

Relationship of Specific Psychological Skills and Its Sub-Factors to Ranking Points of Senior National Women Badminton Players

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INTRODUCTION

Sports are as old as the human society, and it has achieved a universal following in the modern times. It now enjoys a popularity, which outstrips any other form of social activity. It has become an integral part of the educational process. Millions of fans follow different sports events all over the world with an enthusiasm bordering on devotion. Many participate in sports activity for the fun or for health, strength, or fitness. It is taking the shape of a profession to some with high skills, with ample financial benefits linked with high degree of popularity (Sergio Garcia Ramirez, 1976).

Nowhere is an individual more closely scrutinized by so many people than in the world of sports. The results of an athlete's efforts are immediately available to be judged against the clearest criteria by sometimes as many as thousands of people, with millions more watching on television and listening to the radio. As if that were not enough pressure, an athlete's performance may be replayed, described, analysed, questioned and criticised by the media, and may even be the source of political propaganda. Furthermore, athletes invest years of labour and countless dollars in preparation. And the outcome of a contest, individual performances, and collective statistics often make the difference in job security, prestige, and recognition, thousands and sometimes millions of dollars in prize money and salaries, opportunities for lucrative endorsement contracts, and countless other rewards and privileges (Keith F. Bell, 1983).

Badminton is a competitive game. Players compete against each other whenever they go on to the court to play a game. If winning is of primary importance in competition, then the performances the player gives in the game is a determining factor in winning. The criteria for evaluating a performance includes the players skill i.e. his strokes or tactical ability, his fitness i.e. his speed, agility, strength or his attitude i.e. his determination, concentration etc (Jake Downey, 1980)

Training techniques based on new findings in exercise physiology; biomechanics, sports medicine, sports psychology, etc. are adopted to bring about maximum possible unfolding of potential in sports performance (Homvella, 1970).

Athletes' development systems and programmes are no longer adequate if they only emphasize skill and physical development. The inclusion of sound psychological principles and practices in training and competition preparations and conduct is a necessary ingredient of modern sport (Rushall, 1989).

Psychology as a behavioural science has made its contribution for improving sports performance. It has helped coaches to coach more effectively and athletes to perform more proficiently. This psychological aspect of sports is gaining much attention among sports administrators (Kocher and Pratap, 1972).

It has been established beyond doubt that "much of human physiology is controlled by human psychology and that physiological preparation in sports is inconsequential in the absence of study of human behaviour as it is related to competitive sport The virgin realm of the mind has to be explored without which neither excellence nor perfection could be ensured" (Kamlesh, 1989).

It is believed that superior athletic performance has benefited from knowledge about the physiology and mechanics of human motor activity. However, many coaches and psychologists throughout the world believe that future records will be broken primarily because of increased attention to the psychological parameters of human personality (Cratty, 1983).

The craze for winning medals in the Olympics and other international competitions has catalysed the sport scientists to take interest in exploring all the aspects and possibilities which can contribute to enhance sports performance to undreamt heights (Widlund, 1983).

The search for variables, which are most crucial to excellence in sports, has intrigued the sport scientists as well as the coaches alike. The debate whether the elite athletes are a product of “nature” or “nurture” is still alive. Yet, within the limits and limitations of various surveys and studies on outstanding athletes, the researchers have found certain set of variables potentially identifiable with excellence and advocated a number of different techniques for the ‘psychological’ regulation for the improvement of sports performance. Commonly identified psychological aspects of sports are.... (Simons,1991)

Taking into consideration the overall scenario of the psychological aspects of sports in general, anxiety, confidence, mental toughness and achievement - motivation seem to be extremely important elements worth in-depth investigation into the psychology of Indian Badminton players. These variables are a combination of genetic as well as acquirable characteristics.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between ranking points of senior national badminton players and specific psychological skills.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a status study, which did not require the investigator basically to manipulate any of the variables included in it. Rather the collection of data became instrumental in providing correct insight into the specific psychological skills, which cannot otherwise be assessed. It was not intended to study the interaction among various sub-factors. In all there were four samples in each category and seven variables to be investigated.

For the purpose of this study total 42 senior national female badminton players were selected to collect data. The sample representing the International and Senior National women badminton players consisted of those players who participated in the Senior National Badminton Championship, held at Jemshedpur, Jharkhand from 31st January to 6th February 2005.

The questionnaire Athletic Coping Skills Inventory –28 (ACSI-28) prepared by Smith et.al were administered on subjects. The questionnaire contains 28 items on seven sports specific sub-scales: Coping with Adversity, Peaking Under Pressure, Goal Setting /Mental Preparation, Concentration, Freedom from Worry, Confidence and Achievement Motivation and Coachability. Each sports specific sub-scale contains four items.

To find out the relationship between the scores of Specific Psychological Skills and its sub-factors and the ranking points of badminton player’s achievement Product Moment Correlation was employed.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results of Specific Psychological Skills and its sub-factors in form of descriptive data such as means and standard deviations of senior national women badminton players has been presented in Table-1

TABLE-1: Means and Standard Deviations of Senior National Women Badminton Players on Specific Psychological Skills and Its Sub-Factors

S. No.	Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Coping with Adversity	7.528	2.063
2.	Peaking under Pressure	6.25	3.589
3.	Goal Setting	7.5	2.236
4.	Concentration	7.333	1.957
5.	Freedom from Worry	7.194	2.175
6.	Confidence and Achievement Motivation	7.306	2.136
7.	Coachability	9.333	1.957
8.	Specific Psychological Skills	52.444	8.154

To find out the relationship between specific psychological skills to performance points based on round the year performance of senior national women players product moment correlation was employed and data pertaining to this has been presented in Table-2

TABLE-2: Relationship of Specific Psychological Skills and Its Sub-Factors to Ranking Points of Senior National Women Badminton Players

S. No.	Name	'r'
1.	Coping with Adversity	0.114
2.	Peaking under Pressure	0.216
3.	Goal Setting	0.106
4.	Concentration	0.200
5.	Freedom from Worry	0.334*
6.	Confidence and Achievement Motivation	0.078
7.	Coachability	0.140
8.	Specific Psychological Skills	0.330*

* Significant at .05 level of confidence.

$r_{.05}(40) = 0.304$

It can be observed from Table 2 that the obtained values of correlation between Ranking points and Specific psychological skills and its sub-factors scores ranged from 0.078 to 0.334. Values of Freedom from worry and Specific psychological skills are significant at .05 level of confidence. In an attempt to recognise the importance of psychological factors in optimal and exceptional athletic performance among international and national level sportspersons, the psychological skills inventory i.e. Athletic Coping Skills Inventory was administered to badminton players. The different aspects of the specific psychological skills inventory namely Coping with Adversity, Peaking Under Pressure, Goal Setting /Mental Preparation, Concentration, Freedom from Worry, Confidence and Achievement Motivation, Coachability and specific psychological skills as a whole were analysed with respect to level of achievement and relationship to the ranking points.

The findings pertaining to specific psychological skills indicated that their relationship between ranking points and senior national women badminton players was obtained. Significant relationship was observed in each case.

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