

Abstract

The purpose of this research was twofold: first, to identify the sources of acute stress among Czech Elite Soccer Players (CESPs) by investigating their perceived intensity and appraisal direction and second, to investigate the psychological skill training (PST) methods used by Czech elite soccer players. “Stress Intensities, Appraisals and PST methods Questionnaire” was created under the conceptual framework of stress process concluded from literature review to serve the purpose. Total 83 players from 5 teams competing at Czech premier soccer league (Gambrinus liga) completed the questionnaire. The main findings from the questionnaire were: 1) All the pre-competition stressors which were perceived with high intensity were all appraised strongly positive; 2) Cheers from spectators was the major facilitative in-competition stressor while making a goal-relevant game error was the major debilitating one; 3) “Team dynamics” has profound influence on the appraisal direction of stressors; 4) Defenders tend to be more aroused by negative stressors while Forwards by positive ones; 5) Teams with higher performance level use PST methods more frequently and team’s strategies such as “Team’s goal setting”, “Coach’s pep talk” are more frequently used than individual ones. The results of the research were presented and discussed with the coaches and effective PST methods concluded from antecedent research were recommended. The experimental attempt to use questionnaire for investigation of sources of acute stress and usage of PST methods among CESPs was proved to be effective even though further modification was needed in order to complete the questionnaire with validity and reliability for research purpose in the future.

Key Words: Acute Stress, Stress Intensity, Appraisal, Arousal, Psychological Skill Training, Soccer, Elite Athlete