

Mental Condition Evaluation Sheet with Relation to Burnout for Soccer Players (MCESB-S)

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DESCRIPTION

In soccer coaching, monitoring stress experienced by athletes is considered vital for their psychological and physical well-being. Athletes are under substantial stress and pressure to be successful, and if the stress situation becomes excessive over a long period of time, they may fall into symptoms such as burnout. A widely acknowledged definition has stated that athlete burnout is a multidimensional syndrome comprised of three core dimensions: Physical and emotional exhaustion, sport devaluation, and a sense of reduced accomplishment [1]. The first dimension, physical and emotional exhaustion refers to the feeling of exhaustion during training or intense competition. The second dimension, sport devaluation relates to a perception of diminished interest in or resentment toward the athlete's own performance and the sport. The third dimension, reduced accomplishment refers to when athletes feel they can no longer perform as they used to and commonly relates to a devaluation of their performance or a lack of interest in participating in the sport.

Hill, et al. focused on burnout in elite junior soccer players and concluded that such athletes may also be vulnerable to burnout. As an example, they noted that because many football associations are committed to spending some of their TV revenue funding on developing young athletes into professional players, there has been a growth in the number of soccer academies.

However, because only a few of these young academy players will go on to achieve professional status, they are under substantial pressure to be successful which could lead to the development of burnout in some players [2].

Tabei, et al. found that burnout was a severe concern in Japanese soccer. A cross-cultural comparison of burnout between Japanese and English collegiate soccer players found that burnout risk in Japanese athletes was significantly higher as 33% of the Japanese participants were at risk of burnout compared to 12% of the English participants.

It has been suggested that when athletes experience burnout, they are at risk for decreased motivation, withdrawal from the

sport, decreased performance, and decreased recovery from training fatigue, injury, and decreased self-confidence.

Athletes' moods can also change significantly and they may become unapproachable, causing conflicts with teammates [3].

To prevent burnout, Tabei, et al. insisted the importance of assessing athletes' early signs and symptoms of burnout on a regular basis throughout the competitive season.

Quantitative questionnaires have been the commonly used measurement method in burnout research. To measure Raedeke's conceptual framework, the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ), a self-reported questionnaire aimed to measure the three burnout dimensions has been widely used. Cresswell, et al. believed an understanding of early burnout signs could encourage proactive preventative approaches to lower burnout prevalence.

In 2004, they developed the Potential Early Signs (PES) questionnaire to investigate the relationship between the level of burnout and perceptions of early signs. In some cases, questionnaires with small number of question items are required. For instance, when conducting a research in coaching situation, cognitive load, time and space to fill out the questionnaires can be a limitation. For achieving high data collection rate, it seems necessary to minimize the burden on the participants.

In most research of soccer, the off-season period appeared to be avoided due to team and athlete circumstances. In other words, there are only a limited number of studies that regularly evaluate and report the psychological state of athletes during the game season [4].

Tabei, et al. developed a self-reported questionnaire, the Mental Condition Evaluation Sheet with relation to Burnout for Soccer players (MCESB-S) to combat this challenge [5]. The sheet comprised of 15 items measures athletes' mental condition index (Total Mental Condition: TMC), and the TMC indicates burnout related mental condition (Figure 1).

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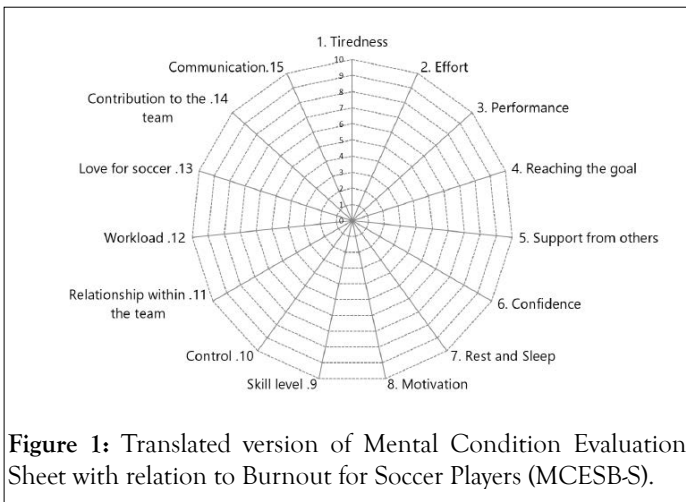


Figure 1: Translated version of Mental Condition Evaluation Sheet with relation to Burnout for Soccer Players (MCESB-S).

It has a shape of a radar chart so that when providing feedback to players and coaches, they can visually understand the changes and balance of their mental condition. Tabei, et al. reported acceptable internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. One of the noticeable features of the MCESB-S is that it enables to evaluate athletes' mental conditions using comprehensive single items, and this allows for a short response time of only one to two minutes. This would minimize the burden on the team and athletes, and allow for more regular implementation. Moreover, it is possible to monitor the mental condition and collect them on the pitch before or after practice. This implies that coaches can evaluate and manage not only the technical and physical aspects of their players, but also the psychological aspects, which will help them to improve their mental condition and avoid collapse.

Another highlighting feature of MCESB-S is that TMC measured in the sheet is physiological evidence based. In recent years, it has been argued that it is difficult to accurately assess the stress state of athletes using subjective psychological

indicators alone. Cortisol, one of the stress hormones secreted in saliva, has been attracting attention as an objective physiological indicator of stress. It has physiological effects on the immune system, the vascular system, and the central nervous system, making it an important hormone in the study of psychological and physical health. In the study of competitive sport, the measurement of Cortisol Awakening Response (CAR) is also considered to be valid as an assessment of the stress state of athletes. Tabei, et al. revealed the fact that TMC and CAR change in tandem during a competitive season, and this suggests the effectiveness of MCESB-S to assess the athletes' stress condition from subjective and objective indicators. Using MCESB-S in soccer coaching, it became easier to notice changes in players' mental conditions and to manage their mental conditions. In addition to preventing burnout, it can also be considered as one of the factors that improve the performance of individual players and teams.

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