

# Newsletter: 1997

## **1. Results of Research**

*The results of the Sportsmind research program have shown performance enhancements of 47.1% on average!*

## **2. Comments**

*Participants comments about Sportsmind workshops.*

## **3. What is Sportsmind?**

*Workshop details and content of the Sportsmind curriculum.*

## **4. Workshop Update**

*Details of upcoming workshops and other Sportsmind resources.*

## **Research Results**

After four and a half years of research and field work, I am happy to report the conclusion of the first stage of the *Sportsmind* research project.

It has been a mammoth undertaking, and I've been closeted in my office for the past four months collating data, and completing my thesis – hence the hiatus in both *Sportsmind* updates and workshops over the past few months.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, over 1,300 athletes and coaches have attended a *Sportsmind* workshop. In all a total of 32 full day workshops and 64 'condensed' evening sessions have been held from Warnambool to Townsville.

To date, almost 5,600 copies of the *Sportsmind* book, and over 400 audio tapes have been sold.

Of the people who attended full-day workshops, 142 volunteered to participate in the research study. The sports interests of those represented in the research study included: Golf (26), Tennis (16), Triathlon (13), Athletics (10), Lawn Bowls (9), Soccer (6), Swimming (6), Cricket (4), Cycling (4), Equestrian (4), Pistol Shooting (4), Netball (3), Baseball (3), Basketball (3), Surf Lifesaving (3), Squash (3), Tae Kwon Do (3), Squash (3), Badminton (2), Rifle Shooting (2), Touch Football (2), Rowing (1), Rugby (1), Skiing (1), Fencing (1), Water Skiing (1), Softball (1), Gliding (1), Volleyball (1), Aerobics (1), and Billiards/Snooker (1).

Ability levels of the sportspeople ranged from 'weekend' social players to high level amateur competitors from club, state and national levels, as well as a number of professional sportspeople.

There were 93 males and 49 females represented, with an average age of participants of 31.5 years.

Responses of participants to the workshops were consistently positive and over 95% responded with either *"More confident"*, *"More relaxed"*, *"More positive"*, *"Better Concentration"* or similar statements in response to questions about their subjective *feelings* about their sports performances.

On average, participants believed that the *Sportsmind* workshops had **improved their sports performances between 35%-44% subjectively**.

Responses of participants to questions about what *objective* improvements they had noted in their performance, were varied, however approximately seventy percent of respondents had identified some significant improvement.

Examples of statements taken from the feedback responses include:

*"Moved from lead position to #2 in Pennant Lawn Bowls"; "Won a few minor club competitions"; "Reduction in golf handicap"; "Winning sets more regularly, and finishing off the set more confidently"; "Better placings in triathlon and cycling"; "Won two major shooting events"; "Swimming times reduce"; "Running faster times"; and "Higher batting average".*

The results were especially noticeable in golf, shooting, lawn bowls, and cricket – but these sports were also more represented in the workshops. Further, there did not appear to be any significant differences in responses between gender, or across age groups in these feedback responses.

Thirty percent of respondents noted no measurable improvement – however, more than half of these noted that they hadn't had an opportunity to 'be tested' as their season hadn't started yet, or they hadn't completed yet, etc.

Even more definitive results were obtained from the seven 'case studies' who attended all four one-day workshops. The results of this 'case study' feedback are as follows:

The subjective rating of their estimated percentage improvement as a result of involvement in the *Sportsmind* workshops shows that, on average, participants believed that *Sportsmind* workshops had improved their sports performance by **47.1%**. (There were responses of 10%, 35%, 40%, 70%, 75% and two responses of 50%.) Further, all participants identified significant *objective* improvements, such as increase in grade of play, awards, competition victories, etc. These I have summarised below.

***Case Study 1: Male Hockey Player, age 13 years.***

His grade of play prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was 'B' grade; at completion of the workshops he was playing 'A' grade. He was also the highest goal scorer for the season and had received the team's 'Most Valued Player' award. His estimated improvement was 70%.

***Case Study 2: Male Baseball Player, age 17 years.***

His grade of play prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was '3<sup>rd</sup>' Division; at completion of the workshops he was playing '2<sup>nd</sup>' Division and acting as a reserve for '1<sup>st</sup>' Division. He played in both the 'Under 18' and '3<sup>rd</sup> Division' finals and was also awarded the team's 'Most Valued Player' award. His estimated improvement was 50%.

***Case Study 3: Male Golfer, age 25 years.***

His grade of play prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was at a handicap of 4/5; at completion of the workshops he was playing at a handicap of 2. He had also won several club championships, and had posted some good rounds in open amateur events, achieving second place in one event. His estimated improvement was 40%.

***Case Study 4: Male Soccer Referee, age 42 years.***

His grade of refereeing prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was at state 'Level 1' games; at completion of the workshops he was refereeing Premier League games. He was also nominated as referee of the year for 1995 by the Victorian sports journalists. His estimated improvement was 50%.

***Case Study 5: Female Netball and Cricket Player, age 33 years.***

Her grade of play prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was District 2<sup>nd</sup>'s in cricket, and State League division 3 in netball; at completion of the workshops she was still playing District 2<sup>nd</sup>'s in cricket, and State League Division 3 in netball – however, she had been invited to join the Victorian Open Squad in cricket for the first time, and had been awarded the Umpire's award for best player in 1995 in netball. Her estimated improvement was 75%.

***Case Study 6: Female Dressage Competitor, age 40 years.***

Her grade of competition prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was at Novice level (level 2); at completion of the workshops she was competing at Elementary/Medium level (level ¾). She also won the Ridden Stallion event at the Royal Adelaide Show – a significant jump in performance. Her estimated improvement was 35%.

***Case Study 7: Female Golfer, age 60 years.***

Her grade of play prior to attending *Sportsmind* workshops was at a handicap of 30; at completion of the workshops she was playing at a handicap of 25-27. Her estimated improvement was 10%.

Given the small numbers involved in the case study, no reliable differences in results can be identified between gender, or sport, or over age groups.

Typical responses to questions asking for what *subjective* benefits they identified from the *Sportsmind* workshops included:

*"More relaxed"; "Better concentration and visualisation skills"; "Clearer set goals"; "Greater sense of purpose about what I want to achieve"; "More confidence"; "No*

*longer worried by the 'calibre' of other competitors"; "I feel more positive and have better concentration"; "I am better able to handle anxiety"; "my batting and throwing is stronger, and I'm more positive about what I do"; "Concentration on the game/situation is easier"; "More confident and relaxed"; "Enjoy it more"; "feel more confident in executing skills"; "More focused in competition"; "More motivation to train"; and "Better concentration".*

## **Comments**

Responses to questions asking which of the *Sportsmind* workshops they found most beneficial were varied: the Hockey and Baseball players, and the Dressage competitor found all workshops equally beneficial; the male golfer identified the *Visualisation* workshop as most helpful; the female golfer and female cricketer/netballer the *Concentration and Anxiety Management* workshop best for them, and the soccer referee noted the *Positive Motivation and Goals* workshop as the most useful.

Responses to questions which asked for feedback about specific content and exercises in the *Sportsmind* workshops was unanimously positive. Most of the respondents ticked virtually all the content and exercises listed.

Two other results from individual workshop feedback responses of these case study participants are worth noting: The female cricketer/netballer indicated that prior to attendance at the *Concentration & Anxiety Management* workshop, she had a batting average of just 16. In the week following completion of the workshop she subsequently scored 132 not out, and 98 in her next two innings, and finished the season with a batting average of 90! She also wrote after attending the *Positive Self Image and Mental Attitude* workshop: *"I made another 98! I also made my first stumping in cricket as wicket keeper! – (having visualised before every game how I'd do it!)"*

Secondly, the female Dressage competitor wrote, after attendance at the *Positive Motivation and Goals* workshop: *"I have used the techniques effectively since the workshop with success: I won the Ridden Stallion event at the Royal Adelaide Show. I actually visualised this as you taught us (even though I doubted it a bit) and things happened just as I visualised them! Wow! When I won, the interesting thing to me was that I didn't get wildly excited – because I just knew it was going to happen and I expected it to happen."*

And again after the *Visualisation* workshop: *"I was able to use the 'swish' technique really well in the presence of some previously daunting competitors which change my attitude and expectations dramatically. I also sustained a really nasty injury about ten days ago and found that visualising the internal healing made a great difference. I was back riding within a week, (and I think this was really a three week injury!)"*

Finally, congratulations to the first eight rowers from St. Joseph's College in Brisbane who had a magnificent victory over arch rivals, and race favourites, Brisbane Grammar. Two weeks prior to the race the boys attended a *Sportsmind* workshop on Visualisation, and had attended three other sessions of the season. Well Done!

Rowing Coach John Bowes wrote:

*"The areas Jeff covered with the rowers have been a great help to them in attaining their goals. Jeff has terrific rapport with teenagers who respond well to his work. I am very happy with the workshops Jeff has run and I would recommend him to any coach."*

### **What is *Sportsmind***

*Sportsmind* is a research and education program being undertaken as part of an M.Sc.(Hons) degree through the University of Western Sydney. Essentially, *Sportsmind* is about modelling excellence: identifying the mental and emotional strategies of champion athletes, and teaching these skills to others.

The training curriculum comprises a core of four one-day workshops, and a fifth advanced program. 'Condensed' 3 hour evening sessions of all *Sportsmind* workshops are also available for those unable to attend on weekends.

The workshop format includes short talks, demonstrations, small group activities and practical exercises. All workshops include practical sports Relaxation and Visualisation exercises. In addition, each workshop covers a specific area of mental conditioning for sport.

### **Workshop Fees:**

Workshop fees are required to cover the costs of travel, accommodation, venue hire, etc., however *Sportsmind* has a policy of not discriminating against people of limited financial resources, and part of full scholarships are available upon written request for genuine cases.

For more details on any *Sportsmind* program, please telephone for the latest workshop details brochure.

**Jeffrey Hodges is also available for private consultations, and for motivational workshops and talks to sports clubs and associations, conferences, corporations, etc.**