

**Course Name: Sports Psychology**

**Professor Name: Priyanka Prabhakar**

**Department Name: Humanities and Social Sciences**

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## INTEGRATED APPROACH TO INJURY- A DISCUSSION

Hello everyone, in this particular section we are going to have 3 discussions. So one discussion is with Dr. Chaitanya Shridhar. She is going to give us expert psychological strategies which could actually be used by athletes. And we are also going to look at from her experience what are the psychological issues and how have athletes actually coped better with the challenges. And in the second discussion, we are also going to have Santosh who is a coach from the Golden Ace Shooting Academy.

He is the founder and chief coach at Golden Ace Shooting Academy. And he is going to give us his inputs in terms of how athletes actually manage their injuries better. And the third part of the discussion we are going to have Dr. Ameya Kagali who is a consultant sport and exercise medicine doctor.

And he is actually going to give inputs in terms of what actually athletes could do in order to take care of their injuries better. So hopefully this is going to be a great learning experience for all of you because we are looking at every stakeholder and every person who actually supports the athlete in the injury talk about their perspectives.

Hello everyone. Today we are going to be discussing the psychology of injury. So Ms. Priyanka and I will both be having this conversation. So hi Priyanka. Hello ma'am. Hi. So let us begin a little with a recent athlete that, you know, you probably worked with who is just coming back to what we call RTP, right return to play.

So and , you know, how were you able to help or was this athlete actually employing mental skills while returning back, , you know , to play. So let us begin with that. Yes I think this particular athlete has been using certain skills which could be useful. Like for example, one thing that we saw and observed in the session was why he is getting frequently injured. Right.

The reason that we came about was that he has been feeling extremely lonely and somewhere he has been getting a lot of support from the medical team. And yeah and we had to really look at how he can incorporate social support in his everyday life. Right. Because he is over relying on others for his own support. Yeah, and I like this example that we started with, because I think for the audience and , you know, for those taking the course, it is very important to realize that every single athlete and every person who is injured wants to recoup. But what we also need to remember is there are unconscious factors which are playing and that is the example which was spoken about and I think that is a brilliant example that and kudos that you all were actually able to identify.

So it is basically a sabotage which we will come back to a little later in the discussion, right. So that is brilliant and , you know, I think something that I have seen is athletes do not make that effort to connect. Let us say, , you know , it does not necessarily have to be a psychologist. If you go to a psychologist, great, but get some support because that is the example you are talking about.

Yeah. And also of late there is a lot more support like I know , you know, it is one of the bitter really bittersweet memories that I have from my career, , you know, , I was collecting during my PhD. I was collecting data and there was one of these so it was from a first class cricketers in Australia. And I got this , you know, it is in my inventory and he said I am so glad you are doing this because it is so essential to, you know, be able to speak about such things and, , you know , “thank you for doing what you are doing” and , you know, he was recouping from an injury and , you know, , it was a weekend, I remember and it had come in my mail and I opened it and so, then I went to tell my supervisor and he is like, “didn't you hear in the news? this guy had a massive heart attack.”

When things are going well we have been discussing this in a lot of , you know, the units that we are talking about there are a lot of people to support and going by your own example of the support right it is very very vital to support an athlete in this phase because it is not just a physical injury right? like let us look at some of what happens to an individual mentally I know I can talk about it myself but , you know, emotionally, there are lot of challenges because for an athlete , you know, they are so physical, they are so into training, they are so busy in a good way , you know, and basically you are so fit and then you are restricted, especially, let us say after an injury or a surgery. So yeah, so let us delve into that. I mean you have had surgery yourself so I am thinking. I knew you were going to say that.

I know that, I mean, it has been a challenge right in terms of coming back and , you know, making your comeback in terms of doing things that you could normally do without the knee injury. So how have you coped? like what are the strategies you have personally used? It is like the psych getting quizzed about. So yeah, I think , you know, thank you for that and , you know, it really is a tedious task. It is like, I think I am just around 5 months after my surgery and , you know, I am letting go of this stick. So I think, what I have learnt and I remember , you know, when they told me about surgery.

It does not hit you till , you know, post surgery actually because surgery is really the first step and then you realize how dependent you are, how stuck you are, how emotionally vulnerable you are and most importantly you are not able to do a lot of things at least for one month. And I think your support system plays an extremely important role and , you know, I have to mention Dr. Chirag Thonse because , you know, he was my surgeon, one of the leading surgeons in the country. And , you know, when I fell down, right, obviously I was not thinking it was this bad, like, that is the hope we all have right. And then of course then we knew it was a surgery but I very clearly recalled till date he said, “okay fine , you know, you are going to be starting after 2 months , you know, partial weight bearing, after 3 months , you know, full weight bearing and in 4 months” , you know, or whatever he gave me that timeline and that is what I focused on.

And then of course , you know, it is based on your union as well and there was a little bit of delay in my whole process but , you know, like we talk about the process right? Like, here the end also becomes very important because I am looking at okay I am going to start walking because , you know, you are on a crutch, you are on a walker and trust me Priyanka , you know, there have been days when I am like, I remember, they told me you can get off , you know, a crutch and walking stick in like I think 2 weeks and in 4 weeks leave everything. I asked the doc, the team, I said “are you sure?” because I really wasn't able to see and I think and then , you know, I had put down so , you know, how we talk so much about visualization and putting out the intent, so I always keep these taglines and I till date remember I had put it down like , you know, from today you can like stop the braces , you know, and then the date when to let go and that was the day I actually, took my baby steps though it was , you know, to an outsider it looks pretty bad. So I think, emotionally, you really need to also process. I would say whole space for everything you are feeling , you know, maybe sometimes you really can't, people around you supporting can't, and I think it becomes very vital to have that , you know, talk to a therapist, talk to your analyst and also go! Your physio has to happen. It's immensely painful but then , you know, why you are doing it? And I think that , you know, I mean thankfully being in sport I really had a lot of support from , you know, like I remember my JSW doctor telling “everything you start ma'am , you know, it's always going to be difficult.”

So , you know, and he is like and that's how your first year is going to be so , you know, like now I'm doing steps right? and I remember I had to hold both ends in the beginning and now I can actually let go of both. I just need a little. So , you know, it's these small victories, small journeys and when I could stand ,I mean, I probably looked really bad, but I remember telling everyone and putting it up because it's these victories you celebrate. Yeah absolutely. It's very essential. Yeah.

And I think on that note I think , you know, I'd also like to focus upon athletes who don't seek help, athletes who , you know, don't process and , you know, what do you feel about them? This is a very interesting question because if I have to look at it from a psychologist standpoint, I think that will have an impact on the other areas of life to a very large extent, right? I mean there can be frequent reinjuries or , you know, it can have an impact probably in the

relationships that they share with other people, or maybe in the work or in the educational aspect. So maybe, I would, I mean it will have to come out one or the other way.

Yeah you're right, you're right. I remember working with one of these young athletes, it was not the academy I consulted, you know, it was someone from outside and he was so resistant and , you know, and I was also suspecting an underlying depression over there. And , you know, I was feeling so bad that I know this and , you know, it's a really tough space he's in but , you know, he would give me mono syllables. "I'm okay", "Oh , you know, you have to make sense of it, You have to." So it took a while and somehow slowly made some progress because like you're saying, you know, sometimes the injury takes longer , you know, it's with best intentions it's also very dependent on you.

As in not just your rehab process, but also how your body recoups and I think it's essential for athletes to really at that point go, "yes, I will come back but I need to give myself that time to recoup." Yeah absolutely. It's very essential. I remember one of these younger guys who got injured , you know, he was lifting and the weights had fallen on him. He's ignored it and gone on. And that resulted in him actually getting injured more badly. Oh okay. And I asked him, I said, "you need to respect your body , you know, we're in sport right? If you don't respect your body, how's it going to happen?" Absolutely, I agree with you. Yeah yeah.

Shall we look at some of the self sabotaging that , you know, we see especially or we tend to hear a lot with the injury. The first that comes to my mind is , you know, this tagline or the storyline of "I don't deserve." Yeah, absolutely. I remember this one particular athlete, who used to get injured right before the competition. Yeah yeah. And the more you look at it, it's either because "I am not good enough, I'm not deserving of this particular thing which is actually happening to me." Absolutely yeah! And I think you have some other fears that you will talk about, right. Yeah yeah.

You know, in fact I wanted to give one example. It was a very young , you know, state cricketer and right before, every time what you're saying , you know, my heart would break every time before competition and he would be bowling so well. And at certain times it's also

been freak injuries, you know, if I may use that word. Like there was this one time where he was fisting, he was , you know, fighting with his brother and he ended up , you know, a brother being a little heavy, ended up on him and he broke his back. Oh God, okay. And , you know, and that was when I was like, and this boy had , you know, a little bit of unconscious , you know, some things which had happened in , you know, teenage and in life, like “I don't deserve.” So , you know, it's really a prime example of that.

Also what about fear of failure? Absolutely, I think that the stress and , you know, those fears can be so intense that the focus cannot be on the process and it can be so much on the emotional intensity that athletes are actually facing.

Yeah, yeah, and here I would also wonder if , you know, this athlete is a little on the anxious side that we normally tend to see and also is this coming from the , you know, your circle, your network, support network. Sometimes knowingly, unknowingly, it really is coming, like, when we see athletes sometimes you can trace where in the family, especially, with younger athletes , you know, is this coming from which parent and , you know, so fear of failure. I want to give this one example, okay, because there was this young boy, he injured himself, once it was his ankle and then he was so like, “oh my god what's going to happen , you know, the tournament's coming” and then this is how and when he returned there was this really big stone he didn't see because he was so much, he tripped ,again re-injured. So , you know, and I think to really work through, listen yes, the injury is happening but somewhere you're contributing, to begin. I think that really is the work this discussion really is for , you know, people to really look at where, not consciously, okay, but unconsciously where is this coming about? And I think , you know, the other one which would come as a surprise is, fear of success. I know every time , you know, I say this it's like even , you know, for like , you know, at talks people really go, “really?” So yeah, fear of success as well.

Absolutely, because I think, again the focus is not on the process and it's always on, “oh okay! I'll get this kind of attention”, “will I live up to that particular attention” , you know, “will I be able to make it bigger than what I am doing?” “Everybody else is going to expect so much more from me.” Yeah and “can I cope with it?”, right, because a leadership role , you know, a

captain's role, a leadership role or , you know, comes with a lot more. So , you know, and I think somewhere this would also be connected to “am I good enough?” so , you know, there's going to be , you know, we always say it's like you look at a tree , you know, you see this beautiful flower, you see these beautiful fruits, but I think also when what we need to get into is the roots of what's actually happening. So once that core is identified, right, then we see the blooming.

Right. so that's very very essential and I wanted to , you know, this question of how sometimes athletes push themselves with pain. yeah so , you know, let's maybe , you know, that's a good way to wrap up this discussion. What do you feel about it? Yeah, I've seen a lot of athletes , you know, maybe they have niggling pain or sometimes , you know, in the major competitions they have to play through the injuries, so it's something that happens to a very large extent like , you know, I'm also wondering what do you think can be the psychological strategies that people can use? because , you know, nothing else that they can do but to play right? You know, I remember this, it was during Khelo India and one of these boys, he was in his peak, he was one of these , you know, very young athletes and he was just, I think few days before, and he was training and on the track there was this kid, I don't know from where and he's like this kid is going to get injured, so he went and he's running in speed, so obviously he's training, so he saved, put that child, but then he I think he ended up hitting himself somewhere okay and then he had to get admitted and and then it was okay it wasn't bad. And , you know, he went and he actually won that race and what he told me was , you know, he said , “you know, ma'am? I was listening to something and then , you know, it said that when you can't use your mind and , you know, you're in and your body is not in its best, use your heart.” Wow. so , you know, it's like “I ran with my heart” , you know, it's like boxers in boxing, they say, “dil se khela” that means , you know, they fought really well or “dil se nahi khela” and I know I love that example. I just love what he said because that's really what it is, no? you somewhere have to go, you have to dissociate from that , you know, like we talk about processing, but like at the competition or at certain points you have to dissociate , you know, so I think definitely , you know, dissociation and focusing on something which can get your energy and get you to your center. I think that would really be one of the ways, is definitely what , you know, and I think and if you ask me, myself, like I know I have the habit of listening to certain music or , you know, certain rituals

and then I go , you know, “why am I doing this?” “What am I doing this?” and , you know, you have to have some cue which shifts you from that pain mode to another mode. so , you know, yeah I would say that was absolutely beautiful. yeah. yeah I think that was a wonderful example, right?

Is there anything else you would want to add or say in this section? No, I think. Good.

Yeah, I hope you all got an idea of , you know, injury; as physical as it is, it's also very important to know there's a lot of emotions involved with it. It is important to process and then returning to play, get ready , you know, and of course , you know, Priyanka's chunk has addressed the rest of it. It's like , you know, your goals have to go slow and end the whole process and also figuring that as I return, my mind needs to shift from injury to RTP, to competition.

I want to give this final example, this is one of our , you know, young boxers who's doing very well. I remember , you know, and any athlete for that matter , you know, so I think she had injured her right, if I'm not sure and , you know, so what we tend to do is not use the right. So , you know, the physios would say she's using more of her left but her right is dominant and this is something which happens so , you know, something that I actually do with athletes is; now what's your story? Start looking at what's your next competition? For me. I'm like where's my next travel? What is my next assignment? so to start looking forward to that so you turn the page and that chapter is over and begin a new chapter.

We hope you enjoyed this discussion. Thank you so much.

Hello everyone, today we have with us, Santosh whom you have already met. He is the chief coach and also the founder of Golden Ace Shooting Academy. My question to you Santosh is , you know, you might have met a lot of athletes, you come across a lot of athletes who have been injured. As a coach, what kind of support will the athletes require? Whenever an athlete goes through an injury, right, it's an unfortunate situation that has occurred so nobody is expecting this kind of situation and first thing, first and foremost immediately, assess what is

going to be the impact of this injury in the entire calendar year. Right, that's the first assessment we need to make. Yeah, so, if it's a small injury then, you know, we can work around things and try to get the athlete to recover very fast or if it's a longer injury which is very, it's going to take a longer time so it becomes very important for the athlete. Now to the coach, now to keep the athlete in a very good mental state, yeah, so staying in touch with the athlete during this injury phase eases the burden on the athlete. So if the coach is completely cut off then it becomes very difficult for him to come back. So let's say, you know, call every alternate day and say, "how are you?", "how are you doing today?", "Listen this is what was happening in training, some funny incident happened.." So discuss that and it lightens up the mood and it, you know, it as though gives a feeling to that athlete that he still belongs in the game right? This coach is still trusting him to come back, you know, gives that sense of belongingness and getting the athlete to the venue at times, you know, sit and watch others, what others are doing, you know, discuss it and discuss with the athlete that; okay see this is what i'm doing as coach, you have a look at it. So that means you are giving the athlete an outside perspective now suddenly. Now he can't play the game but he can sit and analyze the game so you can see others do it and, you know, certain sometimes, maybe pick up some good things up from the what others are doing or maybe pick up a weakness from the opponent. So basically he's not playing the game but he's still playing it. Still playing in the mind so, you know, keeping him in the game in mentally is one of the bigger tasks and second is recovery.

Recovery always depends on fitness both mental as well as physical fitness. So, keeping an athlete physically fit throughout the year helps recovery faster, whenever injury happens. So, ensure your athletes are always top of their fitness because recovery happens much faster. so that's straight forward. And, you know, stop seeing limitations, you know, when the moment, some injuries happen, the athlete first thing they want, first thing they want to do is to see limitations; "what i can't do." So the coach can give the perspective into okay it's an injury it's just a, you know, road hump or a small block in the road. We will slowly proceed but we'll certainly reach our destination and also ensure that, you know, if possible. It's difficult for coaches to follow up, especially with the injured athletes because if the coaching tasks are very high, the requirement is very high. That is what I'm thinking because performance is a priority somewhere and then, you know, how can a coach balance between these two things?

It becomes a little difficult. A lot of effort is also required. A lot of effort, a lot of effort. So now when i say injury; injury not necessarily be something breaking or something damaging, right? Somebody might have suddenly, you know, sciatica issue , you know, where the hip takes the whole load suddenly the whole shift bearing shift , you know, load shifts or it could be something internal, right? Infections, a lot of athletes go through , you know, they suffer from a lot of infections and because of these infections they are unable to give their 100 percent in the game. It's painful. There's a lot of pain and there is , you know, a lot of aches every time they try and there's a lot of weakness, they are unable to become fit and they're unable to give 100 percent in the sport because of infections also. So we don't know what exactly it is, so at all times try to keep a lively environment around the athlete, you will give them positives and show them what is their potential and always discuss about future roadmap. That's what i've done with injured athletes, most of the time i just discuss with them , you know, okay next if the next 12 months we're getting clean , you know, without any health issues, without any problems, this is what we can achieve. So, is it better to get your surgery done right now? or get the surgery done later. So, we discuss things. Be more involved in the injury process. So sometimes we postpone certain , you know, surgeries, sometimes we've taken calls in terms of, we have to get it done right now because the season, the next season is what we are targeting. So the coach being clear in terms of what he can get out of the athlete helps planning this injury downtime better.

And the other question is, what kind of , you know, what do you expect from the athletes also , you know, to keep in mind especially when they're injured, what kind of responsibilities do they have to take? Don't get into bad habits, straightforward. One is don't become extremely lazy, right? Don't start binge watching things, don't go out with friends; smoking, drinking, is something you could avoid. Don't make it a habit , you know, just because you're feeling very low don't make it an excuse to do things, wrong things.

Yeah yeah right. So athletes, that's what they do , you know, just because they're feeling bad they end up doing even worse things to feel better. You will never feel better out of these things. So the first responsibility is to take care of yourself. As an athlete, take care of yourself. See, also as an athlete it's athletes responsibility to bring the best out of the coach, not only the

coach's responsibility to bring the best out of the athletes, right? if you imagine, if 10 athletes are going to torture mentally, the coach, every day, right, put up a very sad face, every day he's not going to be in his top shape. It's gonna affect the mental health of the coach to a very large extent. So it becomes very important for athletes also to remember that, you know, "I need to bring the best out of my coach", "I need my coach to be on top of his game when I want him". It means I will put, I will take all those decisions today, tough decisions today, which is going to help me, help my coach coach me better.

So whatever coach wants or what is even sometimes unsaid, it's athletes responsibility to take care of themselves in these aspects especially when it comes to friends and, you know, these days what I'm seeing, the major challenges for athletes is they think that, you know, going for odd movie is not a problem going for. let's say a party, someday sleeping late is not a problem; one day or two days, just a week, I'm off. So it's okay. Just a month, I'm off, it's okay. So it piles up, right, these things pile up. So that is a good indicator if you've been doing that. It's important to cut back on that, cut back immediately on that. It's squarely simple. When you go ask your friends how many of you want to win an olympic medal, if nine out of ten around you say, "yes, I want to win an olympic medal you're in the right group. If nine out of ten in that group say, "I don't want to win an olympic medal", you're obviously in the wrong group. Or it's quite it's easy to understand that whatever they are doing you cannot do, because goals are not aligned so, you know, if you are also partying if you are also, you know, spending more time with friends than in the game itself then obviously it is going to get affected sooner or later. Or, your expectation of winning an olympic medal might not be able to, you might not be able to reach it because the efforts are not matching up. Yeah, absolutely. That's the challenge.

So thank you so much, Santosh. I think this is going to help a lot of athletes who would want to come back to the sport and, you know, achieve their goals. With this we've finished the discussion with Santosh. Hope you all have had a great learning, you know, from this particular discussion. Thank you.

Hello, I'm Dr. Ameya Kagali and I am a sports medicine consultant at Ramaiah Memorial Hospital, Bangalore, and a few other places in the city itself, I have been asked this question

regarding sports medicine and injury and how it is , you know, related. So coming to something like a first responder or when there's a collision or something happening on sporting field, the first responder obviously would like to be a doctor but if it's not there then any paramedical staff, be it the physiotherapist, nurse, or well-trained nurse, or even an experienced coach, sometimes can attend it, to the athlete. But I'm a little skeptical of non-medical people getting involved because they have their own theories and own experiences, for example, if there's something like an ankle twist or an ankle sprain and I've seen , you know, people just go and make the situation bad to worse. So ideally, sometimes not doing anything is the best thing that one can do. So yeah, it's better that a medical person is there but if it's not there then it's just too bad. An event of high intensity should not be held if there is no medical person around or if there is any untoward incident it has to be taken to the nearby hospital or any PHC or any health care training center.

Then the second question, what was there is, how does one define a difference between a soreness and fatigue or an injury, as such. The short answer is the duration. But, I'm just oversimplifying it, so please don't quote me on this. But generally, a soreness is after a high intensity or even a moderate intensity or something new or the athlete is coming back after a non-competitive phase of training, and then he's slowly gradually building up pace and loading, so that is the time where , you know, he or she might face issues related to soreness. But if that soreness persists and there's no active recovery and passive recovery happening during the post session period for a longer time and for a longer time, again, is very subjective. The larger muscles need larger time to recover, the smaller muscles need that much less. So it's a fine line and it all depends on the history, the workload of the athlete, the recovery period, and only then we can conclude; “oh this might not be soreness and this can be something else.. and may lead to this thing..” So one must understand that fatigue and gaining, attaining fatigue is not a bad thing at all. In fact, the body needs it. If the body doesn't fatigue or has this mild sore, that means you can continue, go on, go on until breaking point and then you break. Right, so it's something called a negative feedback mechanism, where issues like fatigue are required but just that you have to see that you need to recover well also and you have to fatigue and you want to delay the fatigue. it's not that you don't want it, you want it, but at a later period of time. In other words, you're building stamina, right? so generally think about duration, if it's lasting for two to

three days, your athlete complains of pain in a particular area and , you know, not being 100 percent, then we need to investigate further but if the athlete is recovering and doing their daily tasks, day to day, i think , you know, you can just focus a little bit more on recovery and then , you know, be good.

The third aspect is, how do you say whether it's physical or psychological? Now it all depends on the level of athlete, the level of competition, the mental makeup of an athlete like , you know, it's not just for athletes, like us humans, lay people, it differs. like, my mindset, yours, we differ in the way we think, in the way we approach things, even if there's a situation A, there are maybe 10 different ways to look at it. So again, the same way, in athletes, it depends on where, which part of the competition is he on; is the selection tomorrow? I don't see athletes coming to me just a day prior to selection because , you know, they don't want to be deemed unfit and hence not selected, so that is one thing which they play. They carry through the pain and then if there's an important tournament coming up; a world cup or an olympic event. So even if they're carrying , you know, I'm not going to say very very serious, but enough that will nag and ache and , you know, may reduce the performance also that time they won't come. On the other side, is that if they have to , you know, it's an off season and there's compulsory training and the athletes are like “I don't want to do it”, so then that could be psychological.

So the longevity of the support staff with a particular athlete to understand the mindset and a detailed history and a good clinical examination, and if need me thereafter, the investigations, be it an x-ray, MRI or something, those all should collaborate and corroborate your evidence as such and then you get a final picture and then you can actually label it as physical or psychological.

I mean, again, as I said, it depends on the athlete; you can't have the same mental makeup of a 14 year old girl who's just starting off, and a 35 year old veteran who's played like 300 matches for India. Both know how their respective bodies behave differently. The experienced athlete obviously has , you know, seen those ups and downs and he knows or she knows what to do in that kind of phase and newer athlete may not be able to cope with that kind of pressure but that's what , you know, the whole sports science and sports medicine team is there for; to sensitize

these people and to make them understand how their body works or just not understand, make them more aware of their own body actually. I mean, I believe each individual is the best judge of his or her own body, we are just here to make people aware of them and maybe objectify some data.

With this I would I hope this helps you in your lecture series and thank you very much