

ISSUES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of psychological preparation in sports, its impact on the effectiveness of athletes' performance, and its role during competitions. It highlights that, alongside physical and technical training, psychological preparation is a crucial factor in achieving high-level results. Furthermore, the article outlines the scientific foundations of motivation, emotional stability, stress and anxiety management, self-confidence development, concentration, and the cultivation of volitional qualities. It examines the effectiveness of modern sports psychology methods, including psychological training, autogenic exercises, visualization, and relaxation techniques. Additionally, the collaboration between coaches and sports psychologists in preparing athletes for competitions, as well as the importance of an individualized psychological approach, is substantiated. Research findings indicate that systematically organizing psychological preparation strengthens athletes' mental stability, increases their chances of success in competitions, and contributes to consistent improvement in athletic performance. Psychological preparation plays a vital role in achieving high results in sports. The article discusses key aspects of athlete preparation focused on developing mental stability, motivation, and emotional regulation. The primary methods and techniques of psychological preparation are outlined, along with their impact on the success of athletes across various sports.

Keywords: psychological preparation, sport, motivation, stress resilience, concentration, emotional regulation, self-control, sports psychology.

Introduction.

Psychological preparation is a crucial component of an athlete's overall training, alongside physical and tactical preparation. It encompasses work on motivation, concentration, and the management of emotions and stress. Modern research indicates that a high level of psychological preparation enables athletes not only to overcome challenges on the path to success more effectively but also to

maintain long-term performance stability. The aim of this study is to examine key aspects of psychological preparation in sports and to propose methods for enhancing athletes' psychological resilience. Throughout their activities, individuals pass through stages that require psychological competence.

Discussion and Results.

Individual characteristics play a significant role in an athlete's decision-making process. In the educational aspect of an activity, key tasks regarding personal development are addressed: transmitting knowledge gained from human experience to the next generation and fostering essential life skills and competencies. Through the educational process, the learner acquires knowledge that enables participation in general labor activities and contributes to the improvement of socially significant production.

In contemporary pedagogy, education—viewed as a form of cognitive activity—encompasses several fundamental objectives:

- imparting knowledge, skills, and competencies to learners;
- shaping their worldview, ideas, and convictions;
- ensuring learners attain a certain level of education, culture, and upbringing;
- developing their abilities. Age and gender differences must be taken into account when engaging in sports.

Adolescents differ in the acuity and breadth of their intellect: some assimilate a vast array of facts and gain a deep understanding of fundamental scientific principles; others may assimilate fewer facts yet still grasp the underlying principles deeply; while a third group is content with superficial study, achieving only a basic level of understanding and retention. Significant differences in speech culture are evident: generally, many young men and women possess rich speech, enabling them to describe phenomena in a vivid, expressive manner and to form clear, profound mental images.

The emergence and consolidation of these individual intellectual traits depend on a variety of factors. By observing the adult members of their families and their teachers—particularly those they admire and respect—adolescents imitate their mannerisms and ways of reasoning, sometimes consciously but often unconsciously.

During youth, such imitation can foster stable forms of mental activity. Achievements and incentives gained while studying specific subjects can reinforce methods for retaining and recalling educational material [1].

Psychological understanding encompasses an individual's cognitive processes, creativity, emotional state, and personal characteristics. An individual

cannot directly perceive or physically touch every object and phenomenon in the surrounding world. Consequently, much of the knowledge acquired is comprehended not through tactile contact or visual observation, but through reasoning and logic. In the process of creative thinking, tasks such as problem-solving, execution, deliberation, reflection, and hypothesizing are carried out using methods and tools of logical reasoning [2].

According to Abu Nasr al-Farabi: "Every human being is naturally constituted in such a way that they require many things to survive and attain a high level of maturity; unable to acquire these things alone, they need a community of people. The collective activity of such a community's members provides each of them with the essentials for survival and the attainment of maturity [3]."

Achieving high results in sports depends not only on physical conditioning and technical or tactical skills but also directly on the athlete's level of psychological preparation. Modern sports practice demonstrates that the key difference between athletes with comparable physical capabilities lies in their mental readiness, ability to manage emotions, stress resilience, and self-confidence. Consequently, psychological preparation is an integral component of the sports training system.

Psychological preparation is the process of developing the mental qualities that enable an athlete to manage their mental state during competitions and training, maintain motivation, strengthen emotional stability, and achieve high performance. This preparation helps athletes fully realize their potential, make quick and correct decisions in complex situations, and perform effectively even under pressure.

In sports psychology, the primary goal of psychological preparation is to cultivate a drive for victory, strong willpower, self-confidence, mental stability, and the ability to rapidly adapt to competitive conditions. This process is organized with due regard for the athlete's individual psychological traits, age, specific sport, and level of experience. Motivation is a key component of psychological preparation. While intrinsic motivation stems from an athlete's interest in the sport, the need for self-improvement, and the drive for personal growth, extrinsic motivation is shaped by factors such as rewards, medals, and recognition from coaches or the public. Sustained motivation ensures that the athlete approaches training with a sense of responsibility over the long term.

Managing one's emotional state is of particular importance in sports. Pre-competition excitement, anxiety, fear, or excessive mental tension can negatively affect an athlete's technical execution. Consequently, the process of psychological preparation involves teaching athletes how to control their emotions, manage stress, and maintain mental balance.

Stress is an integral part of sports, and managing it effectively directly impacts performance outcomes. Excessive stress leads to reduced concentration, impaired coordination, and an increase in errors. Conversely, an optimal level of psychological tension boosts an athlete's activity and mobilizes the body for

competition. For this reason, sports psychologists teach athletes strategies for managing stress constructively.

Managing attention and developing concentration are also crucial aspects of psychological preparation. In sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, boxing, chess, and gymnastics, the ability to maintain focus over extended periods and ignore external distractions is key to achieving high results. Specialized psychological exercises and attention-development methods are employed to achieve this. Volitional qualities—such as determination, patience, discipline, responsibility, courage, self-control, and the ability to persistently pursue a goal—play a significant role in athletic performance. These qualities are particularly vital in the decisive moments of a competition, helping the athlete secure victory. Such qualities are cultivated through regular training, the execution of complex tasks, and psychological training sessions.

Modern methods are widely used in the psychological preparation of athletes. Through visualization, an athlete mentally imagines the competition process and rehearses the perfect execution of movements. Autogenic exercises and breathing techniques help relax the body, regulate heart rate, and reduce anxiety. Relaxation methods alleviate muscle tension, while positive self-talk strengthens the athlete's self-confidence. The coach is a key figure in shaping an athlete's psychological readiness. Sincere communication, fair treatment, encouragement, and the constructive use of criticism by the coach significantly influence the athlete's mental state. It is essential for the coach to consider the athlete's individual characteristics and select a psychological approach tailored to each specific athlete.

A sports psychologist assesses an athlete's individual psychological traits, organizes psychological training sessions, provides counseling before and after competitions, and offers practical assistance in boosting motivation and reducing stress. Collaboration between the coach and the sports psychologist ensures the athlete's comprehensive development.

In team sports, another crucial aspect of psychological preparation is fostering a positive team environment. Mutual trust, effective communication, leadership, conflict resolution, and working together toward a common goal are key factors determining a team's success. Consequently, team-based psychological training is widely utilized in sports practice.

Today, digital technologies are also making their way into sports psychology. Virtual reality (VR), biofeedback systems, AI-driven psychological monitoring, mobile applications, and online psychological training are creating new opportunities to assess and enhance athletes' mental well-being. These innovative tools serve to further increase the effectiveness of psychological preparation.

In conclusion, psychological preparation is one of the most critical factors in achieving high-level athletic performance. It strengthens an athlete's motivation, ensures emotional stability, helps manage stress and anxiety, and develops qualities such as focus and willpower. Systematic psychological preparation, organized through the collaboration of the coach, sports psychologist, and athlete, ensures the athlete's success in competitions, professional development, and sustained performance in their sporting career.

Conclusion.

Mental preparation is a crucial component of a successful sports career. Developing motivation, stress resilience, and emotional regulation enables athletes not only to achieve their goals but also to maintain psychological well-being under high-stress conditions. It is important that psychological preparation holds an equal place within the overall training process.

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