Mental Cage: A Qualitative Analysis of the Mental Game in the Sport of Mixed Martial Arts

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Abstract
Past research dealing with power sports has dealt mainly with the effects of participation in such sports as boxing and wrestling (Endresen & Olweus, 2005). Results have shown that participation in such sports has led to an increase and enhancement of violent and nonviolent antisocial behavior outside of sport (Endresen & Olweus, 2005; Bloom & Smith, 1996). The sport psychology literature has thus far failed to encompass the lived experience or possible themes that arise that stem from being a part of this culture. The purpose of this study was to examine the amateur Mixed Martial Arts athlete and their experience with mental skill usage in both training and competing. This study utilized existential phenomenological methodology and a humanistic framework. Data was collected from a purposive sample of six amateur MMA fighters. Results were analyzed to uncover possible common themes experienced by the amateur MMA athlete.

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