

MOOD AND CRICKET PERFORMANCE:

How to get into the right mood to perform at your best and how mood affects your cricket performance.

By Amanda J.N Owens MSc BASES

Accredited Sport & Exercise and BOA Registered Sport Psychologist



Players are often heard after a day's play or after a game making the remark 'I didn't feel up for it today or I couldn't get myself in the right mood to play at my best today' or 'I just don't understand I felt tense out there today and could n't get myself in the right mood to bowl really well...' Our mood state and the mood we in are affects cricket performance in many different ways. So often the term mood is heard in sport and so often in cricket due to the nature of cricket whereby, it is a long duration sport, from one day to four- day championship cricket. However, what is mood? And how can it be defined?

Although there is no universally accepted definition of mood, Watson (1989) defines it, as: "A relatively short term feeling state or emotional tone which can involve various specific types of

"Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."
(Hamlet Act 3) Scene 2

both positive and negative emotions such as anger, tension, vigour, etc." sport psychologists and researchers (e.g., Forgas, Bower & Moylan, 1990; Terry 1995) have generally described moods as transitory emotional states which can be influenced by various personality and environmental factors. Therefore, in a one day game or more so over a four day game the cricketer's mood state can fluctuate a lot, due to possible underperformance, bad weather, a perceived bad umpire decision, team mates not performing and of course personal factors like relationships issues and family issues or events

occurring during the day or evening which can and do effect an individual's mood state and performance out on the pitch. An additional factor is the relationship between mood and food, and being aware how foods such as sugary foods or foods with high a content of refined sugars can increase sugar levels very fast and give a false sense of a high and of course the instant sugar rush, instead of sugars being released more slowly and naturally, i.e., eating banana's and raisin's instead of chocolate bars and drinking water and sports drinks replacing fizzy drinks, will assist your mood state and reduce the likelihood of feeling superficially energised and alert and then very quickly feeling fatigued and less alert and maybe down, or in a depressed mood state, due to the body and muscle groups using up the sugar too quickly. Consequently, the body is not able to function properly for long periods of time. This leads to poor concentration and fatigue and ultimately could lead to injury.

The mood state a player is in can affect their own individual performance as well as their team performance. Our mood state albeit whether we are happy, sad, angry, tense, depressed or excited affects not only ourselves but more importantly our team mates and at times an individual's mood may in-avertedly change the mood of others and affect the actual team performance. Therefore, it is crucial that players, coaches and medical support staff alike are aware of their moods and 'how' their mood state can effect their team environment and possible team performance. Indeed, Terry (1992; 1995) states that the mood of officials can affect the team and individual performances within the team. Terry (1992; 1995) maintains a strong case for extending mood profiling (see Terry and Lane, 2002) and the use of the POMS or BRUMS (Terry & Lane, 2002) as an assessment and monitoring tool to include team officials, coaches, and support staff, whom he states "often bear the brunt of athlete frustration and whose



Brett Lee of Australia dejected after Simon Katich of Australia drops a catch during day one of the 4th Test between Australia and India at the SCG on January 2, 2004 in Sydney, Australia. (Photo by Adam Pretty/Getty Images)

Michael Vaughan of England is dismissed during the tour match between South Africa A and England at the Sedgars Park cricket ground on December 11, 2004 in Potchefstroom, South Africa. (Photo by Clive Rose/Getty Images)



mood disturbance can in turn further threaten the mood stability of performers." (The Sport Psychologist, 1995, Nine, The Efficacy of Mood State Profiling with Elite Performers: A Review and Synthesis p.320). Terry (1995) showed how the profiles of the officials on Day 2 at the 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France, prompted a decision to allow each team official a daily period of "personal time" way from as Terry (1995), (p.320) described 'the seemingly endless list of problems'.

Peter Terry was the sport psychologist to the GB Bobsleigh winning Olympic gold and later bronze medallist and highlighted in his paper how mood states of officials and medical staff affected the performance of the bobsleigh team and how it was and still is very much overlooked how officials and support staff can affect a team's performance. Furthermore, Terry Orlick (1998) in his book 'Embracing your potential' makes a salient remark and observation concerning the preparation of NASA astronauts and how they get themselves into the 'right mood' to perform and focus appropriately. Terry (1995) also highlights the relationship between mood and attentional control. In cricket the importance of concentration and the ability to shift attention is paramount to performing well and enhancing