

## **Personality testing**

Methods used to measure personality and predict behaviour include observation, questionnaires such as profile of mood states (POMS), and biological testing, for instance heart-rate monitoring. However, testing has proved inconclusive and as yet there is no certain method of linking personality with sport or behaviour.

Observation is a real-life method whereby a performer's behaviour is analysed before, during and after play. Questionnaires are a cheap and quick method of gaining a vast amount of information. Biological tests generate factual data on physiological responses such as stress levels but necessitate the performer wearing a monitor, which may be restrictive.

### **Limitations of personality testing**

Personality testing has been relatively unsuccessful because results are often vague. Performers may change their behaviour if they know they are being tested or observed — for instance, they may be inhibited if they have to play while wearing a heart-rate monitor. This immediately gives unreliable results. Performers may not give truthful answers on questionnaires, again lowering reliability. Interpreting the behaviour of a performer during observations is subjective — different testers may not see behaviour in the same light and results can lack objectivity. To be reliable, the results of a test should be the same when the test is repeated.

Tests can also lack external and ecological validity. This means they cannot be generalised to the wider population. How people act while playing sport may not be how they act on a day-to-day basis. There is little evidence to support the idea of a 'sporty' personality type or that certain personality types are suited to specific activities. For example, not all team-sport players are extroverts, neither are all long-distance runners introverts. All personality types should be encouraged to participate in a variety of sports, so increasing the number of people leading active lifestyles. No performer should be excluded from participation based on their personality.

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