

Athlete Coping: Personality Dimensions of Recovery from Injury

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Abstract : As participation in organized sports increases, so does the risk of sustaining an athletic injury. These unfortunate injuries result in missed time from practice and, inevitably, the field of competition. Recovery time plays a pivotal role in the overall rehabilitation of the athlete. With time and rehabilitation, an athlete's physical injury can be properly treated. However, there seem to be few measures assessing psychological recovery from injury. Although an athlete has been cleared to return to play, there may still be lingering doubt about their injury. Overall, there is a vast difference between being physically cleared to play and being psychologically ready to return to play. Certain personality traits might serve as predictors of an individual's rate of psychological recovery from an injury. The purpose of this research study is to explore the correlations between athletes' personality and their recovery from an athletic injury, specifically, examining how locus of control has been utilized through other studies and can be beneficial to the current study. Additionally, this section will examine the link between hardiness and coping strategies. In the current study, mental toughness is being tested, but it is important to determine the link between these two concepts. Hardiness and coping strategies are closely related and can play a major role in an athlete's mental toughness. It is important to examine competitive trait anxiety to illustrate perceived anxiety during athletic competition. The Big 5 and Social Support will also be examined in conjunction with recovery from athletic injury. Athletic injury is a devastating and common occurrence that can happen in any sport. Injured athletes often require resources and treatment to be able to return to the field of play. Athletes become more involved with physical and mental treatment as the length of recovery time increases. It is very reasonable to assume that personality traits would be predictive of athlete recovery from injury. The current study investigated the potential relationship between personality traits and recovery time; more specifically, the personality traits of locus of control, hardiness, social support, competitive trait anxiety, and the "Big 5" personality traits. Results indicated that athletes with a higher internal locus of control tend to report being physically ready to return to play and "ready" to return to play faster than those with an external locus of control. Additionally, Openness to Experience (among the Big 5 personality dimensions) was also related to the speed of return to play.

Keywords : athlete, injury, personality, readiness to play, recovery

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