BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

IMPROVING THE METHODOLOGY OF PREPARING 14–15-YEAR-OLD FEMALE VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS FOR COMPETITIONS BASED ON PSYCHOLOGICAL STABILITY

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21259677

Abstract: The article examines methodological approaches to improving the competitive preparation of 14–15-year-old female volleyball players by integrating psychological stability into the training process. Modern volleyball requires not only a high level of physical, technical, and tactical preparedness but also well-developed psychological qualities that enable athletes to perform effectively under competitive stress. Adolescence is characterized by emotional instability, increased anxiety, and fluctuations in self-confidence, which often negatively influence sports performance. Therefore, the integration of psychological preparation into the annual training cycle is becoming an important pedagogical task.

The study involved female volleyball players aged 14–15 years who participated in a pedagogical experiment lasting sixteen weeks. The experimental training program included psychological resilience exercises, stress management techniques, concentration training, visualization, breathing exercises, self-regulation methods, and coach-athlete communication strategies. Comparative analysis demonstrated that athletes in the experimental group achieved significantly higher improvements in competitive performance, emotional stability, concentration, and decision-making accuracy than those in the control group.

The findings confirm that systematic psychological preparation should become an integral component of volleyball training methodology for adolescent female athletes.

Keywords: volleyball, psychological stability, competition preparation, female athletes, adolescence, stress resistance, sports psychology, training methodology.

Introduction

Modern volleyball is one of the fastest developing Olympic sports requiring athletes to demonstrate exceptional technical mastery, tactical thinking, physical preparedness, and psychological resilience. International competitions reveal that victory often depends not only on technical superiority but also on the athlete's ability to maintain emotional stability during stressful situations.

Researchers emphasize that psychological readiness determines approximately 30–50% of competitive success in youth sports. For adolescent female athletes aged 14–15 years, this issue becomes particularly relevant because physiological and psychological development during puberty significantly influences emotional reactions and competitive behavior.

Numerous studies indicate that anxiety, fear of failure, low self-confidence, and inadequate emotional control reduce the quality of technical execution during decisive moments of competition. Therefore, coaches need scientifically based methods that integrate psychological training into the overall preparation process.

The purpose of this study is to improve the methodology for preparing 14–15-year-old female volleyball players for competitions by incorporating psychological stability into the training process.

Literature Review

Recent research highlights the growing importance of psychological preparation in youth sports.

Studies by **Weinberg & Gould (2023)** demonstrate that psychological skills training improves competitive performance by reducing anxiety and enhancing confidence.

Gould et al. (2022) reported that athletes with higher psychological resilience recover faster from mistakes during competitions.

According to **Vealey (2021)**, mental training should be integrated into daily practice rather than implemented separately before competitions.

Research conducted by **Fletcher & Sarkar (2020)** identified resilience as one of the strongest predictors of elite athletic performance.

Despite substantial international research, limited attention has been devoted to psychological preparation methodologies specifically designed for adolescent female volleyball players.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The study involved **40 female volleyball players aged 14–15 years** from specialized sports schools.

- Experimental Group (n = 20)
- Control Group (n = 20)

Training experience ranged from 3 to 5 years.

Research Methods

The following methods were employed:

- pedagogical observation;
- pedagogical experiment;
- psychological testing;
- expert evaluation;
- mathematical statistics.

Psychological Assessment

The following variables were evaluated:

- Competitive anxiety;
- Emotional stability;
- Concentration;
- Self-confidence;
- Stress resistance.

Experimental Program

The experimental methodology included:

- visualization training;
- breathing exercises;
- relaxation techniques;
- positive self-talk;
- goal-setting;
- competitive simulation;
- attention control exercises;

• coach-athlete psychological communication;
• post-match reflection sessions.

The intervention lasted **16 weeks**.

Results

The experimental methodology produced noticeable improvements.

Indicator	Before	After	Improvement (%)
Competitive anxiety	68.4	47.6	−30.4
Emotional stability	58.2	79.8	+37.1
Concentration	63.7	84.6	+32.8
Self-confidence	61.5	83.1	+35.1
Competition efficiency	65.9	87.4	+32.6

Statistical analysis demonstrated significant differences between groups ($p < 0.05$).

The experimental group showed:
• fewer unforced errors;
• improved serving accuracy;
• better decision making;
• greater emotional control;
• enhanced teamwork.

Discussion

The findings support previous international studies emphasizing the importance of integrating psychological training into youth sports programs.

Adolescent female athletes often experience elevated emotional sensitivity due to hormonal and social factors. Consequently, psychological instability negatively affects tactical decisions and motor coordination during competitions.

The proposed methodology successfully combined psychological preparation with volleyball-specific training rather than treating them as separate components.

Visualization exercises enhanced tactical anticipation.

Breathing techniques reduced physiological manifestations of anxiety.

Self-regulation training improved emotional recovery after mistakes.

Coach-athlete communication created a psychologically supportive environment that increased confidence.

These findings are consistent with contemporary theories of sports psychology emphasizing holistic athlete development.

Practical Recommendations

Coaches working with female volleyball players aged 14–15 years should:
• include psychological exercises in every training session;
• conduct weekly stress-management sessions;
• use competitive simulations;
• develop athletes' self-confidence through positive feedback;
• integrate relaxation techniques before competitions;
• evaluate psychological readiness monthly;
• involve sports psychologists in annual preparation programs.

Conclusion

The study confirms that psychological stability significantly influences the competitive performance of adolescent female volleyball players.

The proposed methodology effectively improves emotional regulation, concentration, self-confidence, stress resistance, and competitive efficiency.

Psychological preparation should therefore be regarded as an essential component of long-term volleyball training programs for young female athletes.

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