



## Peer support for female athletes in a psychological review of elite futsal sports

*Apoyo entre pares para deportistas femeninas en una revisión psicológica de los deportes de fútbol sala de élite*

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** This study examined the role of peer support in promoting psychological well-being among elite female futsal athletes in Indonesia, a male-dominated sport. The objective was to identify how emotional, informational, and instrumental support contribute to athletes' psychological resilience and confidence.

**Methods:** A descriptive qualitative design with thematic analysis was employed. Six participants were purposively selected, including three peers from the sporting environment and three from outside sport. Semi-structured interviews explored the types of support provided.

**Results:** Emotional support—through presence, empathy, and encouragement—emerged as the most influential, helping athletes manage anxiety and enhance self-confidence. Informational support included context-specific advice and reinforcement of performance strategies, while instrumental support involved tangible assistance such as logistical help, physical preparation, and pre-competition companionship.

**Discussion:** Findings suggest that peer support not only buffers psychological stress but also strengthens athletes' motivation and adaptability in a challenging competitive environment. In male-dominated sports, where female athletes may face stereotypes and limited resources, peers serve as accessible and trusted sources of psychological reinforcement. This underscores the need to recognize peer dynamics as an integral element of athlete development.

**Conclusions:** Peer support plays a central role in fostering psychological well-being among elite female futsal athletes. Incorporating peer-based mentoring into training programs can help create inclusive and psychologically safe environments. The study offers practical insights for coaches, sport psychologists, and policymakers aiming to promote athlete well-being.

### Keywords

Peer support; sport psychology; female athletes; masculine sports; futsal; qualitative analysis.

### Resumen

**Introducción y objetivo.** Este estudio exploró el papel del apoyo entre pares en el bienestar psicológico de las jugadoras de fútbol sala de élite en el contexto de un deporte masculino en Indonesia.

**Metodología.** Se utilizó un diseño cualitativo descriptivo con análisis temático, seleccionando intencionalmente a seis participantes: tres compañeras del entorno deportivo y tres de fuera del ámbito deportivo. Se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas para identificar las formas de apoyo emocional, informativo e instrumental brindadas a las atletas.

**Resultados.** El apoyo emocional, caracterizado por la presencia, la empatía y el estímulo verbal, surgió como el más influyente, ayudando a las atletas a manejar la ansiedad y fortalecer la autoconfianza. El apoyo informativo incluyó consejos específicos al contexto y refuerzo de estrategias relevantes, mientras que el apoyo instrumental abarcó asistencia tangible como ayuda logística, preparación física y acompañamiento previo a la competición.

**Conclusiones.** En conjunto, estas formas de apoyo fomentaron la resiliencia, mantuvieron la motivación y mejoraron la capacidad de las atletas para desenvolverse en un entorno competitivo exigente. Los hallazgos destacan la importancia de integrar la mentoría entre pares en los programas de desarrollo de atletas femeninas de élite para crear entornos psicológicamente seguros e inclusivos. Esta investigación ofrece aportaciones prácticas para entrenadores, psicólogos deportivos y responsables de políticas que buscan promover el bienestar de las atletas en deportes dominados por hombres.

### Palabras clave

Apoyo entre pares; psicología del deporte; atletas femeninas; deportes masculinos; futsal; análisis cualitativo.



## Introduction

The participation of women in sports has become an increasingly important topic in the academic literature, particularly in discussions surrounding long-term engagement and athlete retention. In Indonesia, the presence of women in elite sports has shown significant progress. For instance, while Indonesia did not send any female athletes to the Helsinki Olympics, the most recent Tokyo Olympics saw the participation of 12 Indonesian women, indicating a positive trend in female representation in competitive sports (International Olympic Committee, 2021). However, quantitative growth in participation does not necessarily reflect a fully supportive or inclusive environment (Apriady et al., 2024; Meier et al., 2021; Schailée et al., 2021). In sports that are perceived as masculine—such as futsal—female athletes continue to face gender stereotypes, skepticism about their capabilities, and pressure to conform to masculine norms (Muñoz-Llerena et al., 2022).

In this context, women's participation in sport is inseparable from the quality of psychosocial support they receive, particularly from peers (Bailey et al., 2015). Peer support not only offers motivation and encouragement, but also serves as a crucial psychological buffer that enhances self-confidence, resilience, and the courage to challenge normative expectations. A supportive peer environment is especially vital for sustaining participation over time, as athletes require more than access—they need emotionally and socially safe spaces (Kenjayeva & Bakhtyeruly, 2025; Zou et al., 2023).

For elite female athletes, peer support becomes even more critical. The demands of high-performance training and competition require consistent motivation, psychological endurance, and long-term commitment (van Luchene & Delens, 2021; Zou et al., 2023). In high-pressure environments, support from peers can help female athletes remain engaged despite injuries, social challenges, or time-management conflicts (Koca et al., 2009; Rice et al., 2022). Research has found a significant relationship between peer support and sustainable participation, especially in youth and elite sports settings (Lawler et al., 2022; MacPherson et al., 2016). Young athletes view acceptance and friendship from their peers as a key motivator to continue participating (Hardy et al., 2024; Hendrawan et al., 2025).

Despite these findings, most studies treat peer support in general terms, with few exploring how it operates specifically in masculine sports contexts, or how psychological mechanisms—such as confidence, emotion regulation, and mental resilience—are shaped by peer interactions. In male-dominated sports environments, peer support plays a critical role in sustaining women's mental health, motivation, and long-term commitment (Amaro et al., 2023; Yildirim et al., 2024). However, elite female athletes often have limited time to build meaningful social bonds due to intense training schedules, which may hinder their access to quality social support (Portela-Pino et al., 2024; Poucher et al., 2018; Rogowska et al., 2022; Trotter et al., 2021).

While previous studies in male-dominated sports have primarily examined peer interactions in relation to team cohesion, leadership dynamics, or performance outcomes (e.g., motivation, tactical coordination), there has been limited exploration of their psychological dimensions. Specifically, little is known about how peers contribute to emotional safety, coping with competitive anxiety, building resilience, and negotiating identity in the face of gendered stereotypes. These aspects are critical for athletes' mental well-being yet remain largely overlooked in research on masculine sports environments. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how peers provide emotional, informational, and instrumental support to elite female futsal players, thereby extending the literature from a psychological perspective and demonstrating how peer relationships can serve as vital buffers against stress and marginalization in a male-dominated sporting context.

## Method

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design using a thematic analysis approach. The aim was to explore the role of peer support in the psychological experiences of elite female futsal



athletes in Indonesia. A qualitative method was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of personal experiences, perceptions, and the meanings constructed by individuals within their social context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Participants**

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, specifically targeting individuals who were close peers of elite female futsal athletes. The study involved six participants: three were teammates or friends from the same sports environment, and three were peers from outside of sport who were closely involved in the athletes' daily lives. All participants had regular, meaningful interactions with the athletes and were considered trusted sources of psychological and emotional support. This selection aimed to capture diverse perspectives on how peer support is experienced and perceived in both sporting and non-sporting contexts.

To ensure homogeneity of respondent characteristics in terms of relationship quality and relevance of experience, specific inclusion criteria were applied:

- Having maintained a close social relationship with the athlete for at least one year.
- Having interacted directly with the athlete at least twice per week during the past six months.
- Having been involved in at least three significant situations experienced by the athlete, whether in training, competition, or personal life.
- Being between 20 and 30 years old to ensure comparable social and emotional developmental stages.
- Willingness to participate in in-depth interviews and provide written informed consent.
- Representing two social environments: three participants from within sport and three from outside sport.

Although the number of participants may appear limited, in qualitative research the emphasis is placed on the depth and richness of data rather than numerical representation. In this study, the relatively homogeneous profile of the participants (close peers of elite female futsal athletes in Indonesia) combined with their diversity of contexts (inside and outside sport) was sufficient to address the research objectives. Data saturation was reached by the fifth and sixth interview, at which point no new relevant themes emerged.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted either face-to-face or via online platforms. The interview guide focused on eliciting detailed narratives about the types of support participants provided, their perceptions of the athletes' psychological states, and the impact of their support on the athletes' motivation, confidence, and emotional well-being. The interviews lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and were recorded with participant consent. To ensure depth, probing questions were used to explore underlying emotions, intentions, and social dynamics.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, which provided a systematic yet flexible framework to identify and interpret meaningful patterns. The process involved: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts; (2) generating initial codes to capture relevant features of the data systematically; (3) searching for potential themes by collating codes; (4) reviewing themes to ensure coherence and alignment with the dataset; (5) defining and naming themes to capture their essence; and (6) producing the report with illustrative extracts that connected the analysis to the research question and existing literature.

The coding process combined deductive reasoning (based on established frameworks of social and psychological support) with inductive identification of patterns emerging directly from the interviews. Through this process, three thematic categories were identified:

Emotional Support – Presence, empathy, active listening, and verbal encouragement to manage stress and competitive anxiety (K. A. Brown et al., 2025; Sheng et al., 2023; Zou et al., 2023).

Informational Support – Context-specific advice, feedback, and strategies adapted to the athlete's characteristics and needs (Keegan et al., 2009; Lawler et al., 2022; MacPherson et al., 2016).

Instrumental Support – Tangible assistance, such as accompanying training sessions, helping with warm-ups, and providing logistical aid before competitions (Amaro et al., 2023; Yildirim et al., 2024).

While all three categories emerged during analysis, the present article focuses on the three primary forms of psychological peer support—emotional, informational, and instrumental—due to their consistent recurrence across participants and strong relevance to the research aim.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

All participants provided informed consent prior to the interviews. Ethical clearance was obtained from the research ethics committee at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. Participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and reporting to protect participant identities.

## **Results**

The analysis yielded three dominant themes of psychological peer support experienced by elite female futsal athletes: emotional support, informational support, and instrumental support. Each theme illustrates how peer interactions contribute to the athlete's psychological resilience and motivation in a high-pressure, male-dominated sports context. All six participants (P1–P6) provided insights into these forms of support, demonstrating the multidimensional nature of peer relationships.

To provide a concise overview of these findings, Table 1 summarizes each theme along with representative participant quotes, followed by a detailed description of each theme in the subsequent sections.

Table 1. Summary of thematic findings on peer support for elite female futsal athletes

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Emotional Support	Presence, empathy, and verbal reinforcement that reduce anxiety and strengthen self-confidence.	"They were always there before the game to calm me down and remind me I was ready."
Informational Support	Context-specific advice, sharing strategies, and providing constructive feedback relevant to competition.	"She gave me tips about marking opponents, which worked well in the match."
Instrumental Support	Tangible assistance such as logistical help, physical preparation, and companionship before competition.	"They helped me carry my gear and warmed up with me so I wouldn't feel alone."

### ***Emotional Support***

Emotional support emerged as the most impactful form of peer assistance, particularly in moments of anxiety, self-doubt, or marginalization within the team. Rather than providing direct solutions, peers often offered empathetic presence, active listening, and reassurance.

As one participant shared:

"She vented a lot after training. I never interrupted—I just let her talk. I think it helped her decompress" (P3). This kind of non-judgmental listening helped athletes release tension and feel psychologically safe.

In performance-related situations, support was expressed through verbal affirmation and reframing. Before a key match, one peer reminded her friend:

"You've done the work—there's no need to prove anything to anyone. Just play your game" (P1). Such statements helped athletes regain focus and confidence under competitive pressure.



Peers also displayed proactive sensitivity, recognizing when athletes were struggling without the need for explicit disclosure. As P2 explained: “She didn’t have to tell me. I could see it in her face—she needed someone nearby, so I stayed.”

Overall, emotional support included presence, affirmation, and emotional sensitivity, providing a consistent psychological buffer against stress, fear of failure, and isolation. These interactions fostered resilience and reinforced the athletes’ sense of belonging in the demanding and often male-dominated environment of competitive futsal

### *Informational Support*

Informational support was distinguished not by the amount of advice given, but by its contextual accuracy and the peer’s deep understanding of the athlete’s personality, triggers, and playing style. Rather than providing new strategies, peers reinforced what the athlete already knew, anchoring them in familiar routines.

As one participant explained: “When she panicked, I helped her break down the game: ‘One ball at a time. Just breathe.’ It helped her slow things down mentally” (P2).

Short affirmations often served as psychological grounding tools that stabilized focus. For example, a peer recalled: “I always reminded her to do what she does best—don’t overthink or try to be someone else on the field. She said it kept her focused” (P1).

In some cases, this support also involved reframing competition pressure. One participant noted: “When she was too tense, I’d say, ‘Think of this game as practice.’ It reduced her nerves and let her play more freely” (P5).

Overall, informational support helped athletes regulate attention, manage anxiety, and maintain confidence. Its effectiveness derived less from technical content and more from the trust and emotional closeness between peers, making the advice uniquely credible and impactful.

### *Instrumental Support*

Although less frequently emphasized than emotional or informational support, instrumental support played a quiet yet crucial role in reinforcing athletes’ psychological readiness and sense of security. This support manifested in tangible actions such as assisting with warm-ups, checking routines, or helping with logistics.

As one participant described: “Every morning before matchday, I’d check on her. Did she eat? Does she need a ride? It became part of her prep routine” (P2). These seemingly simple gestures provided structure, reduced stress, and created a sense of stability.

Peers also offered hands-on help during emotionally intense moments.

One recalled: “I helped her prepare her jersey, her water bottle, even tied her shoelaces once when she was too nervous. It made her laugh—and relax” (P1). In other cases, instrumental support extended beyond the court. For example, “When she was injured, I brought her meals and helped her stretch. She said it reminded her that she wasn’t forgotten” (P5).

These concrete acts of care may appear minor, but their consistency and intentionality conveyed trust, belonging, and reliability. In the demanding and often male-dominated environment of futsal, such support not only reduced logistical burdens but also bridged the gap between emotional reassurance and daily function—strengthening resilience and reaffirming the athletes’ value within their teams.

## **Discussion**

This study aimed to explore how psychological peer support manifests in the experiences of elite female athletes in a masculine sport context. The findings revealed that emotional, informational, and instrumental support from peers played a crucial role in sustaining athletes’ motivation, confidence, and mental resilience. These forms of support align with established psychological



theories on human motivation and social interaction, particularly within the high-pressure context of elite sports.

### ***Emotional Supports***

Emotional support served as the foundation of psychological safety among athletes, acting not only as a short-term coping mechanism but also as a long-term resilience-building factor (Ozan & Secer, 2022). It was particularly crucial during moments of vulnerability—such as heightened anxiety before matches, frustration after underperformance, or feelings of exclusion stemming from gender stereotypes in masculine sports (Alisti et al., 2025; Amodeo et al., 2020; Tseng, 2020). The present findings align with Social Support Theory (K. A. Brown et al., 2025), which identifies emotional support as one of the most significant buffers against psychological distress by reducing perceived threat and enhancing perceived control.

In this study, emotional support often took the form of presence, empathetic listening, and verbal reassurance. Importantly, peers frequently demonstrated the ability to recognize emotional distress without explicit verbal disclosure. This relational attunement—where subtle cues in behavior, tone, or body language were detected—allowed for timely and tailored responses, strengthening trust between peers and athletes (Candra & Riyanto, 2024; Setyawan et al., 2024). Such dynamics are consistent with the Basic Psychological Needs Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), particularly the component of relatedness, which emphasizes that feeling understood, valued, and connected is fundamental for sustaining intrinsic motivation and overall well-being.

Moreover, this form of support had a cumulative effect. Repeated experiences of being emotionally validated and encouraged contributed to the athlete's mental stability over time (Halsall et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023), fostering what Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) describe as psychological resilience: the ability to adapt positively in the face of adversity. Within the context of elite female athletes in masculine sports, where social validation is often lacking or conditional, peer-driven emotional support emerged as a unique and irreplaceable resource. This suggests that such support may not simply mitigate stress in the moment, but also reshape athletes' broader perceptions of belonging and self-worth within their sport, potentially influencing long-term engagement and career sustainability.

This study extends prior literature on emotional support in sport by highlighting how Indonesian female futsal athletes rely not only on verbal encouragement but also on silent, empathetic presence as a form of psychological safety. Unlike findings from Western team-sport settings, where support is often performance-focused, our results emphasize the relational and culturally rooted value of "being there." Practically, this suggests that athlete support programs in Indonesia—and potentially in similar collectivist contexts—should train peers and teammates to recognize and respond to emotional cues beyond explicit communication. Such practices could be adapted in other countries where relational closeness and shared presence are central to social dynamics.

### ***Informational Support***

Informational support complemented emotional reassurance by helping athletes focus, manage competitive pressure, and reframe self-doubt. Unlike advice from coaches—which is often hierarchical, performance-driven, and embedded within formal training structures—peer feedback was perceived as more relatable and emotionally attuned because it stemmed from shared lived experiences (Firmin et al., 2023; Ruiz et al., 2023; Schelling & Robertson, 2020). This mirrors findings by Keegan et al. (2010), who argue that peer interactions can be more influential than coach feedback in creating a motivational climate that fosters psychological comfort. In this study, peers were able to offer advice that balanced technical guidance with emotional sensitivity, allowing athletes to internalize strategies without feeling judged or scrutinized (Sezen-Balcikanli & Sezen, 2019). This was especially crucial in moments of heightened anxiety, where athletes needed concise and affirming input to regain composure and maintain focus on the game.

Furthermore, the adaptability of informational support emerged as a defining feature. Participants described adjusting their advice to match the athlete's current mental state, confidence level, and the stakes of the competition (Bruton & Wright, 2022; Corsby & Jones, 2020). For example, when an athlete was feeling anxious, peers often simplified instructions and emphasized affirmations,



whereas in moments of high confidence, they provided more nuanced tactical suggestions. This flexibility resonates with the principles of self-regulated learning in sport (Robin et al., 2020). Where the timing, tone, and complexity of feedback influence an athlete's ability to process information and execute under pressure. The mutual understanding inherent in peer relationships allowed advice to be framed in ways that felt supportive rather than critical, helping athletes maintain self-efficacy even in high-stakes situations.

Finally, informational support in this context did more than enhance immediate performance—it reinforced long-term psychological resilience (Kiens et al., 2023; Shibata et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).. By consistently offering feedback that was both constructive and confidence-building, peers contributed to stabilizing athletes' self-perception and belief in their own competence. This aligns with Lawler et al. (2022), who note that consistent, positive peer input strengthens the motivational structures that sustain engagement in sport over time (N. Brown et al., 2023; Cummins et al., 2020). Within masculine sports, where female athletes often contend with skepticism about their abilities, peer-based informational support played a counterbalancing role by affirming capability and reinforcing belonging (McManama O'Brien et al., 2021; Mikesell et al., 2023). As a result, informational support served as both a performance enhancer and a social-psychological safeguard, ensuring that athletes remained mentally invested and resistant to the demotivating effects of external pressures.

While informational support has been documented in sports psychology, this study contributes by showing how peers in Indonesia frame advice less as technical instruction and more as relational reassurance. This distinction is critical: peers are trusted not for their expertise but for their shared lived experiences. In practice, this indicates that peer-support interventions should prioritize the credibility of shared experience over technical authority. Programs in Indonesia might, for example, integrate peer mentors into athlete development, while internationally this insight could inform how peer-based approaches are adapted in contexts where athletes may distrust formal authority figures.

### ***Instrumental Support***

Instrumental support represented the tangible, action-oriented dimension of peer involvement, addressing both the logistical and physical demands of competition. In this study, athletes described how peers accompanied them to training sessions, assisted with warm-up routines, and prepared necessary gear before matches. Some also helped arrange transportation or resolve minor off-field issues, ensuring that athletes could devote their mental energy entirely to the competitive task at hand. Although these forms of assistance may appear peripheral to actual performance, they played a critical role in reducing cognitive load and enhancing pre-competition mental readiness (Firmin et al., 2023; Herrero et al., 2021; Park & Jeon, 2023). This finding resonates with (Halsall et al., 2023; Haß & Schütze, 2022).who emphasize that practical, hands-on support in sport settings contributes indirectly to improved performance by creating a structured and predictable environment.

Beyond their logistical value, these tangible acts reinforced a sense of camaraderie and emotional security. When peers shared in preparatory routines—such as stretching together, organizing equipment, or coordinating schedules—it fostered a perception of solidarity and mutual investment in each other's success. This echoes Yildirim et al. (2024), who argue that shared participation in pre-performance activities not only strengthens interpersonal bonds but also cultivates a collective sense of purpose (Dwi Pramesti et al., 2022; Herrero et al., 2021).. For female athletes competing in masculine sports contexts, where they may face marginalization or resource limitations, this shared commitment served as an antidote to isolation, reinforcing their belonging within the sporting environment (Jun et al., 2023; Robazza et al., 2023).

Over time, these small but consistent acts of instrumental support accumulated into what could be described as an ecosystem of trust and reciprocity (Zee et al., 2020).. Athletes came to rely on the predictability and dependability of their peers, which in turn strengthened resilience and sustained engagement in high-demand sporting environments. In settings where institutional backing may be inconsistent, peer-provided practical support effectively bridged structural gaps, ensuring that athletes were not disadvantaged by systemic inequalities. This long-term reinforcement



of psychological and operational stability suggests that instrumental support is not merely a logistical aid, but a strategic resource in athlete development and retention—particularly for women navigating the dual challenges of elite competition and gendered sport structures.

The findings also confirm previous research that highlights the importance of peer acceptance and psychological support for female athletes in gender-stereotyped sports (Yildirim et al., 2024; Amaro et al., 2023). While coaches and families play vital roles, peer support offers a horizontal, emotionally accessible layer of care that bridges formal and informal domains of athlete development. Taken together, these findings suggest that psychological peer support is not incidental—it is structural to the athlete's ability to sustain motivation, regulate emotion, and resist the effects of gender-based exclusion or stereotyping. For female athletes operating in masculine sports spaces, peer support becomes a unique psychological and social asset that complements institutional or formal sources of support.

Our findings highlight the subtle but powerful role of instrumental support—acts often overlooked in previous research on peer relationships. In the Indonesian context, where logistical challenges and resource constraints are common, these tangible gestures reduce stress and foster belonging. This originality lies in showing how instrumental support, though simple, bridges emotional reassurance and daily function. Practically, sport organizations could formalize peer routines—such as shared warm-ups or mutual care during rehabilitation—to strengthen team cohesion. Beyond Indonesia, these practices may offer low-cost, culturally adaptable ways to enhance athlete wellbeing in settings with limited institutional resources

### **Limitations**

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small, involving six participants, which is common in qualitative research but limits the generalizability of the findings. The insights should therefore be understood as context-specific rather than universally representative. Second, the study was conducted in a particular cultural and sporting setting—elite female futsal in Indonesia. While this focus provides depth, the applicability of the findings to other sports or countries should be approached with caution.

Third, the reliance on self-reported interview data means that responses may have been influenced by memory recall or social desirability, potentially shaping how participants portrayed their experiences. Finally, although Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis provide a systematic framework, the process remains interpretive and is shaped by the researchers' perspectives. Future research could address these limitations by including a larger and more diverse sample, incorporating longitudinal designs, or triangulating interview data with observations or quantitative measures.

### **Conclusions**

This study highlights the pivotal role of peer support in enhancing the psychological well-being and sporting experiences of elite female futsal athletes within a male-dominated sport context. Emotional support—manifested through presence, empathy, and verbal encouragement—emerged as the most influential in fostering self-confidence and reducing anxiety. Informational support, in the form of context-specific advice and reinforcement of relevant strategies, complemented emotional bonds by providing practical guidance. Instrumental support, encompassing logistical assistance, physical preparation, and pre-competition companionship, further reduced athletes' cognitive load, allowing them to focus on performance. Collectively, these forms of support contribute to building resilience, sustaining motivation, and ensuring long-term engagement in high-performance sport. From a practical standpoint, integrating structured peer-based mentoring programs into elite female athlete development may foster psychologically safe and inclusive environments, empowering women to thrive in traditionally masculine sports.

Future research should consider broadening the sample to include athletes from multiple sports, both individual and team-based, to examine how peer support functions across contexts. Longitudinal studies could explore how peer support evolves over time and influences athlete retention,





burnout, or transition out of sport. In addition, quantitative studies could measure the impact of different types of peer support on psychological outcomes such as stress, motivation, and perceived belonging. Finally, future research might examine cross-gender peer dynamics or the role of digital peer interactions in shaping psychological support in modern sport environments.

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