WHAT IS MOTIVATION?
As Silva and Weinberg (1984) point out, “Like many other psychological constructs, motivation has been defined in a variety of ways, but in general it refers to the intensity and direction of behaviour. The direction of behaviour indicates whether an individual approaches or avoids a particular situation, and the intensity of behaviour relates to the degree of effort put forth to accomplish the behaviour. Thus, motivation can affect the selection, intensity, and persistence of an individual’s behaviour, which in sport can obviously have a strong impact on the quality of an athlete’s performance.”

INNATE MOTIVATION AND SPORT
• Intrinsic motivation comes from, or is perceived to come from, within the individual.
• In the context of sport it may refer to the spontaneous enjoyment of sporting activities, the sense of mastery and competence in acquiring skills, the inner need to achieve, and the feelings of self-worth at having achieved personal standards or goals.
• When not being controlled by external goals or limits, the above intrinsic influences are self-perpetuating and remarkably persistent forms of motivation.
• A sense of voluntary, self-determining choice and control over one’s sporting activities is central to the individual regarding their sporting activity as intrinsically motivated.
• Intrinsic motivation occurs spontaneously in individuals and is evident from very young ages.
• Intrinsic motivation and inner standards, rewards and punishments are incorporated into psychodynamic, humanistic, cognitive and social learning psychological theories.

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND SPORT
• Extrinsic motivation comes from, or is perceived to come from, outside the individual.
• In the context of sport it may refer to the positive or negative reinforcement of sporting achievement through physical means, such as the possibility of gaining or losing prizes (e.g. trophies and money), or social means, such as praise or the avoidance of criticism. Extrinsic motivation may also involve competition with others to achieve external standards or goals.
• External rewards or goals may set limits on motivation and need to be maintained to keep motivation persistent.
• A sense of lack of voluntary, self-determining choice and control over one’s sporting activities is central to regarding sporting activity as extrinsically motivated.
• Extrinsic motivation may be applied at any age depending upon the type of reinforcer used, e.g. very young children are not readily motivated by competition with others.
• Extrinsic motivation and reinforcement is a key assumption of behaviourist learning theory psychology.

STUDIES OF INNATE AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION
Deci (1971) found that participants paid to conduct an intrinsically interesting activity (puzzle-solving) later spent almost half the time on it than participants who had not previously been paid for it.
Lepper and Greene (1975) – their field experiment tested nursery school children who had shown a high intrinsic interest in picture drawing. They found those children told to expect a certificate and gold star for their drawing before actually receiving this external ‘reward’ later showed lower interest in the activity, implying their intrinsic interest had been undermined. Children unexpectedly given the same reward, or those who were neither told about or received it, showed higher levels of interest than the first group in a free-choice situation.
Smith, Smoll and Curtis (1979) – found American children showed greater enthusiasm and enjoyment of sport if their coaches encouraged and reinforced them rather than stressing winning and competition, thus reinforcing rather than undermining their intrinsic motivation.
Deci et al (1981) – found participants given an intrinsically interesting task and told to compete with others were later found to show less motivation in the task than those not instructed to compete.
Deci et al (1977) – found males who competed for a reward showed more intrinsic interest than those who competed for no reward, but females showed the opposite tendency.
Weinberg (1979) – found higher levels of intrinsic motivation in participants after they had won in an activity than lost in it.