

PROMOTING THE WINNER CULT IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

Vasile Liviu ANDREI,
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad,
Faculty of Physical Education and Sports

Motto: *"The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is often merely the will to try it and the faith to believe that it is possible."*

(Richard M. DeVos-owner of the Orlando Magic NBA)

The human being is threefold determined: biologically, psychologically and socially. Paul Popescu-Neveanu was talking about "taking possession of oneself", emphasizing the empowerment human psychological factor in building their personalities. Human personality as a system, presents a certain degree of constancy of events, ranging from individual to individual. In sports, the manifestation psychobehavioral is an efficiency skill, ensuring reliability of technical - tactical activities.

Athlete in the increasingly fierce competition in recent decades to achieve and exceed performance is a being who- usually - knows what he wants and how he wants, he is a product of sociocultural ambience, but considers that the views, philosophy, knowledge, feelings and ambitions are of his own and justify his actions. We speak thus of the need for awareness of the activities and their own ideas and feelings of the athlete, a "self-awareness raising" real picture of himself, the possibility of accurate assessment of their capabilities and limitations. An optimal level of this awareness of consciousness is the ground of self-development ability - how athletes carry out their work - and self - control of their own mental states and overt behavior, qualities so admired by us in great athletes.

Sport state is considered as a state of maximum workout possible, it is reflected in a particularly good exercise capacity, fatigue resistance, indices with maximum values obtained in the preparation of physical, mental, technical, tactical and outstanding results in competition and a very good capacity of global recovery after exercise, recovery only in recent years has gained great importance in the overall training of athletes, its efficacy being found in both sports results and the preservation of health and sporting longevity.

But we can not talk about the performance or performers without highlighting some concepts regarding sports intelligence (M. Niculescu, 2000). The author believes that success or failure in sport are the consequences not only of general intelligence, but especially of sports intelligence. Sports intelligence manifests and develops in relation to sports activity, demonstrating adaptation of athlete to the training demands, contributing to changes that occur in the sample or practiced sport in terms of technique, tactics, material conditions, etc.

Psychological preparation of athletes in general and the performance in particular is a mixture of: psychomotor, cognitive, affective and volitional features. But we must emphasize the need for strict correlation between sides of preparation - physical, technical, tactical, mental and theoretical capacity: if the listed sides are not corresponding, neither mental capacity can rise to the level of desired requirement.

In 1963, discussing the aspects of mental preparation for competition Epuran made the "states of preparation" system: arrangement, anticipation, engagement, modeling, implementation / adaptation of the analysis; they have, in terms of functional-mentally, a complex

emotionally- cognitive – conative character .

Psychiatric manifestations of athletes were named (M. Epuran- 1963; Spielberger C.D. – 1971; Nideffer - 1992) mental states, divided into the following categories:

- cognitive, of thinking (clarity, confusion, lucidity); of attention (concentration, distraction, vigilance); of perception (perceptual-looking sets or indicative); of memory (blockage); of the imagination (reverie, daydream) ;

- affective: home state, state of readiness for the competition, competitive and pre-competitive anxiety; reactions in situations of frustration, failure or success (disappointment, enthusiasm, overrating); feelings (joy, pride, attachment, etc.);

- conative (volitional); determination, judgment, risk decision, militancy, aggression, abandonment and so on;

- of consciousness (referring to the whole psychic system): limit states - positive or negative, altered states – trance, hiperlucidity, perceptual distortions, self-hypnosis, hypnotic sleep, sofrologic consciousness and so on, all of which are conditions commonly encountered in sports.

One of the basic principles in psychology is that “external factors act through internal factors”; in sports, the same situation will be experienced differently from sportman to sportman, depending on skills system constitution and especially, the attitude.

The most important cases in sports are the training and competition. Training is a pedagogical situation⁶ characterized by prolonged duration, maximal effort level, contradiction between aspirations and results, etc.. The competition is a situation of conflict, fighting for supremacy, is a generator of emotions and limit states, which can not

be modeled identically in training; victory or defeat, success and failure produce current positive or negative mental states, of adjustment, inadequacy or conflict.

To become a champion, an athlete, regardless of sport he practices, needs much time and effort to gain the necessary mental skills of a winner, thereby gaining winner cult consisting of: mental energy control, sensory control, external perception, negative thinking control, anticipation / mental programming of actions, assertiveness development and combativity, control of emotions and motivation, programming of operator behavior, stress control.

The athlete's awareness as a human being is the secret of his personality development, his own identity, his development capacity; therefore achieving self-awareness, for an athlete, is the basis for any intentional processes of preparation and performance aspiration.

Self-regulation with biofeedback provides sensory awareness and can be accomplished through self training and using electronic devices.

Analytical, progressive relaxation - Jacobson, developed by Dr. Edmund Jacobson, is the most used technique to obtain control of anxiety in sport.

Sofrologic training is done through several techniques to harmonize the mind and body and it is based on sofrologic doctrine developed by A. Caycedo in 1960. Sofrology (sophrosyne = selfcontrol, temperance) was defined (B. Santerre, 1989) as "the science of human consciousness, its amendments and the means to change it for therapeutic, prophylactic, pedagogical aims, to enable man to harmonize with himself and his environment. " Mental training has become in recent decades as part of the "total training"; arguments have been made both from researchers and from the athletes who practice it. Ideomotor or mental

training results in activating the neuromuscular formations and consists of repetitions in representation, based on acquired ability - through training and more exercise - to acknowledge their actions and to refresh through thinking and verbalization. Currently, mental training is used in the preparation of athletes focused on performance, to strengthen and improve the basic technique that has already been acquired.

Positive thinking exercises are based on the techniques of autosuggestion and subvocal speech (internal language) of thoughts in positive form, which is very important to note in these exercises is that positive thoughts, subvocal speech or on paper, must be well anchored in reality, having the probability of actually leading to further education and performance - in short, the purpose to be real. Positive thinking, as shown by Irina Holdevici, not just about the optimism, but also constructive guidance in finding solutions.

Yoga techniques - most commonly used in sports training is Hatha Yoga - aim at disciplining psychological and physiological functions of the individual, putting them under voluntary control; once achieved this goal, the athlete achieves better health and increased efficiency / work performance, increasing resistance to stress factors and exercise capacity of the body.

Hypnosis, as altered state of consciousness, is used as a method of self-regulation of mental states in athletes, through various changes as needed: changes in the field of sensory, motor area or sphere of thought; using hypnosis, an athlete can obtain negative emotions and competition anxiety attenuation, increasing resistance to stress and ego strengthening, mental barriers elimination.

Unestahl considered the thinking changing in high performance, noting

that in the champions' mind are carried information processes characteristic to the hypnotic state. Thus he found that the ideal state conducive to restraint performance requirements are for the moment forgotten, the performer thus being able to live moments - decisive for victory - the overtaking of his possibilities.

Zen attitude (Orlické, 1980) is a practical application of the doctrine of Lao-tzuan "doing by not doing" or, in other words, the suspension of critical thinking. It was found (Gallaway and Krieger) that the best way to deal with a summit situation is to clean up the field of consciousness of useless thoughts and program the system to operate on "autopilot" - his own subconscious.

Zen attitude applies only to athletes who have practiced and mastered the technique well. Moreover, the maximum underlying this technique of psychological preparation is as follows: "You have reached perfection when your body, your legs will carry, by themselves, what they have learned, without the intervention of the mind."

Intensity, volume, complexity, duration of work, emotions, stress, race partners adversity, the public and monotony, hardness, cyclicity, training extension, requirements of training programs, diet and the rigorous regime of training camp, all or part of them may induce mental fatigue, besides the motor and biological ones.

Mental fatigue is manifested by multiple neuropsychological signs: unsteadiness, fatigue, decreased alertness and mental responsiveness, resistance to stress. Such condition directly influences mental preparation and competition potential; it requires qualitative and quantitative changes of the effort regime. Mental fatigue, unnoticed or ignored and become chronic, can partially or permanently affect an athlete's career.

It is therefore very important that training, even or especially of the performance athlete, stimulate the body to adapt to the demands of sport, in achieving step by step performance. By the combination of natural and driven recovery it is performed, in addition to the return of the body to the values it had before exercise, an increase in the possibilities of over-compensation.

Elite athletes recognize the importance of lifelong psychological training from junior up to obtain absolute records. Lanny Robert Bassham, winner of gold medal in shooting test of the Olympic Games in 1976, is a good example to illustrate the vital importance of psychological preparation. In 1972, Bassham participated in the Olympic Games in Munich, gun shooting test, targeting winning the gold medal, but he only won the silver medal, which caused him great frustration.

Therefore, he heard up several seminars on mind control in stressful situations, but was not satisfied. After the experience of 1976, when he became world champion in shooting test of the Olympics, interviewed several gold medalists to discover what they did or thought otherwise, to become winners.

Following these experiences, Bassham created a system of mental control that he called Mental Management (Mind Control). Over the next six years, Lanny Bassham dominated his sport, sport shooting gun, winning 22 world individual and team titles and setting 4 world records. In the past 31 years, Lanny Bassham initiated and trained in mind control world and Olympic champions and employees of the United States Secret Service, U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Marine Corps Marksmanship Unit, FBI.

Athletes are never afraid of loss (or should not be). For them, every

desire, every dream and everything they think or do is an existential tool in practice, a short way firstly to the lower targets (learning techniques), and a broad road toward a major goal - achieving record performance. For an athlete, competition is more with himself than with others, psychological training techniques supporting him in the competitive maturing process.

Romanian explanatory dictionary gives, as the first definition of performance, a "result (particularly good) obtained by a person in a sports competition. " But we will go in the closing of the work, little more in the depth of the term, performance means absolute, perfect - at least when it is achieved, performance means a huge accumulation of own resources, physiological and psychological, but also the result of countless hours , days, months and years of specific effort.

Performance means team work, even if a sport is individual (the coach participates actively in the preparation of the athlete, also the psychologist, the doctor, etc.). Performance is synonymous with success, having identical dimensions: knowledge, skills, consistency, convergence and faith. All this is contained in the mystery and the winner cult, defining quality of high class performers.