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Using Imagery to Support Advanced Tactics

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Imagery Use in Sport

Between 95 % (Greenleaf, Gould, Dieffenbach, 2001) and 99% (Orlick & Partington, 1988) of elite athletes use imagery to improve their sport performance and I have yet to meet a squash athlete who could not visualize.

Models to Help Us Understand Imagery Use

Martin, Moritz, & Hall (1999) have developed an Applied Model of Imagery Use in Sport to represent how athletes use imagery in sport.

Figure 1. Applied Model of Imagery Use in Sport (adapted from Martin, Moritz, & Hall, 1999)

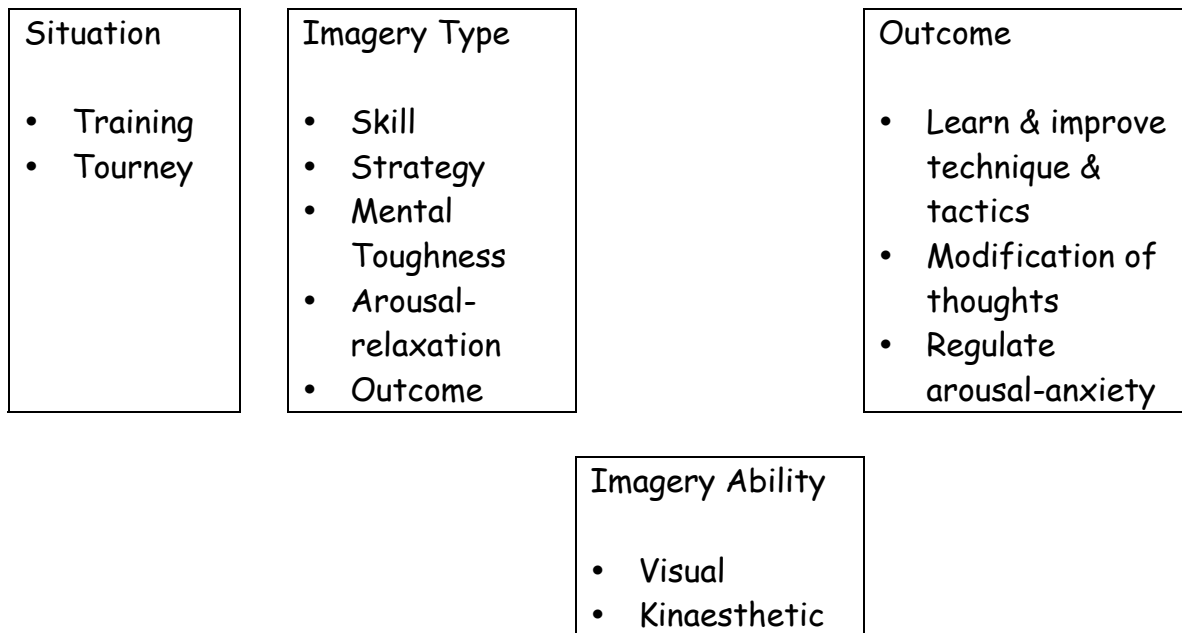
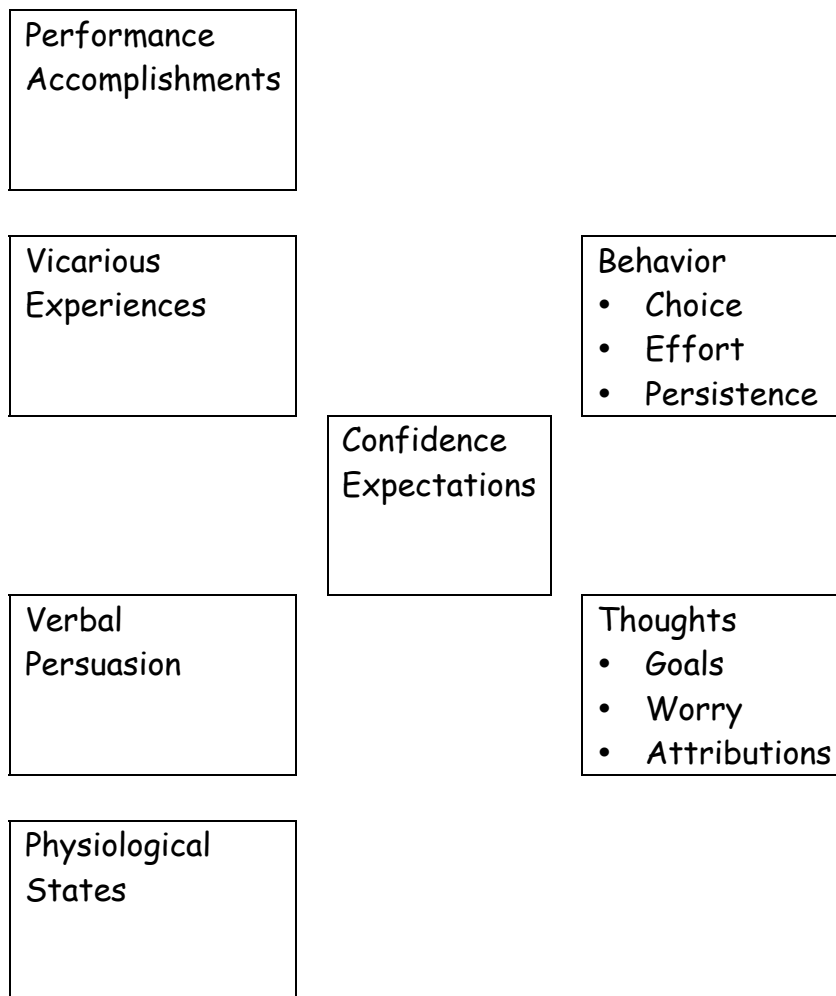


Figure 2. Squash Examples of Imagery Types (adapted from Martin, Moritz, & Hall, 1999)

Imagery Type	Our Definition	Example
Cognitive Specific	Skill Imagery	Imagery of specific shots such as drives, drops, & boasts
Cognitive General	Strategy Imagery	Imagery of competitive strategies such as patterns, styles of play, drop/lob tactics
Motivational General-Mastery	Mental Performance-Toughness Imagery	Imagery of coping/mastery of challenging situations (e.g., confidence & focused in game)
Motivational General-Arousal	Arousal/relaxation imagery	Imagery of anxiety or relaxation feelings in competition
Motivational Specific	Outcome Imagery	Imagery of winning an event, trophy, being congratulated

Application for Imagery of Advanced Tactics?

Figure 3. Relationship Between Sources of Self-Confidence & Behavior/Thoughts (adapted from Bandura, 1997)



According to Bandura (1997) task-specific self-confidence can be developed through "vicarious experiences", i.e., by watching others successfully perform a specific task. More recently, research and application indicate that this can be extended to imaginal experiences (imagining someone performing a task) and sport imagery (imagining oneself performing successfully). The use of "covert modeling" (Cautela & Samdperil, 1989) has been used successfully for some time in clinical settings and can probably be applied successfully in sport. One of the assumptions of covert conditioning is that both overt and covert behaviors observe the same laws of learning (e.g., the stronger the covert behavior the stronger the overt behavior).