

BEACON

Vol 1
Issue XII

NEWSLETTER

Psychology is a science of the behavior of living organisms. The application of this knowledge to real life is an art. 'Beacon' is an endeavor of Department of Psychology to bring about a confluence of this science and art. We have always been involved in the pursuit of attempts to ensure mental well being of one and all, at least in our sphere of influence. This is one more step in that direction.

From the Principal's desk

Sports are a vital part of our lives, offering numerous physical and emotional benefits. Yet, the pressure to perform, compete, and succeed can often take a toll on one's mental well-being. The demand to constantly prove oneself—whether on the field, court, or track—can be overwhelming. So how can athletes maintain their mental health while staying committed to excellence in sport? This important question has been explored by our students in this edition of Beacon. My compliments and best wishes to the team for choosing such a meaningful and timely theme.

Principal Dr. Archana Patki



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Burnout vs. Breakthrough



Therapy taught me to say no to practices and situations I didn't like."

- Grishma Asher, National Chess Champion
(Interviewer - Ms. Miloni Parekh)



"A strong mind can push a tired body to achieve extraordinary feats but when mental health is compromised, even the fittest body can feel like a burden."

-Nitisha, District Level Badminton Player
(Interviewer - Ms. Misha Gada)



"Therapy taught me that winning isn't always about crossing the finish line first - it's about pushing my limits and enjoying the journey."

- Marathon Runner
(Interviewer - Ms. Sana Shaikh)

Track reset – Visualising one lap at a time

Introduction

This report summarizes an interview with Ms. A, a female marathon runner, exploring how therapy shaped her career and mental approach to running. Her journey highlights the critical role of mental health in athletic success.

Journey into Running

At 28, Ms. A discovered running during a period of personal and professional turmoil. Initially, a therapeutic outlet, running evolved into a six-year professional career. Therapy helped her identify running as a passion, giving her purpose and direction.

Challenges Faced

Ms. A faced gruelling training schedules, injuries, and performance pressure. During her first major marathon preparation, self-doubt and stress caused sleepless nights, impacting her training. She questioned her abilities, which intensified her challenges.

Therapy's Role

Prompted by a friend, Ms. A sought therapy to address feelings of stagnation. Choosing a sports psychologist proved pivotal, aligning her mental health with her running goals. Her first session was empowering, dispelling initial hesitations about stigma.

Therapeutic Techniques

In therapy, Ms. A focused on overcoming self-doubt and managing stress through mindfulness, visualization, and reframing negative thoughts. Grounding exercises helped her manage race-day anxiety. A breakthrough came when she linked mental state to physical performance, incorporating positive affirmations and pre-race visualization into training.

Impact on Performance

Therapy transformed Ms. A's mental preparation, enabling a balanced mindset focused on personal growth. During a high-pressure race, deep breathing and visualization kept her calm, reinforcing that success is about pushing limits, not just winning.

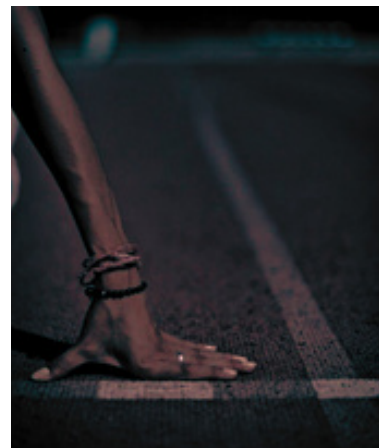
Advocacy and Reflections

Ms. A advocates for mental health support in sports, viewing vulnerability as strength. She suggests sports organizations collaborate with mental health professionals to destigmatize therapy. Reflecting, she credits therapy for making her a better runner and person.



Conclusion

Ms. A's journey underscores the transformative power of therapy in unlocking potential and fostering resilience. Her story emphasizes the need for integrated mental health support in athletics, inspiring athletes to thrive holistically.



THINKING THROUGH WATER- MASTERING THE RIPPLES WITHIN

Introduction

This report chronicles the journey of an international water polo athlete, detailing her challenges, triumphs, and personal growth. Water polo, a rigorous team sport played in a pool, blends swimming, handball, and soccer.

Journey into Water Polo

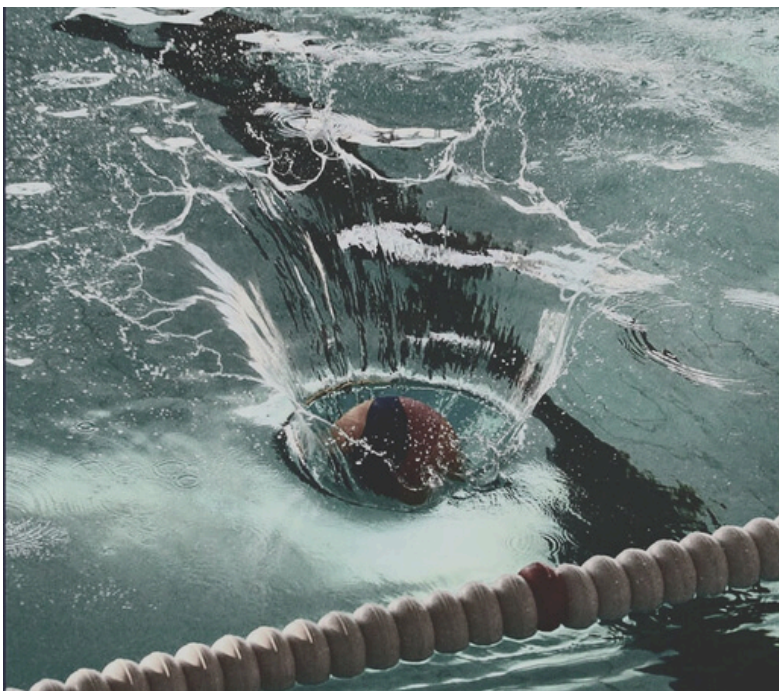
At 14, the athlete began playing water polo in Mumbai, leveraging her swimming prowess. Her coach, forming a girls' team, recognized her potential, sparking her interest. Through tournaments, she grew to love the sport, valuing teamwork's unique power, which deepened her dedication and shaped her athletic path.

Key Achievements

In 2019, at 16, she captained Mumbai's junior team, securing gold at district and state levels. This success led to her selection for Team India at the Asian Age Group Championship in Bengaluru. Though no medal was won, representing India was a cherished milestone, fueling her drive to excel.

Skills and Challenges

Water polo honed her alertness, quickness, consistency, and teamwork, skills that bolstered her Chartered Accountancy studies. During the 2019 National Games, her team's waning confidence challenged her mentally and physically. Coaches' encouragement and her resolve enabled a strong individual effort, despite the team's defeat.



Character and Teamwork

Seven years in water polo instilled confidence, patience, and perseverance, aiding her academic and athletic pursuits. She fosters team unity through mutual support, constructive feedback, and respect, ensuring all members feel valued and collectively tackle challenges.

Health and Support

Music helps manage pre-competition stress, while rest is key for injury recovery. Her slim physique poses challenges against stronger opponents, yet she adapts strategically. Her parents and coach provide unwavering support, guiding her through difficulties and boosting her mental resilience.

Mental Health and Future

Mental health is vital for focus and strategy in sports. While she never consulted a sports psychologist, she recognizes its potential. She plans to stay involved in water polo recreationally, maintaining an active lifestyle. She advises young athletes to prioritize mental and physical health for sustained success.

Conclusion

From a novice at 14 to an international competitor, the athlete's journey embodies resilience, teamwork, and growth.

A Comeback Beyond Court– Rising through rackets and reflection



The Journey of Badminton

This is the story of a 29-year-old deaf badminton player who rose to represent India at the national and international levels, winning two gold medals in the Deaf World Championships. His journey is one of passion, resilience, and self-discovery. Encouraged by his parents, his love for sports began in childhood. He started with tennis but soon shifted to badminton, which became more than just a game—it became his passion and identity.

Overcoming Barriers

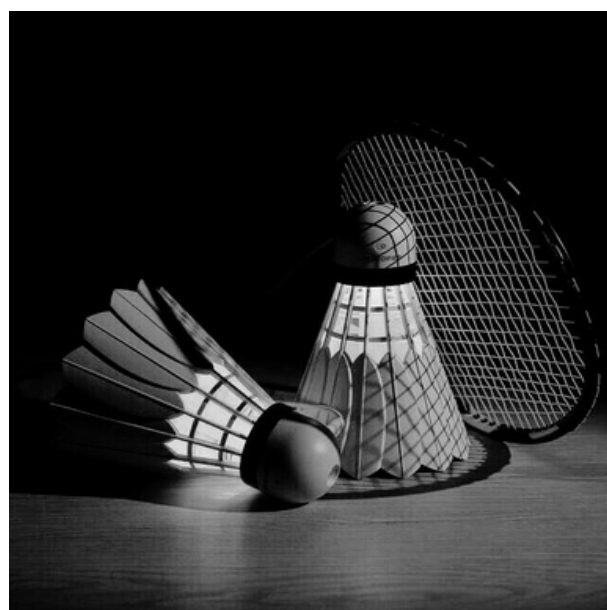
Being a deaf athlete came with unique challenges. During matches, he had to remove his cochlear implants, leaving him unable to hear. He relied on sign language to communicate with his coach and doubles partners. Despite limited visibility of sign language in mainstream culture and political hurdles in some national tournaments, he proudly represented India in 2011 and 2014, moments that reinforced his pride and purpose as an athlete.

Strength Beyond the Court

In 2015, he faced a serious lower back injury while preparing for the Deaf World Championship in Korea. With limited physical training, he leaned on his mental strength. In 2017, he competed in the Deaf Olympics without formal training, showing emotional resilience and deep determination.

Finding Purpose Beyond Sport

That same year, he struggled with depression, feeling lost without badminton. Therapy helped him cope with anxiety and negative thoughts. This healing journey led him to pursue a Master's in Clinical Psychology. He now supports others as a psychologist and coach, teaching practical tools like breathing exercises and body awareness to manage stress.



Inspiring Others

Though he sacrificed much, including social experiences, he never gave up. His advice to young players: follow what feels right and stay determined. His story continues to inspire others to overcome challenges and believe in themselves.

Queen on board– Moving pieces with Divergent grace



Introduction

Chess, known as the game of kings, has been a profound journey of growth, resilience, and discovery for 27-year-old national-level champion and multiple medalist Grishma Ma'am. In this candid interview, she shares her experiences, challenges, and how therapy has shaped her life on and off the chessboard.

Early Journey

Introduced to chess at age 2-3 by her father, a chess player himself, Grishma's early talent labeled her a prodigy. What started as a hobby soon turned into a professional passion, allowing her to travel, compete, and experience diverse cultures.

Role of Therapy

Initially, therapy was ineffective. Later, during her bachelor's degree, therapy helped her regain control, shifting focus from results to personal growth. Therapy taught her to say no, compartmentalize emotions, and manage her mental well-being during competitions. She valued having a safe space to vent and feel heard.

Mental Health in Chess

Grishma stresses that mental strength is vital in chess. Increasing awareness has made it more acceptable to address anxiety and take breaks. She advocates for every national team to include sports psychologists and encourages collaboration with clinical psychologists.



Challenges Faced:

Chess at a professional level required long hours—sometimes two games daily, each lasting up to eight hours. Years of rigorous practice tested her physical and mental limits. She

also faced FOMO (fear of missing out), missing out on social experiences like dating and simple pleasures. Her journey was further complicated by Undiagnosed autism and ADHD. Early counseling misinterpreted her struggles, causing emotional distress. Also stress led to severe health issues, including instances where she vomited blood.

Amidst everything her father supported her with grounding techniques, movies, shopping, and ensuring rest before tournaments.



Advice to Fellow Players

Grishma advises players to be patient with therapy, switch therapists if necessary, and keep therapy a personal journey without external pressures.

Conclusion

Grishma's story reflects resilience, vulnerability, and the critical role of mental health in chess. Her advocacy for mental well-being offers valuable insights and inspires others to seek support, break patterns, and prioritize emotional health alongside competitive success.

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