

Primary diagnosis of psycho-emotional states of athletes of the Russian wheelchair curling team

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to conduct a primary psychological diagnosis of athletes of the main team of the Russian wheelchair curling team.

Methods and structure of the study. Eight athletes of the main composition of the Russian national team aged 33 to 52 years old took part in the scientific work: four men and four women. For diagnosis, four basic methods for diagnosing indicators of stress and anxiety were chosen: a method for diagnosing self-esteem Ch.D. Spielberger, Yu.L. Khanina (assessment of situational and personal anxiety); inventory of stress symptoms (T. Ivanchenko et al.); scale for assessing subjective comfort (A. Leonova); diagnostics of the state of stress (K. Schreiner).

Results and conclusions. According to the results of the diagnostics, it was revealed that the athletes of the main team of the Russian national team are able to get together and respond constructively in a tense situation, but at the same time they are prone to anxiety, which can cause errors during the competition. Based on the data obtained, a sports psychologist developed a correctional program aimed at reducing the levels of situational and personal anxiety, as well as the formation of skills for conscious self-regulation and emotional relaxation.

Keywords: *psychodiagnostics, wheelchair curling, emotional stability, psychological preparation of athletes.*

Introduction. Stable results of athletes in elite sports are the result of the systematic work of a team of specialists. In addition to the competent work of the training staff, the complex activity of a sports psychologist is mandatory, which involves, at the first stage, primary diagnostics, then correction of the necessary indicators, and repeated diagnostics to determine its effectiveness. A sports psychologist provides psychological training. According to the textbook "Sports Psychology": psychological preparation is "the formation, development and improvement of the properties of the psyche necessary for the successful activity of athletes and teams" [1].

Since 2020, the coaching staff of the main team of the Russian wheelchair curling team has decided to form a system of psychological training. Wheelchair

curling has been officially considered a professional sport since 2002. The Russian national team is currently one of the leaders and has medals of the World Championships: "gold" in 2012, 2015, 2016, 2020 and "silver" in 2017. Also in 2014, athletes won silver medals at the Paralympic Games - 2014 in Sochi.

Team coaches note that in this direction of curling, tactical, strategic superiority and psycho-emotional state are in the forefront, and only then motor activity [2].

Objective of the study was to conduct a primary psychological diagnosis of athletes of the main team of the Russian wheelchair curling team.

Methods and structure of the study. One of the most important and often decisive factors for a successful performance in this sport is the psycho-emotional state of athletes at the time of preparation



and participation in competitions, as well as stress resistance. It is worth noting that the 2020-2021 sports season is not quite ordinary: due to the coronavirus pandemic, there were no international competitions, all-Russian competitions are severely limited. The last official game of the athletes - the victorious final of the 2020 World Cup - was about a year ago. The next competition plans were also not determined, which, according to the coaches, leaves an imprint on the psycho-emotional state and stress level of the athletes.

The diagnostics of the athletes was carried out during the training camp in January 2021. The athletes reacted to the diagnostics with interest, were calm and relaxed. The studies were carried out individually with each athlete. All athletes were available for productive contact, showed initiative in conversation, were active in communication, answered questions in detail and in detail. The background of the athletes' mood was moderate with periodic anxiety manifestations, the emotional response was normal, and the speech was literate. Athletes learned the instructions after the first presentation, immediately set to work. When performing tasks, they were not distracted and were independent. The subjects showed interest in the result.

The study involved eight athletes of the main composition of the Russian national team aged 33 to 52 years: four men and four women.

For diagnostics, four basic methods for diagnosing indicators of stress and anxiety were chosen [3]:

- a method for diagnosing self-esteem Ch.D. Spielberger, Yu.L. Khanina (assessment of situational and personal anxiety);
- inventory of stress symptoms (T. Ivanchenko et al.);
- a scale for assessing subjective comfort (A. Leonova);
- diagnostics of the state of stress (K. Schreiner).

Testing C.D. Spielberger revealed moderate anxiety in six athletes, and high anxiety in two, both personal and situational. Personal anxiety characterizes a stable tendency to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening, to respond to such situations with a state of anxiety. Situational anxiety is characterized by tension, anxiety, nervousness. High situational anxiety often causes a violation of attention and even a violation of fine coordination, which is quite critical for curling. High personal anxiety is dangerous with emotional and neurotic breakdowns, as well as psychosomatic diseases. The most likely psychosomatic diseases in-

clude sleep and appetite disorders, gastrointestinal tract disorders, pressure surges, and heart disorders.

Anxiety, unlike fear, does not have an objective cause and a specific object, which significantly complicates the stabilization of the psycho-emotional state. Athletes with high levels of anxiety are recommended to work systematically with a psychologist to stabilize their psycho-emotional state. The recommendations provide specific exercises that, with regular training, reduce the level of anxiety.

In the inventory of stress symptoms (according to T. Ivanchenko et al.), all athletes revealed a similar assessment of the situation of vigorous activity and stress: all are included in the group who scored 31-45 points. If, after a severe injury, both physical and psychological, these people were able to find the strength to start playing sports and achieve high results, then they are characterized by vigorous activity and tension. Athletes are subject to stress both in the positive sense of the word and in the negative: they strive to achieve something, but they have enough problems and worries. A similar overall score in a team indicates social activity and chronic stress. The main task of the coaching staff is to develop the skills of conscious self-regulation and emotional release.

Diagnostics on the scale of subjective comfort (according to A. Leonova) revealed a high level of subjective comfort and well-being in five athletes. The index of their subjective comfort (ISC) >54 points. Three athletes have $48 < ISC < 54$ points, which is an acceptable level of subjective comfort and normal health. One athlete had a reduced level of subjective comfort and decreased well-being, which may be due to the unpleasant news about the illness of another member of the team with whom the athlete was in contact. The results obtained indicate that it is comfortable for athletes to be together at this training camp, in the current period of time.

When diagnosing the state of stress (according to K. Schreiner), it was revealed that all athletes scored a similar number of points: from 1 to 3. This suggests that all members of the team behave in a stressful situation rather restrainedly and are able to regulate their own emotions, which is inherent sports such as wheelchair curling.

Recommendations. Based on the results of the primary diagnosis, a correctional program was developed aimed at reducing the levels of situational and personal anxiety, as well as the formation of skills for conscious self-regulation and emotional relaxation.



The program was based on breath control techniques, visualization, ways to control muscle tone [4], as well as the formation of grounding skills to reduce the level of anxiety before competitions. To mobilize the state, athletes are offered exercises for upper breathing, and for calmness and concentration - four stages of a single cycle of lower breathing. Athletes are also recommended to prevent muscle clamps by performing exercises in three phases: "strain - feel - relax".

Conclusions. Athletes of the main team of Russia are able to pull themselves together and respond constructively in a tense situation, but at the same time they are prone to anxiety, which can cause mistakes during the competition.

Testing was carried out during the preparatory period, the athletes were in comfortable conditions at a familiar sports base, engaged in their usual training activities. At the same time, major competitions were postponed indefinitely due to the self-isolation regime due to the spread of coronavirus infection, the news agenda regarding the future of Russian sports remained alarming, which can explain the increased level of stress among the leaders of the national team. In the future, to complete the primary diagnosis of athletes of the Russian wheelchair curling team, it is planned to study the indicators of aggressiveness and frustration reactions.

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