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# The Psychological Preparation of the Athlete and its Contribution in Improving the Sports Results

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## Abstract

The psychological preparation of the Olympic athlete contributes with the physical preparation and the skill and the planning preparation to reach the player before the competition to what is called the sports form that is the ideal performance of the player, and if the physical preparation is done through developing the physical abilities (strength - speed - flexibility - agility - balance ... etc.) and the sports skills specific to each sport is done through the regular training on these skills then the psychological preparation is achieved through developing the psychological skills like focusing the attention and the self-confidence and the control over the thoughts and the emotions. And the psychological load is distributed over the training season to achieve the highest capacity for the psychological component in facing the training load and the sports competition.

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**Introduction:**

The psychological preparation for athletes is considered an important field from the fields of sports psychology and it is related primarily with the high-level sports, since the good psychological preparation aims to help the player in controlling his thoughts and emotions in a way that achieves the best level of performance with the difference of the competition conditions, like one of its dimensions as the physical training and it is considered important and vital from the sports training it is considered part of the skill and the planning and that for developing the personality of the athlete and determining the goals and the critical duties. And the problem of psychological preparation at the present time is considered from the general problems that face the coaches; since the concept of psychological preparation still is confined to words and material incentives only, and now the countries of the world have become with full knowledge of the various ways of developing and cultivating the elements of the different preparation the physical and the skill and the planning until the competition now has become in how to develop and cultivate the psychological preparation with the latest scientific methods to achieve the comprehensive growth for the player to reach the highest possible level to achieve the victory and avoid the defeat and what is associated with it from psychological burdens which leads to reducing the feeling of fear and tension and psychological anxiety and lack of self-confidence.

**1- Concept of the Psychological Preparation for Athletes**

Sports psychology is considered from the important fields in the modern era and from the modern sciences that entered the sports fields and which contributed and in an effective way in developing and cultivating the abilities of the athlete and reaching him to the highest sports ranks, and to know the importance of applying the psychological sciences in the psychological preparation for the athlete we found that the correct basis is finding the positive solutions for all the psychological problems that most athletes suffer from and related to the personality and behavior of the athlete whether in the competitions or in the training in addition to knowing the ways that make the athlete in his best states to accept the training doses and also to meet the competitor in the best condition and consequently winning in the result, there are important psychological and psychological manifestations that obstruct the player and they are influential variables that increase the intensity of the emotions (tension and arousal) the thing that affects the behavior and level of performance of the player from them for example (emotional control the location and importance of the competition, the level of competitors and the personal preparation for the competition) and here comes the role of the educational coach he does not discuss forms and solutions the coach seeks through them to remove these obstacles that the players face and develop and refine their personalities and behavior through putting programs that include the psychological preparation for each player individually for the individual games and for the team as a whole for the team games, and despite that the training and sports competitions are a natural field for growth and development of many motivations and emotional traits and mental abilities but the sports psychological specialist is the one who determines the procedures and the practical programs during the training for developing and cultivating the motivations and the emotional traits and the required cognitive abilities for the type of activity, and that instead of leaving the conditions of the sports environment and the chance factors to cultivate and develop them. Therefore preparing the psychological climate for the player before the sports competition is considered a goal and a procedure at the same time, since the goal that the training apparatus seeks to it is the physical and motor and planning preparation that is based on the base of the psychological preparation for the player, therefore the sports psychological specialist must increase from his effort during that period and all his procedures with the team direct towards the psychological preparation and mobilization of the self-capacities for the player in particular and for the team in general. And the psychological preparation is a group of defined scientific educational procedures by the sports psychological specialist according to the psychological requirements for the sports practice in general and the specific practice for the specialized sports activity from one side and the psychological preparations of the athlete from the other side, and that with the aim of developing his motivations and cultivating his mental skills and his emotional traits to bear

the physical and psychological burdens of the training and adapt with the competition conditions in order to enable the athlete to achieve the best possible level for him from the sports achievement.

And the psychological preparation leads to cultivating the administrative traits and developing the process of sensation and attention and observation that appears in the ability to remember the characteristics of performance in the different playing situations and the ability to imagine and predict the correct planning.

## **2- Types of Psychological Preparation.**

### **2-1- Long-term Psychological Preparation** prepare long-ter psychological

This preparation aims to the direction and psychological guidance for the sports players to elevate their abilities to face the problems and obstacles that may obstruct them throughout the period of their sports practice, and increasing their abilities on deciding them and confronting them and facing them and also building and cultivating the sports motivation, and particularly the sports achievement motivation for the players and cultivating their abilities on determining and putting their goals in a clear way and striving to achieve them. And this type of preparation is used for achieving its objectives the following practices:

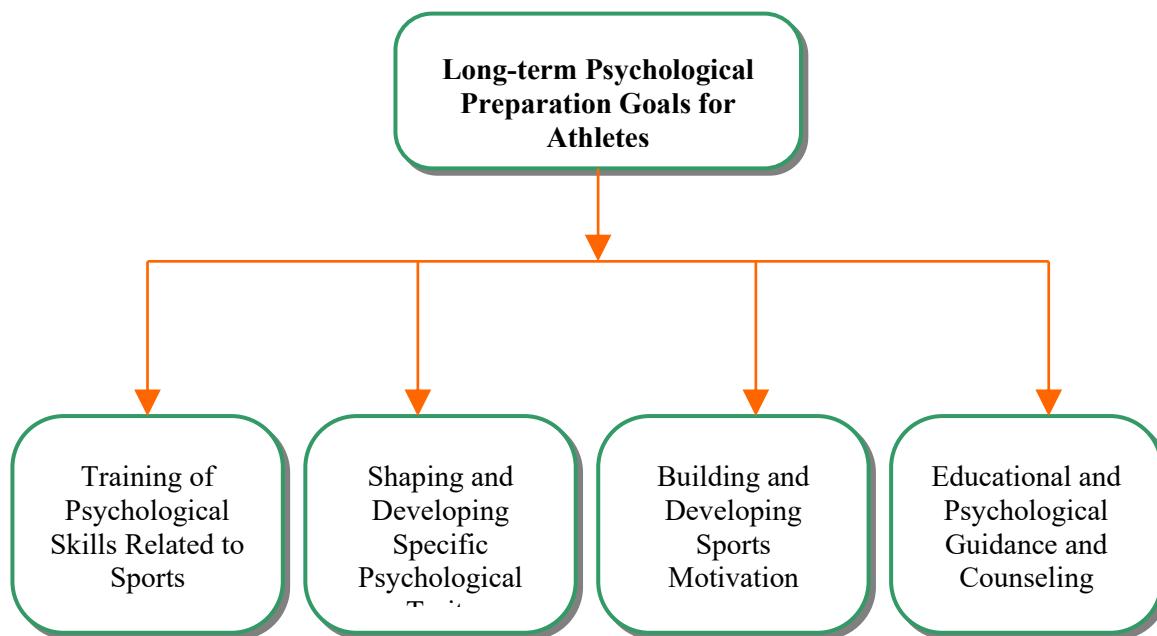
- 1- Granting the player appropriate struggle opportunities, according to his abilities level.
- 2- Supplying the athlete with the correct information that serves the type of sport that he practices.
- 3- Helping the athlete in self-evaluation and comparing his results with his colleagues results from the same level.
- 4- Accustoming the athlete to exerting effort and struggle for the sake of victory.
- 5- Forming and developing the special psychological traits.
- 6- Caring for the general health and psychological state.

### **3- Psychological Preparation for the Injured Player:**

The injured player has in front of him many questions when he is exposed to an injury whether it was serious, or will he recover and return to his previous state from the physical side, therefore there must be a permanent monitoring for the injured player so that he is directed and prepared for this type of situations until his reception for them is in the best possible way.. As for what concerns the psychological rehabilitation and which is related to the player who recovered from an injury and is on his way to return to the sports competitions it is important especially in the case of the treatment length or its extension more than once or the player's participation in his first match after the complete recovery since he would be afraid from the public pressure and the media. The psychological preparation is very important for the players where we find many Iraqi clubs do not employ a psychologist doctor who accompanies the club to get to know the player from the side of his career in training and competitions and in order to stand on any change in his state during his exposure to injuries. And the long-term psychological preparation aims to the direction and the psychological guidance for the sports players with the aim of elevating their abilities on facing the problems and the obstacles that may obstruct them throughout their sports practice period, and increasing their ability on deciding them and challenging them and facing them and also building and cultivating the sports motivation and particularly the achievement motivation for the sports players and cultivating their ability on determining and putting their goals in a clear way and striving to achieve them, as the long-term psychological preparation seeks to achieve and develop the special psychological traits for the handball players from the point that they are important factors related to mastering the level of their abilities and potentials.

As it seeks to develop the athletes motivations towards the game that they practice and helping them on acquiring new strong motivations in addition to developing the determination and the will and the courage and cultivating their psychological and educational and moral and ethical traits and that through controlling the self-behavior during the competitions in addition to educating the players on the national sense and the feeling of responsibility, The scientific

preparation and planning for the process of the long-term psychological preparation for the athletes depends on the following:



And the objective evaluation operations for the important sports competitions have proven the role that the long-term psychological preparation plays with regard to the performance results for the sports players it forms beside the physical preparation and the skill and the planning an indivisible part from the educational and teaching and training process for the sports players and preparing them to elevate their sports levels and appearing in their best levels in the sports competitions.

And through the long-term psychological preparation the search is done for the negative psychological traits among the players (**anxiety, fear, hesitation, selfishness, surrender**) and treating them in an educational way so that the player is convinced by the information that reaches him through the coach or the administrators, as the study of the individual differences for the players gives the self-evaluation for each player and according to his results compared to his colleagues, and through the coaches observations in this field it was noticed that the largest section of them is interested in developing the physical traits and the skill and the planning without studying the psychological and personality and volitional traits for the players which leads to increasing the problems and difficulties that are generated at the coach and the player, and here we emphasize that the long-term psychological preparation is not meant by it the motivational words and the arousal and the speeches that are launched whether by the coach or the administrator but working on preparing the players psychologically and that through cultivating the positive psychological traits and cultivating the self-confidence and the courage and the patience and the perseverance and which help on preparing the team or the player for a long time period like the preparation to the Olympic cycles championship for four years or continental for two years, and that these methods will enhance the feeling of the team or the player with the psychological comfort during the long-term training.

#### 4- Short-term Psychological Preparation: prepartnernspsychological

The short-term psychological preparation seeks to mobilize and activate the player's capacities for competing at the highest level, sometimes the players are exposed before the competitions to some manifestations represented in irregularity of sleep or insomnia and increasing the degree of tension, and the arousal and reaching it sometimes to the degree of spasm and fatigue and lack of thinking and decreasing the degree of enthusiasm and lethargy for participating in the competition, as it seeks to the direct psychological preparation for the sports individual before his actual participation in the sports

competitions in the sports competitions with the aim of focusing on preparing him and readying him and directing him in a way that allows mobilizing all his powers and energies, so that he can exploit them to the utmost possible extent during the sports competitions, some researchers referred to that the short-term psychological preparation for the sports players is meant by it the direct psychological preparation just before their actual participation in the sports competition in a relatively short time with the aim of focusing on directing them and preparing them and readying them in a way that allows mobilizing all their powers and energy for the possibility of investing them to the utmost possible extent in the competition.

That this preparation is meant by it the preparation for participating in the sports competition and preparing the player psychologically for this competition and exerting the utmost degrees of readiness to achieve the victory during the competition and this preparation includes the time before the competition by a short time (just before entering the competition) as the short-term psychological preparation includes studying the way of attack and defense of the competitor and how to exploit the weakness points and confronting the strength points in it in addition to applying the programs of controlling the psychological pressures for each player individually, as the short-term psychological preparation seeks to mobilize and activate the player's capacities for competing at the highest level, that this preparation depends on the coach's knowledge and science and on the extent of the player's understanding and comprehension for the coach's observations where we point that the short-term psychological preparation depends on the coach doing putting a plan in which he clarifies the following aspects:

**First: conditions of the competition:-** and includes (nature of the competition, Olympic - world - international - continental)

- a. The season in which the competition is held (summer, winter).
- b. Determining the date of the competition.
- c. Place of conducting the competition (stadium, hall, track, mat).

And it is preferable to conduct at least one training unit in the place where the competition is held.

**Second: information about the competitors:**

- a. Ages of the players.
- b. Their physical and skill and planning level.
- c. Their sports achievements.
- d. Their best players and their body measurements and determining the weakness points accurately.

**Third:** determining the goal from participating in the competition, so that the goal is not exaggerated but rather matches the players abilities.

And the psychological preparation before the competition depends on two conditions which are:

- 1- The required goals from participating in the competition.
- 2- Expecting all the variables that happen in the competition.

**Duties of the Coach in the Last Day of the Match to Follow the Following:**

- 1. The psychological preparation in this day is based on providing the greatest amount of confidence for the player.

2. Knowing the player on the strength points and weakness for the competitor.
3. Preparing the player for all the variables.
4. Thinking of the player on how to the psychological influence on the competitors.
5. Finding typical trainings before the match for situations possible that may occur in the match.
6. Working on that the player is in a calm atmosphere and especially in the night of the match when the player resorts to sleep and relaxation.

#### **4- Role of the Coach in the Day of the Sports Competition:**

1. Working on how the player controls in his emotional state and mood.
2. Performing the required warm-up to raise the degree of readiness and the appropriate psychological mobilization.
3. Keeping the psychological preparation until the last seconds and before starting the race.
4. On the coach to make the player feel with stability and acquiring the feeling and the desire in victory.
5. The sports psychological specialist does adjusting the level of the player's anxiety to reach him to the optimal level and that is done by using massage or warm-up or self-relaxation.
6. Linking between the results of the last trainings and the expected results for the sports competition on that he takes care mentioning the success experiences and avoiding the failure experiences.
7. Resorting to some procedures or symbols that have meaning and importance for the player and preserving them.
8. Executing the specified program previously and announced to the players and that regarding the attendance time in the day of the competition.
9. Being present in the place of the competition "the hall" the stadium swimming pool ...etc before the start of the competition by a period not less than half an hour and that for the purpose of psychological adaptation with the competition site.

#### **Role of the Coach During the Sports Competition**

1. Relying on the psychological training based on words as a psychological influencer that leads the complete mobilization for any expected circumstance.
2. Instilling the spirit of enthusiasm and optimism in the psychology of the players.
3. Working on that the team is as one unit each of them falls on him duties without waiting to see what the other does that is the responsibility is shared.
4. On the coach to make the player feel with stability and acquiring the feeling and the desire in victory.
5. Observing and recording the psychological responses accompanying the motor performance for each player in the team.
6. Evaluating the level of some mental processes like the motor imagery and attention and motor memory and flexibility of motor thinking and others in light of the motor and planning performance for the player within the sports competition.

7. Observing the manifestations of motor compatibility and planning harmony between the players during performing their roles during the sports competition.
8. Immediate intervention when one of the players is injured with an affecting injury regardless of the intervention of the team doctor or the physical therapy specialist in treating the injured player.
9. Stopping any discussions or dual talks or group between the substitute players that may affect negatively on the team cohesion.

#### **Methods of Psychological Preparation for the Athlete:**

The following methods for psychological preparation are considered from the most important correct methods:

1. The personal method :- The use of advice the word has its importance in the psychological preparation and its effect on the player's personality, so the dialogue in an educational style with the coach and the athlete affects positively on the player.
2. The contemplative method :- This process is done through clarifying to the player his positives and negatives in executing the required duties from him since it has become necessary watching the matches and the pictures and analyzing the video for what it has of importance in the psychological preparation.
3. Method of creating special obstacles :- This method relies on creating additional burdens like conducting a match with intensive rules or conducting a match between two teams not equal numerically.
4. Method of punishment and penalty :- And it is considered a general method in the psychological preparation however this method may have negative effects.
5. Method of matches :- This method is important in the psychological preparation and is used for developing the vitality initiative and maintaining the team formation and correcting its negatives and reinforcing its positives.

#### **Objectives of Psychological Preparation:**

From objectives of the psychological preparation for the player:

- 1- Helping in improving the important psychological processes that aim to reaching the highest levels from the basic skills and the planning.
- 2- Forming and improving the personal traits for the player that affect clearly in the ideal stability for the higher mental processes and retaining it with raising the level of vitality efficiency and motor.
- 3- Forming and building an ideal emotional state in the training and during the competition.
- 4- Improving the ability to organize the psychological state in the difficult conditions of the competition.
- 5- Helping in the psychological and cognitive preparation and the full awareness with the requirements of the match.

#### **5- Role of the Coach in the Psychological Preparation:**

##### **5-1- Characteristics of the Successful Coach:**

The teacher and the educator and the leader who makes the players and qualifies them and prepares them for the competitions from the physical and psychological side and he has the creative abilities and the deep familiarity according to the principle of applying his specialty, many researchers referred to the coach and his characteristics and motivations and philosophy and his sports characteristics and others from the practical and applicative constants that must be available

in the successful coach. But there is an important side for the coach which is his culture in the field of sports psychology in addition to the training physiological sciences, because the goal of sports psychology for the coach is finding the positive correct solutions for all the psychological dilemmas that the player faces and which relate to his behavior whether in the competition or in the daily training units, the field sports psychology is from the most important sciences that contribute in cultivating and developing the coach skillfully and cognitively so that it includes refining and psychological preparation for him considering the important role that the coach undertakes and the way of presenting the psychological advice in the difficult situations so it is required on the successful coach at the beginning of his training work that he does evaluating the personal traits for his players and knowing the positive and negative traits to evaluate the psychological and nervous state for the player in addition to putting a program that includes the psychological preparation for each player individually and for the team as a whole and according to the type of the sports activity.

The successful personality for the sports coach is not retreating from the correct decisions and firmness towards the violating players in addition to the correct knowledge for the technical aspects for teaching and training the motor skills with a scientific degree that matches the players capabilities, this ability enables the successful coach on understanding ideas.

and feelings and emotions of the players to transfer these feelings and translate them to positive reality, and from his positive characteristics that he is lover for the sport he played and does not prefer on it any other hobby.

### **5-2- Duties of the Coach Physically:**

The coach has physiological physical duties basic for developing the activity of the players as the cooperation between the coach and his players depends on the correct training bases that affect effectively in developing the results in the sports competitions that depend on his ability in leading his team and good behavior in facing the problems, the training side for the sports training process depends on the educational side for the skills and aims basically to acquiring and cultivating the general and specific physical traits and teaching and mastering the sports motor skills and the planning abilities for the type of the specialized sports activity in addition to acquiring the theoretical knowledge and information related to the sport in general and his specialized sport in particular, the sports training process is built on correct practical bases and good and studied planning and this good planning that the coach describes that he observes his players for sufficient time that makes him realize the real level for them because he will decide putting graduated exercises so that they start from the simple to the complex and also the transition from the easy exercises to the difficult and composite and so on until reaching the high level, and that the coach's knowledge for the physical and skill and planning aspects and the way of treating the players mastery for their positions so he will certainly reach to the best ways and methods for studying the possibility of his players when the coach puts the bases in the training units he must consider the following:

1. Preparing the body for the work and especially the working muscles in the motor performance by the general and specific warm-up.
2. Gradual in teaching the skill.
3. The suitable choice for the general state of the player and the goal from the training units.
4. Distributing the time to raise the physical fitness and elevating the performance level for the players each according to his specialty and degree of his physical fitness.
5. Determining the goal from the training units and it is preferable not to multiply the goals in the training.
6. Working on arousing the excitement in the training work.
7. And finally the material and moral incentives in the training and competitions.

### **5-3- Duties of the Coach towards the Player for the Psychological Side:**

From the main and important duties for the successful coach is that he is a practical psychological coach and educator at the same time because he certainly practices the process of influencing on the athlete's psychology and works hard according to the put plan to achieve the high psychological building for the players, and that the successful coach is the best who does the process of psychological preparation so that he can treat his players psychologically and in a smooth and natural way and in an intertwined way with the other aspects without the players feeling that they are targeted for psychological treatment because of their behavioral deviation from the right path and for the purpose of preparing the player by the coach in the psychological (psychological) side he must follow the following methods:

1. That the coach's interest in the psychological side for the players contributes in raising some psychological pressures.
2. Considering the close relationship between the coach and the players who are more frank with the coach in revealing their psychological secrets and talking about their problems and identifying them is half the way to the solution and treatment so the successful coach will contain the psychological problems after knowing them and identifying them and putting the successful solutions for them.
3. On the successful coach to arouse the spirit of enthusiasm and perseverance among his players to achieve the victory and reminding them of the importance of the competition and the state of readiness and volitional struggle and the ability to show it during the competition.
4. The successful coach must put a program that includes the psychological preparation for each player individually and for the team as a whole (according to the type of the game) and determining sessions for the psychological preparation that includes repeating the player for purposeful phrases to achieve the muscular relaxation and slowing the mental processes in the brain and consequently reaching the calm type.
5. Using the successful coach multiple methods in the psychological preparation and from them the style of psychological preparation by self-suggestion with the aim of controlling and directing in the psychological characteristics and the player's belief in the benefit of these methods for removing the psychological pressures (fear, anxiety, emotions).
6. Evaluating the personal traits for the players by the coach and knowing the positive and negative psychological traits for his players and that through the individual conversation for each player individually.
7. Observing by the successful coach for each player for a certain type of psychological preparation since the individual differences in the psychological side for the players differ from one player to another, example some players are characterized by lack of self-confidence so it requires from the coach a special psychological preparation for this player its goal is raising the morale and increasing his confidence in himself and removing everything related to lack of self-confidence.

#### **5-4- Steps of the Psychological Preparation for the Coaches:**

1. Acquiring the players with the experiences and knowledge and new field skills (practically and theoretically) and that through the regular trainings in the training units in addition to the technical and planning methods and ways intended to be applied within the training plan.
2. Knowing the type of psychological characteristics for each player with the aim of knowing how to exclude the factors of anxiety and fear and replace them with factors of self-confidence and courage and which contribute and in an effective way in overcoming some difficult and negative situations whether in the training and the sports competitions.
3. Necessity of integrating the psychological preparation with the skill preparation for the players and that by teaching the players the motivating and purposeful psychological methods preparing the player for participating in the sports competitions.
4. Preparing the player for the psychological preparation in the stage before the competitions and that in knowing his psychological traits if they were weak it is required on the coach to put a program for the psychological preparation whether

by helping the player on relaxation and calm and helping him in overcoming the difficult situations and accepting the result of the competition with a sports spirit far from the negative emotions.

5. Studying the strength points and weakness of the competitor in a precise way and putting the suitable solutions and arousing the spirit of enthusiasm and superiority to achieve the victory in addition to emphasizing on the state of readiness struggle and volitional and the ability to show it for participating in the competition.

6. During the competition on the coach monitoring the players and recording all the precise observations about how the way of their playing and degree of applying the technical plans in addition to observing the tense and anxious players and consequently replacing them with other players who do not possess these psychological traits.

Emphasizing on the high educational and moral commitment through the ideal stability for the mental processes and developing and cultivating traits of strength of will in enduring the conditions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in accordance with internationally recognized ethical standards in sports science and psychological research. The research did not involve clinical interventions or experimental manipulation that could pose physical or psychological risks to participants. Where data were collected from athletes or coaches, participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. The confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were strictly preserved, and the data were used exclusively for academic and scientific purposes.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the conduct, authorship, or publication of this research.

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