Effect of Mental Imagery Training on Sports Performance Anxiety on under 18 Cricketers

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to find out whether Mental Imagery training has significant relationship with Sports Performance Anxiety of under 18 cricketers. The training was carried out for a period of eight weeks. The players were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group consisting of 20 players on each group. Sports Performance Anxiety scale devised by (Ahmed, S, & Swaminathan V.D, 1990) was used which had a high reliability and validity. The two forms of 't' tests namely the Dependent 't' test and Independent 't' test were employed to analyze the results.

Key words: Sports psychology, Cricket, Psychological skills, Sports performance anxiety

Introduction

Mental Imagery training are designed to improve mental skills of an athlete, such as self-confidence, motivation, the ability to relax under great pressure, and the ability to concentrate. Psychological skills training takes many forms, but each usually has three phases: the education phase, during which athletes learn about the importance of psychological skills and how they affect performance; the acquisition phase, during which athletes learn about the strategies and techniques to improve the specific psychological skills that they require; and the practice phase, during which athletes develop their psychological skills through repeated practice, simulations, and actual competition. Mental Imagery training is a form of psychological skills training in which the participant is made to sit in a quiet place and asked to close his/her eyes and follow the instructions given by the instructor and visualize the same virtually. The instructions by the instructor would be based on the issues or areas of improvement discussed with the player or the coach and would consist of a mixture of technical and psychological aspects. The instructions are usually vivid, clear and concise trying to give as precise a view of the real world as possible. The detailing of the various aspects would be in-depth which tries to make the player focus on things that usually go unnoticed in the real world and which might possibly give insights into improvements.

Significance of the Study

Even though researches have been carried out in the field of Sports Psychology, there has been a little done on the field of Cricket. Many experts argue that cricket is more of a psychological game. That being stated, there is a need to study the psychological aspects of cricket and ways of improving the players playing the game. Another significance of this study is the fact that there has been research done in the field of Mental Imagery training but not with the particular combination of Mental imagery training .

Objective of the study

The aim of the present study is to study the influence of Mental Imagery training on the Sports Performance Anxiety of under 18 cricketers.

Hypothesis

The Experimental group and the Control group will differ significantly in the Sports Performance Anxiety scores before and after Mental Imagery training in the experimental group.

Review of Literature

This investigation endeavor to study the influence of Mental Imagery training on the Sports Performance Anxiety of under 18 cricketers involved review of literature, here is a of review some of the studies that are relevant to the present investigation.

Bernier et.al., (2010). Examined the functional aspects of the use of imagery and describes the relationship among function, content and characteristics of mental images used by expert golfers in different situations. Results indicated that one category of content (images of the outcome with an internal perspective) was principally used by all participants. Moreover, the expert golfers adapted the content and the characteristics of their images according to the function that was required by the situation.

Callow et.al., (2010). investigated three issues in imagery namely imagery perspective preference in relation to imagery ability; the angle of external visual imagery usage; and the order of visual and kinesthetic previous term experience. Significant but small correlations between perspective preference and previous perspective ability were revealed.

Croft et.al (2009) hypothesized that different interceptive skills are considered, humans tend not to pursuit track the approaching object along its entire trajectory to the point of interception. It was concluded that depending on the spatio-temporal demands of the task and the intentions of the batsman a range of visual search strategies can be employed to support their actions.

Methodology

The present investigation attempts to study the influence of Mental imagery training on the Sports Performance Anxiety of under 18 cricketers. To measure the Sports Performance Anxiety of cricketers, The Sports Performance Anxiety scale (Ahmed, S, & Swaminathan V.D, 1990) was used. This Questionnaire has 35 statements and has a content validity of 0.60. Totally there were 40 male cricketers whose age ranged from 12 to 17, with a mean age of 14.5. All of them were playing for "Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu". Their practice hour ranged from 4 to 5 hours a day. Their experience on playing professional Cricket was 3.5 years on an average. These 40 players were then randomly assigned to an Experimental Group and a Control Group. Treatment in the form of Mental imagery training was then given to the experimental group. The training went on

for a period of 8 weeks. The Mental imagery training were given to them on the basis of the discussions with the coach on the areas of improvement of the players independently. The session would start off with addressing the issues that the player had encountered in the past after which mental imagery training would be given to the player independently focusing on the particular issue. After the exercise the player would then try out the practical implications of the exercise in the practice session and give feedback based on which the future sessions of the mental imagery training would be carried out. There were no drop outs either from the experimental or the control group throughout the experiment. The statistical methods used for the present study are Independent 't' test and Dependent 't' test.

Results and Discussion

Table-I

Mean, Standard deviation, 't' Value and Level of Significance of the Experimental Group and Control Group, before and after the Mental Imagery Training on Sports Performance Anxiety

Group	N	M	SD	t value	Level of significance
Pre and post test scores of the experimental group					
Pre training	20	95.65	12.68	-3.886	<0.05
Post Training	20	80.75	12.76		
Pre and post test scores of the control group					
Pre training	20	87.35	10.54		
Post Training	20	93.5	14.14	1.68	Ns
Scores of the control group and experimental pre test.					
Experimental	20	95.65	12.68		
Control	20	87.35	10.54	2.25	Ns
Scores of the control group and experimental post test.					
Experimental	20	80.75	12.76		
Control	20	93.5	14.14	-2.99	<0.05

It could be inferred from the table that there is no significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety scores of the experimental and the control group before Mental Imagery training while there is a significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety scores of the experimental and the control group after Mental Imagery training is given to the experimental group which shows that the Mental Imagery training has reduced Sports Performance Anxiety considerably. It is also inferred that there is a significant difference between the pre and post test scores of the experimental group in Sports Performance Anxiety while there is no significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety

scores of the control group after the eight weeks gap which again shows that the Mental Imagery training has reduced Sports Performance Anxiety considerably.

Conclusion

Within the limitation of the present study, it was concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre and post training scores of the experimental group in Sports Performance Anxiety while there is no significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety scores of the control group after the eight weeks gap. It is also inferred that there is no significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety scores of the experimental and the control group before Mental Imagery training while there is a significant difference between the Sports Performance Anxiety scores of the experimental and the control group after Mental Imagery training is given to the experimental group.

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