Female Athletes Group

TI 020 - Thematic

By

Mary Ann Moore
Female Athletes Group
Texas A&M University
Educational Psychology Department
Mary Ann Moore
I. Rational

Prior to the mid 1970s, the opportunities for women to participate in competitive sports was extremely limited. The sports that women were involved with at that time reflected traditional gender role beliefs and the various expectations of society. During the mid 1970s two events significantly shaped the future of women's athletics. The first such event was the formation of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletes for Women (AIAW). This organization lead to an increase in funding, facilities, and opportunities for women athletes on college campuses across the nation. The second event was the implementation of Title IX which mandated equal opportunities in sport for women. These two events dramatically changed the role of women's sport at the college level. Specifically, Blinde and Greendorfer (1987) examined the structural and philosophical differences between women's athletic programs in the 1970s to programs in the 1980s. They noted the importance of athletic scholarships, recruitment and increased expectations of the athletes in the programs of the 1980s. One might jump to the hasty conclusion that now women's programs were equal to men's programs, which is simply not the case.

There are two ways that women can become equal to men in sport - through performance and opportunities available. Contrary to popular belief, statistical evidence
demonstrates that women do not perform significantly lower than men in individual speed sports. Speed skating, running, skiing, and swimming are a few of the speed sports that have been researched. Women have been severely criticized in the past for their inability to be as strong and fast as their male counterparts. Although there are biological differences between men and women, in no way does this mean that women are generally inferior to men in all athletic skills. There are many examples of where women are substantially increasing their performance level to be comparable to men such as speed skating and track times, but society may not be ready to accept that fact. The second way that women can become equal to men rests in the opportunities to compete in the same range of athletic events as men as well as experience equal conditions. This second area creates a larger problem for women athletes than the performance level issue. First, women are not exposed to the same range of sports as men. In general, women are excluded from many strenuous and full body contact sports such as boxing, football, ice hockey, and wrestling. Second, the conditions which women play are quite different from men. Overall, at the college level much less money is devoted to women's programs. The equipment is second hand, the fields are in the worse shape, the coach could probably not get a job with a men's team and the general facilities are lacking.
Up to this point, the tone of this paper reflects a pessimistic attitude towards women's athletics. The purpose of such a grim introduction is to demonstrate how far women still need to go and work in order to reach equality with men. Yet, is that the goal? The true goal may be for women athletes to feel like they are treated equal and not as second class citizens to the male athletes. In March 1990, The University of Oklahoma eliminated its women's basketball program because it was not making any money. This action prompted much controversy. Women's coaches across the country expressed their fears about how this move would hurt women's athletics in all areas. The security of even having a team at the college level may be threatened if a school as large and as well known as The University of Oklahoma is allowed to set such a precedent. Has the goal of women's athletics in college now changed to making as much money as the men's programs? As a result of public pressure and the overwhelming support for the program, on April 5, 1990, The University of Oklahoma reinstated the women's basketball program. This entire situation has sparked a renewed interest in college women's athletics and the many problems these athletes face.

Overall, it can be seen that the concept of competitive women's sports is relatively new compared to the rich tradition of men's athletics. Approximately fifteen years ago Gerber, Felshin, Berlin, and Wyrick (1974) stated
"Furthermore, sport for women in the United States is a fast growing, fast changing element of our culture" (p.v). The involvement in women's sport as well as the opportunities for women have increased significantly over the past years. Yet, there are many areas surrounding women's athletics that have been neglected. One such area is sport psychology. "The overwhelming majority of sport psychology research findings and applications has been conducted with male athletes" (Mechikoff & Evans, 1987, p.126). Cox (1985) also came to a similar conclusion. "This is mainly due to the fact that until recently very little personality research has been done with female athletes as subjects" (Cox, 1985, p.31). Therefore, there is a great deal of potential for research and application of psychological principles to women's athletics. Specifically, this paper addresses the female college athlete.

II. The Problems

The problems and concerns of the female college athlete are rather unique and warrant a special discussion. Regardless of gender, high school coaches and athletic directors are vital in helping young athletes explore their options is continuing their education. Although this problem exists for both genders, women have an even greater difficulty. This is due to the inexperience of the individuals in authority of the women athletes and as a result the athletes may be lead blindly into the higher
education system. Parkhouse and Lapin (1980) stated "High school counselors are notoriously ignorant of women's athletic programs at the universities and colleges" (p.96). It is possible to conclude from these circumstances that female college athletes have unrealistic expectations which may lead to much pain and disappointment.

The problem of motivation exists in all athletes (Carron, 1984; Singer, 1984). However, it is believed that women have special circumstances surrounding their motivation problems. "I'm not sure the female is willing to sit on the bench the way men are, because she has gone through many years with the understanding that everybody plays" (Parkhouse & Lapin, 1980, p.97). Also, Roberts and Duda (1981) found that women athletes tended to attribute success and failure to such factors as skill and luck where men used different variables such as task difficulty. The implications of the research on motivation as well as the special conditions that the female athlete evolves require special attention.

"Interest in the role of anxiety in sports competition has stimulated a substantial amount of research among sports psychologists over the past twenty years " (Hackfort & Spielberger, 1989). Research has supported a theory that the relationship between arousal and skilled performance is an inverted-U (Sonstroem & Bernardo, 1981). The greatest problem for the athlete is psyching him/her out rather than
not psyching-up. Generally, our society has placed such importance on athletic competition as well as the nature of competition itself that athletes do not have a difficult time getting excited for the game. The problem exists when the athlete becomes too aroused, excited and psyched-up for the big game and this state of mind hinders his/her ability to perform. Female athletes at the college level have a variety of pressures common to their male counterparts. Some common stressors are significant others (parents, friends, etc.), college scholarships, establishing national rankings, making the Olympic team, starting on the team, etc. Unique stressors for women are the constant drive to prove themselves, overcoming poor facilities and conditions, and lack of overall support for their participation. All of this means that women, more than men, are prone to being "psyched out" by all the pressure.

Confidence is extremely important in competitive sport. It tends to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, if an athlete does not believe he/she can perform well, than most likely he/she will fall short of the goal. "A confident approach is an assertive approach, one that respects your right to compete and win" (Bell, 1983, p.121-122). Society has set the norms that women have a difficult time believing that they have the right to compete, much less win.

Women's issues in general also create problems for the female athlete. Williams, Lawerence and Rowe (1985) claim
that overall feminists have focused on issues relating to work, family, and sexuality. They conclude that the lack of interest by feminists to study women's athletics may actually reinforce the patriarchal concept of sport as masculine. Therefore, issues such as sex-stereotyping and attitudes about success need to be addressed. To avoid such issues that directly relate to women and their unique role in sport would be an injustice.

III. Female College Athletes Group

The purpose of a group for female college athletes is to confront and possibly minimize some of the mentioned problems for these particular athletes. Also such a group provides support and encouragement for the members' role in their sport. The special situation of being a women and a college athlete raises particular problems and this group helps members deal with some of these issues.

There are a few problems that face one who desires to run such a group for women athletes. The coach may be extremely protective of the players and be reluctant to let any of the players participate. Some of the fears and concerns of the coach may come from his/her limited knowledge of psychology in general, much less sport psychology. The coach may not want a psychologist "messing" with the players head. The coach may fear that the player will spend the time in the group bad mouthing the coach and portray an unfair picture of him/her self. Then, the
possibility exists that the player would gain so much confidence that she believes she does not need the coach and loses total respect for the coach. These fears of the coach need to be directly addressed. Stating the purpose and the goals of the group may clear up some misconceptions. It also may be helpful to show part of the groups structure with the intent of educating the coach about some of the relevant issues.

Another potential problem is with the college athletic administration. Who hires you as the group leader may have a strong effect on the productivity of the group. Most likely the athletic department will do the hiring and expect to have knowledge of the events of the group. At times they may expect a leader to break confidentiality, for example ask the leader to evaluate the players attitude toward the coach. This is an extremely awkward situation, for the members of the group will feel that your on "their" side and be very hesitant to talk openly about important issues. One way to deal with these potential problems is to establish some ground rules with the administration. Such rules might include when and under what circumstances confidentiality must be broken. The leader must inform the administration how important confidentiality is to the group members and agree to the conditions when it would be broken. These conditions need to be stated to the group members.

Part of the group's focus is on increasing the members'
confidence and giving them more power in difficult situations. Realistic expectations of the members needs to be continually addressed. In many situations the members may not be in position to have more power than they already have and a leader may inadvertently set up situations where members may feel frustrated. Leaders must be aware of the limitations of the position of these women.

The members of the group themselves might be resistant for relatively the same reasons that the coach was, lack of knowledge about psychology and groups. As with the coach, the members should be given the purpose and goals of the group. Misconceptions about the group need to be directly confronted as well as any unrealistic expectations.

The group will be limited to twelve people maximum, for more than this would be very difficult for one leader to handle. The members will consist of players from varsity teams, limiting that only two players from the same team can participate. This limitation exists to insure that the group focus does not continually revolve around one team. The women would be college age, 18 -22 years old. A good mix from both individual and group teams would be ideal, for a great deal can be learned from each perspective.

A meeting will be held with the coaches of the various varsity athletic teams. A description of the group will be provided as well as a question and answer session. Again, the purpose of such a meeting is to alleviate some of the
coaches misgivings as well as recruit members. Once the coaches were educated about the potential positive aspects of the group a call for members would take place. Each coach will be allowed to recommend a limit of two players that may be appropriate for the group. It will be emphasized that players having a difficult time with anxiety, motivation, and lack of confidence issues will be best candidates. After the list of potential members is provided, the leader will meet with each person to screen their appropriateness for the group. Also, at this point the groups purpose and goals will be outlined. The goals of the group will be as follows:

1. To learn how to relax in situations that may be seen as too anxious and it hinders one's ability.

2. To explore issues regarding motivation and possible ways to overcome motivation problems.

3. To offer support and encouragement for the unique problems of the female college athlete. Issues would focus on sex-stereotyping, feelings of success, and confidence building.

The goals will be approached in this order with the attempt to build on each other. Relaxation is relatively low threatening for members and will be viewed as rather a safe exercise. As relaxation techniques were taught, more intense issues will be gradually introduced. The leader will continue to work to establish a positive rapport and
trusting environment for the members. In addition, this will provide time for the members to get to know each other and trust themselves. The last few sessions will be viewed by the members as the most risky, and hopefully the leader has prepared the members to enter these areas with limited amount of caution.

It is believed that a woman leader will be the most appropriate person to lead such a group. The resistance to a women may be lower, especially toward the end of the structured group sessions where female issues are discussed. Also, it may be an advantage to have a past athlete run the group, for this will help the members identify with such a leader. It is also recommended that a professional run the group for competence and knowledge in a variety of psychological techniques and principles is required. Familiarity with such areas in psychology and sports psychology is a must.

Limited amount of materials will be necessary. The following is a list of the specific materials needed: paper clips, thread, paper, pencils, magazines, glue, chalkboard, and chalk. Handouts would include: guidelines for mental imagery and the Self Perception Test.
SESSION I

Goals: To provide the group members an opportunity to get acquainted with each other. To discuss the goals and expectations of the group members. And with the aid of the ice breaker, to introduce some of the unique problems and concerns of female college athletes.

2:00-2:15 - Introduction of the leader. Brief introductions of the group members (Appendix A).

2:15-3:00 - Grab Bag Icebreaker Exercise (Appendix B).

3:00-3:15 - Brief discussion of the purpose of the group and the goals of the group will be handed out (Appendix C).

3:15-3:30 - Group expectations addressed. Question and answer time (Appendix D).
APPENDIX A

I. Introduction of the leader

The group leader needs to introduce herself in such a way that she communicates that she is able to identify with the members as well as be seen as a credible group leader. This can be successfully accomplished by stating to the members how she is able to identify with them and their problems. She will disclose whether or not she, herself, was once a member of a varsity team or similar organization such as a competitive club. Her credibility will be enhanced when she states her previous training and the reasons why she is competent enough to lead such a group. At this time it is recommended that the leader's educational background be revealed.

II. Introduction of the group members

The members briefly go around the room and introduce themselves by stating their name, class year, what team they played on and how many years they have played on that team.
APPENDIX B

Grab Bag Icebreaker

Materials: One brown paper bag and slips of paper with questions written down on them.

Instructions: A brown paper bag that contained questions written on small slips of paper will be handed to the person on the leaders right. The group member will pull out a question and answer it to the best of her ability. When she is finished with this task she will then pass the bag to the person on her right who will then take out a question and proceed to answer it. The bag is not to be passed on until the question has been addressed by the group member who pulls out that question. This helps keep the focus on the question that is being addressed as opposed to future questions. The following are questions contained in the bag.

Questions:

1. Who is your favorite sports hero and why? 
2. Who is your least favorite sports hero and why?
3. What's the best thing about being a female athlete at Texas A&M University and why?
4. What's one of the hardest things about being a female athlete at Texas A&M University and why?
5. What activities do you enjoy besides sports and why?
6. What's one of the hardest things about being a coach and why?
7. What would be one of the best things about being a coach and why?
8. What's one thing you would like to change about your coach if given the chance and why?
9. Name one positive characteristic of your coach and why?
10. Who was the strongest influence in you continuing on in your sport and why?
11. What's one of your best experiences relating to your sport and why?
12. What's one of your worst experiences relating to your sport and why?
APPENDIX C

I. The Group Purpose

The group purpose will be discussed with the members as providing support and encouragement for the role each woman in the group has in her sport. The special situations of being a female and a college athlete will briefly be discussed as well as some of the relevant issues. Specific topics such as being seen as "second class citizens" to the men athletes, lack of support, motivation problems and societal views of women athletes will be mentioned.

II. The Goals of the Group

The goals of the group will be handed out to each member. They will be listed in the following order.

1. To learn how to relax in situations that may be seen as too anxious where it hinders one's ability to perform in her sport.

2. To explore issues regarding motivation and possible ways to overcome motivation problems.

3. To offer support and encouragement for the unique problems facing the female college athlete. Issues would focus on sex-stereotyping, feelings of success and confidence building.
APPENDIX D

I. Group Expectations

At this point of the group it is important to assess members understanding of the purpose and goals of the group. The leader specifically asks each group member the following questions.

1. What do you hope to accomplish by being a member of this group?

2. After hearing about the purpose and the goals of this group, do you feel that you will benefit from being in such a group?

* The emphasis is placed on having the expectations of the group members be as realistic as possible.

II. Question and Answer

In the remaining few minutes of the group, the leader needs to open up the group to question and answers. If an intense issue is brought up or any issue that cannot be easily resolved, state the time and make sure to convey the message that this topic will be addressed in the next session. Do not leave the group with the feeling that they are "hanging".
SESSION II

Goals: To examine the benefits of being able to relax. To introduce relaxation techniques. To understand the potential power of the mind/body connection and its role is sport.

2:00-2:10 - Old business (issues and concerns carried over from last sessions).
New business (any new issues and concerns).

2:10-2:25 - Role of relaxation - stress its importance. Focus the discussion on the benefits (Appendix E).

2:25-2:40 - Relaxation of arms (Appendix F).

2:40-2:55 - Relaxation of facial area with neck, shoulders, and upper back (Appendix G).

2:55-3:00 - Quickly discuss this experience with the members.

3:00-3:05 - Briefly introduce the concept of the mind/body connection by stressing its power. State that you will demonstrate this by:

3:05-3:15 - Lemon Test (Appendix H).


3:25-3:30 - Discuss the mind/body connection and leave the group with the question "Why does mental practice work to improve physical skills?"
APPENDIX E

A discussion focusing on the benefits of relaxation will be held. The following benefits will be mentioned in addition to any that the group members may bring up.

1. Prepares one for mental imagery.
2. Improves concentration ability.
3. Helps control arousal level.
4. Helps one sleep better.
5. Helps improve body awareness.
6. Reduces recovery time, increases blood flow to fatigued muscles.
7. Decreases minor illnesses and symptoms of illness.
8. Leads to a positive attitude.
Relaxation of arms (Jacobson, 1976).

Settle back as comfortable as you can. Let yourself relax to the best of your ability... Now, as you relax like that, clench your right fist, just clench your fist tighter and tighter, study the tension as you do so. Keep it clenched and feel the tension in your right fist, hand, forearm... now relax. Let the fingers of your right hand become loose, and observe the contrast in your feelings... Now, let yourself go and try to be more relaxed all over... Once more, clench your right fist really tight... hold it, and notice the tension again... Now let go, relax; your fingers straighten out, and you notice the difference once more... Now repeat with your left fist. Clench your left fist while the rest of your body relaxes; clench that fist tighter and feel the tension... and now relax. Again enjoy the contrast... Repeat that once more, clench the left fist tight and tense... Now do the opposite of tension - relax and feel the difference. Continue relaxing like that for a while... Clench both fists tighter and tighter, both fists tense, forearms tense, study the tension feelings... and relax; straighten out your fingers and forearms more and more... Now bend your elbows and tense your biceps, tense them harder and study the sensations... all right, straighten out your arms, let them relax and feel the difference again. Let the relaxation develop... Once more, tense your biceps; hold the tension and observe it carefully... Straighten the arms and relax. Let the relaxation proceed on its own. The arms should feel comfortably heavy as you allow them to relax.... Now, let's concentrate on pure relaxation in the arms without further tension. Get your arms comfortable and let them relax further and further. Even when your arms seem fully relaxed, try to go that extra bit further; try to achieve deeper and deeper levels of relaxation...
APPENDIX G

Relaxation of facial area with neck, shoulders and upper back (Jacobson, 1976).

* This immediately follows the relaxation of the arms *

Now, wrinkle up your forehead; wrinkle it tighter... and now stop wrinkling your forehead, relax and smooth it out. Picture the entire forehead and scalp becoming smoother as the relaxation increases... Now frown and crease your brows and study the tension... Let go of the tension again. Smooth out the forehead once more... Now close your eyes tighter and tighter... feel the tension... and relax your eyes. Keep your eyes closed, gently, comfortably, and notice the relaxation in your jaw. Let your lips part slightly... Appreciate the relaxation... Now press your tongue hard against the roof of your mouth. Look for the tension... All right, let your tongue return to a comfortable and relaxed position... Now purse your lips, press your lips together tighter and tighter... okay now you can let go... Notice the contrast in feeling relaxed and tensed up. Feel the relaxation all over your face, all over your forehead and scalp, eyes, jaws, lips, tongue and your neck muscles. Press your head back as far back as it can go and feel the tension in the neck, roll it to the right and feel the tension shift; now left and feel the tension change again. Straighten your head and press your chin into your chest. Let your head return to a normal and comfortable position... study the relaxed feeling. Let the relaxation spread into the shoulders, right into your back muscles; relax your neck and throat, and your jaws, and other facial areas as the pure relaxation takes over and grows deeper and deeper....ever deeper.
APPENDIX H

The Lemon Test (Curtis, 1988).

Instructions:
Have the members of the group close their eyes and take three deep breaths slowly, then set the following scene:

Close your eyes and imagine a large, juicy, yellow lemon sitting on a table with a knife lying next to it. Walk over to the table, pick up the knife, and cut the lemon in half...then cut it into quarters.

Picture the lemon as you pick up one of the quarters and examine it in detail...

Notice the yellow 'meat' of the lemon...and the rind...and feel the coolness of the rind in your fingers...

Squeeze the lemon in your hand and notice the juice coming to the surface...

Now, see the lemon as you move it towards your mouth... and bite down on the meat of the lemon as you squeeze some of the juice into your mouth...

Taste the sourness...the bitterness of the juice in your mouth...

Feel... taste... and experience the sour juice in your mouth...

And then open your eyes.

* Briefly discuss this experience. Most people will experience salivation.

* Specifically state how this experience illustrates the mind/body experience.
APPENDIX I

Chevreul's Pendulum (Curtis, 1988).

Materials: Paper clips and thread. Each group member should have a string with a paper clip tied to the end of it.

Instructions: Sit in a chair and grasp the string between your thumb and your forefinger of your dominant hand. Rest your elbow on your leg with the string hanging down about ten inches from your hand.

While keeping your eyes open and watching the paper clip at the end of the string, focus your attention on the exhaling phase of your breathing rhythm and allow your body to relax...

Watch the paper clip closely and remain relaxed, but picture in your own mind the paper clip swinging freely toward you and away from you... after 10 to 20 seconds the paper clip will begin to swing in this direction without you consciously moving it.

Now imagine or visualize the paper clip changing directions and swinging from side to side... visualize this in your mind (with the eyes open and watching the paper clip) until the paper clip begins moving in this direction.

After it's swinging freely in this direction imagine it moving in a circle in a clockwise direction until the paper clip moves in the circle.

Then take a deep breath, and flex and stretch as you complete the exercise.
SESSION III

Goals: To continue to discuss the power of the mind/body connection and demonstrate how it can be used to improve physical skills. Continued work with relaxation with an emphasis placed on members ability to relax themselves, deeply and quickly.

2:00-2:15 - Lead discussion focusing on mental practice work and its appropriateness in individual and group sports and example goal statements (Appendix J).

2:15-2:30 - The role of mental practice in my sport (Appendix K).

2:30-2:45 - Relaxation of chest, stomach and lower back (Appendix L).

2:45-3:00 - Relaxation of hips, thighs, and calves followed by complete body relaxation (Appendix M).

3:00-3:15 - Getting mentally ready image (Appendix N).

3:15-3:30 - Discussion on the guidelines for mental rehearsal and give homework assignment (Appendix O).
APPENDIX J

I. Begin by listening to their input regarding the answers to the question "Why does mental practice work to improve physical skills?" Then switch from the why question to how... "How does mental practice work to improve physical skills?" At this point resist the temptation to dominate the discussion and provide the complete answers. Let the members discover some points on their own.

II. Discuss the appropriateness for using mental practice with individual and group sports. Most likely it will be easy for members to identify individual sports and the specific parts of the sport that may benefit from this technique. It is important to stress it's role with team sports as well. Some specific examples may be helpful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Specific Area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Free Throws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set Shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Serve</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Penalty Kick</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shots on Goal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goalie Saves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>Batting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catching a Fly Ball</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pitching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K

I. The role of mental practice in my sport

Materials: Paper and pencils

Instructions:

1. Have each member write down the specific areas in her sport that she wishes to work on.

2. Restate the specific area in terms of the goals that the member would like to accomplish in her sport.

3. Have members examine each of their goals and rank order them in order of importance. For example, rank the most important goal 1, second most important 2, etc.

4. Select the most important goal. Be sure to make goal specific, achievable but high, and one with a sense of direction.

II. Example Goal Statements

A. Basketball
   1. To add a higher arc to my foul shot which would lead to my ultimate goal of increasing my free throw percentage.
   2. To use my left hand when shooting lay-ups from the left side of the basket.

B. Volleyball
   1. To develop a comfortable routine in preparation for my serve which would lead to an increase in my serving percentage.

C. Soccer
   1. To keep my feet down when throwing in a ball.

D. Softball
   1. To square my body to the ball when I am going to bunt.
APPENDIX L

Relaxation of chest, stomach and lower back (Jacobson, 1976).

Relax your entire body to the best of your ability. Feel that comfortable heaviness that accompanies relaxation that you are now familiar with. Breath easily and freely in and out. Notice how relaxation increases as you exhale...as you breath out, just feel the relaxation... Now breath right in and fill your lungs; inhale deeply and hold your breath. Study the tension... Now exhale, let the walls of your chest grow loose and push the air out automatically. Continue relaxing and breathe freely and gently. Feel the relaxation and enjoy it... With the rest of your body as relaxed as possible fill your lungs again. Breathe in deeply and hold it again... that's fine and now let it out slowly. Appreciate the relief. Just breathe normally. Continue relaxing your chest and let the relaxation spread to your back, shoulders, neck and arms. Merely let go... and enjoy the relaxation. Now let's pay attention to your abdominal muscles, your stomach area. Tighten your stomach muscles, make your abdomen hard. Notice the tension... and relax. Let the muscles loose and notice the contrast. Now draw your stomach in and pull the muscles in as far as you can, feel the tension this way... Let the tension dissolve as the relaxation grows deeper. Each time you breathe out, notice the rhythmic relaxation both in your lungs and stomach. Now direct your attention to your lower back. Arch up your back, make your lower back quite hollow, and feel the tension in your spine... and settle down comfortably again relaxing the lower back. Relax your lower back, relax your upper back, spread the relaxation to your stomach, chest shoulders, arms, and facial area. Those parts relaxing further and further and further and ever deeper.
APPENDIX M

Relaxation of hips, thighs, calves followed by complete body relaxation (Jacobson, 1976).

* Note that this is to continue immediately after the chest, shoulders and lower back relaxation. The members should remain in a relaxed state.

Now flex your buttocks and thighs. Flex your thighs by pressing down on your heels as hard as you can.... Relax and feel the difference.... Straighten your knees and flex your thigh muscles again. Hold the tension... Relax your hips and thighs. Allow the relaxation to proceed on it's own. Press your feet and toes down wards, away from your face so that you can feel the muscles in your calves tense up. Relax your feet and calves... This time, bend your feet towards you so that you can feel the tension in your shins. Bring your toes right up... Relax again ... Now spread the relaxation to your stomach, waist and lower back. Feel the relaxation all over. Let yourself relax.

Now you can become twice as relaxed as you are by merely taking in a really deep and slowly exhaling. With your eyes closed so that you are less aware of objects and movements around you and thus prevent any surface tensions from developing, breathe in deeply and feel yourself become heavier. Take in a long deep breath and let it out very slowly... Feel how heavy and relaxed you have become.
APPENDIX N

Getting Mentally Ready Image

Instructions: While group members are in a relaxed state create the following scene:

Now imagine that it is the morning of an important game... you feel good about the upcoming competition... you are relaxed and confident. Now picture yourself in the locker room as you dress for the big event. Get in touch with what is going on around you. What kind of noises do you hear? Other people talking, laughing, getting dressed ... or maybe it is silent. What does the scene look like? Picture the lockers, the benches, the walls and ceiling. You can feel the bench beneath you as you sit on it to tie you shoes. Smell the smells that always greet you in the locker room. Fill your lungs in and out breathing slowly and comfortably. Begin to feel the excitement build...allow your body to move to the ideal tension where you perform at your best ... you feel confident, strong and relaxed. Get in touch with those feelings.... confident, strong and relaxed. I'm going to alert you in a few moments by counting form 1 to 3 and when I get to three you will be alert and refreshed, but before I do I want you to really get in touch with your feelings right now.... being strong .... confident ... and relaxed. After I alert you, you will remember these feelings. 1 ... 2 ... 3.
APPENDIX O

I. Briefly discuss the last image (the locker room scene) and move into more specific areas to work on. Pass out the following handout.

II. Handout on guidelines for mental rehearsal (Curtis, 1988).

1. Visualize a performance that is near perfect, positive, and during which you accomplish your goal.

2. Visualize the experience in detail, using as many senses as possible.

3. Visualize the performance form inside the body as if you are actually performing.

4. Use proper speed.

5. Carry the visualization through to completion.

6. Rehearse regularly.

7. Stay alert.

II. Homework

To work on personal goal with mental rehearsal. Stress importance of being in a relaxed state when beginning this exercise. Rehearse once a day until next week. Write down any problems, concerns or questions that will be discussion next week.
SESSION IV

Goals: To monitor the progress of the group members' work with mental imagery in their sport. To enter into issues surrounding motivational problems and ways to overcome motivational difficulties.

2:00-2:15 - Provide the opportunity for members to discuss their problems and concerns regarding mental rehearsal. Discover where each group member is in the process (Appendix P).

2:15-2:30 - Group members take the Self Perception Test (Appendix Q).


2:55-3:10 - Reporter Game (Appendix S).


3:20-3:30 - Wrap up
APPENDIX P

I. Open the discussion to the members' problems and concerns regarding the imagery they used in their sport. Stress the importance of its continual impact on the athlete and encourage them to regularly practice this behavior. Also, emphasize that before an extremely anxiety provoking event (the "big" game) it may be helpful to use mental rehearsal two or three times immediately before the event.

II. Assess where the members of the group are in this process by asking the following questions:

1. Do you feel comfortable with the image that you have created?

2. Do you need to change any parts of the image to make it more powerful for you? If so what?

III. Be sure to recognize the time limitations to this discussion. This technique might not be learned by all group members or it may take some members longer to develop a good image. Encourage them to work on such an image regardless of how difficult this may seem; stress that it may just take them more time.
APPENDIX Q

Self Perception Test (Singer, 1984)

Instructions:

Answer each question as to your general impression of yourself in the sport of _________________. Place and X through the number most appropriate.

1. How do you rate your general talent/success in this sport?
   (1: extremely low ability, 10: extremely high ability)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. How hard is it for you to try and succeed in this sport?
   (1: extremely low effort, 10: extremely high effort)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. How difficult do you think this sport is for you to do well?
   (1: extremely difficult, 10: extremely hard)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. How lucky do you feel in this sport?
   (1: extremely unlucky, 10: extremely lucky)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. How well do you evaluate your present status in this sport?
   (1: extremely unlucky, 10: extremely lucky)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
APPENDIX R

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, paper, and pencils.

Instructions:

1. Write the words intrinsic and extrinsic up on the board.

2. Ask the group members to define each word. In general make sure that the definitions include that intrinsic means motivation from within and extrinsic is motivation based on external factors.

3. Have each member write examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the board. Make sure that they fit; if one does not ask input from the group, correct the error. Some examples for intrinsic are: to prove to yourself, to have fun and to compete. Some examples of extrinsic are: money, trophies and awards.

4. Have members copy these two lists on a piece of paper.

5. Tell the group that they need to give the motivation a number from 1 to 5 in order of importance to them. Therefore, after each reward the member will place a 1 for the least important and a 5 for the most important motivator for them.

6. Add up the numbers and discover which is more important to the members – intrinsic or extrinsic.

* Stress that research has supported the idea that development of intrinsic interest in an activity will cause the athlete to continue athletic participation. Rewards given merely for participation may result in devalued behavior and reduced future involvement in that activity.
APPENDIX S

The Reporter Game

Materials: Paper and pencils

Instructions:

1. Have the group members divide into pairs.

2. State that one member is to act like a reporter interviewing their partner.

3. The reporter is to ask the following specific questions:
   - How do you feel after your great performance?
   - To what do you attribute your great performance?

4. Have the reporter write down the members responses to these two questions.

5. Have the members switch roles.

6. As the reporter, state how the group member answered these two questions.
Lecture: Brief introduction to the attribution theory

I. Definition: Attribution Theory is how we explain our behavior and outcomes, especially successes and failures.

II. Breakdown of concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inside of self: ability and effort</td>
<td>outside of self: task difficulty and luck</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Unstable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal ability and task difficulty</td>
<td>effort and luck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: running the 100 yard dash</td>
<td>&quot;I didn't try&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Key point is the person's perception of success and failure

* Have members tie in their responses to the reporter game. How do they attribute their success?
APPENDIX U

I. Wrap Up

1. Have each member examine the results of her self perceptions test.
2. Discuss their general themes indicated by the test.
3. Relate the test to the answers given during the reporter game.
4. Discuss where they are in terms of their self perceptions and the attribution theory.
SESSION V

Goals: To give suggestions to help with each individual's motivational problems. To develop awareness of how male/female roles and characteristics are portrayed in the media, specifically advertisements, and the messages they send.

2:00-2:15 - Discussion about motives and self perceptions in relation to motivations (Appendix V).

2:15-3:15 - Sex stereotyping in the media (Appendix W).

3:15-3:30 - Discussion focused on the sex stereotyping exercise and the impact these stereotypes have on the members as women and as athletes (Appendix X).

* Homework Assignment
APPENDIX V

I. Lead general discussion about motivation and its importance in sport.

II. Stress the following points during the discussion:

1. Motives should be more intrinsic rather than extrinsic.

2. A feeling of self-control and direction should prevail over a sense of helplessness and being a victim of fate or luck.
APPENDIX W

Sex Stereotyping in the Media (Eberhardt, 1987)

Materials:

Magazines, glue, scissors, chalkboard, and chalk.

Instructions:

1. Break the group in half.

2. Give each group some magazines, scissors and glue.

3. State "First cut out some advertisements and put them in the center of the group. Then begin to place into three categories where the advertisements portray women as super housewife and super mother in one group; one category that exploits or insults women (e.g. sex objects, dependent on men, submissive, unintelligent) in another group; and one group that shows women in positive or equal roles. A collage should be made of each category chosen.

When groups are finished, hang collages on the chalkboard and write above it with the chalk the group that it is in. Ask group members to move around the room and look for the messages they perceive as they examine the collages.
APPENDIX X

I. Discussion exercise: What were the feelings about the messages of the collages and how do these messages lead to making generalizations.

II. Introduce the fact that the group members are women athletes. How are they seen in the media? What examples of the collages reflect this?

III. Homework Assignment: Bring in one example of a female athlete in the media. Focus on the message that you received personally from the advertisement.
SESSION VI

Goals: To discover how the female athlete is portrayed in the media and the messages such advertisements send. To discover how the members feel about their abilities and what they do with them in this society. To define "success" and how members deal with the possibility of success.

2:00-2:15 - Discuss examples of female athletes in the media and the messages the advertisements send (Appendix Y).

2:15-2:45 - Success Story Exercise (Appendix Z).

2:45-3:15 - Reporter Exercise II (Appendix AA).

3:15-3:30 - Discuss conclusions based on the term success in the group members own lives and provide the opportunity for those who wish to tell the group how they intend on being more successful in the future.
APPENDIX Y

I. Have each group member show the specific example of a female athlete in an advertisement.

II. After the member has shown the advertisement, have them state the messages they received from it.

III. Provide the opportunity for each group member to comment on each other's advertisement.

IV. Summarize the conclusions and generalizations based on the exercises and the group discussions about females in the media.
APPENDIX Z

Success Story Exercise (Eberhardt, 1987)

Materials:

Paper, pencils, chalk, and chalkboard.

Instructions:

Before presenting the topic of success to the group, do the following:

1. Ask each member to complete, in writing, the following story: "At the end of her first year on the track team, Susan finds herself with the fastest sprint times..."

2. Ask each member to read her story to the group.

3. As the first person reads her story, the leader writes the following headings on the chalkboard:
   - Fear of social rejection
   - Doubts about femininity
   - Denial of possibility
   - Positive feelings about success

4. As the members recall their stories, record the main message under the appropriate heading on the chalkboard.

5. After each has had the opportunity, discuss the reactions to the categories and the messages.
APPENDIX AA

Reporter Exercise II

Materials: Paper and pencils

Instructions:

1. Follow the same procedures as previously illustrated Reporter Exercise.

2. Once the pairs have been established and who is to be the reporter first, give them a sheet of paper that includes the following questions. Make sure they record their answers.
   1. What does success mean for you?
   2. In what ways is it important for you to be successful in your own life (using your definition of success)?
   3. Do you want to be more successful?
   4. If yes, what kind of support would you want?
   5. If yes, what kind of things do you need to do now?

3. After the pairs have switched roles, have each person relate to the group how their partner answered these questions. What type of themes about success are revealed?
APPENDIX BB

I. Wrap up Discussion

1. Provide the opportunity for the members to develop conclusions about the role of success in their own lives.

2. Tie this in with their sport. How does your view of success play a role in your ability to perform in your sport? Help or hinder?

3. Ask members if they intend to be more successful in the future.

4. Those who respond positively, give them the opportunity to tell the group how they intend on being more successful.
SESSION VII

Goals: To understand the importance of confidence as it relates to performance. To practice ways to build one's confidence level. To confront self doubts and negative self talk.

2:00-2:05 - Address any questions or concerns regarding the previous session or any new problems.

2:05-2:20 - Lecture: The important role of confidence in the life of an athlete (Appendix CC).


2:30-3:00 - Think you can do it...think that you will do it (Appendix EE).

3:00-3:20 - How to confront thinking that interferes with your confidence (Appendix FF).

Lecture: The important role of confidence in the life of an athlete.

Be sure to stress the following points:

1. State how confidence tends to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you don't believe in your ability to do well, you probably won't reach your goal.

2. Confidence is characteristic by a high expectancy of success.

3. High levels of expectancy naturally relates to motivation, if you think that you will win the harder you try.

4. Confidence arouses positive emotions; exhilaration, joy, excitement, etc.

5. Confidence gets you moving toward success instead of trying to avoid failure.

6. Confidence focuses your attention to the total task at hand.

7. You can build confidence through work and planning. You can practice capturing it!
APPENDIX DD

Imagery: Previous success of an athletic experience

I. In a few minutes have the group members close their and get in a relaxed state. Counting three deep breaths as members close their eyes may be helpful.

II. Set the following image:

You are in the locker room before a game, meet, or match. You are very relaxed and comfortable. You prepare yourself for the upcoming event by dressing and letting the excitement in you build. You are now beginning the event and doing well...very well...extremely well...the best that you have ever done. Get in touch with what's going on around you. You win! You have competed to the best of your ability and won. Experience what it is like to give the winning performance. Stay with those feelings of excitement, pride and joy. Know what it is like to have won. The satisfaction, the attention, the rewards...all are worth getting familiar with. In a few moments I'm going to alert you by counting from 1 to 3 and when I get to 3 you will be alert and refreshed. Before I do that, I want you to stay with the feeling of winning a bit longer. How good it feels... how wonderful. 1...2...3.
APPENDIX EE

I. Think that you can do it!

Materials: Paper and pencils

Instructions:

Have each group member write down five positive affirmations about herself beginning with:

1. I do....
2. I like to do...

1. State the importance of I do or I am because these statements emphasizes action.

2. Also, take care of wording beginning statements "I always..." or "I never..." because they are perfectionistic statements.


II. Think that you will do it!

Same materials as above.

Instructions:

1. Have each member list specific acts that she will do in order to succeed in a situation. Some examples may be; I'm going to exploit my opponent's backhand. I'm going to cover her like a glove.

2. Predict with great certainty that this will take place.

3. Emphasize the action not the results.

4. State the importance of frequent reminders of preparation and previous successes.
Pep Talk: Act Confidently!

Stress the following points during your pep talk:

1. Relaxation is particularly useful in helping look and feel confident.

2. Avoid needless conversation with your opponents about things such as the weather, for this tends to indicate that you are nervous.

3. Walk tall and proud. Let confidence radiate from you. Look calm, confident and ready to go.

4. Even if you have some doubts, act confidently.
SESSION VIII

Goals: To evaluate the group experience with the members and to assess what information and experiences were the most and least valuable. To provide the opportunity to process the group experience. To deal with termination issues.

2:00-2:30 - Informal Evaluation (Appendix HH).

2:30-2:45 - This section of the group would be relatively unstructured. It would be used to let the group members process the entire group experience and deal with any issues they wish to discuss.

2:45-3:30 - Imaginal Female Athlete Gift Giving Exercise (Appendix II).
Imaginal Gift Giving Exercise

1. State "Today we are going to give gifts to each other. Take a few minutes and think of an imaginary female athlete gift that you would like to give someone in this room. These are special gifts that reflect your role as a female athlete. You have a total of three gifts to give and you may give them to three different people if you wish. In deciding the gifts to give, you may want to think about what you have appreciated about the person, what you like about her, then choose something that symbolizes this for you."

2. Lead by example. Such as "I give you a mirror Mary because I would like you to see what a good leader you are both on and off the field.

3. After a few minutes, each person takes a turn to give her gifts. She is also to share what she intended by giving the gift.

4. Ask the group to discuss how members are feeling after completing this exercise.

5. Make sure to address how people feel about the group ending.
References


