Introduction

Competitive anxiety is a construct where the symptoms of anxiety are separated into cognitive (worry) and somatic (physiological tension) components. Cognitive anxiety, the mental component of anxiety, derives from a negative expectation of success or from negative self-evaluation [1]. Alternatively, somatic anxiety, the physiological component is caused directly by stimulation or arousal of the autonomic systems [1]. The latter manifests itself via symptoms such as butterflies in the stomach, sweating, shakiness, and increased heart rate [2]. They reported that the third dimension of state anxiety is self-confidence. This is the realistic expectation of an athletes' personal ability to succeed [2].

Current literature indicates a multitude of experimental studies examining the efficacy of a number of psychological skills on performance, including relaxation, imagery, self-talk, goal setting, and concentration [3,4,5]. In contrast some studies have focused on a single psychological skill approach [6,7] while others have adopted multi-modal package approaches [8,9,10].

Psychological Skill Training (PST) is an individually designed combination of methods selected to attain psychological skill needs [8]. No single ideal PST package exists, as it must be tailored to the individual's psychological state and their sport. They highlight increased efficacy in employing a combination of mental skills related to the specific sport [9]. They further note that PST package efficacy is positive within sports of all nature. Interestingly, they reported a 10% improvement for men's artistic gymnastics on the bars, beam, and floor when compared to the control group. The PST package used by Thewell and Greenlees consisted of a five step intervention using relaxation, self talk, goal setting, focusing and visualization. Of these they found imagery and relaxation to be the most compelling methods utilized [9].

According to Taylor's conceptual framework, it could be argued that for the specific performance subcomponents (i.e., open-skill and closed-skill) examined within the present study, relaxation, imagery and self-talk skills would be beneficial [11]. Relaxation, predominantly in the form of progressive muscular relaxation and centering, appear appropriate for soccer on the premise that they are required to be at their optimal arousal state prior to and during performance [12]. Relaxation would also benefit focus during both good and poor performances, including when errors in perception and decision-making are made. Thus, relaxation strategies may enable performers to maintain appropriate levels of activation rather than experience rapid increases following errors.

Based on the review of the literature there is a need to identify the elements of mental practice most beneficial with specific sport performances. This type of research will give practitioners the knowledge and ability to pass on applied skills that are of direct use to athletes. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Psychological Skills Package on the performance of the closed skill and open skill in FUTSAL. This study also investigated whether Psychological Skills Packages assisted in maintaining the Multidimensional State Anxiety levels.