Analysis on Psychological Factors of College Athletes Based on A Cross-Theoretical Model

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Abstract

The results of sports competitions may be affected by various factors, such as sports skills, on-the-spot performance and psychological quality of athletes. In past sports training for athletes, more attention was generally paid to sports skills of sports athletes. With the continuous increase of sports competitions, psychological quality deficiency in athletes is becoming a more dominant reason for errors and its essentiality draws more attention in sports competitions. Therefore, psychological quality training has become an important link in athletes training in recent years. However, psychological quality is essentially a factor of ideological level to be highly abstract. Most psychological quality training depends on coaches’ personal experience, which is highly demanding and may result in psychological quality deficiency of some athletes. To solve the psychological stress of athletes more in a more scientific manner, it is necessary to start with the source of the psychological stress. Therefore, the paper analyzes the importance of the psychological quality of athletes in sports competition first, with the stress source and influential factors expounded and then puts forward the countermeasures to act as a reference for improving the competitive level of athletes.

Keywords: Cross-Theoretical Model, College Athlete, Psychosocial Factor.

1. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.1 Research background

In sports competitions, especially in high-level sports competitions, most athletes are equipped with excellent skills, making it difficult to distinguish one athlete from others only considering sports competition level. Therefore, sports competition is the competition of psychological quality and on-the-spot performance among athletes to some extent. In the context highly developed sports levels, sports competitions are increasingly fierce. It requires an excellent athlete to be equipped with not only solid sports skills and physical fitness but also tactics ability, psychological quality, response speed and other comprehensive abilities. Especially in finals, athletes are generally subject to huge psychological stress. How to release the psychological stress so as to perform sports skills has become the key to victory. According to relevant research, the psychological quality of athletes may account for more than 50% of competition results in sports competitions. Meanwhile, it is believed in relevant theories in sports psychology that whether athletes can succeed is directly related to their positive mental attitude and confidence. Therefore, sufficient attention should be paid to psychological quality in addition to sports skills in college athletes training with the psychological stress released in a pertinent manner to improve on-the-sport performance level of athletes.

1.2 Literature overview

For athletes, the psychological quality means the ability to make the most accurate decisions, release psychological stress and do their best on competition fields. In general, the psychological quality of athletes includes four elements. The first one is emotional adaptability, which means the ability to respond to stress in a flexible manner; The second one is emotional susceptibility, which means the ability for athletes to maintain their emotional appeal and connection while facing multiple stress; The third one is emotion intensity, which means the ability possess the most positive attitude on despite superior or inferior status on the field The last one is emotional resilience, which means the ability to get rid of depression as quickly as possible and re-engage in training and competitions after losing a game (Yang and Zhang, 2014). The psychological quality of athletes needs to be improved from the following aspects: accurate assessment of their own competition performance, positive attitude toward difficulties,
being brave when facing challenges, fearlessness for any situation on the field, being highly attentive in sports competitions, ability to conduct positive self-talk, ensuring diet nutrition and regularity, attention to warm up exercises, physical adaptability improvement and enjoyment in sports competitions (Lou et al., 2014). Influence by psychological factors varies significantly in sports competitions of different levels. Final competition results almost entirely depend on sports skill levels of athletes in sports competitions of general levels. It is mainly because the sports competitions of general levels have wider range of participating athletes of different qualities. In contrast, sports competitions of high levels are for professional athletes of higher skill levels which will not vary as much. Therefore, psychological quality become the main factor affecting the results (Sun and Xiao, 2012).

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF ATHLETES IN SPORTS COMPETITIONS

2.1 Subjective factors

In sports competitions, subjective psychological factors of athletes are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

The first is goal setting. Before a game starts, athletes usually set an intended goal to motivate themselves. The goal should be neither too high nor too low. An excessively high goal will exert great psychological stress on athletes and a great psychological gap will occur if the goal is not achieved (Sun and Teng, 2012). An excessively low goal will not play a motivating role. Therefore, reasonable goal setting helps improve the competition results of athletes.

The second is the performance level of skills and tactics. In sports, especially team sports, making and applying skills and tactics will directly affect competition results more than the sports skill level of athletes does (Zhou, 2012). The performance level of skills and tactics and psychological states of athletes interact mutually. Lower psychological stress enables athletes to perform advantages of skills and tactics to gain more favor and further motivate themselves while higher psychological stress hinders their performance of skills and tactics to frustrate their self-confidence and further application of skills and tactics (Sun, 2013).

The third is will quality. The level will quality directly affects whether an athlete can have a stable mental attitude. If an athlete is able to calmly face any competition and any form of competition situation to give full play to his competitiveness, then his sports competition result will improve significantly to obtain the final victory (Zeng and Liu, 2013).

The fourth is physical fitness level. Different competitions have different requirements on physical fitness of athletes. For example, sprint requires athletes with an intensive instant burst of energy while ball games require athletes with endurance for long-time exercises. The instant burst of energy is obtained from a long period of special training while durability means to reserve energy using good timing without waste (Sun and Xu, 2014). Physical exhaustion of athletes may result in tension which may affects subsequent judgment and sports competition results directly.

The fifth is self-motivation. Since it is impossible for athletes to be motivated and guided by others on competition fields, the psychological stress is generally released through self-motivation and guidance (Zhang et al., 2015). Athletes with good self-motivation can always stay in the best state with full confidence and emotional stability. They are also more likely to have exceptional performance in actual competitions.

2.2 Objective factors

In sports competitions, objective psychological factors of athletes are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

The first is field environment. The competition environment mainly includes the weather conditions during competitions, infrastructure construction levels of fields, comfort degree of equipment, and surplus objects on competition fields. Especially in outdoor stadiums, sunlight and wind speed will also affect competition states and psychological conditions of athletes (Si and Jiang, 2011).

The second is referee. In sports competitions, a referee mainly records scores, penalize and guide athletes. Since referees differ greatly from athletes in viewing competitions and what they focus on, they are apt to disagree in
penalty decisions. Once this problem occurs, the psychological status of an athletes may be severely affected (Zhang, 2011).

The third is coach. In sports competitions, main duties of coaches are to develop reasonable skills and tactics for the athletes and to conduct corresponding psychological counseling. Subject to multiple subjective or objective factors, qualities of coaches may vary significantly. Many coaches do not know how to carry out effective psychological guidance, which will also affect the psychological status of athletes to some extent (Wang et al., 2017).

3. COUNTERMEASURES TO RELIEVE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS FOR ATHLETES

3.1 Powerful self-confidence building

Self-confidence is an important factor for athletes to have a good competition attitude. Only by fully believe in their own ability can athletes better face field situations and do better in competitions. When an athlete’s score falls behind, he should motivate himself by firmly believing that as long as he plays at his normal level, he can gradually catch up with other competitors and even surpass them rather than giving in to a negative attitude believing he is less competitive, for this will evolve into a more negative psychology to restrain his subsequent performance. When the score takes the lead, he should also guard against arrogance to complete the game smoothly through self-guidance, achieving better results. With excessive prided and underestimating rivals, he may fail in fully giving play to his competitiveness to be overtaken by others (Cui and Zhang, 2014).

3.2 Emotion control and guidance

In sports competitions, every athlete may have anxiety and tension under the stress of audience on one hand and fierce competition between sports athletes one the other. Effective control and guide their emotions allow them to give play to their competitiveness better. The control and guidance are mainly conducted in the following steps: First, relax muscles for muscle tension also can cause the emotional tension, which hinders self-guidance. Second, slow down the pace of game and try not to be aggressive. Third, adjust the rhythm of your breathing to soothe the mood and stay highly concentrated to be more relaxed. Finally, view competitions as enjoyment rather than a burden. Only by dedicating themselves to competitions can they achieve better results (Chen, 2014).

3.3 Reasonable competition goal setting

As mentioned earlier, competition goal setting will directly affect personal emotion. Athletes should make a feasible goal and competition scheme to inspire their own passion and enthusiasm for competitions. More self-confidence can effectively give full play their competitiveness. The goal setting is to be decided by athletes themselves on the one hand and refers to coaches’ opinion on the other hand. Coaches are generally experienced in competition guidance. With the analysis of personal ability for an athlete and field situation by his coach, an attainable but not excessively high goal can be made, which both guides the athlete in making efforts and effectively arouses his enthusiasm for sports to give full play to his competitiveness and avoid motivation deficiency due to the lack of goals (Yang et al., 2013)

REFERENCES