ThinkSmart routines and rowing ergometer performance

Individualised attentional routines, known as ThinkSmart routines, for improving rowing ergometer performance were evaluated among 54 male, high school rowers (mean age = 15.9 ± 0.6 yr.). Participants were timed during three ergometer tests (T1, T2, T3) over 2000m using standardised national testing protocols. Between T1 and T2, Group 1 (n = 22) received ThinkSmart training to design an optimal attentional routine, based on routines previously identified by elite ergometer performers (Lloyd & Terry, 2006), whereas Group 2 (*n* = 32) received no training. Both groups received the same ThinkSmart training between T2 and T3. Group 1 showed significantly improved times from T1 (M = 424.9 sec.) to T2 (M = 421.2 sec.) to T3 (M = 414.9 sec.). Group 2 improved significantly from T1 (M = 424.5 sec.) to T2 (M = 417.7 sec.) but not from T2 to T3 (M = 416.6 sec.). Group 2 produced faster times during T1 and T2, but Group 1 were faster during T3 and showed greater improvement in times from T1 to T3 (Group 1 = 10 sec, Group 2 = 7.9 sec., Cohen's δ = .33). Group 1 reported significantly greater adherence to the ThinkSmart routines and displayed test profiles (i.e., 500m split times) consistent with those of elite performers. Qualitative feedback showed that coaches attributed performance improvements, in part, to the ThinkSmart training. Results suggest potential benefits of ThinkSmart training for 2000m ergometer performance over repeated trials subject to adequate adherence, although new attentional routines may interfere with performance initially.

Reference

Lloyd, M., & Terry, P.C. (2006). What champions think: Optimal attentional strategies for 2000m rowing. In M. Katsikitis (Ed.), *Psychology bridging the Tasman: Science, culture and practice – Proceedings of the 2006 Joint Conference of the Australian Psychological Society and the New Zealand Psychological Society* (pp. 209-213). Melbourne, VIC: Australian Psychological Society.