A critical assessment of psychological skills training in sports

RAVINDRA BALIRAM KHANDARE AND SUWRUDHESH HARIBHAU PADOLE

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ABSTRACT

Sport psychology is the scientific study of people and their behaviours in sport and exercise activities. The aim of the study of sport psychology is to be able to apply the knowledge learned about these to practical uses. 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. Psychological Skills Training (PST) is an individually designed combination of methods selected to attain psychological skill needs. There is no single idyllic PST package, each programme must be individualised based on the psychological state of the individual and the sport. To assemble a successful PST programme, it is important to distinguish between PST skills and PST methods. PST skills are the psychological qualities or attributes that need to be developed (i.e. confidence, concentration), the PST method is the tool that will be used to help improve the PST skill.

Key Words : Psychology, Performance, Psychological training.