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PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT IN ELITE SPORT AS A
COMPONENT OF AN ATHLETE'S SUCCESS

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Abstract

The article raises one of the urgent problems in modern sports of the highest achievements—the problem of psychological support for the superiority of athletes, and is considered as one of the priority directions of state policy. Modern sport is distinguished by a significant intensity of training loads, a reduction in time limits in the preparation of athletes and a great personal responsibility, both of a coach and an athlete, for the result in competitions of various levels. In this regard, there is a need for psychological support of athletes at all stages of sports activity in order to form stress resistance, an active life position, a competitive and healthy personality. The article presents the results of the study, the purpose of which was to reveal the severity of the manifestations of emotional states in athletes in the conditions of the training process. The sample of the study consisted of 1545 athletes: students of sports schools of the Olympic reserve, children and youth schools, national teams of the Sverdlovsk region, Masters of sports, Candidates for master of sports, athletes with I, II, III categories at the age of 14–18, of which the proportion of boys accounted for 68.5 %, girls accounted for 31.5 %. The analysis of the results led to the following conclusion. Despite the rather high positive results and a positive prognosis for success in competitions, some athletes have an unfavorable prognosis even at the training stage.

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1. Introduction

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the elite sport in modern society is increasingly attracting attention. This is due to the fact that one of the factors that affects high achievements in sports is the personality of the athlete, who is capable and ready to win on the playing field. Every year, the requirements for not only the physical, but also the psychological qualities of athletes are increasing. A systematic increase in loads in sports activity, professional sports formation, high competition lead to the emergence of a high level of stress, and the achievement of high results of an athlete is not only physical endurance, perseverance and constancy of training, but also the use of various pedagogical technologies and psychological methods that help to achieve the set goals.

In the context of the development of modern sports as a high-tech process, in today's realities, emphasis is placed on increasing politicization and competition in sports at the international level. Violations of athletes' rights, contradictions between foreign and Russian scientific, educational and methodological, scientific and methodological, medical, anti-doping support in sports activities, in the field of sports training (physical, strength training, motor abilities, technical readiness), all these issues are relevant for studying professional sports. But, unfortunately, until now, little attention has been paid to the issues and problems of psychological support and psychological preparation of athletes. It is important to note that the psychological factor is one of the most important factors in sports. Psychological preparation is a component of success in excellence psychology.

The term "excellence" in sports is considered as the achievement of high sports results, the peak of skill in sports activities, as well as the achievement of the athlete's superiority in setting and implementing a goal, sports activity itself and to ensure the quality of the sports process as an end result.

Achieving victory requires an athlete to mobilize his physical, mental reserve capabilities at different stages of sports activity and are associated with the athlete's emotional sphere (Portnykh, 2001). Let us consider these components in more detail. The physical state is the reaction of the functional systems of the human body to external and internal influences, which, in turn, preserve the integrity of the body and thereby ensure vital activity in different conditions. However, achievements depend not only on physical fitness, but also on the emotional states that the athlete experiences at different stages of sports training. Emotional states affect the result of sports performance and endurance, stress resistance of an athlete. It is emotional states that can be considered as a set of psychophysical phenomena, where, in addition to motor reactions, various changes appear in the course of processes and are associated with different manifestations of emotions. They are distinguished by individuality, polarity, variability, integrity.

One of the most important components of reserve capabilities is the mental state of the athlete and the individual psychological characteristics of the athlete's personality. The final sports result largely depends on mental stability. For example, the degree of mastering the methods and techniques of self-regulation of an athlete is significantly influenced by individual psychological characteristics, such as character, features of building interpersonal relationships in a team, which creates a psychological climate in general (Ilyin, 2016).

If an athlete has a prolonged mental stress, this will lead to a state of psychological satiety. Consequently, the athlete loses interest, both in performing sports tasks and in sports in general; irritability, moodiness, mood instability, psychosomatic states, fear appear, which will lead to emotional burnout. In athletes with mental instability, the plasticity of the emotional-volitional sphere is lost, and intellectual functions decrease. Violations are reflected in the properties and processes of attention, perception, thinking and memory. A high level of mental stress leads to nervousness, asthenic states, anxiety, self-doubt and, sometimes, depression. All these violations require their study in order to form the need for physical improvement, in regular sports activities to restore mental balance, return faith in one's own strength and form an active life (Naboychenko & Vorobiev, 2017).

In studies conducted by foreign experts in the field of sports, it was noted that 10–15 % of professional athletes have not only mental problems, but also mental illnesses (Moran, 2003). A successful athlete is an athlete who has not only technical and tactical training, but also a high level of psychological preparedness, which in turn are the leading factors in achieving victory.

In this regard, the most important role is played by the psychological support of the athlete, in order to form the psychological potential, and is a part of professional training in achieving high sports results.

2. Problem Statement

Psychological support begins with the initial stage of entering sports activities, and ends with the termination of the athlete's activities in "big" sports (this is the most general concept). In the period of sports improvement and sportsmanship improvement, psychological training dominates (the formation of significant personality traits and optimal emotional state). Already at the stage of initial sports development, the procedure of psychological monitoring begins, which consists of psychodiagnostics of mental processes, states and personality traits of an athlete. In the process of monitoring, if necessary, adjustments are made to the complex training of athletes (Yurov, 2009).

Only the one who constantly makes efforts to achieve the set goals becomes the winner. A winner in life never stops there. His goals are always directed towards the future, and his character and behavior are oriented towards victory (Vyrshchikov, 2020).

In our opinion, psychological support in elite sports is a system for managing the processes of an athlete's personality development, mental states, processes of social behavior, adaptation of an athlete to the end of a sports professional career, as well as a study of the psychological patterns of mental improvement in the process of sports formation.

It is also worth noting that athletes who win or lose in competitions need mental recovery. If this does not happen, then it can lead to various injuries, and, therefore, psychological rehabilitation should already be applied here (Halson, 2013; Kaufman, 2017; Santi, 2013).

3. Research Questions

The modern global realities associated with the aggravation of competition at the competitive stage give particular relevance to our research, which determines the mission and development strategies of

elite sports. High performance of an athlete is important not only for his environment, but also for the region and country in general. At the same time, it is important to note that psychological support in sports is a systematic and purposeful work on the formation and development of professionally important qualities in athletes. Unfortunately, today there is no integral system of psychological support, there is no wage rate for the position of a sports psychologist; educational and methodological work to support athletes, both individual and team sports, is poorly represented. The modern training of an athlete is constantly in search of those resources that will help him reveal his capabilities and surpass his rivals. The experience of practical work and scientific research on the problems of psychological support shows that there is a demand for qualified psychological support among athletes, coaches and parents. However, during its implementation, sports psychologists encounter specific problems of organizing the process of psychological support for athletes. Psychological support is an integral part of sports activity, since systematic work helps an athlete to cope with various mental states at the stage of preparation for a competition, before the start, during the competition and, no less important, after it, both in the case of success and defeat. Before the competition, it is necessary to avoid premature states of fever and apathy, psychological breakdowns. As the start approaches, mental tension increases, and if an athlete cannot control and manage his condition, the occurrence of obsessive states increases significantly (Safonov, 2018).

The first thing on which efforts should be directed during the psychological support of an athlete is educational and methodological support (development of a work program with a goal, tasks, technologies, exercises, calendar-thematic training plan). The implementation of the program is ensured by their organizational structure, which includes lectures, practical, and training sessions. In practical classes, it is advisable to carry out psychological and pedagogical diagnostics, to solve certain situational problems. Training sessions should be aimed at developing and practicing skills, followed by a debriefing.

All of the above made it possible to identify a range of research questions.

Study of the importance of psychological support for athletes at different stages of sports activity.

Timely psychological diagnostics aimed at identifying deviations or disorders in the mental sphere of the athlete.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the research is to reveal the severity of manifestations of emotional states in athletes in the conditions of the training process.

5. Research Methods

The research described in the article used the following methods:

- theoretical methods: theoretical and methodological analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, conceptual and terminological analysis;
- empirical methods (testing): methodology for assessing mental activation, interest, emotional tone, tension and comfort (Kurgan, Nemchin), methodology “Well-being, activity, mood” WAM (Doskin), representing a table, which consists of 30 pairs of words, reflecting the

characteristics of psychoemotional states of the individual, the questionnaire for assessing neuropsychic stability “Prognosis-2”, developed by Rybnikov.

- methods of mathematical statistics.

The study was carried out on the basis of the State Autonomous Healthcare Institution of the Sverdlovsk Region “Multidisciplinary Clinical Medical Center “Bonum” in the department of physiotherapy exercises and sports medicine. Based on the Order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation “On the procedure for organizing the provision of medical care to people involved in physical culture and sports ...” an in-depth medical and psychological examination of athletes was carried out on the basis of the Multidisciplinary Clinical Medical Center “Bonum”.

The structure of the medical center “Bonum” includes a center for physiotherapy exercises and sports medicine. Sports medicine is a specific medical and psychological direction that gives permission for sports activities, as well as providing timely assistance to athletes. The main goal of the Center's activities is medical and psychological training and psychological support of athletes in the context of realizing their achievements at different stages of sports training. Students of sports schools of the Olympic reserve, children and youth schools, national teams of the Sverdlovsk region, Masters of Sports, Candidates for Master of Sports, athletes with I, II, III categories are under supervision.

The study sample consisted of 1545 athletes aged 14–18 years, of which boys accounted for 68.5 %, girls accounted for 31.5 %.

6. Findings

The survey results showed that the following indicators demonstrated a high level of severity: interest (av. 6.6); emotional tone (av. 5.4); comfort (av. 6.7); the middle level was demonstrated by the following indicators: mental activity (av. 8.8) and the tension of athletes (av. 10.3).

If we consider the percentage of the severity of emotional states, then the average level of activation prevails (56 %), 36 % of athletes had a high level. These levels indicate a state of high readiness of athletes for the training process, a positive attitude. However, some of the athletes (8 %) showed a low level of activation.

Most of the athletes of the team have a high level of interest in sports activity, an average level is 28 %, a low level of interest was not found. All athletes of the team (100 %) have a high degree of emotional tone. The average level was found in the “tension” indicator (76 %), the low level was not found. Here it is important to pay attention to those athletes who showed a high level of interest (4 %). They potentially have a higher chance of winning.

A significant part of the team's players (84 %) have a high level of comfort and 16 % of athletes have an average level. This indicates a favorable socio-psychological climate in the team and the environment as a whole.

According to the results of the WAM methodology, it was revealed that the majority of athletes have a high level in terms of “well-being” (76 %), “activity” (52 %), “mood” (84 %). Some players showed a low level of health, activity, and mood. This may indicate the presence of instability of emotions, anxiety, and slow engagement in work.

Analysis of the data on the methodology for assessing neuropsychic stability showed that athletes have a good level of neuropsychic stability (76 %). Namely, athletes have a low level of likelihood of neuropsychic breakdowns, adequate self-esteem and assessment of the surrounding reality. A high level of neuropsychic stability was shown by 16 % of athletes. Only 8 % of the participants had satisfactory neuropsychic stability. It can be assumed that in this group of subjects, in the event of extreme situations, manifestations of inappropriate behavior, moderate disturbances in mental activity, self-esteem and perception of the surrounding reality are possible. These data indicate the need to develop programs of psychological support for athletes, both in individual and team sports. An unsatisfactory level of neuropsychic stability in athletes was not found.

Based on the results obtained, we can say that, in general, athletes have mental well-being, a desire to work out the skills of the game with enthusiasm and attention, with the manifestation of a cognitive need, good health, mood, sustained interest and concentration in the implementation of a sports game, full inclusion in the training process.

7. Conclusion

Psychological support of athletes at different stages of the development of a sports career is an important component of the activity of a sports psychologist and includes the following areas:

- primary psychological diagnostics aimed at identifying a comprehensive assessment of psycho-emotional states, intellectual, mental, motivational, psychomotor characteristics in athletes that determine their success in sports;
- psychodiagnostic control of the mental sphere in order to identify stability or deviations from standard values;
- psychological correction with the development of a personality-oriented, individual program through various psychological and pedagogical methods and technologies;
- psychological counseling of athletes and their parents (if necessary), coaches.

Despite the rather high positive results and a positive prognosis for success in competitions, some athletes are at risk, which means that at the pre-start stage, at the most crucial moment, at the stage of the struggle for a prize place, these athletes may have a nervous breakdown. experiences, aggression, and, as a result, loss. Therefore, there is a need to develop programs of psychological support at all stages of their sports activities, including both individual and team sports.

When working with an athlete, an individual approach and taking into account psychological factors are required. Psychological support affects all spheres of the athlete's life, therefore, mutual sincerity, trust and openness are important here.

Summing up, we presented our reasoned opinion about the need for psychological preparation as one of the strategy for the development of elite sports.

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