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Effect of preparation duration diminution in shot put through neurovegetative activity

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Recently, time allocated to athletes concentration has been reduced to 1 minute. Increased activation and focused attention are thought to be important operations which influence performance during preparation. The aim of the study was to test whether reducing preparation time has an effect on subjects' mental activity and consequently on performance. Ten subjects took part in the experiment. Each subject had to perform 14 throws: a) 7 with preparation b) 7 with no preparation. Autonomic nervous system activity was continuously recorded through six variables (2 electrodermal, 2 thermovascular and 2 cardiorespiratory variables). Performance was comparable in preparation and non-preparation modalities. Subjects increase their activation before throwing, however more rapidly without preparation time. Thus, performance was obtained through the same activation level whatever the time allocated to prepare. Shot-put performance seems to be dependent upon execution quality but also on reaching an optimal activation level. Phasic autonomic responses (related to focused attention and movement programming) were recorded during preparation and execution. Only a weak relationship was evidenced between vegetative responses in preparation and execution phases. Thus, vegetative responses during the preparation phase did not attest mental operations such as focusing attention on a technical aspect.

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