

## **Fighting Competition Stress by Focusing the Psychological Training on the Vigor-Activity Mood States**

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**Abstract :** The specific competition and pre-competition stress in professional track and field determined an increasing engagement, from a biological and psychological point of view, of the middle distance and long distance runners, to obtain the top performances that would get them to win in a competition. Under these conditions, if the psychological stress is not properly managed, the negative effects can lead to a total drop in self-confidence, and can affect the value, the talent, and the self-trust, which generates an even higher stress. One of the means at our disposal is the psychological training, specially adapted to the athlete's individual characteristics, to the characteristics of the athletic event, or of the competition. This paper aims to highlight certain original aspects regarding the effects of a specific psychological training program on the mood states characterized by psychological activation, vigor, vitality. The subjects were represented by 12 professional middle distance and long distance runners, subjected to an applicative intervention to which they have participated voluntarily, over the course of 6 months (a competition season). The results indicated that The application of a psychological training program, adapted to the track and field competition system, over a period of time characterized by high competition stress, can determine an increase in the states of vigor and psychological activation, at the same time diminishing those moods that have negative effects on the performance, in the middle distance and long distance running events. This conclusion confirms the hypothesis of this research.

**Keywords :** competition stress, psychological training, track and field, vigor-activity

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