

## Preface

In charting the course of the desired possession from Daddy's little girl to a competent, independent womanhood, I cannot ignore the role of the mother, whose loving care and nurturing and that of her younger sibling, her better half and my adorable granddaughter whose encouragement and love made Nayanika who she is today. With a brilliant background in Psychology, she has not only done us proud with her caliber and intellect in academics but has duly justified her love and passion for sports.

This book is a reflection of the untiring efforts and hard work expended by her, burning mid-night oils to create something unique which is the need of the hour; truly a dream come true. Her book titled "Therapies in Sports- Application and Practices" acclimatizes its readers with how sports provides an enriching platform for the development of human potential; promoting holistic health and well-being, assisting in fostering cognitive skills and competencies, harmony and tolerance among athletes of varied domains across varied population. The book emphasizes on how indulging in regular sports assists in enhancing one's self confidence, self-efficacy and resilience; promotes relaxation, elevates mood, provides a physiological and psychological lift, regulates an athletes' ability to deal with anxiety, stress and sport

related injury contributing toward achieving peak performance. The book attempts to provide a comprehensive and practical orientation of how sports psychology and therapies in sport can contribute towards optimizing sport performance.

Chapter One emphasizes on the role and contribution of Sports psychology in the present scenario with special focus on the Indian Perspective, providing valuable suggestions that can be incorporated in the Indian Sports Curriculum. The remaining part of the book attempts to abreast its readers with how therapies can assist in attaining peak performance. This is explained from the standpoint of the practical application of four major therapies as four chapters of the book which are: Attributional Retraining (AR), Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Sports Massage Therapy (SMT) that can be used by coaches, sports psychologists, teachers, athletes, educationists and parents. This makes the book unique and almost a first of its kind attempt in the Indian scenario.

The book has to its credit the contribution of eminent sport personalities as to how therapies have helped them and can assist them in the near future to optimize their sporting performance based on their real life experiences. The book is being endorsed by The Chandigarh Golf Association and the The Chandigarh Amateur Bodybuilding Association which under their flagship will be used by golfer's and bodybuilders to optimize their sporting performance.

I hope the readers enjoy moving through this kaleidoscope of expression and duly benefit from it.

**Charanjit Matharu**  
International Sculptor & Educationist

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## Views of Eminent Sport Personalities

As stated by Shiva Keshavan, the five time Olympian and the first Indian representative to compete in Luge at the Winter Olympic Games:

*“Sports, contrary to a popular belief, are as much about mental balance as it is about physical performance. Across several sports, like boxing, athletics, tennis, swimming and winter sports, teams often travel with a ‘Mental Trainer and Sports Psychologist who would be the go-to person for any problems, as the case often arises while athletes are training for several months away from home and their families. My sport, Luge, is a high speed, high risk sport where we train for about 6 months in the icy winters. Though adrenaline may drive most luge pilots, it is important to note that without mental training, it is not possible to do the sport. The brain needs to react within milliseconds of negotiating curves on the track at speeds reaching 150 km/hour. Conditioning, visualization techniques and meditation are a few of the exercises undertaken by athletes to be able to perform on the final run.”* (Shiva Keshavan,

International Luge Champion, photograph is attached on the last page of the book).

*“Therapy in sports is as important to an athlete as blood in one’s body. More than just contributing to boosting up ones physical endurance and resilience it acts as a tonic to one’s mind and psyche which according to me is the remote control system rightly channelizing ones thoughts that ultimately lead to sporting actions. Pawan Jain further states that when he was 12 years old the only thing which his coach told him was that in order to emerge victorious in your game what is required is just one more ball than your opponent and success is yours. According to me, the basic mantra for attaining peak performance is dependent on the fuel of positive thoughts that one feeds his/her mind with and how well one can play with the psyche of the opponent. In order to achieve this, the assistance of Sports psychologists and therapists is the need of the hour in the Indian set-up.”* (Pawan Jain, International Tennis Player).

*In Malkiat’s own words, “Therapy and psychological assistance in sports in any form is the heart and soul of an optimal sporting performance. Therapy plays a prime role not only in preparing the athlete before the competition and to be able to perform to the best of his/her ability during the sporting event; but, also dealing with sport related injury. Narrating his own experience Malkiat states that I suffered from an injury during one of my tournament and the kind of physical pain and the psychological trauma associated with feeling of abandonment, neglect, low self-esteem, learned helplessness and low self-confidence to be ever able to get back to that psychological lift are unexplainable. That is a point in time I realized the role and importance of a sport psychologist and therapist in my life, who, if I were provided with, may not have ever suffered from*

*such a period of turmoil*". (Malkiat Singh, Gold Medalist & Former National Level Bodybuilder).

*"Therapy in sports provides a solid grounding to athletes in various ways: it provides them the needed physical and mental resilience and skills and competencies to deal with pre-performance, during the event and post performance related stress and anxiety. It further helps them immensely by enhancing ones mental toughness to be able to deal with defeat, victory and any injury during or post competition effectively. Anjum further ascertains that many a times a person may be very well prepared or at times not so well prepared physically due to inconsistency during training and practice sessions, but if a person is mentally tough and charged up, victory is just a leap away; and it is here where the role and contribution of a therapist and sports psychologist is indispensable"* (Anjum Moudgil, International Shooter).

*"During an intense moment while playing your sport, focusing one's mind on the game and technique is almost impossible under the spell of exhaustion and fatigue, in such situations therapy no doubt provides a way and will to stabilize your reflexes and helps continuing in, your battle in the Court more resiliently leading to optimizing sport performance"* ascertains Arpan (Arpan Vadhera, National Squash Player)

The seven young and courageous boys of The Lawrence School Sanawar Everest Team narrate their challenging and breathtaking experience.

*"Climbing the Mt. Everest was like touching the sky. It involved immense vigor, courage, strength, physical endurance and more so a rational, calm composed, mentally strong and focused state*

*of mind. During our 8 month long comprehensive and rigorous training consisting of cycling up to 1000 Kilometers in 9 days at the heat packed terrain of Rajasthan, to the challenging mountain climbing regime at the Darjeeling Mountaineering Institute and 5kms of running and gyming daily; our experience was a mixed bag of emotions. At times we felt a summit high like experience and at times felt a complete sub-zero low point feeling depressed, anxious, stressed out, uncertain and demotivated. However, other than the support rendered by the training team and coach what kept us going was the “we feeling” of a common Alma matter and the school motto “Never Give in” which acted as a therapeutic red pill. They further, acclaimed, that we would have been in a more regulated position to manage our psychological state of mind if our training could have been supplemented with mental training and relaxation sessions conducted by psychologists and sport therapists”*

(The Lawrence School Sanawar Mt. Everest Team) (Details of the team members and their photograph is attached on the last page of the book).

## Special Contribution

### **Dr. Ali Irani**

Head Department of Physiotherapy

Nanawati Hospital, Mumbai, &

Former Physiotherapist of the Indian Cricket Team

### **The Role and Importance of Sports Psychologists and Therapies in Sports**

Sportsmen are known to be highly strung and aggressive. To channelize their energy in order to have an optimum performance a right mind set is of equal importance. It is more than essential for the athlete to concentrate on the performance and not get distracted by several internal as well as external factors.

Sport psychologists help professional and amateur athletes overcome problems, enhance their performance and achieve their goals.

There are various therapies often practiced by psychologists on sportsmen and have been found to have exemplary effects on their performance:

**“Goal Setting”** – It deals with making the sportsman understand the right kind of goal, one which provides direction, increases motivation and guide them to achieving optimal performance.

**“Arousal Control”** – It deals with managing anxiety and help perform better in high stress and pressure situations by using techniques such as breathing, muscle relaxation, concentration, focus skills, imagery, cognitive strategies etc.

**“Neurobiofeedback” – Alpha Zone-** An unforeseen and inevitable part of an athlete’s life is injury and psychological help and positive mind set at that crucial time helps improve the recovery time. In the time of recovery from the point of injury to the point to return to play anxiety & doubt reduction, making them confident about themselves becomes essential.

The importance of psychological strategies in sports is as follows:

- 1. Enhance performance.** Various mental strategies, such as visualization, self-talk and relaxation techniques can help athletes overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.
- 2. Cope with the pressures of competition.** Sport psychologists can help athletes at all levels deal with pressure from parents, coaches or even their own expectations.
- 3. Recover from injuries.** After an injury, athletes may need help tolerating pain, adhering to their physical therapy regimens or adjusting to being sidelined.
- 4. Keep up an exercise program and enjoy sports.** Even those who want to exercise regularly may find themselves unable to fulfill their goal. Sport psychologists can help these individuals increase their motivation and tackle any related concerns.

**Ajeet Bajaj**

Padma Shree Awardee

Special contribution by Ajeet Bajaj, Padma Shree Awardee, Silver and Bronze medalist at the National and International Rafting Championships and has the unique distinction of creating a polar trilogy by skiing to the North Pole, South Pole and across Greenland.

As stated by Ajeet Bajaj

“Heartiest congratulations on your book. Having competed in the National games and having represented India in international adventure sporting competitions as also having had the privilege of being a member of some of the most challenging expeditions on the planet (white water rafting, kayaking and cross country skiing), I do sincerely feel that your book on sports psychology and therapies in sport should be mandatory reading for all aspiring sportspersons and extreme adventure sportspersons.

Keep up the great work”.



# 1

## Sports Psychology – An Introduction

*“Sport can play a role in improving the lives of not only individuals but whole communities. I am convinced that the time is right to build that understanding, to encourage governments, development agencies and communities to think how sport can be included more systematically in the plans to help children, particularly living midst of poverty, disease, and conflict”*

(Kofi Annan, Former U.N. Secretary General).

According to the U.N. Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003), “Sport includes all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction such as play, recreation organized or competitive sport, indigenous sport or games”.

Sports, provides an enriching platform for the development of human potential. It is used not only as a means of play, fun, frolic and recreation, but assists in promoting holistic health and well-being and provides a rich foundation for the development of cognitive skills, fighting spirit and competition, harmony, tolerance and intense pride and adds a dash of patriotic flavor.

Research conducted across the globe indicates that regular participation in appropriate physical activity and sport provides people of both sexes and all ages and conditions, with a wide range of physical, social and mental health benefits. Indulging in sports helps in improving diet and discourages the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs and reduces violence, enhances functional capacity, and promotes social interaction and integration (W.H.O, 2003). Experts and researchers further suggest that indulging in 30-60 minutes of moderate intensity activity 3-5 times a week benefits one to deal with blood pressure, hypertension, cancer, depression and anxiety, assists in formation of blood lipids, lipoproteins and blood coagulation, boosts immune system and reduces mortality. It is also documented that 50-80 minutes of daily moderate-intensity activity provides benefits for diabetes and obesity (Sport and Health, 2012). Furthermore, indulging in regular sport and exercise boosts ones level of confidence, self-worth, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience. It promotes relaxation, elevates one's mood, provides a physiological and psychological high, and regulates one's ability to deal with anxiety, stress and injury contributing to optimal and enriched performance.

Taking this backdrop into consideration, the basic endeavor of this chapter is to acclimatize its readers with the role and importance of sports psychology from the standpoint of three solution oriented perspectives. These are highlighted and discussed as three separate parts of the chapter. Where, Part I emphasizes on the concept, role and importance of sports psychology. Part II attempts to highlight and discuss the role and contribution of sports in the Indian perspective. Part II also stresses on certain valuable suggestions that can be incorporated in the Indian sport curriculum to enhance sport performance. Part III provides a bird's eye view of the role and importance of

therapies in sports and their contribution in optimizing sport performance. This is explained in light of four basic therapies i.e. Attributional Retraining (AR), Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Sports Massage Therapy (SMT). The functioning, role and contribution and practical application of these four therapies in the area of sports is explained in detail under four major chapters of this book.