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Emotional Intelligence and Emotions Associated with Optimal and Dysfunctional Athletic Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated relationships between self-report measures of emotional intelligence and memories of pre-competitive emotions before optimal and dysfunctional athletic performance. Participant-athletes (n = 284) completed a self-report measure of emotional intelligence and two measures of pre-competitive emotions; a) emotions experienced before an optimal performance, and b) emotions experienced before a dysfunctional performance. Consistent with theoretical predictions, repeated MANOVA results demonstrated pleasant emotions associated with optimal performance and unpleasant emotions associated with dysfunctional performance. Emotional intelligence correlated with pleasant emotions in both performances with individuals reporting low scores on the self-report emotional intelligence scale appearing to experience intense unpleasant emotions before dysfunctional performance. We suggest that future research should investigate relationships between emotional intelligence and emotion-regulation strategies used by athletes.

Key words: Affect, emotion, stress-management, personality, effect regulation

Key Points

- Athletes reporting high scores of self-report emotional intelligence tend to experience pleasant emotions.

- Optimal performance is associated with pleasant emotions and dysfunctional performance is associated with unpleasant emotions.
- Emotional intelligence might help athletes recognize which emotional states help performance.

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