

## A STUDY REGARDING THE COPING STRATEGIES OF STRESS AMONG COLLEGE PLAYERS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA- PAKISTAN

Abdur Rashid<sup>1</sup>, Bahar Hussain<sup>2</sup>, Farooq Hussain<sup>3</sup>, M. Ijaz<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*There is wide recognition that stress has close association with sports and subsequently with athletes and players. This very fact formulated the basis to investigate the “Coping strategies of stress adopted by College players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”. For the purpose literature and related researches were reviewed and descriptive, quantitative, and non-contrived survey was conducted. All college players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were the population of the study in which a sample of 490 was drawn having 50% male and 50% female subjects. A research tool-questionnaire was developed and pilot tested having Cronbach alpha value as 0.87. The data was collected in person and analyzed through SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The data analysis revealed that college players use different strategies to manage their stress such as keeping busy in physical activities, warm up exercises, taking up long breathing exercise and talking to team mates. The responses of male and female college players were compared and their expression regarding coping mechanism was almost similar. On the bases of conclusions of the study, it is proposed that proper guidance and counseling services can make beneficial contribution in order to overcome or minimize the stress and to enhance their performance.*

**Key Words:** College players, Stress, Stress coping strategies, Khyber

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<sup>1</sup>Deputy Director Sports Directorate of Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. [abdurrasheed564@gmail.com](mailto:abdurrasheed564@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer in Health & Physical Education, Govt. Degree College, Swabi-Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Chairman Department of Sports Sciences, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan-Pakistan

<sup>4</sup>Department of Sports Sciences, University of Sargodha, Sargodha (Bhakkar Campus) -Pakistan

Pakhtunkhwa

## **Introduction**

Sport is not only preparation for life but life itself. This is universally acknowledged fact that stress is naturally associated with Sports (Gilbert, Gilbert & Morawski, 2007). The conventional definition of stress expresses that stress is the mental, physical reaction and adjustment by our bodies to the real changes and challenges in our lives (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Stress that affects athletes can be of various types. First, it can be acute i.e. time-limited as in waiting to participate in an event that could make or break one's career. Secondly, stress could be in the form of sequences which are 'a series of events that occur over an extended period of time as a result of an initiating event. However stress to some extent is good for individual, because this works in a productive way as a motivator through which a player perform well (Barkley, 2013).

Human are sensitive to any change in his/her surroundings- environment. Emotional make-up of a person is his or her reaction to a stimulus that brings about change. Due to various changes in life human experience different types of feelings that affects emotional, mental and social health of individual. Hence life of a person is always revolving around enjoyable experience as well as displeasing moments. Human always interact with his/her environment. Reactions to stimuli or changes in the conditions of environment result in pleasant and worrying effects on psychological and physical set up of the body. In a nutshell, stress is a person's physical and psychological reaction to a pressure, perceived or actual demand for change. The demand or pressure itself is called a stressor. When hands are sweaty and heart is beating fast that are the indications of feeling stress in both mind and body, (Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2008).

Failure is always regretted by everyone, but the sports person doesn't agree with it and try to adjust with that kind of difficult and unexpected situation. For adolescents, anxiety about possible performance failure is found to be the leading stressors as well as 'physical errors' (Nicholls &

Polman, 2007). Players always face challenging situations but sometime the situation becomes more challenging than that of the routine situation. Adolescents are also particularly affected with stress by playing in unfamiliar settings (Trezza & Vanderschuren, 2008). Fear of ‘choking’ in late-game situations, playing against stronger opponents and observing opponents that play well (Mapfumo & Muchena, 2014). Participation in Sports carries the advantages of acceptance and status in the peer group as well as social competence and enhanced social worth (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). This kind of aptitude of a player develops sportsmen spirit.

There are certain ways to meet out the stress and stressors. The issue of coping styles and strategies has received as much attention as has stress. The attempt has been to identify stress experiences of athletes as well as the coping style frameworks employed by athletes in different types of sports. Regardless of the way stress is identified, the common ideology is that an individual who is experiencing stress will cope with that stress in a certain way, based on how that particular individual interprets the stressor (Anshel & Sutarso, 2007; White, 2008).

Stress coping mechanism is a significant aspect of Sports Psychology. High levels of stress without coping mechanisms can lead to underperformance, burnout, illness and even departure from competitive sport. Coping strategy itself has been defined as the ‘constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific internal and/or external demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person’ (Folkman, S. 1984). Parsimoniously states that coping is the process of dealing with stress, (Greenglass, & Fiksenbaum, 2009).

This specific study intended to be related to College level player of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The college level players are aging from 16 years to 21 years. This age is considered to be the grooming age of the players. They appear to be unaware, shy, reluctant, and tentative, so they need to be studied from every angle as they are prone to stress and stressors. They should be helped to cope with the stress in a befitting manner.

Various mechanisms may be used to acclimatize college player to cope the stress and stressor and get ready for the forth coming challenges of life. A basic problem may be in the form of competing identities where the excelling sports person may be looked up to in some circumstances while being stigmatized as lacking in motivation and ability in class and any time given by teachers to supporting the athlete in class is perceived as unnecessary favoritism.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To probe the coping mechanisms to overcome stress being employed by the college players.
2. To compare stress coping strategies among male and female college players.
3. To suggest coping strategy for the elimination of stress among male and female college players.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of study is to probe the perception of players to depict existing conditions and settings. The descriptive research advocates collection of numerical data about present day conditions, settings and events without analyzing relationships among variables that happen or fall in descriptive research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Shami et al.2015).The descriptive design of research is applied which means the main objective is to present an image of observable facts or phenomena as they take place naturally (Herdick, 1993). The research process focuses data collection about the perception of players, after which the data has been subjected to analysis to see if any patterns as assumed suggest relationships between variables. From the actual observations one can assess to confirm the construct- generalizations, relationships and even theories (Grey & Dupré, 2004)

### **Population and Sample**

During academic session 2014-15 total number of student enrolments on 5% sports quota was 7757 of which 4906 were males and 2851 females who were actively participating in different games (Year Book 2014-15). As per Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) the recommended sample size was 388 including both male and female college players out of which 245 male and 143 female players were required. However a purposive sample of 490 players admitted on specified quota and currently studying in colleges of KP was selected from 8 districts. Of them 245 were male and 245 were female players.

### Tool of Research

As per practice of related researches a questionnaire as tool of research was developed using five point Likert Scale. This questionnaire had planned set of items related to the topic in question and stated objectives of the study. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked with the help of Cronbach's Alpha. The computed value was 0.87 which is considered appropriate.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Views of players about their stress coping strategies**

S.No	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Mean	
1.	To avoid stress, I get myself technically prepared to take advantage of the weak points of the opponents.	36.5	40.4	11.6	8.8	12.7	3.993
2.	To avoid stress, I follow tough training schedule prior to preparation in competition.	36.7	35.7	15.7	7.8	4.1	3.932

3.	To avoid stress, I always do proper warm up activities before I enter the ground.	34.5	39.6	14.7	8.4	2.9	3.944
4.	To avoid stress, I keep myself busy in different types of physical activities.	35.7	40.0	12.9	8.6	2.9	3.971
5.	To release pressure and avoid stress, I shower cold water on my face.	26.5	44.3	18.0	6.7	4.5	3.816
6.	To release pressure I start talking to my team mates.	26.7	41.6	14.7	13.9	3.1	3.751
7.	To release pressure I take hot bath.	26.5	41.9	18.7	10.5	2.5	1.951
8.	To release pressure I watch my favourite movie.	32.6	38.4	15.6	12.1	1.2	3.887
9.	To avoid stress, I drink water during match.	40.2	35.3	14.8	6.4	3.3	4.026
10.	To avoid stress, I take long breaths when I feel any stress during competition.	31.2	40.7	17.5	9.0	1.6	3.912
11.	I feel relaxed and focused when chewing gum during game.	13.3	29.2	16.6	11.1	5.5	3.730
12.	To avoid stress, I recall the prayers of my parents.	31.5	45.5	12.1	8.0	2.9	3.950
13.	To release pressure, I start strenuous physical exercises.	22.2	46.9	16.5	12.3	2.1	3.755

From the data analysis the following stress coping strategies are identified which are being used by the college players to overcome their stress.

Following stress coping strategies are comparatively more popular among college players:

- Keeping busy in physical activities
- Involvement in warm up exercises
- Drinking water
- Taking up breathing exercise
- Talking to team mates

The data analysis reflects that the following stress coping strategies are comparatively less liked:

- Watching movie
- Taking hot water bath
- Starting strenuous exercises
- Concentrating on weak points of opponents

The researcher offered various coping mechanisms and collected the responses of college players for those coping strategies, such as keeping their-self busy in physical activities, involvement in warm up exercises, drinking water, taking up long breath during stress, talking to team mates and calling prayer of their parents. One of the researchers has also indicated that, the top five coping strategies are religion, positive reinterpretation, active coping, planning, and use of instrumental support by Yusoff (2010). My coping strategies were designed keeping in view the ground realities and approaches of the college players and were specifically for sports players and the above mention study was related to educational background, so some of the changes were intentionally been made to achieve the results of the study. Hence this research study is similar to the studies made by various researchers throughout the world on the subject topic.

The College players need proper guidance and counselling services at their institutions to overcome the feelings of stress. Trainers and coaches need to pay equal attention to all the players individually and do the related counselling of suffering players in the field. Sports psychologist need to be frequently invited to colleges to address players for developing appropriate coping management strategies in relation to various stressing situations.

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