

Tennis sport (psychology of game) essay sample

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Traditionally, sports include emotion, competition, cooperation, and many other different aspects, which provide a rich area for psychological studies. Tennis has been always considered to be more than merely a game of athletes. It is obvious even for the regular audience, watching tennis performance that tennis players subject themselves to intense emotional stress. In the contemporary context of sports science development, where all professional athletes have equal financial and social opportunities to master their tennis skills, the psychological aspect remains to be the only area where one can obtain essential competitive advantage. Therefore, from personal standpoint, psychological side of tennis represents significant interest.

For any individual who has ever played tennis in competitive manner, the necessity to maintain positive mental health seems to be essential. Various studies on runners, golf players, wrestlers, and tennis players indicate that athletes have lower levels of depression, hostility and tension. The Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) measured levels of anxiety and stress among professional athletes, and chess, tennis, and golf players were found to have the highest levels. Other studies indicated that tennis-players have the most developed abilities to control arousal and focus their attention on the game (Bird, 216).

Studies of social influence in tennis, which were predominant in the 1960s and 1970s, focused on such issues as the influence of spectators, and competitors. Sports psychologists have also studied specific types of behavior in tennis. For instance, Rene Botta has investigated the origin and effect of aggression in sports by testing the concept of sport as a cathartic

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release of aggression. During the research it was found that aggressive sports tend to increase rather than diminish hostility and aggression. Thus, Botta reported that tennis players are inclined to have a low aggression and hostility indices (Cratty, 76-77). However, according to Botta tennis along with golf and boxing was notably marked as the most affected by the influence of audience and competitors.

In 1996 Rene Botta conducted an extensive study of tennis players behavior. However, different from other studies focused on professional tennis players, Botta's main consideration was to examine the behavior and psychological impact of tennis among amateurs. During training sessions no significant results or observations were noticed, however during contest sessions, behavior of sample (both men and women) notably changed. Botta reported about increase of self-doubt, anger, and stress. Simultaneously, relationships between participants considerably deteriorated. During peak points of game, participants heartbeat rate varied from 150-180 b/min, moving beyond lactate threshold. Botta interpreted such observations as a result of extreme tension. However, after contest questionnaire answers of participants contained that the main determinants of their behavior during competition were fear of failure and pressure imposed by spectators and research personnel (Botta, 118).

Many researchers were studying the behavior of professional tennis players in order to have an insight into human behavior in various situations. That is why the topic constitutes an extreme importance. The majority of tennis players allege that the main psychological obstacle for them is fear of failure. The same fears chase some people throughout their lives restraining them

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from potential achievements. Famous tennis player Erik Noah, in the interview to Tennis Digest admitted that, “ The road to failure is paved with negativity. If you think you can’t do something, chances are you won’t be able to” (Tennis Digest, 31). According to Noah and many pros tennis is more likely to be called mental game, especially considering its professional aspects. The unique results in sports psychology, especially those related to tennis, have already contributed to other, more conventional areas of psychology and are recognized as having significant applications to the mental health of the general population.

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