EAPI Helpsheet for Athletics

**Section One – Skills**

Remember you will **need to identify three skills that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three skills that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

Skills within athletics (running) could be:

Arm drive / Arm action / arm cycle Leg action / leg drive / leg cycle Head position / movement

Block start Bend running Finishing phase

Recovery phase Timing of breathing within the cycle of movement

Stride length

Think about the timing of these techniques as any moment where they mis-time would mean that this could be a weaker area e.g. arm-action occurs at the same time as the leg cycle.

For athletics, you may also focus on specific areas of individual actions. For example, you may identify that within the arm drive, the fists are clenched and therefore not providing efficient movement.

Once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Think about the phases of the technique:

* Preparation (what was their body position like prior to the start of the technique?)
* Execution (what was the actual technique like in terms of action – flowing, jerky etc.)
* Recovery (what happened with the follow-through of the technique action?)
* Result (Did the technique end up exactly like it was supposed to e.g. did the shot go in? did the pass reach the target?)

**E.g.** *A strength of the athlete was their arm drive. This was part of a continuous cycle of movement, but at the start of this movement their elbow was at the correct angle, hands were relaxed and the arm drive combined with knees and hips to offer an effective running cycle. This created an efficiency through the race.*

**Section Two – Tactics**

Remember you will **need to identify three tactics that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three tactics that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

Tactics within athletics could be:

Maintaining Pacing Increasing pacing to advance on opponent Deliberate slow pacing

Exploiting opponent’s lapse or weakness

Breathing frequency Arm stroke efficiency Leg stroke efficiency

Choice of costume / clothing / eyewear

Again, once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Try to think of how the tactic relates to the individual first, and then how this could affect the team performance.

**E.g.** *A weakness of the athlete was their pacing. They initially went off too fast, and although this meant that they started to lead the race, the result of this was that they did not have enough stamina to complete the race at this specific pace and therefore they finished in fourth. This could also have been due to the lack of specific muscle fibres or the anaerobic capacity levels of the performer.*

**Section Three – Physical Attributes**

Remember you will **need to identify three physical attributes that you saw as particular strengths** of that participant, as well as **three physical attributes that you saw as particular weaknesses**.

Physical attributes within athletics could be:

Speed Strength Power Aerobic Endurance Muscular Endurance

Flexibility Body Composition Agility Reaction Time (Simple)

Reaction Time (Choice) Balance (Static) Balance (Dynamic) Co-ordination

(Common weaknesses are highlighted in yellow)

Again, once you have found the strength or weakness, **explain WHY it was a strength or weakness**. Try to think about why this particular fitness component would be a strength or a weakness – **explain in the context of the game you are watching!**

**E.g.** *A weakness of the athlete was their flexibility. As the athlete was fairly inflexible within the bicep brachii, tricep brachii and deltoid, this meant that the extension of the arm within the arm drive was very short and therefore their arm efficiency was dramatically reduced, leading to an increase in number of arm drives to maintain speed or distance.*

**Section Four – Designing a Training Programme**

Once you have identified ALL of the strengths and weaknesses from your observation, you must highlight what you feel is the biggest weakness of the areas you have discussed.

THINK! **Don’t just select something that you are comfortable with** – you must show that you have considered all of the weaknesses and prioritised the most important one to the performance that you watched. The best thing to do is justify your choice – **make the EAPI examiner understand why you have selected this**.

E.g. *I watched the performer and I felt that there were three major weaknesses. However,* ***the most important weaknesses*** *was their lack of ball control within the game as without this they could not become effective as part of a successful team and would lack basic technical ability to support their performance.*

Once you have identified the biggest weakness, you then need to create a training plan for this. The examiner will observe your use of the following principles:

**FITT** – Frequency, Intensity, Time, Type

**SPORT** – Specificity, Progression, Overload, Reversibility, Tedium / Variance / Variety

**WIMP** – Warm-up and Cool-down, Individuality, Moderation, Periodisation

**TESTING** – What test will you use to assess the performer to start with, what test will you use halfway, and what test will you use at the end of the programme?

Don’t forget to also discuss:

**Aims and Objectives of the Programme** – what are they? Explain them!

**Targets you have set for the Performer** – use the SMARTER principle!

The best way to start this is to write down a simple plan regarding how you would develop the main weakness. As a rough guide:

* **To improve a skill weakness, this can be 8 weeks in duration**
* **To improve a tactical weakness, this can be 8 weeks in duration**
* **To improve a fitness component weakness, this can be 8-10 weeks in duration**

You must discuss this with the EAPI examiner before you start to discuss your specific plan. It is always best to begin with the Frequency component of FITT and outline this to the examiner as it shows your basic thinking.

Before deciding on your plan – THINK! They may already be doing lots of training, so you may just need to plan around this. This can save you some planning time **if you explain this to the EAPI examiner**.

**E.g**. *I have decided to focus on the fitness component of muscular endurance. In order to develop this for my performer,* ***I have created a 8 week training programme****, which will initially be one session per week but progress by week 3 to two sessions and by week 6 to three sessions. This is added to his / her regular football coaching sessions each week and every session will last no longer than thirty minutes.*

**Training Plan – Coaching Points**

**BEFORE** you start to plan your training plan, you will need to think about specific coaching points as your training plan needs to show that you have understood how to develop these.

For skills, think about the perfect skill being performed to identify the coaching points.

E.g.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Skill for Football | Coaching Points |
| Dribbling | Head up  Laced area of the foot  Close control  Dribble at speed |
| Shooting | Laced area of the foot  Body over the ball  Hit the centre of the ball  Follow-through  Non-kicking foot next to the ball |
| Passing | Inside of the foot for control  Non-kicking foot next to the ball  Follow-through  Hit the centre of the ball |
| Lofted Passing | Non-kicking foot next to the ball  Hit the bottom of the ball  Use the laced area of the foot, or inside for swerve / spin  Follow-through  Lean back slightly as you connect |

If you have selected a **component of fitness** for your weakness to improve, this is often more difficult. Try to think about how you could **include coaching points within any of the specific drills** you would be using.

This table may help you with this on this particular area:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Component of Fitness to Improve | Specific drill or method used to improve this that you might discuss | Coaching Points in relation to specific technique within the drill used |
| Strength, Power | Bench Press | Whilst on the bench, ensure your feet are flat on the ground  Exhale when pushing the bar upward  Inhale as the bar is brought downward  2 secs to push up, 2secs to bring the bar down again. |
| Speed | Interval Running | Running technique whilst performing the drill should be:  Head upright  Arms bent at 90 degrees  Relaxed hands  Land on balls of the feet  Knee drive should be between 45 – 90 degrees |
| Muscular Endurance | Repeated press-ups | Whilst performing the press-up, back should remain level  Bring the chest as close to the ground as possible  Arms bent at 90 degrees on downward phase  Fully extend arms in upward phase  Breathe correctly during upward and downward phases |

With regards to improving a tactical weakness – this is by far and away the most difficult aspect to discuss. If you wish to attempt this, **please see a member of staff for assistance with this**!

**Designing the Training Programme**

The last part of this section requires you to actually design the programme.

**Remember to use the principles of training** mentioned above when constructing – especially progression, frequency, intensity, moderation and tedium / variety.

Each training plan will be independent to each person designing it, but as mentioned before a good way to start is to **think about the amount of training the performer may be doing already and base your training programme around this initially**. This would mean that your sessions could then be shorter initially, and gradually expanding.

**Do:**

* Read and research specific drills for the main weakness - e.g. explore how to improve dribbling, turning, speed, strength etc.
* Plan a rough outline of your training plan and check it with a member of staff
* Think about drills you have participated in during previous training sessions and explore how they could be used or adapted to meet the needs of your specific weakness for the performer

**Don’t**

* Just ‘wing it’ and create a plan based on previous experiences in being weak in that area
* Create a random plan that does not address the weakness you have identified. **Check your drills or activities actually improve the weakness you have selected!**
* Create plans that do not adhere to the principles of fitness – again, if you need help with this see a member of staff for support

Remember – you will actually have to SPEAK about the training programme in the EAPI. You cannot just show the EAPI examiner your plan as the exam does not work like this.

Take time and practice explaining your training timetable to friends, family and staff members. **A good way to do this is to speak to individuals who know absolutely nothing about training or your sport – if you can explain it clearly to them, you have a good base to start your EAPI discussion.**

**Psychological and Physiological Justification of the Training Plan, including Adaptations**

For this final section **you will now need to think about how theory** (that you have learned throughout your A-level PE lessons) **applies to the programme you have created.**

You must aim to cover both psychological points and physiological points in as much detail as possible. There must be a clear link between what you are discussing and the training programme that you have created.

Some helpful topics that could apply to netball would be as follows:

**Do it in Stages!**

The best way to do this is do it in blocks (think of weeks rather than sessions, as otherwise it will take too long).

Therefore, think about this:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week 1** | **Week 2** | **Week 3** | **Week 4** |
| Look at the practices you designed.  **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed.  **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed.  **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory | Look at the practices you designed.  **Why** did you do this? Relate to physiological or psychological theory |

**You could then do the same for weeks 5-8**. This is the best way to start, and try to think about at least one physiological or psychological point per week as a good starting point.

If sessions are the same across the training timetable, **don’t repeat your justification**…just justify it once. For example, if you had circuit training from week one to week four, juts justify why you used circuit training as opposed to other methods of training for this performer etc.

**Use the table below** to help you to think about different ways you could justify what you have planned – remember you don’t need everything on the list, but make sure you can talk about a few of these things confidently. Start by discussing areas you feel the most confident about!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Psychological Aspects to help Justification** | **Physiological Aspects to help Justification** |
| Goal-setting | Dietary aids / ergogenic aids |
| Types and Methods of Practice | Training Principles – MRS VOPP Testing WC |
| Transfer | Periodisation |
| Group Dynamics / Cohesion | Heart Rate Training Zones |
| Social Facilitation | Strength Training Methods – Circuit / Free Weights / Machine Weights / Plyometrics |
| Reducing stress / increasing stress | Aerobic Capacity Training Methods – Interval / Fartlek / Continuous |
| Zone of Optimum Functioning | Flexibility Training Methods – PNF / Static / Dynamic / Ballistic |
| Guidance |  |
| Transfer |  |

**Example of Justification**

For example, if we planned for a performer to improve their chest pass in netball:

A **basic psychological answer** would be:

*Within week one, I have mainly focused on isolating the skill of the chest pass by using massed practice in both sessions. This would help them to groove the skill of the chest pass and so making it a correct dominant response in a game.*

Whereas **a good psychological answer** would be:

*Within week one, I have mainly focused on isolating the discrete skill of the chest pass by using massed practice in both sessions. As the performer is in the associative phase of learning, this would help them to groove the skill of the chest pass and so making it a correct dominant response. This would mean that, when under pressure or aroused in a competitive game the chest pass skill is likely to remain consistent and technique should be better.*

A **basic physiological answer** would be:

*Within week one to three, I have decided to use circuit training using free weights to increase the size of their arms. This would help the muscle hypertrophy and assist their chest pass in a game.*

Whereas **a good physiological answer** would be:

*Within week one to three, I have decided to use circuit training as a method to develop the performers upper body strength, particularly focusing on the deltoids, bicep brachii and tricep brachii. By using 65% of their 1 rep max resistance, for 3 sets of 8 reps, this should allow for hypertrophy of the said muscles and therefore would support the performer in enabling her chest pass in netball to be thrown both further and more consistently.*

**Remember that you need to justify:**

The training programme itself AND any methods of testing (e.g. why have you used a MSFT or Step Test to evaluate aerobic capacity)?

**Explaining Adaptations**

Finally, you will also need to state any adaptations that could or should have occurred through your training programme – how has the athlete changed psychologically or physiologically in any way?

Again, the best way to **do this is in TWO stages**:

**Discuss any potential adaptations after weeks 1-4**

AND

**Discuss any potential adaptations after completing the whole training programme (by the end of week 8)**

You MUST **discuss both Physiological AND Psychological adaptations**. Here are some that may help you:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Psychological Adaptations** | **Physiological Adaptations** |
| Increased control of arousal levels | Venous return levels increase |
| Increased concentration and focus | Cardiovascular adaptations (blood pressure, heart size, cardiac output, stroke volume, resting heart rate etc.) |
| Change in group dynamics between group members (if part of a team or working in small groups) | Respiratory system adaptations (strength of intercostal muscles, tidal volume, minute ventilation, gaseous exchange rates, alveoli etc.) |
| Potential phase of learning changes (associative to autonomous etc.) | Musculo-Skeletal adaptations (hypertrophy, motor units, muscle spindles, reduced osteoporosis etc.) |
| Personality changes (longer term only) | Aerobic Capacity adaptations (cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and neural system adaptations) |
| Attitude changes towards exercise / health / lifestyle / training | Strength training adaptations (muscular, neural and connective tissue adaptations) |
| Motivational changes for the performer | Flexibility training adaptations (muscular and connective tissue adaptations) |
|  | Reduced impact of lifestyle diseases (CHD, Angina, Asthma, COPD, stroke, Heart Attack) |

**For example**, if we planned for a performer to improve their explosive power in basketball:

*At the end of the first four week period, there should be a few adaptations taking place for the performer. Psychologically, the performer may be learning to control their own arousal levels by the end of week four. This is because as they have practiced different isolated skill practices such as shooting and slam dunking, they can recognize when they may need to psych themselves up in order to generate a more explosive jump towards the ring. By psyching themselves up, it would mean that they can move themselves “into the zone” and therefore jump higher.*

*Secondly, their attitude may be changing towards training and exercise. To begin with, they may have had a poor attitude towards increased training but at this point, especially if they have gained an increased test result score on the vertical jump, their cognitive component of attitude may have changed as they may see the results and know that the work they are doing has improved their own vertical jump ability.*

*Physiologically, after four weeks the brain may start to activate muscles faster as by regularly working on vertical jumping there should be increased neural pathways connecting the CNS to the muscles via an increased amount of motor units being developed. This would gradually be increasing the speed of information transmission from the brain to the muscles involved in jumping.*

*Finally, physiologically after four weeks there may be an increased range of movement around the knee and hip joints involved in the vertical jump. This may be because the joint is starting to secrete more synovial fluid, and therefore becomes more flexible for the performer and may start to help to develop more power each time the vertical jump is performed.*

You then need to **repeat this for the end of the training programme too** (What has happened by the end of the 8 week period?)

**Remember!**

**As a minimum, try to have at least TWO Psychological and TWO Physiological adaptations for the end of the four week period, followed by TWO Psychological and TWO Physiological adaptations for the end of the eight – ten week period for a top-band (A –A\* grade) answer**.