Proximus Journal of Sports Science and Physical Education
Volume 3, Issue 03, March, 2026
https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
ISSN (E): 2942-9943

The Effectiveness of a Psychological Counseling Program in Emotional Intelligence for Developing Complex Skill Performance under Competitive Pressure among Handball Players

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Abstract
The present research aims to reveal the effectiveness of a psychological counseling program based on developing emotional intelligence in regulating complex skill performance and improving its accuracy under competitive pressure among handball players. Emotional intelligence represents an optimal state of performance characterized by full engagement, high attentional focus, a sense of control, and fluidity in motor execution. The researcher adopted the experimental approach using a pre-test/post-test equivalent groups design (experimental and control), as it perfectly aligns with the nature of the research problem in revealing the effectiveness of the psychological counseling intervention. The research sample consisted of (20) handball players, who were randomly assigned into two equal groups. The emotional intelligence scale and the complex skill performance test under competitive pressure were used as the main measurement tools, where performance situations were designed to simulate actual competition conditions in terms of time constraints and stressful stimuli. The program was implemented over a period of (6) weeks, with (2) sessions per week. The results revealed statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test in favor of the experimental group regarding the level of emotional intelligence and the accuracy of skill performance under competitive pressure; furthermore, it outperformed the control group in the post-test, indicating the effectiveness of the psychological counseling program in improving the regulation of skill performance and maintaining its accuracy in stressful situations. These findings support the theoretical proposition that emotional intelligence acts as a psychological regulatory mechanism contributing to performance stability and mitigating the impact of competitive pressures.
Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Sports Psychological Counseling, Competitive Pressure.

1. Introduction

During recent decades, sports psychology has witnessed a qualitative shift in interpreting athletic achievement; the focus has transitioned from exclusively emphasizing physical and skill-based determinants as decisive factors to studying the psychological processes regulating motor behavior during competition. Athletic performance is now viewed as the product of a dynamic interaction among cognitive, emotional, and motor processes, wherein mechanisms of attention, perception, and emotional regulation contribute to directing the motor response and controlling its efficiency in competitive situations. In this context, the concept of emotional intelligence has emerged as a contemporary construct reflecting a state of optimal performance, in which the player experiences a high degree of immersion, focus, and a sense of control, allowing performance to flow automatically and harmoniously away from hesitation or overthinking. This state is particularly important in team sports, notably handball, which is characterized by a fast pace and multiple situational

Proximus Journal of Sports Science and Physical Education
Volume 3, Issue 03, March, 2026
https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
ISSN (E): 2942-9943

stimuli, compelling the player to make accurate motor decisions in a short time and under high levels of competitive pressure. This pressure often leads to disruption in attentional regulation and an increase in emotional tension, which negatively affects the accuracy of skill performance, even if the player possesses a good technical level under normal conditions. Hence, there is a prominent need to adopt psychological counseling programs aimed at developing emotional intelligence as an internal regulatory mechanism. This helps the player maintain psychological equilibrium and direct cognitive and emotional resources toward performance requirements, thereby regulating skill execution and improving its accuracy during stressful competitive situations.

Research Problem In competitive situations, handball players face intense pressure that requires rapid decision-making and accurate skill execution; this pressure frequently leads to a decline in the level of skill performance, even among experienced players. Despite the growing interest in the psychological aspect within sports psychology, most studies have focused on emotional and cognitive variables in general, without delving into the instantaneous performance regulation mechanisms associated with the concept of emotional intelligence, which represents an optimal mental state that enhances focus, immersion, and emotional control during performance. Consequently, there is an urgent need for an experimental study examining the possibility of utilizing a psychological counseling program as a mechanism for regulating skill performance and improving its accuracy under competitive pressure, thereby bridging the gap between skills acquired in training and their actual execution in matches. Hence, the research problem is determined by the following question: Does a psychological counseling program contribute to developing emotional intelligence to regulate complex skill performance under competitive pressure among handball players?

Research Objectives

- Preparing a psychological counseling program based on developing emotional intelligence to enhance optimal performance among handball players.
- Evaluating the impact of the program on the players' level of emotional intelligence during competitive situations.
- Revealing the program's effect on the accuracy of skill performance under competitive pressure, reflecting the players' ability to regulate their mental and emotional processes during performance.
- Comparing the performance of the experimental and control groups after implementing the program to determine the effectiveness of the psychological intervention in improving skill performance.

Research Hypotheses

- There are statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group in the level of emotional intelligence, in favor of the post-test.
- There are statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group in the accuracy of complex skill performance under competitive pressure, in favor of the post-test.
- There are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the post-test for both emotional intelligence and skill performance accuracy, in favor of the experimental group.

2. Research Methodology and Field Procedures

2.1 Research Approach

The researcher utilized the experimental approach with a pre-test/post-test equivalent groups design (experimental and control), as it is the most appropriate method to achieve the research objectives through the procedures adopted by the researcher in executing the study's experiment (Mohammed Hammood et al., 2025; Mohammed et al., 2025; Omar et al., 2025).

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https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
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2.2 Research Population and Sample

The research population was purposefully selected from senior-category handball players in Al-Anbar Governorate clubs, totaling (75) players. The research sample comprised players from Al-Taawoun Club. After excluding (2) goalkeepers, the number of players included in the study became (20), representing (26.66%) of the total club players included in the research population. The sample members were divided into two equal groups:

- **Experimental Group:** Received the psychological counseling program designed to develop emotional intelligence.
- **Control Group:** Did not receive any psychological intervention and continued with their regular training program without any modification. This distribution aims to control extraneous variables and ensure the ability to compare the impact of the psychological counseling program on the regulation and accuracy of skill performance under competitive pressure between the two groups.

2.3 Devices, Tools, and Data Collection Means:

- Laptop (Lenovo).
- Handheld calculator (Keno).
- Data collection and entry forms.
- Emotional Intelligence Scale (Appendix 1).
- The Psychological Counseling Program.
- Accuracy of Complex Skill Performance under Competitive Pressure Test.
- Arabic and foreign sources and references.
- International Information Network (Internet).

2.4 Main Research Procedures:

2.4.1 The Psychological Counseling Program After reviewing numerous Arabic and foreign sources, as well as previous studies in the fields of psychological counseling, sports psychology, and sociology, and examining the information regarding programs provided by previous studies, the researcher prepared a psychological counseling program (Appendix 1) in emotional intelligence. This was based on the scientific foundations for program preparation. The initial draft of the program included (12) sessions, aiming at shaping and acquiring self-confidence, developing social relationships, mental health, harmony, and integration, achieved by modifying the individual's behavioral patterns into new, more positive ones. The time allocated for a single session was set at (45) minutes, based on scientific sources. The program included several different techniques used in programs aimed at improving and supporting the personal and social behavior of the individual. These techniques included (lecturing, modeling, reinforcement, and homework). After completing the preparation of the psychological counseling program, and to judge the validity of its contents, the initial draft was presented to several experts and specialists to provide their opinions, observations, and indicate its suitability in achieving the objective for which it was designed.

2.4.2 Emotional Intelligence Scale:

To measure the emotional intelligence level of the research sample, the researcher adopted the scale by Salam Mohammed Hamza (2010), which is a standardized and reliable Arabic scale used in psychological and educational research, particularly in the field of physical education and sports. The scale aims to assess individuals' ability to perceive and regulate their own emotions, understand others' feelings, and interact with them positively. This reflects on the efficiency of their social interaction and performance level, especially in competitive and sports situations that require emotional balance. The scale consists of 46 items distributed across five main domains (Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Self-Regulation, Self-Motivation, Empathy and Understanding Others' Feelings, Social Skills). The scale was designed according to a five-point Likert

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scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never), with scores ranging from 46 to 230, where higher scores indicate a high level of emotional intelligence , as shown in Table (1) below.

Table (1) Shows the Emotional Intelligence Scale for Positive and Negative Items

Domain Name	Number of Positive Items	Numbers of Positive Items	Number of Negative Items	Numbers of Negative Items
Self-Awareness	8	4-9-15-20-25-30-42-44	1	35
Emotion Management	9	1-10-16-26-31-36-39-45-46	2	21-25
Empathy	8	2-6-11-17-22-27-32-40	—	—
Motivation	7	7-12-18-23-28-33-37	—	—
Social Skills	10	3-8-13-14-19-29-34-38-41-43	1	24

Table (2) Shows the Correction Keys

Alternatives	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Positive Items	5	4	3	2	1
Negative Items	1	2	3	4	5

2.4.3 Scientific Bases for the Used Scale Reliability of the Scale

To verify the scale's reliability, the researcher used the test-retest method to calculate the reliability coefficient. The researcher administered the scales to a sample of (6) players, then re-administered the scales to the same sample after (14) days under similar conditions to the first application. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the first and second applications.

Validity of the Scales / Face Validity The researcher verified the validity of the scales by presenting them to a group of experts and specialists, achieving an expert agreement rate of more than (75%), thereby confirming the content validity of the test.

2.5 Pilot Studies First:

The First Pilot Study The first pilot study for the Emotional Intelligence Scale was conducted on 15/7/2025 on (5) players, with the purpose of:

1. Ensuring the clarity of the instructions regarding how to answer the scale.
2. Evaluating the clarity of the items and the respondents' reactions to them.
3. Identifying difficulties and errors that might hinder the application process, and calculating the time required to complete all items of the scale.

Second: The Second Pilot Study The researcher conducted the second pilot study on 16/7/2025, specifically for the psychological counseling program sessions, with the purpose of:

1. Determining the appropriate time for each session of the program.
2. Evaluating the efficiency of the techniques used during the sessions.
3. Understanding the sample's readiness to receive the sessions and interact with them.
4. Distributing the components of each session according to their importance and duration relative to the total session time.

2.6 Complex Offensive Skills Test:

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Test Name: Complex Offensive Skills Test.
Objective of the Test: To measure the level of complex skill performance (Receiving, Passing, Dribbling, and Shooting in handball).
Tools and Equipment: Regulation handball court – (5) handballs – (4) cones – Electronic stopwatch – Whistle – Recording form – (2) Video cameras (CASIO and Nikon, Chinese make) – (2) Camera tripods – (2) Circular hoops (1m diameter) – Metric measuring tape.
Test Description: A starting line is drawn in front of the circular hoop designated for the subject, at a distance of (1) m from it. Another circular hoop is placed where an assistant stands beside the subject's hoop, with a distance of 3m between the two hoops. Each hoop has a diameter of 1m. Four cones are placed vertically in front of the subject's hoop towards the goal, with the first cone 2m away from the hoop, and the last cone 3m away from the 9m line. The distance between each cone is 1.5m. A teammate acts as a defender standing between the 7m and 9m lines with raised hands. The assistant stands inside their designated hoop. Upon the starting signal, the subject runs to the middle of their hoop, and 5 medium overhead passes are exchanged between the assistant and the subject (receiving and passing). Then, the subject performs the dribbling skill between the cones. Upon completion, they take three steps to perform a jump shot from the 9m line. The total test distance is 11.5m, starting from the starting line to the 9m line.
Scoring Method:

- The scores for skill performance accuracy (skill performance evaluation) are calculated by 3 experts after video recording each player's performance. Each skill is granted a maximum of (5) points, and then the arithmetic mean of the three experts' evaluations is calculated.
- The total performance time is calculated from the moment of hearing the starting signal until the ball leaves the subject's hand when shooting at the goal.

2.6.1 Scientific Bases for the Complex Offensive Skills Test 1. Validity of the Test Test Validity Al-Zyoud and Olyan (1998) state that a test is considered valid when it is presented to specialized experts who judge that it adequately measures what it was designed to measure. Accordingly, the researcher designed a questionnaire distributed to a number of experts and specialists (10 experts) to obtain the percentage of expert agreement on the test's suitability. Thus, the researcher used face validity, which obtained an agreement rate of (100%). 2. Reliability of the Test One of the characteristics of a successful test is reliability, which means "accuracy of measurement or consistency." To determine test reliability, the researcher used the test-retest method with a time interval of (7) days, applied to (5) players (the pilot study sample). After processing the results using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to find the correlation value between the two tests, the calculated value of (r) was (0.88), which is significant since it is greater than the tabulated (r) value of (0.44) at a significance level of (0.05) and degrees of freedom 20-2=18. 3. Objectivity of the Test Objectivity is achieved when there is freedom from any bias, prejudice, or inclination, and an absence of subjective, extraneous factors in the judgments made by the researcher. It represents the lack of variance among raters when evaluating something. Since the test is clear and understandable by the players, relies on measurement units (score and time), the test scores are characterized by clarity, there was no variance in the evaluation scores, and the correlation coefficient indicated high reliability, objectivity is thus achieved, indicating that the test utilized is highly objective.
Main Research Procedures:
1 Pre-test The pre-test for the constructs (Emotional Intelligence, Complex Skill Performance) was conducted on the research sample on Sunday and Monday, corresponding to 10-11/8/2025, respectively. The researcher took into account the temporal and spatial conditions for conducting the measurement. During the application of the measurement, care was taken to clarify and explain the items and the method of answering them, keep

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ISSN (E): 2942-9943

players separated from each other, emphasize to the players the necessity of accuracy in answering the scale items, and prohibit them from viewing others' answers.

2 Implementation of the Research Experiment The experimental group was subjected to the (Psychological Counseling Program). At the beginning of the meeting with the experimental group members, the researcher introduced the programs and their importance, noting that counseling programs aim to help the individual overcome their problems. Furthermore, the required commitments (rights and duties) from the experimental research sample were discussed. The sessions commenced on Sundays and Wednesdays of each week for the period from 17/8/2025 until 24/9/2025. The program application lasted for six weeks, with a frequency of two sessions per week and (45) minutes per single counseling session. The researcher relied on experts and specialists to manage the sessions in accordance with the sessions' titles and objectives.

3 Post-test: The post-test (Emotional Intelligence, Complex Skill Performance) was applied to both research groups (experimental and control) on Thursday, corresponding to 25/9/2025. The researcher ensured the same conditions under which the pre-test was conducted.

2. 7 Statistical Methods:

For the purpose of data collection and analysis, the authors used the SPSS V 26 comprehensive statistical package due to the ease of data analysis (Abdullateef AbdulJabbar et al., 2025; Fayyad et al., 2026; Khalaf et al., 2025).

4. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results

4.1 Presentation and Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Results for the Psychological Resilience Variable.

Table (3) Arithmetic means, standard deviations, mean differences, standard deviations of differences, calculated (t) value, and significance level for the research sample.

Tests	Unit of Measurement	Pre-test (M)	Pre-test (SD)	Post-test (M)	Post-test (SD)	Hypothesized Mean	Mean Diff.	SD of Diff.	Calculated t-value	Significance
Psychological Resilience	Score	128.39	9.05	156.24	12.78	138	37.90	15.37	11.78	Significant

Significant when the level of significance is less than the error rate of 0.05.

The table illustrates the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the pre- and post-tests of the Emotional Intelligence Scale among handball players in the research sample, as well as the hypothesized mean, mean differences, their standard deviations, the calculated (t) value, and the level of statistical significance. The results showed that the arithmetic mean for the pre-test was (128.39) points with a standard deviation of (9.05), a level reflecting a moderate degree of emotional intelligence among handball players prior to applying the psychological counseling program. Conversely, the arithmetic mean for the post-test reached (156.24) points with a standard deviation of (12.78), indicating a clear increase compared to the pre-test results, which suggests a notable development in the emotional intelligence level among the sample members after implementing the counseling program. Additionally, the hypothesized mean of the scale was (138) points, which is lower than the arithmetic mean of the post-test, demonstrating that the sample members exceeded the scale's average level after the program's application. Furthermore, the mean of the differences between the two tests was (37.90) with a standard deviation of the differences at (15.37) , while the calculated (t) value was (11.78). This value is greater than the tabulated value at a significance level of (0.05), indicating the presence of statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test in favor of the post-test. The

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researcher attributes this result to the effectiveness of the psychological counseling program in developing the emotional intelligence of handball players. Allawi (2002) states that psychological counseling programs contribute to developing skills in emotional awareness, regulation, and management in competitive situations, which helps athletes control their emotional responses and cope positively with the demands of sports competition (Hanin, 2000). This development can also be explained by the fact that the counseling program included a set of psychological techniques that assist players in understanding and effectively managing their own and others' emotions, forming the core of the emotional intelligence concept, which "is defined as the individual's ability to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions in a way that helps direct behavior and achieve optimal performance" (Goleman, 1995). In the field of sports, Rateb (2000) states: "Emotional intelligence is one of the key factors that help an athlete adapt to the psychological stress associated with sports competitions, since a player with a high level of emotional intelligence is better able to control anxiety, stress and negative emotions that can affect his performance in skills during competition" (Meyer & Fletcher, On the other hand, the development of players' emotional intelligence positively reflects the performance of complex skills under competitive pressure because emotional control helps the athlete to perform motor skills accurately and effectively, even in high-stress conditions during matches. The researcher considers that the increase in the level of emotional intelligence in handball players after the implementation of the counseling program is attributed to the program's reliance on various psychological methods, such as the development of emotional awareness, emotional control training, increased self-confidence, and the development of the ability to cope with competitive pressure. key elements to develop the psychological competence of athletes. Therefore, it can be concluded that the current results confirm the effectiveness of the psychological counseling program to develop emotional intelligence in handball players, as it acts as a critical factor to develop their ability to perform complex skills efficiently under competitive pressure conditions.

4.2 Presentation and Discussion of Pre-test and Post-test Results for the Complex Skill Performance Level Variable.

Table (4) shows the arithmetic means for pre and post-tests, mean differences, standard deviations of differences, and the (t) value for the complex skill performance level variable.

Tests	Unit of Measurement	Pre-test (M)	Pre-test (SD)	Post-test (M)	Post-test (SD)	Mean Diff.	SD of Diff.	Calculated t-value	Significance
Complex Skill Performance Level	Score/Sec	0.718	0.069	0.98	0.086	0.09	0.28	11.08	Significant

Significance occurs when the significance level is less than the error rate of 0.05.

Table (4) presents the values of the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the results of the tests before and after, the mean differences and their standard deviation, and the value of the double sample test (t) for the variable of the complex level of performance among players of handball clubs in the first division. The results reveal that the arithmetic mean in the pre-test was (0.718) degrees/second with a standard deviation of (0.069), while the arithmetic mean in the post-examination stage increased to (0.98) degrees/second with a standard deviation of (0.086). The results also showed that the mean difference between the two measurements was (0.09), while the standard deviation of the differences was (0.28). For the results of the double-sample test (t), the calculated value was (11.08), which exceeds the combined value at the significance level (0.05), indicating statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test tests in favor of the post-test. These results show a significant improvement in the level of complex performance of the sample members in

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the post-exam phase compared to the pre-exam test. In addition, the results indicate that the counseling program prepared by the researcher, which was carried out through structured sessions, had a positive impact on the development of the level of performance of complex skills among handball players. The researcher attributes this development to the fact that the counseling program included several axes and was not limited to the cognitive or counseling aspect. It has also contributed to improving psychological aspects related to sports performance, such as self-confidence, emotional regulation, attention and concentration and the ability to cope with competitive pressures, psychological factors intrinsically linked to the level of performance in team sports. The complex performance of the skill in handball requires a high degree of motor coordination, speed, and precision in the execution of a series of sequential skills such as receiving, passing, shooting, and moving without the ball—skills that are profoundly influenced by the player's psychological state. Allawi (2002) notes that "skill performance in the sports field does not solely rely on physical and skill capabilities but is heavily influenced by the athlete's psychological state and level of emotional stability, as emotional control and the ability to focus contribute to enhancing performance accuracy and speed". The improvement in complex skill performance among the sample can also be explained by the fact that the counseling program assisted players in developing focus and attention skills during performance, directly reflecting on the quality of executing complex skills during training and competition. Ratib (2000) mentions that "psychological training contributes to elevating skill performance efficiency by developing attention and focus skills, which helps the athlete execute motor skills with greater accuracy, especially in stressful competitive situations". On the other hand, this development dates back to the contribution of the mentoring program to reduce the anxiety and stress associated with sports competition, helping players to implement skills in a more fluid and stable way. A player with high levels of anxiety or stress often has difficulty controlling their movements during performance, resulting in a decrease in the accuracy of skill execution. In this context, Hamad (2012) points out that "psychological stability and the ability to control emotions are two essential factors that help an athlete achieve optimal performance in skills, because stress and negative emotions negatively affect the neuromuscular coordination necessary to implement athletic skills." Handball is a fast team sport that requires the implementation of multiple skills in a row in short periods of time, which makes it necessary for the player to have a high level of concentration and adaptation to the variables of the game. Throughout the game, the player is constantly faced with changing situations that require quick decisions and complex skills to be executed with great precision and effectiveness. Therefore, the development of psychological dimensions through counseling programs contributes to improving the player's ability to control their motor performance under conditions of competitive pressure. This is confirmed by Shimon and Ismail (2017), who stated that counselling programmes are "a conscious and continuous process and planned services aimed at developing the level of sports performance, developing the personal aspects of the player and the coach, strengthening the relationship between them, contributing to team cohesion and overcoming psychological pressures to achieve sporting achievements. Self-realization, harmony and mental health." Based on the above, the researcher confirms that the apparent improvement in post-test results reflects the effectiveness of the counseling program in developing the complex performance level among handball players. This occurs through its positive effect on psychological aspects associated with sports performance, such as psychological resilience, emotional regulation, concentration and attention. These results are consistent with the claims in the scientific literature in sports psychology that psychological preparation is an essential component of the athlete's overall preparation, and that the development of psychological skills directly contributes to improving performance levels in various sports.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

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5.1 Conclusions

1. The sports counselling programmed has proven effective in the development of emotional intelligence among handball players, reflecting the importance of scientific and psychological programmed in developing the psychological aspects of athletes.
2. The mentoring program has contributed to improving the complex performance level of the players, especially with regard to basic handball skills.
3. The development of the psychological aspects of the players has improved the level of concentration and regulation of emotions during performance, which has positively reflected the implementation of complex motor skills.
4. The results of the research confirmed the need to integrate psychological preparation into sports team training programs, given its role in supporting the integration between psychological fields and skills, as well as in improving levels of sports performance.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Adopting psychological counseling programs within the training regimens of sports teams due to their role in developing emotional intelligence and improving players' skill performance.
2. The necessity of focusing on psychological preparation alongside physical, technical, and tactical preparation in training handball players, given its impact on performance levels during competitions.
3. The importance of involving sports psychology specialists within clubs' coaching staffs to scientifically monitor and develop the players' psychological profiles.
4. Organizing training courses and workshops for coaches to introduce psychological counseling methods and the development of psychological skills among players.
5. Incorporating programs into annual training plans to develop essential psychological skills such as psychological resilience, self-confidence, focus, and emotional regulation.

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Appendix (1) Emotional Intelligence Scale

No.	Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	When I control my feelings, my performance is good.					
2	When I wrong my teammates, I am quick to apologize.					
3	I invest all my capabilities to strengthen relationships with my coach and teammates.					
4	I can clearly define the goal I am striving for.					

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5	When I act impulsively, I feel as if I am physically assaulting the opponent during the match.					
6	I feel uncomfortable when I hurt others' feelings.					
7	I feel optimistic despite the difficulty of the competition.					
8	I can provide suggestions that elevate the team's level.					
9	I can make quick decisions in critical situations.					
10	I confront those who provoke me calmly to resolve the conflict.					
11	I feel joy when meeting and training with the students.					
12	Despite frustration, I continue to perform my duties in the match.					
13	I listen with great attention to the advice of my coach and teammates.					
14	I desire to befriend a large number of students.					
15	I am attentive when participating in the match.					
16	I deal flexibly with others during the match.					
17	I appreciate others' feelings and emotions.					
18	I can overcome obstacles that hinder my achievement.					
19	I desire to provide help to my teammates to master a certain skill.					
20	I can discuss what I feel with myself and others.					
21	When I get angry, I hurt others' feelings in the match.					
22	I sense my teammates' feelings from their tone of voice.					
23	The audience increases my motivation to achieve better performance.					
24	I find it difficult to form a social and athletic relationship.					
25	I can distinguish my negative feelings from positive ones.					
26	I exhibit patience and self-control in the match.					

Proximus Journal of Sports Science and Physical Education
Volume 3, Issue 03, March, 2026
https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
ISSN (E): 2942-9943

27	I show respect for the opposing team when they lose.					
28	The coach's dissatisfaction will not reduce my motivation in the match.					
29	I remain calm in my dealings with others.					
30	I control my emotions at the end of the match despite my team's loss.					
31	I have high confidence to face the opponent's actions in the match.					
32	I lean towards deep affection with my team.					
33	I am enthusiastic about achieving the best level for my team.					
34	I seek help from my coach to solve my problems.					
35	My self-confidence weakens in difficult matches.					
36	I have a strong influence in dialogues with others.					
37	I feel hope and ambition in achieving a win for my team.					
38	I can adapt to social situations.					
39	I can stop negative thoughts that trigger my emotions.					
40	I face the audience's excitement with high morale.					
41	I use numerous methods to resolve conflicts with my teammates.					
42	I accept the criticism of the coach and my teammates when I make a mistake.					
43	I can express the opinions of my teammates and lead them towards achieving their goals.					
44	Emotional control contributes to my team's victory.					
45	I work on absorbing others' anger when they are agitated.					
46	I can switch a negative state to a positive one during the match.					

Appendix (2) The Psychological Counseling Program

No.	Session Title	Session Objectives	Activities
1	Acquaintance and Building the Counseling Relationship	• Breaking the ice and building trust between the counselor and players.	• Acquaintance exercise (each player states their name and athletic ambition).

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https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
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		• Clarifying the program's objectives and session rules.	• Discussing players' expectations of the program. • Setting session rules (commitment – confidentiality – mutual respect).
2	Psychological Preparation and Building Awareness of Athletic Emotional Intelligence	• Acquaintance and building trust between the researcher and players. • Introducing the concept of emotional intelligence and its importance in athletic performance. • Elevating motivation to participate in the program.	• Open group discussion. • Players' expectations exercise. • Presenting realistic sports situations and analyzing them emotionally.
3	Self-Emotional Perception and its Role in Performance Readiness	• Assisting the player in recognizing their feelings before and during the competition. • Linking emotional state to performance level.	• Pre-training feelings log. • Exercise to identify bodily signals of emotion. • Emotional state rating scale.
4	Analyzing Emotional Responses in Competitive Situations	• Identifying stressful situations in the match. • Understanding individual emotional response patterns.	• Role-playing stressful game situations. • Video analysis of competitive situations. • Discussing players' experiences.
5	Emotional Regulation Strategies under Competitive Pressure	• Learning to control anxiety and tension. • Reducing over-arousal during competition.	• Deep breathing exercises. • Progressive muscle relaxation. • Training on stopping negative thoughts.
6	Emotional Control and Rapid Skill Decision-Making	• Reducing emotional impulsivity during play. • Improving skill decision speed.	• Fast game situations with pressure stimuli. • "Stop-Think-Act" exercise. • Decision-making games.
7	Cognitive Restructuring of Performance-Hindering Thoughts	• Modifying performance-inhibiting thoughts. • Developing positive self-talk.	• Self-talk training. • Exposing automatic negative thoughts. • Replacing them with positive statements.
8	Activating Emotional Motivation to Achieve Athletic Accomplishment	• Enhancing internal drive. • Linking positive emotion to skill achievement.	• Setting short-term personal goals. • Recalling previous success experiences.

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https://proximusjournal.com/index.php/PJSSPE
ISSN (E): 2942-9943

			• Mental imagery exercise for success.
9	Managing Attention and Focus under Stressful Conditions	• Reducing mental distraction. • Improving focus during complex performance.	• Attentional focus exercises. • Key words exercise. • Skill performance with intentional distractors.
10	Social Intelligence and Enhancing Team Psychological Cohesion	• Developing empathy among players. • Enhancing group harmony.	• Cooperative group games. • Role-swapping within the team. • Discussing sports conflict situations.
11	Integrating Emotional Intelligence with Complex Skill Performance	• Improving verbal and non-verbal communication. • Reducing misunderstandings during play.	• Role-playing communication situations in the match. • Sports body language training. • Group feedback.
12	Final Evaluation and Enhancing Continuity	• Evaluating achieved program objectives. • Strengthening commitment to pursue ambitions post-program.	• Individual discussion: What have you learned from the program? • Group exercise: Letter to the "Future Self". • Distributing a booklet/paper summarizing acquired key skills.