

# A Comparative Study Of Covid-19 Pandemic On Mental Toughness Of National Level Players Of Selected Team Games

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of society, including sports and the mental health of athletes. This study aimed to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the mental toughness of national level players in team games. The study revealed conflicting evidence about the effects of lockdown measures on the mental toughness of sports persons, underlining the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue. The study also highlighted the challenges faced by elite athletes and the need for coping mechanisms to address the long-term impact of the pandemic on their mental health. Despite the disruptions in the sports world, there are recommendations to support the safe reopening of sporting events and maximize the benefits of sport and physical activity during and after the pandemic.

**Keywords-** COVID-19 Pandemic, Mental Toughness and Team Games

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of society, including sports and the mental health of athletes ([Pandey, 2020](#)). According to a report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the pandemic has had considerable effects on the sporting world, as well as on the physical and mental well-being of people around the world. Specifically, the pandemic has led to the cancellation or postponement of sports events, causing disappointment and isolation for athletes ([Amemiya, 2023](#)). These disruptions in the sports world have had a profound effect on the mental toughness of national level players in team games. The study conducted by Pété et al in France emphasized the need for coping mechanisms to address the long-term impact of the pandemic on elite athletes' mental health ([Breckwoldt et al., 2022](#)). The inability to participate in sporting events has resulted in negative economic, health, and well-being issues for athletes ([Hamilton et al., 2021](#)). Furthermore, the United Nations has recognized the impact of COVID-19 on sport and physical activity and has issued recommendations to support the safe reopening of sporting events and maximize the benefits of sport and physical activity during and after the pandemic. Elite athletes are no exception to the mental health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic ([Mehrsafar et al., 2021](#)). The mental impact on national level players in team games can be attributed to the disruption of their training routines, uncertainty about their athletic careers, and the loss of competitive opportunities. These challenges have led to increased anxiety, stress, and depression among athletes. To address these mental health issues in national level players, it is crucial to understand the impact of the pandemic on their mental toughness. The literature underscores the importance of maintaining a training routine to safeguard the mental well-

being of athletes during times of uncertainty ([Guilherme et al., 2020](#)). By implementing strategies to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on their mental health, such as providing support systems and resources for athletes to cope with stress and adversity, we can help preserve their mental toughness and overall well-being. A comparative study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental toughness of national level players of selected team games is essential in order to understand the specific challenges faced by these athletes and to develop targeted interventions to support their mental health and resilience. In light of these findings, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental toughness of national level players in team games. The literature highlights the importance of continuing with a training routine to protect the athlete's mental health, especially attempting to reduce the risk of anxiety and depression. ([Amemiya, 2023](#))([Merry et al., 2020](#))([Chwaszcz et al., 2020](#)) In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health and mental toughness of national level players in team games. As a result, it is crucial for sports organizations and authorities to prioritize the mental well-being of these athletes and implement strategies to support their resilience and overall mental health. According to various studies and literature, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental toughness of national level players in team games. The disruption of training routines, uncertainty about athletic careers, and loss of competitive opportunities have contributed to increased anxiety, stress, and depression among these athletes. In response to these challenges, it is important for organizations and authorities to provide support systems and resources to help athletes cope with the mental health implications of the pandemic.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The purpose of the study was to compare mental toughness of selected team players from Agra Uttar Pradesh, India. The national level subjects for this study were selected using purposive sampling technique from different clubs, sports stadiums. The age of selected subjects was between 18 to 25 years.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF TEST**

The concept of mental toughness has long been of interest in fields such as sports and psychology. Many researchers and practitioners have developed theories and tools to assess and develop mental toughness in individuals. One commonly used tool is the Mental Toughness Questionnaire developed by Alan Goldberg. This questionnaire measures mental toughness in five categories: Rebound ability, Handling Pressure, Concentration, Confidence, and Motivation. ([Hatachi et al., 2019](#)) The idea behind this questionnaire is that mental toughness plays a crucial role in individuals' ability to participate in outdoor adventure activities and that engaging in these activities can further enhance their mental toughness ([Clough et al., 2016](#)). To assess an individual's mental toughness in various areas such as resilience, pressure handling, concentration, confidence, and motivation, the Mental Toughness Questionnaire can be administered as a reliable and validated measure.

The purpose and description of the questionnaire on mental toughness was explained to the subjects through a google meet. The data was collected during 2021 lockdown phase (1<sup>st</sup> Sep to 30<sup>th</sup> Sep). Questionnaire was given in a Google form, instructions and directions were read by the scholar at dictation speed to make the subjects understand what they were exactly required to do. All subjects responded independently. There was no time limit for the completion of the questionnaire but the subjects were instructed not to ponder too long over any statement.

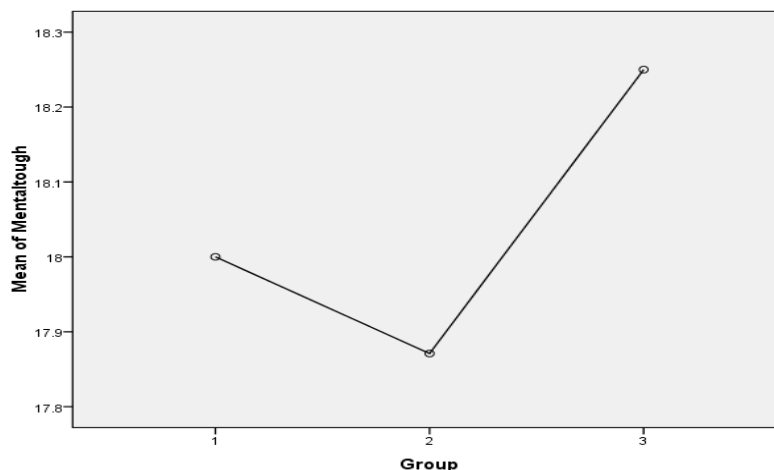
## **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE**

To assess the mental resilience of participants chosen from cricket, volleyball, or basketball players, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were also presented. The significance level was set at 0.05.

**RESULTS**

Game	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cricket,	16	18.00	2.029
Volleyball	30	17.87	2.837
Basketball	10	18.25	2.252
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>17.96</b>	<b>2.493</b>

**Table No. 1** Mean and Standard Deviation of National players of selected team Games comparison to mental toughness.



**Figure No. 1** Line graph representing Mean and Standard Deviation of mental toughness of selected team games.

Table and Fig No. 1 represents the descriptive statistics of selected subjects from team game i.e., Cricket ( $N_1=16$ ) Volleyball ( $N_2=30$ ), and Basketball ( $N_3=10$ ). For Cricketer players the mental toughness mean and standard deviation was  $18 \pm 2.029$ , whereas for Volleyball and Basketball players mental toughness mean and standard deviation was  $17.87 \pm 2.83$  and  $18.25 \pm 2.252$  respectively.

Mental toughness	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Variation					
Between Groups	.946	2	.473	.074	.929
Within Groups	346.984	54	6.426		
Total	347.930	56			

**Table No.-2** One-Way Analysis of Variance

Tabel No.2 represents the mean comparison of more than two groups through selected test statistics i.e., analysis of variance. The F-value (0.74) was found to be insignificant as p-value is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Which means that the null hypothesis of equal means of mental toughness was accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Hence no-pos hoc analysis was done.

**Discussion of Findings**

It was initially hypothesized that there may be insignificant difference among various team game National players in relation to pandemic scenario, after calculating the gathered data and interpretation the null hypothesis were accepted in case of mental toughness of selected team game national players. The data was analysed using ANOVA test statistics to find the mental toughness during pandemic on team games of national players of Cricket, basketball or volleyball are presented in Table No. 2. Within

the limitations of the present study, the insignificant differences were found within in the group or between the groups. The observed sequence was found in groups within the group was greater than between the group in case of mental toughness which can conclude there was somehow similar mental toughness level across the selected groups during pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant global impacts, including the enforcement of lockdown measures to curb the spread of the virus. During this time, various aspects of people's lives were affected, including sports and athletics. Physical activity plays a crucial role in maintaining both physical health and mental well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Iskandarsyah et al., 2022](#)). Regular exercise helps strengthen the immune system, reducing the risk of getting sick and enhancing the body's ability to fight off infections. ([Kumar & Jhajharia, 2018](#)) Additionally, engaging in physical activity releases endorphins, which are known as "feel-good" hormones, leading to improved mood and decreased levels of stress. Lockdown measures and shelter-in-place orders have disrupted the daily routine and habits of many individuals, limiting opportunities for physical activity ([Kaushal et al., 2020](#)). As a result, it is important for individuals to find creative ways to stay active and prioritize exercise during these challenging times. Numerous studies have explored the effects of lockdown on mental health, including its impact on athletes' mental toughness. However, there is conflicting evidence regarding the effect of lockdown on the mental toughness of sports persons. Some studies have suggested that lockdown measures can indeed have a negative impact on the mental toughness of athletes. For example, a study conducted by Pons et al. found that the COVID-19 lockdown in Spain had a negative impact on the mental health and resilience of young athletes ([Bilić, 2022](#)). On the other hand, it is important to consider the potential positive effects of lockdown on athletes' mental toughness. Despite the challenges posed by the restrictions, some athletes have demonstrated remarkable resilience during this time. Research conducted by L, Abi, et al in the US found that psychological resilience during the COVID-19 outbreak may have mitigated the negative effects of the pandemic, alleviating anxiety and maintaining mental health among individuals. Additionally, the adaptability and perseverance shown by athletes in the face of disrupted training and competition schedules also point towards the potential for growth and enhanced mental toughness during challenging times. While the negative impact of lockdown on athletes' mental health cannot be denied, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential for resilience and growth in the face of adversity. ([Sung & Lee, 2023](#)) ([Txi et al., 2022](#)) For instance, a study by Adams-P et al. found no significant impact of the coronavirus lockdown on mental health among athletes in the US. ([Bilić, 2022](#)) Therefore, it can be concluded that the effects of lockdown on athletes' mental toughness may vary based on individual factors such as coping strategies, support systems, and personal resilience. Overall, the effect of lockdown on the mental toughness of sports persons is still uncertain and varies according to individual circumstances and factors ([Pla et al., 2021](#)). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns on athletes' mental toughness and resilience have garnered significant attention within the scientific community. This scrutiny has revealed conflicting evidence about the effects of lockdown measures on the mental toughness of sports persons, underlining the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to determine mental toughness of selected team game athletes and compare them. According the results of study there was no significant difference obtained for mental toughness among selected Cricket, Volleyball and Basketball players. According to this and other aligned researches mental toughness is an individual matter and impact of pandemic on it is very difficult to understand and interpret. Hence the researcher advocates for Further investigations are needed to fully understand the prolonged effects of lockdown measures on the mental well-being of athletes. The impact of the pandemic on mental health may also vary across different social groups and countries. It is clear that the mental and physical well-being of elite athletes has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for continued support and research in this area.

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