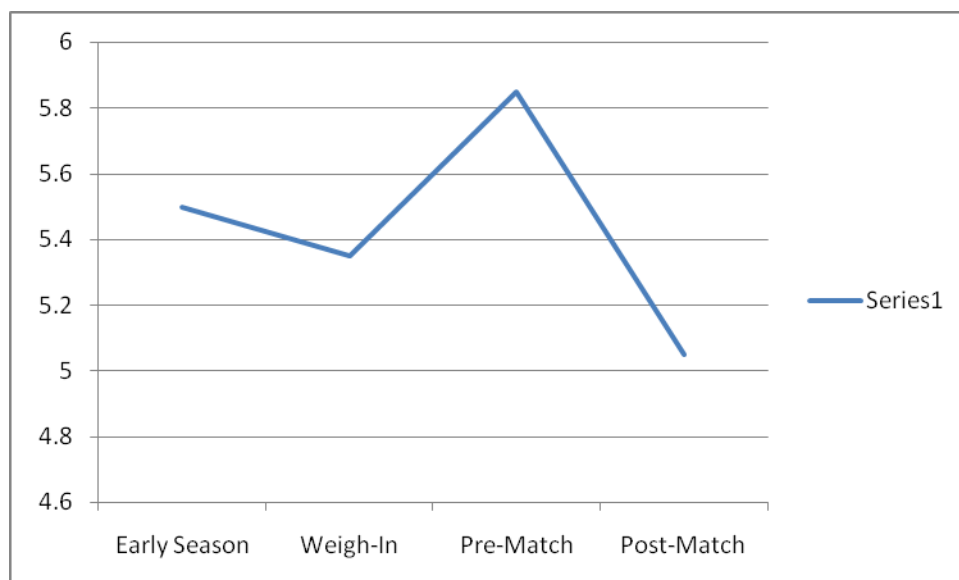


MENTAL HEALTH PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ATHLETIC SUCCESS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT “EMOTIONAL FIRST AID” FOLLOWING COMPETITION IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL FIRST AID: A REVIEW

**Dr. U. P. Sonone, Assoc. Prof., M. S. M's. College of Physical Education, Aurangabad, India¹*

**Dr. Shatrunjay M. Kote, Asst. Prof., M. S. M's. College of Physical Education, Aurangabad, India²*

Coaches have historically been concerned with the psychological preparation of their athletes for competition. This preparation has frequently taken the form of pep talks and various other techniques thought to possess motivational value. The previous section raises the question of whether such techniques are of any value whatsoever, and existing evidence implies that the answer is no. On the other hand, a neglected, and probably far more important consideration, is the athlete's post competitive psychological state. While coaches have historically attempted to get their teams “up” for competition, there is little published evidence to suggest they attempt to bring them “down”. On the other hand, there is some evidence which suggests that win or lose athletes return to normal psychological levels post competitively.



At any rate, it is reasonably clear that strains, sprains, and fractures are treated immediately or shortly following their occurrence, whereas, months may pass before any attention is given to serious psychological problems (Carmen, Zerman, and Blaine 1968; Pierce 1969). Furthermore, certain psychological ailments common among athletes are never even detected much less treated. As with the case of physical injuries, preventive measures and early detection procedures should be employed. It is especially important that team physicians, coaches, and trainers “sensitize” themselves to the potential existence of psychological problems, dismissing an athlete's problem as a “head problem” does not solve anything. It should also be noted that “emotional first aid” should not be limited to the athlete who experiences obvious failure. Indeed, the mediocre athlete who suddenly is catapulted into the spotlight following a record

setting performance is probably in need of more scrutiny than the occasional failure. The reader interested in gaining additional insights into the matter will find the papers by Carmen, Zerman, and Blaine (1968), Little (1969), and Pierce (1969) to be of particular value.

Implication: athletes should not be left to their own psychological resources following either successful or unsuccessful competition. The coach should talk with his athletes following competition with the aim of ego strengthening in the case of traumatic failure as well as counsel and “insulation” following record-setting performances. The athlete should not be left to crawl off and nurse his physical wound, nor should he be expected to completely manage his psychological trauma either. Indeed, he is probably less likely to possess the resources necessary for adaption in the latter situation.

Conclusion: Coaches should pay careful attention to the post competitive psychological condition of their athletes. It is also reasonable to state that psychological stability is a prerequisite for consistent success in the high level athlete. Successful athletes who are truly neurotic are the exception rather than the rule.

References:

- Carmen, L. r.; Zerman, J. L.; and Blaine, B. b., Jr. 1968. Use of the Harvard psychiatric service by athletes and nonathletes. *Mental hygiene* 52:134-137
- Cofer, C. N. and Johnson, W. r. 1960. Personality dynamics in relation to exercise and sports. In *science and medicine of exercise and sport* ed. W. R. Johnson pp 525-529 New York: Harper.
- Cooper, L. 1969 Athloetics activity and personality: A review of the literature/. *Research Quarterly* 40:17-22.
- Eysenck, H. J. and Eysendk, S. b. g. 1962 *Manual for the Eysendk Personality Inventory*. San Diego: Educational and Industrial Testing Service.
- Kroll W. 1970 personality assessments of athletes. In *psychology of motor learning* ed. L. E. Smith pp. 349-367. Chicago: Athletic institute.
- Langer, P. 1966. Varsity Football performance. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 23:1191-1199
- Little J. C. 1969 the athlete's neurosis – A deprivation crisis. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 45:187-197
- Lukehart, R. 1969 the effect of a season of interscholastic football on the personality of junior high school males. *Abstracts of the Americal Associaon of Health, Physical Education and Recreation* 5:122
- Martens, r. 1973. Traits and state anxiety. In *Ergogenic aids and muscular performance*, ed. W. P. Morgan, New York:Academic Press
- Morgan W. P. 1968 Personlaity characteristics of wrestlers participatin in the worl championships. *Journal sports medicine and physical fitness* 8:212-216
- Ogilvie b. c. and Tutko, t. a. 1966 *problem athletes and how to handle them*. London: Pelham.
- Pierce, r. A. 1969 Athletes in psychotherapy: How many, how come? *Journal of Americal college Health Associaon* 17:244-249

- Ryan, e. d. and Foster, R. L. 1967. Athletic participation and perceptual augmentation and redueation. Journal of personality and social psycholoty 6:472-476
- Yananda, H. and Hirata, H. 1970. Personality traits of students who dropped out of their athletic clubs. Proceeding of the college of physical education, university of Tokyo, no.5
- Ziegelaar, R. 1973. Golden Nor Delights the fans/ the Straits times, 3 sep p. 24
- Ziegelaar, R. 1973. Golden Nor Delights the fans/ the Straits times, 3 sep p. 24