the opportunity and chances of performing at an individual's best and encouraging more of a successful personal performance, thus assisting the team's performance.

Mood can affect a player's ability to shift concentration from say a narrow (e.g., a batsman watching the seam of the ball, to broad focus, looking at field placing and seeing where the gaps are to strike the ball into). Especially, if the player concerned has just dropped an important catch, and feels angry and down/depressed as the player believes he/she has let the team down. The mood of the player who then has a key role in the bowling attack, may be affected due to the perceived past negative experience (the event of dropping the catch). So how can a player change his/her mood state and get into 'the right mood to perform at their best?' Here are some suggestions and a four-step plan to assist getting into the right mood state.

Step 1

How to Prepare and get into the right mood state.
Stating and being aware of how you feel. e.g., "I feel tense" or "I feel happy"

Thinking about how to be in a good mood and what to do to get yourself in a better mood to perform at your best. Writing down how you feel at that moment?

Asking yourself how you feel right now? This is called mood state introspection (Diener & Emmons, 1994; Watson & Tellegen, Cf; Owens 1998).

Step 2

Thinking of past positive experiences against the opposition and venue. Thinking about past good performances, batting, bowling and fielding. Have examples of best performances at hand (on cue cards). Batting, what you did and how you felt, certain shots which were played and great catches, bowling and taking wickets, how you felt etc.

Stating a mood sensitive judgement. e.g., I think I will bat well today, I feel relaxed, calm and confident. This is called mood sensitive Judgement (Mayer & Volanth, 1985, cf; Owens, 1998).

Step 3

Using cognitions that monitor and change moods and evaluate your mood state so you can change them. Thinking about good thoughts to cheer yourself up. Avoiding thoughts about personal problems, issues that would make you tense or in a bad mood or in a negative state of mind. Avoiding thinking about negative performances or specific events, which happened against a bowler or batsman that could place you in a bad mood.

Thinking about and writing down your best ever performance or something that will make you smile. Your favourite place and loved ones etc. Change your mood state immediately and think about perhaps what makes you ENJOY cricket (Have written examples at hand/on cue cards) This is called a metamood experience (Thayer et al., 1988, cf; Owens, 1998.

(The above three steps were part of Mayer's (1998) Cognitive Domains of the Mood system, cf; Owens, 1998).

Step 4

Being able to regulate your mood state and being aware of behaviours that modulate energy and tension to your optimal levels. Being able to shift your mood in a self-regulated manner to produce an optimal mood. Therefore, mood management is key to performing at your best or optimal levels and learning how to monitor mood states and shift a less desirable mood state (tiredness, lethargy, depressed mood or tension) into perhaps alertness, vigour or calmness. Also being aware of increasing arousal levels and being aware of what individual methods work to raise arousal levels to an INDIVIDUAL OPTIMAL STATE.

Example 1) Using music (favourite selection) to either

create an increased arousal level (psych up music) or calm relaxing music to focus and reduce tension and excessive nervousness.

Example 2) Use cognitive restructuring strategies: -

Change negative thoughts into positive thought. Learning HOW to mentally BIN negative thoughts and not to ruminate or DWELL on the negatives, but think about your STRENGTHS.

What you do WELL for the team and INDIVIDUALLY?

What YOU NEED to do to PERFORM at your BEST?

What do you need to DO RIGHT NOW to get into your best mood state and FEEL GOOD?

This is called the self-regulation of mood (Thayer, 1994, cf; Owens, 1998).

Following these FOUR steps will enable a player and indeed coaches and medical staff a better understanding of their individual mood state and how mood state can affect performance both from an individual and team perspective. More importantly having an AWARENESS of your mood and mood state differences and how different thoughts and events trigger certain moods and behaviours will enable a change of behaviour to occur and for the player to get into the best and individual mood state i.e., 'to get into the right mood' to perform at their best. Finally, the ability to monitor and evaluate mood will enable a faster and more effective mood state shift from a negative and potentially destructive performance mood state to a more positive mood state that will enable optimal performance to occur and for individuals to use interventions which can enhance their mood state and indeed others within the

team environment. Therefore, changing thought processes and mood -being less emotionally reactive and more proactive in thinking and behaviour, will enhance performance.

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Kabir Ali of England celebrates taking the wicket of Jacques Kallis of South Africa during the 5th One Day International match between Soth Africa and England on February 9 2005 at Buffalo Park, East London, South Africa. (Photo by Tom Shaw/Getty Images)

England bowler Matthew Hoggard, celebrates with team mates for bowling out South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs on the first day of a 5-day test match in Durban, 26 December 2004. (Photo ALEXANDER JOE/AFP/Getty Images)

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