



Sports Psychology

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Abstract:

Sport psychology is an interdisciplinary science that draws on knowledge from the fields of Kinesiology and Psychology. It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors. In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may include work with athletes, coaches, and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career transitions.

"Sports psychology is the study of psychological foundation of physical activity."

"Sports psychology studies the effects of sport itself on human behavior."

Keywords: *Fitness, Psychology, Science, Sports*

1. Introduction

Factor influencing performance in sports Successful performance in sports is just as related to mental fitness as it is to physical fitness. Athletes who are psychologically prepared for competition consistently outperform unprepared athletes. It was for this reason that the discipline of sports psychology was developed. Although sports psychology can benefit you as a competitive athlete, it can also benefit you if you simply seek to achieve personal fitness goals.

2. Definition

The American Psychological Association defines sports psychology as "the scientific study of the psychological factors that are associated with participation and performance in sport, exercise and other types of physical activity." It is further subdivided into two main areas--enhancing athletic performance and using sports psychology to enhance overall psychological well-being throughout life. Each of these two areas has both research and applied branches.

3. History

Psychologist Norman Triplett has been credited with pioneering the discipline of sports psychology around the beginning of the 20th century, when he confirmed that bicyclists ride faster when traveling in groups or pairs. As evidence in favor of the utility of sports psychology gradually mounted, the number of people involved in the discipline increased. Sports psychologists have become involved in research, teaching and consulting. Many of these professionals are also trained in exercise physiology.

4. Areas of Focus

Sports psychology focuses on eight major areas--anxiety control, concentration, confidence, goal setting, communication and intra-team dynamics, creative visualization, internal dialogue and time management. Although each of these is an independent area of research, they often overlap in practice--controlling your anxiety will help you concentrate, for example. Specific techniques have been devised for helping athletes improve in each of these areas.

5. Professional Practice

Several different professions make use of sports psychology. Athletic trainers use sports psychology to prevent and treat sports-related injuries and to design rehabilitation programs. Physical therapists design and execute rehabilitation programs for injured athletes. Coaches use sports psychology to motivate their players and maintain team cohesion. Performance enhancement consultants are unlicensed sports psychologists who train athletes for enhanced performance.

6. Benefits

Sports psychology can enhance individual performance and can help a group of individual athletes gel into a team. It can also motivate injured athletes to maximize the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. You can use sports psychology to help you stick to an exercise program by learning psychological skills, such as realistic goal-setting, to increase your ability to enjoy exercise. The increased concentration, focus and self-confidence can help you in many areas of your life that are seemingly unrelated to sports, such as work productivity and interpersonal relationship management.

Let's take a look at the field of sport psychology and discover how it can help you as an athlete, parent of an athlete, or as a coach. Here are ten areas that sport psychology studies, and how it applies this knowledge to sport learning and performance.

6.1 Sport Psychology Helps You Understand Yourself as an Athlete

You need to have mental strategies for learning, practice and performance factors. Sport psychology gives you the methods and approaches to become aware of what you need so you and your coach can craft custom interventions.

6.2 Sport Psychology Helps You Work Better With Your Parents

Your parents should be part of your success team, at least at some level. It does not necessarily mean they should coach you, but it would be nice to have a solid relationship with them, and excellent communication skills so they can assist you in your career.

6.3 Sport Psychology Helps You Work Better With Your Coaches

Your coach is perhaps the most important person on your team. You need a great working relationship with this person. Sport psychology can help you create this relationship, and nurture it.

6.4 Sport Psychology Helps You Navigate Your Sport Career

There are many blind alleys, pitfalls and false paths in a sport career. Sport psychology helps you create a vision for success, and goals and objectives, so you can execute that master plan.

6.5 Sport Psychology Helps You Prepare Your Mind

It is critical that you know how to prepare mentally and emotionally for lessons, practices and performances. Sport psychology helps you devise a customized mental readiness process that helps you transition from your normal work, school or social worlds into the special world of competition.

6.6 Sport Psychology Helps You Concentrate So You Can Enter the Zone

Attentional control is psychologist-speak for concentration or focus. Sport psychology helps you create strong control over where and how you place your attention so you can concentrate on the proper attentional cues, and you are able to block out unwanted, distracting cues.

6.7 Sport Psychology Helps You Bounce Back From Set-Backs

It is critical that you become resilient to the inevitable problems and set-backs that competitive sport brings. You need solid mental toughness that helps you refocus, reset and re-energize for what is to come.

6.8 Sport Psychology Helps You Increase Motivation and Drive

Successful athletes who have long careers fuel them with exciting goals, a vision for the legacy they want to leave, and dreams of how they want to play. Sport psychology helps you craft engaging

goals that create positive energy within you, so you have huge amounts of drive and determination to achieve your potential.

6.9 Sport Psychology Helps You Handle Stress and Pressure

One of the major ways sport psychology helps you is through stress reduction in learning and performance. While some stress is inevitable and natural, levels of stress those are excessive damage performance. Sport psychology helps you manage stress and turn it into success.

6.10 Sport Psychology Helps You Handle the Paradox of Success

An issue that every athlete faces at some time is the paradox of success. As you become more successful, there are more pressures and more distractions pulling at you. Sport psychology helps you address these; stay focused, and helps you continue to sustain your best performances. The scopes of Sports Psychology are as follows.

- Personality psychology
- Clinical psychology
- Experimental psychology
- Educational psychology
- Social psychology
- Development psychology
- Social & Cultural effects
- Pick performance
- Sex & Age differences

The Mental & Psychological Domain of sports Psychology is as follows.

- Intelligence
- Creativity
- Alertness
- Motivation
- Goal setting
- Discipline
- Mental skill Training

Sports psychology is very simply deals with the mental aspects of sports. It aims to improve both the sports performance and well-being of the athlete, through the application of psychological principles and techniques. It has been defined most simply perhaps as the science of psychology applied to sport. Areas covered by sport psychology, range from confidence to conflict resolution, from motivation to performing under pressure and everything in between. Additionally sports performance is affected by, and in turn affects all other life areas. Yet, it is this aspect of sports performance which has traditionally been paid the least attention in preparation for competition. Hence, in a world where many athletes are physically, technically and tactically increasingly similar the greatest scope for a competitive advantage. There are many scope of sports psychology, personality psychology, experimental psychology, social psychology etc. sports psychology studies the effect of sports it self on human behavior and also study of psychological foundation of physical activity.

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