

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND WILL TO WIN BETWEEN THROWERS AND JUMPERS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBE

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to examine the mental toughness and will to win between throwers and jumpers. To obtain data for this study, the investigators had selected forty (N=40) male school level athletes of 16 to 19 years of age group to act as subjects. They were further divided into two groups which includes twenty (n= 20) Throwers and twenty (n=20) Jumpers. The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the required data. All the subjects, after having been informed about the objective and protocol of the study, gave their consent and volunteered to participate in this study. Mental toughness was measured with questionnaire developed by Goldberg (1998) and Will to win was measured with questionnaire prepared by Kumar and Shukla (1988). It is concluded from the above findings that significant differences were found between throwers and jumpers on the sub-variables i.e. motivation and overall mental toughness. However, no significant differences were noticed regarding the sub variables i.e. reboundability, ability to handle pressure, concentration and confidence. It has been also concluded that insignificant differences were noticed between throwers and sprinters on the variable will to win.

Keywords: Mental Toughness, Will to Win, Throwers and Jumpers

INTRODUCTION:

Mental toughness is a collection of values, attitudes, behaviors and emotions, which enable an individual to persevere and overcome any obstacle, adversity or pressure experienced, but also to maintain concentration and motivation when things are going well, to consistently produce high levels of performance. In today's competitive scenario, the sportspersons, coaches, trainers and all other concerned with sports cannot depend only on physical fitness alone, they have to identify and determine psychological attributes which affects the performance. Research of the last two decades has made considerable progress and contributes to our understanding of the psychological and biological/ physiological components important to individual and team game athletes. Each psychological variable has its unique contribution towards sports performance but some of the variables are preferably and specifically suitable for few games. The psychological parameters such as personality traits, anxiety, self-esteem and mental toughness are among the factors that can be considered to determine psychological predictors (Anizu et al., 2003). The mental toughness is utmost pre-requisite of individual and team athletes. Bull et al. (2005)

observed on the basis of research that there is also the potential for difference in mental toughness from one sports and event to the other. It is further illustrated that mental aspects affect the athlete's performance in competition. It is only when the mind gets tense then the body gets tense. The mind then is the source of our success or failure.

Mental toughness is a quality of players to cope up better than your opponents and unshakeable pre service conviction towards same goal despite pressure and adversity. Jones et al. (2002) defines that cope better than your opponents with the many demands (competition, training, and lifestyle) that sports places on a performer. Specifically be more consistent and better than your opponents in remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure. Gould et al. (2002) examine the psychological characteristics of Olympic champions identified that mental toughness as a significant contributor to sports performance enhancement.

It has long been acknowledged that psychological skills are critical for athletes at the elite level. Athletes with the requisite "mental toughness" are more likely to be successful. In the past, it was assumed that these skills were genetically based, or acquired early in life. Now, it is commonly accepted that athletes and coaches are capable of learning a broad range of psychological skills that can play a critical role in learning and in performance. A review of literature pointed to mental toughness as being one of the more important determinants of peak athletic performance. Gould et al. (1987) reported that 82 percent of wrestling coaches ranked mental toughness as the primary quality related to competitive success. Williams (1998) denoted that mental toughness might be more important in determining the final outcome of a sporting event than factors such as speed and ability. In order to further define the boundaries of mental toughness, researchers have attempted to isolate the distinct characteristics of the construct.

Will to win is the extent to which a person desires to reach some standard of excellence or defeat of opponent. The athletes high in will to win mainly compete to first position and may have something of win at all cost attitude. White (1959) found that will to win is also related with competitive and by acknowledging this, an athlete is able to put in his best and complete the activity successfully. Daino (1985) defined as "the intensity of desire to defeat an opponent or to exceed some performance standard in given sports." Will to win is an important parameter which makes great competitors. It has been observed in some competitions that players who although

lacked physical fitness ended up winning the match, all due to their determination to win. A correct attitude towards winning always helps in achieving high performance in sports. This ability to work to one's full potential is directly related to an individual's Will to Win. Low will to win indicates that competitors are careless about winning.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE:

Sample of respondents:

To obtain data for this study, the investigators had selected forty (N=40) male school level athletes of 16 to 19 years of age group to act as subjects. They were further divided into two groups which includes twenty (n= 20) Throwers and twenty (n=20) Jumpers. The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the required data. All the subjects, after having been informed about the objective and protocol of the study, gave their consent and volunteered to participate in this study.

Instrumentation:

Mental toughness was measured by applying mental toughness questionnaire developed by Goldberg (1998). Mental toughness questionnaire consists of 30 items measuring the mental toughness in five areas, i.e. rebound ability, ability to handle pressure, concentration, confidence and motivation. There was only yes/no answers option in this questionnaire and subjects have to tick only one option. Will to win level was measured by applying will to win questionnaire prepared by Kumar and Shukla (1988). Will to win questionnaire consists of 14 items which measure the will to win and only yes/no option for answers. There was no time limit for the completions of the questionnaires but the subjects were instructed not to take too much time over any questions.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES:

The 't' test was applied to find out the significant differences between throwers and jumpers. To test the hypotheses, the level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS:

Table-1

Significant differences in the Mean scores of Throwers and Jumpers on the variable mental toughness

Variables	Throwers =20		Jumpers =20		Mean Difference	SEDM	t-value	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Reboundability	3.73	1.11	3.48	1.06	0.25	0.19	1.25	0.21
Ability to Handle Pressure	3.80	0.98	3.55	0.94	0.25	0.17	1.41	0.159
Concentration	3.66	1.13	3.65	1.11	0.016	0.20	0.08	0.93
Confidence	4.05	0.98	3.81	0.99	0.23	0.18	1.29	0.19
Motivation	4.01	1.06	3.38	1.01	0.63	0.18	3.34*	0.001
Overall Mental toughness	19.43	1.96	18.08	2.30	1.35	0.39	3.45*	0.0008

*Significant at 0.05 level

Degree of freedom= 118

A glance at table-1 shows the results of throwers and jumpers with regard to the variable mental toughness. It has been observed from the above results that statistically significant differences ($P < 0.05$) were found between throwers and jumpers. The throwers have demonstrated significantly better on the sub-variables; motivation and overall mental toughness than the jumpers. However, insignificant differences ($P > 0.05$) were found with regard to the sub-variables; reboundability, ability to handle pressure, concentration, confidence.

Table-2

Significant differences in the Mean scores of Throwers and Jumpers on the variable will to win

Variables	Throwers =20		Jumpers =20		Mean Difference	SEDM	t-value	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Will to Win	8.05	2.21	8.15	2.11	0.10	0.49	0.1463	0.8844

*Significant at 0.05 level

Degree of freedom= 118

A glance at table-2 shows the results of throwers and jumpers with regard to the variable will to win. It has been observed from the above results that statistically insignificant differences ($P > 0.05$) were found between throwers and jumpers.

DISCUSSION:

It is evident from the findings of table-1 with regard to mental toughness that significant differences have been observed on the sub-variables; motivation and overall mental toughness between throwers and jumpers. When compared the mean values of both the groups, it has been found that throwers have performed significantly better on motivation and overall mental toughness. The outcome of the above results might be due to the motivational drive, successful completion, ability to accomplish the goals and mental toughness present in the throwers which enabled them to outdo the jumpers. However, no significant differences have been observed on the sub-variables; reboundability, ability to handle pressure, concentration and confidence between throwers and jumpers. It can be safely surmised that both the groups equally developed on mentally bouncing back from setbacks and mistakes, ability to stay calm in the clutch, ability to focus and unshaken by setbacks and failures. But a microscopic look at these variables shows that throwers have better mental toughness in contrast to jumpers.

Similar trends have been reported by Rathore et al. (2009) wherein they found that the team game players were more mentally tough as compared to individual game players on the variable mental toughness. Mohammad et al. (2009) found that Malaysian professional football players are at excellent level in mental toughness. Gould et al. (1987) indicated that coaches felt the importance of being mentally tough in achieving success in sports. Thelwell et al. (2005) identified its attributes from single sport perspective of professional soccer players closely resemble the attributes that mental toughness investigated in those individuals who have achieved the ultimate outcome in their sport. Kuan (2007) suggested that athletes with greater mental toughness were more likely to be selected into main teams to play in crucial competition. Gould et al. (1987) expressed that mental toughness determine the success of an athlete and seen as an important element help them to become a champion. Many researchers agreed that successful and champion athletes always remain mentally tough (Alderman, 1974; Pankey, 1993; Sheard, 2009 & Tap, 1991). Mental Toughness is a trainable variable and many specific training programmes have been designed to develop mental toughness in performers. It is believed that mental toughness is not inherited gift but learning variable which acquired through hard work, understanding and practice (Jones 1982; Loehr 1995 & Tapp 1991).

It is also evident from the findings of table-2 with regard to will to win that insignificant differences have been observed between throwers and jumpers. When compared the mean values of both the groups, it has been found that jumpers have performed significantly better on will to win. Contrary results have been reported by Daino (1985) found that tennis players had significantly higher will to win than non-sports group. Ghuman and Dhillon (2000) also, concluded that measure of will to win of team players securing first three positions in the tournament showed higher scores than the team players who participated in the tournament but failed to achieve the position.

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded from the above findings that significant differences were found between throwers and jumpers on the sub-variables i.e. motivation and overall mental toughness. However, no significant differences were noticed regarding the sub variables i.e. reboundability, ability to handle pressure, concentration and confidence. It has been also conclude that insignificant difference were found between throwers and sprinters on the variable will to win.

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