

## ANALYSIS OF COPING SKILLS BETWEEN SPORTSPERSONS BELONGING TO INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM SPORTS

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### ABSTRACT

*Athletes being exposed to a number of intense physical and psychological demands, they use a set of cognitive and behavioral strategies in order to cope with these challenges and related stress. Coping strategies may also differ depending upon the nature and dynamics of the sport concerned, gender and type of sport. Hence it was the purpose of the study to analyze coping skills among national level athletes in India belonging to individual and team sports. The subjects for the study were 216 national level sportspersons consisting of 95 sportspersons belonging to individual sports and 121 sportspersons belonging to team sports. The coping style of the sportspersons was assessed using the Athlete Coping Style Inventory Questionnaire (ACSI-28) by Smith, Schultz and Ptacek (1995). The study results indicated that in case of coping skills variables, sportspersons belonging to individual sports showed significantly higher scores on goal setting and mental preparation, concentration, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability as compared to sportspersons belonging to team sports. However, in case of freedom from worry, sportspersons belonging to team sports showed significantly higher values as compared to sportspersons belonging to individual sports.*

**KEY WORD:** Physical, Psychological, Cognitive and Behaviour.

### INTRODUCTION:

It is generally accepted that poor performance is associated with a high level of stress and worry or anxiety, which prevent athletes from performing in their optimal zone. Athletes being exposed to a number of intense physical and psychological demands, they use a set of cognitive and behavioral strategies in order to cope with these challenges and related stress (Crocker, Alderman & Smith, 1988; Gould, Finch, & Jackson, 1993). An athlete's use of cognitive or behavioral strategies can further be seen as the core of the coping process (Anshel, Kim, Kim, Chang, & Eom, 2001). There seems to be a meaningful association among anxiety, confidence,

and coping skills. People with appropriate coping skills could manage stress and adversity with self-confidence; however, people with inadequate coping skills tend to perceive anxiety as a threatening factor.

Studies (Gould et al, 1993; Holt and Hogg, 2004) have shown that athletes use both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies depending upon the stressful encounters. Coping, therefore can be considered as a complex process in which athletes strive at the same time to deal with both the stressful environment and distressing emotions. Coping strategies may also differ depending upon the nature and dynamics of the sport concerned and very often research studies have indicated contradictory results on athletes coping skills with respect to gender and type of sport. Hence it was the purpose of the study to analyze coping skills among national level athletes in India belonging to individual and team sports.

#### METHOD:

The subjects for the study were 216 national level sportspersons belonging to the following sports disciplines: badminton, football, volleyball, basketball, swimming and track and field. The subjects consisted of 95 sportspersons belonging to individual sports and 121 sportspersons belonging to team sports. All the sportspersons had been playing at the national level and few of them at the international level during the last three years. The age of the subjects ranged from 15 to 29 years. The samples were identified and selected following a convenience sampling method from the venues of national level tournaments and during coaching camps of various teams. The coping style of the sportspersons were assessed using the Athlete Coping Style Inventory Questionnaire (ACSI-28) by Smith, Schultz and Ptacek (1995).

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

To compare the coping skills between sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports, the t-test was applied. The results pertaining to the scores obtained on coping skills of sportspersons are shown in tables 1 to 3.

Table 1

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF COPING SKILLS FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE OF  
SPORTSPERSONS

Variable	Mean	S D	Skewness	Kurtosis
Coping with adversity	8.24	2.05	-0.32	-0.61
Peaking under pressure	8.12	2.21	-0.55	0.45
Goal setting/ Mental preparation	9.02	2.22	-0.39	-0.58
Concentration	7.75	1.71	-0.04	0.35
Freedom from worry	6.17	2.64	-0.05	-0.39
Confidence & Achievement Motivation	9.12	1.93	-0.72	0.48
Coachability	9.06	1.98	-0.46	-0.02

Table 2 of descriptive statistics of scores on coping skills among Indian sportspersons indicates mean score and standard deviation of  $8.24 \pm 2.05$ ,  $8.12 \pm 2.21$ ,  $9.02 \pm 2.22$ ,  $7.75 \pm 1.71$ ,  $6.17 \pm 2.64$ ,  $9.12 \pm 1.93$  and  $9.06 \pm 1.98$  respectively for coping with adversity, peaking under pressure, goal setting/mental preparation, concentration, freedom from worry, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability.

The graphical representation of the mean scores on coping skills of sportspersons is shown in figure 1.

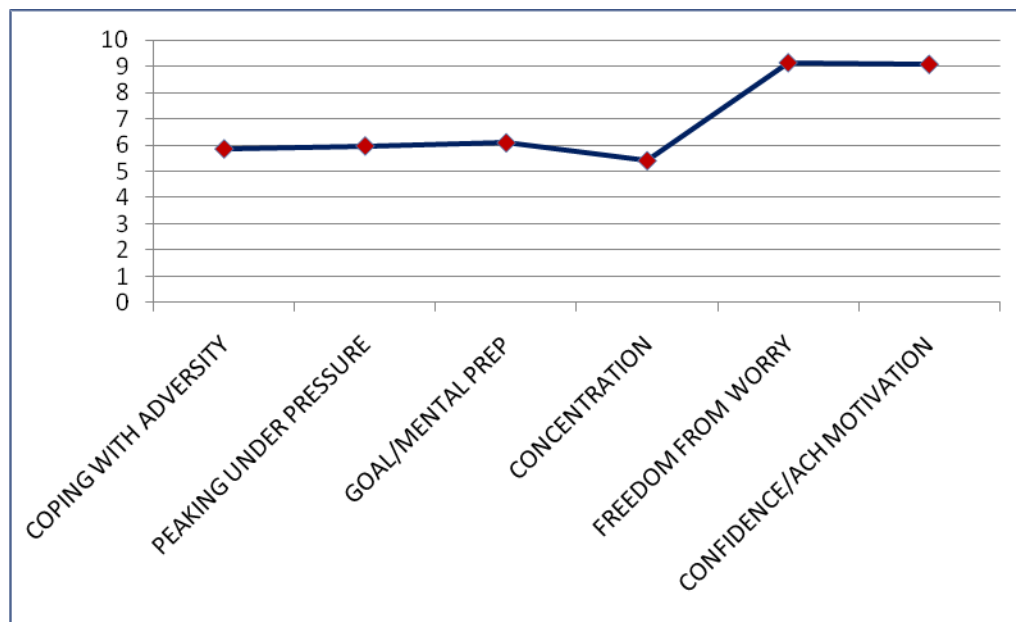


Fig. 1. Mean scores on coping skills for the total sample of sportspersons

The results of comparison between sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports on coping skills are presented in table 2.

Table 2

COMPARISON ON SELECTED COPING SKILL VARIABLES BETWEEN  
SPORTSPERSONS BELONGING TO INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM SPORTS

Variables	Ind Sport		Team Sport		t- valueSig.	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Coping with adversity	8.46	2.30	8.05	1.81	1.46	0.15
Peaking under pressure	8.35	2.54	7.93	1.88	1.41	0.16
Goal setting/ mental preparation	9.60	2.26	8.56	2.07	3.50*	0.001

Concentration	8.16	1.72	7.42	1.63	3.25*	0.001
Freedom from worry	5.51	2.83	6.68	2.36	3.31*	0.001
Confidence &						
Achievement Motivation	9.61	2.06	8.73	1.72	3.39*	0.001
Coachability	9.52	1.76	8.70	2.07	3.09*	0.002

\*Significant at 0.05 level.

$t_{.05} (214) = 1.97$

The above table of significance of difference between sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports on coping skills as assessed by Athletic Coping Skills Inventory indicates t - ratios of 1.46 and 1.41 respectively for coping with adversity, and peaking under pressure, which were not significant as the obtained values were lesser than the t - value of 1.97 required for significance at 0.05 level.

However, the t - ratios for goal setting/mental preparation, concentration, freedom from worry, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability were 3.50, 3.25, 3.31, 3.39 and 3.09 respectively were significant as the obtained values were greater than the t - value of 1.97 required for significance at 0.05 level.

The results indicate that sportspersons belonging to individual sports had significantly better goal setting/mental preparation, confidence and achievement motivation and coachability as compared to sportspersons from team sports, whereas in case of freedom from worry sportspersons from team sports scored better than that of sportspersons belonging to individual sports. In case of coping with adversity, and peaking under pressure sportspersons from individual and team sports did not differ significantly.

The graphical representation of scores of sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports on coping skills is shown in figure 2.

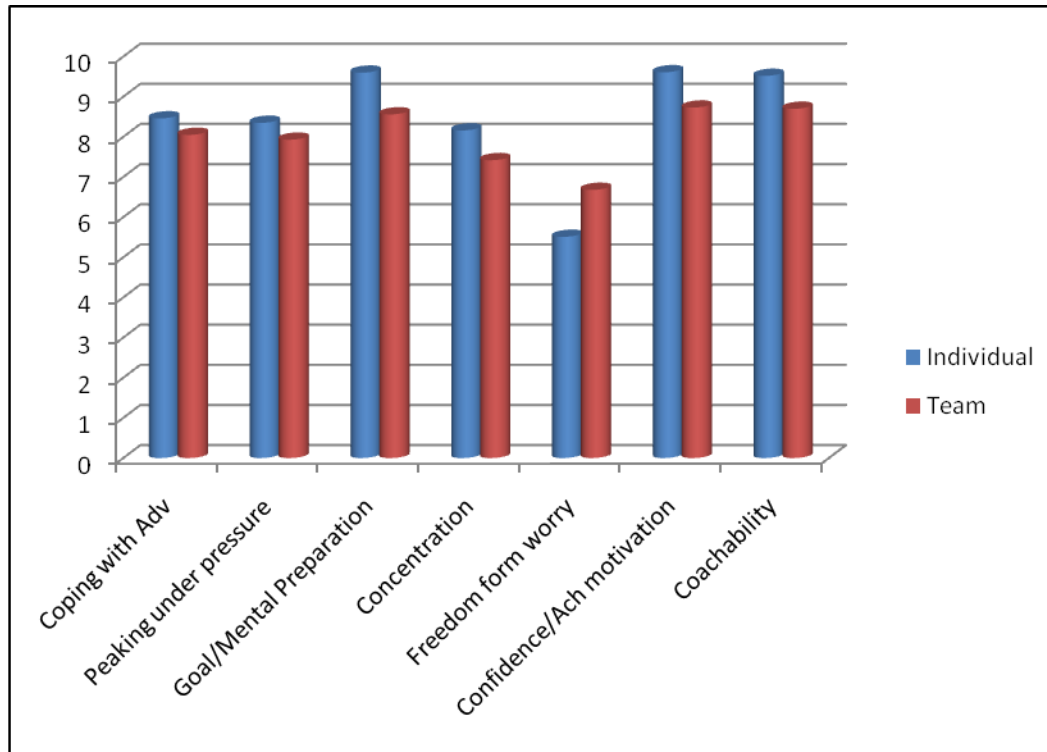


Fig 2. Mean scores on coping skills for sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports

In case of coping skills variables, sportspersons belonging to individual sports showed significantly higher scores on goal setting and mental preparation, concentration, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability as compared to sportspersons belonging to team sports. However, in case of freedom from worry, sportspersons belonging to team sports showed significantly higher values as compared to sportspersons belonging to individual sports.

Variation in coping styles among sportspersons belonging to different sports disciplines is depended upon the nature of sports type, popularity and social acceptance and the support and encouragement provided. Individual sports like badminton and swimming may be better supported and encouraged by family compared to team sports like football and basketball where

the sportspersons are generally believed to have better social support from team mates. Coping style may also differ according to sport-related stressful situations.

### CONCLUSIONS:

The results of the present study lead to the following conclusions:

1. Sportspersons belonging to individual sports showed significantly higher scores on goal setting and mental preparation, concentration, confidence and achievement motivation, and coachability as compared to sportspersons belonging to team sports.
2. Sportspersons belonging to team sports showed significantly higher values as compared to those belonging to individual sports in case of freedom from worry.
3. Sportspersons belonging to individual and team sports did not differ in coping with adversity and peaking under pressure.

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