

The Psychology of Success in Sports – Book Review

Ling Ik Sin, Nurwina Anuar

Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: nurwina@ukm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/16889>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/16889

Published Date: 07 May 2023

Abstract

This book comprises five chapters that talk about the psychology behind being successful in sports in a general sense. These kinds of books are extremely necessary for coaches, those who aspire to become coaches, and athletes to read in order to improve their preparation for the training and contests they will encounter. The author gives arguments, information, and scientific data in a presentation and language style that is easy to understand for every reader and is interesting to read in order to break down each issue that is being discussed and presented in the book.

Keywords: Psychology, Success, Sports, Book Review

The importance of mental and emotional skills in talent search

The author highlights in the first chapter that in order to maintain success in sports, talented athletes, parents, and coaches will encounter four desires that require attention (Brown, 2001).

The first thing that is desired is an overemphasis on the evaluation of potential. It's possible that parents and coaches are looking for their athletes to become stars so badly that they can't provide their athletes an objective evaluation of their skills. They are incorrect in their assumption that having high physical skills is a clear indication of talent selection. Everyone concerned will feel disappointment whenever young athletes are unable to come up to the standards expected of them.

The second aspiration is to place a higher premium on one's physical abilities than on one's mental and emotional fortitude. Professional athletes are outstanding sportsmen even if they are not the largest, fastest, or strongest, but they use mental skills and emotional strength, qualities that are not visible, to achieve great success compared to athletes who only rely on their physical abilities. This allows professional athletes to achieve greater success than athletes who only rely on their physical abilities. According to Ziemilska (2005), who argued that gymnasts do not require a large body size in order to perform effectively during competitions, the most important factors are muscular strength and mental ability. This view is backed by this research.

The third desire is to take advantage of one's abilities. A skilled athlete's health and athletic career can be jeopardised in a number of ways, including beginning training at a young age, pressuring athletes to practise beyond their limitations, playing an excessive number of games, and employing particular equipment to boost performance. As a result of parents and coaches who are overly aggressive and have unrealistic goals, there is a high incidence of injuries among children who participate in sports. This is because children are prevented from enjoying themselves when they are overly focused on achieving their goals.

The fourth objective is to place such a premium on athletic ability that young athletes are rendered incapable of adjusting to a life outside of the sports scene. Talented athletes should be able to transition smoothly into other facets of life and be able to thrive in settings that are not related to sports when a competition is over. It is the shared obligation of parents, coaches, teachers, and friends to assist talented athletes in developing interests in areas outside of their sport (Brown, 2001).

Building a Solid Team through Player Cohesion

This is the second chapter that the author has written, and in it, he discusses research that have been done on the impacts of cohesion on performance. He also provides an overview of cohesion, identifying the three primary components that need to be addressed in order to improve team performance. These three aspects include interpersonal attractiveness, individual commitment, and individual pride within the group in which one participates as a member of the team. Each of these aspects plays a role. On the other hand, performance is a clear determinant of whether or not the goal of building cohesion will be successful. The majority of the studies' findings point to a positive relationship between group cohesion and performance, with the main magnitude of the relationship depending on some less stable elements, such as the level of interaction among group members, the size of the group, and the reality of the group itself. Individuals who are directly involved in team sports should strive to generate the maximum possible amount of team cohesion because it has a significant impact on performance decisions and, ultimately, to keep every member of the group together to achieve success and reject unfavourable performance and team instability.

Motivate Teenagers to Continue being Active in Sports and Physical Activities

The author argues in chapter three that despite the fact that a large number of people are aware that engaging in physical activity has a beneficial impact on one's health, there are still a great number of people who are unsure about whether or not they should begin an exercise routine (Moran, 2004). Hence, it is important for every person, and particularly for adolescents, to begin participating in active pursuits and exercises as soon as possible in order to protect their future health and well-being (Corbin et al., 2004). As was discussed before, there are a number of issues, including a lack of motivation, that prevent persons from engaging in physical activity and exercise (McAuley et al., 1990). Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to provide direction not only for parents and teachers but also for peers, other teenagers, and the teenagers themselves on how to improve motivation to begin involvement in physical activity and exercise and how to continue making it a regular practise. It is vitally important that all parties involved in the effort to motivate teens recognise that varied techniques are required according to the peculiarities of the youngsters themselves (Buckworth & Dishman, 2002).

Effective Sports Leadership

The author explained in the fourth chapter that in order to become an effective leader, one needs to have technical skills, human skills, and conceptual abilities because these things can help in the growth of a versatile leader. The most effective leaders are those who are constantly working to better themselves so that they may look back on their careers with satisfaction and pride. New leaders-in-training and coaches who are just getting started in this industry of sports should familiarise themselves with the qualities and standards highlighted up top. This information can serve as a foundation for new leaders-in-training and coaches who want to be successful in the field of leadership they are pursuing.

How to Overcome the Problem of Lack of Imagery in Sports

The author stresses the importance of imaging skills for all athletes in the fifth chapter of the book. Athletes have faith in the power of mental images to help them better their performance and put their skills into action. Images can only be created using a dedicated software application. The beginning skills of imaging need to be taught to athletes by their coaches as a first step. Usually, the coaches will perform the skill first, either by presenting an example or by playing back a video recording of themselves doing it. After the movements or activities that the athlete is tasked with performing have been identified, the focus shifts to how the athlete should mentally see performing those moves. After performing the imagery skill, the mental activity of visualising movements has resulted in the formation of nodes and its own coding system.

Imagery skills allow athletes to visualise the motions they want to perform in their heads before actually carrying them out, which typically results in the athletes feeling more prepared and confident in their abilities. Imagery skills are practised in order to construct nodes and its own coding system so that the participants can become accustomed to the actual conditions of the competition. Visualization serves as a form of mental preparation for athletes before they enter a real-life competition. Athletes are put through a variety of mental workouts by their coaches, including things like hypnosis, visualisation, meditation, and other similar practises. Developing abilities in imaging can be accomplished through a variety of means, such as through individual training, training in groups, recording modules, imagery exams, and imagery reports.

Improving an athlete's performance may also involve using a number of different tactics or routines. Relaxation imagery skills, practising simple and difficult skills repeatedly, developing tactics and strategies to face opposing teams, recalling past outstanding records achieved, implementing programmes to achieve dream goals, being a key player in moving the team forward, and focusing on what needs to be done are some additional examples of imagery that can be performed to overcome a lack of imagery ability.

Several different image-processing programmes have been put together. When developing the imagery programme for their athletes, coaches are need to follow several fundamental principles in order to reach the greatest possible level of effectiveness. This includes explaining the objectives and goals of imagery and convincing athletes of the effectiveness of imagery training, assessing the abilities and capabilities of athletes in applying imagery skills, training athletes to use their senses and emotions in imagery to form an appropriate imagery role for the sport they are involved in, and evaluating the effectiveness of the imagery programme that has been implemented for the effectiveness of the imagery training to the athletes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this book provides valuable insights into the psychology behind being successful in sports. From the importance of mental and emotional skills in talent search to building a solid team through player cohesion, motivating teenagers to continue being active in sports, and effective sports leadership, this book covers a wide range of topics that are relevant to coaches, aspiring coaches, and athletes. The author uses a language style that is easy to understand, and provides scientific data and real-life examples to support their arguments.

Overall, this book serves as a great resource for anyone who is involved in the world of sports. It provides practical advice on how to develop the skills needed to succeed in sports, and highlights the importance of a balanced approach that takes into account both physical and mental well-being. By reading this book, coaches, aspiring coaches, and athletes can gain a better understanding of the psychological factors that contribute to success, and learn how to apply these insights to their own training and competitions.

References

- Brown J. (2001). *Sports Talent: How to identify and develop outstanding athlete*. Human Kinetics.
- Buckworth, J., & Dishman, R. K. (2002). *Exercise psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Corbin, S. B., Welk, G. J., Lindsey, R., & Corbin, W. R. (2004). *Concepts of fitness and wellness: A comprehensive lifestyle approach*. NY: McGraw Hill.
- McAuley, E., Poag, K., & Gleason, A. (1990). Attrition for exercise program: Attributional and affective perspectives. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 5.
- Moran, A. P. (2004). *Sport and exercise psychology: A critical introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Ziemilska, A. (2005). Effects of intensive gymnastic training on growth and maturation of children, *Biology of Sport*, 2 (4).