Performing under pressure: Helping athletes to meet the challenge

The biopsychosocial model proposes that challenge and threat states are important predictors of performance variation under pressure. Athletes who experience a challenge state (i.e., resources evaluated as outweighing demands, increased cardiac output, and decreased total peripheral resistance) display more favourable emotions, gaze behaviour, kinematic responses, and performance compared to those who experience a threat state (e.g., Moore et al., 2012). The purpose of this PhD project is to advance understanding into what leads athletes to experience a challenge rather than a threat state. A series of studies will use perceptual, motor, and psycho-physiological indices to address three specific aims:

1. To determine the extent to which characteristics of the individual and task influence challenge and threat states.
2. To identify psycho-social variables which predict challenge and threat states.
3. To develop and test an intervention that promotes a challenge state and facilitates performance in demanding achievement contexts.

Recent research:


The target start date for this 3-year, fully-funded PhD studentship is 1st October 2015. This scholarship will be to the value of £12,500 per annum plus UK tuition fees.

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Deadline: Monday 10 August 2015