THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SPRINTERS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to assess the impact of a psychological skills training (PST) programme on the athletic performance of sprinters at Technikon Pretoria, South Africa.

The structure of the PST programme was based on the structure outlined by Wann (1997), and Winter and Martin's (1993) Sport Psychology Basic Training Programme constitutes the content of the programme. The programme consisted of five stages: education, pretests of psychological skills, the PST programme per se, an implementation phase, and posttests. The specific psychological skills that the programme attempted to enhance were self-confidence, stress management, attention, intrinsic motivation and mental imagery.

Athletic performance was measured by the sprinters' personal best times on the one hundred metre event at the beginning and end of the PST programme.

Firstly, the data was analysed to determine if there was an improvement in psychological skills and athletic performance. Thereafter the difference in athletic performance

between the beginning and end of the programme was correlated with the difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the psychological skills measured.

The research findings indicated that there was a significant improvement in the reduction of stress levels, mental imagery skills, and a greater number of athletes had an internal focus of attention. No significant differences were found in self-confidence, intrinsic motivation and the number of athletes with a narrow focus of attention. The only significant correlation was between intrinsic motivation and athletic performance.

Die studie van die impak van 'n sielkundige vaardigheidheidsopleiding-program op die prestasie van naellopers

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OPSOMMING

Die doel van die tesis is om die impak van 'n sielkundige vaardigheidsopleidingsprogram op die atletiese prestasie van naellopers aan Technikon Pretoria, Suid-Afrika te bepaal.

Die struktuur van die program is gebasseer op die struktuur soos uiteengesit word deur Wann (1997), terwyl die inhoud van die program saamgestel is volgens Winter & Martin (1993) se 'Sport Psychology Basic Training Programme'. Die program bestaan uit vyf fases: opleiding, voortoetsing van sielkundige vaardighede, die sielkundige vaardigheidsopleidingsprogram per se, 'n implementeringsfase en die natoetsing. Die spesifieke sielkundige vaardighede wat die program gepoog het om te verbeter, was selfvertroue, streshantering, konsentrasie, intrinsieke motivering en visualisering.

Atletiese prestasie is gemeet aan die naellopers se persoonlike beste tye op die honderdmeter naelloop item aan die begin en aan die einde van die program.

Die data is eerstens geanaliseer om te bepaal of daar 'n verbetering in sielkundige vaardighede en atletiese prestasie was. Daarna is die verskil in atletiese prestasie aan die begin en einde van die program vergelyk met die verskil van die resultate wat tydens die voor- en natoetsing van die sielkundige vaardighede verkry is.

Die navorsingsresultaat toon 'n merkbare verbetering in die stresvlakke en visualiseringsvaardighede van die atlete. 'n Groter aantal atlete het ook 'n interne fokuspunt getoon. Daar is egter geen beduidende verskil in selfvertroue, intrinsieke motivering en die aantal atlete met 'n interne fokuspunt gevind nie. Die enigste merkbare opvallende korrelasie was tussen intrinsieke motivering en atletiese prestasie.

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