



Effect of Mental Imagery Training on Hitting Performance of Softball Players

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to see the effect of mental imagery training on hitting performance of softball players. For this purposes 20 softball players were selected from Smt Radhabai Sarda Arts, Comm. & Sci. College, Anjangaon Surji, Amravati (Maharashtra) who regularly practice softball at college ground. Softball players were selected with the help of purposive sampling method. The age limit of the players was 20 to 25 Years. The players were divided into two groups: 10 softball players as experimental group and 10 softball players as control groups. At first pre-test were taken on hitting performance of the players. To test the hitting performance in softball, researcher allowed players to take 10 hits and the total distance covered were recorded as scores. Experimental group were gone through various imagery training as well as regular practice whereas control group were gone through only regular practice. The imagery training was design was schedule for 6 weeks and 5 days a week. In imagery training the players were allowed to imagine the whole procedure of hitting i.e. grip, holding the slugger, field's position, the pitchers finger, the swing of ball, strike ball, the swing of slugger and follow through. After that they were allowed to take a hit. Again all the players were asked to imagine and take a hit, in this way all the players were attempt 10 times imagery training and 10 times hitting practice whereas control group players were only undergone regular practice. After the finish of the imagery training of 6 weeks the players were allowed to take 10 hits as a post-test and the total distances covered were recorded as the post-test score. Statistical analysis was done on the basis of 't' test at 0.05 level of significance. Result of the study shows that there is significant difference between pre and post test of experimental group as well as control group, as the calculated 't' value 4.19 and 2.05 was greater than the tabulated 't' value 2.024. The difference may be attributed that the imagery training is performing the skill in your mind; the mind serves as a rehearsal, or practice, for the real thing. The more you practice the better you perform. Many studies have concluded that visualizing of any activity or skill in your mind can stimulate the physiological response as actually performing that activity, although to a lesser degree. Hence the scholar recommended that imagery training should be adopted by the coaches to train the players for improving the hitting performance in softball.

Keyword: Mental Imagery Training, Softball, Hitter.

Introduction

Sports are a psycho-physical activity. It has both psychological dimensions besides physical, physiological and technical aspects. People interest in sports is found among all the society of the world. But the quality of participation of the athletes in games and sports is determined by their psychological factors also. In this Modern era of competition, psychological preparation of a team is as important as acquiring the different skill of a game.



On the scientific lines, the teams are motivated not only to play the game but also to win the games. It is not only the proficiency in the skill which brings victory in them but more important is the mental preparation of the players with which they play and perform their best in the competition. There are certain aspects where psycho-physical principles have to be applied during training, so that players are able to show their best performance.

As we know every athlete wants to improve their performance through various scientific ways. They adopt various types of training and strategy but without the psychological help the high level performance is not possible. If the physical practices are combined with mental practices the high level performance can be achieved. All top level athletics and sports persons are adopting psychological preparation and sports psychology for improving performance. Sports are a national prestige and international popularity, every athlete is pursuing to achieve this goal. Sports scientist coaches and trainers have been trying assiduously in many ways and means to increase performance levels of the athletes, as well as the science and psychology plays a vital role in increasing the performance.

Imagery training is also an important mental training for enhancing the sports performance. It is also called as mental rehearsal or visualization training. Imagery means making use of various senses to rehearse your activity for better outcomes. In imagery training while performing some skill in your mind, the mind serves as a rehearsal, or practice, for the real thing. Many studies have concluded that visualizing of any activity or skill in your mind can stimulate the physiological response as actually performing that activity, although to a lesser degree.

It has been suggested that imagery may play a crucial role in improving the performance in sports it allows an individual to practice under conditions that recreate all aspects of actual performance. For example, if a softball player imagines his/her hitting, the image contains aspects of the psychological and physiological responses associated with performing this task in a real world situation. This approach is often referred to as bio informational theory. However, no one can appear to provide a comprehensive account as to why imagery may benefit an athlete's performance.

Imagery is like a mental skill, you will need to concentrate on creating and controlling your images, imagery training can be done through imaging high quality of images for short duration of time, and then progressively improving the time you spend imaging. Always imagine as realistic as possible in your mind's eye. By including details like the field's position, the pitcher's finger, the swing of ball, strike ball, the swing of slugger and follow through, and also imagine spectator's cheering you will feel like you are really experiencing the performance in competition that you are imagining.

Hitting plays a major role to success softball team; the winning and losing in softball game is most probably based on the hitting performance i.e. hitting home run or two base. Therefore, research understanding performance parameters that improve hitting performance in softball. Hence the researcher has selected the study 'effect of mental imagery training on hitting performance of softball players'.

Materials and Methods

The purpose of the study was to see the effect of mental imagery training on hitting performance of softball players. For this purposes 20 softball players were selected from Smt Radhabai Sarda Arts, Comm. & Sci. College, Anjangaon Surji, Amravati (Maharashtra) who regularly practice softball at college ground. Softball players were selected with the help of purposive sampling method. The age limit of the players was 20 to 25 Years. The players were divided into two groups: 10 softball players as experimental group and 10 softball players as control groups.

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Figure no - 1



Imagery Training on Hitting Performance of Softball Players

Statistical Procedure

To see the effect of mental imagery training on hitting performance of softball players researcher has applied 't' test at 0.05 level of significance.

Table no - 1

Comparison of pre & post test of hitting performance of softball players

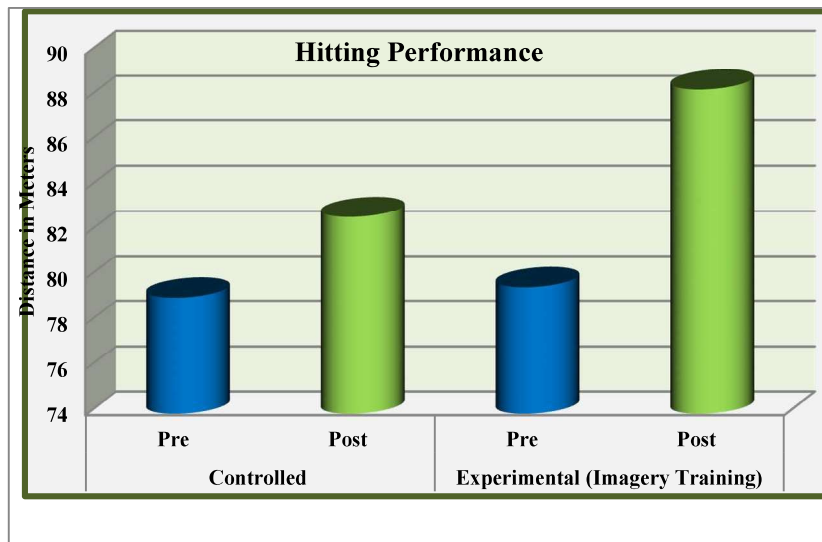
Group	Test	Mean	S.D.	S.E.	M.D	D.F	O.T
Experimental	Pre	79.56	5.2	2.09	8.8	18	4.19*
	Post	88.36	4.12				
Control	Pre	79.1	4.34	1.75	3.6		2.05*
	Post	82.7	3.44				

*Significant at 0.05 Level

Critical t-value – 2.024

The above table shows that on the basis of mean there was difference between the means score of pre and post test of control as well as in experimental group of softball players in reference to hitting performance. To see these differences was significant or not at 0.05 level of significance, researcher calculated 't' test and result shows that there is significant difference between pre and post test of experimental group as well as control group, as the calculated 't' value 4.19 and 2.05 was greater than the tabulated 't' value 2.024.

Graph no - 1



Mean comparison of pre & post test of hitting performance of softball players

Conclusion

From the above study it can be concluded that the imagery training improve the hitting performance in softball players. Experimental group players show better performance as compared to control group players. The difference may be attributed that the imagery training is performing the skill in your mind; the mind serves as a rehearsal, or practice, for the real thing. The more you practice the better you perform. Many studies have concluded that



visualizing of any activity or skill in your mind can stimulate the physiological response as actually performing that activity, although to a lesser degree. Hence the scholar recommended that imagery training should be adopted by the coaches to train the players for improving the hitting performance in softball.

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