



The Hidden Power of Patience in Athletic Success: A Comprehensive Narrative Review

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Article Info

Article type:

Review Article

How to cite this article:

Abdollahi Dehkordi, A. M., & Taheri, M. (2025). The Hidden Power of Patience in Athletic Success: A Comprehensive Narrative Review. *Health Nexus*, 3(2), 93-102.

<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.hn.3.2.11>



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ABSTRACT

Success in sport has traditionally been attributed to physical fitness, technical skill, and mental resilience, with grittiness—determination and passion for long-term goals—reigning supreme over the last decade. This narrative synthesis brings together recent research to position patience as an individual construct, and how it is used in performance enhancement, injury rehabilitation, learning of skills, and career duration. The review sets out to classify patience into three dimensions—interpersonal, life hardships, and daily hassles—and compares it with equivalent constructs like grit, self-control, and mental toughness. Dual-process theory and temporal motivation theory are the theoretical models used to describe patience's cognitive and motivational mechanisms. Patience has been found to have evidence for its effectiveness in enhancing decision-making, emotion regulation, and attentional focus, as well as moderating physiological stress and recovery from injury. Practical applications to coaches, athletes, and sport psychologists are discussed, and suggestions for enhancing patience with targeted interventions are presented. By completing the gaps in the literature, this review argues for more visibility for patience as a critical component of sporting success.

Keywords: *Patience, Athletic Success, Performance*

1. Introduction

Athletic achievement has long been understood as a product of rigorous physical training, technical mastery and psychological flexibility. While a combination of firmness and continuous passion for grit- long-term goals- the game dominates the discussion in psychology, patience as a discrete and equally important psychological factor has been given little attention to patience (1, 2). This review takes patience as a complementary and independent trait and examines its role in performance improvement, rehabilitation, and extended athlete development. Sport psychology has explicitly studied phenomena such as mental

toughness (3), self-regulation (4), and psychological skills training (5), all of which are now pillars of athlete preparation. Patience—defined in this context as the ability to endure delays, adversity, or discomfort without frustration or discomfort—is, however, an under investigated characteristic of profound application to athletic settings. Although bigger structures like emotional control have a different temporal component, patience entails a conscious embrace of process and delayed gratification (6). It is therefore particularly critical when progress is not linear, such as in rehabilitation from injury, acquiring skills at an early stage, plateauing in performance, and competitive

reversals (6). Brown and Fletcher's (2017) meta-analysis of psychological sport interventions reaffirmed the significant role that the mental plays in the determination of performance outcomes, but their study was standard in failing to control for patience as a separate variable (7). Similarly, Balk and Englert (2020) referred to the necessity of recovery self-regulation in sport—a process necessarily dependent on patience, given the uncertainty of physiological and psychological recovery (6). This review synthesizes emerging research on patience in sport, bridging gaps between established psychological theories and this underappreciated characteristic. Considering patience in various areas—performance maximization, rehabilitation, skill learning, and longevity of career—it tries to clarify how patience functions as an athletic psychological resource. This review also examines effective methods for developing patience, offering evidence-based advice to athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists. By going through this extensive analysis, the review encourages greater recognition of patience as a core aspect of sporting success.

2. Methodology

To conduct this narrative review of how patience contributes to success in sport, a systematic approach was employed to search and synthesize the relevant literature. The search strategy in the literature was to interrogate a number of academic databases, viz. PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and PsycINFO, with a set of keywords such as "patience," "sports psychology," "athletic performance," "injury rehabilitation," and "psychological resilience." Boolean operators AND and OR were used to focus the search, and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms and free-text terms were used to give broad coverage. The inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed articles from 2000 to 2023 that specifically addressed psychological constructs of patience in sport environments. Both empirical studies and theoretical papers were included, with particular consideration being given to studies specifically addressing endurance sports, tactical sports, combat sports, and team processes. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies that were primarily addressing non-sports patience or not published in the English language.

3. Conceptual Foundations of Patience in Sports

In sport, patience is so much more than "waiting around." It's a rather subtle psychological trait that is at the heart of performance and development over time. Schnitker (2012) defines patience as the ability to stay calm in the face of frustration, adversity, or suffering. Applied to sports, this concept takes the next step and includes a sportsman's ability to remain vigilant, emotionally resilient, and committed towards long-term goals—even if results do not occur as predicted (8). To get a better grip on patience within the sporting domain, let us break it down into three vital aspects: interpersonal patience, adversity in life patience, and daily hassles patience.

Interpersonal patience is how good players handle relationships with teammates, coaches, officials, and opponents. For team sport, with teamwork and communication being so large a factor, patience here is especially important. Coppel (2015) has a valid point that stresses typically happen between the coach and the player under unfavorable conditions, like reaching a performance impasse or where there is need for technological change. Competitive sport athletes with interpersonal patience can handle these challenges without losing their cool, establishing trust and collaboration in spite of adversity (9). Adversity patience is called for in life adversity when athletes are faced with grave challenges, e.g., severe injury, prolonged slump, or career transformation. Brand and Nyland (2009) indicated that personality traits like patience play an important role in successful recovery from injury. Players who can ride these challenges with patience are in a better position to reframe failure as an temporary setback and retain their enthusiasm and dedication towards long-term development (10).

Finally, patience for hassles is all about dealing with the small, daily annoyances inherent in athletic training—drills that repeat endlessly, slow improvement, or body wear. In contrast to dramatic setbacks, these challenges are unrelenting but subtle and require a special sort of grit. Buckley et al. (2014) illustrated that cognitive control—a term essentially synonymous with patience—is required to stick with training protocols when the immediate payoffs are not forthcoming. For example, daily hassles patience is employed by endurance athletes to overcome fatigue and goal persistence. These three dimensions—interpersonal, life hardship, and daily hassles patience—offer a more

detailed way of thinking about patience in sports. This theory gets past the vague notion of "being patient" and identifies how patience influences achievement in sports (11). As Barakou et al. (2023) explain in their pacing model, effective self-regulation requires situation-specific strategies, as they must learn different kinds of patience depending on the challenges they face (12).

4. The Role of Patience in Sports Performance

4.1. *Reduced Impulsivity in Decision-Making*

Competition sports tend to punish impulsive responses—either a hurried shot in basketball, a misplaced tackle in soccer, or a thrown pass in football. Patience is the antidote to these tendencies by eliciting thoughtful, situation-behavioral responses even in distress. Buckley et al. (2014) characterized impulse inhibition as a vital element of sports cognitive control in which decisions under time pressure must reconcile risk and reward (11). The advantage is specifically visible in high-pressure situations. A nervous patient point guard, for instance, resists the urge to attempt a forced, contested shot when trailing late in a game, opting to wait for a higher-percentage opportunity. Similarly, Patel et al. (2010) learned that young people vulnerable to performance anxiety fall into impulsive choice, thereby working against their own achievement. Patience, on the other hand, becomes a stabilizer, allowing sportspersons to stick to strategy rather than succumbing to affective reactivity (13). Secondly, as per Hagger et al. (2009), self-regulation degrades over a period of time—sportspersons become more susceptible to rash decision-making as fatigue sets in. Patience makes up for the slump by maintaining mental energy so that even towards the final minutes of a marathon match, decision-making never falters (14).

4.2. *Enhanced Emotional Regulation*

Competition is replete with affective triggers: a referee's wrong call, an opponent's provocation, or an isolated mistake at a critical moment. Without regulation of emotions, frustration mounts and performance goes awry. Patience, by contrast, results in what Balk and Englert (2020) called "recovery self-regulation"—the ability to handle missteps without getting bogged down by them (6). Envision a tennis player who narrowly misses a break point

due to an uncertain line call. An angry reaction—ranting at the umpire or smashing a racket—dissipates energy and destroys concentration. A restrained player, instead, sees frustration but quickly recalibrates, refocusing attention on the subsequent point. Patel et al. (2010) discovered that more emotionally regulated athletes perform more steadily under pressure, implying that patience acts as a protective shield against competitive stress (13). This ability is particularly important in endurance events, where emotional mismanagement can cause early burnout. A marathon runner who becomes impatient with a slow initial pace may surge too early, burning out before the end. Patience is not passivity then, but rather deliberate emotional economy—save up psychological resources for when they are most valuable.

4.3. *Increased Attentional Focus*

The ability to concentrate amidst distractions—crowds, physical discomfort, or past failure—is a virtue of elite-level athletes. Patience supports this virtue by keeping attention in the here and now, not past failures or concerns in the future. McCormick et al. (2019) observed that endurance athletes rely on patience to keep concentrating on pacing and form despite increasing tiredness. Similarly, a golfer who has lost an easy putt must avoid dwelling on the mistake; patience allows them to begin anew and shoot the next shot with single focus (4). McNevin et al. (2000) demonstrated that focused attention optimizes motor learning and performance, so patient athletes don't just play better—they learn better. The benefit varies by sport. In fast-paced team sports, patience helps discriminate between irrelevant information (e.g., insults) and task-related information while kept informed of strategic circumstances. In precision sports like shooting or archery, it allows precise repetition of habit in spite of contest anxiety (15).

5. Physiological and Behavioral Effects of Patience on Sport Performance

While the psychological benefits of patience are well-documented, its scope extends to physiological and behavioral domains, influencing athlete performance, recovery, and strategy. These effects are not ancillary—they enhance performance, accelerate recovery, and improve competitive decision-making. Through the lenses of stress

physiology, injury rehabilitation, and strategic behavior, we uncover a multiple-resource resource that operates at biological and tactical levels.

5.1. *Patience as a Physiological Stress Regulator*

Competition sports expose athletes to excessive physiological stress, triggering cortisol release—a hormonal response that, once prolonged, can weaken cognitive function, motor precision, and energy control. In this case, patience acts as a biological moderator that helps athletes maintain balance under stress. Heaney et al.'s (2015) study found that stress-reduction techniques using patience—like mindful breathing and acceptance-based coping—lower cortisol levels, maintaining both mental clarity and physical functioning. This is especially critical in endurance competitions or high-stakes competitions where cumulative stress hastens the decline of decision-making with time (16). Patel et al. (2010) also demonstrated that cortisol spikes are linked to competitive anxiety and that patient athletes may be afflicted by adaptive dampening of stress reactions to sustain optimal performance for longer (13). Patience even alters physiological adaptation during training. Mok et al. (2022) illustrated that athletes who are able to tolerate discomfort without excessive stress response recover better, optimizing long-term adaptation. A distance runner, for instance, who gradually builds up mileage rather than forcing rapid increments, avoids overtraining syndrome but still achieves physiological adaptation (17).

5.2. *Patience in Injury Rehabilitation: The Hidden Catalyst*

Injury rehabilitation is rarely linear, and impatience—doing too much, too quickly—most frequently leads to setbacks. Patience, conversely, promotes adherence to rehabilitation protocols while softening the psychological blow of enforced inactivity. Brand & Nyland (2009) found that ACL-recovery patients with higher patience levels exhibited more effective functional outcomes than those with similar physical starting points but less psychological strength (10). Similarly, Goddard et al. (2021) discovered acceptance and emotional regulation—patience's essential components—to be key predictors of rehab adherence. Athletes who navigate plateaus patiently are more likely to execute prescribed exercises correctly, without relying on

compensatory movements that delay healing (18). Neurologically, patience even enables recovery. Motor imagery—a purposeful, patient mental rehearsal of movement—strengthens neural pathways, effectively "prehabbing" the body for return to play. A gymnast visualizing routines while injured, for example, maintains neuromuscular engagement even in the short term despite physical limitations (18). The risks of impatience are obvious. Lepley (2015) linked premature return-to-play after ACL surgery to lingering strength deficits and reinjury. Patience, then, is not passive waiting—it's active participation in recovery, ensuring total restoration rather than rushed compromise (19).

5.3. *Patience as a Strategic Weapon*

In competition, patience separates reactive from strategic athletes. From chess-boxing's physical-mental duality to a fencer's timed lunge, the ability to wait until the time of optimal advantage is a hallmark of top performance. Gould & Maynard (2009) indicated Olympians don't just excel via ability but by making more intelligent decisions in moments of tension—a by-product of patience (20). This manifests in: Risk assessment:

- Patient athletes avoid low-percentage plays, like a basketball team milking the clock for a final shot rather than rushing.
- Resource allocation: Marathoners who patiently conserve energy early outperform those who surge prematurely.
- Temporal precision: In archery, patient release timing improves accuracy by 12-18% (21).

Even pre-competition, patience enables preparation. Slimani et al. (2016) found that mental imagery—a patient, focused rehearsal—heightens subsequent strength performance by 5-8%, showing that strategic patience physically prepares the body (22).

6. **Patience in Different Sporting Situations**

6.1. *Endurance Sports (Marathon, Cycling)*

The most obvious manifestation of patience in endurance sports is in pacing strategy, where energy expenditure must be exactly controlled to avoid premature exhaustion (23). The so-called "hitting the wall"—a state of severe energy

depletion typically occurring in the latter stages of a race—typically comes from impatience in the early stages, as athletes overexert themselves from competitive pressure or adrenaline. McCormick et al. (2019) emphasize the role of self-regulation in pacing, with patience-like traits being closely linked to optimum energy expenditure (4). Top marathon athletes, for instance, record highly even splits across the 42.195-kilometer distance, resisting the urge to chase bold pacemakers. This control preserves glycogen stores and neuromuscular resilience, allowing quicker finishes. Barakou et al. (2023) build upon this dynamic, theorizing a multidimensional pacing model in which patience serves as a mediating influence between actual performance and physiological potential. According to their work, even among athletes of the same fitness level, individuals with greater self-regulatory patience will outperform their less restrained counterparts consistently. (12).

Beyond physiological endurance, mental endurance—the capacity for sustaining concentration and tactical clarity in the presence of mounting fatigue—dictates endurance performance. That the ability to endure discomfort, ward off motivational slumps, or maintain technical precision in the presence of pressure cannot be physically trained. Buckley et al. (2014) identified executive functions of patience, such as delayed gratification and impulse control, as basic predictors of persistence in prolonged physical exertion (11). This cognitive component becomes especially salient in ultra-endurance events, where athletes struggle not only with muscular fatigue but also with sleep deprivation, nutrition depletion, and environmental extremes. The Tour de France, for example, demands not just physical capacity but patience to survive three weeks of cumulative stress and adhering to race strategy. Hardy and Nelson (1988) observed that training in self-control not only enhances endurance but also the ability to maintain proper form when fatigued—a measure of the qualitative influence of patience on performance (24). Crust (2007) encapsulates this interaction as "mental toughness," a construct that mediates psychological resilience and physiological capability (3).

The role of patience in endurance sport functions on several time scales. Within the immediate timeframe of competition, it regulates pacing decisions, making sure energy stores are wisely allocated. On a weekly and monthly

basis, it guides the progression of training, modulating intensity and recovery to optimize adaptation and reduce the risk of injury. On the scale of a career, patience underlies long-term growth, precluding the chase of unrealistic peaks that could undermine an athlete's overall path. This multiscale effect emphasizes patience as a psychological cornerstone—one that dictates not only race-day outcomes but the very direction of an athlete's career.

6.2. Tactical Sports (*Futsal, Basketball, Tennis*)

Tactical sports—characterized by rapid decision-making, adaptive strategy, and psychological warfare—provide an intriguing context for the study of patience as a determinant of performance. Unlike endurance sports, where energy conservation is managed by patience, tactical disciplines call for a more energetic form of restraint: the ability to restrain spontaneous action while remaining prepared to strike at the right moment (25). Victory in futsal, basketball, and tennis typically hinges on the interactive tension between calculated patience and blowup action, which makes them well adapted to understanding how strategic waiting translates into competitive advantage.

One of the things that define elite tactical athletes is their ability to eschew low-percentage shots in lieu of waiting for optimal opportunities. This restraint is not passive but highly deliberate—a choice to string out possession, play games with defensive positioning, or extend out rallies until an insurmountable advantage has been gained. Gould and Maynard (2009) study of Olympic athlete's also mentions that great performers are great at assessing when to attack and when to press, and the former stems from patience under pressure (20). Patient offense sets in basketball, for instance, involving additional passes and defensive probing, always yield shots of greater percentage than rushed attempts. Even skilled players suffer from efficiency losses when hurrying contested shots too soon, making patience a decisive factor in quality of execution. Similarly, in tennis, unforced errors—usually the consequence of impatient shot selection—are more consequential than outright winners. McNevin et al. (2000) found that attentional control, a cognitive component of patience, enhances motor accuracy in high-stakes environments, demonstrating that stringent decision-making directly contributes to technical performance (15).

Other than bodily movement, tactical sports are battles of psychological endurance, in which patience is both a shield and a weapon. Novak Djokovic's superiority in tennis, for example, is partly because he can tolerate long baseline wars, testing the mental and bodily limits of adversaries even when he can finish off points earlier. This is in line with Kahneman's (2011) dual-process theory: by actively taking cognitively effortful, patient strategies, elite athletes force opponents into automatic—and often error-laden—responses (26). Patel et al. (2010) demonstrated that more patient-resilient athletes are more resistant to psychological pressure, including trash talk, momentum effects, and strategic gamesmanship. In basketball, top-level sides weather opponent runs without conceding their sets, and in futsal, disciplined sides weather desperate attack throws that leave them exposed on the back foot (13). Meta-analysis by Brown and Fletcher (2017) confirmed that psychological resilience—with patience at the center of this—strongly predicts consistency of performance in dynamic, high-pressure environments (7).

Arguably the most interesting aspect of patience in tactical sports is how it exists alongside explosiveness. Unlike endurance competitions, where effort is distributed equally, sports like tennis, basketball, and futsal demand what might be referred to as explosive patience—the capacity to be strategically held back while being physically and mentally coiled to unleash at the perfect time. A tennis player, for instance, must be tactically disciplined during extended rallies but flip into an attacking approach shot at the moment when an opportunity arises. Disciplined half-court basketball play does not rule out transition shooting in an instant when the defense is disrupted. The players of futsal must also reconcile defensive organization with the readiness to initiate fatal counterattacks within a few seconds. This double-sidedness sets elite athletes apart: they shun both aggressive impulsivity and passive hesitation, opting instead to develop the timing of when to hold back and when to strike.

6.3. *Combat Sports (Boxing, MMA)*

Combat sports are an odd proving ground for witnessing patience in athletic competition, where naked physicality meets sophisticated strategy and psychological warfare. Boxing and MMA are anomalous in that they require

athletes to not only master their own emotional states but to engage in deliberate goading of an opponent who is actively attempting to disturb their tranquility. In such a high-stakes environment, patience is both a strategic necessity and a psychological buffer—one that separates great fighters from hot-headed brawlers. At the foundation of combat sports lies a built-in conflict between aggression and self-control. Brawlers, on one side, rely on choking offense at the expense of defensive mastery. Against them are counter-strikers, who are the masters of patience—waiting for opponents to overcommit and then capitalizing with precise, fight-altering responses. Slimani et al. (2016) studies suggest that more patient people with greater patience-related traits perform better in counter-striking approaches. This patience pays dividends a great many greater than mere effectiveness; historical data show that technical fighters like Floyd Mayweather Jr., who prefer disciplined defense and selective attack, have longer careers and accumulate less total damage than do their more aggressive counterparts (22). Wagman and Khelifa (1996) also reported that patient fighters receive significantly fewer strikes, and they demonstrate how tactical restraint is both a performance enhancer and a safety device (27). The moral is clear: in combat sports, impatience is rewarded less quickly than in any other situation. One wild exchange can produce a fight-stopping counter, and therefore the ability to wait—adrenaline, crowd noise, or opponent's trash talk aside—is an absolute requirement at the top level.

In sports that emphasize grappling like wrestling, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, and ground fighting in MMA, patience looks differently but no less significantly. Here, elite athletes understand that victories are often not the product of explosive submissions but the slow, methodical leeching of an opponent's energy. A patient grappler can sit in a controlling position—e.g., mount or back control—without hastening to seek a finish. They accomplish that, however, gradually exhaust their adversary, hoping fatigue will dismantle resistance before they intensify. This is according to Hagger et al.'s (2009) strength model of self-regulation, whereby patience behaves like a muscle: it could be strained briefly but built long-term through practice in a deliberate manner (14). This "grind them down" culture fulfills what Steel and König (2006) refer to as temporal motivation theory: willingness to give up short-term pleasure for a better

likelihood of ultimate success (28). MMA artists like Demian Maia or Khabib Nurmagomedov captured this idea through controlling pressure and positional skill that wore out opponents mentally and physically before finishing them off with submissions.

Arguably there is no sport that demands the management of emotion as desperately as combat sports. Fighters must master not just their own fear and adrenaline but opponents' psychological game-playing—feints, trash talking, and deliberate attempts to get them crazed. Literature highlights the imperative of patience once again. Olin and Westhoff (2018) found that more emotionally controlled fighters—an essential aspect of patience—handled pressure better all the time. This can mostly be observed in championship fights, where composure usually determines fights among top-level competitors (29).

6.4. Team Dynamics

Team leadership contexts represent particularly gratifying situations for contemplating the functioning of patience within team structures, especially those between experienced veterans and enhancing team members (1, 30). Effective team leaders typically demonstrate superior interpersonal patience in teaching less veteran colleagues through developmental steps, competitively playing against opponents, and changing roles without making complaints or stopping positive interventions. The patience manifestation includes tolerating changing performances, informational limitations, and adjustment periods without displaying irritability or cessation of motivating measures. Van Raalte et al. (1993) examined interpersonal processes among sports teams and found that leadership characteristics associated with patience predict team cohesion and individual development rates of young players, suggesting that patient leadership produces important team-level performance gains over contributions. This tension comes into play particularly in development contexts where success relies on the capacity to integrate fresh players into existing systems at the expense of making veterans have to balance short-run performance needs and longer-run team development necessities (31). Gould and Maynard (2009) also noted that successful Olympic teams demonstrate superb experience level integration, meaning leadership by tolerance-exhibiting older experienced players creates

performance climates that maximize collective potential rather than simply profiting from already established performers (20). The patient guidance by veteran players creates what Wallace et al. (2021) called strength-based development strategies that enhance individual progressions as well as team-level performance outcomes.

Conflict resolution is one more team dynamics area where patience is crucial for both interpersonal and group performance. The interdependent, high level of team sport inevitably generates interpersonal conflicts regarding playing time, strategic tactics, performance causation, and leadership composition that need to be resolved patiently constructively (32). Coppel (2015) experimented with psychological aspects of team sports and found that communication patterns related to patience were predictors of successful conflict resolution without performance disruption, and interpersonal patience seems to act as a buffer against team dysfunctions following unavoidable conflicts. This dynamic emerges in the forefront during competitive adversity, when such teams with higher collective patience tend to maintain communication quality and tactical discipline despite performance stress that otherwise would trigger blame allocation and communication breakdown (9). Balk and Englert (2020) quoted that team settings require reciprocal patience to process competitive frustration without relational harm, highlighting the role of patience in team effectiveness through oscillating performance (6). The patience exhibited in effective conflict resolution in teams is a model of interpersonal patience—the capacity to maintain helping engagement despite frustration or disagreement with others' behavior or opinions (8).

The factor of time in team building offers a second platform upon which patience becomes a key in collaborative outcomes since team's progress from formation, to adaptation, to performance phases requiring adequate developmental patience rather than initial expectations of performance. Hardy and Nelson (1988) argued that team development entails orderly sequences of phases and related patience abilities at specific phases, suggesting proportional patience allocation by developmental timeliness significantly shapes ultimate potential for team performance (24). Such shaping tends to particularly occur in novice teams or teams with rampant

roster turnover such that initial performance exigency brings counterintuitive intervention measures, which subsequently inhibit quality development processes required. Brown and Fletcher (2017) demonstrated through meta-analysis that appropriate developmental patience predicts final team sport performance levels, affirming the worth of accepting developmental processes rather than demanding early performance maximization (7). Patience required for effective team development demonstrates what Kahneman (2011) referred to as resistance to the planning fallacy—the tendency to underestimate time requirements for complex processes like team coordination development (26).

7. Limitations and Future Directions

While patience is increasingly acknowledged as a coveted psychological resource in sport, some limitations in current literature must be overcome. Firstly, much research on patience rests on correlational studies, rather than causal. For example, while research correlates patience with enhanced recovery from injury, it remains unclear if patience itself contributes directly to recovery or if some intervening factor (e.g., social support) mediates the association. Second, measurement of patience varies between studies, such that some measure by behavioral outcomes (e.g., rehabilitation adherence) and others self-reporting measures. Heterogeneity prevents comparing across studies and underscores the requirement for uniform measurement tools. Third, cultural differences in the experience and expression of patience are not researched well, even though there is some indication that cultural norms influence psychological factors like grit and self-control. Finally, the majority of work has focused on elite athletes, with much yet to be known about the role of patience in amateur or youth sport environments.

Future research must establish the causal role of patience in sport through longitudinal and experiment designs, rather than correlational evidence. Sport-specific measures will enhance rigor, enabling precise differentiation from related constructs. Cultural and contextual variation research will reveal nuances in expressions of patience, informing targeted interventions. Youth sport is crucial, examining how development of patience influences long-term participation and well-being. Combining technology, such as machine learning and biometrics, offers objective real-

time feedback concerning the physiological and behavioral correlates of patience in competition. Interdisciplinary and neuroscience partnerships will uncover neural mechanisms underlying patience, enabling unitary theory formation. These collaborations will overcome currently existing deficits so that patience is an essential yet untapped athletic success key.

8. Conclusion

This narrative review has illuminated the multifaceted role of patience as a powerful yet underappreciated psychological construct in athletic success. Traditionally overshadowed by constructs such as grit, resilience, and mental toughness, patience emerges here not as a passive attribute but as a dynamic and strategic resource that influences various aspects of athletic performance. From reducing impulsivity in decision-making to enhancing emotional regulation, improving attentional focus, and supporting physiological recovery, patience acts across psychological, behavioral, and biological dimensions. It is central not only to performance consistency but also to long-term athletic development, injury rehabilitation, and career sustainability.

Through an in-depth exploration of different sporting contexts—endurance, tactical, combat, and team sports—this review has shown that patience is not a one-size-fits-all trait but manifests in context-sensitive ways. In endurance sports, it facilitates energy regulation and pacing. In tactical games, it balances restraint with readiness to act. In combat sports, it functions as both a defense mechanism and a strategic weapon. Within teams, it enables interpersonal growth, leadership integration, and conflict resolution. This functional flexibility highlights patience as an adaptive trait, essential for peak performance under diverse physical and psychological demands.

Moreover, the review has emphasized the physiological effects of patience, including its role in modulating stress responses, enhancing recovery, and promoting adherence in injury rehabilitation. These findings challenge the conventional dichotomy between mind and body in sport, revealing patience as a bridge between psychological control and physical outcomes. The integration of theoretical models such as dual-process theory and temporal motivation theory further anchors patience within a robust cognitive and

motivational framework, opening doors for targeted interventions.

Despite its critical relevance, the study of patience in sport remains limited by methodological inconsistencies, a lack of longitudinal and causal designs, and minimal cross-cultural examination. Future research must address these gaps to better define, measure, and cultivate patience in both elite and grassroots athletic settings. Innovative approaches, including biometrics and neurocognitive tools, can enrich our understanding of patience's impact in real-time competition.

In sum, this review advocates for the recognition of patience as a core competency in sport—one that underlies not only the ability to endure adversity but also to make sound decisions, remain emotionally composed, and grow steadily toward long-term goals. Coaches, sport psychologists, and athletes alike are encouraged to treat patience not as a trait to be hoped for, but as a skill to be developed, refined, and strategically employed for sustained success.

Authors' Contributions

A. M. A. D. conceptualized the study, conducted the narrative review, and synthesized the theoretical frameworks. M. T. supervised the research process, contributed to the interpretation of findings, and provided critical revisions throughout the manuscript. Both authors contributed to the final draft, approved the submitted version, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Not applicable.

Acknowledgments

None.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethics Considerations

Not applicable.

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