

## A Conceptual Analysis of Maltreatment/Mental Torture in Sports

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### ABSTRACT

Sports psychology, a quickly developing field, has earned overall respect since its commencement during the 1960s. Its essential goal is to bridle the psychological and emotional abilities of competitors to streamline their exhibition. However, in these games the world wrestles with the complex issue of maltreatment, which incorporates physical, sexual, mental maltreatment, disregard, and double-dealing, sustaining its presence as a critical issue. The pervasiveness paces of maltreatment in sports are disturbing, underscoring the earnestness of resolving this perplexing issue. This paper features the squeezing need to address the difficulties related with abuse, taking into account the individual outcomes as well as the harm caused for the donning local area's uprightness. Recognizing the perplexing elements of maltreatment in sports, it highlights the basic significance of making strong, conscious games conditions to relieve its unfavourable consequences for competitor prosperity and the more extensive games scene. This paper explores the hidden lives of athletes and the challenge of culture of silence. It focuses on the health and well-being of athletes and their ethical responsibilities and it also seeks to uncover the hidden world of abuse in sports community.

**Keywords:** *Sport Psychology, Maltreatment, Mental Health, Performance, Abuse in Sports*

Sport psychology is a relatively new discipline in the grand scale of things, yet it has experienced a rapid increase in global recognition since its inception in the 1960s, with the emergence of academic courses and content-specific publications, as well as expert governing systems. This rapid increase in recognition has been achieved both in terms of applied practice and academic objective (Mehta, 2022). Sports psychology is a specialized area of psychology that focuses on the development of athletes' mental capabilities and emotional health to enhance athletic performance. It encompasses various critical aspects, such as improving performance, increasing mental resilience, managing anxiety, setting goals, and improving team communication. Sports psychologists are well-equipped to work with athletes, coaches and athletic teams to provide the necessary guidance and mental strategies to help athletes reach their peak performance while maintaining optimal mental health.

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### *Maltreatment in sports*

Maltreatment in sport is a widespread phenomenon that manifests itself in a variety of relational forms, including physical, sexual and emotional maltreatment or neglect. Furthermore, maltreatment in sports is also present in non-relational forms, with a focus on mezzanine and macro forms of abuse, such as systematic and organizational maltreatment, as well as physiological abuse or neglect, such as exploitation and athlete trafficking. It is essential to investigate the consequences of maltreatment in sport, as athletes can be both victims and perpetrators of abuse (Gattis & Moore, 2022). Maltreatment in sports is a common occurrence that may take many different forms in relationships, including as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect. In addition, there are non-relational kinds of abuse in sports as well. These include physiological abuse or neglect, including exploitation and athlete trafficking, as well as meso and macro forms of abuse, like systemic and organisational mistreatment. Given that athletes may be both abuse victims and abusers, it is imperative to look at the effects of maltreatment in sports. The definition and specifics of maltreatment are complicated, and there is a lot of discussion about them in scholarly journals and in professional contexts. Maltreatment is hard to describe because of the differing definitional criteria (i.e., frequency or severity of the act, effects of the act, and the perpetrator's purpose). Because of this, labels like abuse, maltreatment, and neglect are applied to what may be a wide variety of behaviour (Kavanagh, 2014). Abuse is a multi-layered idea that envelops different hurtful activities, ways of behaving, or disregard coordinated towards people, frequently prompting physical, close to home, or mental mischief. It is portrayed by activities of abuse, mercilessness, or misuse, whether purposeful or unexpected, which bring about misery, injury, or unfriendly ramifications for the individual exposed to such ways of behaving. While looking at abuse, specific consideration ought to be given to its psychological and mental aspects. These perspectives dig into the significant and getting through mental impacts of abuse.

Abuse frequently includes close to home and mental maltreatment. This type of misuse involves activities that deliberately or accidentally incur profound pain, mental misery, or mental damage. Instances of such activities incorporate consistent putting down, embarrassment, control, and gas lighting. The drawn out mental repercussions may significantly influence a singular's confidence, close to home prosperity, and in general psychological well-being. One more huge aspect of abuse is mental torment, which involves the purposeful curse of close to home agony and mental affliction. Gas lighting, a manipulative strategy that misshapes a singular's view of the truth, is a focal component of mental torment. It drives casualties to scrutinize their contemplations, feelings, and encounters, bringing about huge mental disturbance. Abuse can likewise appear as the disregard of a person's mental necessities. This sort of abuse might incorporate an absence of daily encouragement, heartlessness toward a person's close to home battles, or a general negligence for their mental prosperity. Such disregard can prompt crumbling emotional well-being and a lessening in mental flexibility. Taking everything into account, abuse envelops different activities, ways of behaving, and types of disregard that incur physical, close to home, and mental mischief on people. Understanding its psychological and mental aspects is vital to fathoming the significant and durable mental outcomes it can cause.

### *Types of maltreatment or torture*

- The term "physical abuse" refers to actions such as beating, strangling, or physically restricting someone as well as assault and forced detention.
- Sexual abuse refers to coerced sexual actions or sexual contact without permission.

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- Threats and intimidation, such as gas lighting or instilling doubts in the victim's sanity, are considered psychological abuse.
- Abuse including fraud and extortion through budget control or withholding of funds is referred to as financial abuse.
- When the basic needs of life are denied, it is considered neglect and can result in malnourishment, dirty living circumstances, and other problems.

31% of female athletes and 21% of male athletes who participated in a study of 370 elite and club athletes said they had been sexually abused before the age of 18. According to research, the prevalence of abuse among athletes in sports ranges from 38%-72% for psychological abuse, 9%-30% for sexual assault, and 11%-21% for physical abuse. While many people associate abuse in sports with sexual or physical assault, verbal and emotional abuse is also very widespread. In all levels of sport, emotional abuse is a type of abuse that goes unreported. Instances of emotional abuse include humiliation, taunts, and threats, and it can be committed by coaches, players, and parents (Pozzulo & Pica, 2022).

### ***Challenges faced by professional athletes***

While the advantages of game support like the advancement of coordinated abilities and worked on physical and psychosocial wellbeing are generally revealed, the anxieties and difficulties related with superior execution game might cradle these constructive outcomes. Because of elevated requirements, focused energy preparing conditions, expanded media openness, and more serious ramifications for less than ideal exhibitions, world class competitors are presented to weariness and wear out, inclined to actual wounds, and at the outrageous cases, mental and actual problems. These difficulties are particularly hard for competitors arising onto the public and global contest, from both athletic and social turn of events perspectives (Dehghansai et al., 2021). Competitors tend not to look for help for emotional well-being issues, because of reasons like disgrace, absence of grasping about psychological wellness and its possible effect on execution, and the view of help looking for as an indication of shortcoming. While there have been endeavours to disperse sport-related emotional wellness discoveries to propel the avoidance, recognizable proof and early treatment of psychopathology in world class competitors, there are ideas that a few wearing overseeing bodies keep on limiting the meaning of mental weakness in this populace. This has sobering ramifications in the event that world class competitors inside such associations are not given admittance to opportune or satisfactory psychological wellness care, or don't feel that the way of life of the wearing association is to such an extent that they could actually raise their emotional well-being concerns. While it is deep rooted that actual work decidedly affects emotional well-being, a survey has found that extreme actual work performed at the first class competitor level could rather think twice about prosperity, expanding side effects of tension and sadness through overtraining, injury and burnout. Some, however not all, research proposes that this populace has an expanded gamble of psychological well-being issues, including dietary problems and self-destruction (Rice et al., 2016). Rather than the regularly held insight that competitors are areas of strength for intellectually, and don't encounter mental chronic sickness, it is progressively clear that competitors are not resistant to psychological wellness issues. In examples of French and Australian competitors, pervasiveness rates were 17% and 46% separately, with the most well-known messes including uneasiness, gloom and dietary problems. In spite of these rates being comparable or higher to those found in everyone, competitors have nearly much lower paces of help-chasing for psychological well-being. The mismatch between predominance of psychological wellness issues and paces of help-seeking in competitors is of concern. In an

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investigation of Norwegian world class competitors, 13.5% gave a dietary issue contrasted with 4.6% in everybody. While the paces of help-chasing for anorexia nervosa, bulimia and voraciously consuming food are viewed as 34.5%-62.6% in the general population, the pace of help-seeking for dietary issues in competitors was 1.5%. Consequently, a huge extent of competitors are possible not getting the assistance required. A perusing survey is expected to plan the writing on competitors' perspectives towards and encounters of help-seeking, including how they access and use various types of psychological wellness benefits, and recognize where proof holes exist (Brown et al., 2022)

### *Impact of maltreatment and torture in sport*

The psychological wellness outcomes of savagery and misuse are annihilating, enduring and, in game can be related with decreased execution and accomplishment, early exit from sport, diminished confidence, self-perception aggravations, cluttered endlessly dietary problems, substance use issues, misery, tension, self-mischief and self-destruction. Moreover, the affinity to cheat and dope is expanded with regards to savagery in aggressive games; moreover, youth mental maltreatment relates with long haul, complex post-awful and dissociative side effects. Savagery and maltreatment in sport influence the people in question and their athletic climate, as well as the casualties' private and social connections, even beyond sport (Claussen, 2021). The chance of encountering viciousness, inside and beyond sport, ought to be thought of and asked about by clinicians to whom competitors present with mental side effects. Perceiving viciousness and the mental outcomes of brutality and maltreatment accordingly, having the option to manage exposure by those impacted, and the serious mental results and injury squeal, require mental psychotherapeutic mastery and an interdisciplinary methodology that incorporates the casualties' current circumstance (Claussen, 2021). Results related with previous elite competitors' encounters of genuinely harmful ways of behaving incorporate sensations of humiliation and disgrace and diminished confidence; clinical signs of uneasiness, melancholy, obsessive-compulsive ways of behaving (e.g., dietary issues, trichotillomania), and PTSD symptomology; also, the discontinuance of game investment Survival methods also, emotionally supportive networks used by competitors who experience genuinely oppressive instructing ways of behaving have likewise been investigated, and explicit ways of behaving, including support-chasing and exiting sport, have been recognized as short-and long haul survival methods (Alexander et al., 2023). Standardization of savage and forceful conduct in sports has been connected to higher paces of brutality by male competitors across professional sport, including rape. Associations have likewise been made between animosity while watching sports and brutality against ladies.

Emotional wellness results of purposeful brutality in game might incorporate neuropsychiatric squeal of awful cerebrum wounds, substance use issues and outrage the board issues. More examination is expected to explain and portray these dangers completely. The psychological well-being effects of abuse in sport have been irrefutable. These incorporate higher predominance of melancholy, nervousness, posttraumatic stress jumble (PTSD), suicidality, substance use jumble, dietary problems, self-hurt ways of behaving, and exiting sport (Edwards et al., 2023). The effect of abuse and torment in sports involves critical concern, justifying formal assessment. These types of abuse, whether physical or mental, apply a significant effect on competitors' prosperity and the respectability of the wearing local area. In a proper setting, one can think about the accompanying viewpoints:

- **Physical and Mental Health:** Abuse and torment can bring about serious physical and mental results. Actual maltreatment, overtraining, and disregard of a competitor's

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wellbeing can prompt wounds, actual decay, and long haul medical problems. On the mental front, competitors exposed to psychological.

- Mistreatment, gas lighting, or seclusion might encounter uplifted pressure, tension, and sorrow.
- Execution Deterioration: Abuse can essentially block a competitor's presentation. The psychological and close to home trouble made by abuse can prevent a competitor's capacity concentrate, centre, and perform at their best. Accordingly, their athletic accomplishments might endure.
- Mental Resilience: Mental torment can sabotage a competitor's psychological flexibility and self-assurance. Constant psychological mistreatment or putting down can dissolve a competitor's confidence, prompting self-question and diminished fearlessness.
- Long haul Trauma: The close to home and mental scars caused by abuse can make enduring impacts. Competitors might convey the injury from their encounters into their own lives, influencing their general prosperity and connections.
- Group Dynamics: Abuse can likewise upset group elements, prompting struggle and division inside sports groups. This can adversely influence the cooperative and helpful parts of sports and frustrate group execution.
- Competitor Retention: Competitors who get through abuse might decide to leave the game or association, influencing ability maintenance and the improvement of future competitors.
- Notoriety Damage: Sports associations, mentors, and foundations that endure or execute abuse risk serious harm to their standing and may confront legitimate outcomes.
- Emotional well-being Advocacy: The predominance of abuse in sports highlights the need of emotional wellness promotion and the execution of emotionally supportive networks and assets for competitors.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the realm of sports, competitors taking a stab at greatness frequently become presented to a scope of misuses, enveloping physical, profound, and nourishing abuse (Reynolds, 2006). This review of literature embraces an investigation of the elements supporting competitors' weakness to such maltreatment, with a particular accentuation on the emotional and neglect aspects. It orders competitor conduct across a range, going from over conforming conduct, ordinarily connected with cheating, to under conforming conduct, connected to unnecessary preparation and responsibility.

### CASE STUDIES

#### *Emotional/mental torture*

##### **Case-1**

Lance Armstrong's admission in an interview with the renowned talk-show host Oprah Winfrey has illuminated the emotional trauma that clean athletes face in the cycling industry. During the interview, the cyclist acknowledged the use of a variety of prohibited substances, including epoetin, testosterone, cortisol, HGH, and blood doping, following the release of extensive evidence that resulted in the forfeiture of seven of his Tour de France victories (Wilson, 2013). Additionally, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) requested the return of one of Armstrong's bronze medals from the 2000 Games. The case has not only revealed the extent of Armstrong's doping, but has also highlighted the prevalence of drug use in professional cycling, leaving many clean athletes with the difficult

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decision of whether to use prohibited substances to maintain their integrity or to abandon their sports career. In a statement, Travis Tygart, CEO of USADA, stressed the urgency of protecting clean athletes and promoting greater transparency in the fight against doping (Wilson, 2013).

### **Case-2**

In 2007, the "Spygate" scandal rocked the NFL when the New England Patriots were caught illegally videotaping coaching signals from the New York Jets. This controversy not only hurt the Patriots' successful franchise, but also caused emotional turmoil throughout the league. Players, coaches and fans struggled with the integrity of the sport as revelations of cheating strained relationships within the NFL community. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell responded with fines and penalties, including a hefty \$500,000 fine for Patriots head coach Bill Belichick and a \$250,000 fine for the team. Additionally, the Patriots had to give up a first-round pick in the 2008 NFL Draft. The decision to destroy the "Spygate" game recordings has increased controversy and ignited ongoing debate. Despite the emotional roller coaster, the Patriots remained a formidable team. However, their efforts for an undefeated season ended in disappointment with a loss to the New York Giants in Super Bowl 42, adding to the excitement of a season marked by scandal and triumph (history.com editors, 2001)

### **Case-3**

In a crucial 2011 Premier League game, John Terry was accused of racial abuse against Anton Ferdinand. Terry initially denied the allegations, claiming he had used the offensive language in response to a challenge. The incident sparked an FA investigation, resulting in Terry's suspension from the league, a penalty, and a fine. He was also stripped of his England captaincy. In a deeply personal documentary released by the BBC in 2020, Ferdinand recounted the incident, revealing the emotional distress he had experienced on social media, and expressing regret for his failure to speak out against racism. His elder brother, Rio, was also present at the time and commented on the impact the incident had on his brother's career and his emotional wellbeing (Anton Ferdinand Racism: What Did John Terry Say to Him in 2011? | Goal.com India)

### **Case-4**

The East German sports system, which operated from 1949 until 1990, was a highly successful one. It was used as a political tool to demonstrate the superiority of socialism, and East German athletes were expected to back this up by winning medals (Cole, 2000). Despite the fact that many athletes did not personally subscribe to the ideology of the GDR, they still achieved great success. However, after the end of the Cold War, there were allegations of widespread performance-enhancing drug use, leading to trials in Berlin for coaches and physicians accused of administering substances to athletes without their permission or knowledge. What is unique about this era is the emotional impact it had on the athletes, who were caught between their personal convictions, the pressure of sport, and the possibility of being exposed to drugs without their consent. Surprisingly, many athletes have expressed positive sentiments about their experiences (Cole, 2000)

### **Case-5**

The incident involves emotional, psychological torture, harassment, and bullying within the Miami Dolphins football team. Offensive lineman Jonathan Martin was subjected to racial slurs, sexual taunts toward his mother and sister, and other forms of abuse by three of his teammates, Richie Sheikneet, John Jerry, and Mike Pouncey, suffered a series of

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harassment, including physical abuse. The abuse was so bad that Martin left the team in October. NFL investigator Ted Wells' 144-page report details the emotional abuse Martin suffered, including daily taunts and ridicule. Incognito even boasted that he "broke" Martin into the notebook used by linemen to keep track of fines and bonuses. Another player was subjected to homophobic insults and physical contact, and an assistant coach was subjected to racist insults. The report emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere of tolerance in the NFL, especially in light of gay defensive lineman Michael Sam's coming out. It was also revealed that Dolphins offensive line coach Jim Turner was aware of the jokes about players' sexuality and joined in with the heckling. The report acknowledged Martin's mental health issues and sensitivity to insults, but said he was actually harassed by Incognito, who played a central role in creating a culture of vile abuse within the offensive line. In response to the report, Dolphins owner Stephen Ross expressed his determination to address the issue and foster a culture of civility and mutual respect within the organization. The incident garnered national attention and sparked a discussion about workplace harassment and bullying in professional sports. This highlights the importance of addressing emotional abuse and creating a respectful and inclusive environment in sport and other areas (Walker, 2014)

### **Case-6**

Larry Nassar, a former USA Gymnastics doctor, was convicted of sexually abusing young athletes under the guise of medical treatment. In addition to the physical abuse, Nassar subjected his victims to emotional torment. He manipulated their trust, convincing them that his invasive procedures were necessary for their well-being, leading to confusion and anguish (Rabinowitz, Holly Yan, 2023). Nassar's actions shattered their trust and silenced their attempts to speak out, adding to their emotional distress. Over 150 survivors bravely shared their trauma in court, shedding light on their profound suffering. These survivors are on a path to recovery, supporting each other in healing. The case underscores the emotional toll of abuse and the importance of holding abusers accountable (Rabinowitz, Holly Yan, 2023)

### **Case-7**

Six women have filed suit against USA Swimming, claiming the organization failed to protect them from sexual abuse at the hands of coaches Mitch Ivey, Everett Uchiyama and Andy King. These lawsuits appear to be the first under California's new law that extends the statute of limitations for past sexual abuse cases, and highlight the emotional pain suffered by victims. The survivors, who were aspiring athletes, initially placed a lot of trust in their coaches and their sports association, USA Swimming. This trust was brutally exploited by coaches who manipulated their emotional vulnerability. In addition to physical abuse, survivors were also subjected to emotional manipulation, causing severe emotional turmoil. The trainers convinced her that her abusive behavior was part of her training or necessary for her success, resulting in confusion, guilt, and emotional distress. The psychological torture was further exacerbated by a deep breach of trust. The survivors, who once respected their trainers, struggle with a helpless feeling of betrayal when they learn that the trainers they entrusted with their dreams have violated them in the most reprehensible way. When survivors tried to speak out and seek help, they were often met with silence, ignored, and even rejection from USA Swimming authorities. This led to increased emotional distress as they struggled to gain validation and find support. The lawsuit is part of a broader movement aimed at holding national sports organizations accountable for allegedly failing to protect athletes and provide a safe environment. It highlights the ongoing psychological

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suffering of victims of sexual abuse in the sports world, even as they strive for justice and healing (Pavitt, 2020)

### **Case-8**

Following Naomi Osaka's absence from the French Open, the four major tournaments (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open) have committed to creating "meaningful improvements" for supporting players, particularly regarding their mental health, is what happened. Osaka withdrew from the French Open after the tournament threatened to expel her for refusing to give media interviews. In a joint statement, the Grand Slam tournaments praised Osaka for speaking candidly about the pressures she faced and her struggle with fear, highlighting her understanding of the unique pressures tennis players face. They recognized the need to promote mental health and wellbeing in sport and expressed their intention to work with players, tours, media and the wider tennis community to bring about meaningful improvements. The statement marked a change in tone from an earlier statement in which Osaka had threatened "heavier fines and banning from future Grand Slam tournaments" if she continued to avoid engaging with the media. Several players, including Coco Gauff, Gael Monfils and Venus Williams, expressed support for Osaka and discussed the challenges of media obligations in professional tennis. Osaka's withdrawal and subsequent discussions emotionally demonstrated the importance of addressing mental health issues in sport and providing appropriate support for athletes facing such challenges. The mental strain of dealing with intense control and pressure and keeping commitments has become a major aspect of discussion within the tennis community (Grand Slams Offer Support to Osaka, 2021).

### ***Neglect in sports***

#### **Case-1**

In April 1989, 95 Liverpool fans were killed in a tragic incident at Hillsborough Stadium during an FA Cup semi-final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. This disaster was characterized by overcrowding and neglectful response. The situation further escalated when too many Liverpool fans were ushered through the exit gate into two standing room only booths. A crush soon ensued and the fan moved forward until he was pressed against the front fence. Despite calls for help, police were slow to respond as they focused on maintaining public order following past incidents of hooliganism. The match was stopped after only five and a half minutes, but the damage was severe: 95 people died, most of them from suffocation. This tragedy resulted in numerous casualties on the field. Initially, the blame was placed on the fans themselves, blaming them for drinking and disorder, deeply angering the victim's family and friends. Multiple investigations over the years suggest that it may have been police decisions that caused the crisis. In a significant development, criminal charges were finally laid almost 30 years later when David Duckenfield, the match manager that day, was charged with manslaughter. The Hillsborough disaster brought about major changes in English football. Standing areas were replaced with seats, making the stadium safer and preventing overcrowding. The lasting legacy of this tragedy is a safer and more controlled environment for football fans attending matches in England. (Begley, 2017)

#### **Case-2**

In September 1961, the decade-long streak of fatal boxing matches at Madison Square Garden came to an end with the tragic announcement by Emile Griffith that he intended to kill Benny Paret if given the opportunity to fight again. Paret and Griffith's brutal trilogy exposed a disturbing neglect for fighter safety in boxing. Paret, a two-time Welterweight Champion with a difficult background, and Griffith, a known homosexual, had a heated

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rivalry that culminated in Paret using a homophobic slur during the weigh-in. Despite Paret's previous defeat, he agreed to fight Griffith again. Griffith initially dominated the early rounds, but eventually found himself vulnerable as he sought vengeance. In the twelfth round, Paret was viciously beaten and the referee did not take action in time, resulting in the death of Paret. This tragedy highlighted the need for reform of the boxing industry, which should prioritize the safety of fighters over entertainment and financial gain. (FloCombat Staff, 2023)

### Case-3

American football is a physically demanding and dangerous sport known for its uncompromising violence. Players can sustain a variety of injuries, including bruises, cuts, strains, dislocated shoulders, torn knee ligaments, broken bones, internal organ damage, and, in rare cases, paralysis. What sets soccer apart is that its rules are intentionally designed to cause collisions between people at high speeds, making such injuries almost inevitable and making the sport itself highly controversial. It's brewing. But new discoveries about brain injuries have sparked attention, with many questioning the morality of soccer and even calling for its abolishment. At the center of this discussion is traumatic brain injury (TBI), which is caused by blows, bumps, and impacts to the head. A concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury, occurs when the brain rapidly moves back and forth within the skull, causing different types of structural damage. Concussions are called "mild" traumatic brain injuries because they are usually not immediately life-threatening, but the long-term effects can be debilitating. Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) is a disease of particular concern characterized by degeneration of the brain, likely caused by repeated head trauma. What makes CTE particularly insidious is that a person can develop CTE without a single head impact that causes a concussion. Rather, it accumulates over time, often leading to severe neurological impairment and even early death. Despite growing concern, the scientific understanding of sports-related concussions (SRC) and related brain injuries is still in its infancy. This lack of clarity is due to the relative newness of the field. A pivotal moment came in 2002 for him. Bennett Omalu, an African- American neuropathologist from Pittsburgh, performed the autopsy at Hall of Fame center Mike Webster. Dr. Results. Omalu cited evidence of CTE, including the identification of clusters of an abnormal protein known as tau in Webster's brain. These tau proteins form tangles that gradually strangle neurons and severely impair brain function. The issue of neglect in American football is accentuated by the sport's historical indifference to the risks faced by players, particularly when it comes to head injuries. This neglect is at the heart of an ongoing debate about the ethics of the sport and the need for urgent reforms to prioritize the safety and well-being of players over the spectacle of violence on the field. (Head Injuries & American Football - Ethics Unwrapped, 2020)

### Case-4

The tragic incident at Sao Paulo's soccer stadium, where the opening game of the World Cup is scheduled to take place, highlights the disregard and safety concerns surrounding large-scale construction projects in the name of sporting events. São Paulo's stadium, also known locally as Arena Corinthians or Itaquerao, is undergoing major renovations and FIFA has set a deadline. The rush to complete the renovations ended in a catastrophic failure when the 500-tonne metal structure collapsed, crashing through the stadium's exterior walls and destroying the seating area and LED panels on the facade. In this horrific incident, a crane fell onto a vehicle, killing two people. A third person was also seriously injured. The accident occurred during a lunch break when there were fewer workers on site, thus avoiding a potential increase in the number of fatalities. This tragedy clearly shows the

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disregard for safety measures and the pressure to meet FIFA deadlines. As a result of the incident, construction on the stadium was suspended for 30 days, further delaying its completion. The stadium, which cost an estimated \$360 million, was nearly completed before the collapse. FIFA had set a December deadline for all 12 World Cup venues to be completed, putting enormous pressure on construction workers and potentially compromising safety standards. This incident is a stark reminder of the human cost of accelerating construction projects for large-scale sporting events, and the overall this raises concerns about priorities. (Saravia & Smith, 2023)

### **Case-5**

The "Calciopoli" scandal, commonly referred to as a match-fixing scandal, caused immense disruption to Italian football, exposing a culture of laxity and corruption. Major clubs such as Juventus, A.S. Lazio, and Fiorentina were implicated in the affair. The main culprit behind the scandal was Juventus Sporting Director Lucian Moggi, who was accused of attempting to manipulate match results by manipulating referee appointments. The transcripts of phone conversations revealed these activities during the 2004-05 season. Juventus was the most severely penalised club, suffering demotion to the Serie B, the loss of league titles, and significant point's deductions. Moggi was subsequently banned for life, demonstrating the damaging effects of neglect ethical standards and fair play on the integrity of football, as well as the damaging effects of bending the rules for personal gain. (Caught Offside!, 2017)

### **Case-6**

The sudden death of 28-year-old Olympic gold medallist in pairs figure skating, Sergei Grinkov, shocked the world. An autopsy revealed that Grinkov had suffered a painless heart attack within the last 24 hours of his death. Pathologist Dr. C. Francis Varga revealed that Grinkov had an enlarged heart due to untreated high blood pressure and near-total occlusion of two coronary arteries. Preliminary tests ruled out drug abuse or steroids as a cause. Grinkov's death was particularly surprising. This was because he was a young, healthy athlete who had never complained of heart problems. However, Professor Varga pointed out that sudden death in young people could be the first sign of coronary heart disease. This tragedy highlighted the importance of early detection of heart disease. If Grinkov's high blood pressure had been discovered earlier, he may have been able to undergo bypass surgery to prevent this fatal outcome. The autopsy also revealed that Grinkov suffered from an enlarged heart. This is a common trait among athletes, but it was unusually pronounced in his case. It was speculated that Grinkov may have been in pain, but did not complain due to his athlete mentality. This tragedy served as a stark reminder that heart attacks can occur without warning and affect even the healthiest of people, and emphasized the importance of regular health check-ups and early intervention. Grinkov's wife, Ekaterina Gordeeva, agreed to an autopsy to determine the cause of death and dispel any rumours. Despite her family's grief, the autopsy brought clarity and understanding and shed light on this rare and tragic event. (Altman, 1995)

### **Case-7**

In the wake of the untimely passing of the father of the long-distance runner, the tragic case of neglect is highlighted by the unexpected nature of the death, which occurred during the course of a family visit. The father had arrived in the United States in order to witness his son's record-breaking indoor mile, expressing his pride and support. Unfortunately, the father passed away at the son's home, resulting in the withdrawal of Eamonn from important races, as well as the disruption of their planned reunion and sporting experiences. As a

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result, Eamonn, a well-known distance runner, had to take the time to accompany his father back to Dublin, postponing his return to compete. His father's passing had a significant impact on the sport world, with fans and organizers expecting him to compete against Alberto Salazar. The Coghlan family tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the unpredictable nature of life, and the need to cherish every moment with loved ones. (RYE, N.Y., 1983)

### Case-8

The Simone Biles case highlights the gross neglect and mishandling of sexual abuse cases involving USA Gymnastics and the Larry Nassar scandal. Simone Biles, a highly acclaimed gymnast with four Olympic gold medals, bravely reveals that she, too, is a survivor of sexual abuse by former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar. Her statement, posted under the hashtag #metoo, highlighted the emotional turmoil she endured before speaking out and dispelling her misplaced guilt. Larry Nassar, accused of sexually abusing more than 140 women and girls under the guise of medical treatment, was indicted and sentenced to federal prison. However, according to an investigation by the Indianapolis Star, USA Gymnastics has come under heavy criticism for its inadequate response to abuse allegations. Biles' fellow athletes, including Aly Raisman, McKayla Maroney and Gabby Douglas, also spoke out about abuse at the hands of Nassar. Maroney also filed a lawsuit against USA Gymnastics, alleging that it silenced her through a confidential financial settlement. Biles' decision to share her story was inspired by the courage of her fellow survivors. She affirmed her resilience and her determination and vowed not to let her abuse define her. Yet she expressed her heartache at having to return to the same training facility where she was abused while chasing her dream of competing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. This lawsuit highlights the neglect and mishandling of sexual abuse allegations in gymnastics and highlights the need for better protection and support systems for athletes. (Lutz, 2018)

## METHODOLOGY

### 1. Search Strategy:

The search approach involved a thorough investigation of professional athletes' narratives across various sports disciplines. Various sources such as media reports, autobiographies, interviews, and online forums like PubMed, ResearchGate, The New York Times, etc, were carefully examined to identify athletes who openly shared their emotional and mental experiences, as well as instances of neglect within the competitive sporting environment.

### 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

#### Inclusion Criteria:

- Athletes who expressed their emotional and mental struggles within the realm of professional sports.
- Cases that provided in-depth insights into athletes' challenges, including neglect and psychological stressors.

#### Exclusion Criteria:

- Cases that lacked substantial depth or detail regarding athletes' emotional and mental experiences.
- Instances where athletes' experiences did not align with the study's focus on emotional and mental challenges in professional sports.

### **3. Data Extraction:**

Sixteen cases were meticulously chosen based on the specified criteria, ensuring a diverse representation of sports, genders, and cultural backgrounds. These cases served as focal points for extracting relevant data concerning athletes' emotional and mental journeys, as well as encounters with neglect within the sporting environment.

Thorough examination of each case involved analyzing personal narratives, interviews, and available documentation to gain nuanced insights into athletes' experiences and challenges within their respective sports arenas.

### **4. Data Analysis:**

The data analysis was primarily done by finding out the recurring themes and patterns of the research variables like neglect, psychological or emotional torment faced by athletes, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of emotional and mental challenges, as well as instances of neglect, prevalent within professional sports. The analytical process aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding and contextualization of athletes' experiences, emphasizing the profound psychological impact.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of sixteen case studies has provided valuable insights into the emotional and mental experiences of professional athletes. These findings shed light on the challenges that athletes face within the highly competitive world of sports. Athletes from various sports disciplines expressed a wide range of emotions, including stress, anxiety, and feelings of neglect. These emotions were often intensified by the immense pressure to perform, media scrutiny, and the demanding nature of professional sports environments.

### ***Strengths of the Study***

This study possesses several strengths that enhance the credibility and robustness of our findings. Firstly, we utilized multiple sources such as autobiographies, interviews, and online forums like PubMed, ResearchGate, The New York Times, etc, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of athletes' experiences from diverse perspectives. Additionally, we included cases representing different sports, genders, and cultural backgrounds, which enriched the depth and breadth of our analysis. This approach provided a nuanced understanding of the emotional landscape in professional athletics.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

Despite the strengths of our study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations. One limitation is the reliance on self-reported narratives, which may be influenced by bias or selective memory. Additionally, the sample size of sixteen cases may limit the generalizability of our findings to a broader population of professional athletes. Furthermore, the subjective nature of thematic analysis introduces the potential for interpretation bias, although we made efforts to mitigate this through intercoder reliability checks.

### ***Implications***

The results of this research have significant implications for the various parties involved in the professional sports industry. Our study sheds light on the emotional and mental obstacles that athletes face, emphasizing the importance of increased awareness and support systems within the sports community. Coaches, administrators, and sports organizations stand to gain

from comprehending the psychological stress that athletes experience and implementing strategies to enhance mental health and resilience.

### *Future Research*

Drawing from the findings of this study, upcoming research projects could delve into other factors that impact athletes' emotional well-being, such as social support systems, coping mechanisms, and the influence of personality traits. Conducting longitudinal studies to monitor athletes' mental health over time could offer valuable insights into the evolving nature of emotional wellness in sports. Additionally, comparative studies exploring cultural variations in the perception and handling of emotions in sports could provide a global perspective on the subject.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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