



**SELINUS UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**FEATURES OF COPING BEHAVIOR AMONG  
PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES OF DIFFERENT ACHIEVEMENT  
LEVELS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH SELF-  
ATTITUDE**

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## INTRODUCTION

**Relevance and the problem statement.** Human behavior under stress is characterized by complexity and diversity, which gives rise to a number of unresolved theoretical problems concerning the psychological mechanisms of adaptation, personal resilience, and effective coping strategies. One of the central issues is the identification of psychological predictors that ensure the maintenance of an individual's psycho-emotional stability and enable resistance to the destructive influence of various stressful factors. Consequently, the study of subject-activity determinants that shape the choice of adaptive coping strategies represents a pressing scientific and practical task.

Professional sports, particularly elite sports, constitute a unique model of activity in which success directly depends on the athlete's physical abilities and psychological qualities that facilitate achieving victories. As noted by R.M. Zagaynov, sports activity is a model where success hinges on the ability to constructively overcome critical competitive situations [153]. At the core of sports motivation lie internal resources that accumulate the forces necessary for mobilizing and implementing coping behavior strategies aimed at overcoming psychological and physiological barriers [97].

Professional athletes operate under conditions of systemic exposure to specific stressors, including extreme physiological loads, psycho-emotional pressure, risk of injury, and lack of professional fulfillment [5]. The primary life orientation of a champion athlete is the desire to win and to gain social recognition. Athletic qualities, expressed as the ability to "overcome oneself," one's weaknesses and shortcomings, underlie the athlete's great achievements [141]. This combination of conditions creates a persistent state of psychological tension, which can lead to the development of distress and emotional burnout, directly affecting competitive performance and overall career longevity. Under these conditions, coping behavior transforms from a general personality characteristic into a professionally significant resource that determines an athlete's competitiveness and their adaptation to the chronic stressful situations of the sports environment. Thus, the phenomenon of coping occupies a special place in the system of psychological support and general training of high-class athletes, whose activity is continuously associated with extreme, uncertain, and risky situations.

The issue of coping behavior in psychology is regarded as a central mechanism of personality adaptation to challenging life situations. The dominant approach is the transactional model developed by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman, which conceptualizes coping as a dynamic process involving cognitive appraisal and strategic responses to stress-inducing events [71].

Within the context of elite sports, particular significance attaches to the concept of proactive coping, which shifts the focus from reactive management of already-occurred events toward anticipatory planning and preparation for potential stressors. For athletes, this entails developing psychological readiness for competition through simulation of critical situations, formulation of individualized rituals, and cultivation of anticipation skills. The selection of specific coping strategies may depend on sport-specific characteristics, stage of athletic career, gender, and level of expertise. Domestic researchers, notably T.L. Kryukova et al. [64], complement this approach with the concept of predicting coping behavior through construction of an individual psychological profile.

Studies in sport psychology [5, 153, 104] emphasize that, despite the notion of psychological resilience as a relatively stable trait, coping is subject to change over time, necessitating a dynamic approach to its investigation.

Self-attitude occupies a prominent place within the structure of psychological resources among professional athletes. Research by A.A. Sander [124], B. Lukanovich [77], and other authors demonstrates that athletic achievements and failures substantially influence athletes' self-esteem, self-confidence, and overall self-attitude. Constructive feedback from coaches and team support contribute to the formation of positive self-attitude. Within the context of an athletic career, where self-esteem is often shaped by external outcomes, a specific dynamic emerges in the interrelationship between self-attitude and coping strategies. Positive self-attitude, encompassing self-acceptance and high self-efficacy, serves as a resource facilitating the selection of active, problem-focused coping strategies.

To date, the question remains unresolved regarding differentiation of features of coping behavior and self-attitude depending on the objective level of athletic achievement. Research by N.A. Shestilovskaya [126] indicates that as skill level increases, athletes less frequently employ maladaptive strategies such as denial and demonstrate greater resilience. However, a systematic comparative analysis of psychological patterns among high-level athletes, accounting for the interrelationship between their self-attitude and coping repertoire, remains fragmentarily represented in contemporary literature.

A review of scientific concepts reveals a contradiction between the pressing need to investigate coping behavior in elite sports and the insufficient development of research concerning its relationship with self-attitude among athletes achieving varying levels of mastery. Existing studies generally focus either on analyzing coping strategies without thorough examination of their connection to the core of personality, or on investigating self-attitude outside its dynamic interaction with coping processes under conditions of differing

athletic success. This contradiction defines the scientific problem: identifying the nature and specificity of the interrelationship between structural components of self-attitude and the repertoire of coping behavior among professional athletes at different levels of achievement.

**Degree of problem development.** The theoretical foundations of coping behavior are laid in the works of foreign (R. Lazarus and S. Folkman [108], H. Hartmann [56], L. Murphy [58]) and domestic researchers (T.L. Kryukova [64, 65], A.L. Zhuravlev and E.A. Sergienko [156], R.M. Granovskaya and I.M. Nikolskaya [4, 102]). The specifics of its manifestation in sports were studied by A. Nicholls and R. Polman [99], as well as M. Daumiller et al. [29]. The specifics of coping behavior in sports were studied by foreign (A. Nicholls and R. Polman [99, 98], M. Daumiller et al. [29], W. Hudd et al. [44]) and domestic researchers. The theoretical foundations and methodology of analysis were established by T.L. Kryukova [64, 65], A.L. Zhuravlev and E.A. Sergienko [156]. Empirical studies were conducted by K.A. Bocharver and L.M. Dovzhik [11], N.A. Shestilovskaya [126], Z.R. Sovmiz and E.I. Berilova [130], M.V. Popova [117, 21], E.I. Rasskazova, S.V. Leonov and E.V. Enikolopova [119].

Psychological features of professional athletes were investigated in the context of their personality structure and self-regulation. Personality models, including a complex of necessary mental properties, were developed by N.B. Stambulova [131], T.V. Ogorodova [104], and L.K. Serova [125]. Key characteristics of elite athletes, such as volitional qualities, emotional stability, and perfectionism, were analyzed by A.S. Kozhemyako [62] and M.S. Subbotina et al. [134]. V.I. Morosanova [86, 85] investigated the fundamental role of conscious self-regulation in ensuring professional reliability, while A.I. Kharitonova [54] studied personal potential as a determinant of athletic mastery. In foreign studies, psychological features of elite athletes, including mental resilience, were studied by G. Jones, S. Hanton, and D. Connaughton [49, 50], S. Bull and colleagues [19], as well as D. Gould, K. Dieffenbach, and A. Moffett [40]. The connection between perfectionism, pre-competitive anxiety, and optimism in young highly qualified athletes was investigated by J. Dunn and colleagues [31].

Athletes' self-attitude as a complex psychological phenomenon was considered within the context of various theoretical approaches. General psychological foundations for the study of self-attitude and self-consciousness were laid in the works of V.V. Stolin [132, 133], I.I. Chesnokova [58], S.R. Pantileev [111], and A.M. Kolyshko [58]. The specifics of athletes' professional self-attitude, its structural components, and connection with the level of achievement were investigated by E.V. Kolomiychenko [57, 56], Y.P. Povarenkov and A.A. Rogova [116]. In the foreign tradition, significant attention is paid to the concepts of self-esteem (M. Rosenberg) and self-compassion (K. Neff [92]), which are regarded as key components of

psychological well-being. The influence of self-esteem on the emotional state and mental health of athletes was the subject of research, in particular, by B. Lukanovich and colleagues [77].

Psychological support for professional athletes is presented in studies dedicated to optimizing their condition and developing key skills. General principles and methods of psychological preparation were analyzed by V.K. Safonov [122], E.P. Ilyin [46], and V.A. Rodionov with co-authors [120]. Problems of coping with stress in pre- and post-competitive periods, as well as psychological work with injured athletes, were considered by S.A. Khazova and V.V. Kuznetsov [53], A.D. Yavorovskaya and colleagues [151]. Various aspects of practical support, including the formation of motivation and performance stability, are covered in the works of E.K. Evseeva and N.V. Kolesnikova [32], T.V. Priskova [3], I.A. Pankratova [108], and Z.T. Usmanova [106].

The interrelationship of coping behavior with personality characteristics and self-attitude among athletes has become the subject of several empirical studies. Features of coping strategies depending on the level of qualification and type of sport were studied by N.A. Shestilovskaya [126], Z.R. Sovmiz and E.I. Berilova [130], M.V. Popova [117, 21]. The mutual influence of self-regulation, subjective well-being, and coping strategies was analyzed by E.I. Rasskazova, S.V. Leonov, and E.V. Enikolopova [119]. The connection between self-esteem, perfectionism, and coping behavior was considered in the works of D.A. Danyuk and O.N. Melnikova [28], E.Y. Nagornova [88].

Thus, the analysis of the degree of problem development shows that, despite an extensive fund of research on individual aspects of coping behavior, self-attitude, and psychological features of athletes, a comprehensive study of typological differences in the interrelationships between self-attitude and coping behavior among athletes at different stages of their professional career remains insufficiently investigated. Scientifically grounded methods of psychological support that would purposefully form adaptive self-attitude as a system-forming resource for effective coping specifically among elite athletes have not been fully developed. This dissertation work is aimed at filling these gaps.

**Object of the study** – the phenomenon of coping behavior in sports.

**Subject of the study** – the interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes at different levels of achievement.

**Aim of the study** – to identify the specific features of the interrelationship between coping behavior and structural components of self-attitude among professional athletes at different career stages (the stage of athletic mastery improvement and the stage of elite athletic

mastery) and to develop a comprehensive methodology for fostering adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior among elite athletes.

**General hypothesis of the study:** It is hypothesized that there are qualitative differences in the nature and structure of interrelationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes at the stage of athletic mastery improvement and at the stage of elite athletic mastery, reflecting the degree of integration of professional identity and the maturity of personal self-regulation.

**The formulated assumption grounded the following additional hypotheses:**

- professional athletes employ adaptive, problem-focused coping strategies to a greater extent than amateur athletes. For Masters of Sports, compared to Candidates for Master of Sports, a high level of adaptive strategies and "positive reappraisal" is more characteristic.

- professional athletes demonstrate higher scores on scales related to professional identity and self-regulation (self-guidance, self-efficacy, professional self-esteem) compared to amateur athletes;

- the structure of self-attitude in Masters of Sports, compared to Candidates for Master of Sports, is characterized by greater differentiation, complexity, and the presence of specific dynamics, expressed in a simultaneous high level of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and increased internal conflict alongside reduced self-attachment.

- positive components of self-attitude (sports self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-guidance, self-kindness) in all professional athletes are positively associated with adaptive coping strategies.

**Research tasks:**

1. To conduct a theoretical analysis of contemporary approaches to the study of coping behavior and self-attitude, and to investigate the specifics of these phenomena within the context of professional sports activity.

2. To identify and compare the features of coping behavior and self-attitude among amateur athletes and professional athletes of different achievement levels.

3. To determine the specific characteristics and structural components of self-attitude among professional athletes.

4. To establish the nature and direction of interrelationships between indicators of coping behavior and various aspects of self-attitude among professional athletes.

5. To develop scientifically grounded principles and a methodology of psychological support aimed at fostering adaptive self-attitude and effective coping behavior among athletes at the stage of elite athletic mastery.

### **Theoretical foundation of the study:**

1. The theory of stress and coping by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman.
2. The psychology of personality relationships as interpreted by V.N. Myasishchev, as well as concepts of self-consciousness and self-attitude developed in the works of domestic psychologists (V.V. Stolin, S.R. Pantileev, I.S. Kon), which reveal the structure and functions of the emotional-evaluative relationship of the personality toward itself.
3. The resource and subject-activity approaches in psychology (B.G. Ananiev, K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya), emphasizing the role of internal (personal) resources and the activity of the subject in the process of adaptation to challenging life situations, as well as concepts of mental self-regulation (V.I. Morosanova).
4. Theoretical principles of sport psychology (A.Ts. Puni, R.M. Zagaynov, N.B. Stambulova, E.P. Ilyin).
5. The principles of psychological support and personality development developed within the framework of humanistic (C. Rogers, A. Maslow) and acmeological (A.A. Derkach, N.V. Kuzmina) psychology, which served as the basis for designing the practical component of the study.

**Research methods.** The study employed a comprehensive set of complementary scientific methods aligned with the stages of the research. At the theoretical stage, comparative analysis, theoretical-methodological analysis, and content analysis of scientific literature were utilized. The latter was aimed at identifying, categorizing, and systematizing key concepts and conceptual approaches to the problems of coping behavior and self-attitude, which enabled the formulation of the author's definitions and research hypotheses.

At the empirical stage, the primary method of data collection was standardized psychodiagnostic testing (questionnaire survey). During the adaptation of the Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ) for the sports context, semantic analysis was applied to ensure contextual validity and semantic equivalence of item formulations. The research design was based on a cross-sectional approach for group comparisons. Data processing was carried out using methods of mathematical statistics: descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, the Mann–Whitney U-test for group comparisons, Spearman's correlation analysis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and regression analysis.

At the design stage, modeling methods (development of a cyclical support model), systematization and classification methods (structuring of targets and techniques into a block-module system), and constructive-design methods (creation of a specific methodological complex of exercises) were employed. Interpretation of results at all stages was supported by

integrative content-semantic analysis of quantitative profiles and theoretical constructs. Statistical processing of empirical data was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics software package (version 22) and the Jamovi program (version 2.4.7.0, built on the R statistical platform).

**Research instruments:**

1. Ways of Coping Questionnaire by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman, adapted by T.L. Kryukova [59].
2. Self-Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ). Author: S.R. Pantileev [111].
3. Self-Compassion Scale by K. Neff (2003), adapted by K.A. Chistopolskaya et al. [25].
4. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Author: M. Rosenberg. Adaptation: A.A. Zolotareva [157].
5. Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ). Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko (2010) [51].

**Research base:** the study was conducted at sports training centers and educational-training centers in Moscow, specifically: the State Budgetary Institution of Additional Education "Moscow Tennis Academy," the artistic gymnastics sports-training club "Olympia-Iskra," the Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport, Youth and Tourism (SCOLIPE), and the Moscow State Academy of Physical Culture (MSAPC). Empirical data collection was carried out via an online survey using the Yandex Forms platform.

**Sample characteristics:** the study sample comprised 168 athletes aged 20 to 36 years (mean age:  $24.7 \pm 3.3$  years), including: 71 amateur athletes (mean age:  $26.2 \pm 4.2$  years) and 97 professional athletes, of whom 49 held the qualification of Candidate for Master of Sports (CMS) (mean age:  $22.9 \pm 1.7$  years) and 48 held the qualification of Master of Sports/Master of Sports of International Class (MS/MSIC) (mean age:  $24.4 \pm 1.7$  years). Sports represented in the sample included: badminton, boxing, track and field, table tennis, swimming, sambo, artistic gymnastics, tennis, fencing, and rhythmic gymnastics.

**The theoretical significance** of the study lies in the systematization of contemporary foreign and domestic approaches to the study of the coping behavior phenomenon; in the integration of coping and self-attitude concepts into a unified explanatory model of personality adaptation under the extreme demands of professional sports; in identifying and describing specific determinants, structure, and functions of coping behavior among professional athletes; in revealing the role of self-attitude as a system-forming factor mediating the selection and effectiveness of coping strategies; and in the theoretical substantiation of the author's definition

of an athlete's coping behavior as a dynamic, purposeful, and contextually conditioned process. The obtained results contribute to the development of sport psychology, deepening theoretical understanding of psychological adaptation mechanisms and personal resources in activities associated with elite achievements.

**The practical significance** of the dissertation research lies in the fact that its results, conclusions, and the developed author's comprehensive methodology are directly applied in the training system for elite athletes to achieve specific tasks of psychological support: in providing coaches and sport psychologists with a scientifically grounded toolkit, tested in real competitive practice, for the step-by-step formation of adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior; in the operationalization of psychological work principles in the form of a structured block-module program, flexibly adaptable to the athlete's individual profile, preparation stage, and competition schedule; in enhancing the stability and effectiveness of athletes' performances by reducing cases of unexplained performance decline and developing the ability to mobilize and recover in critical moments; in reducing the recovery period after psychologically traumatic defeats and minimizing destructive behavioral reactions to stress (outbursts of anger, loss of concentration) directly during competitions; and in creating a reproducible model of effective interaction between the sport psychologist, the coaching staff, and medical personnel within the unified training process.

**The scientific novelty of the study** lies in the fact that, for the first time in sport psychology, empirical data have been obtained confirming the typologically distinct nature of interrelationships between components of self-attitude and coping strategies among athletes at different stages of their professional career. To conduct the research, a contextual adaptation of the Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ) for sports activity was carried out and validated for the first time, demonstrating substantially higher discriminant validity and sensitivity to the level of athletic mastery compared to general self-attitude instruments. Based on the identified empirical patterns, a comprehensive methodology for fostering adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior among elite athletes was developed and pilot-tested for the first time. This methodology purposefully cultivates a stable, integrated system of psychological regulation, in which professional self-attitude serves as the system-forming core that ensures proactive and strategic coping.

**Provisions submitted for defense:**

1. An athlete's coping behavior is a dynamic, purposeful, and contextually conditioned process of using individual resources (personal qualities, skills, external support) by the athlete to adapt to specific stressors of sports activity (high competition, physical and mental loads,

public scrutiny, dependence on results, risk of injury) aimed at maintaining optimal physical and mental state, achieving high sports results, and preserving psychological well-being.

2. In amateur athletes, coping behavior is characterized by a uniform, polystrategic profile with low expression of responsibility, while self-attitude is characterized by relative simplicity with isolatedly high self-worth. In professional athletes (CMS and MS), coping behavior transforms into a problem-focused profile with pronounced strategies of self-control, planning, and acceptance of responsibility, while self-attitude acquires a complex structure with high self-guidance and self-acceptance. The qualitative difference between mastery stages (CMS/MS) lies in the fact that among Masters of Sports, the coping profile is reinforced by the strategy of positive reappraisal, and the self-attitude profile is characterized by increased internal conflict alongside reduced self-attachment.

3. A specific characteristic of self-attitude in professional athletes is its progressive professionalization and differentiation, maximally expressed at the stage of elite mastery (MS). This manifests in the formation of an independent construct of professional (sports) self-attitude, diagnosed by a specialized questionnaire (adapted PSAQ). This construct possesses significantly higher discriminant validity compared to general self-attitude and is characterized in MS by the simultaneous expression of positive components (sports self-esteem, self-efficacy) and maladaptive tendencies (internal conflict, self-blame), reflecting the extremity of activity demands.

4. The nature of interrelationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes differs qualitatively depending on the level of mastery. In Candidates for Master of Sports (CMS), these connections are dependent and bipolar in nature: positive self-attitude supports adaptive strategies, while self-criticism directly blocks the acceptance of responsibility. In Masters of Sports, an integrated and stable system is formed: key aspects of professional self-attitude (self-esteem, self-guidance) establish strong connections with proactive coping strategies (planning, responsibility), serving as their system-forming core, while negative components of self-attitude do not lead to general behavioral disorganization.

5. The scientifically grounded principles of psychological support for elite athletes, aimed at fostering adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior, are: a) purposeful development of professional self-attitude as the system-forming core of psychological regulation; b) differentiation of intervention targets into a positive pole (strengthening self-esteem, self-efficacy) and a maladaptive pole (transforming internal conflict and self-accusation into a resource for reflection); c) integration of proactive coping skills training (planning, positive reappraisal) into the process of strengthening professional identity. The comprehensive

methodology built on these principles represents a block-module program, the pilot testing of which confirms its effectiveness in enhancing performance stability and reducing destructive behavioral reactions to stress.

**Approbation and implementation of research results.** The research results were presented and discussed at scientific-practical conferences: the International Scientific-Practical Conference (October 16–17, 2025) "Physical Culture and Sports. Olympic Education" [18], and the IX International Scientific-Practical Conference "Sport as a Path to Peace Among Nations" (Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport, Youth and Tourism).

Publications related to the research topic include: the article "Specific features of coping behavior in professional athletes, as they relate to their individual perspectives on the world and their self-perception," published in the journal *Current Issues of Sports Psychology and Pedagogy* [17], and the article "Interrelationship of Coping Behavior and Self-Attitude in Professional Athletes," published in the journal *Psychology and Pedagogy of Sports Activities*.

Furthermore, the research results have been implemented in practical work with junior and professional athletes at the "Pirogovsky" Tennis Club.

**The reliability and validity of the results** are ensured by the conducted theoretical analysis of Russian and foreign studies on the problems of coping behavior and self-attitude; the methodological principles and theoretical foundations of the study; the combination of a set of theoretical and empirical methods and procedures adequate to the aim and objectives of the research; the selection of appropriate psychodiagnostic instruments; the representativeness of the research sample; and the use of diverse methods of mathematical statistics.

**Structure and volume of the dissertation.** The dissertation is presented in 189 pages of typescript text and consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references comprising 157 sources, including 38 works by foreign authors. The material is illustrated with 25 tables and 7 figures and contains 17 appendices.

## **CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF COPING BEHAVIOR AND SELF-ATTITUDE IN PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES**

### **1.1 Contemporary foreign and Russian approaches to the study of coping**

The phenomenon of coping behavior represents one of the most ambiguous and contradictory topics in contemporary Russian and foreign psychology. This ambiguity stems from the fact that, to date, no unified conceptual framework for understanding this phenomenon has been established within the scientific community, as coping is a broad concept with a long and rather complex history of development.

The problematics of coping behavior encompass a wide range of psychological realities, are represented within various theoretical approaches, and are characterized by terminological diversity. In scientific discourse, several interrelated yet non-identical categories are used to describe this phenomenon, including "coping," "coping behavior," "coping responses," and "stress-overcoming behavior".

Currently, coping is generally understood as conscious strategies for overcoming stressful situations. These are consciously employed techniques that individuals use to manage difficult situations and states, representing a set of diverse behavioral strategies—varying attempts in cognitive and behavioral domains — to address specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources [135].

In foreign psychology, two main concepts—"coping" and "defense"—are used to describe behavioral strategies employed by an individual in response to complex or stressful situations; these concepts are interrelated.

The term "coping" denotes active, conscious efforts aimed at managing, minimizing, or eliminating a stressor, as well as adapting to it. This implies a purposeful impact on the problem situation or on one's own emotional reactions caused by this situation [156].

In contrast, the term "defense" (psychological defense) refers to predominantly unconscious mechanisms designed to protect the psyche from negative experiences, unacceptable thoughts, impulses, or information that may threaten the individual's sense of stability and positive self-esteem [114]. Within the framework of psychoanalytic theory, the concept of "defense" describes the protective function of the "ego", aimed at shielding consciousness from becoming aware of or accepting unpleasant, traumatic aspects of reality that may cause anxiety or other negative emotions [110]. In other words, psychological defense

represents a set of mechanisms through which an individual seeks to avoid encountering a psychological problem and, consequently, the need for its constructive resolution.

Due to the fact that coping research abroad was conducted within the framework of studying defense mechanisms, some researchers continue to use the term "coping" to mean adaptive defenses in the literature on coping and psychological defenses to this day.

Initially, interest in this subject matter formed within the psychoanalytic paradigm. Such renowned psychologists as S. Freud and A. Freud investigated the mechanisms of psychological defense. They emphasized that defense mechanisms, such as rationalization or repression, may temporarily alleviate suffering but do not always contribute to long-term problem solving [110]. A. Freud (A. Freud, 1936) developed the concept of defense mechanisms as ways in which the ego copes with unacceptable impulses and anxiety [109]. Although she did not use the term "coping", her work laid the foundation for understanding how people unconsciously manage stress.

The emergence of the "coping" phenomenon is associated with the name of the outstanding Austrian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst H. Hartmann (Heinz Hartmann, 1939/1958). He published the book *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* in German in 1939, which was translated into English in 1958. In it, the concept of the "conflict-free ego sphere" was described for the first time [56]. He emphasized the adaptive functions of the ego and its capacity for autonomous functioning. The author considered coping as part of the process of adaptation to reality, and not only as protection from internal conflicts [56].

In the second half of the last century, the prominent American psychologist L. Murphy (Lois Murphy, 1976) was the first to introduce the term "coping" into the scientific community. In Russian-language literature, this term is used as "coping" or "совладание" (coping), and less frequently in the context of "to cope" or "to manage". According to the author, this concept encompasses a wide spectrum of strategies and methods that people use to deal with emotional, social, and psychological difficulties [87].

In her empirical research, L. Murphy focused on developmental crises that may arise at different periods of childhood, for example, during adolescence, when children face new challenges such as changes in the social environment, the emergence of new responsibilities, and the need to adapt to new conditions. She observed that coping behavior is directly related to individual personality characteristics, such as stress level, emotional stability, and social skills. The author identified various coping strategies that may be used by children [138]. The research of this author served as a foundation for further studies in psychology aimed at

investigating the mechanisms through which people cope with crises and stressors throughout the lifespan.

In contemporary foreign psychology, in our view, three main theoretical approaches to studying the coping phenomenon can be distinguished, each offering its own perspective on the mechanisms of adaptation to stressful situations.

The first approach, represented by the ego-oriented theory of coping, originates in the psychoanalytic tradition and traces back to the works of S. Freud (1923) and A. Freud (1937), further developing in the works of K. Menninger (1963), G. Vaillant (1977), T. Kroeber (1963), and N. Haan (1963, 1969). Within this paradigm, coping is viewed as a specific ego-mechanism to which an individual resorts with the aim of reducing internal tension. The emphasis is placed on the role of unconscious processes and defense mechanisms in managing stress. At the same time, the effectiveness of coping is evaluated in terms of its ability to restore homeostasis and reduce internal discomfort, rather than in terms of its adaptiveness to the external environment.

The second approach focuses on personal dispositions as stable predictors of coping behavior. According to this concept, presented in particular by the works of R. Moos (1982), coping strategies are viewed as relatively stable personality traits, predetermining the nature of an individual's response to various stress factors. The author distinguishes between active and passive ways of responding to stress, viewing the former as a manifestation of constructive, adaptive behavior, and the latter as non-constructive and maladaptive. This approach emphasizes individual differences in coping strategies and suggests that some people are more inclined toward effective, active strategies, while others more frequently use passive, maladaptive strategies. However, critics note that this approach may underestimate the influence of contextual factors and the dynamics of the coping process [84].

Researchers A. Billings and R. Moos noted that the use of coping strategies can help an individual avoid unexpected actions in stressful situations, which in turn can lead to problem resolution without the need for active measures on the part of the person. They argue that the choice of behavior in a stressful situation depends on stable personality qualities that determine ways of overcoming stress, such as situation appraisal, intervention, or avoidance [73].

The third, most influential direction is represented by the cognitive-phenomenological theory of stress coping, developed by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman (1984), who made a significant contribution to the study of this topic in foreign research. R. Lazarus theoretically substantiated and practically developed the concept of coping behavior. They proposed the following definition: "coping as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at

managing specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" [71, p. 141].

This definition (which is widely used), in our view, has many advantages. Firstly, it describes the term as a process, rather than as a stable characteristic or behavioral style; the process is described more functionally and can also become an object of intervention (unlike a characteristic or style). Secondly, it refers to the individual's attempts to appraise/define (rather than control, which in itself is often impossible) negative stimuli. This "appraisal" may include reappraisal, tolerance, or even acceptance of the negative incident, if this is to lead to effective adaptation. Thirdly, the definition of cognitive appraisal/analysis makes the term exclusively psychological. Fourthly, the definition considers coping as a mobilization of the organism or an intentional effort of the individual to respond to external or internal adversities. The latter brings to the forefront the question of differentiating this term from other terms. In particular, since coping with stress requires conscious efforts, it cannot be synonymous with reflexive or spontaneous reactions of the individual, as these are outside the individual's conscious control.

Psychologist R. Lazarus viewed coping as a problem-solving endeavor undertaken by an individual if demands are of great significance for their well-being (both in situations involving great danger and in situations aimed at great success), since these demands activate adaptive capacities. According to his model, coping strategies represent cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at overcoming or reducing stress in response to challenging life situations. These strategies allow a person to adapt to changing conditions, maintain emotional equilibrium, and achieve set goals [67].

According to their interactive model, a person goes through two distinct processes that are crucial for the outcome of the problem. The first is cognitive appraisal, which refers to the degree and manner in which the situation relates to the individual. The second relates to how the problem is coped with. Problem solving is defined as an attempt to find a solution, endure, and/or reduce the external and internal pressure caused by the situation. The interactive model is not linear; as R. Lazarus and S. Folkman assert, stress coping is a dynamic process, during which reappraisal leads to a change in the mode of interaction with it, and vice versa [71]. They define stress as a specific relationship between the individual and their environment, which is expressed in their appraisal that the situation they face significantly taxes or even exceeds their mental resources, thereby threatening their mental equilibrium [71].

According to R. Lazarus and S. Folkman, coping with a stressogenic stimulus may be undertaken not by the individual themselves, but by the social group to which they belong. "Others" not only support the individual's decisions/actions but also participate in group efforts

to overcome stress. Even the stressor is not considered a property of the individual, but is recognized as a property of the group. This model evolves in response to constant changes in the relationships between the individual and the group at sequential stages of its development [35].

Most classifications of coping behavior are based on two types of coping identified by S. Folkman and R. Lazarus:

1. Problem-focused coping strategies, which are aimed at changing or eliminating the stressor. They include actions such as information seeking, problem solving, planning, and implementing actions to change the situation.

2. Emotion-focused coping strategies, which are aimed at managing emotional state and reducing stress. These include actions such as emotional regulation, avoidance, distraction, positive reappraisal of the situation, and seeking social support.

Reviewing the relevant scientific literature, F. Cohen and R. Lazarus (1973) cite the following functions that are part of overcoming stressful situations: (a) "reduces harmful environmental conditions and improves the individual's prospects for 'recovery';" (b) "toughens the individual and allows him/her to withstand or adapt to negative circumstances and situations;" (c) "helps maintain a positive self-image;" (d) "[helps maintain] emotional stability;" and (e) "allows the individual to maintain satisfactory relationships with other people" [27].

In contemporary foreign coping psychology, alongside the main classical theoretical approaches, two independent but complementary directions structuring the field of research can be distinguished: focus-oriented theories (including approaches emphasizing traits and states), and approach-oriented theories (represented by micro- and macro-analytical models).

Focus-oriented coping theories, specifically those concentrating on states and traits, consider internal resources and mental abilities of the personality as determinants of its adaptive potential. Within this direction, the emphasis is placed on stable personality characteristics, such as optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, as well as on current psychological state (e.g., level of anxiety, depression, stress), which influence the selection and effectiveness of coping strategies [75]. These theories suggest that people with more developed internal resources and a positive psychological state possess a greater ability to effectively adapt to stressful situations. For example, studies (Jex, S. M. et al, 2001; Benight, C. C. et al, 2015) demonstrate that people with a high level of self-efficacy are more inclined toward active coping strategies aimed at problem solving, while people with a high level of anxiety more frequently use avoidance strategies.

In contrast, approach-oriented coping theories are subdivided into micro-analytical and macro-analytical models, depending on the level of detail and abstraction of the coping mechanisms under consideration (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Micro-analytical theories focus on specific strategies and techniques used by the individual to overcome stress in a specific situation. For example, these may include specific behavioral actions (e.g., information seeking, seeking social support) or cognitive processes (e.g., positive reappraisal, dissociation). Macro-analytical theories, in contrast, consider coping at a higher level of abstraction, identifying general styles or types of coping behavior (e.g., active coping, avoidance, emotion-focused coping) [22]. These theories allow for the identification of general patterns of coping behavior that may be applicable to various situations and groups of people.

The distinction between micro- and macro-analytical approaches lies in the level of analysis detail. The micro-analytical approach allows for obtaining a more detailed picture of coping behavior in a specific situation, but may be less generalizable. The macro-analytical approach, on the contrary, allows for identifying general patterns of coping, but may overlook important nuances and individual differences.

Thus, both directions – focus-oriented and approach-oriented – make an important contribution to understanding the complex phenomenon of coping, offering different perspectives and levels of analysis. The integration of these approaches allows for obtaining a more complete and deep understanding of the mechanisms of adaptation to stressful situations.

In a review presented by M. Boekaerts (1996) at the end of the last century, the stress coping process is conceptualized as a dynamic sequence of interconnected elements, covering the period from the initiation of the stressor to its elimination or adaptation to it. The main components of this model are:

- 1) the negative situation itself, acting as a trigger;
- 2) the repertoire of coping skills available to the individual, determining potential response capabilities;
- 3) the hierarchy of coping goals, structuring the direction of efforts and determining the desired outcome;
- 4) cognitive appraisal of the situation, which is a subjective interpretation of the stressor and determines its significance;
- 5) intention to cope, reflecting motivational readiness for active actions;
- 6) specific coping strategies, implemented in practice and aimed at changing the situation, oneself, or the attitude toward the situation [13].

A distinctive feature of this model is the identification of two additional components integrated into the general scheme: modification of coping skills and evaluation of coping goals. These processes, resulting from the application of specific strategies, imply revision and adaptation of existing skills and goals based on obtained experience and feedback. Modification of coping skills may include learning new strategies, improving existing ones, or abandoning ineffective ones. Evaluation of coping goals, in turn, allows for revising initial expectations and adjusting the direction of efforts in accordance with realistically achievable results.

An important element of the model is the emphasis on the role of working memory, which is considered as a cognitive resource actively involved in processing information related to the first four elements of the coping process: stimulus perception, activation of skills, goal formation, and situation appraisal. Working memory ensures maintenance and manipulation of relevant information necessary for effective planning and implementation of coping strategies, and is also influenced by these processes, forming the basis for further learning and adaptation.

L. Perlin and S. Shuler identify three coping strategies:

- 1) strategy of changing the situation;
- 2) strategy of changing the way of viewing the problem;
- 3) strategy of managing emotional distress [33].

The renowned American psychiatrist and psychologist G. Vaillant (George Vaillant, 1992) studied formed defense mechanisms and their role in successful adaptation to life. He identified mechanisms such as sublimation, altruism, and humor as coping methods contributing to psychological health [145].

One of the most important representatives of object relations theory, D. Winnicott (1958), emphasized in his works the importance of the "good enough mother" in forming the child's ability to cope with frustration and anxiety. His concept of "transitional objects" is also related to the development of coping skills [149].

The beginning of domestic research in the direction of studying coping and defense mechanisms was laid in the mid-90s of the last century; it should be noted that to a large extent it was driven by practical demand. Among the first were psychologists: R.M. Granovskaya [41], I.M. Nikolskaya [102], A.L. Zhuravlev, T.L. Kryukova [156, 94]. In domestic psychology, it is also accepted to use such terms as overcoming, coping, or adaptive behavior.

To date, domestic science encompasses numerous approaches to understanding and describing coping behavior, similar to foreign science. Coping behavior, according to a number of domestic authors (A.L. Zhuravlev, T.L. Kryukova, E.A. Sergienko), is "a special type of human social behavior that ensures or destroys his health and well-being. It allows the subject

to cope with stress or a difficult life situation through conscious actions and is aimed at active interaction with the situation – its change (when it is subject to control) or adaptation to it (in cases where the situation is not subject to control). If the subject does not possess this type of behavior, adverse consequences for his productivity, health, and well-being are possible" [156, p. 8].

In domestic scientific literature, the terms "coping" and "coping behavior" are often used interchangeably, denoting behavioral and cognitive strategies aimed at overcoming stress; therefore, it seems advisable to conduct a conceptual differentiation between them. Such differentiation will allow for a more detailed analysis of the mechanisms of personality adaptation to stressful situations, taking into account the nuances of selection and effectiveness of various strategies depending on the context and individual characteristics. Differentiation of terms may contribute to a more precise definition of research goals, interpretation of results, and development of practical recommendations in the field of stress psychology and coping behavior.

Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor T.L. Kryukova notes that, "in contrast to psychological defense, coping behavior is a conscious strategy of action aimed at eliminating a threat or obstacle, better adapting a person to situational demands, and helping to transform the situation in accordance with one's intentions, or to endure and tolerate circumstances that a person cannot change" [64, p. 22].

We propose considering "coping" as a broader construct encompassing any efforts undertaken by an individual to manage a stressor, regardless of their effectiveness or adaptiveness. This includes both conscious, purposeful actions and automatic, sometimes maladaptive reactions to stress. In turn, the term "coping behavior" can be defined as successful, adaptive coping that leads to a reduction in stress levels, improvement in psychological well-being, and preservation of personality functioning.

This approach allows for emphasizing the process of evaluating the effectiveness of various coping strategies. Thus, research on coping behavior focuses on identifying factors that determine successful adaptation to stress, as well as on developing methods to enhance the effectiveness of coping behavior. It is necessary to consider that "coping behavior" is not a static state and depends on numerous factors, including the type of stressor, individual personality resources, and social support.

It should be noted that some domestic authors also identify certain distinctions between coping strategies and coping behavior. For example, E.V. Libina [73] believes that:

- coping strategies are specific actions that a person uses to overcome psychologically difficult situations. They may be cognitive, emotional, or behavioral.

- coping behavior is purposeful social behavior that enables a person to cope with a difficult life situation in ways adequate to personality characteristics and the situation.

Consequently, coping behavior can be represented as a certain sequence of coping strategies, each of which addresses its own task. Only their collective combination provides the opportunity to cope with a stressful situation.

Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Research Fellow at the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, I.I. Vetrova considers coping behavior as one of the mechanisms of self-regulation, alongside behavioral control and psychological defense. The researcher emphasizes that if psychological defense represents the least conscious level – an insufficiently recognized tendency—then behavioral control occupies an intermediate level: it is partially conscious, relying on both unconscious and conscious concrete structures. In contrast, coping behavior is a fully conscious phenomenon. In her work, the author draws attention to the differentiation between the concepts of "coping behavior" and "psychological defense," equivalent mechanisms with numerous interconnections. Longitudinal data obtained allow the assumption that in the process of forming coping behavior styles among adolescents, behavioral control remains a relatively stable variable, whereas psychological defenses and coping behavior change significantly. There is a substitution of psychological defenses by coping strategies, i.e., a shift to a higher level of self-regulation—the conscious level [146].

N.Y. Litvinova, author of the monograph *Psychological Resources of Coping Behavior in Human Life Activity*, believes that "coping behavior in difficult life situations is understood as a rational activity strategy ensuring effective achievement of results" [74, p. 9].

In domestic psychology, five main tasks of coping as a special adaptive behavior are identified:

- 1) minimization of negative impacts of circumstances and enhancement of possibilities for restoring activity and functioning;

- 2) endurance, adaptation, or regulation, transformation of life situations;

- 3) maintenance of a positive, favorable "self-image" and confidence in one's abilities;

- 4) maintenance of emotional equilibrium;

- 5) maintenance and preservation of sufficiently close relationships with other people [78].

Coping actions include thoughts, emotions, and behavioral reactions that a person undertakes to deal with difficulties. Coping actions may be aimed at changing the situation, changing one's attitude toward it, or regulating emotional state.

Coping strategies may be oriented toward problem solving, seeking social support, avoiding the stressful situation, or accepting it as inevitable. They may be active or passive, adaptive or maladaptive, as reflected in the scheme we have compiled (Fig. 1.1).

Cognitive	Behavioral	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•adaptive variant: problem analysis strategy</li> <li>•relatively adaptive variant: strategies of ignoring, dissimulation, maintaining self-control, religiosity, reappraisal (or meaning-making), and establishing one's own value</li> <li>•maladaptive variant: strategies of resignation and confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•adaptive variant: cooperation strategy</li> <li>•relatively adaptive variant: strategies of distraction, altruism, compensation, constructive activity, and seeking help from others</li> <li>•maladaptive variant: strategies of active avoidance and withdrawal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•adaptive variant: optimism strategy</li> <li>•relatively adaptive variant: strategies of protest and passive cooperation</li> <li>•maladaptive variant: strategies of emotional discharge, submissiveness, self-blame, aggressiveness, and emotional suppression</li> </ul>

Figure 1.1 – Adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies

Note: Compiled by the author

There are various classifications of coping strategies in contemporary scientific literature. One of the most common classifications identifies three main types of coping strategies:

1. Task-oriented coping – aimed at changing the situation or solving the problem.
2. Emotion-focused coping – aimed at regulating emotional state and reducing anxiety and stress.
3. Avoidance coping – aimed at avoiding or postponing problem resolution [156].

The choice of coping strategy depends on many factors, such as the type of stressful situation, individual personality characteristics, social support, and resources. However, not all coping strategies are equally effective; some of them may be maladaptive and even exacerbate stress [135].

Furthermore, the effectiveness of coping strategies may depend on individual personality characteristics and social environment. Types of coping are highly diverse (Fig. 1.2).

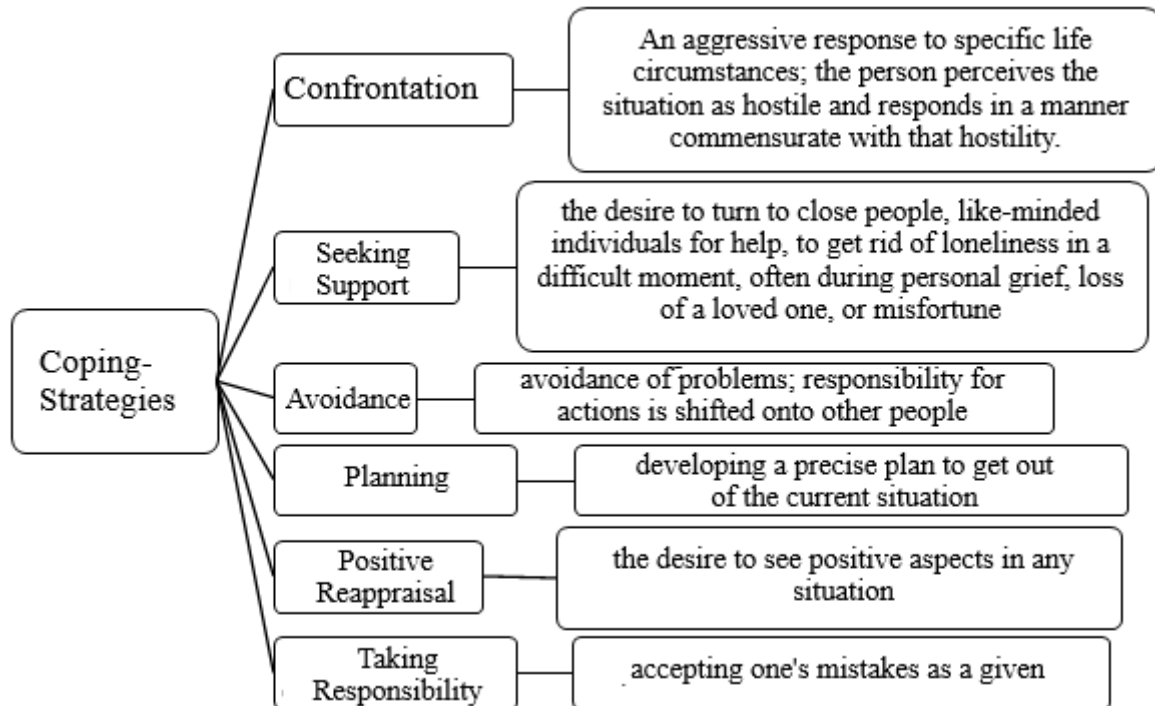


Figure 1.2 – Types of coping

Note: Compiled by the author

The concept of "productive" and "unproductive" coping evolved through empirical research within the transactional model of stress, which demonstrated that problem-focused coping strategies positively correlate with adaptation and health, and negatively with the level of experienced stress. It was believed that emotion-focused strategies, conversely, play a negative role and exacerbate stress, as they do not resolve the situation itself. Subsequently, data were obtained indicating that this relationship is ambiguous [73].

The choice of coping strategy depends on the level of control over the situation. If the stressor is controllable, one can actively take steps to eliminate it using problem-focused coping strategies. If the stressor is uncontrollable, acceptance of the problem and adaptation to it come to the forefront, utilizing emotion-focused coping strategies. The effectiveness of coping strategies may change over time. A strategy that was effective in one situation may prove ineffective in another. Therefore, it is important to possess a repertoire of various coping strategies to enable adaptation to diverse stressful situations. Coping strategies can help manage

stress and enhance psychological well-being; however, some of them may be ineffective or even harmful. For example, avoidance or denial of a stressful situation may lead to exacerbation of the problem. Therefore, it is important to select coping strategies that correspond to the specific situation and individual characteristics of the person.

Scholars engaged in the study of coping strategies hold several viewpoints regarding their effectiveness. Some consider that coping strategies can be both functional and productive, as well as destructive and dysfunctional. Others posit that one of the components of coping is its utility for the personality. According to this viewpoint, coping strategies represent a spectrum of purposeful and conscious actions aimed at adaptation to life situations.

There is another viewpoint according to which coping strategies are productive ways of coping with stress, the effectiveness of which depends on two factors: the context of events and the response reactions through which specific coping strategies are implemented.

We share R. Lazarus's viewpoint that coping represents a continuous process, characterized by dynamics and constant transformation of the applied coping methods. Such dynamism is determined by the continuous interaction between the personality and the environment, which exert mutual influence on each other. The choice of a specific coping strategy depends on the specificity of the problem, the individual's well-being, and personality characteristics.

Thus, coping strategies represent a diverse set of methods that people use to cope with stressful and anxiety-inducing situations. The effectiveness of coping strategies depends on many factors, including the context of the situation, the individual's personal characteristics, and their life experience.

Empirical studies (N.I. Vasilyeva, 2017; A.V. Fomina, 2020) confirm that positive self-attitude correlates with the dominance of problem-focused coping strategies, while negative self-attitude is associated with the predominance of avoidance and emotion-focused coping.

In contemporary domestic research on coping behavior, as demonstrated by the theoretical analysis of publications, the following patterns have been established:

1. Content of the coping process analysis. The analysis of coping behavior involves studying the characteristics of the subject's behavior in difficult situations, patterns of functioning of coping styles and strategies, as well as factors determining the subject's activity. These factors include character traits, specifics of activity, the level of formation of personal-regulatory properties, and conformity to social norms.

2. Mechanisms of coping effectiveness. Coping effectiveness is ensured by conscious behavior aimed at active interaction with the situation. This implies either changing the situation

if it is controllable, or adapting to it if control is impossible. The absence of such behavior can lead to negative consequences for the subject's productivity, health, and overall well-being.

3. Subject characteristics as a key resource. The most important feature of coping behavior is the presence of psychological resources linked to subject characteristics. These include a positive attitude toward life, the ability to plan, program, model, and evaluate results, as well as flexibility and independence. The formation of resources for goal-setting, reflection, and creativity is considered a necessary condition for successful coping in complex life situations.

4. Dynamics of coping in the development of a difficult situation. Coping behavior is not static but develops along with changes in situational demands and/or the transformation of the subject themselves. This implies that coping styles and strategies may change depending on the current context. An important factor is the subject's ability to learn coping skills, which allows for regulating and optimizing the adaptation process to complex circumstances.

5. Age-related dynamics and subjectivity in coping. The choice of "coping supports" changes throughout a person's life. Maturation, development of self-knowledge and self-regulation lead to an increase in subjectivity within the coping process. Positive dynamics are characterized by an increased use of productive strategies aimed at problem solving, and a decrease in unproductive strategies, including destructive forms of discharge. A decrease in subjectivity and behavioral adequacy can lead to an increase in unproductive or self-destructive coping. The development and formation of coping behavior styles occurs particularly actively during adolescence and youth, under conditions of interaction with parents and peers.

Furthermore, contemporary research emphasizes the influence of sociocultural and personal determinants on the selection of coping strategies. Age-related changes in preferences for coping behavior methods and the possibility of teaching individuals corresponding skills are noted [1].

Functional analysis of coping behavior (T.L. Kryukova, 2005; E.V. Bityutskaya, 2011) reveals that one of the key tasks of coping is maintaining a positive "self-image" and preserving self-esteem in situations of frustration. This allows for the assertion of bidirectional determination: on one hand, self-attitude determines the selection and effectiveness of coping strategies; on the other hand, the success of coping directly influences the transformation of self-attitude.

The conducted analysis allows us to assert that the effectiveness of coping behavior is determined not only by situational factors and the available repertoire of behavioral strategies, but also by stable psychological personality structures. As a central, system-forming factor

determining the nature, direction, and success of coping activity, the personality's attitude toward itself emerges.

## **1.2 Self-attitude as a psychological phenomenon: structure, determinants, and functions**

Self-attitude, representing a complex and dynamic psychological construct, should be considered an integral attribute of personality self-consciousness. Operationally, it is a system of stable evaluative judgments, affective reactions, cognitive representations, and behavioral dispositions oriented toward the perception of and interaction with one's own "Self". The formation of this phenomenon unfolds during ontogenesis, undergoing continuous evolution and exerting significant influence on processes of self-regulation, the motivational sphere, and the nature of interpersonal interactions.

In contemporary psychological science, it is acknowledged that there is no unified definition of the phenomenon of "personality's attitude toward itself", despite its active investigation in both domestic and foreign scientific traditions. Analysis of specialized literature on this topic reveals significant variability in the psychological constructs used to describe the content of this phenomenon. In particular, concepts such as global self-esteem, self-respect, self-acceptance, emotional-evaluative attitude toward one's own "Self", self-attitude proper, self-confidence, sense of dignity, self-satisfaction, self-sympathy, and self-worth are employed. Operationalization of these concepts is carried out through such psychological categories as "set" (D.N. Uznadze), "personal meaning" (A.N. Leontiev), "attitude" (V.N. Myasishchev), "attitude towards self" (M. Rosenberg, R. Wylie, S. Coopersmith), "social attitude" (I.S. Kon, N.I. Sarchveladze), and "feeling" (S.L. Rubinstein).

V.V. Stolin (1983) made a significant contribution to psychological science by developing the concept of self-consciousness, within which attitude toward oneself is interpreted as a complexly structured system that includes a number of interrelated components, such as evaluation of one's own personality, acceptance of oneself as an integral subject, respect for one's own qualities, and a sense of personal efficacy [132].

According to V.V. Stolin, attitude toward oneself is not a static formation but develops dynamically through social interaction and under the influence of the external environment. Evaluative judgments and expectations of significant social actors play a decisive role in the process of self-attitude formation. At the same time, the author emphasizes the active role of the individual in constructing their own self-image and attitude toward themselves through the interpretation of personal experience and reflexive understanding. The concept underscores the

significance of object-practical activity in the formation of self-attitude. The scientist asserts that success in solving tasks and achieving set goals has a direct impact on the formation of a sense of competence and confidence in one's own abilities. Positive experience of activity, in turn, contributes to enhancing self-esteem and strengthening the sense of self-respect. In his dissertation, V.V. Stolin considers self-attitude as the main mechanism of behavioral regulation. It influences the selection of goals, the development of behavioral strategies, and the degree of persistence in achieving desired outcomes. A formed positive attitude toward oneself promotes more active and purposeful activity, whereas negative self-attitude may lead to reduced motivation, uncertainty, and avoidance of complex situations [133].

According to I.I. Chesnokova's position, self-attitude represents an emotional-evaluative modality of attitude toward one's own "Self", constituting one of the intrapsychic processes of self-consciousness. Within this framework, self-attitude reflects the integrative unity of the cognitive act of self-cognition and the system of subjective experiences. In this context, "experience" is interpreted as the internal dynamic foundation constituting the mode of existence of self-attitude as a psychological phenomenon. In other words, the emotional-evaluative aspect of self-attitude is realized and manifested through the continuous process of experience, which is an integral component of its structure and dynamics [58].

Y.A. Kosolapov (2006) made a significant contribution to the study of self-attitude, examining it within the context of personality development and its adaptation to changing social conditions. His works are characterized by a comprehensive approach to analyzing the structure of self-attitude, highlighting cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. He emphasizes the role of social experience, interpersonal relationships, and success in activity in the formation and modification of self-attitude. Particular attention is given to the process of self-evaluation, which is viewed as an active process of constructing a self-image based on the analysis of one's own achievements, failures, and comparison with others [61].

The novelty of the approach lies in the integration of various theoretical models of self-attitude and the development of an original method for its assessment. He proposed the concept of "reflexive self-attitude", characterized by an individual's capacity for conscious analysis of their own feelings, thoughts, and behavioral motives. Reflexive self-attitude is regarded as an important resource for personal growth and self-improvement.

As A.A. Bodalev writes, self-attitude "proves to be a structurally complex construct, encompassing both a general, global feeling for or against oneself, as well as more specific parameters: self-respect, self-sympathy, self-interest or closeness to oneself, [and] the expected attitude of others" [14, p. 356].

According to S.R. Pantileev, self-attitude is a psychological construct of personality, and its essence can be revealed through the subject's real relationships, social development situations, and leading activity, all endowed with personal meaning. Thus, in the author's understanding, self-attitude represents an emotional-evaluative system expressing personal meaning, or the meaning of "Self" [111].

Based on the literature analysis, it was established that the internal organization of self-attitude implies a hierarchical structure comprising interconnected components:

1. The cognitive aspect, represented as self-consciousness, constitutes a set of knowledge, representations, and beliefs of the individual regarding their own characteristics, competencies, social roles, and achieved results.

2. The affective-evaluative component (self-esteem) reflects the spectrum of emotions and experiences experienced by the individual in relation to themselves, including both positive feelings (satisfaction, pride) and negative ones (dissatisfaction, guilt, sense of inadequacy).

3. The behavioral component, linked with self-regulation, is manifested in a set of behavioral patterns reflecting attitude toward oneself, ranging from manifestations of care and striving for self-improvement to self-destructive behavior and avoidance of responsibility.

The genesis of attitude toward oneself is determined by the complex interaction of multiple factors acting throughout the life cycle. Genetic predictors, determining temperament and neurophysiological characteristics, are capable of influencing the formation of basic emotional reactions and predisposition to a certain type of self-esteem.

Social experience, including interactions with parents, peers, and significant others, plays a critical role in the formation of self-concepts and self-esteem, especially at early stages of ontogenesis.

Cultural factors establishing social norms, values, and ideals also exert significant influence, since discrepancy with these standards can provoke negative experiences and a decrease in self-esteem.

Individual experience, including personal achievements and failures, experienced life conflicts, and personal values, directly influences the formation of a subjective attitude toward oneself. Age-related changes, conditioned by shifts in social roles, professional activity, somatic status, and life experience, also determine the transformation of attitude toward oneself.

Self-attitude performs a number of fundamental functions in the mental organization of the individual. The regulatory function orients behavior and activity, influencing the choice of goals, motives, and strategies for their implementation. The motivational function activates the striving for success, self-improvement, and achievement of planned tasks. The protective

function ensures stability against negative impacts and stress factors, facilitating adaptation to complex situations. The integrative function contributes to the formation of a sense of identity and personality integrity, integrating various aspects of the "Self" into a coherent structure. The social function influences the nature of interpersonal relationships, determining communication style, partner selection, and the ability to form emotional intimacy.

Within the framework of scientific analysis of self-attitude as an integral construct explicating the individual's attitude toward oneself, the following categories are most frequently operationalized, widely represented in specialized literature within the context of personality psychology and social psychology (S.R. Pantileev, V.V. Stolin, R. Burns, M. Rosenberg):

1. Self-evaluation. A category reflecting the cognitive evaluation by the individual of their own qualities, abilities, competencies, and their correspondence to internalized criteria of success and social desirability. In scientific research (Bandura, 1977; Deci & Ryan, 1985), self-esteem is considered as a determinant of motivation, behavior, and personality adaptation.

2. Self-respect. The affective component of self-attitude, characterizing the emotional acceptance by the individual of their own value and dignity. As indicated in the works of Baumeister (1998) and Leary (2007), self-respect plays a key role in regulating social behavior, interpersonal relationships, and maintaining psychological well-being.

3. Self-acceptance. It is characterized by an unconditional positive attitude of the individual toward themselves, regardless of external evaluations, failures, or imperfections. In the context of humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1961), self-acceptance is considered a necessary condition for personal growth and self-actualization.

4. Self-concept. A complex cognitive structure including the individual's representations of themselves as an object possessing certain characteristics, qualities, roles, and identities. In studies by Markus (1977) and Higgins (1987), it is shown that self-concept influences processes of perception, interpretation, and memorization of information related to oneself.

5. Self-efficacy. The individual's evaluation of their ability to successfully cope with specific tasks or situations. According to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), confidence in one's own abilities influences the choice of goals, efforts, persistence, and emotional reactions in the process of achieving the desired result.

6. Self-consciousness. The process of the individual's awareness of their thoughts, feelings, motives, and behavior. In studies by Duval & Wicklund (1972), it is shown that self-consciousness can lead to increased conformity of behavior to internalized standards and values.

These categories, grounded in scientific research and theoretical concepts, allow for a comprehensive assessment of the structure and dynamics of self-attitude, as well as its influence on various aspects of an individual's life activity.

Self-esteem plays a key role in the formation of one's self-image, influencing behavior, emotional state, and even physical health. The foundation of self-esteem consists of socially significant values and norms, which vary depending on cultural context and historical period [119]. These values help the individual comprehend their personality, determining the extent to which they feel worthy of respect and recognition in society. Self-esteem is not static; it can change depending on circumstances and environment.

It should be noted that self-esteem does not always correspond to objective reality; it can be distorted by negative experiences, criticism from others, or internal fears.

In the works of domestic psychologists (L.I. Bozhovich, I.S. Kon, I.I. Chesnokova), self-esteem is considered not merely as a separate aspect of personality, but as a central element integrating various aspects of self-knowledge. This phenomenon not only includes the evaluation of one's qualities and abilities but also forms the emotional-evaluative attitude of a person toward themselves.

Literature analysis has shown that there are two viewpoints regarding self-esteem. On one hand, self-esteem essentially coincides with the concept of self-attitude, as argued by R. Burns [20]. In his concept, self-esteem is an affective evaluation of the individual's representation of themselves, possessing varying degrees of intensity depending on the strength of emotions evoked by specific traits of the self-image. On the other hand, authors define self-esteem by distinguishing it from other similar constructs and phenomena [76]. The most widely accepted viewpoint considers self-esteem as the affective component of personality self-consciousness.

In psychology, two main types of self-esteem are distinguished: adequate and inadequate (Fig. 1.3). A division into optimal and non-optimal self-esteem is also encountered [135].

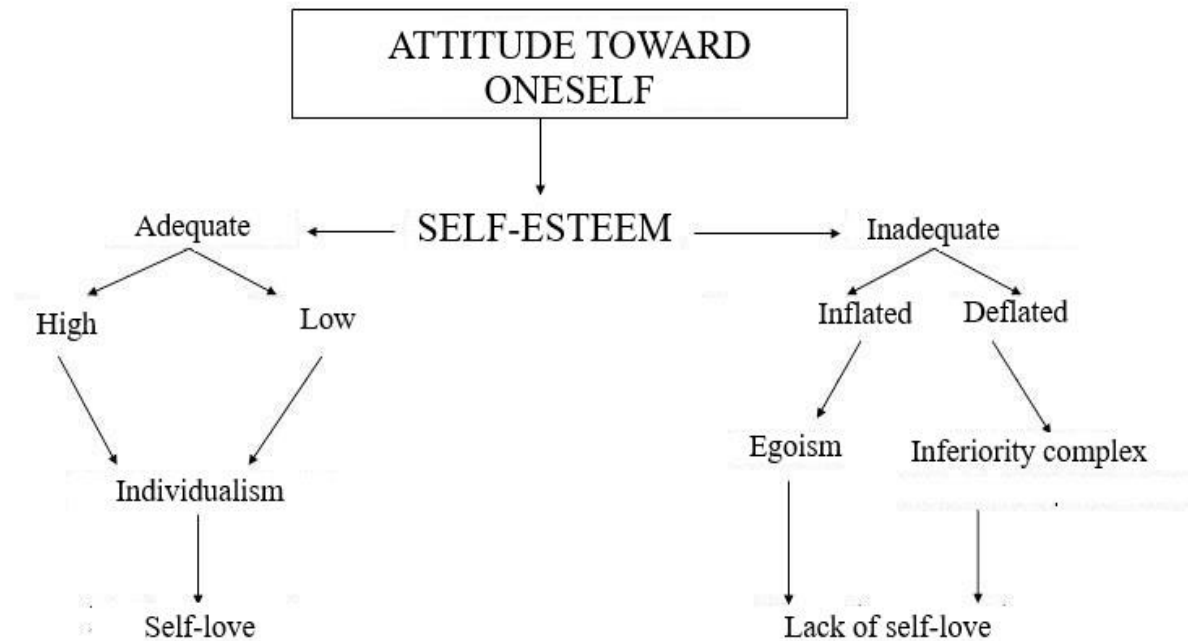


Figure 1.3 – Types of self-esteem

Adequate self-esteem is an important aspect of psychological health that enables a person to accurately perceive their abilities and qualities. It should be based on real achievements rather than distorted representations. Individuals possessing adequate self-esteem are capable of realistically evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, which in turn contributes to their personal and professional development. Adequate self-esteem entails not only awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses but also the ability to accept oneself as one is, as well as the aspiration for personal growth and development.

Self-esteem can vary from positive to negative. Positive self-esteem helps a person move forward confidently, make decisions, and cope with difficulties, whereas low self-esteem can lead to uncertainty, fear of new challenges, and even depression. It should be emphasized that self-esteem is a dynamic process that can change depending on life circumstances and new achievements.

Self-esteem can serve as an indicator of the level of self-consciousness development, as it reflects how an individual perceives themselves within the context of the surrounding world. High self-esteem may indicate a healthy level of self-consciousness, enabling a person to interact confidently with others and achieve set goals. Conversely, low self-esteem may indicate problems in self-perception and hinder social interactions [119].

Types of self-esteem are also distinguished: global and specific. Global self-esteem reflects the level of self-respect and the degree of acceptance or non-acceptance of oneself as a whole. It can vary from low to high and serves as a foundation for the formation of personal identity. Specific self-esteem, in turn, characterizes a person's attitude toward particular aspects of their life, such as achievements in career, academics, or personal relationships.

Within the structure of self-esteem, psychologists distinguish two key components: emotional and cognitive [76]. The emotional component represents a person's attitude toward themselves, their own manifestations and achievements. This refers to how a person perceives themselves: they may experience both love and pride, as well as dislike or shame. These emotions are often contradictory and may change depending on circumstances [38]. The emotional component of self-esteem generally depends on external factors, such as the opinions of others, social comparisons, or life events.

The cognitive component of self-esteem includes certain knowledge and representations of the individual about themselves. This encompasses awareness of one's abilities, skills, strengths and weaknesses, as well as understanding of one's goals and aspirations [38]. The cognitive component is formed throughout life, beginning in childhood, when the child receives feedback from parents, teachers, and peers. The process of self-knowledge, in which a person reflects on their own achievements and failures, plays an important role in the formation of cognitive self-evaluation. Thus, a person who regularly sets goals and achieves them is likely to have high self-esteem, whereas someone who frequently encounters failures may begin to doubt their abilities.

It should be noted that these two important components (emotional and cognitive) do not exist in isolation from each other in reality, but interact, since a person's representations of their own qualities are always colored by emotions, and this influences how they evaluate themselves. This is illustrated by the following example: if a person considers themselves a failure, this may evoke negative emotions, which, in turn, further lowers their self-esteem. Conversely, positive emotions can strengthen self-confidence and contribute to the development of more adequate self-esteem.

Within the research approach of A.M. Kolyshko (2004), the analysis of self-regulation in the context of the self-attitude system presupposes the identification of three complementary aspects. Firstly, the influence of the individual's attitude, acting as a subject of external relations, toward their own "Self" on their behavioral manifestations is considered. In other words, the study examines how a formed attitude toward oneself, conditioned by external influences and evaluations, determines a person's behavior in various situations.

Secondly, self-attitude is analyzed as a causal factor influencing self-perception processes. In this context, emphasis is placed on the fact that self-attitude is not only a consequence of experience and self-evaluations but also actively shapes the self-image, predetermining how the individual perceives their own qualities, abilities, and potential.

Thirdly, the impact of self-attitude on the individual's perception of the surrounding world is investigated. It is assumed that a formed attitude toward oneself exerts a significant influence on the interpretation of social interactions, the evaluation of other people, and the perception of surrounding reality as a whole. Thus, self-attitude functions as a kind of filter through which the individual perceives and interprets the surrounding world [58].

The concept of "self-compassion", developed by the American psychologist Kristin Neff, represents a novel approach to understanding and evaluating oneself. In contrast to self-esteem, which is often based on social comparison and may be subject to fluctuations depending on circumstances, self-compassion focuses on acceptance and understanding of one's own emotions and experiences.

In opposition to self-esteem, K. Neff proposes studying and cultivating an alternative, primarily compassionate and sympathetic, representation of oneself. She argues that this perspective avoids the pitfalls of self-esteem, as a person who practices self-compassion in the face of failure treats themselves with kindness, understands the shared human nature of their imperfection, and remains mindful of their experiences: they neither avoid nor exaggerate them, "... neither running away from their feelings nor running along with them" [60]. The author compares her concept with the notion of empathy toward oneself.

The author identifies three main components of self-compassion: self-kindness, awareness of common humanity, and mindfulness [144]. Self-kindness implies that in moments of failure or suffering, a person shows themselves the same care and support they would offer to a friend or loved one. This means that instead of self-criticism and judgment, a person learns to be more tolerant and understanding toward their own weaknesses and mistakes.

Awareness of common humanity is associated with the understanding that suffering and imperfections are an inherent part of human life. K. Neff argues that by realizing that all people face difficulties, an individual can more easily accept their own flaws and failures, which, in turn, significantly contributes to reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness [144].

Thus, healthy self-esteem and self-compassion contribute not only to personal well-being but also to harmony in relationships with others, as a person who is confident in themselves establishes contacts more easily and builds trusting connections.

Thus, the conducted theoretical analysis allows for viewing self-attitude as a systemic psychological construct performing a central regulatory function in the organization of the personality's mental life. Its structure, integrating cognitive representations, affective evaluations, and behavioral dispositions derived thereof, is formed through the continuous interaction of intrapsychic processes and social experience. The dynamic nature of self-attitude manifests in its sensitivity to current life events, while it itself acts as a filter mediating the perception of external circumstances and the interpretation of personal experience. The functions performed by this construct—from regulatory and motivational to integrative and protective—ensure stability and integrity for the personality in changing environmental conditions.

The interrelationship between self-attitude and coping behavior is characterized by mutual determination and is mediated through a system of psychological mechanisms. On one hand, the established structure of self-attitude, in particular the level of self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-efficacy, predetermines the nature of cognitive appraisal of a stress-inducing situation. An individual with a developed positive self-attitude tends to perceive difficulties as an area of potential growth and controllable influence, which activates the selection of strategies aimed at active transformation of the situation or seeking instrumental social support. Conversely, diffuse or negative self-attitude is often associated with appraising the stressor as an uncontrollable threat, which provokes a repertoire of reactions oriented toward avoidance, emotional discharge, or self-blame, which can exacerbate the state of stress.

On the other hand, the coping process itself and its subjectively perceived outcomes exert a reconstructive influence on self-attitude. Successful overcoming of difficulties and achievement of goals through one's own efforts strengthens the sense of competence and self-efficacy, becoming embedded in the structure of the "self-concept" as confirming experience. Failures in coping, especially when using rigid or destructive strategies, can undermine self-respect and activate negative self-evaluations, creating a vicious circle of maladaptation. Thus, self-attitude acts not as a static background, but as a dynamic factor and simultaneously a product of the coping process, which makes empirical research of their interrelationship in conditions of activity saturated with stress particularly significant.

Professional sports activity represents the quintessence of such conditions, presenting heightened demands to the adaptive resources of the personality. The activity of a highly qualified athlete represents a model where systematic psycho-physical loads, the extremity of the competitive environment, public scrutiny, and social evaluation of results create a stable complex of stressogenic factors. In this context, formed patterns of coping behavior and specific

features of self-attitude become not merely personality characteristics, but professionally significant resources, directly influencing performance reliability and psychological well-being. Investigating the features of this interrelationship in the sports environment allows not only to deepen theoretical understanding of personality adaptation processes but also to formulate practical approaches to psychological support aimed at optimizing self-regulation and enhancing stress resilience among professional athletes.

### **1.3 Psychological characteristics and personality traits of professional athletes**

The concept of personality is one of the most complex and multifaceted in the field of psychology. It encompasses numerous aspects that cannot be reduced to simple terms or definitions, since personality is not merely a set of characteristics but a complex structure formed by both internal and external factors [125].

The etymology of the word "personality" is related to the terms "persona" and "mask", implying that each person wears a certain "social face" when interacting with others. This social face may change depending on the situation and context in which a person finds themselves. Personality can be viewed as something we present to the world, while the true "self" may remain hidden.

The concept of personality began to form relatively recently in psychology, only in the last century. G. Allport was the first to propose it, considering personality as a dynamic organization of all psychophysical systems of a person that determines their behavior and thinking [125]. We believe that this definition directly emphasizes that personality is not a static entity but a developing individual who constantly changes under the influence of various factors, such as social environment, culture, and personal experience.

Contemporary psychological research on personality covers various aspects, including temperament, character, motivation, and the emotional sphere. Psychologists distinguish several theories of personality, such as psychoanalytic, humanistic, and behavioral, each offering its own perspectives on how personality is formed and develops.

As already noted, the structure of personality is extremely diverse, and there is no single structure that satisfies all researchers. However, in domestic psychology, the personality structure proposed by K.K. Platonov has gained the widest acceptance. This structure includes four substructures:

1. biologically determined personality features, such as temperament, type of nervous activity, and aptitudes;

2. features of the personality's mental processes;
3. level of preparedness (experience);
2. socially determined personality qualities – worldview and orientation.

The structure of an athlete's personality has not yet been fully developed by sport theorists, but research on individual personality traits of athletes is numerous.

The emergence of such a research field as the psychology of the athlete's personality dates back to the mid-twentieth century, associated with attempts to create theories, holistic concepts and structures of personality, methodological approaches, and psychodiagnostic methods.

One of the first researchers who emphasized the necessity of creating a structure of the athlete's personality was N.B. Stambulova (1999). She identified several key mental properties that play an important role in the preparation and performance of athletes. In her concept, a special place is occupied by mental properties responsible for the perception and processing of information. These characteristics are necessary for the athlete to be able to respond quickly and effectively to changing competitive conditions. Thus, an athlete's ability to analyze the situation on the field or in the arena, as well as the capacity to make decisions under stressful conditions, are important personality qualities that determine success in sports [131].

The structure of the athlete's personality proposed by N.B. Stambulova is multilevel and encompasses all aspects of mental activity (mental, psychomotor, emotional), which emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach in athlete preparation.

"The athlete's personal potential, as A.I. Kharitonova writes, consists of individual-psychological qualities manifested in professional sports activity, reflecting the capacity for behavioral self-regulation to achieve maximum results. The main components of athletes' personal potential are: meaningfulness, independence, involvement, internality, and positivity" [54, p. 10]. In her research, the author confirmed that characteristics of athletes' personal potential significantly influence the level of professional mastery; specifically, a high level of positivity and involvement influences the highest level of professional mastery, while increased internality combined with a moderate level of meaningfulness and independence influences the lower level of professional mastery.

Mental properties necessary for an athlete's successful performance, as noted by L.K. Serova [125], should be represented as a complex that reflects all aspects of athletes' mental activity. When these properties manifest in practical, work-related activity, they function as professional qualities.

T.V. Ogorodova [104] proposed a generalized model of the athlete's personality, presented in a diagram (see Appendix 1). In this model, the behavioral component characterizes external conditions of mental activity (type of nervous activity, temperament, and character). The motivational component characterizes internal conditions of mental activity that motivate the athlete toward achievement. It consists of interest in the activity, level of aspiration, and value orientations. The intellectual component ensures understanding of one's sport; these qualities facilitate mastery of its technique and tactics. It contains the following model characteristics: psychomotor skills, specialized perceptions, operational memory, attention, and thinking. The emotional component ensures self-regulation and self-control of sports activity. It includes model characteristics: emotional stability, mental self-regulation, and volitional qualities. The communicative component characterizes interpersonal relationships in sports: attitude toward the coach, toward partners, and toward opponents [104]. The presented model belongs to generalized models and allows for studying psychological professional qualities of athletes from various sports, comparing them with each other, and identifying typical and distinctive features.

Undoubtedly, sports play an important role in shaping human personality, rivaling in significance educational and work-related activities. In particular, some studies show that Olympians, compared to a control group of students, exhibit pronounced traits indicating a higher level of personal development. Olympians generally possess a greater drive for independence and tend to prioritize their own opinions [123]. This suggests that they are not only confident in their abilities but also capable of making decisions based on their own convictions.

Athletes demonstrate a more pronounced need to be at the center of attention and to receive recognition for their achievements [6]. We assume that this may be related to the high level of competition in sports, where success is often determined by external evaluations and awards. Athletes, especially professional ones, generally exhibit greater aggressiveness and persistence in achieving their goals, which is also an important aspect of their personal development.

Professional athletes are more extraverted and emotionally stable compared to those who do not engage in sports, according to N.S. Bar [7]. We believe that this may be related to the necessity of interacting with teammates, coaches, and spectators, which promotes the development of social skills and confidence in communication.

With the growth of athletic mastery, according to G.Y. Rotar, an increase in self-confidence is observed, which allows athletes to express their thoughts and feelings more freely [121].

In her publication, Y.M. Bosenko draws attention to the fact that sports cultivate qualities in a person such as independence of views and behavior, skepticism, restraint, and competitiveness. These qualities help athletes not only in their sports careers but also in life in general. Volitional control, which is necessary for achieving high results, also contributes to the development of the ability to protect one's "Self" and maintain high self-respect [16].

At the level of individual sports, according to A.S. Kozhemyako, the most important characteristics among athletes were: purposefulness; persistence in overcoming difficulties; perseverance, faith in one's success; decisiveness; courage in making fateful decisions; good emotional state; and equanimity (mental state) [62].

Conducting a study of personality traits of athletes engaged in team sports, A.K. Poklad and Y.K. Rodygina established that they are characterized by stubbornness, modesty, and a desire to gain sympathy from others. The obtained results indicate the pronounced intuitiveness, shyness, fastidiousness, and pedantry in their work. The researchers determined that volleyball players, in particular, are characterized by a distinctive perception, mental flexibility, inventiveness, impatience, and unpredictability of actions. They possess good social adaptability and a wide range of interests [113].

Summarizing various studies, it can be stated that the personality features of a professional athlete include: emotional stability, self-confidence, independence of thinking, autonomy, high level of self-control, strong volitional qualities, propensity for risk-taking, meaningfulness, involvement, internality, resilience, and positivity.

Additionally, properties of an athlete's personality may include motivation for high achievement and anxiety. Anxiety is a relatively stable predisposition to respond to threatening situations with emotional states of anxiety or fear.

Athletes' self-esteem, as research shows, is formed primarily based on the evaluation of their sports achievements, physical capabilities, and prospects [2]. When an athlete achieves significant success, for example, setting a personal record, it directly influences their self-perception. As a rule, the athlete begins to respect their own efforts and labor, which, in turn, enhances their self-esteem.

It should be noted that an athlete's self-esteem is not limited solely to their sports achievements. It also depends on their psychological state, support from coaches, family, and friends, as well as on how they cope with failures. Thus, an athlete who is able to learn lessons

from defeats and perceive them as opportunities for growth is more likely to have a more stable and positive self-esteem.

An athlete's self-esteem may vary depending on external factors, as noted by N.B. Stambulova, such as public opinion, media attention, and comparison with other athletes. Under conditions of high competition, when athletes constantly compare their results with the achievements of others, this can lead to a decrease in self-confidence [131].

It should be noted that perfectionism represents an important characteristic for athletes. Perfectionism in sports is a complex concept that goes beyond the simple pursuit of success. It represents a constant striving for ideal execution of sports actions and achievement of maximum possible results, often accompanied by self-criticism, an overwhelming fear of making mistakes, and fear of failure. This internal struggle for flawlessness can have both positive and destructive effects on the sports career and psychological well-being of professional athletes.

In sport psychology, two main types of perfectionism are distinguished, which differ fundamentally in their manifestations and consequences.

The first is positive perfectionism, or, as it is also called, "striving for self-improvement", characterized by setting high but achievable goals. Athletes demonstrating this type of perfectionism perceive mistakes not as a catastrophe but as valuable experience, an important step on the path to improvement. These athletes use their demandingness toward themselves as a powerful motivator, focusing on the training process and constant refinement of their skills. They analyze their mistakes, draw lessons from them, and direct their energy toward correcting actions, which leads to continuous progress. Such perfectionism fuels perseverance and persistence, contributing to the achievement of outstanding results. At the same time, these athletes possess a sufficiently high level of self-esteem and are not afraid to take risks [125].

The second type is negative perfectionism, which represents a destructive striving for flawlessness, accompanied by constant self-blame, anxiety, and fear of evaluation. Beginning athletes are particularly affected by this type of perfectionism, becoming hostages to their high standards, which are often unrealistic and unattainable. Every mistake is perceived by them as a catastrophe, leading to self-criticism and profound disappointment. Young athletes focus not on the process but on the result, which leads to constant stress and a decline in athletic performance [134]. Negative perfectionism can lead to the development of serious psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, as well as burnout and loss of interest in sports in general. Furthermore, negative perfectionism is often

accompanied by a feeling of inadequacy and inability to achieve expected results, which, in turn, can lead to social isolation and reduced quality of life.

To differentiate between positive and negative perfectionism, it is important to pay attention to the athlete's internal experiences in response to their successes and failures. It should be noted that these two types of perfectionism are not mutually exclusive and can coexist within the same athlete, leading to a complex and contradictory dynamics of internal experiences.

Next, we will consider self-regulation as one of the most important personality qualities of an athlete. Thus, V.I. Morosanova considers self-regulation as a complex process representing an internal purposeful activity of the personality. This activity is carried out through the interaction of various levels of the psyche, which makes self-regulation a multilevel and multifaceted phenomenon. The researcher emphasizes that self-regulation includes not only initiation processes but also the formulation of goals that a person sets for themselves, as well as management of the process of achieving these goals [85].

According to the aforementioned author, the main aspect of self-regulation is understanding the patterns that determine how regulation of various types and forms of voluntary activity is formed and realized. This may include both everyday tasks and larger life goals. The style of self-regulation, which manifests in each person, depends on how they plan and program their actions, as well as on their ability to take into account both internal and external conditions influencing their activity.

The author distinguishes several key components necessary for effective self-regulation. Firstly, planning is the process during which the subject determines exactly what they want to achieve and what steps will be required for this. Secondly, modeling involves creating an image of the desired result and the pathways to achieve it. Programming entails a detailed description of actions necessary for the implementation of intended plans [86].

Sport self-regulation is a complex set of skills that allows an athlete to control and correct their physical and mental state under conditions of intensive athletic activity [119]. This is not merely the ability to "pull oneself together", but a purposeful influence on the emotional, motor, and vegetative (internal functional) spheres of the athlete's organism.

Sport self-regulation manifests in the athlete's capacity to voluntarily regulate shifts in the emotional, motor, and internal functional spheres, as well as in the nature of self-control of competitive behavior. Specific manifestations of self-regulation are always specific, as they are related to the peculiarities of the activity and the immediate environment [125].

Emotional self-regulation encompasses the capacity to manage stress, anxiety, and aggression, preventing the negative influence of these factors on athletic performance. An athlete possessing developed skills of emotional self-regulation can maintain calmness and concentration even in critical competitive situations, effectively coping with pressure and the negative emotions of opponents [54].

Motor self-regulation is also crucial in sports, manifesting in the skill to control muscle tension, speed, and accuracy of movements, adapting them to changing conditions of competition or training. Manifestations of sport self-regulation are always individual and depend on numerous factors: the type of sport, the athlete's personality, their experience, training conditionedness, as well as the specifics of the competitive environment.

Thus, sports activity, particularly professional, significantly influences the inner world of a person, forming a personality capable of self-improvement and achieving set goals.

The conducted analysis indicates that the personality of a professional athlete is formed under the influence of the extreme demands of the activity, which is expressed in a specific structure of self-attitude and developed self-regulation skills. An athlete's attitude toward themselves often proves to be closely connected with the dynamics of sports results, which forms a conditional nature of self-esteem, dependent on achievements and external recognition. Simultaneously, such personality constructs as volitional qualities, emotional stability, and perfectionism create the basis for certain patterns of overcoming difficulties. Coping behavior in this context acts not only as a reaction to stress but also as a mechanism for maintaining the integrity of the "sports Self" and professional identity. Thus, a closed-loop system arises, where environmental demands shape personality features, and those, in turn, determine ways of adaptation, which makes the study of specific manifestations of coping and self-attitude under conditions of a sports career necessary.

#### **1.4 Specific features of coping behavior and self-attitude in professional athletes**

The specifics of coping behavior and self-attitude in sports activity are a subject of active study in sport psychology. Research on coping behavior in sports is multidirectional, due to the initial breadth of understanding of coping. Various contemporary studies show that sports activity, characterized by high competition, physical and psychological loads, presents specific demands to athletes' coping strategies and forms a special attitude toward oneself.

The study of coping behavior in sports is represented by numerous works of foreign researchers.

In the works of L. McLean (2020) and M. Daumiller et al. (2021), attention is focused on the classification of coping strategies used by athletes in stressful situations, including problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant strategies. It was established that successful athletes more frequently use problem-focused strategies aimed at active problem solving and changing the situation. At the same time, maladaptive use of avoidant strategies can lead to a decrease in sports results and an increase in anxiety levels [29, 81].

The influence of sports activity on athletes' self-attitude is also an important direction of research. In the works of A.A. Sanader et al. (2021) and B. Lukanović et al. (2020), it is presented that sports achievements and failures exert a significant influence on self-esteem, self-confidence, and the general self-attitude of athletes. Constructive feedback from the coach and support from the team can contribute to the formation of positive self-attitude and increase motivation for training and competitions [77, 124].

Based on the generally accepted concept of coping in sports (Nicholls & Polman, 2007), we share the viewpoint that psychologically resilient athletes, described, for example, by G. Jones, S. Hanton, and D. Connaughton (Jones et al., 2002, 2007), demonstrate the ability to effectively cope with stress (Bull et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2002; Jones et al., 2007). Nevertheless, research insufficiently demonstrates differences in specific coping strategies used by psychologically resilient and non-resilient athletes. Khoshaba & Maddi (1999) suggested that people with a high degree of resilience are more likely to resort to problem-focused coping strategies in stressful situations. However, specific coping strategies distinguishing psychologically resilient athletes from less resilient ones remain understudied [55].

Studying the psychological features of overcoming critical situations in sports activity, V.V. Andreev notes that coping behavior in the context of sports is purposeful conscious behavior, allowing the athlete to successfully cope with extreme situations in sports by various constructive ways adequate to sports and competitive contexts [2].

As noted by A.R. Nicholls and R.C.J. Polman, the connection between coping and psychological resilience appears obvious but has not been empirically investigated to a sufficient extent. It is important to consider that, despite the notion of psychological resilience as a relatively stable characteristic, one of its main components—coping—is subject to change over time [98].

Another psychological construct closely related to both psychological resilience and coping is optimism. In a qualitative study (Gould, Dieffenbach & Moffett, 2002), it was established that Olympic champions demonstrate high levels of psychological resilience,

coping effectiveness, and optimism. In this context, optimism is defined as a fundamental factor determining the choice between continuing the pursuit of a goal and abandoning it [31].

It can be assumed that research interest in optimism in elite sports is due to the fact that more optimistic athletes demonstrate greater persistence in achieving goals, while less optimistic ones are inclined to abandon attempts or cease them altogether (J.G. Dunn et al., 2020; C. Peterson et al., 2002). Furthermore, optimism acts as a predictor of sports results. In a study (Norlander & Archer, 2002), it was found that optimism is the most significant predictor of results among professional skiers, shooters, and swimmers. We believe that optimism is directly related to the selection of coping strategies. Thus, a meta-analysis (Solberg Nes & Segerstrom, 2006) showed that optimists more frequently use approach strategies and less frequently resort to avoidance strategies [129].

In a study conducted by V. Hadd and colleagues (V. Hadd, M.H. McDonough, P.R.E. Crocker, 2007) aimed at identifying coping strategies for competitive stress, a series of interviews were conducted with athletes specializing in swimming. The research results allowed for forming a detailed and multifaceted picture of coping methods with stressful situations used by athletes in the context of competitive activity [44].

Within the framework of the analysis of obtained data, eleven behavioral (activity-based) strategies were identified, including such forms of coping as listening to music, relaxation techniques, shifting attention to social interaction with friends, as well as specialized methods of preparation for competition, such as warm-up.

Additionally, nine cognitive strategies were identified, based primarily on volitional control of attention. This category included strategies such as concentration on the technical aspect of exercise execution, concentration on the opponent's actions, cognitive avoidance manifested in suppressing thoughts about stressors, acceptance of the situation, as well as refocusing attention on upcoming competitions and events [29].

These results emphasize the importance of both behavioral and cognitive strategies in the process of coping with competitive stress in sports. The identified strategies reflect the active use by athletes of various methods aimed at regulating emotional state, enhancing concentration, and maintaining an optimal level of motivation during competitive activity.

Domestic researchers have also made a significant contribution to the study of this problem. In particular, the works of V.K. Safonov (2013), G.D. Babushkin (2012), and E.P. Ilyin (2008) are devoted to the analysis of psychological features of athletes, including their motivation, emotional stability, and self-esteem. It was shown that adequate self-esteem and self-confidence are important factors for successful sports activity. Contemporary studies (N.B.

Stambulova, 2010; G.V. Parastaeva, 2012) emphasize the role of psychological support for athletes, aimed at forming adaptive coping strategies and positive self-attitude. At the same time, the importance of taking into account individual characteristics of athletes, the specifics of the sport, and the stage of the sports career is highlighted.

A study by A.S. Kuzmina and colleagues (2019) provides an understanding of the features of coping behavior among athletes specializing in extreme sports. The authors established that this category of athletes is characterized by pronounced abilities for planning and self-regulation, which allows them to effectively adapt to the complex and unpredictable conditions accompanying extreme sports activity. At the same time, a low level of self-criticism is noted, which, on one hand, may contribute to increasing self-confidence and reducing anxiety levels; however, on the other hand, it may hinder the objective evaluation of one's own capabilities and potential risks.

The authors indicate that this category of athletes experiences difficulties in adequately evaluating their achievements and failures, which can lead to unrealistic expectations, inadequate planning of the training process, and, as a consequence, an increased risk of injury or a decrease in sports performance [66].

In a study by N.B. Trofimova (2022), devoted to the study of coping behavior in the context of athlete preparation, a significant relationship was established between the applied coping strategies and the level of personal and athletic development. The results show that constructive and positive strategies demonstrate a positive correlation with high indicators of personal and athletic development. These strategies are characterized by an active approach to conscious problem-solving related to situational anxiety, as well as flexibility in choosing optimal methods and means for overcoming obstacles on the path to victory. An important feature is the athlete's striving for the maximum realization of their potential.

However, non-constructive strategies exert a negative impact on personal and athletic development. They are characterized by dependency on the problematic competitive situation, manifested in problem avoidance and reluctance to perceive defeats constructively. A distinctive feature is the absence of focus on mobilizing internal resources to overcome difficulties [143].

Thus, these results emphasize the importance of fostering constructive coping strategies among athletes, contributing to enhanced training efficiency, improved psychological resilience in competitions, and the achievement of high sports results. We believe that the identification and correction of non-constructive coping strategies is an important task of psychological

support in sports activity, aimed at optimizing personal and athletic development and preventing the negative consequences of stressful situations.

Research conducted by V. V. Andreev (2016) revealed specific patterns of psychological defense used by athletes in extreme competitive situations. It is noted that rationalization and assertive behavior, prevailing in high-stress situations, contribute to expanding the range of choices and enhancing self-control in critical moments. Assertiveness, manifested as persistence, activity, social focus, and self-confidence, becomes an important factor enabling athletes to effectively cope with the psychological pressure of competitions [70].

In particular, among track and field athletes, psychological defense strategies such as rationalization, compensation, denial, assertive actions, entering into social contact, and seeking social support dominate. Additionally, the use of strategies such as "overcoming outside reality", "rational actions", and "self-change" is noted. According to the author, this choice of strategies reflects the track and field athletes' striving to analyze the situation, seek constructive solutions, and adapt to changing circumstances.

Unlike track and field athletes, the group of gymnasts revealed high scores on strategies such as "projection", "compensation", "rationalization", and "regression". Furthermore, gymnasts demonstrate the most pronounced use of strategies such as "self-change", "overcoming outside reality", and "distraction". It is assumed that this specificity may be related to the features of the sport, requiring high concentration, precision, and body control, which in turn can lead to increased anxiety levels and the use of strategies aimed at reducing emotional tension and withdrawal from reality [2].

We share the author's viewpoint that universal coping strategies may prove ineffective due to differences in personality traits, style of activity, and sport specificity. It is extremely important to consider the psychological defense strategies dominant in the athlete and, if necessary, train them in more adaptive and effective methods of coping with stress and emotional tension. Special attention should be paid to the development of mindfulness skills, emotional regulation, and cognitive restructuring, which will enable athletes not only to reduce stress levels but also to enhance their psychological resilience and effectiveness in extreme competitive situations.

A study conducted by N.A. Shestilovskaya (2018) allowed for identifying a number of patterns in the use of coping strategies by young athletes. It was established that the most common coping strategies are "positive reframing and personal growth", "planning", "active coping", and "suppression of competing activity", which belong to productive and adaptive methods of overcoming stressful situations [126].

Analyzing the obtained data, we come to the conclusion that athletes are primarily oriented toward constructive problem-solving related to competitive activity. They strive to actively seek solutions to difficult situations, plan their actions, and reframe failures as opportunities for self-improvement. This indicates the formation of basic psychological resilience skills necessary for a successful career.

Analysis of gender differences in N.A. Shestilovskaya's study showed that female athletes more frequently resort to strategies such as "turning to religion" and "using emotional social support", which is likely related to a greater tendency to express emotions and seek external support in difficult situations. This fact emphasizes the importance of considering gender characteristics when developing psychological preparation programs for athletes, as well as the necessity of providing access to various forms of social support [126].

In our opinion, these results indicate that female athletes more openly seek help and support from others, as well as find comfort and strength in religious beliefs. This may be related to features of girls' socialization, during which expression of emotions and establishment of close interpersonal relationships are encouraged. At the same time, it is necessary to consider that gender differences in the use of coping strategies may also be conditioned by cultural factors.

In the same study, differences in preference for coping strategies depending on the level of athletic mastery were identified. It was found that more experienced athletes less frequently use such maladaptive strategies as "denial" and "behavioral disengagement from the problem", and demonstrate higher resilience to stressful situations, as well as developed skills for overcoming negative emotional states after failures and defeats. Presumably, with the growth of sports experience, a more realistic perception of occurred negative events and more constructive ways of responding to them are formed [126].

Perhaps this fact indicates that with an increase in sports experience, athletes learn to accept failures as an inevitable part of the competitive process and use them as a stimulus for further development. More experienced athletes possess a higher level of self-regulation and emotional intelligence, which enables them to effectively cope with stress and negative emotions.

During the analysis, a relationship between age and preference for coping strategies was revealed. Thus, with age, athletes tend to more frequently use productive strategies such as "positive reframing and personal growth", "turning to religion", and "suppression of competing activity". This may indicate the development of a more mature and adaptive coping system with age [126].

It can also be assumed that with age, athletes acquire greater psychological maturity, which enables them to more consciously select strategies for coping with stress. They learn to draw lessons from past experience, find positive aspects in difficult situations, and focus on the goals and tasks facing them. Furthermore, with age, athletes may become more open to spiritual practices and turning to faith.

An inverse relationship is observed between the level of mastery and the use of the "denial" strategy, which indicates a decrease in the tendency to deny the reality of a negative event with an increase in sports experience. As the author believes, it can be assumed that a high level of mastery is associated with a more realistic and pragmatic attitude toward sports failures, which are viewed not as a tragedy but as valuable experience contributing to personal and professional growth [126].

In our opinion, this confirms the hypothesis that high-level athletes possess a more developed capacity for analysis and self-analysis. They are not inclined to withdraw from reality and prefer to face the truth, even if it is unpleasant. This enables them to objectively evaluate their mistakes and develop strategies for correcting them.

Most frequently in contemporary research, the primary objects of coping among athletes, including professional ones, are feelings of anxiety and fear.

Investigating the psychological features of an athlete's personality, V.A. Rodionov notes that an individual who, at the cost of incredible psychological and physical efforts, has done everything possible during preparation for competitions may experience one of four types of "fear of success": "fear of danger", "fear of loneliness", "fear of responsibility", "fear of meaninglessness" [120].

Within the framework of research on coping behavior in professional sports, K.A. Bochaver notes the prevalence of stress experienced by athletes before and during competitions. At the same time, the nature and functions of this stress possess specific features. Initially, the mobilization reaction of the organism, designed to provide protection under conditions of threat, transforms into a spectrum of negative experiences, including pre-competition fever, anxiety conditioned by comparing the complexity of the task with one's own resources, and fear of defeat. This transformation underscores the psychological complexity of stress processes in sports activity and the necessity of developing coping strategies that take into account the specificity of these experiences [11].

Despite the significant number of studies devoted to stress management in the pre-competition period, relatively little attention is paid to studying stress arising after failure in competitions. Dominant approaches in sport psychology focus on optimizing the athlete's state

immediately before the contest, whereas the psychological consequences of defeat often remain outside the scope of close attention. However, it is precisely the experience of failure, especially in the first days after competitions, that can exert a significant destabilizing effect on the athlete's psychological state, motivation, and further career.

Unlike acute pre-competition stress, which is generally temporary and situational in nature, failure-related stress can acquire a chronic character, forming negative attitudes, reducing self-confidence, and leading to burnout. The absence of effective coping strategies for this type of stress can provoke maladaptive behavioral reactions, such as avoidance of training, conflict within the team, or even abandonment of a sports career.

The results of the theoretical analysis are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 – Features of coping behavior among professional athletes

	Description	Influencing factors	Consequences
<b>Cognitive strategies</b>	Predominance of rational situation analysis, reappraisal of the stressor, formation of a positive attitude toward failures, focus on learning from experience.	Level of athletic mastery, experience in competitive activity, personality type, cognitive abilities, coach's attitudes and instructions.	Enhanced psychological resilience, reduced anxiety levels, improved concentration, increased motivation, successful adaptation to changing conditions, burnout prevention.
<b>Emotional strategies</b>	Effective regulation of negative emotions (anger, anxiety, disappointment), use of humor, seeking emotional support, mindfulness.	Level of emotional intelligence, social support, personality characteristics, training in emotional regulation, stress tolerance.	Maintenance of emotional balance, improvement of interpersonal relationships, reduced conflictuality, enhanced effectiveness of team interaction, improved mental health.
<b>Behavioral strategies</b>	Active problem solving, planning, seeking social support, self-discipline, persistence, striving for performance improvement, maintaining physical condition.	Motivation, goals, self-efficacy, access to resources (coaches, psychologists, medical personnel), support from team and family, organization of the training process.	Improvement of sports performance, enhanced training process efficiency, strengthened team spirit, increased self-esteem, development of self-improvement skills.
<b>Psychological defense</b>	Predominance of adaptive mechanisms (sublimation, altruism) and reduced use of maladaptive ones (denial, projection).	Psychological maturity, experience, personality characteristics, influence of social environment, availability of psychotherapeutic support.	Improved adaptation to stressful situations, reduced likelihood of developing neurotic disorders, enhanced level of psychological well-being, constructive interaction with others.

The data presented in Table 1.1 allow for systematizing the key features of coping behavior among professional athletes, highlighting cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies, as well as mechanisms of psychological defense. Analysis of this structure indicates that effective coping in sports activity represents a multifaceted process that includes not only active problem solving and planning but also regulation of emotional state, formation of a positive attitude toward difficulties, and the use of adaptive psychological defense mechanisms.

Considering cognitive strategies, it should be noted that professional athletes generally demonstrate a rational approach to analyzing competitive situations, are capable of reappraising stressors, and forming a positive attitude toward failures. They focus on extracting lessons from defeats, which contributes to enhanced psychological resilience and improved concentration. Emotional strategies, in turn, play an important role in maintaining emotional balance and reducing anxiety levels. Athletes who possess skills in effective regulation of negative emotions demonstrate better competitive performance and interact more effectively with their team.

Behavioral strategies, aimed at active problem solving, planning, and seeking social support, are also an integral part of successful coping behavior. Athletes who possess self-discipline and persistence organize the training process more effectively and strive to achieve set goals. The use of adaptive psychological defense mechanisms, such as sublimation and altruism, contributes to improved adaptation to stressful situations and reduces the likelihood of developing neurotic disorders.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the formation of effective coping behavior among professional athletes is a complex and multifactorial process requiring a comprehensive approach that includes psychological preparation, training in emotional regulation, development of cognitive skills, and formation of adaptive psychological defense mechanisms. Developing these skills contributes not only to the improvement of sports performance but also to the formation of a psychologically resilient and harmonious personality, capable of successfully coping with both the challenges of contemporary sports activity and life activity in general.

Based on the conducted theoretical analysis, the following authorial definition is formulated: an athlete's coping behavior is a dynamic, purposeful, and contextually conditioned process of using individual resources (personal qualities, skills, external support) by the athlete to adapt to specific stressors of sports activity (high competition, physical and mental loads, public scrutiny, dependence on results, risk of injury) aimed at maintaining optimal physical and mental state, achieving high sports results, and preserving psychological well-being.

The proposed definition takes into account all key aspects of coping behavior identified in existing definitions, as well as the specificity of sports activity. It emphasizes the importance of an individual approach to coping, adaptiveness, and the use of available resources to achieve success in sports and maintain psychological well-being. The proposed definition is currently the most complete and comprehensive and can serve as a foundation for further research in the field of athletes' coping behavior.

Thus, the study of coping behavior and self-attitude in sports activity represents a multifaceted task requiring consideration of both general patterns and specific features related to a particular sport, the athlete's level of mastery, and the sociocultural context.

### **Summary of Chapter 1**

The conducted theoretical research allowed for the formation of a holistic conceptual model revealing the specifics of the interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude within the context of professional sports activity. Analysis of the evolution of scientific concepts revealed that coping behavior is interpreted in contemporary psychology as a dynamic process of conscious cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at managing a stressor appraised as exceeding the individual's resources. Of primary importance is the operational distinction between adaptive coping strategies, oriented toward problem solving or emotional state regulation, and unconscious mechanisms of psychological defense, which perform the function of concealing internal conflict.

In the theoretical chapter, the structure and genesis of self-attitude were examined as a complex systemic construct serving as the central element of personality self-consciousness. Self-attitude integrates cognitive representations about oneself (self-concept), their affective evaluation (self-esteem, self-respect, self-acceptance), and derived behavioral dispositions. Its formation is conditioned by the continuous interaction of biological prerequisites, social experience acquired within the system of significant relationships, and reflection on one's own activity. The construct performs a number of fundamental functions: regulatory, motivational, protective, and integrative, ensuring stability and internal consistency of the personality in the process of adaptation to changing environmental conditions.

It was determined that an athlete's coping behavior is a dynamic, purposeful, and contextually conditioned process of using individual resources (personal qualities, skills, external support) by the athlete to adapt to specific stressors of sports activity (high competition, physical and mental loads, public scrutiny, dependence on results, risk of injury) aimed at

maintaining optimal physical and mental state, achieving high sports results, and preserving psychological well-being.

Special attention was given to the specificity of the professional athlete's personality, which is formed under the influence of the extreme demands of the activity. Elite sports create a unique constellation of chronic stressogenic factors, including extreme physical and mental loads, high competitiveness, public visibility, outcome uncertainty, and injury risk. In response to these demands, a profile of personality traits is formed, characterized by pronounced emotional stability, developed volitional qualities, a high level of self-control and self-regulation, as well as specific manifestations of perfectionism, which can take both adaptive and maladaptive forms.

The central theoretical conclusion is the proposition of mutual determination between self-attitude and coping behavior, which acquires special intensity and practical significance under the conditions of professional sports. On one hand, the established structure of self-attitude acts as a system-forming internal resource and a predictor of coping strategy selection. A positive, integrated self-attitude, based on adequate self-esteem, self-acceptance, and confidence in one's own efficacy (self-efficacy), promotes cognitive appraisal of a stressful situation as controllable and encourages the use of active, problem-focused strategies. An athlete who respects themselves and believes in their resources is inclined toward problem analysis, action planning, and seeking instrumental social support.

Conversely, a diffuse or negative self-attitude, burdened by internal conflicts and low self-respect, predisposes the individual to perceive the stressogenic demands of sports as an uncontrollable threat. This activates predominantly passive or destructive response patterns: behavioral and cognitive avoidance, emotional discharge, and self-blame. Although such strategies may provide short-term relief, they do not resolve the situation and often lead to its exacerbation, forming a vicious circle of maladaptation.

On the other hand, the coping process itself and its subjectively perceived outcomes exert a reverse, reconstructive influence on self-attitude. Successful overcoming of difficulties, achievement of goals – especially under extreme competitive conditions – serves as significant confirmation of one's own competence and efficacy. Such experience is internalized, strengthening self-respect, increasing the level of self-efficacy, and contributing to the integration of a positive "sports Self" into the overall identity structure. Failures in coping, especially with repeated use of maladaptive strategies, exert a destructive impact, undermining self-belief, activating negative self-evaluations, and intensifying internal conflict.

Thus, within the context of professional sports, self-attitude and coping behavior form a dynamic system with cyclical feedback. This system can function either in a mode of positive development, where adaptive strategies strengthen resourceful self-attitude, which in turn increases the likelihood of selecting effective strategies in the future, or in a mode of a maladaptive loop, where ineffective coping undermines self-attitude, which predetermines the further selection of destructive behavioral patterns.

Identifying the specific features of this system's functioning among athletes of different qualifications, specializations, and career stages constitutes the main objective of the subsequent empirical research.

## **CHAPTER 2. EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COPING BEHAVIOR AND SELF-ATTITUDE IN ATHLETES WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

### **2.1. Organization and methods of the study**

Goal, objectives, and hypotheses of the study.

This empirical study was aimed at investigating the specifics of stress coping within the context of professional sports activity. The focus of analysis lies on individual differences in coping behavior, as well as their deep interrelationships with the system of self-attitude among professional athletes.

Object of the study is the phenomenon of coping behavior in sports.

Subject of the study is the interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes with different levels of achievement.

Goal of the study: to identify the features of the interrelationship between coping behavior and structural components of self-attitude among professional athletes at different career stages (the stage of improving athletic mastery and the stage of highest athletic mastery) and to develop a comprehensive methodology for fostering adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior among elite athletes.

Objectives of the empirical study:

1. To identify the specifics of preferred coping behavior strategies in the studied groups.
2. To determine the features of self-attitude among professional athletes and amateur athletes.
3. To establish the presence, strength, and direction of significant interrelationships between components of self-attitude and coping behavior strategies among professional athletes.

Main hypothesis of the study: There are qualitative differences in the nature and structure of interrelationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes at the stage of improving athletic mastery and at the stage of highest athletic mastery, reflecting the degree of integration of professional identity and maturity of personal self-regulation.

Specific hypotheses:

- professional athletes use adaptive, problem-focused coping strategies more prominently than amateur athletes. For Masters of Sport, compared to Candidates for Master of

Sport, a higher prevalence of adaptive strategies and "positive reappraisal" is more characteristic.

- professional athletes demonstrate higher scores on scales related to professional identity and self-regulation (self-direction, self-efficacy, professional self-respect) compared to amateur athletes;

- the structure of self-attitude among Masters of Sport, compared to Candidates for Master of Sport, is characterized by greater differentiation, complexity, and the presence of specific dynamics, expressed in a simultaneously high level of self-respect, self-efficacy, and increased internal conflict with reduced self-attachment.

- positive components of self-attitude (sports self-respect, self-efficacy, self-direction, self-kindness) among all professional athletes are positively associated with adaptive coping strategies.

#### Stages of the study.

The study was conducted in several stages, with the stated tasks being implemented sequentially at each stage. The stages of the study were as follows:

Stage 1 (November 2024 – December 2024): Determination of the relevance of the research topic, formulation of the goal and research objectives, development of the methodological framework of the study. Theoretical review of domestic and foreign sources on the topic of coping behavior and self-attitude among athletes. Summarization of results from contemporary research presented in scientific literature on the studied problem.

Stage 2 (January 2025 – June 2025): This stage was dedicated to the empirical testing of the proposed hypotheses. Within this stage, a complex of measures was implemented. With the aim of assessing the studied variables, valid and reliable psychodiagnostic methods corresponding to the goals and objectives of the study were selected. To ensure the adequacy of the measured constructs for the sample of professional athletes, an adaptation of the questionnaire "Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire" (K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko) was conducted. The research sample was formed from professional athletes and amateur athletes representing various sports. The research base included sports training centers and educational training centers in Moscow, in particular: the State Budgetary Institution of Additional Education "Moscow Tennis Academy", the sports training club for rhythmic gymnastics "Olimpia-Iska". Additionally, the sample included students studying in sports-related programs at the Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport, Youth and Tourism (SCOLIPE), and the Moscow State Academy of Physical Culture (MSAFC). Collection of empirical data was carried out via an online survey using the Yandex Forms

platform. Before beginning the survey, respondents were informed about the goals and objectives of the study, as well as the guarantee of confidentiality of the obtained data. The scheme of the empirical study is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 – Scheme of the empirical study

Stages of empirical research	Research methods
1. Comparison of coping behavior strategies among amateur and professional athletes (n=168)	1. "Ways of Coping Questionnaire" by R. Lazarus, adapted by T.L. Kryukova.
2. Comparison of self-attitude among amateur and professional athletes (n=168)	2. Self-Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ). Author: S.R. Pantileev.
3. Identification of self-attitude features among professional athletes (n=97)	3. Adapted "Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire". Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko. 4. "Self-Compassion Scale" by K. Neff, adapted by K.A. Chistopolskaya et al. 5. "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSES). Author: M. Rosenberg. Adaptation: A.A. Zolotareva.
4. Identification of features of the interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes (Candidates for Master of Sport n=49; Masters of Sport n=48)	Calculation of correlation coefficients using correlation analysis.

Stage 3 (July 2025 – December 2025): Mathematical and statistical processing of primary data, interpretation and discussion of research results, publication of findings in scientific journals, presentation at All-Russian and international conferences, and writing of the dissertation text.

Characteristics of the research sample.

To achieve the goal of the study, a representative sample was formed, including 168 athletes aged 20 to 36 years (see Appendix 2). All respondents are citizens of the Russian Federation. The sample was divided into main groups based on the criterion of athletic qualification level:

1) Amateur athletes (hereinafter referred to as the "Amateurs" group). This group included individuals who systematically engage in their chosen sport (at least 3 times per week), actively participate in competitive activities, but do not hold official sports rankings. For them, sports activity is not their primary profession.

2) Professional athletes at the stage of improving athletic mastery (hereinafter referred to as the "CMS" group – Candidates for Master of Sport). This group included athletes holding the qualification of Candidate for Master of Sport (CMS).

3) Professional athletes at the stage of highest athletic mastery (hereinafter referred to as the "MS" group – Masters of Sport). This group included athletes holding the qualifications of Master of Sport and Master of Sport, International Class. To ensure homogeneity of subgroups, the MS and MSIC (Master of Sport, International Class) groups were combined into a single group for statistical analysis due to the small number of participants in the MSIC subgroup, which reflects the objective reality when studying elite populations.

Additional control criteria: All participants were engaged in active training and competitive activity at the time of the study. Age limits were taken into account, restricting the professional group to athletes aged up to 28 years, which is related to the objective age frames for peak athletic achievement in the specified sports.

Gender composition of the sample:

1. Women 81 participants (48.2%), mean age  $25.3 \pm 3.3$ .
2. Men 87 participants (51.8%), mean age  $24.2 \pm 3.2$ .

The distribution of respondents by qualification level is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 – Distribution of respondents according to qualification level

Qualification level	n	% of total sample	Age M $\pm$ SD	Sports experience M $\pm$ SD
Amateurs	71	42.3	26.2 $\pm$ 4.2	6.3 $\pm$ 1.1
CMS	49	29.2	22.9 $\pm$ 1.7	12.9 $\pm$ 2.8
MS	43	25.6	24.4 $\pm$ 1.7	14.9 $\pm$ 2.1
MSIC	5	3.0	25.2 $\pm$ 1.6	17.2 $\pm$ 0.7
Total	168	100.0	24.7 $\pm$ 3.3	10.6 $\pm$ 4.4

Note: M = arithmetic mean; SD = standard deviation.

Distribution of respondents by sport type (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 – Distribution of respondents by sport type

Sport type	Amateurs, n=71		CMS, n=49		MS, n=43		MSIC, n=5		Total respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Badminton	11	15.5	5	10.2	7	16.3	0	0	23	13.7
Boxing	13	18.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	13	7.7
Track and field athletics	0	0.0	8	16.3	6	14.0	0	0	14	8.3
Table tennis	15	21.1	6	12.2	5	11.6	0	0	26	15.5
Swimming	3	4.2	9	18.4	5	11.6	1	20	18	10.7
Sambo	0	0.0	3	6.1	3	7.0	0	0	6	3.6
Artistic gymnastics	0	0.0	4	8.2	2	4.7	0	0	6	3.6

Sport type	Amateurs, n=71		CMS, n=49		MS, n=43		MSIC, n=5		Total respondents	
Tennis	29	40.8	11	22.4	6	14.0	3	60	49	29.2
Fencing	0	0.0	1	2.0	4	9.3	0	0	5	3.0
Rhythmic gymnastics	0	0.0	2	4.1	5	11.6	1	20	8	4.8
Total	71	100. 0	49	100.0	43	100.0	5	100	168	100. 0

Based on the data presented in the tables, it can be stated that the formed sample possesses characteristics of representativeness for the general population in studying coping behavior and its interrelationship with self-attitude among professional athletes with different levels of achievement. Stratification by level of athletic qualification, including amateur athletes (42.3%), qualified athletes holding the CMS rank (Candidates for Master of Sport, 29.2%), Masters of Sport (25.6%), and elite representatives (MSIC – Masters of Sport, International Class, 3.0%), enables comparative analysis of stress coping strategies at various stages of the sports career.

The inclusion of a wide spectrum of sports specializations (10 individual sports) in the sample, with a predominance of tennis (29.2%), badminton (13.7%), and table tennis (15.5%), ensures diversity of sports contexts. Gender balance (48.2% women and 51.8% men) and age limits (from 20 to 35 years) further enhance the representativeness of the sample, allowing for minimization of the influence of demographic factors on the research results. The progressive increase in mean sports experience depending on qualification level (from  $6.3 \pm 1.1$  years among amateurs to  $17.2 \pm 0.7$  years among MSIC athletes) indicates correct distribution of participants across groups and confirms that differences in sports activity experience may determine the specificity of coping strategies.

Thus, the composition and structure of the sample are adequate to the research goal and allow for identifying patterns in the formation of coping behavior depending on the level of sports achievements and features of self-attitude within the professional sports environment.

#### Diagnostic package of the study

The following methods were used in the study:

1. **"Ways of Coping Questionnaire"** by **R. Lazarus** (hereinafter referred to as **WCQ**) [59]. The instrument was developed by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman in 1988 and adapted by T.L. Kryukova, E.V. Kuftyak, and M.S. Zamyshlyeva in 2007. It was additionally standardized at the Bekhterev Psychoneurological Research Institute by L.I. Wasserman and colleagues (2009).

The WCQ questionnaire includes 50 statements, each reflecting a specific variant of behavior in a difficult or problematic situation. The statements are rated by the participant on a 4-point scale depending on the frequency of use of the proposed behavioral strategy (never, rarely, sometimes, often). The questionnaire items are grouped into eight scales corresponding to the main types of coping strategies identified by the authors: confrontation; distancing; self-control; seeking social support; acceptance of responsibility; escape-avoidance; planful problem-solving; positive reappraisal (see Appendix 3).

The degree of preference for a particular stress coping strategy is determined based on the following conditional rule:

- score below 40 points – rare use of the corresponding strategy;
- $40 \text{ points} \leq \text{score} \leq 60 \text{ points}$  – moderate use of the corresponding strategy;
- score above 60 points – pronounced preference for the corresponding strategy.

The effectiveness of the method is confirmed by its ability to provide rapid and multidimensional diagnostics of behavioral patterns in stressful situations, which allows for identifying targets for psychotherapeutic interventions and evaluating their effectiveness. The practical value of the method is demonstrated by its successful application in examining heterogeneous groups of respondents, including both healthy individuals and patients with various disorders.

2. **Self-attitude questionnaire (SAQ)**, Author: S.R. Pantileev (1989) [111]. This standardized psychodiagnostic instrument for identifying the structure of personality self-attitude and characterizing its individual components contains 110 statements distributed across 9 scales: internal honesty, self-confidence, self-direction, reflected self-attitude, self-worth, self-acceptance, self-attachment, internal conflict, and self-blame (see Appendix 4). The instrument is designed for in-depth study of the sphere of personality self-consciousness, encompassing various (cognitive, dynamic, integral) aspects.

3. **"Self-Compassion Scale" by K. Neff (2003), adapted by K.A. Chistopolskaya et al. (2020)** [25]. According to K. Neff's concept, self-compassion is understood as a healthy alternative to traditional self-esteem. It represents a constructive and kind attitude toward oneself in moments of failure, suffering, or awareness of one's imperfections. This construct consists of interrelated components (questionnaire scales):

1. Self-kindness – describes a kind and loving attitude toward oneself in situations of failure and difficulty.

2. Self-judgment – involves harsh condemnation of one's own shortcomings, imperfections, and missteps. A high score on this scale indicates a lower level of self-judgment.

3. Common humanity – describes the understanding that difficulties arise in every person's life path and do not uniquely define the respondent.

4. Self-isolation – describes the feeling of loneliness and being different from others in times of failure. A high score on this scale indicates a lower level of self-isolation.

5. Mindfulness – implies a balanced, interested attitude toward one's experiences, where a person neither exaggerates nor minimizes their feelings but attempts to explore them impartially.

6. Over-identification – describes a strategy of immersion in experiences during difficult situations. A high score on this scale indicates a lower level of excessive identification with experiences.

Within the framework of the Russian adaptation of the questionnaire, this concept was translated and conceptualized as "self-compassion", which accurately reflects its essence – the ability to treat oneself with compassion. The authors of the adaptation emphasize that self-compassion is a proactive, prosocial attitude toward oneself that contributes to psychological well-being, emotional resilience, and motivation for development, as it allows one to acknowledge mistakes without destructive feelings of shame and guilt. This is not self-pity or egocentrism, but a foundation for healthy self-regulation and empathy toward others.

4. **"Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSES). Author: M. Rosenberg (1965). Adaptation: A.A. Zolotareva (2020) [157].** The psychometric properties of the original version of the RSES have been evaluated in numerous studies confirming the validity and reliability of the scale. The Russian-language version of the RSES has successfully passed testing of basic psychometric properties and demonstrated acceptable indicators of validity and reliability (tested on 213 Russian-speaking students aged 16 to 24 years). The adapted scale is simple to complete (10 items) and to score, and is therefore recommended as an instrument for rapid diagnostics of self-esteem for scientific and practical purposes. The single scale of the questionnaire, "self-esteem", reflects confidence in one's sense of personal worth and the individual's subjective evaluation of themselves, their own actions, and personal qualities.

5. **"Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire" (PSAQ).** Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko (2010) [51]. The author of the questionnaire explains that "in the broadest sense, professional self-attitude is a mental construct in which objective relationships between an individual's personal characteristics and the process of practical implementation of professional activity, career building, and business communication are represented and structured. ... this is not an attitude toward knowledge about oneself as a worker, specialist, or professional, but an attitude toward oneself as an acting, communicating, and career-building

subject. Therefore, in a narrower sense, professional self-attitude is understood as the meaningful attitude of the personality toward oneself as a subject of professional activity, communication, and career, phenomenologically represented by self-evaluative judgments and emotional experiences regarding one's own individual characteristics and reflecting the objective influence of these characteristics on the practical realization of labor and career motives" [51, p. 115]. Scales of the original questionnaire: 1) internal conflict; 2) professional self-respect; 3) professional self-blame; 4) professional self-efficacy; 5) professional self-abasement; 6) general indicator of positivity of professional self-attitude (see Appendix 5).

Within the framework of this study, the original "Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire" was adapted for the context of sports activity (see Appendix 5). This was necessary for the following reasons:

1. To enhance validity: the wording of items was adjusted to align with the specific terminology and realities of elite sports (e.g., replacing the concepts "work" with "sports activity", "colleagues" with "team members/opponents", "professional tasks" with "competitive tasks").

2. To ensure construct validity: Focusing the items exclusively on the sports domain allows for a cleaner measurement of self-attitude as a professional athlete, minimizing the influence of general, non-sports-related aspects of self-esteem.

3. To address the main objective of the study: investigating the interrelationship of coping behavior specifically with the professional component of personality self-attitude. The adaptation was linguistic in nature and did not affect the semantic core or structure of the original instrument.

The adaptation of the questionnaire was conditioned by the necessity of diagnosing specifically professional aspects of athletes' self-attitude. In contrast to general instruments, this questionnaire allows for the assessment of attitude toward oneself precisely as a subject of sports activity, including components relevant to elite sports such as professional self-confidence, self-direction in one's career, evaluation of personal growth through sports, and professional self-blame. The adaptation of the instrument consisted in contextualizing the item wording while preserving the original factorial structure, which ensures content validity of measurements within the sports environment. The substantive interpretation of the scales and their names was also adapted.

A specialized questionnaire is necessary because professional sports form such a specific system of self-evaluation that general instruments may be methodologically "blind" to key professional aspects. For example, an athlete may demonstrate high general self-respect on

the Rosenberg scale while simultaneously experiencing acute professional self-abasement after a series of defeats. Only a specialized instrument allows for capturing this professional specificity, which is fundamentally significant for understanding the mechanisms of coping in sports.

Methods of statistical data processing.

Statistical processing of empirical data was carried out using the software packages IBM SPSS Statistics (version 22) and Jamovi (version 2.4.7.0, built on the R statistical platform). Analyses were implemented at the level of statistical significance  $p < 0.05$ :

1. Descriptive statistics: calculation of mean values and standard deviations for all studied variables in each group of participants.

2. Testing empirical distributions of the studied variables for conformity to the normal distribution law using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

3. Comparative analysis of mean values between independent samples using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test for pairwise group comparisons.

4. Correlation analysis to identify and assess the strength of interrelationships between variables, calculating Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (a non-parametric measure of correlation).

5. Comparative analysis of structural profiles of coping behavior and self-attitude based on interpretation of qualitative levels of indicator expression.

6. Comparative analysis of the discriminative (differentiating) capacity of psychodiagnostic instruments. For this purpose, a quantitative approach was applied, including:

– calculation of the absolute and relative number of scales that revealed statistically significant differences between groups;;

– calculation and comparison of effect size ( $r$ ) for each significant difference using the formula.

7. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for comprehensive assessment of the influence of the athletic qualification factor on integral indicator profiles.

7. Regression analysis with testing of interaction effects to clarify the nature of interrelationships between general and professional self-attitude.

## 2.2. Analysis of the research results

### 2.2.1. Comparative analysis of coping behavior in amateur and professional athletes

The results obtained using the WCQ questionnaire in the three groups are presented in Table 2.4 and Appendix 6.

Table 2.4 – Mean scores on the scales of the "Ways of coping questionnaire"

Scale (strategy)	Amateurs, n = 71			CMS, n = 49			MS, n = 48		
	M	SD	level	M	SD	level	M	SD	level
Confrontation	42.7	14.4	moderate	<b>38.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>rare</b>	42.4	15.4	moderate
Distancing	45.3	6.1	moderate	46.7	12.8	moderate	44.9	15.3	moderate
Self-control	47.3	4.4	moderate	<b>66.3</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>moderate</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>moderate</b>
Seeking Social Support	45.9	6.9	moderate	45.4	12.5	moderate	44.2	13.8	moderate
Acceptance of Responsibility	<b>32.9</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>rare</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>moderate</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>moderate</b>
Escape-Avoidance	46.2	18.0	moderate	45.6	14.2	moderate	46.7	17.1	moderate
Problem-Solving Planning	58.7	18.8	moderate	<b>62.4</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>moderate</b>	<b>69.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>moderate</b>
Positive Reappraisal	40.4	2.9	moderate	50.3	16.4	moderate	<b>62.4</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>moderate</b>

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Analysis of the data presented in Table 2.4 allows for a quantitative characterization of coping behavior profiles in the studied groups.

In the group of amateur athletes, a uniform distribution of indicators is observed, with a predominance of moderate levels of strategy expression. The exception is the scale "Acceptance of Responsibility", which demonstrates statistically significantly lower values ( $32.9 \pm 4.6$ ) compared to other strategies.

In the CMS group, polarization of strategies is revealed: alongside a low level of Confrontation ( $38.7 \pm 8.8$ ), there is pronounced activation of adaptive coping strategies, including Self-Control ( $66.3 \pm 11.6$ ), Acceptance of Responsibility ( $62.6 \pm 15.9$ ), and Planful Problem-Solving ( $62.4 \pm 13.8$ ).

In the MS group, the most differentiated profile is identified, with maximum expression of key adaptive strategies: Self-Control ( $71.2 \pm 9.0$ ), Acceptance of Responsibility ( $70.5 \pm$

10.6), Planful Problem-Solving ( $69.8 \pm 9.2$ ), Positive Reappraisal ( $62.4 \pm 12.3$ ). The remaining strategies maintain a moderate level of expression, comparable to other groups.

The obtained results are presented in the diagram (Fig. 2.1).

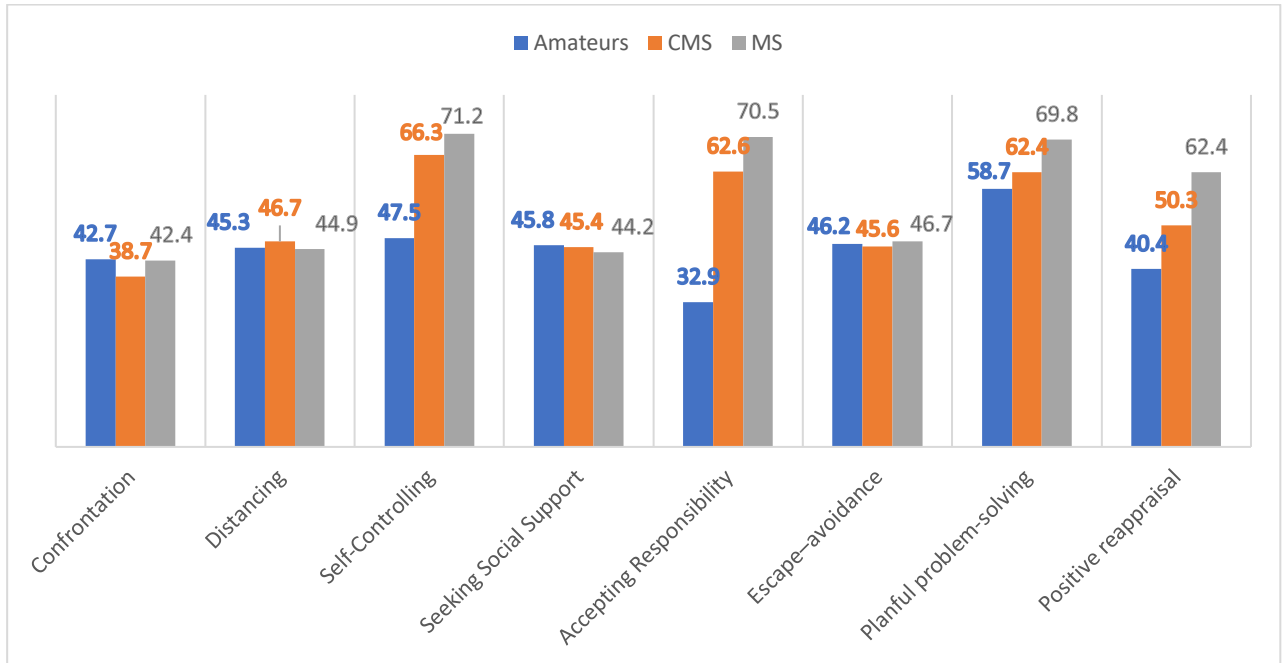


Figure 2.1 – Comparison of mean scores on the scales of the "Ways of coping questionnaire" across groups

Testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion for all studied variables showed that they have distributions differing from normal (Table 2.5). Therefore, comparison of mean scores across groups (Table 2.6) was conducted using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test for independent samples, as it does not require normal distribution of the compared populations.

Table 2.5 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for the amateur athletes group

Scale (strategy)	Amateurs, n = 71	
	D $\approx$	p
Confrontation	0.153072	0.0003
Distancing	0.234309	0.0001
Self-control	0.229077	0.0001
Seeking Social Support	0.235515	0.0001
Acceptance of Responsibility	0.227591	0.0001
Escape-Avoidance	0.204376	0.0001
Planful Problem-Solving	0.333066	0.0001
Positive Reappraisal	0.106118	0.0478

The results of the comparative analysis of coping behavior strategies between groups using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test are presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 – Comparative analysis of mean scores on the "Ways of Coping Questionnaire" Scales

Scale (strategy)	Amateurs vs CMS		Amateurs vs MS		CMS vs MS	
	U	p	U	p	U	p
Confrontation	1572	0.372	1631.5	0.696	1083.5	0.506
Distancing	1558.5	0.335	1627	0.678	1061.	0.408
Self-control	<b>366.5</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>109.5</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	917	0.062
Seeking Social Support	1412.	0.080	1422.5	0.127	1127	0.726
Acceptance of Responsibility	<b>238.5</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>0.014</b>
Escape-Avoidance	1649.5	0.632	1595.	0.556	1145.5	0.828
Planful Problem-Solving	1612.5	0.499	1369.5	0.070	<b>832.5</b>	<b>0.013</b>
Positive Reappraisal	<b>1102.5</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

Note: differences are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; U = Mann-Whitney U-test statistic.

Statistically significant differences between the Amateurs and CMS groups (Table 2.6) were found on the scales "Self-control" (U = 366.5,  $p < 0.001$ ), "Acceptance of Responsibility" (U = 238.5,  $p < 0.001$ ), and "Positive Reappraisal" (U = 1102.5,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Comparison of the Amateurs and MS groups revealed significant differences on the same scales: "Self-control" (U = 109.5,  $p < 0.001$ ), "Acceptance of Responsibility" (U = 83.5,  $p < 0.001$ ), and "Positive Reappraisal" (U = 98,  $p < 0.001$ ).

When comparing the CMS and MS groups, statistically significant differences were established on the scales "Acceptance of Responsibility" (U = 837,  $p = 0.014$ ), "planful problem-solving" (U = 832.5,  $p = 0.013$ ), and "Positive Reappraisal" (U = 696,  $p < 0.001$ ). Differences on the "Self-control" scale between the CMS and MS groups did not reach the level of statistical significance (U = 917,  $p = 0.062$ ).

Statistically non-significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) across all pairwise comparisons were recorded for the scales "confrontation", "distancing", "seeking social support", and "escape-avoidance", indicating homogeneity of coping behavior profiles with respect to these strategies regardless of athletic qualification level.

Analysis of the features of coping behavior in groups of athletes with different qualification levels allows for the identification not only of statistical differences but also of substantive patterns reflecting the transformation of psychological regulation mechanisms under the increasingly complex demands of a sports career. Examining the expression of strategies through the lens of their functional purpose and potential maladaptive risks enables the construction of a comprehensive interpretation of the obtained profiles.

In the group of amateur athletes, a uniform profile is observed, with a predominance of moderate use of virtually all strategies. This pattern can be characterized as poly-strategic but lacking clear specialization and hierarchy, which is typical of situational and emotion-focused coping. The moderate expression of most strategies, including confrontation, distancing, escape-avoidance, and seeking social support, indicates a flexible but non-specialized style, whose primary function is the operational regulation of emotional state. The rare use of the "acceptance of responsibility" strategy stands out against the general background and represents the most notable qualitative distinction of this profile.

From a psychological perspective, this indicates a tendency toward external attribution of the causes of emerging difficulties. Problematic situations in the sports context—such as unsuccessful performance, technical errors, or team conflicts—are more likely to be interpreted as consequences of external circumstances: an inconvenient schedule, insufficient support from the coach, or simply bad luck. Such an attributional model, on one hand, performs a protective function, shielding self-esteem from criticism; on the other hand, it substantially limits opportunities for purposeful self-development and correction of one's own actions.

Overall, this profile reflects a universal, situation-dependent adaptive style, which may be effective under conditions of low or irregular competitive load but appears insufficient for the systematic improvement of mastery under conditions of high competition.

For professional athletes at the level of Masters of Sport and above, the most differentiated and integrated profile is characteristic, demonstrating features of a mature psychological self-regulation system. In contrast to the CMS group, the confrontation strategy is used moderately, similar to amateurs, which may indicate a more flexible and situationally adequate use of this strategy, potentially as a source of energy and persistence, but within the framework of an overall controlled style. Among Masters of Sport, as well as CMS athletes, the strategies of self-control, acceptance of responsibility, and planful problem-solving are pronounced, constituting the operational core of professional self-regulation.

A qualitative distinction that sets this group apart is the pronounced use of the positive reappraisal strategy. This may indicate a developed capacity for higher-order cognitive

reframing. At this level, competitive difficulties (losses, injuries, psychological crises, etc.) cease to be perceived by professional athletes exclusively as negative events requiring simple overcoming. Most often, they are actively reinterpreted as an integral and valuable part of a sports career, a source of unique experience, motivation, and personal growth. Such transformation allows not only for the effective neutralization of the destructive emotional impact of failures in elite sports but also for extracting long-term personal resources for development from them. The moderate level of strategies such as seeking social support indicates not dependence, but a balanced ability to attract external resources (informational, emotional) for solving specific tasks, while maintaining autonomy and ultimate responsibility for the outcome.

Comparative analysis of the groups' strategies allows us to state that the coping behavior of amateur athletes is predominantly adaptive-reactive in nature. Its main function lies in the operational modulation of emotional state in response to emerging stressors, with strategies aimed at emotion regulation (distancing, seeking support) or situational behavioral activity (moderate confrontation) dominating. Detailed problem analysis and long-term planning likely take a back seat.

In contrast, professional athletes develop a proactive, problem-oriented style, the structural core of which consists of strategies requiring developed skills in internal discipline, reflexive analysis, goal-setting, and voluntary control. Among Masters of Sport, this system reaches its most complete form, enriched by the mechanism of semantic processing of experience.

Thus, the evolution of coping behavior from the amateur to the professional level reflects a general trend from external, situational regulation to internal, semantic self-regulation, which is one of the systemic psychological conditions for achieving and maintaining the highest sports results.

### 2.2.2 Comparative analysis of self-attitude in athletes with different levels of achievement

The results obtained using the Self-Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ) in the three groups are presented in Table 2.7 and Appendix 7.

Table 2.7 – Mean scores on the scales of the "Self-attitude questionnaire" across groups

scale	Amateurs, n = 71			CMS, n = 49			MS, n = 48		
	M	SD	level	M	SD	level	M	SD	level
Internal honesty	4.5	1.8	moderate	4.4	1.8	moderate	4.6	1.9	moderate
Self-confidence	6.1	2.1	moderate	6.2	1.9	moderate	8.3	1.9	moderate
Self-direction	5.3	2.5	moderate	8.1	1.1	high	8.2	1.1	high
Reflected self-attitude	5.9	2.1	moderate	6.1	1.7	moderate	6.0	2.0	moderate
Self-worth	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>high</b>
Self-acceptance	5.8	2.0	moderate	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>high</b>
Self-attachment	4.6	2.3	moderate	4.6	2.1	moderate	<b>3.1</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>low</b>
Internal conflict	4.6	1.9	moderate	4.5	2.4	moderate	<b>8.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>high</b>
Self-blame	4.7	1.8	moderate	4.7	1.6	moderate	4.6	1.8	moderate

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Analysis of the data presented in Table 2.7 allows for a quantitative characterization of self-attitude profiles in the studied groups. Qualitative differences in the structure of self-attitude among athletes of different qualification levels were identified. In the group of amateur athletes, a homogeneous self-attitude profile is observed, with a predominance of moderate values across most scales, while maintaining a statistically significantly higher score on the "Self-worth" scale ( $8.2 \pm 1.4$ ). This indicates the formation of a fundamental acceptance of one's own personality.

In the group of Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS), a transformation of the self-attitude profile toward greater differentiation is observed: against the background of preserved moderate values on scales reflecting basic aspects of self-attitude (mean score for "Internal honesty" =  $4.4 \pm 1.8$ ; "Self-confidence" =  $6.2 \pm 1.9$ ; "Reflected self-attitude" =  $6.1 \pm 1.7$ ), statistically significantly higher scores are formed on the scales "Self-direction" ( $8.1 \pm 1.1$ ) and "Self-acceptance" ( $8.2 \pm 1.6$ ). This reflects the development of the capacity for self-regulation and personality integration.

The most complex organization of self-attitude is characteristic of Masters of Sport (MS). The profile is distinguished by pronounced polarization: maximum mean scores are noted

on the scales "Self-direction" ( $8.2 \pm 1.1$ ), "Self-worth" ( $8.3 \pm 1.0$ ), "Self-acceptance" ( $8.3 \pm 1.1$ ), and "Internal conflict" ( $8.3 \pm 1.3$ ), alongside a minimal mean score on the scale "Self-attachment" ( $3.1 \pm 1.8$ ). This configuration reflects a mature, dynamic structure of self-attitude, characterized by high reflectiveness and readiness for personal change among elite athletes.

The obtained results are presented in the diagram (Fig. 2.2).

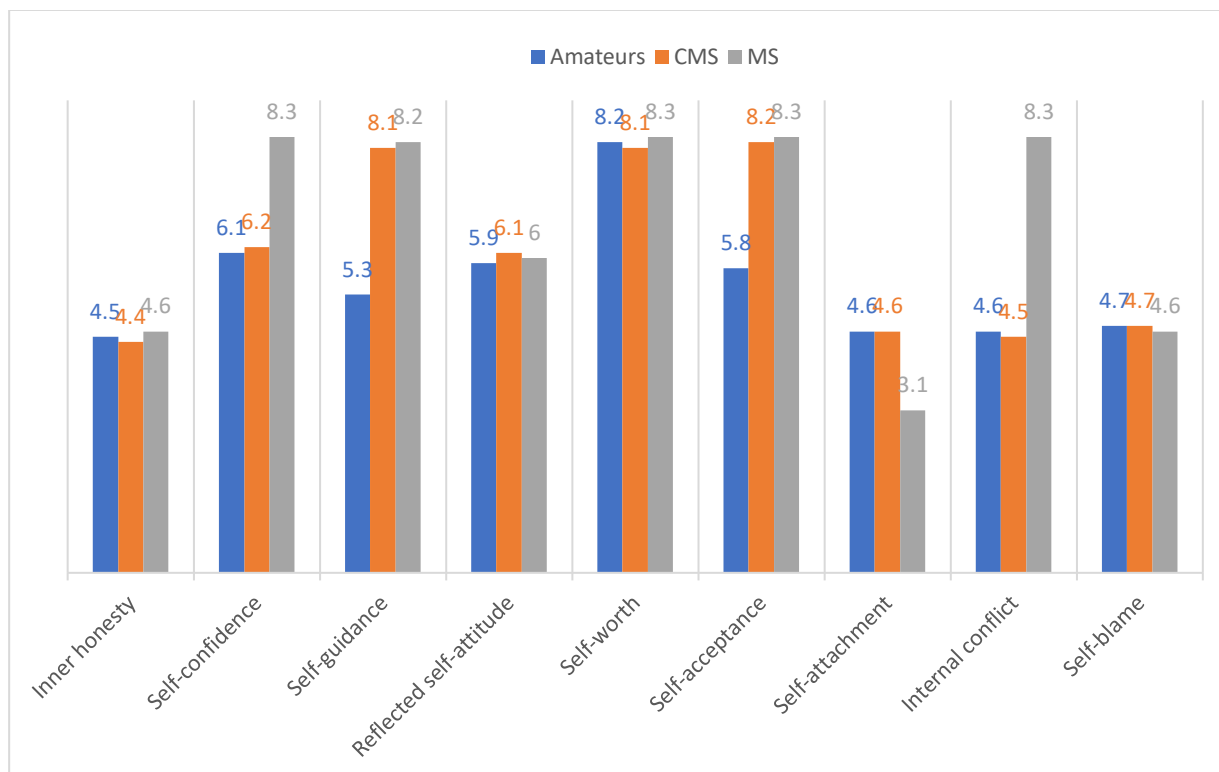


Figure 2.2 – Comparison of mean scores on the scales of the "Self-Attitude questionnaire" across groups

Comparison of mean scores across groups (Table 2.8) was conducted using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test.

Table 2.8 – Comparative analysis of mean scores on the "Self-attitude questionnaire" scales between groups

Scale	Amateurs vs CMS		Amateurs vs MS		CMS vs MS	
	U	p	U	p	U	p
Internal honesty	1710.5	0.879	1612	0.620	1094.	0.556
Self-confidence	1660	0.673	<b>639</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Self-direction	<b>622</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	1132	0.753
Reflected self-attitude	1663.5	0.686	1644	0.747	1174.5	0.994
Self-worth	1564.5	0.351	1633	0.702	1089.5	0.534

Scale	Amateurs vs CMS		Amateurs vs MS		CMS vs MS	
	U	p	U	p	U	p
Self-acceptance	<b>570</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	<b>528.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	1093.5	0.554
Self-attachment	1734.5	0.980	<b>1039</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	<b>635.50</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Internal conflict	1706	0.860	<b>202.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Self-blame	1711.5	0.883	1660.5	0.815	1160	0.910

Note: differences are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; U = Mann-Whitney U-test statistic

Statistical analysis revealed a heterogeneous pattern of significant differences in the structure of self-attitude between groups of athletes with different qualification levels (Table 2.8). When comparing the Amateurs and Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS) groups, statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were established on three scales: "Self-confidence" ( $U = 639$ ), "Self-direction" ( $U = 622$ ), and "Self-acceptance" ( $U = 570$ ).

The most pronounced differentiation was revealed when comparing the results of the Amateurs and Masters of Sport (MS) groups, where statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were recorded on five scales: "Self-confidence" ( $U = 639$ ), "Self-direction" ( $U = 584$ ), "Self-acceptance" ( $U = 528.5$ ), "Self-attachment" ( $U = 1039$ ), and "Internal conflict" ( $U = 202.5$ ).

Comparative analysis of the CMS and MS groups revealed statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) on three parameters: "Self-confidence" ( $U = 406$ ), "Self-attachment" ( $U = 635.5$ ), and "Internal conflict" ( $U = 215$ ).

Statistically non-significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) across all pairwise comparisons were noted for the scales "Internal honesty", "Reflected self-attitude", "Self-worth", and "Self-blame", indicating the stability of these self-attitude components regardless of athletic qualification level.

Qualitative analysis of the structural patterns of respondents' self-attitude allows for the identification of substantive differences between groups of athletes with different qualification levels, conditioned by the specifics of sports activity and the demands placed on psychological self-regulation. The examination of data emphasizes those factors whose degree of expression deviates from the average level, which enables the description of the qualitative distinctiveness of each profile.

In amateur athletes, a contour-like self-attitude profile is identified, characterized by a predominance of moderate values across most studied parameters. The only parameter whose

degree of expression differs from the average is the high level of self-worth. This indicates the presence in respondents of this group of a general positive feeling related to the value of one's own "Self", self-love, a sense of the value of one's own personality, and simultaneously the presumed value of one's "Self" for others. This, in turn, can be regarded as a basic emotional resource for all individuals engaged in sports. However, this experience exists in relative isolation, not being integrated into a system of developed regulatory mechanisms, which is confirmed by the moderate scores on factors such as self-direction and self-acceptance. The absence of pronounced deviations on the parameters of internal conflict and Self-blame indicates a moderate, situational character of self-reflection that does not escalate into systematic analysis or stable internal tension. Thus, the profile of amateurs can be characterized as predominantly conformist and adaptive, where self-attitude is formed rather under the influence of external evaluations and current emotional state than on the basis of established internal criteria.

Among professional athletes (CMS), a qualitatively different pattern of self-attitude is revealed, in the structure of which factors directly related to the formation of an active subject position are highlighted. The main distinction of this profile lies in a higher degree of expression of self-direction and self-acceptance compared to amateurs. A high degree of self-direction reflects a stable representation of oneself as an active source of one's own actions, decisions, and achievements, which corresponds to the demand of sports activity for an internal locus of control and personal responsibility. Simultaneously, the observed high degree of self-acceptance indicates the development of internal consistency and a friendly, accepting attitude toward oneself among professional athletes, which creates the necessary psychological foundation for resilience under conditions of regular training and competitive loads. The preservation of a moderate level on factors of internal conflict and Self-blame alongside a high degree of self-acceptance allows for interpreting this position as internally integrated and stable, where critical analysis of one's actions and possible shortcomings does not provoke acute negative experiences but serves as a tool for correction.

Among professional athletes (Masters of Sport), the most complex and internally differentiated profile among all respondents was identified, reflecting the specificity of psychological demands for the elite level of sports. As in the CMS group, a high level of factors such as self-direction and self-acceptance was identified, which confirms the stability of this complex as the operational basis of professional self-regulation in elite sports. However, the specificity of this group's profile is determined by three distinct deviations from the average level, which form a peculiar dynamic configuration. Firstly, a significant increase in the

expression of the self-confidence factor is recorded, indicating the development of a stable sense of one's own competence, strength, and validity of self-respect, directly related to the experience of high sports achievements. Secondly, a decrease in the degree of self-attachment to a low level is observed, which demonstrates the absence of rigidity in the self-concept and the presence of pronounced dissatisfaction with the current state, accompanied by a striving for constant changes and development. Thirdly, a high degree of internal conflict was identified. In the context of maintaining a high degree of self-direction and self-acceptance, this factor can be interpreted not as a sign of maladaptation, but as a reflection of intensive internal work, extremely deepened reflection, and constant critical analysis, which become integral components of activity aimed at achieving the maximum result in sports. Thus, the profile of Masters of Sport is built on a peculiar dialectical unity: confidence in one's strengths and competencies coexists with acute dissatisfaction with the current Self and high internal conflict, which in this case performs not a destructive, but a motivational and developmental function.

Comparative analysis of amateur and professional athletes revealed a fundamental difference in the architectonics of self-attitude. Thus, the former are characterized by a relatively simple profile with an isolated high level of self-worth in the absence of a developed self-regulation system. Among professional-level athletes, a stable structural core is formed, represented by a high degree of self-direction and self-acceptance, which constitutes the psychological basis for a proactive, internally determined position necessary for systematic improvement. At the level of Masters of Sport, further complication of this basic structure occurs: internal dynamics are added to it, expressed in increased self-confidence, decreased self-attachment, and increased internal conflict. This configuration reflects the formation of a psychological system capable of sustaining the highest level of demands on oneself, where internal tension and critical reflection become sources of professional development rather than factors of disorganization.

### 2.2.3 Identification of specific features of self-attitude in professional athletes

The results of the comparative analysis on the scales of the adapted Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ) in groups of professional athletes, using non-parametric statistical criteria, are presented in Table 2.9 and Appendix 8.

Table 2.9 – Mean scores on the Scales of the "Professional self-attitude questionnaire"

code	Scale/subscale	CMS, n = 49			MS, n = 48			U	p
		M	SD	level	M	SD	level		
<b>S</b>	<b>Sports self-respect</b>	28.5	5.3	moderate	35.9	3.1	high	257	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
S1	sports self-confidence	12.4	3.8	moderate	18.1	1.7	high	183	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
S2	sports self-attachment	16.1	2.7	moderate	17.8	2.5	high	692.5	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Sports self-efficacy</b>	32.0	4.1	moderate	37.3	1.9	high	316.5	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
E1	sports self-direction	21.7	3.8	moderate	26.2	1.6	high	339	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
E2	self-assessment of personal growth in sports	<b>10.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>high</b>	11.1	1.1	high	791	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Sports self-abasement</b>	40.5	12.7	moderate	30.5	5.3	moderate	627	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
<b>NK</b>	<b>Internal conflict of sports self-attitude</b>	25.2	9.2	moderate	18.9	3.8	moderate	750	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
<b>NS</b>	<b>Self-blame in sports</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>high</b>	11.7	4.2	moderate	770.5	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>General indicator of positivity of sports self-attitude</b>	101	16.2	moderate	103.7	7.2	moderate	971	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Note: M – mean, SD - standard deviation; differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ ; U = Mann-Whitney U-test statistic.									

Comparison of mean scores on the scales of the adapted Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire between groups of professional athletes with different qualification levels, using the Mann-Whitney U-test, revealed statistically significant differences across all analyzed indicators (Table 2.9).

The mean scores on scales reflecting the positive component of self-attitude were significantly higher in the Masters of Sport (MS) group. In particular, differences were recorded on the scale of Sports self-respect (S):  $35.9 \pm 3.1$  (high level) in the MS group versus  $28.5 \pm 5.3$  (moderate level) in the CMS group. A similar pattern was observed for the subscales of Sports self-confidence and Sports self-attachment, as well as for the scale of Sports self-efficacy and its components—Sports self-direction and Self-assessment of personal growth in sports. For the latter subscale, a high level was identified in both groups; however, the mean score in the MS group was statistically significantly higher.

For scales reflecting the negative component of self-attitude, opposite results were obtained. Mean scores for Sports self-abasement and Internal conflict of sports self-attitude were significantly lower in the MS group, although in both groups they corresponded to the moderate level. A substantial change was revealed for the scale of Self-blame in sports: whereas in the CMS group the mean score corresponded to a high level ( $15.3 \pm 5.7$ ), in the MS group it decreased to a moderate level ( $11.7 \pm 4.2$ ). At the same time, the General indicator of positivity of sports self-attitude remained at a moderate level in both groups, despite the statistically significant difference between them.

Thus, quantitative analysis demonstrates that athletes with higher qualification (MS) exhibit a more adaptive profile of professional self-attitude, which is quantitatively expressed in higher mean scores on scales of self-respect and self-efficacy, and in lower mean scores on scales of self-abasement and internal conflict.

A comparative evaluation of the discriminative validity—that is, sensitivity to within-group differences—of two diagnostic instruments was conducted: the Self-Attitude Questionnaire (MIS) and the adapted Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ). The validity criterion was each instrument's ability to detect statistically significant differences in the self-attitude profile among athletes of different qualification levels within a single professional group (CMS and MS). It was hypothesized that the context-specific questionnaire (PSAQ) would demonstrate higher differentiating capacity compared to the general self-attitude questionnaire.

To verify this assumption, a quantitative approach was applied, based on two complementary indicators: absolute and relative number of scales on which the Mann-Whitney U-test recorded statistically significant differences between the CMS and MS groups. Calculated effect size ( $r$ ) for each identified significant difference—a more substantive indicator. Effect size was computed using the formula:

$$r = Z / \sqrt{n}, \quad (1)$$

where  $Z$  – standardized value of the  $U$ -statistic, and  $n$  – total number of compared samples ( $n=97$ ), Results were interpreted according to the conventional gradation: from 0.10 – small effect, from 0.30 – medium effect, from 0.50 – large effect.

The results of the comparative analysis are systematized in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10 – Comparison of the discriminative capacity of the MIS and PSAQ questionnaires on a sample of professional athletes (CMS and MS)

№	Instrument	Number of scales compared	Number of scales with significant differences ( $p<0.05$ )	Proportion of scales with significant differences, %	Range of effect size ( $r$ ) for significant differences	Mean effect size ( $r$ ) for significant differences
1	MIS	9	3	33.3	0.3-0.4	0.32
2	PSAQ	10	10	100.0	0.5-0.8	0.69
<i>r – effect size for the Mann-Whitney U-test</i>						

The data in Table 2.10 demonstrate a pronounced advantage of the specialized questionnaire according to both analyzed criteria. The basic MIS questionnaire revealed statistically significant differences between qualification groups on only three out of nine scales, which constitutes 33.3%. At the same time, analysis of responses to the adapted PSAQ showed significant differences on all ten analyzed scales and subscales, i.e., in 100% of cases. This indicates a fundamentally higher sensitivity of the PSAQ instrument to those aspects of self-attitude that are actualized and vary depending on the level of athletic mastery within the professional environment.

A substantial addition is the analysis of not only the presence but also the magnitude of the identified differences. The mean effect size for statistically significant differences detected using the PSAQ questionnaire was 0.69, which corresponds to a high level of effect magnitude. For the three MIS scales that also showed significance, the mean effect size was 0.32, corresponding to a medium level of effect magnitude. Thus, the use of the adapted PSAQ instrument allows not only for more frequent detection of differences between groups of athletes with different qualification levels, but also for registering these differences as more substantial and contentually pronounced.

The obtained results allow us to conclude that the adapted PSAQ possesses substantially higher discriminative validity when working with a sample of professional athletes compared to the general self-attitude instrument MIS. Its context-dependent item wordings, relevant specifically to sports activity, provide finer and more substantive differentiation of psychological profiles among athletes with different levels of achievement. Consequently, for the subsequent study of interrelationships between self-attitude and other variables (in

particular, with coping behavior strategies) within the framework of this research, it is justified to use the data obtained via the PSAQ questionnaire as the primary and more valid instrument for diagnosing self-attitude among professional athletes.

In order to verify construct validity and substantiate the adequacy of the applied instruments, a comparative analysis of the discriminative capacity of two methods was carried out: the MIS (Self-Attitude Questionnaire) and the adapted PSAQ (Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire). The validity criterion was each method's ability to statistically significantly differentiate groups of athletes with different levels of achievement (Candidates for Master of Sport and Masters of Sport), which is a key requirement for an instrument investigating psychological correlates of self-attitude in sports.

This method allows testing the assumption of a statistically significant influence of the factor "athletic qualification" on the set of indicators of each method as an integral profile. For comparative evaluation, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used, performed separately for two sets of dependent variables: standardized scores on the MIS scales and raw scores on the PSAQ scales.

The independent variable in both cases was the athletic qualification group (CMS, n=49; MS, n=48). To assess the strength of the statistical effect, the partial eta-squared indicator ( $\eta^2$ ) was used.

The results confirmed a statistically significant influence of the athletic qualification factor on the integral profile of indicators both in the MIS method and in the specialized PSAQ questionnaire (Table 2.11). However, the strength of this influence, which is a crucial indicator of a method's discriminative sensitivity, turned out to be fundamentally different.

Table 2.11 – Comparative results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

Instrument	Multivariate criterion (Wilks' $\Lambda$ )	F	p	Partial $\eta^2$ ( $\eta^2$ )
MIS (9 шкал)	0.781	F(9, 87) = 2.71	0.008	0.219
PSAQ (10 шкал)	0.452	F(10, 86) = 9.38	< 0.001	0.548

*Note:  $\Lambda$  – Wilks' Lambda; F – value of Fisher's F-criterion (degrees of freedom for the effect and error are indicated in parentheses, respectively); p – achieved level of statistical significance;  $\eta^2$  – \*effect size indicator "partial eta-squared" (interpretation according to Cohen, 1988: 0.01 – small effect, 0.06 – medium effect, 0.14 – large effect)*

As shown in Table 2.12, for the profile measured by the MIS instrument, Wilks' Lambda was  $\Lambda = 0.781$ . The corresponding Fisher's F-criterion was statistically significant: F (9, 87) = 2.71; p = 0.008. The partial effect size ( $\eta^2 = 0.219$ ) indicates a large effect, according to J.

Cohen's criteria, of the qualification factor, which explains approximately 22% of the variance in the multivariate profile.

At the same time, for the profile measured by the specialized PSAQ questionnaire, the analysis revealed a substantially more powerful effect. Wilks' Lambda was significantly lower ( $\Lambda = 0.452$ ), and the F-criterion value was markedly higher::  $F(10, 86) = 9.38, p < 0.001$ . The effect size indicator for the PSAQ ( $\eta p^2 = 0.548$ ) exceeded the corresponding indicator for the MIS by more than twofold. This means that the athletic qualification factor explains approximately 55% of the variance in the profile of indicators of the adapted instrument, which points to its exceptionally high discriminative capacity in this sample.

Thus, the MANOVA results provide primary evidence in favor of the higher construct (discriminant) validity of the PSAQ questionnaire compared to the MIS instrument in the context of researching self-attitude among highly qualified athletes.

For further substantiation of the construct validity of the adapted PSAQ questionnaire, an analysis of its correlation with the general MIS instrument at the level of individual scales was conducted. The aim was to verify the extent to which professional sports self-attitude is interrelated with general self-attitude, and whether this relationship changes depending on the level of mastery—which would indicate the differentiating capacity of the instrument. Five conceptually related pairs of scales were included in the analysis (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12 – Correspondence of MIS and PSAQ scales included in comparative analysis

Measured construct	MIS scale	PSAQ scale/subscale
Self-confidence	Self-confidence	S1. Sports self-confidence
Self-control, direction	Self-direction	E1. Sports self-direction
Internal conflict	Internal conflict	NK. Internal conflict of sports self-attitude
Self-blame	Self-blame	NS. Self-blame in sports
General positive evaluation	Self-worth	A. General indicator of positivity

To test the hypotheses, sequential multiple regression analysis was employed, using the group factor (CMS/MS) and the interaction term "PSAQ scale  $\times$  group". The presence of a significant interaction indicates a differing strength of the relationship between the instruments among athletes of different qualification levels (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13 – Results of regression analysis predicting MIS scales based on PSAQ scales, accounting for qualification factor and interaction (n=97)

Dependent variable (MIS)	Predictors	$\beta$	p	R <sup>2</sup> adj
<b>Self-confidence</b>	<b>PSAQ: Sports self-confidence (S1)</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>0.52</b>
	Group (MS)	0.22	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	

Dependent variable (MIS)	Predictors	$\beta$	p	R <sup>2</sup> adj
	<b>S1 × Group (Interaction)</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>0.003</b>	
<b>Self-direction</b>	<b>PSAQ: Sports self-direction (E1)</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>0.48</b>
	Group (MS)	0.15	0.058	
	<b>E1 × Group (Interaction)</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	
<b>Internal conflict</b>	<b>PSAQ: Internal conflict (NK)</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.55
	Group (MS)	0.38	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	
	NK × Group (Interaction)	0.11	0.145	
<b>Self-blame</b>	<b>PSAQ: Self-blame in sports (NS)</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	0.30
	Group (MS)	-0.08	0.280	
	NS × Group (Interaction)	-0.04	0.632	
<b>Self-worth</b>	<b>PSAQ: General positivity indicator (A)</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.002</b>	<b>0.18</b>
	Group (MS)	0.05	0.550	
	<b>A × Group (Interaction)</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.025</b>	

Note:  $\beta$  – standardized regression coefficient, reflecting the strength and direction of the relationship between a predictor and the dependent variable; p – achieved level of statistical significance; values of p < 0.05 are considered statistically significant; R<sup>2</sup>adj – adjusted coefficient of determination for the full model (with predictors: PSAQ scale, group, interaction); indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (MIS scale) explained by the model, adjusted for the number of predictors. Group (MS vs CMS) – effect of the qualification factor, where the CMS group serves as the reference (baseline) category; a positive  $\beta$  for the group variable indicates that the mean level on the MIS scale is higher in the MS group compared to the CMS group, while controlling for the effect of the PSAQ scale. Interaction indicates how the strength of the relationship between a PSAQ scale and its corresponding MIS scale changes in the MS group compared to the CMS group.

The results presented in Table 2.14 allow for the following conclusions. First, convergent validity is confirmed: all PSAQ scales significantly predict their corresponding MIS scales. Second, and most importantly, for the main aspects of positive self-attitude (self-confidence, self-direction, and self-worth), statistically significant interaction effects were detected. This means that the relationship between professional self-attitude and general self-attitude on these aspects is substantially strengthened in the Masters of Sport group. Among elite athletes, confidence, control, and worth in sports become virtually inseparable from their general self-attitude, whereas among CMS athletes, these domains remain more autonomous.

Thus, the specialized PSAQ questionnaire not only measures constructs related to general self-attitude but also validly reflects the specific integration of professional identity among elite-level athletes. This conclusion, consistent with the results of the multivariate profile analysis, forms comprehensive evidence of the higher construct and discriminant validity of the PSAQ questionnaire for diagnosing self-attitude in professional sports.

Within the context of self-attitude among professional athletes, other aspects were examined in the CMS and MS groups: self-compassion and self-esteem. The diagnostic results using K. Neff's questionnaire are presented in Table 2.14 and Appendix 9.

Table 2.14 – Comparison of mean Scores on the scales of the "Self-Compassion Scale" in groups of professional athletes using a non-parametric statistical test

scale	CMS, n = 49			MS, n = 48			U	p
	M	SD	level	M	SD	level		
Self-kindness	2.7	0.6	moderate	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>702.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Self-judgment	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>low</b>	1154	0.876
Common humanity	2.9	0.6	moderate	2.8	0.6	moderate	1103	0.600
Self-isolation	3.1	0.6	moderate	3.0	0.6	moderate	1016	0.249
Mindfulness	3.2	0.7	moderate	3.1	0.7	moderate	1049	0.361
Over-identification	2.8	0.6	moderate	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>662.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>
Self-attitude	2.8	0.3	moderate	2.6	0.2	moderate	<b>608.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>

Note: M – mean, SD – standard deviation; differences are statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ ; U – Mann-Whitney U-test statistic

Analysis of mean scores in groups of highly qualified athletes reveals deviations from the average level on specific components of self-compassion. In the group of Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS), the mean score on the self-judgment scale is  $2.3 \pm 0.8$ , which corresponds to a low level of expression. In the Masters of Sport (MS) group, a low level of expression is characteristic of two components: self-kindness ( $2.2 \pm 0.8$ ) and over-identification ( $2.2 \pm 0.8$ ). The self-judgment indicator in this group is also at a low level ( $2.3 \pm 0.7$ ). The remaining mean scores on the scales in both groups, including the integral indicator of self-attitude (CMS  $2.8 \pm 0.3$  и MS  $2.6 \pm 0.2$ ), fall within the moderate range.

Statistical comparison using the Mann-Whitney U-test confirms the presence of significant differences between groups on the following parameters. Significantly lower scores in the Masters of Sport group were recorded on the scales of self-kindness ( $U=702.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and over-identification ( $U=662.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). A statistically significant difference was also identified for the integral indicator of self-attitude ( $U=608.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), whose quantitative level, while remaining in the moderate range, is significantly lower among Masters of Sport ( $M=2.6$ ) than among Candidates for Master of Sport ( $M=2.8$ ). For the remaining components (self-judgment, common humanity, self-isolation, and mindfulness), no statistically significant differences between groups were detected ( $p>0.05$ ).

Thus, the quantitative profile of self-compassion among Masters of Sport differs from that of Candidates for Master of Sport not only in the qualitatively lower expression of self-kindness and the ability to distance oneself from experiences, but also in a statistically confirmed reduction in the overall level of self-compassionate attitude.

The obtained results are presented in the diagram (Fig. 2.3).

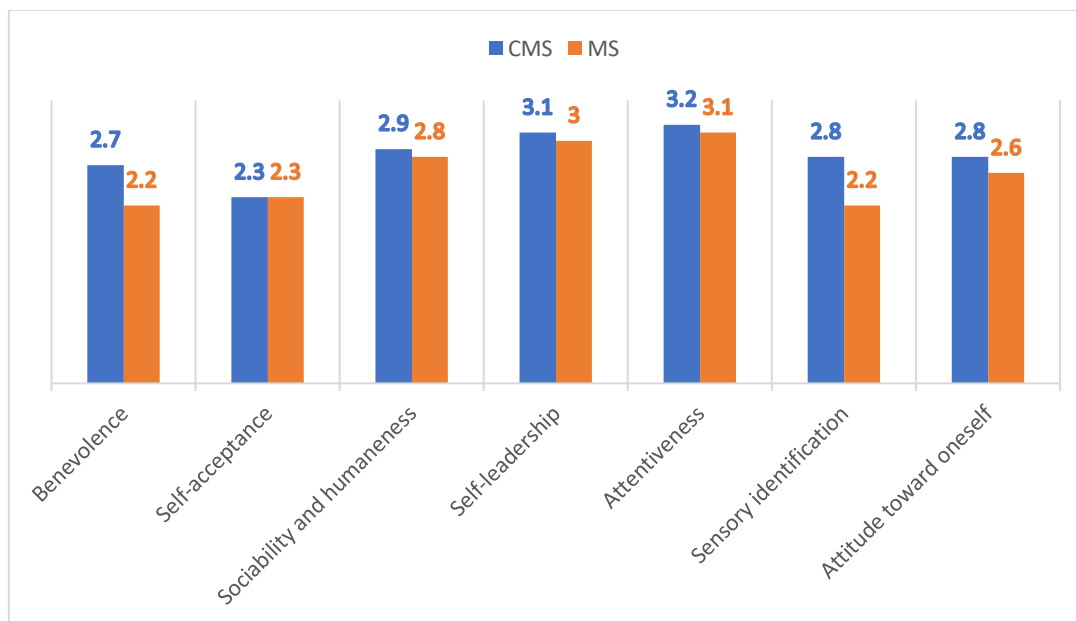


Figure 2.3 – Comparison of mean scores on the scales of the "Self-Compassion Scale" across groups

Qualitative analysis of the obtained data revealed substantive differences in the structure of self-compassion among professional athletes at different stages of sports specialization. A common feature for these professional athletes is a low level of self-judgment, which indicates an absence of a tendency toward harsh self-condemnation. However, further differentiation of components allows for the identification of specificity in their internal stance.

Among Masters of Sport, a substantially lower expression of self-kindness is observed compared to Candidates for Master of Sport. This may indicate that in situations of failure or difficulty, elite-level athletes are less inclined to exhibit a supportive and accepting attitude toward themselves. Their internal dialogue is possibly more restrained, reflecting the internalization of extremely high performance standards. In parallel, Masters of Sport demonstrate significantly lower expression of over-identification, which indicates a developed capacity for distancing oneself from negative experiences and preventing immersion in destructive emotional states. This feature can be viewed as adaptive for conditions of maximum psycho-emotional load in elite sports, allowing for the maintenance of operational effectiveness. At the same time, the integral indicator of general self-attitude, despite

statistically significant differences in scores, remains within the same moderate-level category for both groups, which indicates the preservation of a basic balance in self-attitude even against the backdrop of specific changes in its individual components. Thus, self-compassion among Masters of Sport acquires a more instrumental character, shifting from emotional support toward functional regulation of affect.

The results of the comparative analysis of mean scores on the scales of the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)" in groups of professional athletes, using a non-parametric statistical test, are presented in Table 2.15 and Appendix 10.

Table 2.15 – Mean scores on the scales of the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)" in groups of professional athletes

scale	KMS, n = 49			MS, n = 48			U	p
	M	SD	level	M	SD	level		
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	18.1	4.9	moderate	<b>26.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>132.5</b>	<b>&lt; 0.001</b>

Note: M – mean, SD - standard deviation; differences are statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ ; U – Mann-Whitney U-test statistic

Comparison of mean scores on the self-esteem scale (Rosenberg Scale) between groups of professional athletes revealed a statistically significant difference among athletes of different qualification levels (Table 2.15).

In the CMS group, the mean score is  $18.1 \pm 4.9$ , which corresponds to a moderate level according to the standard interpretive criteria of the instrument.

In the MS group, the mean score is  $26.4 \pm 2.3$ , which corresponds to a high level. The dispersion of scores in this group is noticeably smaller, as indicated by the lower standard deviation. Statistical verification using the Mann-Whitney U-test confirmed the reliability of differences between groups:  $U = 132.5$  при  $p < 0.001$ . This indicates high statistical significance of the identified difference.

The obtained data indicate a qualitative difference in the structure of basic self-attitude among athletes at different stages of their professional careers.

For CMS athletes, moderate self-esteem is characteristic. This may reflect the transitional nature of their professional position: on one hand, a significant sports result has already been achieved, providing grounds for a positive self-evaluation; on the other hand, uncertainty remains regarding prospects for reaching the elite level, which may limit further development of self-esteem. The relatively high standard deviation indicates group

heterogeneity: it includes both athletes with stable positive self-attitude and those who experience doubts about their worth and competence.

For Masters of Sport, a stable high level of self-esteem is more characteristic, as confirmed both by the mean score and by the minimal dispersion of indicators. This suggests that achieving and confirming the status of Master of Sport contributes to the consolidation of a stable, internally grounded positive attitude toward oneself. The low dispersion of scores may indicate that high self-esteem is a systemic characteristic of the psychological profile of elite athletes.

The statistically significant difference confirms that the level of self-esteem logically increases with the transition from the stage of skill refinement (CMS) to the stage of highest sports mastery (MS). This growth can be interpreted as a result of the internalization of professional achievements: successful confirmation of high sports status (the title of Master of Sport) becomes a stable internal resource that strengthens the basic self-esteem of the individual.

Thus, the quantitative increase in self-esteem indicators from moderate to high level reflects a qualitative transformation of self-attitude: from a conditional self-evaluation largely dependent on current results, to stable self-esteem as a fundamental characteristic of the personality of a highly qualified professional athlete.

#### **2.2.4 Comparative analysis of coping behavior profiles and self-attitude in athletes with different qualification levels**

In order to compare the level of expression and structural correspondence of coping behavior profiles and professional self-attitude among athletes at the stages of skill refinement (CMS) and highest mastery (MS), a comparative analysis of mean scores on the scales of the WCQ (Ways of Coping Questionnaire) and PSAQ (Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire) was conducted in groups of professional athletes. Corresponding parameters are presented in the integral table (Table 2.16).

Table 2.16 – Comparison of the expression levels of key adaptive and maladaptive indicators among CMS and MS athletes

Psychological construct	Indicator	CMS Group (n=49)	MS Group (n=48)	Direction of change in MS
<b>Adaptive coping (WCQ)</b>	Self-control	66.3 (pronounced)	<b>71.2</b> <b>(pronounced)</b>	→ <b>Increase</b>
	Acceptance of responsibility	62.6 (pronounced)	<b>70.5</b> <b>(pronounced)</b>	→ <b>significant increase</b>

Psychological construct	Indicator	CMS Group (n=49)	MS Group (n=48)	Direction of change in MS
	Planful problem-solving	62.4 (pronounced)	<b>69.8 (pronounced)</b>	→ <b>growth</b>
	Positive reappraisal	50.3 (moderate)	<b>62.4 (pronounced)</b>	→ <b>qualitative leap</b> (moderate → pronounced)
<b>Professional self-attitude (PSAQ) – positive pole</b>	Self-respect (S)	28.5 (moderate)	<b>35.9 (high)</b>	→ <b>qualitative leap</b> (moderate → high)
	Self-efficacy (E)	32.0 (moderate)	<b>37.3 (high)</b>	→ <b>qualitative leap</b> (moderate → high)
	Sports self-confidence (S1)	12.4 (moderate)	<b>18.1 (high)</b>	→ <b>qualitative leap</b>
<b>Professional self-attitude (PSAQ) – negative pole</b>	Self-abasement (N)	40.5 (moderate)	<b>30.5 (moderate)</b>	→ <b>substantial decrease</b>
	Self-blame in sports (NS)	<b>15.3 (high)</b>	11.7 (moderate)	→ <b>qualitative improvement</b> (high → moderate)
<i>Note: qualitative levels of indicator expression are indicated in parentheses.</i>				

As shown in the data in Table 2.17, the transition from the CMS level of preparation to the MS level is characterized by simultaneous and unidirectional changes in both profiles:

- the increase in all key adaptive coping strategies (particularly pronounced for positive reappraisal) corresponds to an increase in all indicators of positive professional self-attitude (self-respect, self-efficacy, self-confidence);
- the decrease in maladaptive components of self-attitude (self-abasement, Self-blame) corresponds to a general tendency toward reduced use of non-adaptive strategies (although, according to the WCQ, these remain at moderate levels in both groups);

The most indicative changes are observed for positive reappraisal (WCQ) and self-respect/self-efficacy (PSAQ). Among Masters of Sport, these parameters are not merely quantitatively higher but shift into a qualitatively different category (from "moderate" to "pronounced" level, and from "moderate" to "high" level, respectively). This may indicate that, for Masters of Sport, the ability to extract meaning from difficulties is directly interconnected with a well-established, high level of professional self-respect.

Thus, the comparative analysis does not reveal isolated changes. Rather, it demonstrates a coordinated transformation of the integral psychological system "self-attitude – coping". Among Masters of Sport, compared to Candidates for Master of Sport, a systemic shift is

observed toward a more positive, respectful, and effective attitude toward oneself as a professional, which is logically accompanied by a shift toward more mature, proactive, and meaning-oriented coping behavior. This allows us to speak not merely of a set of superior individual indicators, but of the formation among elite-level athletes of an integrated psychological resource, wherein professional self-attitude serves as the foundation for the most adaptive forms of stress management.

### 2.2.5 Interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude in professional athletes

In this study, a comparative analysis of the interrelationships between coping behavior strategies and components of self-attitude was conducted among athletes of different qualification levels. The analysis was performed separately for the groups of Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS, n=49) and Masters of Sport (MS, n=48) in order to test the proposed hypothesis.

Due to violation of the assumption of normal data distribution, the non-parametric Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ( $r_s$ ) was used to assess associations. Statistical significance of the coefficients was evaluated at the  $p < 0.05$  level, and their practical strength was interpreted according to Chaddock's criteria. Full intercorrelation matrices for both groups are presented in Appendix 11.

For comparative analysis, statistically significant associations of moderate, noticeable, and high strength were systematized in summary tables (Table 2.17 for CMS and Table 2.18 for MS). This approach allows focusing on stable and substantively meaningful patterns, thereby revealing key differences in the organization of the "self-attitude – coping" system among athletes at different stages of their professional careers.

Table 2.17 – Significant Spearman correlation relationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among candidates for Master of Sport (CMS, n=49)

Strength of correlation*	Questionnaire scales	$r_s$	p
Very high (strong) from 0,9 to 1,0	Not detected	–	–
High* from 0,7 to 0,9	Sports self-respect (PSAQ) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.701	<.001
	Sports self-efficacy (PSAQ) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.703	<.001
	Self-kindness (Neff) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.703	<.001

Strength of correlation*	Questionnaire scales	$r_s$	p
Noticeable from 0,5 to 0,7	Sports self-confidence (PSAQ) → Self-control (WCQ)	.512	<.001
	Sports self-respect (PSAQ) → Planful problem-solving (WCQ)	.635	<.001
	Sports self-efficacy (PSAQ) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.521	<.001
	Sports self-direction (PSAQ) → Planful problem-solving (WCQ)	.582	<.001
	Self-judgment → Acceptance of responsibility	-.512	<.001
Moderate* from 0,3 to 0,5	Sports self-direction (PSAQ) → Self-control (WCQ)	.463	<.01
	Self-blame in sports (PSAQ) → Escape-avoidance (WCQ)	-.423	<.01
	Self-esteem (Rosenberg) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.423	<.01
Weak from 0,1 to 0,3	Multiple weak correlations lacking practical significance for interpretation.		
*According to Chaddock's criteria			

The most pronounced interrelationships in the group of Candidates for Master of Sport, corresponding to the level of high correlation, were identified between positive aspects of self-attitude and adaptive coping strategies. Thus, a high degree of accepting personal responsibility in difficult situations among athletes is closely associated with pronounced sports self-respect and belief in one's own efficacy. A correlation of similar strength was found between a benevolent attitude toward oneself and the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal of the situation.

Noticeable correlations are also characterized predominantly by positive interrelationships. Planful problem-solving is positively associated both with the capacity for autonomous self-direction in sports and with self-respect. Sports self-efficacy correlates with positive reappraisal, while self-confidence correlates with self-control. At the same time, a negative correlation of moderate strength was identified: a tendency toward self-judgment is associated with reduced acceptance of responsibility for resolving problematic situations.

Moderate correlations complement the overall picture. Sports self-direction is positively associated with self-control, and general self-esteem is associated with acceptance of responsibility. An inverse moderate interrelationship was also found between the tendency toward self-blame in the sports domain and the use of the maladaptive avoidance strategy.

Thus, the obtained data indicate that positive and effective self-attitude among Candidates for Master of Sport is statistically significantly associated with a preference for active and problem-focused coping strategies. At the same time, a critical and self-blaming attitude toward oneself in this group of athletes correlates either with problem avoidance or with reduced responsibility for its resolution. Weak correlation interrelationships that do not reach the threshold of practical significance for interpretation in this group were not considered. Significant Spearman correlation relationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among MS athletes are presented in Table 2.19.

Table 2.18 – Significant Spearman correlation relationships between coping behavior and self-attitude among Masters of Sport (MS, n=48)

Strength of correlation*	Questionnaire scales	$r_s$	p
Very high from 0,9 to 1,0	Not detected	–	–
High* from 0,7 to 0,9	Sports self-respect (PSAQ) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.721	<.001
	Sports self-respect (PSAQ) → Planful problem-solving (WCQ)	.758	<.001
	Sports self-efficacy (PSAQ) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.703	<.001
	Sports self-direction (PSAQ) → Planful problem-solving (WCQ)	.724	<.001
	Self-kindness (Neff) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.703	<.001
Noticeable — from 0,5 to 0,7	Sports self-confidence (PSAQ) → Self-control (WCQ)	.635	<.001
	Sports self-efficacy (PSAQ) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.521	<.001
	Self-assessment of personal growth (PSAQ) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.582	<.001
	Self-judgment (Neff) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	-.512	<.001
Moderate* from 0,3 to 0,5	Sports self-respect (PSAQ) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	.423	<.01
	Sports self-direction (PSAQ) → Self-control (WCQ)	.463	<.01
	Internal conflict of sports self-attitude (PSAQ) → Confrontive coping (WCQ)	-.423	<.01
	Self-blame in sports (PSAQ) → Positive reappraisal (WCQ)	-.423	<.01
	Self-esteem (Rosenberg) → Acceptance of responsibility (WCQ)	.423	<.01
Weak from 0,1 to 0,3	Multiple weak correlations lacking practical significance for interpretation		
*According to Chaddock's criteria			

The conducted analysis revealed a complex and pronounced system of interrelationships, wherein positive components of self-attitude act as a reliable resource for the active overcoming of difficulties. The strongest (high) correlations constitute the semantic core of these interrelationships. Among Masters of Sport, central aspects of professional self-attitude such as self-respect, belief in one's efficacy, and the capacity for self-direction are closely associated with basic adaptive strategies: acceptance of responsibility for the situation and its planful resolution. This indicates an established professional identity wherein responsibility and planning are an integral part of their self-perception. Furthermore, a kind, accepting attitude toward oneself is equally strongly associated with the ability to find positive meaning in difficult circumstances (positive reappraisal), which may serve as a significant emotional buffer.

The identified noticeable correlations expand and specify this picture: self-confidence in elite sports is logically associated with enhanced self-control. Notably, self-efficacy and the sense of personal growth also correlate within the Masters of Sport group with the positive reappraisal strategy, underscoring the role of cognitive reframing as a tool for development. At the same time, self-judgment, unlike healthy reflection, noticeably weakens the readiness to take responsibility among Masters of Sport, acting as a maladaptive factor.

The established moderate correlational links complement the profile of elite athletes, revealing more specific associations. For instance, sports self-respect is positively, albeit to a lesser extent, associated with positive reappraisal, and self-direction with self-control. An interesting result reflects the interrelationship between internal conflict of self-attitude (contradiction of feelings and evaluations); these are negatively associated with the tendency toward confrontive coping, which may indicate avoidance of open confrontation among athletes experiencing internal uncertainty. The negative moderate association between self-blame and positive reappraisal is logical: it is difficult to find positivity in a situation when feelings of guilt dominate.

Thus, among Masters of Sport, a clearly structured system of interrelationships is observed, wherein mature and positive professional self-attitude serves as the foundation for employing the most effective, proactive coping strategies. The key personality features of athletes in this group include the strongest association of self-respect not only with responsibility but also with planning, as well as the presence of moderate negative associations reflecting the maladaptive influence of internal conflict and self-blame.

## **2.3 Discussion of the research results**

### **2.3.1 Discussion of coping behavior in amateur and professional athletes**

A comparative analysis of coping behavior profiles among athletes at different stages of sports training allows for the identification of systemic patterns consistent with contemporary theoretical frameworks regarding the development of psychological resilience in sports activity. The obtained results enable an analysis of the transformation of coping strategies throughout the athlete's professional development and the identification of critical points in this developmental trajectory.

Among amateur athletes, a relatively uniform coping behavior profile is observed, with a predominance of moderate expression levels across most strategies. Notably, this group exhibits a form of "coping pluralism," wherein no single strategy demonstrates clear dominance. The observed low expression of the acceptance of responsibility strategy aligns with findings reported by N.A. Shestilovskaya [126], who notes that at the initial stages of an athletic career, athletes have not yet developed a stable reflexive stance toward emerging difficulties. This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that amateur sports are typically oriented toward the process rather than the outcome, which diminishes the perceived significance of personal responsibility for sports achievements. At the same time, it is important to note that the acceptance of responsibility strategy—which presupposes the subject's acknowledgment of their role in the emergence of a problem—when used moderately, reflects an individual's striving to understand the relationship between their own actions and their consequences. However, among amateur athletes, this capacity remains insufficiently developed.

Among professional athletes at the stage of skill refinement, a significant transformation in the structure of coping behavior is identified, manifested in the activation of adaptive strategies such as self-control, acceptance of responsibility, and planful problem-solving. Particularly indicative is the increase in scores on the self-control scale, which presupposes the purposeful suppression and restraint of emotions, minimizing their influence on situational appraisal. On one hand, this ability helps avoid emotion-driven impulsive actions and ensures the predominance of a rational approach; on the other hand, as noted by R. Lazarus and the authors of the WCQ adaptation, it may lead to difficulties in emotional expression and excessive behavioral control.

The planful problem-solving strategy, also prominently expressed among professional athletes, demonstrates their capacity for purposeful situational analysis and the development of

problem-resolution strategies. This adaptive strategy facilitates constructive difficulty resolution, although, when used excessively, it may lead to excessive rationality and reduced behavioral spontaneity – a point consistent with T.L. Kryukova's theoretical propositions [64] regarding potential negative aspects of over-planning.

Among athletes at the stage of highest sports mastery, further complexity and differentiation in the structure of coping behavior are observed. The pronounced activation of the positive reappraisal strategy – which presupposes overcoming negative experiences by reframing the problem as a stimulus for personal growth – confirms G. Jones's propositions regarding the significance of positive reframing of difficulties for achieving elite sports results [49].

However, it should be noted that when this strategy is excessively pronounced, it may lead to underestimation of opportunities for effective problem resolution, as emphasized by S. Folkman in research on coping behavior [35].

A fundamental difference between amateur and professional athletes lies in the formation of a system of adaptive coping strategies. Whereas amateurs exhibit a relatively uniform but insufficiently effective use of various strategies, professionals develop a clear hierarchy of preferences with the dominance of problem-focused strategies. This aligns with the conclusions of L. McLean [81] and M. Daumiller [29] regarding the predominance of adaptive coping strategies among successful athletes.

Particular attention deserves the developmental dynamics of the acceptance of responsibility strategy – from its minimal expression among amateurs to high scores among athletes of the highest qualification level. This strategy, which presupposes acknowledgment of one's role in the emergence of problems and responsibility for their resolution, when used moderately, reflects a mature personal stance. However, as Lazarus notes, its pronounced expression may lead to unjustified self-criticism and acceptance of excessive responsibility, which poses a particular risk for elite athletes who are constantly under the pressure of competitive stress.

The identified differences between amateur and professional athletes indicate fundamentally different approaches to overcoming difficulties. Professionals demonstrate a more mature, integrated style of coping behavior, based on self-control, planning, and positive reappraisal of situations, whereas amateurs employ a more diffuse and less structured approach. These differences underscore the importance of purposeful development of adaptive coping strategies in the process of sports refinement and the necessity of a differentiated approach to psychological support for athletes at different stages of their careers – a position consistent with

contemporary trends in sport psychology as reflected in the works of N.B. Stambulova [131] and G.D. Babushkin [5].

### **2.3.2 Discussion of self-attitude in amateur and professional athletes**

Analysis of the results obtained during the study allows for the identification of patterns in the formation of self-attitude within the context of sports activity. In our view, the revealed dynamics of self-attitude components reflect not merely quantitative changes, but a qualitative transformation of the personality during the process of sports professionalization.

In the group of amateur athletes, a high level of self-worth, combined with moderate indicators of self-direction and self-acceptance, reflects the specifics of the initial stage of a sports career. These data align with the research of N.B. Stambulova [131], who noted that at the initial stages of a sports career, self-attitude is formed primarily on the basis of emotional self-acceptance, whereas cognitive and regulatory components develop later. We believe that high self-worth may be associated with the fact that, for amateurs, sport represents rather a sphere of self-realization and pleasure, where the value of the personality is not directly dependent on sports results. We posit that such a configuration of self-attitude performs a protective function, allowing for the maintenance of psychological stability amidst the inevitable failures and difficulties encountered at the initial stage.

However, the moderate level of self-direction indicates insufficient formation of an internal locus of control in sports activity. This result is consistent with the conclusions of A.I. Kharitonova [54], who established that internality as a component of the personal potential of athletes progressively increases with growing qualification. In our view, within the context of the training process, this may manifest as a tendency to attribute failures to external factors – training conditions, quality of equipment, or insufficient coach qualification. We believe that overcoming this tendency is a core task of psychological support at the initial stage of a sports career.

In the group of Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS), qualitative changes in self-attitude reflect a transition to a professional approach in sports. A high level of self-direction indicates the formation of an internal position of an active subject of the training process. These findings are confirmed in the works of L.K. Serova [125], who emphasized that psychic properties necessary for successful sports activity are formed in a complex and manifest as professional qualities. Based on the obtained data, we can assume that the athlete begins to

realize that their sports results directly depend on the ability to organize their activity and manage their emotional state.

The increase in self-acceptance to high levels among Candidates for Master of Sport holds particular significance within the context of competitive activity. This result resonates with the research of T.V. Ogorodova [104], who incorporated the emotional component of self-regulation into a generalized model of the athlete's personality. We are convinced that accepting oneself with all strengths and weaknesses enables adequate assessment of one's capabilities and constructive perception of critical feedback from coaches. As practice shows, it is precisely well-developed self-acceptance that allows athletes to maintain psychological resilience in situations of competitive stress.

In the group of Masters of Sport (MS), the identified structure of self-attitude reflects the psychological characteristics of athletes at the highest qualification level. High indicators of self-direction correspond to the demands of professional sports, where the ability to independently set goals and plan the training process is essential. These data align with V.I. Morosanova's concept [85] of self-regulation as an internal, goal-directed activity of the personality, carried out through the interaction of various levels of the psyche. We share the viewpoint that well-formed self-direction is a necessary condition for achieving elite sports results.

The elevated internal conflict observed among Masters of Sport within the context of professional activity may be viewed as a manifestation of high quality standards and perfectionism. This result echoes research by foreign authors L. McLean and M. Daumiller [81], who noted that successful athletes are characterized by high levels of self-criticism and self-demandingness. However, in our opinion, such internal conflict should remain within an optimal range, as its excessive expression may lead to psychological burnout. We consider it important to develop athletes' skills in the constructive resolution of internal conflicts.

The low self-attachment observed among Masters of Sport reflects psychological readiness for change, which is a necessary condition for sports longevity. These findings are confirmed in the works of Yu.M. Bosenko [16], who noted that sport fosters qualities such as independence of views and behavior, the ability to defend one's "I," and maintain high self-respect. We believe that in professional sports, the capacity to revise established self-conceptions determines the possibility of adaptation to changing demands. This characteristic appears to us particularly relevant in contemporary sports, where training technologies and tactical schemes are constantly evolving.

The consistently high indicators of self-worth among Masters of Sport indicate the preservation of a basic positive self-attitude. This result aligns with the conclusions of A.S. Kozhemyako [62], who determined that goal-directedness, perseverance, and belief in one's success are characteristic of high-level athletes. Drawing from our own practical experience, we can state that in conditions of high competition and public scrutiny, the ability to maintain a sense of self-worth independent of sports results constitutes an important resource for psychological resilience. We consider this aspect of self-attitude to be fundamental for an athlete's professional longevity.

The high level of self-acceptance among Masters of Sport manifests in the capacity to adequately perceive one's limitations and shortcomings. These data resonate with K. Neff's concept [92] of "self-compassion," which views acceptance of one's imperfections as an important component of psychological well-being. In our view, this enables timely adjustments to the training process and revision of competitive goals. We observe that athletes who have developed this capacity demonstrate greater flexibility and adaptability in their professional activity.

Comparative analysis of the identified features of self-attitude across groups of athletes with different qualification levels demonstrates the regular, systematic nature of self-attitude transformation during sports professionalization. The obtained results are consistent with the research of N.A. Shestilovskaya [126], who established that as sports mastery increases, athletes less frequently use maladaptive coping strategies and demonstrate higher resilience to stressful situations. We have concluded that the transition from an external to an internal locus of control, the development of self-acceptance combined with constructive self-criticism, reflects the psychological maturation of the athlete and corresponds to the demands of professional sports activity.

The identified patterns confirm the propositions of V.V. Stolin's theory [133] regarding self-attitude as a system formed through social interaction and subject-practical activity. Based on the conducted research, it can be asserted that intensive sports practice creates conditions for the development of all components of self-attitude, contributing to the formation of a mature personality capable of self-regulation and professional self-improvement. The obtained results have substantial practical significance for the development of psychological support programs for sports careers at different stages.

### **2.3.3 Discussion of the interrelationships between coping behavior and self-attitude in professional athletes**

In this study, empirical data revealing the structural interrelationships between components of self-attitude and coping behavior strategies among professional athletes were obtained for the first time. The results indicate the presence of specific features that differ depending on the level of sports achievement. Within the framework of a comparative analysis of athlete groups at the stage of skill refinement (Candidates for Master of Sport) and those who have reached the stage of highest sports mastery (Masters of Sport), not only quantitative differences in the strength of interrelationships were identified, but also a qualitative transformation in the structure of psychological regulation. The obtained results suggest that the professional development of an athlete is reflected in the depth of integration between their self-perception and patterns of overcoming stressful situations, forming specific psychological profiles corresponding to the tasks and challenges of each career stage.

For athletes at the stage of skill refinement, a forming but not yet fully integrated system of interrelationships is characteristic. Positive self-attitude, based on respect for one's sports qualities, belief in one's own efficacy, and self-acceptance, serves as an important but not yet fully stabilized psychological resource. This resource is logically directed toward the formation of adaptive coping behavior, supporting readiness to accept responsibility in difficult situations, plan problem-solving strategies, and find positive meaning for further growth. At the same time, a maladaptive pattern was also identified among Candidates for Master of Sport. A tendency toward self-criticism and self-reproach, characteristic of the stage of active growth and continuous external evaluation, exerts a negative influence on acceptance of responsibility and contributes to avoidance of active problem resolution, which may potentially slow down progress. Thus, at this stage, constructive coping is relatively unstable and directly depends on the ability to maintain a positive self-image, whereas negative aspects of self-attitude may disrupt this balance, shifting behavior toward less effective pathways. The psychological system is in a state of dynamic formation, wherein interrelationships between self-concept and coping behavior are sufficiently pronounced but have not yet reached the level of an automated and stable functional system. This observation warrants further investigation within the framework of longitudinal research.

Among athletes who have reached the stage of highest sports mastery (Masters of Sport), the identified system of interrelationships acquires a fundamentally different, more complex, deeply integrated, and stable character. In this group, positive components of self-

attitude, especially sports self-respect, the ability for independent management of one's own actions (self-direction), and self-acceptance, form not only a resource but also a solid framework of the professional's personality, upon which mature and active coping behavior strategies are based. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that adaptive strategies, such as strategic planful problem-solving and personal acceptance of responsibility, cease to be situational tools and become an organic part of the Master of Sport's professional identity, defining the nature of their interaction with sports reality. Notably, in this group, even moderately expressed negative aspects of self-attitude (internal conflict, episodic self-blame) do not lead to global behavioral disorganization. Instead, they are associated with a reduction in the expression of individual, less adaptive strategies (confrontation). This indicates greater psychological differentiation, flexibility, and selectivity of elite athletes in the mobilization and distribution of their coping resources: the athlete is capable of compensating for individual shortcomings in self-attitude due to the overall stability of the self-regulation system.

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be asserted that the transition from the stage of skill refinement to the stage of highest mastery in sports is accompanied not only by a strengthening of connections but also by their qualitative transformation and structural restructuring: an evolution is observed from relative dependence of coping on the current emotional-evaluative background of self-attitude to their deep systemic integration. Among Masters of Sport, positive self-attitude crystallizes into a stable internal support, which allows not merely reacting to stress factors, but proactively and strategically constructing the process of overcoming professional difficulties. In the context of the identified differences, the task of purposeful formation of a holistic, positive, and autonomous self-attitude acquires particular significance, as it serves as a psychological foundation for achieving and long-term maintenance of result stability at the level of highest sports achievements.

The identified differences in the organization of the "self-attitude – coping" system among athletes with different mastery levels receive substantive interpretation within the context of personal development discussed in the theoretical part of the study. As noted in the first chapter, the development of a professional is accompanied by a qualitative transformation of personal potential, the formation of specific psychic properties, and the development of self-regulation.

For athletes at the stage of skill refinement, the revealed bipolarity of interrelationships (where positive self-attitude facilitates active coping, while self-criticism blocks it) receives explanation within the framework of models of professional formation and personal potential development discussed earlier (see Section 1.3). In particular, this aligns with the idea that

athletes in this category are characterized by a stage of active professional identity formation, where self-esteem still depends significantly on external evaluation, comparison, and immediate results. Such dependence, described, for example, in the works of N.B. Stambulova [131], creates a basis for internal conflict and self-criticism, which, according to our data, directly undermine the strategy fundamental for progress – accepting personal responsibility. Thus, the identified maladaptive pattern can be viewed as a direct manifestation of the unfinished process of integrating key personal qualities, such as self-confidence and emotional stability, into a holistic self-regulation system. This reflects a general pattern noted by L.K. Serova [125], according to which, at the formation stage, professional qualities do not yet represent a stable complex. Coping behavior at this stage, consequently, acts as a sensitive indicator of the fragility of the forming personal potential, which is easily disorganized under the influence of negative components of self-attitude.

In contrast to this, among athletes who have reached the stage of highest sports mastery, the revealed deep integration of positive self-attitude with proactive coping strategies reflects a qualitatively different level of personal maturity, described in the theoretical review. As shown by research of A.I. Kharitonova and L.K. Serova, Masters of Sport are characterized by high indicators of positivity, meaningfulness, internality, and formed volitional control. The empirical data obtained in this study specify these general characteristics. They indicate that such "positivity" and "meaningfulness" find expression in the form of specific, stable mental connections: self-respect becomes inseparable from strategic planning, and self-direction from systemic self-control. This fact corresponds to the model of sports self-regulation (V.I. Morosanova), in which the main components are planning, modeling, and programming of activity. Among Masters of Sport, these regulatory processes are firmly integrated into the core of self-attitude, which allows them to demonstrate selectivity and flexibility in coping, compensating for individual negative experiences without general behavioral disorganization.

Особое внимание при интерпретации результатов следует уделить характеру негативных взаимосвязей. В группе КМС самокритика блокирует принятие ответственности, что может рассматриваться как проявление деструктивного перфекционизма. В группе МС самообвинение и внутренняя конфликтность связаны не с отказом от проявления активности, а со снижением выраженности отдельных, менее адаптивных стратегий (конфронтация). Это указывает на более высокий уровень дифференциации и осознанности в управлении собственными состояниями, что является признаком развитой саморегуляции.

Thus, the results of the conducted study provide empirical substantiation for the concepts regarding the development of self-regulation as a systemic personality formation within the context of a sports career. The obtained data demonstrate that as mastery increases, the main components of self-regulation – planning, modeling, and programming of activity, as described by V.I. Morosanova [86] – cease to be isolated skills. They become firmly "embedded" into the core of positive self-attitude, forming a unified psychological structure. In this context, the self-attitude of an elite athlete transforms from an evaluative phenomenon into a central regulatory resource, which aligns with the notion of self-direction as a component of professional identity. For an elite athlete, active coping becomes not merely a situational reaction, but a natural, self-regulated extension of their professional Self.

## **Summary of Chapter 2**

Based on the conducted empirical study comparing the expression of coping strategies and self-attitude profiles among amateur and professional athletes, it was determined that statistically significant differences exist between groups in the use of adaptive coping strategies. When comparing the groups of amateurs and Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS), significant differences were found on the scales of self-control ( $U = 366.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), acceptance of responsibility ( $U = 238.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and positive reappraisal ( $U = 1102.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). When comparing amateurs and Masters of Sport (MS), significant differences were identified on the same scales: self-control ( $U = 109.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), acceptance of responsibility ( $U = 83.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and positive reappraisal ( $U = 98$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). When comparing CMS and MS groups, significant differences were established on the scales of acceptance of responsibility ( $U = 837$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ), planful problem-solving ( $U = 832.5$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), and positive reappraisal ( $U = 696$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Quantitative analysis showed that the mean score on the positive reappraisal scale among CMS athletes was 50.3, corresponding to a moderate level, whereas among MS athletes this indicator was 62.4, corresponding to a pronounced level. Consequently, the first sub-hypothesis – that professional athletes use adaptive, problem-focused coping strategies more pronouncedly than amateur athletes, and that MS athletes compared to CMS athletes are characterized not only by higher expression of these strategies but also by a qualitative transition of the positive reappraisal strategy from the moderate to the pronounced usage category – received full confirmation.

Furthermore, based on comparative analysis data using the self-attitude research methodology and the specialized Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire, it was established

that the structure of self-attitude among professional athletes has specific distinctions. When comparing amateurs and CMS athletes, statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were identified on the scales of self-confidence ( $U = 639$ ), self-direction ( $U = 622$ ), and self-acceptance ( $U = 570$ ). The most pronounced differentiation was noted when comparing amateurs and MS athletes, where significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) were recorded on five scales: self-confidence ( $U = 639$ ), self-direction ( $U = 584$ ), self-acceptance ( $U = 528.5$ ), self-attachment ( $U = 1039$ ), and internal conflict ( $U = 202.5$ ). The use of a context-specific instrument showed that among MS athletes compared to CMS athletes, indicators of sports self-respect ( $U = 257$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), sports self-efficacy ( $U = 316.5$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and sports self-confidence ( $U = 183$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were significantly higher. Simultaneously, MS athletes demonstrated a qualitatively different profile, characterized by high values on the scales of self-direction, self-worth, self-acceptance, and internal conflict, alongside a low indicator of self-attachment. Consequently, the second sub-hypothesis—that professional athletes demonstrate higher scores on scales related to professional identity and self-regulation compared to amateur athletes, and that the self-attitude structure among MS athletes compared to CMS athletes is distinguished by greater differentiation, complexity, and the presence of specific dynamics expressed in the simultaneous high level of self-respect, self-efficacy, and elevated internal conflict alongside reduced self-attachment – was proven.

Spearman correlation analysis of interrelationships between components of self-attitude and coping behavior strategies, performed separately for CMS and MS groups, revealed systemic differences. In both groups, positive components of self-attitude (sports self-respect, self-efficacy, self-direction, self-kindness) demonstrated statistically significant positive associations with adaptive coping strategies (acceptance of responsibility, planful problem-solving, positive reappraisal), whereas negative components (self-judgment, self-blame) were negatively associated with these strategies. The main distinction lies in the fact that among CMS athletes, these associations are more generalized, whereas among MS athletes they manifest more selectively, with greater strength and complexity, forming an integrated system. For instance, among MS athletes, high correlations ( $r_s$  from 0.70 to 0.76) were identified between sports self-respect, self-direction, and the strategies of acceptance of responsibility and planful problem-solving – a pattern not observed to the same extent among CMS athletes. Consequently, the third sub-hypothesis—that positive components of self-attitude are positively associated with adaptive coping strategies, while negative components are negatively associated, and that among MS athletes the structure of these interrelationships is distinguished

by greater integration, strength, and complexity, reflecting formed professional identity – was confirmed.

Thus, the general research hypothesis regarding the existence of an interrelationship between features of self-attitude and coping behavior among professional athletes, which qualitatively changes with increasing sports qualification, is proven. It was empirically established that the transition from the amateur level to the professional level, and within it – from the qualification of Candidate for Master of Sport to the title of Master of Sport – is accompanied by a coordinated transformation of the psychological system "self-attitude – coping". This transformation is expressed in the formation of a more positive, differentiated, and conflictual professional self-attitude, which serves as a psychological resource for the selective and effective use of adaptive, proactive coping strategies. Together, these elements constitute the characteristic psychological profile of an elite athlete.

## CHAPTER 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR ELITE ATHLETES

### 3.1. Principles, psychological targets, and methods of psychological work focused on the self-attitude of professional athletes

In the context of modern elite sports, where performance gains are accompanied by maximal psychophysiological loads, the precision and scientific validity of athlete preparation methodologies become paramount. The increasing complexity of training technologies and the multiplicative effect of planning errors objectively demand a high degree of professionalization and narrow specialization from all participants in the process. This imperative fully applies to the domain of mental preparation, the effectiveness of which directly depends on the competencies of a specially trained professional – the sport psychologist – who possesses a specific arsenal of diagnostic and developmental methodologies.

In this study, psychological support is understood as a holistic, systemic activity aimed at optimizing all components of preparation. Its strategic goals include ensuring peak psychological readiness for competition, creating conditions for a long-term sports career, and minimizing performance fluctuations. This work synthesizes personal practical experience of a sport psychologist in supporting tennis players at the stage of highest sports mastery. A scientifically grounded model for organizing such activity is proposed.

The professional activity of a sport psychologist is characterized by a number of specific features, determined by the unique conditions of elite sports:

1. Orientation toward achieving peak performance, most pronounced in elite sports. This task is associated with working under conditions of extreme neuropsychological tension, high risks of injury, and overtraining syndrome, which requires the psychologist to possess the ability to purposefully mobilize and develop the athlete's volitional sphere.

2. Modeling of extreme competitive conditions within the training process, driven hypercompetition at the highest mastery level. In parallel, a key task becomes the prevention of states of chronic overstrain, maladaptation, and non-constructive behavioral manifestations (conflictuality, aggressiveness) that may extend into athletes' non-sporting lives.

3. The paradox of evaluating effectiveness: on one hand, the effectiveness of work is often assessed based on specific competitive outcomes; on the other hand, long-term positive effects may manifest in stable personality developments, such as advanced self-regulation skills, volitional self-control, and stress resilience.

4. Comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. Given that the athlete's organism is subject to the simultaneous impact of maximal training loads, pharmacological support, and physiotherapeutic procedures, the sport psychologist must integrate their methods into the overall preparation system, possessing foundational knowledge in the theory of sports training, sports medicine, and physiology.

5. Mobility and readiness to work in non-standard conditions, especially during competitions. The work of a sport psychologist is often conducted outside the office – in various climatic zones, directly at training bases, arenas, and training camp locations – which places special demands on the specialist's adaptability regarding the applied instruments and techniques.

6. Emphasis on preventive and operational work. Practice requires mastery of methods for express diagnostics and urgent correction of mental states, as well as a proactive stance aimed at preventing unfavorable states, rather than merely responding to explicit requests for help.

Disregard for these professional features inevitably leads to reduced effectiveness of psychological preparation, its formalization, and detachment from the real needs of sports practice. Conversely, their consideration and the competent, scientifically grounded formulation of tasks for psychological support ensure significant savings in time, financial, and human resources across the entire athlete preparation system.

The substantive content of psychological support, aimed at addressing typical practical tasks, should be focused on deep personality structures that regulate the athlete's behavior and state under the extreme conditions of sports activity. The central target of intervention becomes the athlete's self-attitude system, since it is precisely this system that determines their level of psychological resilience, capacity for mobilization, and the quality of coping behavior. The following are identified as priority targets in this work:

1. Self-confidence (conviction in one's own strength and ability to achieve set sports goals).

2. Self-direction (perception of oneself as the source of control over one's own actions, decisions, and their outcomes).

3. Self-worth (awareness and internal acceptance of one's significance as a person, independent of immediate sports results).

4. Self-acceptance (a positive, non-judgmental attitude toward oneself in situations of failure and mistakes).

5. Sports self-respect (a stably high evaluation of one's own qualities and competencies specifically within the context of sports activity).

Parallel to the development of these self-attitude components, work is also necessary on:

6. Minimizing destructive self-criticism, which blocks activity and reduces self-efficacy.

7. Forming the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal, which enables the transformation of threatening and stressful situations into tasks for personal and professional growth.

The specification of these psychological targets establishes not only substantive but also methodological guidelines for constructing psychological support. Work with each of them should be based on a specific set of principles that ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the intervention. The principles of psychological work with these targets are listed below:

1. Principle of differentiation and hierarchical structuring of targets. Work with components of self-attitude cannot be simultaneous and uniform. It requires primary diagnostics to identify the most deficient or problematic link (for example, pronounced destructive self-criticism or low sports self-respect), which becomes the starting point. The development of more complex, integrative components (self-direction, positive reappraisal strategy) is built upon strengthening the foundational ones (self-acceptance, self-worth). For diagnostics, the methodological complex presented in Chapter 2 of this study can be used.

2. Principle of contextual embeddedness. The development of any self-attitude component is not an abstract training exercise but must be directly "woven" into the specific training and competitive context. For instance, the formation of self-confidence occurs not through general affirmations, but through the analysis and reinforcement of successful actions in specific game situations.

3. Principle of operationalization through behavior and cognitions. Abstract constructs (self-respect, self-worth) must be translated into observable and regulatable elements. This is achieved through:

- cognitive restructuring, that is, the identification and restructuring of automatic thoughts and beliefs underlying low self-acceptance or high self-criticism;
- behavioral experiments, such as planning and executing specific actions aimed at confirming self-efficacy and strengthening self-direction.

5. Principle of cyclicity and dynamic monitoring. Psychological work with self-attitude is not a linear process but a cycle aligned with the macrocycles of preparation. In the preparatory

period, the focus may shift toward building self-confidence and long-term goals (self-direction); in the competitive period – toward maintaining self-respect and the operational reappraisal of unsuccessful moments; in the recovery period – toward strengthening self-worth independent of results. Regular monitoring of the state of targets allows for flexible adjustment of the support strategy.

Thus, the proposed system of psychological targets and principles forms a conceptual foundation for constructing individualized programs of psychological support. It translates the theoretical understanding of self-attitude into the realm of practical, technology-driven work, where each psychological instrument is selected and applied in accordance with a clearly defined goal of developing a specific personal resource. This creates a basis for developing concrete methodological recommendations, presented in the following section.

The implementation of the outlined principles of psychological work acquires concrete content within various contexts of sports activity. Its effectiveness is determined by adaptation to the main stages of the athlete's professional journey and integration into the logic of the training process.

At the initial stage of adaptation to the elite level, primary attention is devoted to developing self-confidence and sports self-respect among athletes. At this stage, the principle of contextual embeddedness is realized through joint analysis of initial successes under conditions of heightened competition, which contributes to strengthening belief in one's capabilities. As the athlete becomes established in elite sports, the focus shifts to the task of forming stable self-direction and preventing destructive patterns of internal dialogue. At this phase, the principle of operationalization becomes most in demand, aimed at developing the athlete's autonomous criteria for evaluating their own activity. During periods of decline, injury, or other performance crises, the central focus becomes work on maintaining self-worth and self-acceptance, as well as activating the cognitive strategy of reframing difficulties. This work is built upon an understanding of the cyclical nature of development, helping the athlete perceive a challenging period as a natural phase requiring resource regrouping.

The integration of this work into daily practice is systemic in nature. Within the training microcycle, this is expressed through thematic structuring of psychological tasks. For example, one series of sessions focuses on developing self-direction through in-depth planning of individual tasks. Another focuses on practicing self-acceptance skills during the analysis of reactions to technical errors. Psychological work acquires particular specificity under competitive conditions. On the eve of competition, techniques are applied that actualize the sense of self-confidence through structured recollection of successful experiences. On the day

of competition, operational methods of attention management rely on the established foundation of sports self-respect. In the recovery period following performance, constructive analysis of what occurred becomes essential, based on the strategy of positive reappraisal.

The specification of the content of psychological support is determined by the characteristics of the particular sport. In tennis, as an individual game discipline requiring constant decision-making under conditions of isolation, the connection between components of self-attitude and performance effectiveness is particularly evident. Self-confidence influences the quality of play in decisive moments of a match. The capacity for self-direction manifests in the ability to manage the tempo of play. At the same time, destructive self-criticism, expressed in reactions to errors, disrupts concentration. A well-formed skill of positive reappraisal becomes a tool for mental recovery during pauses between points. The process of psychological support for professional athletes is non-linear and adaptive in nature, as reflected in the Model of psychological support for professional athletes and visually presented in Fig. 3.1. The starting point is an analysis of the current activity context and the athlete's career stage, which determines the priority focus of psychological work with components of self-attitude. The subsequent application of specific principles and techniques, synchronized with the training process, is aimed at achieving the target result—optimization of coping behavior. The cycle concludes with an evaluation stage, the data from which serve as the basis for adjusting further work.

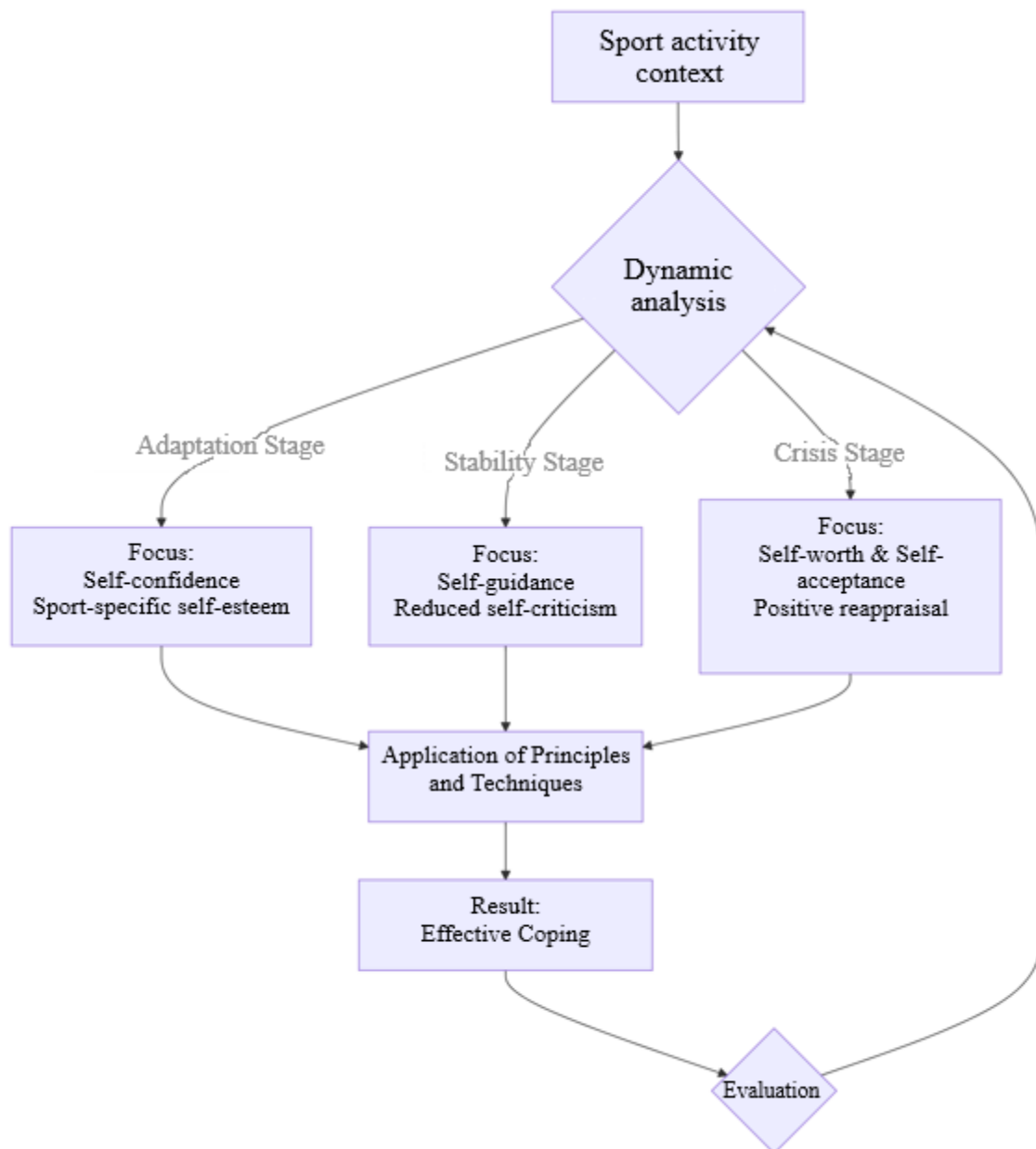


Figure 3.1 – Model of psychological support for professional athletes

The logic of psychological support presented in Fig. 3.1 is cyclical and adaptive. It begins with an analysis of the current context of the athlete's activity (career stage, competitive phase), which determines the primary focus of work with components of self-attitude. The application of corresponding principles and methods, integrated into the training process, is aimed at developing effective coping behavior. Outcome monitoring provides feedback for adjusting the work in accordance with new tasks and changes in context.

It can be stated that the developed system of psychological work with professional athletes represents a dynamic model, the content of which is determined by the context of sports activity. Its practical value lies in ensuring personalized intervention on those aspects of self-attitude that are significant for successful adaptation, stable functioning, and overcoming crises

in the career of an athlete at the highest mastery level. This adaptive approach creates a foundation for developing concrete methodological recommendations.

Enhancing adaptive self-attitude and effective coping behavior among professional athletes requires targeted intervention on specific personality structures. The developed methodological complex realizes this task through the integration of techniques and procedures drawn from contemporary psychological approaches, each applied to work with a specific component of self-attitude. This synthesis of methodological resources ensures a comprehensive influence on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the athlete's functioning under the extreme demands of sports activity. This allows not only for the correction of existing maladaptive patterns but also for the purposeful formation of new, more effective ways of self-organization and stress coping.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) represents a scientifically grounded approach based on the principle of the interplay between cognitive processes, emotional states, and behavioral reactions. The main working tools within this approach are methods of cognitive restructuring, aimed at identifying and modifying dysfunctional automatic thoughts, and behavioral experiments, allowing for the testing of belief realism in action. The choice of CBT as one of the fundamental elements is due to its highly structured nature, methodological precision, and proven effectiveness in working with specific, situation-specific cognitive distortions, which are particularly evident under conditions of competitive stress. Within the developed complex, CBT techniques are applied predominantly for developing sports self-confidence. This is carried out through systematic work with catastrophizing and failure-predicting thoughts (e.g., "I won't cope with this opponent," "one mistake will ruin the whole game"), which directly undermine the athlete's confidence before and during performance. Cognitive restructuring exercises help the athlete learn to identify these thoughts, evaluate their empirical basis, and develop more balanced and realistic alternatives. Simultaneously, CBT methods are used for strengthening sports self-respect, as they allow for work with core beliefs that devalue personal achievements and competencies ("my success was accidental," "I am not good enough yet"), forming a more objective and stable self-esteem based on facts.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a third-wave CBT approach, whose focus shifts from changing the content of thoughts and emotions to developing psychological flexibility. The main components of ACT include working with acceptance of internal experience, cognitive defusion (distancing from thoughts), contact with the present moment, self-as-context awareness (the observing "I"), values identification, and committed action. The integration of ACT into the developed methodology is dictated by the necessity of forming the

athlete's ability to function stably under conditions of inevitable internal discomfort (stress, anxiety, doubts, fatigue, physical pain) without engaging in a futile struggle with these experiences. In practical terms, ACT techniques are applied for deep work on forming self-worth and self-acceptance. Defusion exercises (e.g., the "leaves on a stream" or "bus" metaphor) and self-as-context awareness help the athlete separate their "I" from transient thoughts and emotions related to outcome evaluation. This allows reducing the degree of identification of the athlete's personality with sports successes and failures, which forms the basis for unconditional self-acceptance. In parallel, ACT serves as a central tool for reducing destructive self-criticism. The approach teaches not to dispute the content of criticizing thoughts ("I am a loser"), but to change the relationship to them, perceiving them as verbal events rather than truth. This radically reduces their emotional charge and disorganizing influence on behavior, translating the internal dialogue into a more constructive channel.

Mindfulness practices represent a system of attention training aimed at developing the skill of purposeful, non-judgmental awareness of the present moment – thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, external stimuli. Basic exercises include breath meditation, body scan, and mindful movement. These practices are included in the methodological complex as a universal psychohygienic and general developmental tool. Their role lies in training the metacognitive position – the ability to take an observer stance toward one's own mental flow. This skill is a necessary foundation for most other psychological techniques. Regarding the tasks of developing self-attitude, mindfulness practices actively support processes of self-worth and self-acceptance, as they cultivate an attitude toward internal experience as a neutral phenomenon rather than an object of evaluation. They are also critically important for reducing destructive self-criticism, as they allow timely noticing the beginning of the self-flagellation cycle, creating a pause, and weakening automatic involvement in it, breaking the vicious circle of rumination and emotional suffering.

The psychodynamic approach and schema therapy propose deep models for understanding personality, focusing on unconscious motives, early childhood schemas (deep dysfunctional patterns of perceiving oneself and the world), and psychological defense mechanisms that continue to influence adult behavior. The toolkit includes analysis of transference, resistance, investigation of recurring life scenarios, and techniques for working with Ego modes (e.g., the 'Punitive Parent' in schema therapy). The inclusion of these approaches in the methodology is justified in cases of working with persistent, chronic self-attitude problems that have deep roots, which cannot always be effectively resolved solely by behavioral or cognitive methods. Within the context of the present complex, psychodynamic

analysis and schema therapy are used for in-depth investigation of the origins of destructive self-criticism. They help identify whether the inner critic is an introject of demands from significant figures of the past (parents, coaches), a manifestation of an early maladaptive schema such as 'Defectiveness' or 'Unrelenting Standards/Perfectionism'. Understanding the origin and function of this criticism allows for its transformation at a deeper level. These same approaches can be employed to support the formation of self-worth in situations where its deficit is linked to deep intrapersonal conflicts or attachment disturbances.

Coaching and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) are practice-oriented approaches focused not on problem analysis, but on constructing a desired future, searching for internal and external resources, setting specific goals, and developing steps to achieve them. Main techniques include scaling, exception seeking, the 'miracle question', and creating a vision of the result. Their inclusion in the methodology is dictated by the pragmatic task of developing the athlete's skills of autonomy, self-management, and practical self-organization – qualities that directly influence professional longevity and effectiveness. Within the psychological support system, these methods are purposefully applied for developing sports self-direction. Coaching sessions and exercises (e.g., the 'Wheel of Life' in sports adaptation) help the athlete independently analyze their current state in various areas of preparation, formulate measurable goals, plan specific actions, and track progress. This forms a strong internal locus of control, a sense of responsibility for the process and outcome, as well as the ability to make independent decisions in training and competitive activity, which is the essence of self-direction.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques and metacognitive therapy offer a set of procedures for operational impact on the subjective perception of reality and regulation of cognitive processes. NLP works with reframing (changing the semantic context of a situation), anchoring (creating conditioned reflex connections with resource states), and working with submodalities (characteristics of internal images). Metacognitive therapy focuses on changing the relationship with thoughts, training the skill of their decentering and flexible attention management. The choice of these methods is due to the necessity of developing the athlete's skill of rapid mental restructuring under conditions of limited time and high stress, characteristic of competitions. Within the methodology, these techniques are used predominantly for forming the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal. Reframing exercises (e.g., "How else can one look at this situation?") train the ability to find potential opportunities, lessons, or hidden advantages in failure or obstacles. Decentering methods from metacognitive therapy help the athlete 'detach' themselves from the negative evaluation of an event, seeing it as one of many possible points of view. This allows for quickly reducing emotional intensity and switching to the search

for constructive actions, which constitutes the essence of adaptive reappraisal as a coping strategy.

Each methodological approach in the presented complex occupies a strictly defined niche and solves a specific range of tasks. Their integration allows for multi-level impact: from correction of situational thoughts and training of operational self-regulation skills to deep work with personality structures. This ensures the formation of a holistic, stable, and flexible self-attitude of the professional athlete, which, in turn, serves as a reliable psychological foundation for selecting and implementing the most effective coping strategies for the extreme demands of elite sports.

Thus, the developed methodology represents not an eclectic set of techniques, but a purposeful synthesis of methodological capabilities, where each approach is responsible for solving a certain range of tasks within a unified strategy for developing adaptive self-attitude among athletes of highest mastery.

### **3.2. A comprehensive methodology for the development of adaptive self-attitude and coping behavior in elite athletes**

The implementation of a practical model of psychological support into practice requires the development of specific tools adapted to the conditions of elite sports. The comprehensive methodology presented below is an operationalization of the principles and targets described in the previous section. Its goal is to provide the sport psychologist with a structured system of phased work, focused on developing specific components of self-attitude that directly influence the quality of coping behavior in the stress-generating conditions of competitive and training activity.

The methodology presented in this section was formed and underwent validation within the framework of many years of practical work by the psychologist (the author of this dissertation study) with highly qualified athletes. Over a period of five years, the author applied and refined it in work with players included in national teams, Masters of Sport, and Masters of Sport of International Class.

This cohort of athletes is characterized not only by consistently high training loads but also by a saturated calendar of international-level competitions (ITF tournaments, ATP/WTA Challenger series), where demands for psychological resilience and speed of adaptation are extreme. Its development and application were carried out in close interaction with coaches and medical staff.

Work with this group of athletes implied constant presence under conditions of intensive training camps and a tight schedule of international starts, which created the necessary context for testing the stability of the proposed psychological tools.

The implementation of the methodology was carried out in stages, with mandatory initial diagnostics of the current state of self-attitude for each athlete (MIS and WCQ). This allowed for constructing an individual work trajectory, where certain blocks of the methodology received priority development, while others served as supportive measures. Great attention was paid to synchronizing psychological work with the competition schedule: during the preparatory period, basic techniques were practiced; in the pre-competitive period, resource states were activated; and during tournaments, operational regulation tools were applied.

The achieved results are comprehensive in nature and manifest in several interrelated aspects of the athletes' activity.

Firstly, stable changes are observed in the methods of internal communication among professional athletes. Self-reports and observations record a shift in vocabulary from generalizing and evaluative judgments to more specific and process-oriented formulations. Athletes demonstrate an increased ability for structured analysis of both successful and unsuccessful actions, which is directly related to the worked-through techniques.

Secondly, an increase in performance stability and predictability is noted. The coaching staff and the athletes themselves indicate a reduction in cases of unexplained decline in performance from the standpoint of physical and technical readiness. There is an increase in the number of matches where players demonstrate the ability to come back when events develop unfavorably and maintain concentration in decisive moments of the meeting.

Thirdly, noticeable changes have occurred in behavioral patterns related to coping with stress and failures. The duration of the recovery period after psychologically challenging defeats has decreased. Behavior on the court has become more restrained and purposeful, with a reduction in the number of incidents that distract from solving game-related tasks. This indicates the formation of more adaptive and conscious ways of responding to external pressure and internal tension.

Consequently, the long-term application of the methodology under real sports practice conditions allows us to confirm its viability as a tool for the systemic development of personal resources. The observed positive shifts in the domain of self-attitude and coping behavior confirm that the proposed complex of measures meets the specific needs of athletes working at the limits of their capabilities and can serve as a foundation for building effective psychological support.

The methodology is built on a block-modular principle, which allows for flexible adaptation to the athlete's individual profile, the current stage of preparation, and the specifics of the sports discipline. Each block corresponds to one of the identified psychological targets and contains:

1. A clear target orientation defining the vector of psychological intervention.
2. A set of complementary techniques based on validated methods of contemporary psychology.
3. Specific exercises with a detailed execution algorithm, effectiveness criteria, and recommendations for integration into the training process.

The sequential work through these blocks forms a holistic resource of adaptive self-attitude, which serves as the internal foundation for selecting and implementing effective coping strategies in situations of competitive stress, failures, and high loads.

The blocks and tables with exercises presented in this section are not a prescribed sequence but form a toolkit for assembling an individualized psychological support program. Simultaneous use of the entire spectrum of exercises is considered inadvisable, as it may lead to cognitive overload of the athlete and reduced work effectiveness. The methodology functions on the principle of a semantic constructor, where the choice of specific exercises is determined by two main factors.

Firstly, the starting point is the results of diagnostics. Priority is given to techniques aimed at developing the component of self-attitude that is currently the most deficient. For example, when catastrophizing thoughts and high anxiety dominate, the focus shifts to exercises from cognitive restructuring (Block 1 "Self-Confidence"). If the main problem is the lack of experience-based evidence of one's own efficacy, techniques for accumulating behavioral experience of success are actively included in the work.

Secondly, the structure of psychological work is synchronized with the current tasks of the training cycle and the competition calendar. In the basic preparatory period, when training loads are planned, the emphasis may be placed on forming fundamental skills through exercises that require time for reflection and integration, such as the "Micro-Wins Diary" or "Complexity Ladder". In the pre-competitive and competitive periods, techniques for operational state regulation, programming, and rapid mobilization come to the forefront, including "Anchoring Confidence", "Ideomotor Rehearsal of Success", and "Power Pose". The recovery period is used for retrospective analysis and consolidation of achieved changes.

Thus, the flexible combination of exercises based on diagnostics and the logic of preparation allows for the creation of a personalized and context-dependent program for

developing self-confidence, maximally responsive to the athlete's needs at a specific stage of their professional journey.

### **Block 1 Sports self-confidence.**

*The target orientation of this block* is the formation and strengthening of a stable, realistic conviction in one's own capabilities among professional athletes for achieving goals within the context of training and competitive activity.

*The methodological foundation* comprises CBT methods (for working with dysfunctional beliefs), behavioral experiment techniques (for accumulating experience of success), and body-oriented regulation methods (for anchoring the state of confidence at the psychophysiological level).

*The expected outcome* includes reduced dependence of confidence on situational results, development of the skill for its independent restoration, and increased readiness to tackle complex tasks.

Practical work is implemented through a series of interconnected techniques and exercises presented below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Exercises for developing sports self-confidence

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Cognitive restructuring (modification of maladaptive schemas for evaluating situations and own capabilities)	"The Witness"	Regularly, as a tool for post-event analysis after training or competitions.	Individual session, independent written work.
	"Evidence balance"	In situations of acute doubt or immediately after an unsuccessful performance.	Individual session, operational independent work during training camp/tournament.
	"Confidence scaling"	Daily monitoring of state in pre-competitive and competitive periods; before and after performing a responsible task in training.	Individual session, independent monitoring (state diary).
2. Accumulation of Behavioral Experience of Success (mastery)	"Micro-wins Diary"	Daily routine practice at all stages of preparation.	Independent work with subsequent discussion in session.

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
experiences) (creating conditions for experiencing and fixing controlled achievement)	"Complexity ladder"	Planned, within educational-training microcycles of basic and pre-competitive periods.	Joint planning with psychologist and coach, integration into training process.
	"Retrospective analysis of overcoming"	In the recovery period after a season or in crisis moments for actualization of resources.	Individual session, structured interview.
3. Body-Image State Regulation (formation and anchoring of psychophysiological pattern of confidence)	"Power pose"	Daily practice in a calm environment; application as a warm-up/pre-start ritual.	Individual training with subsequent independent application.
	"Anchoring confidence"	Primary formation – in office conditions; anchor activation – in pre-start states and moments requiring operational mobilization.	Individual session (anchor installation), independent application (activation).
	"Ideomotor rehearsal of success"	In the pre-competitive period for programming a successful scenario; before performing a complex element in training.	Individual session, independent execution within mental training.

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 12.

### **Block 2 Sports self-direction.**

*The target orientation* is the enhancement of professional athletes' capacity for independent goal-setting, action planning, responsible decision-making, and conscious control over their own activity, which ensures an internal locus of control and autonomy within the context of a sports career.

*The methodological foundation* comprises coaching techniques (focus on setting specific, measurable goals and planning steps), methods for developing reflective thinking (for analyzing the connection between actions and results), and approaches aimed at forming internal attribution of responsibility (attributing outcomes to one's own efforts and decisions).

The expected outcome includes increased awareness and deliberateness in the athlete's actions, development of the skill for independent analysis of the training process, reduced dependence on external instructions, and strengthened sense of personal responsibility for sports results.

Practical work is implemented through a series of interconnected techniques and exercises presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 – Exercises for developing self-direction

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Goal-Setting and Planning (formation of the skill for setting process-oriented goals and developing steps to achieve them)	"Wheel of sports balance"	Beginning of the preparatory period, stage of setting tasks for the season/macrocycle.	Individual session, visualization and discussion.
	"Goal path map"	Planning stages for achieving a specific medium- or long-term goal (e.g., entering top ranking).	Individual or paired work with psychologist, creation of a visual scheme.
	"Daily focus plan"	Daily use within the training process to concentrate on 1–2 key tasks of the day.	Independent completion (in the morning) with evening analysis.
2. Reflective Analysis and Attribution (development of the ability to analyze the connection between one's own actions, decisions, and their consequences)	"Decision tree"	Analysis of a complex game situation (tactical choice) or career decision.	Individual session, schematic analysis of options and their possible outcomes.
	"Result protocol: my role"	Mandatory review after a completed training session or competition.	Independent written work using a structured template.
	"Dialogue with future Self"	Crisis moments, strategy selection, completion of a career stage.	Writing a letter or conducting an imaginary dialogue under the guidance of a psychologist.
3. Development of Internal Dialogue and Self-Instruction (formation of a supportive and guiding inner voice that replaces external instructions)	"Creating the inner coach"	At all stages, especially during the competitive period when autonomous decision-making on the court is required.	Individual session, visualization and verbalization techniques.
	"Beacon commands"	Development for use directly during training or competition to correct state and focus.	Joint development with psychologist, memorization and application in activity conditions.
	"Freeze frame and reset"	In moments of lost concentration, increasing errors, or emotional breakdown during activity.	Operational skill for independent application "here and now".

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 13.

### **Block 3 Self-worth and self-acceptance**

*The target orientation* of this block is to foster in the athlete a stable, context-independent sense of intrinsic worth and to develop the capacity for full, non-judgmental acceptance of one's own experiences, personality traits, and history, including errors and failures.

*The methodological foundation* comprises three complementary approaches ensuring work at cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels. ACT is used for developing the skill of psychological flexibility – the ability to accept internal experience (thoughts, emotions, memories) without struggle, while maintaining contact with the present moment and acting in accordance with core values. The Psychodynamic Approach is used for investigating and bringing to awareness unconscious patterns, internal conflicts, and defense mechanisms that form rigid or negative self-attitude, hindering holistic self-acceptance. Mindfulness is used for training the meta-position – the ability to impartially observe the flow of internal experiences, which creates a foundation for distancing oneself from automatic self-evaluations and destructive internal dialogue.

*The expected outcome* is the enhancement of the professional athlete's psychological resilience, based on internal rather than external reference. This manifests in the ability to maintain contact with a sense of self-worth during periods of failure, a reduction in the intensity of internal criticism, and increased clarity in understanding one's values and motives, which creates a solid foundation for a long-term career and personal well-being.

Practical work is structured around the application of complementary techniques presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 – Exercises for developing self-worth and self-Acceptance

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Development of Psychological Flexibility and Values-Oriented Actions (ACT)	"Observing Self"	Daily practice for forming the skill of distancing from thoughts and emotions, especially in stressful situations.	Daily practice for forming the skill of distancing from thoughts and emotions, especially in stressful situations.
	"Values vault"	Season planning, exiting a motivation crisis, stage of re-evaluating career goals.	Individual session, work with hierarchy and specification of personal values.

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
	"Action despite"	In moments when fear of failure or self-criticism paralyzes activity.	Joint planning with psychologist of a small behavioral experiment.
2. Investigation and Integration of Internal Experience (Psychodynamic Approach)	"Recurring scenario analysis"	When encountering cyclically recurring difficulties in behavior or relationships (e.g., a "breakdown" in key matches).	Individual session, pattern analysis, search for its possible origins and functions.
	"Work with the inner critic figure"	During periods of intense self-criticism, perfectionism, feeling of "I must".	Individual session, visualization and dialogue techniques for investigating the origin and "task" of the inner critic.
	"Integration of opposites"	When experiencing internal conflicts (e.g., "desire to win" vs "fear of responsibility").	Individual session, methods of working with polarities for acknowledging and accepting contradictory parts of the personality.
3. Cultivation of Mindfulness and Self-Compassion (Mindfulness & Self-Compassion)	"Breath and body meditation"	Regular basic practice (morning/evening) for developing general background of mindfulness and grounding.	Independent daily practice via audio guide.
	"RAIN-practice for difficult emotions"	At the moment of emergence of intense negative emotions (shame, anger, disappointment).	Operational skill for independent application according to the algorithm: recognize, accept, investigate, non-identify.
	"Written self-kindness practice"	After an unsuccessful performance, injury, or during a period of heightened stress.	Independent written work.

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 14.

#### **Block 4. Sports self-respect.**

*The target orientation* is the formation of a stable, objectively grounded, and consistent respect for oneself as a professional among athletes, based on recognition of one's competence,

efforts, sports ethics, and contribution to the common cause, independent of temporary fluctuations in performance.

*The methodological foundation* comprises CBT methods for correcting dysfunctional beliefs about one's own professional competence, as well as elements of coaching and strength-based techniques (Strength-Based Approach) aimed at identifying, recognizing, and systematically developing the athlete's professional competencies and volitional qualities.

*The expected outcome* is the strengthening of the athlete's internal position as a master of their craft, which manifests in resilience to non-constructive external criticism, reduced need for constant external validation of one's significance, the ability to adequately assess and defend one's professional level, as well as increased awareness and pride in one's own sports journey.

Practical work is structured around the application of complementary techniques presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 – Exercises for developing sports self-respect

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Formation of Objective Professional Self-Esteem (development of the ability to adequately assess one's strengths, competencies, and progress based on facts rather than emotions)	"Professional achievements map"	Season summary, preparation for contract negotiations, confidence crises.	Individual session, creation of a visualized résumé of sports successes and acquired skills.
	"Expert panel"	When doubts arise about one's professional value, after defeats by lower-ranked opponents.	Individual session, technique of examining one's career from the position of a hypothetical panel of impartial experts.
	"Mastery scale"	Regular monitoring (every 1–2 months) to track progress in various components of mastery (physical, technical, tactical, psychological).	Independent or joint assessment with psychologist according to specified criteria.
2. Development of Awareness of the Value of Process and Effort (shifting focus from exclusively outcome-based evaluation to respect	"Champion's path chronicle"	During periods of performance "plateaus" when progress is not obvious, to maintain motivation and respect for daily work.	Individual session or independent work, focusing on analysis of work done over a long period.

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
for quality of work, discipline, and overcoming)	"Labor recognition ritual"	Weekly practice at the end of a training microcycle.	Brief independent ritual (e.g., journal entry) for recording key efforts applied.
	"Value of my contribution"	When working in a team or with a team of specialists, to recognize one's unique role.	Individual session, analysis of one's specific contribution to the overall result or process.
3. Strengthening Internal Boundaries and Professional Position (development of the ability to protect one's professional sphere, respond adequately to criticism, and defend one's opinion)	"Dialogue with the inner critic"	In situations of non-constructive external criticism or internal self-abasement.	Individual session, technique of defending one's professional position in dialogue with the criticizing part.
	"Formulating a professional creed"	Stage of reflecting on one's sports philosophy and values as a professional.	Individual session, written formulation of principles and beliefs upon which professional activity is built.
	"Response instead of reaction"	Practicing the skill of an adequate, balanced response to provocations, pressure, or unfair criticism in the sports environment.	Role-play in session with psychologist, modeling of complex communicative situations.

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 15.

### **Block 5. Reduction of destructive self-criticism.**

*The target orientation* is the development of a professional athlete's skill to recognize, constructively process, and reduce the intensity of destructive self-criticism, transforming the internal dialogue from judgmental and limiting to supportive and motivating.

*The methodological foundation.* The Psychodynamic Approach for investigating unconscious origins and deep functions of self-criticism (often this is an introject of a criticizing coach, or an attempt to defend against a more frightening feeling of shame or helplessness). Schema Therapy (J. Young) for working with dysfunctional schemas ("I must be perfect", "I am not good enough") and modes (the 'Punitive Parent' mode) underlying chronic self-criticism. ACT for developing the skill of decentering and accepting self-critical thoughts without struggle, reducing their controlling influence on behavior.

*The expected outcome* is a reduction in the frequency and emotional charge of self-critical thoughts, the formation of the ability for constructive self-analysis instead of self-blame, as well as an overall reduction in psychological stress levels and increased motivation for activity due to the elimination of the internal "saboteur".

Practical work is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 – Exercises for reducing destructive self-criticism

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Investigation of Origins and Functions of Criticism (Psychodynamic Approach, Schema Therapy)	"History of the inner voice"	For persistent, recurring patterns of self-criticism ("eternal should-er", "perfectionist").	Individual session, in-depth interview aimed at searching for prototypes of this voice in the past.
	"Dialogue with the punitive parent" (Schema Therapy)	When self-criticism takes the form of humiliating, global accusations ("You are incapable of anything!").	Individual session, "two chairs" technique for dialogue between the 'Healthy Adult Mode' and the 'Punitive Parent Mode'.
	"Secondary gain of self-criticism"	When the athlete intellectually understands the harm of criticism but cannot let it go.	Individual session, joint analysis: What do I get by criticizing myself? (Possible answers: illusion of control, justification for inaction, protection from disappointing others).
2. Changing Relationship with Thoughts and Developing Meta-Position (ACT)	"The self-criticism Song"	In moments of obsessive repetition of the same critical phrase.	Operational humorous technique: mentally sing this phrase to the tune of a children's song to reduce its seriousness and emotional charge.
	"Leaves on a stream" (ACT metaphor)	Daily practice for forming the skill of observing thoughts.	Meditative practice: imagine that thoughts (including critical ones) are leaves floating down a stream. The task is to observe them passing by without grabbing them.
	"Playing the advocate"	When there is strong conviction in one's own "inadequacy".	Individual session or written practice. Task: act as one's own advocate and gather all possible facts and arguments in one's

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
			defense against the accusations of the inner prosecutor.
3. Integration and Formation of a New Pattern (Integrative Approach)	"Ritual of gratitude to the critic"	After understanding the function of self-criticism, for its "contract renegotiation".	Symbolic ritual: mentally thank the inner critic for its original goal (e.g., "thank you for trying to protect me from failure"), but clearly declare a change of strategy.
	"Creating the inner wise advisor"	To replace the punishing instance with a supportive one.	Individual session, visualization technique and endowing the image with specific qualities: calmness, wisdom, faith in potential.
	"Protocol of constructive self-feedback"	After a completed action (training, match) to replace the habitual "post-mortem" analysis.	Individual session, visualization technique and endowing the image with specific qualities: calmness, wisdom, faith in potential.

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 16.

### **Block 6. Development of the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal.**

*The target orientation* is the development of a professional athlete's stable skill of flexible cognitive reformulation (reframing) of negative, stress-inducing, or threatening situations (injuries, defeats, errors, pressure) into tasks, opportunities for growth, sources of valuable experience, or new perspectives.

*The methodological foundation.* NLP Reframing. Techniques for reformulating a problem into a task, searching for positive intent in a negative situation, and shifting the context of event evaluation. Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT): shifting attention from problem analysis to searching for exceptions, existing resources, and constructing a desired future. Third-Wave CBT (Metacognitive Therapy) for developing attention and detached observation of thoughts, which allows changing one's relationship to them without direct struggle.

*The expected outcome* is the enhancement of psychological flexibility and resilience: the ability to recover faster and more effectively after setbacks, maintain motivation and

strategic focus under conditions of uncertainty, and utilize any experience, both positive and negative, as potential for further development. The exercises are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 – Exercises for developing the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
1. Techniques of Contextual and Content Reframing (NLP)	"Positive Intent of Failure"	After a loss or making a mistake, when emotions are still fresh.	Individual session: joint search for an answer to the question "What benefit or important signal might this situation hold for me?".
	"Changing the Frame Size"	When fixating on a single failure (lost point, error).	Operational skill: mentally "zoom out" — view the situation in the scale of the entire match, season, or career.
	"Translation into Process"	When evaluating oneself by the final outcome ("I lost").	Exercise on replacing evaluative categories with process-oriented ones: instead of "loss" — "gaining experience playing against a left-hander".
2. Resource Searching and Solution Building (Solution-Focused Therapy)	"Progress Scale"	In moments when progress is not obvious and it seems nothing is changing.	Individual session: rating on a 10-point scale where the situation currently stands, and detailed analysis of what is already working for those 2–3 points.
	"Miracle Question"	In deadlock situations when no way out is visible.	Questioning technique: "Imagine you wake up tomorrow and the problem is solved. What are the first signs you would notice that this has happened?".
	"Exception Experiment"	When holding the belief "I never manage to.. "..	Joint planning of a micro-experiment to create an exception to this rule in safe conditions.
3. Development of Metacognitive Flexibility (Metacognitive Therapy)	"Delayed Evaluation Technique"	When a strong negative emotional reaction arises.	Pause skill: introduce a rule not to evaluate the situation within a specified time (1 hour, until evening), but simply observe.
	"Attention Mode Switching"	During rumination (obsessive "chewing over" of failure).	Conscious switching of attention focus from internal dialogue to external sensory

Psychological technique (Direction of intervention)	Exercise name	Optimal context of application (Preparation phase)	Work format
			stimuli (technique "5-4-3-2-1").
	"Thought Decentering"	When catastrophizing predictions appear.	Practice of mentally placing anxious thoughts on an imaginary screen and changing their font, color, speed of movement.

Detailed descriptions of the exercises are presented in Appendix 17.

In addition to systematic work, the methodological complex includes a series of operational author's psychotechniques designed for situational application directly under competitive conditions. These techniques ensure maximally rapid access to resource states and operational correction of psychophysiological tone, which is critically important for maintaining performance during a tournament and minimizing the negative consequences of unsuccessful performances.

General goal of operational cognitive techniques for pre-start application: To carry out, under conditions of time deficit (30–120 seconds), a targeted cognitive intervention, the result of which is the actualization, intensification, and stabilization of the state of sports self-confidence through modification of the current thought pattern and activation of adaptive cognitive schemas.

#### 1. Cognitive cueing technique for "Master Mode".

Goal: To perform a rapid shift from an evaluative mode ("I must win") to a process-oriented and identification-based mode of thinking ("I am a professional performing my work").

Execution time: 20–30 seconds.

Execution technique. The athlete is invited to perform mental self-categorization through a key trigger phrase: "Right now, I am not an opponent, not a contender, not someone being evaluated. Right now, I am [own name or surname], a master of my craft, executing a well-practiced algorithm". Repeat silently 2–3 times, with emphasis on the sense of professional identity and detachment from the evaluative context.

#### 2. Technique of selective retrieval of efficacy evidence.

Goal: To purposefully activate from long-term memory not generalized memories of victories, but specific episodes of flawless execution of key technical elements under stress conditions, thereby strengthening confidence in one's own reliability.

Execution time: 45–60 seconds.

Execution technique. Instruction delivery: "Recall not the victory in match X itself, but one specific, technically perfect moment within it — that ideal serve, that precise shot, that instantaneous tactical decision under pressure. Hold this image for 5 seconds. Now find a similar episode from another, recent game. Merge these two 'pieces of evidence' into a unified sensation: 'I possess these skills, and they are reproducible'".

3. Technique of verbal narrowing of the focus of control.

Goal: To limit the cognitive field to "zones of responsibility" under the athlete's control, displacing thoughts about external and uncontrollable factors (opponent, judges, weather) that reduce self-efficacy.

Execution time: 15–25 seconds.

Execution technique. Mental articulation of a clear formula: "My zone of control right now: my breath, my gaze, the quality of my next movement. Only this. Everything else is external noise". Repeat until a sense of cognitive "clicking into place" on internal points of effort application is achieved.

4. Technique of cognitive contrasting with the past "Self".

Goal: To enhance the sense of competence and growth through instant comparison of the current state with the state in a similar start situation in the past (1–2 years ago), emphasizing progress in skills and psychological readiness.

Execution time: 30–40 seconds.

Execution technique: Internal dialogue following the scheme: "Back then, in a similar situation, I did not yet know how to do Y. I worried about X. Now I master Y perfectly. X is no longer a problem for me. I am an updated, stronger version of myself. The start is a test of this update".

5. Technique of acceptance and recalibration of doubt.

Goal: Not to suppress emerging doubts (which is energy-consuming), but to cognitively restructure them by acknowledging them as normal background noise, and to redirect focus to operational confidence in the next action.

Execution time: 20–35 seconds.

Execution technique. When the thought "what if it doesn't work?" arises, an immediate cognitive response is given following a template: "The thought about a possible error is present. This is a statistical probability, not a prediction. My task is not to guarantee a 100% result, but to guarantee 100% quality in executing the first step. Confidence lies in this first step. All attention on it alone".

#### 6. Technique of contrastive cognitive self-command.

Goal: To sharply interrupt emerging destructive thoughts and immediately replace them with a constructive, authoritative self-directive, forming a pattern of dominance over the internal dialogue.

Execution time: 10–15 seconds (for each occurrence of doubt).

Execution technique. Upon noticing a thought that undermines confidence ("the opponent is stronger", "I am not in shape"), the athlete mentally pronounces a sharp stop-signal ("Stop!" or "Cancel!"), and then immediately gives oneself a command formulated in the imperative mood from the third person or from the "professional Self": "[Surname], focus on the task!" or "Coach's instruction: play your own game, period".

Thus, the developed comprehensive methodology for psychological support of professional athletes represents a structured, block-modular toolkit that operationalizes the theoretical model of adaptive self-attitude formation. Its flexible constructor principle, based on diagnostics and synchronization with the training cycle, allows for building personalized trajectories of psychological support. Validation under elite sports conditions has confirmed the methodology's effectiveness, manifested in positive changes in internal communication, performance stability, and adaptability of athletes' coping behavior. Consequently, the methodology serves as a practical foundation for the systemic development of key personal resources necessary for sustainable activity under the extreme conditions of elite sports.

### **Summary of Chapter 3**

Within the framework of Chapter 3, a practice-oriented system of psychological support for professional athletes at the stage of highest mastery was developed and theoretically substantiated, aimed at developing adaptive self-attitude and effective coping behavior. Analysis of the specifics of a sport psychologist's activity in elite sports conditions allowed for the identification of key professional features: orientation toward achieving peak performance, the necessity of working under extreme loads, the paradoxical nature of effectiveness evaluation, interdisciplinarity, mobility, and the preventive character of the work.

Based on the empirical data obtained in Chapter 2, central psychological targets for intervention were identified: self-confidence, self-direction, self-worth, self-acceptance, and sports self-respect, alongside accompanying tasks of reducing destructive self-criticism and forming the cognitive strategy of positive reappraisal. To work with these targets, principles of psychological support were formulated: differentiation and hierarchical structuring of targets,

contextual embeddedness, operationalization through behavior and cognitions, and cyclicity and dynamic monitoring.

The core of the practical part of the chapter was the developed comprehensive methodological toolkit, built on a block-modular principle. The methodology represents a synthesis of techniques from contemporary psychological approaches – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), mindfulness practices, psychodynamic approach, coaching, NLP, and metacognitive therapy – each of which is applied for the purposeful development of a specific component of self-attitude. For each of the six identified targets (self-confidence, self-direction, self-worth and self-acceptance, sports self-respect, reducing self-criticism, developing positive reappraisal), a structured set of exercises is proposed with clear algorithms, effectiveness criteria, and recommendations for integration into the training process.

A special place in the system is occupied by a set of operational cognitive techniques, developed for situational application directly under competitive conditions (before the start, during the match). These techniques ("Cognitive cueing for 'Master Mode'", "Selective retrieval of efficacy evidence", "Verbal narrowing of the focus of control", etc.) are aimed at rapid actualization of a resource state, correction of destructive thought patterns, and stabilization of psychophysiological tone under conditions of acute stress and time deficit.

The presented system is adaptive and cyclical in nature, which is reflected in the visual support model. It implies flexible combination of methodological blocks based on initial diagnostics and synchronization with the logic of the training cycle (preparatory, pre-competitive, competitive, recovery periods). Validation of the methodology within the framework of many years of practical work with highest qualification tennis players (MS, MSIC) confirmed its practical viability. The observed results – stable changes in athletes' internal communication, increased performance stability, formation of more adaptive coping behavior patterns – indicate that the developed complex is adequate to the specific requirements of elite sports and can serve as a foundation for building effective, scientifically grounded psychological support, aimed at optimizing the key personal resource – adaptive professional self-attitude.

## CONCLUSION

The dissertation research is dedicated to analyzing the interrelationship between coping behavior and self-attitude among professional athletes. The obtained results allow us to assert that the nature of this interrelationship is not universal but is determined by the stage of the sports career and the level of achievement. The obtained results indicate that the nature of this interrelationship is not constant or universal but undergoes a systematic transformation conditioned by the achieved level of mastery.

The theoretical part of the study provided a conceptual foundation for the subsequent empirical work. During the analysis, the conceptual framework was clarified and differentiated, which allowed for the development of operational definitions of the key concepts. Athletes' coping behavior was defined not as a situational reaction but as a purposeful process of active adaptation, unfolding in response to specific stressors of the sports environment, such as high competition, physical overloads, public scrutiny, and dependence on results. In parallel, self-attitude was examined as a complex systemic formation performing a central regulatory function and formed under the influence of the extreme demands placed on the personality in elite sports.

The empirical part of the study revealed qualitative differences in the structural profiles of the studied psychological phenomena among athletes at different stages of professional development. Among amateur athletes, coping behavior is characterized by a relatively uniform profile with moderate expression of most strategies, while a low tendency to accept personal responsibility for emerging difficulties is observed. Self-attitude in this group is distinguished by a relatively simple structure with isolatedly high self-worth, which reflects general emotional self-acceptance not yet integrated into a system of developed regulatory mechanisms. In the group of Candidates for Master of Sport (CMS), the formation of a distinct problem-oriented coping style is observed, the core of which consists of self-control, planning, and acceptance of responsibility. The structure of self-attitude at this stage becomes more complex; a significant increase in indicators of self-direction and self-acceptance is recorded, which indicates the development of an internal position of an active subject of professional activity.

The most complex picture is observed among Masters of Sport: their coping behavior profile is enriched by the strategy of positive reappraisal, allowing them to find constructive meaning in failures, while self-attitude acquires a polarized organization. It simultaneously includes high levels of sports self-respect and self-efficacy, which form the basis of professional confidence, and elevated internal conflict alongside reduced self-attachment, reflecting intense

inner work, critical reflection, and readiness for change necessary for maintaining positions at the elite level.

The most significant result of the study was establishing the typologically different nature of interrelationships between self-attitude and coping behavior depending on the career stage. For Candidates for Master of Sport, a dependent, or reactive, structure of connections is characteristic. In this configuration, coping behavior is largely determined by the current tone of self-attitude: its positive components support adaptive strategies, while the tendency toward self-criticism and self-blame directly blocks the readiness to take responsibility, contributing to avoidance. Among Masters of Sport, a fundamentally different, integrated system of psychological regulation is formed. In this system, basic, stable aspects of professional self-attitude, such as self-respect and self-direction, form strong and substantive connections with proactive, strategic forms of coping, serving as their semantic and operational foundation. This means that for elite-level athletes, effective coping ceases to be a situational response and becomes an integral part of their professional identity, a natural extension of a stable attitude toward oneself as a subject of highest achievements. This transition from reactive dependence to structural integration reflects a qualitative transformation of personality regulation mechanisms in the process of ascending to the peaks of sports mastery.

The practical result of the dissertation research was the development and validation of a comprehensive methodology of psychological support, addressed to athletes of highest mastery. This methodology is focused on the purposeful formation of precisely that adaptive, resourceful self-attitude which, as was shown, constitutes the system-forming core of effective coping among Masters of Sport. Its application under conditions of real training and competitive practice confirmed operational effectiveness, manifested in objectively registered positive shifts: increased stability and predictability of performances, reduction of psychological recovery time after failures, and minimization of destructive behavioral reactions in acute stressful situations.

Nevertheless, the conducted scientific research has a number of substantive limitations that outline directions for further scientific inquiry. The primary limitation is related to the specificity of the formed sample, represented predominantly by athletes from individual sports. The obtained results, revealing patterns of individual self-regulation, require caution when extrapolating to conditions of team activity, where coping processes and the formation of self-attitude may be substantially mediated by group dynamics, intra-team relationships, and the specifics of role interaction. The constative and correlational nature of the present study, which allowed for the identification of stable structural interrelationships, simultaneously indicates

the necessity of organizing longitudinal or formative experiments. Such research is necessary for a deeper understanding of the cause-and-effect mechanisms underlying the identified transition from a reactive to an integrated regulation system, and for testing hypotheses about factors that facilitate or hinder this transformation. Furthermore, the tools developed within the study – both the adapted Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire and the comprehensive support methodology – require further standardization on broader and more heterogeneous samples, as well as investigation of the long-term effects of their application, especially in the context of preventing professional burnout and addressing adaptation tasks at the stage of completing a sports career.

Prospects for further research logically follow both from the obtained results and from the outlined limitations. A priority is the organization of a longitudinal study aimed at tracking the transformation of interrelationships between self-attitude and coping behavior within the same group of athletes during their transition from the skill refinement stage (CMS) to the highest achievements stage (MS). Equally relevant is the study of the specificity of the identified patterns in the context of team sports, with mandatory consideration of factors such as group cohesion, the system of intra-team communications, leadership, and the coach's management style. To overcome limitations related to retrospective self-assessment of coping, a promising task is the development and implementation of ecological momentary assessment methods, allowing for the fixation of coping strategies and self-attitude states in real time, directly during training and competitions. The phenomenon of internal conflict among elite-level athletes requires in-depth study, with the aim of determining the fine line at which this state performs an adaptive, motivational, and developmental function without transforming into a maladaptive, disorganizing experience. A separate scientific-practical direction consists of creating and validating specialized psychological support programs for athletes at the critical stage of transition from amateur status to professional (CMS level), the focus of which should be directed toward forming a stable core of positive self-attitude and overcoming the bipolar, vulnerable dependence of coping on the momentary emotional background. Finally, a significant task is the integration of the theoretical propositions and empirical results obtained in this work into educational programs for professional training and advanced qualification of sport psychologists, coaches, and other specialists working in elite sports, with the aim of developing their competencies in diagnosing and developing psychological resources that ensure the reliability and longevity of a sports career.

Thus, the results of the conducted research contribute to the development of sport psychology by specifying theoretical concepts regarding the mechanisms of psychological

adaptation in activity associated with highest achievements. The established typology of interrelationships, the developed diagnostic toolkit, and the validated practical methodology create a theoretical-methodological and empirical foundation for subsequent scientific investigations in this field and for improving the system of comprehensive psychological support for the preparation of highly qualified athletes.

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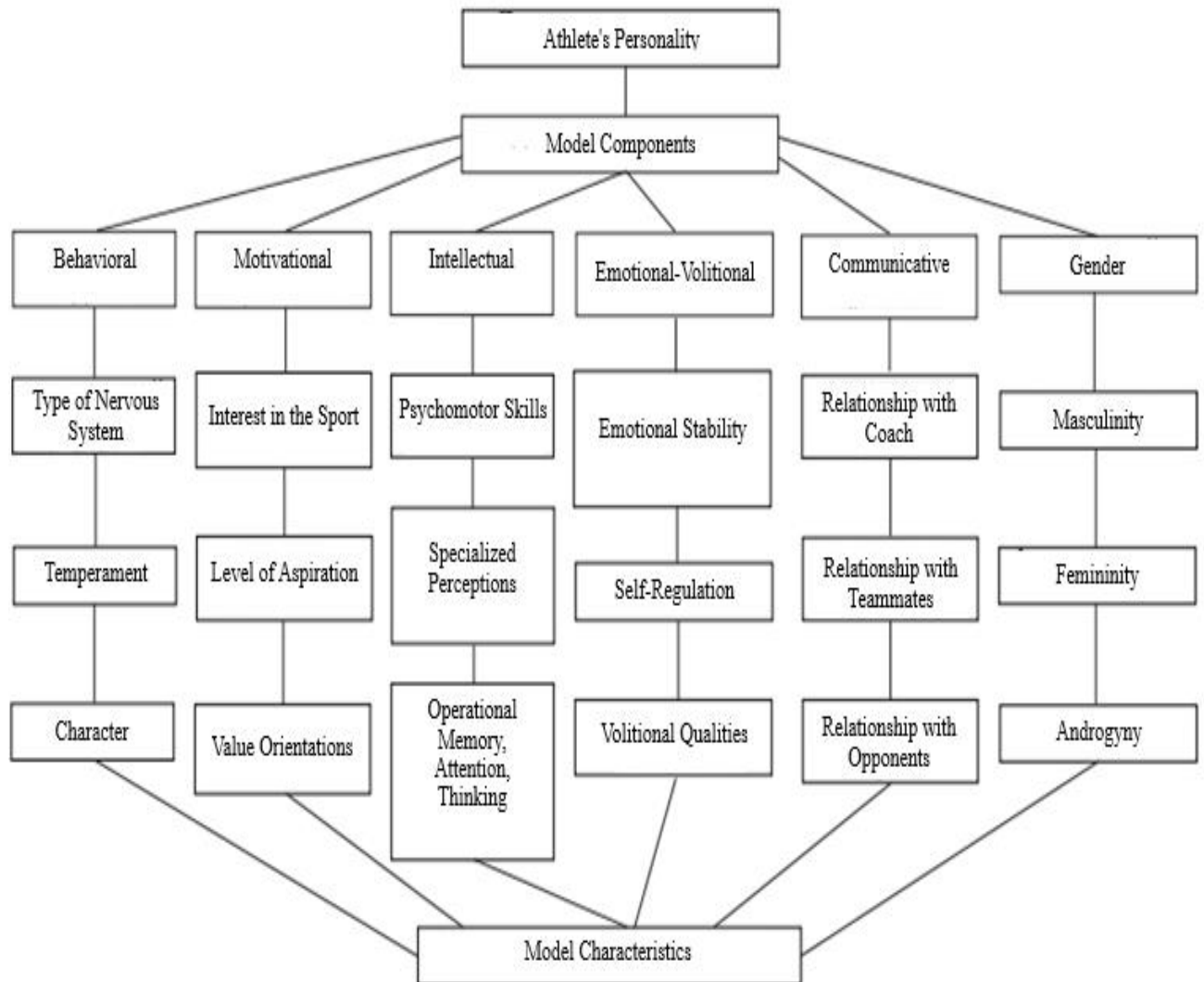
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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1



T.V. Ogorodova's Generalized model of athlete personality

### Characteristics of the respondents

No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)	No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)
						27	M	23	Artistic gymnastics	MS	14
1	M	24	Tennis	Amateur	6	28	F	25	Tennis	Amateur	7
2	M	28	Boxing	Amateur	8	29	M	21	Artistic gymnastics	CMS	12
3	M	22	Boxing	Amateur	5	30	F	28	Track and field	MS	18
4	F	31	Table tennis	Amateur	4	31	M	24	Table tennis	Amateur	8
5	M	26	Badminton	Amateur	3	32	F	22	Table tennis	CMS	10
6	F	32	Tennis	Amateur	6	33	M	22	Tennis	MS	13
7	M	25	Tennis	CMS	15	34	F	23	Badminton	Amateur	6
8	M	22	Tennis	CMS	13	35	M	23	Track and field	CMS	11
9	F	23	Rhythmic gymnastics	MS	15	36	F	25	Swimming	MS	17
10	F	24	Rhythmic gymnastics	MS	17	37	M	24	Table tennis	Amateur	7
11	M	28	Tennis	MSIC	18	38	F	26	Tennis	CMS	9
12	M	21	Tennis	CMS	15	39	M	22	Badminton	MS	12
13	M	35	Tennis	Amateur	5	40	F	28	Tennis	Amateur	8
14	F	29	Badminton	Amateur	5	41	M	23	Swimming	CMS	17
15	M	24	Track and field	CMS	14	42	F	25	Table tennis	MS	13
16	F	23	Rhythmic gymnastics	MS	16	43	M	21	Tennis	Amateur	6
17	M	25	Swimming	CMS	15	44	F	21	Badminton	CMS	12
18	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	6	45	M	24	Track and field	MS	12
19	M	22	Artistic gymnastics	MS	16	46	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7
20	F	24	Track and field	CMS	16	47	M	23	Table tennis	CMS	12
21	M	23	Boxing	Amateur	5	48	F	25	Tennis	MS	13
22	M	35	Boxing	Amateur	7	49	M	22	Badminton	Amateur	6
23	M	25	Tennis	CMS	18	50	F	28	Track and field	CMS	15

No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)	No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)
						27	M	23	Artistic gymnastics	MS	14
24	F	22	Track and field	MS	14	51	M	24	Track and field	MS	12
25	F	31	Badminton	Amateur	8	52	F	26	Table tennis	Amateur	7
26	F	24	Swimming	CMS	15						

No.	Gen der	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)	No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)
53	M	20	Tennis	CMS	12	80	F	21	Track and field	CMS	9
54	F	25	Badminton	MS	13	81	M	24	Swimming	MS	12
55	M	21	Tennis	Amateur	6	82	F	26	Table tennis	Amateur	7
56	F	22	Swimming	CMS	16	83	M	23	Tennis	CMS	15
57	M	24	Table tennis	MS	15	84	F	25	Badminton	MS	13
58	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	85	M	22	Tennis	Amateur	6
59	M	23	Badminton	CMS	12	86	F	22	Swimming	CMS	11
60	F	25	Track and field	MS	17	87	M	28	Table tennis	MS	17
61	M	22	Swimming	Amateur	6	88	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7
62	F	21	Table tennis	CMS	9	89	M	23	Badminton	CMS	10
63	M	24	Tennis	MS	12	90	F	25	Track and field	MS	13
64	F	26	Badminton	Amateur	7	91	M	21	Swimming	Amateur	6
65	M	23	Track and field	CMS	10	92	F	21	Table tennis	CMS	15
66	F	25	Swimming	MS	17	93	M	24	Tennis	MS	16
67	M	21	Table tennis	Amateur	6	94	F	26	Badminton	Amateur	7
68	F	22	Tennis	CMS	9	95	M	23	Track and field	CMS	13
69	M	29	Badminton	MS	18	96	F	25	Swimming	MS	13
70	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	97	M	22	Table tennis	Amateur	6
71	M	23	Swimming	CMS	15	98	F	22	Tennis	CMS	9
72	F	25	Table tennis	MS	18	99	M	24	Badminton	MS	18
73	M	22	Boxing	Amateur	6	100	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7
74	F	23	Badminton	CMS	11	101	M	23	Swimming	CMS	10
75	M	24	Track and field	MS	12	102	F	25	Table tennis	MS	15
76	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	103	M	21	Tennis	Amateur	6
77	M	23	Table tennis	CMS	10	104	F	21	Badminton	CMS	9
78	F	25	Tennis	MS	18	105	M	24	Track and field	MS	12
79	M	21	Badminton	Amateur	6						

No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)	No.	Gender	Age	Sport	Qualification	Athletic experience (years)
106	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	132	F	25	Table tennis	MS	13
107	M	23	Table tennis	CMS	10	133	M	22	Tennis	Amateur	6
108	F	25	Tennis	MS	17	134	F	20	Badminton	CMS	9
109	M	22	Badminton	Amateur	6	135	M	24	Track and field	MS	17
110	F	28	Track and field	CMS	17	136	F	26	Swimming	Amateur	7
111	M	24	Swimming	MS	18	137	M	23	Table tennis	CMS	10
112	F	26	Table tennis	Amateur	7	138	F	25	Tennis	MS	15
113	M	23	Tennis	CMS	11	139	M	21	Badminton	Amateur	6
114	F	25	Badminton	MS	13	140	F	22	Track and field	CMS	16
115	M	21	Tennis	Amateur	6	141	M	24	Swimming	MS	16
116	F	21	Swimming	CMS	9	142	F	26	Table tennis	Amateur	7
117	M	24	Table tennis	MS	14	143	M	23	Tennis	CMS	14
118	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	144	F	25	Badminton	MS	15
119	M	23	Badminton	CMS	15	145	M	22	Tennis	Amateur	6
120	F	31	Track and field	MS	19	146	F	21	Swimming	CMS	15
121	M	22	Tennis	Amateur	6	147	M	24	Table tennis	MS	15
122	F	21	Table tennis	CMS	9	148	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7
123	M	24	Tennis	MS	12	149	M	20	Badminton	CMS	12
124	F	26	Badminton	Amateur	7	150	M	33	Boxing	Amateur	6
125	M	23	Track and field	CMS	15	151	M	31	Boxing	Amateur	5
126	F	25	Swimming	MS	17	152	F	25	Rhythmic gymnastics	MS	19
127	M	21	Table tennis	Amateur	6	153	M	23	Artistic gymnastics	CMS	17
128	F	22	Tennis	CMS	9	154	M	23	Artistic gymnastics	CMS	16
129	M	24	Badminton	MS	15	155	M	31	Tennis	Amateur	5
130	F	26	Tennis	Amateur	7	156	F	33	Tennis	Amateur	6
131	M	23	Swimming	CMS	17	157	F	35	Tennis	Amateur	3
						158	F	36	Tennis	Amateur	5

No.	Gen der	Age	Sport	Qualificatio n	Athletic experienc e (years)
159	M	29	Table tennis	Amateur	6
160	M	23	Table tennis	Amateur	6
161	M	27	Table tennis	Amateur	8
162	M	26	Table tennis	Amateur	4
163	F	25	Tennis	Amateur	5
164	F	23	Table tennis	Amateur	6
165	M	31	Boxing	Amateur	3
166	M	29	Boxing	Amateur	7
167	M	28	Boxing	Amateur	7
168	M	25	Boxing	Amateur	6
169	M	29	Boxing	Amateur	8
170	F	23	Rhythmic gymnastics	CMS	15
171	F	22	Rhythmic gymnastics	CMS	14
172	F	24	Rhythmic gymnastics	CMS	18
173	F	21	Rhythmic gymnastics	CMS	15
174	F	21	Rhythmic gymnastics	MS	15
175	M	33	Boxing	Amateur	8
176	M	22	Boxing	Amateur	7
177	M	25	Swimming	CMS	16
178	M	22	Swimming	CMS	13
179	M	24	Swimming	CMS	15
180	F	23	Artistic gymnastics	CMS	16
181	F	23	Artistic gymnastics	CMS	15
182	F	24	Tennis	CMS	15

**Scales of the Ways of Coping Questionnaire by R. Lazarus, adapted by T.L. Kryukova, 2007**

	Essence of the strategy	Manifestations and characteristics	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
<b>Confrontation</b>	Active, but not always purposeful, attempts to cope with the problem, often driven by the need to release emotional tension.	Impulsive actions, hostility, conflict, difficulties with planning and forecasting, unjustified persistence.	Active resistance to difficulties, energy, ability to defend one's interests.	Insufficient purposefulness and rational justification of behavior.
<b>Distancing</b>	Overcoming negative experiences by reducing the significance of the problem and emotional detachment.	Rationalization, use of humor, shifting attention, devaluation of the situation.	Reducing the intensity of experiences, preventing intense emotional breakdowns.	Risk of devaluing one's own feelings and underestimating opportunities for actual problem resolution.
<b>Self-control</b>	Suppression and restraint of emotions to maintain control over the situation and one's own behavior.	High behavioral control, striving for self-mastery, concealment of emotions, fear of self-disclosure.	Predominance of a rational approach, avoidance of impulsive actions.	Difficulties in expressing feelings and needs, risk of excessive self-control.
<b>Seeking Social Support</b>	Resolving the problem by seeking external assistance (informational, emotional, or practical).	Orientation toward interaction, expectation of advice, sympathy, or concrete help.	Utilization of external resources for more effective problem resolution.	Risk of developing a dependent position and inflated expectations from others.
<b>Acceptance of Responsibility</b>	Acknowledging one's own role in the emergence of the problem and responsibility for its resolution.	Analysis of one's own mistakes, self-criticism, in extreme cases — self-blame.	Understanding cause-and-effect relationships, opportunity to work on one's own mistakes.	Risk of unjustified self-criticism, feelings of guilt, and development of depressive states.

	Essence of the strategy	Manifestations and characteristics	Positive aspects	Negative aspects
<b>Escape-Avoidance</b>	Overcoming negative experiences by evading the problem and thoughts about it.	Denial of the problem, immersion in fantasies, passivity, outbursts of irritability, use of substances to relieve tension.	Rapid but short-term reduction of emotional tension in acute situations.	Failure to resolve the problem, accumulation of difficulties, short-term effect.
<b>Problem-Solving Planning</b>	Purposeful analysis of the situation and development of an action plan for its resolution.	Analysis of possible options, development of a strategy, consideration of past experience and resources.	Purposeful, systematic, and constructive problem resolution.	Risk of excessive rationality, lack of spontaneity and intuition.
<b>Positive Reappraisal</b>	Overcoming negative experiences by finding positive meaning or a lesson in the problem.	Reinterpretation of the situation as a stimulus for personal growth, philosophical approach.	Personal growth, finding new meanings, changing the attitude toward the problem.	Risk of indulging in philosophizing and underestimating the need for practical action.

**Interpretation of Scales of the Self-Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ) Author: S.R. Pantileev (1989)**

Scale name	Content	High values	Low values
<b>"Internal honesty" or Closedness – Openness</b>	The statements included in this factor were designed to contain certain qualities (primarily negative from the perspective of conventional morality) that are to some extent inherent in every person but require sufficient reflective skills and a degree of internal honesty to acknowledge. Thus, responses to these items are determined by the predominance of one of two tendencies: either criticality, deep self-awareness, internal honesty, and openness, or conformity or pronounced motivation for social approval. Essentially, the scale reflects deep or superficial penetration into oneself, an open or closed (defensive) attitude toward oneself. "Closedness" corresponds to the high pole of the scale.	High values indicate closedness, an inability or unwillingness to recognize and disclose significant information about oneself; in extreme cases, outright deceit and falsification of responses in the direction of socially desirable answers.	Low values on the scale indicate deep awareness of the "I," heightened reflexivity and criticality, and the ability not to conceal significant unpleasant information from oneself or others. Extremely low values may suggest self-exposure, sometimes bordering on cynicism.
<b>Self-confidence</b>	This factor establishes an attitude toward oneself as a confident, independent, strong-willed, and reliable person worthy of respect.	High values correspond to high self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of the strength of one's "I," and an absence of internal tension.	Low values indicate dissatisfaction with oneself and one's abilities, and doubt about one's capacity to command respect.
<b>Self-Direction</b>	This factor can be interpreted as reflecting the belief that the primary source of activity and outcomes—both regarding one's activities and one's personality—is oneself. A high score characterizes a person who clearly understands that their destiny is in their own hands, that they themselves integrate and organize their activities, communication, and behavior. Additionally, several items reflect the individual's belief in their ability to effectively manage their emotions and experiences regarding themselves, as well as to control them. The opposite pole is associated with the subject's belief that their "I" is subject to external circumstances, poor self-regulation, a diffuse locus of the self, and a lack of tendency to seek the causes of actions, outcomes, and personal characteristics within oneself.	A person with a high score clearly experiences their own "I" as an inner core that integrates their personality and life activities, believes that their destiny is in their own hands, and experiences a sense of justification and consistency in their inner motivations and goals.	Low scores indicate the subject's belief that their "I" is subject to transient circumstances, an inability to resist fate, poor self-regulation, a diffuse locus of the "I," and a lack of tendency to seek the causes of actions and outcomes within oneself.
<b>Reflected self-attitude</b>	The content of this factor reflects the subject's belief that their personality, character, and activities are capable of evoking respect, sympathy, approval, and understanding from others—or the opposite feelings. It is important to emphasize	High values correspond to the subject's belief that their personality, character, and	Low values are associated with the expectation of

Scale name	Content	High values	Low values
	that this is not about the actual attitude of others, but about the anticipated, reflected attitude of others, i.e., the subject's own self-attitude. At the same time, the expected attitude of others is one of the most important aspects of self-attitude.	activities are capable of evoking respect, sympathy, approval, and understanding from others.	opposite feelings from a generalized other.
<b>Self-worth, "I" as value</b>	The positive pole of this factor reflects the sense of one's own personal value and simultaneously the presumed value of one's "I" for others. The scale reflects the emotional evaluation of oneself, one's "I" based on internal, intimate criteria of spirituality, richness of the inner world, and the ability to evoke deep feelings in others.	High scores reflect interest in one's own "I," self-love, a sense of the value of one's own personality, and simultaneously the presumed value of one's "I" for others.	Low scores indicate a perceived lack of spiritual depth of the "I," doubt in the value of one's own personality, detachment bordering on indifference to one's "I," and loss of interest in one's inner world.
<b>Self-acceptance</b>	The basis of this factor is a feeling of sympathy toward oneself, agreement with one's inner motivations, and acceptance of oneself as one is, even with some shortcomings. The factor is associated with approval of one's plans and desires, and a lenient, friendly attitude toward oneself. This factor, like the previous one, does not have an opposite pole—statements associated with a negative attitude toward oneself. The feelings and experiences underlying this factor are not associated by respondents with their personal manifestations.	The high pole corresponds to a friendly attitude toward oneself, agreement with oneself, approval of one's plans and desires, and emotional, unconditional acceptance of oneself as one is, even with some shortcomings.	The low pole indicates the absence of these qualities—insufficient self-acceptance, which is an important symptom of internal maladjustment.
<b>Self-attachment – "Crystallization" – ease or difficulty of changing the individual's self-perceptions</b>	The negative pole of this factor is associated with a strong desire for change, dissatisfaction with oneself, and a striving to conform to an ideal self-image. A high score, accordingly, characterizes a person who does not wish to change their attitude toward themselves and is fully satisfied with themselves; the factor reflects a certain rigidity of self-concept, conservative self-sufficiency, and denial of the possibility and desirability of developing one's own "I" (even for the better).	High values indicate rigidity of self-concept, attachment, and unwillingness to change against a background of generally positive self-attitude. These experiences are often accompanied by attachment to an inadequate self-image. In the latter case, the tendency to maintain such an image is one of the defense mechanisms of self-awareness.	Low values indicate opposite tendencies: a desire to change something about oneself, a striving to conform to an ideal self-image, and dissatisfaction with oneself.
<b>Internal conflict</b>	The content of the items on this scale is related to the presence of internal conflicts, doubts, and disagreement with oneself. They reveal a tendency toward excessive self-examination and reflection occurring against a background of generally	High values indicate the presence of internal conflicts, doubts, disagreement with oneself,	Extremely low values indicate denial of problems,

Scale name	Content	High values	Low values
	negative emotional attitude toward oneself. Denial of these qualities may indicate closedness, superficial self-complacency, and denial of problems. In terms of general psychological content, this aspect of self-attitude can be described as a feeling of conflict within one's own "I".	anxiety-depressive states accompanied by feelings of guilt. Moderate elevation on the scale indicates heightened reflection, deep self-awareness, recognition of one's difficulties, an adequate self-image, and an absence of repression.	closedness, and superficial self-complacency.
<b>Self-blame</b>	This factor includes items related to intrapunitiveness, self-blame, and negative emotions directed toward the "I". This is a unipolar factor that has independent significance within the system of self-attitude.	High values indicate self-blame, a readiness to blame oneself for one's mistakes and failures, and one's own shortcomings. The scale is an indicator of a lack of sympathy toward oneself, accompanied by negative emotions directed at oneself, even despite high self-esteem of one's qualities and achievements.	

The test-retest reliability of the questionnaire, measured on a sample of 53 participants with an interval of 10–14 days, shows Spearman correlation coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.93 for the various scales, which exceeds current requirements for reliability of personality questionnaires. Internal consistency reliability was ensured through factor analysis with the selection of items demonstrating high factor loadings. The validity of the results is controlled using the "Closedness" scale—protocols with scores of 9–10 sten on this scale are considered invalid.

Convergent and discriminant validity were tested on a sample of 92 individuals through correlations with the MMPI, Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire, and the Locus of Control Questionnaire. Seven scales of the SAQ ("Self-confidence," "Self-Direction," "Reflected self-attitude," "Internal conflict," "Closedness," "Self-blame," and "Self-acceptance") demonstrated statistically significant correlations ( $p < 0.01$ ) ranging from  $-0.62$  to  $0.47$  with the scales of the aforementioned instruments. The "Self-worth" and "Self-acceptance" scales did not show significant correlations with other instruments. The psychometric properties of the questionnaire are generally considered confirmed.

**Scales of the professional self-attitude questionnaire (PSAQ)**

Original scale/ <b>Adapted scale name</b>	Original subscales / <b>Adapted subscale name</b>	Items
1. Internal conflict / <b>Internal conflict of sports self-attitude</b>	-	2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 32, 33, 34, 36
2. Professional self-respect / <b>Sports self-respect</b>	Professional self-confidence / Sports self-confidence	7, 16, 27, 31, 38
	Professional self-attachment / Sports self-attachment	22, 28, 30, 35, 39
3. Professional self-blame / <b>Sports self-blame</b>	-	3, 8, 10, 21, 26, 29
4. Professional self-efficacy / <b>Sports self-efficacy</b>	Professional self-direction / <b>Sports self-direction</b>	4, 9, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24
	Professional personal growth self-assessment / <b>Sports personal growth self-assessment</b>	1, 11, 37
5. Professional self-abasement / <b>Sports self-abasement</b>	-	2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29, 32, 33, 34, 36
6. Overall positivity index of professional self-attitude / <b>Overall positivity index of sports self-attitude</b>	-	1 - 39

**Adaptation of the professional self-attitude questionnaire Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko (2010)**

No.	Original item	Adapted version for professional athletes
1	Work has made me a confident person with a sense of self-worth.	<b>Sport</b> has made me a confident person with a sense of self-worth.
2	The traits of my character are poorly compatible with the profession I work in.	The traits of my character are poorly compatible with <b>the sport I practice</b> .
3	When I experience troubles at work, I lose self-confidence.	When I experience <b>failures in sport</b> , I lose self-confidence.
4	As a rule, my character does not let me down in professional life.	As a rule, my character does not let me down in my <b>sports career</b> .
5	When choosing my profession and workplace, I greatly overestimated my own abilities.	When choosing my <b>sport</b> , I greatly overestimated my own abilities.
6	To properly meet the demands and conditions of my profession, I need to become a different person.	<b>To achieve high results in my sport</b> , I need to become a different person.
7	Comparing myself with my colleagues at work, I feel a sense of pride in myself.	Comparing myself <b>with other athletes</b> , I feel a sense of pride in myself.
8	I am often angry at myself for creating problems for myself at work.	I am often angry at myself for creating problems for myself <b>in sport</b> .
9	A person with my personal qualities is capable of achieving a great deal in my chosen profession.	<b>An athlete</b> with my personal qualities is capable of achieving a great deal <b>in my sport</b> .
10	Despite having considerable work experience, in some work situations I feel like an incompetent beginner.	Despite having considerable <b>sports experience</b> , in some <b>competitive situations</b> I feel like an incompetent beginner.

No.	Original item	Adapted version for professional athletes
11	Work has helped me discover the truly strong aspects of my character.	<b>Sport</b> has helped me discover the truly strong aspects of my character.
12	I feel an inner discord between what my work demands of me and my abilities.	I feel an inner discord between what <b>elite sport</b> demands of me and my abilities.
13	I think that my colleagues in my professional activity most likely evaluate me as a conscientious and responsible worker.	I think that <b>other athletes and coaches</b> most likely evaluate me as a conscientious and responsible <b>athlete</b> .
14	My character withstands the test even in the most difficult professional situations.	My character withstands the test even in the most difficult <b>competitive situations</b> .
15	If I do not change as a person, I would be better off changing my workplace or finding another profession altogether.	If I do not change as a person, I would be better <b>off ending my career or changing my sport</b> .
16	Deep down, I consider myself one of the best employees in the organization where I work.	Deep down, I consider myself one of the best athletes in <b>my discipline</b> .
17	At work, I cannot afford to be myself.	<b>In sport</b> , I cannot afford to be myself.
18	If I have achieved something in my profession, it is primarily due to my personal qualities.	If I have achieved something <b>in sport</b> , it is primarily due to my personal qualities.
19	I feel superfluous and useless in my work team.	I feel superfluous and useless in my <b>sports environment (team, national team)</b> .
20	I have more positive professional qualities than professional shortcomings.	I have more <b>qualities necessary for a champion</b> than professional shortcomings.

No.	Original item	Adapted version for professional athletes
21	If I had foreseen the difficulties associated with my work, I would have made much more effort during my education.	If I had foreseen the difficulties associated with <b>elite sport</b> , I would have made much more effort at the <b>initial stage</b> .
22	Overall, I can evaluate myself as a highly qualified specialist capable of solving the most difficult professional tasks.	Overall, I can evaluate myself as a <b>high-class athlete</b> capable of solving the most difficult <b>competitive tasks</b> .
23	I am haunted by the feeling that I chose an unsuitable profession for myself.	I am haunted by the feeling that I chose an unsuitable <b>sport</b> for myself.
24	I possess sufficient inner potential to cope with any difficulties in my professional activity.	I possess sufficient inner potential to cope with any difficulties in my <b>sports career</b> .
25	If my boss got to know me better, he would stop trusting me even with the work I currently do.	If <b>my coach</b> got to know me better, he would stop trusting me.
26	Problems at work always make me feel dissatisfied with myself.	Problems <b>in sport</b> always make me feel dissatisfied with myself.
27	I think that most of my colleagues would gladly accept me as their leader.	I think that most <b>members of my team (rivals, federation)</b> would gladly accept me as a <b>leader</b> .
28	I have already fully formed as a specialist and do not want to change anything about myself.	I have already fully formed as <b>an athlete</b> and do not want to change anything about myself.
29	I am usually upset by how I react to difficulties at work.	I am usually upset by how I react to difficulties <b>in sport</b> .
30	When making difficult decisions at work, I rely solely on my own professional experience.	When making difficult decisions during <b>training and competitions</b> , I rely solely on my own <b>sports</b> experience.
31	I can say that I am adapted to the conditions of my profession better than most of my colleagues.	I can say that I am adapted to <b>the demands of my sport</b> better than most of <b>my rivals</b> .

No.	Original item	Adapted version for professional athletes
32	My profession has changed me as a person for the worse.	<b>Elite sport</b> has changed me as a person for the worse.
33	To achieve high results in my profession, I would have had to be born a different person.	To become <b>a champion</b> , I would have had to be born a different person.
34	The qualities that are valuable for communication with family and friends most often do not benefit me in my professional activity.	The qualities that are valuable for communication with family and friends most often do not benefit me in my <b>sports activity</b> .
35	No matter who criticizes the results of my work, I remain confident in my own professionalism.	No matter who criticizes <b>my sports results</b> , I remain confident in my own professionalism.
36	I often feel embarrassed about myself as a specialist.	I often feel embarrassed about myself as <b>an athlete</b> .
37	It seems to me that my profession has a positive impact on my character.	It seems to me that <b>sport</b> has a positive impact on my character.
38	I think that my professional training surpasses that of my colleagues in many respects.	I think that my <b>sports training</b> surpasses that of <b>my main rivals</b> in many respects.
39	Overall, I am satisfied with the level of my professional skill.	Overall, I am satisfied with the level of my <b>sports skill</b> .

**Note:** The adaptation is contextual in nature and preserves the meaning of the original questionnaire

**Original and adapted substantive interpretation of the scales of the  
Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M.  
Kolyshko (2010)**

**1. Scale "Self-respect". Subscale "Professional self-confidence"**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale is designed to assess the degree of an individual's confidence in their own professional competence, skill, and experience. The primary source of professional self-confidence is social comparison with one's immediate professional environment. The content of the items included in this subscale reveals the individual's firm belief in the desirability and attractiveness of their own "I" to those in their professional circle; confidence in the significance and exceptional nature of their professional knowledge, skills, abilities, and business qualities; and aspirations for professional success and social recognition.

**A high score** on this subscale characterizes an individual with an acute sense of professional superiority and dignity, who takes pride in themselves as a specialist and attempts to dominate in work relationships. Such a person is adapted to the conditions of their profession, is ambitious, and has a tendency toward careerism; in their work activity, they are interested not in the process but in the result, especially if it comes with worthy material reward and various non-material honors. They strive to gain and maintain professional authority, to occupy a leadership position, or at least to lead informally within the work team. In professional activity, they pursue and defend primarily individual rather than group interests. They are more predisposed to competition than to cooperation within the work team.

**A low score** on this subscale indicates that the individual lacks belief in their professional potential. They tend to overestimate the professional qualifications of their colleagues and, against this backdrop, diminish the level of their own professionalism and understate their personal contribution to the overall work result. They do not aspire to leadership, do not seek to take initiative, feel comfortable in subordinate roles, and are more likely to follow than to lead within the work team. At the same time, a low score on this subscale should not be regarded as evidence that the individual experiences feelings of professional inadequacy, worthlessness, or helplessness.

**Adapted version**

**1. Scale "Sports self-respect". Subscale "Sports self-confidence"**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale is designed to assess the degree of an athlete's confidence in their own sports competence, skill, and experience. The primary source of sports self-confidence is social comparison with one's immediate sports environment: direct rivals, teammates, and the champion ideal. The content of the items reveals the athlete's firm belief in the desirability and attractiveness of their own "I" to those in the sports environment (coaches, judges,

spectators); confidence in the significance and exceptional nature of their sports skills, technical abilities, physical attributes, and volitional qualities; and aspirations for sports success, victories, and public recognition.

**A high score** on this subscale characterizes an athlete with an acute sense of sports superiority and dignity, who takes pride in themselves as an athlete and strives to dominate in sports relationships. Such an athlete is adapted to the conditions of sports activity, is ambitious, and is oriented toward achieving high results. In training and competitive activity, they are interested not so much in the process as in the result (medals, records, titles), especially if it comes with worthy reward and recognition. They strive to gain and maintain sports authority, to occupy a leadership position in the team, or to lead informally within the sports community. In sports activity, they defend primarily individual rather than team interests. They are more predisposed to competition than to cooperation.

**A low score** on this subscale indicates that the athlete lacks belief in their sports potential. They tend to overestimate the preparation and abilities of their rivals and, against this backdrop, diminish the level of their own skill and understate their personal contribution to the overall team result. They do not aspire to leadership, do not seek to take initiative, feel comfortable in subordinate roles, and are more likely to follow the coach's instructions than to show independence. At the same time, a low score on this subscale should not be regarded as evidence that the athlete experiences feelings of sports inadequacy, worthlessness, or helplessness.

## **2. Scale "Self-respect". Subscale "Professional Self-Attachment".**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale measures the strength of attachment to oneself as a subject of professional activity, and the degree of stability and conservativeness of the professional "self-concept". Against a generally positive background of self-attitude, there predominates a state of subjective satisfaction with the current level of development of professionally important knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality traits. This satisfaction is combined with a sense of self-sufficiency and autonomy in carrying out professional duties and making professional decisions. Moderately expressed self-attachment predisposes the individual to rely on personal professional experience in difficult work situations and to seek support in their own professional qualities.

**High scores** on this subscale indicate a tendency toward excessive self-satisfaction and self-admiration, and an uncritical perception of oneself as a worker and specialist. Such an individual may exhibit risky overconfidence in their work, reduced motivation for self-development, denial of the possibility and necessity of further improving professional mastery, and unwillingness to listen even to constructive criticism. They relatively easily forgive themselves for mistakes made at work and, moreover, may indulge themselves in fulfilling job responsibilities, catering to their own weaknesses even to the detriment of the task at hand. A high score may also be associated with a forced defense of an inadequate image of "Self in the Profession".

**Low scores** indicate weak attachment of the individual to their current state of professional development. This feature of self-attitude is often "accompanied" by strong motivation for professional-personal self-improvement. It is appropriate here to speak only of the respondent's desire to change and grow professionally, which is not equivalent to subjectively painful dissatisfaction with oneself as a subject of labor. The subscales of self-confidence and self-attachment are contentually united by the individual's belief in their professional strengths and capabilities, and their representation of themselves as a professionally mature and competitive personality. Their semantics are brought closer by a value-based attitude toward oneself as a worker who fully meets the requirements of the profession and has achieved certain heights of professionalism. The contentual kinship of the subscales is also manifested in the fact that they are colored by a feeling of deep self-respect and subjective satisfaction with the results of becoming and realizing oneself in the profession. In this regard, it can be concluded that self-confidence and self-attachment merge in the general experience of professional self-respect.

#### **Adapted version**

### **2. Scale "Sports self-respect". Subscale "Sports Self-Attachment".**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale measures the strength of an athlete's attachment to themselves as a subject of sports activity, and the degree of stability and conservativeness of the sports "self-concept". Against a generally positive background of self-attitude, there predominates a state of subjective satisfaction with the current level of development of sports skills, physical condition, technical mastery, as well as psychological properties important for results. This satisfaction is combined with a sense of self-sufficiency and autonomy in carrying out training tasks and making competitive decisions. Moderately expressed self-attachment predisposes the athlete to rely on personal sports experience in difficult competitive situations and to seek support in their own athletic and volitional qualities.

**High scores** on this subscale indicate a tendency toward excessive self-satisfaction and self-admiration, and an uncritical perception of oneself as an athlete. Such an individual may exhibit risky overconfidence in training and competitions, reduced motivation for self-development and improvement, denial of the necessity of further growth in sports mastery, and unwillingness to listen even to constructive criticism from a coach. They relatively easily forgive themselves for sports mistakes and failures and may indulge their own weaknesses in observing regimen and discipline, even to the detriment of sports results. A high score may also be associated with a forced defense of an inadequate image of "Self in Sports".

**Low scores** indicate weak attachment of the athlete to their current state of development in sports. This feature of self-attitude is often accompanied by strong motivation for sports-personal self-improvement. It is appropriate here to speak

of the athlete's desire to change, grow, and raise their level, which is not equivalent to subjectively painful dissatisfaction with oneself as an athlete.

**The subscales of sports self-confidence and sports self-attachment** are contentually united by the athlete's belief in their sports strengths and capabilities, and their representation of themselves as a professionally mature and competitive athlete. Their semantics are brought closer by a value-based attitude toward oneself as an athlete who fully meets the requirements of their sport and has achieved certain heights of mastery. The contentual kinship of the subscales is also manifested in the fact that they are colored by a feeling of deep self-respect and subjective satisfaction with the results of sports development and realization. In this regard, it can be concluded that self-confidence and self-attachment merge **in the general experience of sports self-respect.**

### **3. Scale "Self-Efficacy". Subscale "Professional Self-Direction".**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale reveals the respondent's attitude toward themselves as a reliable, conscientious, and responsible worker, capable of overcoming obstacles and achieving complex goals in labor. Their own personality traits are evaluated as internal resources or "tools" of professional activity. Agreeing with the statements of this subscale, the respondent proceeds from the assumption that their individual traits are ideally suited for the high-quality performance of their chosen profession or specialty. The respondent's self-attitude as a whole is characterized by a positive emotional-evaluative tone. It is based on the conviction that professional advantages clearly outweigh disadvantages, as well as on a "presumption" of the desirability of their "Self" for people in their professional environment.

**High score.** A respondent who scores high on this subscale considers themselves the creator of their own professional life and attributes to themselves the causes of significant career events. They view their professional prospects optimistically and often feel not merely suitability for, but a true calling to, their profession. They know well the features of their character and are able to predict and control the influence of these features on the process and results of professional work.

**Low score.** With a low score on this subscale, the respondent doubts their ability to master themselves in the context of professional activity, i.e., to neutralize the unfavorable impact of their own shortcomings and weaknesses on this activity, and to engage their strengths and advantages to optimize this activity. It seems to them that their individual traits poorly align with the requirements and conditions of the profession, due to which they may "break down" in a difficult work situation.

#### **Adapted version**

### **3. Scale "Sports Self-Efficacy". Subscale "Sports Self-Direction"**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale reveals the athlete's attitude toward themselves as a reliable, disciplined, volitional, and responsible athlete, capable of overcoming obstacles and achieving complex sports goals. Their own personality traits are evaluated as internal resources or "tools" of sports activity. Agreeing with the statements of this subscale, the athlete proceeds from the assumption that their individual traits are ideally suited for the high-quality performance of their chosen sport and the achievement of high results. The athlete's self-attitude as a whole is characterized by a positive emotional-evaluative tone. It is based on the conviction that their sports advantages and strengths clearly outweigh disadvantages, as well as on confidence in the desirability and respect for their "Self" from the coach, team, and sports community.

**High score.** An athlete who scores high on this subscale considers themselves the creator of their own sports career and the author of their achievements. They attribute to themselves the causes of significant sports events (victories, records, progress). They view their sports prospects optimistically and often feel not merely suitability for, but a true calling to, their sport. They know well the features of their character and temperament and are able to predict and control their influence on the training process and competitive results.

**Low score.** With a low score on this subscale, the athlete doubts their ability to master themselves in the context of sports activity. This implies difficulties in blocking the unfavorable impact of their own shortcomings (e.g., insecurity, impulsivity) on performance, as well as in purposefully engaging their strengths and advantages to optimize results. It seems to them that their individual traits poorly align with the extreme requirements and conditions of elite sports, due to which they may psychologically "break down" or fail to realize their potential in a difficult competitive situation.

#### **4. Scale "Self-Efficacy". Subscale "Self-Assessment of Personal Growth in the Profession".**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale determines the subjective assessment of the strength and direction of the profession's impact on the respondent's personality traits, primarily on their character. All its items are imbued with a positive tone of attitude toward oneself as a subject of labor and a positive personal meaning of the profession itself. By answering affirmatively to the items of this subscale, the respondent reports that professional activity facilitates their personal growth, i.e., improves and strengthens them as a personality. It should be emphasized that we are speaking not about career advancement, but about those constructive personal changes and acquisitions that the respondent derives from professional activity. Moreover, the latter may contribute to personal growth in two ways: first, it educates, cultivates positive traits or corrects, adjusts negative character traits; second, without objectively changing character, it helps the respondent discover and re-evaluate already existing traits that were insufficiently recognized or underestimated previously.

**High score.** A person who scores high on this subscale relates to their profession as a means of self-realization and self-improvement. Work and career achievements are for them an important source of nourishment for their sense of self-worth, not only professional but human in general. They clearly feel the compatibility, congruence of their individual character with the objective character of professional activity.

**Low score** on this subscale indicates that the profession is not for the respondent the leading type of activity, self-assessment within which predetermines the content of their general self-attitude. This, however, does not yet mean that the profession is perceived by the respondent as an activity that inhibits growth or deforms their personality.

The content of the subscales of self-direction and self-assessment of personal growth in the profession has much in common. Their contentual kinship lies in the individual's experience of an organic unity between their personality and their chosen profession, which leads to their mutual reinforcement. The person recognizes their personal qualities as prerequisites for professional success, and transforms professional successes into impulses for progressive personal development. In their self-consciousness, personal traits and profession are linked by a tight ring of cause-and-effect dependencies, which gives reason for a stable experience of their compatibility, harmony, and synergism. On this basis, the subscales are combined into a more general dimension of professional self-attitude of the personality, which may be designated "**self-efficacy in the profession**". Within the context of the present questionnaire, self-efficacy is viewed as a person's ability to consciously apply their individual traits for the constructive resolution of contradictions and achievement of high results in professional activity, and equally consciously use these contradictions and achievements as stimuli for further personal growth. High self-efficacy distinguishes a genuine subject who has comprehended and practically mastered the regularities of the mutual mediation between professional activity and professionally important personality qualities.

#### **Adapted version**

#### **4. Scale "Sports Self-Efficacy". Subscale "Self-Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports"**

**Content interpretation.** This subscale determines the subjective assessment of the strength and direction of sports' impact on the athlete's personality, primarily on their character. All its items are imbued with a positive tone of attitude toward oneself as a subject of sports and a positive personal meaning of sports activity itself. By answering affirmatively to the items of this subscale, the athlete reports that sports activity facilitates their personal growth, i.e., improves and strengthens them as a personality. It should be emphasized that we are speaking not about sports achievements as such, but about those constructive personal changes and acquisitions (such as willpower, discipline,

stress resilience, goal-directedness) that the athlete derives from their experience. Moreover, sports may contribute to personal growth in two ways: first, it educates, cultivates positive traits or corrects negative character traits; second, without objectively changing character, it helps the athlete discover and re-evaluate already existing traits that were insufficiently recognized or underestimated previously.

**High score.**

An athlete who scores high on this subscale relates to sports as a means of self-realization and self-improvement. Their sports achievements and the very path to achieving them are for them an important source of nourishment for their sense of self-worth, not only in sports but in their personality as a whole. They clearly feel the compatibility, congruence of their individual character with the objective character of sports activity.

**Low score** on this subscale indicates that sports is not for the athlete the leading type of activity, self-assessment within which predetermines the content of their general self-attitude. This, however, does not yet mean that sports is perceived by them as an activity that inhibits growth or deforms their personality.

The content of the subscales of sports self-direction and self-assessment of personal growth through sports has much in common. Their contentual kinship lies in the athlete's experience of an organic unity between their personality and their chosen sport, which leads to their mutual reinforcement. The athlete recognizes their personal qualities as prerequisites for sports success, and transforms sports successes and overcoming difficulties into impulses for progressive personal development. In their self-consciousness, personal traits and sport form a tight cause-and-effect connection, which gives reason for a stable experience of their compatibility, harmony, and synergism. On this basis, the subscales are combined into a more general dimension of sports self-attitude, which may be designated "**sports self-efficacy**". Within the context of the questionnaire, self-efficacy is viewed as an athlete's ability to consciously apply their individual traits for the constructive resolution of contradictions and achievement of high results in sports activity, and equally consciously use these contradictions and achievements as stimuli for further personal growth. High self-efficacy distinguishes a genuine subject of sports who has comprehended and practically mastered the regularities of the mutual influence between sports activity and personality qualities.

**5. Scale "Internal Conflictuality of Professional Self-Attitude".**

**Content interpretation.** This scale measures the individual level of internal contradictoriness and ambivalence of professional self-attitude. The source of conflict in this case is the objective mismatch between professional requirements (qualification, positional, environmental, etc.) and the individual capabilities and resources of the subject of labor. In subjective form, this conflict

is experienced through such phenomena of personality self-attitude as: a feeling of uselessness, futility, or worthlessness in the work collective; a feeling of distrust toward oneself as a specialist and embarrassment about one's "clumsiness" or "awkwardness" in professional matters; a feeling of inadequacy in the choice of profession or maladjustment to working conditions. The conflictuality of professional self-attitude is also manifested in the subjective alienation by the individual of their own qualities, motives, and values from the process and results of labor activity. Under conditions of such conflict, a person feels the inappropriateness or lack of demand in the professional sphere for those personality traits that they perceive as personal advantages in other spheres of life. Moreover, they assess the influence of the profession on their personality as a whole as destructive, deforming, or weakening.

**A high score** on the scale should be regarded as an indicator of professional-personal maladaptation and a splitting of the respondent's self-consciousness into poorly integrated "professional" and "non-professional" subsystems.

**A low score** on the scale may indicate the absence of acutely experienced contradictions between professional requirements and the respondent's personal capabilities. However, it should not be interpreted as a sign of internal consistency between the "professional" and "non-professional" subsystems of the respondent's self-consciousness.

#### **Adapted version.**

### **5. Scale "Internal Conflictuality of Sports Self-Attitude".**

**Content interpretation.** This scale measures the individual level of internal contradictoriness and ambivalence of the athlete's self-attitude. The source of conflict in this case is the objective mismatch between the requirements of elite sports (physical, psychological, regimen-related, competitive) and the individual capabilities and resources of the athlete. In subjective form, this conflict is experienced through such phenomena of self-attitude as: a feeling of uselessness or futility in the team or national squad; a feeling of distrust toward oneself as an athlete and embarrassment about one's "clumsiness" in training and competitions; a feeling of inadequacy in the choice of a sports path or maladjustment to the conditions of sports life. The conflictuality of sports self-attitude is also manifested in the subjective alienation by the athlete of their own qualities, motives, and values from the process and results of sports activity. Under conditions of such conflict, an athlete feels the inappropriateness or lack of demand in the sports sphere for those personality traits that they perceive as advantages in other spheres of life. Moreover, they assess the influence of elite sports on their personality as a whole as destructive, deforming, or weakening.

**A high score** on the scale should be regarded as an indicator of sports-personal maladaptation and a splitting of self-consciousness into poorly integrated "sports" and "non-sports" selves.

A **low score** on the scale may indicate the absence of acutely experienced sharp contradictions between the requirements of sports and the athlete's personal capabilities. However, it should not be interpreted as a sign of complete internal consistency between the "sports" and "non-sports" subsystems of self-consciousness.

#### **6. Scale "Self-Blame in the profession".**

**Content interpretation.** This scale diagnoses the respondent's tendency to perceive themselves as an obstacle or hindrance to productive work activity and career self-realization. It integrates items describing negative emotional states that are directed toward oneself as a subject of professional activity. The spectrum of these emotional reactions is quite broad and includes not only guilt, but also anger, irritation, regret, disappointment, dissatisfaction, shame, and vexation. Notably, a situation of professional failure generates these experiences in the respondent regardless of whether they are actually the cause of the situation. This feature characterizes self-blame as a stable semantic disposition that predisposes the respondent to take blame upon themselves irrespective of what actually caused the problems at work.

**High score.** A person who scores high on this scale is characterized by intrapunitiveness, a tendency toward self-flagellation and self-torment in situations of professional failure. They are sensitive to critical remarks about their work, accept them without protest, but then painfully "digest" them internally and "get stuck" on failures for a long time. In evaluating the results of their work, they are categorical and demanding, prone to maximalism, and often judge themselves as a specialist according to an "all-or-nothing" principle. Responsible assignments provoke bouts of anxiety and self-doubt in them. Their work behavior exhibits escapism, i.e., a tendency to avoid difficult tasks that force them to work "at the limit" and mobilize all professional resources. Professional activity holds great personal significance for such a person, and their attitude toward themselves as a personality largely depends on professional success. Even a minor success "inspires" and instills a sense of self-confidence, but the slightest setback at work quickly destabilizes professional self-respect and shakes the feeling of self-respect.

A **low score** on this scale indicates that the respondent is not inclined to reproach themselves for mistakes and errors made at work, or to chide themselves for shortcomings in professional preparation or flaws in professional qualities. Given that this scale does not have an opposite pole in the form of statements related to positive professional self-attitude, a low score should not be interpreted as an indicator of self-acceptance or a lenient, caring attitude toward oneself as a worker.

Together, the scales of **self-blame and internal conflictuality** reflect the individual expression of the negative emotional-evaluative modality of professional self-attitude of the personality. The commonality of content of these

scales allows them to be combined into an integral indicator – **self-abasement in the profession**. Within the present questionnaire, self-abasement is specified as a fixed attitude of the subject toward negative evaluation or meaninglessness of their individual qualities in the context of labor activity and professional career.

#### **Adapted version.**

##### **6. Scale "Self-Blame in sports"**

**Content interpretation.** This scale diagnoses the athlete's tendency to perceive themselves as an obstacle or hindrance to productive sports activity and self-realization. It integrates items describing negative emotional states that are directed toward oneself as a subject of sports. The spectrum of these emotional reactions is quite broad and includes not only guilt, but also anger, irritation, regret, disappointment, dissatisfaction, shame, and vexation. Notably, a situation of sports failure (loss, mistake, injury) generates these experiences in the athlete regardless of whether they are its direct cause. This feature characterizes sports self-blame as a stable semantic disposition that predisposes the athlete to take blame upon themselves irrespective of the objective circumstances of failure.

**High score.** An athlete who scores high on this scale is characterized by intrapunitiveness, a tendency toward self-flagellation and self-torment in situations of sports failure. They are sensitive to critical remarks from coaches, judges, or spectators, experience them painfully, and "get stuck" on their mistakes for a long time. In evaluating their performances, they are categorical and demanding, prone to maximalism, and often judge themselves as an athlete according to an "all-or-nothing" principle. Responsible starts or decisive moments in competitions may provoke bouts of anxiety and self-doubt in them. Their behavior exhibits escapism – a tendency toward subconscious avoidance of situations that force them to work "at the limit" and mobilize all resources. Sports activity holds exceptional personal significance for such a person, and their self-respect is extremely dependent on sports results. Even a minor success "inspires" and instills confidence, but the slightest setback quickly destabilizes sports self-respect.

**A low score** on this scale indicates that the athlete is not inclined to excessively reproach themselves for mistakes and errors made in sports, or to chide themselves for shortcomings in preparation or flaws in mastery. Given that this scale does not have an opposite pole in the form of statements related to positive sports self-attitude, a low score should not be interpreted as a direct indicator of healthy self-acceptance or a lenient attitude toward oneself as an athlete.

Together, the scales of self-blame and internal conflictuality reflect the individual expression of the negative emotional-evaluative modality of sports self-attitude. The commonality of their content allows them to be combined into an integral indicator – **sports self-abasement**. Within the questionnaire, self-abasement is specified as a fixed attitude of the athlete toward negative evaluation

or meaninglessness of their individual qualities in the context of sports activity and career.

### 7. Scale "General Indicator of Positivity of Professional Self-Attitude".

**Content interpretation.** The general indicator of positivity of professional self-attitude determines the expression of a global, internally undifferentiated feeling of the personality being "for" or "against" oneself as a subject of professional activity.

#### Adapted version

### 7. Scale "General Indicator of Positivity of Sports Self-Attitude"

**Content interpretation.** The general indicator of positivity of sports self-attitude determines the expression of a global, internally undifferentiated feeling of the athlete being "for" or "against" oneself as a subject of elite sports activity. It reflects the cumulative, integral emotional-evaluative background of the athlete's attitude toward themselves in the context of their professional sports career, synthesizing both positive (self-respect, self-efficacy) and negative (conflictuality, self-blame) aspects, but in their general, fused experience. This indicator is fundamental, determining the overall direction and tonality of the athlete's self-attitude in their primary sphere of activity.

Rating scale: 1 - Completely untrue; 2- Probably untrue 3 - Probably true; 4- Completely true

#### Key to the professional self-attitude questionnaire

Questionnaire scales	Questionnaire subscales	Questionnaire items
Internal Conflictuality of Professional Self-Attitude		2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 32, 33, 34, 36
Self-Respect in Profession	Self-Confidence in Profession	7, 16, 27, 31, 38
	Self-Attachment in Profession	22, 28, 30, 35, 39
Self-Blame in Profession		3, 8, 10, 21, 26, 29
Self-Efficacy in Profession	Self-Direction in Profession	4, 9, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24
	Self-Assessment of Personal Growth in Profession	1, 11, 37
Self- Abasement in profession		2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29, 32, 33, 34, 36
General Indicator of Positivity of Professional Self-Attitude		1 – 39

Scale		Table for Converting to Sten Scores <sup>(M)</sup>										#
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A	128	39-82	83-92	93-99	100-108	109-118	119-127	128-134	135-141	142-147	148-156	7
S	30	10-16	17-19	20-21	22-24	25-26	27-28	29-31	32-34	35-36	37-40	7
S1	16	5-6	7	8-9	10	11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20	8
S2	14	5-7	8-9	10	11-12	13	14-15	16	17-18	19	20	6
E	37	10-19	20-22	23-25	26-28	29-30	31-33	34-35	36-38	39	40	8
E1	25	7-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20	21-22	23-24	25	26-27	28	8
E2	12	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	-	12	10
N	34	19	20-21	22-23	24-27	28-33	34-40	41-45	46-51	52-60	61-76	6
NK	21	13	14	15	16-17	18-21	22-25	26-30	31-35	36-43	44-52	5
NS	13	6	7	8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17	18-19	20-24	6

**Interpretation of results for the "Ways of Coping Questionnaire" by R. Lazarus,  
adaptation by T.L. Kryukova, 2007**

<b>WCQ results Amateurs group</b>								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
1	23	44	32	55	28	34	65	38
2	75	53	45	47	33	68	23	42
3	33	32	52	34	29	53	68	35
4	39	33	44	51	31	63	31	41
5	44	32	53	49	35	59	75	44
6	53	26	32	46	30	42	69	37
13	32	59	33	52	32	25	32	43
14	33	43	32	48	34	67	28	39
18	32	44	42	50	26	38	67	36
21	26	53	42	45	59	32	43	45
22	59	32	43	53	43	26	73	40
25	43	33	47	44	42	31	55	42
28	42	32	49	42	42	65	34	38
31	42	26	51	43	43	21	72	41
34	43	59	46	31	37	71	69	44

WCQ results Amateurs group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
37	55	43	44	49	35	68	74	39
40	23	42	48	46	32	33	67	36
43	56	42	52	33	33	70	75	43
46	27	43	45	48	31	65	39	37
49	33	47	50	44	34	38	69	42
52	39	45	47	52	29	21	73	40
55	41	49	49	46	36	27	68	45
58	69	46	51	50	30	34	74	38
61	22	48	46	43	32	41	70	41
64	39	50	48	47	35	68	42	39
67	59	44	52	49	33	39	31	44
69	31	47	47	51	31	65	75	36
72	31	45	49	46	34	67	68	42
75	72	49	50	48	28	63	73	37
78	33	46	46	52	32	51	71	43
81	32	48	48	44	35	66	70	40
84	26	50	51	47	30	64	74	45
87	52	44	47	49	33	68	69	38

WCQ results Amateurs group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
90	43	47	49	51	31	29	72	41
93	42	45	50	46	34	65	21	39
96	42	49	46	48	29	67	68	44
99	43	46	48	52	32	63	73	36
102	35	48	51	44	35	69	22	42
105	35	50	47	47	30	66	41	37
108	44	44	49	49	33	64	23	43
111	67	47	50	51	31	68	69	40
114	42	45	46	46	34	42	27	45
117	48	49	48	48	28	44	75	38
119	62	46	51	52	32	67	68	41
122	51	48	47	44	35	38	25	39
125	41	50	49	47	30	21	71	44
127	18	44	50	49	33	42	70	36
129	22	47	46	51	31	64	74	42
131	39	45	48	26	34	68	69	37
133	29	49	51	48	29	55	72	43
135	31	46	47	52	32	25	75	40

WCQ results Amateurs group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
136	31	48	49	44	35	48	68	45
137	32	50	50	47	30	54	47	38
140	33	44	46	49	33	31	23	41
141	32	47	48	51	31	39	70	39
142	34	45	51	46	34	39	74	44
143	46	49	47	28	28	23	28	36
144	39	46	49	52	32	44	72	42
145	75	48	50	44	35	23	75	37
146	33	50	46	47	30	27	68	43
147	59	44	48	49	33	63	41	40
148	56	47	51	21	31	69	71	45
149	52	45	47	46	34	22	70	38
150	73	49	49	22	29	34	37	41
151	42	46	50	52	32	26	69	39
152	42	48	46	44	35	18	72	44
153	39	50	48	39	30	29	75	36
154	45	44	51	49	33	22	68	42
160	67	47	47	51	31	21	73	37

<b>WCQ results Amateurs group</b>								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
161	78	45	49	46	34	23	35	43
168	28	49	50	48	28	28	29	40
Mean (M)	42.7	45.3	47.3	45.9	32.9	46.2	58.7	40.4
Std. Deviation	14.4	6.1	4.4	6.9	4.6	18.0	18.8	2.9
level	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	rare	moderate	moderate	moderate

WCQ results CMS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
7	30	34	69	37	76	34	68	69
8	33	64	73	43	48	29	85	72
12	31	38	69	40	52	32	65	75
15	34	55	77	45	74	35	78	68
17	28	65	75	38	47	30	54	47
20	32	67	68	68	49	33	69	23
23	35	63	65	39	51	31	39	70
29	30	69	71	44	67	36	72	71
32	33	42	70	36	78	45	68	65
35	31	39	74	42	73	40	32	67
38	34	21	69	37	55	42	75	63
41	49	42	42	65	84	38	72	69
44	51	43	43	57	72	41	33	42
47	46	47	37	57	69	44	77	64
50	44	49	65	68	74	39	65	68
53	48	46	69	33	67	30	49	42
56	52	51	58	70	75	33	51	43
59	45	48	78	65	77	31	66	47

WCQ results CMS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
62	50	44	34	38	69	34	74	49
65	47	52	82	49	73	28	65	75
68	49	46	68	27	68	32	67	68
70	51	50	77	34	74	35	63	25
73	46	43	71	64	70	30	69	71
76	47	51	75	31	69	71	42	70
79	45	47	69	59	59	70	64	74
82	31	49	62	29	64	37	68	69
85	46	50	52	32	68	69	81	41
88	48	46	64	35	18	72	79	21
91	50	48	73	30	29	75	46	34
94	21	51	82	43	75	68	48	29
97	47	47	51	31	81	73	52	32
100	27	49	46	34	52	35	44	35
103	31	39	70	39	50	50	47	30
106	34	64	74	58	44	47	51	51
109	28	52	81	36	75	45	47	46
112	32	71	72	58	73	49	49	48

WCQ results CMS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
115	35	65	75	37	21	46	75	52
120	30	27	68	43	69	48	46	44
123	33	23	78	49	82	50	48	47
139	31	69	71	45	64	44	51	49
156	34	22	70	59	68	47	78	51
157	29	37	59	41	50	48	74	30
158	50	48	69	61	58	51	69	33
162	44	23	49	39	47	47	71	31
163	47	47	51	69	45	49	76	34
164	45	49	68	34	79	39	70	39
165	23	34	74	38	34	64	74	44
166	39	38	70	41	81	68	78	36
167	41	23	71	56	72	71	72	42
Mean (M)	38.7	46.7	66.3	45.4	62.6	45.6	62.4	50.3
Std. Deviation	8.8	12.8	11.6	12.5	15.9	14.2	13.8	16.4
level	rare	moderate	pronounced	moderate	pronounced	moderate	pronounced	moderate

WCQ results MS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
11	69	38	75	45	69	44	77	64
26	22	45	88	27	74	39	65	68
48	64	37	81	33	67	30	49	42
71	68	69	69	48	75	33	78	72
155	18	35	84	65	81	31	66	47
9	29	23	70	38	69	34	74	49
10	22	68	71	21	73	28	65	75
16	21	73	70	27	68	32	67	81
19	32	47	87	51	68	74	57	65
24	34	45	69	47	72	67	78	49
27	46	49	72	22	70	75	73	51
30	39	46	75	31	65	77	89	66
33	75	48	68	34	38	69	84	74
36	33	50	73	32	51	73	72	65
39	59	44	73	68	57	68	69	67
42	56	47	71	36	78	45	74	65
45	52	45	47	42	73	40	67	67

WCQ results MS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
51	73	26	85	37	55	42	75	63
54	42	46	59	65	84	38	77	69
57	42	48	88	21	72	41	73	42
60	39	30	78	51	69	44	77	64
63	45	44	81	33	74	39	65	68
66	67	47	73	33	67	30	49	42
74	78	45	74	55	75	33	51	43
77	45	23	78	37	77	31	66	47
80	50	44	69	39	69	34	74	57
83	31	69	71	42	70	28	65	75
86	34	59	70	52	74	32	67	68
89	29	20	68	68	81	69	71	78
92	32	68	69	29	41	59	70	64
95	35	18	72	35	79	64	69	68
98	30	29	75	46	82	68	69	81
101	33	31	68	48	73	18	72	79
104	31	28	73	52	81	29	75	46
107	34	52	65	44	83	75	68	74

WCQ results MS group								
ID	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
110	39	50	50	47	89	81	73	52
113	58	44	71	51	51	52	76	44
116	35	18	72	79	69	50	55	76
118	30	29	75	46	58	44	47	51
121	33	75	68	48	81	59	68	79
124	31	81	73	52	76	41	59	51
126	34	52	65	44	77	30	68	59
128	39	50	70	47	67	39	75	79
130	58	38	47	51	59	31	85	49
132	59	27	69	78	83	34	79	57
134	41	50	59	31	70	38	74	64
138	30	58	79	58	77	41	81	81
159	39	47	61	34	71	67	73	58
Mean (M)	42.4	44.9	71.2	44.2	70.5	46.7	69.8	62.4
Std. Deviation	15.4	15.3	9.0	13.8	10.6	17.1	9.2	12.3
level	moderate	moderate	pronounced	moderate	pronounced	moderate	pronounced	pronounced

**Raw scores from the Self-Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ), Authors: S. R. Pantileev (1989).**

ID group Amateurs	Internal honesty	Self- confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self- Attitude	Self-worth	Self- acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
1	3	8	7	7	9	3	5	5	3
2	7	4	4	4	8	5	4	2	6
3	3	8	8	6	8	5	4	5	5
4	5	6	3	7	8	4	7	3	3
5	3	3	2	7	9	3	5	5	5
6	3	5	4	2	10	4	5	6	7
13	7	5	3	4	7	2	4	3	5
14	3	5	2	5	9	5	5	7	7
18	7	7	2	3	7	2	5	6	7
21	4	4	6	4	10	4	2	3	6
22	2	2	7	4	9	6	3	6	6
25	5	5	7	7	8	7	4	4	3
28	3	3	3	5	9	6	2	2	6
31	7	4	5	9	6	7	5	5	5
34	6	4	3	4	8	5	2	5	5
37	6	6	4	6	8	7	2	3	3
40	5	6	4	4	9	4	6	4	4
43	7	3	2	9	9	7	2	4	4
46	6	3	5	5	4	5	2	2	5
49	3	5	2	7	9	4	3	4	6
52	3	8	2	3	9	3	1	5	6
55	4	9	6	7	6	4	2	5	4
58	6	2	2	4	9	3	5	2	2

ID group Amateurs	Internal honesty	Self- confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self- Attitude	Self-worth	Self- acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
61	5	6	2	9	7	3	1	2	5
64	6	4	3	4	9	3	5	2	5
67	2	8	1	5	7	3	1	2	8
69	2	4	2	5	4	4	4	6	7
72	3	6	5	9	9	2	2	2	4
75	2	6	8	9	8	5	5	2	7
78	6	8	7	7	9	3	4	3	4
81	2	4	4	6	10	8	3	1	5
84	2	7	2	9	8	8	4	2	5
87	3	5	5	2	9	8	3	5	2
90	2	9	2	8	10	5	9	6	2
93	6	4	6	5	9	8	9	2	6
96	5	5	7	8	6	8	5	5	5
99	5	9	7	3	10	5	6	6	3
102	5	6	3	4	5	7	9	6	6
105	2	2	2	4	9	4	8	5	2
108	5	7	7	8	6	7	5	7	2
111	3	9	8	8	9	7	9	6	3
114	6	7	7	7	9	5	4	8	2
117	2	4	4	6	8	7	7	7	2
119	2	9	8	9	8	8	5	6	3
122	6	8	7	5	8	8	8	8	1
125	2	9	8	3	10	6	9	6	4
127	2	4	4	4	8	5	2	3	5
129	3	9	9	4	8	5	6	5	5

ID group Amateurs	Internal honesty	Self- confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self- Attitude	Self-worth	Self- acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
131	5	8	8	2	7	7	9	8	5
133	3	6	9	6	9	2	8	5	7
135	5	6	4	4	9	8	5	3	6
136	3	9	9	9	10	5	9	6	7
137	6	9	8	5	9	7	4	8	3
140	5	5	6	5	9	6	7	5	5
141	5	6	6	9	8	6	5	4	6
142	4	4	9	8	8	8	8	3	5
143	7	9	9	6	8	8	9	5	6
144	5	6	5	6	9	8	2	7	2
145	3	8	6	9	7	9	4	4	6
146	8	6	9	9	9	7	2	8	2
147	8	6	8	5	7	5	5	5	6
148	6	8	5	6	7	7	3	4	3
149	5	6	9	4	8	7	2	3	8
150	5	4	4	9	9	8	2	4	8
151	7	7	7	6	8	9	3	8	5
152	2	5	5	8	8	8	5	3	8
153	8	7	8	6	9	8	3	7	5
154	5	9	9	6	10	9	4	4	6
160	7	8	2	8	10	8	2	2	2
161	4	6	5	6	7	8	5	5	2
168	5	9	8	4	6	5	3	5	3
Mean (M)	4.5	6.1	5.3	5.9	8.2	5.8	4.6	4.6	4.7
Std. Deviation	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.1	1.4	2.0	2.3	1.9	1.8

ID group	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
Amateurs level	average	average	average	average	high	average	average	average	average

ID group CMS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
7	3	7	8	8	7	9	7	5	6
8	7	7	8	5	8	9	7	7	2
12	3	5	9	8	7	7	9	2	2
15	7	7	7	5	7	8	6	8	3
17	4	4	8	4	8	7	9	5	5
20	2	2	7	4	9	6	10	7	3
23	5	5	7	8	9	6	4	6	5
29	3	7	8	8	8	3	3	6	7
32	7	4	9	7	9	9	3	8	7
35	6	4	8	6	10	5	9	8	7
38	6	6	8	9	6	10	3	8	7
41	5	6	9	5	9	9	8	9	6
44	7	8	10	5	9	9	7	5	6
47	6	8	6	4	7	9	7	6	3
50	3	6	9	4	7	8	8	9	6
53	3	8	9	5	8	9	4	8	7
56	4	5	7	6	8	10	4	6	5
59	5	7	7	6	7	7	4	6	3
62	4	2	8	9	7	7	5	5	4

ID group CMS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
65	2	8	8	6	9	9	3	4	4
68	5	5	7	8	6	6	2	3	5
70	3	7	7	4	9	9	4	6	6
73	2	6	9	4	7	10	2	2	6
76	4	6	6	8	9	9	5	2	4
79	2	8	9	5	9	8	4	3	2
82	5	8	10	8	10	8	3	1	5
85	3	8	9	7	9	9	6	2	5
88	8	9	8	7	9	10	5	5	8
91	4	5	8	5	8	8	3	4	7
94	7	6	9	8	8	7	2	3	4
97	5	9	10	8	8	10	4	6	7
100	3	8	8	7	9	8	2	2	4
103	2	6	7	6	7	9	5	2	2
106	4	6	7	9	9	8	4	3	4
109	7	9	8	5	7	10	3	1	5
112	5	9	9	7	7	9	4	6	4
115	3	5	8	4	8	10	2	2	4
120	2	6	8	4	9	9	5	2	2

ID group CMS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
123	4	4	9	7	8	10	4	3	4
139	2	9	10	6	8	9	3	7	5
156	6	5	6	4	9	9	5	6	5
157	3	4	9	9	10	4	4	6	4
158	2	3	9	5	6	10	2	2	4
162	6	9	7	4	9	9	5	2	6
163	5	5	6	5	9	9	4	3	4
164	7	4	8	4	6	7	3	1	5
165	6	7	8	7	9	7	4	5	4
166	3	7	9	4	8	8	2	2	4
167	6	6	9	7	6	8	5	2	2
Mean (M)	4.4	6.2	8.1	6.1	8.1	8.2	4.6	4.5	4.7
Std. Deviation	1.8	1.9	1.1	1.7	1.1	1.6	2.1	2.4	1.6
level	average	average	high	average	high	high	average	average	average

ID group MS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
11	2	10	7	8	9	9	4	9	6
26	6	9	8	8	8	10	3	9	5
48	5	9	9	7	8	8	6	8	5
71	5	8	8	6	8	7	2	8	5
155	5	8	8	9	9	7	2	8	5
9	2	8	9	5	7	8	3	9	5
10	5	9	10	5	10	9	1	7	4
16	3	7	6	4	7	8	2	10	4
19	6	10	9	4	7	8	5	7	2
24	2	7	9	5	8	9	4	7	2
27	2	7	7	6	9	10	3	8	5
30	6	8	7	6	8	6	6	9	6
33	7	9	8	9	8	9	2	8	2
36	8	8	8	6	9	9	2	8	2
39	7	8	7	8	10	7	3	9	6
42	5	9	7	4	6	6	1	10	7
45	3	10	9	4	10	8	6	6	8
51	5	6	6	8	9	8	6	10	7

ID group MS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
54	3	10	8	5	9	9	3	9	5
57	7	9	8	4	8	8	4	9	3
60	6	9	9	4	8	9	2	10	5
63	2	8	7	2	8	7	6	7	3
66	6	8	10	6	9	10	2	7	7
74	5	8	7	5	9	7	2	8	6
77	2	9	7	2	8	7	3	9	2
80	3	7	8	3	8	8	2	8	2
83	5	8	9	5	8	9	2	8	3
86	3	7	8	3	9	8	3	9	4
89	5	7	8	5	7	8	1	10	6
92	6	8	9	6	10	9	4	6	2
95	5	9	10	5	7	10	2	9	2
98	7	8	6	7	7	6	2	10	6
101	4	8	10	6	8	10	2	6	7
104	8	9	10	9	9	9	6	9	8
107	5	10	9	9	8	9	2	9	7
110	3	6	9	7	8	8	2	7	5
113	6	9	8	7	9	8	3	7	3

ID group MS	Internal honesty	Self-confidence	Self-Direction	Reflected Self-Attitude	Self-worth	Self-acceptance	Self-attachment	Internal conflict	Self-blame
116	3	9	8	8	10	8	4	8	5
118	7	7	8	8	6	9	9	9	3
121	3	7	9	8	9	7	7	4	7
124	6	8	7	9	9	10	1	7	6
126	7	8	10	9	9	8	1	9	5
128	3	8	7	7	8	8	1	9	3
130	7	9	7	7	8	8	1	9	4
132	2	9	9	3	8	7	3	8	4
134	2	9	9	7	7	7	3	9	2
138	3	9	9	4	8	10	2	10	6
159	5	10	8	7	7	9	2	7	4
Mean (M)	4.6	8.3	8.2	6.0	8.3	8.3	3.1	8.3	4.6
Std. Deviation	1.9	1.0	1.1	2.0	1.0	1.1	1.8	1.3	1.8
level	average	average	high	average	high	high	average	average	average

## Appendix 8

**Raw Scores from the Professional Self-Attitude Questionnaire (PSAQ), Authors: K.V. Karpinsky, A.M. Kolyshko (2010).**

ID group CMS	S1 Sports Self- Confidence	S2 Sports Self- Attachment	S Sports Self- Respect	E1 Sports Self- Direction	E2 Self- Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports	ESports Self- Efficacy	NK Internal Conflictuality of Sports Self- Attitude	NS Self-Blame in Sports	N Sports Self- Abasement	A General Positivity Index of Sports Self- Attitude
7	10	17	27	23	11	34	21	11	32	93
8	7	11	18	21	9	30	22	9	31	79
12	18	15	33	17	11	28	25	9	34	95
15	8	13	21	21	12	33	22	12	34	88
17	13	19	32	15	10	25	18	11	29	86
20	17	18	35	11	20	31	19	10	29	95
23	7	15	22	22	9	31	34	9	43	96
29	15	13	28	17	11	28	21	6	27	83
32	10	20	30	18	12	30	17	10	27	87
35	17	17	34	19	10	29	21	7	28	91
38	6	17	23	25	12	37	15	9	24	84
41	15	15	30	23	11	34	34	10	44	108
44	15	16	31	19	11	30	17	9	26	87
47	13	13	26	21	10	31	23	9	32	89
50	17	17	34	19	9	28	14	8	22	84
53	9	18	27	22	9	31	14	7	21	79
56	15	19	34	22	10	32	16	8	24	90
59	7	15	22	24	9	33	15	18	33	88
62	9	13	22	15	9	24	17	17	34	80
65	10	19	29	19	8	27	17	21	38	94

ID group CMS	S1 Sports Self- Confidence	S2 Sports Self- Attachment	S Sports Self- Respect	E1 Sports Self- Direction	E2 Self- Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports	ESports Self- Efficacy	NK Internal Conflictuality of Sports Self- Attitude	NS Self-Blame in Sports	N Sports Self- Abasement	A General Positivity Index of Sports Self- Attitude
68	6	11	17	23	7	30	18	18	36	83
70	16	17	33	17	8	25	15	21	36	94
73	11	15	26	26	4	30	17	10	27	83
76	15	16	31	16	7	23	19	18	37	91
79	13	13	26	18	9	27	18	19	37	90
82	9	17	26	19	8	27	17	12	29	82
85	8	19	27	25	12	37	36	21	57	121
88	15	20	35	26	11	37	33	10	43	115
91	13	18	31	27	10	37	27	18	45	113
94	18	13	31	21	11	32	24	12	36	99
97	15	19	34	23	12	35	25	22	47	116
100	16	20	36	25	9	34	42	21	63	133
103	14	15	29	22	10	32	36	18	54	115
106	6	10	16	21	11	32	34	21	55	103
109	13	17	30	23	10	33	33	23	56	119
112	17	18	35	22	10	32	35	22	57	124
115	18	20	38	26	10	36	46	20	66	140
120	9	19	28	27	12	39	37	16	53	120
123	17	19	36	27	11	38	38	19	57	131
139	11	17	28	25	12	37	36	10	46	111
156	9	15	24	18	12	30	37	23	60	114
157	8	12	20	21	8	29	41	22	63	112
158	13	17	30	25	12	37	16	18	34	101
162	11	16	27	28	12	40	25	21	46	113

ID group CMS	S1 Sports Self- Confidence	S2 Sports Self- Attachment	S Sports Self- Respect	E1 Sports Self- Direction	E2 Self- Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports	ESports Self- Efficacy	NK Internal Conflictuality of Sports Self- Attitude	NS Self-Blame in Sports	N Sports Self- Abasement	A General Positivity Index of Sports Self- Attitude
163	9	15	24	21	11	32	29	22	51	107
164	13	15	28	28	10	38	16	14	30	96
165	17	13	30	23	12	35	15	22	37	102
166	16	19	35	21	11	32	36	22	58	125
167	15	12	27	27	10	37	33	23	56	120
Mean (M)	12.4	16.1	28.5	21.7	10.3	32.0	25.2	15.3	40.5	101.0
Std. Deviati on	3.8	2.7	5.3	3.8	2.2	4.1	9.2	5.7	12.7	16.2
level	average	average	average	average	high	average	average	high	average	average

ID group MS	S1 Sports Self-Confidence	S2 Sports Self-Attachment	S Sports Self-Respect	E1 Sports Self-Direction	E2 Self-Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports	ESports Self-Efficacy	NK Internal Conflictuality of Sports Self-Attitude	NS Self-Blame in Sports	N Sports Self-Abasement	A General positivity index of sports self-attitude
11	19	12	31	26	12	38	14	7	21	90
26	20	19	39	27	12	39	17	9	26	104
48	18	17	35	26	9	35	16	8	24	94
71	15	12	27	25	12	37	15	9	24	88
155	18	9	27	22	12	34	17	10	27	88
9	17	11	28	28	8	36	17	10	27	91
10	19	19	38	26	11	37	18	9	27	102
16	20	18	38	25	11	36	15	12	27	101
19	19	20	39	27	11	38	17	21	38	115
24	17	17	34	28	12	40	19	10	29	103
27	16	18	34	27	10	37	18	18	36	107
30	15	20	35	26	12	38	17	12	29	102
33	15	19	34	25	8	33	16	11	27	94
36	19	20	39	25	12	37	16	10	26	102
39	17	19	36	26	10	36	15	8	23	95
42	20	17	37	28	10	38	21	15	36	111
45	15	18	33	23	11	34	25	18	43	110
51	20	15	35	25	12	37	17	21	38	110
54	18	19	37	25	11	36	19	11	30	103
57	20	19	39	22	10	32	17	14	31	102
60	17	17	34	28	12	40	18	22	40	114
63	20	18	38	28	12	40	19	10	29	107

66	16	18	34	25	11	36	16	21	37	107
74	15	18	33	28	10	38	19	10	29	100
77	20	20	40	26	12	38	18	18	36	114
80	19	19	38	25	11	36	17	12	29	103
83	18	15	33	28	12	40	17	11	28	101
86	19	18	37	25	11	36	18	10	28	101
89	18	15	33	28	10	38	16	8	24	95
92	20	18	38	25	9	34	16	15	31	103
95	17	17	34	26	12	38	15	10	25	97
98	16	19	35	27	11	38	21	12	33	106
101	18	20	38	27	12	39	25	11	36	113
104	19	19	38	28	12	40	17	9	26	104
107	20	20	40	28	10	38	19	8	27	105
110	17	20	37	24	12	36	17	9	26	99
113	18	18	36	25	11	36	18	10	28	100
116	19	19	38	28	12	40	19	8	27	105
118	20	19	39	28	10	38	16	9	25	102
121	19	19	38	26	12	38	19	12	31	107
124	18	20	38	28	11	39	18	21	39	116
126	18	20	38	26	11	37	29	10	39	114
128	20	17	37	26	12	38	28	6	34	109
130	19	18	37	27	12	39	27	8	35	111
132	20	19	39	25	12	37	25	9	34	110
134	15	18	33	28	10	38	23	8	31	102
138	17	20	37	26	11	37	29	11	40	114
159	19	19	38	28	12	40	21	9	30	108

Mean (M)	18.1	17.8	35.9	26.2	11.1	37.3	18.9	11.7	30.5	103.7
Std. Deviation	1.7	2.5	3.1	1.6	1.1	1.9	3.8	4.2	5.3	7.2
level	high	high	high	high	high	high	average	average	average	average

**Raw Scores from the Self-Compassion Scale by K. Neff (2003), Adaptation by K.A. Chistopolskaya et al. (2020)**

ID group CMS	Self- kindness	Self- Judgment	Common Humanity	Self-Isolation	Mindfulness	Over- Identification	Self- Compassio n
7	2.5	1.3	2.6	1.2	2.7	3.1	2.2
8	1.1	2.3	3.4	2.5	3.1	2.7	2.5
12	2.3	1.3	2.2	2.2	2	2.5	2.1
15	2	1.2	2.7	1.9	3.5	2.3	2.3
17	2.8	2.5	3.1	3	3.2	2.2	2.8
20	3.1	2.2	2	3.9	3.2	2.8	2.9
23	2.7	1.7	3.5	3	4.2	3.1	3.0
29	2.5	3	3.2	3	3.6	2.8	3.0
32	2.3	2.3	3.2	2.2	2.7	1.9	2.4
35	2.2	2.3	2	3	2.2	3	2.5
38	2.8	1.9	3.5	3	4.2	2.1	2.9
41	3.1	3	3.2	3	4	2.7	3.2
44	2.8	2.1	3.2	2.2	2.7	2.5	2.6
47	1.9	3.5	3	4.2	3.1	2.5	3.0
50	3	1.8	3	3	2	3.2	2.7
53	3.9	3.2	2.2	2.7	3.5	3.2	3.1
56	2.2	2.3	2	3	3.2	3.5	2.7
59	2.8	1.9	3.5	3.9	3.2	3.2	3.1
62	3.1	3	3.2	1.9	3.5	3.2	3.0
65	2.8	1.2	3.2	3	3.2	4.2	2.9
68	1.9	2	3.1	3.9	3.2	3	2.9
70	3	3.5	2.9	3	4.2	2.7	3.2
73	1.9	3.5	2.7	3	3	2.2	2.7

ID group CMS	Self- kindness	Self- Judgment	Common Humanity	Self-Isolation	Mindfulness	Over- Identification	Self- Compassio n
76	3	3.2	2.6	2.2	2.7	3.1	2.8
79	3.9	3.2	2.5	3	2.2	2.8	2.9
82	3	4.2	2.2	3.7	4.2	1.9	3.2
85	3	3	2.3	3.9	3.2	3	3.1
88	2.2	2.7	2.2	3.3	2	3.9	2.7
91	3	2.2	2.8	2.9	3.5	2.2	2.8
94	3	2.1	3.1	3	3.2	2.8	2.9
97	2.7	1.4	2.8	3.9	3.2	3.1	2.9
100	2.2	2	1.9	3.5	3	2.8	2.6
103	3.5	1.2	3	3.7	3.2	1.9	2.8
106	3.1	2.3	3.9	3.2	3.5	3	3.2
109	2.8	2.2	2.3	3.5	3.2	1.9	2.7
112	1.9	2.7	1.9	3.5	3.2	3	2.7
115	3	1.2	3	4	4.2	2.1	2.9
120	3.9	2.8	3.9	3.2	4	2.7	3.4
123	2.2	1.9	3.5	3	2.7	3.5	2.8
139	2.8	1.9	1.9	3.5	4.2	4.2	3.1
156	3.1	0.8	3	3.2	3.1	3	2.7
157	2.8	1.9	3.9	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.9
158	1.9	1.1	2.3	2.8	1.9	2.2	2.0
162	3	2.1	1.9	3.9	3	4.2	3.0
163	1.9	2.7	3	3.2	3	3	2.8
164	3	3.5	3.9	3.2	2.2	2.7	3.1
165	2.9	1.3	3.5	2.1	4.2	3.1	2.9
166	3.1	2.2	3.2	3	4.1	2	2.9

ID group CMS	Self-kindness	Self-Judgment	Common Humanity	Self-Isolation	Mindfulness	Over- Identification	Self- Compassio n
167	4	2.1	3.2	2.8	2.7	3.5	3.1
<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>level</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>

ID group MS	Self-kindness	Self-Judgment	Common humanity	Self-isolation	Mindfulness	Over- identification	Self- compassion
11	2	2.7	3.9	3.7	2.8	1.2	2.7
26	2.6	2.2	2.7	3.1	1.9	2.7	2.5
48	2.5	2	2.2	2.8	3	1.2	2.3
71	2.2	1.4	4.2	1.9	3.9	1.1	2.5
155	2.3	3.9	3.2	3	2.2	1.9	2.8
9	2.2	1.2	2	3.9	2.8	1.9	2.3
10	2.8	2.9	3.5	2.2	3.1	1.4	2.7
16	3.1	2	3.2	2.8	2.8	1.9	2.6
19	2.8	2.1	3.2	3.1	1.9	1.1	2.4
24	1.9	3.5	3	2.8	3	2.1	2.7
27	3	1.3	3.2	3.6	1.9	2.7	2.6
30	3.9	3.2	3.5	3	3	1.5	3.0
33	2.3	3.5	3.2	1.9	2.9	1.3	2.5
36	1.9	3.5	3.2	3	3.1	2.2	2.8
39	3	2.1	4.2	2.1	3.2	1.9	2.8
42	3.9	2	4	2.7	3.2	2	3.0

ID group MS	Self-kindness	Self-Judgment	Common humanity	Self-isolation	Mindfulness	Over-identification	Self-compassion
45	2.1	1.2	2.5	2.8	4.2	2.1	2.5
51	1.4	1.3	2.3	3.1	4	2.7	2.5
54	1.3	2.2	2.2	2.8	2.7	3.5	2.5
57	1.9	2.7	2.8	1.9	4.2	2.1	2.6
60	1	1.2	3.1	3	3.1	2.2	2.3
63	3.9	2.8	2.8	3.9	2.8	1.7	3.0
66	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.3	3.8	2.2	2.4
74	1.3	1.9	2.9	2.9	4.1	1.2	2.4
77	1.1	1.1	2.7	3	3	2	2.2
80	2.8	1.9	2.6	3.9	2.2	2.7	2.7
83	1.9	1.1	2.5	2.1	4.2	3.1	2.5
86	3	2.1	2.2	2.8	4.1	2	2.7
89	1.9	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.7	3.5	2.7
92	1	3.5	2.2	1.9	3.5	3	2.5
95	2.9	1.3	2.8	3	2.8	3.9	2.8
98	1.1	2.2	3.1	3.9	3.7	3.5	2.9
101	3.2	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.8	1.9	2.4
104	2.7	2.1	1.9	4	4	3	2.9
107	1.2	2	3	3.2	1.9	1.3	2.1
110	1.2	2.7	3.9	3	3.9	2.3	2.8
113	1.2	1.2	2.3	3.5	2.1	1.9	2.0
116	2.8	3.1	2.7	3.2	2.7	3	2.9
118	1.6	2.8	2.2	3.2	3.5	1.1	2.4
121	2.7	1.9	3.1	2.8	3.8	3.5	3.0
124	2.9	3	2.8	3.9	2.7	1.4	2.8

ID group MS	Self-kindness	Self-Judgment	Common humanity	Self-isolation	Mindfulness	Over-identification	Self-compassion
126	2.0	2.7	1.9	3.2	2.9	2.7	2.6
128	2.0	1.6	3	3.2	3.4	1.2	2.4
130	1.1	2.8	2.1	3.9	2.8	3.1	2.6
132	1.2	1.9	2.7	2.7	3.1	2.8	2.4
134	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.8	3.9	3.2	3.0
138	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.9	3.5	2	2.7
159	1.6	2.6	3.2	3.1	1.9	3.5	2.7
<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>level</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>average</b>

**Raw Scores from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)**

ID group CMS	Self- Esteem	ID group MS	Self-Esteem
7	23	11	21
8	19	26	29
12	11	48	27
15	18	71	22
17	25	155	27
20	21	9	28
23	11	10	25
29	17	16	21
32	21	19	28
35	10	24	22
38	21	27	26
41	19	30	27
44	15	33	26
47	10	36	27
50	17	39	27
53	18	42	30
56	19	45	25

ID group CMS	Self- Esteem	ID group MS	Self-Esteem
59	23	51	24
62	13	54	28
65	18	57	22
68	9	60	26
70	14	63	28
73	17	66	26
76	9	74	30
79	19	77	26
82	19	80	27
85	8	83	25
88	21	86	25
91	17	89	25
94	23	92	28
97	21	95	27
100	13	98	30
103	19	101	28
106	22	104	27
109	27	107	21
112	21	110	25

ID group CMS	Self- Esteem	ID group MS	Self-Esteem
115	15	113	27
120	11	116	28
123	18	118	27
139	23	121	26
156	27	124	28
157	18	126	26
158	22	128	29
162	16	130	29
163	18	132	28
164	26	134	27
165	21	138	25
166	24	159	29
167	21	Mean (M)	26.4
Mean (M)	18.1	Std. Deviation	2.3
Std. Deviation	4.9	level	high
level	average		

**Spearman's Rank Correlations in the CMS Group (n=49)**

Scales/ WCQ Strategies	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
<b>PSAQ Scales</b>								
Sports Self-Respect	.173	.102	.184	.218	<b>.701***</b>	.198	<b>.635**</b>	.287
Sports Self-Confidence	.152	.087	<b>.512*</b>	.115	.251	.095	.401	.221
Sports Self-Attachment	.112	.152	.184	.218	.151	.118	.204	.175
Sports Self-Efficacy	.098	.082	.324	.124	<b>.703***</b>	.152	.384	<b>.521**</b>
Sport Self-Direction	.148	.102	<b>.463*</b>	.081	.241	.123	<b>.582**</b>	.178
Self-Assessment of Personal Growth in Sports	.098	.051	-.224	.176	.253	.083	.301	.247
Sports Self-Abasement	.273	.153	.182	.072	.135	.231	.202	.164
Internal Conflictuality	.183	-.021	.147	.034	.101	.176	.173	.118
Self-Blame in Sports	.178	.148	.124	.052	.147	<b>-.423*</b>	.181	.151
General Positivity Index	.123	.124	.215	.203	-.184	.103	.241	.252
<b>Neff Scales</b>								
Self-Kindness	.184	.152	.247	.312	.223	.104	.281	<b>.703***</b>

Scales/ WCQ Strategies	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
Self-Criticism	-.123	-.104	.181	.048	<b>-.512**</b>	.147	.204	.163
Over-Indentification	.251	.151	.147	.083	.104	.118	.178	.118
Self-Compassion	.151	.124	.318	.253	.284	.123	.252	.303
<b>Rosenberg Scale</b>	.223	.152	.253	.104	<b>.423*</b>	.201	.282	.252



Scales/ WCQ Strategies	Confrontation	Distancing	Self-control	Seeking Social Support	Acceptance of Responsibility	Escape-Avoidance	Problem-Solving Planning	Positive Reappraisal
Self-Kindness	.178	.147	.240	.305	.216	.099	.274	<b>.703***</b>
Self-Criticism	.118	.098	.174	.045	<b>-.512**</b>	.142	.198	.418
Over-Indentification	.145	.145	.141	.078	.099	.113	.172	.113
Self-Compassion	.145	.118	.312	.247	.278	.118	.245	.298
<b>Rosenberg Scale</b>	.218	.147	.247	.099	.423*	.195	.276	.247

### Description of exercises for Block 1 "Sports Self-Confidence"

#### The Witness Exercise

**1. Goal:** Developing a meta-position toward a failed experience of a situation or doubt in order to separate objective facts from emotional and evaluative judgments that undermine self-confidence.

**2. Work format:** Individual session with a psychologist or independent written work after training/competition.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identification. The athlete selects a specific recent situation involving a mistake, defeat, or feeling of uncertainty.

Step 2. Shift of perspective. The athlete mentally takes the position of a completely neutral but competent external observer (e.g., a referee, a video analyst, an opponent's coach).

Step 3. Factual report. From this new position, the athlete gives an oral or written description of the event, strictly answering the questions:

What happened objectively? (Timeline of actions, technical parameters: "After the opponent's serve, a shot from the back line went out.")

What were the external conditions? (Court conditions, weather, opponent's actions, match flow.)

What are the probable, specific reasons for the outcome? (A technical error at a specific moment, tactical choice, physical condition.)

Step 4. No evaluation. The description must not contain generalizing evaluative categories ("terrible", "failure", "I am weak").

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The exercise is considered successfully completed if the athlete can provide a detailed, comprehensive account without self-deprecating statements. An indirect criterion is a subjective reduction in emotional tension when recalling the situation.

#### Exercise "Balance of Evidence"

**1. Goal:** Objectifying self-assessment during acute doubt by countering the cognitive distortion of "mental filter" (selective attention to negatives) and forming rational counterarguments.

**2. Format:** Quick independent work (in a diary, notes) during a moment of confidence crisis or during an individual session.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Capturing the thought. Clearly formulate the troubling thought or belief ("I cannot beat this opponent").

Step 2. Creating a table. Draw a table with two columns: "Evidence AGAINST" (supporting the thought) and "Evidence FOR" (contradicting the thought).

Step 3. Filling the columns. In the left column, list 2–3 facts that support the negative thought (objective). In the right column, list at least as many specific, relevant facts indicating the opposite: past successes under similar conditions, current strengths, positive feedback, progress in training.

Step 4. Formulating a conclusion. Based on the comparison of the columns, formulate a more balanced and rational conclusion about the situation and one's own capabilities.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to independently initiate the technique during a difficult moment and find at least two solid, specific "evidence for" statements. A subjective

reduction in conviction in the original negative thought by 30–50% on a 0–100 subjective scale.

### **Exercise "Confidence Scaling"**

**1. Goal:** Developing the skill of quantitative self-reflection and real-time monitoring of confidence levels, making it possible to identify patterns and triggers of its change.

**2. Format:** Independent daily monitoring (state diary) with discussion of trends during sessions with the psychologist.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Defining the scale. Adopt a simple numeric scale (e.g., from 0 – "complete lack of confidence" to 10 – "absolute, unshakeable confidence").

Step 2. Regular assessment. 2–3 times a day (e.g., morning, before key training, evening) the athlete briefly records in the diary: a) Context (what is ahead / what happened); b) Numeric confidence rating; c) A brief comment/reason ("5 – nervous before the test match, " "8 – good warm-up, feeling strong").

Step 3. Trend analysis. Together with the psychologist, review the records over a week/month. Identify situations, people, thoughts, or actions that consistently increase or decrease confidence levels.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Regularity and honesty in keeping records. The athlete's ability to draw practical conclusions based on the data analysis and plan actions to adjust their state (e.g., "to raise my confidence before the match from 4 to 6, I need to repeat the successful warm-up and analyze the opponent's weaknesses").

### **Exercise "Micro-Wins Diary"**

**1. Goal:** Creating a constant flow of confirmation of one's own effectiveness by shifting attention from the global result to daily, controllable procedural successes.

**2. Format:** Daily independent written practice with a weekly review during sessions.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Defining a "micro-win". A win is not the outcome of a match, but the successful execution of a planned, controllable action or the demonstration of a desired quality.

Step 2. Daily recording. Every day the athlete writes down 2–3 micro-wins using the following scheme:

Context: (Date, type of activity: "May 14, morning practice, work on serve").

Action/Quality: ("Made 8 out of 10 second serves into the designated square, " "Maintained focus and won the next rally after my own mistake").

Skill/Resource reinforced: ("Technical stability of second serve, " "Volitional compensation, emotional stability").

Step 3. Regular review. Once a week the athlete reviews the accumulated notes, noting recurring strengths and progress.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Consistency of logging (at least 5 days a week). Ability to identify and appreciate procedural successes. Use of the diary entries for self-support during moments of doubt.

### **Exercise "Ladder of Difficulty"**

**1. Goal:** Providing the athlete with structured, manageable mastery experiences through the sequential achievement of increasingly difficult but attainable goals, which directly strengthens confidence in a specific skill.

**2. Format:** Joint planning with a psychologist and coach, followed by integration into the training process.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Selecting the target skill. Identify a specific technical, tactical, or psychological skill to develop ("serving under pressure, "confident play at the net").

Step 2. Building the "ladder." Create a hierarchy of 5–7 steps/tasks, from simple to complex. Each step should be objectively more difficult than the previous one but still achievable.

Example: 1) Practicing the element in "sterile" conditions. 2) Practicing with slight difficulty (fatigue, distraction). 3) Application in a practice game with a specific assignment. 4)

Application in a test game. 5) Application in competition.

Step 3. Sequential progression. Move to the next step only after 3–5 stable successful completions of the current task. Failure at a high step signals a temporary return to the previous step for consolidation.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Successful and stable completion of tasks at the highest planned step of the hierarchy. An increase in the athlete's subjective confidence in the practiced skill, confirmed by self-report and coach observation.

### Exercise "Retrospective Coping Analysis"

**1. Goal:** Activating and structuring memories of past successes in overcoming difficulties in order to use that experience as an evidential resource in current challenging situations.

**2. Format:** Individual session, structured interview; a written format is also possible.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Selecting a situation. The athlete chooses from past experience a significant instance of overcoming a difficulty (return from injury, winning a tough match, breaking a losing streak).

Step 2. Detailed reconstruction. Under the guidance of a psychologist, the athlete reconstructs the event in detail, answering the questions:

What was the problem/difficulty?

What thoughts and emotions were present at the time?

What concrete steps (actions, decisions) did I take?

Which personal qualities, skills, or beliefs helped me? (Perseverance, tactical thinking, coach support, self-belief).

What was the outcome?

Step 3. Generalization and projection. Formulate a generalized conclusion: "When I encounter X, I can use Y and Z, just as I did in the past." Determine how this experience can be applied to current or future challenges.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Depth and detail of the analysis. The athlete's ability to clearly articulate the internal and external resources they used. The emergence in the athlete of a sense of "I have experience and tools to cope" rather than merely a memory of a favorable outcome.

### Exercise "Confidence Posture"

**1. Goal:** Using body-mind feedback to quickly evoke and reinforce the psychophysiological state of confidence by adopting a corresponding body configuration and breathing pattern.

**2. Format:** Individual instruction followed by independent use as a pre-start or corrective ritual.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identifying an individual posture. Together with the athlete, find and define a "confidence posture" – an open, expansive, stable posture that they associate with a peak state of composure and strength (straight back, shoulders back, chin up, hands on hips or hanging freely).

Step 2. Breathing synchronization. Hold the posture for 2–3 minutes, accompanied by slow, deep diaphragmatic breathing (e.g., inhale for 4 counts – hold for 2 – exhale for 6).

Step 3. Mindful practice and transfer. First practice the exercise in a calm setting. Then practice in moderately stressful situations (before stepping onto the court, during a break) to establish a stable association.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to independently use the technique for self-regulation in a state of stress. Subjective report of feeling composed, calm, and in control within 1–3 minutes after performing it. Objective observation of a change in nonverbal behavior (becoming more composed, "imposing").

### Exercise "Anchoring Confidence"

**1. Goal:** Creating a conditioned reflex link (anchor) between a simple, voluntarily reproducible action/image and the complex psychophysiological state of confidence, enabling rapid access to that state when needed.

**2. Format:** Individual session (anchor setup), independent use (activation).

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Choosing and setting the anchor. In a state of deep relaxation or while recalling a vivid moment of confidence, the athlete performs a simple, unique action (e.g., forming a ring with thumb and index finger, touching the wrist) or visualizes a clear image, at the psychologist's cue. The action/image is repeated several times at the peak of the experience.

Step 2. Testing and reinforcement. After a short break, the athlete attempts to activate the anchor (perform the action/call up the image) and observes the sensations and changes in state that arise.

Step 3. Application in target situations. In a real situation that requires confidence (before a serve, during a break), the athlete deliberately activates the anchor to trigger the desired state.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Successful initial setup (when the anchor is activated in calm conditions, clear elements of the target state appear). Effectiveness in real-life situations – a subjective sense of quick (seconds) access to the resource state and/or observation of behavioral changes after activation.

### Exercise "Ideomotor Rehearsal of Success"

**1. Goal:** Programming the nervous system for successful execution of an action by mentally simulating not only the technical elements but also the accompanying states of confidence, control, and positive emotions.

**2. Format:** Individual session (teaching the correct format), independent mental training.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Creating a script. Choose a specific upcoming situation (an element, a match, walking onto the court). Create a highly detailed first-person script.

Step 2. Multi-sensory rehearsal. In a relaxed state, the athlete mentally runs through the script using all sensory channels:

**Kinesthetic:** Bodily sensations – strength, lightness, balance, muscle sensations during a correct stroke.

**Visual:** Vivid picture of the event – view of the court, the ball, one's own movements.

**Auditory:** Sounds – the hit on the ball, foot sliding, one's own calm breathing.

**Emotions and state:** Feelings of confidence, calm focus, readiness, enjoyment of the process.

Step 3. Focusing on process and outcome. The rehearsal ends with successful execution of the action and a positive result, accompanied by an internal affirmation ("Yes, I can do this, " "Just like that").

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Degree of detail and realism of the mental image. The athlete's ability to evoke and maintain accompanying positive states during the rehearsal. Subjective sense of increased readiness and confidence before the actual performance of the task.

### Description of exercises for Block 2 "Sport Self-Direction"

#### Exercise "Wheel of Sport Balance"

**1. Goal:** Visualizing and assessing the current state of various areas of sporting activity to consciously determine priorities in goal setting and effort planning for the upcoming period.

**2. Format:** Individual session with a psychologist, working with a visual diagram.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Defining the areas. Together with the athlete, identify 6–8 key areas that make up their sporting activity (e.g., physical fitness, technique, tactics, mental readiness, recovery, nutrition, organization of daily life/training camps, opponent analysis).

Step 2. Visualization and assessment. Draw a circle ("wheel") divided into segments according to the number of areas. In each segment, the athlete subjectively rates their satisfaction with the current state of that area on a scale from 1 (complete imbalance, problems) to 10 (ideal state). The resulting "star" clearly shows imbalances.

Step 3. Analysis and goal setting. Discuss the segments with the lowest scores. Formulate an answer to the question: "What specifically can I do in the next month to raise my rating in this area by 1–2 points?" Identify 1–2 priority areas for focus and set specific, measurable goals.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to identify the areas relevant to them personally. Awareness of the interconnections between different aspects of preparation. Formulation of at least one specific, procedural goal for improving an identified "weak" area.

#### Exercise "Path to the Goal Map"

**1. Goal:** Structuring the process of achieving a medium- or long-term goal by breaking it down into intermediate stages and visualizing anticipated obstacles and resources.

**2. Format:** Individual or pair work with a psychologist, creating a visual diagram (mind map, road map).

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Formulating the goal. Clearly define a SMART goal (e.g., "enter the top 200 of the world rankings in 18 months").

Step 2. Decomposition. Break the goal down into major stages (quarters, seasons). For each stage, identify key tasks (e.g., "increase first serve percentage to 68%," "win 2 ITF \$25K tournaments," "strengthen core muscles to prevent injuries").

Step 3. Risk and resource analysis. On the map, Note potential obstacles at each stage (risk of injury, financial difficulties, psychological crises) and available resources to overcome them (team support, past experience, external experts).

Step 4. Determining first steps. Clearly plan concrete actions to begin moving through the first stage.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Logic and realism of the goal decomposition. Depth of analysis of potential obstacles. Presence of a clear plan for immediate actions. The map is used by the athlete as a "living" document for periodic review and adjustment.

#### Exercise "Outcome Protocol: My Contribution"

**1. Goal:** Forming a stable habit of reflective analysis of completed activities with a focus on identifying one's own contribution and controllable factors, shifting causal attribution from external circumstances to internal ones.

**2. Format:** Independent written work using a structured template after each significant training session or competition.

**3. Procedure:** The athlete fills out a protocol by answering the following questions:

**Fact:** What was the result/outcome? (Won/lost with a score of X; completed/did not complete the task).

**Controllable success factors** (what depended on me and succeeded): Which specific actions, decisions, or efforts of mine led to positive moments? (For example: "followed the tactical plan in the first set," "effectively used drop shots," "maintained emotional control after mistakes").

**Controllable factors needing correction** (what depended on me but did not succeed): Which specific actions, decisions, or omissions of mine led to difficulties? ("Did Not approach the net aggressively enough," "lost concentration at the start of the second set").

**Uncontrollable factors** (external circumstances): What did not depend on me? (Weather, referee decisions, opponent's strength).

**Conclusion and action:** Based on the analysis, what do I decide to do in the next training session / next match?

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Regularity of completion. Quality of analysis: ability to identify specific rather than general controllable factors. Shifting the focus in the analysis from external circumstances ("opponent, referee, weather") to internal, manageable elements.

### Exercise "Creating an Inner Coach"

**1. Goal:** Forming a stable, positive, and directive inner voice capable of giving clear instructions, support, and focus in critical situations (especially when external help is unavailable), replacing the external guidance of a coach.

**2. Format:** Individual session using visualization and verbalization techniques.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Image of an ideal mentor. The athlete is asked to create in their imagination an image of an ideal coach-mentor for themselves. It is important to describe their qualities: how they speak (tone, pace), what they look like, their facial expression (calm, confident, supportive).

Step 2. Formulating key messages. Identify 3–4 key phrases or instructions that this "inner coach" says in different situations: for mobilization ("Get focused, the game is going according to our plan"), for calming ("Breathe, control only the next ball"), for correction ("Now it's important to play to his backhand").

Step 3. "Installing" and training. Through repeated visualization and mentally speaking these phrases from the created image, the pattern is "installed." The athlete then practices mentally "turning on" this mentor in simulated difficult situations.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Clarity and detail of the created image. Practicality and relevance of the formulated "coaching" phrases. The athlete's ability, in a mildly stressful state (during training), to mentally turn to this image and receive an instruction from it, noting a subjective feeling of support and clarity.

**Exercise “Freeze-Frame and Reset”**

**1. Goal:** Developing the operational skill of independently interrupting a negative behavioral or emotional spiral (chain of mistakes, rising anger) and quickly returning to a manageable state and focused action.

**2. Format:** Skill training during sessions, practice in training conditions, independent application in competitions.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Awareness and stop signal. At the moment the athlete feels they are losing control (after a series of mistakes, a referee decision they perceive as unfair), they give themselves a mental or minimal external command “STOP” (can be combined with an inconspicuous gesture, e.g., adjusting a headband).

Step 2. Physical reset. Perform a simple, controllable physical action that breaks the pattern: step back to the baseline, take three deep diaphragmatic breaths, drink water.

Step 3. Cognitive refocusing. On the exhale, mentally say a brief, neutral or positive statement that sets focus on the next action rather than the past mistake (“Ball. Serve. Target”).

Step 4. Return to activity. The athlete returns to the task, following the given focus.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Speed of applying the skill from the moment of realizing loss of control to the start of “reset” actions (target: 10–15 seconds). Ability to interrupt visible signs of distress (verbal, motor). Subjective feeling of regaining control over the situation and one’s own state.

### Description of exercises for Block 3 "Self-Worth and Self-Acceptance"

#### Exercise 1. The "Observing Self"

- 1. Goal:** To develop the skill of psychological distancing from automatic thoughts and emotions, forming the position of an internal observer to reduce identification with negative mental content.
- 2. Format:** Individual session (teaching the metaphor), independent daily practice in the form of brief exercises (3–5 minutes).
- 3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Teaching the Metaphor. The psychologist explains the metaphor of "the sky and the weather". Thoughts and feelings are the changeable "weather" (clouds, rain, sun), while the "observing Self" is the unchanging "sky" that simply contains this weather but is not it.

Step 2. Observation Practice. The athlete closes their eyes in a calm state. They are asked to notice arising thoughts without engaging with their content, simply noting them internally: "Here is a thought about tomorrow's match," "Here is a feeling of anxiety in the chest". The goal is to observe them like passing cars or drifting clouds.

Step 3. Transfer to Real Situations. When a harsh, critical thought arises in a real situation (e.g., "I made a mistake again"), the athlete practices mentally adding the phrase: "I notice that I am having the thought that..".
- 4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability, in a state of mild stress, to notice and verbalize their thought from the position of an observer ("I am thinking that.."), rather than identifying with it ("I am a loser"). A subjective reduction in the emotional charge of thoughts.

#### Exercise 2. "The Vault of Values"

- 1. Goal:** To identify, structure, and operationalize deep personal values as internal guides for action, independent of immediate results or external approval.
- 2. Format:** Individual session with a psychologist, work with cards or a list.
- 3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Generation. The athlete creates a broad list of what is important to them in life and sports (e.g., honesty, growth, challenge, health, family, contribution to the team).

Step 2. Ranking and Selection. From the list, 4–5 core, most significant values are selected. It is important that they are formulated as directions rather than as goals (not "to become a champion," but "to pursue mastery," "to give maximum effort").

Step 3. Specification. For each chosen value, 2–3 small, concrete actions are defined that can be taken at the next practice or during the week to live by that value (e.g., for the value "growth" – "stay after practice for 15 minutes to work on a weak skill").
- 4. Evaluation criteria:** Clarity and awareness in the formulation of values. The ability to connect specific daily actions with chosen value-based guides. Using the list of values as a "compass" when making decisions or in moments of lost motivation.

#### Exercise 3. "Recurring Scenario Analysis"

**1. Goal:** To become aware of and deconstruct an unconscious, maladaptive behavioral or emotional pattern ("scenario") that regularly repeats in similar situations and hinders self-acceptance.

**2. Format:** Individual session, in-depth interview.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identifying the Scenario. Clearly describe the recurring problem (e.g., "in every important match, when the score is 5:4 in my favor, I make a series of uncharacteristic errors").

Step 2. Reconstructing the "Plot". Describe the typical sequence of events in detail: the trigger, the sequence of thoughts and feelings, the climax (the mistake), and the aftermath (self-blame).

Step 3. Exploring Origins and Function. Together with the psychologist, explore questions such as: When might this have first appeared? What might this scenario be "protecting" or what need might it be fulfilling (e.g., an unconscious fear of success and the responsibility that comes with it)? What secondary gains might it offer (e.g., confirming the unconscious belief "I don't deserve to win")?

Step 4. Reframing. Understanding the hidden logic of the scenario allows one to stop seeing it as a fatal character flaw and instead view it as a previously developed method of adaptation that can now be consciously changed.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to see the connection between the current pattern and earlier experiences. A reduction in feelings of guilt and self-blame for recurring mistakes, and a reframing of these mistakes. The emergence of the possibility for conscious choice of a different response at the key point of the scenario.

**Exercise 4. "The RAIN Practice for Difficult Emotions"**

**1. Goal:** To develop an immediate skill for handling intense negative emotions in an accepting and healthy way, preventing their suppression or destructive acting out.

**2. Format:** Teaching during a session, independent application at the moment the emotion arises.

**3. Procedure (using the acronym RAIN):**

R (Recognize). Pause and mentally name the emotion: "This is shame," "This is anger," "This is disappointment".

A (Allow). Allow the emotion to be present without trying to change it, push it away, or judge yourself for having it. Phrase: "Yes, this is here right now".

I (Investigate). With curiosity and without judgment, direct attention to the body: "Where does it live? What sensations are there? (tightness in the stomach, heat in the face, tension in the shoulders) ".

N (Non-Identification). Take a step back by reminding yourself: "This experience is a temporary state, not my essence. I am more than this emotion".

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The speed of applying the sequence from the moment of recognizing the emotion. A reduction in the intensity of the emotion's autonomic manifestations (rapid breathing, tension) after completing all steps. The ability to return to the activity after the practice without being fully consumed by the experience.

**Exercise 5. "Written Self-Compassion Practice"**

**1. Goal:** To form an alternative, supportive internal dialogue through a structured written letter to oneself during difficult times, replacing patterns of self-criticism.

**2. Format:** Independent written work using a template.

**3. Procedure** (the letter consists of three parts):

Part 1. Acknowledgment and Validation. Describe the situation and feelings without judgment, acknowledging their difficulty: "This is really hard right now because... I feel disappointment and fatigue".

Part 2. Reminder of Common Humanity. Write that failures, mistakes, and suffering are part of the shared human experience: "Anyone in my position might feel the same way. I am not alone in this experience".

Part 3. Kind Wishes and Support. Write words of support and encouragement to yourself, as a close friend would: "You have worked so hard. Allow yourself to rest. I believe in your ability to get through this. You deserve kindness".

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The ability to complete the practice without abandoning it during the self-criticism stage. A subjective feeling of calm and reduced internal tension after writing. Gradually adopting the phrases from the letter for internal dialogue in future difficult situations.

### Description of exercises for Block 4 "Sports Self-Respect"

#### Exercise "Map of Professional Achievements"

**1. Goal:** To create a visual and substantive account of the athlete's professional journey, objectifying accumulated experience, skills, and achievements to build an evidence base for their own competence.

**2. Format:** Individual session, independent work followed by discussion.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Timeline. The athlete creates a timeline (from the start of their sports career to the present moment). Key milestones are marked on the timeline: transitions to new categories, first significant victories, overcome injuries, coaching changes, reaching the international level.

Step 2. Skills and Competencies. For each significant stage, 1–2 key skills or qualities that were developed or demonstrated are identified (e.g., "learned to play on the counterattack," "developed endurance," "showed character in a match after an injury").

Step 3. Visualization. The "map" is formatted as a diagram, mind map, or collage using symbols, photographs, and key figures. It is important to reflect not only the peaks but also the "valleys" overcome (injuries, crises), emphasizing their significance for growth.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Completeness and depth of the analysis of the athlete's journey. The ability to identify developed competencies rather than just formal results. The athlete experiencing a sense of legitimate pride and respect for their journey when viewing the finished map.

#### Exercise "The Expert Commission"

**1. Goal:** To develop the ability to objectively and multidimensionally evaluate one's own professional activity by internalizing an external, impartial expert perspective.

**2. Format:** Individual session, structured interview, or written analysis.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Forming the "Commission". The athlete imagines that their career is being evaluated by a commission of 3–4 ideal, impartial experts (e.g., a respected veteran of the sport, an analyst, a sports psychologist, a renowned coach).

Step 2. Evaluation According to criteria. From the perspective of each "expert," an evaluation is conducted based on specified parameters: technical-tactical arsenal, physical preparation, mental resilience, work ethic, progression trajectory, contribution to the development of the sport.

Step 3. Summary Conclusion. Based on these "evaluations," a final, balanced conclusion is formulated. The emphasis is placed on strengths and potential, while weaknesses are considered as areas for growth rather than as deficits.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to take a meta-position and provide an evaluation free from emotional self-criticism or self-justification. Consistency between the identified strengths and the opinions of real specialists (coach, psychologist). Using the "commission's" conclusions to strengthen professional self-respect.

### Exercise "Chronicle of a Champion's Journey"

**1. Goal:** To shift the focus from immediate results to recognizing the value of sustained, systematic effort, overcoming difficulties, and the daily contribution to one's own development.

**2. Format:** Independent written or audiovisual work (e.g., creating a short, unedited video diary).

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Documenting the Process. Over the course of 1–2 weeks, the athlete briefly records daily not the result, but a key effort or act of perseverance: "practiced for 2 hours on the court in the rain," "completed all sets in the gym despite fatigue," "analyzed an hour of video of my mistakes".

Step 2. Connecting with Values. Each documented action is linked to a professional value or quality it develops (discipline, perseverance, striving for excellence).

Step 3. Final Review. At the end of the period, the athlete reviews the collected material. The task is to see not isolated days, but a consistent, effort-filled journey, which in itself is an achievement and a reason for respect.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Regularity of documentation. Depth of awareness of the connection between routine efforts and professional growth. A subjective strengthening of self-respect, based on recognizing the value of one's own work, independent of current competitive results.

### Exercise "Dialogue with the Inner Critic"

**1. Goal:** To transform the destructive inner critic from an adversary into a part of the personality whose irrational demands can be recognized, challenged, and redirected, while defending one's professional competence.

**2. Format:** Individual session, two-chair technique, or written dialogue.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identifying the Critic. A typical critical phrase or belief is clearly formulated (e.g., "You failed under pressure again, you're weak").

Step 2. Separation and Dialogue. The athlete physically or mentally sits in the "Critic's" chair and voices its position as fully as possible. Then, they return to their own chair and respond to the "Critic" from the position of a Self-Respecting Professional. The response should be factual, calm, and aimed at defending their reputation: "I acknowledge the mistake. It is related to a specific tactical shortcoming. However, my past experience, including victories in stressful situations X and Y, proves that I can handle pressure. Right now, I am focusing on correcting that specific flaw".

Step 3. Reframing Demands. Together with the psychologist, they explore what irrational need (e.g., for total control) the "Critic" expresses and how it can be satisfied in a healthier way.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The ability to conduct an internal dialogue without fully emotionally immersing in the role of the critic. Formulating responses based on facts and professional self-assessment, rather than emotional defense. A reduction in the intensity and frequency of internal criticism after a series of such dialogues.

### Exercise "Formulating a Professional Credo"

**1. Goal:** To become aware of and articulate the fundamental principles, values, and rules that underpin the athlete's professional activity, thereby creating an internal core and a source of self-respect.

**2. Format:** Individual session, in-depth interview followed by written documentation.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Exploring Values. Through guiding questions ("What does being a professional mean to you?", "What rules would you never break?", "What are you proud of in your work?"), core professional values are identified (fair play, continuous improvement, respect for opponents, teamwork).

Step 2. Formulating Principles. Based on the values, brief, aphoristic principles or rules are formulated. For example: "My level is defined not by my ranking, but by the quality of today's practice"; "I compete against my opponent, not the referee"; "Defeat is data for analysis, Not a verdict".

Step 3. Formatting and Use. The credo is written down or created as a poster. It is used as a mantra for focus before a competition, as a criterion for decision-making, and as a reminder of professional identity during difficult moments.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The sincerity and personal significance of the formulated principles. Using the credo in practice for self-regulation and decision-making. A strengthened sense of internal integrity and professional dignity when adhering to one's principles.

### Description of exercises for Block 5 "Reducing Destructive Self-Criticism"

#### Exercise "The Story of the Inner Voice"

**1. Goal:** To trace the genesis of the self-critical inner voice, uncovering its connection to specific figures, situations, or introjects from the athlete's past experience, in order to strip it of its status as "absolute truth".

**2. Format:** Individual session, in-depth interview.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identifying the Phrase. A typical, most painful self-critical phrase is identified (e.g., "You always mess everything up," "Look at others, and then look at you.. ").

Step 2. Searching for the Prototype. A series of questions is asked: "Whose voice could this have been when you first heard it?", "Who in your life spoke to you, or about you, in that way or a similar way?", "In what situations did you start saying this to yourself?" The goal is Not blame, but exploration.

Step 3. Distinguishing "Then" and "Now". Together, it is analyzed whether this criticism was appropriate or useful in that past situation (e.g., a strict coach in childhood) and whether it remains relevant and useful now, at the level of high performance.

Step 4. Reclaiming. The athlete is invited to realize: "This voice came from the outside and was once internalized. Now, as an adult and an expert in my field, I can decide whether to give it power over my state".

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The athlete's ability to clearly identify the source or prototype of the critical voice. A reduction in the subjective belief that the self-criticism reflects objective reality ("this is the truth") and its reframing into a historical context ("this is an old recording").

#### Exercise "The Self-Criticism Song"

**1. Goal:** To quickly reduce the emotional power and seriousness of an obsessive self-critical thought through humorous distortion, breaking the automatic fusion with its content.

**2. Format:** An operational skill for independent application at the moment the thought arises.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Recognizing. The athlete Notices the beginning of a self-critical cycle ("I messed up again.. ").

Step 2. Creative Distortion. Instead of arguing with the thought, they mentally "set" it to an absurd, childish, or comical tune (e.g., the melody of a nursery rhyme like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or the "XX Century Fox" fanfare). The thought needs to be internally sung along to this sarcastic "soundtrack".

Step 3. Observing the Effect. The task is to track how the perception of the thought changes after this action. Typically, it loses its pathos and drama, turning into a ridiculous background noise.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The speed of applying the technique. A subjective feeling of distance and a reduction in the emotional charge of the thought. The ability to refrain from further developing the critical scenario after applying the technique.

#### Exercise "Dialogue with the Punishing Parent"

1. **Goal:** To visualize and structure the internal conflict between the destructive, punishing part of the personality and the healthy adult part, giving the latter a voice and strength to defend.

2. **Format:** Individual session, two-chair technique.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Identifying Modes. Two "actors" are defined: "The Punishing Parent Mode" (the source of harsh, global criticism) and "The Healthy Adult Mode" (the reasonable, compassionate, realistic part).

Step 2. Dialogue. The athlete sits in the chair of the "Punishing Parent" and voices its accusations. Then, they move to the chair of the "Healthy Adult" and respond. The response should be Not emotional, but factual and protective: "Your accusations are exaggerated. I made a mistake, but that does not make me worthless. I have the right to make a mistake; I am learning. My worth is not defined by a single action".

Step 3. Setting Boundaries. The "Healthy Adult" clearly establishes new rules: "Your criticism in this form is unacceptable. If you want to point out a mistake, do it specifically and respectfully. Otherwise, I will not listen to you".

4. **Evaluation criteria:** Clarity in distinguishing the two internal positions. The strength and persuasiveness of the "Healthy Adult's" responses. A reduction in the intensity of feelings after the dialogue and the ability to mentally "activate" this defender in real situations.

**Exercise "Ritual of Gratitude to the Critic" (Integrative Approach)**

1. **Goal:** To perform a symbolic act of integration, changing the relationship with the inner critic from one of struggle to recognition of its original (albeit distorted) positive function, and redirecting its energy.

2. **Format:** Individual session, symbolic action.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Understanding the Function. Based on previous exercises, clearly formulate what supposed "benefit" or protection the inner critic was trying to provide (e.g., "motivate through fear," "prevent disappointment from the coach," "maintain an illusion of control").

Step 2. Formulating Gratitude. The athlete mentally or verbally addresses this part: "Thank you for trying to protect me from failure / make me stronger / make me meet the standards. I see your original intention".

Step 3. "Re-signing the Contract".

"But your method (harsh criticism) costs me too much. It drains my strength. So, from today, I take responsibility for my motivation and growth. Your new role is to be a signal of alarm, not a judge. Signal calmly, but I will act myself, from the position of a professional adult".

This can be accompanied by a real ritualistic action (writing down and symbolically tearing up the old "contract," crumpling up a piece of paper with a critical phrase and throwing it away).

4. **Evaluation criteria:** Sincerity and depth of understanding of the critic's function. A subjective feeling of a shift in internal dynamics – from struggle and suppression to acceptance and redirection of energy. A decrease in fear of the emergence of self-critical thoughts.

**Exercise "Protocol for Constructive Self-Feedback"**

- 1. Goal:** To form a new, structured, and productive habit of self-analysis that completely replaces the chaotic and destructive stream of self-criticism following actions.
- 2. Format:** Independent written work using a strict template.
- 3. Procedure (protocol template):**
  1. **FACT:** Describe the situation as neutrally as possible, without evaluations. ("In the third set, with the score at 4:4, I made two double faults in a row".)
  2. **REASON (hypotheses):** Suggest possible reasons, avoiding "because I am bad". Focus on specifics: fatigue, loss of focus on the serve target, wrong choice of serve type for that situation.
  3. **ALTERNATIVE / CONCLUSION:** Formulate a specific, actionable takeaway for the future. ("In moments of fatigue, I need to simplify the task: focus on accuracy rather than power on the second serve".)
  4. **SUPPORT:** A mandatory section. Write a phrase of self-support based on facts. ("Despite these errors, I won more games on my serve than my opponent. I know how to correct the situation".)
- 4. Evaluation criteria:** Discipline in adhering to the protocol structure (especially the "Support" section). Quality of analysis: shifting from global self-blame to specific, modifiable factors. A subjective feeling of closure in the analysis and having a clear plan of action, instead of residual guilt.

## **Description of exercises for Block 6 "Developing a Cognitive Strategy of Positive Reappraisal"**

### **Exercise "The Positive Intention of Failure"**

**1. Goal:** To develop the skill of finding constructive meaning or hidden potential in a situation initially perceived as purely negative, by analyzing its possible useful function or signal.

**2. Format:** Individual session; can be adapted for independent analysis using a template.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Statement. Clearly and neutrally describe the negative event ("Losing in the first round of the tournament I had high hopes for").

Step 2. Posing an Investigative Question. Ask the key question: "If this failure wanted to communicate something important to me or teach me something useful, what might that be?"

Step 3. Generating Hypotheses. Together with a psychologist or independently, possible "positive intentions" of the failure are proposed and discussed. Options can range from tactical ("It shows a vulnerability in playing against aggressive opponents") to value-based ("To remind me that my worth lies Not in a single tournament, but in the long journey; a signal for the need for emotional reset").

Step 4. Selecting and Adopting Meaning. From the list, 1–2 of the most resonant and useful interpretations are selected. A conclusion is formulated: "Thus, this situation is Not a failure, but a source of data X and a reason for Y".

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The ability to generate at least three different hypotheses about the possible positive meaning of the event. A reduction in the intensity of negative emotions towards the situation after finding an acceptable constructive interpretation.

### **Exercise "The Progress Scale"**

**1. Goal:** To shift the focus from a feeling of "stagnation" or "failure" to identifying existing, albeit small, signs of forward movement and the resources that facilitate this movement.

**2. Format:** Individual session; can be conducted as a dialogue or with visualization of a scale.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Defining the Scale. A problem or task is selected (e.g., "confidence in playing tiebreaks"). An imaginary scale is drawn from 0 (complete absence of the desired state) to 10 (ideal state).

Step 2. The "Now" Point. The athlete notes where they are currently (e.g., at 3 points). The key point: The question is not "Why isn't it 10?", but "What is already present that allows you to be at 3, rather than at 0 or 1?"

Step 3. Analyzing the "Building Blocks" of Progress. A detailed breakdown is made of what specific actions, thoughts, circumstances, and small successes constitute these 3 points ("sometimes I manage to take a timeout and calm down," "I understand the tactic for the first ball," "I once won an important tiebreak").

Step 4. The Step towards 4. The question is asked: "What will be the first small sign that you have moved from 3 to 4?" A specific, minimal action is planned.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Shifting the athlete's attention from deficits to resources. Specificity in describing the "building blocks" of progress. Formulating a realistic next step rather than an abstract wish.

### **Exercise "Delayed Evaluation Technique" (Metacognitive Therapy)**

**1. Goal:** To break the automatic connection between a stressful event and an immediate emotional-evaluative reaction, creating a "buffer zone" to reduce affect and engage more rational thinking.

**2. Format:** Establishing a new behavioral rule, independent application.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Establishing the Rule. An agreement is made with the athlete on a new rule: after any strongly negative event (mistake, loss, conflict), they are forbidden from giving it a definitive evaluation ("this is a disaster," "I am a loser") for a predetermined period (e.g., 1 hour, until the evening, until the next morning).

Step 2. Actions During the "Buffer" Period. During this period, it is allowed and recommended to:

Record facts (what happened).

Notice physical sensations and emotions (without evaluation).

Engage in routine, distracting activities (taking a shower, eating, listening to music).

It is forbidden to: discuss the event with the aim of getting an evaluation, ruminate on it, or make global conclusions.

Step 3. Structured Evaluation. After the "buffer" period, a brief, structured analysis is conducted based on predetermined questions (e.g., "What was objective?", "What can be learned?", "What is the next step?").

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Adherence to the established time-based rule. A reduction in the intensity of the emotional reaction to the event by the time the structured analysis begins. An improvement in the quality and constructiveness of conclusions drawn after the pause, compared to hypothetical conclusions made "in the heat of the moment".

### **Exercise "The Miracle Question"**

**1. Goal:** To shift thinking from analyzing the problem and its causes to constructing an image of a desired future and finding existing resources to achieve it, activating goal-setting and hope.

**2. Format:** Individual session, questioning technique.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Imagining the Miracle. The athlete is asked to close their eyes and imagine that while they slept, a miracle occurred: the problem bothering them (e.g., fear of performing on center court) has been completely resolved. However, they do not know this.

Step 2. Exploring the Signs. A series of questions is asked to detail this "miraculous" morning:

"By what very first, small signs will you know, upon waking, that the miracle has happened?" (e.g., "I will wake up with a calm feeling, rather than a knot in my stomach").

"What will you do differently at breakfast? How will you behave during the warm-up?"

"What will others (coach, teammates) notice about you?"

Step 3. Searching for "Exceptions".

"Have there been moments recently, even very brief ones, when tiny fragments of this 'miracle' appeared?" (e.g., "yesterday in practice, I imagined playing on center court without fear for a minute").

"What helped you then? How did you manage to do that?"

**4. Evaluation criteria:** Vividness and detail in the constructed image of the desired future. The ability to discover "exceptions" in past experience — moments when the problem was less pronounced. Formulating, based on these "exceptions," specific, already available actions or strategies for moving towards the "miracle".

### **Exercise "Cognitive Defusion" (Thought Decentering)**

**1. Goal:** To develop a meta-position skill towards one's own catastrophic thoughts, learning to perceive them as transient mental events rather than objective reality, thereby reducing their controlling influence.

**2. Format:** Teaching during a session, independent practice.

**3. Procedure:**

Step 1. Noticing the Thought. A specific anxious or critical thought is caught ("I am going to mess everything up now").

Step 2. Visualizing a "Screen". The athlete imagines a large screen (cinema, computer) in front of their inner eye.

Step 3. Mental Manipulation. This thought is "projected" onto this screen, and they begin to mentally alter its parameters:

Write it in different fonts (comical, gothic, childish).

Change its color (to pink, lime green).

Make it move (travel across the screen from right to left, spin, shrink to a point and disappear).

Mentally voice it using a cartoon character's voice.

Step 4. Observing the Effect. The task is to track how the subjective perception of the thought's seriousness and truthfulness changes after these manipulations.

**4. Evaluation criteria:** The ability to perform the full sequence of mental manipulations. A subjective feeling of increased distance between the "Self" and the thought. A reduction in the emotional charge and persuasiveness of the original thought.