

2024 OLYMPIC GAMES IN PARIS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL LOOK AT THE EVENTS

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Biles, a four-time gold medalist from the 2016 Rio Olympics, withdrew from the Tokyo 2020 games during her team's final performance due to a psychological issue, and is predicted to do well at the 2024 Paris Olympics, is an example of a well-known athlete who experiences this kind of effect on her performance. As the first female gymnast to ever land the hardest vault in Olympic history, Simone Biles solidified her place among the sport's greatest athletes. Nor was it the fact that she performed on Saturday as part of the 2024 Paris Olympics, dazzled audiences while creating history in custom diamanté Ralph Lauren, or that she managed to pull all of this off while also tending to a significant calf injury. Instead, the fact that Biles accomplished all of this in spite of her erratic mental state is what solidified her status as a celebrity. Biles stated that she believes it is crucial to look after her mental health in addition to her physical health. Another example is Kimberley Woods, who in the canoeing event at the Paris Games earned Team GB their third gold medal. Woods has been open about her long-term struggles with mental health and self-harm, having checked herself into a private mental health hospital twice and experiencing suicidal thoughts at her lowest points (May, 2024). At the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, athletes vying for medals at the highest levels of competition will have the chance to delve into a variety of sport psychology subjects. Here we highlight the psychological aspects of the Games that were critical to overall health and success.

Mental fortitude and Pressure Management, the first element-mental toughness and pressure management-is the most frequently required to achieve peak performance. Athletes are under tremendous pressure to perform well, from the

media, coaches, sponsors, and supporters, among others. Psychological stress can be accompanied by physical signs like perspiration, gastrointestinal problems, and elevated heart rate. Their concentration and performance may suffer as a result of tension and anxiety. Olympic athletes need to be able to handle pressure, show mental toughness, and maintain concentration. A variety of coping strategies were seen, emphasizing the need of mental preparation for achieving peak performance. These strategies included mindfulness, visualization, and pre-competition rituals. Anxiety levels are often found to rise in high-stakes events involving professional athletes. According to study, Olympic athletes, for example, frequently suffer elevated stress levels prior to and during their competitions, which may have an effect on their physiological and psychological states (Hanton, Neil, & Mellalieu, 2008).

Challenges with Mental Health: Athletes that answered interview questions or shared personal information talked about their struggles with burnout, anxiety, and despair. This feature emphasizes how important it is to address mental health concerns in high-level athletic environments in a proactive way. Anxiety and depression symptoms may worsen due to the extreme pressure and seclusion. During the Games, some competitors could deal with these ailments more candidly, asking for help or talking about their experiences in public. High-stakes play and demanding training regimens can cause burnout, which manifests as diminished performance, emotional tiredness, and a sense of disengagement from the sport. In 2018, Phelps opened out about the depth of his troubles in an interview with David Axelrod. He talked candidly about his struggles throughout his career with anxiety and despair. After the

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London 2012 Olympics, they reached a breaking point and resulted in suicide thoughts. I didn't want to be in the sport anymore, as Phelps put it. I had had enough of being alive. Phelps praised Biles' choice to withdraw from the Olympics and mentioned his own difficulties once more. "Like Simone mentioned, I felt like I had the entire world weighted on my shoulders. It's not an easy scenario. I'm hoping this will open your eyes. Michael Phelps' depression (CNN, 2018/01/19; <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/19/health/index.html>)

Coping Mechanisms and Psychological Readiness: It was evident that techniques including deep breathing, goal-setting, and cognitive restructuring were employed to deal with competition. These methods were very beneficial for lowering stress and enhancing performance. According to Dr. Lesyk, being successful in sports does not require one to be an Olympic champion or a professional athlete. It's also not necessary to win a state championship, have a room full of trophies, or appear on the sports section's main page. Successful athletes I've worked with include a high school golfer with a perfect handicap, an eleven-year-old figure skater who hasn't won a competition, a middle-aged runner who wants to finish her first marathon, a weightlifter who owns many world records, as well as an Olympian medalist. All of these athletes have one thing in common: they value their sport highly and are dedicated to achieving their full potential within the constraints of their inherent abilities, other obligations in their lives, money, and time. They practice hard and play hard, setting high but reasonable goals for themselves. They are successful because they are having fun with their sport and working toward their objectives. Their involvement in sports improves their life, and they feel that the benefits of their engagement outweigh the costs. A person's mindset is the first step toward success, along with eight others. These nine distinct mental skills are essential for success and should be developed from the outset of a sports career. The ability of athletes to control

their thoughts and emotions during competition is the primary and most crucial talent (<https://www.sportpsych.org/nine-mental-skills-overview>).

Support systems and team dynamics: It was discovered that key aspects of team interactions were effective communication, unity, and support. Good team dynamics and robust support systems significantly improved both individual and collective performance. Team cohesiveness and individual mental health may be impacted by internal conflicts or disagreements that occur in team sports. Such disagreements can have a big influence on performance when they are resolved. Notable moments can also occur when coaches and teammates offer outstanding assistance. Strong support networks and positive team dynamics have a significant impact on athletes' mental health. Along with athletes and coaches, sport scientists assist with team preparation and game day operations. There are support groups for athletes both inside and outside of their communities, such as American House, Japanese House, South African House, Thai House, and so forth (Sport Authority of Thailand, 2024).

Public criticism and Media Influence: The impact of media and public criticism on athletes' mental health was one of the central issues. The ability to maintain focus in the face of public expectations and resist media pressure was one of the key factors influencing the results. Stress can be increased by constant media attention, particularly if it's unfavorable coverage or if athletes feel like their every action is being watched closely. According to interviews and media coverage, a large amount of athletes' report experiencing anxiety and stress before to competition. Athletes who endure intense media attention and interviews may experience psychological stress as they manage their public personalities and the pressure to uphold a particular image. Conversely, media reports have the potential to enhance an athlete's performance.

Thus, it relies on how competitors have trained and used their preparation. The public and spectators are also greatly impacted by the

Olympics. Seeing athletes succeed and overcome adversity can be tremendously inspirational, spurring others to pursue their own objectives with newfound enthusiasm. It's important to recognize, though, that the pressure to match these achievements can occasionally have a negative impact on mental health, including stress and low self-esteem.

We can encourage spectators to enjoy the Olympics in a supportive and healthy manner by highlighting the value of mental health and advocating for a balanced perspective on success. The experiences of athletes who place a high priority on their mental health can act as potent reminders that mental well-being is essential to success in all endeavors. (<https://thethreeseas.com.au/pastoral-health-olympic-games-paris-2024>)

Recovering and Becoming Resilient after Setbacks: Recuperating and Building Resilience after Setbacks: The Games improved contestants' comprehension of how to recover from setbacks or injuries. The perseverance of athletes in overcoming setbacks and recovering form was a potent reminder of the importance of adaptable coping strategies and psychological recovery programs. Olympians are very good at training and recovering. These professional athletes have undergone years of rigorous training, thus there are differences in their ability to manage psychological stress. The speed at which athletes recover from setbacks and build resilience is a scientific indicator of their success (Chrétien, Hayotte, Vuillemin, & d'Arripe Longueville, 2024). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other sports organizations have taken major actions to promote athletes' mental health in recognition of these difficulties. Athletes can avail themselves of a range of mental health services and resources for Paris 2024, guaranteeing that they will receive the necessary support. These programs include workshops on stress management and resilience, on-site counselors, and hotlines for mental health. (<https://olympics.com/athlete365/articles/mentally-fit/ioc-mental-health-in-elite-athletes-toolkit-x3908>).

In conclusion, the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris can teach us a lot about the intricate relationships that exist between mental health, performance, and coping strategies. The results underscore the need of offering comprehensive psychological assistance to players and highlight the need for mental resilience, flexibility, and effective coping mechanisms to succeed at the top levels of professional sports.

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