

When, Where, and Why Do College Athletes and Coaches Use Mindfulness?



A study conducted by Sam Zizzi, Thomas Minkler, & Blake Costalupes

Why is this study important?

There is a growing literature about mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in sport but we know little about athlete and coach informal or unstructured experiences with mindfulness



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Research Design



The research team used a **descriptive, mixed method research design** to survey athletes and coaches about their experiences with, and attitudes towards, mindfulness.

Convenience and snowball sampling resulted in 338 college athletes and coach responses, with approximately 243 usable surveys. The sample include 85% who identified as White/Caucasian, and 51% who identified as male. Many sports were represented.

When do they practice?



30% of participants had tried meditation in the past

Of those who practice:

-->most practiced randomly throughout the day or before practices, competitions or workouts

Where and how do they practice?



A **quiet place at home** was the most common location for practice

Only 11 athletes used a mobile app

Walking or eating mindfully were the most common ways to practice (47%)

Why do they practice ?



Top themes included reducing stress, improving attitude or performance, and focusing thoughts

Some participants reported unrealistic expectations for how quickly mindfulness will help performance (i.e., they expected a quick fix)

Important Take Home Messages



- Most participants used mindfulness informally throughout the day or at home. About **1/3** of the sample used formal methods
- Some athletes and coaches have unrealistic expectations
- Few participants (**13%**) reported a consistent practice of mindfulness for six months or more
- Approximately **6-10%** of athletes and coaches experienced a negative reaction during mindfulness or meditation