



Research Article

ICFFL Goa Conference|2025

A comparative study of sports mental toughness in soccer between under 19 and above 19 male soccer players from Goa.

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Article History

Received: 01.07.2025

Accepted: 20.08.2025

Published: 25.09.2025

Citation

Kachavi, P. A. K. K. (2025). A comparative study of sports mental toughness in soccer between under 19 and above 19 male soccer players from Goa. *Goa Conference 2025 Fit for Life: Empowering Youth Through Physical Education, Sports and Traditional Sports. Indiana Journal of Agriculture and Life Sciences*, 105-107. Indiana Publications.

Abstract: Sports psychology focuses on the mental and emotional aspects of athletic performance, helping soccer players enhance their performance by improving their focus and concentration, enhancing confidence, and managing stress and anxiety. The purpose of this study was to compare the mental toughness Under 19 and Above 19 years age were selected by using purposive sampling technique. For the present study sample of 140 ie.62 Under19 and 72 Above 19 years. The participants were selected from soccer academies and clubs of Goa. The tool used was Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire (SMTQ) developed by Sheard, M., Golby, J., Van Wersch, A. (2009) to measure mental toughness of both under 19 and above 19 years age group. With the help of SPSS, the descriptive statistics the data was analysed the under 19 year player mean & standard deviation was 35.76(±6.808). As the 19 years mean player mean & standard deviation was mean is 38.95(±6.666). The data was compared using independent sample “t” test. The calculated t-value for total mental toughness was 0.006, which shows that there is a significant difference between those under 19 and above 19 male soccer players from Goa.

Keywords: Sports mental toughness, Sports psychology, male soccer player, stress and anxiety.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental toughness is a psychological trait that plays a pivotal role in an individual's ability to confront and overcome challenges, setbacks, and adversities. Rooted in resilience, determination, and a strong mind set, it empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of life with unwavering focus and tenacity. In this exploration, we delve into the multifaceted nature of mental toughness, examining its components, development, and the profound impact it can have on personal and professional spheres.

Despite the widespread use of the term “mental toughness” by performers, coaches and sport psychology consultant's alike, it is only recently that researchers (e.g., Citation Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2002) have attempted to provide some conceptual clarity to reduce the confusion surrounding the understanding and operationalization of the concept. As reported by Citation Jones et al. (2002), mental toughness has been construed to represent a variety of positive responses to situations which have included the ability to persist and refuse to give in (Citation Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987), overcome setbacks and poor performances (Citation Goldberg, 1998), cope with excessive pressure (Citation Goldberg, 1998) and to not let adverse situations affect performance (Citation Gould et al., 1987). In reviewing the literature, Citation Jones et al. (2002) suggested mentally tough performers to hold several key attributes, which enable them to experience

positive psychological states. Examples of these include commitment and determination (Citation Bull, Albinson, & Shambrook, 1996), motivation and control (Citation Gould et al., 1987), excellent concentration and focusing abilities (Citation Goldberg, 1998) and, confidence and self-belief (Citation Goldberg, 1998).

The definition of mental toughness forwarded by Citation Jones et al. (2002) suggests that it can be both a natural and/or developed phenomenon. It was also argued that mental toughness includes some form of outcome measure (e.g., psychological edge, coping better than opponents) where comparisons are made with opponents (Citation Jones et al., 2002). Furthermore, the definition identifies the mentally tough performer as not only able to cope and perform well under excessive pressure, thus utilizing skills that enable control, determination, confidence and focus on a consistent basis, but they also have the ability to exert control over the varying demands placed upon them in training and their personal life.

In Goa soccer has witnessed remarkable growth, fueled by the state's passion for the sport and its rich footballing heritage. The establishment of football academies, improved infrastructure, and the rise of tournaments like the Indian Super League (with FC Goa being a prominent team) have played a pivotal role in nurturing talent and drawing young players to the game. Soccer's popularity in Goa is not just about skill

development but also fostering a sense of community and pride. However, alongside technical abilities, mental toughness is crucial for players to thrive in such a competitive environment. It helps athletes handle pressure, overcome setbacks, and maintain focus during critical moments of the game. This mental resilience ensures players can adapt to challenges, sustain peak performance, and contribute effectively to their team's success, making it an indispensable aspect of a soccer player's development.

This study aims to compare Sports mental toughness between Under 19 and Above 19 male soccer player from the state of Goa. It employs Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire (SMTQ) to measure athlete's mental toughness, confidence, commitment, control, challenge.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants for this study were the player of clubs and Academies from the state of Goa. A total of 140 soccer players, both under 19 & above 19, were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 35 years. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were ensured throughout the study process.

MATERIALS & METHOD

Method: Descriptive comparative was used to describe the sports mental toughness between Under 19 and Above 19 male soccer players from the state of Goa. Age category is (17-35) years.

	AGE	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t
SCORING	U19	62	35.76		
	Above19	78	38.95	-3.191	-2.787

The analysis of the data collected through Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire (SMTQ) revealed that there is a significant Difference between Under 19 and Above 19 male Soccer Player from Goa.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest a positive comparison between under 19 & above 19 years male soccer player from the state of Goa. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that Comparison of mental Toughness of All India intervarsity and Intercollegiate male soccer players. The Shield (ISSN-1991-8410) Vol.06,2011.

Sports psychologist (researchers and practitioners), coaches, sports commentators, sports fans, and athletes acknowledge the importance of mental toughness in sporting performance (see Goldberg, 1998; Gould & Dieffenbach, 2002; Hodge, 1994; Tunney, 1987; Williams, 1988). In early work on the issue, Loehr

Sample: For this study, 140 male soccer players aged (17-35years) who is practicing soccer minimum one year in different (clubs and academies) were acquired by the of non- probability –based convenience and accidental technique.

Variables & Tool

***variables:** Dependent variable: Sports mental toughness / categorical Variable: Under 19 and Above 19 years. The male whose age belong to (17-35years).

SPORTS MENTAL TOUGHNESS QUESTIONNAIRE (SMTQ)

The Sports Mental Toughness Questionnaire (SMTQ) is a widely used psychological tool designed to assess an athlete's mental toughness. It measures key psychological traits that contribute to performance under pressure in competitive sports. Developed by Sheard, Golby, and Van Wersch (2009). Consists of 14 items (short version) Uses a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all true, 4 = Very true) Measures three core components of mental toughness: 1. Confidence – Belief in one's abilities and skills 2. Constancy Ability to stay focused and committed to goals 3. Control – Emotional and cognitive control under pressure

Scoring & Interpretation:

Higher scores indicate greater mental toughness.

RESULTS

Comparison of sports mental toughness between under 19 and above 19 year of soccer player.

(1982, 1986) emphasized that athletes and coaches felt that at least fifty percent of success is due to psychological factors that reflect mental toughness.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of result it conclude that there exist a significant association between performance male soccer player with their mental toughness. Player with above 19 have higher sports mental toughness report greater levels of mental toughness handling pressure, concentration, commitment, control, challenges.

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