



DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOLITIONAL SPHERE IN MIDDLE-DISTANCE RUNNERS

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Annotation. *The development of the volitional sphere is a crucial factor in the success of middle-distance runners, as these athletes face intense physical and psychological challenges during both training and competition. Middle-distance running (800 m - 1500 m) requires a unique combination of endurance, speed, and tactical decision-making. Athletes must overcome fatigue, pain, and psychological pressure while maintaining optimal performance throughout the race.*

Keywords: *volitional development, middle-distance running, endurance, psychological training, self-regulation, sports psychology.*

Introduction. Sports activities are not only physical but also a serious psychological test for athletes, requiring high motivation, concentration, self-discipline and the ability to overcome difficulties. This is especially evident in endurance athletics disciplines such as middle-distance running. During competitions and training, runners have to deal with fatigue, pain, intense competition and the need to make quick decisions under high physical stress [1, 4, 5].

Middle-distance running (800 m - 1500 m) is one of the most difficult athletics disciplines, since it requires a harmonious combination of aerobic and anaerobic capabilities of the body, as well as developed volitional qualities [2, 3]. Unlike the sprint, where maximum speed over a short distance plays a key role, or the marathon, where the main factor for success is overall endurance, medium-high distances place high demands on both speed and the ability to conserve energy for the final sprint.

At these distances, the athlete experiences intense physical and psychological stress. Tactical thinking plays an important role: it is necessary to correctly distribute

forces, choose the moment to accelerate and be able to react to the actions of opponents. Miscalculations can lead to premature burnout or the inability to realize one's maximum speed at the finish line. It is at such moments that the runner's willpower manifests itself - his ability to fight fatigue, maintain concentration, make decisions in a limited time and continue moving despite a strong desire to slow down or stop altogether [6, 8, 10].

In sports psychology, the volitional sphere is considered as a set of mental qualities that ensure purposeful overcoming of obstacles and difficulties. Will is an important factor in success in sports, since it allows an athlete to continue to fight in difficult conditions, withstand high physical loads and maintain motivation even after failures [7, 9].

The development of the volitional sphere in runners requires an integrated approach. This includes not only systematic physical training, but also the use of special psychological training techniques aimed at increasing stress resistance, self-control, motivation and the ability to cope with difficulties.

The purpose of this article is to study the features of the formation of the volitional sphere in middle-distance runners, as well as an analysis of the most effective methods for its development. The study will consider the key volitional qualities necessary for athletes of this category, as well as methods for their purposeful formation and improvement in the conditions of the training process and competitive activities.

The volitional sphere of a person is a set of mental qualities that ensure a person's ability to consciously and purposefully overcome difficulties and obstacles. In sports, especially in track and field disciplines, which require a high degree of self-organization, self-control and resistance to stress, volitional qualities play a decisive role.

A developed volitional sphere allows an athlete to:

- Overcome fatigue and pain during training and competitions.
- Make decisions in conditions of tough competition.

- Maintain concentration and self-control under high physical and emotional stress.
- Motivate yourself to long-term and persistent work to achieve your goals.

The formation of volitional qualities is a long process that includes both innate predispositions and purposeful development of the necessary skills during training.

Sports psychology identifies several key components of the volitional sphere:

1. Decisiveness - the ability to quickly make important decisions under limited time. In middle-distance running, this manifests itself in choosing the moment to accelerate, changing tactics, and reacting to attacks from opponents.
2. Perseverance - the ability to continue an activity despite the difficulties that arise. Middle-distance running requires an athlete to be able to tolerate discomfort, overcome fatigue, and maintain pace.
3. Self-control - the ability to manage your emotions, not succumb to panic or euphoria. During the competition, the runner must remain calm, avoid rash jerks, and distribute strength wisely.
4. Purposefulness - focus on achieving specific sports goals. This quality allows runners to withstand long years of training without losing motivation.
5. Self-regulation ability - control over your psychophysiological states. This includes breathing control, working with anxiety, and the ability to mobilize strength at crucial moments during the race.

Unlike physical qualities, which have physiological limitations, volitional qualities can be developed almost without limit. That is why psychological preparation in sports becomes as important as physical.

The formation of the volitional sphere is not a spontaneous process, but a targeted work, including special psychological exercises, a system of training loads and the creation of conditions that require the manifestation of volitional efforts.

Middle-distance running (800 m - 1500 m) is a unique discipline in athletics, combining elements of sprint and endurance running. Unlike marathons, where aerobic endurance is of primary importance, and sprint, which requires maximum speed over a short distance, middle distances require an athlete to have high tactical

literacy, the ability to correctly distribute strength and quickly respond to changes in the pace of opponents.

Key features of middle-distance running:

1. High intensity load. At these distances, the athlete works in a mixed energy supply mode: anaerobic processes (without oxygen) dominate at the beginning and finish, and aerobic processes (with oxygen) dominate in the middle part of the distance. This creates additional stress on the body and requires the ability to tolerate oxygen debt.
2. Tactical thinking. Runners must be able to correctly distribute their strength, control their position in the group, choose the moment to accelerate and react to attacks from opponents. Tactical errors can lead to premature exhaustion or loss of finishing acceleration.
3. Psychological pressure. Unlike long distances, where the pace is set individually, in 800 m and 1500 m running, athletes are often in a tight group, where contact, fighting for position and psychological pressure have a serious impact on the result.
4. The critical importance of the finishing spurt. The final 200-300 meters often become decisive. The athlete must maintain concentration, endure extreme fatigue and at the same time show maximum speed.

Successful performance in middle distances requires a set of willpower qualities that allow the athlete to cope with physical fatigue, maintain concentration and show determination in critical moments of the race.

1. Endurance and patience. The athlete must be ready to tolerate a high level of physical discomfort, especially in the last laps of the distance, when lactic acid accumulates in the muscles, causing a burning sensation and fatigue.
2. Decisiveness. In middle distance running, instant decision-making is crucial. When the opponent begins to accelerate, you need to either react to the attack or stick to your strategy, but do it quickly and confidently.

3. Self-control. The runner must be able to manage his condition: do not panic when losing position, do not make sudden movements under the influence of emotions, maintain concentration on his tactics.

4. Stress resistance. Pressure from competitors, spectators, coaches, and even one's own expectations can cause anxiety. It is important for runners to be able to cope with pre-race jitters and maintain psychological stability during the race.

5. Self-control. Middle distances are not just physical work, but a constant struggle with the desire to slow down, slow down, or even quit. An athlete must develop the ability to ignore these signals from the body and continue moving at high intensity.

6. Willpower to overcome fatigue. On the last lap, when the body demands a stop, an athlete must find internal reserves to maintain the pace or speed up.

7. Determination. Achieving high results requires many years of work and a willingness to go through failures. Without strong determination, an athlete will not be able to withstand intense training and come back after defeats.

Developing strong-willed qualities is possible through targeted psychological and physical training.

1. Psychological training:

- Self-regulation training (breathing exercises, auto-training).
- Forming positive attitudes (working with motivation).
- Visualizing success (mental training).

2. Training methods:

- Using interval training with a high level of fatigue.
- Special exercises to develop patience (running when tired).
- Monitoring and developing self-discipline (keeping a training diary).

3. Game and competitive methods;

- Organizing training runs with elements of competition.
- Setting individual goals that require strong-willed efforts.
- Introducing non-standard conditions (changing distance, pace, weather factors).

Conclusion. Middle-distance running is a discipline that requires not only physical but also serious psychological training. High speed, the need for tactical decisions in conditions of tough competition, physical fatigue and the importance of finishing acceleration place increased demands on the runner's willpower. Athletes with developed determination, patience, self-control and the ability to self-coerce gain a significant advantage in the fight for high results. Formation of the willpower of middle-distance runners is a process that requires an integrated approach. The use of psychological, training and competitive methods allows athletes to develop persistence, stress resistance and the ability to overcome self-imposed obstacles, which is an important factor in successful performance in middle-distance running.

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