Psychological Bases of Sport Injuries
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Reviewed by Eric E. LaMott, Department of Health & Physical Education, Concordia College, St. Paul

With the current interest in psychology of sports injuries, the publication of this text is timely. The majority of the publications in the field of psychology of injury focus on the antecedents and predictors of injury, but Psychological Bases of Sport Injuries is directed toward hands-on skills for the rehabilitation professional (i.e., athletic trainer, physical therapist, and sports psychology consultant). A key plus to this text is that it draws authors from all areas of sports injury research (e.g., trainers, coaches, clinical and educational sport psychologists) and thus attempts to generate a more holistic view of injury rehabilitation.

It is important to note that the text is divided into four distinct sections covering an overview of sports injuries, the psychological perspective of the athlete, counseling injured athletes, and counseling athletes with permanent disabilities. Due to the variety and importance of topics therein, it is important to review the specific contents of each chapter within each section.

Section 1, “Injury and Sport—The Problem: Conceptual and Practical Approaches,” is composed of the first four chapters. In chapter 1, Dr. Pargman opens up the topic of sports injuries with a brief, general discussion of personality factors and psychosocial stressors that relate to injury. Chapter 2 examines the athletic trainer’s role in the physical and psychological rehabilitation of athletes. This chapter relies heavily on individual athletic examples to describe the various scenarios that an athletic trainer is likely to experience. The strength of this chapter lies in the last two sections. There are eight practical applications for trainers involved in the injury process and recommended psychological interventions for trainers.

Chapter 3, “The Biopsychology of Injury-Related Pain,” examines the issues of pain and its assessment and management. The limited discussion of pain, assessment, and pain-management techniques, however, falls critically short of informing the practitioner of the complex nature of pain and pain-management techniques.

Chapter 4 examines legal and ethical issues relevant to counseling injured athletes. The authors provide an excellent discussion of the ethical and legal issues related to athletic trainers. In fact, the depth and clarity of the information in this chapter make it a must read for all health-care professionals (including physicians, physical therapists, trainers, and sport psychology consultants). Key topics discussed within this chapter include, value judgments, the ethical standards, potential traps, and documentation of one’s performed work.
Section 2, "Psychological Perspectives on Athletic Injury," is composed of chapters 5 through 8. Chapter 5 examines a clinical perspective to a proactive assessment and monitoring program of sport athletes. This monitoring system incorporates both research and counseling components. The focus of this chapter is on how the assessment and monitoring programs facilitate recovery.

Chapter 6 addresses a salient issue in injury and all of athletics: the malingerer athlete. This chapter does an excellent job of identifying, defining, and developing basic interventions for the malingerer athlete.

In chapter 7, the author discusses the personality variables of explanatory pessimism, dispositional optimism, and hardiness as they relate to rehabilitation. This chapter goes beyond simple development of these three personality variables and concludes with a discussion on how rehabilitation personnel can use this personality information when dealing with athletes.

Chapter 8 develops the function of social support and its mediating role with injuries. The extensive review of this topic is the best I have seen. The latter half of the chapter develops a specific framework for social support-based interventions with injured athletes. This section details the provisions for providing emotional support, informational support, and tangible support. The authors conclude with some very useful support suggestions for the practitioner.

Section 3, "Counseling Athletes Who Are Injured," includes chapters 9 through 12. Chapter 9 provides a postinjury extension of the Andersen and Williams (1988) injury model. In light of this new postinjury model, the authors discuss detailed intervention techniques and strategies. The details included in this chapter are critical to anyone looking to perform applied work in the injury field. The authors conclude the chapter with a breakdown of the common duties of injury-treatment team members (e.g., physicians, physical therapists, psychologists).

Chapter 10 discusses the effective use of the modeling technique of motivation in the rehabilitation setting. The author develops the background of modeling and its specific application to rehabilitation. This chapter also incorporates the critical components that should and should not be included in an injury-modeling tape. This innovative technique offers great potential for advancement of the healing process.

Imagery is the topic of chapter 11. The author provides an educational background supporting the mind-body paradigm for rehabilitation. The imagery in this chapter focuses on a psychophysiological and psychomotor perspective of rehabilitation. This chapter concludes with several useful suggestions for the implementation of imagery into rehabilitation.

Chapter 12 adds many key psychological components to the healing process. Within this chapter the authors discuss in detail the use of positive self-talk, relaxation, and imagery toward a healthy recovery. The authors conclude the chapter with recommendations for the injured athlete and those persons helping with the recovery. The authors have also added an excellent healing-imagery guideline and script.

Section 4, "Counseling Athletes With Permanent Disabilities," includes chapters 13 through 15. Chapter 13 discusses the little-studied topic of permanent disability in sports. The key issues of injury rehabilitation and life transition are discussed in two real-life vignettes. This topic deserves further exploration and intervention.