



Review Article

Volume 3 Issue 1 - April 2018
DOI: 10.19080/JPFMTS.2018.03.555605

J Phy Fit Treatment & Sports

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The Awareness in Sports Performance



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Submission: April 03, 2018; **Published:** April 13, 2018

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Abstract

In order for athlete to receive the most out of his performance, it is crucial for him to be aware of his own action that will not only complement but also enhance his physical, physiological and biochemical variables. Contemporary sport psychology professionals who focus on performance enhancement aim to increase athletic performance by building confidence with affirmations and self-talk, improving game by guided imagery, clearing the mind with breathing, bringing athlete to a deep center, etc. And that from our perspective creates intention which is product of the mind. In our paper we argue that "Sensory-perception of reality should dominate over mental perception". Condition, when thinking subsides and awareness dominates the action. Even though psychological variables are difficult to monitor and are mostly relied on subjective assessment, for the future research we recommend closer look on actual value of sensual experiences, thought processes as factors that to a large extend enhance or limit sport performance of the athletes.

Keywords : Zone; Under zone; Physical performance; Awareness; Sportsman

Awareness and Sport Performance

If the athlete stops dealing with himself and begins to think about the opponent, he usually starts to experience problems with his own performance and results. We believe that awareness is the key to excellence in sport performance. In that reality understanding our own action implies constant awareness of thought process on one side and our body intelligence on the other (subjective vs. objective) perception. Independence from something is not independence. Independence is a result quality of human action [1]. To be independent from what we want to be independent does not bring independence. Demand to understand to be independent from something is nothing but reaction and therefore does not free us from discomfort, negativity etc. The very urge to be independent from something is result of our dissatisfaction. We must understand our reaction, and also that independence does not come through our effort or will. Will and independence are opposite entities. Thought cannot produce independence by reason that thought is conditioned [2]. In that reality, thinking represents the surface, it is response of memory, the collected experiences, the conditioning and according to that conditioning we respond to any challenges. Thought is always bound to this collected experience. Only where there is no compulsion, no awareness of oneself - ego,

no pressure of social environment and other sources, there is possibility to see reality that what actually is.

There must be impartial observer, when we are observing what we are thinking, feeling, why we are thinking and in looking into sources of motive of our thoughts. If there is any compulsion or pressure, thought become miss evaluated and interpreted. Most of the time we want to be independent "from" or have independence "to be", to fulfill, and that represents only superficial understanding. Above mention categories having attachment to be independent and that is anxiety, fear, frustration etc. because there is wants. Thought free the intellect if experience is not cultivated by thought [2]. Then there is a state of reality, and that state cannot be brought about by the intellect. The intellect that is seeking is expression of our ambition, seek implies that we know what it is we are seeking. Independence is impartiality, we see what is, not what we want to see, achieve. Many times, in sport performance, we see what we want to see [3].

To our body it does not matter what we think, the body reacts on its own way and that represents our body intelligence. What we should focus on, is to become aware of that intelligence and

be very sensitive, receptive to it. Body intelligence is something that thought cannot grasp and put into memory. It is something that we can only, experience that tennis players call “the zone” and other athletes have labeled the “playing trance”. In real life we call it “natural flow” etc. (the meaning of the word is not in the word, but in its interpretation).

In spite of fact that feelings are in essence thoughts because we can identify them, they are representing sensational experiences. And when the intellect interferes with the feeling, out of this interference grows limited mind experience [4]. We have to focus on perception which see thinks as false or true without delay. This immediate perception of what is false and what is truth is the critical factor not the intellect, with its reasoning base upon self-gratification, its knowledge, and its commitments. Seeing truth of something immediately, without analysis, without reasoning, without the things that the intellect creates in order to postpone perception. It is entirely different from intuition and experience. In that respect, there is just direct perception, and action, not reasoning, calculation or analyzing. Despite of all that, we must to have capacity to analyze to have sharp mind in order to reason, but an intellect that is limited to reason and analyzing is incapable of perceiving what is [5]. When we perceive instantaneously, we don't have to make an effort to be objective. However, most of the coaches and athletes are not aware of interplay or duality between our intellect and natural intelligence (adaptation out vs. adaptation in, external adaptation vs. internal adaptation and the ability to capture reality vs. the ability to process future and past).

We are seldom giving thought to the ways our intellect is operating as we have given much more thoughts to accumulation of knowledge, to ego gratification and so forth. We have scarcely ever looked inside; we have seldom wandered into the depths of ourselves without calculation, without premeditation, without seeking something out of it. We have never taken the path into ourselves without a purpose. The moment we have a motive a purpose, we are captive to it and that creates tension [6,7]. We cannot see what is within ourselves, because we are always thinking in terms of change, of self-improvement [5]. As a consequence, we are tied up to the position of self-improvement which is a projection of our own mind and that is creating wants and therefore tenseness. Action without our “calculated efforts” creates unlimited energy and indescribable sensation “the zone” that at times some athletes experience. When thought process, ego gratification, steps in this incredible sensation, sensation disappears instantly. Reality, impartiality, what is, comes into being only when we consciously create conditions for its manifestation. That requires a certain quality of awareness, because, if we don't know our self, there is no basis for reasoning, for thought. Knowing and knowledge are two different things [6]. Knowing is a constant process, whereas knowledge is always static. In that process, we have to begin by seeing the overall picture not concentrating on any particular

point, on any particular problem or action, but looking at the whole as it is. And in this to be aware of the way how to do it, oppose to what to do it, is crucial.

What we uncovered, what we discovered, is of the highest importance not the theory we heard, read, listen etc. After all, reality or that which is not expressible in words cannot be found by the intellect. The fact is one thing and symbol, word is another, to break away from the symbols, that condition our thinking requires alert, vigorous mind. What is needed is a clear intellect an intellect that is not in conflict, not afraid to investigate, an intellect that is capable of being alone, an intellect that is capable of “destroying, reset itself” to find out. Simple way to say be open without expectations that ultimately creates tension. The distance between where I am now and where I want to be creating tension that consequently translates to physiological, biochemical and biomechanical alternation that ultimately compromise athletes' performance.

In overall the problems lies about in the question of creating space in our mind that brings newness that there can be the creative mind. Because athlete is many times forced to conform individuality is becoming less and less significant, and that leads to deterioration of the quality of the intellect that is creative. The collective mind cannot be progressive, can only follow, can only adjust itself, can imitate and conform. It that senses only the individual can break through, abolishing all these conditioning, and become creative. Contrary, more improvement in any pursuits in life not only is sport will bring above intellect that is not in its own limits created by external environment.

The denial, questioning of something requires vertical look, penetration, requires breaking of one's ideas, traditions. And that is essential where make-believe is overwhelmingly taking over. We accepting the things we see or we examine the things we see? To examine means finding explanations, without mere judgment, to perceive directly something as false requires absolute attention, requires all of our faculties. We should not bind ourselves to a particular set of belief, particular form of experience, certain course of action.

Though is a response of memory, which is always limited, mechanical, conditioned by the past and the hopes for the future. We seldom change voluntarily, we always change with a “motive”, and change through a motive is not a change. To be aware of the motive, of the influences, compulsions that force us to change, bringing the change. Any change represents reaction a resistance to a compulsion, but that resistance is not a real change it is merely a reaction. Real change comes with effortlessness [8]. Recognition is in polarity with something and that is real change. The questions cannot be answered by a mind or intellect that becomes mechanical, repetitive therefore creating not “free questions”. We have to have the mind that is fresh, clean, new to investigate, to find out what is beyond all the thing we put together [2]. But that embrace self-inquire, an inquiry into

oneself, self-knowing and awareness of our reactions. We need to move from unknown to a new awareness. If we remain in the state of the known, with its contradiction's, conflicts and from that state to move, try to find what is unknown, will be difficult to find the new, all the same we are still in continuation, the extension of the old thing and that is the known. To understand this fundamental question is not so simple. The intellect must be untied to see something new. But most of the time our minds are not open, to see, to observe, to understand. Be in a state of free mind is "very unique feeling" that is reflection, outcome, of something that is in concordance with inner body intelligence.

And that realization, express itself through the medium of conscious awareness without any interference from the intellect. It is only when the intellect is still; serene that can learn, what is learning is not as important as how is learning. We must become aware, understand the whole process of our own thinking [8,9] our lifestyle, that is, we must know ourselves. And that is one of the most difficult tasks that we can possibly undertake. Because to know oneself implies an intellect that is capable of looking at itself detachedly, without the "previous" knowledge it has acquired.

Many times, in the sport performance we function mechanically. In therefore, we emphasize importance of athlete to know himself not what other people have said about him/her, but observe his/her own minds, its operation, and function from there [10]. What is important is what is, and not what should be. When we observe what is, without the ideal, which is distraction, avoidance from what is, then we accept what is without naming it just to experience what lies behind the details. Open mind has ample of space within. But mind that is crowded with its own accumulations, prejudices such mind is never "empty", and therefore there is nothing new for it, nothing new can come. And for the space to come about, we have to understand the movement of our thought process. It is new experience that comes to us when we create conditions for that to happen. Athlete, coach, cannot listen through another, cannot see with the eyes of another, and cannot think with the thoughts of others [11]. But on the other hand, athlete, coach, can listen through others; see through the activities, through the dictum of others. If we put aside activity of other and simply listen, attentively, only then we will find out, become independent, discovering reality for ourselves. Athlete should become investigator, explorer not scarcely follower of own psychological structure. Life is a dynamic process. And to do that, we have to go inward "get read of" all these sediment deposits of conditioning, thinking and its byproducts.

To find out, athlete must create space in his inside. It is only through the inquiry that he going to find out. Most of us would rather accept, go along old way, we do not know how to inquire [12,13]. Many times, for inquiring into oneself about oneself we do not invest energy. A state of mind is a consequence of something that we did correctly, properly or improperly, wrong.

Proper understanding demands space, they go together. But that space is not equivalent of space around the center, we know space only because of the object within that space. By "space" we refer not the limited space that we created around ourselves as a human being in relationship with physical and nonphysical world. We refer to the space without center, without object that creates space within us. Therefore, in order to see what actually is, athlete must be aware of how conditioned, prejudiced he is, he must be aware that often we look at life through the desire for success, through our compulsive thinking and as a consequence we do not see what actually is, reality is distorted [14].

To comprehend all these, athletes and coaches have to understand own thought process, memory, time, comprehend it not verbally, but actually. Athlete's should not escape from their own confusion, contrary they should understand, accept, their own confusion, limitation, and from there to move to proper action, and that action is result of seeing what actually is [15].

Thoughts

We are in questing, striving to stop thinking to achieve homeostasis which is impossible. Our ability to control our thought process is very limited [16,17]. The moment we stop thinking we cease to exist. What we want to emphasize is that we are compulsive, addictive thinkers, in many times, we are "prisoners" of our own thinking, at times striving to detach from it. We have to be aware that stop thinking is thinking. To talk about thinking is thinking, that thought is a thought. Thought is only what we want about thought. We have abiding conviction that through, thinking, knowledge, experience we can change, everything that we go through in life. Still this is a product of our intellect, therefore thinking. We should be aware, that we use our thoughts process to achieve, that thought is a protective mechanism, thoughts creates goals, it is a matter that creates a space within ourselves, has center, and can be destructive. We have to come to realize that thoughts have its limitations, and we have to comprehend its operation. We should look beyond thought process, detach from it to create space for our "body natural intelligence" to exercise its gleam intensity, energy or power and its representation that is "the zone".

Knowledge

We have to become aware that, thoughts forms knowledge, and all we know is through the knowledge and that is memory, experience, we are listening, accumulating and interpreting. Knowledge is what we experience. There is no question out of knowledge, question goes with the answers, and the end of answers is the end of questions. We exist in the limits of our knowledge that gave us experience of reality. We have no answers "on its own" only gathered information's, and with this resulting knowledge. We should realize that thought respond to the stimulus, there is stimulus respond interaction. Many times, solutions given to us not solving problems contrary, creating problems. In the following, knowledge creates experience

and experiences fortify knowledge. As we already mentioned, thought is protective self-serving, mechanism that creates problem, taking us away from our body natural intelligence. We can observe ourselves as we go along in sport performance and without understanding be aware of it, be conscious of our body intelligence. And that observation we can achieve merely without strain. Effortlessness we cannot achieve by force [17]. We have all the necessary tools, but we do not utilize them. In that process, nobody can help us, coach can impersonate "instrument" on the way to understanding. Conditions such as feelings, experiences can have its substantiation, but cannot create, understand and solve the appearing problems.

What athlete actually sees in the sport game is not consequence of his sense-organs but interpretation of his/her sensual experiences [13]. And that can be interpreted variously. On one side with the intellect and its centric thinking, or on the other side with the absolute immersion on the task that unfolds, which implies total presentation of athlete ability in that particular moment. Where thinking subsides and abilities and skills are optimized. In that state even though sportsmen make mistakes he knows exactly what and why he made mistakes. And that realization gives athlete sense of control. He sees what is, he focuses all of his energy, attention on the task at hand. There is ample space in his "mind", thinking subside and inner intelligence, his abilities are fully demonstrated. Number of times, the feeling of "the zone" comes and go, that we name "the under zone" which depends on the athletes' awareness fluctuations. Once ego comes in, focus decreases, awareness dissipates. Athlete start to experience state of inner noise which is disturbing, thinking mind become in control of the action. In that state athlete stops acting and start reacting to the situation and that is fragmentation, therefore thinking [18-20].

Conclusion

From the testimonial evidence of the top athletes, we recognize the importance of not acting deliberately during peak performance. In that reality, shifts in alertness are experienced, these involve sharpening of senses (vision, hearing etc.), or a keener sense of interior (kinesthetic) sensation is perceived. Even sometimes the unconscious, instinctive action in sport performance is perceived as coming from a greater power beyond oneself. From our observations, empirical evidence and personal experiences, we can conclude that "the zone" or more often "the under zone" is in the most part result of our own action and that is creation of the conditions for its manifestation. In other words, "the zone" is a result of proper action. We are hampered by the fact that many times in the training process, we are not grounded in above discussed process of knowing, that would meaningfully account for and encourage the systematic development of our inner possibilities. Instead we are trusting blindly that by steadfast practice and perseverance of our hidden reserves will eventually be mobilized and perform to our best ability possible. In our present research we are

investigating possible pathways to the ability of the athlete to capture reality or immediate moment. On the conclusion we can to utter, that sports provide a strong and compelling platform for an exploration of psychological, physiological and biochemical transformation of the athletes under certain plausible conditions. Even though there is a deficiency of information's and research from presented point of view. For the future, we recommend searching for the ways, tools and possibilities, how to direct "train" athletes and coaches on their way to ever new reality. Investigate to which degree mental state of the athlete can influence his physical and for the most part physiological and biochemical fluctuations and modifications.

Acknowledgment

This study was supported by the Kultúrna a edukačná grantová agentúra Ministerstva školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky (KEGA). Grant (project č. 004UPJŠ-4/2017) Humánna fyziológia so zameraním na pohybovú aktivitu a šport.

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DOI: [10.19080/JPFMTS.2018.03.555605](https://doi.org/10.19080/JPFMTS.2018.03.555605)

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