Athletes’ self- and interpersonal emotion regulation and their effects on anxiety and goal achievement during competition

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Introduction

• Athletes’ emotion regulation is important for their functioning and performance (Uphill & Jones 2011)
• Emotion regulation can occur in two ways:
  1. Emotional self-regulation (ESR): regulating one’s own emotions
  2. Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER): regulating others’ emotions
• Athletes may try to improve or worsen their own (ESR) or their teammates’ (IER) affect

Purpose: To examine whether affect-improving and affect-worsening IER from teammates relate to anxiety and performance satisfaction

Method

• 509 team sport athletes in Canada and the United Kingdom (M_age = 19.0 ± 3.1) completed a survey.
  • Demographics, emotions during sport, engagement in ESR and received IER from teammates, and performance satisfaction.

Results

a) 

b) 

Note. IER = interpersonal emotion regulation, ESR = emotional self-regulation, + sign denotes affect-improving, - sign denotes affect-worsening. Sat = performance satisfaction. Each variable was measured with 3-5 items. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Key Takeaways

1. Athletes should engage in positive ESR (e.g., positive self-talk).
2. Athletes should avoid using negative ESR (e.g., negative self-talk).
3. Though IER between teammates might be important, this may be more helpful for athletes who may lack ESR skills.
4. There may be contextual differences; IER may be more relevant in other contexts such as training.