Part 6

You are going to read a newspaper article in which a former ballet dancer talks about the physical demands of the job. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences **A – G** the one which fits each gap (**37 – 42**). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Good preparation leads to success in ballet dancing

A former classical ballet dancer explains what ballet training actually involves.

What we ballet dancers do is instinctive, but instinct learnt through a decade of training. A dancer's life is hard to understand, and easy to misinterpret. Many a poet and novelist has tried to do so, but even they have chosen to interpret all the hard work and physical discipline as obsessive. And so the idea persists that dancers spend every waking hour in pain, bodies at breaking point, their smiles a pretence.

As a former dancer in the Royal Ballet Company here in Britain, I would beg to question this. **37** With expert teaching and daily practice, its various demands are easily within the capacity of the healthy human body. Contrary to popular belief, there is no need to break bones or tear muscles to achieve ballet positions. It is simply a question of sufficient conditioning of the muscular system.

Over the course of my dancing life I worked my way through at least 10,000 ballet classes. I took my first at a school of dance at the age of seven and my last 36 years later at the Royal Opera House in London. In the years between, ballet class was the first thing I did every day. It starts at an early age, this daily ritual, because it has to. **38** But for a ballet dancer in particular, this lengthy period has to come before the effects of adolescence set in, while maximum flexibility can still be achieved.

Those first classes I took were remarkably similar to the last. In fact, taking into account the occasional new idea, ballet classes have changed little since 1820, when the details of ballet technique were first written down, and are easily recognised in any country. Starting with the left hand on the barre, the routine unrolls over some 75 minutes. **39** Even the leading dancers have to do it.

These classes serve two distinct purposes: they are the way we warm our bodies and the mechanism by which we improve basic technique. In class after class, we prove the old saying that 'practice makes perfect'. **40** And it is also this daily repetition which enables us to strengthen the muscles required in jumping, spinning or lifting our legs to angles impossible to the average person.

The human body is designed to adapt to the demands we make of it, provided we make them carefully and over time. **41** In the same way, all those years of classes add up to a fit-for-purpose dancing machine. This level of physical fluency doesn't hurt; it feels good.

42 But they should not be misled: there is a difference between hard work and hardship. Dancers have an everyday familiarity with the first. Hardship it isn't.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A Through endless tries at the usual exercises and frequent failures, ballet dancers develop the neural pathways in the brain necessary to control accurate, fast and smooth movement.

B The ballet shoe offers some support, but the real strength is in the muscles, built up through training.

C As technology takes away activity from the lives of many, perhaps the ballet dancer's physicality is ever more difficult for most people to imagine.

D Ballet technique is certainly extreme but it is not, in itself, dangerous.

E The principle is identical in the gym – pushing yourself to the limit, but not beyond, will eventually bring the desired result.

F No one avoids this: it is ballet's great democratiser, the well established members of the company working alongside the newest recruits.

G It takes at least a decade of high-quality, regular practice to become an expert in any physical discipline.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Part 7

You are going to read a newspaper article about a young professional footballer. For questions **43 – 52**, choose from the sections (**A – D**). The sections may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Which paragraph

states how surprised the writer was at Duncan's early difficulties?	**43** ☐
says that Duncan sometimes seems much more mature than he really is?	**44** ☐
describes the frustration felt by Duncan's father?	**45** ☐
says that Duncan is on course to reach a high point in his profession?	**46** ☐
suggests that Duncan caught up with his team-mates in terms of physical development?	**47** ☐
explains how Duncan was a good all-round sportsperson?	**48** ☐
gives an example of how Gavin reassured his son?	**49** ☐
mentions Duncan's current club's low opinion of him at one time?	**50** ☐
mentions a personal success despite a failure for the team?	**51** ☐
explains how Duncan and his father are fulfilling a similar role?	**52** ☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Rising Star

Margaret Garelly goes to meet Duncan Williams, who plays for Chelsea Football Club.

A It's my first time driving to Chelsea's training ground and I turn off slightly too early at the London University playing fields. Had he accepted football's rejections in his early teenage years, it is exactly the sort of ground Duncan Williams would have found himself running around on at weekends. At his current age of 18, he would have been a bright first-year undergraduate mixing his academic studies with a bit of football, rugby and cricket, given his early talent in all these sports. However, Duncan undoubtedly took the right path. Instead of studying, he is sitting with his father Gavin in one of the interview rooms at Chelsea's training base reflecting on Saturday's match against Manchester City. Such has been his rise to fame that it is with some disbelief that you listen to him describing how his career was nearly all over before it began.

B Gavin, himself a fine footballer – a member of the national team in his time – and now a professional coach, sent Duncan to three professional clubs as a 14 year-old, but all three turned him down. 'I worked with him a lot when he was around 12, and it was clear he had fantastic technique and skill. But then the other boys shot up in height and he didn't. But I was still upset and surprised that no team seemed to want him, that they couldn't see what he might develop into in time. When Chelsea accepted him as a junior, it was made clear to him that this was more of a last chance than a new beginning. They told him he had a lot of hard work to do and wasn't part of their plans. Fortunately, that summer he just grew and grew, and got much stronger as well.'

C Duncan takes up the story: 'The first half of that season I played in the youth team. I got lucky – the first-team manager came to watch us play QPR, and though we lost 3-1, I had a really good game. I moved up to the first team after that performance.' Gavin points out that it can be beneficial to be smaller and weaker when you are developing – it forces you to learn how to keep the ball better, how to use 'quick feet' to get out of tight spaces. 'A couple of years ago, Duncan would run past an opponent as if he wasn't there but then the other guy would close in on him. I used to say to him, "Look, if you can do that now, imagine what you'll be like when you're 17, 18 and you're big and quick and they won't be able to get near you." If you're a smaller player, you have to use your brain a lot more.'

D Not every kid gets advice from an ex-England player over dinner, nor their own private training sessions. Now Duncan is following in Gavin's footsteps. He has joined a national scheme where people like him give advice to ambitious young teenagers who are hoping to become professionals. He is an old head on young shoulders. Yet he's also like a young kid in his enthusiasm. And fame has clearly not gone to his head; it would be hard to meet a more likeable, humble young man. So will he get to play for the national team? 'One day I'd love to, but when that is, is for somebody else to decide.' The way he is playing, that won't be long.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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