

A Review on Mental Toughness Levels of Players on Different Position of Football Ground

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Abstract: *The factors that determine whether a sport succeeds or fails are numerous. It is determined by a number of factors, including physical, tactical, technical, and psychological ones. In most sports, the psychological aspect is the deciding factor between a victor and a loser. Mental toughness is a collection of mental characteristics that include unwavering self-confidence, resiliency, motivation, focus, and the capacity to perform under pressure, as well as the ability to cope with physical and emotional hardship. Mental skills training is used in sport psychology to help players build mental toughness. Mental skills training include evaluating athletes' strengths and weaknesses and developing a programme that strengthens key areas important to their sport as well as their unique needs.*

Keywords: *Psychological Skills, Age Category, sport performance, Mental toughness.*

1. Introduction

Football involves a good team player both physically and mentally. Mental strength is often an essential factor in a person's growth and success. A depressed state of mind opposes an athlete and prevents success. The increasing productivity of athletes depends on the technical, tactical, physical and psychological factors, according to [1]. Football has not only been dominated by male athletes, but also by female soccer athletes.

Football was one of the world's most popular sports and consisted of tension, challenge and physical contact. Several influences, including their emotional abilities, could have affected the success of footballers. Today the task of sports psychologists is better recognised by team and individual athletes as part of the day-to-day assistant coaches. Sports psychologists have different functions, but mainly teach athletes mental resilience in order to improve their achievement and learning [2]. Mental resilience has therefore been conceived as a psychological ability to perform and maintain goal-focused actions despite different levels of interpersonal demands, from stressors to

serious adversities. In response to the familiar concerns, the researcher initiated a study to examine the mental toughness of footballers in different roles, such as forward, centre and defend positions. The thesis was designed to promote the understanding of footballers' mental toughness, where the researchers tried to enhance the football outcomes, among school teachers, training professionals, athletes and sport psychologists.

2. Mental Toughness and Their Characteristics

Mental toughness is widely used expression in modern sports. It is a quality which differentiates the winner from the loser, the champion from the rest of the field. Basically, a sportsman with mental toughness has the ability to raise their game to the highest level at crucial moments in a match. This also implies that the mental toughness gives them necessary focus and ability to concentrate on the job in hand. It is this, which is instrumental in injecting extra doses of adrenaline into sportsmen system, which charges them to give off their best.[3]



Mental toughness is a critical element in contemporary international cricket. However, little is known beyond the obvious basics of what constitutes mental toughness in an English cricketer. This study addresses two main objectives: 1) develop a greater understanding of what mental toughness is within cricket, and 2) identify how the existing mentally tough English cricketers developed their mental toughness. Twelve English cricketers identified as being the mentally toughest during the previous twenty years were interviewed. Analysis of the focused interview transcripts identified the critical role of the player's environment in influencing "tough character", "tough attitudes", and "tough thinking". The global themes are presented in a mental toughness framework that has been used to disseminate the findings to the cricket coaching and playing population in England. The contrasting and complementary nature of the global themes are used to help provide a structural appreciation of the need for consistent interaction between environment, character, attitudes, and thinking in order that the performer can consistently be considered as mentally tough in cricket. Implications of the findings in relation to the delivery of sport psychology support within English cricket are also highlighted. [4]

There are so many psychological factors which are closely associated with the performance in cricket like moderate anxiety, motivation, concentration, self-concept and mental toughness etc. All psychological factors are having different aims make player mentally for the competition, increasing concentration of a player and helps in eliminate nervousness, frustration, forgetful, pressure etc. One of the important psychological factors which are directly related during competition is competitive behavior.

Competitive behavior is a psychological factor which explains the behavior of the player before, after and during the competition. Competitive behavior studies the interaction of the player with the opponents, relation of the player with his team members and coaches, relation with officials. It is also explaining the behavior of a player during different game situation like how he tolerate with pressure? How he tolerate with aggressive behavior of opponents? How player maintain his concentration when opponents disturb him? So competitive behavior has a tremendous effect on performance. It is highly required mental toughness for achieving and maintains the high performance.[4] Sport is a psycho-social activity and success in competitive sports places high psychological demands on the participants. They have to be physically fit, mentally and socially balanced and technically and tactically sound to cope up the competitive situation. Hence their psychological alertness is of paramount importance. So we witness the emergence of sports psychology as a

major area of study in the discipline of physical education.[5]

Sports provide an outlet for the suppressed internal feelings of a person; it is like a safety valve to "blow off the steam". Nervous, tired and frustrated persons can take sports as a tonic. Sports can be utilized for the students to dissociate them from the monotony of books and the pressure of studies.

Sports provide learning situation in formal and informal ways in which the participants learn to modify certain qualities in a unique way. According to Dr. L. Lusen, sport activity is determined by four sub-systems i.e. the cultural, social, personal and organic system. Sports play a vital role in developing individual's character and desirable personality traits. With art, religion and normal values, sports share value system, which is always an important part of human society. Mental toughness is the ability to consistently sustain one's ideal performance state during adversities in competition. Performing to one's potential requires good technique and mental skills. Ups and downs in performance are often directly traceable to psychological ups and downs. Players who create a special atmosphere within them perform consistently. Mental toughness is learnt, not inherited. The ultimate measure of mental toughness is consistency.

The mentally tough competitor is self-motivated and self-directed. He/she does not need to be pushed from outside as he is controlled from within. The player is in total control of his emotions. He/she is positive and realistic about his/her goals and success. The individual is generally calm and relaxed under pressure situations. The person is also mentally alert, focused, confident and responsible for his/her actions. He/ She are ready for action, usually energetic and determined.

Mental toughness can also give you an edge like focusing on the match no matter what is happening around, keeping you calm and cool in the court. Having mental toughness is having a high EQ (emotional intelligence).

While the needs of each athlete will vary, there are common strategies used by many Players.

Goal-setting

Players will engage in various goal-setting strategies to deliver a successful performance. While they may have an outcome goal of winning a medal or placing among the top finishers, they will also set performance goals and process goals.

Performance goals are self-referenced and may involve the goal of achieving a new personal best. Process goals direct athletes' attention to the execution of technical elements necessary to be successful. They are the "hows" and "ways" to achieving an outcome or performance goal.

Self-talk

Self-efficacy is the unshakeable belief of an athlete that they can meet the challenge they are facing. It is arguably the cornerstone for any great performance. Self-talk is a strategy that can positively influence self-efficacy and performance.

Self-talk is the internal dialogue we have with ourselves. In a given day we have over 50,000 thoughts. Thoughts are powerful and can affect an athlete's confidence. While it's impossible for an athlete to keep track of all the thoughts they may have in a given day, athletes can engage in positive self-talk. Such talk can include affirmations of their strength, and cue words that pump them up or manage their nerves. It can include simple reminders of where their focus should be and what it is they need to execute.

Successful Players manage their thoughts effectively, ensuring they are their own best friend at the top of the slope or stepping out onto centre ice. Ultimately, this process has the incredible ability to make an athlete feel confident, in control and ready to face any challenge.

Canada's Cassie Sharpe skis to a gold medal win during the women's ski halfpipe at the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games. Competitors like Sharpe often visualize their entire performance – including twisting their bodies to simulate the moves – moments before starting their routines.

Imagery

Imagery can be one of the more difficult skills to learn but, when well executed, it enables an Olympian to envision performing their discipline from start to finish as if they were doing it in real time. Imagery involves visualizing the actual action an athlete would like to execute and engages all of their senses. What is most incredible is that when it is well practiced, the muscles involved in the activity in real life will fire in the same sequence and rate — as if the activity was actually being performed. As a player, imagery was one of the mental skills we relied on the most. In preparation for competition, we would spend hours envisioning what we wanted to execute and how it should feel. We would even create bad scenarios that could occur, feeling the pressure and discomfort, and rehearse what my appropriate response would be. When it was time to compete, I felt ready for any and every situation. This was easily the hardest area of my preparation but something critical to perform well when it counted most.

Arousal control

Players have a sweet spot for how they like to feel when performing their best. This is their optimal arousal level. Some athletes prefer being very pumped up while others

may enjoy being so calm you wonder whether they know they are about to compete.

Like a thermostat that regulates the temperature of a house, successful Players are well dialed into their level of arousal. If they find they are outside of this zone, they will regulate it. When it comes to high performance, there is no question being mentally tough places any athlete at an advantage over their competitor. While it may be possible for some athletes to have this innate quality, it can certainly be harnessed and developed. The importance of the mental toughness is well understood by successful Players. Most world-class athletes understand developing their mental skills is as important as working on their physical and technical skills.

3. Review of Literature

Mohammadzadeh and Sami (2014) [6] compared selected psychological skills of elite and non-elite volleyball players. 30 elite and 30 non elite volleyball players of Urmia premier league were selected as sample. Psychological skills assessment issued by South Australian Sports Institute (SASI) was used to collect the data. The results showed that elite volleyball players, compared with non-elite ones, recorded higher scores at all levels of mental skills.

Khan et al. (2013) [7] compared self-concept, mental toughness and body image of State and All India Interschool soccer players. 27 State and 27 All India Interschool male soccer players constitute the sample for the present study. Self-concept was measured by Deo (1998) questionnaire and body image was measured by Singh (1991) questionnaire. It was found that self-concept and body image did not differ significantly among soccer players on the basis of their level of participation.

Sheard M [8] studied the relation between nationality and a selected indicator of psychological performance in rugby league football was examined. Mental toughness was assessed using the alternative psychological performance inventory (PPI-A) and hardiness using the personal views survey III-R (PVS III-R). Participants (N=49, M age=21.7 yr., SD=2.3) were male elite-level university rugby league footballers representing Australia and Great Britain. Participants completed the questionnaires in training camp in Sydney, Australia, one week prior to the commencement of an international tournament there in 2006. Multivariate analysis revealed that the Australian universities players had significantly higher mean scores on positive cognition, visualization, total mental toughness and challenge that



their opponents from great Britain. The Australian universities players were also the tournament winners. The findings occur with previous research indicating superior mental toughness and hardiness are related to successful sport performance. Practical implications focus on the potentiality of ameliorative cultural environments.

Deshpande [9] compared the mental toughness of north east, south, and west zone badminton players on the basis of their position in zonal and all India inter university badminton tournament. Subjects for the study 96 male badminton players of different university qualifying in north east, south and west zone inter university badminton. Tournament for inter zonal, inter university badminton tournament, 2000-01 session. The questionnaire on mental toughness prepared by Alan Golberg has 60 items consisting of 4 categories namely: Handling pressure (20 questions), Concentration (17 questions), Mental Rebounding (14 questions) and Winning Attitude (9 questions). To compare the mental toughness of badminton players from different universities means and standard deviation were computed for the mental toughness and all its variables. Two - way analysis of variance (F-ratio) was applied to compare the mental toughness of badminton players from different universities which result in significant F-ratio in mental toughness for only (2.072) Post-hoc test of least Significant Difference was applied to study the significant differences.

Lee Crust, KayvonAzadi [10] “studied to the relationship between mental toughness and athlete’s use of psychological performance strategies. Sixty-seven male (mean age 22.6 years, $s=5.0$) and 40 females (mean age 21.1 years, $s=2.8$) athletes, he found as club/university to national standards in a variety of sports, participated in the study. Participants completed the MTQ 48 (Clough et al., 2002) to measure mental toughness and the test of performance strategies to easier the use of psychological strategies in practice and competition. Results of Pearson correlations and linear regression analysis revealed that self-talk, emotional control and relaxation strategies were significantly and positively ($r=0.26$ to 0.37 , $p<0.01$) related to mental toughness in both practice and competition of the MTQ48 subscales, commitment was found to lead most frequently against performance strategies and thus it is possible that the results of this study reflects highly committed performers and seeking performances enhancement strategies, consistent with theoretical predictions, athletes of country standard and above reported significantly higher mental toughness than club/university athletes (t 0.05= - 2.25, $p=0.03$).

Apgar [11] investigated that wide spread changes that

winning is over emphasized in high school athletes, Kenyon's attitude towards physical inventory was modified to include pursuits of victory dimension of interscholastic athletics. The instrument was administered to 341 randomly selected male high school students for a central New York high school. Factor analysis of split half reliability techniques yielded satisfactorily validity and reliability measures for modified instruments. Data were analyzed by ANOVA, t test multiple discriminant functions analysis and Scheffe's test. They were tested at or beyond 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that male high school students placed no greater emphasis on winning than on all. The order dimension of interscholastic athletics the relatively low rank order of winning dimensions (6 out of 8), reputed, in part, critics charges that winning dominant high school athletics. The result also showed that athletics placed greater emphasis on winning then did non-athletes there was no difference in attitude towards winning according to the type of activity purposed (Team Vs Individual Sport).

Kate Hays, Owen Thomas, Ian W. Maynard and Joanne Butt [12] examined the applicability of confidence profiling to the development of an individualized intervention designed in accordance with Murphy and Murphy's (1992) eight step cognitive- behavioral model. The case study designed illustrated the potentials uses and benefits of confidence profiling when developing an athlete driving intervention to enhance the sport confidence of a female swimmer. Specifically, it showed how confidence profiling can act as an applied measure to accurately assess sport confidence from the athlete's own perceptive, provide the basis of an intervention targeted toward the athlete's individual confidence needs, and provide feedback to the sport psychologist concerning the effectiveness of the intervention. A post intervention interview with the athlete highlighted the usefulness of the confidence profiling process. Specifically, the profiling process helped to raise the athlete's awareness of the factors that facilitated and debilitated her sport confidence. Furthermore, the athlete reported feeling more confident and very satisfied with the mental skills training, which she perceived resulted in performance gains. Scalan and Passer³² examined the attribution of young females athletes ($N=163$) for their personal and team's performance after winning, tying and losing a competitive soccer game. Player's attributions were made to the internal factors of ability and effort and to the external factor of opponent difficulty and luck. It was proposed that opportunities for tying and losing players to make self-projecting external ascription would be limited by situational constraints operating in competitive sports that



reduce the possibility and acceptability of such defensive responses. Overall the findings provided the support for this situational constraint nation. Additionally, the results of this study with young female soccer players generally were consistent with findings of previous study involving young male soccer player, suggesting that game outcomes has similar impact on the attribution responses of girls and boys.

Connaughton D, Wadey R, Hanton S, Jones G [13] studied to be interviewed about the development of mental toughness. We also aimed to determine whether mental toughness requires maintenance. Semi structured interviews were conducted to elicit the participant's perceptions of how mental toughness is cultivated and retained. Findings indicated that the development of mental toughness is a long term process that encompasses a multitude of underlying mechanism that operate in a combined, rather than independent fashion. In general, these perceived underlying mechanisms related to many features associated with a motivational climate (e.g. enjoyment, mastery), various individuals (i.e. coaches, peers, parents, grandparents, siblings, senior athletes, sport psychologists, team-mates), experiences in and outside sport, psychological skills and strategies and an insatiable desire and internalized motives to succeed. It was also reported that once mental toughness had been developed, three perceived underlying mechanisms were required to require maintaining this construct: a desire and motivation to succeed that was insatiable and internalized, a sport network that included sporting and non-sporting personnel and effective use of basic and advanced psychological skills. Practical implications and future avenues of research are discussed.

4. Findings

Studies of mental toughness developing definitions and conceptualizations literature were identified for this review. The operational definition of mental toughness piqued people's curiosity, followed by an understanding of the operational mechanisms that drive the development of mental toughness, and finally, measuring techniques for testing mental toughness in athletes. While the presence of recurring themes aids in the development of a general understanding of mental toughness and its components, non-empirical studies that appear to be based more on anecdotal, experiential consultations and applied work with elite performers than on rigorous systematic research programmes have limited the theoretical development in the early mental toughness literature. Recent studies have

taken a more thorough and systematic approach to understanding and examining mental toughness; yet, these have been criticised for their shortcomings and have been found as rather problematic.

5. Conclusion and future research recommendations

Although the research of mental toughness has progressed with the introduction of more scientifically rigorous methodologies, there are still certain limitations and theoretical descriptions to consider when interpreting their findings. Mental toughness appears to be multifaceted, with unwavering self-belief, the ability to bounce back after failures (resilience), persistence or refusal to quit, dealing effectively with adversity and pressure, and maintaining concentration in the face of numerous potential distractions being the most common characteristics. Most modern academics believe that an individual's mental toughness is influenced by both inherited traits and learning, experience, and environmental factors. Higher levels of mental toughness are related with improved performance in both cognitive and physical skills, according to research investigating the relationship between mental toughness and performance. The creation of valid and reliable measurement devices appears to be one of the most important steps toward a better understanding of mental toughness. Other psychological factors such as emotions, affections, perceptions, or pains have been used in the past as a possible mechanism for psychological mental toughness in competitive sports circumstances. As a result, this topic should be viewed as a future research direction because there is still possibility for further development of potential confirmation methods.

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