

Sport psychology narrative flashcard



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Sports Psychology Scenario one: bottom of the ninth, full count, bases loaded, tied game. Scenario two: eighteenth hole, ten foot put to win the match. Scenario three: championship game, game tied, penalty kick awarded ninety minutes into the game. Three different scenarios all involving game winning situations, athletes, and pressure. Scenarios like these can occur in every sport at every level. Athletic competitions at all levels have reached new heights in almost every aspect of it. With the growing competition and talent, athletes now need both physical and mental strength to achieve their maximum performance level.

Sport psychology helps athletes enhance their mental strength needed to perform better in their sport by improving their mental skills. Sport psychology is a relatively new established field in psychology. According to Jarvis, the concept of sport psychology is as old as psychology itself. The first cited sport psychology experiment was performed by Norman Triplett during the nineteenth century (Jarvis). In 1920 the Deutsche Sporthochschule (German Sport University Cologne) was the first sport psychology laboratory established by Carl Diem in Berlin, Germany (Careers in Sport Psychology).

Sport psychology was introduced to the United States by Coleman Griffith. Griffith established the first sport psychology laboratory in the United States known as the Athletic Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois. Due to this, Coleman Griffith is often referred to as the “father of sport psychology” (Jarvis). In 1965 the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) was formed. A year later in 1966, sport psychologists in Chicago founded the was created (Careers in Sport Psychology). In 1985 the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) was formed.

The creation of these three sport psychology focused associations sparked interest and expanded the field of sport psychology across the United States and Europe. Sport psychology is “ the study of the psychological and mental factors that influence and are influenced by participation and performance in sport, exercise, and physical activity, and the application of the knowledge gained through this study to everyday settings”(Careers in Sport Psychology) . Athletes seek sport psychologists for three main reasons; to enhance performance, to overcome pressures that accompany competitions, and to overcome an injury (Careers in Focus).

A sport psychologist can help enhance the performance of an athlete by strengthening the athlete’s mental skills. Mental skills can be categorized into five different categories (Cockshott). The first one is deals with an athlete’s goals. Goals must have two parts to them; the first being direction and the second being the minimum standard of performance required. These two parts make a goal attainable. A goal setting guides an athlete towards their goals. Mastery and skill acquisition can be acquired through an athlete’s goal setting (Cockshott).

Sport psychologists help athletes achieve their goals by a process known as goal orientation and the athlete’s own motivation. There are two types of goal orientation. The first is outcome goal orientation. Outcome goal orientation is guided by objective, measurable verifications of improvements such as a winning record. The second type is performance goal orientation. This type of orientation is guided by an athlete’s improvement or mastery of skills (Cashmore). Imagery is the second mental skill that can enhance an athlete’s performance.

Imagery involves “...mentally picturing an event as vividly as possible with the intention of duplicating that event in actuality...” (Cashmore). Imagery is most commonly used prior to a competition or training session. A sport psychologist helps an athlete simulate or imagine themselves performing a skill (Cockshott). Imagery can also help an athlete in decision making by thinking through and imagining possible scenarios the athlete may come across during competition. Imagery should be a multi-sensory experience. The athlete must be able to incorporate touch, taste, hear, sight and smell into their mental picture (Moran).

An athlete’s ability to concentrate and focus is crucial to its performance. Concentration is the control over one’s attention (Cashmore). According to Moran attention is divided into three dimensions. The first is concentration itself, which refers to an athlete’s ability to “...exert deliberate mental effort on what is most important in any given situation...” (Moran). The second dimension is selective perception. Selective dimension is the ability to “zoom in” on a certain event or information while ignoring potential distractions. The third dimension is double tasking.

An athlete should be able to perform two skills equally well at the same time. For example, a “good” soccer player should be able to keep the ball away from the opponent while simultaneously looking around for the opportunity to pass or score. A sport psychologist can help improve an athlete’s concentration by indirectly evaluating it through psychometric, experimental or neuroscientific assessments (Moran). Self confidence is a crucial mental skill category that allows an athlete to perform acceptably in a competition. Confidence designates a strong sense of self-believe.

According to Cockshott, self-confidence in an athlete allows the athlete to have strong positive thoughts, a “ care-free” attitude during a competition, and good skill execution. An athlete’s confidence can be characterized as multi-dimensional. The dimensions to self-confidence are confidence about physical ability, adaptability, psychological and perceptual skills, learning potential, fitness and training level, and decision making (Weinberg). A lack of confidence and overconfidence can lead an athlete to under perform in a competition.

With competition comes pressure, and with pressure comes stress. Athletes rely on sport psychology to learn effective ways of coping with stress derived from competition. Stress is defined by Weinberg as a “...substantial imbalance between physical and psychological demand and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet the demand has important consequences. ” An athlete’s stress can be separated into four stages. The first stage is environmental demand which is the stage in which a demand is placed upon an athlete. The second stage is the perception of demand.

In this stage the athlete perceives the amount of physical or psychological “ threat. ” The third stage is the stress response. Reactions to stress may include changes in concentration, tension in muscles and anxiety. The last stage includes the behavioral response, in which an athlete may rise to the occasion and overcome their stress or deteriorate and crumble under their stress. Using these four stages, a sport psychologist can help reduce the stress of an athlete by finding the source of their stress and their response to stress.

A sport psychologist may also help the athlete cope with stress by teaching the athlete stress management techniques, and relaxation techniques such as progressive relaxation, breath control, and meditation (Cockshott). The fifth mental skill that can help an athlete is motivation. Motivation is defined as being the intensity and direction of an athlete's effort. Motivation is approached by sports psychologists in two different views. The first view is trait-centered view. In trait-centered view, motivation is viewed as a trait characteristic of the athlete.

The personality and goals of an athlete are what motivates the athlete. Athletes whose motivation increases or decreases as situations change is approached through the situation centered view. Sport psychologists can help athletes build motivation by following five guidelines. A sport psychologist must consider the situation and personal factors. Afterwards, the sport psychologist must understand and identify the athlete's multiple motives, decide how environmental factors affect the athlete's motivation, and discover how or what influences the athlete's motivation.

Achievement motivation is an athlete's efforts to master a task, achieve excellence, overcome obstacles, perform better than others, and take pride in implementing their talent. Motivation is affected by situational factors, personality factors, emotional factors and environmental factors. Motivation can be the ultimate mental skill that can give the athlete the competitive edge to perform above the competition (Weinberg). With increased competitiveness at all levels of sports, aggressiveness and long grueling training sessions athletic injuries have become abundant among athletes.

It is estimated that up to seventeen million athletes are injured in an athletic environment every year (Weinberg). Even though physical factors attribute to most athletic injuries, psychological factors also attribute to athletic injuries. According to Weinberg, personality factors, stress levels, and attitude have all been identified as psychological factors that can attribute to athletic injuries. Psychological intervention can help the athlete through athletic injury rehabilitation. Injury rehabilitation can be sorted into three phases. The first phase is the injury and illness phase. In this phase sport psychologists help the athlete deal with the emotional factors that accompany the athlete's injury. The second phase is the recovery and rehabilitation phase. A sport psychologist "help the athlete sustain motivation and adherence to rehabilitation protocols" (Weinberg). The third phase is the return to full activity phase. The last phase concentrates on the athlete's ability to return to competition and excel in it.

Sport psychology helps the athlete rehabilitate in their physical injuries using the well known concept that "The mind is stronger than the body" (Jarvis) Many elite athletes now claim that their sport is ninety nine percent mental and only one percent physical. Athletes must now possess two very different strengths in order to be successful at what they do. An athlete can now physically train with his or her personal trainer and psychologically train with his or her sport psychologist. Learning and executing mental skills during competition can make the difference between a win and a loss.