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Original article

THE ROLE OF IMAGINATION AND MENTAL VISUALIZATION PROCEDURES IN PERFORMANCE SPORTS

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Abstract

Aim. The purpose of this study was to show the role of visualization and mental imagination procedures in performance sports, in the sense that this technique helps the athlete to imagine himself in a certain situation, to form a certain psychological path in a game before an important competition

An essential activity in practicing performance sports is the firmness of fast actions, in the shortest possible time, which makes the difference in competition. Recognising the best solution is an essential step in taking action.

The theory of dual processing shows that the information received by the brain is processed in two forms and implicitly the body movements take place, some of them reflexively (correctly assimilated movements) and respectively the other form implies self-control and a lot of informations.

This training of the psyche is fundamental in physical, technical and tactical training, in the sense that the athlete's performance is much better.

The athlete in his activity uses his psyche and his body, creating a connection by associating all methods and procedures, which is fundamental in achieving victory.

The difference between performance sport and the other spheres of activity is that in the latter mentioned ones, new opportunities can be found for the fulfillment of a goal. While sports performance has a single purpose, the first place. It is essential that in the other spheres of activity the one who acts does so based on considerations accepted by those desires and the performance athlete is obliged to decide in a very short time to solve an existing situation. In performance sports activity, imagination helps in the immediate favorable resolution of difficult situations that arise in competition. Performers have a certain skill that they perfect in that field. Psychology is a discipline that has special attributes, thus distinguishing it from the other sciences. In performance sport, this way of dynamic adaptation, transformation and innovation, this rapid, momentary inventiveness represents that plus that makes the difference. With the help of imagination, the cognitive horizon of the athlete becomes broader, he can reach a performance of achieving in his activity, the cohesion between the actions of the past, present and future. The athlete structures and analyzes his activities, thinking about the future. In the absence of this imagination, the athlete would no longer be able to orient himself to the immediate next actions and therefore there would no longer be a safe action that would lead to success.

Keywords: Psychology, Sensations, Mental component, Physical component, Performance.

Imagination and mental peculiarities, biological maturations in adolescent athletes

This science reflects, with the help of individual sensations, the conception of actions, language, memory processes, willpower, inventiveness and people's needs. The way in which a performance athlete exposes himself in his activity involves physical and mental involvement. During this activity, the two components, the physical and mental components, are very much in demand, therefore, these components depend on each other in obtaining special performances. Consequently, the mental training of the athlete involves a series of activities that he must acquire, among which we mention

- a good relationship with the family, in society and last but not least with the team;
- a security in one's own strength;
- proper stress management;
- an effectiveness of the emotion process;
- vigilance;
- keeping motivation constant;
- acceptance and recovery after a failure;
- the ability to accumulate information;
- the spirit of Fair Play.

About imagination, it can be said that it represents an action of complex knowledge, of creating images and new plans, based on the development of experience.

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The method of imagination emerges from the form of thinking, admitting an order of the actions that the performance athlete performs. At each training session and afterwards, before the competition, the athlete visualizes his entire journey during the competition.

This effective method of visualization can transform the athlete's behavior into competition. The action of imagination is beneficial in many forms of mental training.

The results appear in actions such as: a motivational development in achieving sports performances, awareness of emotional transformations, which leads to the development of the feeling of champion.

Imaginative repetition of the activities that the athlete has to carry out, develops a confidence in his own strength. This possibility helps the athlete to focus on the actions of the present (in training or throughout the match).

With the help of imagination, the athlete can conceive, mentally, the objective of the action and the plan of its development, and on the basis of them to always carry it out and oriented with very few failures and with a very high effectiveness. Consequently, the performer can acquire something completely new, and for this he uses his imagination.

The application of these techniques makes the difference in competition by the fact that the athlete is able to maintain a high level of play throughout it by maintaining increased attention. Also, failure is managed differently, as a motivation for the future.

Therefore, the training that includes these methods forms the ability to transform your thinking and emotions to your advantage.

Emotional moments and experiences maintain a great attraction for certain components of the concrete, allow them to be brought to the forefront, highlighted according to criteria other than those of thought, generate relationships and new reorganizations. Reality shows that the phases of a strong, affective experience are succeeded by a maximum yield of the imagination. The formation of a mental representation of technical procedures is the first condition of learning. The athlete must know exactly what he has to learn.

In order to facilitate the formation of a motor image of the procedures as accurately outlined as possible, they are demonstrated by the teacher or an athlete who already masters the technique at a high level of execution.

In the first demonstration, the execution of the technical procedure must be as faithful as possible to the one in the game. The demonstration must not lack any element of the structure of the process, and they will be performed with full respect for the normal speed, rhythm and amplitude of the movements, on the other hand, the intensity of the effort must remain within the limits where the irreproachable execution is possible and, above all, safe.

In many cases, the initial demonstration is completed with special demonstrations aimed at reinforcing and specifying the representation of the process in its entirety or some important elements that need to be highlighted. In order for the demonstration to achieve its goal, the appropriate measures will be taken to organize the team of athletes.

The explanation, description and illustration of the exercise contribute to specifying the representation of movement. The content of the explanation and description of the procedure depends on the team of athletes, however, in any situation, the good performers of the procedure must be appointed. The expression will be succinct, in precise and, as far as possible, plastic terms. The illustration is done by presenting kinograms and technical films or by attending the official games of the teams of higher categories and organizing the observation.

If we say that thinking is useful to us, but not enough to carry out actions, we can also talk about imagination. In the absence of thought, inventiveness can lead to undesirable results. Thinking is what establishes, controls, and appreciates the results of the imagination. (Lyle, 2002).

The author's references to the usual method of learning highlight several characteristics:

- a) criticizing or judging the previous behavior;
- b) imposing a change by repeatedly giving you verbal instructions;
- c) trying hard to execute a shot correctly (I-1 1 tells I-1 2 to do);
- d) making critical judgments about the results.

The method of learning inner play versus the usual method is oriented as follows:

- observe your current behavior without judging it;
- imagine the desired result;
- Let it happen! trust in the I2!;
- Calm observation, without judging the results, leads to permanent learning.

After all, thinking and learning synthesize several theories of action.

It is considered that thinking and learning as an acquisition process carried out through previous experience (knowledge, motor skills, skills), which then leads to new skills as well as to the learning of the laws of phenomena (tennis, handball, etc.). At the base of thinking and learning are assimilation and accommodation by modifying the individual's actions or transforming a sensory-motor or cognitive-reactionary action scheme (I-1 1 and I-1 2) that tends to assimilate knowledge and objects by incorporating them into a superior behavior.

Theory of mental actions show that the process of forming actions takes place in stages:

- familiarizing yourself with the task or knowing the objective or knowing precisely what you want or even more precisely having the exact representation of the objective;
- action or attempt;



- transferring the action to the speech plane (description of the action);
- the transfer of the action into thought (contradiction with Gallaway's Theory, 2013);
- the formation of the action that follows automatically (like the theory of the inner game). (7)

The cybernetic theory based on the concept of feedback as a common element of self-control and self-regulation is described as a condition of a performing mental during adolescence.

The dynamics of interpersonal relationships in adolescence imply, in addition to parental detachment, deep involvement and affective investment in interaction with friends. (Cristea, 2005). If in early and mid-adolescence confidences are made to a greater extent to friends than to parents, towards the end of the period the confidant is the romantic partner. It is also found that girls structure their friendships more frequently than boys on the basis of intimacy and confidences reciprocal processes.

The differentiation from childhood friendships is primarily due to greater intimacy. This need is the result of the complexity of cognitive and emotional elaboration. In adolescence, friendships are based mainly on affinity criteria, i.e. everyone looks for people with whom they have as many things in common as possible – attitudes, opinions, preferences, hobbies, etc. It is found that friendships are often made between those who have various affinities, as well as a similar level of school performance.

The advantages of friendships are manifested both at the level of identity and in terms of socio-affective skills. From an identity point of view, well-welded friendships help adolescents to know and understand themselves better.

The confidences they make to friends are as many opportunities to give new meanings to the experiences lived, which can contribute to a better management of any emotional suffering. From a socio-affective point of view, it is about increasing the ability to communicate and synchronize with the needs of the other, emotional validation, compassion, sports attitude Landsberg (2007).

It should be noted that friends' choices are influenced even in adolescence by parents, first of all by the quality of the relationship they have managed to build with their own children and secondly by the way they exercise control (authoritarian, democratic or permissive). The community in which the teenager lives – the neighborhood in which he lives, his high school classmates – also matters. Such aspects can be real resources or can be a source with negative potential if it is about disadvantaged environments and the company with adolescents who have already structured an antisocial personality.

Parents should be concerned about teenagers entering gangs or potentially harmful groups when they have not created a positive, healthy relationship since childhood. In other words, "immunity" to such potentially toxic relationships was developed by those parents who were good enough (I emphasize not perfect parents). Good enough parents are those who, with love and love for their children, have made them feel unconditionally accepted and have also taught them that they must respect certain socially accepted values and standards.

If discipline has been done inconsistently, if positive behaviors have not been reinforced, then there are vulnerabilities or risk for structuring and stabilizing an impulsive tendency and defiant, oppositional reactions and even aggressive behaviors.

Specialists have highlighted that the increased risk of substance addictions (drug addiction, alcoholism, etc.) and behavioral addictions (addiction to video games, addiction to the internet, social media, gambling, etc.) is found by those who have lived in a climate overloaded with tensions, unsatisfied fundamental needs and especially deficiencies in affective communication. In such contexts, adolescents look for people with whom they feel they resonate, understand and

they accept them without judging them (even if they are part of deviant gangs or groups) or seek to diminish their emotional sufferings or temporarily forget about them through substance use or escape into the virtual world. Obviously, it is not the best solution, but it is the only solution they find. It goes without saying that adults must prevent adolescents from reaching such extreme situations. How? As mentioned above, by constantly reminding the the needs that an adolescent has, as well as the fact that adults were themselves immature at some point and perhaps also experienced the passing feeling of overwhelm – which psychologists talk about as one of the characteristics of adolescence, regardless of historical time.

A source of great affective effervescence in adolescence, but also of stress and suffering, is represented by the establishment of romantic relationships, respectively their disintegration. As in the case of friendships, romantic relationships contribute in the context of intimacy to the exploration and discovery of oneself. It has been observed that the patterns of adolescent romantic relationships can leave their mark on subsequent relationships. Also, the quality of parental affective relationships influences the way of interaction with the romantic partner. They are models for affective communication, conflict resolution, mutual support and tolerance.

According to Bouchery and Furman (2003), the breakdown of the romantic relationship, the cheating on the part of the partner is a source of distress whose intensity can lead to depression, suicidal thoughts or even their enactment.

Romantic relationships in adolescence can turn into opportunities for the beginning of sexual life. This onset is influenced by a multitude of factors related to individual aspects, but also by cultural messages/values, parental attitudes,



religious orientation and last but not least congeners and group of friends. Cultural models can provide permissive or non-permissive scenarios related to this topic.

Also, the presence of double standards – permissiveness and ambivalent social perception is found in the case of girls who are judged more harshly than boys in the case of the early onset of sexual life. Religiously oriented young people agree less with premarital sex compared to other young people. Congeners and the group of friends are also a model that influences adolescents' decisions regarding the onset of sexual relations.

Conclusions

Psychologists have studied the effects of the onset of sexual life in adolescence. They did not analyze in the correct or incorrect terms, but explored the subjective, personal and psychosocial dimensions of it, taking into account the favorable factors and the effects on the emotional level. They mentioned that adolescents are not emotionally mature enough to cope with the sources of additional stress in such contexts: affective disengagement, conflictive states, duplicitous behavior of the partner, pregnancy, teenage mothers etc.

P.S. Not all possible implications have been exhausted. You will discover many more things then when you will interact with high school students as teachers or as parents. The important thing is to have the willingness to listen, communicate and unconditionally accept all the needs of athletes.

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