

A COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS' MENTAL ABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to compare mental skills in elite and non-elite volleyball players, both male and female. OMSAT3 was completed by 104 volleyball players from the Iranian Super League (20 males and 30 females) and Student Competitions (30 males and 24 females). The elites had better Mental Ability than the sub-elite group, according to the results of a 22 ANOVA. There was no discernible difference between males and females in this sample. The relationship between group and gender was important ($p < 0.05$). According to the findings, the explanation for elites' advantage over the sub-elite community is due to psychological factors. They are less affected by excitation and therefore have a greater concentration, self-confidence, and mental efficacy because they have a higher degree of focusing, self-confidence, and mental efficacy of performance.

KEYWORDS: Mental Skill, OMSAT 3, Volleyball, Skill Level, Gender Difference

INTRODUCTION

Physical, technical, and psychological fitness are all needed for optimal performance of sport skills. Sport psychology has steadily gained popularity as a result of the growth of professionalism. Mental skills are one of the most important and well-proven components of high-level competition success. Fundamental skills, psychosomatic skills, and cognitive skills are the three types of mental skills. Goal finding, trust, and determination are all examples of fundamental skills. After these two skills have been stabilised, the other two can be established. Psychosomatic Skill involves stress response, relaxation, and activation, all of which are linked to the athlete's physiological indexes. Cognitive abilities are concerned with mental functions such as comprehension, perception, memory, and so on. It also includes visualising, mental rehearsal, concentrating, refocusing, and competition planning (Green-Bush, Durand-Bush, and Salmela Demers, 2001).

Weinberg and Gould (2007) The primary reason for day-to-day sway in results has been described as psychological factors. Researchers discovered that mental skills have a

positive impact on sport success (Weinberg and Gould 2007), but that it also needs to be strengthened (Orlick 2008). Mental preparation improved mental skills (khanjari 2009). Williams (2001) found that mental skills that used for peak performance are imaginary, goal setting, control of arousal, and advanced planning. Recently a new approach with emphasis on mental skills in elite and sub-elite athletes has been formed. Junior and Mourth (2009) monitored mental skills of 6 female elite volleyball players using OMSAT3 and showed only in goal setting since 2007 by 2008. Meyers, Bourgeois, and Leunes (1993) showed that elite equestrian have higher level of anxiety control and lower confidence. Farokhi (2002) had found that focusing and confidence has major importance in distinction

between elite and non-elite badminton players. Motsharei (2009) showed that Iranian elite badminton players in reaction to stress, fear control, focusing, and Refocusing were lower than normal level. In gender's area, Sharifi (1385) showed higher skill of activation, mental practice, and reaction to stress in boys than girls in National Team Squash players, however, grils were better in commitment, relaxation, and competition planning. Dominkus (2009) examined relationship between anxiety interpretations in Hacky players and found that there were differences between boys and girls in goal setting, fear control, activation, mental practice, and

competition planning but no difference in confidence, commitment, reaction to stress, relaxation, imaginary, focusing, and Refocusing.

White (1997) in an investigation on 148 participant with different skill level in volleyball concluded that National Team volleyball players have used skill in imaginary, goal setting, arousal regulation skills, and pep talk better than sub elite players. However, some studies examine mental skills in elite, sub-elite, and getting advanced athletes. The purpose of the present study was to compare mental skills in male and female elite (Iranian Super League) and non-elite volleyball players (Iranian Student Competitions).

METHODOLOGY

Participants of this study are 104 national team volleyball players and practitioners in Iranian Super League (20 males and 30 females) and Student Competitions (30 males and 24 females). They completed Persian version of Ottawa Mental Skill Assessment Tool 3 (OMSAT3) in random sampling method. Sanati, Monfared, And Vaez Mousavi (2006) in

Iran National Olympic and Paralympics Academy, proved the Persian Version of Questionnaire's validity and reliability. The 2 (level of skill) × 2 (gender) ANOVA was used to determine the differences between groups ($p= 0.05$).

RESULTS

The result of two-way ANOVA shows that main effect of group was significant in Goal setting, Confidence, Reaction to stress, Relaxation, Fear Control, Activation, Imaginary, Mental Practice, and Competition Plane ($p\leq 0.05$). The elite group was greater than sub elite group but there was no difference in Refocusing subscale between elites and sub elites. A gender effect has shown that there was no significant difference between males and females. There was a significant interaction between group and gender in Refocusing, Imaginary, and Competition Planning ($p\leq 0.05$). The interaction between group and gender in subscales of Goal Setting, confidence, Commitment, Reaction to Stress, relaxation, Fear Control, Activation, and Focusing was not significant ($p\geq 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Considering the results of this study, the reason for the advantage of elites over sub-elite group is associated with psychological factors. Enjoying a higher level of focusing, self-confidence, and more mental efficacy, they are less affected by excitation and anxiety, therefore, have a better performance. Athletes have Advantage in Goal setting that could explain special, Realistic, individual and motivating Goals for themselves. Advantage of elites in Confidence may explain by some personality theories. Advantage of elites in Focusing may result from continuous training, ignorance of less important things and using Imaginary in elite Athletes. Also in activation the elite athletes was superior. It is possibly because of coach role in regulating mental conditioning and guiding athlete in regulating level of mental skill and self-awareness. Comparison of genders in this study was not showed any difference but interaction of group and gender was significant changes in female from sub elite to elite level was greater than mans. This may explain by low mental skill of sub elite female so that they have more capacity to enhance result from Sport trainings.

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