they could employ to develop trust in their swing. These included putting with your eyes closed, humming while you swing, committing to club selection, and separating practice from play. Another such technique was the preshot routine and I re-emphasised its importance in golf. Although the preshot routine had not been discussed formally in the seminars before, it was

a technique that had been discussed with all the participants at some point during the individual consultations.

In seminar #14 I introduced the 'Smart Golf' approach, a concept designed to help golfers improve and score their mental game of golf (Kirschenbaum et al., 1998). 'Smart Golf' uses the acronym 'PAR' (Plan the shot, Apply imagery and preshot routines, React constructively after each shot) to summarise some of its key elements in an attempt to help golfers remember the approach. The remaining elements are preparation and positive focusing. 'Smart Golf' also includes a simple scoring system that allows the golfers to evaluate each of these aspects of their mental game, which was postulated to facilitate learning (Kirschenbaum et al., 1998). The scoring system is presented in the 'Smart Golf' handout in Appendix E. Lastly, to conclude the seminar series, in #15 I led a discussion on methods that would facilitate the participants continued adherence to the MST. I also provided participants with a MST resource list at this time.

Individual consultations.

The purpose of the individual consultations was to individualise the MST to meet the participants' needs, address their individual concerns, and provide them with the opportunity to ask questions they did not feel comfortable asking in seminars. I took an athlete centred approach to these meetings and started each one by asking the participants "How's it going?" Their answers to this question then guided the meetings and the direction of the MST. Prior to each consultation I read over the participant's file that comprised interview transcripts, evaluation records, detailed summaries of previous consultations, and my notes regarding emerging themes and ideas. I asked participants how they felt they had progressed with tasks we had set in previous meetings. During the meetings the participants were challenged to reflect on their

perceived progress with mental skill development and application, on potential relationships between performance correlates, and issues relating to MST adherence.

Procedures

During this inquiry, information was gathered over a period of one year. Prolonged involvement with the participants is critical to case study design. Furthermore, regular and multiple contact with the participants enabled me to develop trust and rapport with them and provided me with many opportunities to discuss emerging issues. Various data collection methodologies were selected for use in this inquiry to allow the participants' voices to be heard and a thick description of the experience created. Data sources included interviews, individual consultations, MST seminars, observations, documents, and a questionnaire. Figure 2 pictorially depicts the research design.

Interviews.

Merriam (1998) proposed that interviews are "the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals" (p. 72). Patton (2001) suggested that researchers interview individuals in order to uncover things that cannot directly be observed such as thoughts, feelings, and intentions. He stated that "we cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. . . . The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2001, p. 341). Interviewing was therefore the primary means of data collection in this inquiry.

Before the participants were exposed to any MST within this inquiry, each participant participated in an initial interview at a time and place convenient to them. All participants chose to be interviewed in their own homes. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain background information from the participants in terms of obtaining a picture of their "golfing self" and

provide some insight into areas of MST they might particularly benefit from. These interviews were used to create "Golfer Profiles" and develop an understanding of the meaning of golf enjoyment for each of the participants. The "Golfer Profiles", which are presented in the next chapter, illustrate how the participants became involved with golf, the role golf played in their lives, their attitude towards golf, and their preparation for golf prior to the MST. Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours.

Prior to the start of each interview, I explained the purpose of the interview and attempted to develop a relaxed atmosphere and good rapport with the participant through general conversation. I felt that I quickly developed relaxed, comfortable, and trusting relationships with all the participants. Many of the participant recruitment meetings lasted an hour due to informal conversations relating to my background, the resort, and general everyday banter that appeared to expedite the relationship building process. Consequently, by the initial interviews I felt we were comfortable in each others' company.

Although permission to audio-tape the interviews had already been obtained through the consent form, I reminded the participants that the interview would be recorded. The interview was semi-structured and facilitated by an interview guide (Appendix H) that had been pilot tested. Participants were asked to clarify and expand on responses that were unclear or ambiguous. Throughout the interview I exercised caution so as not to lead the participants towards predetermined conclusions. When I felt as if all the questions had been fully answered and the participant had nothing more to add, the interview was terminated.

Immediately following the interviews and prior to the MST, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts returned to the participants who were asked to read and amend them if they felt it would clarify or better represent their answers. The participants were

also invited to expand their answers to any of the questions. Before returning some of the transcripts I wrote a couple of questions in the margins directed at the participants in order to try and clarify some of the issues that were unclear to me when reading through the transcripts. If the participants chose not to answer these questions in writing while amending the transcript, I followed up on the issues during subsequent meetings. The participants were asked to return the transcripts to me during the first MST seminar.

At the end of the MST, six of the participants partook in another semi-structured interview (Appendix I). I was unable to conduct a final interview with Laura because she cancelled the appointment we had and then would not commit to setting up another time. When I telephoned her she did not answer her phone and she did not have an answering machine. When I saw her around the resort she said she did not have her diary with her but would call me to arrange a time; she never did.

For the remaining six participants, the final interview was conducted following the same procedures as for the initial interview. The purpose of this final interview was to elicit final data towards answering the research questions. One hour into the final interviews with three of the participants it was apparent that there was still a lot more I wanted to ask them. Concerned with fatigue and because I wanted to ensure that I continued to get quality responses from the participants, I asked them whether they would prefer to continue on with the interview at that time or arrange another date to complete it. All three indicated that they would prefer to arrange another day to continue. As for the initial interviews, the final interviews were transcribed verbatim and returned to the participants for member checks.

Two follow-up interviews were conducted after the completion of the MST. The first follow-up interview was conducted over the telephone three to four months after the MST

terminated. I covered all the costs of the telephone calls. These interviews could not be done face-to-face as I was not in Spain at the time of the follow-up. At the end of the MST I had asked all the participants for permission to contact them by telephone to conduct the follow-up interviews. All agreed and provided me with a telephone number at which they could be reached. At the time of the first follow-up I telephoned the participants and asked them to identify a convenient time I could call back to conduct the interview. All indicated that they would like to do it immediately. Again, I was unable to get in contact with Laura over the telephone and after numerous attempts gave up and decided not to conduct follow-up interviews with her.

A second follow-up interview was conducted nine months after the MST ended. At this time I was back in Spain so was able to meet face-to-face with the participants again. A meeting was arranged with each of the six participants at a time and place of their choosing. All six participants chose to give the interview at their home.

The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to determine the extent to which participants continued to apply what they learned from the MST. The interview guides for the follow-up interviews were developed based on previous data collected. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then given back to the participants for member checks. Participants were asked to return their amended transcripts to me via the resort's internal mail system (a free service).

I was disappointed with the quality of the data I collected through the telephone interviews. Previously, researchers have indicated that they found little difference between the quality of data collected in interviews conducted via the telephone compared to face-to-face (Farres, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Given that I had already established a good rapport with the participants, I did not think it would be a problem to conduct the first follow-up interviews

over the telephone. Indeed, I do not think that it was an issue of comfort that affected the depth and quality of data I was able to collect.

The first follow-up interviews were relatively quick, lasting between 15 and 20 minutes. A number of the participants voiced a concern for the cost of the transatlantic calls that I would incur and "promised to keep it quick". Despite my attempts to reassure them that the calls would not cost that much and that I was more interested in hearing about their continued experiences with MST, it did not seem to alleviate their concern. Furthermore, during two of the interviews we repeatedly got disconnected which not only served to break the rhythm of the interview but also acted as a stimulus to progress a little faster through the interview before we were disconnected a further time.

On reflection, maybe I should have called to arrange a time to conduct the follow-up interviews first, stressing that a chunk of time would be needed for the interview, and not provided the option of doing the interviews immediately. Rubin and Rubin (1995) noted that interviewees can rarely spend a spontaneous hour on the telephone without scheduling it in advance. Although he was referring to office workers, one has to respect that retirees have busy lives as well. Regardless of the fact the participants said they had time to talk, providing them with prior notice of when the interview would be and more information as to the nature of the interview, they may have been better able to gather their thoughts.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) also suggested that it is more difficult to refocus a conversation on the telephone compared to face-to-face. I definitely found this to be the case. The participants were very interested in how I was, what I had been doing since we last spoke, and when I would be returning to Spain. They repeatedly tried to steer the conversation back towards me. I think this reflects the close relationship I developed with the participants.

Individual consultations.

The individual consultations, described above, started four weeks into the MST and were conducted either at my house or at that of the participants depending on which they preferred. The original intention was that each participant would engage in six consultations spaced two weeks apart. However, due to participants' schedules and the apparent lack of demand for these sessions on the part of the participants this did not occur. Instead, each participant engaged in two to four one to one-and-a-half hour individual consultations that were spaced between two and seven weeks apart.

At the start of each meeting I obtained permission from the participants to audio-tape the session. Following the conclusion of each consultation I transcribed the meeting and reflected on the consultation process. I noted down ideas as to the direction I felt the MST should progress, what MST tools and techniques might help the participant, the progress the participant was making with the MST and his or her mental skill development, and areas I wanted to discuss the next time we met.

MST seminars.

The 15 one-hour MST seminars were conducted Tuesday evenings in a conference room at the resort hotel. At the beginning of the MST I intended to start each seminar with a general discussion of the participants' experiences with the MST to date. In a study evaluating MST effectiveness, Kirschenbaum et al. (1998) reported that "problem solving, discussion, and reviewing the principles . . . helped participants adapt the [MST] to their own games" (p. 273). At the start of the second seminar I asked the participants to split into groups of 3-4 and discuss their experiences with the training and then choose a spokesperson to report back to the rest of the group. I audio-taped this session with the participants' permission and later transcribed it. As

interesting as this was, the process took 20 minutes thereby only leaving 40 minutes to introduce and discuss the topic for that week's seminar. While recognising the importance of providing the opportunity for the participants to share their experiences, I was also mindful of the time it was taking. Consequently, in seminar #3 rather than ask the participants to divide up into groups I provided a short time at the beginning of the session for people to provide feedback. Once again this was audio-taped with permission and transcribed. In subsequent weeks this opportunity for feedback and discussion became less formal and tended to occur prior to the "official" start of the seminar. I made notes on these discussions and the seminar in general each week.

Because I valued the importance of providing the participants with opportunities to discuss how they were using and benefiting from the MST and because I felt that as the MST was progressing this was becoming a little lost, I dedicated the whole of seminar #12 to providing the participants with the opportunity to recount and discuss their MST experiences with each other. This seminar was audio-taped with the participants' permission and then transcribed.

Observations.

Observation is an effective means of obtaining firsthand information about the phenomenon of interest, gaining an understanding of the context, and providing specific incidents which participants can be asked about during interviews (e.g., what were you thinking before hitting your tee shot?) (Merriam, 1998).

In this inquiry, each participant was video-taped playing golf on two separate occasions, once before and once after the MST. Stimulated recall sessions were then conducted to obtain more in-depth information. The main purpose of these sessions was to further explore the participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours when they played golf; specifically in terms of

how they prepared for each shot, how they reacted after each shot, and what they did between holes. Furthermore, evidence of enjoyment and unenjoyable incidences was sought. The initial interview was conducted before the first observation and stimulated recall sessions so that the researcher had knowledge of each participant's attitude to golf and his or her sources of enjoyment.

Each observation session comprised three or four participants. The management at La Manga Club will not allow more than four players to go out as a group and time constraints prevented me from going out with all of the participants individually. As a result, there were two observation sessions conducted before the MST and two after. One participant, Sam, was unable to attend either of the second observation sessions so was video-taped on a separate occasion while playing golf with friends. Each participant was video-taped for at least three full holes. Prior to the start of the observation sessions the participants were told that they would be video-taped in order to identify what they do when they play golf. Participants were asked to go about their game as usual and were given the option of keeping their score or not.

Within five days of the observation sessions the participants engaged in a stimulated recall at my house at a time convenient to them. During the stimulated recall sessions, the participants were shown the video of themselves playing golf and asked to provide a narrative of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours while they were playing. The stimulated recall sessions were audio-taped with the participants' permission.

Unfortunately, part way through the first set of stimulated recall sessions the video camera broke thereby only three participants (Annika, Tom, and Nancy) could complete the first stimulated recall as there was no other way the video-tapes could be viewed. I did not receive the

camera back from the repair shop until three months later, which was then too late to conduct the stimulated recall with the remaining participants.

Documents.

From the start of the MST until the conclusion of data collection, the participants were asked to keep a record of their golf and MST. I provided them with evaluation records (developed based on Orlick, 1986, 1998) that I asked them to complete after each round of golf they played (Appendix J). Alternatively, I suggested they keep a journal. The purpose of the evaluation records and/or journals was threefold. First, they provided me with data relating to the research questions of this inquiry, providing additional information and insight into how the participants used and experienced the MST. Furthermore, the participants' mental and physical preparation for golf and the enjoyable incidences they experienced in golf and other aspects of their life were ascertained. Second, the evaluation records provided me with insights into the participants' MST experiences and mental skill development and application that I could use to individualise the MST to meet their individual needs. Lastly, the evaluation records and/or journals served as a MST tool to help the participants develop awareness about their golf and evaluate their performance. The evaluation records were collected and photocopied with the participants' permission each week.

Throughout the inquiry I noted observations, reflections, ideas, insights, and strategies. Immediately following any interaction with the participants I documented it. These interactions included interviews, observations on the golf course, observations on the driving range, group seminars, individual consultations, stimulated recall sessions, and informal discussions around the resort.

Questionnaire.

Participants were asked to complete the Mental Skills Questionnaire (MSQ, Bull et al., 1996, Appendix K) on four different occasions during the inquiry: Towards the start of the MST (i.e., mid-February), at the end of the MST (i.e., end of April), and at the two follow-ups (i.e., September/October and January of the following year). The MSQ is a 28-item questionnaire designed to assess imagery ability, mental preparation, self-confidence, anxiety and worry management, concentration ability, relaxation ability, and motivation. Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Participants' scores on each of the seven sub-scales were graphed. During the final interviews the participants were shown a graph of their results and asked to comment on what they saw. The purpose of administering this questionnaire was not to provide a quantitative assessment of the participants' mental skill development, but to provide a stimulus for discussion relating to their mental skill progress and gain insight into their perceptions of the process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an ongoing process throughout the inquiry and commenced immediately after the conclusion of the first interview. Data analysis was guided by Merriam (1998) and Bogdan and Biklen (1998). Both within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted. Direct quotations were used throughout the report in order to preserve the voice of the participants. All the data that were collected, in addition to my notes and observations, were kept in a separate file for each participant in chronological order. On each set of data the time, date, location, and source were recorded.

First, I compiled the seven individual case studies. In the initial step of the analysis for each case study I read and reread the first set of data (i.e., initial interview) and wrote notes, comments, and observations in the margin with regards to interesting data that was relevant to answering the research questions, creating the "Golfer Profile", and understanding the meaning of enjoyment for that participant. While reading the data I began to develop a preliminary list of emergent categories into which I grouped the notes and comments. These categories were guided by the purpose of the inquiry, my knowledge and orientation, and the meanings made explicit by the participants (Merriam, 1998). The categories were constructed through the constant comparative method. A list of these categories was compiled and attached to the data.

The next set of data collected (i.e., notes from stimulated recall or evaluation record) were then carefully read and, with the previously constructed list of categories in mind, notes, comments, and observations were once again recorded in the margin. The notes, comments, and observations from the second data set were then grouped into categories and a list of the categories compiled. The two lists were then compared and merged to create a master list of categories that reflected "the recurring regularities or patterns in the study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 181). This process was repeated until all the data had been analysed.

The categories were then given names. Category names emerged from the participants, the literature, and/or my knowledge. Once I was satisfied with the categories the data was assigned to the categories. Taking a clean copy of the data, I fractured the data into meaning units and assigned them to the relevant categories by writing the category code in the margin. Using Microsoft Word, I then created separate files for each category and cut and pasted the meaning units into the relevant category creating a file containing all the relevant data. Care was taken to avoid context stripping by carefully cross-referencing all units by coding them with the

participants pseudonym, the date of data collection, and the data source (Maxwell, 1996). I then linked the categories together and wrote the seven case studies that are presented in the next chapter.

Once the case studies were completed I conducted a cross-case analysis. The purpose of which was to develop an understanding of the experiences, processes, and outcomes of the MST for this group of individuals as a whole. Using the categories identified in the within-case analysis as a starting point, I attempted to make connections between the categories across participants. I used the literature, the research questions, and my knowledge to facilitate this process. Once these connections were made I compiled an integrated summary of the similarities and differences in the participants' MST experiences, processes, and outcomes. These results are presented in chapter five.

Trustworthiness

The conventional terms "internal validity", "external validity", "reliability", and "objectivity" used within the positivist paradigm to judge the soundness of research have been rejected by many qualitative researchers. These criteria are grounded in the positivist ontologies and epistemologies of naïve realism and objective reality and, as such, are deemed inappropriate for the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, Guba and Lincoln (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) outlined four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) for assessing the quality of a constructivist inquiry, that is, its trustworthiness.

In this inquiry, trustworthiness was strengthened by a number of factors. Creswell (1998) suggested that researchers engage in at least two verification procedures in any given inquiry. In

the remainder of this section the six techniques I used to judge the quality of this inquiry are presented.

Prolonged engagement.

Prolonged engagement is one method for strengthening the credibility of an inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). In this inquiry I was in regular contact with the participants over the first five to six month period of the data collection process. I had between 9 and 13 individual contacts with each participant, each lasting at least an hour, in addition to the weekly MST seminars and numerous impromptu meetings (e.g., telephone calls, around the resort, playing golf).

Through this frequent contact I was able to "establish rapport and build the trust necessary to uncover constructions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Moreover, I was able to check for misinformation or distortion, both on the part of the participants and myself. Frequent interactions further allowed me to clarify issues and obtain any information I missed in previous interactions that became apparent following reflection.

Triangulation.

Triangulation is a second procedure I used for strengthening the credibility of this inquiry. Triangulation involves the use of multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2001). However, Mathison (1988) argued that it is unrealistic to "expect various data sources and methods to lead to a singular proposition about the phenomenon being studied" (p. 13). She recognised that data are frequently inconsistent and contradictory and the researcher must rely on a "holistic understanding" of the situation to make sense of what he or she finds. Indeed, Patton (2001) emphasised that "understanding inconsistencies in findings

across different kinds of data can be illuminative and important" (p. 556). In this sense, triangulation "places the responsibility with the researcher for the construction of plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied" (Mathison, 1988, p. 17) rather than being seen as a method that demonstrates that different data sources provide essentially the same result (Mathison, 1988; Patton, 2001).

In this inquiry I used different methodologies to gather data from multiple sources including interviews, observation, stimulated recall, individual consultations, MST seminars, and evaluation records/journals. Participants often reconstructed specific events more than once, sometimes in more detail, thereby furthering my understanding of the situation and allowing me to rule out contradictions or correct misunderstandings.

Member checks.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider member checks to be the most important technique for establishing credibility. Member checks, also strongly advocated by Maxwell (1996), Creswell (1998), and Merriam (1998), involve returning the data and interpretations to the participants and soliciting their feedback. In this inquiry, participants were provided with the opportunity to read and amend their transcripts from the initial, final, and follow-up interviews if they felt it would clarify or better represent their answers. The participants were satisfied with the transcripts. They made a few modifications to grammar and in a couple of instances asked for peoples' names to be omitted. In the majority of cases where I had asked for clarification of an issue in the margin of the transcript the participants responded in such a way to eliminate any confusion I had. The completed case studies were also returned to the participants who were asked to consider whether the case study adequately represented their MST experience, process, and outcomes.

Rich, thick description.

The provision of thick description detailing the participants and context allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1998). In order to help the reader establish the degree of transferability I provided profiles of the participants in each of the case studies and a thorough description of the setting. I described the content of the MST seminars in detail and documented the process of the individual consultations. Furthermore, I detailed the data collection and analyses procedures I used.

Multiple cases.

Evidence from multiple cases, especially cases with variation, is often considered more compelling (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). In this inquiry I studied seven cases (participants). The intention was to purposively sample seven participants in order to capture the heterogeneity in the population and "ensure that the conclusions adequately represent[ed] the entire *range* of variation" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 71). As highlighted earlier in this chapter, only seven participants proved eligible to participate in the inquiry. Nonetheless, variation among participants with regards to gender, age, skill level, golfing experience, and frequency of playing golf was achieved (see Table 2).

Researcher position.

In this inquiry I was the main instrument, serving as both the researcher and MST consultant. Consequently, it is important to consider my competencies and skills in both these areas. I had extensive interviewing experience as a result of research assistant positions that I had held, micro-counselling and qualitative research classes I had taken, my MST consulting experience, and conducting the pilot study for this inquiry. Throughout these interviews I found

it easy to develop a good rapport with the participants, obtain relevant information in accord with the purpose of the interview, probe for further information, follow the lead of the participant, and remain focused throughout the duration of the interview. I also had experience conducting observations in the field as a result of a study I conducted with youth alpine ski racers (Culver & Stodel, 1998; Stodel & Culver, 2000).

In order for the reader to understand any of my biases that may have impacted this inquiry, prior to the start of data collection I commented on past experiences, prejudices, and orientations that may have shaped the interpretation and approach to this inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2001) and reflected on my relationship with the participants (Appendix L). During data collection I exercised caution not to lead participants toward predetermined conclusions. During data analysis I made the effort to organise the data in different ways and look for alternative explanations of my findings.

In my capacity as a MST consultant, having previously completed my masters degree in sport psychology and consulted with various athletes and coaches, I felt confident that I would facilitate the MST effectively in this inquiry. The feedback I had received from coaches and athletes I had consulted with in the past had always been positive. Specifically, while completing my masters degree I worked individually with a number of gymnasts and field hockey players. After graduating, I worked for 18 months at Stratton Mountain School, a ski academy in Vermont, USA, as a mental training consultant. There I consulted with developing alpine and nordic ski racers and snowboarders who competed from a local to an international level. After leaving the States I continued to work with a similar demographic in Canada, serving as the mental training consultant for the National Capital Outaouais Alpine Ski Team. Also around this time I facilitated mental training seminars for golfers in La Manga Club. The individuals who

attended these seminars were fairly representative of those who participated in this inquiry. The summer prior to conducting the research for this inquiry I worked with young aspiring golfers in order to obtain more consulting experience with golfers. This inquiry marked the first time I would work for an extended period of time with an older population.

My experience as a sport participant is long and diverse; I cannot remember sport not being a part of my, or my family's, life. I have participated at both recreational and competitive levels in a multitude of sports including, gymnastics, field hockey, tennis, squash, running, telemarking, skiing, and snowboarding. For many of these I travelled throughout Europe to compete. In the few years preceding this inquiry I had not been engaged in any competitive sport, but had continued to be actively involved in a number of different pursuits. Six months prior to this inquiry I started playing golf. Although I had not played golf before this I had been exposed to the sport and its culture since a young age due to my parents' eager involvement in the sport. As a child I used to go to the practice ground with them and would hit balls in our garden.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS – INDIVIDUAL CASE-STUDIES

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of MST in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented. In this chapter, the seven case-studies will be presented. Each case-study will commence with a "Golfer Profile" that will provide the reader with background information about the participant as a golfer, including the role golf plays in his or her life and his or her golf goals. Next, a description of the participant's meaning of golf enjoyment, based on the factors that underlied and undermined his or her golf enjoyment prior to the onset of the MST, will be presented. Then, the participant's MST experience, process, and outcomes will be described. Each case-study will conclude with a summary. The data sources for each of the participants can be seen in Table 3.

Tom

Golfer Profile

Tom was 73 years old at the start of the inquiry and had lived in La Manga Club with his wife since 1990. He was retired, but in his business life had been an insurance broker and had also spent time in the Navy. Tom had been playing golf for 25 years and revealed that it had become a "consuming passion" (initial interview, 24/12/98) for him over the last few years. Before he started playing golf, Tom had been an international level rifle and pistol shooter and had represented his country in this sport. Although shooting was a sport he greatly enjoyed, eventually he became bored with it and looked for another sport he could pursue – he found golf. Tom recounted:

> I fully imagined that golf would be like shooting. You know, where you just have to dedicate yourself a bit to it and . . . . But I found out I didn't have the natural ability with golf that I appeared to have with shooting, it was a different kettle of fish altogether. The trouble with golf is that occasionally you do a very good shot and, having done it once, you can never figure out why you can't do it 100% of the time. And this is what the great search is. To try and improve. To try and do these perfect shots – the occasional great putt, great drive, great chip – more often. So I'm still working at it, trying to achieve things and look for the magic formula, which so far has eluded me. But I still love it and I get a lot of fun out of it. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

Without a doubt, golf played a significant role in Tom's life. He testified:

> I think of all the things I do, or things I'm interested in, probably golf is the most consistent, the one that takes up most of my time – and the one that I'd like to do more, especially if I could get better at it. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

Tom regularly played golf three times a week in the club competitions and spent about 45 minutes before each round practising the long game, chipping, and putting. On occasion, Tom would also go to the practice ground for an hour or so to work on a specific part of his game, though noted he did not do this as often as he felt he should. Besides playing and practising, Tom attested he thought about golf "a fair bit" (initial interview, 24/12/98) and watched the majority of the golf tournaments that were broadcast on the television.

Tom's handicap at the start of the inquiry was 25 and his goal was to lower it as much as possible. Ideally, he wanted to improve so he could play to an 18 handicap, the level he was at about five years previously, and noted "if I could get down to 16 I'd be ecstatic" (initial

interview, 24/12/98). Tom indicated he was willing to work hard to improve his golf and achieve his goal:

> I'm prepared to practice more than I do now. Take any tips I can get. Watch any videos. Listen to anything, within reason. At my age I don't want to spend 100% of the time, but I'm prepared to put a substantial amount of my free-time into improving. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

In the contract he wrote with himself in the first seminar, Tom agreed to spend 45 minutes practising before the three rounds of golf he played each week and go to the practice ground or putting green for half an hour on one other occasion each week.

Prior to the inquiry, Tom did not engage in any type of preparation before playing until he arrived at the golf course. Once at the course Tom practised the different facets of his game, placing a lot of importance on his putting. He considered a successful round to be one where he scored less than 95 (i.e., two shots under his handicap), but was happy with any round he scored more than 30 Stableford points (i.e., six shots over his handicap). Although Tom had a competitive nature and was often focused on his score, he was also very task oriented. He explained:

> It's nice to be beating [the others], to be ahead. But I think I associate golf a bit the way I used to associate shooting. Every time I used to shoot, the aim was to beat a personal best. And for me, with golf, whether it's in a competition or just a friendly, is to go out and try to beat a personal [best]. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

In sum, golf played a significant role in Tom's life and he appeared extremely motivated to improve. Although he dedicated a fair amount of time to technical practice and preparation, Tom did not appear to engage in much mental preparation.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Tom portrayed his experience of enjoyment as "a feeling of well being, a good glow all over, inside" (initial interview, 24/12/98). Many sources of his golf enjoyment were related to his performance. He enjoyed playing well, the challenge of playing well consistently, and recognising the improvements he made. However, his golf enjoyment also stemmed from factors relating to the environment, exercise, the social aspects of golf, and betting. Slow play, poor performance, and unfavourable environmental conditions diminished his enjoyment. These themes will be elaborated in this section.

Simply put, Tom enjoyed playing well. He stated, "to me, enjoyment in golf is hitting a good shot" (initial interview, 24/12/98). It did not matter what type of shot it was -- a tee shot, a fairway shot, a chip, or a putt -- but he attested there "is a tremendous lot of satisfaction [when you] do the occasional perfect shot" (initial interview, 24/12/98). Tom described the satisfaction he felt when he played well: "You come off after having had a good score and [feel] 'There's life in the old dog yet. I can still do it. I'm not too old'. And that's a very satisfied feeling. It motivates you" (initial interview, 24/12/98).

Tom kept a record of his golf scores and calculated his average score on each golf course in La Manga. At the end of each year he compared the averages to those from the previous year: "If the scores are lower, or the average Stableford points are higher, then that's very satisfying and I get a lot of enjoyment because I know, very slightly, I'm improving" (initial interview, 24/12/98). In addition, Tom revealed:

> I've got a list of just about every golf course I've ever played on and the best score I ever achieved on that course. . . . If I beat it, do better, then I'll change it. That's just a little bit

> of personal pleasure I get out of doing these things and try and make them better. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

The challenge to hit the "perfect shot" or make an important putt also served to fuel Tom's golf enjoyment. Indeed, the inherently challenging nature of golf was critical to Tom's enjoyment of the game:

> Most of us are capable of doing the perfect drive, the perfect putt, the great chip – chip it in the hole – and having done it, we know we can do it. Physically and mentally we're capable of doing it but the problem is we can't do it as often as the experts and this is why you have this challenge. . . . I think what I'm saying is probably true of most golfers, they're determined to do these perfect shots more often. It certainly is [true] for me, [I enjoy] the challenge. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

Just as playing well served to increase Tom's golf enjoyment, playing badly undermined it. Playing badly caused Tom to get angry and frustrated, especially if it was due to carelessness and not taking the time to prepare for the shot and compose himself.

Besides performance related sources of enjoyment, Tom enjoyed the exercise inherent in golf and being outside in the fresh air. In fact, regardless of whether he was playing golf or not, Tom enjoyed walking: "I think it's very good for a person, especially someone my age to get that fresh air and have exercise" (initial interview, 24/12/98). Tom particularly liked playing golf on a nice sunny day when it is "not too hot", "not freezing cold", and "not raining".

Although Tom enjoyed playing golf in good company with friends, golf was not a social event for him. He noted, "I don't like to talk a lot on the golf course. I like to think about the game" (initial interview, 24/12/98). Nonetheless, the occasional side-bet with his playing partners added to his enjoyment and made the game more interesting for him.

Besides playing badly and playing in bad weather, slow play and course maintenance were two factors that negatively impacted Tom's golf enjoyment. Tom did not enjoy playing on temporary tees or temporary greens. He explained:

> [With] temporary greens . . . it's like putting over a ploughed field. . . . You could hit a perfectly good putt and two inches from the hole it could turn at right angles. That sort of thing, it's not golf. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

Neither did Tom like slow play. He described himself as an impatient golfer and became irritated and annoyed if he played with slow players or the flight in front was slow and held him up. Because slow play had a tendency to affect his performance it was a double blow for him with regards to his golf enjoyment.

MST Experience

Tom was excited about the prospect of participating in the MST and wrote to me to request a place in the seminars as soon as he read about the inquiry in the La Manga Club magazine, indicating he "would very much like to take part" (letter, 16/5/98). He revealed, "it's something I've wanted to do for years and then the opportunity came so I jumped at it" (final interview, 8/5/99). Tom was not disappointed with the experience, noting "certainly the course exceeded my expectations" (final interview, 8/5/99). He enjoyed the MST and found it to be beneficial in improving his golf:

> I enjoyed every meeting. And I enjoyed filling in the evaluation records. And when I started noting improvements here and there, I was even more keen to find out what was coming next and what else we would learn. The course was great as far as I'm concerned. I think it's helped me tremendously. (final interview, 8/5/99)

As a further testament to his satisfaction with the MST, friends Tom had talked with about his MST experience contacted me with interest in engaging in MST (field notes, 3/3/99).

The highlights of the MST for Tom, and the times he was most engaged, were related to the MST techniques he found most useful, namely the cue word routine, imagery, positive self-talk, relaxation, and not getting upset and frustrated by outside distractions. He was least engaged during discussions of attentional styles, 'Personal Par', and 'Smart Golf'; concepts he found impractical or irrelevant to improving his golf. Tom found 'Smart Golf' to be confusing and felt there was too much to do, remarking "you . . . los[e] focus on what you're there for – and that is to play golf. It's difficult to see how to apply this" (final interview, 8/5/99). Regarding 'Personal Par', Tom remarked "it doesn't do a lot for me. . . . I don't get an awful lot of enthusiasm with it, . . . I get more of a lift from the total score at the end" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Tom explained:

> You get to a hole and say 'OK, what's my average on this hole?', . . . but, [then] you get up on the tee, go through SCRAP [(my cue word) and] deep breathing and it's gone. You've forgotten it. You hit your shot and on you go and you don't think about it 'til you get to the next hole. 'What's the average for this one? Did I beat the average for the last one?' To me, it doesn't help me at all. (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

At the start of the MST Tom was impatient to see improvements in his golf. The week after the first seminar he wrote, "I know it's early days yet but [I] feel a little despondent that [I] am still making the same old mistakes and bad shots" (evaluation record 3, 25/1/99). However, he soon came to the realisation, "I think the mental skills so far learned will eventually help if applied all the time, but it is no instant magic cure and it is going to take time and dedication" (evaluation record 6, 3/2/99). Yet six weeks into the training I sensed Tom was a little

disappointed that the improvements he perceived he was making were not being reflected by better scores, despite the fact he had his handicap cut by three shots a couple of weeks before. He mused, "although I'm using a lot of these skills, and I'm very pleased with them, it doesn't seem to be reflected in my scores except that one great day. I can't understand why. I'm sure I'm learning" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99).

Indubitably, Tom was extremely dedicated to the MST. He attended every seminar and completed evaluation records for almost every round he played during the course. Tom tried out nearly every technique that was presented in the seminars, integrating them into his golf game the very next round after he learned about them and recording his experiences in the evaluation records. Those tools he found to be beneficial he incorporated permanently into his golf game. If he did not find the techniques to be of immediate value, he would continue to apply them in a number of games before rejecting them as ineffective for him.

Tom completed 41 evaluation records during the course of the inquiry, generally writing them the day after he played when he was less tired. Reflecting after the last seminar Tom recalled, "I remember thinking 'Thank God that's the last one I'm going to write for a while'" (final interview, 8/5/99). Nonetheless, Tom found the evaluation records to be a useful tool. Still, having completed 28 evaluations within the first nine to ten weeks of the MST, Tom felt some of the questions were becoming a bit repetitive and he was answering "practically the same almost every time" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). Consequently, he considered developing his own more abbreviated evaluation tool.

About five weeks into the MST, Tom got into the habit of reviewing his seminar notes prior to playing golf. He also started to read through past evaluations he had written. From these he compiled lists of areas in which he had improved, areas he needed to work on, and the lessons

he had learned. Tom updated these lists at intervals and read through them prior to playing. Indeed, it was not surprising that Tom described the MST as "16 weeks of, what I thought was, fairly intensive instruction and training and practising" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Tom and I met four times on an individual basis during the inquiry. Discussing the utility of these sessions he relayed to me:

> It was interesting from the point of view that you would bring up certain notes you'd made about previous things I'd put in the evaluation records or the initial interview and things like that. And you delved further into it which gave me, shall we say, some reassurance that you were working on my particular case. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Furthermore, Tom found these sessions advantageous as he felt more comfortable sharing his thoughts on a one-to-one basis rather than in the seminars. At the end of each session he wrote down the things we had discussed that he intended to work on.

One criticism Tom had of the seminar experience was that certain participants tended to dominate the discussions and "hog the floor" (final interview, 8/5/99). He conveyed that this made him less likely to contribute, noting that at times he "gave up" waiting to speak. Tom suggested more control could have been exerted over the discussions and participants encouraged to quickly conclude what they had to say. Nevertheless, Tom asserted that hearing the other participants discuss how they had improved through the training was beneficial, but iterated this should be limited to two to three minutes per person. Tom recommended increasing the length of the seminars to one-and-a-half hours. He reasoned:

> I had the impression right from the start that we were trying to cram too much into the one hour. Everybody wanted to say something and we had a lot to get through. And then by the time you started your bit, 15 or 20 minutes was gone. And you'd go through the

seminar and then there was hardly any time for discussion after that. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Tom would have also liked me to check-up on the participants' adherence to exercises they were asked to do in order to motivate them to do them. For example, in the first seminar the participants paired up so they had a partner for support and encouragement during the MST. However, this "buddy-system" was not effective for Tom:

> That, in my case, never worked. I paired up but we never ever got together. . . . And I get the impression that none of the others really paired up together and talked. That is maybe something that could be checked on in future seminars by saying 'You two, have you been together? Have you discussed things? What did you discuss?' . . . I think you should have been more forceful. If this is part of the training and this is what one is supposed to do, this is what one should do. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Despite the fact that Tom was satisfied with the MST experience and the outcomes that ensued, towards the end of the course Tom felt he was trying to apply too much information with a deleterious effect on his golf performance:

> I think I put too much into it. I tend to go into things 100% and expect too much. And I think I got myself into a bit of a state, where I was standing on the tee and trying to think 'I have to calm down here. I have to take a deep breath. I have to do this, have to do that', . . . trying to remember too many things. . . . Each seminar we did something else and I was trying to add bits on here and bits on there. . . . I'd go out the day before and be doing this and the morning before I would be reading and on the way down I would be doing something. . . . I didn't keep it in perspective. . . . I think I needed a bit of a rest to clear my mind, . . . which I did, and I felt I played better yesterday. . . . I stop[ped]

> thinking and worrying about it too much. Just take it very gently, lightly, calmly. Step up to the tee. Deep breathing. Go through [my preshot routine]. I didn't worry too much about putting in an hours study here and an hours study there and all that. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Overall, the MST experience was a positive one for Tom. He dedicated himself to the training and worked hard to develop his mental skills.

MST Process

This section depicts the MST process for Tom. First, his mental skill weaknesses will be presented. Next, the steps Tom took to learn to reduce muscle tension, develop attentional control, adopt a positive attitude, and learn to use imagery will be documented. Lastly, the method in which Tom and I worked to deal with problems he repeatedly experienced on a couple of specific holes will be described.

Tom chose to engage in the MST "to learn a better mental approach to [golf]" (initial interview, 24/12/98) and improve his performance. Furthermore, Tom disclosed that he lacked confidence when hitting certain shots, specifically when he had to hit over some of the barrancas and wanted to change this:

> I wouldn't call it nerves but in the mental background . . . before hitting the second shot over the barranca on the 9th and 18th holes, usually what's going through my mind is that I've messed the shot up so many times before, that I must take extra care . . . and a fair number of times I mess that shot up. I know I'm perfectly capable of doing the shot because I've done it in the past. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

Tom also experienced similar thoughts on the first tee: "It's not a terrible worry but it's at the back of your mind, you know, 'please God, let me have a good one'. I think [these thoughts] hinder me because it's very difficult to put it out of my mind" (initial interview, 24/12/98).

Even prior to engaging in the MST, Tom was acutely aware of the importance of keeping his muscles free of tension while playing golf, particularly when putting. Slow play and nervousness were a particular cause of tension for Tom. In an attempt to decrease this tension, Tom would say "detense" or "untense" to himself and while doing so noted "I try to relax all my arm muscles and shoulder muscles in particular, and stomach muscles sometimes too if I'm very tense" (initial interview, 24/12/98).

The day after seminar #5, where the participants were taught how to do abdominal breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, Tom employed what he had learned and did deep breathing and relaxation at home before playing golf. Tom recalled what he did in these relaxation sessions:

> I went into the bedroom and lay back on the bed, with big pillows, and went through the complete relaxation thing for ten minutes. I did deep breathing, relaxing the hands, arms, feet etc. Then the whole body. Things like that have been very beneficial. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Within a couple of weeks of learning these skills it had become a habit for Tom to utilise deep breathing and focus on relaxing while he drove to the course in his golf buggy. He revealed, "as I come in off the road, down by the 9th [hole], I start deep breathing and relaxing and thinking happy thoughts" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99).

As a result of the performance profiling conducted in seminar #3, Tom became aware of a couple of other areas he wanted to improve in, namely his ability to recover from mistakes and

his ability to deal with anger and frustration. The anger and frustration largely manifested itself as a result of hitting a bad shot (especially missing short putts due to a lack of focus), playing poorly on a hole, playing with a friend of his who had the tendency to constantly talk while playing, and slow play. In the initial interview, Tom detailed many examples of others' behaviours that slowed the pace of play and frustrated him. For instance, players who were not ready to play their shot when it was their turn, took a long time preparing for their shot, and/or left their trolleys in the wrong place so had to walk back to them after their shot or finishing the hole. In the following excerpt his frustration is palpable:

> You'll get a guy who stands there and he'll have about three practice swings and then instead of stepping up to the ball, he'll step back behind the ball and look up the fairway. And then he'll have another couple of practice swings. Then he'll get up to his ball and have another practice swing. Then he'll address the ball. Then he'll stand there while you count to about 20 or 25 before he'll actually hit it. And by this time you're waiting and you can feel it, I can feel this building up. And I feel like saying 'For God's sake, hit the damn thing'. When this happens all the way round, it does tend to put me off. I feel tense and frustrated and it probably doesn't help my game. I think this is probably my fault, you know. I should learn to ignore it, but I find it very difficult. (initial interview, 24/12/98)

As the MST progressed, Tom became more aware of how his frustration was affecting his focus and performance and decided to make an effort to prevent this from happening:

> Although I knew one shouldn't let oneself get annoyed I never realised how much it was affecting my game. But when I highlighted it I really started to think about it. I'm working on it and I think it's getting better. (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

As a first simple step towards dealing with his frustration, Tom made the conscious decision, and set the goal, to "not get angry and frustrated if we were held up by slow play or I made bad shots" (evaluation record 7, 5/2/99). Throughout the MST he also learned and applied a number of techniques designed to aid attentional control, which helped him retain an appropriate focus in these situations. These techniques included cue words, 'Action Steps' (i.e., short-term goals), physical attention cues (e.g., 'treeing it', throwing grass in the air), and imagining being in a house or cocoon when playing a shot. The process of how he used these techniques will be delineated now.

In the fourth seminar the concept of cue words was introduced as an aid to direct attention towards relevant performance cues. The idea is for the cue word to act as a backbone for the preshot routine. Tom developed the cue word "SCRAP" for tee shots. He described what "SCRAP" represented:

> My biggest fault is I swing too hard, so: S – Slow and smooth; C – Confidence. I probably do lack confidence because I think, 'this is a difficult shot, if I don't get it right I won't get over the barranca' or whatever; R – Relax. I always knew that, but it's important to keep remembering that; A – Alignment. Making sure feet are aligned, which is sometimes a problem for me; P – Positive thinking. Think positively, 'I can do this' (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

Tom also noted that he had to think about keeping his head down, but had been unable to incorporate this into his cue word. A few days later, Tom developed a separate cue word, "CRASH", for fairway shots and this did include a reminder to keep his head down. "CRASH" symbolised Confidence, Relax, Alignment, Stroke the grass, and Head down. A month later Tom reported, "[I've] decided to abandon cue word SCRAP and use cue word CRASH for both

tee and fairway shots" (evaluation record 25, 17/3/99). He noted, "they were pretty much the same thing. The S was the main difference – 'Smooth' instead of 'Sweep the grass'. I still think ['smooth'] on fairway shots, it's just simpler having one word, I'm tidying the edges" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). Although I was concerned that both his cue words, SCRAP and CRASH, could have negative connotations, Tom attested that he did not relate the words' literal meanings to golf: "No way. I know what the words are there for and I'm trying to go through each part of them before taking the shot" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99).

Tom also developed another cue word, "BEG", to help him relax and switch his focus away from golf in-between shots: "B – Breathe deeply; E – Enjoy; G – Good thoughts, think good thoughts" (evaluation record 12, 17/2/99; individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). And later on in the training, when he was having problems hitting out of bunkers, he developed a fourth cue word, "PAWS": "P – Positive thinking; A – Alignment; W – Wrists should be firm; S – Swing. Reminds me to take the club back enough" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99; individual consultation 4, 13/4/99). "PAWS" became the first thing Tom thought about when he stepped into a bunker and asserted that when he used it "the ball comes out [of the bunker] much better. Comes out and well onto the green" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99).

The number of cue words Tom developed attests to his penchant for them and the benefits he reaped from using them. Tom went through the elements of his cue words prior to starting the round and used the appropriate cue word before addressing his ball each shot (i.e., "SCRAP" for tee shots, "CRASH" for fairway shots, and "PAWS" for bunker shots). For example, "[for 'SCRAP' I say 'Relax, relax. Be confident. Alignment's right. OK, positive thinking. Now do a nice smooth swing. Relax. And away we go'" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). He testified "I think [using the cue word] is a good idea. By repeating it before

addressing the ball it helps you not to forget things that are important to you if you're going to make a good shot" (evaluation record 10, 12/2/99). Moreover, he noted "I am certain my cue word helps me focus and avoid past mistakes i.e., swinging too fast, insufficient confidence I can make the shot, and positive thinking" (evaluation record 12, 17/2/99). Towards the end of the MST, following my advice, Tom started to go through his cue word before hitting each shot on the practice ground as well as on the course.

Tom used the cue word "BEG" after having played his shot and while driving in his buggy to his ball. He found that it helped him to relax: "I've been doing this very religiously. Taking the deep breath, especially when you think something is getting a bit tense, and thinking 'Take a deep breath, enjoy the lovely day, great, think nice things'. I'm very pleased with it" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Tom expanded:

> I like [switching my focus on and off], I think it is very beneficial. I used to always focus all the time [but] I think that tires me a bit. I use BEG all the time now, it stops me concentrating too hard. It makes me relax. I may be thinking casually about golf still, but it's not intense. (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99)

In addition to employing cue words, Tom also used 'Action Steps' to deal with his anger and frustration. Having identified two weaknesses through performance profiling in seminar #3, the participants were asked to write short-term goals or 'Action Steps' that would help them improve in these areas. Tom described his 'Action Steps' for managing anger and frustration when held up by slow play and attested they helped him:

> Relax. Think of good things, think good things that have happened to you. . . . When you get up to take the shot, don't worry about the people behind. Focus, analyse the shot, go through 'SCRAP'. Realise you're getting frustrated. (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

In addition, Tom and I discussed various physical attentional cues he could use to release his frustration. I introduced Tom to the concept of "treeing it" (Orlick, 1998). In short, this technique involves the notion of touching a tree and saying "Tree it" as a cue to leave frustration in the tree while playing a shot. As an adaptation of this idea, I suggested Tom picked some grass and let it go in the wind, imagining the wind was taking his frustration too. Tom liked this idea and used it as a refocusing tool the next time he played, also saying "No worries" as he let the grass go. Although it took him a while to remember to use this tool when he became frustrated, by the end of the MST he was using it on a fairly regular basis when needed, and to good effect:

> One of our four was terribly slow at playing a shot, [so I] picked up a handful of grass and put all thoughts of impatience out of mind. I'm pleased to say it worked very well. Didn't get annoyed and didn't let it spoil my game. (evaluation record 30, 29/3/99)

As another way to minimise distractions affecting Tom's focus, we talked about imagining being in a cocoon, house, or room when taking a shot to help block out external distractions. Tom tried this on the odd occasion but noted that it interfered with his focus on his cue word, which he found more beneficial.

In the second seminar I introduced the concept of highlight training and encouraged participants to carry a positive perspective into everything they did. Tom immediately implemented the ideas he had gleaned from that seminar:

> Having attended the seminar the previous evening I tried to put into practice the concept of thinking 'happy thoughts'. Thinking happy thoughts and good things that have happened is probably a good idea and way to approach game. Shall continue to try it. (evaluation record 4, 27/1/99)

Indeed, Tom continued to adopt a positive attitude and made a sterling effort to "keep negative thoughts out of mind when faced with narrow fairways and hazards" (evaluation record 9, 8/2/99). He experimented with 'thought stopping' as a tool to replace negative self-talk with positive, but divulged:

> When I first did it I used to think of the big red flashing light. But now if a negative thought comes I just put it out and think of a positive. If I think of a big red flashing light it brings the negative thought more to my attention, whereas I try to kick it out immediately before it even gets a toe in the door. (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99)

In general, Tom used positive self-talk to "talk to [himself] about playing well and being positive" (evaluation record 25, 17/3/99) and "to psyche himself up and keep things going. For example 'You can do this. You've done it before. Go for it'" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). His more positive approach towards golf in general and the inclusion of positive thinking in his cue word (the 'P' in "SCRAP") helped strengthen his confidence, which in turn aided his performance. He shared:

> I told you before about the 9th and 18th on the North, you need a good drive and a good second shot [to get over the barranca in two shots]. Now, I'm happy to say, that since I've been on this course I haven't been down those barrancas once because I've had this positive thinking: 'Relax', 'positive thinking', 'you've done this shot before'. And Wow, away she goes! I'm very pleased about that. (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

Imagery was a new technique for Tom, something he had not done consciously prior to the MST. Having been exposed to the concept in seminar #7 Tom started to use imagery before playing golf, "trying to think of hitting a nice clean shot, and what it felt like, and see myself do it" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99), but admitted it was "not with any outstanding success"

(evaluation record 18, 3/3/99). However, he liked the theory behind imagery and recognised that developing his imagery skills would take time. I suggested he practised imagery at home in a relaxed environment before using it on the course, he agreed "Yes, I thought maybe I'm expecting results too quick. I like the idea of practising this, think[ing] about this beforehand" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99). From this time on Tom regularly worked on improving his imagery skills. Before every round, either the night before playing or in the morning before getting up, Tom imagined himself hitting good shots, emphasising how it would feel, and/or he visualised playing some or all of the holes perfectly. During our third meeting, Tom depicted his imagery in the following way:

> Before I came here I was sitting on the patio for 10 minutes, closing my eyes, and I imagined I'm on the first tee on the South tomorrow. Imagined I was setting up the ball, going through my cue word, and doing a really good shot going out over the barranca and it didn't fade right into the barranca. On the golf course, I imagine when I am walking over to the ball. I'm taking this shot and it's a perfect shot – I've taken enough back-swing and it's smooth. (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99)

Early on Tom noted "[I] am pleased with results [of doing imagery], will work more on it" (evaluation record 19, 6/3/99).

Over time, Tom started to use imagery in more diverse ways. He used it on the practice ground. He used it to devise game plans of how to play problematic holes. He started to visualise where he wanted the ball to land, reporting "visualising where I want the ball to land on the fairway seemed very helpful today, usually I just look up the fairway generally with no specific spot in mind" (evaluation record 39, 21/4/99). He also used imagery to replay good shots he had hit: "I had some very good shots yesterday and I've been trying to relive them ever since

yesterday. I'm trying to get the feeling of what it felt like and that helps, I'm sure it does" (final interview, 8/5/99). Furthermore, he related,

> If I think my driving is not 100% half-way round the course, I'll try and imagine that I'm on the practice ground. Because I know that when I came off the practice ground I was driving great. So I try to recreate that in my mind. (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99)

During our first individual meeting Tom identified three holes where his performance on the tee shot often suffered due to an off-task focus. The first was the par 3 second hole on the North Course where he reported he always landed in the left greenside bunker: "You can bet your life I'll hit my ball in those bunkers. If I aim over there [right] it will go over there [right], if I aim straight it will go left" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Evidently, Tom had created a mental barrier for himself on this hole and it had become such an issue that he had started to change the mechanics of his swing for this tee shot. He had also started to aim too far right of his target to try to avoid ending up in the bunker, which instead of solving the problem was creating another. As the required shot on this hole was one that Tom was capable of executing, we were both sure there was a good chance his problem was due to poor thinking and not swing technique.

The first step I took towards solving this problem was to emphasise the importance of not changing his swing or alignment on this hole – if it worked for him on every other shot there was no reason why it should not work on this hole. Just as with every other shot, Tom should pick a target, focus on that target, line up to that target, think positively, block out any negative thoughts of landing in the bunker, and then trust his swing. I urged Tom to practice this on the practice ground and develop confidence that he can hit the ball to the target with the clubs he tended to use on that hole. I further underscored the importance that he remains in the present

and does and not think about his past experiences on the hole. Given his previous success with cue words I proposed he developed one for this par 3 along the lines I had just described, maybe one that included the words "Confident" and "Target". Tom had a similar problem with the 12th hole on the South Course, also a par 3.

The next time Tom and I met individually, he had forgotten what we had discussed in the previous meeting and so had not made any steps towards remedying his problem on these two par 3s. Again I emphasised the importance of staying in the present, being confident in his swing, and picking a specific target to hit to. In addition to this, I recommended he imagine a huge green with no hazards around it and a white cross marking his target. Following this meeting, Tom did start to apply some of these ideas. He used imagery to imagine hitting a good shot onto the green, saw an imaginary white cross on the green as his target, and used positive self-talk, but to no avail. Tom reported in the evaluation records that his tee shot was still finishing in the bunker every time. Given his lack of success with this approach, Tom decided to develop a cue word specifically for these par 3s. Coincidentally or not, the first time Tom employed this cue word, "RAGS", he hit the green: "RAGS: Relax, Alignment, Green, Smooth. On Monday I actually got on the green on the second [hole]. First time for ages. I'm not out of the woods yet with this, but it's getting better" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99).

During the last individual session I had with Tom, he affirmed that he had been working hard on improving his mental approach to these holes:

> I've been working on that a lot. Imagining the big white cross on the green. . . . I have to be very strict if the thought [of going in the bunker] even enters my head, straight out, nothing but the green. Going for the green. Line up and do my cue words. Relax. Think

> of the green. Swing back. And never let that bunker thought come into it. (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99)

In fact, Tom seemed to have been successful in eradicating this problem as in the last few evaluation records before the MST ended, Tom gleefully announced that he landed on the green less than 15ft from the hole each time.

The third instance where Tom was often distracted was on the 15th tee on the North Course. The tee box for this hole is located alongside the entrance road to the golf course so is a high traffic area. During our first meeting, Tom divulged that he often got distracted by cars driving in and out of the course or by cars that stopped on the road to wait for him to play his shot. However, due to time constraints, we did not get around to discussing this issue in more detail until he brought it up again in the second meeting. Strangely, although he had identified this was a problem and had mentioned it to me on various occasions and documented it in his evaluation records, he appeared reluctant to put the effort into eradicating the problem, noting it was "a unique situation".

Although this situation occurred only once a round, a poor tee shot on this hole could add at least one or two strokes to his score and I felt this was an important point to get over to Tom. He agreed half-heartedly, but still seemed reticent, "I guess like all other golfers, if you do a bad shot you always find ten excuses: somebody moved, a car was coming, the wind came up etc." (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99). At this time I believed it was important Tom started to take responsibility for his shots and realised that he can take control and be proactive towards improving his focus, rather than making excuses. I informed Tom he could learn to narrow his focus through practice so as not to be distracted by the cars, something he did not appear to be aware of. I suggested Tom familiarise himself with the different attentional styles we had

discussed in seminar #6 and then practise switching between them, something he could easily do while out walking his dog. By the end of the session Tom indicated he was willing to improve his focus within the different attentional styles, yet realised it was going to take time to learn. Towards the end of the training I asked how this was going. He replied:

> The traffic hasn't worried me the last few times. Once I stepped away, then stepped up to the ball again and it was alright. Other times I'll hear it and I can now shut it out of my mind and still do a good shot. So all these things have helped a lot one way or another. (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99)

The main focus of the MST process for Tom was to learn to deal with his anger and frustration so, rather than focusing on this, he could obtain an on-task focus for playing his shot. The techniques Tom adopted to help with attentional control included cue words, 'Action Steps', and a physical attention cue. Furthermore, Tom worked on becoming more positive and learned and applied activation control techniques and imagery. Finally, he applied these techniques to help cope with specific incidents he experienced on the course.

MST Outcomes

Engaging in the MST led to many positive outcomes for Tom both within and outside the context of golf. His golf performance improved and he enjoyed playing golf more. Tom's attitude and mental approach towards golf also changed. He became calmer on the course and was less likely to get angry and frustrated. Tom's self-awareness grew and he became more relaxed, confident, and positive on the golf course. His focusing ability improved, as did his imagery skills. Tom was pleased with the outcomes and intended to continue developing his mental skills. These themes will be elaborated on in this section. A more quantitative

presentation of the changes in Tom's mental skills can be seen in the graph of his scores from the MSQ administered at various times during and after the MST (see Figure 3).

The MST had an immediate effect on Tom. Following his first round of golf after the first seminar, Tom logged that he was "taking more time to think about and analyse each shot" (evaluation record 1, 20/1/99). Overall, Tom became more aware of how his attitude and approach to golf affected his performance: "The whole course made me very aware of a lot of things I didn't know, or a lot of ways I wasn't being helpful to my game" (final interview, 8/5/99). By the end of the MST, Tom's attitude had changed quite dramatically. He was a calmer, more patient person on the golf course and no longer let slow play or a poor performance upset him and ruin his enjoyment of the game:

> That [MST] has really worked marvels for me. Because until I looked into it I didn't realise how much [getting angry at slow play] was affecting my game. Once it became apparent to me it was affecting my game, half the battle was over, there was no way I was going to get annoyed. Yesterday, in fact, it was an ever so slow round, [but] it didn't annoy me. That's cracked. That's cured. (final interview, 8/5/99)

A similar realisation that ruminating over bad shots also affected his performance, also led to a change in Tom's thinking on the golf course. Previous to participating in the MST, Tom recalled:

> The mistake, the bad shot would have stayed in my mind, instead of putting it out of my mind and concentrating on the next shot. . . . I've changed a lot in that respect because again, like being distracted by slow play, I realised that thinking about these mistakes affected my game. And once I realised that, then I very quickly did something about it. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Rather than trying to "make up" for a bad shot with his next shot, which often then led to a string of poor shots, Tom took a calmer and more disciplined approach to his next shot, carefully planning the shot he wanted to play. He related,

> Now, what I do, I tell myself 'OK, put this [bad shot] clean out of your head. Whatever you do, the next shot is going to be good. Now, think about this carefully. Take your time, there's no hurry. Is it better to just go out sideways and get it safely on the fairway or go between the trees? And if you do, are you confident you're going to do it? Don't make one bad shot into two'. This is what I'm telling myself now. So a much more positive approach. (final interview, 8/5/99)

By the end of the MST, Tom did not get as angry as he used to prior to the training if he was not playing well. Although he emphasised, "I don't like making mistakes" he learned to "accept that mistakes are part of the game" (final interview, 8/5/99). He remarked:

> I tend to accept now, that no matter how good a golfer you are, even if you're off scratch, you'll get bad days. Now if I have a bad day, or a bad game, or a bad hole, I tell myself 'Well, I'll never be perfect all the time. Nobody ever is'. . . . What's that expression 'I accept the things I can't do, and the things I can't change', or something? . . . It came up somewhere in the course. Anyway, I think my mental approach has gone more to that way of thinking. I'm getting older and I can't hit as far as I used to, so even just to stay level with my game is an achievement – if I can improve, that's great – I have to accept that. (final interview, 8/5/99)

On account of the MST, Tom started to analyse his game diligently, mainly through the use of the evaluation records, which allowed him to plan for improvement.

> It's part of trying to get better, I think, to go back. I had some bad holes yesterday and I've been trying to analyse why they were bad and what happened. [Prior to starting the MST,] if I thought about [my round afterwards] it was cursing my luck and feeling sorry for myself – not trying to analyse why it happened. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Tom iterated that the evaluation records forced him to ask himself questions he would not normally ask, for instance "What did I do wrong?', 'Why did I hit a bad shot?', and 'How did I prepare myself?' (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Tom particularly benefited from question 8 on the form, "What are the lessons from this experience? What can you work on to continue to improve?" He affirmed:

> I think that was most excellent. I think that is something that perhaps everybody, after a game of golf, should sit and write on a bit of paper – 'How can I improve on where I went wrong today? Where was I weak?' That's something I'd never done or never thought of, but certainly something I do now – analyse the game. I still do it even though the seminars have finished and I don't fill out the evaluation records. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Once Tom identified a weakness in his game, he then made the effort to focus his practice around these areas.

Over the course of the MST, Tom's handicap dropped from 25.2 to 21.9. Just over a month after the MST started Tom scored 42 Stableford points and was cut to 23.1. Tom telephoned me with the news noting he was "absolutely ecstatic" and thanked me for the "best round he had ever had" (field notes, 19/2/99). In week 10, Tom had another outstanding performance getting 40 Stableford points but did not get his handicap adjusted as he was playing

in a team competition. In the last week of the course Tom received a further reduction in his handicap bringing him down to 21.9.

Besides the reduction in his handicap, Tom observed other signs that his golf improved. Relatively early in the MST, Tom noted "I don't seem to have as many 8s, 9s, or the odd 10 on my [score] card" (evaluation record 13, 19/2/99). In addition, Tom reported he was getting Stableford points on holes he did not used to play well enough to score on and felt that, in general, he was hitting the ball better.

On a number of occasions throughout the inquiry, Tom noted that on the days he did not play well, the MST seemed to prevent "the bad days [being as] disastrous as they might have otherwise been" (evaluation record 15, 24/2/99). He further noted "my 'off' days don't produce such low scores as before – the highs and lows seem to be not so 'volatile'" (evaluation record 33, 8/4/99). Indeed, instead of giving up when he played badly, Tom worked hard to regain his focus for each shot and persevere:

> I went out yesterday and played. I was knackered. I mean, quite honestly, I would have given up, but I said 'No, no. Stick at it. Concentrate. Do all the things you've learned here.' Which I did and I had nine points in the last three holes. It still wasn't a great score, 27, but I think before I took this course it would have been 22 because I would have just thought 'Scrub the day off. It's a bad day. You're tired.' But I learned a lesson – Keep at it, fight 'til the end. (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99)

Besides aiding with performance enhancement, the MST also built Tom's confidence. He testified, "probably one of the things that has helped me [the] most is to have confidence in myself that I can do the shot I'm trying to do" (evaluation record 13, 19/2/99). Specifically, Tom

felt more confident "executing tricky shots" (evaluation record 32, 5/4/99) and hitting over the barranca on the 9th and 18th holes. He postulated as to the cause of this change:

> I think one of the things from being on the [MST] course that has been brought out to me is that I must have had a lack of confidence with certain shots. Instead of approaching these shots in a positive manner, I was approaching them with the idea that 'I could miss this' or 'I could foul this shot up', which is totally the wrong thing. So now I approach them in a different way, in a confident manner, thinking positively. (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99)

In addition to approaching each shot in a more positive manner, thereby eliminating negative thoughts and fostering feelings of confidence, Tom also felt his increased confidence was due to a more relaxed approach.

As well as having a calmer and more relaxed attitude towards golf, Tom also became more aware of his tension while playing golf and learned to manage that better, partly through the use of deep breathing. One month into the training Tom commented:

> I always thought I knew a bit about relaxation and I tried to relax on the golf course. But I now realise I wasn't as relaxed as I thought I was. When you think about it more and you examine yourself more during the game you find bits of tension do creep in. (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99)

From the MSQ graph (see Figure 3) it is apparent that Tom's concentration improved quite significantly over the course of the MST. Tom felt that his focus for each shot had improved and noted once he stepped up to the ball, "I'm thinking solely of the shot" (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99). In the tenth week of the MST, reflecting on a round, Tom mused "I think that day I was really starting to move towards 100% concentration. [I was] able to shut

everything out for every shot and switch off between shots" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). Tom described one experience where he was so focused for the first eight-and-a-half holes of the round it was as if he were in the "zone":

> It was strange. It was a really interesting feeling. You're completely isolated, in a world of your own. It's like you said, stepping into another room or into a cocoon, totally in there by yourself. Locked in 100%. It was lovely. It was lovely. I've been trying to get that again. . . . All the confidence was there. It was a great feeling. I'd love to recapture it every time I play. (individual consultation 4, 13/4/99)

Interestingly, Tom described this same experience on two different occasions three weeks apart and used exactly the same words to describe it each time.

Tom felt the MST improved his ability to focus:

> [The MST] has improved my concentration – stepping in the circle and going through the cue words and things – it's helped me to get locked in. Whereas before, I would just stand up to the ball, ensure my stance was right and whatever, and then hit it. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Tom also improved his imagery skills through the MST. He did not use imagery before learning about it through the MST, but at the end of the training was using it in the multiple ways detailed in the previous section.

Evident from the start of the inquiry was that Tom's golf enjoyment was closely linked to his golf performance. On one occasion, Tom journalled "[I had a] very enjoyable round – but it always is when you play well" (evaluation record 11, 15/2/99). On another he described being "utterly depressed" following a round where he "played very badly" (evaluation record 4, 27/1/99). Perhaps not surprisingly, as Tom's golf performance improved over the course of the

MST, his enjoyment did as well. However, besides enhanced performance there were other factors that contributed to Tom's increased golfing enjoyment. As he developed his mental skills he derived satisfaction and enjoyment from recognising that the MST was working and as a consequence he was able to exert greater control over his performance. Feeling more confident about hitting a good shot further served to heighten his golf enjoyment. Tom also started to appreciate and enjoy non-performance related factors:

> I enjoy the fact I'm going down to the course to play. And I'm in a nice place with lovely scenery and good weather most of the time. Even if it's a cold day it's still a damn sight better than it is in England. So yes, I get a lot more pleasure out of golf than I did before [because I'm appreciating this]. (follow-up 2, 7/1/00)

Lastly, on the occasions Tom did not play well he did not get as upset as he used to prior to the MST: "Certainly I don't get as despondent as I used to when I had a bad game. It would upset me for the rest of the day. It certainly doesn't now. A bad game is a bad game" (final interview, 8/5/99). Nor did he let slow play upset him and undermine his enjoyment any longer.

Besides benefiting from the MST within the context of golf, Tom also benefited from it in his life in general:

> The whole course made me very aware of a lot of things I didn't know, or a lot of ways I wasn't being helpful to my game. Obviously having learned this in a golf aspect, the same things apply in your ordinary life, your everyday life to a certain degree. And you probably find that you tend to bring this in to your every day life. (final interview, 8/5/99)

Notably, Tom reported that he did not dwell on things that upset him as much as he used to. Furthermore, he became more aware of how fortunate he was to live in La Manga Club and lead the lifestyle he did and therefore had come to enjoy it more.

When the MST concluded, Tom indicated that he planned to continue to use what he had learned. Moreover, he voiced intentions of repeating the course: "Give it maybe four or six months and I'll sit down and start this whole course again. I'll work through a seminar a week and do all the exercises again and the evaluations and all that" (final interview, 8/5/99). Tom indicated interest in reading some of the books from the recommended reading list I provided the participants. He had already started reading "Golf's mental hazards" (Shapiro, 1996) and was compiling a summary of the key points on his computer. In the couple of weeks after the seminars ended Tom had continued to graph his scores.

Four months after the end of the seminars Tom was still looking for opportunities to learn and develop his mental skills. He had borrowed a couple of Bob Rotella's books, which served to reinforce some of the issues discussed during the MST. As he did for "Golf's mental hazards", Tom again summarised relevant points from these books on his computer. A year on, Tom bought the books and was reading them again for a third time. Tom also jumped at the opportunity to participate in the series of four MST workshops I gave at La Manga Club just before the second follow-up, finding them to be a useful reminder of what he had learned:

> It was helpful because your presentation was slightly different with one or two new ideas giving food for thought. And the input from the other people was also helpful as well [as] there were some different ideas coming up. I think any refresher at anytime is going to be good for you. (follow-up 2, 7/1/00)

At the four-month follow-up, Tom reiterated his intentions to go through the course again:

> I want to start working from the first page and go right through it in slow time and do it again. I think that having gone to all that trouble and all those seminars and put all that effort into it, it's a pity not to keep working on it and improving. Because even though I

think I'm doing quite a bit of it now, I obviously must have forgotten some of it. (follow-up 1, 27/8/99)

During the few months following the inquiry, Tom returned to England. He continued to play golf, although not as often, and continued to use his routine and cue word prior to playing a shot. In addition, he integrated things he had learned from the books he had read (e.g., working on staying in the present). However, he no longer employed the MST techniques off the golf course, explaining that while in England he had been "rushing around doing different things so much I got a bit out of routine" (follow-up 1, 27/8/99). Nevertheless, he indicated that once back home in Spain he would start to do this again.

Indeed, once Tom arrived back in Spain, he returned to using progressive muscle relaxation and mental rehearsal of hitting a good shot in bed in the mornings prior to playing golf. At the eight-month follow-up Tom further revealed that during his drive to the course in his buggy, he was still using deep breathing and thinking positively. On the course, Tom continued to apply the mental skills and techniques he had learned. Specifically he mentioned using the concept of the circle, an adapted cue word, imagining the shot he wanted to play, being confident that he was going to hit the shot he wanted to (and more positive in general), replaying good shots in his mind using imagery, and setting short-term goals ('Action Steps'). Although Tom was not using the evaluation records, he attested that he still mentally evaluated his game after each round.

At the second follow-up Tom felt that the prolonged use of these tools was continuing to benefit him in terms of enhanced performance:

> My scores seem to have improved, so I'm very pleased with it. . . . I'm improving slowly, but I know I'm improving. I'm getting better. I had another two strokes handicap cut just before Christmas and I might get one for today as well [38 points]. (follow-up 2, 7/1/00)

Positive effects continued to be manifested in performance correlates as well. Tom reported he felt more confident; was able to calmly plan a shot when in trouble on the course (i.e., had good course management); was able to "accept a bad shot, or even a bad day, calmly without getting upset or angry" (follow-up 2, 7/1/00); and continued to derive greater enjoyment from golf, due not only to improved performance but also to his improved attitude.

Summary

Golf played a significant role in Tom's life. He played and practised thrice weekly, kept records of his performance, and watched as much golf as he could on television. Tom was an average level golfer, playing to a handicap of 25 at the start of the inquiry, and was extremely dedicated towards improving. MST was a new experience for Tom and he was eager to participate in it. Throughout the inquiry Tom worked hard to integrate the MST techniques into his golf and develop his mental skills. He enjoyed the process and benefited from it in many ways both in terms of his performance and other performance correlates, including enjoyment, confidence, and focus. Furthermore, Tom's attitude to golf changed during the inquiry. He became calmer and more accepting of his mistakes, an attitude change that was also apparent in other areas of his life. The outcomes of the MST persisted and were still evident at the eight-month follow-up.

Nancy

Golfer Profile

Nancy was 58 years old and married with two sons at the start of this research inquiry. She had never worked outside the home. Although she had taken golf lessons some years before, she said she had only been playing golf "seriously" for four years. Her decision to take up golf and consequently enrol in golf lessons was spurred by a number of events. Nancy recounted that along with "reach[ing] the magic age" she was suffering from injuries that impacted her mobility around the tennis court so she wanted to find a sport that was less strenuous and less demanding on her body. This, coupled with the opportunity to "have [golf] lessons at a reasonable rate in a pleasant environment" with the British Women's Club in Brussels where she lived, prompted Nancy to become involved with golf. Unfortunately, soon after this, Nancy became quite ill and was unable to play golf for a number of years. Since her return to good health Nancy played fairly consistently but was quick to note that golf did not play a pivotal role in her life: "I've never thought about [the role golf plays in my life]. It's just something to . . . do socially, I suppose; rather than something very important to me" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Indeed, Nancy remarked, "at this moment in time, given the choice of playing bridge or golf, I would opt for bridge" (initial interview, 31/12/98). However she reflected "I suppose if I'm playing really well and the weather's good, [golf's] more enjoyable" (initial interview, 31/12/98).

> Before the MST, Nancy devoted little time to practising, playing, or thinking about golf: I rarely think about golf except when I'm on the course actually playing, reserving tee times, watching golf on TV, or occasionally [I'll think] 'Mmm it's a nice day perhaps I'll try a few holes'. . . . I seldom practice. I might go down [to the practice ground] for 15 minutes prior to play[ing on the course] and hit some golf balls to limber up. [I play]

> maximum twice a week and then it's only nine holes. . . . Sometimes I play 18, [but] I get rather tired because at my level you're hitting more balls. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

Nancy's "level" was that of a 36 handicapper, though she noted remorsefully that she had only played to her handicap once. Still, her golf goal was to lower her handicap to 31. In order to become more consistent and achieve this goal, Nancy commented that she would be prepared to

> devote more time to [golf]. . . . Play regularly twice a week. Possibly go down to the driving range and practice. I think that's what I have to do if I really want to attain my goal. But mentally I have to condition myself to do this. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

Besides lowering her handicap, deriving enjoyment from golf was also an important goal for Nancy.

The manner in which Nancy prepared for a round of golf appeared to depend somewhat on whether she was playing in a competition or not. That said, in both cases her preparation was minimal to non-existent: "Other than a warm-up exercise, unless it's a competition I don't give prior thought to the actual game" (initial interview, 31/12/98). In fact, when she did think about golf prior to competitions her thoughts and attitude were quite negative. Yet despite her lack of effective mental preparation, Nancy physically prepared for golf in a fairly systematic fashion, making time to stretch every morning. Besides stretching, Nancy occasionally arrived at the course 15 minutes earlier than usual so she could go to the practice ground to find her rhythm and try to fix any technical mistakes that arose. If she had time she would also practise her chipping and putting. From the putting green Nancy would head straight to the first tee.

Based on a detailed narrative Nancy gave about her behaviour, thoughts, and feelings on the course a number of interesting insights regarding her self-perception as a golfer emerged. Nancy was not a confident golfer. She frequently used the words "hope" and "luck" when talking

about her shots (e.g., "I hope that it will go where I want", "If I'm very lucky it will be a good shot", "I hope to just brush the grass"). Furthermore, it was apparent that Nancy engaged in self-defeating, counterproductive thinking. Clearly, this style of thinking can be destructive to golf performance as it inhibits an on-task focus.

To conclude, Nancy was a beginning level golfer who wanted to improve her golf to obtain a 31 handicap. Golf did not play an important role in her life yet she was willing to devote more time to it in order to improve. Nancy did minimal preparation prior to playing golf and her two mental weaknesses that were immediately apparent were lack of confidence and focus.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Nancy's golf enjoyment stemmed from a variety of sources. The main factors that underlied her golf enjoyment were the environment, exercise, performance, sensual experiences, and feelings of achievement. Playing poorly and/or in bad weather conditions, other players' actions on the course, slow play, and fatigue detracted from Nancy's golf enjoyment. These themes will be elaborated in this section.

The scenery and views afforded through playing golf were central to Nancy's enjoyment of the game: "I enjoy the West Course particularly here because I enjoy the scenery of golf. The views are spectacular wherever you play. . . . The senses are alert and appreciating the natural wonders of life" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Moreover, Nancy enjoyed golf the most when the course was "very lush and very green" (initial interview, 31/12/98).

Another critical environmental factor that affected Nancy's enjoyment was the weather. She noted, "there would be no way that I would go out [and play golf] in the rain and cold and sleet and snow. That would be of no fun to me whatsoever. So, being here [in southern Spain] is

wonderful" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Indeed, Nancy recounted a time when she pulled out of a competition because it was "cold and windy and awful" (initial interview, 31/12/98).

Nancy also enjoyed the exercise afforded through playing golf as it provided her with "physical well being and [a] sense of achievement" (initial interview, 31/12/98). The sense of achievement resultant from playing well was also a source of Nancy's golf enjoyment, whether it was hitting a good shot (e.g., "I enjoy hitting a good ball. There's nothing like it. It really is a tremendous sense of achievement" (initial interview, 31/12/98)) or achieving a good score overall:

> I'm not out there to win prizes. I'm out there for me, to have a good time . . . And if I happen to win something one day, which I did, I mean, that was such a fantastic achievement. . . . I mean, that was just wonderful . . . . It wasn't the winning, it was achieving my first ever 36 points. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

Performance as an underlying factor of enjoyment emerged repeatedly for Nancy. Sometimes the joy came from hitting a superb shot, other times it resulted from a feeling of having played well in general. Her enjoyment of hitting a good shot was further heightened when her senses were also stimulated: "I enjoy seeing that little ball going into the hole and the nice 'clunk'. I enjoy hearing the correct 'clunk' or 'ting' when I hit a good shot" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Indeed, it transpired that performance played a pivotal role in Nancy's golf enjoyment and involvement in golf: "I suppose if I'm playing well, it's wonderful and I can't wait to get out there again. And if I'm not playing well, my attitude is 'Leave it alone. Forget about it'" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Nevertheless, even when Nancy was not playing well, she noted, "I still quite enjoy it because I enjoy the walk and the views" (initial interview, 31/12/98).

The social aspects of golf were not a great allure to Nancy. Instead, she enjoyed playing alone:

> I love playing golf on my own. . . . You can to talk to yourself. I can play at my own pace. I don't have to listen to idle chatter and I'm confident that I'm not holding up the players behind. . . . I like to get on with it, and in fact, I find it disruptive if people want to chat all the way round the course. And I get a bit bored [with] people telling me where they had dinner last night, who they went out with. I'm not interested. I'm there to play golf. I want to hit the ball and get on with it. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

For sure, slow play irritated Nancy and detracted from her golf enjoyment as it caused her to "feel under pressure" and "uptight". Furthermore, players who do not take care of the course by replacing divots and repairing pitch marks for example, nor abide by the rules of golf also aggravated her.

MST Experience

The early stage of the MST experience with Nancy was a frustrating one for me. In part this was due to her relatively negative attitude towards MST (for older recreational golfers at least) and her apparent lack of commitment to the training. I had the impression that Nancy thought MST was a waste of time and could not be of benefit to her, a point highlighted by a comment she made about a month into the MST:

> I can't help feeling that this is meant more for younger people. . . . We've all got our set ways for doing things, if you're younger you don't have such preconceived ideas. [Also,] it must be easier to work with people who are really gun-ho with the game and is anyone in our group really gun-ho? (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99)

Nancy's negative attitude may have stemmed from the detrimental effect she perceived the MST to be having on her golf during the initial stages of the training. Recounting her poor performance on one particular hole, Nancy joked, "it's all this pressure of this [MST] course. I wouldn't go on it" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99). Nancy suspected the training was making her think too much and she felt compelled to "remember my thoughts and feelings for [the evaluation] form" (evaluation record 1, 22/1/99). Furthermore, she felt obligated to keep a record of her score each round even though she did not want to because she was playing badly. Possibly, part of the problem was that in the early stages Nancy focused too much on the research aspect of the MST rather than on how the MST could help her achieve her goals. Consequently, she was putting too much effort into trying to remember everything that occurred during the round so she could record it in her evaluation and not enough into applying the techniques and developing her skills.

My frustration in the early stages was further founded in the belief that Nancy did not take the MST seriously, an opinion that originated from the blasé comments she made on the evaluation records. For example, when asked what lessons she had learned from the round she answered with offhand remarks such as "wear ear plugs" (evaluation record 4, 29/1/99) (so she did not have to listen to her playing partners) and "keep my eyes closed" (evaluation record 5, 2/2/99) (so she did not have to see how far ahead the flight in front was). Or when asked what she could work on to improve she commented "presumably everything" (evaluation record 1, 22/1/99). Moreover, Nancy did not appear to be making any effort to implement any of the material that we covered in the seminars. She made excuses for why she was not trying a technique out or why she felt it would not help her, even before trying it. Despite the fact Nancy repeatedly commented that she was a positive person, there was an underlying thread of

negativity that was apparent throughout the early stages of the MST. Lastly, Nancy did not believe she had control over her game. She often blamed her biorhythms, noting they had a significant impact on her golf performance and believed "when the technique has gone nothing will help". The belief that she could not regain control of her performance needed to be changed if the MST was to be effective.

Seven weeks into the MST I had not noticed a change in Nancy's attitude. I was beginning to feel that Nancy and I were wasting our time continuing with the MST. Consequently, I made the decision that during our next meeting I would ask Nancy again what she wanted from the MST and how she thought she might be able to benefit from it. If she did not respond positively to this, I would remind her that she did not have to continue with the MST if she did not want to. However, Nancy came into the next meeting with a totally different, and very positive, attitude. She opened the meeting by commenting:

> I'm deeply conscious at the moment that 'If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got'. When I started with you I told you I was going to immerse myself for this period of time, but then I got to the point where golf was taking over my life, now I think I have it in perspective. (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99)

From this point on, there was a notable change in Nancy's approach and she started to reap the benefits of the MST and enjoy golf more again. As importantly, Nancy started to enjoy the MST and see the experience in a more positive light, describing it as "a worthwhile learning experience" (evaluation record 13, 26/4/99). At the conclusion of the MST, Nancy remarked:

> I was pleasantly surprised at how beneficial it could be. Which, although I went in with an open mind, I hadn't really thought that it could be. . . . I had reservations about it in all honesty. Now I know it's an excellent idea . . . and beneficial. (final interview, 11/5/99)

Nancy suspected that her attitude changed when "we started to do things which I could use without too much thought, . . . things I could relate to easily, 'hands on' times rather than listening to others waffle" (final interview, 11/5/99). These "things" included performance profiling and the cue word; tools that she enjoyed and benefited from the most. Nancy reported that she did not find the idea of 'Personal Par' to be of use to her. She iterated that she did not find her 'Personal Par' to be very encouraging, noting "I know I can play better than this average" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99). Also, although Nancy found the idea of 'Smart Golf' "interesting", she reported "there's no way I could use it, no way" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Nancy had not been in a "classroom situation" for a long time and found "listening to other people's attitudes and approaches . . . stimulating" (final interview, 11/5/99). Yet she voiced her impatience with certain members of the group who had a tendency to "ramble on". In spite of this, the group seminars were a motivating force for Nancy:

> Pretty much each time I came away, I felt more motivated. The encouragement that one has had from the rest of the group, it wasn't that outgoing, but you knew it was there. We were part of a group and that was encouraging you to get out there and do a little bit better if you could. (final interview, 11/5/99)

Nancy attended 10 of the 15 seminars (67%; see Table 4) and we met four times individually. On the surface, Nancy's experience with the individual meetings was not as positive as with the seminars, but she valued the process nonetheless:

> I thought it was a pain to answer all these questions. They seem to be the same questions but in a different form. But it does reinforce all the other things that maybe I had forgotten, but because of these sessions it's come to the fore. (final interview, 11/5/99)

The questions often required Nancy to reflect on a situation or comment she had made and postulate how she thought certain factors impacted her golfing performance or enjoyment. Sometimes Nancy found this difficult and ended up thinking aloud in circles which perhaps embarrassed her on a certain level. For example, on one occasion Nancy mentioned feelings of "over-confidence". I asked her what she meant by this and how she thought it might affect her game. She responded:

> It's very difficult for me to explain it. I've never had to analyse this before, never in my life, Emma! It is good though because it makes you think. . . . What I mean by over-confidence is cockiness almost. Blasé. But I don't feel blasé about it. I think we'll just scrub this whole thing. I never ever said [anything about over-confidence]. I'm now just going to sit and nod and shake my head to you. (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99)

Although I did not intentionally create a power relationship between me and the participants, Nancy perceived one to exist. She divulged that she did not ask me to work with her on the golf course, partly because she did not see how I could help her on the course, and partly because "we didn't want to let you down" (final interview, 11/5/99). Nancy expanded:

> Whether you like it or not, you're the teacher and we're the pupils. . . . Therefore having you walking around with me, would be almost off-putting. But that could be just me and my own insecurities. And of course, we're all getting a bit nervous about Saturday [observation session] because we all know we've improved and now we have to prove to you that we've improved. Of course, we haven't got to prove to you at all, but that's what we're going to feel like. (final interview, 11/5/99)

Nancy attested that it was practice and repetition that facilitated her implementation of the mental training tools as it made them "become automatic, become something normal" (final

interview, 11/5/99). Conversely, Nancy found it harder to integrate the use of the tools when she was not playing well and probably could have benefited from them the most. She explained, "when you're having a very bad time on the course and therefore trying to focus on all these things it's more difficult because you're mentally expecting a lot of yourself. But it's possible and I know it's possible" (final interview, 11/5/99). Nancy dismissed the idea of creating a schedule for MST outside the seminars and individual meetings, stating "the idea of the diary is no good. Life is not that structured anymore. I tend to do it automatically when I have time to spare" (field notes, 13/4/99).

At the end of the experience, Nancy expressed how "astonished" she was "that there is so much to talk about with golf [and] that we can have spent all these hours talking about the game of golf" (final interview, 11/5/99). Although she was still not sure that this was "such a good thing". However, despite her hesitant start with the MST, by the end Nancy attested it had been a "worthwhile, informative, helpful course" (course evaluation, 26/5/99).

MST Process

When Nancy initially saw the notice advertising the MST as part of this research inquiry, she was not going to participate. Nancy did not consider herself to be a "serious golfer" and because in the notice I had requested a "group of enthusiastic and dedicated recreational golfers who are interested in developing their mental game" she did not feel she was an appropriate candidate. However, after some deliberation she decided to engage in the MST:

> I had the impression that you needed a lot of people [for your research] so I thought, 'OK, I'll do it'. But equally, in May/June when I was really playing well, I thought 'OK, maybe I am a serious golfer and if I could do this now, this would be the icing on the cake'. . . . I feel that I need something to help me because I've been a 36 handicapper for

> such a long time. I don't find lessons very helpful so perhaps psychologically this will help me improve my game. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

Once Nancy decided to participate, she made a commitment to herself that for the 16 weeks of the MST she would work on improving her game with the ultimate goal of lowering her handicap. Indeed, she dramatically increased the amount of golf she played as soon as the MST started. From playing nine holes twice a week before the MST, in the first two and a half weeks of the MST Nancy played at least six full, 18 hole rounds, five of them being competitions. Nancy quickly noted "golf seems to be taking over my life instead of being just a small part" (evaluation record 5, 2/2/99). Sadly, Nancy perceived this in a negative fashion and her discontentment was perceptible in her evaluation records. She reported disappointment with the way she was playing and voiced frustration over slow play and certain playing partners. It became clear that Nancy's golf enjoyment was waning and after one round commented, "frankly I'm rather bored with the whole thing and plan to give [golf] a rest for a while" (evaluation record 6, 7/2/99). As it transpired, Nancy fell ill the next day and had to take a two-week break from golf regardless. The first round she played after regaining her health was a non-competition round with two friends and she summarised it as follows:

> I enjoyed it enormously . . . I hit some rubbish shots, hit some wonderful shots. A lovely afternoon: empty course, relaxed, good company, a few laughs, no pressures. This, for me, is what golf is all about. . . . I now know that I shall never be a serious golfer. I don't want to be a serious golfer. It's a game to be enjoyed for my pleasure without pressures of competition and just to play with people I like. (evaluation record 7, 20/2/99)

I was concerned that playing in competitions was undermining Nancy's golf enjoyment and felt that this needed to be addressed to avoid the possibility of Nancy giving up golf

altogether. However, Nancy was extremely reluctant to cease playing in the competitions: "I'm going to continue playing in the individual Stableford [competition] to see if I can get my handicap down. I've set myself this goal for six months, so I have to keep doing it. I committed to this" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99).

Given that Nancy was determined to continue playing in competitions I felt it was important to work on the aspects of competition that maybe detracted from her enjoyment. Based on our interactions I saw these to include her goal orientation, a concern about what other people think of her performance, slow play, certain playing partners, and nervousness before competitions. In the remainder of this section, the process we went through in an attempt to deal with these issues will be presented.

Throughout the MST, Nancy fought with her goal of lowering her handicap. At the beginning she appeared to be quite process orientated, defining success as hitting good shots and noting in a couple of her evaluations that she was happy with the way that she had played even though her score did not reflect how well she thought she had played. However, her desire to reduce her handicap often led her to focus on her score rather than the process of executing a good shot. This near obsession with reducing her handicap was to cause Nancy some internal conflict throughout the MST. In an attempt to get Nancy to focus more on skill execution rather than on getting a good enough score that would dictate her handicap be cut, I worked to help her set more process oriented goals.

In the first month of the MST, each round Nancy set a vague goal to "play well". To help the participants set more effective, process goals, in seminar #3 we discussed the principles of effective goal setting. Then, I asked the participants to set themselves short-term goals (or 'Action Steps') that would help them improve in the areas in which they had identified they were

weak through performance profiling. Nancy did not complete this exercise. Consequently, during our second individual meeting we spent some time discussing the goals Nancy had been setting for herself (i.e., to play well) and identified the problems that may be associated with them. Nancy realised, "it's an impossible goal now that I stop to think about it, nobody plays well throughout. I need to refocus, rethink. This course is bringing that about, that's a good thing" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). Although we discussed other goals she could set for each round that were more specific and process oriented (e.g., using a cue word, taking a deep breath before each shot), Nancy had not changed her goal setting behaviour by our next individual meeting. She iterated that setting goals put her under too much pressure. However, she noted "perhaps as I get better and feel more confident maybe I can focus on goals" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99).

Suspecting that Nancy was still focusing on the outcome of her shots, I decided to take a different approach to get her focus away from her score. During our second meeting, it became evident to me that Nancy had high expectations for herself, demanding that every shot she hit be the best she can do. Problematically, when she did not hit her best shot she was very critical of herself and called herself derogatory names like "stupid twit". Consequently, I proposed that Nancy set a goal to accept her bad shots and not be so hard on herself, an idea that appealed to her and one she committed to try. Indeed, following this discussion her evaluations indicated that Nancy did adjust her goals as discussed.

Despite my attempts to switch Nancy's focus away from reducing her handicap, it remained in the forefront of her mind. Finally, towards the end of the MST there was a hint of change in her attitude as it dawned on her that focusing on decreasing her handicap was "not a

good idea" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99). However, she remained fixated on the importance of scoring well so she could get her handicap cut:

> I always used to say, that really, if you have done a good shot, and you know it's gone up in the air, it doesn't actually matter where it goes, like if it goes in the bunker. It's not true, I've changed my mind about that. If you do a good shot you want to be rewarded for that. . . . If you know that you're playing a good game, I agree, the score at the end of the day doesn't matter. But for me at the moment, it does because I want to get my handicap down. So obviously the score at the end is important. (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99)

Three days later, following a round where she scored 34 Stableford points, Nancy's opinion changed again. Nancy announced that she had had a revelation and was no longer going to have reducing her handicap as her goal. She noted that although she had had a good score it was not good enough to merit a handicap reduction. Consequently, she did not feel proud of her performance despite the fact she played well and thought she should be satisfied with it (field notes, 13/4/99). However, this new attitude did not persist for long, two weeks later Nancy reverted again, noting "points are now very important – hitting good shots is now not enough!" (evaluation record 13, 26/4/99).

By the end of the MST, Nancy's attitude had not changed significantly. Yet she was aware that going into a round of golf with the goal of achieving a certain score was not a good approach for her. She realised, "I have to put that aside and just try and play the best that I can and eventually it will happen, that magical day will happen" (final interview, 11/5/99). That said, Nancy was still getting frustrated when balls she struck well were ending in the bunker, iterating "that messes up the hole. In the past it didn't matter because I wasn't bothered. Now I am more bothered. So, I go back every time – is this a good thing? You tell me. I don't know" (final

interview, 11/5/99). Interestingly, Nancy's attitude in matchplay was entirely different. On the couple of occasions Nancy played matchplay she exhibited a previously unknown desire to win and enjoyed the format much more. Of note is that players' handicaps cannot be adjusted as a result of matchplay competitions.

Part of Nancy's desire to get her handicap cut was because she believed that she would enjoy golf more once this happened. She believed this to be the case for two reasons. First, because she would feel she had achieved something and, second, because of her concern with how other people judged her performance. Indeed, this concern appeared to be a double-edged sword and a further undermining factor of her golf enjoyment. Nancy did not want to embarrass herself or "look like a total idiot" if she played badly, yet conversely she felt embarrassed if she played well, revealing "I have a fear that I will play really well in the ladies competition and will win and have to face this aggression of people saying 'Oh get your handicap cut'" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). Nancy's worry about what others thought of her was a theme that came up a number of times throughout the inquiry and proved a hard attitude to change. We discussed this attitude a number of times throughout the MST and I began to suspect Nancy had a fear of success. On one occasion Nancy declared "I actually played so well for 12 holes it was embarrassing to have a 36 handicap" (evaluation record 8, 11/3/99). I challenged her on why she thought this way. She revealed that although she was happy she had played well, she could see the irritation in the other players because she was scoring more Stableford points than they were on holes they took the same number of strokes because of her higher handicap. I urged Nancy to play her own game and enjoy the occasions she played well, without worrying about what the others were thinking about her. But she retorted that she could not do this, as she was a sensitive person and could sense how the others were feeling.

Being concerned with others' opinions appeared to impact Nancy's ability to focus on relevant performance cues and not become distracted, as did slow play. Nancy tended to become exceedingly concerned if her flight was slow and the golfers in front got too far ahead and these thoughts negatively affected both her performance and her enjoyment. She also noted that she found it distracting when people in her flight complained about slow play ahead of them. Early on in the MST Nancy described ways she tried to deal with this, though none were particularly successful:

> I tried to relax and look ahead but this did not help me [refocus] as I was aware we were losing ground. (evaluation record 5, 2/2/99)
>
> Play was slow and my partners found this very annoying and verbalised their feelings. I found this distracting. I said [to myself] put them out of your mind, try not to hear them, concentrate on your new swing. (evaluation record 4, 29/1/99)

Attention control was definitely an area that Nancy needed to work on. Besides the examples above, in the initial interview Nancy said that she wanted to learn how to improve her concentration, noting her mind often wanders to other things while playing such as "Did I remember to put the washing out?" or "I wonder why we haven't seen such and such" (initial interview, 31/12/98). In addition, dealing with distractions was a weakness that emerged when Nancy constructed her performance profile. Moreover, when playing badly, Nancy had a tendency to focus on her poor performance rather than on what she had to do to execute a good shot. Given the ease with which Nancy appeared to be distracted from the task at hand when playing golf, and the non-methodical way in which she prepared for each shot, I felt she would benefit from developing a preshot routine. In our first individual meeting we discussed a number of ways Nancy could construct this routine. She decided that developing an acronym to help her

remember key points before each shot would be the most helpful approach. On previous evaluation records, Nancy had recorded that when she was playing well she had been focused on the following thoughts: head down, stay relaxed, slow back-swing, and brush the grass rather than hit the ball. Given that these cues tended to help when she remembered to use them, it seemed appropriate that at least some of them formed the basis of her routine.

The next time we met Nancy confirmed that she had developed a cue word. However, she could not recall it immediately suggesting that although she might have developed one she was not using it much. Nancy related that she had based her cue word on one she had discovered in a golf magazine, "GASP", which referred to Grip, Alignment, Stance, Position, and then adapted it to meet her needs:

> I could easily adopt ["GASP"] because it makes a lot of sense. The only problem is when I'm thinking of all this I seize up. I can stand and have the most amazing practice swing and follow through but as soon as I stand in front of that ball it all seizes up and I don't follow through. I found therefore I have to waggle. (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99)

Consequently, Nancy decided to use "SWAG" (Slow, Waggle, Alignment, Grass) and "SWAT" (Slow, Waggle, Alignment, Tee) as her cue words depending on whether she was hitting off the tee or not.

Soon after this meeting, Nancy started to use her cue word on the course and documented in her evaluations that she felt, quite immediately, that her concentration was improving. Within a couple of weeks, Nancy appeared to have integrated the use of her cue word into most aspects of her game and attributed improvements in her golf to the use of this tool: "Somehow, it does seem to be going better. I think it's the cue word that's really helping, because then nothing else can creep in because that is what you're focused upon" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). A

couple of weeks later, Nancy disclosed that although she went through the elements of the routine, she did not voice each element to herself. Nonetheless, having gone through the process of explicitly using the cue word she reported she was now much more aware of what she needed to attend to prior to making a shot.

> Although the cue word was helping Nancy's focus to a certain extent, she revealed:
>
> I still have this enormous difficulty blocking out other people. Indeed, I introduce them unnecessarily. I'm standing there doing my preshot routine and my cue and something creeps in the back in my head, [I think] they're thinking 'why the hell is she doing all that?' They're not thinking that at all, but it creeps in, and then I have to say louder in my head 'SLOW, WAGGLE, ALIGNMENT, GRASS'. (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99)

That said, Nancy still agreed she was better able to deal with this type of distraction now compared to before the MST. Yet at the other extreme, Nancy was mindful that "sometimes I think I'm focusing too much, or concentrating too much, and I stiffen up. And of course have a bad shot" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99). I described the significance of 'relaxed concentration' and the idea of not 'forcing focus' to Nancy, emphasising that tension can result from trying too hard and consequently affect rhythm and co-ordination. As Nancy was aware of the tension and had a number of tools she was using successfully to decrease tension, I suggested she consider incorporating some form of activation control, such as a deep breath, into her cue word.

Nancy observed that she was less disciplined using her cue word when she was not playing well. For example, if she had a bad drive she had a tendency to just walk up to the ball and hit it without giving much thought and preparation to the shot and going through her cue word. Nancy was aware that on such instances she was trying to "make up ground" for her

previous bad shot. We discussed the importance of ignoring previous mistakes, staying focused in the present, and playing one shot at a time. Nancy extracted the key points from our discussion and wrote "DISCIPLINE FOR EACH SHOT – What do I have to do to make the next shot a good one" and said she would post it on the wall at home. Pleasingly, by the end of the MST, Nancy noted she was more disciplined in using the mental tools when she was not playing as well, noting "I have now reached that point where it is more automatic" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Nancy and I also talked about the importance of switching her focus away from golf between shots, especially away from slow play. Another technique we discussed was for her to imagine that she was in a bubble or a cocoon. I felt that this might be especially useful as Nancy seemed to get distracted when people watched her play. Nancy experimented with this technique, practising it before she played, though she noted she was not very good at it.

Nancy's nervousness prior to competitions was another factor that served to detract from her golfing enjoyment. During the initial interview, Nancy voiced her trepidation towards competitions: "If it's a competition, I'm terrified; that's an over exaggeration, but I'm concerned" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Nancy's major concern was getting over the first barranca and she tried to cope, fairly ineffectively, with her nerves using self-talk to put the situation into perspective:

> [I say] 'Look, it really doesn't matter, it's not that important if you get over the barranca or not'. But then my other self says 'Oh yes it is important if you get over the barranca'. I just don't want to make a fool of myself. (initial interview, 31/12/98)

As the MST progressed Nancy learned to adopt a more positive approach as a means of dealing with her anxiety and "psych" herself up before she started playing: "I tried to think positively

about the first shot, . . . hoping that the anxiety will just disappear, . . . rather than thinking 'Oh this is a competition. Oh God, I feel awful, I hate it'" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99).

Prior to the start of the MST, Nancy used techniques such as deep breathing, repeating a mantra, cue words (e.g., slow down, keep your head down), and tensing and relaxing her shoulders and arms in an attempt to reduce her nerves. Yet she did not appear to use them in a systematic fashion. Although I encouraged Nancy to explore other ways of dealing with competitive anxiety, our conversations usually returned to the use of deep breathing, a technique Nancy used occasionally both within and outside the context of golf. Given her apparent comfort with this technique as well as the recognition that it was effective for her, our focus switched to how she could use deep breathing on a more consistent basis. Nancy noted, "I know that if I stop and breathe through the stomach instead of the chest, it does help slow me down and hopefully refocus" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). As we talked about this it became apparent to Nancy how she might benefit if she could remember to do this before every shot. Consequently, Nancy decided to make it a goal to take a deep breath before each shot to help her slow down and refocus.

To further aid with relaxation, I suggested to Nancy that she create the image of a peaceful, relaxing place while taking a deep breath. She indicated that in fact she sometimes used a "South Pacific image with a warm beach, warm sea" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99) to facilitate relaxation. Another relaxation technique Nancy used was a "body scan" where she would scan her body for tension and try to become acutely aware of each part of her body, then try to relax it more. Although not always successful in bringing about a complete relaxation response, in general Nancy felt they were effective techniques and acknowledged, "if I did this

more often it would be easier" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). Consequently, we identified a good time for Nancy to practice these techniques.

A couple of weeks later, Nancy informed me that she felt much more relaxed when playing golf and believed she was playing better as a result (field notes, 23/3/99). She expanded:

> I just try to take a deep breath, which I always thought I had done but now it's much more so. I'm more aware that I'm doing it at the right time. I guess I used to do it between holes, now I do it just before I strike the ball. (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99)

Furthermore, Nancy reported that thinking about exhaling as well as inhaling was beneficial.

Despite being better able to relax, Nancy still experienced nerves before competitions and suspected that they affected her performance at the start of her round. A critical part of dealing with nervousness is the belief that you are in control of them, something I did not think Nancy fully appreciated early on in the training. I decided to demonstrate this to Nancy by using a combination of imagery and relaxation. During the third individual consultation, I explained the technique to Nancy. In short, the first thing was to get into a relaxed state. Once fully relaxed I wanted Nancy to recreate the nervousness she experienced on the first tee. When she was able to vividly imagine this, I wanted her to recreate the feelings of relaxation she had just experienced. By repeating this process the intention was that Nancy would learn to recognise that she can control her thoughts and feelings and will consequently be able to control her nervousness on the golf course. Nancy regarded this technique as "logical" and was enthusiastic to try it. Consequently, I made an audio-tape to guide her through the process. The script of this tape is in Appendix M. Nancy described the tape as "very helpful" and was "very grateful" for it (field notes 15/4/99). She went on to divulge that my voice on the tape helped guide her and prevent her mind from wandering and said she would suggest that others use the tape. By the end of the

MST, Nancy was using the tape about three times a week, usually before playing golf and sometimes when she had her rest in the afternoon.

On one part of the tape, I ask the listener to associate the feeling of relaxation with a word. Nancy chose the word "floating": "Initially I thought of float, but float is such a harsh word, and I needed an -ing, so float*ing*. It made it more relaxing" (final interview, 11/5/99). Nancy started to use the word "floating" on the course as a cue to relax, revealing when she thought of "floating" it made her smile, and that made her relax. Moreover, she explained "floating and my magical island and the water, the two go together. So, it's sort of fun. It really is fun. So that has helped" (final interview, 11/5/99).

During the MST process Nancy had her first introduction to imagery, a technique she previously did not know existed. One week into the MST somebody gave Nancy an audio-tape called "Great golf – hypnotic induction", which had an imagery component on it. To mentally prepare for golf one day, Nancy listened to the tape and "worked through each shot from the tee to hole on the first hole" (evaluation record 6, 7/2/99). Although she did not have a good round that day, a month later she was extolling the virtues of imagery and sharing her excitement about not having to lay up to the barranca on a particular hole: "It's such a great thrill. Maybe it's the imagery thing. I know I can do it" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). Indeed, Nancy hypothesised that listening to the tape and doing the imagery increased her confidence.

Due to the fact that Nancy experienced a modest degree of success with imagery, I suggested that she use it to help her break down a mental barrier she had, namely clearing the lake on a certain hole. I encouraged Nancy to use imagery at home to see herself successfully hitting shots over the lake and strengthening her belief that she can do it. Later on, Nancy alluded that there was a downside to the advantages of imagery, suggesting "very possibly there is even a

question of over confidence. I psych myself up and say 'yes, I can do this' and then . . ." (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). Nancy divulged that she tended to think "this is really not a problem for me, I know I can do it" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99) and then proceeded to mess up the shot. Although Nancy was unable to speculate why she thought this occurred, I suspected that it might be due to a lapse in concentration, if not a lack of skill. By the end of the MST, Nancy appeared to be using imagery on a fairly regular basis to mentally prepare for golf by imagining her first tee shot or previous good shots she had made. By the tenth week of the MST Nancy had also started to use imagery to visualise where she wanted her shots to go.

Engaging in the MST stimulated a significant increase in the amount of golf Nancy played. Also, because she wanted to get her handicap cut, Nancy started to play in a number of competitions. Unfortunately, along with this came a great deal of frustration and her golf enjoyment started to wane. Consequently, much of the MST was dedicated to increasing her golf enjoyment by dealing with the issues that were undermining it, namely her focus on reducing her handicap, a concern about what other people think of her performance, slow play, certain playing partners, and nervousness before competitions.

MST Outcomes

Overall, Nancy found the MST to be "extremely helpful" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99). Engaging in the MST prompted Nancy to think more about golf thereby making her a more deliberate player. She became more confident, her self-awareness increased, and her attitude towards the game of golf was transformed significantly. Specifically with regards to mental skill development, Nancy improved her relaxation and imagery ability and her attention control. A quantitative presentation of the changes in Nancy's mental skills can be seen in the graph of her scores from the MSQ administered at various times during and after the MST (see

Figure 4). The resulting benefits of the MST were not limited to the context of golf, but were transferred to other aspects of her life. In this section these outcomes will be delineated.

Nancy's self-concept as a golfer changed dramatically over the course of the MST: "I am beginning to think that now I *am* a golfer, as opposed to someone just playing at trying to be a golfer, which is not something that I would have said at the beginning" (final interview, 11/5/99). Indeed, golf became a more important part of her life and she came to enjoy it more. At the start of the MST, Nancy noted that given the choice she would rather play bridge than golf, however at the end of the training Nancy remarked "I can't choose because I enjoy both. It's that simple" (final interview, 11/5/99). Part of the increased enjoyment came from having learned to switch her focus away from her performance when she was not playing well and appreciate the scenery instead. Furthermore, her general attitude towards golf was quite different at the end of the MST compared to at the start. The following comment encapsulates these changes:

> My attitude to golf has changed in that I now look forward to going out and playing and doing well. Whereas before, it was this thing, 'Go out, have a bit of fun, and nothing really matters. Enjoy it when you have some good shots', but there was no real focus. Now there's focus. Now there's motivation. I want to get out there and really play well and play more often. . . . I've played more golf in the last four months than I have for a very, very, very long time. . . . It's just more important than I thought it could be. I've invested more time in it and I've realised that there is more to it. It isn't just going out and hitting the ball and hoping to get it right. You do have to practice. You do have to think about it. (final interview, 11/5/99)

The realisation that golf requires careful preparation and thought was reflected in the way Nancy's approach to golf changed. She attested, "My whole preparation is different. I mean, I

now have mental preparation, which I didn't really have before" (final interview, 11/5/99). Moreover, Nancy started to pay attention to course management and club selection, commenting "I now think about it. I think about the game, I prepare my shots. I used to tee-off with my 3, hit with my 7. Now I try to think about it" (final interview, 11/5/99).

There was a sense that Nancy felt more in control of her golf now that she knew there were mental techniques she could use to control her thoughts: "That's the great thing, before one wasn't aware that there were tools to use to help you. I didn't even know about it. So I am now aware that I can do it with the tools" (final interview, 11/5/99). The MST also increased Nancy's awareness of techniques she was already familiar with (e.g., relaxation, deep breathing), making them "bigger and brighter" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99), and made her more aware of when to use them. Nancy remarked she found it much easier to relax through deep breathing and discovered she was "much more capable of a deeper relaxation" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Nancy indicated her imagery skills had improved and, as a result of practice, she was able to imagine things more clearly, a feat she did not know was possible previously. Perhaps most significantly, as this was what Nancy indicated she wanted to improve at the start of the MST, was that her ability to focus had improved: "There is no question that this has made me focus more. I mean, at one point we were saying 'What's focus? Please define focus.' We are much more focused. And I'm focusing even when approaching the ball, just trying to block out other people" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99). Nancy also became more aware of how mental tools could be applied outside the context of golf. A passage in a book she was reading described the lead character using imagery to help with her dance movements and Nancy suggested "in the past I probably wouldn't have even been aware [of that]. So that was interesting" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Nancy was very much more confident in her ability as a golfer at the conclusion of the MST, asserting "my confidence level is higher and I think more positively about my ability. . . . I'm more capable than I thought I was. I now know that I'm capable of playing a good game of golf more often" (final interview, 11/5/99). Moreover, Nancy attributed the change in part to the imagery she was doing and in part because she was better able to clear her mind. In addition, Nancy became more aware of who she was as a person, learning she was a more nervous person than she originally thought. The MST also made her recognise that other people's opinions of her did matter to her, something she had previously denied.

Overall, Nancy felt that the MST had an impact on her attitude towards life in general and remembered a number of instances where she had thought "that's all to do with the course" (final interview, 11/5/99). Nancy used the mental training techniques in all areas of her life. Two that were particularly useful were the idea of maintaining a positive perspective and enjoying the moment and deep breathing. Nancy also applied these techniques, with others, while playing bridge.

At the end of the MST I asked Nancy whether she intended to continue applying what she had learned. She answered:

> I can't guarantee that I will use everything, but I shall certainly try. I shall pluck the elements that are good for me [as] there's no way I can use everything. . . . Obviously I'll use my cue word. Obviously my relaxation, I enjoy your tape. But certainly the imagery. . . . The mental relaxation beforehand. The ability to use things like my floating, and my magical island, and listening to the birds, and looking at the flowers. All these things I will use, there's no question. (final interview, 11/5/99)

Whether Nancy followed through on her intentions was difficult to determine as she was not playing much golf at the time of the follow-up interviews. In a letter to me Nancy wrote:

> My interest in golf at present is zilch, I hope that's because it's too hot for me to play and I prefer going to the beach. However, I shall start to play again towards the end of the month when doubtless enthusiasm will return. (letter, 13/9/99)

However, the end of the month did not see much of a change in Nancy's attitude. Although she started playing golf again, she was not playing well and did not enjoy it. She portrayed her feelings as follows:

> I am so off the game of golf. . . . I played in a competition last Tuesday . . . and I got 15 points and 9 blobs, it was just horrific. . . . In fact, [I have no] desire to go out on the golf course. We drove out to Murcia today, and there were people on the course, and I said to [my husband] 'I have no wish to go out there at all. No wish at all'. I do hope [my swing] will come back because I did quite like to get out there. (follow-up 1, 28/9/99)

That said, the occasions Nancy did play she continued to use the tools and techniques and to good effect. At the five-month follow-up Nancy reported that the most important techniques she continued to use were the relaxation ones, specifically the relaxation tape, the image of her island, and "floating".

At the eight-month follow-up things had not changed much. Nancy had only played golf once in the preceding three months, and although had been to the driving range she described her game as "awful". Consequently, as she was not playing she reported she was not using the skills. Nancy no longer felt that her cue word was appropriate, ruing "because my swing has so gone to pot I'm really not even using [my cue word] because I'm not sure that Slow, Waggle, Alignment,

Tee is that useful. So I'm having to rethink all of that" (follow-up 2, 8/1/00). However, Nancy reflected:

> I suppose I am using [the skills]. I am aware that the skills are there and I have to rethink them and adjust them to my way of playing. And in time and with lessons, I can then bring it all together. . . . When I was playing reasonably well, it was working. It was all coming together and was very useful. I look forward to being able to use them as and when I am able. (follow-up 2, 8/1/00)

So, despite the fact Nancy was not applying the mental skills to a great degree eight months after the termination of the seminars, she still had the intention of using them and noted that off the golf course she still engaged in relaxation exercises when she felt tense.

Summary

When Nancy originally became involved with this research inquiry, golf did not play a significant role in her life. However, once the MST commenced Nancy started to play golf more often and it became more central in her life, a change Nancy initially received with mixed emotions. Nancy's commitment to the MST was low at first. She appeared sceptical as to how it could benefit her and did not fully engage in the process. Partway though the training Nancy's attitude to it changed and at the end she testified that it had been a positive and beneficial experience. Throughout the process Nancy adopted the use of a number of tools she integrated into her life and golf specifically. Following the end of the training Nancy took a break from golf and only returned to it sporadically so I was unable to determine the extent to which she continued to use these tools, though she reported she continued to use some of them in her general daily living. As a result of the experience Nancy's attitude towards golf changed (though this change in attitude did not persist through to the follow-up), her self-awareness increased, and

she developed a more positive perception of herself as a golfer. She also developed basic mental skills including activation control, imagery, and attention control. However, these changes did not appear to persist through the follow-up.

Sam

Golfer Profile

Sam, married with two daughters, was a 60 year-old recently retired lawyer at the start of this research inquiry. He had started playing golf two-and-a-half years earlier, but had had to stop playing for a year-and-a-half because of a broken ankle. In fact, Sam had only started playing golf again without any fear of re-injuring his ankle a couple of months before the research started. Although Sam first became involved with golf so he could play with his wife, he quickly became motivated to play for his own reasons:

> I started to play golf initially just to partner her and [then] became more interested. Whether it was her enthusiasm that got me interested or whether it was general enthusiasm on my part I don't know. So, that's how I started to play golf and I have enjoyed it ever since. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Golf did not play an all-encompassing role in Sam's life, nor did he want it to. Indeed, he was quick to state "golf plays a more important role for [my wife] than it does for me" (initial interview, 28/12/98). That is not to say that Sam did not find golf exceptionally enjoyable, he remarked "I doubt actually that I could enjoy golf more, because I do enjoy it an awful lot already" (initial interview, 28/12/98). Sam provided some insight as to why he felt that golf did not play a more consuming role in his life: "I think mainly because I'm a fairly competitive person and I realise that it's highly unlikely that I would be able to compete at a certain level and therefore I've excluded the possibility" (initial interview, 28/12/98). Indeed, at the start of the

research inquiry, Sam did have much self-efficacy as a golfer and did not perceive himself to be a competent golfer. He commented that he had not "measurably improved" since he started playing and when asked to describe a situation where he felt competent with regards to golf he was quite stumped:

> That question really pulls me up in my tracks. I don't think I feel really confident in any situation [in golf]. It sounds rather strange but I don't. I don't really feel as if any shot I play is going to come off. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Sam played golf a couple of times a week for pure enjoyment's sake. Although he played golf in part to get exercise, he noted that was not as an important reason now as it was before he retired when golf was his only form of exercise. Sam also played for the social aspect, though again noted "that's really relatively unimportant because I don't think golf is necessary for me socially. I'm quite a gregarious character, I don't need golf to spark me off in any particular direction" (initial interview, 28/12/98).

At the start of the research inquiry, Sam played off a handicap of 28, the maximum handicap allowance for men. He stated his golf goals were to "produce a handicap of shall we say about 20 and play competent golf with anyone so that when occasions arise that I have to play in a team situation I don't feel that I'm letting the team down" (initial interview, 28/12/98). At the outset of this research, Sam's invested effort towards achieving these goals was minimal. Although he played golf twice a week, he engaged in a very minimal amount of practice and had not enrolled in lessons with a golf professional although he affirmed that this was something he resolved to do. The two rounds he played each week tended to comprise the Owner's Weekly Scramble and a social game with friends. However, he expressed intentions of entering one of the weekly club competitions. In order to achieve his goal, Sam testified that he would be willing

to play golf three times a week, practice for up to two hours a week, and possibly take a lesson a week.

Before going out on the course to play a round of golf, Sam did no physical warm-up. He did not hit balls on the driving range, though occasionally if he had time he would practice his putting. Nor did he mentally prepare, though he noted:

> I sometimes think about the course. And if I'm going to play the West Course, which is a difficult course, I tell myself 'Look, don't try to hit the ball too hard. Try and be accurate'. And if it's the South Course, which is more open you know, I tend to think in terms of 'Well, perhaps you can give a bit more'. But I don't get down to specifics, ever. I mean I never think in terms of position or addressing the ball or anything like that until I'm actually there. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

To summarise, Sam was a novice golfer with one year of golf experience. He played twice weekly, but rarely practised – something he was willing to change in order to improve and reach his golf goal. Although Sam enjoyed playing golf tremendously, it did not play a significant role in his life, perhaps because he perceived himself to be a poor golfer.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Without a doubt, Sam derived great pleasure from playing golf. Moreover, he enjoyed having an interest in golf. When Sam was growing up in Wales, sports outside rugby had no appeal to him, something that changed since he discovered golf:

> Sport really in Wales consisted of rugby football and rugby football! . . . So all the other things that quite a lot of my friends used to play, such as tennis or whatever, never really interested me. I rather enjoy being interested in golf. And I am interested in it, it's

> nothing that I have to force myself into being interested in. It's a pastime that I thoroughly enjoy. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Indeed, Sam pronounced, "I very rarely come off the course very depressed. I do enjoy almost every round" (initial interview, 28/12/98). However, while we were talking about the meaning of enjoyment within the context of golf, Sam commented "I find it very difficult to be quite clear as to why or what constitutes enjoyment and what doesn't" (initial interview, 28/12/98). Despite this, he was able to articulate the factors that both underlied and undermined his golf enjoyment, many of which appeared to be related to physical comforts. Sam portrayed how these factors impacted his enjoyment of the game: "I think, really, I'm very much a hedonist. I think it's the physical things, it really is. If I'm wet, if I'm miserable, if I'm too cold, if it's too early for me – I'm not enjoying myself" (initial interview, 28/12/98).

Sam derived enjoyment from the scenery on the golf course: "From an enjoyment point of view I enjoy dramatic courses" (initial interview, 28/12/98); and being outdoors: "One of the things that I enjoy is the very basic business of being outside in the open air for four-and-a-half or five hours" (initial interview, 28/12/98). Sam also enjoyed the walk and carrying his golf bag rather than using a trolley.

Although Sam highlighted he did not play golf for social reasons, he did derive enjoyment from the social aspects of golf. For example, the opportunity to meet new people:

> It's the social aspect of meeting people with a very different mind-set or approach to my own. Because an awful lot of them, very obviously, are sport oriented and I never really was. . . . And obviously there are loads of different people here [at La Manga], different personalities, different backgrounds, different interests. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Playing in good company was another crucial element in Sam's golf enjoyment. Not only did he "enjoy the company" of his playing partners, but "good company" defined the meaning of enjoyment within the context of golf for Sam. He also enjoyed playing with his family, especially his wife. He described why he thought this was the case:

> [Golf] is something that my wife and I do together. I find that enjoyable. . . . It isn't the companionship aspect, it's more that it's something that we have not done before, . . . something we've only been doing for the last two years. That in itself is very enjoyable. [Also], I don't feel very competitive towards my wife. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Playing well was also a source of Sam's golf enjoyment. He related when he plays a good shot: "I don't quite jump up and down, but mentally I do" (initial interview, 28/12/98). This feeling was possibly exaggerated when Sam played consistently over a few holes. Sam indicated that, to him, the meaning of enjoyment is "playing two or three holes consistently" (initial interview, 28/12/98). He went on to describe an occasion where he was really delighted with his play:

> We were playing the North Course and the 18th hole and I had a good-ish drive and an absolutely excellent second shot. So I had two good shots one after the other. I was very happy with that. . . . *And* if truth be told, as I was walking over the bridge there were some people that I knew who had seen the shot. So I was pleased with that as well, to be honest. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Sam had a benign tremor that caused him to shake, especially his hands. It appeared that the satisfaction Sam felt when he played well was particularly heightened because of the additional challenge his tremor presented. Indeed, the inherent challenge of golf was integral to Sam's golf enjoyment:

> I enjoy the sport aspect of the hitting of the stationary ball. I mean, I know from other games like billiards and snooker how difficult that is. There's a greater ease, it seems to me, in hitting a moving ball than a stationary ball. . . . I do find [it] difficult [to hit a stationary ball], and it is the challenge I suppose. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Although Sam highlighted that part of his golf enjoyment came from the challenge associated with "the sport aspect of the hitting of the stationary ball", it was not so much the "physical whacking" of the ball he enjoyed as what happened to the ball after it has been struck that he found enjoyable:

> For me it has to be the end product, it's the way the ball goes. I do find it aesthetically a very pleasing sight when the ball rises after a certain trajectory and goes up in the air and then seems to hang in the air forever and then come down. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

It was apparent that Sam enjoyed golf for a number of reasons. However, certain things detracted from his enjoyment. One of these factors was poor performance. Sam tended to become resigned and angry when he was not playing well, which made golf less enjoyable for him. Nor did he enjoy having to play on wet and cold days. The only other aspect of golf that lessened Sam's enjoyment was certain behaviours of his playing partners:

> There are occasions when you're playing with people who . . . talk an awful lot about what they have to do and what they're not going to do and that does annoy me. That does irritate me, analysing every shot. [It's] that their ambitions, or their efforts to improve their game, are impinging on me. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Other players' comments towards his game also sometimes impacted Sam's enjoyment levels. He reported getting annoyed when others said things like, "'That was almost a good shot', . . .

not because people are being patronising, but they're being too kind. And that I don't think is too enjoyable" (initial interview, 28/12/98).

MST Experience

Prior to engaging in this research inquiry, Sam had had no prior experience with sport psychology or MST. However he had clear expectations of what he wanted to achieve by participating in MST:

> Basically, [I want] to improve my golf a little. [I want] to allay, conquer, or control my fear or nervousness and help my concentration during the round. . . . [I want to learn] how people with modest physical skills can hone those skills. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Overall, Sam found the MST to be a "fascinating" and "most rewarding" experience, yet he voiced disappointment in the fact his golf did not improve as much as he had hoped, and said regretfully "I think I could have done better" (final interview, 14/4/99). On a number of occasions he pronounced that he must be my "laziest pupil". Indeed, Sam's involvement in the organised aspects of the MST was relatively low. He only attended seven seminars (47%; see Table 4), did not complete an evaluation record after the first two weeks of the MST, and we only met twice on an individual basis as Sam forgot to turn up for one meeting. Largely, but not exclusively, the low attendance was because Sam took a ten day holiday midway through the MST and then left Spain to return to Wales earlier than he originally intended, therefore shortening the length of his participation in the MST.

Reflecting on his participation in the MST, Sam felt he should have been "going for it a bit more" (final interview, 14/4/99). He hoped that the MST might have disciplined him to work harder towards improving his golf, but it did not. However, he speculated "if the course were to start again tomorrow, I think I would do rather better on completing certain things than I actually

did" (final interview, 14/4/99). Although Sam admitted that his lack of involvement in the MST may have been due in part to laziness, he also highlighted that he had found one tool (a relaxation tape) so successful that he was "loath to try and do more" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99). Nevertheless, Sam felt that he would have benefited more from the MST if he had been coerced into using the tools and techniques more: "You might possibly have bullied us into doing [things] a bit more" (final interview, 14/4/99).

"Bullying" would have encouraged Sam to complete more evaluation records. He saw the evaluations as a "chore" and disclosed that he did not fill them out partly due to laziness and partly because he had "spent a lifetime filling in forms and [had] a bit of a block about that" (field notes, 6/4/99). Furthermore, he was not convinced that they were of benefit to him. However, Sam indicated that he would have been more likely to complete them if I had sat with him and gone through the process with him individually:

> You know, if you'd shown me one of yours or if you'd said 'What is all the fuss about? Why are you having so much trouble with the evaluation record? OK when was your last round, let's go through it, I'll mark it, I'll do it'. I think that would have got me going a bit. (final interview, 14/4/99)

In addition, hearing the other participants talk about their experiences with the evaluations heartened Sam towards them:

> Listening to other people on the course talking about how they had gained from [the evaluation records] sort of brought back to me that 'Look, you're being silly about these evaluation sheets. They really aren't that long, they're not really too much of a chore. You must do them.' And I am going to do them. . . . I have blank ones and I can see that this is something that needn't end with the course. (final interview, 14/4/99)

The "camaraderie" and social aspect of the MST was a positive aspect of the MST for Sam. Besides motivating him to engage more fully in the MST, through the group discussions Sam came to realise that he was not alone in the challenges he faced on the golf course, something he found reassuring:

> It's quite clear that this concentration problem is absolutely general. I mean everybody at the seminar had the same problem. I was beginning to wonder whether it was unique to me and whether I was in some way a bit odd, or a bit special, in not being able to concentrate. But that was something that everybody had. (final interview, 14/4/99)

In fact, Sam indicated a desire "for a bit more togetherness" (final interview, 14/4/99) and would liked to have had more group activities besides the seminars. For example, Sam suggested organising regular group sessions at the practice ground. He felt that he would have enjoyed it and it would have motivated him to practice more. However, he was quick to note "if it had been one-to-one it wouldn't have been so attractive, simply because the focus would have been too strong on the individual, at least on this individual" (final interview, 14/4/99). That said, Sam indicated that he would have liked me to work with him individually on the golf course:

> That certainly would have interested me. . . . If, as one is going around, you were asking questions like 'What was in your mind then? Well, why don't you do it this way? Try and think of it this way round', or whatever. It is actually amazing how one is helped by a one-to-one. . . . I think that would be great and I'm sure the others would think that as well, because it's the need for a reminder. (final interview, 14/4/99)

Working with the participants on the course was a planned component of the MST but was not organised before Sam left for Wales. Consequently, we tried to arrange a time to do this before he left. Unfortunately, the only opportunity for us to be on the course together was to play in the

same team in the Owners' Scramble competition and, because I was competing as well, I was unable to spend much time talking with Sam and helping him with his game.

Sam attested that the individual meetings were more helpful to him than the group seminars:

> I found in the one-to-ones that one could perhaps dwell, or give more time to things that concerned me. . . . I gained more out of that. After all, it was only after our first one-to-one that you gave me the relaxation tape and that, in a sense, was a pretty seminal point as far as I'm concerned. (final interview, 14/4/99)

However, Sam divulged that he was "a little bit nervous" about the individual meetings:

> The one-to-one is always a quite tense situation, I always think. Funnily enough, most one-to-ones that I have been involved with over years and years and years have been in a situation where I have controlled the meeting. So, this was unusual for me and slightly uncomfortable, although you did your best to put me at ease. (final interview, 14/4/99)

With regards to the weekly seminars, Sam enjoyed the structure they provided. Having to be somewhere at a specific time and place was something that had been lacking in Sam's life since he retired and it made him aware that maybe he should build more routine in his life. Sam also intimated that I lost him on occasions with some of the terminology I used, but this did not appear to be too big an issue. He noted, "some of the terminology was unusual to me and I had to tell myself, now hold on, all that is a phraseology that I'm not accustomed to. I just have to stick with it until you explain what it is" (final interview, 14/4/99). Sam further revealed that sometimes he disengaged from the experience because of the quotations I used:

> I'm a bit anarchic about certain quotations. I was telling myself 'Do not, do not be self-destructive on these things. Don't tell yourself that it isn't Nietzsche, it's just Mr. So-and-

> so in Ottawa in 1998, or whatever. Don't do that! You know she's got a purpose in saying that so listen to it'. [It's partly that they were recent quotations, but] it's this strange thing, any kind of big statement I tend to decry or pooh-pooh. Some quotations are very powerful, but sometimes you can see the funny side of it and that's my problem. (final interview, 14/4/99)

Sam suggested that in future, I provide the participants with the handouts before the seminar starts so they can read them over. He indicated, "having the printout while you're speaking so you haven't read it before is a little bit distracting. Because what are you going to do? Are you going to listen or are you going to read?" (final interview, 14/4/99). However, he cautioned against giving all 15 handouts at the beginning, feeling it would have been overwhelming.

For Sam, the highlight of the MST experience was what he had accomplished through participating in it:

> It's just a feeling of achievement. Achievement that there has been a movement from 'this game is beyond me, it's out of control', to 'this game is not beyond me up to a certain level, up to a certain level I can play this game'. It's a question of sticking at it, being sensible, putting in the work, and making sure I don't lose sight of the pure enjoyment of striking the good shot. It doesn't sound very much, . . . [but] it's a huge turnaround and that's the enjoyment. (final interview, 14/4/99)

In sum, although Sam did not fully engage himself in the whole experience he found it to be rewarding, though was a little disappointed that it did not lead to greater improvements in his golf performance. Sam would have appreciated it if I had taken a more forceful approach to encourage him to implement the tools and techniques and had certain regrets he had not

dedicated himself more fully to the training. Overall though he found the MST experience to be very enjoyable.

MST Process

From the initial interview with Sam, several weaknesses with regards to his mental skills as they related to golf emerged. These included an inability to cope with the psychological and physiological manifestation of nerves, problems maintaining concentration for the duration of a round of golf, a lack of confidence in his golfing ability, feelings of resignation when he was playing poorly, and an absence of consistency in his approach to each shot. The process Sam and I went through in order to develop his mental skills and improve in these areas will be documented in this section.

As was mentioned earlier, one of the reasons Sam chose to partake in the MST was to learn to deal with the fear he experienced on the golf course. Golf elicited strong feelings of anxiety for Sam that were intensified on the first tee and in competitive situations. Sam first revealed these feelings in the initial interview, but when he read through the transcript he amended: "On reflection, I don't think I've really admitted to the extent of my nervousness. In reality, I'm little short of terrified. Certainly considerably more nervous that at any time during my earlier working career, which is quite absurd". Sam's nervousness was manifested both psychologically and physiologically. He exemplified aspects of it:

> I have got a physiological problem. I've got a benign tremor which makes me shake some, and my hands will shake, and [that happens more when I am nervous]. There are occasions [in golf] that the hands are trembling so badly I'd get up off the ball, try and pretend that I'm being nonchalant, and [then] I'd come back and address it again. . . . I'm

nervous about really duffing the shot rather than producing a very good shot or something like that. Nervous about making an absolute fool of oneself. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Sam also referred to feelings of "panic" when he was not playing well (evaluation record 4, 28/1/99).

As a result of the performance profiling conducted in the third seminar Sam made it his goal to "obtain tranquillity on the golf course". At the end of the seminar Sam asked me for advice on how he could work towards achieving this. We talked for a while and I offered to make him a relaxation tape. The tape was the same one I gave to Nancy, the script of which can be found in Appendix M. Sam used the tape daily, usually after breakfast, and it became a central component of his MST. At the first follow-up four months after the end of the training, Sam attested that he was still using the tape once or twice a week. However, rather than listening to it after breakfast and before he went out to play, he listened to it the night before. Another four months on Sam was no longer using the tape as he felt he did not need it:

> I am sure that if I had a sort of panic attack, or whatever, again, I would go back to it. I've got it and I've got it very safe. I've got the feeling that it's there if I need it. It's a crutch and I'll go back to it should I ever need it. (follow-up 2, 6/1/00)

Sam delineated his experience the first time that he listened to the tape:

> I think that tape of yours is very effective. . . . I find the breathing thing absolutely incredible. When you say on the tape 'breathe out your tension', my initial reaction was 'that's an extraordinary thing to say', but it really worked. It absolutely worked. Because you feel as if you're exhaling your tension. . . . The first time I listened to it, on the tape you say to imagine yourself on the tee and imagine the fear, I couldn't do that. . . . That

> was a surprise to me and that told me that I had relaxed an awful lot because I couldn't even get the pressure. (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

After the guided relaxation portion of the tape, I ask the listener to think of a word that sums up how they feel in this relaxed state. In the future, with practice, it is hoped that thinking of this word will illicit a quick relaxation response. Sam chose "cotton wool":

> After [cotton wool] came to me I tried to think why I got to that. And it was the feeling [that] if you squeeze cotton wool it gets into a very small ball, but every bit of cotton wool has its own bit of life and when you relax it, it expands like a sponge. (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

Having devised this relaxation cue, Sam used it on the golf course when he wanted to relax. He thought "cotton wool" as he addressed the ball before playing his shot, especially on tee shots. However, "cotton wool" meant more to Sam than 'relax', he saw a connection between the image of cotton wool expanding and the release in his swing:

> Cotton wool works for me because I think in terms of something that is soft, which you can contract into something very, very small and then just let go. And I feel that if I hit the ball well, that's the moment I'm letting go, that's the moment I'm releasing. (seminar #12, 6/4/99)

As the MST progressed, Sam expanded on this relaxation cue. He felt that for more difficult shots, although he still needed to relax, he needed something that would help him get "a different type of concentration" because he noted "away from the tee and away from other people, I don't need to relax quite so much" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99). Consequently, he chose a second word for these types of situations that he felt would help him obtain a better focus: "My word for the shots I find difficult is "flax", because I associate it with cotton wool

but at the same time a little bit more concentration because of the staccato nature of the word" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

Sam did not use "flax" as routinely as he did "cotton wool", tending only to use it when he felt he needed more help to remain focused for the upcoming shot, such as after hitting a bad shot or if he felt tension or pressure. Sam asserted these words helped him both in terms of relaxation and concentration, noting:

> I'm so relieved that this fear element has gone out of my golf. It really is a huge thing for me. It really is a very, very important thing. Now I think the next aspect is the focusing, which I think now I've got a chance of doing. Whereas before I just couldn't do it, I was petrified! (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

Before the onset of the MST, Sam had divulged that he had trouble remaining focused for the full duration of a round. He explained:

> I really can't concentrate for 4 hours. . . . [At times during the round, I] remind myself 'Oh gosh, I really have to concentrate and hit the ball properly' and then that will perhaps last for about, I don't know, a minute or two. And then I'm back to thinking about looking for the great views, looking at the Strip from the golf course, or particular views, and I'm miles away from golf. . . . It happens quite a lot where, walking off the tee with someone else in the flight or whatever, we're chatting about rugby football or a meal or something completely outside golf, and then suddenly I find myself over the ball and I haven't thought about the next shot at all. (initial interview, 28/12/98)

Clearly, if Sam was going to improve his golf performance he needed to develop a strategy that would help him bring his focus back to golf in a timely fashion before he played his next shot. Doing so would also allow Sam to prepare for the shot. During our first meeting we worked on

developing such a strategy. A two-step approach sprung to mind. First, I urged him to continue to enjoy the views and company of his playing partners between shots as he had been doing. I emphasised that what needed to be improved was his ability to switch his focus back from this to his upcoming shot in time to prepare for it properly. At this time Sam needed to focus on relevant performance cues for executing the shot. I suggested that he imagined walking into a bubble or cocoon or house that surrounded his ball and once he was in this all his thoughts should be directed to the upcoming task and nothing else. Once he left the cocoon, he could then return to talking with his playing partners and enjoying the scenery.

The second strategy was to develop a preshot routine. Given that Sam found the words "cotton wool" and "flax" to be effective in helping him relax and focus before each shot when he remembered to use them, it seemed important that they were incorporated into the routine. In addition, because Sam had trouble transferring his weight during his swing and highlighted this was something he needed to think about, I suggested he use imagery to imagine himself hitting the shot with the appropriate weight transfer and incorporate this into his routine too. Sam approved of this approach and agreed to develop a preshot routine. Despite wanting to improve his concentration and recognising that a preshot routine would help him, the next time that we met Sam divulged that he had not done so. He explained why not:

> I don't want to over-complicate things. I'm very impressed with these people who have these [routines], but that's far too much for me. I couldn't cope with that so that's why I haven't [done it], but I'm almost ready [to do so]. (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99)

As our dialogue continued it emerged that Sam did in fact have a routine of sorts. He always placed his bag in the same place, stood behind his ball to pick a target to help him align himself for the shot, and then took a couple of deep breaths as he approached his ball. Noting the

importance of the preshot routine in golf, I encouraged Sam to build on what he had while still keeping it simple. I reminded Sam of the simple techniques he told me he sometimes used and to good effect (e.g., taking a deep breath, cue words such as "cotton wool"). I highlighted that if he incorporated these into a routine he would be more disciplined to use them and benefit from them more often. Although Sam agreed it would be of assistance, there was no indication that he developed such a routine.

Even though Sam did not appear to develop a routine to help him focus, in our second meeting he reported that his concentration had improved and he attributed this to being more relaxed. Aside from listening to the tape and using his cue word "cotton wool" to help him relax, Sam also started doing abdominal breathing exercises at home. While it was a technique Sam had used many years ago when doing public work, he had forgotten about it and never used it within the context of golf and wondered, "God, how could I forget that? It's such an obvious thing. I must do that" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). As a result, Sam started to use deep breathing on the golf course and found it to be an effective way to remain calm after hitting a bad shot:

> Instead of mentally swearing away and the air is blue above my head, I do my deep breathing and think 'Thank goodness I'm here. I'm enjoying my company and I'm enjoying my day. Yes, that was an awful shot, but that's gone, that's finished. A few more deep breaths. The next one is going to be a good one'. (seminar #12, 6/4/99)

Another mental training technique that Sam had some success with was imagery. Early on in the MST Sam indicated that he felt he was good at creating mental images yet was unable to apply this skill to golf as he was never relaxed enough on the course. He explained, "I'm so excited playing golf, so jumpy, that mental imagery has not been forthcoming. I'm so excited it

just isn't there" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). As the MST progressed and Sam became better able to relax, he felt that he was able to use imagery more and felt his skills improved. Sam reported he visualised the shot he wanted to play and where he wanted it to land more often. He postulated as to why he felt imagery had benefited him:

> I possibly convince myself that this is a shot that I can do. I think it all comes down to the confidence, it really does. Because it's not a sort 'Oh, I can't do this shot', it's 'Yes I can, I've done it before. I jolly well can do this shot'. And it's such a pretty shot when it goes up in the air and holds, it's a lovely shot to watch and I think 'Yes, I'm going to do it'. [Imagery] does help with indecision too. (follow-up 2, 6/1/00)

Because Sam felt he was good at creating images, I tried to get him to use mental rehearsal to help with a swing change he was trying to make. Unfortunately, I do not think he ever followed through with my suggestion. I also suggested he use imagery during his upcoming golf lessons. We discussed the various ways in which he could do this. For example, to get a feel for what the golf professional wanted him to do before actually executing the shot, to replay a well executed shot, and to visualise the professional's swing. Sam indicated he was grateful we discussed this as he would not have thought of using imagery in this way. However, whether he implemented any of the suggestions remains unclear.

Sam and I did a minimal amount of goal setting together, mainly due to the lack of contact time we had. Before we addressed the concept of goal setting in the MST seminars, Sam set goals such as "don't go into the barranca on the first tee", "don't lose my ball", "score under 50", and "drive well off tee" (evaluation records 1-5, 24/1/99-2/2/99). Although often not written in positive terms, I was heartened to see Sam set preround goals that were specific and under his control. During our first meeting I urged him to take it one step further and ask himself what he

would need to do in order to achieve the goals he had set. I highlighted the importance of continuing to set process oriented goals and emphasised that the goals could be mental goals as well as physical. Together, we took his goal of "score under 50" and broke it down into smaller goals or 'Action Steps', which included things like 'play within self' and 'focus on weight transfer before every shot'. I was unable to determine whether Sam then focused on these goals when he played as he did not complete any more evaluation records after this meeting. However, he commented that he thought this was a much better approach than the one he had been taking.

In short, nervousness was Sam's biggest problem on the golf course and the majority of the MST was dedicated towards teaching Sam techniques he could use to deal with this. Sam's focusing ability was also relatively poor so I provided him with strategies he could use to help him obtain a more on-task focus when preparing for his shot. However, it did not appear that he developed these ideas. Nonetheless, it was apparent that by becoming more relaxed Sam's ability to focus was also improving. Lastly, Sam used imagery to imagine the shot he wanted to play and where he wanted it to land. At the end of the MST, Sam shared his intentions to continue using imagery and various relaxation techniques including the tape, progressive muscle relaxation, and deep breathing.

MST Outcomes

A number of positive outcomes resulted from the MST. Sam benefited from the training in his life outside the context of golf as well as in terms of helping his golf. Sam developed an awareness of what he needed to do in order to achieve his golf goals, his motivation to improve his golf increased, and he learned to control his nervousness and became more relaxed on the golf course in general. These outcomes of the training will be presented in this section.

The initial effect the MST had on Sam was to make him aware that he needed to put some thought into golf, as well as practice more and take lessons, if he was going to improve. Before, Sam was under the illusion that he could improve without too much effort: "I just felt, I suppose stupidly, that there were certain things I could do without practising. I just felt I could do it and then when I couldn't do it I used to get very upset" (seminar #12, 6/4/99).

Right from the start of the MST Sam reported that it had "incentivised" him. He increased the amount of time he practised golf, though admitted he was still not practising as much as he felt he should. Yet at the conclusion of the MST he attested "I'm really quite anxious to improve my golf now, whereas before I was really wondering whether I ought to bother with it because I didn't seem to be getting anywhere" (final interview, 14/4/99). Indeed, Sam felt that the MST had provided him with the "right mental framework" to improve, noting "what's holding me back now is the lack of technique, before I couldn't even start trying to improve [that]" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Although Sam had indicated that he wanted to take golf lessons at the beginning of the inquiry he did not get around to organising them until just before the end of the MST. However, according to his wife this was a big step: "My wife again had a terrific surprise, she said, 'You've been talking about that for a year and a half and now you've actually done it!'" (final interview, 14/4/99).

Another significant change for Sam was that he started to enjoy practising golf, something he previously considered to be "just another chore" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99):

> There is a genuine enjoyment on the range now, something I never had before. As far as I was concerned, the range was a chore. . . . [However], you made the point that it should be done, so I went. And you made the point that it should be something that should be

> enjoyed, and I started enjoying it. . . . [I realised,] 'Oh, I'm quite enjoying this', it was a bit of a surprise actually. Like, 'Why am I enjoying this?' I realised that it's because I'm setting myself little tasks [e.g., changing the target] that from time to time I am achieving. [I noticed] this is fun, and why shouldn't I get fun out of this? This is a nice feeling hitting the ball, the ball looks pretty when it's up in the air. (final interview, 14/4/99)

In addition to investing physical effort into improving his technique, Sam started to mentally prepare before golf. He put aside time to relax with the tape and think about golf prior to playing. He also took time to read a few pages of a golf book that helped him focus on technical aspects of the game and get his mind into golf. Again, this was another behaviour change for Sam he noted, "I've got a book on golf and [the MST] has helped me actually read some of that. I mean I've had it two and a half years and I've opened it and shut it. Now I'm actually reading it and rereading it" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

The single biggest effect of the MST for Sam was that he learned to control his nervousness, a change seen relatively early on in the MST and one that persisted over time. Eight months after the MST ended Sam reported still feeling "very much more relaxed about my golf" (follow-up 2, 6/1/00). He recounted "I used to get absolutely terrified on the tee. I mean, not just nervousness but fear. And now that has gone completely with a combination of the breathing and also the mantra – the word" (seminar #12, 6/4/99). Being more relaxed positively impacted Sam's golf enjoyment and performance. Indeed, he reported that his golf enjoyment increased over the course of the MST, something he did not think possible at the start. He attributed this to a number of factors. First, as a result of being more relaxed, Sam revealed:

> I'm also able to get a little bit more vicarious enjoyment out of golf now. I seem to be noticing what other people are doing a bit more. And I cheer for them when they do a good golf shot and things like that. (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99)

Also, the MST promoted a change in Sam's playing style. Again, because he was more relaxed, Sam made more sensible decisions about what shot to play, rather than going for shots he was not capable of and "trying to hit it a country mile" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Not only did this increase his enjoyment because he was playing better, but because he was playing better he was not worried about holding his playing partners up and spoiling their round on account of his bad play.

Not only did Sam feel as if he was playing better (in terms of ball striking ability and getting more distance), but others also commented on his improvement (field notes, 13/4/99). Still, three months into the MST Sam rued that his scores were not reflecting his perceived improvement. However, a month later, after the MST had finished, Sam had a series of handicap cuts and quickly got down to 22. Again, Sam attributed much of his improvement to being more relaxed on the course:

> The relaxation, not being quite so uptight, has allowed me to think about other things. I'm thinking more about the golf as opposed to just trying to hit the ball. Before it was all, sort of, 'My God am I going to hit this ball at all?', very negative. The common mistake was 'the best thing for me to do is thrash at it, because that way it doesn't take so long'. And then, moving from there to [thinking about] the slow take away and coming back at it and then bit of impetus as I get close. Relaxing has enabled me to think 'Now really I don't need to go as far as the chap who is off 14 or 15'. Although I knew that before, when I actually got to the ball all that went out of my mind and I just wanted to whack it.

> All the normal thinking processes just simply stopped. (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99)

Moreover, Sam's emotions also became more stable during the MST. He noted:

> The good shot doesn't make me quite as excited as before, which I find helpful. Because I don't hit a good one and get terribly excited and think 'good, good, good, I'm going to be on for two' and then duff the next shot. And certainly the bad shot doesn't phase me as much as it used to. Partly because it's not happening as often and partly because, quite often, I'm able to recognise what I'm doing wrong, whereas before I was so excited that I couldn't think clearly about what was going wrong. (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

Certainly, overall Sam felt that he was more in control of his golf. He attested:

> I'm not feeling [golf] is beyond me and that I'm struggling away thinking 'should I be doing this? . . . What am I doing here? What a waste of time, I'm not getting any better. Why aren't I sitting down and having a cigar? That's much more fun than this'. That never happens now, it used to happen a lot. (final interview, 14/4/99)

Indeed, Sam's self-perception as a golfer was much more positive eight months after the training. He had a strong belief that he could improve his golf and no longer felt that he was wasting his time. Again, Sam attributed his more positive and confident outlook to being more relaxed.

The benefits of the MST were not confined to golf. Sam also applied the tools, and noticed benefits, in other areas of his life. He used the relaxation tape as a means of relieving the pain he experienced from kidney stones. In addition, having recognised the benefits of relaxation, and specifically the tape, Sam sought ways in which he could build on it. For example, Sam asked himself what else he could do to relax and decided to stop drinking coffee because it made him "extremely twitchy". Being more relaxed reduced the occurrence of his

tremor, which was not only beneficial when he played golf but also on social occasions, for example when he had to pour drinks.

Sam reported improvements in his concentration, which also benefited him outside the context of golf. He noticed he read books slower, and was able to stand in front of paintings longer, therefore getting more out of them. Sam gave another example:

> The intensity of the ice flower plants yesterday, the colours of them. I'd have enjoyed them before, but I don't think I would have enjoyed them quite so much. . . . Before I would have seen a block of colour and I would have thought 'that's awfully pretty', . . . now when I look at it . . . I see the intensity of those colours. (final interview, 14/4/99)

Sam still had this "heightened appreciation of things" at the eight-month follow-up.

Furthermore, the MST made Sam reflect on what he wanted out of life and increased his self-awareness. He was getting more enjoyment out of life and as a result of the MST he had become more "*carpe diem*, you know, enjoy the moment" (final interview, 14/4/99). He divulged that he used to have a tendency to postpone things, but a discussion in one of the seminars changed this: "This business of 'don't put off 'til tomorrow what you can do today', that's helped me. So my lifestyle has changed, so now it's enjoying the moment" (final interview, 14/4/99). As a result of this, Sam had become more proactive, organising trips and reunions himself rather than "sitting back and letting somebody else organise it" (final interview, 14/4/99), a change his wife remarked on.

Overall, Sam reflected:

> [The MST] has enhanced my lifestyle. . . . It is a question of being extremely bad at something and then working out why. And that was through you. Then [finding] methods

of dealing with it. I wouldn't say it's a novel experience, because it obviously isn't, but it's an experience that I haven't come across for a good few years. (follow-up 2, 6/1/00)

Summary

Sam was relatively new to the game of golf having only played for a year prior to this inquiry. Even though it had not become a central part of his life, golf was a sport Sam had quickly come to enjoy a great deal. By participating in the MST, Sam hoped to improve his thinking and mental approach to golf in order to become a better golfer. However, he was not particularly committed to the MST and felt he had been "lazy" by not applying more of the techniques taught during the training. That said, Sam was aware that he needed to keep it simple for himself and having found a couple of tools he found helpful he was reluctant to start using others. As a whole, Sam found the MST to be a fascinating experience and wished he had become more engaged in the process. He felt that he needed closer supervision and more encouragement to apply what was being taught. Nonetheless, Sam felt that the MST had benefited him substantially, particularly because it made him more relaxed, which in turn led to increased enjoyment, enhanced performance, better concentration, and better decision making on the course. At the end of the training Sam was also more motivated to work towards improving his golf by taking lessons and practising more, in part because he felt he had developed a better mindset for learning.

Lee

Golfer Profile

Lee, a 64 year-old married man with 2 children, was a retired communications consultant. He had been playing golf for 3 years on a regular basis at the start of this research inquiry. He recounted ruefully that he had played golf when he was in his teens but "didn't keep it up

unfortunately" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Lee started playing golf again when he was asked to take on the role of Editor for the "La Manga Club Magazine". He described his motivation as follows: "When I was asked to take [the magazine] over, I thought, 'Well if I'm going to do it, I'd better really do something with golf to give myself some credibility" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Besides the magazine, Lee reported that "the obvious things, like being surrounded by golf courses and golfers" (initial interview, 30/12/98) also moved him to start playing again.

Unlike many of La Manga Club's residents, Lee was not initially attracted to the resort because of the golf facilities. Having had a holiday home there since the mid-1980's he and his wife decided that La Manga Club "seemed like a very agreeable place to retire and golf was a kind of optional bonus" (initial interview, 30/12/98). However, since he started to play golf again it has had a profound impact on his life:

> I've been playing now for three years in February and I would say that it's not an overstatement to say it's changed my life. It's wonderful. It's infuriating. It's frustrating. It's challenging. And I love it. I could cheerfully play almost every day; I don't. I think it's doing me a lot of good: physically, mentally. It gets me out. It gives me something to look forward to. I love it. I just wish I could be better. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

It was evident that golf played a central role in Lee's life and he derived a great deal of enjoyment from it. In comparison to other activities that he was involved in, Lee indicated "that golf has probably notched up to number one [in terms of enjoyment]" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Lee typically played golf three times a week, participating in the weekly Individual Stableford, Fourball Betterball, and Owners' Scramble club competitions. The year prior to this inquiry he recorded having played 139 games over the year. Furthermore, Lee commented that

he thinks about golf "certainly several times a day, [whether] playing or not" (initial interview, 30/12/98).

Without a doubt it was important for Lee that he was able to enjoy the game and benefit from it both physically and mentally, something that did not occur when he first started playing golf again:

> I define [recreation] as something that you are doing, something probably physical, which has all round benefits. I found that when I took up what I would call 'serious' golf three years ago, it wasn't benefiting me at all, quite the opposite. I was getting angry, frustrated, tense – all the opposite things of what you should do, [that is] play the game and enjoy it. . . . When you live here, it's just a wonderful resource to have access to all this golf. We should be using it and using it in a way that's beneficial – to make your life richer and more enjoyable. (final interview, 16/5/99)

Besides maintaining the enjoyment in golf, Lee's golf goal was "clearly to improve" (initial interview, 30/12/98), and having this recognised by a drop in his handicap was an important objective for Lee. He remarked that being "the typical competitive person, one would like to quantify [one's goals] and the only way you can do that is talk in terms of handicap or earnings or things like that" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Although at the start of the research inquiry Lee played to a 28 handicap, he expressed:

> I'm still sufficiently optimistic to think I'm going to get nearer 20 in the fullness of time. . . . The day that my handicap comes below 28, will be a day for real celebration and I'm absolutely convinced that I can do it. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Lee appeared committed to improving his game and highlighted that he would be prepared to invest as much time "as needed to make progress – several hours every day" (initial

interview, 30/12/98). He typically went to the practice ground to practice his long game a couple of times a week and sometimes before playing too. He noted, "I enjoy doing that. I've tried to practice my short game a bit but I'm perhaps not as conscientious at that because it's not so much fun" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Before playing Lee would practice his putting, revealing "as well as sharpening one's skills, this can have a calming effect" (initial interview, 30/12/98). Lee estimated that he practised, on average, about one-and-a-half hours each week; his time divided fairly equally between his woods, irons, and putting, with a "negligible" amount of time spent practising chipping and bunker play.

In addition to practising fairly regularly, Lee also read golf books, including those on mental training, and watched instructional videos in an attempt to improve. Yet he commented:

> I'm still looking for a solution. I've done all the obvious things. I've done the academy [a five day golf clinic with three hours of golf a day]. I've had individual lessons. I practice. I play regularly. I suppose we all tend to think, especially as we get older, there's some sort of "Holy Grail" there, if we could only grasp it. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Lee's preparation for golf was fairly basic. Before leaving home he engaged in a number of stretching exercises. Indeed, he acknowledged the importance of stretching every morning for people of his age and tried to do so on a regular basis. He tried to organise his equipment for golf in advance and arrive at the golf course early so he was not under pressure to get everything done at the last minute or feel rushed once at the course.

To conclude, golf was an important part of Lee's life and a sport he derived a great deal of enjoyment from. He played on a regular basis and was eager to improve and appeared very willing to work to this end. Lowering his handicap meant an enormous amount to Lee.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Lee enjoyed golf for a number of diverse reasons. He described golf as a "melange of so many attractions" (initial interview, 30/12/98), explaining:

> It's a total package of things that we derive pleasure from. Some physical, some mental, some emotional, [and some] spiritual. It's because golf is on so many different levels like that, that makes it special . . . [Golf is] mentally, physically, [and] emotionally so demanding and satisfying. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Indeed, these challenges were quite central to Lee's enjoyment of the game:

> I think we enjoy being challenged as a basic instinct . . . I think we all like to be tested. We all like to be doing something stimulating and interesting . . . [and golf is] very, very challenging . . . I think, really, at any level, at any age, we all are convinced we can improve our personal performance and the anticipation of doing that is quite central to my motivation for playing [golf]. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

By viewing golf as a positive challenge, Lee enjoyed the competitive and demanding aspects of the sport. The sense of achievement that is felt when the challenge has been met and one performs well, proved to be a great source of enjoyment for Lee:

> Say you do well on a difficult hole, you tend to remember that. And some clubs, as you well know, are more difficult to play with than others; one tends to remember those, when you've done particularly well. . . . Talking about it like this, I mean, it sounds a bit dumb. But these are the kinds of thing that make one feel 'That was all rather good'. There's nothing on a more intellectual or philosophical level. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Evidently, playing well was a significant source of enjoyment for Lee and he summarised this quite succinctly: "If I've done well I feel good. If I've done badly I don't feel good" (initial interview, 30/12/98).

Lee's enjoyment of golf was not limited to sources related to his performance. As highlighted above, Lee derived enjoyment from many different aspects of golf, one of which related to the social component. Lee enjoyed meeting interesting people and playing in good company. A sub-theme of the social sources of enjoyment that emerged for Lee was playing with family:

> The most enjoyable golf I've played is when we had our two sons here. . . . The older one and I went and played 9 holes together and that was brilliant. . . . It was a joy to watch him as his game has improved so much. When you play with the family that's wonderful, to play with your own kids. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Although Lee delighted in describing this round with his son, he hastened to point out that the enjoyment of playing with his family did not always extend to playing with his wife. He revealed "we don't find that conducive to good marital relations" (initial interview, 30/12/98).

The physical activity involved in golf also emerged as a source of enjoyment for Lee: "The fact that this is also a physical thing adds to the appeal . . . It is good to do something physical. When I was your age, we expected people my age now to be dead" (initial interview, 30/12/98).

In sum, when asked to describe the ideal conditions in which to play golf Lee responded:

> Playing with people who are roughly contemporaries, but better than I am because we all get charged up when playing with better players, . . . on a pleasant day, probably here [in La Manga]. No pressure, nobody in front holding us up, nobody behind breathing down

> our necks. And playing well, consistently at all times, beating the others and coming in with 40 points. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

The only unenjoyable aspect of golf that Lee identified was playing badly. However, it was more than the simple act of hitting a bad shot that detracted from Lee's enjoyment of the game:

> At the age that I am we all accomplish certain things in our lives. We get used to winning and being good at stuff that we take on board. It's been totally frustrating to be playing golf and not playing well. You think 'Oh, God . . . Am I over the hill? How much time do I have left to get better at this?' So it does get quite personal. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

MST Experience

Lee decided to engage in this inquiry and participate in the MST as a means of improving his golf performance and lowering his handicap:

> That's one of the reasons for playing golf, not the primary reason, but there's always this thing 'I want to get my handicap down'. . . . We can't stand still, we have to progress. I think that is a natural human instinct to want to get better. . . . Towards the end of last year I was beginning to feel a touch impatient to make things better, so when I heard about your course my ears pricked up, the next logical thing to try. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

I did not have to "sell" the concept of MST to Lee. Before becoming a part of this inquiry, Lee had read books and magazine articles relating to the mental game of golf that he noted "really got me into this and I realised that it's not just a matter of having lessons" (final interview, 15/5/99). Having read a little bit in this area Lee felt he had "perhaps made some progress with the mental game of golf" (initial interview, 30/12/98) yet realised he "still [had] a way to go"

(initial interview, 30/12/98). There was no doubt that he saw the value in MST but he felt that there were a lack of available resources to guide him in this training:

> I would like to see more emphasis on this aspect of golf. It is something that appears to be lacking. I have had lessons from half a dozen or so different pros here and no one has mentioned it. I've got all the videos – long game, short game, course management – but I have never seen a video on mental skills. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

Despite starting off with great enthusiasm for the MST, a number of factors prevented Lee from totally engaging in the MST in the early stages. Lee injured his back and was unable to play golf for a couple of weeks. So, although he still attended the seminars, he was unable to implement what he had learned into his golf game. Once he recovered from this injury and was able to play golf again, he was prevented from attending the next three seminars (seminars #5-7) because of ill health and being away on holiday (see Table 4). Also for these reasons, the first time I met with Lee on an individual basis was seven weeks into the MST.

Up until this stage, Lee was doing "nothing special" (evaluation record 4, 30/1/99) to mentally prepare for his golf and felt it was "too early to say" (evaluation record 5, 12/2/99) what impact the MST was having on him. However, this first individual consultation marked the start of a positive change in Lee's MST experience and it was during this meeting that I suspected that Lee had only recently decided to commit to putting the MST concepts into practice (field notes, 9/3/99). During this meeting, he postulated "there's no harm in coming at this afresh, the way I'm doing it. I don't think I'm at a disadvantage" (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99). Indeed, from this point on Lee appeared to fully engage in the MST. The first time he played golf after that individual meeting, Lee implemented the three suggestions made during the meeting, namely, to use imagery on the range before playing, a preshot routine before every shot, and

deep breathing. He played well during this round and reported, "this was an encouraging round with the mental skills applied, probably for the first time really. I must use the same approach in my next game" (evaluation record 7, 13/3/99). Certainly, it became apparent that Lee had started to put much of what we had talked about in that first meeting into practice and was seeing positive results. At out next individual meeting Lee remarked, "there has been a definite improvement. I must say that I think the mental training must be a key factor in that" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99).

The recognition that he was benefiting from the MST appeared to fuel Lee's motivation and commitment to the training, making it easier for him to invest the necessary time and effort to practice and use the techniques discussed during the MST:

> I think that the thing that makes [implementing the techniques] easy is that I know that they work. . . . I believe that they work for me. It's a great motivation therefore, and if you're motivated things come easier. (final interview, 16/5/99)

Despite this, Lee noted that when he was not playing well, or was going through a swing transition phase, he found it more difficult to implement the mental skills and techniques. Furthermore, keeping the MST simple appeared to be paramount, too much information could hinder integration and use of the MST skills and techniques:

> It is a lot to think about. We both know that one of the great challenges of golf is to do everything right, but at the same time don't think about it. . . . It's a matter of drawing an appropriate line. If we try to incorporate too many techniques, the golf gets more complicated. I'm a believer in keeping it simple. (final interview, 16/5/99)

Indeed, almost two months into the MST Lee voiced concern over the amount of information in the seminars: "It's a bit like trying to drink from a fire-hose, which is the same with any aspect of

trying to get help in golf, very quickly you get deluged" (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99). Due to the fact that Lee missed three successive seminars would have no doubt added to the feeling of being swamped with information. As a means of coping with this, Lee described his approach to the MST as follows:

> What I'm trying to do is two things. One, to give a really conscientious reaction to everything that is coming at me. But on the other hand, try to filter it so that I'm just getting the stuff that is really meaningful to me. (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99)

Indeed, by our second individual meeting three weeks later, Lee felt he had things more under control:

> I think I have my priorities, number one. And secondly, I have the things that work for me. Thirdly, I've got my arms round it all a little bit. I wasn't expecting it to work too quickly, it needs a few weeks and some practice and getting comfortable with it all. I would say I'm at that point now. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

Engaging in the MST was the first time he had "done anything like this since retirement" (final interview, 15/5/99) despite participating in many workshops and seminars during his working life. Because of this, Lee found:

> The techniques were rather familiar. For example, working with small groups, trying to motivate them and hold their interest. Trying to get them all to take part in discussions. Keeping things moving in a positive way. I thought you did it well . . . [and] it came very naturally to me. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Overall, the MST experience was a positive one for Lee and he enjoyed it. He found it "irritating" to miss aspects of the MST noted that he was "pleased to be back into the Tuesday evening sessions" (evaluation record 7, 13/3/99) after having missed three in succession. Lee

particularly enjoyed the "novelty" of the video sessions and found it useful to see himself playing on the course. The individual consultations were also a source of enjoyment for Lee:

> I like these sessions, they've been very good because you probe. You keep asking the same questions with different words. It really makes one search your heart for an honest answer, a helpful, meaningful answer. . . . Clearly, it's more fun to do it one-on-one than to do it with a group, . . . [but] I enjoyed it all. (final interview, 16/5/99)

The components of the MST that Lee found most enjoyable tended to be the ones that he found most useful. Although Lee reported there were many highlights in the work that we did together, he listed the 'spider's web' (i.e., performance profiling), setting goals based on the results of the profile, the 'circle', and the relaxation tape as high points. Indeed, the times Lee was most engaged in the MST was when he was doing practical work such as the performance profiling and setting objectives, noting he "quickly got engrossed" (final interview, 16/5/99) with these activities.

Conversely, the time that Lee felt least engaged was during the seminar when the concept of 'Smart Golf' was presented. He noted, "I felt a sort of glaze coming over" (final interview, 16/5/99). For sure, in this seminar practical work was minimal. Certainly, Lee perceived participant involvement and interactivity as critical to the MST success and in the final interview suggested that the seminars be made more interactive. Lee elaborated:

> I felt at times you were doing most of the work instead of prodding people and getting them to talk, asking questions of individuals and so on. . . . [But] the danger is you're going to get one or two people who will hog the discussion because they want to ramble on and that's a problem for you. What I think you should be doing is saying something

> like, 'Now then Jo, tell us what concentration means to you'. And get her actually saying something, having to think. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Neither did Lee like the idea of 'Personal Par', noting "that was a D- for me" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99).

Lee proffered three suggestions for improving the MST besides making the seminars more interactive. First, "pre-test" the evaluation records. Lee did not understand some of the terminology at first. He revealed, "I have to say I still find the word focus a bit difficult. For me, it's concentration, relaxation – those old fashioned words that I find easier to cope with. I find focus very hard" (seminar #3, 2/2/99). Second, introduce the idea of writing a 'contract' with yourself later on in the MST rather than in the first seminar. Lee thought, "it would have been something that might have worked better if we were more into the program. I think we did it on the first day and we hadn't really got our arms round the subject yet" (final interview, 15/5/99). Lastly, do "more practical stuff on the course . . . play a few holes [together] . . . [so] it's more real" (final interview, 15/5/99). Lee found the time I walked round the course with him "very helpful" and noted it motivated him to develop his new preshot routine, something he had been putting off. Moreover, with me there he said that he adhered to the routine 100% of the time (field notes, 22/5/99).

Lee described a number of aspects of my approach as a consultant that made the MST experience profitable for him:

> I liked the style with which you conducted the thing; the tone was very good. . . . I think you got it right for this group – the way you conducted it, the way you talked with people. You were very patient. . . . You also did it very sensitively. . . . I think you were able to judge things from the point of view of the group and respond to us. If you could see that

> you were losing us, you were aware of that. Or, if you thought something irritating was going on, you would fix it. So, I think you had your antenna out. You were alert to the reactions of the group. . . . You are a bit stimulating the way you talk. . . . We were all very impressed with the amount of work that had gone into it, and preparation. You're clearly on top of your subject, so you get a feeling of confidence. Because the best thing you can possibly do in overcoming any age difference and so on is come across as being well-equipped to do what you're doing and you are obviously. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Lee also appreciated the seminar handouts that provided the objectives and an overview of each session. In addition, the group discussions allowed him to recognise that he was not alone in his problems he faced on the golf course, a fact he found very reassuring. In fact, the only aspect of the MST that Lee was disappointed with was that he did not reduce his handicap during this period, though noted "I don't really expect you to do that! I'm disappointed because I have been having lessons, and with this and everything else it should have come down" (final interview, 15/5/99).

MST Process

Lee wanted to improve his game through the MST. Furthermore, he indicated that he would like to learn "any exercises, any kind of drills for relaxation" (initial interview, 30/12/98). As the MST progressed, it transpired that this was not so much to help control his activation level and cope with nerves, but to slow him down in his shot preparation. The third objective Lee had entering the MST was to learn how to improve his ability to concentrate when playing golf, noting that concentration was his "biggest problem" (initial interview, 30/12/98). The majority of the training with Lee was devoted towards developing a preshot routine to help him deal with the

issues mentioned above. In addition, we worked on setting effective goals and developing his imagery skills. The MST process for Lee will be delineated in this section.

A number of issues relating to concentration emerged throughout my work with Lee. The first was what he termed a "midway setback" – a perceived drop in performance halfway through a round which he believed was "partly to do with age, level of fitness, energy level, and concentration" (initial interview, 30/12/98). He described the trend as follows:

> It's a really curious phenomenon. Usually I start off playing well and then I get to about the 7th hole and things fall apart and it stays like that until about the 10th or 11th when it comes back together again. Obviously, subconsciously, there's a risk that I've been waiting for that to happen, but very often I forget completely that this happens but it still happens. (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99)

Indeed, Lee referred to this problem in a number of evaluation records in the early stages of the MST.

A second problem relating to concentration was that Lee tended to rush into his shot and therefore not fully prepare it. He described this problem as follows: "I tend to be a bit impetuous. I mean I tend to be a bit impatient. I may not sound that way but I am. It's so easy to go and hit the wretched ball without thinking about it" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99). Despite the fact that Lee was aware of this problem and articulated that he knew what he should be doing before playing each shot, he admitted that he did not always do so:

> It comes back to discipline, trying to be self-disciplined and to concentrate and all that. . . . I think there's a technique here if you stop to think about it: Am I addressing the ball correctly? Am I swinging correctly? Which, of course, we tend not to do. We tend to just get up there and get on with it. Give it a whack. . . . I have a "Hill Billy" [electric trolley]

> [and] I know that if I'm starting to take the club out when the Hill Billy's on the move I've got it wrong. Sometimes I find myself anxiously grasping the club while the [trolley] is still in motion and just as it stops I go and [hit the ball]. (initial interview, 30/12/98)

Clearly, Lee would benefit from slowing down his shot preparation and developing a more relaxed approach to the game.

Having read books that addressed mental aspects of golf prior to the onset of this inquiry, Lee was aware of a couple of techniques that he could use to help relax on the course. The most useful of which he noted were deep breathing and switching his focus away from the game onto something else. For example, "instead of watching the other players, especially on green, turn the other way and look at a palm tree" (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99). Lee admitted that although he tried to use these techniques he often forgot and did not integrate them into his game with any regularity. I noted that Lee might benefit from building these techniques into a preshot routine.

Lastly, I discovered that Lee's approach to concentration appeared to be to try to shut out distractions once they occurred rather than to focus on the relevant cues needed for successful shot execution, which might prevent him from being distracted in the first place. On a couple of occasions Lee commented that he believed "thick skinned people seem to play much better golf than sensitive people" (initial interview, 30/12/98). He explained, "I have a theory that sensitive people are at a disadvantage playing golf. If you get someone who is thick skinned they have an advantage as they are oblivious to what is going on around them" (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99). Again, a preshot routine would appear to be a useful tool for Lee as it would provide him with something constructive to focus his attention on and therefore lessen the chance of getting distracted.

From my initial conversations with Lee it was apparent that he did not have a preshot routine. Consequently, during the first individual meeting Lee and I discussed the possibility of him developing one. Lee related that he had recently had an exceptionally helpful golf lesson where the professional had focused on his set-up and alignment. Given that Lee had found this beneficial, we decided that the key points from the lesson should form the basis of the routine so he would not forget them. Lee described the routine he developed as follows:

> I use numbers. I don't use an acronym or a mnemonic the way we talked about in the group. I just do 12345. 5 is the back-swing. So, Number 1, I place the head of the club in the right place. Secondly, I place my feet in the correct place. Thirdly, I ensure that I have the right grip. Fourth, I [drop my hands] so I bring the club down and line it up and bend my knees slightly. Fifth, I take the club back, making sure I take it back using my left shoulder. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

The development of the preshot routine marked a turnaround in the MST experience for Lee. He started to integrate it into his game immediately and felt he benefited at once. Following the first round he used it Lee commented, "I played more consistently than usual. There were no real flashes of brilliance, but no real disasters either and no midway collapse!" (evaluation record 7, 13/3/99). Furthermore, Lee felt that simply making the decision to use the routine made him enter the round with a more positive attitude and greater confidence. It did not take long for the preshot routine to become part of Lee's game. Three weeks after developing it Lee reported, "I'm getting better at remembering to do it with every shot. I still miss one occasionally, but not very often . . . It's made a significant difference" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99). No doubt the speed with which Lee adopted his preshot routine was related to the benefits he associated it with:

> The biggest single thing that you did for me is to get me doing this preshot routine, which gives you this confidence that the chances are you're going to hit a good shot more often than not. The preshot routine has made the game more consistent which has built the confidence and [made it] more enjoyable as well. (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99)

Despite the positive results Lee associated with using his "12345 routine", following a number of golf lessons he took he felt he needed to adjust it to accommodate technical changes the golf professional suggested. Furthermore, Lee wanted to incorporate deep breathing into his routine. The process of developing a new routine was quite an arduous one for Lee. He described it as follows:

> It's funny how the preshot routine develops. I've sat down for the past two weeks now trying to [develop my new routine]. . . . First of all I took the old routine and tried to modify it, but it didn't work at all. Then I sat down and tried to develop a new one, but I haven't got it quite right yet. It seems to be something that you have to do when you're playing almost. I've got a sequence that makes a nice acronym, but then I get out there and find it's the wrong sequence! (final interview, 16/5/99)

Finally, Lee developed a routine he was comfortable with and at the eight-month follow-up reported that he was still using it. He described the new routine as follows:

> The acronym is BAFFS. A breath to calm me down. Alignment, I stand behind the ball and I try to breathe in and count to ten and align at the same time. The two 'F's are for fingers and feet. I try to grip the club with my fingers rather than clutch it. And the 'S' is for shoulders. I have a tendency to bring my shoulder round and I think that's what the problem is. . . . Anyway, that's the preshot routine and very often in a round of golf I do

> use it every single shot which I never thought I would ever do. . . . It's been with me for some time now. In fact, I had it on the screensaver of my laptop. (follow-up 2, 8/1/00)

Another tool that Lee used to help with his concentration when playing golf was the concept of the 'circle'. Although the main ideas surrounding this were presented in seminar #4, it was not until Lee read the article that I had written (Appendix G) that he started to apply the idea of the 'circle'. Lee used his preshot routine and the 'circle' together, noting that once he entered the 'circle' he started his preshot routine. Lee found that this combination allowed him to recover his focus after mistakes and most importantly, the 'circle' allowed him to relax in-between shots and then refocus fully before shot execution:

> I suppose I've been thinking about how I'm going to play the shot too soon. I'm not a relaxed person, I might give that impression, but I find [the 'circle'] helps me to relax and think about other things and concentrate on other things. And then I step into that circle and everything changes, I'm totally focused on what I'm about to do, so that is good. (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99)

I also highlighted how this tool could prevent Lee from becoming frustrated and focused on his score when he was not playing well by allowing him to switch off from golf between shots. Again, this was a tool Lee continued to use at the eight-month follow-up.

Although Lee indicated that his main impetus for engaging in the MST was to improve his concentration and performance, other foci for the MST emerged. It was apparent from the evaluation records completed early on in the MST process that Lee did not set specific goals for each round, if he set any at all, and they often tended to be outcome oriented goals (e.g., to win). We spent a portion of our first meeting discussing the merits of process oriented goals compared to those that were more outcome oriented. I encouraged Lee to break down his more vague goals

into more specific short-term goals or 'Action Steps'. To help with this I suggested, for example, he ask himself "What specific steps do I need to take in order to win?" Lee revealed that he found taking a deep breath before each shot useful, but noted he often forgot to do it. He therefore made it a goal to scan his body for tension and take a deep breath before each shot if necessary.

Following the seminar on imagery Lee started to use imagery immediately. In every evaluation record following this seminar Lee commented that he used imagery on the course to get a "mental picture of the shot", though admitted that he did not remember to do it every shot. He also used imagery on the practice ground. However, during the second individual meeting it became apparent that Lee was not finding imagery to be as beneficial as some of the other mental tools we had discussed and had started to use it less regularly:

> I use [imagery] from time to time but I don't use it constantly because I don't find it's making any difference. It does sometimes, . . . but then you go on the range and you picture this magnificent ball and you do all the right things and everything's perfect and you hit it but it doesn't work. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

I felt rather than focusing on the visual aspects of the swing or ball flight it may be more beneficial for Lee to focus on the kinaesthetic aspects of the swing. Imagining the shape of a shot may be more beneficial to lower handicap golfers than high handicap golfers who may benefit more from imaging the "feel" of a correct swing. However, Lee felt that he did that automatically anyway.

Imagery is a skill that needs to be developed, and is an important skill to possess in golf. Consequently, Lee agreed that he would persevere and practice imagery at home. Then, if in time he felt that it would help him he could integrate this back into his game and, to ensure he

remembered to do it each shot, build it into his routine. However, the next time we met Lee was still focusing on the shape of the shot rather than the feel of the swing and still felt that imagery was not a useful tool for him:

> I've given it a fair crack of the whip, but I don't think it's done much for me. I have this wonderful picture of how clean the shot's going to be, where the ball's going to go and so on. It just doesn't happen. It does sometimes. That particular thing is not for me. (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99)

I was concerned that Lee would give up on imagery altogether and not see the other uses it has (e.g., building confidence, seeing the line of a putt etc.).

In sum, many of the areas Lee wanted to improve in could be helped through the use of a preshot routine and consequently this was the main technique Lee adopted during the training. Deep breathing and the 'circle' were other techniques Lee integrated into this golf. In addition, Lee devoted part of his time to developing his imagery skills and I helped him with his goal setting. The outcomes of these efforts will be delineated in the next section.

MST Outcomes

Lee found the MST to be a beneficial experience and derived a number of positive outcomes from it. He summarised them as follows:

> Some very positive things have come out [of the mental training]. For one, I feel very much more relaxed about my golf. . . . Two, I feel very much more confident about my golf. . . . Generally speaking, I'm walking on to the tee now and know that the chances are I'm going to hit a reasonable drive. I'm playing better. I'm getting more enjoyment from the game, . . . [and I have] increased awareness. . . . Another thing I've got out of it is I think my concentration has improved. . . . Also, I'd really got out of the habit of

> practising before play. You've got me back into it, so that's good news as well. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Lee's scores on the MSQ before, during, and after the MST indicating the changes in his mental skill level can be seen in Figure 5.

The MST had a broad impact on Lee's attitude and approach to golf. He described the MST as a "maturing process" (final interview, 15/5/99), noting that he had become a calmer, less anxious, and more confident golfer. Following the MST he remarked, "I'm very much more philosophical and much more emphasising enjoyment rather than trying to get my handicap down. I think I've got a better sense of balance, which perhaps one would expect through doing all that mental training" (follow-up 1, 28/9/99). Indeed, this attitude endured. Eight months after the conclusion of the MST Lee commented "I continue to feel that the positive attitude I have comes out of the work we did together" (follow-up 2, 8/1/00).

Furthermore, the MST led Lee to think in a more disciplined manner. Being more disciplined, along with his ability to now call on his "mental reserves" (final interview, 15/5/99), helped him to persevere with his game and refocus if he was not playing well, something he felt he could not do prior to the MST. Indeed, the MST appeared to give Lee a sense of control over his game:

> I know that if I do certain things it will almost certainly let me play better. I know that I can use these techniques to sharpen my concentration, to relax me, to give me more consistency. There used to be a feeling of hopelessness. The situation gets desperate and there is this awful tendency to try harder, which is bad. I feel I can turn it around now. (final interview, 16/5/99)

Moreover, the MST may have prolonged Lee's involvement with golf, preventing him from giving up because he felt that he was not improving:

> [Through the MST] I learned that I can be a reasonably consistent player [and] I really had it confirmed that I must keep on [playing]. We all have a temptation at times to think 'Oh, to hell with this, this is really not my game, I'm just not going to get any better', and then give it up for months, give it up completely. So, it's put my mind at rest on that, because I guess I was concerned that I had got into it a bit late. (final interview, 16/5/99)

On the occasions Lee still "got a bit despondent" he noted "this bag of tricks, if you forgive the expression, is something you can dip into and it will give you a bit of a leg up" (follow-up 2, 8/1/00).

Although there was no objective evidence of any change in Lee's golf performance (he did not get his handicap cut, but did come within a shot of being cut), he felt that he was playing much more consistently and reported that his scores were reflecting this. Lee felt that the main tools that contributed to this improvement were the preshot routine, deep breathing, the 'circle', and the performance profiling. The performance profiling led Lee to take steps towards improving his technique. He recounted:

> I remember my number one priority was to improve my play with my irons, particularly the long and mid irons. . . . And that was what really motivated me to go and see [the professional. The performance profiling] . . . got me focused. Because, there are a lot of different attributes on that list [of qualities and characteristics of good golfers] and we tend to think 'Ah, I must do that. I must concentrate more on this', whereas when you come to do the spider's web, one thing, or one or two things should emerge [as being most important]. So it's getting priorities. And it really did that. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Moreover, the performance profiling served to increase awareness. In fact, Lee expressed that the MST in general was increasing his awareness: "It's making me think even more about golf and what I should be doing to improve" (evaluation record 6, 15/2/99). In fact, the most immediate benefit of the MST for Lee was that it motivated him to go out and practice more, especially immediately before the round. Until this point, Lee remarked that he had "tended to separate practice and play, put them in two different compartments" (individual consultation 1, 9/3/99) but was finding it beneficial to go to the practice ground before playing, something he did not do before the MST.

The video sessions also proved to be a useful tool to increase Lee's awareness, even though they were included for research purposes rather than the MST itself:

> Certainly yesterday [after the video stimulated recall session], I came away horrified at my lack of follow through. Poor Javier [golf professional] has been beating me up about that. I don't know why he didn't get me on camera, he should have done. That message has come home. I really have to fix that problem. That's a bit removed from the mental game of golf in a way, but it's all increased awareness. (final interview, 15/5/99)

Lee's perception that his golf was more consistent also served to increase his confidence, something that dramatically increased over the course of the MST. Lee further attributed his greater confidence to the mental training, his recent lessons with the golf professional, and having more experience with the game. Within the MST, four tools emerged as the main contributing elements to Lee's increased confidence: the preshot routine, performance profiling, deep breathing, and visualising the upcoming shot. Lee asserted the preshot routine "gives you this confidence that the chances are you're going to hit a good shot more often than not. The

preshot routine has made the game more consistent which has built the confidence" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99). He expanded on this theme:

> I know that if I do this, that should happen. My preshot routine is a discipline. The aim is to make sure I do certain specific things in a prescribed sequence. It is not a guarantee for success but I know from experience it usually leads to success and hence increases my confidence. (final interview, 15/5/99)

The preshot routine made Lee slow down and allowed him to put more thought into his upcoming shot.

Feeling more confident was central to the MST experience for Lee. He expressed that his increased confidence led to many of the positive outcomes he associated with the MST. For example, the increased confidence and consistency allowed him to adopt a more ambitious and adventurous "go for it" attitude towards his golf. Lee noted "I'm much braver, I go for it much more" (stimulated recall 2, 14/5/99). Furthermore, Lee's confidence allowed him to feel more comfortable playing with better players. He attested, "I can play with anybody now. It doesn't matter whether it's . . . any of these low [handicappers]. It's the mental training that has done that, not the golf lessons. The mental training has increased my confidence" (final interview, 16/5/99).

Lee's golf enjoyment also increased, again as a result of being more confident and playing more consistently. Towards the end of the MST Lee was reporting that he was playing some of his most enjoyable golf ever. In fact, simply using the mental training techniques and then seeing the ensuing effects of it were some of Lee's golfing highlights. For example, on one occasion he listed, "I remembered to use my preshot routine throughout" (evaluation record 11, 4/4/99) as one of his highlights from the round. Another time he wrote, "I had a wobbly patch

but used the breathing, the circle around the ball, and the preshot routine to get back on top" (evaluation record 13, 9/4/99). Indeed, the general sense of control over his game Lee felt he had developed served to enhance his enjoyment.

Using the 'circle' further added to Lee's golf enjoyment as it allowed him to focus on other things beside golf. He described how:

> I suppose I've been thinking about how I'm going to play the shot too soon, but I find [the 'circle'] helps me to relax and think about other things, concentrate on other things. . . . I admire the scenery, . . . admire what's going on. I'm more conscious of all the nice things that are around. . . . There's more time to appreciate other things. That's a good thing and it's also conducive to the game of course. (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99)

Lee was eager to continue on with MST after the seminars finished yet he was concerned that without the structure of the seminars and individual meetings he may not be as diligent implementing the skills. Despite his concern, follow-up interviews five- and eight-months after the last MST seminar, revealed that Lee was still using the techniques that had benefited him during the inquiry, specifically the preshot routine, the 'circle', and breathing.

Summary

Lee was a high handicap golfer with a huge desire to improve. Golf brought him a great deal of enjoyment and formed a significant part of his life. Although Lee had not engaged in MST before, he had read books and magazine articles on the subject and wanted to learn more. Lee had a slow start with the MST. Illness, injury, and a brief holiday prevented him from playing golf and/or attending the seminars at various times during the first month and a half of the MST. Consequently, during this time the MST had minimal effects for Lee. However, following our first individual meeting where Lee developed his preshot routine he started to see

positive changes and appeared to become more committed to the training. Lee adopted a select few tools that he applied to his golf game and continued to use at the eight-month follow-up. The most significant of these tools was the preshot routine, which helped make his golf more consistent and served to increase his confidence, consequently leading to greater golf enjoyment. Lee also developed a mellower attitude towards golf and tended to focus on enjoying golf more rather than always on trying to get his handicap cut. Moreover, as a result of the MST Lee felt he had more control over his performance, was prompted to take steps towards improving his technique, and developed greater self-awareness.

Laura

Golfer Profile

Laura played off a 21 handicap and had been playing golf for 16 years on a regular basis at the start of this research inquiry. She was single and would not disclose her age, though noted she was over 45. A retired dress designer and living fulltime in La Manga Club, Laura pointed out "[golf] does play a large role in my life; . . . living on top of the golf courses, talking to golfers frequently, I talk and think about golf most days. You can't switch off in an environment like this" (initial interview, 21/12/98). Laura regularly played golf three times a week, usually in the Individual Stableford, Fourball Betterball, and Owners' Scramble competitions. She chose to play in the weekly competitions because they provided her with playing partners and the opportunity to meet new people. Indeed, the social component of golf was paramount to Laura.

Laura noted that her goal, "naturally like every golfer, [was] to play as well as possible" (initial interview, 21/12/98). She reported that her handicap had increased when she first moved to La Manga and she hoped to improve her golf and consequently get her handicap down again. In an effort to attain this goal, Laura stated that she had plans to start taking lessons and intended

to play one practice round a week. She confessed, "I'm no good on the driving range, so I prefer to go and play a practice round when it is very quiet so I am able to do a second shot, if the first shot wasn't good enough for my liking, without holding anybody else up" (initial interview, 21/12/98).

At the start of the inquiry Laura was not actively working towards her goal. Although she was playing golf on a regular basis in competitions, she had not taken a lesson with a golf professional within the preceding six months and did not spend time practising, neither on the course nor on the practice ground. In fact, the only effort Laura appeared to be making to improve her golf was to spend ten minutes on the putting green before playing. In fact, besides having a few practice swings, this comprised her total preparation prior to playing; she never went to the practice ground to warm-up or "find her rhythm". Indeed, her evaluation records supported this but also revealed that Laura tended to stretch for five to ten minutes before she played.

Laura did not appear to have a clear preshot routine that she went through before taking each shot. She said that she does "just basics [like] lining up properly where I want to go, choosing the right club and so on" (initial interview, 21/12/98). Mentally, she tried to "be relaxed and play slowly" (initial interview, 21/12/98). Although she commented that she could not describe exactly how she did that she stated, "I just say to myself 'Come on old girl. Slow down. [I talk to myself] to get into that frame of mind. [Basically I] just try to have a relaxed swing and have a good follow through" (initial interview, 21/12/98).

Laura's perception of herself as a golfer was that of a "short hitter", which seemed to affect her attitude towards golf depending on the course she was to play. Laura noted that she had less confidence when she played the South Course than the West Course, commenting "I feel

I can score better on the West Course than on the South Course. The South Course is too long for me because I'm not a big hitter" (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99). Laura appeared to be a "thinking golfer" and have good course management skills. She reported to adjust her tactics depending on the course she played:

> Well, you play a different round of golf on the North Course than you do on the West Course. I'm not a big hitter so I play percentage golf on the West Course. . . . I think more. I don't just take the longest club. You sometimes [have to] take less club to be on the straight and narrow because you can get in too much trouble on the West Course, [you have to be] more conservative and sensible. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

In short, golf played an important role in Laura's life, especially socially. She regularly played golf three times a week and although iterated she very much wanted to become a better golfer, there was nothing to indicate she had done anything specific to improve her golf up to this point. Laura had not taken lessons, nor did she practice, and she did little to prepare before playing.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

A number of different factors underlied Laura's golf enjoyment, yet it was environmental factors and the social aspects of golf that emerged as the more dominant themes. Laura could be described as a "people person". During the initial interview (21/12/98), she repeatedly commented on how much she "enjoy[s] being in the company of other people" when she is playing golf and also stressed the importance of being "able to have a laugh and a giggle" with the people she is playing with. Indeed, the opportunity afforded her through golf to meet new people was an underlying component of her golf enjoyment. She revealed, "being by myself, . . .

it's a big benefit to be here [in La Manga] and be able to join in a game of golf in the day time and the social aspects in the evening" (initial interview, 21/12/98).

However, Laura's golf enjoyment was grounded in more than simply being in the company of others. Laura described how her golf enjoyment could be heightened or diminished depending on who her playing partners were:

> You must get on with people. If you have any sort of . . . bad feeling; . . . when you don't like somebody and you think, 'Oh, they're not a nice person', . . . it's very difficult to enjoy the game. I want to be comfortable with the people [I am playing with]. . . . I had a social round, yesterday with friends, . . . nice people, and that makes a good round of golf. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Aside from the enjoyment the social aspects of golf offered Laura, being outdoors, experiencing the scenery, and playing in good weather were also key factors underlying Laura's enjoyment of golf. Laura left no doubt about her love for the outdoors:

> If I can be outdoors, I'm outdoors. . . . I like to be in lovely surroundings [and] that's what you get when you play golf generally. . . . I enjoy the nature, the countryside. When I'm on the West Course sometimes I feel like that's being in heaven, because there are times . . . when there are not many people and you think you have your own private golf course. Then automatically, when you feel that way, everything falls into place – you play well, you get physical exercise. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Without a doubt, "having gentle exercise while you go round, to keep well" (initial interview, 21/12/98) added to the meaning of Laura's golf enjoyment.

Playing well also contributed to Laura's golf enjoyment. Indeed, she encapsulated the meaning of enjoyment simply as "being able to play well" (initial interview, 21/12/98). She went on to describe how she experienced this enjoyment:

> Well, you have a good shot – maybe in the long game, in the short game, or you have a super putt, or a super chip – and you just have got like a light happy feeling coming inside yourself. . . . You think 'Yippee', 'Brilliant, I've done something, why can't I do it all the time?' (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Not only did Laura's own good performance add to her enjoyment of the game, but Laura also iterated that she found it "very enjoyable seeing somebody else playing well" (initial interview, 21/12/98). Despite the enjoyment Laura obviously derived from golf, she found it difficult to portray the depth of her golf enjoyment: "I can't say. I don't know how to describe it . . . I would give it an 8 out of 10" (initial interview, 21/12/98).

Aside from instances when Laura did not feel comfortable with her playing partners, she was unable to identify many factors that undermined her golfing enjoyment. She noted, "there are none for me really, as long as I'm playing reasonably and it's not too distracting with outside noises, I enjoy the game" (initial interview, 21/12/98). However, lack of organisation on the first tee prior to the start of the game was a source of aggravation to her:

> It's frustrating when people don't turn up for their tee times. . . . [If] you have to wait . . . before you tee off I find that very frustrating, especially when it's always going back and forwards. It's not like [the marshals say,] 'Oh, Laura, you are playing now with these people', . . . they change their minds. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Laura's enjoyment of golf was apparent. Although founded on a number of different factors, the social element of golf, along with being outdoors, surfaced as major sources of her

golf enjoyment. Although few undermining factors of golf enjoyment emerged in the initial interview, it became apparent during the inquiry that poor performance was a significant factor that diminished her enjoyment.

MST Experience

Laura had a low level of commitment to the MST. Unfortunately, this impacted my ability to obtain a complete set of rich data from her for the purposes of this inquiry (see Table 3). Her lack of zeal for MST was reflected in a number of ways: the number of seminars she attended; the difficulty I had organising the individual consultations with her; the number of evaluation records she completed; and an apparent reluctance on her part to implement MST techniques and develop her mental skills.

Out of the 15 seminars, Laura attended 9 (60% attendance rate, see Table 4). Laura could not attend two of seminars because she was away. She decided against coming to another two as they were scheduled immediately after a ladies golf competition. Of note, all but one of the other ladies who played in those competitions did attend the seminars those nights (including myself). Laura did not provide reasons for missing the other two seminars.

I was only able to set up three individual consultations with Laura during the course of the inquiry as it was difficult to get in touch with her. Moreover, on three occasions she cancelled meetings at the last minute. These meetings were cancelled twice because Laura overslept and once because the time of a golf competition was changed. On one occasion it then took a further two weeks before another meeting could be arranged.

With regards to the evaluation records, Laura completed four within the first two weeks of the inquiry but then only completed one more after that. Being sensitive to the fact that some individuals are reticent to filling out forms, I suggested that she only fill out one a week, instead

of one a round. As an alternative, I offered to develop a shorter evaluation tool for her. However, Laura rejected these ideas and said she would complete evaluation records from then on. She never did.

The times Laura and I met in person she appeared dedicated and committed to the MST, seemingly willing to implement at least some of the ideas we discussed. Yet she rarely seemed to put any of them into practice, despite the fact that during the individual meetings we worked together towards solutions to problems or concerns she had identified herself and chose techniques she thought might work and was prepared to implement. In an attempt to increase adherence, at the end of each session I always made the point of asking her what her goal would be for the upcoming week and we reiterated one simple thing that she would work on. Yet this effort was to no avail. When I asked her about this pattern of behaviour, she gave two simple answers: forgetfulness and lack of time, noting "it's not a lack of knowing what to do and how to do it, but a lack of time, or taking time" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99).

In spite of this, Laura genuinely appeared to want to improve her performance and realised she would have to make an effort if she wanted to achieve this: "I must remember though because I want to play better. My ambition is to [lower my handicap]. I can only do this if I play better. It's no good talking about it. I have to practice what I think" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99). Indeed, it appeared that Laura was aware of what she needed to do, but she emphasised that any change would take time:

> It will come eventually but it just takes practice. I've been playing for so long and you come along and try to alter it, rightly so, but it takes time to do it. Sometimes I can do it, other times I can't, [but] I'm aware of all the things. (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99)

Laura may have found it difficult to filter through the information provided in the seminars and select methods that would help her, thereby hindering her application of them. Despite my stressing the KISS principle throughout the MST and emphasising the importance of selecting techniques that worked for the participants as individuals, Laura did appear to feel overwhelmed by the amount of information that was available through the seminars:

> I find it very hard at times to concentrate on all these things then take my shot as you suggested. Because I'm [also] thinking about what I was told in my technical lesson [from my friend]. So if all these thoughts come together when you take your shot it can take over and you duff the next shot. It has to come automatically. (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99)

The manner in which the material was presented may not have been conducive to Laura's learning style. She commented, "you give everything separate little names. To me it just slots in together. I don't have any divisions. I just try to do it and try to think about it" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99).

Laura's MST experience and her commitment to the training may have been shaped by influences outside golf and the MST itself. After the second seminar Laura stayed behind to meet with me. She revealed that she was menopausal and consequently was feeling a little "depressed" and "lacking motivation to do things", including playing golf (field notes, 26/1/99). Furthermore, she did not appear to be totally satisfied with her life in general and suggested that this impacted her willingness to fully immerse herself in the MST:

> I'm not, how shall I put it, 100% settled in life. Most people are happily married, or pretend to be happily married, at least contented. I'm by myself, I see no one. I'm not 100% contented. I think this all has something to do with it. I have to be honest, that's

> why I said at the beginning don't go by me and my behaviour; I must be one of the exceptions. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

I was unable to conduct a final interview with Laura to gain more insight into her perceptions of the mental training experience because she cancelled the appointment we had, then proved evasive when I tried to set up another date, and finally we ran out of time. Furthermore, she did not complete the MST evaluation form at the end of the training. However, six weeks into the MST Laura did describe the experience as positive and interesting:

> On the whole it has helped me. It's going well. I'm interested. I think it's wonderful that you're getting into this with adult students, because it's different teaching children and adults. Perhaps some children learn because they have to and we adults do it because we want to. But often adults have a lot of outside distractions. They have more to think about. I can imagine we're not all so dedicated. (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99)

In sum, Laura did not get very involved with the training. She did not appear willing to dedicate the time needed to develop her mental skills and seemed to forget entirely about the techniques between the MST sessions. The fact that Laura was menopausal and malcontent likely impacted her experience.

MST Process

Throughout the MST four main areas of concern emerged around which the individual consultations were focused: ineffective focusing skills, rushing shot preparation, outcome focus, and a lack of time spent practising the technical aspects of the game. The process of the MST in these areas will be presented in this section.

The inability to ignore distractions and remain focused on the task at hand was an important issue for Laura. Indeed, she stated that part of her motivation for participating in the

MST was to learn how "to concentrate better on my game" (initial interview, 21/12/98). Evidently, lapses in her concentration often resulted from her being distracted by other people:

> I find that the more you talk to other people in the flight, the more distractions you can get. . . . Everybody just goes from one subject to another while you're walking along and I can't cope with that. . . . [Also,] you meet people in-between [holes] and very often they tell you something and then your mind just wanders off. . . . [Moreover,] it is very busy on the courses here and people are very, very noisy. They forget how much the noise, or their voice, travels on the golf course . . . and it's very difficult to play your shot. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Prior to the onset of MST Laura did have some basic strategies she used in an effort to minimise distractions:

> Most of the time I mention [to the people I am playing with] at the beginning of the game, that I do not talk a lot. Not that I'm antisocial, just that I have to concentrate, and I'm happy to stay afterwards and have a drink and a chat then. (initial interview, 21/12/98)

Other times she noted, "if I can assess the situation before I take my swing, [and find] that it's too noisy for one thing or another, I just stop doing whatever I'm doing and wait for them to keep quiet" (initial interview, 21/12/98). She had also asked golfing professionals for advice on how she could maintain her concentration for the duration of a round of golf. They had told her that it is difficult, but suggested that she "just enjoy the scenery. Look at the trees. Listen to the birds" (initial interview, 21/12/98). However, she did not find that easy to do.

During the first individual consultation I had with Laura, she noted that the most useful thing she had learned from the first seven seminars was to visualise herself stepping into a room

or bubble when she approached her ball as a means of blocking out distractions. She explained how it benefited her:

> This helps me to not see people around me. . . . I try to put it into action as often as possible. . . . It helps me cut myself off from everything going on around. I forget what's around me. It doesn't always work, but with anything like this you have to do it again and again until you can do it automatically. (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99).

I agreed, stressing the importance of practice and perseverance with using the technique so she could fully develop the skill of narrowing her focus. Indeed, Laura used this tool throughout the duration of the inquiry.

Another factor that impacted Laura's ability to concentrate was slow play. I talked with her about changing her perspective and focus. Instead of focusing on her frustrations about being held up, I encouraged her to focus on enjoying her time outdoors and the people she is playing with. However, Laura was resistant to this suggestion, responding "when [play is slow because] you are playing with big hitters who have to wait for the area to clear, it destroys the rhythm, Emma. It's very difficult to keep it all together" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99). I suggested she use the concept of the 'circle' to help with this and gave her a copy of the article (Appendix G) to remind her of it. She found this useful since she felt it summarised many of the concepts that had been presented in the seminars. Furthermore, I suggested she use the 'circle' as a tool to help slow herself down when she was playing golf, another factor that Laura reported negatively impacted her golf performance.

Laura's natural tempo was fairly fast and this appeared to be affecting her golf as it caused her to rush when taking her shots. She relayed:

> My big mistake is that I rush too much. I have been rushing all my life and I find it incredibly difficult to sit and slow down. . . . I think basically my main problem is that I don't have the right temperament for golf. I should be a racing driver rushing and doing things. But [with] golf you have to be cool and calm and I find this extremely difficult. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

Laura had a naturally fast walking pace and so walked quickly between her shots. Walking fast can be considered a good trait in golf as it has the effect of speeding up play. However, Laura did not slow down substantially before she played her shots. By not taking the time to prepare both mentally and physically before hitting each shot, Laura's performance was suffering and this was reflected in her scores. Laura noted that this problem was exacerbated when she was told by the marshal to "set the pace" (evaluation record 4, 2/2/1999) or "put your skates on" (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99).

Laura readily admitted that rushing her shot preparation negatively impacted her golf performance, but when questioned how committed she was to changing that one aspect of her game she said it would depend on what she had to do to change it. Much of the second individual consultation was spent working on a solution to this problem. In the first observation session, I noticed that as soon as Laura reached her ball she took her club out of her bag very quickly; apparently without assessing the lie of the ball, distance to the pin, and other cues that may impact shot selection (field notes, 6/1/99). Indeed, Laura agreed that she often made her club selection before she reached her ball. By delaying club selection until she arrived at her ball, I reasoned that not only would Laura reduce her chances of missing out on important cues for shot selection, but it would also help to slow her down. We therefore discussed the possibility of developing a preshot routine and using the concept of the 'circle' as a means to slowing her

down over her ball and facilitating her mental and physical preparation. However, Laura was resistant to this idea, later commenting "I always feel it takes up too much time for the whole game if everybody was to do that" (stimulated recall 2, 18/5/99). In addition, Laura argued that knowing what club she was going to use before she arrived at her ball and planning her shot in advance helped her concentrate. She explained, "it helps you concentrate on what you do, I think. Thinking about [your shot] when you approach the ball sometimes cuts you off from everybody else" (stimulated recall 2, 18/5/99).

Exploring alternative solutions, I returned to asking Laura whether she had ever done anything that helped her slow down. She reported that taking a deep breath before playing a shot helped "most of the time", but remarked that she did not do this consistently. The goal therefore appeared to be to find a way to make Laura do this before every shot. Consequently, Laura and I brainstormed for ideas on how to achieve this. The solution Laura liked best was to put a sticker on the switch of her electric trolley reminding her to take a deep breath before taking her shot. Then, every time she switched her trolley off when she got to her ball she would be reminded to take a deep breath. Laura agreed that she would try this in the upcoming week. However, during our next meeting I asked her about her experience and she said, "I do [take a breath] mostly anyway because I do yoga you see. Whenever I feel myself a little under stress I make myself relax" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99). I was concerned that she had not made any progress in this area but she affirmed, "I'm slowing down gradually. I think something like that you can't alter over night. You just can't. I'm not professional enough to do that" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99).

A third issue that emerged during the MST was that Laura's poor scores in the competitions were affecting her golf enjoyment. At the onset on this inquiry, Laura had a

handicap of 21. However, it did not accurately reflect her golfing ability and Laura never had good scores in the competitions, usually scoring between 18 and 24 Stableford points. These low scores were a cause of discontentment for Laura and after two frustrating years of not being able to play to her handicap she asked the golf club administration to reassess her handicap based on her competition scores. Laura felt that her handicap should be adjusted to 26 or 27, but after review the handicap committee adjusted it to 30. Although she was glad that her handicap had been increased, she commented "it is a little bit below the belt being on 30. I want to come down" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99). Despite this, the impact this handicap adjustment had on Laura's attitude towards golf was remarkable. Although she was not playing better golf, her improved net scores led her to enjoy golf more:

> I enjoy the game a little bit more because my handicap has gone up at long last. . . . The last year I just went out to play golf and I forgot about the score because it depressed me so much. It wouldn't have taken much for me to have given up the whole game altogether. . . . It was soul destroying. I'm off 30 now, . . . it has brought my confidence up already. On Sunday I scored 31 points. Yippee, yippee hooray! . . . My confidence is coming back because I am starting to see scores that are more realistic. I'm also enjoying it more. . . . It's not the money I'm winning. I just want to be recognised that I'm not a bad golfer. (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99)

Centring on the reason that a low score was undermining her golf enjoyment, we discussed switching her focus away from her final score and onto the quality of the shots she had played during the round. This was something that she said she did: "I have to be satisfied with my game, with what I'm doing. Score, or winning prizes, OK it's wonderful, but it's not the essence of playing. You want to play well" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99). Yet despite this

attitude, Laura's golfing enjoyment had been impacted by her low scores and had led her to consider giving up golf.

During the first seminar I highlighted the fact that MST is not a substitute for physical practice. Participants were encouraged to identify what they were prepared to do in order to develop the skills they needed to achieve their goals and then form a contract with themselves. I encouraged them to support and motivate each other as they worked towards their goals. After the second seminar, Laura told me she lacked motivation to get out and play golf. She asked me if I would meet her on the practice ground on Saturday mornings as she felt that that would provide her with the necessary motivation to go and practice. I agreed and we met every Saturday for the next three weeks until she cancelled the fourth Saturday. After that time her practice time waned again, though on occasion she did go to the practice ground before going out on the course, a new behaviour since the onset of the inquiry and one I had encouraged.

Even so, Laura found it very difficult to make enough time to practice before she played. She attested that even on occasions when she arrived at the golf course with enough time to practice she often got waylaid and then ran out of time because she met friends and started talking to them. We did not address this concern immediately as Laura had more pressing concerns that she wanted to discuss in that meeting. However, this topic arose again in the next meeting and so some time was devoted towards devising a plan on how to deal with this and talking about commitment to change. In fact, Laura appeared to have already spent some time thinking about how to cope with this situation:

> I've thought about this already and I have decided that what I will do in future if I'm there in time to practice and somebody approaches me. I will excuse myself and say that

> I'm teeing off very soon and I'm running late can I give you a ring. A little lie, but . . . (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99)

Unfortunately, as this was the last time I had contact with Laura, I was unable to discern whether or not she put this into action and increased her practice time. Oftentimes Laura's intentions and behaviours did not align. Laura always expressed a strong desire to increase the amount of time she practised and to take lessons but did not appear prepared to make the effort to do so. My attempts to help her devise a plan to increase her practice time and arrange for lessons were faced with a barrage of excuses, including "I'm sorry, the putting on the [practice] putting green is completely different from on the real greens" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99); "I thought about going into the [golf] academy but there are too many people there now" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99); and "I haven't the time, it's hard work living here" (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99). Perhaps if she had organised lessons this may have motivated her to practice more. After she received a tip from a friend on how to gain more distance, she spent time on the practice ground practising that.

In sum, the MST process with Laura involved working towards improving her concentration, trying to get her to slow down and carefully prepare for each shot, strengthening her task orientation, and getting her to practice more. Although Laura appeared relatively willing to work towards these objectives during the individual meetings she did little to put any of the techniques into practice.

MST Outcomes

Unfortunately, because I was unable to conduct final nor follow-up interviews with Laura I was unable to fully ascertain what effects the MST had for her. However, during the inquiry a

few ways the MST benefited Laura emerged. First, the MST increased Laura's awareness. She attested:

> You remind us of certain things. You make us more aware of what is important, because we come to an age where we take a lot of things for granted. We think automatically. We do things automatically. But you make us remember to do things that we do automatically or think automatically which is good. (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99)

Second, the MST made her think about her approach to golf more and slow down a little. Third, Laura's concentration improved. She relayed:

> I'm getting my act together now and am working to overcome distractions. . . . [My concentration] has improved. Because now, the other point you tried to make us understand, is to take your time and be in a bubble or a room when you're taking your shot, but in-between when you're walking, talk to people or look at the scenery or whatever. I try to do that and it helps. (individual consultation 3, 22/4/99)

Lastly, for a short while Laura got into a routine of practising her golf on a weekly basis. Unfortunately this did not last for long, but she at least continued to make the effort to try and practice before she went out on the course.

Summary

Golf was a central activity in Laura's life. She played three times a week in the club competitions and highly valued the social opportunities this gave her. Although Laura indicated that she wanted to become a better golfer she did not appear willing to invest the time or effort necessary to improve her skills, whether mental or physical. She missed six seminars and forgot to turn up to a number of meetings we had scheduled. Going to the practice ground appeared too much of an effort for Laura and despite the fact she said she wanted to take lessons and play a

practice round of golf each week, she did neither. Laura appeared almost defensive when I suggested MST techniques she could use to deal with problems she was having and often made excuses for why they would not work for her, even before she tried using them. Despite her overall lack of involvement with the training, Laura saw a few benefits from participating in it. The MST increased her self-awareness, made her think about her shot more and slow down her shot preparation to a certain degree, started to improve her concentration, and slightly increased the amount of time she practised.

Phil

Golfer Profile

Phil, a retired businessman, married with children, was 69 at the start of this inquiry and a very active individual. Throughout his life Phil had been an avid and distinguished athlete. He played soccer and cricket for his university and held the Welsh National record for running quarter-mile. Besides having a deep involvement playing sports, Phil also studied Physical Education, graduating with a First Class diploma. Moreover, he was a certified soccer and cricket coach and also coached rugby and track. As he grew older, Phil looked for sports that he could continue to participate in throughout his life and took up golf and swimming. At the time of the inquiry Phil had been playing golf for 30 years and played to a handicap of 19. He felt golf had become a replacement for the sports he played when he was younger. However, Phil noted, "it's not a question of taking the role of the competitive life I had. It is not that at all. It's recreation" (initial interview, 22/12/98).

Although golf was a recreational pursuit for Phil, it played an important role in his life. Much of the golf Phil played was with his wife and they partnered each other in the weekly club Fourball Betterball competitions. Indeed, he admitted "golf was quite a factor to our coming to

live here [in Spain]. . . . I'm not sure how much La Manga would mean without the golf. The golf obviously is featured very strongly in my life, my life's satisfaction" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Phil described golf as an "absorbing sport", though not to the exclusion of other activities: "I'm not totally wedded to only golf. I read and I write, I climb mountains and swim" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Yet he noted, "without the golf I think I would find a big hole in my life's pleasure" (initial interview, 22/12/98).

Golf was not always pleasurable for Phil as his enjoyment was highly dependent on his performance, which often fluctuated dramatically throughout a round. These inconsistencies in his performance had become a source of frustration and irritation for him and were starting to diminish his golf enjoyment. In fact, it was Phil's waning golf enjoyment due to his frustration with erratic performance that motivated him to participate in the MST:

> I'd like to gain more consistent enjoyment from golf through more consistent play or less bad play. . . . If I [could] play to my handicap regularly then I'd probably feel a lot happier. . . . I'm not looking to be a great golfer, I think that's gone by the board. But I need to perform to [a level of] my satisfaction which, although I'm not a perfectionist, I don't have sloppy standards either. But I need to, at least most of the time, get playing that way so that I can come away and say 'I enjoyed that'. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

At the start of the inquiry Phil's golf goal was to play more consistent golf. He no longer had desires to decrease his handicap. His strong task orientation was apparent throughout the inquiry and he described the meaning of a successful round of golf as follows:

> It's rather like [I defined] success on the track, I didn't need to win. I remember once breaking the Welsh record in the quarter-mile. I was second and yet that probably gave me more satisfaction because I had performed far better than I expected myself to do. . . .

> I'm always delighted for other people [when they do well]. It's never been a source of peevement for me to have someone do better than I do. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

In order to achieve his goal of more consistent performance, Phil indicated he would be willing to practice more. Although he played golf three times a week he only did a "negligible" amount of practice. Phil did not believe that the time he spent on the practice ground transferred to improvements on the golf course. However, when Phil had a consistent swing fault he would go to the practice ground to try and remedy it. He preferred to correct his own faults rather than go to a golf professional as he felt lessons he had taken in the past had harmed rather than helped his swing because the golf professional had tried to teach him an orthodox swing rather than refine his natural swing.

Furthermore, Phil was aware that he needed to improve his focusing ability if he was to play more consistently and was willing to work on this:

> I think I need to reassemble my thoughts when I'm taking a shot. I used to just walk up to the ball and hit it and most of the time that was good enough. Now perhaps I think about it too much. But then, I think [improving my] concentration would be a requirement to get my game better. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

If Phil arrived at his ball with enough time before it was his turn to play he would look at the lie of the ball and the distance and line to the pin, which generally led to him hitting a better shot. Yet, if he did not have to wait for one of his playing partners to play he would just hit the ball without giving any thought to the shot he wanted to play, commenting "I suppose I don't spend a lot of time planning or thinking about the next shot" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Having played fast paced open-skill sports throughout his earlier life, Phil described himself as an "intuitive

player" and felt this contrasted to the discipline required when playing golf. Phil admitted he was not as disciplined as he felt he should be and was prepared to change this.

Phil's lackadaisical attitude carried over to his preparation for golf, something that was fairly non-existent. He did not think about his upcoming round nor did he hit balls on the range before stepping onto the course. If he had time before teeing off he might chip and putt, and once at the tee would swing a club a few times to loosen-up, though admitted he often did not have time to even do this. He commented:

> I don't prepare as clear as I should, . . . but then again I think I should be able to walk into it and hit it right. But that's not so. I think there's much more technique involved than I gave [golf] credit for originally, but that was because I could play every game very easily. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

In short, Phil had a strong athletic background and turned to golf as he got older. Although only one of a number of recreational pursuits Phil engaged in, golf played a significant role in his life and was a contributing factor to his life satisfaction. However, his inconsistent performance on the golf course was starting to affect his golfing enjoyment. Phil hoped that the MST would be able to help him become more consistent. Although prior to the MST Phil did not appear to be doing anything to improve his consistency – he rarely practised and was reluctant to take lessons – he attested "I think it matters enough to get reasonably well motivated to do something [now]" (initial interview, 22/12/98).

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Phil struggled to define the concept of enjoyment to his satisfaction. He philosophised over the meaning and experience of enjoyment and what he believed determined whether

something was enjoyable. He arrived at what seemed to be the most satisfactory explanation for him through considering the concept of friendship:

> I struggled to define friendship the other day. The Americans use the term very freely, they don't really mean friendship by my yardstick. But even I found it hard to define, anymore than I could define enjoyment really. To me it's thinking about friends, however distant, and it's a sort of inward smile, if you like. Reflecting about them you get some warmth of an inward smile. With enjoyment it's not so different. . . . But what is that that makes you say 'I enjoyed that'? It's almost incapable of definition. . . . I'm not sure I can define it, the feeling of enjoyment. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Nonetheless, Phil was able to articulate the factors that underlied and undermined his golf enjoyment.

Phil's golf enjoyment was strongly related to his performance. Specifically, Phil derived pleasure and satisfaction from hitting the ball a long way. Reflecting on why he found this pleasurable he noted, "I think partly because it's not that frequent that it becomes ordinary. It's something exceptional. Something rather nice that you have done that comes off. Something rather good" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Another performance related source of golf enjoyment was hitting a good shot where "it gets almost precisely where you aimed for and intended it to be, and that's not easy. And then you get a succession of those and it adds to your enjoyment" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Phil's enjoyment was further heightened with appreciation for how difficult the game of golf is. Indeed, feelings of achievement were an important source of Phil's golf enjoyment:

> Enjoyment is that I have done things that I have wanted to do as well as I would like them to be done. When it was climbing it was sort of 'conquering', [whether it was a]

> fear of heights or maybe feeling faint, or a particular rock face. . . . [I derive enjoyment from achieving] something that I didn't think I could do or trying something that I thought was difficult. There was one difficult situation where on the North [Course] I was in the barranca with some stones and to get to the green I had to get a lot of lift as there were trees in the way. And it was one of the rare things where everything went absolutely right. I missed the stones, I shot the ball high from in the barranca, out the barranca, over the trees, and it landed by the pin. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Recognition of his improvement and the learning experience in golf also served to enhance Phil's golfing enjoyment, especially if it was something that he consciously worked towards improving:

> I think there is some satisfaction that's more worked for, where with some effort results are better . ... If I concentrate on [one thing, and] there's improvement in one area by a little more diligence and careful thought then that's nice too. I think 'aahh I did that, you know two weeks ago I was nowhere near'. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Although task oriented, and focused on his own performance, winning in a competitive situation amplified Phil's enjoyment. He remarked, "if you happen to be winning as well then that's an extra, that's a nice thing" (initial interview, 22/12/98). When playing in a team event, Phil's enjoyment was heightened when he was able to make a contribution to his team:

> If it's a team thing, like a Thursday [Owners' Scramble, and] I've made a good contribution to the team effort then that matters too. . . . Some Thursdays, when we're in a bit of difficulty, I can sometimes produce something out of the hat, which helps. . . . That's a plus, in nice company, when I can make a contribution. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Besides performance related factors, Phil also derived his golfing enjoyment from being outside, the physical activity associated with walking round the course, and the social aspects of the game. Throughout his life, Phil had always enjoyed being outdoors. Although he could not pinpoint what is was about the outdoors he enjoyed so much he reported:

> I certainly get more pleasure from outdoor life than being indoors. . . . I've [always] been an outdoorsman, whether it's been bird watching or sailing or being on the sports field. I'm not sure why. All I know is that is what I've wanted to do – spend time on farms or game reserves in Africa. Maybe there's much more going on there than indoors [where] we have created much of the structures, [and] it's our own input and not so much input from other naturally occurring things. There is a lot of interest there in the big wide world, we can find something new all the time. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Besides providing Phil with the opportunity to be outdoors, golf also provided him with "an excuse for a good walk". He explained:

> I can't just go and exercise normally without having some motive: hitting a silly little ball around or get to the top of that hill to see some views I haven't explored before. . . . [Golf] provides a motive, however trivial. . . . It gives some sort of rationale for being out walking. Otherwise you'd be walking back and forth and you'd start to think how daft this is. But if you take the ball with you it's less crazy! (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Phil attested, "playing with people you enjoy being with is also significant [to golfing enjoyment]" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Phil and his wife derived a lot of enjoyment from playing with each other and he enjoyed playing in good company in general. Furthermore, when his playing partners played well, especially if they were friends or regular competitors, it added to his golfing enjoyment.

Although Phil derived his golfing enjoyment from a number of different sources, two factors undermined his enjoyment: poor performance and slow play. Again, the link between performance and enjoyment emerged. He noted, "I'm not a perfectionist, I settled for 98% a long time ago, but I think it's when [my performance] falls short of what I'm capable of then it's frustrating, irritating, and not very satisfying" (initial interview, 22/12/98). Phil expanded:

> If the shots are going well I'm pretty happy walking round [the course]. If I have a bad shot I can usually put that by, [but] if I get a second bad shot or a third bad shot then I start to think about that, which I shouldn't. I should put it aside and start afresh. But it's part of me. I don't enjoy it. I feel frustrated [and] I feel I'm being rather stupid and I don't like being stupid. So that's part of it and that detracts from the enjoyment. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Playing badly had an overt effect on Phil's demeanour. A fact his wife recognised even when she was not playing in the same flight as him.

Slow play was another source of frustration for Phil. Not only did he not enjoy having to wait with nothing to do between shots, but the hold ups also broke his rhythm, which had a negative impact on his performance:

> I need involvement and active sport. . . . There are times on the West [course] when you can be hanging around the tee for 20 minutes. So having got mobile and the stroke has become reasonably fluid, you start from scratch again, . . . [which] is not the way I'm going to play the best golf. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

MST Experience

Although Phil had not had any formal mental training, his experience as an athlete and coach had made him aware of some of the techniques and the importance of it:

> I think it's a science that is very late developing. I mean it's been done subconsciously by people who have coached things before, it must have been in the back of their minds how to get people to perform better. . . . I think without having studied sport psychology per se, I think I was studying the individuals I was teaching. . . . I suppose it was more intuitive again, rather than formal study. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Phil fully involved himself in the organised components of the MST. He attended all bar one of the seminars, which he missed while on holiday, and was always active during group discussions (see Table 4). We met four times individually and Phil completed 19 evaluation records. Overall, Phil found the MST to be a fun, positive, and worthwhile experience, so much so he wanted to share his experience with others in the community. He indicated that he intended to ask the editor of the La Manga Club magazine if he could write "a positive encouraging critique for the magazine from the perspective of one of the participants" (follow-up 2, 5/1/00). However, no such article was ever published.

There were a number of factors that Phil specifically enjoyed about the MST. Being a member of a small group of people who were working towards similar goals proved to be a source of enjoyment for Phil. Furthermore, he enjoyed the fact that the MST helped him to play more consistent golf and control his emotions when he was not playing as well. Another highlight was "the intellectual thing of thinking about something which I'd taken for granted before and hadn't put much thought into. I've never really been a big student of the game of golf" (final interview, 7/5/99). Moreover, Phil enjoyed the opportunity the MST afforded him to learn more about himself and become more aware of his attitude, noting "it's very rarely that we do much self-analysis" (final interview, 7/5/99). That said, Phil remarked that developing an awareness of the self does not always reveal positive characteristics and consequently "real

learning experiences are usually uncomfortable" (course evaluation, 18/5/99). Indeed, through the MST Phil became aware of his frustrations with the inconsistencies in his game and once they became apparent he felt compelled to do something about it, noting "[it's] uncomfortable to have to work at something at this stage [of life]" (final interview, 7/5/99). However, the self-growth and improvement at the end of the MST negated the negatives and so created a positive experience overall.

Phil had never analysed his performance in a leisure time pursuit before, which struck him as strange given he spent his business career analysing problems and had coached sport. Yet he noted, "it's easier to do it looking at someone else's performance than your own" (final interview, 4/5/99). Consequently, he indicated, "[the MST] was refreshing in that I was now going to apply this to my performance in golf and why it was so miserable" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Phil noted that it was this critical and analytical approach to the MST that contributed to the outcomes for him. Although he perceived much of the MST to be the application of common sense, Phil noted:

> Common sense is not really as common as one would think. A lot of these [tools] are probably in existence, but people don't take the trouble to look at them critically and analytically. We don't do that as a daily thing and I think you have to break down [the mental aspect of golf], as you have done, into elements to look at, so that the corporate whole can be analysed properly. (final interview, 4/5/99)

Each week these "elements" formed the foci of the seminars. The ensuing week Phil experimented with the tools and techniques that were discussed and "absorb[ed] the portions" that he found to be of immediate benefit to him. Over the course of the MST he selected four

tools that he found helped him create an on-task focus, which promoted more consistent golf performance and consequently greater enjoyment. Ten weeks into the training, Phil felt he was equipped with all the tools he needed and now had to continue to apply them on a regular basis. He was reluctant to adopt the use of any more tools, conscious of the importance of keeping things simple. He reported on his progress:

> Progressively I'm using [the tools] more and more and more. Like any learning curve it seems to be I can't go all the way in one fell swoop. . . . Not that I'm taking time to learn the skills, but to use the skills progressively more and more. What I do need to do is maintain all of these tools for the whole 18 holes which has become much more feasible because of the progress made so far, time will give me that. (individual consultation 4, 16/4/99)

Eventually, Phil felt that his use of the tools was almost subconscious and it was only after a lapse in his performance that he consciously returned to the use of the tools. Fatigue also appeared to make it harder for Phil to remain disciplined in his adherence to the use of the tools, as did playing in the Scramble. In particular, Phil found it hard to turn his concentration on and off when playing in the Scramble. When playing golf in this format Phil felt he had to pay attention to how his team-mates were playing and make decisions on which ball they would use, thereby making it hard for him to turn his focus away from golf in-between shots.

Because Phil recognised a correlation between his use of the MST techniques and hitting a good shot he became annoyed when he became lax in their application:

> I kick myself after [I let the routine fall off] because . . . it can make a difference. I'm surprised at how consistent [it is] that if I do go through all this routine, how much better and more predictable the shot is. (final interview, 4/5/99)

Although Phil noted he had "tried pretty much all the tools that were raised at different periods" (final interview, 7/5/99), he felt that he should have given more time applying some of them, especially some of the more complicated ones (e.g., Smart Golf was "a little to heavy"). Distractions during competitions, the time required by the technique, and pressure to not slow down play prevented Phil from spending more time implementing more tools on the course. Instead, he felt he needed to go out on the course and play on his own to fully experiment with them. Despite my urging, Phil did not practice any of the skills away from the golf course. Furthermore, he postulated "maybe my selectivity has interfered with a full scale testing of all of them. I found some tools were particularly useful and I have adopted those. So maybe I haven't given enough time to the others" (final interview, 7/5/99). Certainly, Phil wanted to keep things uncomplicated and not have too many things to think about. For this reason he did not attend the series of four workshops I offered later in the year:

> I have what I need. I would never say that there's nothing new for me, because even at my age there's always something new to learn. I think I gained a lot previously and it is still of value to me. If there's going to be some new material as well, then I don't know how much more I could cope with. So I felt that perhaps at the moment I didn't need anything else, except to get back doing the things that I should have done in the first place. (follow-up 2, 5/1/00)

The majority of the information Phil garnered and then used came from the seminars. During the times we met one-on-one, we discussed how he was using this information and how he could individualise the tools further to meet his needs. Phil did not come into the individual meetings with specific concerns he wanted to work on. Instead, he seemed content working with

the information from the seminars. Phil perceived the individual meetings to be a follow-up to the evaluation records:

> It's a following up of the evaluation sheets that we filled in because [the individual meetings are] forcing us to think about things we normally would dismiss or not give a thought. I hadn't thought 'Why am I not performing as well today?' or 'Why did I do that on that particular shot?' and this I should do and you forced me to. Getting the answer is not as easy. I think [the individual meetings are] a very good tool because there you are getting down to the individual and you can focus on the individual and what he or she needs to do. (final interview, 4/5/99)

Although Phil felt the evaluation records were a "chore, up to a point", he considered them to be an "essential part" of the MST experience. He indicated they allowed him to reflect on the things he learned in the seminars, encouraged him to think about the different components of golf, and examine why maybe he did not enjoy the round as much as he wanted to. By waiting a while before he assessed his round, Phil felt he benefited because he could be more objective. He explained:

> [There is an] intuitive [feeling] that dominates when you first come off the course, say you've played well or badly. [It] is a little different when you go back [later] and do this analysis because then you're reflecting more objectively about what happened. There is that discipline there that comes from analysing what you're doing, that you don't get immediately on the course or when you've just finished. You've played well, you're on a high, and you come away feeling quite well. Or conversely, you're depressed by having done all this daft stuff again, but coming back and [analysing the round and seeing] it only happened twice in the game, you know, [it's not that bad]. (seminar #12, 6/4/99)

Phil iterated that the opportunities for the participants to share their experiences during the seminars were helpful, interesting, and enjoyable and he would have liked to have seen this occur more frequently. Discussion and feedback reinforced things that he had done or felt, as did repeated reference to the use of specific tools during the seminars, both of which served to engage Phil more fully in the process.

MST Process

In the initial interview a key area emerged in which I felt Phil could be helped through MST to achieve his goal of more consistent performance and consequently greater enjoyment. Phil often appeared to have an inappropriate focus before executing a shot. He showed no diligence in assessing the shot requirements and/or sometimes would focus on trying to make up for a mistake or put pressure on himself to make a contribution in a team event. In addition, putting appeared to be a weak part of his game. During the MST, Phil found four tools were of particular benefit to him, namely switching his concentration away from his game in-between playing shots, deep breathing, imagery, and a cue word. How he came to adopt, develop, and use these tools to achieve a more appropriate focus will be delineated in this section.

Prior to the MST, Phil had a casual approach to golf and, in general, did not engage in any systematic shot preparation. However, he divulged "[instances] where the task has been obviously difficult, I have tended to focus more and do a better job" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Similarly, if he felt pressure to hit a good shot, such as in a team event (especially if he was the team captain), he remarked that he "forced his focus" and again found that to be beneficial. Although Phil was aware he needed to focus on the requirements of the task for every shot, he was reluctant to do so because he felt it diminished the time he could socialise with his

playing partners as it required him to walk ahead of them so he could get to his ball early enough to prepare.

Another factor that impacted Phil's ability to focus was his tendency to dwell on mistakes and let them affect subsequent shots. He realised, "if I could get to the stage of always ignoring what's gone before, except where it teaches you something, I could probably be a little more consistent [in my golf performance]" (initial interview, 22/12/98). In the early stages of the MST Phil used self-talk to try to remain positive and refocus in such instances: "[I'd] tell myself that what had happened earlier was not relevant. I had played many, many shots in the past from similar positions very successfully and there would be neuromuscular memory to repeat the better performances" (evaluation record 5, 7/2/99). However, this attitude only brought him a modicum of success and it tended to still take him a few holes to fully refocus.

In seminar #4 I presented a number of techniques designed to help golfers remain in the present. Phil implemented two of these techniques directly into his game the following week and found them to be particularly effective. The first of these techniques was the use of a cue word, or what Phil came to call his "focusing device". The purpose of this was to remind the golfer of key points (i.e., relevant cues) prior to shot execution. Phil's original cue was "SS", which stood for "Seve Swing" but he quickly expanded it to SAS: "Slow swing à la Seve" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Seve Ballesteros was a highly successful Spanish golf professional with 88 tournament wins to his name. The cue was designed to remind Phil to have a slow back-swing and keep his head still. He explained how he came up with this cue:

> This relates to a large photograph that used to be in the pro shop in the old hotel. The camera has caught Seve's swing and the ball in flight with Seve's eye still fixed on the original ball position at impact. (evaluation record 7, 16/2/99)

Phil continued to use this cue throughout the inquiry and was still using it at the eight month follow-up when he attested to its effectiveness in helping him remain focused on the task at hand.

The second technique that Phil adopted was to switch his attention away from his golf in-between shots. Phil related how it benefited him:

> I like what you suggested about switching concentration on and off rather than trying to sustain it for the whole round. When I used to start trying to concentrate I was trying to do it for the whole round and it was not lasting. Now switching off and sharply switching on to focus on what I was doing is better and I sustained [my concentration]. I played the last hole at least as well as the first hole this time, and that hasn't happened. (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99)

The analogy of the 'circle' served to reinforce this idea. Phil described how it helped him:

> When you mentioned the circle I thought that's a good approach, that meter ring round the ball. Nothing disturbs me [when I'm in it], it's just that shot, nothing else. Outside the circle anything goes, but once I'm back in the circle I have to focus on what I'm doing. That helps. (individual consultation 4, 16/4/99)

These two tools, along with imagery and deep breathing, had a fairly immediate and rather positive effect on Phil's ability to focus on upcoming shots. He used these tools to form a basic preshot routine. Before each shot Phil would switch his concentration on, say "forget what's gone, this is it", take a couple of deep breaths, picture where he wanted his shot to go, and think "SAS". Phil commented, "having something specific to think of and not allowing my mind to think about previous mistakes is helping my game enormously" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). In essence, these tools brought about the "foreign focus" or "forced focus" that Phil

only used to experience when he faced a difficult shot or felt he had to contribute to his team. He indicated:

> This [focus] is becoming the norm now, rather than the exception. The exception before was the awkward shot required four or five times in 18 holes that forced me to focus. Now it's becoming the norm because of the discipline of the mental training to do the techniques. It's coming without too much strain. Every shot now is becoming one of a challenge to do the right thing. (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99)

Another attention control technique that was introduced in seminar #4 was the concept of 'Personal Par', a technique proposed to "provide short-term and specific goals, to enhance attention to the play on each hole, and to minimise the tendency to remember a failure on previous holes" (Keogh & Smith, 1985, p. 43). Although Phil exercised the theory of 'Personal Par' he pronounced "I'm not sure that my personal par is good enough for me [because] it's an average of when I was playing badly" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Consequently, even if he made his personal pars it did not serve to increase his enjoyment. Although, the idea of the 'Personal Par' was not effective in the way it was intended it did serve a valuable purpose for Phil. During one round Phil achieved his 'Personal Par' on two holes on the first nine and seven holes on the back nine, thereby highlighting he could regain an acceptable level of performance after a poor start. He explained:

> I got better on the back 9. I got 7 out of 9 [personal pars], which is not great, but enough to show you can pull away from a bad situation. That helped the next time when I said 'What's gone before is not relevant. This is where we are. This is what I have to do'. . . . So I think it certainly changed an attitude, is changing an attitude, and it's for the better. (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99)

Overall, Phil found it more effective to use his cue word and think shot-by-shot, rather than use 'Personal Par', which made him think hole-by-hole. He explained:

> [With the 'Personal Par'] I was thinking about the total instead of the individual [shot], the little bit I wanted to do. I would rather focus on what I'm doing, and if I can do that well the results will fall into place. I had done better in getting closer to my handicap by looking at one shot at a time rather than the target for the hole. (final interview, 4/5/99)

Another factor that negatively impacted Phil's ability to focus on relevant cues, and that persisted to some degree throughout the inquiry, was a tendency to "try too hard" in certain situations, in particular following a bad shot:

> I certainly feel I'm thinking about [a previous bad shot] more than I should when it comes to the next shot and then there is that tendency to try and make up [for it]. . . . Let's say it was a topped shot and I'd only gone 100 yards instead of the intended 150, I then, subconsciously, am thinking 'well I'll make it up on the next one' and I try that bit harder and that is disastrous for me in golf because I then have a second bad shot. . . . If I don't try, and I'm relaxed and casual almost, it all goes rather well. (initial interview, 22/12/98)

Phil's tendency to "try too hard" was also evident in competitions, especially in team events when he wanted to contribute to the team effort, and he observed he did not play as well in competitive rounds. At one stage early on in the MST, Phil even started to question whether he should continue to play in competitions. He had begun to find, due to his poor performance, that "competition in golf is not very fruitful in terms of enjoyment" and speculated "maybe I set the wrong objectives by going in competitions as that introduces pressure, which leads to anxiety, which is then screwing up my shots" (seminar #3, 2/2/99).

Perhaps, by trying too hard, he was creating a degree of muscle tension that was affecting his rhythm. To alleviate this problem, I felt it was important that Phil learned to become aware of his tension prior to shot execution, adjust it to an optimum level, and then refocus on the upcoming shot. As a result of the MST Phil did start to become more aware of his tension. Moreover, he employed some of the tools presented in the seminars to control it. He described how:

> I have to start with calming down, there the breathing is helping. . . . Deep breathing helps to relax [me]. Deep breathing also helps check previous irritation. . . . But at the same time one is relaxing, . . . relaxing the shoulders. . . . I can think the muscles through a bit; shaking, moving the muscles to relax them. (individual consultation 3, 2/4/99)

Having relaxed, Phil would then say to himself "Come on. Here it is. You've done this many times [before]" and refocus on the requirements of the task using his cue word, "SAS". Three months into the MST, Phil attested this routine was reducing his tendency to "try too hard", though he had not eliminated the problem entirely. Phil reasoned the routine was effective since it made him think about what he had to do to execute his next shot rather than the need to make up distance from a previous bad shot:

> I don't, nearly as much, think about how to make up for a previous shot because I've put that previous shot behind me. Now I tend to focus on what I need to accomplish with this shot. I'm not thinking that I have to force this, . . . it's more objective: 'What do I need to accomplish on the next shot', rather than 'I have to make up this, I have to make up this'. . . . The biggest thing is playing one shot at a time. (individual consultation 4, 16/4/99)

Although by the end of the MST, Phil had not developed enough discipline to use this approach before every shot, and therefore still occasionally fell into the trap of trying too hard, he was aware of the problem and what he had to do to solve it.

The fourth tool that Phil found to be beneficial in helping him focus on the upcoming shot was imagery. Immediately following the imagery seminar, Phil started to employ imagery on the course and just over three weeks later was using imagery to plan his shots on a consistent basis. He described his imagery:

> [I imagine] the ball, I do it like Jack Nicklaus [said he does (see seminar #8)], where it's landing and coming back from that to where I'm orientating. And thinking maybe I should come in with the wind or over the bunker or . . . that sort of thing. I can picture the ball flying that way. And it can help, either it's helping or I've been lucky choosing the right shot! Collectively, it disciplines one, whereas in the past I used to pretty much walk up to the ball and swing. (individual consultation 3, 2/4/99)

To a lesser extent, Phil started to use imagery on the range to imagine the shot he wanted to hit. He reported, "it does help and you get more chance to do it on the range actually because your groove stays sharper. So that helps. And then being able to translate it [to imagining how the swing feels]" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Phil's putting was a weak point of his golf game. In his first evaluation record he documented ten three-putts and it was evident that putting was a source of frustration for him. Given the importance of putting in golf, I considered it to be an important area to focus our work on. One round Phil set himself the goal of two-putting every hole. He went on to achieve that goal, which provided him with a great deal of pleasure: "I was walking on air coming away from that" (seminar #3, 2/2/99).

Phil speculated that part of his problem was a lack of confidence in his putting, which caused him to look up to see where the ball was going before he had completed his stroke and push the putt off line. Also, I suspected that because the specific goal of two-putting each hole led to a dramatic improvement in his putting, maybe he rushed his putting and did not give enough attention to the demands of the task (e.g., distance and line of the putt). Phil agreed that could have been a contributing factor, noting he was "pretty casual about putting" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Consequently, I suggested he develop a putting routine to slow down his shot preparation. Following this discussion, Phil started to think "SAS" prior to taking a putt to remind him to keep his head still. Phil also started to take a deep breath prior to the putting stroke, again to help slow him down. Within three weeks Phil documented improvements in his putting in his evaluation records. He described what he attributed the improvements to:

> I can stand over the ball and just put aside what has gone before and say this is what is needed. I'm looking at the distance of the putt. I'm looking at the line. I'm saying I need to go back this far. Taking more care. I used to just walk up and hit it. And it's not so now. You can't do that. I'm slowing down now through using the routine. (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99)

Through analysing his game and recognising his putting was letting him down, Phil started to pay more attention to it. Something he had not done before because it did not give him much enjoyment:

> I have not valued [putting] as a shot which gives me aesthetic pleasure such as a long drive, or a good iron shot, or a nice shot pitched up high which stops where you put it. They're aesthetically more pleasing. But of value for the game, putting is everything and I have not given it the attention. (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99)

Consequently, we also discussed ways that Phil could derive more pleasure from putting (e.g., appreciating the sound of the ball falling into the hole rather than the aesthetics of the flight of the ball). Indeed, at our next meeting Phil reported, "for the long putts I have been enjoying the passage of the ball, the pace and the line as it curls in. It looks great" (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99).

To conclude, the main focus of the MST for Phil was to improve his focus, especially for putting. He found the 'circle', deep breathing, imagery, and an attentional cue word helped him to this end.

MST Outcomes

At the outset of the inquiry Phil indicated that he wanted to "gain more consistent enjoyment from golf through more consistent play or less bad play" (initial interview, 22/12/98) as a result of participating in the MST. He achieved his objectives. Not only did Phil enjoy golf more because he was performing at a higher level more consistently, but also because he learned to control the negative emotions associated with his mistakes. Moreover, Phil learned to look for enjoyment in things outside the performance domain and appreciate these by switching his attention away from golf in-between playing his shots. Linked to improvements in his performance came increases in Phil's confidence. Lastly, Phil's blood pressure dropped, something he attributed to being more in control of his emotions. Changes in his mental skills, as assessed by the MSQ, can be seen in Figure 6. These themes will be elaborated on in this section.

Phil's golf performance improved over the course of the MST. Although improvements in his performance could not be assessed by changes in handicap because he did not play in competitions that would have allowed for its adjustment, Phil's scores reflected this improvement. In addition, Phil reported on numerous occasions that his golf was more

consistent: "There's much less oscillation between the peak performance and the poor performance and the overall average must be levelling out and at a higher level than it was" (final interview, 4/5/99). Golfers who regularly played with Phil also recognised improvements in his golf. Phil related, "my partner of many months volunteered the information that I was playing very much better than in the last few months. I agree that my all round play is more consistent" (evaluation record 9, 9/3/99). In fact, he even started to consider the possibility of lowering his handicap because he was playing so well, a feat he had given up on before.

There is no doubt that Phil's improvement led to greater golf enjoyment for him. He frequently referred to the link between enjoyment and performance. Feelings of satisfaction were further heightened for Phil because his improvement was the result of a concerted effort. Although Phil did not increase the amount he practised, he did begin to enjoy what time he did spend practising, noting "I'm probably making the few practice sessions I have a little more interesting because of the tools [I learned]" (final interview, 7/5/99).

Not only was Phil enjoying golf more because he was playing better, but on the occasions his performance lapsed he was less likely to dwell on it and let it adversely affect future performance, thereby enhancing his enjoyment on a number of levels. He explained why:

> I know that [the lapse] is short lived. It might last a few holes, but at least [I know] I can come back from that situation and start enjoying the game. There was one time when I'd have carried it with me the whole game, especially if it was early on [in the round] and I'd done something daft. I'd still be thinking about that stupid shot an hour or two later which is nonsense really. I've changed from that, I can shrug it off more readily. . . . Then, when you start to play reasonably [again], there's reinforced enjoyment because you've come out of [the bad patch]. (final interview, 7/5/99)

Phil felt that he was better able to control the frustration and irritation he used to experience when he was not playing well, reporting "my enjoyment from [golf] is very much better because I'm not uptight the whole game, or kicking myself about bad shots [I hit] earlier" (individual consultation 3, 2/4/99). Eliminating these negative emotions was of further importance because when he played with his wife he revealed:

> There's a problem being a little concerned about the other's game and their enjoyment. And I think it's certainly the case if I have a bad time [my wife] will have a bad time. . . . My ill feeling of doing something badly affected my demeanour and that was picked up by [her] and would upset her. Then, I in turn would see her get upset and there would be a cumulative effect. (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99)

However, that changed by the end of the MST as Phil had better emotion control. Indeed, he noted, "I certainly stop myself every time I start thinking negatively now. [I say] 'Now, come on, Phil', and start thinking something positive. That again was from the seminars. I would never attempt to control the thoughts before but now I do" (final interview, 4/5/99). He described this change as "good and satisfying to me as part of personal development. It's [having] that control over emotions and feelings" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Indeed, Phil's attitude to golf changed over the course of the MST. Towards the start of the MST, he had reflected, "I am normally quite philosophical and well adjusted. Perhaps I need to apply more of this acquired balance to my golf game" (evaluation record 1, 23/1/99). By the end of the MST Phil had indeed done this, reporting "my daily, or my normal, behaviour is now being applied in the game of golf, which it clearly wasn't in the past, and to the benefit of both my golf and myself" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Furthermore, the negative feelings that Phil used to carry with him after a bad shot served to undermine his confidence. However, having learned through the MST that he could put those feelings aside he started to develop confidence that his performance would return to a more acceptable level later in the round. The increased confidence then helped his performance, which in turn strengthened his confidence, which in turn helped his performance and so on, leading to greater enjoyment.

Phil's golf enjoyment also increased through greater awareness of other potential sources of golf enjoyment besides performance. On the golf course he learned to switch his attention away from golf in-between shots, giving him more time to appreciate other factors which resulted in "heightened pleasure derived from the social contact with fellow players, the delightful weather, bird song, scenery etc" (letter, 3/5/99). Phil iterated:

> I think it's very good to have this ability to switch on and off, because it used to be that I'd probably been less than sociable in a sense because I was too concentrated on the game, on every shot and on the approach to the shot. I'd be up at my ball waiting and thinking 'come on' and waiting for them to have their shot. It's much better now because I can stand on the tee if I'm held up and have a chat knowing that most of the time I can switch back on and focus on the shot ahead, which is good, very good. It leads to more enjoyment too. (individual consultation 4, 16/4/99)

Given that it was better performance that led to greater golf enjoyment for Phil, it is worth considering what he perceived led to him playing more consistently. In short, Phil postulated that it was due to the four tools he adopted. Reflecting in an evaluation record, Phil wrote:

> I have the capability to play golf at an acceptable level (to me). Most impediments to do this [previously] have not been an inability to execute the shots by the absence of skill but carelessness and lack of concentration/focus or 'trying too hard'. The tools mentioned above, with consistent use, are producing more consistent performance, confidence, and pleasure. (evaluation record 17, 4/4/99)

Besides helping him focus, the tools enable Phil to trust his swing and not try to steer or control it:

> Somehow [the imagery] helps on top of the other [tools] to focus on what I'm doing. The swing seems more natural because I'm not thinking about the swing. I could do it before, but I was inhibited from doing it before because I was forcing it. Now it's falling into place and I'm not thinking so much as to how to do something, as doing it. (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99)

Certainly the MST changed Phil's approach to golf:

> I discovered a number of things. First of all, my casual approach to most games has been very facile, it won't do in golf, that's for sure. I've never had to concentrate on shots as they seem to come fairly naturally before. But what's happened in the last few weeks is that I very definitely think more about the game and what I'm doing. (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99)

The performance profiling conducted in the third week of the MST facilitated this process:

> I think [performance profiling] was an aid because we started looking at elements of [golf]. We don't, or we very rarely in a game, at least I've never done so much in a game, break down the elements that were important for focusing on and that was good for me. Looking at something like [golf], which is a highly technical game really, does cause an

> awful lot of thinking. I never used to think about it and that was another thing you started, you forced us to look at the game, in total and by its elements, and I've never had to do that. That was a very refreshing thing, because having done that the results are that much better than before. (final interview, 4/5/99)

As a result of the MST, Phil learned that with a bit of effort and application of his new knowledge he could improve his golf, which was important if he was going to continue playing in the future. He admitted that, in the past, when he had not been able to do something well he had a tendency to say "Oh, to hell with it" (final interview, 7/5/99) and give up. He explained this as follows:

> If it's something that requires a lot of perseverance or effort I've not been very keen to do that. That's a lazy streak, yes, but I think it's also that I *expect* to do something with minimal effort. That's been a problem from school days on. It's easy when you don't have to study very hard or you don't have to train very hard and you're in the first teams. . . . But I learned [from the MST] that I can, given the will, get over a lazy streak and stick at something a bit longer than I would otherwise do. I learned something about myself, a bit late learning but . . . (final interview, 7/5/99)

Phil did not report benefiting from the MST in areas of his life outside golf. However, he noted that his blood pressure was lower and he no longer needed to take medication to regulate it. He hypothesised why:

> It might be because I'm more controlled of my emotions. I never felt [uptight] except when I played golf. I would get cross with myself and I could feel the irritability and I'm not an irritable person, not really. So maybe this [MST] has helped on that too, I think it probably has. . . . I've logged [my blood pressure] morning and night and it hasn't been

> much higher in the evening after playing [golf] so, that's, perhaps, a very revealing thing. It could well be that I have more control of my blood pressure as well because of this [MST]. I really think that. (final interview, 4/5/99)

Summary

Phil came from a distinguished sporting background and was a good golfer. However, he had trouble playing well on a consistent basis and this was affecting his golf enjoyment. He hoped that participating in the MST would help change this. Phil absorbed himself in the training. He was eager to learn, constantly reflecting on the material and trying to make connections, and was always engaged in discussions. Phil tried many of the MST techniques presented, but found four to be particularly helpful for him, namely the 'circle', deep breathing, imagery, and an attentional cue. Applying these tools helped Phil to play more consistently, enjoy golf more, and improve his emotional control. More generally, the MST made Phil analyse his golf game and approach it in a more careful, thoughtful, and precise manner.

Annika

Golfer Profile

Annika was a German woman who had recently retired from a successful career in distance learning. She was 59 years old at the start of the inquiry and married with one daughter. Annika did not have an athletic background and had only started playing golf about two years before the start of the inquiry, yet she voiced surprise at how big a part of her life golf had become since then. Annika started playing golf after she and her husband moved to La Manga when they retired, feeling "if you stay [at La Manga Club] without golf, it's not the same. I think they should go together" (initial interview, 29/12/98). Moreover, they felt golf was a sport they could enjoy into later life.

At the start of the inquiry Annika played golf three to four times per week and stated she did not want to play more often than that. Although she might go to the practice ground a couple of times a week for 30 to 60 minutes a time, Annika preferred to practice on the course as she found the practice ground "a little bit boring" (initial interview, 29/12/98). However, she recognised the importance of practice for developing "stability" (i.e., consistency) and reported she would like to go to the practice ground more regularly.

Annika appeared to be dedicated towards improving her golf. She read golf books, watched instructional video-tapes, made an effort to play with experienced players and learn from them, and in the six months preceding the inquiry she had taken six lessons with a golf professional. However, Annika did not do much to prepare herself immediately prior to playing. On the tee she stretched, took some practice swings, and thought about where she wanted the ball to go, yet this was fairly unstructured. She did not warm-up on the practice ground, saying she found golf too time consuming as it was. That said, Annika admitted she knew she should, and probably could manage to, go to the course 10 or 15 minutes earlier to do this. She did tend to go to the putting green prior to playing to develop touch and feel for the greens, however.

With little experience in ball sports and having started golf at a relatively late point in her life, Annika felt it was taking her more time than average to develop her skills, which proved to be a great source of frustration for her. She did not use woods, indicating that she wanted to master hitting irons before progressing. At the start of the inquiry, Annika had not reached a skill level that would allow her to obtain an official handicap. Indeed, her main golf goal for the upcoming year was to "improve enough to have a handicap" (initial interview, 29/12/98) and then be able to play to this consistently. Annika noted, "I do not have goals like 'In three years I

want to have [a handicap of] 25'. It's not so important to me . . . because that is not realistic at my age" (initial interview, 29/12/98). Annika also wanted to develop more self-confidence.

In sum, Annika was a novice golfer for who golf had become a significant part of her life. She worked hard to improve her golf skills through practice, lessons, instructional tapes and books, and playing regularly a few times a week. However, her progress was slow and she was finding this frustrating.

Meaning of Golf Enjoyment

Annika derived her golf enjoyment from a number of diverse sources including: opportunities for personal development, social factors, exercise, the environment, the privilege of being able to play, care for personal appearance, and her performance. These themes will be elaborated on in this section.

Golf was more than just a physical sport for Annika. In the three to five months preceding the start of this inquiry she had come to value the more intellectual and stimulating aspects of the game. Annika viewed golf as an activity with multiple dimensions and something "deeper" than merely hitting a ball around a course. As such, she saw golf as a vehicle for personal development and growth. Certainly it was her appreciation of these different levels that fuelled her golf enjoyment: "People should see in golf not only the sporting aspects, but also the mental dimensions. Working both body and muscles as well as mental and meditative goals will give you more fulfilment for the time you spend in golf" (initial interview, 29/12/98). In fact, given her lifelong concern for personal growth and her desire to "try to give the situations in life depth, [whether] it be a social engagement or to improve personal discipline etc" (initial interview, 29/12/98), it is not surprising that she transferred this attitude to her golf game. Indeed, part of her enjoyment of golf came from the personal responsibility she felt for her self-

development and her quest to expand her knowledge, something she hoped the MST would contribute to:

> [The enjoyment comes from] the responsibility to bring me on a higher level of thinking and feeling and doing things, not only to do them without any respect. That I think is important. You can combine [golf] with a lot of feelings, with aesthetic things. You can combine it with spirituality. There are such a lot of things and I know only so much. There may be a lot more and it's very interesting to bring it into the discussion we [golfers] have with you [the mental training consultant]. . . . I am very interested to have more experience[s like this] and I'm interested in people who are thinking like this. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Indeed, Annika professed that this social discourse and the opportunities that arise in golf, "to take part in the life of another person and in the way these men or women . . . play, make you more rich" (initial interview, 29/12/98). In fact, she likened the experience to reading different authors.

A second aspect of golf that Annika enjoyed was that golf is a game that provokes "discussion with yourself" and in which no one can be blamed save yourself. Annika explained:

> You have discussion with yourself because golf is not a sport where you can say 'My partner, he did not hit the ball in this way. He did everything wrong. He was not on my level'. With golf, if you make a mistake, if you miss a point, or something else, it's you, only you, and that's very interesting. Because not every day's the same, your condition and your co-ordination are different. If the moon is full it's another day. All these influences. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Due to the nature of golf there are plenty of opportunities to set goals, a characteristic that greatly appealed to Annika as it allowed for the planning and monitoring of personal development:

> [Goals provide] a clear perspective in an area of your life within which you can encourage yourself every day or every week, however you want it, to go [forward]. And you have an interest which gives you the feeling that you can work on it and you can create something with you . . . Besides, it's not only fun. It's also a thing you have to do. You should always work on your personal development. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

The social aspects of golf also made an important contribution to Annika's golf enjoyment. Being in contact with other people was central to her enjoyment, she attested "it's nice to have people around you, it gives you also good feelings [when you're] close to friends" (initial interview, 29/12/98). Meeting new people and developing friendships were also vital elements of enjoyable golf for Annika:

> The social thing is very important, I didn't believe it before. But in golf you are always with people – acquaintances, friends, and people you don't know, but you always find a way to join them. That, for me, is very important because I'm very interested in contact . . . I think also you can find friendship, which, for me, is very important. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Furthermore, social contact with diverse individuals provided Annika the opportunity to speak different languages thereby further developing her language skills and contributing to her personal development.

Perhaps related to the importance Annika placed on the social aspects of golf, it became apparent that interaction with her playing partners during the round was critical to her golfing enjoyment:

> You should be sure that the other players are interested in your game as well as in their own. That's important. That's a social and psychological point. . . . I'm not interested to play with people who are only concerned with their thing and their ball and their movement and they don't react to whatever you say. . . . For me, the atmosphere between the people is one of the main things in my life. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Annika's golfing enjoyment was heightened when her playing partners were able to create a relaxed, positive, and warm friendly atmosphere in the flight and provide encouragement.

Besides enjoying the physical activity inherent in golf, Annika also enjoyed the resultant health benefits from this exercise. She had noticed her physical condition had improved since she started playing, which in turn contributed to a sense of well-being and self-satisfaction:

> I think it's nice to go, to move, not to sit too long; to do it for your blood. It's like a motor for your circulation and that gives me a good feeling. If I walk such a long time and my condition is well, and afterwards, when I lay down for half an hour I feel a little bit tired but in a very good mental feeling. I think, 'I've done a lot. I feel well'. It's nice. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

The environment was also a source of Annika's golf enjoyment, both in terms of weather (Annika enjoyed the sunshine and "hated" the wind) and the scenery:

> I look around at the animals I see and the palms. And I enjoy the attitudes of the animals. There are some small black birds and they don't fly away, they stay. These things. I look

> to the nature and to the green and I take the atmosphere and circumstances around me. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Annika appreciated being able to live in such a beautiful location and felt privileged she was able to play golf:

> It's kind of special. It gives me always a feeling of happiness, to have the freedom to do it, to be free and able to have the time to spend on [golf]. And I think it's a kind of privilege to have. It makes me happy. I'm happy to stay here and this happiness I don't forget. It's every day I say it once or twice. And when I stand on the high level [of the tee] and look over the barranca I'm happy to be here. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Annika's performance affected her golf enjoyment. Playing well made golf more enjoyable for her. However, a poor performance would not only detract from her golfing enjoyment during the round, but could also affect her feelings once the round was finished. She recounted a recent round:

> One day I was so bad. [I was] disappointed about my golf and I thought I never will bring it to a better position. And at first I was very angry and tears came. It takes me the whole evening to find my self-confidence and I didn't find it this evening. It was totally confusing for me that I could be so disturbed from this golf. And nothing helped me, saying 'It's only a game', no. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Lastly, Annika noted, "One of the important things is to look trendy! Which trousers, which shirt to look nice? And to have pleasure with these things too" (initial interview, 29/12/98).

MST Experience

Prior to the inquiry, Annika had come to the realisation it was time she integrated MST into her golf practice. Before engaging in the inquiry she had not had formal experience with MST, but had read a MST book written for soccer players, done yoga, autogenic training, and had attended Neuro-Linguistic Programming seminars. Annika was very enthusiastic going into the MST in this inquiry and recognised its potential value. Overall, she described the experience as very positive and interesting and affirmed at the conclusion of the training: "I have a lot of benefits from the things I worked on in our seminars and I am very happy with it" (final interview, 1/6/99). Not only did she benefit from the training within the context of golf, but she also transferred what she learned to other areas of her life and found the experience to be life enriching.

Overall, Annika enjoyed the MST. She particularly enjoyed the social components of the MST such as the opportunity to develop friendships, work in a group with other people, and meet others who had a shared interest in the mental aspects of golf. The progress she made with her golf further added to her enjoyment. However, Annika found the MST to be hard work: "it's not only fun, . . . there's a lot to ask yourself" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

The only drawback to the experience for Annika was grounded in her perception that she was the weakest golfer in the group and as a consequence faced unique problems. She revealed:

> At the beginning I had some internal difficulties because I was the last in the queue. They are all better golfers, they are all better in understanding, and I always was the last in the queue. It takes some time to say 'OK, it is like it is'. (final interview, 5/6/99)

The MST was attenuated for Annika due to ill health and an unexpected trip to Germany for four weeks, resulting in a 60% attendance rate for the seminars (see Table 4). In addition, in

the first five weeks of the MST, Annika was not able to play much golf as she was recovering from an operation and then had flu. As a result of these obstacles, we were only able to meet twice for individual sessions. A third meeting was arranged towards the end of the MST, but then Annika cancelled it feeling she had plenty of things to think about and just needed the time to practice and integrate them on her own.

When Annika was in La Manga and healthy she was highly committed to the MST and working to improve her golf, constantly pulling out lessons from her experiences. Annika studied the material quite extensively outside the seminars, sometimes translating the handouts into German, discussing the topics with other participants as well as with friends, and implementing the skills both in her golf game and daily life. She stressed, "you have to work very hard, it's yours. That is very clear, whatever you do in golf it's yours" (final interview, 5/6/99).

Annika preferred to keep a journal rather than fill in the evaluation records after each round as she felt they put too much pressure on her. Instead, she picked out relevant questions from the forms to guide her journal writing. Although Annika found keeping the journal time consuming, she noted that "in the end the experience is helpful" (final interview, 1/6/99). No doubt this was compounded by the fact that English was not her mother tongue. In fact, at certain times Annika lapsed into writing her journal in German. Also for language reasons, Annika appreciated the handouts, noting "sometimes it took a little bit more time to understand everything clearly so it was so helpful to have these sheets and also to repeat at home, or to pick out the main ideas and to note them" (final interview, 5/6/99).

Annika enjoyed the practical exercises during the MST seminars and would have liked to have seen more as she found them useful. She highlighted, "those type of things you don't forget. It's like a picture in your mind, in your memory. Especially for me because I could not all

the time be quick enough to understand everything clearly" (final interview, 5/6/99). Annika postulated that integration of the MST with the golf lessons would have further enhanced her experience with both. She felt especially strongly about this as a beginner. For example, through the MST Annika became aware that she was a visual learner. However, the golf professional taught her using technical jargon, which she found difficult to understand and not as an effective way of learning. It took a while for her to realise this and then convey it to him. There was a feeling that if the three of us had worked together as a team this solution could have been identified earlier.

To summarise her experience, Annika enjoyed the MST, finding it fun despite the fact she found it hard work. Although she missed many components of the MST because she was ill or in Germany, Annika was committed to the training and engaged in a great deal of self-directed study to supplement what she learned in the seminars and individual sessions.

MST Process

Annika chose to engage in the MST because she wanted to learn how to "structure [her] thoughts in the right way" (initial interview, 29/12/98) and "come away from th[e] nervous feeling" (stimulated recall 1, 4/1/99) she experienced when playing golf. Annika reported, "sometimes, [when I am nervous,] I do the wrong movement or do it too quick" (initial interview, 29/12/98). She recognised, "to be a little bit nervous is good, [as] it makes you feel more awake, [but] you must turn it in a positive way and I am still not able to do this and that is what I want to learn" (stimulated recall 1, 4/1/99). Indeed, at the start of the MST, she experienced many negative and unproductive thoughts while playing golf that affected her confidence and concentration:

> It's like a bad fly, you know, buzzzz. I'm not always able to get rid of these thoughts, . . . 'Will I be able to manage it? Will I be able to go through the ball at the right moment?' These things. Fear to make it right. . . . The nervousness destroys my concentration. (initial interview, 29/12/98)

Annika's cognitive anxiety was greatest when she was being watched by other people, asked to play through the group in front, playing with better golfers, faced with hitting over a barranca, playing poorly, feeling pressure to hit a good shot, and on the first tee. She recounted her train of thought prior to teeing off one day:

> I remember thinking 'I want to have a good shot here'. But there were all these thoughts in my head saying 'Be careful of this and be careful of that. Do that, don't do that'. It drives me crazy, I hate it. (stimulated recall 1, 4/1/99)

Besides learning to cope with her anxiety, Annika hoped to improve her concentration through the MST. Unquestionably, her negative self-talk, which appeared to stem from her nerves and lack of confidence, was preventing her from maintaining an on-task focus. Her performance profile further revealed one of her main weaknesses to be an "[in]ability to focus on the present shot".

Consequently, the main focus of the MST with Annika was thought control and coping with nervousness. In addition, highlight training and positive self-talk were used to develop a positive attitude. Annika also spent time developing her imagery skills. A number of other areas including improving fitness and goal setting were also touched upon. The MST process in these areas will be elaborated on in the remainder of this section.

During our first individual meeting we spent much of the session discussing techniques she could use to develop her focusing skills. Before this time, Annika used self-talk such as "'Go

away.' 'STOP.' 'Stop thinking.' 'Nothing.' 'Think of nothing.'" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99) in an attempt to clear her mind of negative thoughts, though with limited success. As it is difficult to think of nothing, I recommended she identify key thoughts that would help her maintain an on-task focus and then create a focusing cue or preshot routine based on these. As she was taking lessons from a golf professional and was a novice golfer, I suggested she developed a technical focus cue that comprised key points that emerged from her lessons. As an alternative to this, I offered the idea of creating a preshot routine that created an attitude or feeling.

Annika chose to develop a technical cue word. She first identified key thoughts relating to her swing, then took the first letter of each of these and created a phrase that she thought about prior to playing each shot. The phrase was "Positive Characters Take Goals" (**P**osture and Ball **P**osition; **C**lub square; **T**urn to back-swing; **G**o through). She reported, "[it] helps with concentration as it is a reminder – it works!" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). The next time we met one-on-one, the phrase was expanded to encompass another critical concept Annika needed to focus on, namely executing a smooth stroke. Consequently, we discussed the idea of adding a word to her phrase to encourage her to think of "Smooth" prior to starting her back-swing. After brainstorming for a while I came up with the idea of using "Smile" to which she exclaimed, "That's a wonderful idea. It is a good idea, and not so serious. That's wonderful. I am happy about this" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). As a result, Annika's phrase became "Positive Characters Take Goals, Smile".

Another technique to help block out distractions, one that was introduced in the seminars, was to imagine being in a cocoon. During our first meeting we discussed this concept further, suggesting that within the cocoon one would feel confident, positive, and relaxed. I asked

Annika to conceive an image or word that summed up how she would like to feel when in the cocoon. The idea was that she could then use this word to help create that feeling once on the golf course. We went on to discuss other images she could use to create this idea of being in a "different space" where she was "protected" from distractions. The intention was that when Annika was playing golf, she would imagine herself being in the cocoon, feel relaxed and confident, and then use her focusing phrase to direct her attention to relevant performance cues.

By the middle of March, Annika had integrated the ideas of a cocoon and her focusing phrase. However, she reported that she found it too much to think about before every shot and so instead had adopted the ideas as a philosophy:

> The cue words and all these things, I take it like a personal philosophy and all the time when I am standing at the tee, it is easier for me when I take this philosophy like a coat. [stimulated recall 2, 12/5/99] . . . It's more a feeling. It's a feeling to give you independence and be very clear and confident. (final interview, 1/6/99)

In her diary, Annika created a diagram to represent this (see Figure 7). Annika reported that thinking through her phrase prior to playing golf gave her "a positive feeling and thoughts" (16/4/99). This attitude or life philosophy also transferred to her life outside golf:

> I am sure that my main sentence, which is 'Positive Characters Take Goals, Smile' is more than for golf, it is like a philosophy for the time I am spending here [in La Manga] now. I am very sure that to stay here, for me, is the right decision. So, the golf seminars and golf training and other things you do in your life coming together in one unit, and that is also excellent. (final interview, 1/6/99)

So what started as a simple technique to aid her concentration, Annika developed into a life philosophy.

By the end of the MST, Annika testified that she worked to improve her concentration in everything she did:

> To concentrate is 'what you do, do it with nothing else'. If I read, I read and I don't hear. If we have a meal, I am not thinking the next and then the next, I concentrate on this. More and more living together with my husband I say "now I want to do this" and I don't let him disturb me. Concentrate on things you do and protect you from distractions. Also, if I write a letter I want to stay on my thoughts and I want to keep my thoughts even when he is turning on the TV or the music or something. Also, when you think about kitchen work, stay on it. But it is not easy, you have to work on it. (final interview, 5/6/99)

The techniques designed to aid concentration were fairly effective for Annika. At the conclusion of the MST Annika reported that she felt her concentration had improved and she was able to concentrate over a longer period of time. Furthermore, she commented, "the cocoon is good for me. If you get nervous and people are watching and you have good imagination you don't see that. It's good" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

Annika experimented with a number of other techniques in the early stages of the MST in attempt to combat her nerves. These included swinging a club to relax her shoulders, remaining positive, paying attention to the other people in her flight ("because then you don't feel so alone and it brings you up from your nervous feeling" (stimulated recall 1, 4/1/99)), taking deep breaths, and using self-talk. However, their use lacked structure and Annika still faced tension and anxiety playing golf. Consequently, I hoped that she could start to use the autogenic training she did at home to benefit her on the golf course. I suggested she associate a word with the relaxed feeling she experienced during autogenic training and then use it on the course to attain

an immediate relaxation response prior to playing a shot. Annika reported she used the words "Quiet. Nothing is disturbing me. I feel quiet. I feel calm. Nothing is disturbing me" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99) during autogenic training.

A factor that negatively impacted Annika's concentration and ability to relax was her intermittent anger towards golf. The anger resulted from mistakes Annika made when playing golf and the impatience at the time it was taking her to improve, exacerbated by the fact her husband was improving at a faster rate than she was. Although Annika felt her golf was improving, she sometimes felt she was going through periods of regression:

> I fell down and I had such a bad body feeling and body movement. I lost it often and I thought it so silly. My inner discussion was . . . 'you silly girl, you never will learn it'. I was really angry with myself, and that was really wrong, one of the most wrong things I can do. (final interview, 1/6/99)

Undoubtedly this undermined her golf enjoyment. Fortunately, various components and effects of the MST served to minimise this anger and make her happier. Improved golfing ability and playing well in a tournament bolstered her enjoyment. But, most importantly, during the MST Annika focused on becoming more positive, noting during the first stimulated recall that "to be more optimistic and to get rid of the negative thoughts" were two things she wanted to achieve.

The main techniques that Annika used to create a more positive attitude were highlight training and positive self-talk. The concept of highlight training was introduced in the second seminar, a fairly opportune time for Annika as she had to go into hospital the next day for an operation. Annika started to record her highlights in her journal the next day, listing on average three to four highlights each day she was in hospital and during her post-operative recovery. Not only did Annika record her highlights, but also discussed them with her friends. Annika always

looked for the positive things in her life, remarking "it's enormous how positive you can think [through doing this]" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). The more positively Annika thought, the more confident she felt and asserted "these feelings of attitude you can bring to your partner as well" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). In general, keeping a diary helped Annika focus on positive things and see the improvements she made. She noted, "it is good that it is written. I am still keeping a diary because it's better, then you feel that there were a lot of positive things" (stimulated recall 2, 12/5/99). Annika's adherence to highlight training persisted throughout the duration of the inquiry.

Annika also started to pay more attention to her internal dialogue and made an effort to structure her thoughts in a more positive way, working hard on this throughout and after the MST. She relayed, "that was a point I worked out really like you work in a laboratory" (final interview, 1/6/99). In her diary she listed her common negative thoughts and then counteracted them with positive statements. When she started to talk negatively, Annika would rationalise with herself and restructure the dialogue into a more positive vein, reporting "I discuss with myself when doubts reach me and I find mostly to a positive point" (diary entry, 18/5/99). Annika elaborated:

> Being positive is the main point. To have interest to read a green. Before I said 'Oh, this terrible green'. But if you say, 'I am able to read the green' it's quite another aspect. So, it gives me a new frame within which to do things at a higher level. Not feel so small, feel more able to run yourself, more in control. (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

Imagery was another mental skill that Annika developed over the course of the MST. Prior to starting MST, Annika was already familiar with the concept of using imagery to help her learn golf. She emphasised, "I think that it is very important to have a picture in your mind from

the real movement you do, like a video" (initial interview, 29/12/98). To get a more accurate picture of her swing she would look in the mirror or ask her husband to show her what she was doing. When actually playing, she reported "I try to feel when I have a good and a long shot, more than 100 meters, 'What did I do? Am I going through? My feet were better?' And things like that. [I repeat the swing] mentally" (initial interview, 29/12/98). After a bad shot she would use imagery to try and identify what she did wrong. In both instances, Annika focused on the movement of her body.

Initially, Annika found it difficult to imagine her body position during the swing. In order to develop kinaesthetic and spatial awareness and improve her imagery skills I suggested that she go to the practice ground and following each shot use imagery to mentally recreate the swing she just made. Unfortunately, although she continued to use imagery throughout the duration of the MST, Annika never practised the skill off the golf course despite my urgings to do so. Towards the end of the MST Annika described her imagery prior to a shot:

> I help myself [by] seeing an internal video which shows myself turning back easy and smooth and find[ing] the right point to rest a little bit before turning to the swing without force and without lifting my head. I try to concentrate on finding the high finish and be in the right position to the target. (diary entry, 16/4/99)

Annika also used imagery to help judge the weight of a putt and imagine the line of the putt. She described her approach:

> I build up a virtual line from my ball to the hole and try to feel like a unit with both when I putt [evaluation record 1, 23/1/99]. . . . I try to have feeling with the hole and the line, and bring it together inside so the feeling helps me to give the putter not too much power for the [distance]. (stimulated recall 1, 4/1/99)

However, she found it hard to imagine these things and wanted to improve her imagery in this area as she recognised its value:

> I have to get the feeling for putting. That would be good if you could get more and more imagery. How far do you come back to do this big shot? Sometimes it works wonderfully but not automatically. The more you are able to have the imagination, the more you play it automatically and better. (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99)

I provided Annika with a number of exercises she could do to improve this.

As the MST progressed, Annika began to use imagery in a number of different ways. By the middle of March, not only was Annika using imagery to "feel" her body position during the swing, but she also started to visualise her target and "see the ball flying to this point" (diary entry, 15/3/99). She also used imagery to recreate good shots she hit:

> I want to preserve the way I played today. I saved the pictures of my very good shots in my mind like a movie with the sound and the feeling as well and I'll see them again and again during the following days. (diary entry, 16/5/99)

Annika further made use of imagery when doing autogenic training:

> Imagery is very interesting and I am working more on it. Yesterday I did autogenic training, there imagery is very important. . . . I just thought heavy legs and heavy arms and feeling warm and feeling inside and feel through your hips, feel your back, and feel relaxed, breathe deeply. Only these things [I was concentrating on]. Feel how your eyes are lying in the sockets. Feeling your forehead, you feel the position, your lips and teeth, have it relaxed and feel inside your body everywhere. (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99)

Lastly, based on an idea that emerged from reading the book "Kagami Golf", Annika revealed: "[I] develop pictures [analogies] in my mind which help me to move in the right time

in the right way when swinging the club" (diary entry, 18-24/3/99). For example, Annika used the image of a waterwheel to help her picture in her mind how her body should turn during the golf swing. She described, "a waterwheel turns my shoulders back, stops, turns forwards, and the club flies" (diary entry, 14/5/99). Annika reported, "I repeat before every shot my visualisation of the waterwheel. With this method I came to a good result and could stay relaxed" (18/5/99).

Annika was quite goal oriented. Excluding the goal setting work conducted during the seminars, I did not spend any time helping Annika set her goals. Coming into the MST she had already set her long-term goal (i.e., to get a handicap of 36 by the year 2000). In her diary she further identified her monthly goals for the upcoming five months and revisited and adjusted them as necessary as the training progressed.

A last area Annika wanted to improve was her fitness. Towards the end of the round she tended to get tired and felt that she should have more endurance for golf. Her concentration typically faded on the back nine and her performance suffered. We discussed the possibility of exercising more, but Annika did not want to start anymore "programs", noting that she was doing enough already. I did not feel this was too much of an issue, thinking that once she got back to playing golf more frequently after her illness her fitness would improve. We also talked about using imagery to energise herself by imagining herself walking briskly and feeling lively and upbeat.

Besides learning new techniques through the MST, Annika was also reminded of ones she had used in the past but had failed to use more recently (e.g., deep breathing, autogenic training, and yoga) or apply to golf. By starting to use these again, she not only benefited from them (e.g., they helped her cope with her injuries and deal with nerves), but also she improved her ability to use these techniques effectively.

In sum, during the MST Annika focused on developing her concentration and learning how to cope with her nerves and become more relaxed on the golf course. She also worked to develop her imagery, a skill she used in numerous ways to aid her golf.

MST Outcomes

Annika derived many positive outcomes from participating in the MST both within and outside the context of golf. She reported she learned a lot and often discussed and shared her knowledge with family and friends, as well as showing them exercises done in the seminars. They in turn reported this to be interesting and of value to them and felt they had benefited from Annika's participation in the MST. Annika reported that she wished she had developed these skills earlier in life as she felt they would have helped her when she was learning to ski. The outcomes of the MST will be summarised in this section. In addition, changes in Annika's mental skills as assessed by the MSQ can be seen in Figure 8.

As a result of participating in the MST, Annika's interest in golf grew. Along with this, her motivation to play golf increased quite significantly:

> [Motivation] is the most increased point in my golf. I am very motivated and with a good motivation things come more fluently. Now I *want* to play often golf, not I must, I must, I must; I *want* to, and that is the big difference. (final interview, 1/6/99)

Annika developed a "new drive" to work towards improving her golf, testifying, "the MST made me take awareness of my golf and set goals and setting goals makes me go straight and spend more energy in it" (final interview, 5/6/99). She became more disciplined to practice, stretch, and use the MST techniques, which also gave her a sense of pride. The MST made it apparent to Annika that "if you want to make progress you have to do these things" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Annika further enjoyed the new dimension MST brought to golf:

> I have to [practice] a lot [as] I am not the sort of person who is talented in golf. For me it is work. So I had to find [a way] to make it a bit nicer, to get a background and to have reactions which are really fun for me. And I like to do it a little bit more mental, if I only train boom, boom, boom [hitting ball after ball] that's boring for me. (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99)

Indeed, the MST seminars and the golf itself gave Annika's life a new meaning and direction at a time she needed it. Retirement had not been an easy transition for Annika. Leaving her job had been hard and left her without a clear plan of what she wanted to do. However, the MST served to fill some of the empty spaces she felt in her life after moving to Spain.

Through keeping a diary, Annika came to feel more independent with regards to her golf and she started to take more control over her learning. By recording the key points she extracted from her golf lessons she became aware of her common mistakes and what she needed to do to correct them. Moreover, by assessing her golf and becoming more aware of her weaknesses, Annika gained a better understanding of what she wanted from the teaching professional during her lessons. Consequently, she took more control over the direction of her lessons. She explained, "before I did what [the pro] said, now I say 'this is my weak point, help me, which exercises can we do?' This was really a development for me coming from the seminar" (final interview, 5/6/99).

Annika felt that her performance improved over the course of the MST. Without a doubt her self-perception as a golfer became more positive and she became more confident over the span of the MST:

> When I look at my cards it seems [that I am playing more consistently] and my feeling is now better when I do 21 points. It's a different feeling than before. Before, I think

> sometimes it was a little bit by accident but now I am more sure that I worked it out. (final interview, 1/6/99)

She expanded:

> Before, I was so unsure. And if you do everything wrong you don't feel well, or if you're afraid for every shot. . . . But now I think I am able to do it and I feel better. So that is nice. (final interview, 1/6/99)

Another indication of Annika's increased confidence was that she started to play in the Owners' Scramble and Individual Stableford competitions, something she was reluctant to do prior to the MST because she did not feel she was a good enough golfer.

Annika's golf enjoyment was closely tied to her success and confidence. Her excitement when she relayed her improvements was palatable. Early on in the MST she recounted, "I was able to hit the ball 120m with my 5-iron and I felt happy for the rest of the day. Now I am sure that golf is the right sport for me. My self-confidence grew. That's wonderful" (diary entry, 25/1/99).

There is no question that Annika approached golf in a more positive manner at the end of the MST, an attitude that was still apparent at the follow-up. Indeed, Annika developed a more balanced perspective towards golf in general: "Now if it's not so good, I say 'it's OK. Take it how it is'. That makes such a big marker. I am happy with golf and I am happy with my lifestyle here" (follow-up 1, 4/1/00). She was able to play more relaxed, control her muscle tension, and better deal with the anger and frustration she felt towards her slow improvement. Her concentration also improved:

> I was more able to stay in my cocoon. I was aware what was going on around me but it didn't disturb me. . . . I am able now to keep my head free of thoughts when I swing. I am

> able to make them come to stop for a short time. That I do in a very conscious way. But of course it works on some days very good and on others not so good. (follow-up 1, 11/10/99)

Annika was still working towards developing her mental skills and using many of the tools eight months after the conclusion of the seminars. She continued to remain aware of her self-talk and strived to keep it positive, always took a deep breath before hitting her shot, did relaxation exercises in the evening, and worked to improve her concentration by practising keeping a clear mind.

Annika indicated her intentions to continue working on the mental aspects of golf and had already set goals for the future. She had set up a support system of friends of similar golfing ability to play golf with, discuss psychological issues relating to golf, and practice mental skills and techniques.

Annika also applied her new knowledge outside the context of golf, noting "most of the things we learn I integrate more in my life" (final interview, 1/6/99). Indeed, for Annika, the MST was related to more than just golf:

> The other point is the psychological approach, a bit more than only golf, other parts of life [too]. Looking back [and reflecting] 'What was my life? What do I want now? Not only the goal in golf, but what are my interests in life here? Which lifestyle will I prefer? Which plans can I develop to create it in a good way?' It was more than golf. (final interview, 5/6/99)

The MST prompted Annika to ask herself questions about her lifestyle "to come a bit deeper and look at it from a different perspective" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). It gave her "a new sense of interest to do new things and get awareness" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). Annika

became more aware in all aspects of life, not just golf, noting "observing myself, I do more than ever before. Because I learned in golf observing my movements and observing the surrounding, so I do it like this on other parts of [my life]" (final interview, 5/6/99). During the training she highlighted, "my whole life and all I do, I do with more awareness and I feel more concentrated in every one of my activities" (diary entry, 7/3/99). And later on noted, "even when I am working in the kitchen I take awareness on all movements" (diary entry, 15/4/99).

> Annika's positive attitude also transferred to other aspects of her life. She asserted:
>
> I'm always interested to make the best of the minute. Staying in the minute. Don't kill today with thinking only of tomorrow and what you will do later. All these are very helpful to me and I am really interested to do more. (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99)

Annika testified, "I think my positive thinking helps me to manage things better – talking with friends, discussing about business themes, and prepare decisions of difficult things in my life" (diary entry, 15/4/99).

The MST in general, and the individual consultations in particular, prompted Annika to read a number of new books. These books, along with our discussions, prompted internal philosophical discussion and she developed some interesting thoughts from this.

To conclude, participating in the MST further increased Annika's motivation to work towards improving her golf. Annika also started to take more control over her learning as she became more aware of what she needed to do in order to improve. Annika perceived that she was playing better golf as a result of the MST and also was enjoying it more as she felt more confident. In general, Annika reported feeling more relaxed and having better emotional and attentional control. Lastly, Annika's self-awareness in all aspects of her life increased.

Summary

Despite the fact that English was not Annika's mother tongue, she was included in this inquiry because of her philosophical attitude towards the game of golf. Annika saw golf as a multi-dimensional activity while considering the possibilities to combine it with feelings, aesthetics, and spirituality. Annika was a beginner golfer who was dedicated towards improving her golf. Unfortunately, a number of life circumstances prevented her from fully participating in all the seminars and more individual sessions, yet she engaged in a great deal of self-directed study instead. The main focus of the MST for Annika was on working to improve her attentional control, predominantly through the use of an attentional cue phrase. Negative thoughts relating to her golf proved abundant and impacted her ability to focus on the task at hand and undermined her confidence. Consequently, highlight training and the use of positive self-talk also played an important role in the MST process. As a result, Annika derived a number of positive outcomes from the training, including increased motivation, improved concentration, enhanced enjoyment, improved golf performance, more confidence, more control over her learning, greater self-awareness, and a more relaxed, positive attitude.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS – CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the role of MST in increasing sport enjoyment. Not only was the effectiveness of MST in enhancing enjoyment investigated, but also an attempt was made to gain an understanding of the MST experience from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, the MST process for the participants was documented. In the preceding chapter seven individual case-studies were presented. By reading these case-studies it becomes apparent that the participants' experiences with the MST, the process of the training for each of them, and the outcomes that ensued were unique for each individual. Yet in spite of these differences many similarities across participants emerged. These shared experiences, processes, and outcomes will be presented in this chapter. The findings that ensue should not be construed as a generalisation of all athletes, or even of all golfers, engaging in MST. Instead, it is the intention that the following presentation of the cross-case analysis provides the reader with an understanding of the experiences, processes, and outcomes of the MST for this group of individuals as a whole.

The findings for the cross-case analysis are organised and presented according to the three research questions: (1) What are the experiences of the recreational golfers as they participate in the MST?; (2) What is the MST process for the recreational golfers?; and (3) What effects, if any, does MST have on the recreational golfers' affect, cognitions, and/or behaviours? Specifically, what are the changes, if any, in the golfers' enjoyment? Furthermore, what key factors, if any, did they perceive contributed to the outcomes of the MST?

Q1. What are the experiences of the recreational golfers as they participate in the MST?

The shared experiences of the participants have been divided into three categories: Commitment to MST, overall perception of MST, and perception of individual components of MST. The similarities and differences across participants within these areas will be presented in the following sections. The themes are summarised in Figure 9.

Commitment to MST

The participants' involvement with various aspects of the MST and their commitment to the training in general, in terms of the time and effort they invested in it, varied. These differences will be delineated in this section. Yet before their level of commitment to the MST in this inquiry is presented, I feel it is worthwhile to briefly highlight their experience with aspects of sport psychology and/or mental training prior to this inquiry.

None of the participants had had any formal training in sport psychology or mental training before this inquiry. However, a number of them had made some attempt to improve their mental skills for golf. Lee, Nancy, and Annika had read books on sport psychology. Although in the case of Lee and Nancy these books related specifically to golf, the book Annika read did not. Lee had also read magazine articles on improving the mental game of golf. Many years previously, Tom had attempted to improve his mental skills through the use of a self-hypnotic tape called "Play better golf", but he had not found it helpful and not used it recently. Phil, having coached various sports, felt he had developed a more "intuitive" knowledge of the field, but acknowledged he had not been formally trained in sport psychology.

Although unrelated to golf, Annika and Lee reported they had some experience in areas loosely related to sport psychology and/or mental training. Lee had taken psychology courses at university and during his career worked in the area of human communication. Annika had

attended Neuro-Linguistic Programming seminars and used autogenic training. Neither Laura nor Sam had any previous experience with sport psychology or related areas.

Given the voluntary nature of the MST, one would expect the participants to be fairly motivated to participate. However, the level of involvement with the MST varied across the participants. Variations can be exemplified to some extent through objective measures, such as the number of evaluation records completed and the number of seminars and individual consultations attended (see Table 3), as well as through more subjective measures, such as the extent to which they applied the knowledge and skills they acquired.

The number of seminars the participants attended varied from 7 (47%, Sam) to 15 (100%, Tom), the number of evaluation records completed varied from 5 (Sam and Laura) to 41 (Tom), and the number of individual consultations ranged from 2 (Sam and Annika) to 4 (Tom, Phil, and Nancy). There is no doubt in my mind that Tom was the most dedicated individual to the training, a sentiment echoed by many of the other participants. The amount of time and effort he invested in the mental training far surpassed anything I had expected from this demographic. He implemented the majority of techniques I taught and suggestions I made, taking many of the exercises a step further. For example, he regularly read over his seminar notes and evaluation records, created lists of areas he needed to work on and areas in which he had improved, and wrote summaries of the MST notes and books he read. His zeal for the training may be, in part, explained by his attitude towards MST going into it: "I was very, very keen to get involved in this sort of thing anyway. It's something I've wanted to do for years and then the opportunity came, so I jumped at it" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Although the objective data and my perception of the participants' MST commitment appeared to align in the case of Tom, I would not be as confident to state that Sam was the least

committed to the training as suggested by the objective evidence. Of the eight seminars Sam missed, one was due to ill health and six were because he was away on trips. Moreover, he made attempts to integrate at least some of what he learned through the training into his golf game with positive effects, most notably through the use of the relaxation tape. Nonetheless, Sam did admit that he had been lazy regarding the MST in some regards and indicated that if the training were to "start again tomorrow" he would invest more effort in it. That said, Sam indicated that his reluctance to apply more of the information from the MST came, in part, from the success he had with the relaxation tape, explaining "it has been so successful that to a certain extent I have missed out on other aspects because the relaxation thing has worked so well for me" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99).

Instead, I would argue that Laura was the least committed to the MST. Of the six seminars she did not attend, two she missed without providing any reason, two were because she played in a ladies golf tournament earlier in the day, and two were due to trips. Like Sam, she completed only five evaluation records and, although she participated in three individual consultations, it was hard to get her to commit to times for the meetings and a number of times she did not show up to meetings or cancelled them at the last minute. Although Laura appeared enthusiastic about the training during the meetings, there was scant evidence to suggest she put much of what we talked about during the MST into practice, reporting she either forgot about it or did not have time to do it. Laura revealed that she was not "100% content" with her life and felt this had an impact on her commitment to the training.

Looking at Table 3 one might surmise that Annika was not very committed to the training either, though I would argue otherwise. Of the six seminars she missed, four were because she had to return unexpectedly to Germany and two were due to ill health. After missing the

seminars when she was ill, Annika spent over one hour with Nancy going through the handouts and the exercises together. Even when she was in Germany her journal reveals she continued to work hard to integrate what she had learned from the training into her golf game. She also bought a book to further guide her mental skill development while she was away. Immediately after the initial interview and before the seminars started, Annika started to keep a golf journal. In my opinion she invested a great deal of time and effort into the mental training, something especially noteworthy given it was not conducted in her mother tongue.

To place the remaining participants along a hypothetical commitment continuum, I would place Phil close to Tom on the "highly committed" end of the continuum and position Lee and Nancy in the "high-middle" range. Interestingly, there did not appear to be any link between the participants' commitment to the MST and the amount of time and effort they indicated they were willing to invest in order to achieve their golf goals at the start of the MST.

Overall Perception of MST

There was an overwhelming consensus from the participants that the MST was a positive experience overall. All seven participants reported they found it helpful and enjoyable. Words they used to describe the training included enriching, fun, fascinating, beneficial, enjoyable, stimulating, interesting, and worthwhile. Tom and Nancy both indicated that the training exceeded their expectations.

As further indication of the value and usefulness they placed on the training following their involvement with it, Lee and Annika both noted that they would like to see MST take a more prominent role in golf education. Lee commented that mental skills and techniques should be emphasised more by teaching professionals and voiced surprise that none of the professionals he had taken lessons with had ever told him about the value of a preshot routine. Similarly,

Annika believed that mental training should be integrated into technical lessons by having the mental training consultant work in conjunction with the golf professional. Overall, Lee felt there was a lack of MST resources available and would like to see more emphasis on this area in general. He suggested the development of MST videos and "slender" MST books that could be read fairly quickly.

Some of the participants found it hard to immediately identify specific highlights or particularly enjoyable aspects of the training, reporting they had finished the training with a general, overall positive impression. When pressed to reflect further, it emerged that the highlights of the training for Nancy, Lee, Sam, and Tom related to the tools and techniques of the training, specifically the cue word routine, the circle, the relaxation tape, imagery, and performance profiling. Working in a group with others who shared similar interests was a highlight of the training for Phil and Nancy. The deeper interest in golf the training promoted, the enjoyment that resulted from looking at golf from a mental perspective as well as a technical one, and the intellectual nature of the training were highlights of the MST for Annika. For Phil and Sam the highlights of the training were the changes that resulted from it. For Phil these related to his improved performance and control over his emotions. For Sam, the highlight of the training was connected to an overall sense of achievement.

Despite these accolades for the training overall, Nancy did not view the training in a positive light at the start. She questioned the appropriateness of MST for this older, recreational demographic, who she suspected were "set in their ways" and not so "gun-ho with the game [of golf]". She had a blasé attitude towards the training and did not appear to take it seriously in the early stages. Furthermore, she implied that the MST negatively affected her performance because

it made her think too much. Yet despite this discontent in the first few weeks of the training, at the end she was a firm proponent of it.

A common complaint about the MST expressed by almost all of the participants was the amount of information presented. Like Nancy, Laura felt that with technical cues and the MST she had too much to think about before taking each shot, which had an adverse effect on her performance. Tom also felt overloaded with information towards the end of the training, attributing his decline in performance to this. In an attempt to give all aspects of the training his attention he found by the end he was trying to do and remember too much. By easing off the amount of off-course studying he was doing, and just using his preshot routine on the course, he found his performance returned to its former level.

The other participants also commented on the amount of information included in the training, but not in the sense that it negatively affected their games. Lee likened the experience to trying to drink from a fire-hose, yet attested he was quickly able to filter the information and select the portions he felt would be of most benefit to him. Likewise, Phil reported being able to select the material relevant to him fairly easily. There is no doubt the participants found the MST to be challenging. Tom described it as "16 weeks of . . . fairly intensive instruction and training and practising" (final interview, 8/5/99). Annika commented, "there's a lot to ask yourself, it's not only fun" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

Although the participants were engaged throughout the majority of the training, times when they were less engaged were when they perceived the techniques to be "impractical" or "irrelevant to improving their golf". For Tom, Lee, and Nancy these techniques were 'Smart Golf' and 'Personal Par'. The participants' experiences with specific techniques will be more fully discussed when answering the second research question.

In sum, the overall perception of the MST was one that was very positive, both in terms of being enjoyable and beneficial. Even Nancy, who at the start showed scepticism towards the training, described it as a positive experience by the end. The main protest relating to the training was the amount of information presented.

Perception of Individual Components of MST

In the previous section the participants' perceptions of the MST as a whole were documented. In the ensuing sections the participants' experiences with the individual components of the MST, that is the seminars, individual consultations, consultant, and in the field consulting, will be presented.

Seminars.

Overall, the participants' experiences with the seminars were positive. Participants commented on aspects of the seminars they liked and disliked and provided suggestions as to how they could be improved for the future. Their experiences with the seminars are divided into those relating to interactivity, the handouts, and the structure of the seminars.

Interactivity – Four participants would have preferred more interactivity in the seminars. Interactivity is defined as social interactions and practical exercises. The social aspects of the seminars were critical to the participants' experiences. Annika liked the opportunity the seminars afforded her to meet new people. Others benefited from the support and encouragement they derived from the group and were motivated to engage more fully in the MST as a result. Hearing how others were using and benefiting from the tools made Sam feel "silly" that he felt some aspects of the training were too much of a chore. Talking with others also made Sam reassess his golf goals and not get demoralised about his slow progress. Listening to others' golf learning experiences made him realise, "I'm being a bit over ambitious, I've just got to pace myself and

make gradual progress" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Furthermore, Sam divulged the group discussions made it "obvious that one isn't alone with one's problems on the course. On the whole you don't talk to people about your problems because they've enough of their own. I think the commonal experience helped me, the degree of camaraderie" (final interview, 13/4/99). In the same way, Lee found it reassuring to hear other people faced similar problems on the golf course that he did, such as waning concentration during a round and a lack of confidence.

Nancy, Phil, and Annika enjoyed the sharing of experiences with other participants. Nancy explained, "listening to other people's attitudes and approaches – some you agree with and some you don't – it's stimulating" (final interview, 11/5/99). Tom and Phil wanted more opportunities to hear other participants' experiences with the training and how they were benefiting from it. Not only did Phil find that helpful, but also enjoyable and interesting. However, a delicate balance appears to exist. Tom highlighted that that type of discussion needs to be limited to a couple of people speaking for a few minutes each seminar so there is time to participate in other aspects of the MST. Although Lee also suggested making the seminars more interactive by encouraging the participants to talk more, he did not advocate an "open discussion" format, warning that there is then the risk of "people hogging the discussion". He felt that directing specific questions at the participants would be better.

Indeed, the one common negative aspect of the seminars was the tendency of one or two people to "ramble" and "hog the airspace". Tom, Lee, and Nancy expressed dissatisfaction with this, noting feelings of frustration and impatience with these individuals. They felt it took time away from me speaking and one of them commented it had, on occasion, prevented him from participating in the discussion: "A lot of people talk too much at a meeting, they don't just say their bit and shut up. Sometimes I might want to say something and then in the end have given

up" (Tom, final interview, 8/5/99). Tom and Nancy both felt I should have taken more control in these situations.

Sam called for more "togetherness" in the MST and suggested that more group activities be incorporated into the training. Sam would have liked group practice sessions and other "get togethers" arranged as part of the training. Annika suggested the inclusion of more demonstrations and practical exercises, feeling they would facilitate her understanding and help her remember the material. She noted, "those type of things, [like the pendulum], you don't forget, it's like a picture in your mind, in your memory. Especially for me because I could not all the time be quick enough to understand everything clearly" (final interview, 5/6/99). Tom and Lee suggested increasing the length of the seminars from one to one-and-a-half hours to allow for this greater interactivity.

Handouts – Three participants made reference to the handouts that supported the seminars, all the comments were positive. Lee appreciated knowing the objectives and scope of each seminar. Annika, for whom English was a second language, found the handouts particularly helpful as they allowed her to review the material in her own time and translate portions she did not understand. Both she and Lee liked the layout of the handouts, regarding their organisation and design. Sam suggested making the handout available prior to the seminar, as that would have allowed him to read through it and identify portions he did not understand. He found that seeing the handout for the first time during the seminar distracted him from what was said during the seminars.

Structure – Lee, Sam, and Nancy commented that this was the first time they had been in a classroom learning environment since their retirement. Sam enjoyed the structure the seminars brought into his life, even though, up until this point, he had thought that one of the things he

enjoyed about retirement was the lack of structure. Indeed, this experience made him consider introducing more structure into his life.

Individual consultations.

Besides the seminars, the individual consultations were the main medium through which the training was delivered. Those participants that made a comparison regarding the effectiveness of the two modes of delivery reported the individual consultations to be more helpful than the seminars. Tom, Phil, and Sam appreciated these meetings because they focused on the individual. They felt the individual consultations provided the opportunity to delve further into specific issues they had and, as Tom put it, "work on my particular case" (final interview, 8/5/99). In addition, Tom revealed he felt more comfortable sharing certain things on a one-on-one basis than in a group. Conversely, Sam found the individual consultations "slightly uncomfortable" and noted he was "a little bit nervous about those" as he felt "the one-to-one is always an interesting, quite tense situation" (final interview, 13/4/99). He explained, "most one-to-ones that I have been involved with, [as a lawyer,] over years and years and years have been in a situation where I have controlled the meeting. So, this was unusual for me" (final interview, 13/4/99).

Lee found the individual consultations more fun than the seminars. He enjoyed the individual sessions because I "probed, asking the same questions with different words" (final interview, 15/5/99). Nancy also sensed that certain questions were being asked a number of times with different phrasing. Yet while Lee felt questioning in this regard was beneficial as it helped him "search [his] heart for a . . . helpful, meaningful, honest answer" (final interview, 16/5/99), Nancy felt it was "a pain to answer all these questions" (final interview, 11/5/99). That said, she recognised that this approach reinforced points and served as a reminder of things previously

discussed. Phil concurred with Lee, noting "[the individual sessions are] forcing us to think about things we normally would dismiss or not give a thought [to]" (final interview, 4/5/99).

In sum, the participants tended to view the individual consultations as more helpful than the seminars due to their focus on the individual. Yet, in some instances these sessions seemed to prove a little uncomfortable for the participants.

Consultant.

The consultant's style and approach is an integral part of the MST. Four participants commented on my role as the consultant when asked about their experiences with the MST. Sam and Lee both remarked how prepared I was, recognising the amount of work I had put into developing the MST. Furthermore, Lee noted, "you're clearly on top of your subject, so you get a feeling of confidence. The best thing you can possibly do in overcoming any age difference and so on, is come across as being well-equipped to do what you're doing" (final interview, 15/5/99). Lee further liked the style and tone with which I conducted the training, explaining "you were very patient. . . . You were able to judge things from the point of view of the group and respond to us. . . . You had your antenna out" (final interview, 15/5/99).

Nancy, Sam, and Tom highlighted that they would have liked me to follow-up more on exercises I asked them to do and monitor whether or not they were doing them. They felt it would have encouraged them to implement more aspects of the training. Sam even went as far to say he wished he had been "bullied" more. Specifically, both Sam and Tom referred to the "buddy system" in this regard. Sam noted, "that didn't happen. . . . You might possibly have bullied us into doing that. . . . You put it forward as a good idea and everybody sort of went 'hmmm' . . . and then shied off" (final interview, 14/4/99). Although Tom did in fact make the effort to meet with his partner, he reported his partner, who was not a participant in the inquiry,

appeared reluctant to get together and/or help him. Nancy was of a like mind regarding the contract. She indicated that if I had checked up on her and asked, "How's the contract? Are you fulfilling it?", she may have been more likely to accomplish it. As it turned out, she did not, noting "I didn't actually take it that seriously" (final interview, 11/5/99). Perhaps, as one participant suggested, introducing the concept of the contract later on in the MST, when the participants had a better idea of what it entailed, would have helped. Sam also felt that my "bullying" him would have driven him to fill out the evaluation records. He suggested providing him with an example of a completed evaluation record and then going through it step-by-step with him as he filled one out would have further helped.

However, contrary to the views of these participants, Lee did not agree with the idea of me being more "forceful" when it came to maximising adherence to the training. He emphasised the need to "sell" the technique to the participants, but still suggested following up the week after by asking the participants to share how they had used the techniques over the preceding weeks.

Given the integral role of the consultant in MST, the lack of comments regarding the participants' experiences with the consultant was somewhat surprising. Perhaps my dual role as consultant and researcher played a part in this. However, I felt that I developed a close and open relationship with the participants and do not believe this would have prevented them from commenting if they had something to say that was central to their experience. Indeed, most of the participants did comment in some small way as reported above.

In the field consulting.

Although the majority of the MST was delivered during the seminars and individual consultations, towards the end of the training I invited the participants to participate in a MST session on the golf course and/or at the practice ground. The purpose of this was to facilitate

further integration of the techniques into their golf game. Only Tom, Sam, and Lee indicated interest to have a MST session while they were playing. Unfortunately, Sam could not attend this session as he was not in Spain at the time, though he felt he would have benefited from it as it would have served to remind him when to use the tools. Lee found this on-course session made the MST "more real".

Annika opted against the on-course MST, indicating that she was already working hard integrating what she had learned into her game and did not feel she could cope with any more information at that time. Along a similar vein, Nancy revealed, "it's something up here that I have to sort out, work out for myself" (final interview, 11/5/99) and she could not see how my physical presence on the golf course would help her further. She even went as far as to say that my being on the course with her "would be almost off-putting, but that could be just me and my own insecurities" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Summary of MST Experience

The participants' commitment to the MST varied greatly, yet they all enjoyed the experience and benefited from it in some way. The highlights of the training tended to be the tools that played important roles in contributing to the outcomes of the training. Conversely, participants reported being least engaged in the MST when they could not see the relevance of the material for helping them improve their performance or when they perceived the tools to be impractical.

The individual consultations emerged as the most helpful aspects of the MST as they were individually tailored to the needs of the participants. However, the seminars also played a critical part in the mental training experience, not least because they provided a social nature to the training. Not only did the participants enjoy the social element of the training, but they also

benefited from it. Besides learning from each other, the sharing of experiences among participants provided a sense of support and encouragement. Not surprisingly there was a call for more social components in the training and greater interactivity and sharing of ideas among participants.

Many of the participants commented on the amount of material presented over the 15 weeks of training. Although some participants were able to effectively filter the information and select portions that were most helpful to them, others felt deluged by the amount of information presented. About half the participants suggested greater follow-up on the material presented to encourage greater adherence to more aspects of the training.

Q2. What is the MST process for the recreational golfers?

The MST process refers to the structure and content of the MST. Because the majority of the material was presented in the group seminars it could be argued that the MST process was fundamentally the same for each of the participants. However, the participants entered the MST with different needs and different ideas of what they wanted to gain and/or learn from engaging in the training. As a result of these individual differences certain techniques appealed to, and benefited, some participants more than others and thus they selectively focused on some aspects of the training more than others. Moreover, the individual consultations allowed further tailoring of the MST process to meet the participants' individual needs.

In this section, the shared elements of the MST process will be presented by highlighting the similarities and differences in the participants' reasons for participating in MST, the emergent MST issues, the participants' integration of the MST skills and techniques, and the factors affecting the implementation of the techniques. The themes are summarised in Figure 10.

Reasons for Participating in MST

During the initial interview, participants were asked what they expected and/or wanted to learn from participating in the MST. All the participants except Laura and Annika directly stated that they wanted to improve their golf performance. Phil further hoped the training would allow him to derive more enjoyment from golf, something he felt would occur if he could play more consistent golf. None of the other participants indicated that enhancing their golf enjoyment was a motive for their participation in the training, despite the fact that in the participant recruitment notice they were informed that the MST was designed to teach mental skills that facilitate more consistent golf performance and maximise golf enjoyment.

Five of the participants, all except Tom and Phil, further specified that they wanted to learn how to improve their concentration while playing golf. Lee remarked that concentration was a particular problem for him midway through a round. Nancy wanted to learn to "unclutter [her] head from all the boundless things one can say to oneself, like 'Keep your head down', 'Watch your back-swing', [and] 'Follow through'" (initial interview, 31/12/98). Annika hoped to learn how to "structure her thoughts in the right way" (initial interview, 29/12/98).

Also in these initial interviews, Sam, Nancy, and Lee expressed a desire to learn how to control their nerves and/or relax on the golf course. Tom hoped the training would teach him to cope with the cognitive anxiety he experienced on a couple of specific shots and Annika sought to become more confident regarding her golf in general. Lastly, Sam, Annika, and Tom hoped the MST would generally improve their mental approach to golf.

Emergent MST Issues

In addition to the motives for participating in the MST the participants highlighted prior to starting the training, once the training started other areas and/or situations in which they might

benefit from MST emerged. These areas became the foci of the individual consultations and played a role in shaping the content of the seminars. The problem areas that emerged can be categorised into two groups; those that tended to impact the individuals' focus and those that tended to cause them tension. These emergent MST issues will be summarised in this section.

Off-task focus.

Five participants indicated that, in part, their motive for participating in the MST was to improve their concentration. As the MST progressed it became apparent that attentional control would be a central theme of the MST process for all the participants. There were a number of issues that appeared to impact the participants' ability to focus, including anger and frustration, poor performance, slow play, other people, nerves, specific points on the course, a lack of shot preparation, and an outcome focus.

Anger and frustration – All the participants reported feelings of frustration, and in some instances anger, when they were not playing well. Slow play was also a source of frustration for Phil, Tom, Nancy, and Laura. On occasion, Tom and Nancy were further frustrated by their playing partners and the actions and comments of other golfers on the course. The participants' anger and frustration tended to affect their ability to focus effectively while playing golf and undermine their golfing enjoyment.

Other people – Nancy's concern for what other people thought of her as a golfer and how she was playing frequently distracted her while she was playing golf. Indeed, other people on the golf course were a frequent source of distraction for her, Annika, and Laura in general, especially if they felt they were being watched while they played their shot. Laura appeared especially susceptible to being distracted by people talking and Tom found it hard to concentrate when he was playing with people who talked a lot throughout the round.

Nerves – A common barrier to obtaining an on-task focus was worry or cognitive anxiety. Annika, Tom, Sam, Nancy, and Phil all described situations when their nerves affected their ability to focus. For the majority of the participants their nerves were most prevalent in competitive situations and on the first tee, especially if the first shot required them to hit over a barranca. Annika also experienced cognitive anxiety when she felt people were watching her play her shot.

Specific points on the course – Some of the participants found it particularly hard to obtain or maintain an appropriate focus at specific points on the course. Lee described a frequent lapse in his concentration about halfway through the round. Sam and Phil found it hard to maintain their concentration towards the end of the round. Tom identified specific holes where he was often distracted by thoughts of previous bad shots he had hit there.

Lack of shot preparation – Prior to the MST none of the participants, perhaps with the exception of Tom, appeared to spend any time carefully assessing the shot requirements before playing their shot. Sam and Phil disclosed that they often found themselves addressing their ball without having put any thought into the shot whatsoever and Lee admitted to sometimes hitting the ball before his trolley had come to a complete stop. Indeed, Lee and Laura both appeared to have a naturally fast rhythm and confessed they tended to rush into playing their shots without paying any attention to relevant performance cues. Both of them acknowledged they would probably benefit from slowing down.

Outcome focus – Nancy and Laura both had a tendency to focus on their score, which generally served to undermine their golf enjoyment. Nancy placed a great deal of importance on playing well enough to warrant a reduction in her handicap. Unfortunately, she was not able to play at this level and so often was disappointed with her performance. Moreover, she was forcing

herself to enter competitions that she did not enjoy playing in as this was the only means through which her handicap could be adjusted. Laura's golf enjoyment was also being undermined because of the bad scores she was getting. Her poor scores were mainly because her handicap did not accurately reflect her ability. Despite the fact Laura stressed that she judged her performance based on how well she perceived she had played rather than on her final score, her low scores were definitely detracting from her golf enjoyment.

Muscle tension.

All the participants noted that on occasion they experienced muscle tension that affected their ability to execute a smooth swing. For many, this tension was most apparent in their neck and shoulder area. Although the participants recognised that sometimes the tension just "creeps in" during the course of a round it more specifically resulted from nerves, slow play, and trying too hard.

Nerves – Tom, Annika, Sam, and Nancy noticed that their muscles tended to tense up when they were nervous, usually before competitions. Sam further revealed that nerves exacerbated his tremor.

Slow play – Slow play was a cause of tension for Tom as it frustrated him. For Phil, slow play broke his rhythm and caused him to stiffen up. Both men indicated that this affected their performance.

Trying too hard – Phil had a tendency to "try too hard" when hitting certain shots and felt this caused his muscles to tense up. He reflected that this usually occurred during competitions, especially if it was a team event, or when he tried to make up for a mistake. On a different note, both Nancy and Lee felt that when they tried to concentrate too hard they would "stiffen" up. Lee

noted, "I have found concentration and relaxation don't always go well together, the more you concentrate the more tense you tend to become" (initial interview, 30/12/98).

In sum, the participants were generally looking to the MST to help them improve their golf performance. As the training progressed, mental weaknesses in the areas of attention and activation control emerged. Consequently, the MST was geared towards helping the participants develop their skills in these areas, in addition to facilitating the development of other mental skills that would enhance performance and maximise enjoyment.

Integration of the MST Skills and Techniques

In the previous two sections what the participants wanted to gain from the MST, along with problem areas that emerged during the training, were presented. In this section, how the participants came to integrate the skills and techniques taught in the MST into their golf will be portrayed. The purpose of this section is to highlight the similarities and differences that emerged among participants regarding their use of the most frequently mentioned techniques. These techniques have been divided into four categories based on their purpose: Techniques for increasing awareness, attention control techniques, activation control techniques, and other techniques.

Techniques for increasing awareness.

The MST as a whole made participants more aware of the factors that contribute to golf performance and enjoyment. Yet two techniques designed specifically to increase awareness were introduced at the start of the MST, namely the evaluation records and performance profiling.

Evaluation records – In the first seminar the participants were asked to evaluate and keep a record of each round they played during the course of the inquiry, either by completing

evaluation records or keeping a journal. The evaluation records, specifically created for this inquiry, required the participants to log their physical and mental preparation prior to playing and reflect on the round afterwards. Participants were encouraged to assess their goals, compare their focus when they were playing well and not as well, record their highlights, extract lessons they had learned, and reflect on their application of the MST. Annika was the sole participant who chose to keep a journal rather than use the evaluation records. She felt that completing the evaluations was "too much pressure" and instead felt it more beneficial if she used the questions from the evaluations to guide her journal writing. She hinted that the pressure came from being the least experienced golfer of the participants.

The participants were asked to complete the forms as soon as practicable after each round. The amount of time that lapsed between the game and the evaluation was rarely short though. Tom waited until the day after playing to evaluate his round, as he was too fatigued immediately after. Phil also waited "a while" before evaluating his round. This way, he felt he could approach the task in a more objective manner, without letting his emotions about the round interfere with his evaluation. Sam and Laura gave up using this technique early on. Having completed five evaluations within the first week Sam never completed another during the inquiry. Similarly, Laura only completed five at sporadic intervals through the first one-and-a-half months of training. Sam revealed he had "a bit of a block" when it came to completing the evaluation records as he had spent his business career filling out forms and he just did not want to do it, a sentiment echoed by Laura. In fact, she was even less enthused about keeping a journal. Laura indicated that she hated writing, something that further deterred her from completing this aspect of the training.

Tom was the sole participant who came close to completing an evaluation record after every round he played during the MST. Without a doubt, the participants found this aspect of the mental training time consuming and some described it as a chore. Yet in spite of this Tom and Phil iterated it was a helpful and essential part of the MST. In the same way, Annika described journal writing as a time consuming activity yet a beneficial one. For example, by recording the main points from her lessons she became aware of mistakes she repeatedly made and, as a result, felt she became more independent in her learning and more capable of solving her own problems. Both she and Phil felt that these logs helped them focus on positive things that had happened during the round.

Tom reasoned that the evaluation records benefited him in that they helped him analyse his game and identify the areas he needed to improve in, something he had not done prior to the MST. He even went on to develop lists of areas in which he had improved and areas that he still needed to focus on from these evaluations. Phil found the evaluation records helpful because not only did they encourage him to think of the different aspects of golf, but they also helped him to reflect on things he had learned in the seminars and explore reasons why he did not enjoy his round as much as expected. Conversely, Sam never saw the benefit of completing the evaluations. Lastly, although Tom found the evaluations helpful, towards the end of the training he started to find the questions repetitive, prompting him to consider developing his own abbreviated evaluation form.

Performance profiling – In seminar #3 I guided the participants through performance profiling. I structured the performance profiling so that areas in which they were weak and wanted to improve would emerge. The weaknesses that emerged varied greatly across participants. For example, Sam wanted to obtain tranquillity on the course, Tom wanted to learn

to deal with anger and frustration, Lee wanted to improve his skills with his long irons, Annika wanted to improve her physical preparation before playing, and Nancy wanted to play more consistently. Yet some similarities emerged as well. Improving focus was a weakness that emerged for Tom, Annika, and Nancy.

Having completed the performance profiling, participants were asked to set goals or identify "Action Steps" to guide and motivate them in their efforts to develop their skills in the areas that emerged from the profiles. Although the principles of effective goal setting were highlighted to the participants, none of them developed well set goals as a result of this activity. One barrier to this exercise was a lack of time. Not all the participants were able to complete this activity within the seminar so were asked to complete it over the next week. As a result, I was not immediately at hand to answer any questions and many of the participants did not complete the exercise.

The performance profiling activity marked the starting point of more individualised training. It prompted the participants to think about what they needed to do to improve in a specific area of their golf game. Having identified their biggest weaknesses through performance profiling some of the participants found it easy to identify the "Action Steps" they would need to take to improve in this area, some had no idea. Sam came to me following the seminar confused as to what steps he could take to achieve his goal of obtaining tranquillity on the course. Our discussion led to the development of the relaxation tape that became a central component of his mental training. For Lee, who wanted to improve his skills with long and mid-irons, the steps were more forthcoming. The performance profiling activity prompted him to arrange golf lessons. Tom, who's two biggest weaknesses were "ability to recover from mistakes" and "ability to deal with anger and frustration", did not set short-term goals that would improve his

skills in these areas, but instead highlighted a set of actions and thoughts he could use each time he was angry or made a mistake. For example, if he started to feel angry or frustrated because of slow play he would relax, think of good things that had happened recently, analyse the shot, and then go through his cue word "SCRAP". Tom used these steps throughout the training and felt they were very beneficial. In fact, it appeared that Tom was the only participant who referred back to these goals or "Action Steps" during the course of the training.

The performance profiling was a well-received component of the MST by the participants in general. Lee and Nancy both reported it was a highlight of the training for them and an activity they were very engaged in. The appeal of the performance profiling was that it was practical. Indeed, it served as a starting point for the individual consultations for many of the participants. Lee, Phil, and Tom liked that it helped them become more aware of the factors that contribute to good golf performance by breaking golf into its important elements. Performance profiling then helped them focus on what they needed to do to improve and motivated them to take steps to improve. Lee noted that with golf there are a lot of areas he needs to improve in and the performance profiling helped him narrow it down and focus on just the most important ones. Lastly, Nancy liked that the performance profiling was easy to understand.

Attention control techniques.

Two techniques that were new to all the participants coming into the training and that were arguably the most used and most useful were both attention control techniques, namely the cue word and the concept of switching one's attention away from golf in-between playing shots. How the participants refined the basic ideas I presented to them during the training in order to meet their individual needs will be presented in this section.

Cue word – In the fourth seminar the concept of cue words was introduced as an aid to direct attention towards relevant performance cues. When I presented this technique my intention was that the participants would use the cue word as the backbone of their preshot routine, with each letter of the cue word representing a step in their mental and physical preparation for the shot. I hoped that by basing their routine on a word they would be more likely to remember all the components of it. Although some of the participants followed my directions exactly, others adapted the concept to meet their own needs and style.

Tom, Nancy, and Lee followed my suggestions directly and developed cue words where each letter of the word represented an aspect of shot preparation (e.g., "SCRAP", "SWAT", "BAFFS" etc). The most common elements that were included in the cue words were alignment, swing thoughts (e.g., slow, smooth), technical cues (e.g., firm wrists, turn in back-swing, head down), relaxation cues (e.g., relax, breathe deeply), and positive thinking (e.g., confidence, I can do this, enjoy). Tom and Nancy developed more than one cue word as they felt they needed to remember different things for different shots. They both developed different cue words for tee and fairway shots and Tom also formed cue words for bunker shots and the tee shots on the par 3 holes he had trouble with. There was little similarity across Tom's cue words. Although they did have a couple of common components (e.g., positive thinking, alignment) they did not appear in the same order for the different shots. Conversely, although Nancy used two different cue words for fairway (i.e., "SWAG") and tee shots (i.e., "SWAT") they were fundamentally the same: "Slow, Waggle, Alignment, Grass" and "Slow, Waggle, Alignment, Tee".

Phil and Annika also benefited from the idea of using a cue word to help them remember critical components of shot preparation, but they adapted the idea in slightly different ways. Rather than developing a cue word Annika developed a cue phrase: "Positive Characters Take

Goals, Smile". The first letter of each word in the phrase represented an aspect of her set-up or swing. Again, adjusting the concept slightly, Phil used the mnemonic "SAS", which referred to the phrase "Slow, Same as Seve", to remind him to have a slow back swing and keep his head still.

There was no evidence to suggest that Laura or Sam developed cue words or any type of preshot routine. Laura argued that a preshot routine takes up time and slows the pace of play too much. She was also concerned that a preshot routine would give her too much to think about. I tried to convey to her that a routine might actually simplify her shot preparation as it would combine the things she had to think about (i.e., aim, alignment, and technical swing thoughts) into a simple routine that would be easy to repeat and remember. However, she remained resistant to the idea. Mirroring Laura's view, Sam also felt a preshot routine would over-complicate matters for him. Yet he acknowledged that in the future, once his golf improved somewhat, a preshot routine might be of benefit. In spite of that, when I asked him to describe his preshot preparation he revealed he did have the beginnings of a basic routine. He habitually put his bag to the left of his ball, aligned himself for the shot in the same way, and took a couple of deep breaths while standing behind his ball. Yet when I suggested he add a cue to serve as a reminder for things he had found useful in the past (e.g., his relaxation cue "cotton wool") he was reluctant to add to it.

The participants developed their cue words in different ways, for different reasons, drawing on different resources and inspirations. After the concept was presented in the seminar, Tom and Phil were the sole participants to take the initiative to develop and use a cue word straight away. Nancy, Lee, and Annika did not develop theirs until I highlighted to them how it could help them with a specific problem they had that emerged during their individual

consultations. Refocusing after a bad shot was an issue that surfaced during the first individual consultation I had with Nancy. I highlighted to her that it is often easier to focus on relevant performance cues than try to ignore distractions and explained how a cue word might help achieve this. Together we looked back over her evaluation records to identify the key things she focused on when she was playing well so she could develop her cue word around these. Soon after this discussion Nancy found an example of a cue word in a golf magazine that she tried to adopt but quickly found she needed to adapt it. Hence her cue words "SWAT" and "SWAG" emerged.

When Annika indicated in the individual consultation that she had not yet developed a cue word, we started to develop one for her together. As a result of her regular golf lessons, Annika was finding she had a lot to think about before she took a shot. We decided that integrating the most important points from her lessons into a routine would help her remember them as she set up for her shot. Following this discussion she developed her cue phrase. Similarly, Lee's 12345 routine represented five things he had to attend to when setting up for a shot.

Different from the cue words of the participants described above, Phil's cue, "Slow, Same as Seve", did not relate to his set-up. In developing his cue Phil was inspired by a large photograph of Seve Ballesteros hitting out of a bunker. The picture captures the ball mid-flight while Seve is still looking at the original position of the ball. The purpose of the cue was to remind Phil to keep his head down through the whole swing, just as Seve had done in the picture.

Having developed their cue word, many of the participants refined them as they used them more and more. For instance, initially Phil's cue was "SS" (Seve Swing) and served only as a reminder to keep his head down. Soon after, he expanded it to include the swing thought

"slow", so his cue became "SAS" (Slow, Same as Seve). Similarly, Annika added "Smile" to her original cue phrase "Positive Characters Take Goals", also as a reminder to execute a smooth swing. Tom first developed his cue word, "SCRAP", for tee shots. However, he soon realised he wanted to include a reminder to keep his head down, especially for fairway shots. He therefore developed a new word, "CRASH", which included this reminder. He quickly found that he could use "CRASH" for tee shots too, so abandoned "SCRAP" to simplify matters.

Towards the end of the MST, Lee, Nancy, and Tom went through technical swing changes and found that their routines were no longer appropriate and they needed to adapt them or create new ones. Lee found this process hard. Initially he tried to modify his original routine to adapt the change, but reported that did not seem to work so decided to develop a new one. He started by identifying the key components he wanted to include in the routine and then tried to combine them into a cue word. However, he found that when he came to use it on the course the components were not in the right order. Lee felt that he needed to develop his cue word routine while playing. Tom and Nancy's swing changes occurred in the follow-up period of the inquiry. Although they both recognised they needed to change their cue word routines as a result, neither had done so at the time of the follow-up interviews. Whether they did eventually, and what their experiences were with the process, remain unknown to me.

As the MST progressed, Phil, Tom, and Lee's cue words came to form part of a larger preshot routine. Lee explained that as he reached his ball he took a deep breath, imagined stepping into the 'circle', and then went through his cue word. Similarly, Tom also started going through his cue word once he stepped into the 'circle'. Phil's "SAS" became one aspect of his routine, along with deep breathing, imagery, and the phrase "forget what's gone, this is it".

When Nancy first used her cue words she voiced each element to herself before each shot. As time progressed she noted that she no longer said each aspect of the cue, yet she remained aware of each one. Nancy revealed that when she was playing well she was more likely to use her cue than when she was not playing well and probably would benefit from it the most. Tom voiced each element of his cue to himself before each shot and also went through it as a form of mental preparation before the round. Annika took a similar approach. She found her cue phrase became too much to think about before each shot so instead adopted it as her philosophy towards golf, reflecting on it before playing.

Only with Phil and Lee did the idea of a preputt routine get addressed. Phil adapted his routine to putting and found it helped him. Conversely, Lee was unable to recognise the value of a putting routine. He argued that his putting was good so he did not want to "tinker" with it.

Switching attention – The idea of switching attention away from golf between shots was first presented in seminar #4. Phil, Tom, and Laura implemented the idea of turning their focus away from golf between shots immediately after they learned about it in the seminar. Laura indicated that she tried to take her time preparing her shot when she was in her bubble and then talk with her playing partners and enjoy the scenery when outside the bubble. Phil took a similar approach and noted that in addition to improving his concentration it was also allowing him to be more sociable. Previously Phil had quickly walked to his next shot without talking to his playing partners as he thought he had to concentrate continuously in order to concentrate effectively. He came to realise this was not the case and in fact this approach was harming rather than helping his concentration. With the realisation he could switch his focus to his shot as necessary, Phil could chat with others at ease as he knew he could turn his attention back to golf when he had to play his shot. Phil indicated he found the idea of "intermittent concentration . . . more practical

and more readily achievable [than] . . . sustained 18 hole concentration" (evaluation record 7, 16/2/99), though at the start found it hard to turn it on and off.

When this idea was first introduced, Tom liked the idea of stepping into a cocoon as he approached his ball, though as he learned about the circle he found that image more favourable. He reported, "I can really vividly see this circle and when it's my turn to play I can step into it. . . . I'm in this circle with 100% concentration and that has seemed to work better for me" (final interview, 8/5/99). To further help him relax and switch off in-between shots, Tom developed a cue word, "BEG". He explained, "I use BEG after I have finished [playing my shot]. . . . I think, 'Switch off 'til the next shot, . . . [BEG –] take a deep Breath; Enjoy the lovely day; Great, think nice things'" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99).

Although presented in the seminars, it was not until Lee read the article on the 'circle' that he started to apply the concept of switching his concentration off between shots. He felt the 'circle' helped him relax between shots by helping him focus on other things and preventing him from thinking about his shot too early.

Not all the participants used the image of the cocoon in conjunction with the idea of turning their attention away from golf between shots. Some used it as a stand-alone technique to help eliminate distractions. Sam, Laura, Annika, and Nancy tried to apply the idea on a regular basis with varying results. Laura found this tool particularly useful in helping her block out what was going on around her and tried to imagine she was in the cocoon "as often as possible". She explained, "I cut myself off from everything going on around. I forget what's around me. It doesn't always work, but with anything like this you have to do it again and again until you can do it automatically" (individual consultation 1, 6/3/99). Annika found the cocoon helped her cope with her nerves, describing that once she imagined she was in it things did not disturb her

as much. Conversely, Sam noted he was less likely to imagine stepping into a cocoon when he was nervous as he felt his relaxation cue "cotton wool" was more effective than the cocoon at calming him down. Nancy, in the same way as Annika, used the cocoon to imagine she was some place on her own without people watching, but felt she was not very good at it.

To conclude, the participants used the cue word routine, the cocoon, and switching their focus away from golf between shots as techniques to help them focus with varying degrees of success. The participants adapted basic ideas I presented in the MST to meet their needs.

Activation control techniques.

The participants were familiar with various approaches for controlling activation prior to the MST, though did not necessarily use them to good effect. During the training, the two most common activation control techniques adopted by the participants were deep breathing and the relaxation tape I created.

Deep breathing – The use of deep breathing as a means of relaxing and/or refocusing on the golf course was universal across the participants. All except Phil, indicated they were aware of the relaxing effects of deep breathing prior to the MST but had not used it effectively on a regular basis to help them relax on the golf course. In seminar #5 the participants were told how abdominal breathing could help them on the golf course and then taught how to do it and given the opportunity to practice it.

Following this seminar, Tom started to practice abdominal breathing at home before going to play golf, iterating that as he did it he inhaled to the count of four and exhaled to the count of eight. In addition, while driving to the course in his buggy Tom continued to take deep breaths and focus on relaxing. Lee and Sam also used deep breathing to mentally prepare for golf. Sam used the relaxation tape to guide him.

On the course, all the participants reported that they used deep breathing to help them refocus. A couple of deep breaths after a bad shot helped Sam stay calm, a contrast to the mental swearing he had done previously. Likewise, Phil found a deep breath helped calm him down and "check the irritation" after a bad shot. Phil revealed he could feel his shoulders relax as he breathed deeply. Lee and Laura found taking a deep breath before playing their shot prevented them from rushing into their shot by forcing them to slow down.

To help them remember to take a deep breath before each shot, Lee, Tom, and Phil incorporated deep breathing into their cue words or preshot routines. Tom also included deep breathing in the cue word he used between shots. In an effort to remain relaxed throughout the round Lee indicated he took deep breaths while he was waiting for others to play their shots. Furthermore, the times he was playing really well he tended to use deep breathing to try to stay calm and "in the moment" to prevent him thinking ahead to his final score.

Although Nancy felt that she benefited on the occasions she took a deep breath before playing her shot, she argued that sometimes she did just not have enough time to do so, and was reluctant to include a deep breath in her preshot routine for this reason. However, as the training progressed Nancy used deep breathing more and more and found she was better able to relax. She revealed that "thinking about exhaling as well as inhaling really helps" (field notes, 23/3/99), further noting, "I know if I stop and breathe through the stomach instead of the chest, it does help slow me down and hopefully refocus" (individual consultation 2, 9/3/99). Moreover, as a result of the training she felt that she was taking deep breaths at more beneficial times during the round, for example before her shot rather than between holes.

Relaxation tape – The relaxation tape (Appendix M) that some of the participants used was originally made for Sam after he asked me how he could work towards achieving his goal of

obtaining more tranquillity on the course. Because Nancy also appeared to suffer from nerves I gave her the tape too. Both Sam and Nancy listened to the tape frequently. Nancy reported that she used the tape three times a week, usually before playing golf, and sometimes would listen to it in the afternoon if she took a nap. For Sam, listening to the tape after breakfast became an almost daily routine. However, as time progressed and Sam became more adept at relaxing he used the tape less frequently, tending to listen to it only on the nights before he played golf. Lee also tried using the tape. Although he only listened to it a couple of times during the training he reported he "loved it" and described it as a brilliant aspect of the training that "stands apart" from the rest. However, he believed that one could not listen to it every time one played golf and was surprised to learn that in fact some of the participants had.

On the tape the listener is asked to associate a word with the relaxed feeling he or she achieves. Nancy chose the word "floating", having initially thought of the word "float" but feeling it was "too harsh" a word. Consequently, saying "floating" to herself while playing made her smile, which in turn helped her to relax. Sam chose "cotton wool" to sum up the feeling of being relaxed as he felt the image of cotton wool was relaxing. The image of cotton wool expanding after it has been compressed also served as an analogy for Sam to release his hands during the swing. On the course, he repeated "cotton wool, cotton wool, relax, relax, cotton wool, cotton wool" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99) to himself before taking his shot to help relax. Sam also felt there were occasions on the course when he did not need as much help to relax (e.g., when people were not watching him, he was not hitting off the tee) and instead needed help to focus on the upcoming shot. He chose the word "flax" as a cue to focus on his shot as it was a shorter word with a more staccato sound to it, yet still related to cotton wool, thereby reminding him of the need for relaxed concentration.

In short, the relaxation tape formed an important component of the MST for a couple of the participants. The use of deep breathing was more prevalent amongst the participants, though some used it in more structured ways than others, incorporating a deep breath into their preshot routines to ensure they did not forget.

Other MST techniques.

In addition to the techniques mentioned above designed to increase awareness and control activation and attention, a number of other techniques were introduced during the course of the training. The techniques discussed in this section are the ones the participants commented on most frequently, they are not necessarily the ones they found the most useful. These techniques include imagery, 'Personal Par', 'Smart Golf', developing a positive attitude, and goal setting.

Imagery – Imagery was introduced to the participants during seminars #7 and #8. Participants were taught how to do imagery and made aware of how it can be used to enhance golf performance and enjoyment. They were also guided through a number of imagery exercises that required them to use different senses in order to create a vivid mental experience. None of the participants used imagery consciously prior to the MST. Nancy noted, "I had not really been aware that it was a possibility, or even necessary" (final interview, 11/5/99). However, she became familiar with imagery soon into the MST through a hypnotic golf tape she had. The tape encouraged her to use imagery to "work through each shot from tee to hole", something she then did to mentally prepare before playing. Nancy also used imagery to recreate past shots she played well and imagined herself hitting a good first tee shot as part of her mental preparation. Likewise, at home before playing Tom imagined himself hitting good shots, emphasising how they would feel, in order to mentally prepare for his round. He included going through his cue word in his imagery.

The participants used imagery in diverse ways. In general, their imagery appeared to be mainly visual, but Annika and Tom also attempted to imagine the feel of the swing. Tom, Sam, Phil, and Nancy used imagery to "see" the specific point on the fairway or green they wanted their shot to finish. Although not doing it for every shot, in general they noted they were doing it more and more as time progressed. When putting, Annika used imagery to imagine the line the ball would roll along to the hole. Phil, Annika, and Lee created mental pictures of the shots (ball flight) to help them choose the type of shot they wanted to execute. Phil found that this helped him be more disciplined about his golf and think about the shot, rather than just approaching the ball and hitting it. Many of the participants also used imagery as a way of strengthening their confidence. Tom found visualising himself playing holes well prior to playing helped his confidence. Nancy indicated she approached shots saying, "You know you can do it. You know where you want the ball to go. Visualise the spot where you want it to go" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99) and found it helped her to achieve what she wanted. Likewise, Sam felt imagery helped him believe in his ability to execute the shot. Tom and Annika both commented that if they hit good shots they would replay them in their minds over and over again.

When Tom first started to try to imagine hitting a "nice clean shot", he found it very hard. Yet he persevered and practised imagery at home before every round. Both he and Nancy commented that they felt their ability to create vivid images improved over the course of the MST. Their scores on the MSQ supported their perceptions (see Figures 3 & 4). Scores on the MSQ also indicated that Lee and Annika's imagery ability had improved over the course of the training (see Figures 5 & 8). Annika hypothesised that she found imagery hard at the start because she did not have much experience with sport growing up. Sam considered himself to be good at creating images in general, but found it hard to use imagery on the golf course at first

because he was so "jumpy". However, as he learned to relax he reported the imagery was more forthcoming.

Although Lee used imagery fairly frequently the first few weeks after it was introduced, towards the end of the training he started to use it less and less. Lee explained, "I have this wonderful picture of how clean the shot's going to be, where the ball's going to go and so on [but] it just doesn't happen" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99). Lee believed that he had developed his imagery skills as much as he was going to and stated that he felt it was more important to feel confident about what he is doing. We talked about other ways he could use imagery, but Lee was fairly resistant to the ideas feeling he had given imagery "a fair crack of the whip" and it had not done much for him. Nancy experienced similar results with imagery, noting, "I try to envisage where I want the shot to go. Sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn't. . . . I psych myself up and say 'yes, I can do this' and then [it doesn't happen]" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99).

The participants mainly used imagery while on the course or to mentally prepare before playing. However, Lee, Phil, and Tom occasionally used imagery on the range. Although the participants reported they used imagery to imagine the shots they wanted to hit, I was not confident they did so on a regular basis nor with great detail. Annika and Phil were the only two participants who ever vividly described their imagery during the inquiry.

Personal Par – The 'Personal Par' (Keogh & Smith, 1985) approach to golf was presented to the participants in seminar #4. Overall, the participants did not perceive this approach as useful and their implementation of the technique was short-lived. At least two of the participants noted they found it more helpful to focus on each shot rather than on each hole as this technique encouraged. Phil explained that although 'Personal Par' helped him to some extent

to focus on one hole at a time, it did not help as much as when he thought about one shot at a time. He explained, "[Personal Par] is a target, like playing scratch golf [or] playing to your handicap, it's too big a chunk. I think the focus on the individual shot is getting me to [where I want to be]" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Tom concurred.

Another common criticism of the 'Personal Par' approach by the participants was that it did not provide them with goals that were challenging enough. Consequently, even when they achieved their personal par on a hole they did not derive any sense of satisfaction from it. Phil described his personal par as "an average of when I was playing badly" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). As a result he noted, "I found myself getting a little bit frustrated only because I didn't feel I was playing well enough, even if I reached my personal par. I still wanted to do better than that" (final interview, 7/5/99). Nancy also stated that her personal par was not "good enough" for her and knew that she could play better. Accordingly, like Phil, she derived no fulfilment from achieving her personal pars. Likewise, Tom noted he did not get a lot of enthusiasm from the concept of 'Personal Par', iterating he got "more of a lift from the total score at the end" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Although Annika never implemented the concept of 'Personal Par', she thought it was a good idea. Contrary to the other participants Annika felt the 'Personal Par' would provide her with "a good starting point", feeling it would provide her with realistic goals. She highlighted, "it makes you unhappy if you're always thinking to go too much better" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

In spite of the general negative reaction to the 'Personal Par' approach, Phil benefited from it in a different way than intended. By comparing the number of personal pars he achieved on the front nine to the number achieved on the back nine, Phil realised he was able to come back from poor performance at the beginning of a round. He used this information in the future

to help maintain a positive attitude when he did not play well. Regrettably, Phil was the only participant who indicated he benefited from the 'Personal Par'.

Smart Golf – Like 'Personal Par', 'Smart Golf' (Kirschenbaum et al., 1998) was not well received by the participants. None of them embraced the concept of 'Smart Golf', an approach designed to improve and evaluate the mental game of golf. The majority of the participants did not even try to use 'Smart Golf'. Nancy felt overwhelmed with the concept and stated there was no way she would be able to apply it on the golf course. Tom and Phil were the sole participants who tried to implement 'Smart Golf' while playing golf and they quickly gave up due to the amount of things they were required to evaluate. Phil described 'Smart Golf' as "heavy". Tom felt it was confusing and there was too much to do. He questioned how one could focus on playing golf when required to record and evaluate so many components of your golf game. Similarly, Phil found "there was an a awful lot to concentrate on" and noted "I tried it once and half way around I said, I can't fill all this in" (final interview, 4/5/99). Tom and Lee named 'Smart Golf' as the least engaging aspect of the MST and Tom indicated that he did not feel it could help his golf.

Developing a positive attitude – Throughout the MST participants were encouraged to adopt a positive attitude towards golf and life in general. Specifically, in the second seminar they were introduced to the concept of highlight training and encouraged to carry a positive perspective into everything they did. In the evaluation records participants were asked to record their highlights from each round, as well as the highlights from their life outside golf. Every few weeks during the seminars, participants were asked to share and discuss their highlights with the group. In addition to highlight training, the participants were coached to use positive self-talk to

replace negative thoughts they experienced, build confidence, enhance motivation, and create a positive mood.

Tom immediately implemented the ideas he had gleaned from the second seminar on highlight training and adopting a positive perspective. On his drive to the course it became a habit for Tom to think "happy thoughts" and reflect on good things that had happened in his life recently. Annika also focused on positive aspects of her life and golf and discussed them with friends.

With regards to documenting highlights in their evaluation records, all participants were able to extract highlights from their rounds. Of the 377 golf highlights that were recorded in the 97 evaluation records by the participants, 348 (93%) related to their performance (see Table 5). The most frequently recorded performance highlights were scoring well on a hole (n=93), making a par (n=79), hitting a good shot (n=54), playing well off the tee throughout the round (n=26), putting well throughout the round (n=25), and their overall score or performance (n=20). The remaining 7% of the participants' golf highlights related to the weather (n=7), the scenery (n=7), their playing partners playing well (n=4), their company (n=3), and a general appreciation of life (n=3). Other golf highlights recorded can be seen in Table 5, along with statistics describing the distribution of the highlights among the participants.

Participants were also asked to record highlights in their life outside golf. Based on the number of highlights recorded, it appears the participants found it harder to identify highlights in their life outside golf. A total of 138 highlights from their life outside golf were recorded by the participants in their evaluation records, which represented 27% of the total number of highlights documented. In the evaluation records completed towards the start of the MST there was a sense of general satisfaction and contentment with life from all the participants and a dearth of specific

highlights recorded in their life outside golf. Phil and Tom commented it was a "joy to be alive" and Nancy iterated "most of life is one big highlight" (evaluation record 3, 26/1/99). Yet in the evaluation records later on in the training there appeared to be a general shift towards the participants recording more specific highlights.

The most frequently cited highlights outside golf were those that related to the environment, social factors, and activities and hobbies (see Table 5). The most frequently recorded highlights were those that related to the environment (n=49). Within this category, wildlife was the most oft cited highlight (n=22). For example, one of Sam's highlights was seeing his first salamander of the year. Hearing bird song was a highlight for Lee, Phil, Nancy, and Sam. The "scents from the lemon groves" and the "mimosa in blossom" were highlights in Nancy's life. The "abundance of wild flowers" was a highlight for Phil. Other common highlights among the participants within the category of environment related to the weather (n=12) and the scenery and views (n=12). Tom wrote, "what about the weather the last few days? Fantastic! Great to be alive" (evaluation record 32, 5/4/99). Phil, Tom, and Nancy listed varying views and scenery as highlights. Tom vividly described a sunrise when recording his highlights one day: "Seeing lovely sunrise this morning over Lion Mountain with pure white vapour trail above from airliner flying South to North. It made a lovely picture and wished I'd had my camera" (evaluation record 36, 14/4/99).

The second most common category of highlights related to social factors. Within this category, the most frequently recorded highlights were those that related to contact with friends (n=21). These highlights varied from a telephone call or visit from a friend to dinner with friends to going to a party. Contact with family was mentioned as a highlight by four of the participants

(n=8). These highlights related to receiving birthday cards, letters, phone calls, and visits from family members.

The third largest category of highlights related to hobbies and activities outside the context of golf. Some of these highlights were as general as going on a trip others as specific as fixing a computer problem. The more frequently mentioned highlights within this category included going to the theatre or ballet (n=5), taking a trip (n=5), sunbathing (n=3), playing bridge (n=3), and doing arts and crafts (n=3). Other frequently mentioned highlights included being in good health (n=9) and food and drink (n=14).

All the participants made an effort to become more positive on the golf course and restructure their negative self-talk. For some this process was as simple as making the decision to be more positive. For example, following the second seminar Nancy reported, "I tried using the positive approach to help [with nerves] and psych myself up before I start, rather than thinking 'Oh this is a competition. Oh God. I feel awful. I hate it" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99). Both Tom and Phil indicated they used positive self-talk to build confidence for their shots by saying phrases like, "I can do this" and "you've done this shot before". Others worked more systematically towards developing a positive perspective. Following the seminar on self-talk, Annika constructed a list of self-talk that was helpful to her and a list that was unhelpful. Her goal was to eliminate the negative self-talk by rephrasing it in a positive manner. For example, she changed the phrase "I will never learn to play good and stable golf" to "I have improved much recently and feel more stable". She documented that on the course she worked hard to replace her negative self-talk with more positive thoughts, likening it to working in a laboratory. Tom tried to use thought stopping as a technique to help him clear his mind of the negative thought before replacing it with a positive, but did not find it helpful.

In sum, the participants used a variety of techniques to help them adopt a more positive attitude and think more positively on the golf course. The participants used the evaluation records to record their golf highlights as well as highlights in their life outside golf. Moreover, in general, they made an effort to structure their thoughts in a more positive way.

Goal setting – Goal setting did not emerge as an important component of the MST process for the participants. The use of goal setting following the performance profiling has already been discussed in an earlier section. Besides this, the participants were asked to record any goals they set for each round in the evaluation records and indicate whether or not they achieved them. The purpose of including this question in the evaluation was to direct the participants' attention to specific things they could do during the round to help them reach their long-term goals. The goals that the participants set towards the beginning of the training did not serve this purpose and were often vague and/or written in negative terms. For example, Nancy's goals included "play well" and "reduce my handicap". Sam's included, "don't go into barranca on first tee" and "don't lose my ball". Laura's goal one round was to "keep out of bunkers". Phil's was to "two putt every hole". Lee's included "to win". Seminar #3 on goal setting did little to change this goal setting behaviour.

Goal setting was touched upon again with Sam, Nancy, and Lee during the individual consultations but the remaining participants did not receive any further guidance for setting goals. In the individual consultations with these participants I helped them break down their larger, less specific goals, to process goals they could focus on during the round. For example, one of Sam's goals was to score under 50 for nine holes. I asked him what he needed to do in order to achieve this. He responded that he needed to think about weight transfer on every shot. As a result, I suggested that his goal for the round could be to focus on transferring his weight

before every shot. He understood the benefits of setting these types of goals noting, "yes, that's clearly much better than setting a stroke target because if, after so many holes, the thing has gone, where are you then?" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). I took a similar approach with Lee and Nancy in the individual meetings I had with them. After these meetings Lee started to set more process oriented goals for each round, such as "go through preshot routine before each shot" and "take a deep breath before each shot".

Nancy was very resistant to the idea of setting goals when we first started to discuss goal setting as she felt having goals put her under too much pressure. Up until this discussion her goals had been "to play well". However, I provided her with some examples of more process-focused goals that she could set that might not make her feel as if she was under as much pressure. For example, one such goal might be for her to be more accepting of herself when she hit a bad shot and not call herself names. She indicated that these types of goals would be more preferable and went on to set goals of this nature.

To summarise, during the MST the participants were exposed to a number of different MST techniques. Some of these techniques immediately appealed to the participants and they quickly integrated them into their golf games with beneficial results. Other techniques were faced with greater resistance. Some overwhelmed the participants to such a degree they did not even try to use them. Others were integrated more tentatively and if positive effects were not apparent abandoned soon after. Besides the appeal of the techniques themselves, there were a number of other factors that affected the implementation of the techniques. These will be presented in the ensuing section.

Factors Affecting Implementation of MST Techniques

Although not prolific, the participants identified a number of factors that facilitated and hindered the implementation of the MST skills and techniques. These factors will be documented in the following sections.

Factors facilitating implementation of techniques.

Four factors were identified as facilitating the implementation of the techniques. Nancy indicated that repeatedly using the techniques made it easier for her to implement them. She stated, "the more you do something the more it becomes automatic, something normal" (final interview, 11/5/99). Indeed, as the training came to an end she attested that she used the techniques more automatically. Similarly, Tom indicated, "now that I've trained myself [to use these skills] I find it easier to use them, to slip into this mode of locking in and locking out" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Lee indicated that recognising the beneficial effects of the training motivated him to persist with the application of the techniques, iterating "I believe that the [techniques] work. And I believe that they work for me. It's a great motivation therefore. And if you're motivated, things come easier" (final interview, 16/5/99). Furthermore, Lee reported that my presence with him on the course served as a reminder to use the techniques and implement his preshot routine throughout. Lastly, Phil indicated that a lapse in his performance brought his attention back to a more conscientious application of the MST techniques.

Factors hindering implementation of techniques.

While Phil found that poor performance prompted more diligent use of the techniques, Lee and Nancy's experiences were contrary. Nancy reported that she was less likely to use the techniques when she was not playing well as she felt they just gave her more to think about, an

opinion echoed by Lee. He found that if he was going through a swing change and had to think about that it was harder for him to adhere to the use of the MST techniques.

Lee's concern for keeping things simple led him to selectively choose the techniques he liked and felt would benefit him, to the exclusion of using others. Phil and Sam mirrored this approach, selectively choosing which techniques they used.

Phil commented on a number of occasions that when he was playing golf in the Scramble format he found it harder to switch his concentration away from golf as he had to be aware of where his team members' balls were and make decisions regarding which ball they were going to play. Fatigue also affected Phil's ability to focus and maintain his preshot routine.

Summary of MST Process

The participants chose to engage in the MST primarily to improve their golf performance. More specifically, many wanted to improve their concentration and learn how to cope with their nervousness on the course. Some also indicated a desire to build their confidence and generally improve their mental approach to golf. During the MST the participants were taught diverse MST techniques and guided in their mental skill development. The use of these techniques varied across participants in terms of how they adapted them to meet their needs and the degree to which they integrated them into their golf.

Q3. What effects, if any, does MST have on the recreational golfers' affect, cognitions, and/or behaviours? Specifically, what are the changes, if any, in the golfers' enjoyment? Furthermore, what key factors, if any, did they perceive contributed to the outcomes of the MST?

In this section, the shared outcomes for the participants will be presented and the elements of the MST they hypothesised contributed to these outcomes highlighted. However, the relationship between the elements of the MST and the outcomes that resulted did not emerge in a

clear-cut fashion. Rarely were the participants able to pinpoint a specific tool or element of the MST as the cause of a particular outcome. Often it appeared to be the MST as a whole and/or the general philosophy of the training that had the effect. In fact, on a number of occasions participants referred to one particular sentence I had said during the MST that had had a profound impact on them even though that may not have been the key idea I was trying to convey at the time. Furthermore, many of the outcomes became contributing factors themselves. For example, participants developed more confidence as a result of the MST, which they in turn believed helped improve their golf performance. Consequently, organising the presentation of the shared outcomes in this section became quite a struggle. Before I delineate the common outcomes that emerged in this inquiry, I will provide some insight into how I came to the decision to present them as I have.

Greater golf enjoyment and improved golf performance emerged as the two most significant outcomes for the participants in this inquiry. By significant I am not referring to a measure of statistical significance, but instead I deemed these two outcomes as the most significant because of the number of participants who reported them and the frequency and tone in which they referred to them through the latter parts of the inquiry. However, not only did improved performance emerge as an outcome, it emerged as a contributing factor to the participants' greater enjoyment. Indeed, so did a number of the other outcomes that were common to the participants (i.e., a change in attitude, being more relaxed, a sense of control, and a non-performance focus when appropriate). Therefore, I decided to present these outcomes within the realm of them being contributing factors to greater enjoyment in order to avoid repetition and simplify the presentation of the findings. In order for an outcome to be presented

as a contributing factor to enjoyment in these findings, at least three participants needed to have cited it as such.

In addition to the outcomes mentioned above, the participants also developed their mental skills as a result of participating in the MST. The second set of common outcomes will therefore be presented under the heading 'Skill Development'. The third category of MST outcomes comprised those that occurred outside the context of golf. That is, ways in which the participants benefited from the MST in their lives outside golf. These outcomes are summarised in Figure 11.

I was unable to conduct final and follow-up interviews with Laura and therefore could not obtain a complete set of data from her regarding the latter stages of the MST. Consequently, I was unable to obtain a full picture of the effects of the MST for her. I therefore decided not to include Laura in the cross-case analysis of the MST outcomes.

Greater Golf Enjoyment

All six participants reported increases in their golf enjoyment by the end of the MST. Without question, the participants enjoyed golf prior to the MST, but all of them noted that their enjoyment of golf was greater at the end. Even Sam, who doubted that he could enjoy golf any more than he did at the start, noticed that just a couple of months into the MST "the enjoyment level is much, much greater. I didn't think that that would happen, I have to say" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

In this inquiry, no attempt was made to objectively measure the amount of change in the participants' enjoyment levels. However, the frequency with which the participants mentioned that they were enjoying their golf more, and the tone in which they spoke, revealed that the change had been quite significant, especially for Tom, Phil, and Sam. Moreover, it is telling that Nancy, who at the start of the MST indicated that given the choice of playing bridge or golf she

would choose to play bridge, stated after the MST "I can't choose because I enjoy both. It's that simple" (final interview, 11/5/99). In addition, Phil and Nancy both indicated that they now looked forward to playing golf more, whereas previously it had sometimes been an effort to go out and play. Sam also remarked, "generally, I was sorry that the round had finished, which is not my usual thing. Normally it's 'thank God that's over'" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Indeed, on a number of occasions participants remarked that they were playing some of the most enjoyable golf they had played for years.

Not only did the participants find playing golf more enjoyable, but Phil and Sam enjoyed practising golf more as a result of the MST. Sam commented, "there is a genuine enjoyment on the range now, something I never had before, that's for sure" (final interview, 14/4/99). He attributed this change to setting goals while practising and looking for the enjoyment in hitting, and appreciating, a good shot.

The factors the participants attributed the change in enjoyment to varied both in terms of the factors themselves and the extent to which they considered them to be a contributing element to the change in their golf enjoyment. Five factors that contributed to increased enjoyment emerged, namely 'Change in Attitude', 'More Relaxed', 'Perceived Golf Improvement', 'Non-Performance Focus', and 'Sense of Control'. Note that these factors are outcomes of the MST themselves.

Change in Attitude

'Change in Attitude' was defined as a change in the participants' outlook and/or approach to golf. Three sub-themes of attitude change emerged: The participants became more confident, more balanced, and more disciplined as a result of the MST. A change in attitude contributed to enhanced levels of golf enjoyment for all six participants. In the following sections, the sub-

themes themselves, how they impacted enjoyment levels, and the causes of the change will be delineated.

More confident.

Four of the participants cited that the increase in their confidence levels was a contributing factor to their enhanced golf enjoyment. Sam noted that he enjoyed golf more because he was more confident about his golf and so did not feel "embarrassment or a burden on others" when he did not play well. Similarly, Lee remarked that the confidence he gained from the MST allowed him to play with low handicappers without concern. Having developed more confidence, Tom no longer worried about where his shot would go and instead believed the shot would go where he wanted. He noted, "I've got the confidence that it's going to be OK, and if it isn't I'm a bit surprised. So, that's a lovely feeling and that makes me enjoy my golf a lot more" (follow-up 2, 7/1/00). Lee also attested, "[I get] much more enjoyment from the game now that I am playing more confidently" (evaluation record 13, 9/4/99). Because he had more confidence he attempted more challenging shots, which in turn added to his golf enjoyment. Not being "afraid for each shot", and instead feeling more confident, also made golf more enjoyable for Annika.

Although only four of the participants reported that being more confident had played a part in increasing their golf enjoyment, all six of them noted they had become more confident over the course of the MST. The participants' scores on the MSQ provide further support for this (see Figures 3-6, & 8). Two raw data themes made up the sub-theme 'more confident': Confidence in current ability and confidence in ability to improve.

Confidence in current ability – All six participants reported a general increase in their golf confidence. Changes in Nancy's confidence levels were quite marked as highlighted by the

graph of her MSQ scores (see Figure 4). Overall, she became a more confident golfer, noting "my confidence level is higher and I think more positively about my ability. . . . I'm more capable than I thought I was. I now know that I'm capable of playing a good game of golf more often" (final interview, 11/5/99). Indeed, her self-perception as a golfer changed. By the end of the training she started to think, "I *am* a golfer, as opposed to someone just playing at trying to be a golfer" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Lee also gained greater confidence regarding his golf, attesting "I feel very much more confident about my golf, and we certainly know the importance of that. Generally speaking, I'm walking on to the tee now and know that the chances are I'm going to hit a reasonable drive" (final interview, 15/5/99). More specifically, Tom related his confidence for hitting previously troublesome shots had increased.

Confidence in ability to improve – Further to issues of increased confidence, following the MST, Sam, Phil, Nancy, and Lee developed confidence that they could improve their golf, something they had questioned before. Sam explained, "I think before I started on the seminars with you I was really almost kidding myself that I could improve. I think deep down I didn't think I could. Now I really do think that I can" (follow-up 2, 6/1/00). Lee had similar concerns that were allayed as a result of the MST: "I learned that I can be a reasonably consistent player. I really had it confirmed that I must keep on" (final interview, 16/5/99). Indeed, Lee felt confident that he would be able to lower his handicap in time.

Contributing factors – The participants proposed five key factors contributed to their greater confidence: improved golf performance, being more positive, being more relaxed, imagery, and a preshot routine. Phil and Lee both indicated that they felt more confident as a

result of playing better. Phil noted, "the ability to do a shot and repeat it successfully, tends to give a level of confidence" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Tom, Phil, and Annika reported that being more positive fostered feelings of confidence. Tom expanded, "instead of approaching [certain] shots in a positive manner, I was approaching them with the idea that I could miss this. . . . Now I approach them . . . in a confident manner, thinking positively" (individual consultation 2, 4/3/99). Phil experienced something similar. He attributed his greater confidence to "being able to put aside other things" (final interview, 4/5/99) and therefore approach each shot without negative thoughts. He explained, "I can now forget the bad shots and concentrate on the ones I'm doing and getting those successfully completed reinforces the confidence level" (final interview, 4/5/99). Annika found that focusing on the positive things that occurred, and always making the effort to look for the small joys in golf, helped build her confidence.

Sam, Tom, Phil, and Lee felt their confidence increased as a result of being more relaxed. Tom asserted he was "especially more confident when addressing the ball for a tricky or difficult shot due to the more relaxed and positive approach" (evaluation record 15, 24/2/99). Sam postulated that listening to the relaxation tape and engaging in deep breathing had helped develop his confidence. Lee also believed deep breathing played a role in increasing his confidence.

Imagery was a further element of the MST that played a role in increasing confidence for Lee, Nancy, and Sam. Lee attested that "visualising the upcoming shot" made him feel more confident about executing it and Sam noted imagery helped to "possibly convince myself that this is a shot that I can do" (follow-up 2, 6/1/00). Lastly, Lee attested that his preshot routine served to increase his confidence. Within the first few rounds Lee started to use his preshot

routine he noted that he felt more positive and confident merely through making the decision to use it. Lee asserted the preshot routine "gives you this confidence that the chances are you're going to hit a good shot more often than not" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99). He further expanded, "I know that if I do this, that should happen. . . . It is not a guarantee for success but I know from experience it usually leads to success and hence increases my confidence" (final interview, 15/5/99).

More balanced.

All six participants developed a more balanced attitude through the MST. This sub-theme comprised three raw data themes: Accepting of poor performance, accepting of slow play, and positive attitude. It was apparent that for all of the participants except Annika, a more balanced attitude contributed to greater golf enjoyment. In the remainder of this section, the raw data themes will be delineated along with the factors the participants felt played a role in changing their attitude in this regard.

Accepting of poor performance – Prior to the MST all six participants noted that poor performance undermined their golfing enjoyment. Yet by the end of the training it emerged that all of them had become more accepting of their poor performances and bad shots. Tom noted, "I don't get as despondent . . . when I have a bad game. . . . I tend to accept now that no matter how good a golfer you are, even if you're off scratch, you'll get bad days" (final interview, 8/5/99). Moreover, following a round where Tom did not play well, he reflected, "although I was conscious I wasn't getting a good score, it wasn't worrying me. It wasn't until I got to the end and counted up, I was rather surprised that my score was as bad as it was" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). He went on to suggest, "I think I used to get worried more and more

[about a bad score] and that made me play worse, but it didn't worry me that I was having the odd blob on the back nine, not scoring" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99).

Tom attributed this change to a greater awareness of how his attitude negatively affected his performance and then learning to put mistakes behind him. He used self-talk to help with this, using phrases like "forget today and not mourn over it, it's water under the bridge, history. Start again on Monday" (evaluation record 29, 26/3/99) and "if you've had a bad day, so you've had a bad day and that's it. If we didn't have bad days we wouldn't be playing off the handicaps we are, we'd be making a living out of it" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Lee also remarked that his "attitude to the game is far more agreeable to live with now" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99) because he no longer got "depressed" when he played poorly for a number of rounds. Part of this was due to the belief he could now overcome a spell of poor play. Similarly, poor performance no longer affected Phil's golf enjoyment as much as he came to believe any lapse in performance would be short-lived. Phil also became better at "putting aside the poor shots and starting afresh" (evaluation record 10, 11/3/99), whereas originally he noted "the [bad shots] used to carry forward with me. I was spending half a dozen subsequent shots after a bad one, thinking about the bad one that made me feel like such an idiot" (individual consultation 1, 19/2/99). Reflecting on his MST experience, Phil noted "further enjoyment has been derived from the ability gained through mental training to put aside lapses in performance, the memory of which once strongly influenced, adversely, subsequent performance and pleasure" (letter, 3/5/99). Phil attributed his improved ability to forget mistakes to his "preshot routine of relaxation breathing, imagery of the anticipated shot, then SAS [cue word]" (evaluation record 10, 11/3/99).

Just a month into the training, Sam also talked about not being "phased" as much by his poor performances. He postulated as to why: "Partly because it's not happening as often and partly because quite often I'm able to recognise what I'm doing wrong, whereas before I was so excited that I couldn't think clearly about what was going wrong" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Furthermore, Sam no longer got upset when things did not go well on the practice ground.

Annoyance and frustration with poor performance also abated for Nancy by the end of the training. For her, the change was a result of being able to put the result into perspective and, like Tom, talking positively to herself. In addition, she learned to focus on positive things that occurred.

Throughout the MST Annika worked hard to deal with the anger she felt when she was not playing well or improving as fast as she wanted. By the end of the MST she felt she was able to deal with it through rational discussion with herself. Initially, like the others, Annika found it hard to forget her bad shots. However, a couple of months into the training she felt better able to do so as a result of making a conscious effort to work on forgetting the bad shots and always looking for positive things that had happened.

Accepting of slow play – Besides being more accepting of poor performance, a couple of the participants also learned to be more accepting of slow play and therefore not let it detract from their golfing enjoyment as much. Slow play was a source of anger and frustration for Tom, Nancy, and Phil prior to the MST. Following the training both Tom and Nancy noted that they were better able to deal with these negative emotions and no longer let slow play frustrate them. Tom noted, "it's certainly cured me of the frustration and anger over slow play, playing with slow people who dither about. That's been 100% as far as I'm concerned" (final interview,

8/5/99). For Tom, this change was still apparent eight months after the MST. As with his poor performance, it was an awareness of how slow play was negatively affecting his game that led to the change. He explained, "until I looked into it, I didn't realise how much it was affecting my game. Once it became apparent, . . . half the battle was over, there was no way I was going to get annoyed" (final interview, 8/5/99). Having realised this, Tom started to use "relaxing and deep breathing", noting "because obviously when I was getting upset and annoyed I was getting tense" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). In addition, he would pick some grass and let it go in the wind to represent himself letting go of his negative emotions associated with slow play. For Nancy, it was simply the adoption of a more carpe diem attitude that led her to be more accepting of slow play.

Phil had not totally learned to prevent slow play from undermining his golf enjoyment and affecting his performance though he noted, "[slow play] is less, less enjoyable" (final interview, 7/5/99). Phil attested that the idea of the 'circle' and not thinking about the upcoming shot until it was time to play it helped him deal with slow play.

Positive attitude – All the participants developed more positive attitudes as a result of the MST. A positive attitude was characterised by positive thinking and the ability to eliminate negative thoughts. For example, at the end of the MST Annika was more likely, when faced with a hazard on the course (e.g., barranca, water hazard), to say "it's a challenge, I like it" (final interview, 1/6/99) rather than be "afraid". Indeed, in general Annika recognised, "my thinking is much more positive and I started to tell positive thoughts to my husband or to friends" (diary entry, 15/4/99). Annika's positive attitude was still apparent, if not more so, at the follow-up. She revealed, "being optimistic is one of the essentials in my life. The more I think about it, and internalise, the more I am convinced to do so" (follow-up 1, 11/10/99). Annika attributed her

change in attitude to the highlight training (i.e., looking for small joys), the use of her cue phrase "Positive Characters Take Goals, Smile", and self-talk: "I discuss with myself when doubts reach me and I find mostly to the positive points (18/5/99). Tom also became more positive during the MST, attesting "if anything upsets me I don't dwell on it now" (final interview, 8/5/99). Nancy iterated, "by eliminating negative thoughts I'm able to focus on the positive and thus enjoy the game more" (final interview, 11/5/99). Sam felt that being more relaxed had made him more positive.

More disciplined.

All six participants noted they had developed a more disciplined approach towards golf as a result of the MST. Discipline was defined as the ability to make oneself do things one knows one should do even if one does not want to. Three areas in which the participants had become more disciplined emerged: preparation before play, preparation for each shot, and playing within one's capabilities. There was scant evidence to suggest that a more disciplined approach to golf increased the participants' golf enjoyment, yet because a more disciplined approach falls under the theme 'Change in Attitude' it has been presented here. That said, it emerged that greater discipline had the effect on enhancing golf enjoyment for both Phil and Sam. Moreover, the participants' more disciplined approach to golf appeared to have a positive effect on their performance, which in turn served to enhance their enjoyment.

Preparation before play – The MST made Lee and Annika more disciplined in their preparation before playing in terms of warming up on the practice ground and stretching. Annika attested, "I am more disciplined now. . . . If you want to make progress you have to do these things. Now you have it in black and white I have become aware that it is necessary" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Lee agreed, "I'd really got out of the habit of practising before play.

You've got me back into it. So that's good news as well" (final interview, 15/5/99). Sam's preround preparation also took on a more disciplined nature, but not in terms of warming up on the practice ground. Instead, Sam got into the habit of reading an instructional golf book and listening to the relaxation tape prior to playing to mentally prepare for the round.

Preparation for each shot – All the participants with the exception of Annika, indicated that they had adopted a more disciplined approach when preparing to play a shot. Rather than approaching the ball and hitting it without much thought, they now thought more carefully about the requirements of the shot. Phil noticed "a considerable change to [his] once cavalier approach to the game" (evaluation record 17, 4/4/99). He explained, "where once it was the norm to walk up and hit the ball with variable results (good and bad), mental preparation is much more controlled and focused with more consistent performance and enjoyment" (evaluation record 17, 4/4/99). He went on to describe, "the techniques have changed my way of playing golf. . . . The tools are making me focus to do it the proper way. . . . It's the self-discipline on the golf course that's producing results" (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99). Phil's more methodical approach to his shots led to a greater satisfaction with his golf game: "Because I put something into it and I got something out of it, it's a little more satisfying than just 'OK so I hit the ball'" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Tom's preshot preparation became more disciplined through the use of a preshot routine. Phil, Nancy, and Lee also developed preshot routines that helped in this regard. Lee reported that his helped to slow down his shot preparation and assess the shot requirements more carefully. Nancy used hers to help remember key points before each shot, thereby helping her prepare mentally for each shot, something she had not done prior to the MST. Although the preshot

routine was the main tool the participants attributed their more careful shot preparation to, Lee reported that deep breathing and the concept of the 'circle' also helped him.

Playing within one's capabilities – The last raw data theme within the 'more disciplined' sub-theme was 'discipline to play within one's capabilities'. Tom and Sam both became more disciplined about playing within their own capabilities and making "sensible" decisions with regards to shot selection. Sam attributed this change to being more relaxed. Tom also attested he was making more sensible decisions on the golf course. He reported, "if I get into trouble, you know, in the rough, bad lies, whereby before I used to try and work a miracle now I can much more calmly suss this thing out. . . . I'm much more sensible" (follow-up 2, 7/1/00).

More Relaxed

All six of the participants became more relaxed on the golf course as a result of the MST. The shared outcome 'More Relaxed' comprised two raw data themes: Less tension and less worry. Participants were considered to have less tension if they reported they experienced less muscle tension or had learned to control their muscle tension as a result of the MST. In addition, participants were deemed to have less worry as a result of the MST if they experienced less fear and anxiety and/or felt calmer and/or adopted a more laid back, less "uptight" approach to their golf. Being more relaxed led to greater enjoyment for three of the participants. How being more relaxed contributed to the participants' greater enjoyment will be presented, along with the two raw data themes, in this section.

Less tension – All the participants reported that they were better able to control their muscle tension as a result of the MST. Before she learned how to reduce her tension Annika said, "I always went to the ball with too much tension. Always too stiff, too hard" (final interview, 1/6/99). In general, the tension was mainly in the participants' shoulder and neck area. Phil found

that breathing deeply and consciously making the effort to relax the muscles in his shoulders by "easing the shoulders, shaking, moving the muscles to relax them" (individual consultation 3, 2/4/99) helped relax his muscles prior to playing his shot. Fortunately, this combination was effective as he noted he did not have time to do much else. In fact, deep breathing was a technique used commonly among all of the participants as a means to relax. On top of the deep breathing, Lee reported he would look at "something calm", such as a palm tree, while he was waiting for his playing partners to play their shots, which further helped him stay "calm and cool". Indeed, comparing himself on the videos from the observation sessions at the beginning and end of the MST, Lee observed he looked more relaxed in the one at the end of the MST.

The tool that proved most critical in reducing Sam's tension was the relaxation tape. Nancy also used the tape on a regular basis, usually before playing golf. In addition to it helping her relax as she listened to it, she was also able to benefit from it on the golf course. On the tape, the listener is asked to associate the relaxed feeling they obtain with a word. Nancy chose the word "floating" and then repeated this word on the golf course as a stimulus to relax. In conjunction with thinking "floating" she also recalled an image of "a magical scene with palm trees". This approach proved to be an effective way to help Nancy relax as the image and word caused her to smile, which then automatically caused her to relax. On the golf course, Tom used self-talk in addition to deep breathing to help himself relax. Off the course he used progressive muscle relaxation, often in the afternoons or in bed before he fell asleep or got up in the morning.

Less worry – In addition to experiencing less muscle tension and/or being better able to control this tension, all the participants also experienced less worry and had a more relaxed outlook towards their golf as a result of the training. For example, Lee reported feeling "calmer and less anxious", Phil attested he was "less uptight", and Sam and Annika noted the fear they

used to experience on the golf course had diminished. Sam attested, "I have lost my terror of the tees. That has gone completely. I feel very much more relaxed about my golf" (follow-up 2, 6/1/00). Annika noted, "I am more often able to come over the barrancos without fear" (diary entry, 15/3/99). Indeed, Annika described feeling "more relaxed and more easy" (final interview, 1/6/99) in general and indicated that the "fear" she used to feel on the golf course had been eliminated as a result of the training.

Whereas Sam attributed his lesser anxiety mainly to the tape, Annika employed a combination of techniques to reduce her anxiety. She used self-talk to rationalise the situation and calm herself down. In addition, she found that the cocoon helped with her anxiety, explaining "the cocoon is good for me. If you get nervous and people are watching, and you have good imagination you don't see that" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Deep breathing was another technique she found helpful in reducing her anxiety. Similarly, Tom and Lee attributed their more relaxed mental attitude to the use of deep breathing. Annika also felt she had become more relaxed because she had become more positive. Nancy felt she was more relaxed due to the fact she felt more confident. Lee felt it was a result of using his preshot routine, as well as reminding himself of the reason he was playing golf "which is for pleasure, for enjoyment, rather than becoming preoccupied with the next shot" (individual consultation 2, 30/3/99).

For half the participants, being more relaxed contributed to their enhanced enjoyment. Lee noted, "I feel very much more relaxed about my golf. . . . [and that] makes life more pleasant [and] that's really, absolutely consistently, been the objective [from] the beginning" (final interview, 16/5/99). Phil explained, "my enjoyment from [golf] is very much better because I'm not uptight the whole game or kicking myself about bad shots earlier" (individual consultation 3, 2/4/99). Moreover, Phil noted "the ability to maintain a more consistent performance, leads to a

little more tranquillity inside, so I can now relax and enjoy the other things as well" (final interview, 4/5/99). Similarly, as a result of being more relaxed Sam noted, "I'm also able to get a little bit more vicarious enjoyment out of golf now. I seem to be noticing what other people are doing a bit more" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99). Moreover, as a result of being more relaxed Sam felt he had become "less fiercely competitive", noting "I'm much more sensible about my golf . . . [and] don't let [other people's good] shots concern me at all. That is a new experience for me. And then I started hitting the ball well myself" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). This all served to contribute to Sam's greater golf enjoyment.

Perceived Golf Improvement

All the participants reported, to varying degrees, that they were playing better golf as a result of the MST. For all six of them these improvements led to greater golf enjoyment. The message from all six participants was quite simple: "I enjoy golf more because I am playing better". I termed this theme 'Perceived Golf Improvement' because although the participants repeatedly stated that they felt they were playing better there was not objective evidence (e.g., reduction in handicap, trend of improved scores) from all the participants to support the claim that they had become better golfers. However, improvements may not have been reflected in these objective measures due to the relatively short length of the data collection period and the limited number of scores available on each course using the same scoring method (i.e., medal compared to Stableford).

During the MST, Sam and Tom both remarked that they did not feel that the improvements they were making were being reflected in their scores. Sam postulated why this was the case: "I'm actually striking the ball better. . . . I'm a little bit longer than I was and I'm having some difficulty with that. . . . I'm looking at it and thinking 'the club for me here is this'

but it isn't [anymore]" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99). That said, the previous week Sam recorded his best score ever. Sam's perception that his golf was improving was supported by his regular playing partners: "Just about everyone that I have played with has said that there is an improvement, and I feel it myself" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Indeed, within a couple of weeks after the last seminar, Sam reduced his handicap from 28 to 22 whilst in Wales. On his return to Spain a few months later he did not submit his new handicap, but was soon cut to 27 based on this performance there. Sam attributed these improvements to being more relaxed.

The only other participant whose handicap changed over the course of the data collection period was Tom. In the early stages of the MST Tom, like Sam, felt his improvements were not being reflected in his overall scores as quickly as he would have liked. Nonetheless, just over a month into the training he noticed he was not scoring as "many 8s, 9s, or the odd 10" (evaluation record 13, 19/2/99) on his card and soon after he had his first of two handicap cuts. Over the course of the seminars, Tom reduced his handicap from 25.2 to 21.9. However, at the follow-up eight months later his handicap had crept up to 23.

Although the participants played a lot of golf, team events and the different scoring formats and courses meant that there were not many scores available for comparative purposes. However, Phil had records for at least five Stableford scores on each of two of the courses over the MST period. An examination of his scores on the different courses over time provides some objective support for the perceived improvements Phil felt he had made as a result of the MST. Moreover, Phil attested, "my partner of many months volunteered the information that I was playing very much better than in the last few months" (evaluation record 9, 9/3/99). Phil perceived his improved scores to be a result of playing more consistently and directly attributed this improvement to a better focus rather than to technical improvement.

Annika sensed that her golf had improved and stated that this was being reflected in her scores. However, when I looked at her scores this did not overwhelmingly appear to be the case. Then again, looking at her scores may not give an accurate representation of her performance. To recap, Annika is a novice golfer with no official handicap. As such, she could not play in the majority of competitions and often treated her rounds as practice rounds. Consequently, she would replay shots she was not happy with and take "Mulligans" off the tee, something her scores would not reflect. I therefore did not see the value of graphing her scores to look for a trend.

Annika continued to improve her golf after the MST ended. At the 5-month follow-up, she reported she had just got her best score ever on the South course. Moreover, at the second follow-up Annika reported that she had started to play in the Scramble competitions, something she had not felt comfortable doing before because she did not feel she was a good enough golfer. Despite the fact there is no firm evidence that Annika's golf improved during the course of the MST, what is significant within the realm of this inquiry, is that by the end of the MST Annika felt she was playing more consistently and was enjoying golf more as a consequence.

Lee also believed the MST had improved his golf, though, as with Annika, there was no objective evidence to support this. Nonetheless, the fact he felt he was playing better and that added to his enjoyment is a worthwhile point. Similar to Phil, Lee felt his golf was more consistent and he testified that he no longer experienced his "midway collapse". He ascribed his improved consistency to the preshot routine, deep breathing, the circle, performance profiling, and more practice.

To a certain extent, Nancy also felt her golf had improved over the course of the MST. However, the change did not appear as great as for the other participants. Nancy mentioned on a

couple of occasions that she felt she was playing better and a mutual acquaintance informed me she thought Nancy had improved, yet the infrequency with which she talked about her improvement and her intonation on the occasions she did, led me to wonder whether she really felt she had. That said, prior to the video session Nancy remarked, "I know I've improved and now I have to prove to you that I've improved. Of course, I haven't got to prove to you at all, but that's what I'm going to feel like" (final interview, 11/5/99). Moreover, it might be telling that at the start of the MST Nancy considered 26 Stableford points to be a good score, whereas by the end of the training she had adjusted her standard for success, reporting "anything over 30 I'd be happy with" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Non-Performance Focus

A 'Non-Performance Focus' was defined as one where the golfers were not focused on their golf performance, the outcome of their shot, or their score. All six participants indicated that being able to switch their focus away from their performance when appropriate (i.e., between shots) enabled them to enjoy their golf more. Annika reported that she never thought about her shots between playing them and so this was not a change for her. However, the remaining five participants either learned to switch their focus away from their performance or became more efficient at doing so and consequently enjoyed golf more as a result. All five participants cited that they used the scenery as an alternative focus to their performance. In addition, they referred to the wildlife, the exercise they were getting, the weather, social contact with fellow players, and enjoyment of other players' performances as substitute foci for their attention between shots. Tom attested, "I get a lot more pleasure out of golf than I did before because I'm appreciating these other things" (follow-up 2, 7/1/00).

Both Nancy and Phil noted that a non-performance focus was especially important for maintaining enjoyment when they were not playing well. Prior to the MST Phil had tried to concentrate on his golf for the entire round. With such an approach, Phil's enjoyment suffered when he did not play well. He explained, "if I'm not satisfied with what I'm doing, I will spend a lot of time constantly thinking about it. That has been to the exclusion of other things" (final interview, 4/5/99). However, paying attention to other aspects of golf he enjoyed, as he learned to do in the MST, allowed greater enjoyment to ensue.

Phil and Lee ascribed their improved ability to focus on non-performance issues to the concept of the 'circle' and having learned to switch their focus off after a shot and then turn it back on to prepare for the next shot. Phil felt this approach, "gives you more time to appreciate things" (final interview, 4/5/99). Moreover, the knowledge that he could bring his focus back to the upcoming shot when he needed to, prevented Phil from feeling he had to focus on golf the whole round in order to be successful. Lee affirmed that applying the idea of the 'circle' allowed him to "admire the scenery, admire what's going on" noting "I'm more conscious of all the nice things that are around. It's fascinating isn't it? There's more time to appreciate other things. It's a good thing. And it's also conducive to the game of course" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99).

Sense of Control

A fifth theme that emerged as a contributing factor to greater golf enjoyment was 'Sense of Control'. 'Sense of Control' was defined as the belief that one had control over one's golf performance, emotions, and development. The four male participants reported enjoying their golf more because they "felt more in control on the golf course". Sam attested, "there has been a movement from 'this game is beyond me, it's out of control' to 'this game is not beyond me, up

to a certain level I can play this game'. . . . It's a huge turnaround, but that's the enjoyment" (final interview, 14/4/99).

Lee explained, "if something goes wrong now, like this thing which I'll try not to mention again with the long irons, I *know* that I shall overcome that. So [the MST] gives one a better perspective" (individual consultation 3, 21/4/99). He elaborated, "I know that I can use these techniques to sharpen my concentration, to relax me, to give me more consistency. There used to be a feeling of hopelessness, . . . I feel I can turn it around now" (final interview, 16/5/99). Likewise Phil's greater enjoyment was rooted in the knowledge he could turn his performance around when he was playing badly, an achievement he often documented as a highlight in his evaluation records. Phil's enjoyment was further heightened because he was better able to control his negative emotions that resulted from hitting a bad shot, which he noted "is also good and satisfying to me as part of personal development" (final interview, 4/5/99).

Trusting the idea that if they employed the mental skills and techniques they had learned they would be able to turn their performance around prevented at least three of the participants from ceasing to try their best if they were playing badly. For example, after having had a "terrible start" to a round one day and ending up with 27 Stableford points, Lee remarked, "it's not a total disaster [after the start]. Could I have done that without all of this? . . . If I had to guess, I would say that it's because of this, the change of attitude and bringing these mental reserves" (final interview, 15/5/99).

Although they did not state directly that it led to greater enjoyment, both Annika and Sam acquired a greater sense of control over their golf development. Annika noted, "[the MST] gives me a new frame within which to do things at a higher level – don't feel so small, feel more able to run yourself, more in control" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). Likewise, Sam attested that

the MST had given him the "right mental framework to improve", noting "what's holding me back now is the lack of technique. Before I couldn't even start trying to improve [as] I didn't have the right mental framework" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99). In addition, the MST gave Annika greater control over the golf lessons she took as through it she became more aware of her weaknesses and what she wanted to gain from the lessons. Lastly, there was a sense that Nancy felt more in control of her golf now that she knew there were mental techniques she could use to control her thoughts: "That's the great thing, before one wasn't aware that there were tools to use to help you. I didn't even know about it. So I am now aware that I can do it with the tools" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Skill Development

All six participants developed their mental skills as a result of participating in the MST. The types of skills developed fell logically into Vealey's (1988) model of psychological skills that differentiated between foundation, performance, and facilitative skills. Foundation skills "are those qualities that are basic and necessary psychological skills" (Vealey, 1988, p. 328), such as motivation, self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Performance skills "are the traditional [M]ST skills that most psychologists address" (Vealey, 1988, p. 329) and include optimal physical and mental arousal and optimal attention. Lastly, facilitative skills are those Vealey considered "facilitate behaviour is sport as well as other areas of life . . . [but] are not directly influential on performance and sport behaviour" (p. 329). Vealey regarded interpersonal and lifestyle management skills as facilitative skills. The participants in this inquiry developed both foundation and performance skills.

Foundation Skills

All of the participants cultivated foundation skills over the course of the MST. The participants showed signs of higher motivation, greater awareness, and increased confidence. These shared outcomes will be presented in the following sections.

Motivation.

Five participants reported that the MST had increased their motivation. Three areas in which the participants became more motivated emerged. The participants demonstrated greater motivation to improve their performance, to play golf, and to practice. These raw data themes will be presented in the ensuing sections.

To improve performance – Sam, Lee, Nancy, and Annika indicated that during the MST they had become more motivated to work towards improving their golf performance. Annika was perhaps one of the most dedicated participants in this regard. She highlighted, "the decision to work in the FUNdaMENTAL GOLF training with Emma Stodel gave my development in golf a new drive" (evaluation record 1, 23/1/99). She started a regular series of lessons, solicited low handicapped friends to help her, and played and practised regularly. Despite the fact that Annika's motivation to improve was high at the start of the MST, it escalated as she recognised the progress she was making.

The MST also strengthened Sam's drive to improve his golf. He testified, "I'm really quite anxious to improve my golf now, whereas before I was really wondering whether I ought to bother with it because I didn't seem to be getting anywhere" (final interview, 14/4/99). However, through the MST Sam became aware of what he needed to do to become a better golfer and as a result became "really keen" about improving. Indeed, he finally organised golf lessons, an

intention he had had for some time but had never actualised. The MST in general, and the performance profiling specifically, also served as a catalyst for Lee to take golf lessons.

Like Sam, Nancy's desire to improve increased quite markedly over the course of the MST. At the start of the MST Nancy was not very purposeful when it came to improving her golf. She did not invest much time or effort in this area as there were many other activities she also enjoyed doing. Conversely, by the end of the MST her motivation had increased and she stated, "I want to get out there and really play well and play more often . . . because I *do* want to get my handicap down and the only way I can [do that] is get out and play more" (final interview, 11/5/99). Nancy found the group seminars to be a source of motivation.

To play golf – As a result of the MST three participants purported they were more motivated to play golf and/or had increased the amount of golf they played. Nancy affirmed, "I have much more motivation now to get out there and do things. . . . I've played more golf in the last four months than I have for a very, very, very long time" (final interview, 11/5/99). Sam also started to play more golf as a result of the MST, as did Annika. Annika noted, "[motivation] is the most increased point in my golf. . . . Now I *want* to play often golf, not I must, I must, I must. I *want* to, and that is the big difference" (Annika, final interview, 1/6/99).

To practice – In addition to encouraging the participants to play more, the MST also motivated Tom, Sam, Lee, Nancy, and Annika to practice more. Through performance profiling, Annika recognised that her physical preparation prior to playing golf was weak. As a consequence she started to practice before playing, something she had not done prior to the course. Lee was also moved to practice before he played. Although the MST encouraged Annika and Lee to practice before playing, it motivated Nancy and Sam to go specifically to the course

to practice. Nancy reported, "often it was an effort to make myself go and practice, now it isn't. I'm more excited about the game of golf" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Prior to the MST, Tom practised a number of hours a week. Although the MST may not have increased the amount of time he practised overall, it made him more aware of the areas in which he was weak and therefore focused his practice on these areas.

Awareness.

The second foundation skill that was developed through the MST was awareness. All six participants developed greater awareness during the course of the MST. The lower-order sub-theme 'Awareness' comprised three raw data themes. First, participants became more aware of what they needed to do to improve their golf. Second, the MST reawakened and enhanced previous knowledge the participants had relating to mental skills and techniques. Lastly, participants developed greater self-awareness.

Recognised factors needed for improvement – All six participants became more aware of what was necessary for them to improve their golf performance. Nancy noted, "I've realised that there is more to [golf]. It isn't just going out and hitting the ball and hoping to get it right. You do have to practice. You do have to think about it" (final interview, 11/5/99). Sam shared a similar sentiment: "I just felt, I suppose stupidly, that there were certain things I could do without practising. I just felt I could do it and then when I couldn't do it I used to get very upset" (seminar #12, 6/4/99). However, through the MST, Sam came to realise that he would need to invest some effort if he was going to improve. As a result, he started to practice, a pursuit he came to enjoy. Neither did Phil appear to be aware of the kind of thought that was required to play golf well. He noted, "[playing golf] better requires me to think about what I am doing in the game of golf, which I never thought I had to" (individual consultation 2, 12/3/99).

One of the most immediate effects of the MST was that the participants started to think more about their golf. Right from the very beginning of the training Sam attested, "[the MST is] focusing my mind on need to practice and think about golf" (evaluation record 1, 24/1/99). Within the first week, Phil reported, "I am certainly thinking more about the game and my personal approach" (evaluation record 1, 23/1/99). Annika started keeping a journal immediately following the initial interview, which served to increase her awareness, and the first time playing after the first seminar Tom revealed, "[I] am taking more time to think about and analyse each shot" (evaluation record 1, 20/1/99).

Also towards the very beginning of the training Lee reported, "[The MST] is making me think even more about golf and what I should be doing to improve" (evaluation record 6, 15/2/99). He started to put more thought into the psychological aspects of golf, something that had been initiated through reading a MST book a year before but had escalated through the training. Interestingly, a component of the research, and not the MST (i.e., the video session), also served to increase his awareness by illuminating a point that the golf professional had been trying to get across to Lee for several lessons without success. Seeing his swing on video increased Lee's awareness of what he was doing and the change that was needed for him to improve.

Tom and Annika engaged in an ongoing, fairly systematic analysis of their golf game, which made them more aware of areas in which they needed to improve. However, they did so in slightly different ways. Annika used her diary as a means to reflect on her golf after playing, noting the highlights, what she had achieved, and what she needed to work on to improve. Moreover, she recorded the key points that arose in her golf lessons and, through this, noticed patterns that emerged. Tom primarily used the evaluation records to reflect on each round and

analyse his game. Prompted by the questions on the form, Tom reflected on what he had learned from the round and what he could do to improve and created lists of these things that he updated every so often. Once he identified his weaknesses Tom would then tailor his practices to improve in these areas. In addition, Tom remarked that the MST had prompted him to analyse his game on the course more. If he hit a poor shot he would ask himself "Why?" and then work to improve on it, whereas previously he noted he would have been "cursing my luck and feeling sorry for myself, not trying to analyse *why* it happened" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Phil and Nancy both benefited from the performance profiling in terms of it increasing their awareness. Prior to the MST Phil had not spent much time nor thought breaking golf into its component parts and analysing his performance. However, through the MST, and the performance profiling in particular, Phil noted, "you forced us to look at the game, in total and by its elements, and I've never had to do that. That was a very refreshing thing because having done that the results are that much better than before" (final interview, 4/5/99). Nancy further attested the benefits of performance profiling: "I thought what an excellent idea to focus upon your weaknesses and where you want to be. I thought that was terrific. I think little by little by little, I've become [more] aware" (final interview, 11/5/99).

Reawakened previous MST knowledge – Not all the material in the MST was novel to the participants. All of them except Phil reported that the MST had brought certain techniques and approaches they had forgotten about to the fore. Moreover, their use of these tools became more refined. Tom remarked, "while I always had a general idea of what we are doing, I had never really put it into practice, maybe only played at putting it into practice. But now when you're really doing it . . . it's helping" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). Nancy concurred, saying "this course is extremely helpful, there's no question about that. Although some of the things I

had already been doing and was aware of, I am much more aware of them now – they are bigger and brighter" (individual consultation 4, 10/4/99). She went on to explain, "I always felt that I could relax and [that I] did the deep breathing and so on, but now it's much easier to do it and I'm aware more when I *need* to do it" (final interview, 11/5/99).

In fact, all the participants, save Phil, mentioned that deep breathing was a tool they had used previously. Nonetheless, most of them had not used it at all, or had not used it effectively, within the context of golf. Both Sam and Lee said they had "forgotten" about deep breathing when it came to golf. Although Tom had used deep breathing as a technique to relax while playing golf before the MST, soon into the course he divulged, "I always thought I knew a bit about relaxation and I tried to relax on the golf course, but I now realise I wasn't as relaxed as I thought I was" (individual consultation 1, 18/2/99). The MST had made him more aware of the tension he experienced on the course.

Not all the techniques presented in the MST were new for Annika either. However, she observed that as she was using them more they were becoming more effective. For example, through using deep breathing she was better able to calm herself down and not be so afraid of hitting bad shots. Annika also started autogenic training as a result of the MST. Again, something she had done prior to the MST but had not done recently.

Greater self-awareness – The last raw data theme within the sub-theme 'Awareness' is greater self-awareness. All the participants increased their self-awareness in some regard as a result of the MST. In fact, a greater awareness of his attitude and having learned more about himself was one of Phil's MST highlights.

Through the MST, Nancy learned that she was more nervous than she thought she was and was more aware that other people's opinions were important to her. Tom learned he was

capable of "handling lots of problems now that he couldn't before". Sam became more aware of how negative he was. He shared, "I was quite shocked actually to see how negative I was. I was quite surprised by that, because there didn't appear to be . . . [a] good reason. . . . It might be a degree of timorousness I think possibly" (final interview, 14/4/99). The MST also revealed more to Lee about himself. He divulged, "I think [the MST's] rather drawn my attention to the fact that I tend, still, to be a bit hasty, a bit impetuous. . . . That I've really got to stop and consider, have a measured approach, be properly structured, thoughtful, calm" (final interview, 16/5/99). Lastly, Annika became aware of her preferred learning style and that she learned most effectively "with pictures", knowledge that came somewhat as a surprise to her.

Confidence.

The third and last foundation skill that emerged as an outcome of the MST was confidence. All six participants felt more confident about their golf as a result of the MST. However, because it became apparent that the participants' increased confidence was a contributing factor to their greater enjoyment, this outcome has already been presented in a previous section.

Performance Skills

All six participants developed their performance skills as a result of participating in the MST. The participants improved their attention and arousal control.

Attention control.

Attention control was defined as the ability to focus the mind upon relevant sources of information to the exclusion of everything else. All the participants learned to have a more appropriate focus when playing golf and be more focused on the upcoming shot. Tom even described feelings akin to those of being "in the zone". Midway through the MST, Tom recorded

the following in his evaluation: "Today I felt I was getting the benefit of the mental skills and techniques more so than any other day since starting the course" (evaluation record 19, 6/3/99). He later explained, "I think that day I was really starting to move towards 100% concentration. [I was] able to shut everything out for every shot and switch off between shots. . . . It was a peculiar experience" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). Tom attributed his improved focus mainly to the cue word and 'circle'. He explained how his cue word, CRASH, helped: "[It has] helped me to get locked in, whereas before, I would just stand up to the ball, ensure my stance was right and whatever, and then hit it" (final interview, 8/5/99). The 'circle' was beneficial in that it acted as a cue for Tom to focus on the upcoming shot: "I can really vividly see this circle and when it's my turn to play I can step into it and switch on so that I'm in this circle with 100% concentration" (final interview, 8/5/99).

At the start of the training Tom appeared to get fairly easily distracted by slow play, people talking, and poor shots. However, as a result of the training he was able to bring his focus back onto appropriate cues. Tom explained that he refocused "by relaxing and deep breathing between shots and imagining myself in a cocoon as I step up to address the ball. Then I go through the items of my cue word" (evaluation record 15, 24/2/99). Indeed, by the end of the training Tom attested, "I find that if I am distracted I automatically now go to deep breaths. I use it a lot. I think it helps a lot" (final interview, 8/5/99). Tom also went through his "Action Steps" as a means to refocus.

Nancy's focus also improved as a result of participating in the MST. Like Tom, the cue word helped Nancy focus "because then nothing else can creep in because that is what you're focused upon" (individual consultation 3, 25/3/99). She also attributed her improved focus to "floating" and "the magical scene with palm trees". Sam credited his better concentration to

being more relaxed and not so "uptight". Being more relaxed helped eliminate some of his negative thinking, like "oh my god am I going to hit this ball at all?" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99), and allowed him to shift his attention to swing cues (e.g., slow takeaway). Before adopting this more relaxed approach, although Sam knew what he should be thinking, he revealed "when I actually got to the ball all that went out of my mind, all of it. All the normal thinking processes just simply stopped" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99).

Prior to the MST Phil attempted to focus on golf continuously for the four plus hours of the round, a tactic that proved fairly ineffective. The MST taught Phil to focus on golf only when needed, which "enabled more intense focusing on the actual shot, producing a more sustainable and consistent effort" (letter, 3/5/99). In addition to the idea of switching his focus on and off as needed, Phil also found his "SAS" cue helped his focus in the same manner it helped Nancy. He reported, "having something specific to think of and not allowing my mind to think about previous mistakes is helping my game enormously" (individual consultation 1, 21/2/99). Phil also became better at refocusing after distractions, though noted as the MST progressed that he was needing to do so less and less. The two key tools that helped Phil refocus were deep breathing and the "SAS" cue.

Annika also felt her focusing ability had improved and as a result was able to "stay without thoughts controlling my movement during a swing" (diary entry, 15/4/99). As with the other participants who had developed cue words, Annika's cue phrase "Positive Characters Take Goals, Smile" helped her focus more effectively as it initially served to remind her of key swing thoughts. The idea of being in a cocoon while she was playing her shot further helped prevent Annika from becoming distracted.

Prior to starting the MST, Lee had noted that focus was his "biggest problem". However, similar to the other participants Lee improved his attention control by participating in the MST. Moreover, as with many of the other participants, the concept of the 'circle' and Lee's routine were the biggest contributing factors to the improvement. In sum, the common factors mentioned by three or more of the participants that contributed to their improved attention control were the cue word routine, the 'circle', deep breathing/being relaxed, and imagery.

Arousal control.

Arousal control was defined as the ability to control one's mental and physical arousal levels. Physical arousal refers to the participants' perception of their physiological arousal. In this inquiry, the only indicator of physiological arousal the participants consistently referred to was muscle tension. Through the MST, all six participants learned to control their muscle tension and as a result became more relaxed. Because this change contributed to greater golf enjoyment, it has already been presented in a previous section.

Mental arousal refers to the participants' worry or negative affect. As highlighted previously under the theme, 'More Relaxed', all six participants experienced less worry and had a more relaxed outlook towards their golf due to the MST. Again, because this outcome has been discussed previously as it was a contributing factor to greater enjoyment, no further comment is necessary here.

Outcomes Outside the Context of Golf

In addition to benefiting from the MST within the context of golf, the MST also reaped benefits for five of the participants, all except Lee, in areas of their lives besides golf. In this third category of MST outcomes, 'Benefits Outside the Context of Golf', three sub-themes

mentioned by three or more participants emerged: 'More Positive Attitude', 'Greater Awareness', and 'Health Benefits'.

More Positive Attitude

Four of the participants adopted a more positive attitude towards life as a result of the MST. The participants became more carpe diem with a focus on "enjoying the moment". The MST encouraged Nancy to carry a more positive perspective into all areas of her life. Moreover, she noted that her attitude had changed "in terms of the relaxation and enjoy the moment" (final interview, 11/5/99). Sam likewise attested he had developed a more carpe diem attitude and as a result of one of the early seminars had adopted a "Don't put off 'til tomorrow what you can do today" type attitude. He noted, "that's helped me. So my lifestyle has changed, now it's enjoying the moment, very much so" (final interview, 14/4/99). As a result of this change in attitude Sam became less likely to procrastinate planning things, a number of times describing how he had become more proactive in arranging things he wanted to do rather than "sitting back and letting somebody else organise it".

Like Nancy and Sam, Annika also became more positive in her daily life and adopted a more carpe diem attitude. She iterated, "I'm always interested to make the best of the minute. Staying in the minute. Don't kill today with thinking only of tomorrow and what you will do later" (individual consultation 2, 8/3/99). Lastly, Tom noted the more positive and accepting attitude he had adopted towards his golf had "spilled over to his other life outside golf". He noted, "I find this [MST] tends to affect my life in general. Things that upset me I don't dwell on as much as I used to. I put them out of my mind" (final interview, 8/5/99).

Greater Awareness

The greater awareness the participants experienced regarding their golf, transferred to areas in their life outside the context of golf for three of the participants. Tom emphasised, "the whole course made me very aware of a lot of things I didn't know, or a lot of ways I wasn't being helpful to my game. Having learned this in golf, the same things apply in your ordinary life" (final interview, 8/5/99). The MST had a similar effect for Annika. Away from golf she also recognised a greater awareness in the things she did. Annika explained, "nothing I do now is really serious, like earning money, but there are very interesting meetings or interesting things we do together, like a trip or talking about the future or politics, and I do it with a greater awareness" (final interview, 5/6/99).

Evidently, for Tom and Annika the greater awareness resulting from the MST spread throughout all aspects of their lives. Nancy also exhibited greater awareness in her life outside golf, though perhaps to a lesser extent. On a number of occasions Nancy recalled she had become aware that when she was rushed to do something she tended to tense up which proved counterproductive. Having become aware of that she could then made an effort to relax.

Health Benefits

Phil, Annika, and Sam appeared to benefit in three very different, health-related ways from the MST. Phil suffered from high blood pressure and was on medication for this condition. Interestingly, in the second seminar Phil stated that his blood pressure was higher on the days he played golf. However, he hypothesised that the MST played a role in reducing his blood pressure. Partway through the training Phil stopped taking his medication and was glad to report he could maintain his blood pressure at an acceptable level without it. Phil believed this occurred

because, through the MST, he had learned to better control his emotions and did not get so uptight or frustrated when he did not play well.

Sam reported that the MST had had a positive effect on his tremor, in that following the MST it occurred less. Although the tremor used to affect him the most when playing golf, reducing the intensity of the tremor also helped Sam in social situations, for example when he poured drinks or was holding a wine glass. Sam expanded, "the actual physical act of pouring tea is now much easier for me" (individual consultation 2, 13/4/99). He attributed the change to the relaxation tape. Furthermore, the tape helped Sam manage the pain he experienced from kidney stones. He attested, "by the way, your relaxation tape is not just good for relaxing. It's incredible for pain relief. I wouldn't have believed it" (individual consultation 1, 23/2/99).

Lastly, in a small way, the MST also helped Annika with a minor health-related problem. Annika experienced problems with her back during the course of the MST. However, prompted by the MST to engage in self-analysis and reflect on her life she became aware that she needed to "change her lifestyle" so she started to use autogenic training again, which helped alleviate some of her back problems.

Summary of MST Outcomes

Numerous outcomes resulted from the MST. Of most interest, when one considers the purpose of this inquiry, is that all the participants reported greater golf enjoyment at the end of the mental training. They attributed the increase in enjoyment to a number of cognitive, affective, and behavioural changes that resulted from the MST. First, the MST changed the participants' attitudes, making them more confident, balanced, and disciplined. Second, the participants learned to become more relaxed when playing golf. Third, the participants felt they were playing better golf. Fourth, they learned to derive enjoyment from sources besides their

performance as a result of learning to switch their focus away from their performance when appropriate. Lastly, the participants developed a sense of control over their performance and emotions.

The participants further reported that the MST was successful in helping them develop their mental skills. Both foundation (i.e., motivation, awareness, and confidence) and performance skills (i.e., attention and arousal control) improved. Furthermore, they indicated that they derived benefits from the MST in their lives outside the context of golf.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

I have synthesised my findings in this inquiry into a model (see Figure 12). At the foundation of the model lie the MST and the golfer. The mental training techniques, consultant, and structure of the training are considered along with the learning style, motivation, age, and previous experience of the golfer. In the first part of this chapter these findings will be discussed in light of the literature on adult education and implications for MST will be highlighted. The upper portion of the model comprises the outcomes of the MST that contributed to the golfers' greater enjoyment. In the second part of this chapter I will discuss these factors as they relate to sport psychology theory and practice.

MST, the Golfer, and Adult Education

MST

The literature on adult education provides some valuable insights for the mental training practitioner working with adults. In the following sections the findings regarding the MST techniques, consultant, and structure of the training will be discussed from an adult learning perspective.

Techniques.

Congruent with the principles of effective practice of adult education, the participants enjoyed and implemented the techniques that they felt were most beneficial to them and helped them achieve their goals. This finding highlights the importance of making mental training relevant and including techniques and approaches that lead to practical outcomes. MacKeracher (1996) emphasised that "if the content is directly relevant to some aspects of what they currently

do, then learners are more likely to be motivated to look for connections and develop new meanings" (p. 256).

Adults need to see a reason for learning. If adults do not see a connection between the activity and the learning objectives it is likely they will lose interest and not have a successful learning experience (Brookfield, 1989; Thoms, 2001). Within this inquiry, it was apparent that many of the participants were initially unaware of what they needed to do in order to achieve their objective of playing better golf. The importance of developing the participants' awareness became apparent. Performance profiling was an effective tool for these participants in this regard. Once individuals are aware of what they need to do in order to attain their goals, relevant techniques need to be taught to help them move closer to achieving them.

In this inquiry it became apparent that some participants felt that certain techniques put too much pressure on them. For example, Annika avoided completing the evaluation records for this reason and Nancy did not set goals. This finding underscores the importance of pacing and/or teaching techniques that do not challenge the individual too much at first. Tasks should be made more challenging as the individual develops his or her skills and the improvements he or she makes should be recognised. The consultant should further recognise that individuals will have different levels of engagement and therefore include a variety of techniques that will satisfy individuals at these different levels.

Consultant.

Participants highlighted that the consultant needs to regulate the discussions to ensure all voices are heard and prevent individuals from dominating discussions. Facilitators need to create a climate of mutual respect and be able to encourage nonparticipants to become more active in

discussions while reducing the time the "discussion monopoliser" speaks (McKeachie, 1999; Poonwassie, 2001). In his book, McKeachie presented a number of guidelines for doing this.

The need for the consultant to follow up on the participants' progress on tasks they have been set was stressed by a number of participants. A couple indicated they would like to have been "bullied" more into completing the exercises. Contrary to this, literature on adult education reminds facilitators that adult learners participate on a voluntary basis and therefore warns against bullying (Brookfield, 1986; Poonwassie, 2001). This finding draws attention to the need for consultants to be aware of which participants need and want to be monitored during the learning experience. Nonetheless, the importance of following up on tasks that have been set, at least to some degree, remains.

Lastly, the participants commented on the positive manner of the consultant. Not only does the consultant need to be knowledgeable, but also personable. The consultant should be friendly and approachable and attempt to put the participants at ease. They should be patient, sensitive, responsive to the atmosphere in the group, and have a sense of humour. If the consultant can establish a respectful, trusting, and open relationship a climate of collaboration is more likely to ensue (Poonwassie, 2001). Furthermore, a well-prepared and credible consultant will instil confidence in those he or she works with.

Structure.

The seminars and the individual consultations were both essential components of the MST for these participants. They found the social aspect of the seminars enjoyable and it helped them learn. This finding supports the notion that adult learning should be viewed as a collaborative activity (Brookfield, 1986; Silverman & Casazza, 1999). It was apparent from this inquiry that it is important to provide participants with opportunities to hear about others'

learning experiences and how they are benefiting from the training. This finding supports extant research. For example, Kirschenbaum et al. (1998) reported that providing golfers with opportunities to discuss 'Smart Golf' helped them adapt the approach to their own games. Similarly, MacDonald, Gabriel, and Cousins (2000) found that adults in a training program for managers of technology based firms enjoyed learning from each other. They suggested making better use of the participants' experiences by providing them with more occasions for sharing their personal experiences.

The participants also enjoyed being part of a group whose members shared similar interests, a finding mirrored in the MacDonald et al. (2000) study. Perhaps the fact the participants in this inquiry were retirees contributed to this finding. Beatty and Wolf (1996) stated that retirees have the need to be socially active and belong. Lastly, the social facet of the training was also a source of support and encouragement for the participants during their learning. Indeed, Brookfield (1986) iterated that groups are powerful motivators and reinforcers of learning.

The participants indicated the individual consultations were more helpful than the seminars as they had a higher level of personal relevance. Again, this finding underscores the importance of making mental training relevant and meaningful to the participants. It also emerged that the individual consultations encouraged the participants to reflect more on what they were learning compared to the seminars. Adult learning theorists (e.g., Brookfield, 1986; Poonwassie, 2001) have argued that the process of exploration, action, and reflection is central to adult learning. Although some participants in this inquiry enjoyed this process, others found it uncomfortable.

Golfer

Each individual experienced the MST in a unique manner and consultants should thus be sensitive to individual differences. In the ensuing discussion the findings regarding the golfers' learning styles, motivation, age, and previous experience will be addressed.

Learning style.

In her discussion on adult learning, MacKeracher (1996) noted that each learner has a preferred strategy for processing information and learning. Indeed, the participants in this inquiry varied in the ways they approached the learning tasks. Some had disciplined minds and habits of learning, whereas others were fairly undisciplined. For example, following the seminars Tom reread his notes, typed them up onto his computer, reflected on what he had learned, and planned for improvement. Conversely, Sam did not take any notes during the seminars, instead relying on the handouts.

Certain participants, for example Phil, enjoyed and benefited from the content of the MST being broken down into its component parts and presented separately. In contrast, Laura found it difficult to view the different aspects of mental training as separate entities. The participants also differed in their ability to effectively select the information and techniques that were personally meaningful for them. Some were unable to filter the information and ended up feeling overwhelmed by the amount of material.

These findings emphasise the necessity for the consultant to be sensitive to differences in how individuals learn. In this inquiry I made an attempt to accommodate participants' learning styles by presenting the material both verbally and visually (through the use of handouts and a flipchart) and providing opportunities for both independent and collaborative learning.

Motivation.

As with the majority of adult education, participation in this learning experience was voluntary. Yet the level of involvement with MST across participants varied from very high to very low. In adult education, effective practice is often linked to humanist philosophy, an important aspect of which is that adults take responsibility for their learning (MacKeracher, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Poonwassie, 2001). However, it appeared that not all the participants in this inquiry were ready to do so. It was apparent that those who were, and who put more effort into the training, got more out of it. Furthermore, the more the participants recognised they were benefiting from the training, the greater their motivation was to engage in it. Once again, this finding attests to the importance of relevant content that has personal meaning to the learner.

The use of journals and feedback has often been advocated as a means of enhancing motivation (Poonwassie, 2001). However, for many of the participants in this inquiry the evaluation records did not fulfil this role. Some participants saw this aspect of the training as a nuisance and completed very few evaluations with very little reflection. Perhaps the length of the evaluations and the frequency the participants were asked to complete them was a factor in this. This finding illustrates the importance of keeping evaluations short and simple so participants are more apt to complete them. Nonetheless, a couple of the participants regularly completed the forms and found them to be of use.

Age.

The participants often mentioned their age during the inquiry. Some wondered whether problems they experienced on the golf course (e.g., poor concentration) were a function of their age, others speculated whether it was possible for them to improve their golf given their

declining years. At the start of the training, Nancy questioned its appropriateness for older individuals who may be "set in their ways" and therefore resistant to change. However, the findings from this inquiry refute this idea, indicating that older adults can develop new skills and change their attitudes.

Moreover, research has demonstrated that adults can continue to learn throughout the lifespan. The myth that adults lose their ability to learn and cognitive decline is inevitable as we age has not been substantiated in the literature (Beatty & Wolf, 1996; Glendenning, 2000; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Research has shown that physiological deterioration is only responsible for a small portion of physical and cognitive decline and both can be maintained through appropriate training (Glendenning, 2000). The value of staying both mentally and physically active is therefore highlighted.

Although many of the participants commented on their age during the inquiry, I believe that, in general, they had a relatively positive approach to aging. They were an active group of individuals who played golf on a regular basis. Moreover, many of them swam and hiked regularly and one had bungee jumped at 72 years of age. They travelled frequently and went on overseas vacations. They also challenged themselves on a cognitive level. For example, one was the editor of the resort magazine, another was involved in managing his community, and many played bridge and were avid readers.

Previous experience.

A central principle of adult education is that adults bring much experience to the learning situation and this needs to be respected (MacKeracher, 1996; Maehl, 1999). Adults need to be able to connect new learning to their current knowledge base. In this inquiry, the more successful participants were able to select the information and techniques that were applicable to them and

integrate them into their current practices. Suggestions that required radical change were often met with resistance. This finding emphasises the need for the consultant to be patient and provide time for the participants to reflect on their past experiences, make connections between these and the new information, and integrate the new knowledge and skills (MacKeracher, 1996). Moreover, the consultant should encourage them to reflect and explore the reasons why they are so resistant to this new information. Perhaps the information is not as discordant with their current views as they originally thought.

Summary

Consideration of the findings in light of the adult education literature led to a number of recommendations regarding the delivery of MST to adults. In sum, MST techniques should be relevant and easy to implement and care should be paid to the pacing of skill development. A combination of seminars and individual consultations for MST delivery is most desirable as this offers opportunities for collaboration and sharing as well as a more personalised approach to the training.

The consultant should be both knowledgeable and personable and play an active role in monitoring group discussions. They should be sensitive to individual differences and track individuals' progress with the training. Even though adult learning is usually voluntary, it is still important to consider learner motivation and build strategies for increasing motivation into the training. Lastly, it is important that consultants respect individuals' past experiences and help the learners make connections between these experiences and new information provided in the training.

Contributing Factors to Greater Enjoyment

There was overwhelming support for the worth of MST as a means of enhancing golf enjoyment for the participants. Five outcomes of the MST contributed to the participants' greater enjoyment, namely a change in attitude, being more relaxed, perceived golf improvement, a non-performance focus, and a sense of control. These themes will be discussed as they relate to sport psychology theory and practice.

Change in Attitude

There was a change in the participants' attitudes towards golf as a result of the MST. All the participants developed more positive mental attitudes. One aspect of this change was an increase in confidence. All six participants felt more confident about their golf at the end of the training and four identified this to be a contributing factor to their greater golf enjoyment. Self-confidence has been operationalised in many different ways in the literature (Cox, 2002; Hardy, Jones, & Gould, 1996). The terms self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), sport confidence (Vealey, 1986), and perceived competence (Nicholls, 1984) are deemed essentially the same constructs as situation-specific self-confidence. The finding that the participants in this inquiry derived greater enjoyment from their golf because they felt more confident is not surprising when you consider that perceived competence has consistently been found to be a predictor and source of enjoyment in the literature (Bakker et al., 1993; Boyd & Yin, 1996; Carroll & Loumidis, 2001; Frederick et al., 1996; Ommundsen & Vaglum, 1991; Scanlan et al., 1989; Spray, 2000; Williams & Gill, 1995; Yoo & Kim, 2002).

The participants in this inquiry lacked confidence in many aspects of their golf game and it is apparent why this affected their enjoyment. One finding that emerged in this inquiry was the participants' lack of confidence that resulted when they had to play with someone they perceived

to be a much better player than themselves. The participants worried that they would embarrass themselves by playing badly and were concerned that they would ruin the other players' games with their poor play. Besides being unpleasant, these feelings tended to affect the golfers' performance as they prevented them from focusing on the task at hand.

Another finding was that some of the participants initially lacked confidence that they could become better golfers. Discouraged and frustrated with the lack of progress they were making, some had considered giving up golf. In addition to highlighting the importance of developing confidence to maximise enjoyment, this finding exemplifies the significance of finding enjoyment in non-performance arenas if we are to keep individuals engaged in physical activity.

The findings from this inquiry suggest that practitioners interested in increasing golf enjoyment should focus on increasing golfers' confidence. The participants in this inquiry attributed their greater confidence to a number of aspects of the MST. Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy can be used as a framework to understand some of these findings. Furthermore, practitioners attempting to enhance confidence would do well to align their practices within this framework. According to Bandura, expectations of self-efficacy (i.e., the belief you can succeed in a particular task) are developed based on, in order of importance, performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

Bandura (1977) posited that successful experiences will develop self-efficacy, especially when a difficult task is accomplished without the help of others and without having experienced previous failures. There is evidence in the sport domain attesting to the superiority of performance-based information over the other sources of information in fostering self-efficacy (see Hardy et al., 1996). Findings from this inquiry provide further support for this theory. A

number of participants attributed their increased confidence to improved performance. Phil noted, "successfully [making shots] reinforces the confidence level. . . . You're feeding on the fact that you've done it so many times now" (final interview, 4/5/99). This finding points to the importance of planning for success. Perhaps the most useful MST technique for increasing confidence through performance accomplishment is goal setting. In order for goal setting to be effective in this regard it is important that the goals set are both challenging and realistic.

Vicarious experiences are also posited to impact self-efficacy, although to a lesser extent than previous performances (Bandura, 1977). Vicarious experiences refer to sources of efficacy related to seeing or imagining others completing the task. Demonstrations and modelling have been found to enhance self-efficacy within sport (see Hardy et al., 1996). The role of vicarious experiences in developing self-efficacy provides support for the use of imagery as a means of building confidence. Indeed, a number of participants in this inquiry attributed their increased confidence to the use of imagery. To use imagery as a means of increasing confidence, Moritz, Hall, and Martin (1996) advocated that athletes imagine themselves performing the task successfully. Results from this inquiry suggested that visualising their upcoming shot may help golfers feel more confident about executing it. Further research in this area is warranted.

Verbal persuasion, the third predictor of efficacy expectation, refers to statements used by the self and others to manipulate confidence. Self-talk is an important form of verbal persuasion. The participants in this inquiry indicated they felt more confident because they were approaching their shots with a more positive attitude. They reported that they were better able to focus on positive things that occurred and put negative thoughts aside. The participants noted their positive attitudes resulted, in part, from talking to themselves in a more positive manner.

The fourth factor affecting self-efficacy is emotional arousal. However, it is not the arousal itself that affects self-efficacy, but how the individual appraises the arousal (Bandura, 1977). This aspect of Bandura's self-efficacy theory implies that when athletes perceive arousal in a negative fashion, practitioners should either teach the athletes how to control their arousal levels or help them reappraise the arousal so they come to view it as facilitative rather than debilitative. More than half the participants in this inquiry attested to feeling more confident as a result of being more relaxed. Their comments suggest they had learned to decrease their arousal levels rather than reinterpret them. Research comparing the effectiveness of relaxation strategies to cognitive restructuring techniques in enhancing self-efficacy when arousal is perceived in a negative fashion would be valuable.

One participant indicated that his preshot routine had contributed to his greater confidence. I found it surprising that only one participant commented on the effectiveness of his or her preshot routine in this regard. There is intuitive appeal for the use of a preshot routine as a mechanism to increase confidence. First, there is empirical support attesting to the utility of preperformance routines in enhancing performance (Hill & Borden, 1995; Lidor & Singer, 2000). The significance of successful performance for developing confidence has already been discussed. Second, I expected that the familiarity that would result from using a preshot routine would serve to increase individuals' confidence before their shot. Lastly, it has been proposed that a preshot routine may give the individual a sense of control over his or her performance (Singer, 2002; Wrisberg & Pein, 1992). This point is mentioned here as Hardy et al. (1996) noted that "perception of control . . . [is] of primary importance in the process of enhancing confidence" (p. 67). The 'Sense of Control' theme will be discussed further in a later section.

Unfortunately, research examining the effectiveness of preshot routines in enhancing confidence is lacking. One study that hinted to the utility of preshot routines as a means of increasing confidence was that of Cohn et al. (1990) conducted with three college golfers. Following a cognitive-behavioural program designed to enhance adherence to preshot routines, the golfers reported that their confidence had improved. The role of preshot routines in enhancing confidence is a line of research worthy of pursuit.

The other aspect of the 'Change in Attitude' theme that led to greater enjoyment was that the participants developed more balanced attitudes concerning golf. That is, they became more accepting of their poor performances and slow play and, in general, adopted a more positive attitude towards golf. There was evidence that for five of the participants in this inquiry this change in attitude contributed to greater golf enjoyment. That such a change occurred is impressive when you consider the average age of the participants was 64. Furthermore, it besmirches the old adage "You can't teach an old dog new tricks".

There is no doubt that the participants' anger and frustration that frequently accompanied their poor performance and slow play on the course was undermining their golf enjoyment. As Orlick (2000) noted, "getting angry . . . interferes with your reason for being there, whether you are seeking enjoyment, consistency, or a high quality performance" (p. 92). Not only is anger a negative emotion, but it is also impossible to be angry and focus on the upcoming shot at the same time and therefore performance will be affected. By becoming more accepting of the negative aspects of golf the participants did not experience negative emotions as often. Furthermore, on the occasions they did display anger they reported being better able to control it. This point will be elaborated under the theme 'Sense of Control'.

The participants did not attribute their more balanced attitudes to specific MST techniques. They felt that their attitudes had changed because they were better able to forget about mistakes and focus on positive things, put the negative aspects of golf in perspective, and be more *carpe diem*. Moreover, some had developed the belief they could overcome lapses in performance. Consequently, when their performance declined they did not get as upset because they had faith it would return soon enough. Lastly, the awareness of how his attitude was affecting his performance was enough for at least one individual to elicit change. Perhaps it was the general philosophy of the training, or the awareness it provoked, that brought about the participants' change in attitude.

The findings from this inquiry attest to the importance of a balanced, positive, and accepting attitude for fostering enjoyment. As practitioners, we need to highlight to athletes how their attitudes can impact their enjoyment and performance. Athletes must be aware that their attitude is their choice and it is only they who can change it. If an athlete is predisposed to negative thinking and has the tendency to always look for the negative in everything they do, it is critical they learn to turn this pattern around. Looking for something positive, however small, can be the first step to make a change (Orlick, 2000). Orlick also suggested getting more rest, reducing life stress, keeping track of the good things that happen to you each day, doing something for yourself every day, opening yourself to experiencing your own successes, and remaining open to the positive emotions of those around you will foster a positive perspective.

More Relaxed

Half the participants in this inquiry indicated that they derived greater enjoyment from golf because they were more relaxed. The MST was effective in reducing the participants' worry and anxiety on the golf course. The techniques the participants found most effective in this

regard were deep breathing, the relaxation tape, positive self-talk, and the cocoon. The participants talked about being "calmer", "less uptight", "less terrified", and "less fearful". Indeed, one would expect that diminishing these negative emotions would allow for greater positive affect (enjoyment). Moreover, Orlick (2000) suggested that shifting focus away from anxiety and fear allows one to focus on more positive things and experience more simple joys.

At various stages in this inquiry participants reported experiencing tension on the golf course, usually in the shoulder and neck area. Muscle tension can interfere with the execution of the fine motor skills required for golf, especially chipping and putting (Taylor, 1995). Indeed, the participants in this inquiry recognised that being tense tended to affect their ability to execute a good shot. Through the training they reported they had learned techniques, and improved their ability, to reduce this tension. Specifically, deep breathing, "shaking out" their muscles, the relaxation tape, shifting focus, and self-talk were techniques the participants found most effective. That performance is a source of enjoyment and can be affected by muscle tension suggests that practitioners should help athletes develop skills that will allow them to control their tension.

A discussion of enjoyment and arousal would be incomplete without a mention of reversal theory (Apter, 1982). This theory has important implications for practitioners working with athletes in the realm of arousal control. Reversal theory posits that high levels of arousal are not always associated with unpleasant emotions such as anxiety. Instead, the relationship between affect and arousal is dependent on the individual's interpretation of his or her arousal level. High levels of arousal can be interpreted as anxiety (unpleasant hedonic tone) or excitement (pleasant hedonic tone), whereas low levels of arousal can be interpreted as boredom

(unpleasant hedonic tone) or relaxation (pleasant hedonic tone). How individuals interpret their arousal is said to depend on their metamotivational state (Kerr, 1997).

According to reversal theory, there are four pairs of bistable metamotivational states. The *telic-paratelic* pair is of most interest when considering arousal. In the *telic* state individuals are described as being goal-oriented, serious-minded, and concerned with the future. They like to plan ahead, prefer important activities, and focus on completing the activity. Individuals in this state prefer low levels of arousal (Kerr, 1997). As such, these individuals interpret low arousal as relaxation and high arousal as anxiety. Conversely, individuals in the *paratelic* state are seen as sensation-oriented, playful, and being concerned with the present. They are spontaneous, prefer unimportant activities, and attempt to prolong these activities. Individuals in this state tend to seek high levels of arousal (Kerr, 1997). In the *paratelic* state, high arousal is perceived as excitement and low arousal as boredom. Although an individual may be predisposed to experiencing one state more than the other, individuals typically switch, or "reverse" between the two. Hence the name "Reversal theory".

It is apparent that reversal theory has important implications for practitioners and it underscores the importance of taking an individualistic approach to managing arousal. Consider an individual in the *paratelic* state who feels he or she has a high level of arousal. Attempts to reduce this arousal could have a negative impact on affect and performance. In his or her current state the individual perceives this arousal as exciting and any attempts to reduce it may result in boredom. This is contrary to the more common theories of arousal and performance in contemporary sport psychology (e.g., inverted-U theory). Furthermore, attempts to increase arousal in an individual in the *telic* state are likely to induce feelings of anxiety. Therefore, practitioners should avoid automatically encouraging athletes to obtain moderate levels of

arousal as a means of facilitating improved performance. If an individual in the *paratelic* state has low levels of arousal (i.e., is bored), reversal theory posits two mechanisms for facilitating positive affect and performance. The individual can either increase his or her arousal level through psyching up strategies or induce a reversal into the *telic* state. On the other hand, individuals in the *telic* state with high levels of arousal (i.e., are anxious) can either decrease their arousal levels through relaxation strategies or induce a reversal to the *paratelic* state in order to engender positive affect and enhanced performance (Cox, 2002).

The fact that the participants in this inquiry reported greater enjoyment from being more relaxed suggests that they tended to be in the *telic* state. Cox (2002) suggested that individuals with a disposition to be in the *telic* state should participate in activities associated with low levels of arousal, such as golf, whereas individuals with a predisposition to the *paratelic* state should engage in activities that involve excitement and risk, such as BASE jumping. It is likely that *telic*-oriented individuals are drawn to sports like golf as these provide them with the greatest opportunity for experiencing enjoyment.

Perceived Golf Improvement

All the participants in this inquiry indicated they were enjoying golf more because they were playing better. Feelings of improvement and mastery have been linked to enjoyment in the past, both as a source and predictor of enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Gould et al., 2001; Orlick, 1998; Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel et al., 1993; Scanlan et al., 1989). Indeed, improvement, achievement, and personal growth were sources of golf enjoyment identified by the participants at the start of this inquiry (Stodel, 1999). This finding suggests that improvement and learning can contribute to one's enjoyment throughout life. What is more, Orlick (2000) highlighted that ongoing learning is an element of personal excellence that enriches life.

Although not surprising that perceptions of improvement and a sense of accomplishment led to greater enjoyment, this finding bears significant weight for practitioners. Especially when you consider that, with one or two exceptions, before engaging in the MST these individuals were doing relatively little to improve their performance besides playing golf on a regular basis. More than half the participants in this inquiry did negligible or no practice and in the six months prior to the inquiry only one participant had taken golf lessons. None of them appeared to have a plan for improvement despite the fact that all the participants shared the same goal of improving their golf ability and (except in the case of Phil) reducing their handicap.

The finding that improvement leads to greater enjoyment suggests that in order to enhance enjoyment practitioners should help athletes plan for improvement, focus on the improvements they make, and develop the mental skills necessary for improvement. Approaches practitioners can take within these three areas will be delineated in the remainder of this section.

The MST proved to be successful in motivating the majority of the participants to practice more. Moreover, it provided them with a structure to help them plan for improvement. Orlick (2000) noted that ongoing learning centres on reflecting on what went well during a performance, why it went well, and what can be improved; drawing out lessons from each performance and then acting on these lessons; and assessing how important factors, such as focus and commitment, affect performance. The evaluation records used by the participants in this inquiry guided them in the areas outlined above. Although the participants found the evaluation records time consuming and some ceased using them quite early on, those that regularly used them to assess their golf found them helpful. This finding illustrates the importance of keeping evaluations short and simple. Perhaps a more concise evaluation form would have increased participants' adherence to the use of this technique.

The finding that improvement is an important contributor to enjoyment underscores the importance of focusing on learning and improving rather than on how well one is doing in comparison to others. Interestingly, not one participant in this inquiry indicated they were enjoying golf more because they were winning more. According to achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1984, 1989, 1992), fostering a task involvement will encourage individuals to focus on their own improvements rather than make normative comparisons. Not surprisingly, links between task involvement and positive affect, such as enjoyment, have been demonstrated in the literature (Boyd & Yin, 1996; Duda et al., 1992, 1995; Gano-Overway, 2001; Goudas et al., 1994, 1995; Kohl, 2002; Roberts et al., 1996; Vlachopoulos et al., 1996; Williams & Gill, 1995). Achievement goal theory was examined in detail in chapter two and it is worth underlining the implications it holds for practitioners given this finding.

Whether an individual is task or ego involved in any given achievement situation is dependent on his or her dispositional goal orientation and his or her perception of the motivational climate (Duda et al., 1995; Kavussanu & Roberts, 1996; Roberts, 2001). The question of whether dispositional or situational factors play the more important role in shaping individuals' goal involvement remains to be answered. However, preliminary findings suggest that affective responses are more heavily influenced by situational factors, whereas cognitive and behavioural responses are more influenced by individual factors (Newton & Duda, 1999; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000; Seifriz et al., 1992). These findings imply practitioners should intervene at both levels, but especially at the situational level in the case of maximising enjoyment.

Unfortunately, within the context of recreational golf one questions how practitioners can impact the motivational climate, given that in general there is no structured learning

environment. They could provide golf professionals with strategies to make their lessons more mastery oriented. These strategies might include providing sufficient time before moving on to the next stage of skill development, involving the golfers in decision making, soliciting the golfers' opinions about what they did right and wrong, and recognising and rewarding improvements the golfers make (Duda & Treasure, 2001). However, the minimal contact time between golf professionals and recreational golfers casts a doubt as to the value of this. Moreover, the willingness of golf professionals to work with mental training consultants in this regard remains to be examined.

A second roadblock to fostering a mastery oriented motivational climate is that many golf clubs are organised around competition, the results of which are made public. At La Manga Club golfers can compete in organised competitions between four and six times a week. The results of these competitions are posted on the club notice board and are often accompanied by award dinners, large trophies, and prizes of varying magnitude. Attempts to change this aspect of golf clubs are likely to be met with great resistance by all involved (including the golfers themselves). However, one approach for fostering a more mastery oriented climate would be to recognise the most improved player of the year. Another might be a year-long competition where participants hand in their best four scorecards recorded over the year. Although in both cases there is competition between the golfers at the end of the year, the focus during the year is on personal improvement.

It is likely within the context of recreational golf that a mental training consultant will have more chance of impacting the individual's dispositional goal orientation than the motivational climate. By targeting interventions at the individual level it may be possible to strengthen dispositions so they override conflicting cues in the environment. Practitioners should

assist golfers in goal setting, establishing practice sessions, evaluating their performance, and taking control over their learning (Duda & Treasure, 2001). Moreover, they must make an effort to work in a task involving manner during all their interactions with the golfers. What practitioners say and do, how they reward the individuals they work with, and their performance expectations all convey their values to the golfer (i.e., whether they value winning or improving).

In sport contexts that have more structured group learning environments, consultants are likely to maximise their effectiveness in strengthening task involvement if they take an interactionist approach. By teaching significant others in the environment how to foster a mastery oriented climate, and helping athletes strengthen their task orientation, the quality and frequency of positive sport experiences may be augmented.

Lastly, the link between enjoyment and improvement in this inquiry suggests it is important that practitioners facilitate the individual's development of the necessary mental skills for improvement. Indeed, this is the primary aim of mental training and its effectiveness in enhancing performance is well documented in the literature (e.g., Perkos et al., 2002; Rogerson & Hrycaiko, 2002; Terry, Mayer, & Howe, 1998; Thelwell & Greenlees, 2001). It was not possible to point to a specific mental skill or technique that improved the golfers' performance the most in this inquiry. The participants indicated it was the application of a combination of mental skills and techniques that elicited the change, which highlights the importance of taking a multi-modal approach. Worthy of note though were the relaxation tape, the preshot routine/cue word, deep breathing, performance profiling, and the 'circle'.

Non-Performance Focus

All the participants in this inquiry indicated that being able to switch their attention away from their performance when appropriate (i.e., between shots) enabled them to derive greater

enjoyment from golf. This tactic appeared effective for a number of reasons. First, the ability to regulate focus and not concentrate on golf continuously for the duration of the round facilitated performance. It is well established that playing well is enjoyable. Golf comprises brief performances (i.e., shot execution) that require a narrow focus separated by relatively long periods of non-performance related activity (i.e., walking or riding to the next shot, waiting for others to play their shots). During these latter times there is no need for the golfer to focus on his or her game and doing so may actually prove deleterious to performance. Nicklaus (1993), one of the greatest golfers of all time, emphasised the importance of not "over-concentrating" and highlighted it would be a "drain of mental energy" to focus only on golf shots for the whole round. He described how he shifts his focus during the round "from peaks of concentration into valleys of relaxation and back again as necessary" (p. 47). Nicklaus "sharpens" his focus as he approaches his shot, reaching a peak as he set ups and executes the shot. After playing the shot he returns to a "valley of relaxation".

Taylor (1995) advocated a similar approach to Nicklaus. However, rather than referring to "peaks" and "valleys" of concentration, Taylor used the concept of a "shot zone". The "shot zone" is an imaginary 20-foot diameter circle around the ball in which the player's focus should be directed towards the upcoming shot. When outside the "shot zone" Taylor suggested players engage in behaviours that allow them to forget their upcoming and previous shots. These ideas were presented to the participants in this inquiry using the concept of the 'circle'.

Before engaging in the MST, many of the participants were unaware that this type of variable focus would help improve their golf. They held the idea that in order to play well they had to maintain focus on their performance for the duration of the round. For instance, walking to his ball in the first observation session after a bad shot Sam said, "OK, I'm going to start

concentrating now". He appeared to narrow his focus, putting his head down as he strode to his ball and ceasing to talk. However, by the time he played his shot and walked to the next one his focus seemed to widen again and he despaired, "I've stopped concentrating already". Not only is it extremely hard to maintain such a narrow focus for a long period of time, but by doing so you run the risk of shutting out everything that is going on around you, including things that are the essence of enjoyable golf.

Indeed, the second reason this tactic was effective in enhancing enjoyment was that by switching their attention away from their golf game, participants were able to derive enjoyment from other sources besides their performance. Sport is not all about performing well. Prior to the onset of the MST, the participants articulated numerous sources of golf enjoyment. Many of them found that by turning their attention away from golf in-between shots they had more time to appreciate these things. Furthermore, the participants felt more comfortable enjoying these other elements of golf as they knew they had developed a new tool (i.e., the 'circle') that would help them return their focus to golf when necessary.

An appreciation of the non-performance sources of enjoyment is especially important when the golfer is playing badly. Focusing on something you are not doing well is not enjoyable. Rather than focusing on mistakes and the negative emotions associated with them, participants learned to switch their attention to such things as the scenery, the company of their playing partners, or some other source of enjoyment. As a result, they did not maintain a negative frame of mind for the round, which made the game more enjoyable for them.

The structure of golf allows the players to switch their focus away from their performance to other sources of enjoyment relatively easily once they have learned to do so. This affords them opportunities to appreciate other aspects of golf they find enjoyable and shift their

focus away from aspects of golf they find less enjoyable (e.g., poor performance, slow play). Yet not all sports offer their participants such obvious structure in which to do this. The key thing as a practitioner is to help athletes develop strategies that will help them derive enjoyment from all sources of sport enjoyment. These tactics and strategies will be different for athletes in different sports that have different attentional demands. Pinel (1999) suggested using enjoyment profiling as a framework within which to do this.

For example, an idea similar to the 'circle' may be applied to tennis. Performance in tennis, similar to golf, is interrupted by periods of relative inactivity between points and games. At these times it is important that the players do not focus on how well or how poorly they are playing. As with golf, these periods of downtime provide the perfect opportunity for tennis players to focus on elements of tennis they enjoy that are not related to their performance. For example, the smell of new tennis balls, the warmth coming off the court on a summer's day, the feeling of exerting oneself, and the sounds of the birds. Practitioners can help tennis players develop a cue to switch their focus away from their performance once the point is over and then switch it back onto the game in time to prepare for the next point. Obviously time between performance episodes in tennis is significantly less than that in golf, but this type of strategy may still be effective.

More often, sports require continuous performance. Consider distance running, cycling, and cross-country skiing. Typically there are no breaks in performance in these sports. However, they place little attentional demands on the participants so provide ample opportunities for the individual to appreciate diverse sources of enjoyment. Setting a watch to 'beep' every few minutes can serve as a cue for these athletes to look for highlights in what they are doing and

help them focus on positive aspects of their workout. Alternatively, they could search for highlights every kilometre they run, ride, or ski.

As MST practitioners, we must help athletes identify the appropriate pattern of focusing for their sport. Based on the findings from this inquiry, it is likely that recreational level athletes have little idea what type of focus will be most effective for them in order to facilitate performance and enhance enjoyment. If there are "down" times in their sport athletes should be taught to appreciate aspects of the sport they find enjoyable outside the performance domain. Furthermore, it is critical we make sure there are a variety of sources available (Scanlan & Simons, 1992).

Sense of Control

A number of participants indicated that they were enjoying golf more because they had developed a sense of control over their golf performance and emotions on the golf course. The men in particular commented that they had learned skills that, when applied, allowed them to play better golf. On many occasions during this inquiry the participants talked about not wanting to "look like an idiot" or embarrass themselves by playing poorly. Without a doubt these situations lead to feelings of being out of control and take away the potential for enjoyment (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The sense of control the participants developed over their game prevented them from feeling "hopeless" and prompted them to keep trying their best and not give up on occasions they played badly. Being able to turn a poor performance around was a further source of enjoyment for them. The development of emotional control also served as a precursor to greater golf enjoyment. Not only did their ability to control their negative emotions on the golf course make golf more enjoyable, but it also allowed them to focus on their game.

Interestingly, of all the studies of enjoyment I reviewed I did not find one that identified a sense of control as a source of enjoyment. However, a sense of control is considered to be a defining characteristic of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Jackson, 2000; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). When in flow, athletes report feeling in control of their performance. They believe they have the required skills to cope with the task at hand and whatever obstacles they might face. Feelings of being in control provide a sense of security, whereas feelings of being out of control can elicit negative emotions such as worry (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Given this, it is not surprising that the participants in this inquiry indicated that having a sense of control contributed to their greater golf enjoyment.

In the early stages of the MST there was a sense of hopelessness among the participants and a lack of understanding that they could learn to control their performance. Many of the participants were unaware that it was possible to develop skills that would enable them to focus or relax more effectively and therefore facilitate enhanced performance. Certainly there appears to be a necessity for practitioners to educate in this regard. Moreover, it appears critical that practitioners help individuals develop skills and approaches that will allow them to develop a sense of control over their performance. One such approach for golfers is the preshot routine (Singer, 2002; Wrisberg & Pein, 1992). Lidor and Singer (2003) noted "by developing a personalised and meaningful routine, the athlete feels more in control over what he or she is about to do and, therefore, the performance outcome" (p. 71). Practitioners should help golfers develop a routine that helps them attain a confident, focused, and optimally aroused state prior to, and during, skill execution (Cox, 2002; Lidor & Singer, 2003). For guidelines for developing preshot routines see Cohn (1994); Cohn and Winters (1995); and Lidor and Singer (2003). In addition, findings from this inquiry suggest that simple arousal and attentional control techniques

used outside the context of a preshot routine, such as deep breathing and self-talk, may also be beneficial in helping golfers obtain a sense of control.

A further suggestion for cultivating a sense of control in athletes emanates from research in the area of flow. The central component of flow is the "challenge-skill balance" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Jackson, 2000; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). That is, the individual must have the necessary skills to meet the demands of the task for flow to occur. If the challenge of the task is greater than the individual's skill level then there is little chance he or she will feel in control and therefore will not experience flow. Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) argued that in order to gain control, and have a chance of experiencing flow, individuals need to define the challenge in terms of something that is realistic. Consequently, helping athletes set realistic goals that are within their control may help them develop a sense of control over their performance. Indeed, Gilbourne and Taylor (1998) found that goal setting can empower injured athletes "with skills that . . . create an enhanced sense of control" (p. 124).

Besides developing a sense of control over their performance, some participants reported they had learned to better control their emotions and this also contributed to their greater golf enjoyment. This finding suggests that by providing athletes with the skills to control their emotions we may be able to increase their sport enjoyment. As practitioners, we need to teach athletes that while the situations themselves may not be under their control, their responses to them are (Botterill & Patrick, 2003; Orlick, 1998, 2000). Botterill and Patrick suggested that helping athletes anticipate situations that will elicit emotional responses and develop a plan for how they want to physically, mentally, and emotionally respond to the situation will help them improve emotional control. In this inquiry, a simple awareness of how their negative emotions

were affecting their performance appeared to be enough to motivate the participants to exercise better emotional control.

Summary

Based on the findings it is apparent that MST is an effective means of enhancing golf enjoyment for older recreational golfers. If consultants are going to use MST to this end, the findings propound that they should tailor it in a number of ways. First, teach golfers to switch their focus away from their performance when appropriate. Second, help them develop a sense of control over their performance and emotions. Third, help individuals plan for improvement, develop the mental skills necessary for improvement, and then focus on these improvements. Fourth, teach them to relax. Lastly, consultants should focus on developing confidence and helping individuals develop more balanced attitudes; specifically in terms of becoming more accepting of poor performance, and in the case of golfers, more accepting of slow play.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this last chapter, I will highlight the practical and theoretical contributions of this inquiry and outline some of its limitations. I will then conclude the chapter by sharing some personal reflections regarding my professional development and what I learned from this experience.

Practical Contributions

The findings from this inquiry provide support for the role of MST as a means of enhancing golf enjoyment among recreational golfers. The fact that the MST was effective in increasing enjoyment for a group of individuals who already found golf exceptionally enjoyable bears significant weight. The participants attributed the change in their enjoyment levels to five main outcomes of the training. Practitioners interested in enhancing athletes' enjoyment are advised to focus their work in these five areas. In sum, given that improvement and learning are sources of golf enjoyment, mental training practitioners should continue to devote their efforts towards teaching skills that will facilitate enhanced performance. Furthermore, it is important that athletes are taught to recognise these improvements, rather than focus on how well they are doing in comparison to others.

Practitioners would also do well to teach skills and develop MST programs that allow athletes to develop a sense of control over their performance and emotions. Not only was a sense of control found to be a contributing factor to greater enjoyment in this inquiry, but it is also considered to be an important element for developing confidence (Hardy et al., 1996), which in itself has been found to be a significant predictor of enjoyment. Helping athletes develop confidence and adopt a more balanced attitude towards their sport are also advocated in the

pursuit of greater enjoyment. The ability to relax, both mentally and physically, further helped the participants derive more enjoyment from golf. This underscores the importance of teaching skills that can be used to reduce muscle tension and anxiety. Lastly, switching focus away from performance and onto other sources of enjoyment when appropriate also helped the participants enjoy golf more. Practitioners should help athletes identify strategies that will allow them to do this while not interfering with their performance.

The findings also attest to the importance of considering the principles of adult education when consulting with older adults. Although there is no definitive list of adult education principles, theorists and practitioners of adult education tend to agree on what constitutes effective practice. Imel (1998) summarised some of the widely held beliefs about adult learning into six principles of adult education: (1) involve learners in planning and implementing learning activities, (2) draw upon learners' experiences as a resource, (3) cultivate self-direction in learners, (4) create a climate that encourages and supports learning, (5) foster a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting, and (6) use small groups. The application of the above principles in MST with adults is advised based on the findings in this inquiry.

Theoretical Contributions

Much of the research in applied sport psychology has focused on the role of MST in enhancing performance. Increasingly, researchers are beginning to look at the effects of mental training on performance correlates such as confidence (e.g., Daw & Burton, 1994) and motivation (e.g., Beauchamp et al., 1996). Yet despite the fact that the main aim of sport psychology is to increase enjoyment, in addition to enhancing performance (Anderson et al., 2002; Bull, 1991; Cox, 2002), it has remained relatively unexamined in that regard. This inquiry took a step towards remedying this shortcoming and lends support to the notion that MST can be

effective in enhancing sport enjoyment. However, this inquiry was conducted with a small, distinct group of individuals who participated in the same MST program facilitated by the same consultant. The findings are therefore limited to the meanings that arose within this group. There is a need for further research to explore the role of MST in increasing enjoyment with individuals of differing ages, from different sports and competitive levels, who engage in MST facilitated by different consultants.

This inquiry provides some preliminary evidence for the mechanisms through which enjoyment may be enhanced. The findings espouse that enjoyment can be increased by a change in attitude, developing a sense of control, improving performance, learning to relax, and adopting a non-performance focus. It was apparent that many of these constructs were related. Further research in this area is warranted in order to identify any causal relationships between them. A model for enhancing enjoyment would be valuable to researchers and practitioners alike.

Much of the research that has focused on the study of enjoyment to date has examined the sources and predictors of enjoyment. Diverse sources of enjoyment have consistently been found in the literature (Bakker et al., 1993; Gould et al., 2001; Pinel et al., 1999; Scanlan et al., 1989; Yoo & Kim, 2002). This inquiry supports the belief that enjoyment can be derived from many sources, both intrinsic and extrinsic, and provides a unique contribution to the literature by extending this line of research to older individuals and a golfing population. In addition, the findings provide further support that perceived competence (confidence) is a critical source of enjoyment, not only for children and professional and elite athletes, but also for older individuals engaged in recreational pursuits.

By studying the experience of participants engaged in MST this inquiry provides insights for effective MST practice from the perspective of those involved. The importance of grounding

MST in the principles of adult education when working with adults in order to make it effective and enjoyable was highlighted. Furthermore, this inquiry may be the first that has reported individuals' experiences with MST from the perspective of the individuals themselves.

Lastly, this inquiry makes an important contribution to the sport psychology literature as it examined an older population, a demographic traditionally understudied in the field (Weiss, 1998). The value of this is underscored when one considers that we are an aging society (Beatty & Wolf, 1996; Burbank & Riebe, 2002). This point is particularly poignant given the role of enjoyment in prolonging sport involvement. Keeping older individuals physically active is likely to lead to a healthier and happier population.

Limitations

Although the participants talked little about my role as a consultant when discussing their experiences with the MST, I believe that my personality, passion, commitment, and consulting style had an impact on the training. I find it easy to develop relationships with people and felt the participants and I were quickly able to develop a trusting, mutually respectful relationship. During the seminars I was dynamic, energetic, and confident in the way I conducted them, which I am sure added to their engaging and enjoyable nature. I believe that the participants' experiences would have been different had another consultant conducted the training. However, the purpose of this inquiry was not to examine the effectiveness of the MST, but to explore whether there is a role for MST in increasing golf enjoyment.

By adopting the role of research-practitioner there was a danger that the participants would tell me what they thought I wanted to hear rather than what they truly felt. Throughout the process I encouraged the participants to be open and tried to create a safe, respectful environment where they could share their concerns, criticisms, and experiences without fear of repercussions

or offending me. I feel I was successful in this regard and the relationship I developed with the participants led them to be honest with their answers.

Furthermore, as a research-practitioner I was fully integrated into the process and as such created the social context and co-constructed knowledge with the participants. In this role "the dangers of bias and reactivity are great" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 15). In order to minimise this I identified my biases prior to data collection and attempted not to lead the participants through my actions, comments, and questions. Nonetheless, there is the possibility that I might have impacted their explanatory style.

Another limitation of this inquiry relates to the participants involved. The participants were retirees who no longer had jobs and family commitments. The MST may have provided meaning for them at a time when their life was relatively unstructured. This may apply particularly to those participants who were in the transition phase from work to retirement. Moreover, this was a privileged group of individuals. Older adults who have high income and status are more likely to participate in continuing education, not to meet pressing needs but for personal growth and enjoyment. Lastly, given the successful careers of many of the participants, it could be argued that they were high achievers and therefore were motivated because they wanted to be, and were used to being, successful.

The context within which this inquiry was conducted may also have impacted the findings. The participants were members of a relatively small community of residents at La Manga Club. For the duration of this inquiry I was a member of this community. I lived in the resort, played golf in the same competitions, and attended many of the same functions. The strong sense of community and my presence within it may have reduced attrition. Perhaps if the

participants had had to travel further to participate in the training they would have been less likely to attend.

Personal Reflections

Engaging in this research was a truly enjoyable experience for me. My goal when I started my doctoral work was to develop as a mental training consultant, researcher, and person. I am satisfied in all regards. The ability to engage in research in an applied, uncontrived setting meant a lot to me. I have long felt there is a greater need for research-practitioners to bridge the gap between research and practice in the field of sport psychology. I also felt it was important that we examined the utility of mental training for populations that have not typically been the focus of such research. I believe this inquiry represents another step towards remedying these shortcomings.

By merging research and practice in this inquiry I acted as both researcher and practitioner. I frequently questioned this dual role at the start. Every time I did or said something I questioned which "hat" I was wearing. I did not want my concern for collecting relevant data to interfere with what I did as a practitioner. At times during the individual consultations in the early stages of the inquiry I was worried that the questions I was asking were coming out of the researcher's mouth (in an attempt to solicit information to answer the research questions) rather than the practitioner's. Soon I realised that the questions I was asking were actually making me a better consultant. When I thought about it I realised that an underlying objective of the researcher and practitioner is essentially the same; that is, to obtain an understanding of how the individual is experiencing the MST. Regardless of which hat I wore, my goal was to discover how the MST could be tailored to better meet the participants' needs, which techniques had worked and why they worked for each participant, and which had not been beneficial and why this was the case.

Although the inquiry was a positive experience for me overall, there were definite moments of anxiety. At the start I was nervous of how the MST and I would be received by the participants. I was conscious of my relatively young age and low golf ability, having started playing golf only six months previously. However, when I questioned the participants about these issues at the end of the training they indicated that my age and golf experience had no bearing on their perceptions of me as a consultant. What was important, according to them, was my expertise in mental training.

Nonetheless, I truly believe that it is important as a consultant to understand the sport of the athletes you are working with, an opinion echoed by many eminent consultants (Halliwell et al., 1997). Although at the start of the training I was not a good golfer I feel I had a good understanding of the sport and its mental demands. My boyfriend at the time was a highly talented golfer and I learned much from him about the culture and intricacies of golf. Having him as a sounding board to discuss ideas and consult on terminology allowed me to conduct the training in a highly sport-specific manner. In the few years that have passed since I conducted the training for this inquiry I believe I have improved immensely as a consultant and my confidence has grown accordingly. I attribute these changes to this inquiry and the consulting experience I have gained in the interim. But also, in that time, my skill as a golfer has improved significantly and I believe that my current handicap of 13 adds to my credibility when working with golfers.

The nervousness I experienced during the inquiry also stemmed from my role as a researcher. I was aware that this was a long period of data collection (six months) and the data I collected would shape my whole PhD. I could not "redo" it with another group of participants if I (or they) messed up. I soon realised "they" could not "mess it up"! I recognised that failure to

apply the skills and techniques was a reality of MST and it would be an anomaly if all the participants were highly committed to the training. Ravizza (1988) reported that in his experience, about one third of the athletes in a team are very receptive to MST from the start, one third are not receptive at all, and the remaining third will seek help when they face difficulties. I feel that this ratio generally applied to the participants in this inquiry.

Although I have come to accept that as practitioners we cannot touch everyone to the same degree, I found it hard when the participants appeared so keen when I met them face-to-face and then did not apply the concepts afterwards, despite attesting they would. I learned to be patient and recognised it is important to give individuals a chance to warm up to MST. Although they may not embrace the concepts straight away, it is important as a consultant not to give up on them. My frustration with Nancy over her apparent indifference to the MST in the first month had prompted me to think of reminding her she did not have to engage in the training if she did not want to. However, she arrived at the next meeting extremely positive and excited about the training and proceeded to benefit from it. This incident underscored the importance of providing information the participants feel is relevant and will benefit them.

Despite these times of frustration I experienced plenty of joyful moments during my journey in this inquiry. Many of these were grounded in the successes of the participants. A phone call telling me they had had their handicap cut, played "the best round of their lives", or reaped benefits from implementing a new technique left me on a high for the rest of the day. Yet for me, the greatest joy came from doing what I love, that is, working with individuals to help them achieve their goals. The seminars were a wonderful source of enjoyment as we came together and shared our knowledge.

This inquiry illustrated there is a place for MST among recreational golfers. The participants found the training both enjoyable and beneficial. The prevalence of books on the mental game of golf suggests there may also be a demand for MST among a variety of different level golfers. A number of participants in this inquiry indicated they would like better access to MST resources. I would like to see practitioners begin to explore alternative ways mental training can be delivered that would increase its accessibility. One obvious way of doing this is through the web (Stodel & Farres, 2002; Farres & Stodel, 2003). The web offers a convenient, flexible, and cost-effective means of providing education and training in an interactive learning environment.

I learned a number of things from this inquiry that have since shaped my consulting practices. Despite trying to keep the MST simple and practical in this inquiry, the findings suggest that I did not do this enough. Although I feel I provided the participants with many practical exercises and techniques I relied on them to apply these outside our contact time. Perhaps if I had presented them with more opportunities to practice the techniques while we were face-to-face, they may have been more likely to apply them at other times. Moreover, if we ran out of time in a seminar to complete a written exercise (e.g., goal setting, developing a refocusing plan) I asked the participants to complete it on their own sometime during the next week. Unfortunately, all too often this meant the exercise remained unfinished. On reflection I should have provided time at the beginning of the next seminar for the participants to complete it, thereby providing assistance and support if required. The reason I did not do this was because I felt pressured to get through what was planned. I now realise I should have been more flexible with the delivery of the MST, as the literature on adult education advocates.

What also became apparent was that I needed to follow up more on activities I asked the participants to do. In some senses I felt uneasy doing this. I perceived that these older recreational golfers would not want to spend all their spare time engaged in mental training. I felt that those who wanted to complete the activities would do so regardless of whether or not I followed up with them. However, in the final interviews it became apparent the participants would have welcomed a little "gentle persuasion".

Based on the findings from this inquiry I would advocate teaching basic mental skills and avoid concepts such as 'Personal Par' and 'Smart Golf'. It appeared that these techniques were not easily integrated into the participants' golf. Findings indicated that the development of performance skills, such as arousal and activation control, appears to be a much better focus of MST for recreational golfers. One of the biggest surprises for me in this inquiry was how little thought and preparation the participants put into their golf shots prior to the MST. The development of a preshot routine to help in this regard should be a priority in MST for recreational golfers.

As a result of this inquiry I further learned that social interaction can be a key aspect of mental training. Not only does it appear to be an important part of the learning process, but the social dynamic proved to be a source of enjoyment for the participants and provided a sense of unspoken support. However, special attention should be paid to ensure that all voices in discussions are equal; one person dominating discussions can detract from others' enjoyment. As a consultant it is important to take control of this.

Through conducting this inquiry I believe I developed as a researcher. This was my first big project as a qualitative researcher and writer. Data analysis was a slow, painful process at the start. I felt overwhelmed with data. I remember seeing a cartoon during my qualitative research

class where someone was dumping a wheelbarrow load of data in front of a desk – at the time I thought it was funny, now I see the reality in it the humour has disappeared! Although I struggled in the beginning, each case study I wrote became an easier process as my skills developed. By the time I wrote the last one I wondered what had taken me so long with the other six! Furthermore, I feel I became a better interviewer. I think I listened better and became more proficient in asking the right questions as the inquiry progressed.

Lastly, I grew as a person. I learned a lot about myself, especially while writing the dissertation. I met, and learned from, many wonderful people, not only the participants but also those I have crossed in the world of academia. I have read and reflected, read and reflected; often in areas I would not normally have ventured in to. Finally, the process of writing, especially the last three chapters, has enabled me to link together concepts in sport psychology and provided me with a solid background on which to draw when consulting with athletes or other performers in the future.

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Table 1. Achievement goal analysis of classroom climate (from Ames & Archer, 1988)

Climate dimensions	Mastery oriented climate	Performance oriented climate
Success defined as . . .	Improvement, progress	High grades, high normative performance
Value placed on . . .	Effort, learning	Normatively high ability
Reasons for satisfaction . . .	Working hard, challenge	Doing better than others
Teacher oriented toward . . .	How students are learning	How students are performing
View of errors/mistakes . . .	Part of learning	Anxiety eliciting
Focus of attention . . .	Process of learning	Own performance relative to others'
Reasons for effort . . .	Learning something new	High grades, performing better than others
Evaluation criteria . . .	Absolute, progress	Normative

Table 2. Demographic profiles of the participants

Participant	Sex	D.O.B (age at start of inquiry)	Golf experience (years played)	Handicap	Rounds played/week	Practice time/week
Phil	M	13/1/30 (69)	30	19	3	negligible
Tom	M	10/5/26 (73)	25	25.2	3	2 hours
Lee	M	22/5/35 (64)	3	28	3	1.5 hours
Nancy	F	5/10/41 (58)	4	36	2	0
Annika	F	21/1/40 (59)	2	36	3-4	1-2 hours
Sam	M	2/3/38 (61)	2.5	28	2	55 minutes
Laura	F	45+	16	21	3	negligible

Table 3. Data sources

Part[a]	Initial Int[b]	Obs 1[c]	SR 1[d]	Sem[e]	IC[f]	ER[g]	Obs 2[h]	SR 2[i]	Final Int[j]	Follow-up 1[k]	Follow-up 2[l]
Phil	Yes	Yes	No	14 (93%)	4	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	Yes	Yes	No	11 (73%)	3	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tom	Yes	Yes	Yes	15 (100%)	4	41	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Laura	Yes	Yes	No	9 (60%)	3	5	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Nancy	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 (67%)	4	13	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sam	Yes	Yes	No	7 (47%)	2	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annika	Yes	Yes	Yes	9 (60%)	2	journal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

[a]Participant; [b]Did the participant participate in an initial interview?; [c]Did the participant participate in the first observation session?; [d]Did the participant participate in the first stimulated recall?; [e]How many seminars did the participant attend?; [f]How many individual consultations did the participant participate in?; [g]How many evaluation records did the participant complete?; [h]Did the participant participate in the second observation session?; [i]Did the participant participate in the second stimulated recall?; [j]Did the participant participate in a final interview?; [k]Did the participant participate in the first follow-up interview?; [l]Did the participant participate in the second follow-up interview?

Table 4. Attendance at MST seminars

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	Total #
Nancy	✓	✓	✓	✗[c]	✗[d]	✓	✗[e]	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗[b]	✓	✓	✓	10
Lee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[d]	✗[c]	✗[e]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	11
Tom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	15
Phil	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[e]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14
Laura	✓	✓	✗[b]	✓	✗[d]	✓	✓	✗[e]	✗	✗	✓	✗[b]	✓	✓	✓	9
Annika	✓	✓	✗[c]	✗[c]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[e]	✗[e]	✗[e]	✗[e]	✓	✓	9
Sam	✓	✓	✓	✗[c]	✗[d]	✓	✗[e]	✓	✗[e]	✗[e]	✗	✓	✓	✗[h]	✗[h]	7
JC*	✓	✗[a]	✗[a]	✓	✓	✓	✗[f]	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	7
JS*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[g]	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[e]	✓	✓	✓	13
RM*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[e]	✗[e]	✗[e]	✗[e]	✓	10
JJ*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[h]	✗[h]	✗[h]	✗[h]	11
AJ*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗[c]	✗[h]	✗[h]	✗[h]	✗[h]	10

*Individual participated in the MST seminars but was not a participant in the inquiry

[a]Away on business; [b]Ladies golf day – participants felt that it finished too late to be able to attend the seminar; [c]Ill health; [d]Participants went on a day trip to see the almond blossom and did not return in time for the seminar; [e]Away on holiday; [f]Had to attend a meeting; [g]Unable to get to seminar due to car trouble; [h]Returned to the UK

Table 5. Frequency of highlights recorded by the participants

				Tom	Nancy	Sam	Lee	Phil	Laura
Golf highlights	Performance	Shot	Hit a good shot	30	16	3	3	1	1
			Hit a good putt	11					
		Hole	Made par	67	4			4	4
			Scored well on a hole	72	8	1	9		3
		Aspects of game	Overall score/performance	7		1	6	6	
			Putting	16	2	1		5	1
			Chipping/pitching	6				1	1
			Bunker	2	1				
			Approach shots					1	
			Fairway/long shots		3			2	1
			Tee shots	15	3	1		4	3
		Recovery from poor performance		3		3	2	7	
		Succession of good shots			2			1	
		Contribute to team						2	1
		Scoring better than others		1					
	Total # of performance highlights			**230**	**39**	**10**	**20**	**34**	**15**
	Non-performance	Social	Company					3	
			Partners playing well	2		1		1	
		Environment	Weather	5	1			1	
			Scenery	4	2			1	
		Exercise	Physical activity					1	1
			Sense of well-being	1					
		Other	Not let bad shot annoy	1				1	
			Appreciation of life	3					
	Total # of non-performance highlights (% of golf highlights)			**16 (6.5)**	**3 (7)**	**1 (9)**	**0 (0)**	**8 (19)**	**1 (6)**

Table 5. contd.

Highlights outside golf	Social	Family	4	1		1	2	
		Friends	10	2	2	1	3	3
	Environment	Weather	6	2	1		2	1
		Scenery/views	9	2			1	
		Wildlife (flora and fauna)		6	2	1	13	
		Garden		3				
	Activities/hobbies	Trips/vacation		1		1	1	2
		TV	2					
		Bridge		3				
		Reading a good book		1		1		
		Sunbathing	3					
		Arts and crafts	3					
		Bowls	1					
		Computer	1					
		Theatre/ballet		3		2		
		Walking	1	1				
	Food and drink	Gastronomy	10					
		Drink	4					
	Other	Health	2	2	2	3		
		Retirement	3					
		Deep breathing	1					
		Dog	1					
		Magazine				5		
Total # of highlights outside golf (% of all highlights)			**61 (20)**	**27 (40)**	**7 (39)**	**15 (43)**	**22 (34)**	**6 (27)**

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

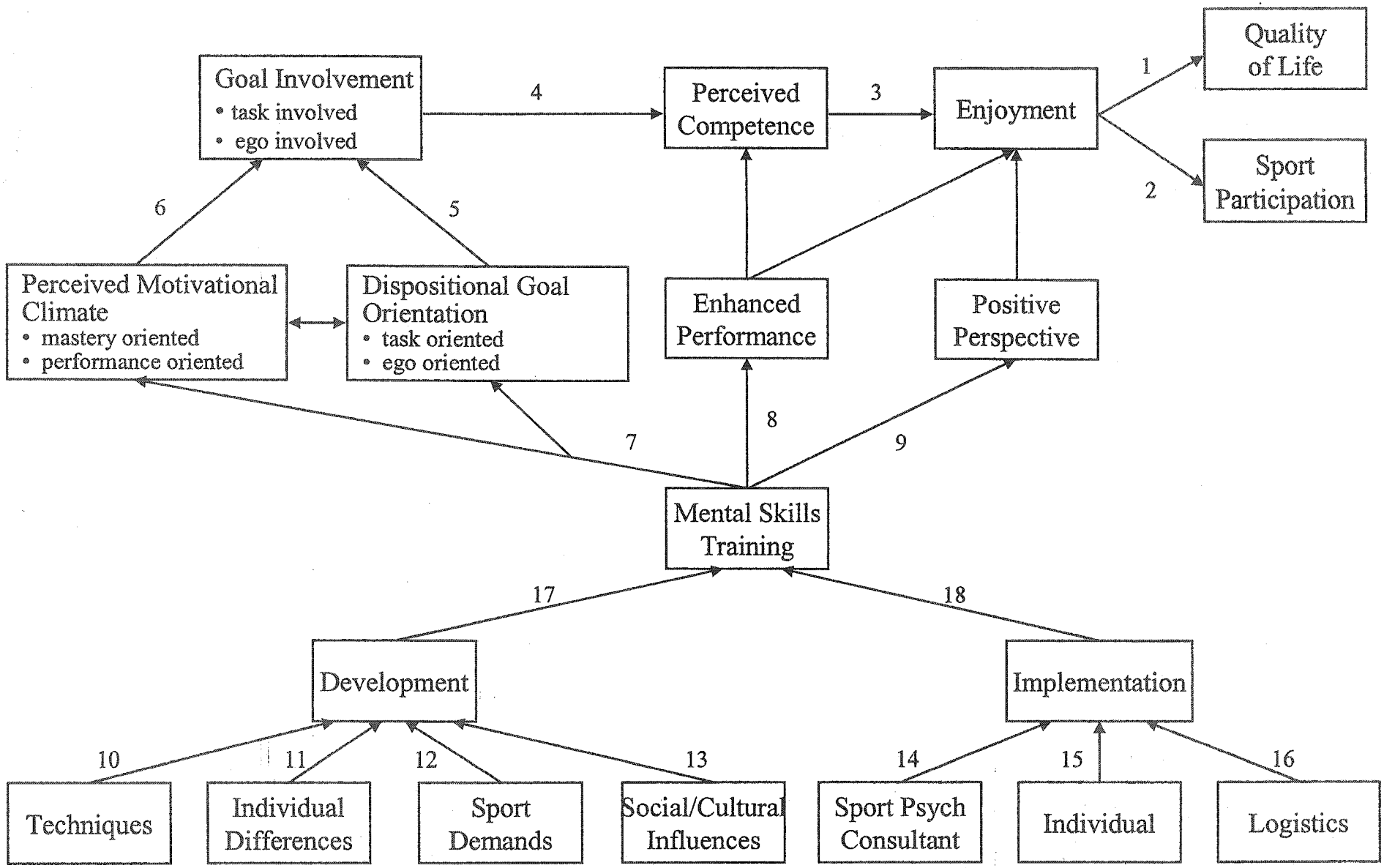
Goal Involvement
• task involved
• ego involved
Perceived Competence
Enjoyment
Quality of Life
Sport Participation
Perceived Motivational Climate
• mastery oriented
• performance oriented
Dispositional Goal Orientation
• task oriented
• ego oriented
Enhanced Performance
Positive Perspective
Mental Skills Training
Development
Implementation
Techniques
Individual Differences
Sport Demands
Social/Cultural Influences
Sport Psych Consultant
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Figure 2. Research design

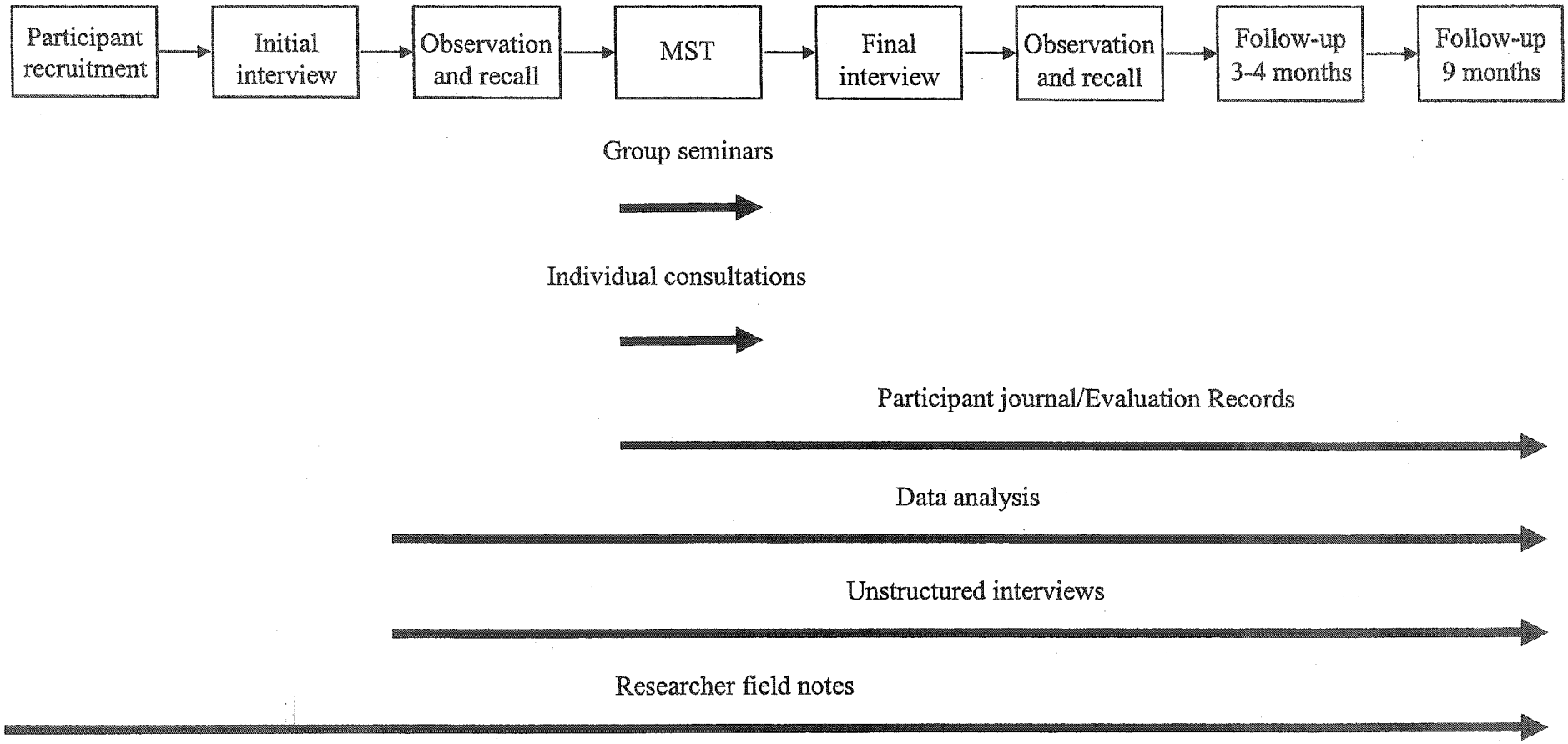

Participant recruitment
Initial interview
Observation and recall
MST
Final interview
Observation and recall
Follow-up 3-4 months
Follow-up 9 months
Group seminars
Individual consultations
Participant journal/Evaluation Records
Data analysis
Unstructured interviews
Researcher field notes

Figure 3. Graph of Tom's scores on the MSQ

17/2/99
27/4/99
end/10/99
9/1/00
Motivation
Relaxation Ability
Concentration Ability
Anxiety and Worry Management
Self-Confidence
Mental Preparation
Imagery Ability
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24

Figure 4. Graph of Nancy's scores on the MSQ

17/2/99
27/4/99
end/10/99
10/1/00
Motivation
Relaxation Ability
Concentration Ability
Anxiety and Worry Management
Self-Confidence
Mental Preparation
Imagery Ability
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24

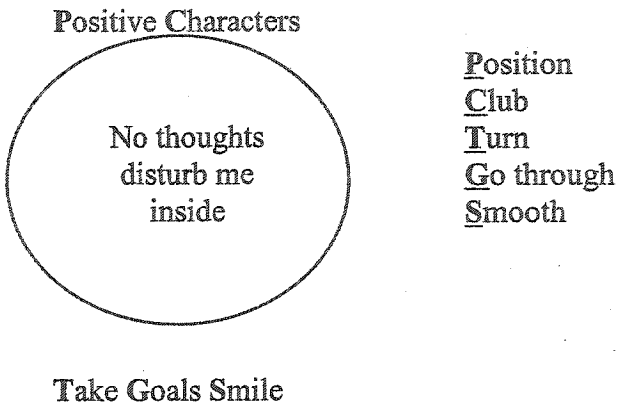
Figure 5. Graph of Lee's scores on the MSQ

17/2/99
27/4/99
end/10/99
9/1/00
24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Imagery Ability
Mental Preparation
Self-Confidence
Anxiety and Worry Management
Concentration Ability
Relaxation Ability
Motivation

Figure 6. Graph of Phil's scores on the MSQ

17/2/99
27/4/99
end/10/99
5/1/00
Motivation
Relaxation Ability
Concentration Ability
Anxiety and Worry Management
Self-Confidence
Mental Preparation
Imagery Ability
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24

Figure 7. Annika's cue word philosophy



"I feel in a cocoon which is my cue word"

Figure 8. Graph of Annika's scores on the MSQ

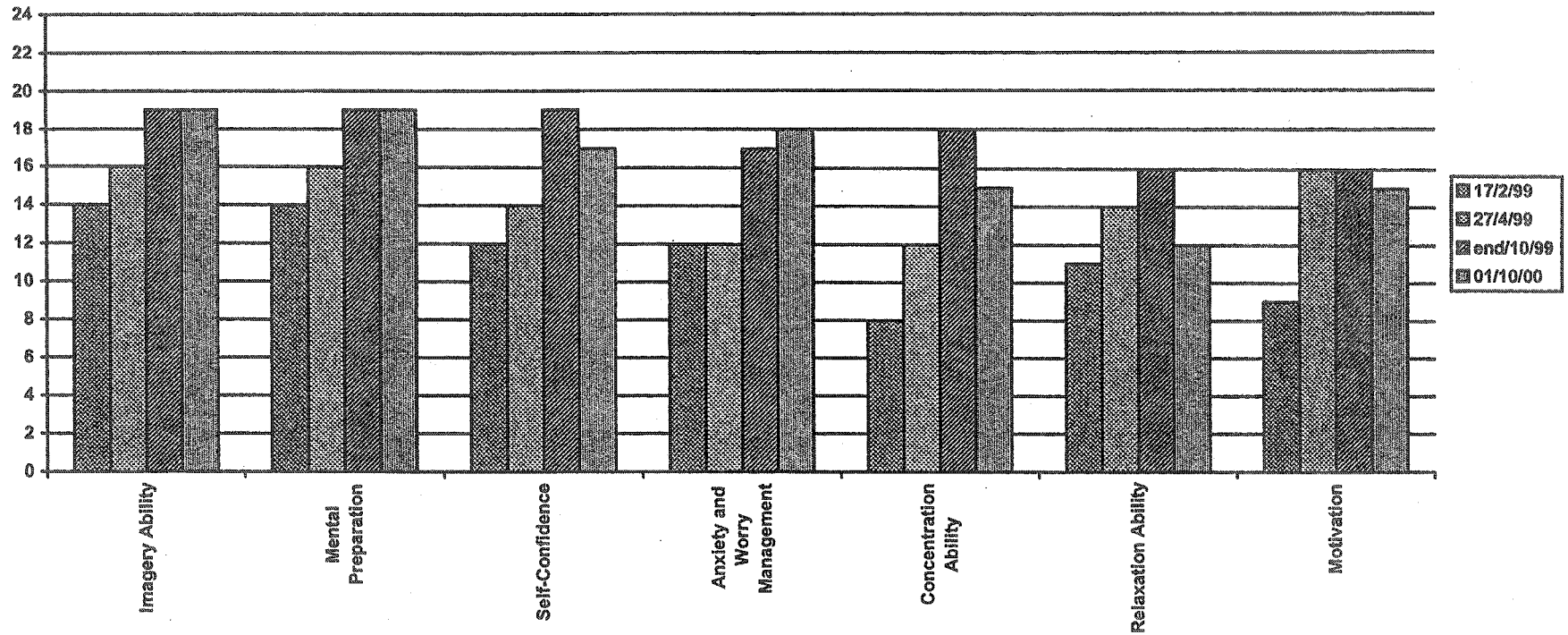

24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Imagery Ability
Mental Preparation
Self-Confidence
Anxiety and Worry Management
Concentration Ability
Relaxation Ability
Motivation
17/2/99
27/4/99
end/10/99
01/10/00

Figure 9. Themes of MST experience

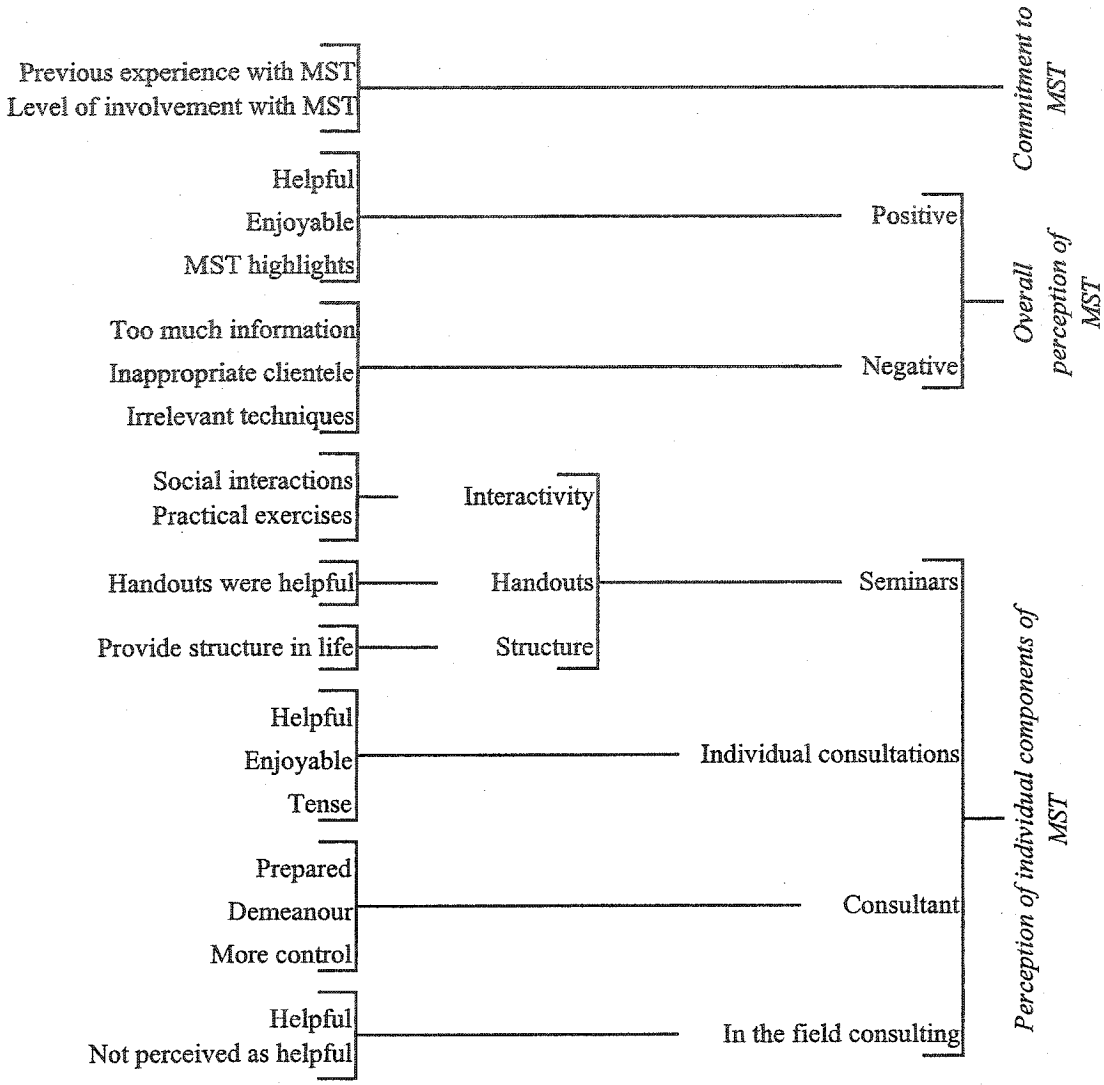

Previous experience with MST
Level of involvement with MST
Commitment to MST
Helpful
Enjoyable
MST highlights
Positive
Too much information
Inappropriate clientele
Irrelevant techniques
Negative
Overall perception of MST
Social interactions
Practical exercises
Interactivity
Handouts were helpful
Handouts
Provide structure in life
Structure
Seminars
Helpful
Enjoyable
Tense
Individual consultations
Prepared
Demeanour
More control
Consultant
Helpful
Not perceived as helpful
In the field consulting
Perception of individual components of MST

Figure 10. Themes of MST process

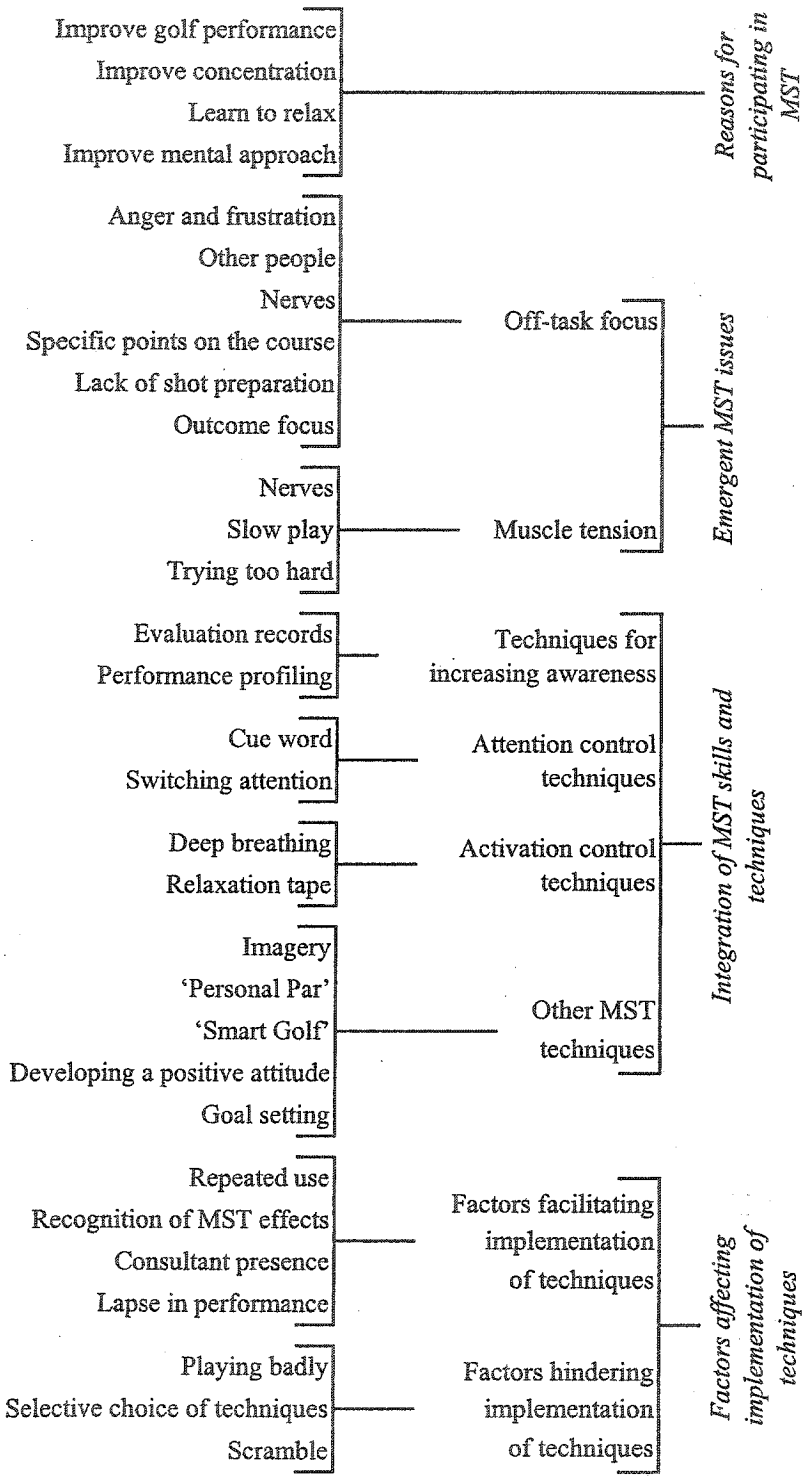

Improve golf performance
Improve concentration
Learn to relax
Improve mental approach
Reasons for participating in MST
Anger and frustration
Other people
Nerves
Specific points on the course
Lack of shot preparation
Outcome focus
Off-task focus
Nerves
Slow play
Trying too hard
Muscle tension
Emergent MST issues
Evaluation records
Performance profiling
Techniques for increasing awareness
Cue word
Switching attention
Attention control techniques
Deep breathing
Relaxation tape
Activation control techniques
Imagery
'Personal Par'
'Smart Golf'
Developing a positive attitude
Goal setting
Other MST techniques
Integration of MST skills and techniques
Repeated use
Recognition of MST effects
Consultant presence
Lapse in performance
Factors facilitating implementation of techniques
Playing badly
Selective choice of techniques
Scramble
Factors hindering implementation of techniques
Factors affecting implementation of techniques

Figure 11. Themes of MST outcomes

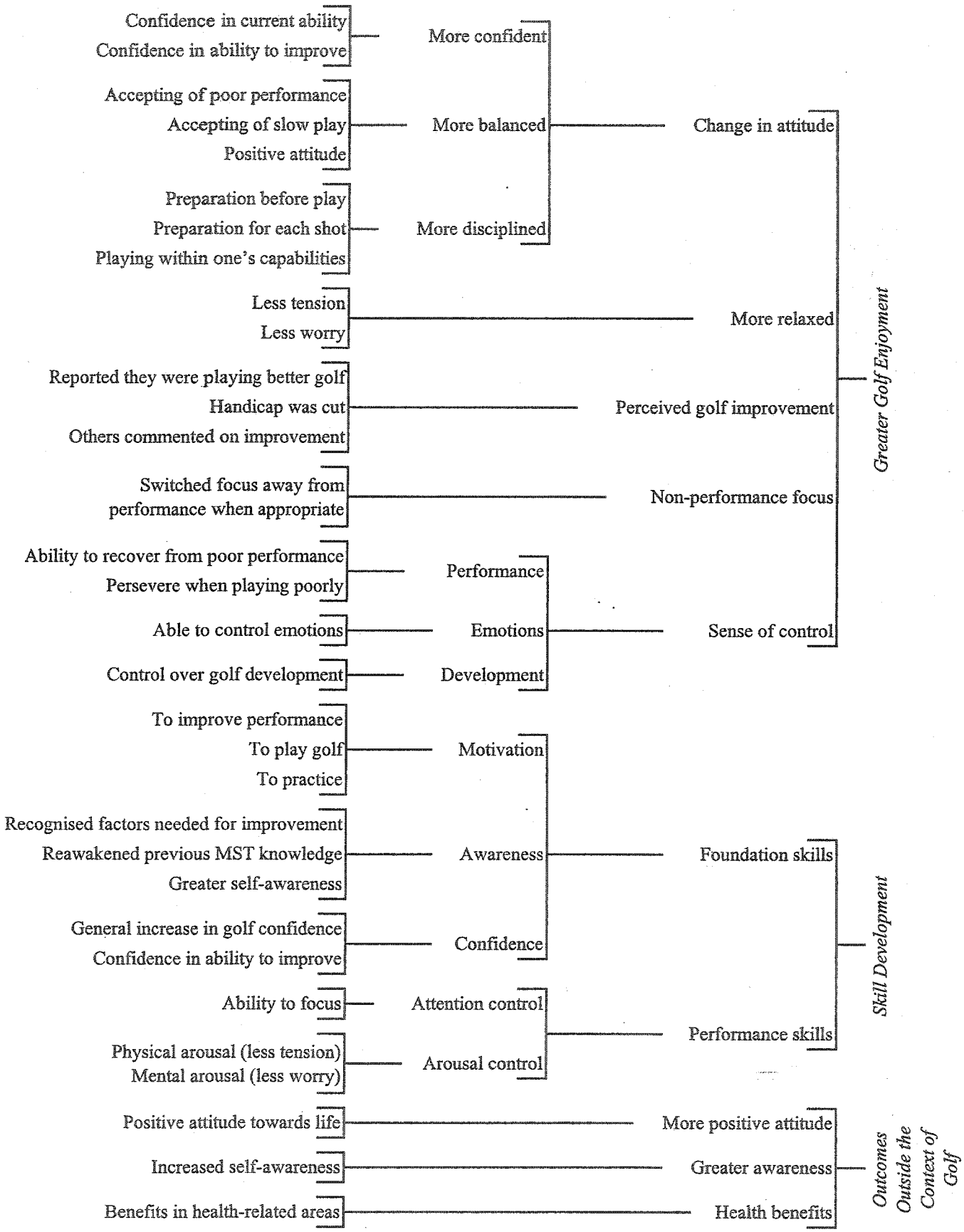
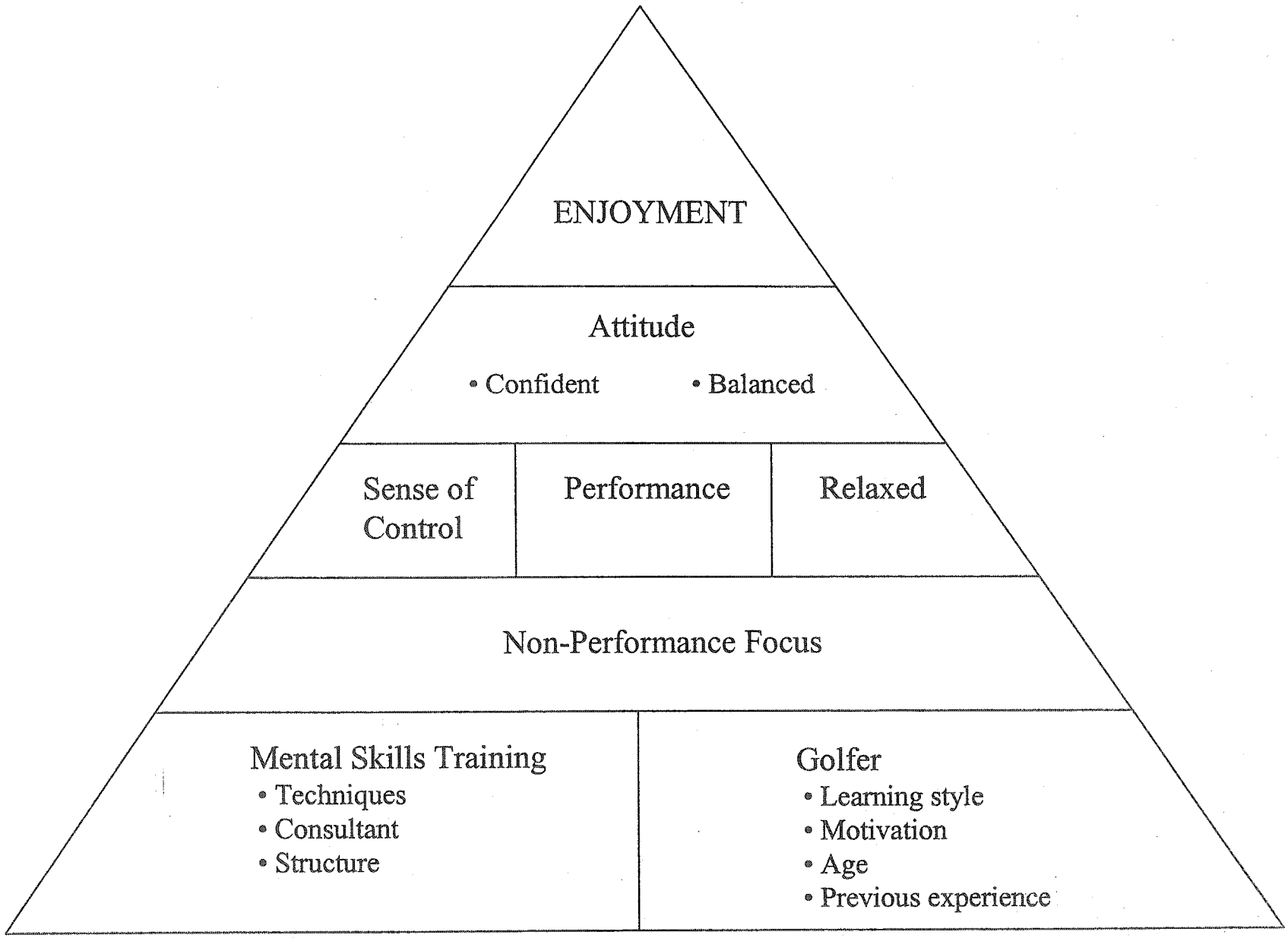

Confidence in current ability
Confidence in ability to improve
More confident
Accepting of poor performance
Accepting of slow play
Positive attitude
More balanced
Preparation before play
Preparation for each shot
Playing within one's capabilities
More disciplined
Change in attitude
Less tension
Less worry
More relaxed
Reported they were playing better golf
Handicap was cut
Others commented on improvement
Perceived golf improvement
Switched focus away from performance when appropriate
Non-performance focus
Ability to recover from poor performance
Persevere when playing poorly
Performance
Able to control emotions
Emotions
Control over golf development
Development
Sense of control
Greater Golf Enjoyment
To improve performance
To play golf
To practice
Motivation
Recognised factors needed for improvement
Reawakened previous MST knowledge
Greater self-awareness
Awareness
General increase in golf confidence
Confidence in ability to improve
Confidence
Foundation skills
Ability to focus
Attention control
Physical arousal (less tension)
Mental arousal (less worry)
Arousal control
Performance skills
Skill Development
Positive attitude towards life
More positive attitude
Increased self-awareness
Greater awareness
Benefits in health-related areas
Health benefits
Outcomes Outside the Context of Golf

Figure 12. Model of findings


ENJOYMENT
Attitude
• Confident
• Balanced
Sense of Control
Performance
Relaxed
Non-Performance Focus
Mental Skills Training
• Techniques
• Consultant
• Structure
Golfer
• Learning style
• Motivation
• Age
• Previous experience

Appendix A

Description of Golf Games (adapted from Vanner, 1989)

Individual Stableford

The individual Stableford involves scoring points on each hole based on your net score for the hole. The golfer receives two points for a net par, one point for one over net par, three points for one under net par, four points for two under net par and so on. Players who play two shots more than their net par cannot score on that hole and should pick up their ball. The points are totalled over eighteen holes and the player with the most points is the winner. The major advantage of Stableford play is that if you have a bad hole you can compensate for it during the remainder of the round, unlike medal play.

Fourball Betterball

The Fourball Betterball uses a similar scoring system to the individual Stableford, but is played with a partner. Both players play their own ball on each hole and calculate their Stableford score. The highest Stableford score in the pair is recorded as the Betterball score for that hole. If one partner cannot beat his or her partner's score on a hole he or she should pick up his or her ball. The points are totalled over eighteen holes and the players with the most points are the winners.

Medal Play

Medal play, or stroke play, requires counting every shot played over the course of eighteen holes. At the end of eighteen holes the total number of shots is calculated and the player's handicap is subtracted. The player with the lowest net score wins.

Scramble

A Scramble is played in teams of four. All players play the first shot on every hole then decide which ball is in the best position. The other balls are then picked up and dropped within one club length of the selected ball but no nearer the hole. The players whose ball was not chosen then hit their next shot from this position. A similar selection for the following shot is made and play continues in this way. When on the green all balls must be putted from within 1cm of the spot where the selected ball lies. Gross scores are recorded on the card after each hole, then totalled for the eighteen holes. The handicap allowance is deducted for the net score and the team with the lowest net score is the winner.

Appendix B

Article for Participant Recruitment

The Mental Game of Golf

I have been visiting La Manga Club for the last 13 years; more frequently since my parents, Jackie and Laurie Stodel, and the dog, Izzie, moved to these sunnier climes nearly 4 years ago. At about that time I took the opposite track and headed for the cold and snow of the East Coast of North America. I received my master's degree in sport psychology in Massachusetts and then worked as a sport psychology consultant at a ski academy in Vermont. I am currently in Canada doing my Ph.D. with a concentration in sport psychology and continue to consult with athletes helping them enhance their performance through mental training. This July I will be consulting with young golfers at the "Future Pro Golf Camps" in Canada.

Through observation and discussion with many of La Manga Club's golfing visitors and residents, I have noticed the frustrations associated with inconsistent play that many of you seem to experience. I refuse to believe, and I'm sure you'll agree, that these fluctuations in your game are due to changes in your technical ability, but are more likely due to differences in your mental approach. As one noted golf psychologist said: "Like a stone in your shoe can ruin a good walk, the mental aspects can throw your game way off its best form".

Many golfers on the pro tour, such as Davis Love III, Nick Price, and Tom Kite, see the value of mental training and currently work with sport psychology consultants. Mental training is beginning to be seen as the logical complement to the time spent on the driving range and practice green. However, mental training should not be seen as something that only the pros "do"; the positive impact of learning mental skills can be as great for the recreational golfer. Sport psychology consultants are not "shrinks" and our main goal is not to fix problems. Instead,

we take an educational approach with the objective of enhancing performance through teaching individuals mental skills. There are no earth shattering secrets in the field of sport psychology. The key is to help athletes put into action things they often already know. As golfers, you know that you should be fully focused on the shot you are about to play and not thinking about the previous hole, but *how* do you successfully do this?

Through learning mental skills it is possible to reduce the inconsistencies in your game and play your best more often. Your thoughts prior to each shot can have a remarkable effect on where your ball ends up. Just like a minute change in your swing plane can mean the difference between having a great drive and having your ball end up out of bounds; your attitude can mean the difference between playing to your potential, and having a bad round and leaving the course frustrated.

For my dissertation I am developing a mental training program specifically designed for recreational golfers. The main goal of the program is to teach skills which will facilitate more consistent play and thus maximise your enjoyment of the game of golf in addition to lowering your handicap. In order to evaluate the program I need a group of enthusiastic and dedicated recreational golfers who are interested in developing their mental game. I am hoping to find enough people at La Manga Club who are willing to help me with this endeavour by dedicating some time and vitality to the program. The program will comprise hourly group seminars once or twice a fortnight from January to April, 1999. In addition to the seminars, the golfers involved in the program will be asked to integrate what they have learned in the seminars into their golf games, keep a diary of their progress, and do brief monthly assessments. I will only be offering this complimentary program at La Manga Club if there is enough interest. So, if you would like to participate in this unique venture, please show your interest by contacting me or my parents,

or by signing up in the Owner's Clubhouse, before October. I will be at La Manga Club in August 1998 if you would like more information; please do not hesitate to contact me then or by mail.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Name: _____
2. Sex: Male / Female
3. Date of birth: _____
4. How long have you been playing golf on a regular basis? _____months/years
5. What is your **exact** current handicap: _____
6. How long have you been at your current handicap? _____ weeks/months/years
7. What has been the range of your handicap over the last 6 months? from ____ to ____
8. How many times a week, **on average,** do you play golf? _____
9. How much time a week, **on average,** do you spend practising:
    - with woods? _____
    - with irons? _____
    - putting? _____
    - chipping? _____
    - bunker play? _____
10. How many times have you had a golf lesson with a pro within the last six months? _____
11. Will you be leaving La Manga Club for any appreciable length of time between now and June? Yes / No

    If yes, please provide approximate dates: _____

Appendix E

Handouts for MST seminars

Seminar 1 - Introduction

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ P rovide an introduction to FUNdaMENTAL GOLF.
⇒ I dentify the critical aspects of golf.
⇒ C ommit to change.
⇒ M aking practice transferable - and FUN!

Summary:

My goal is to help you play your best game more often. To help you develop mental skills and provide you with mental training exercises which you can use to strengthen your mental game. However, mental training is not something that can be done to you. It requires commitment, dedication, and effort. In order for you to gain the most from the time you put into this training . . .

REFLECT, CHALLENGE, AND TAKE ACTION

Fundamental to any kind of improvement and change is an awareness of the current position and an image of the desired position. The same goes for you as a golfer. You need to develop an understanding of yourself as a person and as a golfer *right now* and identify where you want to be in the future. In this first seminar we will identify the fundamental qualities of an elite golfer. In small groups answer the following question:

♦ ***In your opinion, what are the qualities and/or characteristics of an elite golfer?*** ♦

It may help you to:

◊ consider the following categories - *physical, mental, technical, and tactical.*
◊ ask "When everything is going right, and it all falls into place, what am I thinking, feeling, and doing?"
◊ compare and contrast your thoughts, feelings, and actions before a good shot to those before a poorer shot.

Next week we will identify your current standing as a golfer and then go on to develop a plan of action to close the gap between the 'current you' and the 'ideal you'. In order to create change you need to be committed change. What are you prepared to do to meet your goals? Make a contract with yourself. Have it witnessed by someone who is willing to support you. Witness someone else's commitment and help them achieve their goals . . .

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE

A common adage *'Practice makes perfect'* should really be *'Perfect practice makes perfect'*. How can you make your practice more transferable and fun? What are you committed to do over this next week? Choose ***three*** ways in which you will improve your practice routine.

Over the next week:

⇒ K eep all your score cards and record them on a master card. These will be needed for an activity we will do in seminar 4.
⇒ C omplete an 'Evaluation Record' after each round of golf you play. Take time to reflect thoroughly on your round. Further your understanding of the 'golfing you'. Look for highlights in all domains of life.
⇒ R emember your contract - practice like you want to play.
⇒ E ncourage your fellow FUNdaMENTAL golfers on their road to improvement - invite them down to the driving range and putting green with you.

Seminar 2 - Enjoyment & Improvement

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ F eedback from last week.
⇒ I ntroduce the concept of highlight training.
⇒ U se performance profiling to develop an awareness of what you need to do to reach your goal(s).

Summary:

I believe that there are 3 predominant mechanisms through which enjoyment can be increased:

- by enhancing performance
- by increasing perceived competence
- through the development of positive perspectives

Positive Perspective Training or "Highlight Training":

> ***Choose to Live Your Potential***
> There are limits to the time you have to live but no limits on how you live your time.
> Every day you are free to choose between things that lift you or drag you down.
> Embrace experiences that can enrich your life.
> Absorb yourself in each opportunity.
> Find positives in every pursuit.
> *Do it now,* rather than waiting, wishing you had, once your game is over or your life is nearing the end.
> Now is the time to live each day.
> Now is the time to embrace your potential.
> *~ Terry Orlick, 1998 ~*

One of the simplest ways through which to derive more enjoyment from golf, and life in general, is to look for, see, and embrace the good things in our lives, or the *highlights.* "Life is full of extraordinary opportunities for embracing simple joys within ordinary experiences" (Orlick, 1998). Through the simple task of looking for, recording, and reflecting on, highlights within different domains of our lives (see the highlight flower) we can develop a more positive outlook on life and experience more joy. This week, commit to carrying a positive perspective into each pursuit you do. Also, spend a couple of minutes at the end of day to record the highlights of the day in questions 3 and 9 of your "Evaluation Record".

Performance Profiling:

Last week you identified the qualities and/or characteristics of an elite golfer. This week you will identify the necessary qualities in order for you to reach your goals. Through the use of performance profiling you can identify your strengths and weaknesses in these qualities and identify the areas on which you should focus. You will develop the plan for improvement next week. Remember . . .

IF YOU CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS DONE,
YOU WILL CONTINUE TO GET WHAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS GOT

Over the next week:

⇒ L ook for highlights in all domains of life and record them on your 'Evaluation Record' - Develop a positive perspective.
⇒ C ontinue to keep all your score cards and record them on a master card.
⇒ C ontinue to complete the 'Evaluation Records' after each round of golf you play.

Seminar 3 - Goal Setting

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ F eedback from last week.

⇒ U se performance profiling to develop an awareness of what you need to do to reach your goal(s).

⇒ D evelop a plan for improvement through the use of effective goal setting.

Summary:

Goal setting is probably one of the most valuable mental training tools when approached in the correct manner. Goal setting is an effective means of building self confidence in addition to being an excellent source of motivation. One way of describing goals is to see them as dreams or mental images toward which you choose to work. Goal setting is like a map. You should be able to identify the destination (long term goal) and then decide on the quickest and most economical way to arrive there (each step being a short term goal) with the least wasted energy. Through doing this you are directing your attention at the task in hand and not wasting precious energy by taking unnecessary detours.

Principles of Goal Setting:

In order to make your goal setting most effective, bear these points in mind.

1. The goal must be important to you. If you are not committed to your goal you will not put in the necessary energy and effort to reach it. Set your own goals - don't let others set them for you. If you set your own goals you will be more committed to them.
2. The goals must be realistic - with regards to the amount of time you have available, your ability, and your motivation. It is not as important to make your long term goal realistic as you do not know what you will be capable of achieving in the distant future.
3. Although your goals must be realistic, they should also be challenging. You should feel satisfied when you achieve them. This will help build your self-confidence. If the goals are too challenging or unrealistic, you may never reach them and this could work to undermine your self-confidence. If your goals are not challenging enough, you will not derive any satisfaction from them once you have achieved them and this will not serve as a building block for developing your self-confidence.
4. The goals must be within your control. They should be performance (quality of golf) and not outcome (result) oriented. A goal that is within your control is one that is not dependent on how well others perform. Outcome goals can lead to frustration and anxiety.
5. Write your goals in specific terms. Avoid "do your best" or "feel good" goals.
6. Your goals should be assessable/measurable. How are you going to determine whether or not you have achieved your goal?
7. Write your goals in positive terms - avoid using the word "not". Focus on what you want to achieve or gain, not what you want to omit.
8. Include target dates by which you will complete your goals.
9. Once you have written down your goals you should see this as a contract and you should post it in visible places to remind yourself of what you are working towards.
10. Reassess your goals and adjust them as necessary - they are not carved in stone. If you fail to attain a goal that's OK - maybe it was unrealistic. Rewrite it and GO FOR IT AGAIN!!

Over the next week:

⇒ C ontinue to **record your scores** on a master card; complete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, and record, **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 4 - Remaining in the Present

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ I ntroduce the concept of 'Personal Par' (Keogh & Smith, 1985) as a means to increase confidence and maintain focus.

⇒ P resent simple techniques to help maintain focus on the present shot.

Summary:

Being confident about the shot you are about to play and having belief in your ability are the most valuable skills a golfer can possess. It is important to develop an enduring and stable confidence rather than a 'fake' one. Confidence can be developed by maintaining a positive perspective and focusing on the highlights of your game. Confidence can also be developed through positive thinking. Positive thinking does not mean convincing yourself that you can do something that you truly know you can not, but instead it is having confidence in your ability and what you can do. Confidence can also be strengthened by setting realistic goals. This can be achieved through calculating your 'Personal Par'. The 'Personal Par' system provides short-term and specific goals that are conducive to the development of confidence.

Calculating your 'Personal Par'

1. Using the master card on which you have been recording your scores, calculate your average score for each hole. Round your score to the nearest whole number.
2. On your score card record the average rounded score for each hole. This is your 'Personal Par' for each hole on the course.
3. Use your 'Personal Par' as your goal for each hole. Record how many 'Personal Pars' you make out of 18 for each round you play.

Not only is this an effective means of developing confidence, but it will also help concentration. This technique will help you focus on one hole at a time as you do not have to remedy mistakes from previously duffed holes. By remaining in the present, and focused on the hole you are playing, you are less likely to have disruptive thoughts negatively influence your game.

> What do I mean by concentration? I mean focusing totally on the business at hand and commanding your body to do exactly what you want it to do.
> ~Arnold Palmer~

Not only is it important to take one hole at a time, but it is also important to take one shot at a time. You should be fully focused on the shot you are about to take. Focused on what you need to do in order to execute that shot to the best of your ability. Any superfluous thoughts are deleterious to the execution. *What should you be thinking prior to taking a shot? What are some of the distracting thoughts you experience?*

So that your concentration doesn't become 'exhausted', turn it off between shots. Then, as you prepare for the next shot turn on your concentration to that one shot. Imagine yourself in a 'bubble' or 'cocoon'. Keep a *relaxed focus* - you can't force focus. Take a deep breath or focus on your breathing to slow everything down. Then gently bring yourself back to the present and task in hand using a cue word (e.g., smooth, calm, focus).

Over the next week:

⇒ U se the 'Personal Par' system and record your experiences with it on the 'Evaluation Records'

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, and record, **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 5 - Reducing Muscle Tension

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ F eedback.
⇒ L earn and practice abdominal breathing and progressive muscle relaxation.
⇒ S et up times for individual consultations.

Summary:

Muscle tension, whether it be from nerves or from over tightening your muscles in an effort to "hit the ball into tomorrow", is a common cause of error in golf. Nerves and/or tension often lead us to contract every muscle in the body instead of just the ones necessary. Consequently, this affects our coordination and timing and leads us to slice, hook, or top the ball. However, in order to reduce muscle tension, you must first be aware that it exists. Therefore, start to become aware of signs of tension in your body both when playing golf and going about your daily activities. Once you have identified tension in your body you can work towards reducing it and becoming more relaxed. Two of the most common forms of relaxation are abdominal breathing and Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR).

Abdominal Breathing

When under stress, we tend to breathe in short, shallow breaths. This prevents the lungs from filling up completely. With this type of breathing, stale air remains in the lungs and oxidation of the tissues is incomplete. This can lead to muscle tension. Conversely, by learning to breathe properly, tension can be reduced. To do this, sit upright with your back straight. Inhale very slowly; as you do, push your abdomen out. This will move your diaphragm down and fill the lower part of your lungs. As you continue to inhale expand your chest and fill the middle part of your lungs. Then, lift your shoulders and collarbones slightly to fill the upper part of the lungs. Hold the breath and then exhale slowly drawing in the abdomen and lowering your shoulders and collarbones. Empty your lungs from the top to bottom.

Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This technique works on the assumption that a relaxed muscle cannot be a tense muscle. First, you need to become aware of the contrast between the different feelings of a tense and relaxed muscle. Once you are aware of this, there is no reason why, with practice, you cannot change or adjust these levels.

♦ *Note that being more relaxed when playing golf is not necessarily better. It is the critical level which is important* ♦

> It's hard to maintain the physical relaxation needed to play flowing rhythmical strokes when I'm over anxious, and this can lead to technical faults. My timing comes from having my head and weight over the ball while playing the shot, but when I get too nervous I tense up and start pushing stiffly too early at the ball and end up hitting it in the air or flashing at it outside the off stump.
> ~Robin Smith, *international cricketer*~

Over the next week:

⇒ S pend 10-15 minutes a day using progressive muscle relaxation and/or deep breathing. Associate your cue word with the feelings of relaxation. Record your experiences on the 'Evaluation Records'
⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, and record, **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 6 - Attention Control

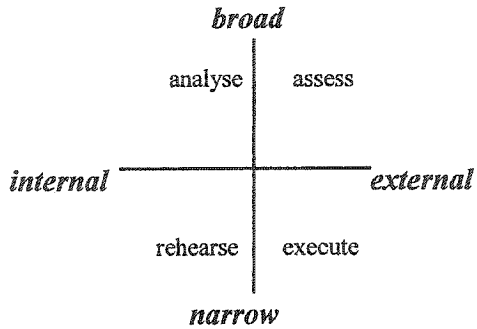
Seminar Objectives:

⇒ Explain different attentional styles.

⇒ Present concentration exercises that can be used to improve concentration.

Summary:

We have all recognised that a loss of concentration often impairs our performance and that it is sometimes difficult to remain focused throughout the duration of the round. Effective concentration requires us to focus our attention on *relevant* cues while ignoring distractions (both internal and external). According to Nideffer, there are four attentional styles and we must be able to switch between them as the situation requires:



We all have a favoured attentional style; one that we are better able to maintain for a longer period of time. However, our ability to concentrate within other attentioanl dimensions can be improved with practice. This is particularly important when our favoured attentional style does not match the primary attentioanl demand of the task. Moreover, as our arousal and activation levels increase, we tend to revert to our favoured style which could prove deleterious to performance. Reducing arousal levels is one way in which you can regain control over your concentration. In golf, we are required to use all four attentional styles and in order to effectively concentrate we must switch between the styles.

Attentional Styles in Golf (adapted from Scully & Kremer, 1998)	
Preliminary Phase:	
1. Broad-external:	Gather information needed to assess shot requirements (e.g. hazards, course conditions)
2. Broad-internal:	Plan the shot. Taking care to examine your personal abilities and preferences.
3. Narrow-external:	Select the club.
Set-Up Phase:	
4. Narrow-internal:	Feel the perfect shot. Monitor tension levels. Mentally rehearse the shot.
5. Narrow-external:	Concentrate on the target.
Swing Phase:	
6. Narrow-external:	Eye on the ball as you start backswing.
7. Narrow-external:	Observe results.
8. Narrow-internal:	Capture the feeling of that shot.
9. Broad-external:	Analyse the shot relative to previous correct or incorrect decisions.
10. Narrow-internal:	Visualise and feel the correct swing.

Developing a focus plan ~ Determine the critical points in your game ~ Decide how you want to feel, focus, and function ~ Plan how you are going to make this happen ~ Implement the plan ~ Revise the plan

Over the next week:

⇒ Practice the different concentration exercises in order to improve your concentration skills. Record your progress on your "Evaluation Records'.

⇒ Complete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, and record, **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 7 - Introducing Imagery

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ I ntroduce the concept of imagery: What is it? How does it work? What are its uses?

⇒ P resent basic imagery exercises and assess your imagery skills.

Summary:

Imagery is the creation, or recreation, of images in your mind using *all* of your senses (i.e., visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, and kinesthetic). Imagery is most effective when the images created are vivid, under your control, and include emotion (e.g., pride, satisfaction). There are two sorts of imagery - *internal* and *external.* Imagery from an internal perspective means that you replicate what you see through your own eyes from within your body. Conversely, imagery from an external perspective is like seeing the image on television from outside your body. Although both types of imagery are valuable in their own right, internal imagery is particularly important due to its kinesthetic value.

How Does Imagery Work?

- Examples of imagery working - lemon taste test; pendulum test.
- Strengthening Muscle Memory - research indicates that vivid imagery of a skill produces innervation in the muscles similar to, but to a lesser degree than that produced by actual physical execution of the skill. Therefore, imagery strengthens muscle memory by causing the nerves to fire in the correct sequence.
- Creating Mental Blueprints - imagery helps us acquire and understand movement patterns thus making the movement more familiar and potentially more automatic. Movements must first be encoded in the CNS and we need a 'blueprint' to plan for this movement.

Different Uses of Imagery.

- Mental practice of specific skills you have previously acquired (e.g., chipping).
- Recreate the image of an elite golfer executing a shot to learn the shot.
- Reviewing a shot to analyse strengths and weaknesses
- Identifying and correcting mistakes in your swing.
- Imagine previous successful performances to build confidence and create positive thinking.
- Create relaxing images to reduce tension.
- Imagine your goals to increase motivation - What do you want to achieve today?
- Preparing for performance in different conditions (e.g., opponents, wind, cold).
- Imagining the next shot within a pre-shot routine.
- A substitute for physical practice when unable to play or practice due to injury or fatigue.
- Re-experience highlights and develop a positive perspective.
- To create feelings and emotions (e.g., enjoyment, laughter, 'warm glow').
- Problem solving through imagining a critical incident and how you want to respond to it.
- Imagine playing a specific hole in order to develop your game plan.

Visualisation. It has been called "going to the movies" and it may be the most important part of your mental package.

~Ray Floyd~

Over the next week:

⇒ U se imagery on the driving range before a shot to create the feel of the stroke you want and after the stroke to strengthen the 'muscle memory' of your good shots.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 8 - Creating Mastery Through Imagery

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ E xplain how and when to "do" imagery.
⇒ U se imagery.

Summary:

How to "do" Imagery.

- Start off with a relaxation exercise.
- Create positive images. Ensure you create correct images, you do not want to ingrain an incorrect response pattern. Remember ~ **"*Perfect* practice makes perfect".**
- Make images as vivid as possible by using all your senses. Imagine the emotions associated with the images. Recreate thoughts and feelings.
- Emphasise kinesthetic imagery. 'Feel' the correct movement (e.g., weight transfer)
- Image on 'real-time'. This will help you improve your timing and rhythm.
- Learn to control your images. You should be able to manipulate the images at will.
- Incorporate cue words and symbolic images into your imagery. Sam Snead used the cue word "oily" to describe his fluid swing. In our seminars we discussed the analogy of "cutting the gas" on the Bunsen burner in order to reduce activation.
- Do short, frequent periods of imagery practice to ensure maintenance of concentration and quality practice.
- Use a video of yourself performing well or the image of an elite golfer to internalise a correct swing - focus on feeling the set-up, swing, rhythm, ball contact, and follow-through.
- You may wish to make your own imagery tape - either a mastery or a coping tape.

When to Use Imagery.

Daily Practice ~ Use imagery systematically by dedicating 5-10 minutes a day to practicing imagery. In order to build imagery into your routine, it may help if you practice imagery regularly before, or after, a round or a session on the driving range.
Pre-Shot Routine ~ Incorporate imagery into your pre-shot routine.
Post-Shot Review ~ To strengthen 'muscle memory' of a good shot or identify an error.
Post-Round Review ~ Use imagery when completing your 'Evaluation Record' to increase awareness of what happened during the round.

> I never hit a shot even in practice without having a very sharp, in-focus picture of it in my head. It's like a colour movie. First I 'see' the ball where I want it to finish. Then the scene quickly changes and I 'see' the ball going there. Then there's a sort of fade-out, and the next scene shows me making the kind of swing that will turn the previous images into reality.
> ~Jack Nicklaus~

Over the next week:

⇒ P ractice imagery daily. Five minutes once or twice a day is optimal until you become more proficient and are able to perform quality imagery for longer periods.
⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 9 - "Talk-the-Talk"

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ H ighlight the effects of self-talk.

⇒ I ntroduce techniques to control self-talk.

Summary:

The influence the mind has over the body has been illustrated through a number of exercises (e.g., lemon taste test, pendulum test, walking on hot coals, combating cancer). What we think influences our feelings and subsequently our actions. Consequently, our self-talk, or internal dialogue, has a tremendous impact on both our golf performance and golf enjoyment. Self-talk can be both beneficial and a hindrance. Positive ways in which self-talk can be used include:

- *skill learning and correction* - key swing thoughts
- *attention control* - through the use of cue words
- *creating mood/appropriate activation levels* - "relax", "smooth"
- *source of motivation* - "keep it up"
- *building self-confidence* - "I can do it"
- *problem solving* - "If _____ happens, I will _____"

However, quite often our self-talk is negative. Again, this may act in either a helpful ("fire-up") or harmful ("give-up") way. Unfortunately, more often than not, negative thinking is deleterious to our performance. It affects our ability to focus, undermines our confidence, creates tension, becomes self-fulfilling, causes us to play for others rather than ourselves, and causes us to change tactics so we 'play not to lose'.

Techniques to Control Self-Talk

* Thought Stopping - negative to positive
* Positive Affirmations
* Parking It
* Achievement Reminders - treasure box
* Channel Changing
* Cue Card - developing correct attitude

Type of Negative Thinking	*Cognitive Restructuring Techniques*
• "Don'ts"	• Rephrase negative self-talk to positive.
• Limitations	• View it as a challenge - What do you have to do to make it happen?
• Put downs	• Confront it - What would you think if *somebody else* said this to you? • View it as something unstable that can be changed
• "What ifs"	• Put it into perspective - What's the worst that can happen? • Prefix it with "So" and develop a plan.
• Self-doubt	• Confront it. • Change the perspective.
• Concern about what others think.	• Be your own judge.
• Non-performance preoccupations	• "Tree it"; "Park it"; Hole in the ground.

Over the next week:

⇒ C reate a list of positive affirmations and a list of achievement reminders. Read each list daily.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement.**

Seminar 10 - FUNdaMENTAL Enjoyment

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ O verview, review, and discussion of approaches to increase golf enjoyment.

Summary:

Potential means through which golf enjoyment may be augmented:

1. Performance Enhancement

- *Adequate preparation before play.* Both mental and physical.
- *Increase consistency of golf performance.* Approach each shot in the same way, both psychologically and physiologically, regardless of the outcome of the previous shot or hole. Adhere to your preshot routine.
- *Commitment.* Be fully involved in what you are doing, both physically and mentally.
- *Quality not quantity practice.* **'*Perfect* practice makes perfect'**. Set goals - have a focus; make the practice worthwhile. Make practice enjoyable.
- *Draw out lessons.* Great performers take personal responsibility for their performance. They learn from each experience by reflecting and drawing out valuable lessons. They then ***ACT*** on them. Use your 'Evaluation Records' to help with this.

2. Becoming More Task Involved

Feelings of competence often lead to enhanced enjoyment. How competent you feel is often dependent on the manner through which you assess it. This assessment may be based on self-referenced (e.g., improvement [i.e., task involved]) or other-referenced (e.g., winning [i.e., ego involved]) comparisons. This will consequently determine the types of goals that you set. Compare task goals (e.g., hit 60% of fairways) to ego goals (e.g., win Wednesday's Medal). As task oriented goals are under your control, focused on the process, and provide more opportunities for success, it is recommended that you set these types of goals.

3. Developing a Positive Perspective

- Remember that *you* choose the perspective you take into the game.

> *"You can accomplish almost anything in your life with a positive attitude and connected focus - but almost nothing of value without them" ~ Orlick, 1998*

- *Search for highlights.* Highlight domains within the "flower".
- *Enjoy the moment.* Search for enjoyment within the act of playing.

> *"The act of winning is satisfying, but it's the fight and the battle that you go through that's the fun part" ~ Bob Tway*

- *Focus on your strengths.* Remember the good shots and mentally replay them.
- *'Golf is not a game of perfect'.* Accept that you will make mistakes - after all, you are only human. Forgive yourself for making mistakes and learn from the outcome.

> *"Golf is not a game of great shots. It's a game of the most accurate misses. The people who win make the smallest mistakes" ~ Gene Littler*

- *Keep it in perspective.* What does a missed putt really amount to?

> *"If you aren't trying to earn a living by playing golf, believe me it isn't worth getting that steamed up. Remember that golf is a game meant for recreation" ~ Curtis Strange*

Over the next week:

⇒ C hallenge yourself to enter and maintain a positive state of mind every day - or at least for part of the day. Get into the habit of being fully engaged with every performance, challenge, experience, and interaction. See how long you can maintain a positive attitude.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 11 - Attributions

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ P romote awareness of how attributional style may impact your golf game and attitude.

Summary:

The consideration of one's attributions for success and failure in sport is worthwhile, as how one interprets the outcome of an achievement situation may impact:

- *confidence*
- *affect and emotion*
- *motivation*

Attributions occur as a part of everyday life; most often after an unexpected result or when an individual fails to attain his or her goal. Attributions are either stable or unstable, and internal (related to the individual) or external (related to the environment).

Attribution model (from Biddle, 1991)

	Internal	*External*
Stable	• ability	• coaching
Unstable	• effort	• luck
	• unstable ability (form)	• task difficulty
	• psychological factors	• team work
	• practice	• officials

Correlates of Attributional Style

- ***Confidence***

We have already discussed how confidence is strengthened by previous successes. However, the story is not quite as simple as that. How we interpret these successes will impact the development of confidence. The critical factor is whether the attribution is stable or unstable.

success ⇒ if stable attribute ⇒ expect future success ⇒ increase confidence ⇒ success

Your level of confidence may also affect the type of attributions you make.

- ***Affect and Emotion***

Following an achievement situation you are likely to experience an *outcome dependent emotion.* This emotion is usually quite strong and is a result of *intuitive appraisal.* However, later on, *reflective appraisal* occurs, and *attribution dependent emotions* are experienced.

- ***Motivation***

Task involved individuals are concerned with improvement and therefore focus on effort; increased effort leads to enhanced performance. Regardless of the outcome, task involved individuals will continue to try hard next time as they are striving to improve. This will also cause them to seek challenging situations. Conversely, ego involved individuals are concerned with winning (i.e., demonstrating superior ability) and consequently tend to focus on ability attributions. This attributional style is fine as long as the outcome is favourable. However, in times of failure situation, ego involved individuals are likely to give up as they have a low expectancy for future success. Consequently, they will avoid challenge, exert low effort, and not persist with the task. This negative reaction is termed *learned helplessness* and develops when failure is attributed to internal, stable, and global factors. The ideal attributions for failure are those that are internal, unstable, and specific. The importance of taking personal responsibility for both successes and failures cannot be overstated.

Over the next week:

⇒ E nsure you have a healthy attributional style.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement.**

Seminar 12 - Discussion, Reflection & Problem Solving

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ S hare experiences of FUNdaMENTAL GOLF in small groups.

⇒ D evelop a 'Mental Game Plan'.

Summary:

A. Small Group Discussion

Within your group, discuss how you are using the material that has been presented in the seminars so far. Recount experiences where you have used the techniques effectively and identify factors which have made implementation difficult. Reflect on how you may use it more effectively in the future. What suggestions can you provide to others in the group? You may want to consider each of the following mental training techniques:

- evaluation records (ER)
- preparation before play - mental and physical (#1 & #10)
- highlight training/developing a positive perspective (#2, #4 & #10)
- performance profiling (spider web) (#2)
- goal setting (#3 & #10)
- personal par - for developing confidence and concentration (#4)
- switching concentration on and off between shots (#4)
- use of a 'bubble', 'cocoon' etc. (#4)
- cue word for improving focus (#4)
- relaxation techniques (e.g., abdominal breathing, PMR) (#5)
- cue word for creating relaxation (#5)
- switching attentional styles (#6)
- developing a focusing plan (#6)
- imagery (#7 & #8)
- 'Thought stopping' and changing negative self-talk to positive (#9)
- positive affirmations (#9)
- 'Parking' (#9)
- 'Treasure box' (#9)
- 'Channel changing' (#9)
- cue card to create desired attitude (#9)
- attributions (#11)

B. Committing to Change

It appears that you have now developed the basic mental skills needed to promote more consistent performance and enjoyment. However, in order to continue to reap the benefits of FUNdaMENTAL GOLF it is important that you continue to practice the techniques you have learned. With many athletes, the regularity of mental training tends to decrease over time. This is often the result of poor time management and a lack of prioritisation rather than a lack of belief in the value of the training. Developing a 'Mental Game Plan' will help increase adherence to the mental training.

1. Consider how much time a week you are willing to 'mentally train'. How many sessions a week of mental training are you willing to commit to? How long will each session last?
2. Determine what aspects of mental training are most applicable to you (see spider web)
3. On the weekly calendar, identify existing commitments.
4. Identify periods of time when you could carry out mental training (e.g., after breakfast; out walking the dog).
5. Fit in mental training sessions to these times. Make sure they are realistic in terms of both time and your amount of motivation.
6. Record your progress with each session in your 'Evaluation Records' or in the 'Mental Game Plan Diary'.
7. Try to integrate mental and physical training where possible.

Over the next week:

⇒ I mplement your mental game plan.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement.**

Seminar 13 - Go With The Flow![a]

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ I ntroduce the concept of trust.

⇒ H ighlight ways in which trust can be enhanced.

Summary:

In order to play more consistent golf, it is essential that you approach each shot in exactly the same way. The use of a pre-shot routine facilitates this. For many of you, a cue word has become the basis of this routine and it has proven to be a highly effective way of improving concentration. Other things you may want to include in your routine are assessment of the situation; shot and club selection; target/line selection; alignment; positive image of the shot you want to achieve; deep breath; positive thought; and a final swing thought. Not only should you go through your routine before each shot on the course, but in order to make the most out of your time on the range, it is important to use it there too. Using a pre-shot routine will also help you develop trust in your swing. Having trust in your swing will allow you to swing without any interference from your mind allowing you to have an *unconscious, automatic, flowing swing.* To obtain this (i.e., change from a mechanical to an instinctual swing) a lot of practice is needed. However, practice is not the only solution. To become instinctual rather than mechanical we need to let the unconscious mind take over and 'go with the flow'. Without trust we need conscious energy which prevents automaticity and makes the swing 'effortful'. We often interfere with our ability to let it flow by:

- practising rather than playing golf
- being over concerned with swing mechanics - you can't swing freely if you are always analysing ~ **'analysis to paralysis'**
- aiming for the perfect swing - instead think BALL IN HOLE!
- not trusting our swing . . . *because of* . . .
    - ◊ *attempts to control the path of the swing*
    - ◊ *fear* ~ of looking stupid; consequences of a bad shot
    - ◊ *doubt and indecision* ~ about your ability; the line; club selection
    - ◊ *anxiety and worry* ~ this leads to tension and the tendency to try to guide the ball rather than swing freely
    - ◊ *trying too hard* ~ increases the need to control the swing

How to 'go with the flow' and play with trust

- develop a pre-shot routine which will allow you to prepare for each shot consistently, thereby preparing your mind and body for a good swing you can trust
- play a round without focusing on mechanics - focus on rhythm; use imagery
- separate practice from play - don't try and fix swing problems on the course
- focus on getting the ball in the hole with the least number of strokes rather than trying to find the perfect swing
- practice 'letting it flow'
- under what circumstances do you lose trust? What can you do to increase it?
- if in doubt about your club selection - CHANGE IT!
- don't try too hard as this will cause you to consciously control your swing
- practice with your eyes closed - you can't steer the shot if you can't see the target
- hum or sing while you execute the stroke - it will help calm the analytic mind

Over the next week:

⇒ C hoose one round this week where your goal is to "go with the flow" for each shot.

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement.**

Seminar 14 - "Smart Golf"

Seminar Objectives:

⇒ I ntroduce the concept of "Smart Golf".

Summary:

Many of you now feel that you have developed basic mental skills that are helping you gain more consistency and derive more enjoyment from golf. The weakness appears to be in the lack of discipline to use these skills and apply the techniques ***EVERY*** shot. "Smart Golf" may be an approach that will help you develop this discipline. "Smart Golf" was developed by an LPGA instructor and a sport psychology consultant with the goal of helping golfers improve and score their mental game of golf. There are five major elements to "Smart Golf":

1. Preparation

- *maximum preparation (2 points)* ~ includes stretching; chipping; putting; and using several different clubs on the driving range
- *adequate preparation (1 point)* ~ spent less time; used fewer clubs (e.g., no putting)
- *minimal or no preparation (0 points)* ~ minimal or no time preparing; generally rushed

2. Positive Focusing *(i.e. directing attention towards the better rather than the poorer shots)*

- Record the 'good or better' shots. Ask yourself "Did I hit the ball as I intended and did it basically go where I was aiming?". Ignore where the ball landed.
- Prior to teeing off on the next hole, review these good shots using imagery.

Score 1 point for each hole if you recorded at least one 'good or better' shot and then replayed these shots in your mind before teeing off on the next hole.

3. Plan

Score 1 point for each hole if you follow the 4 following planning principles for each shot:

- Use your Personal Par (par for the hole and handicap strokes or use your calculated Personal Par from Seminar 4) to develop a 'game plan' for each hole
- Be conservative - play percentage golf
- Play towards the widest part of the fairways and green
- Go for the safer means of escape when in trouble ~ "When playing safe, play safe"

4. Apply

Score 1 point for each hole if you meet the following criteria for each shot:

- Identify a specific target
- Use imagery
- Commit 100% to the shot
- Complete your preshot routine

5. React

Score 1 point for each hole if you meet the following criteria for each shot:

- Use only positive verbal comments about your game and yourself
- Defend yourself against negative comments from others
- Make healthy attributions
- Remember the 4 F's - fudge, fix, forget, focus

Scoring

Max score = 74: 2 for preparation + 18 for positive focusing + 18 for each PAR component

Over the next week:

⇒ I mplement "Smart Golf".

⇒ C omplete the **'Evaluation Records'**; look for, record, and re-experience **highlights**; and **strive for improvement**.

Seminar 15 - Keep It Up!

Seminar Objectives:
⇒ D iscuss methods that will facilitate increased adherence to mental skills training.

Summary:
Although we have now reached the end of this series of seminars, it should not signify the end of your mental skills training. Knowledge is only powerful if you use it. Hopefully, over the last few months you have learned much about the mental game of golf. It is now important that you keep using and practising the skills you have acquired and continue to develop your mental game. So far I have provided direction in your 'journey' towards more enjoyable and consistent golf. Now it is time to go it alone! Just like your physical game will go off without practice, so will your mental game. You need to keep working at it to reap the benefits you have been enjoying so far. The use of performance profiling (the spider's web) will help you develop a 'map' for the rest of your journey. *Identify two specific qualities that you are going to work on and the 'action steps' you need to take in order to improve them.*

The following FUNdaMENTAL GOLF tips will guide you in planning your mental training and ensure you derive more benefit and enjoyment from this training:

- ☺ Use **performance profiling** (spider's web) on a regular basis. This will help you:
  - ⇒ I dentify your strengths and weaknesses and allow you to plan for improvement
  - ⇒ R ecognise improvements
  - ⇒ A llow you to personalise your training
- ☺ **Set aside time** every week to 'mentally train'. Plan your training and keep a record of your progress rather than just 'letting it happen'.
- ☺ **Integrate your mental and physical training** where possible.
- ☺ **Vary your mental training.** "A change is as good as a rest".
- ☺ Take the **'little and often'** approach.
- ☺ **Plot your progress.** Recognising improvement is a great source of motivation. Keep a record of your scores; number of fairways hit; greens in regulation; number of putts.
- ☺ Apply your mental training to **other life pursuits.**
- ☺ Revisit your seminar **handouts and notes.**
- ☺ Expand your knowledge of the mental game of golf and get another perspective by reading relevant material - see the **recommended reading list.**
- ☺ Continue to evaluate and reflect on your game using the **'Evaluation Records'.**
- ☺ Use other **FUNdaMENTAL GOLFERS**
  - ⇒ M eet on the driving range to practice
  - ⇒ M eet as a group to discuss your progress over coffee or a beer (or two!)
  - ⇒ P lay golf together - remind each other of the skills and techniques we have discussed
- ☺ Use relaxation or imagery **tapes** to facilitate practice.
- ☺ Arrange **individualised mental training sessions** with me when you feel it necessary

From Now On...
Continue to use and practice your FUNdaMENTAL GOLF skills and techniques. Keep looking for highlights and strive to improve. ***REMEMBER*** **'Change is a necessary ingredient of growth'.**

IF YOU CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS DONE,
YOU WILL CONTINUE TO GET WHAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS GOT

Appendix F

Contract to Improve

In order to reach my golf goals, I, _____ am prepared to:

- Play _____ rounds of golf a week
- Spend _____ minutes practising before I play each round
- Go to the practice ground and/or putting green _____ times a week for _____ minutes each time
- Read books and magazines _____ (how often and for how long?)
- Watch videos _____ (how often and for how long?)
- Take lessons _____ (how often and for how long?)
- _____ (anything else?)

_____	_____	_____	_____
Signature	Date	Witness Signature	Date

Appendix G

Article on the 'Circle'

The use of mental training and sport psychology by elite level athletes in all sports is continuing to grow. Probably in no sport so much as golf. This is not surprising when one considers the self-paced nature of the sport. Not having to hit the ball until you are ready to do so provides ample opportunity to become distracted. The ability to cope with distractions and concentrate entirely on the shot you are about to play is fundamental to good performance. Over the last 6 months I have been working with recreational golfers, here at La Manga Club, helping them strengthen their mental game through the FUNdaMENTAL GOLF program that I developed. The philosophy behind FUNdaMENTAL GOLF is to increase golf enjoyment through facilitating more consistent golf performance. More often than not, it appears that inconsistency is a result of lapses in concentration.

The occasions when golfers seem to have the most trouble concentrating is towards the end of a round, after a bad shot or hole, and during slow play. Hopefully, the ensuing FUNdaMENTAL tips will help you improve your concentration, enabling you to play your best game more often, and consequently enjoy your golf more.

It is unrealistic to expect that you can concentrate for the full 4 hours of a round of golf. Quite often, lapses in concentration towards the end of a round are a result of 'exhausted concentration'. Therefore, try to 'switch' your concentration on and off between shots. Imagine that there is a large circle (about 15-20 feet in diameter) around your ball. As you approach your ball and enter this imaginary circle, use this as a cue to switch your attention on. As you leave your circle after the shot, leave your emotions about the shot behind, just take with you your confidence and positive thoughts. Between 'circles' totally switch off from golf - don't think

about your upcoming shot. Instead, enjoy the scenery and the company of those you are with, until you reach your next 'circle'. This FUNdaMENTAL tip will allow you to be as concentrated for a shot at the end of the round as you were at the beginning, as you will have only had to concentrate for 45 minutes instead of 4 hours. Furthermore, this technique can be used to prevent slow play affecting your game. While waiting for your target area to clear, avoid stepping up to the ball. Stay outside your 'circle'. As the area clears, step into your 'circle' and 'switch on' your concentration. Remember, you are the one in control of your feelings - don't let slow play get to you. There's nothing you can do about it. Take time to enjoy the moment.

The ability to concentrate on the present shot is crucial. The golf course is a haven for distractions - a chattering partner, your chattering mind, dreams of winning, thoughts of your last duffed shot, the image of your ball sailing into the lake . . . How many times have you tried to ignore distractions such as these - and failed, however hard you have tried to block them out? Rather than fighting to ignore these distractions, an easier and more effective approach is to concentrate on relevant cues. Relevant cues are the things you need to be focused on in order to execute the shot well. David Duval emphasised this point after he won The Players Championship earlier this year: "While you're playing, you'll think about winning and what it will mean. There's nothing you can do to block it out, you just need to embrace it. Heck, I was thinking about it yesterday. But you just have to put it aside and figure out what you need to do to get there". By asking yourself "What do I have to focus on to execute a good swing?" and then integrating these things into a specific routine, you are providing your mind with direction, something constructive to focus on. This makes it harder for your mind to wander and be distracted by negative thoughts. Typically, a pre-shot routine should commence as you enter your 'circle'. Although routines are highly personal, many include club selection, alignment,

visualisation, a practice swing, positive confident thinking, a glance at the target, a deep breath, and a last swing thought "smooth". However, a word of warning - KISS (Keep It Simple, Smart). If you become distracted during your routine, step away from the ball and recommence. Many tour pros consider their routine to be as much part of the stroke as their swing is. Hopefully you will too. Happy Golfing!

Appendix H

Initial Interview Guide

The Golfing Self

I'd like to start off by asking you some questions so I can get a picture of the 'golfing you'.

1. What role does golf play in your life?
2. What are your golf goals?
3. What are you prepared to do in order to attain them?
4. How much do you think about golf when you are not playing?
5. What is the meaning of a successful round of golf for you?
6. Describe a situation when you feel very competent with regard to golf.
7. Describe what you usually do for preparation prior to playing golf. You may want to start from when you get up, or as you arrive at the course.
8. Do you go the driving range prior to playing golf? If so, what do you do there?
9. What are you thinking, feeling, and doing on the 1st tee?
10. Describe your attitude to golf throughout the round.
11. Describe for me what you do before playing a shot.
12. Describe for me what you do during playing a shot.
13. Describe for me what you do after playing a good shot.
14. Describe for me what you do after playing a bad shot.
15. What do you do between playing holes?
16. Tell me about any experiences you have had with sport psychology/MST.
17. What do you expect to gain from this MST?
18. What would you like to learn from the MST?

Meaning of Enjoyment

During the MST I will be teaching you techniques aimed at improving your mental skills to help you derive more enjoyment from your game. Everyone defines enjoyment in different ways and derives enjoyment from different sources. I'd like to try and get an idea of the meaning of enjoyment for you.

1. How would you compare the depth of your golf enjoyment with other aspects of life you enjoy?
2. What is it that you enjoy about playing golf?
3. Within the context of golf, what is the meaning of enjoyment for you?
4. Under what conditions do you enjoy playing golf the most?
5. How do you experience enjoyment?
6. Describe a particularly enjoyable moment you experienced when playing golf within the last week or so?
7. Tell me about some of the unenjoyable aspects of golf. What happens that makes it unenjoyable?

Probes

- What was it about . . . that made it a source of enjoyment to you?
- What did . . . mean to you that made it so enjoyable?
- Tell me a little more about what you mean by enjoying . . .
- Tell me a little more about how you derive enjoyment from . . .
- Why do you enjoy . . . (being with people etc.)

Appendix I

Final Interview Guide

Now that our work together has come to an end, I'd like to ask you some questions about your experiences with what we have done.

1. What was your experience with the work that we have done together over the last four months?
2. If you were to go through this experience again, is there anything you would like to see done differently?
3. If you were to do through this experience again, is there anything you would do differently?
4. Have you gained anything from what we have done?
5. In what ways, if any, has your attitude and/or approach to golf changed as a result of the MST?
6. Do you think differently now compared to when we started this work?
7. Do you play differently now compared to when we started this work?
8. Do you prepare for golf and/or each shot differently now?
9. Do you have a different attitude towards life now compared to when we started this work?
10. In your opinion, what factors contributed to the outcomes of the work we have done?
11. What factors made the implementation of the skills easy?
12. What factors made the implementation of the skills difficult?
13. For you, what were the highlights of our work together?
14. What did you enjoy about the time we spent together?
15. What did you enjoy most about the time we spent together?
16. Was there anything that was disturbing, or unpleasant about the work we did together? Any low points? Anything you were disappointed with?
17. When were you most engaged during the program?
18. When were you least engaged during the program?
19. What did you learn as a result of our time together? How do you use this knowledge?
20. What have you learned about yourself as a result of our work together?
21. Do you plan on continuing to use what you have learned? If so, how? If not, why not?

Appendix J

Evaluation Record

Date: _____ Course: _____ Tee-off time: _____ Score: _____

Playing partners: _____

Type of round: _____

Prior to playing - physical preparation:

Time spent on driving range: _____ minutes Time spent on putting green: _____ minutes

Time spent on bunker shots: _____ minutes Time spent practising chipping: _____ minutes

Time spent stretching: _____ minutes

Clubs used during practice (circle): 1W 2W 3W 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 PW SW lob other _____

How long did you arrive at the tee before your tee-off time? _____ minutes

Prior to playing - mental preparation:

How did you mentally prepare for this round?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Post-Round Evaluation:

Following each round of golf you play, please spend about 15 minutes to reflect on your round and complete this form. In order to derive the most benefit from this exercise I suggest that you complete it as soon as possible or feasible after your round and in a quiet place where no one will interrupt you.

1. How did you feel going into this round? Consider your determination to achieve your goal(s), activation level, worries or fears, and confidence in your ability and preparation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What are your thoughts and feelings about this round?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What were some of the good things you did during this round? What were the highlights? What did you especially enjoy? Was there something that really lifted you?

4. Did you have a goal/goals for this round? If yes, to what degree did you achieve it/them?

5. Where was your focus when you were playing your best during this round?

6. If things were going less well for you in parts of this round, where was your focus then?

7. Did you have to refocus to get yourself back on track during this round? If yes, were you able to refocus quickly? How did you do this?

8. What are the lessons from this experience? What can you work on to continue to improve?

9. What are some of the highlights in your life outside of golf right now? What are you especially enjoying about life right now? Was there something that really lifted you recently outside of golf?

10. Are you using any of the mental skills training techniques or the mental skills you have developed? If yes, what have you tried/used and what were the outcomes of these efforts?

11. What are your experiences with the mental skills training? What impact do you feel it is having on you?

12. Based on your reflection of this round, what are your goals for next round?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix K

Mental Skills Questionnaire (from Bull et al., 1996)

Imagery Ability
1. I can rehearse my sport in my mind
2. I rehearse my skills in my head before I use them
3. It is difficult for me to form mental pictures
4. I can easily imagine how movements feel

Mental Preparation
5. I always set myself goals in training
6. I always have very specific goals
7. I always analyse my performance after I complete a competition
8. I usually set goals that I achieve

Self-Confidence
9. I suffer from lack of confidence about my performance
10. I approach all competitions with confident thoughts
11. My confidence drains away as competitions draw nearer
12. Throughout competitions I keep a positive attitude

Anxiety and Worry Management
13. I often experience fears about losing
14. I worry that I will disgrace myself in competitions
15. I let mistakes worry me when I perform
16. I worry too much about competing

Concentration Ability
17. My thoughts are often elsewhere during competition
18. My concentration lets me down during competition
19. Unexpected noises put me off my performance
20. Being easily distracted is a problem for me

Relaxation Ability
21. I am able to relax myself before a competition
22. I become too tense before competition
23. Being able to calm myself down is one of my strong points
24. I know how to relax in difficult circumstances

Motivation
25. At competitions I am usually psyched enough to compete well
26. I really enjoy a tough competition
27. I am good at motivating myself
28. I usually feel that I try my hardest

Items are scored on a 6-point scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6)
Items 3, 9, 11, 13-20, 22 are reverse scored

Appendix L

My Comments on Issues Relating to this Inquiry

Before the participant recruitment for this inquiry I did not know any of the participants. The majority of them knew my parents through playing golf, but none were close friends. However, in the time between the recruitment article appearing in the magazine and the start of the data collection I have come into contact with the majority of the individuals who have indicated interest in participating in this inquiry. I got on well with them immediately and feel that I will be able to establish a good rapport with them. They all appeared excited about participating in the training and felt they would benefit from it.

In some ways I am surprised at the relatively small number of people who have indicated an interest in participating in this inquiry so far. I believe this is a great opportunity for people at La Manga Club. How often will they have the opportunity to engage in mental training? I believe that golf is an important part of people's lives at La Manga Club. They regularly take part in competitions and the desire to play well is apparent. I would have thought that the possibility of gaining an edge through mental training might have encouraged more to participate. On the other hand, I suspect the idea that sport psychology is only for elite athletes may be quite prevalent among this population and so the individuals at La Manga Club may question how it can help them. Furthermore, I am asking the participants to commit to a relatively long period of training. Individuals' lifestyles may prevent them from doing this or they may simply be unwilling to invest that much time and effort.

This inquiry will be the first time I have worked with individuals in this age group. The majority of my consulting experience to date has been with developmental athletes. I expect that the group of individuals I will work with will be highly motivated and willing to learn. I

anticipate they will attend the vast majority of the seminars and work hard to apply what they learn as they have signed up under their own volition. One of my biggest concerns conducting this inquiry is that the participants will be unreceptive and unwilling to commit to the mental training and will not apply what they learn. However, if I can increase their awareness of how their thoughts, attitudes, and feelings affect their performance; encourage them to consistently use a preshot routine and warm-up properly before playing; teach them to go out and have fun without worrying about their score; help them develop a positive self-image; and teach them to effectively deal with distractions I will feel I have been successful. I do expect that the MST will enhance the golfers' enjoyment levels at least to some extent. I am sure that the golfers will already enjoy golf a lot but that sometimes their enjoyment is undermined because they do not play well.

Appendix M

Script for Relaxation Tape

Start off by sitting down, or lying down, in a comfortable position. And make whatever minor adjustments are necessary in order to allow yourself to be as comfortable and unrestricted as possible. Let your mind drift over your body and check that everywhere is loose and relaxed. Check that there is no restrictive clothing nor uncomfortable positions in your body. Make sure your arms are uncrossed and resting comfortably by your sides. Make sure your legs are uncrossed. And again, make whatever minor adjustments you need to allow yourself to be in a comfortable position. Start off by focusing on your breathing. Focus all your attention on your breathing. Pay attention as you breathe in. And as you breathe out. And just try to slow your breathing down. Slow everything right down. Don't try to control your breathing. Just focus on each breath. And start to feel a little more relaxed. Breathe in. And out. And every time you breathe out try and exhale some of the tension that is in your body. So you become more and more relaxed. And now move your attention from your breathing to your left hand. And clench your left hand into a fist. Notice the tension in that fist. And then relax it. And notice the different feelings between the tension and relaxation. And be aware that you're in control of this tension. Again, clench your fist. Clench it really tightly so you're a 5 out of 5 on a tension scale. Feel the tension spreading up your forearm. And then relax it. Notice how your fingers uncurl. Notice the feeling of relaxation in your left hand. Try and relax that hand even more now. Maybe you're on a 1 or 2 out of 5 on that tension scale. Try and get it lower. Try and get it to zero. Try and exhale the tension from your hand. And just relax it. It might seem comfortably heavy or it may seem floatingly light. But it's relaxed. You can feel the relaxation spreading up your arm. Try and relax it more. With every breath try and relax that left hand more. And now do the same

with your right hand. Clench your right fist into a tight ball. Tension 5. And then relax it. Let all the tension leave your hand. Remember that you are in control of the tension. You make your hands tense and then relaxed. Imagine your right hand becoming more and more relaxed. Imagine the relaxation spreading up your forearm. Smoothing out all the muscles. And getting rid of all the tension. Become more and more relaxed. Now see if you can tense your left bicep, the muscle in the front of your upper arm. Tense it by bending your left arm. Feel the tension. Notice how the tension spreads from that muscle into other areas of your body close by. But try to keep the rest of your body relaxed. Again, remember you're in control of the tension. Now relax. And as you relax your bicep and your arm you feel more and more relaxed. Every time you breathe out, you breathe out tension. Exhale the tension. You become more and more relaxed. And now do the same with your right arm. Tense that bicep. Feel the tension. And then relax it. Notice the relaxation spreading throughout your arm. While you are doing this, you're remaining aware of what I am saying. And yet you're feeling relaxed. Remain awake and aware. But more and more relaxed. This is different from sleep as it is active relaxation, whereas with sleep you are being passive. Now move your attention to your shoulders. Shrug your shoulders up to your ears. And feel the tension. And then push your shoulders forward. Notice how the tension shifts position. Then push your shoulders back. Again, notice how the tension moves. Now relax your shoulders fully. Allow yourself to sink or float through the air. Imagine the comfortable feeling of relaxation. And again, every time you breath out, exhale a little more tension from your body. Now turn your head over to one side. Notice the tension in your neck muscles. And as you turn your head to the other side notice how the tension moves from side to side. Remember you're in control of the tension. Relax your neck muscles. Imagine the relaxation spreading throughout your body. Like a wave. A wave of warm relaxation. Now move

your attention to your face. Scrunch up your whole face. Clamp down with your teeth. Scrunch your eyes. Scrunch your nose. Scrunch your mouth. Feel the tension in your face. Make deep wrinkles on your forehead. Feel all that tension. And then relax it. Smooth out your whole face. Smooth the muscles out. Let your scalp rest comfortably on your head. Let the relaxation flow over your eyebrows, your eyelids. Even relaxing the back of your eyes. Letting your eyes rest quite comfortably. Let the relaxation spread over your cheeks, your lips, your chin. Let your whole face become comfortably heavy and relaxed. Pay special attention to your jaw. Allow the muscles that hold up your jaw to relax. Just let them go. You may notice that your jaw is pulled down slightly by gravity and as that happens your mouth opens slightly. And as you relax your face and your jaw, also let go of your tongue, your throat. Become quite quiet. Quite comfortable. As you're deeply relaxed. And now your face and your neck, your shoulders and your arms, should be quite comfortably heavy and relaxed. Now move your attention down to the trunk of your body. Let that wave of relaxation spread over your body. Try and relax your stomach muscles. Smooth them out. Relax all of your back muscles. Smooth. And relaxed. Scan your trunk for tension. You might want to imagine yourself on an X-ray machine. Look for areas of tension. And try and smooth them out. Try and relax them, so you feel more and more comfortable. And if you still feel tension try to increase the tension more by tensing the muscle more. Then relax it. As you breathe out, let the tension leave your body with each exhaled breath. And as this wave of relaxation continues to sweep down your body . . . tense your buttocks. Notice the tension. And then relax. Relax. Relax. Let that relaxation spread over your body. And then tense your quadriceps. The big muscles at the front of your legs. Tense these muscles and then relax. Remember you're in control of how you feel. The tension levels. You may notice your legs shaking as you tense them. Now relax them. Try and relax them even more

than they are now. Just relax. And now the same with your hamstrings. The muscles at the back of your upper legs. Tense the muscles and relax them. Imagine this wave of relaxation again spreading over your body. From the very tip of your head, down through your face. Your neck, your shoulders, your arms, through the trunk, through your pelvic area, through your legs. And now try and experience tension in your shins. Pull your toes up to your knees. Notice the stretch. Notice the tension in your foot and your leg. Then relax. And notice how the tension leaves your body. Notice how you feel more relaxed. And the same with your other leg. Pull your toes up to your knee. Notice all that tension. And now scrunch all the toes up in your right foot. Again, feel the tension spreading through from your toes, through your foot, maybe into your ankle. Feel that tension and then relax. Do the same with the other foot. Scrunch up the toes and then relax them. Smooth them out. Now scan your whole body again. See if there are any areas of remaining tension. Just try and smooth out any remaining tension. Each time you exhale try to imagine smoothing out all your muscles. Getting rid of a little more tension. You might want to imagine your muscles as a knotted rope. And untie each of those knots until you become more relaxed. And you feel more and more comfortable. And now try and capture this feeling in a word or image. How do you feel right now? What is a word or an image that captures this feeling for you? Repeat this word to yourself, over and over again. Try and associate this feeling of relaxation with this word. And every time you do this exercise use this same word or image. Eventually, through practising this, you should be able recreate these feelings of relaxation you are experiencing now when you think of this word. This is something that you can use on the golf course. When you're on the first tee think of this word to relax yourself. Use it to get rid of the nervousness and tension. Imagine yourself now on the golf course. Imagine yourself on the first tee. Imagine the sights. Imagine the sounds around you. Try and create a vivid picture of

yourself on the first tee. Try and recreate the feelings you usually experience. Feelings of tension maybe. Nervousness. How do you experience this? Butterflies? Trembling? Legs like jelly? Recreate these feelings now. Feel the nervousness. Now go back to the feelings you had just a few minutes ago. Imagine how you felt them. Recall your word and repeat this word to yourself. And notice how the relaxation starts to spread through your body again. Relax even more and even deeper. Try to exhale that tension again. Try and smooth out your muscles. Try and relax more and more. Remember you're in control of the tension you experience. You're in control of the relaxation. You can recreate these feelings. Remember this on the first tee. Or when you are facing a difficult shot. Remember your word. Remember these feelings of relaxation. Take a few seconds in these times to take a deep breath and repeat this word to yourself. And the more you practice this at home, the better able you will be to recreate these comfortable feelings of relaxation when you are feeling tense or nervous. Just spend a couple of minutes now focusing back on your breathing. Try to slow everything down muscle by muscle. More and more. Breath by breath. And when you feel ready, open your eyes. Slowly stretch. And spend a couple of minutes contemplating and reflecting on this experience before you continue with what you have to do today.