



Effect of challenged negative self-talk on the performance of clay novice and expert tennis players

Oral Presentation

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Abstract

Introduction: Self-talk broadly is defined as a dialogue in which an individual interprets feelings and perceptions, regulates and changes evaluations and convictions, and gives themselves instructions and reinforcement. There are various categories of self-talk as educational, motivational, positive, neutral, and negative (Barwood, 2015). The effect of self-talk on performance has been examined in many studies before; however, challenged self-talk in a competitive situation is the one that has not been investigated in any studies before (Dewolf, et al., 2020). There are mixed results regarding the performance effects of negative self-talk. An interesting consideration is that negative self-talk may not have to be replaced to improve performance (Nedergaard et al., 2021). The purpose of the present study was to determine if negative self-talk can improve performance when interpreted as a challenge.

Methods: Participants (N = 40) completed a period of self-talk and skills set training for ten sessions and were randomized into experiment group (i.e., challenging self-talk) and control group. During a subsequent session, participants attended their previously scheduled match and were video recorded, and their won rollies were also noted. In the pre-test (first competition), the won rollies were measured in both groups. The experimental group performed ten sessions of self-talk exercises, and the control group had only physical activities; after the intervention, the post-test (second competition) was performed. One-variable covariance analysis was used to analyze the data.

Results: The results revealed a significant group-by-time interaction effect. The challenging self-talk group significantly outperformed the control group in the number of gained scores and won rollies.

Conclusion: Overall, these results provide initial support for implementing challenging self-talk and suggest that novice athletes' performance excels more than expert athletes when applying challenged negative self-talk.

Keywords

Self-talk; tennis players; performance; athlete

Reference:

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