

Implementation of Mental Training to Enhance Achievement Motivation in Amputee Football Athletes

Eka Kurnia Darisman¹, Moh. Hanafi², Ramadhany Hananto Puriana³, Gatot Margisal Utomo⁴, Yandika Fefrian Rosmi⁵, Yoga Rahman Sanjaya⁶, Agatha Candrika⁷, Wahyu Erlangga⁸
^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8}PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study is to analyze the role of mental training in enhancing the psychological readiness of amputee football players to optimize their performance under competitive pressure. **Method:** The study focuses on three primary techniques of mental training: concentration, relaxation, and mental imagery. These techniques are systematically applied to address psychological challenges faced by amputee football players during competitions, enabling them to manage stress and maintain focus effectively. **Results:** Findings indicate that structured mental training significantly enhances athletes' ability to handle competitive stress, improving their psychological preparedness. This improvement positively influences their overall performance, complementing their physical, technical, and tactical skills. **Novelty:** This study highlights the unique psychological challenges faced by amputee football players and emphasizes the necessity of tailored mental training programs. It offers a specialized approach to support athletes with special needs, integrating mental preparation as a core element of their training regimen.

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, sports have become an inseparable part of daily life. Sports are not only an arena for achieving accomplishments but also a necessity for maintaining physical health. In the midst of globalization and the rapid development of the times, individuals of high quality are needed – those who have various achievements, both in academic and non-academic fields. Sports play an important role in strengthening the body and mind, shaping a healthy personality, and helping individuals face changes with resilience and creativity in solving complex problems [1].

The psychological approach in sports aims to create athletes who are motivated to perform their best and win matches. This motivation is important not only in individual sports but also in team sports, where group motivation is greatly needed. Strategy and mental strength are important elements in facing a match. A strong mentality functions as a driver, controller, and director of motor activities, so athletes with a good mentality are expected to achieve maximum performance [2].

To improve performance or achieve the best results in sports, physical training, technique, tactics, and strategy are not the only requirements. Mental training also plays a crucial role in building a strong mental condition. In the world of sports, every discipline involves mental and physical aspects that support each other. The mind as the controller plays a major role, where the body follows its commands. Athlete achievements are not solely obtained by following the coach's instructions or through

intensive training, but also through a positive mindset that can direct their sports behavior towards optimal outcomes.

Every individual is endowed with strengths and weaknesses in living life, but the path of life is often unpredictable. Some are born with perfect physiques, while others may be born with certain limitations. In addition, there are also individuals who initially have perfect physical conditions but later experience misfortunes, such as losing a limb or cognitive decline, thus facing new limitations in their lives.

These strengths and weaknesses become one of the factors that differentiate one individual from another. Unfortunately, society often forgets or even neglects individuals with physical disabilities, commonly referred to as disabilities. Consciously or unconsciously, they are often looked down upon, kept at a distance, or considered a minority group. In fact, individuals with disabilities have the same right to live freely without intervention, including in choosing a career or profession, such as becoming an athlete.

It is important for us to realize that every individual, regardless of their limitations, has potential that can be developed. In the world of sports, for example, many disabled athletes have proven that physical limitations are not an obstacle to achieving extraordinary accomplishments [3]. Therefore, support and inclusion for them are very important so that they can live with dignity and have equal opportunities.

Achievement motivation is one of the key factors that determine the success of athletes, including special needs football players. Athletes with high motivation tend to have a greater determination to achieve their goals, overcome challenges, and continuously strive to improve their abilities [4]. However, for special needs football athletes, achievement motivation often faces more complex obstacles. These obstacles can be in the form of physical or mental limitations, as well as a lack of appropriate psychological and social support. This situation demands a more specific and targeted approach to help them develop motivation and achieve their maximum potential in performance.

A. Mental Exercise

Mental is a condition that reflects the integration between a person's emotional and intellectual aspects [5]. Mental factors must be built, enhanced, and maintained at an optimal level from an early stage, especially while the athlete is still in the club, under the guidance of a coach. Gråstén & Watt, define mental practice, or mental imagery, as a training process that focuses on tasks whose movements are not directly observable [6]. Mental training is a cognitive exercise for physical skills, which trains the clarity of movement.

The success of athletes does not only depend on physical or technical training from coaches, but also on a positive mindset that can guide their behavior in sports. Mental practice is described as the practice of conceptualizing ideas, introspection, and imaginative exercises to prepare for performance. This exercise aims to visualize tasks that will be performed without visible physical activity.

Mental encompasses organized psychological structures and processes, both conscious and unconscious. These psychological components form the foundation of an athlete's strength and mental condition. Broa & Abellanosa, define mental training as a systematic process to strengthen mental resilience through concentration, emotional control, and management of psychophysical conditions [7].

A champion's mentality is not something that is born naturally, but is formed through environmental influences and self-motivation. Mental training is very important to prepare the psychological readiness of athletes, especially in facing match pressure. This process involves integrated psychological aspects to help athletes manage stress and maintain focus in competitive situations [8].

B. Implementation

1. Mental Training Forms

According to Budi Prasetyo et al, mental training is a method to enhance athletes' mental abilities and endurance [9]. This includes the ability to develop oneself in any situation, facing internal and external obstacles during the match. Mental training is conducted systematically and long-term, with the aim of controlling behavior, performance, emotions, and mood (mood-state). With this approach, athletes can more easily overcome negative impacts.

Mental training consists of two main stages: the initial stage and the advanced stage. In this community service activity, several stages are carried out. In the early stages, the main focus is mental preparation, which includes several aspects such as:

- a. Breathing exercises, to align physical and mental conditions.
- b. Concentration exercises, so that athletes can focus their attention and energy on specific tasks.
- c. Relaxation, as a technique to reduce tension and restore optimal condition.
- d. Imagery or visualization, to illustrate the techniques and strategies that will be used in the match.
- e. Self-image development, so that PERSAS amputee football athletes have a sense of responsibility as representatives of the nation.



Figure 1. Implementation of mental training.

At the advanced stage, the training is aimed at strengthening mental functions through three main aspects, namely:

- a. Cognitive (mind), attention focusing, visualization, and thought restructuring.
- b. Konative (will), willpower training, concentration, and contemplation.
- c. Affective (emotional): biofeedback techniques, self-control with suggestion, and meditation to manage emotions.

This process aims to develop a strong and integrated mentality, so that athletes are not only physically skilled but also possess a positive mindset that guides their sports behavior. Transcendental meditation is referred to as one of the methods that can deepen the ability to control the mind through prayer and meditation [10]. With this method, it is hoped that athletes will be able to face match pressure with optimal psychological resilience.

Individual motivation can be measured through several indicators, such as the duration and frequency of activities, persistence, resilience, dedication, sacrifice, level of aspiration, and the quality of the results achieved. Motivation will remain intact if athletes can set clear goals through the process of goal setting. This process allows individuals to design personal goals with a certain level of importance (valence), which is usually done on their own initiative [11].



Figure 2. Discussion during the implementation of mental training.

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the effectiveness of mental training techniques in improving the achievement motivation of amputee football athletes from PERSAS Surabaya. The study emphasized the application of systematic mental training exercises designed to enhance psychological resilience and motivational levels in sports performance.

B. Participants

The research involved ten amputee football athletes registered with PERSAS Surabaya, selected purposively based on their active participation in training sessions

and competitions. The participants varied in age, background, and experience to provide a comprehensive analysis of motivational factors across diverse profiles.

C. Data Collection

The data collection process incorporated the following methods:

1. **Observation:** Field observations were conducted during training sessions to document athletes' behaviors, focus levels, and responses to mental training exercises.
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were held with athletes, coaches, and support staff to gather insights into the psychological challenges and the impact of mental training on performance and motivation.
3. **Questionnaires:** A validated achievement motivation scale was administered before and after the mental training sessions to measure changes in motivational levels quantitatively.

D. Mental Training Interventions

The study focused on structured mental training interventions divided into two stages:

1. Initial Stage:

- a. Breathing exercises to align physical and mental states.
- b. Concentration drills to sharpen focus on specific tasks.
- c. Relaxation techniques to alleviate tension and optimize mental readiness.
- d. Imagery exercises to visualize strategies and techniques.
- e. Self-image building to instill a sense of responsibility as national representatives.

2. Advanced Stage:

- a. Cognitive Training: Exercises for attention focus, thought restructuring, and visualization.
- b. Conative Training: Techniques to enhance willpower, concentration, and contemplation.
- c. Affective Training: Biofeedback methods, self-control through suggestion, and meditation for emotional regulation.

E. Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative inputs from observations and interviews, and statistical methods for quantitative data from questionnaires. The combination allowed for a holistic understanding of the impact of mental training on achievement motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of Mental Training Before Facing a Match

According to Gråstén & Watt, there are three main techniques in mental training that require special attention to support athlete development in facing competitions,

namely: concentration, relaxation, and imagery [6]. These three techniques are designed to help athletes manage the mental aspects in achieving their best performance.

1. Focus

Concentration is a condition where an athlete can fully focus on one thing or specific object without being easily distracted. Concentration allows athletes to showcase their best abilities. The two types of concentration are:

- a. Internal Concentration, which focuses on the observation, feelings, or thoughts from within the athlete.
- b. External Concentration, which focuses on objects outside the athlete, such as opponents or equipment used in the sport.

Athletes with good concentration can maintain physical and emotional balance, as well as focus their minds on the tasks that need to be completed. One of the concentration exercises is to ask athletes to sit back, look at a specific object (for example, a picture related to their sport), and recount the details of that object without mistakes after a few minutes of focus.

Setyaningrum, further identifies attention in three forms, namely [12]:

- a. Narrow External Focus: A narrow external focus, like a golfer concentrating on the direction of the ball.
- b. Narrow Internal Focus: A narrow internal focus, like a discus thrower concentrating on their technique.
- c. Broad External Focus: A broad external focus, like a soccer defender monitoring the movements across the entire field.

This concentration exercise aims to ensure that athletes can maintain focus and maximize performance under competitive pressure. With a structured approach, athletes can develop concentration skills that support their success in various sports.

2. Relaxation

Relaxation is an important strategy in mental preparation aimed at helping athletes cope with stress and tension during competitions. This technique is designed to create physical, emotional, and mental calmness, allowing athletes to perform optimally. Some commonly used relaxation techniques include:

a. Progressive Relaxation

This technique was introduced by Jacobson in 1938. The main concept is to help individuals distinguish between the state of tension and relaxation. By gradually training the body to sense these differences, the muscles become more sensitive to the body's condition, and blood flow can better adjust to the body's needs.

b. Biofeedback

This technique uses physiological feedback to measure body tension, such as through skin temperature, muscle tension, or blood pressure. With visual or audio indicators, individuals can monitor their stress levels and learn to control them effectively.

c. Transcendental Meditation

Developed by Benson in 1975, this technique involves meditating twice a day for 20 minutes. This practice has been proven to lower blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, oxygen consumption, and muscle tension, thereby positively impacting athletic performance.

In general, relaxation is characterized by minimal physical and mental activity as well as deep tranquility. According to Mulya, relaxation is easier to achieve in a supine position [8]. However, for pre-match preparation, relaxation is better done in a seated position with the back supported so that the athlete does not fall asleep, especially if the body is in a state of fatigue.

With the application of these relaxation techniques, athletes can minimize tension and focus optimally, enhance mental readiness, and support better performance in competitions.

3. Mental Imagery

Mental imagery has become an important part of modern sports training methods. This technique is often used by coaches to accelerate the learning process of movements and skills, while also increasing athletes' motivation during training. Mental imagery allows athletes to build mental images of specific movements or skills and visualize the actions that need to be taken in certain situations.

According to Darisman et al, the mental imagery technique is carried out through several stages [4]. First, athletes are given demonstrations of new movement patterns, such as through live demonstrations or film media. This process aims for athletes to observe the movements carefully, thereby gaining a deep cognitive understanding. Next, the athletes are invited to discuss the new technique, including providing feedback on any difficulties or advantages they perceive.

After the discussion, the athletes were asked to perform internal mental rehearsal, which involves imagining or visualizing the movements that had been demonstrated. This process is followed by a re-demonstration to fill in the gaps in their imagination. The final stage is hands-on practice, where athletes practice the technique according to the previously formed imagination. Also so that they can minimize the occurrence of boredom when training [13].

Mental imagery can also be applied to analyze potential opponents, helping athletes recognize their strengths and weaknesses. With this method, athletes are expected to be more mentally and technically prepared to face the competition. The mental imagery technique not only accelerates the skill learning process but also becomes an important strategy for enhancing athletes' confidence and readiness in competitions. After conducting mental training, the amputee football athletes from PERSAS Surabaya were then measured for their achievement motivation scale using a questionnaire [14]. The test results showed that the average achievement motivation of the athletes was 4.17, with the lowest score being 3.6 and the highest being 4.8, where the highest value for achievement motivation is 5.0. From these results, it can be concluded that the average

achievement motivation scale of the amputee football athletes from PERSAS Surabaya falls into the very good category. Individually, three athletes were found to have their achievement motivation still in the moderate category.



Figure 3. Group photo with PERSAS Surabaya amputee football athletes.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : Mental training is a structured psychological practice designed to enhance athletes' performance by addressing foundational, performance, and facilitative mental skills, alongside personal and team development skills. This training involves progressive stages, starting with techniques like breathing exercises, relaxation, and visualization to build fundamental mental readiness, followed by advanced methods for competitive scenarios. **Implication :** The integration of mental training into regular athletic programs highlights its critical role in improving psychological resilience and performance under pressure. Coaches and athletes who systematically apply these practices can foster a stronger mental foundation, enabling sustained focus, relaxation, and visualization during high-stakes competitions. **Limitation :** Despite its benefits, mental training faces challenges, such as the need for specialized expertise, athlete motivation, and consistency in implementation. Without tailored and structured approaches, the effectiveness of mental training may diminish, limiting its impact on athletic performance and psychological growth. **Future Research :** Future research should explore innovative methodologies and technologies, such as virtual reality and biofeedback, to enhance mental training techniques. Additionally, studies should examine the long-term effects of mental training across diverse sports disciplines to identify strategies for broader application and optimization of mental performance.

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***Eka Kurnia Darisman (Corresponding Author)**

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: ekakurniadarisman@unipasby.ac.id

Moh. Hanafi

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: hanafi@unipasby.ac.id

Ramadhany Hananto Puriana

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: ramadhany@unipasby.ac.id

Gatot Margisal Utomo

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: gatotmargisal@unipasby.ac.id

Yandika Fefrian Rosmi

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: yandikafefrian@unipasby.ac.id

Yoga Rahman Sanjaya

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: yogarahman35@gmail.com

Agatha Candrika

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: agathacandrika@gmail.com

Wahyu Erlangga

PGRI Adi Buana University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: wahyuerlangga961@gmail.com
