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EFFECT OF A SPORT EDUCATION SEASON ON THE TECHNICAL LEARNING AND MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE OF JUNIOR HIGH PERFORMANCE SWIMMERS

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INTRODUCTION

Actually, one of the most prominent student-centred approaches to teaching physical education model is known as Sport Education (Siedentop, 1994). The research has focused almost exclusively on team sports in physical education, and by consequence, there is a limited understanding of the application of the model in cyclic sports in which there is a focus on technique. To date, Sport Education research has been conducted exclusively within school physical education (Hastie, Martínez de Ojeda, & Calderón, 2011). In contrast, there have been few studies that have analysed the effects of different pedagogical models applied in youth sports settings. The purpose of the present work was to examine the extent to which Sport Education might serve as an appropriate intervention in a high performance junior sport to know the development of the technical learning of the main swimming strokes as well as the motivational climate perceived by the participants.

METHOD

Twenty-two young swimmers from a sports club in southern Spain partici-

pated in 16 training sessions organized around the key principles of Sport Education. Experts assessed technical learning from video analysis, and the swimmers and their coaches also completed self-assessments. Motivational climate was analysed through the Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire-2 (Cecchini, González, López-Prado, & Brustad, 2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated that regardless of performance level (sampling and specializing swimmers) and gender, the swimmers significantly improved their technical performance from pre-test to post-test (Table 1). As can be seen from the results, the swimmers improved in the technical aspects of all four strokes. Moreover the results found by Wallhead, Hagger, and Smith (2010) are corroborated; because they applied Sport Education in different age groups and all improved the learning. In addition, all subjects reported statistically significant improvements in the task-oriented motivational climate (Table 2). The finding of high values of a perceived mastery moti-

Table 1. Changes in Technical Learning across the Season.

	Pre-test M**	Pre-test SD	Post-test M**	Post-test SD	Δ	$F(1,21)$	p	d
Front crawl	60.70	10.98	79.87	9.27	19.17	146.25	<.001*	0.026
Backstroke	60.22	15.20	77.65	8.28	17.43	72.53	<.001*	0.021
Breaststroke	58.76	13.57	83.11	5.64	24.35	113.43	<.001*	0.043
Butterfly	57.40	13.03	82.70	10.90	25.30	194.45	<.001*	0.023

*Significant difference between the pre-test and post-test ($p < 0.05$). **%=(Total¹-I/Trial¹)/100.

Table 2. Changes in Mastery and Ego Climate Variables across the Season.

	Pre-test M	Pre-test SD	Post-test M	Post-test SD	F	p	η^2
Mastery	80.48	7.77	94.00	3.26	71.42	<.001	.773
Ego	49.09	9.64	48.01	9.19	.490	.491	.023



ational climate are consistent with those found in numerous studies showing that such a climate provides task-oriented high levels of effort and intrinsic motivation (Trenz & Zusho, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that the intervention program based on Sport Education has a positive impact on improvement of swimming skill, and a more optimal motivational climate.

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