

4th World Conference on Psychology, Counseling and Guidance WCPCG-2013

OPINIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES FROM DIFFERENT BRANCHES ON “PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

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Abstract

In our country, being a sports psychologist is not exactly settled as a status in terms of functioning. In professional teams, works to be done by sports psychologists can be carried out by different branches as well. Psychological support given by experts is a professional field of study. It is necessary for an expert who will work in the field of sports to be trained both in the field of psychology or psychological counseling and sports and psychological counseling in sports. Psychological support in sports is a service which is required to be given in quite a different way from the psychological support other than the one in sports. (Karagözoğlu). Psychological support in sports is a professional field needed for the athletes, trainers, sports administrators and spectators. Not only can the psychological support be given to the individuals or teams, but it can also be given continuously or in training periods to ensure development in specific issues. (Karagözoğlu, p.15). The study to determine the opinions of players from different branches on psychological support was carried out in the survey model and the data acquired were analyzed adopting the content analysis approach. In data acquisition, the opinions of players were determined by asking open-ended questions. After obtaining information from the participants about their branches, genders and how long they had been performing that sport, the following questions were asked:

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- 1- Do you apply different techniques other than physical training in order to increase your performance?
 - 2- How do you evaluate your anxiety state before and after the competition?
 - 3- What is/are the most important factor or factors which you think have affected your success throughout your sports life?
 - 4- Do you have a sports psychologist in your team?

For the first question, the typical answers given by the athletes are pilates, energy drink, running, cycling, yoga and mental training. It was determined that the ones whose sports ages were under 10 had more frequently written the techniques such as mental training and yoga. For the second question, they gave answers concerning that the anxiety did not affect them adversely. For the third question, it was determined that the phrases “family” and “team mates” were frequently repeated. Predominant answer for the fourth question is “They do not have a sports psychologist.”Starting from these points of views, it can be said that works based on psychological support in teams have not become widespread yet.

Keywords: sport psychology, Psychological support;

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

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1. Introduction

Sports sciences and social sciences are advancing every passing day and creating new areas to support individuals. The scientific area that these two disciplines integrate and collaborate in is the sports psychology. Sports psychology is an applied field of study which focuses on the development of psychological skills of the athletes and aims to reveal their potential performances. Not only does sports psychology contain the ethical values and basic concepts of psychology, but it also includes new sport-specific concepts and applications.

Psychological support in sports is a professional field needed for the athletes, trainers, sports administrators and spectators. Not only can the psychological support be given to the individuals or teams, but it can also be given continuously or in training periods to ensure development in specific issues (Karagözoğlu, 2005, İkizler, Karagözoğlu, 1997).

In our country, being a sports psychologist is not exactly settled as a status in terms of functioning. In professional teams, works to be done by sports psychologists can be carried out by different branches as well.

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Psychological support in sports means supporting the athletes in the areas they need.

Counseling Topics for the Athletes are specified as follows:

- Finding and Activating Sources of Motivation
- Increasing the Level of Concentration
- Controlling the Stimulation, Stress and Anxiety Levels for High Performance
- Development of Relaxation Techniques
- Right Goal Setting
- Performance Profiling
- Improvement of Psychological Skills
- Increasing the Self-Confidence Level
- Creating Psychological Routines
- Providing Emotion-Behavior-Thought Control
- Focusing on Cognitive Processes. (<http://www.psidanismanlik.com/sporcu/sporda-psikolojik-destek>)

Experting in mental skills in basic and advanced levels is very important for the athletes at important competitions and to achieve peak performance (Konter, 2006). Therefore, awareness in the athletes regarding the need for psychological support should be developed. The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions of the players from different branches on psychological support. For this purpose, the answers to the following questions were sought;

- 1- What are the techniques used to increase performance other than physical training according to sports ages?
- 2- What are their opinions on perception of anxiety according to sports ages?
- 3- How are the factors affecting their success expressed according to sports ages?
- 4- What are the techniques used to increase performance other than physical training by the ones who have a sports psychologist in their team and who do not?
- 5- The analyses of the views of the players involved in team or individual sports on the factors affecting their performance improving, anxiety and achievements were conducted.

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