

Anticipation and Imagery Skill Level Differences of Judo Coaches

Itay Basevitch¹, Rebeka Prosoli², Dagmara Budnik-Przybylska³, Claire Rossato⁴

¹*Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK*

²*University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia*

³*University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland*

⁴*University of Greenwich, London, UK*

The ability to anticipate what will happen next has been studied extensively with athletes (Mann et al., 2007). Studies have generally found that higher-level athletes are able to anticipate earlier and more accurately than lower-level athletes, which provides them with an advantage in the decision making process and subsequently in choosing the best decision. Furthermore, the use of imagery among athletes has been studied extensively (e.g., Bhasavanija et al., 2011). Findings pertaining to differences among skill level indicate that higher-level athletes have better imagery ability skills than lower-level athletes (Williams & Cumming, 2011). Limited research has been conducted on anticipation ability and imagery use among coaches. This is surprising since coaches have reported imagery use across sports such as basketball and gymnastics (Short et al., 2005). Furthermore, in many sports coaches need to provide instructions to players by understanding what happened and predicting what will happen next, i.e., anticipation (Ford et al., 2009; Grundel et al., 2013). Thus, the purpose of the current study was to examine imagery ability (e.g., vividness, duration, perspective) and anticipation abilities among low, moderate and high skilled judo coaches. Sixty-five judo coaches from a European country who have been coaching from 1–39 years ($M = 11.74$, $SD = 10.27$) and have competed for 1–45 years ($M = 13.57$, $SD = 7.73$) participated in the study. Coaches reported imagery use and ability during coaching on a 7-item imagery questionnaire (Razon et al., 2010). In addition, coaches reported their subjective coaching and anticipation ability. Actual anticipation ability was measured using the occlusion paradigm in which coaches watched clips of matches in judo stopped just before an attacking action by a judoka. Results indicated that high-level coaches rated their ability to anticipate and provide instructions higher than low-level coaches. Furthermore, higher-level coaches reported more control of the image when using imagery, and used an internal perspective when viewing the videos of the judo matches compared to

medium-level coaches. Findings showed that similar to athletes, higher-level coaches have higher imagery and anticipation abilities compared to lower-level coaches and have higher levels of confidence in their coaching ability in general. Future studies should examine the relationship between objective coaching abilities and imagery use.

