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Common Psychological Skills in the field of Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology

Andrew Ezigbo, *University of Central Florida*



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Abstract

- ❑ This research is based on a review of the published literature and identifies and discusses *common psychological skills* that are needed by the athlete and which should be supported by the sport psychologist.

Introduction

- ❑ The field of *sport and exercise science* considers the theoretical knowledge and practical application of scientific principles relating to multiple *subfields*, one of which is *sport psychology*.
- ❑ Sports psychology is the study of the relationship between psychological or mental factors and sports participation and appreciation (Branscombe, Schafer, and Fonesca (2013).
- ❑ To be an effective applied sport psychology practitioner, a common set of knowledge and skills is required (Holder and Winter, 2017).



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Central Research Question

Based on published literature, what are common psychological skills needed by high performing athletes?

Sport Psychology

Theme 1: Athletes must stay focused and they must be able to concentrate throughout competition for ultimate performance and success.

Theme 2: Athletes must develop a core set of skills to support success and elite performance.

Theme 3: To help athletes develop these skills, it is important to plan a psychological skills training (PST) program.

Why Does this Research Matter?



- ✓ The importance of psychological skills training (PST) in the development of athletic performance is widely recognized (Birrerr and Morgan, 2010).
- ✓ Common psychological skills considered to have potential importance in skill-level differentiation, may be broadly categorized by the themes of concentration, anxiety management, self-confidence, mental preparation, and motivation (Mahoney, Gabriel, and Perkins, 1987).
- ✓ Research supports the contention that there are specific mental skills that contribute to success in sports, including attitude, motivation, goals and commitment, people skills, self-talk, effectively dealing with anxiety, effectively dealing with emotion, and concentration (Lesyk, 1998).
- ✓ Sport psychology practitioners provide invaluable services to individual athletes and teams by helping them engage in mental skills training designed to translate into improved within-competition performance (Gee, 2010).
- ✓ My future graduate school plans include completion of a Masters in Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Orlando, Florida. I also aspire to earn a Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology. My areas of research interest include health promotion and wellness. Since sport and exercise psychologists identify principles and guidelines that support optimal athletic performance, these psychological skills will be key to my ongoing research endeavors in sport and exercise science.

Conclusion

- The mind and the body work together, so the *knowledge* that can be derived *from research into sport and exercise psychology* is essential to ensuring that individuals who participate in sports achieve at their highest level of performance.
- *Applied sport and exercise psychologists* need to understand behind how athletes think. Sport psychologists strive to help athletes enhance their overall physical health and mental well-being, so that they can optimize performance in their chosen sport.

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