

# Anxiety and the effect on a golfers performance



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Anxiety can be defined as a negative unpleasant emotional state in which feelings of apprehension, nervousness, worry, distress and uneasiness are felt (Weinberg & Gould, 2007 and Reber & Reber, 2001). This statement states that anxiety would seem to be a hindrance and generate negative feeling for a person. Woods also states that ' is a negative emotional state, caused because a situation can or may be perceived as being threatening to them. In relation to sport anxiety may be thought to be through out a competition however Hassmen (p. 278) states ' sports psychology researchers have assumed that an individual's anxiety level experienced immediately before a competition (i. e. state anxiety) has a moderating effect on subsequent athletic performance' Hassem raises the argument that the feelings before a sporting event for the athlete can have an impact on an athletes performance, (Martens, 1971) and relating this to Weinberg's definition it would seem to be a negative effect. This is however contradicted by Hanin(2000) who looked at this in more depth and who suggests that there is mounting evidence that indicates athletes vary significantly in the level of anxiety that benefits the athletes performance. This therefore suggests that anxiety is a individually measurable state and not toally a hinderance, as supported by Hassmen (2000 p. 278) who proposed ' that the optimal level of anxiety for performance can vary considerably across athletes.' This statement gives light to the fact of an optimal level of arousal that shall be addressed later on. However According to Maynard (1995) the general consensus of practitioners and researchers has been of the idea that anxiety impairs performance in sport. Therefore we have the identification of anxiety and what it is supposed to be, also the different factors that it can entail, it is stated as a negative (Weinberg & Gould, 2007 and Reber & <https://assignbuster.com/anxiety-and-the-effect-on-a-golfers-performance/>

Reber, 2001 Maynard 1995) and also as a positive with Hassmen (2000) suggesting that there is an optimal arousal level that will help the athlete. This is however contradicted by Jones (1991) that the precise identification of the relationship between anxiety and performance has proved elusive. This is therefore suggesting that more research needs to be conducted in to the area of anxiety and to try and determine the effects if any and the relationship between them, before conclusions can be drawn.

#### Different types of anxiety

Spielberger (1971) proposed that anxiety was influenced by people's traits and states in response to certain situations. Trait anxiety is a predisposition to perceive certain environmental situations as threatening (Cox, 2007).

Woods(1998) relates this to sport and claims that a person who is trait anxious and suffers form trait anxiety would worry about the condition of the ground for the next football match a month in advance. Relating this to golf , a trait anxious person would worry about the weather the people there well in advance of situation arising.

State anxiety differs from trait anxiety in that it can be seen as a temporary emotional state characterised by feelings of apprehension and tension (Cox, 2007 and Weinberg & Gould, 2007). In relation to golf this may the the reaction to standing on the first tee of a compettion it is environment injusied and a repsonse to a situation. It may also changew under circumstances for example when the round is under way, anxiety levels may drop. (Woods 1998)

Martens et al (1990) proposed that anxiety not only included state and trait but was also multidimensional in its nature in that it also includes cognitive and somatic factors. Polman(2007 p. 39) also agrees and states ' anxiety consists of three independent but also interacting components, somatic(emotionally), cognitive(worry), and behavioural.' These are mainly associated with state anxiety, and the two different types of anxiety somatic and cognitive are not always oth present in a athlete. For example Woods (1998) suggests that some individuals may show signs of having high somatic state anxiety before an event, but however at the same time they may come across very calm and mentally strong, showing ow signs of cognitive state anxiety.

Cognitive anxiety is the mental aspect of anxiety caused by fear of negative social evaluation, fear of failure and loss of self esteem (Cox, 2007). There are also cognitive trait and cognitive state types of anxiety which again are mental responses to anxiety which are either predisposed or in response to certain environments (Cox, 2007). Maynard's (1995 p. 52) Definition ' Cognitive anxiety is the mental component of anxiety caused by the negative expectations about successor negative self-evaluation,' (Burton, 1988. p. 46)

Somatic anxiety is the awareness of arousal in the body, for example when standing on the first tee of a large golf event some people may respond to the situation with an increase in heart rate and muscular tension (Cox, 2007 and Woods, 2004). This is supported by Maynard's (1995) view somatic anxiety is the physiological or affective component of anxiety that is directly related to autonomic arousal (Burton, 1988. p. 46) this gives two different

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factors of anxiety that also can be broken in to there own sub categories which as stated earlier gives reasoning for the multi dimensional theory of anxiety. Maynard states with this intervention of multidimensional that there seems to be enough research to show that anxiety is a complex multidimensional construct that differentiates anxiety in to somatic and cognitive and the sub groups. This is based on the research of Borokvec (1976) and Davidson (1976) in to the development of the understanding of anxiety. Therefore Jones (1991) may be seen as irrelevant.

### Measurements of anxiety

To test somatic anxiety measures such as monitoring breathing rate, monitoring heart rate using an electrocardiogram and muscle response using an electromyogram can be used (Woods, 2004), it is important to acknowledge however that although performers may exhibit physiological evidence of stress, they may not report feeling stressed, it is therefore advised that numerous physiological and psychological tests are carried out to measure anxiety (Woods, 2004). Somatic anxiety is also made up of somatic trait and somatic state which again are physical predisposed or responses to situations

The multidimensional theory of anxiety proposed that cognitive anxiety has a negative linear relationship with performance, whereas somatic anxiety has an inverted U shaped relationship with performance (Hardy et al, 1996).

There are two main sources of anxiety that affect performance (Woods, 2004 and Murphy, 2005), pre-competitive anxiety occurs in anticipation of competition (Martens et al, 1990) and competitive anxiety that occurs during

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competition. Weinberg and Genuchi (1980) found that precompetitive anxiety was higher in players during the competitive rounds of golf than during the practice rounds, Cook et al (1983) however concluded that player's performance affected anxiety, not anxiety having an affecting performance. Endler (1978) determined that there are five specific factors that increase anxiety in anticipation of a competitive situation; fear of performance failure, fear of negative social evaluation, fear of physical harm, situation ambiguity and disruption of a well learned routine.

Sub Categories to come?

One of the test for anxiety that is the most renowned is the Sport Competitive Anxiety Test abbreviated to SCAT test, this is a derived to show the anxiety in a performer through a questionnaire, the SCAT test has been developed to asses competitive A-trait in performers (Martens) The competitive A-trait is defined in three ways the first being the individual differences that a person may have when perceiving a threat either physically or mentally to the state response to the threat. The last is the combination of the two. (Martens) This is different from A-State which focuses on a persons dealing with the situation as the event is occurring The SCAT test is a combination of questions that are given in such a manner to try and lead the participant away from guessing that, it is about anxiety. This is done by the introduction of questions that can be totally random, to make the participant think of an aspect of the game and hopefully add to the validity of the results. If not and the participant can guess that it is a study in relation to anxiety then they may feel the need not to be laboratory bias and put answers that are not true to them selves.

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Csai-2 stands for Competitive State Anxiety Inventory

Anxiety optimal arousal

The relationship between arousal and anxiety is thought to need one there so that the other can exist. ' Both Cognitive and Somatic Anxiety are closely Associated with the concept of arousal, which refers to the intensity and dimension of behaviour, the state of the organism varying on a continuum from deep sleep to intense excitement' (Martens ) and arousal are very closely linked anxiety is seen to be one of the negative forces that can effect arousal.(Oxedine 1970) however according to woods(p. 91) arousal is neither a positive nor a negative, it is the perception of arousal that may lead to stress and anxiety. Therefore this is the link between anxiety and arousal. According to wood it is the perception of arousal that people perceive differently and may lead them to feel uneasy, anxious or stressed. For example if two golfers are standing on the first tee and the are perfectly matched ability wise, but have psychological differences when dealing with anxiety, and therefore effecting the arousal level of the player and visa versa, with the player dealing with arousal by being anxious, if the player does not deal with this as well as the other then this may have a detrimental effect on there performance . Anshel(1997) states that anxiety has a psychological basis and arousal is the physiological side therefore both are interlinked. When researching however it seems that stress anxiety pressure are all used interchangeable in this relationship, and needs to be taken in to consideration. For Example Kremer and Scully (1994) argue that separating arousal, anxiety and stress is too tidy and because there is considerable overlap and interaction between them. When relating this to sport then, they

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may be seen as being used overlapping, for example a golfer suffering from anxiety stress or pressure, may be seen as negative. However as we will see the right amount of any of these symptoms, can help an athlete in the right situations; therefore there may need to be some more clarification on these subtle difference between them and what they actually entail.

Arousal is ' a blend of physiological and psychological activity in a person, and it refers to the intensity dimensions of motivation at a particular moment. (Weinberg p. 78) this contradicts Anshel statement of them being two parts to one symptom.

Woods(p. 90) finds that ' arousal refers to the state of alertness and anticipation that prepares the body for action: it involves physiological activity (such as increased heart rate and cognitive activity (such as increase in attention)' This supports Weinberg theory and leaves the thought that arousal is taken in to consideration just before competing and, there does seem to be a direct link between anxiety and arousal, and this impact on the performance. Arousal is neither a positive nor a negative; it is the perception of arousal that may lead to stress and anxiety.

Arousal is seen through many different measuring tools firstly is the drive theory this is the theory which was developed by Hull (1951) and Spence (1956) woods P. 94. The drive theory's more focused at athletes that are highly skilled for example relating this to golf any one who is a single figure golfer. This entailing that have a grasp of technique and there skill is well learned and autonomous and can be repeated easily. The drive theory then goes on to state that with this ability level that the higher the pressure or



arousal the better the performance, and will allow the athlete to perform the skill very successfully. (Woods) This theory is adapted into a formula and highlighted by Anshel() who looks

The Drive Theory has been criticised for the fact that it is not clear what a well learned skill is and can be defined as (Woods), also research has shown that after a certain point arousal becomes a hindrance and detrimental (Weinberg Gould) this therefore leads to a system that would have an optimal arousal level.

Which is incorporated in the Inverted U theory. The inverted U theory is a theory that is developed and shows a curvilinear relationship between arousal and performance. (Anshel) Starting off with low levels of arousal in relation to lower standard than normal, as arousal increases so does the performance, (Weinberg Gould) this is the same principle as the drive theory however it is curved at the optimal level of arousal and then begins to dip afterwards as seen below (Weinberg Gould) FIGXXX Therefore the more arousal and anxiety after this the performance will decrease. ' Thus the effect of arousal on performance is based on the optimal level given the particular skill'.

(Anshel p. 73) This theory was brought up to account for some of the criticism of the drive theory (Woods)

In relation to the optimal level of arousal Hanin looked at the alternative view of individualized zones of optimal functioning. (Hanin...w and g p. 87) This view on arousal levels is different for two main reasons one of these being that the optimal level of arousal does not always occur in the middle of the continuum it can vary between different athletes (Weinberg Gould) some

performances may peak at a very low level of arousal and anxiety and others at a very high level of arousal. This is all to do with the type of person that they are. As stated before anxiety is the reaction to arousal levels and perceiving a situation as threatening therefore if an individual does not see a situation as a threat then their arousal and anxiety may be lower and it may take a certain situation to induce this peak performance and optimal arousal level. The other difference between the inverted U and the IZOF is that the IZOF has not one singular point that is the optimal level of arousal however a bandwidth and continuum (Weinberg Gould) this therefore gives an easier range for an athlete or performer to aim at and to try and achieve rather than a specific point, which may seem very difficult.

### Catastrophe Model

Supporting evidence for these and against these

### Methodology

#### Pilot study

The pilot study that was carried out involved the two questionnaires that were previously revised in the literature review the SCAT test to find trait anxiety and the CSAI-2 questionnaire to determine the amount of state anxiety. The test were administered at different stages one two days before and renamed and adapted and the other ten minutes before the game began. The first one administered was the CSAI-2 questionnaire on the recommendations of Martens (p. 52) as he states that 'when the CSAI-2 test is delivered together with the SCAT test it recommended that the CSAI-2 test

is delivered first as not to impact the results of the SCAT test. The tests were no longer than five minutes each and the questions in the SCAT tests that were not important, were adapted to be golf specific and related to other parts of the round and game, for example how often do you use a routine in your set up, and how often do you play to your handicap these are spurious items on the questionnaire. I used to players one of a low handicap and one of a higher handicap; these two roughly encompass the range of my final sample group for testing. The two participants played 6 holes of golf with me the researcher watching and I informed them that I would be taking pictures and detailed notes of the round, for them and also to take their scores. This would be to see later on if their scores in the test would have any correlation between the state and trait anxiety, so if they are a generally anxious person or if they only get anxious at threatening situations and how they deal with this. If they play the holes in a worse score than they would normally do relating to their handicap, and stroke index is going to have to be taken into consideration, and if they scored highly on the CSAI-2 test or the SCAT test then there could be some correlation between the two scores, and this is what we are going to be looking for. Copies of the questionnaires and the score cards for the rounds can be found in the appendices.

## Subjects

The subjects that were chosen are all from Bourn Golf club located in Cambridgeshire and are all members and have been for at least three years. They all play on average twice a week, therefore they know the course well and feel comfortable playing there. This should take away from any anxiety

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about the unknown and focus on the competitive anxiety and arousal. The players range from a Touring PGA professional to a 22 handicapper golfer with the average in the UK being 20 so the range is from elite player to beginner, there will be 8 participants ranging between the ages of 21 and 60. Therefore the adult version of the CSAI-2 shall be used rather than the child version. The participants that were found for the study were all volunteers and happy to undertake the study all consent and ethics forms are attached in the appendices.

## Materials

The materials used in the study were largely questionnaire based. The first questionnaire used was the CSAI-2 test it is a test that is formed up of 27 questions and a scale of 1-4 is used with 1 being the response not at all and 4 is the response very much so. The CSAI-2 is used to measure anxiety scores and in particular state anxiety scores. This is the measuring tool that was redeveloped from the CSAI questionnaire it was redeveloped by Martens, Burton and Vealy 1990, there are different forms of the CSAI-2 one for children and one for adults, the questionnaire not only measures anxiety it has been adapted to look at the two different types of anxiety as stated before the cognitive side of anxiety the psychological side and the somatic side the physiological symptoms related to anxiety, these can be seen as sweaty palms, being uneasy and not relaxed.

The second questionnaire that is going to be given is the SCAT test this will be given after the participants have had a practise and just before they go out to play there holes. The Scat test is used to measure trait anxiety, this is

looking at the persons genetic make up if they are generally a anxious person regard less the situation they are in. The SCAT test consists of 15 questions with 5 spurious items with in it to prevent the participant from gathering that the questionnaire is looking at anxiety, also the questionnaires are going to renamed, the instructions shall be kept the same however the titles shall be Competing in sport 1 which will be the CSI-2 questionnaire and Competing in sport 2 which shall be the SCAT test.

### Procedure

The procedure was started with the participant filling out the consent forms and reading the ethics forms. The next step was for the participants to go through the proceedings with the researcher and to make sure they fully understand and are content with what is going to be asked of them, the researcher then went on to inform the participant that they are going to be filmed, as this is an out side stressor that would normally be present on the golf course. However li is only the illusion they are going to be filmed there will be no tape in the came as it is data that is not useful or needed. With this it will add another component to the environment and the player may see it as an item to raise arousal and then consequently anxiety is an effect from this, this will give the basis for the results, will this rise in arousal and anxiety improve the players performance or be detrimental, for the participants. The next step is to go through a score card and in relation to there handicap put the scores down on the holes that they would normally have. This will be the basis of the results this is in comparison to a control group that the players normally perform to. This also is adding a target for the players, that may have the same effect as the camera After this they will

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be assigned the CSAI-2 questionnaire and asked to complete this, to break up the questionnaires as stated by Martens (1990), the participants shall be asked to take part in a warm up and hit a few balls to have a practise. This also reduces the risk of injury and gives the players time to get used to the researcher being there and the surroundings. The net step that was undertaken was to take players to first tee, and to mark the score card on each hole for the player. The study should last approximately