



### ASSESSING SPORTS PERFORMANCE PERCEPTION IN POST TRAUMATIC FOOTBALLERS AFTER RETURNING TO SPORTS

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#### ABSTRACT

Returning to sport after an injury can be a challenging journey for many athletes. This cross-sectional study explored how post-traumatic footballers perceive their sports performance after completing rehabilitation and resuming play. Conducted over six months in Fame Football Club Lahore, the study included 127 footballers aged 18–35 years, selected through non-probability convenience sampling. All participants had undergone at least six months of rehabilitation and were medically cleared to return to football. Data were gathered using the Sport Performance Perceptions Scale (SPPS) and analyzed with SPSS version 25. Overall, the results showed that players had a moderately high sense of performance, with the strongest perceptions in Mastery and Development and the weakest in Recovery and Injury Prevention. These insights suggest that although athletes feel confident about their skills and growth, they see room for improvement in how they recover and prevent future injuries. The findings underline the need to include psychological and educational support within post-injury rehab programs to help athletes maintain their performance and stay in the game longer.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Recent studies highlight that sports performance depends not only on physical training but also on mental, nutritional, and overall health factors. China's sports system exemplifies this integrated approach through structured training, strong coaching, and government support (P. Yang et al., 2024).

Athletes recovering from injuries face both physical and psychological challenges. Confidence and mental readiness are crucial for returning to sport safely and effectively (Dunlop et al., 2023; Scott W. Donald, 2024). Tools like the Injury-Psychological Readiness to Return-to-Sport Scale (I-PRRS) are emerging to measure this readiness, though further validation is needed.

Footballers, in particular, are vulnerable to mental health issues—especially when injured—due to their identity being strongly tied to the sport. Injuries can lead to anxiety, depression, and even premature retirement, emphasizing the need for holistic recovery models that address both mind and body (Furie et al., 2023).

Physical and psychological recovery processes should progress through structured rehabilitation stages—from pain management and movement restoration to gym and field-based training—culminating in full competitive readiness. The “control-chaos continuum” model supports gradual, safe reintegration into sport (Mitchell et al., 2023).

Beyond injuries, factors such as training load, rest, and nutrition strongly influence athletic performance. Balanced diets, proper recovery, and individualized plans are vital for sustained excellence (P. Yang et al., 2024). Additionally, issues like exercise-induced migraines remain complex and require further study (Kobus et al., 2022).

Overall, the research calls for **athlete-centered rehabilitation strategies** that combine physical, mental, and emotional care—promoting resilience, confidence, and optimal performance in post-traumatic footballers.

## **RATIONALE:**

Traumatic injuries in footballers can impair not just physical healing but also their impression of performance after returning to sport. While physical rehabilitation is well-studied, there is a dearth of study concentrating on footballers' self-perceived performance post-injury. Many athletes endure anxiety of re-injury and lost confidence despite medical clearance. This research tries to bridge this gap and encourage more complete return-to-play tactics.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVE:**

The Aims and objective of this study was:

To assess the perception of sports performance in post-traumatic footballers after returning to sport.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Recent research highlights the increasing focus on the psychological, physical, and social dimensions of athletic performance and recovery. Across studies, mental health, injury prevention, and readiness to return to sport are emerging as central themes in modern sports science.

Grashow et al. (2024) found that perceived chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) among former football players was strongly linked to cognitive problems, depression, and suicidality, underscoring the need for better psychological screening and support. Similarly, Acosta-Figueroa and Sánchez-Alfaro (2024) emphasized how perceptions, comfort, and practicality influence athletes' willingness to use protective gear like mouthguards, showing how behavior and safety are shaped by psychological and social factors.

Mental well-being remains crucial in sports performance. Zhao et al. (2023) demonstrated that psychological needs and anxiety strongly influence mental health among Chinese college athletes, while Liu et al. (2022) showed that occupational stress and burnout harmed referees' mental health but were mitigated by social support. Selmi et al. (2022) and Cullen et al. (2021) reinforced the value of tracking subjective wellness indicators—such as fatigue, sleep,

and stress—to guide training loads and prevent overtraining or injury.

In rehabilitation contexts, D’Isanto et al. (2022) found that mirror therapy improved psychological readiness and reduced pain in injured footballers, while Chaibak and Chaibak (2022) showed that recurrent injuries affected balance and feelings of accomplishment. Likewise, Tranaeus et al. (2022) revealed that coping strategies like positive reframing reduced injury risk in young female athletes.

The physiological and biochemical side of performance was explored by Farjallah et al. (2021), who found that melatonin reduced oxidative stress and muscle damage but didn’t enhance physical output, and Dambroz et al. (2022), who showed that fatigue significantly impaired technical and physical skills but had unclear effects on cognition.

Gender-focused research by Pettersen et al. (2022) found that elite women footballers performed better when exhibiting traits like mental toughness and low anxiety. Kobus et al. (2022) identified a possible link between headaches and flexibility in young female players, suggesting new avenues for research. Gorczynski and Webb (2022) noted that mental health disclosures in football could lead to stigmatization and career disadvantages, revealing persistent social barriers in sport.

Injury prevention and prediction studies, such as those by Wilkerson et al. (2021), showed that combining self-reports with smartphone-based cognitive tests can predict sports-related injuries. Psychological models developed by Dai et al. (2021) highlighted how social support and self-perceived ability help athletes manage stress. Benítez-Sillero et al. (2021) identified mental toughness as a key developmental trait in youth players. Clemente et al. (2021) emphasized sleep’s vital role in preventing injuries and optimizing performance.

Finally, Aguirre-Loaiza (2020) and Dugdale et al. (2020) focused on psychological and evaluative dimensions—showing how stress management, education, and balanced use of

subjective and objective assessments are essential for fair evaluation and sustained performance.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS:**

### **Methodology:**

This cross-sectional study was carried out over six months at football clubs, and sports academies in Lahore, focusing on post-traumatic footballers who had undergone rehabilitation and return-to-play assessments. A total of 127 participants were recruited using Cochran’s formula and selected through non-probability convenience sampling. The inclusion criteria required male and female football players aged 18–35 years who had sustained traumatic injuries, completed at least six months of rehabilitation, and received medical clearance to return to football. All participants also provided informed consent and completed a survey assessing their perceptions of sports performance. Players with non-traumatic injuries, pre-existing psychological conditions, severe unrelated medical conditions, or those still undergoing rehabilitation were excluded. Data were collected using the Sport Performance Perceptions Scale to evaluate how trauma or injury affected footballers’ perceptions of their performance. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, and demographic data were reported as means and standard deviations.

### **Study Design:**

Cross-sectional study design was used (Flores et al., 2024).

### **Study Setting:**

This study was conducted at Fame Football Club, and sports academies of Lahore where post-traumatic footballers undergo rehabilitation and return-to-play assessments.

### **Study Duration:**

The study duration was 6 months after synopsis approval (Nawaz et al., 2022).

### **Sample Size:**

Sample size 127 was determined by using the Cochran formula.

### **Sampling Technique:**

Non-Probability Convenient Sampling technique was used (Nawaz et al., 2022).

### **Sampling Assortment Criteria:**

#### **Inclusion Criteria:**

- Football Players with Traumatic Injuries (Doroshenko et al., 2024).
- Both male and female (Feller & Webster, 2013).
- Participants aged between 18–35 years (Doroshenko et al., 2024).
- Participants must have completed at least 6 months of rehabilitation post-injury (Feller & Webster, 2013).
- Footballers who are willing to provide informed consent and participate in interviews or surveys regarding their perception of sports performance (Doroshenko et al., 2024).

#### **Exclusion Criteria:**

- Athletes who have experienced non-traumatic injuries (e.g., overuse injuries like tendinitis or muscle strains) (Boden et al., 2019).
- Footballers with a diagnosed pre-existing psychological condition (e.g., major depressive disorder or severe anxiety disorder) (Haraldsdottir & Watson, 2021).
- Participants with severe medical conditions unrelated to the injury (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes) (Haraldsdottir & Watson, 2021).
- Participants who are still undergoing rehabilitation at the time of the study (Haraldsdottir & Watson, 2021).

#### **Statistical Analysis:**

The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, demographic data was shown as mean and standard deviation.

#### **Outcome Measurement Tool:**

The Sports Performance Perception Questionnaire was used.

#### **Data Collection Procedure:**

A cross-sectional study design was used to collect data from participants. Eligible participants will be recruited from different athletes (footballers). After obtaining informed consent, participants was complete a questionnaire The Sport Performance Perceptions Scale. Data was analyzed to find the impact of trauma or injury on sports performance perception.

### **Parameters of Study:**

1. Age
2. Young Footballers
3. Psychological Behaviour
4. Emotional Control
5. Training Frequency

#### **Age:**

Advancing age is a key factor that leads to a gradual decline in sports performance. This decline tends to accelerate after the age of 70, even among highly trained master athletes. While regular physical activity can maintain performance levels and quality of life into older age, it is not without health risks, especially for endurance athletes. (Ganse & Degens, 2021)

#### **Young Footballers:**

Young footballers' perception of their performance is influenced by their motivation and the satisfaction of their psychological needs, which together shape how meaningful and rewarding they find participation in football. (Amado et al., 2014)

#### **Psychological Behaviour:**

Psychological behaviors such as motivation, confidence, stress management, and mental resilience play a vital role in shaping how athletes train, perform, and cope with challenges. When their psychological needs are supported, athletes are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors that contribute to consistent performance and long-term engagement in sports. (Lourenço et al., 2022)

#### **Emotional Control:**

A history of traumatic injury can impact emotional control in athletes. Experiencing past injuries may lead to increased anxiety, reduced confidence, and difficulty managing emotions during performance. This emphasizes the need for psychological support and rehabilitation that addresses both physical and emotional recovery. (Chyi et al., 2024)

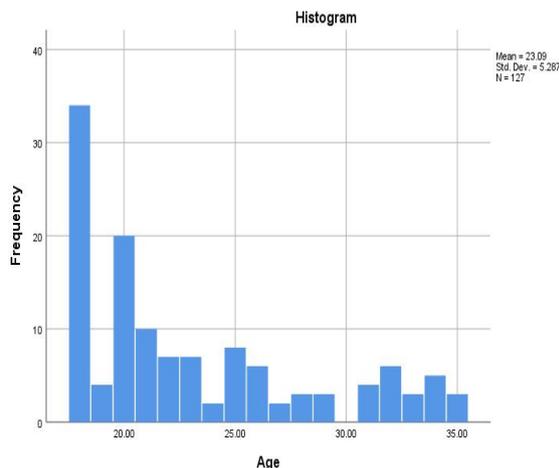
#### **Training Frequency**

Training frequency among athletes is influenced by the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, with feelings of competence playing a key role in maintaining consistent participation. When coaches provide autonomy support, it

creates an environment that nurtures autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which can indirectly enhance athletes' motivation to train regularly. This supportive atmosphere encourages athletes to engage more consistently in training. (Lourenço et al., 2022)

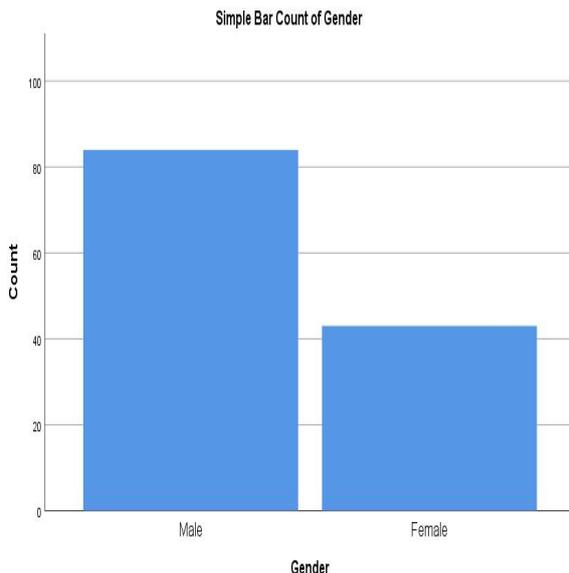
**RESULTS:**

**Age Distribution of Participants**



The histogram shows a positively skewed age distribution among the 127 participants, with a mean age of 23.09 years (SD = 5.29). Most participants were aged between 18 and 20 years, while fewer were in older age groups. This indicates a predominantly young sample, which may influence age-related findings in the study.

**Gender Distribution of Participants**



The chart shows that two-thirds of the participants were male (66.1%), while one-

third were female (33.9%), indicating a male-dominated sample population.

**Descriptive Statistics of SPPS**

Statistics		
SPPS Mean		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		5.0027
Median		5.0625
Std. Deviation		.50599
Variance		.256

The overall mean score on the Sports Performance Perception Scale (SPPS) among 127 post-traumatic footballers was 5.00 (SD = 0.51), indicating a moderately high level of perceived sports performance following their return to sport. The median score of 5.06 is very close to the mean, suggesting a symmetrical distribution of responses. The low standard deviation (0.51) and variance (0.26) reflect a high level of consistency in the athletes' self-perceptions, indicating that most participants rated their performance at a similar level after injury.

**Frequency/Percentage of SPPS**

I recognize that I have a primary sport.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	10	7.9	7.9	7.9
	Rarely	6	4.7	4.7	12.6
	Occasionally	4	3.1	3.1	15.7
	Sometimes	26	20.5	20.5	36.2
	Frequently	26	20.5	20.5	56.7
	Usually	40	31.5	31.5	88.2
	Almost Always	15	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers acknowledge having a primary sport, with 40 participants (31.5%) responding “Usually” and 15 participants (11.8%) selecting “Almost Always,” indicating that 55 out of 127 respondents (43.3%) strongly identify with a specific sport. Additionally, 26 participants (20.5%) chose “Frequently,” bringing the total to 81 participants (63.8%) who regularly recognize a primary sport. In contrast, lower levels of identification were reported by 10 participants (7.9%) who selected “Almost Never,” 6 (4.7%)

“Rarely,” and 4 (3.1%) “Occasionally,” totaling 20 participants (15.7%) who show limited sport identity. This distribution suggests that despite past injuries, a strong connection to sport persists among most footballers, potentially supporting psychological readiness and motivation in their return to sport.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I take my training seriously.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Rarely	12	9.4	9.4	11.0
	Occasionally	19	15.0	15.0	26.0
	Sometimes	24	18.9	18.9	44.9
	Frequently	18	14.2	14.2	59.1
	Usually	14	11.0	11.0	70.1
	Almost Always	38	29.9	29.9	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table represents participants’ responses to the statement “I take my training seriously” and shows a strong overall commitment to training among post-traumatic footballers. Out of 127 valid responses, the largest portion—38 participants (29.9%)—selected “Almost Always,” followed by 24 (18.9%) who chose “Sometimes,” and 19 (15.0%) who responded “Occasionally.” Additionally, 18 participants (14.2%) selected “Frequently” and 14 (11.0%) chose “Usually,” bringing the total to 94 participants (74%) who expressed a moderate to high level of seriousness toward training. In contrast, only 2 participants (1.6%) reported “Almost Never,” 12 (9.4%) “Rarely,” and 19 (15.0%) “Occasionally,” indicating that low commitment was less common. These findings suggest that the majority of footballers maintain a serious attitude toward training despite their history of injury, which may support effective rehabilitation and sustained performance levels.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I complete training that is event or position specific.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	5	3.9	3.9	3.9

Rarely	8	6.3	6.3	10.2
Occasionally	7	5.5	5.5	15.7
Sometimes	40	31.5	31.5	47.2
Frequently	27	21.3	21.3	68.5
Usually	20	15.7	15.7	84.3
Almost Always	20	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report completing training that is specific to their event or playing position, with the highest frequency of responses falling under “Sometimes” at 40 participants (31.5%), followed by “Frequently” with 27 participants (21.3%). Additionally, 20 participants each (15.7%) selected “Usually” and “Almost Always,” indicating that 67 participants (52.7%) regularly engage in position- or event-specific training. On the other hand, a smaller proportion indicated lower levels of specificity in training, with 5 participants (3.9%) selecting “Almost Never,” 8 (6.3%) “Rarely,” and 7 (5.5%) “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that while just over half of the athletes consistently tailor their training to their sport-specific demands, there remains a significant portion (approximately 47%) who may benefit from more structured or focused training programs to enhance their return-to-sport readiness.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I complete all of my training					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Rarely	1	.8	.8	3.9
	Occasionally	3	2.4	2.4	6.3
	Sometimes	22	17.3	17.3	23.6
	Frequently	30	23.6	23.6	47.2
	Usually	21	16.5	16.5	63.8
	Almost Always	46	36.2	36.2	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that a substantial majority of post-traumatic footballers report consistently completing all of their training. Out of 127 valid responses, the most frequent answer was “Almost Always,” chosen by 46 participants (36.2%), followed by “Frequently” with 30 participants (23.6%) and “Usually” with 21 participants (16.5%).

Combined, these categories account for 97 participants (76.3%) who demonstrate a high level of training adherence. A smaller portion of participants reported lower consistency: 22 (17.3%) selected “Sometimes,” while only 4 (3.1%) chose “Almost Never,” 1 (0.8%) “Rarely,” and 3 (2.4%) “Occasionally.” These findings indicate that most footballers are committed to completing their training routines, which may support effective recovery, maintain fitness, and enhance performance post-injury.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

When I am training I am focused on improving my sport specific skills.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Rarely	4	3.1	3.1	6.3
	Occasionally	1	.8	.8	7.1
	Sometimes	12	9.4	9.4	16.5
	Frequently	18	14.2	14.2	30.7
	Usually	54	42.5	42.5	73.2
	Almost Always	34	26.8	26.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers remain highly focused on improving their sport-specific skills during training. Among the 127 valid responses, the most frequent response was “Usually,” selected by 54 participants (42.5%), followed by “Almost Always” with 34 participants (26.8%), and “Frequently” with 18 participants (14.2%). Together, these categories account for 106 participants (83.5%) who demonstrate consistent focus on sport-specific improvement. In contrast, only a small proportion indicated low focus, with 4 participants (3.1%) each selecting “Almost Never” and “Rarely,” and 1 participant (0.8%) choosing “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that most footballers maintain strong performance-oriented training habits, which likely supports effective return-to-sport outcomes and targeted skill enhancement after injury.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

I am more interested in improving in my sport than winning.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	7	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Rarely	12	9.4	9.4	15.0
	Occasionally	13	10.2	10.2	25.2
	Sometimes	11	8.7	8.7	33.9
	Frequently	47	37.0	37.0	70.9
	Usually	18	14.2	14.2	85.0
	Almost Always	19	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a majority of post-traumatic footballers prioritize improvement in their sport over merely winning. Out of 127 valid responses, 47 participants (37.0%) selected “Frequently,” while 18 (14.2%) chose “Usually” and 19 (15.0%) responded with “Almost Always,” totaling 84 participants (66.2%) who regularly or consistently focus more on development than competition outcomes. In contrast, lower levels of interest in improvement were indicated by 7 participants (5.5%) who chose “Almost Never,” 12 (9.4%) “Rarely,” and 13 (10.2%) “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that the mindset of most athletes in this group is centered around personal and skill-based growth rather than simply winning, which may contribute to long-term recovery, resilience, and performance sustainability after injury.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

I eat food that helps me train and compete well in my sport.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	7	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Occasionally	18	14.2	14.2	19.7
	Sometimes	31	24.4	24.4	44.1
	Frequently	18	14.2	14.2	58.3
	Usually	24	18.9	18.9	77.2
	Almost Always	29	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers report making dietary choices that support their training and performance. Out of 127 valid responses, 29 participants (22.8%) selected “Almost Always,” 24 (18.9%) chose “Usually,” and 18 (14.2%) responded with “Frequently,”

indicating that 71 participants (55.9%) regularly eat food that enhances their athletic performance. Additionally, 31 participants (24.4%) selected “Sometimes,” reflecting a moderate level of nutritional awareness. However, 18 (14.2%) reported “Occasionally” and 7 (5.5%) “Rarely,” suggesting that 25 participants (19.7%) follow performance-enhancing diets infrequently. These results suggest that while over half of the athletes are consistently mindful of their nutrition, a significant portion may benefit from nutritional education and support to optimize recovery and sports readiness post-injury.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I get at least 7 hours of sleep every night.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	6	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Rarely	8	6.3	6.3	11.0
	Occasionally	14	11.0	11.0	22.0
	Sometimes	36	28.3	28.3	50.4
	Frequently	18	14.2	14.2	64.6
	Usually	9	7.1	7.1	71.7
	Almost Always	36	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that sleep patterns among post-traumatic footballers vary, with nearly equal proportions reporting high and low consistency in achieving at least 7 hours of sleep each night. Among the 127 valid responses, 36 participants (28.3%) selected “Almost Always,” and another 36 (28.3%) chose “Sometimes,” showing a split between consistently adequate sleep and moderate sleep habits. Additionally, 18 participants (14.2%) responded “Frequently,” and 9 (7.1%) selected “Usually,” bringing the total to 63 participants (49.6%) who get sufficient sleep on a fairly regular basis. In contrast, 6 participants (4.7%) reported “Almost Never,” 8 (6.3%) “Rarely,” and 14 (11.0%) “Occasionally,” indicating that about 22% struggle with achieving adequate nightly sleep. These findings suggest that while around half of the athletes maintain a healthy sleep routine, a notable portion may

face sleep challenges, which could impact recovery, energy levels, and overall sports performance.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I feel confident in my sport specific skills in training situations.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	3	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Rarely	7	5.5	5.5	7.9
	Occasionally	1	.8	.8	8.7
	Sometimes	24	18.9	18.9	27.6
	Frequently	30	23.6	23.6	51.2
	Usually	40	31.5	31.5	82.7
	Almost Always	22	17.3	17.3	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers feel confident in their sport-specific skills during training situations. Out of 127 valid responses, the highest proportion of participants—40 (31.5%)—selected “Usually,” followed by 30 (23.6%) choosing “Frequently” and 22 (17.3%) selecting “Almost Always.” Combined, these categories account for 92 participants (72.4%) who regularly experience high confidence in their training performance. Meanwhile, 24 participants (18.9%) reported “Sometimes,” indicating moderate confidence. Only a small number expressed low confidence, with 3 (2.4%) selecting “Almost Never,” 7 (5.5%) “Rarely,” and 1 (0.8%) “Occasionally.” These results suggest that most athletes, despite past trauma, maintain strong self-assurance in their training abilities, which may positively influence their recovery, engagement, and readiness to return to competition.

### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I feel confident in my sport specific skills in competition situations.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	8	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Occasionally	22	17.3	17.3	23.6
	Sometimes	18	14.2	14.2	37.8
	Frequently	32	25.2	25.2	63.0
	Usually	26	20.5	20.5	83.5
	Almost Always	21	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers report feeling confident in their sport-specific skills during competition situations. Out of 127 valid responses, 32 participants (25.2%) selected “Frequently,” 26 (20.5%) chose “Usually,” and 21 (16.5%) responded with “Almost Always,” totaling 79 participants (62.2%) who consistently feel confident during competitions. Meanwhile, 18 participants (14.2%) reported “Sometimes,” and 22 (17.3%) selected “Occasionally,” indicating moderate confidence levels in a smaller group. Only 8 participants (6.3%) chose “Almost Never,” reflecting low confidence in a minority of athletes. These findings suggest that despite prior injury, the majority of footballers retain strong competitive self-confidence, which is a crucial psychological factor for successful return to sport and in-game performance.

**Frequency/Percentage of SPPS**

I feel like I can manage my emotions in my training.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	7	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Occasionally	8	6.3	6.3	11.8
	Sometimes	25	19.7	19.7	31.5
	Frequently	26	20.5	20.5	52.0
	Usually	36	28.3	28.3	80.3
	Almost Always	25	19.7	19.7	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers feel capable of managing their emotions during training. Among the 127 valid responses, 36 participants (28.3%) selected “Usually,” 26 (20.5%) “Frequently,” and 25 (19.7%) “Almost Always,” indicating that 87 participants (68.5%) regularly demonstrate emotional regulation during training. Additionally, 25 participants (19.7%) responded “Sometimes,” showing a moderate level of emotional control. Only a small portion reported difficulty, with 7 (5.5%) selecting “Rarely” and 8 (6.3%) “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that most athletes maintain effective emotional management in training settings, which likely supports focus, consistency, and

psychological readiness during the recovery and return-to-sport process.

**Frequency/Percentage of SPPS**

I feel like I can manage my emotions in competition.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	8	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Rarely	11	8.7	8.7	15.0
	Occasionally	22	17.3	17.3	32.3
	Sometimes	10	7.9	7.9	40.2
	Frequently	46	36.2	36.2	76.4
	Usually	20	15.7	15.7	92.1
	Almost Always	10	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a significant proportion of post-traumatic footballers feel capable of managing their emotions during competition. Out of 127 valid responses, 46 participants (36.2%) selected “Frequently,” 20 (15.7%) chose “Usually,” and 10 (7.9%) responded “Almost Always,” indicating that 76 participants (59.8%) regularly demonstrate strong emotional control under competitive pressure. Additionally, 10 participants (7.9%) selected “Sometimes,” while 22 (17.3%) chose “Occasionally,” reflecting moderate emotional regulation in 25.2% of the group. However, a smaller group showed difficulties, with 8 participants (6.3%) selecting “Almost Never” and 11 (8.7%) “Rarely.” These findings suggest that while the majority of athletes report effective emotional management during competition, a notable minority may benefit from targeted psychological support to enhance performance consistency and competitive resilience.

**Frequency/Percentage of SPPS**

I am able to stay focused when I am training.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Rarely	6	4.7	4.7	7.9
	Occasionally	4	3.1	3.1	11.0
	Sometimes	21	16.5	16.5	27.6
	Frequently	27	21.3	21.3	48.8
	Usually	41	32.3	32.3	81.1
	Almost Always	24	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report being able to stay focused during training. Among 127 valid responses, 41 participants (32.3%) selected “Usually,” followed by 27 (21.3%) choosing “Frequently” and 24 (18.9%) selecting “Almost Always,” indicating that 92 participants (72.5%) maintain strong training focus. Additionally, 21 participants (16.5%) chose “Sometimes,” reflecting a moderate level of attentiveness. Only a small number indicated difficulty with focus: 4 participants (3.1%) each selected “Almost Never” and “Occasionally,” and 6 (4.7%) chose “Rarely.” These findings suggest that most footballers demonstrate high concentration during training sessions, which may support effective skill acquisition, adherence to rehabilitation programs, and overall return-to-sport performance.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I am able to stay focused when I am competing.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Occasionally	15	11.8	11.8	15.0
	Sometimes	37	29.1	29.1	44.1
	Frequently	22	17.3	17.3	61.4
	Usually	23	18.1	18.1	79.5
	Almost Always	26	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers are able to maintain focus during competition. Out of 127 valid responses, 26 participants (20.5%) selected “Almost Always,” 23 (18.1%) “Usually,” and 22 (17.3%) “Frequently,” totaling 71 participants (55.9%) who report consistently strong competitive focus. Meanwhile, 37 participants (29.1%) selected “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate focus in a substantial portion of athletes. A smaller number indicated difficulty with focus during competition, with 15 participants (11.8%) choosing “Occasionally” and 4 (3.1%) “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that while over half of the footballers demonstrate reliable concentration in competitive settings, a considerable group

may require strategies to strengthen focus under pressure, potentially supporting better in-game performance and recovery outcomes.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I feel confident in my level of fitness when training for my sport.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Rarely	5	3.9	3.9	5.5
	Occasionally	2	1.6	1.6	7.1
	Sometimes	14	11.0	11.0	18.1
	Frequently	38	29.9	29.9	48.0
	Usually	37	29.1	29.1	77.2
	Almost Always	29	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers feel confident in their level of fitness when training for their sport. Among the 127 valid responses, the largest group—38 participants (29.9%)—selected “Frequently,” followed closely by 37 (29.1%) who chose “Usually,” and 29 (22.8%) who responded with “Almost Always.” Altogether, 104 participants (81.8%) expressed a consistent level of confidence in their training fitness. Meanwhile, 14 participants (11.0%) reported “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate confidence, and only a small fraction indicated low confidence: 2 participants (1.6%) each for “Almost Never” and “Occasionally,” and 5 (3.9%) for “Rarely.” These findings suggest that most footballers maintain a strong belief in their physical readiness during training, which likely supports effective participation, motivation, and return-to-sport progress following injury.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I feel confident in my level of fitness when competing in my sport.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	14	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Rarely	1	.8	.8	11.8
	Occasionally	13	10.2	10.2	22.0
	Sometimes	15	11.8	11.8	33.9
	Frequently	41	32.3	32.3	66.1
	Usually	17	13.4	13.4	79.5
	Almost Always	26	20.5	20.5	100.0

	Always			
Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report feeling confident in their level of fitness during competition. Out of 127 valid responses, the most frequent response was “Frequently,” selected by 41 participants (32.3%), followed by “Almost Always” with 26 (20.5%) and “Usually” with 17 (13.4%). These categories together account for 84 participants (66.2%) who demonstrate consistent confidence in their fitness while competing. Meanwhile, 15 participants (11.8%) reported “Sometimes,” and a smaller portion expressed lower confidence: 13 (10.2%) selected “Occasionally,” 14 (11.0%) “Almost Never,” and 1 (0.8%) “Rarely.” These findings indicate that while the majority maintain strong fitness-related confidence in competitive settings, a notable minority may still face doubts, highlighting the need for continued physical conditioning and psychological support during the return-to-sport phase.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I take rest from training when I am told to.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	8	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Rarely	11	8.7	8.7	15.0
	Occasionally	8	6.3	6.3	21.3
	Sometimes	28	22.0	22.0	43.3
	Frequently	30	23.6	23.6	66.9
	Usually	31	24.4	24.4	91.3
	Almost Always	11	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that responses regarding adherence to rest instructions among post-traumatic footballers are varied, with a slight majority complying when advised to rest from training. Among 127 valid responses, 30 participants (23.6%) reported “Frequently” taking rest when told, 31 (24.4%) chose “Usually,” and 11 (8.7%) selected “Almost Always,” indicating that 72 participants (56.7%) generally follow rest recommendations. Meanwhile, 28 participants (22.0%) selected “Sometimes,” reflecting occasional compliance. However, a notable portion reported low adherence: 8

(6.3%) “Almost Never,” 11 (8.7%) “Rarely,” and 8 (6.3%) “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that while over half of the athletes show reasonable compliance with rest guidance, a significant minority may disregard it, which could hinder recovery and risk re-injury during the return-to-sport process.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I take rest from competition when I am told to.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	1	.8	.8	.8
	Rarely	10	7.9	7.9	8.7
	Occasionally	22	17.3	17.3	26.0
	Sometimes	25	19.7	19.7	45.7
	Frequently	27	21.3	21.3	66.9
	Usually	12	9.4	9.4	76.4
	Almost Always	30	23.6	23.6	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a considerable proportion of post-traumatic footballers comply with advice to rest from competition when instructed. Out of 127 valid responses, the largest group—30 participants (23.6%)—selected “Almost Always,” followed by 27 (21.3%) choosing “Frequently” and 12 (9.4%) “Usually,” indicating that 69 participants (54.3%) regularly adhere to rest recommendations during competition. Additionally, 25 participants (19.7%) chose “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate compliance. However, a notable portion indicated lower adherence: 22 (17.3%) selected “Occasionally,” 10 (7.9%) “Rarely,” and 1 (0.8%) “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that while over half of the athletes generally follow rest advice, nearly one-third exhibit inconsistent or poor compliance, which could affect recovery quality and elevate the risk of re-injury during competitive return.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I complete all of my rest and recovery activities.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	3	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Occasionally	5	3.9	3.9	6.3
	Sometimes	32	25.2	25.2	31.5
	Frequently	33	26.0	26.0	57.5
	Usually	31	24.4	24.4	81.9

Almost Always	23	18.1	18.1	100.0
Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report consistently engaging in rest and recovery activities. Out of 127 valid responses, 33 participants (26.0%) selected “Frequently,” 31 (24.4%) chose “Usually,” and 23 (18.1%) responded with “Almost Always,” totaling 87 participants (68.5%) who regularly complete their recovery routines. Additionally, 32 participants (25.2%) selected “Sometimes,” indicating moderate adherence. Only a small portion of respondents reported low compliance, with 5 participants (3.9%) choosing “Occasionally” and 3 (2.4%) “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that most footballers prioritize rest and recovery, which is crucial for safe return to sport, performance optimization, and injury prevention, although a minor group may require reinforcement of recovery protocols

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

In my training I always try to do my best.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Rarely	1	.8	.8	2.4
	Occasionally	3	2.4	2.4	4.7
	Sometimes	27	21.3	21.3	26.0
	Frequently	26	20.5	20.5	46.5
	Usually	20	15.7	15.7	62.2
	Almost Always	48	37.8	37.8	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the vast majority of post-traumatic footballers report consistently putting forth their best effort during training. Among 127 valid responses, the highest number of participants—48 (37.8%)—selected “Almost Always,” followed by 26 (20.5%) who chose “Frequently,” and 20 (15.7%) who selected “Usually.” Altogether, 94 participants (74%) demonstrate a strong commitment to training effort. Additionally, 27 participants (21.3%) reported “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate effort, while only a small fraction showed low effort: 3 (2.4%) selected “Occasionally,” 1 (0.8%) “Rarely,” and 2

(1.6%) “Almost Never.” These results suggest that most footballers maintain high levels of motivation and dedication in training, which likely supports effective recovery and successful reintegration into competitive sport.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

In competition I always try to do my best.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Rarely	1	.8	.8	3.9
	Occasionally	1	.8	.8	4.7
	Sometimes	13	10.2	10.2	15.0
	Frequently	21	16.5	16.5	31.5
	Usually	45	35.4	35.4	66.9
	Almost Always	42	33.1	33.1	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers report consistently giving their best effort during competition. Out of 127 valid responses, the highest proportion—45 participants (35.4%)—selected “Usually,” closely followed by 42 (33.1%) choosing “Almost Always” and 21 (16.5%) selecting “Frequently.” Together, these responses indicate that 108 participants (85%) maintain a strong competitive drive. Meanwhile, 13 participants (10.2%) reported “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate effort levels, and only a small minority showed lower motivation: 1 (0.8%) each selected “Rarely” and “Occasionally,” and 4 (3.1%) chose “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that despite previous injuries, the vast majority of footballers remain highly motivated and committed to performing at their best in competitive situations, which is essential for successful return to sport.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

I take rest after a big competition to improve my recovery.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	9	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Rarely	10	7.9	7.9	15.0
	Occasionally	8	6.3	6.3	21.3
	Sometimes	16	12.6	12.6	33.9
	Frequently	44	34.6	34.6	68.5
	Usually	13	10.2	10.2	78.7
	Almost Always	27	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report taking rest after a big competition to support their recovery. Out of 127 valid responses, 44 participants (34.6%) selected “Frequently,” 27 (21.3%) chose “Almost Always,” and 13 (10.2%) responded with “Usually,” showing that 84 participants (66.1%) regularly engage in post-competition rest. Meanwhile, 16 participants (12.6%) indicated “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate recovery behavior. However, a notable minority reported lower rest adherence: 8 (6.3%) selected “Occasionally,” 10 (7.9%) “Rarely,” and 9 (7.1%) “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that while most athletes recognize the importance of recovery after competition, a significant portion may be neglecting this critical aspect of post-performance care, potentially increasing their risk of delayed recovery or re-injury.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I am able to accurately identify areas for growth in my sport.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	1	.8	.8	.8
	Rarely	8	6.3	6.3	7.1
	Occasionally	16	12.6	12.6	19.7
	Sometimes	31	24.4	24.4	44.1
	Frequently	14	11.0	11.0	55.1
	Usually	26	20.5	20.5	75.6
	Almost Always	31	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a substantial proportion of post-traumatic footballers believe they are capable of accurately identifying areas for growth in their sport. Among the 127 valid responses, 31 participants (24.4%) selected “Almost Always” and another 31 (24.4%) chose “Sometimes,” while 26 (20.5%) indicated “Usually” and 14 (11.0%) “Frequently.” Together, these account for 102 participants (80.3%) who show moderate to high self-awareness in skill development. Meanwhile, 16 participants (12.6%) chose “Occasionally,” and a small number selected “Rarely” (6.3%) and “Almost Never” (0.8%). These findings suggest that

the majority of athletes have a strong ability to assess their own performance and recognize areas needing improvement—an essential aspect of self-directed recovery, performance enhancement, and return-to-sport readiness following injury.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I am able to take feedback from coaches and other athletes constructively.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	6	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Rarely	10	7.9	7.9	12.6
	Occasionally	10	7.9	7.9	20.5
	Sometimes	30	23.6	23.6	44.1
	Frequently	22	17.3	17.3	61.4
	Usually	11	8.7	8.7	70.1
	Almost Always	38	29.9	29.9	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a majority of post-traumatic footballers perceive themselves as able to take feedback from coaches and teammates constructively. Out of 127 valid responses, 38 participants (29.9%) selected “Almost Always,” 22 (17.3%) chose “Frequently,” and 11 (8.7%) responded with “Usually,” indicating that 71 participants (55.9%) consistently accept and apply feedback positively. Additionally, 30 participants (23.6%) reported “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate receptiveness. However, 20 participants (15.8%) selected lower categories: 10 (7.9%) each for “Rarely” and “Occasionally,” and 6 (4.7%) “Almost Never.” These findings suggest that while the majority of athletes are open to constructive feedback—an important factor in development and return-to-sport adjustment—a notable portion may struggle with criticism, highlighting the potential need for communication or psychological support interventions.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

During competition I follow the plans set by my coach.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	3	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Rarely	14	11.0	11.0	13.4
	Occasionally	3	2.4	2.4	15.7
	Sometimes	32	25.2	25.2	40.9
	Frequently	27	21.3	21.3	62.2
	Usually	38	29.9	29.9	92.1
	Almost Always	10	7.9	7.9	100.0

Total	127	100.0	100.0
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This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers report adhering to the strategies set by their coach during competition. Out of 127 valid responses, 38 participants (29.9%) selected “Usually,” 27 (21.3%) chose “Frequently,” and 10 (7.9%) indicated “Almost Always,” making up 75 participants (59.1%) who follow coaching plans regularly. Additionally, 32 participants (25.2%) responded with “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate adherence. However, a smaller group showed low compliance: 14 participants (11.0%) chose “Rarely,” 3 (2.4%) “Occasionally,” and another 3 (2.4%) “Almost Never.” These results suggest that while the majority of athletes show a willingness to follow structured plans in competition—a key factor in team coordination and performance—there remains a significant portion who may benefit from better coach-athlete communication or reinforcement of tactical discipline.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I am confident making strategic decisions during competition.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	6	4.7	4.7	4.7
	Rarely	2	1.6	1.6	6.3
	Occasionally	21	16.5	16.5	22.8
	Sometimes	16	12.6	12.6	35.4
	Frequently	38	29.9	29.9	65.4
	Usually	26	20.5	20.5	85.8
	Almost Always	18	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a majority of post-traumatic footballers report feeling confident in making strategic decisions during competition. Among the 127 valid responses, 38 participants (29.9%) selected “Frequently,” followed by 26 (20.5%) choosing “Usually” and 18 (14.2%) “Almost Always,” indicating that 82 participants (64.6%) possess high levels of strategic confidence during gameplay. Additionally, 16 participants (12.6%) reported “Sometimes,” while 21 (16.5%) chose “Occasionally,” reflecting moderate

confidence. A smaller group indicated low confidence, with 6 (4.7%) selecting “Almost Never” and 2 (1.6%) “Rarely.” These findings suggest that most athletes are self-assured in making tactical choices during competition, a crucial trait for independent performance and effective return to sport, while a smaller subset may benefit from additional decision-making training or psychological support.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I recognize situations in competition when I should think strategically.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	8	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Occasionally	6	4.7	4.7	11.0
	Sometimes	23	18.1	18.1	29.1
	Frequently	31	24.4	24.4	53.5
	Usually	41	32.3	32.3	85.8
	Almost Always	18	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers report being aware of situations during competition where strategic thinking is required. Out of 127 valid responses, 41 participants (32.3%) selected “Usually,” 31 (24.4%) chose “Frequently,” and 18 (14.2%) responded with “Almost Always,” indicating that 90 participants (70.9%) regularly recognize when to think strategically. Additionally, 23 participants (18.1%) reported “Sometimes,” reflecting moderate situational awareness. In contrast, a smaller portion indicated lower awareness, with 6 (4.7%) selecting “Occasionally” and 8 (6.3%) “Rarely.” These results suggest that the majority of athletes are well-tuned to competitive demands and capable of identifying key moments for strategic decisions—an essential skill for effective performance and reintegration into competitive play after injury.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

I recognize situations in training when I should think strategically.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Rarely	9	7.1	7.1	10.2
	Occasionally	25	19.7	19.7	29.9
	Sometimes	16	12.6	12.6	42.5

Frequently	41	32.3	32.3	74.8
Usually	19	15.0	15.0	89.8
Almost Always	13	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers are aware of the importance of strategic thinking during training. Among the 127 valid responses, 41 participants (32.3%) selected “Frequently,” 19 (15.0%) chose “Usually,” and 13 (10.2%) “Almost Always,” totaling 73 participants (57.5%) who regularly recognize strategic moments in training. An additional 16 participants (12.6%) responded with “Sometimes,” and 25 (19.7%) with “Occasionally,” indicating moderate awareness. However, a smaller group—9 (7.1%) chose “Rarely” and 4 (3.1%) “Almost Never”—show limited recognition of such situations. These findings suggest that while most athletes demonstrate a good level of situational awareness in training, a notable minority may benefit from coaching interventions to enhance their strategic thinking and decision-making skills during practice sessions.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

When training I recognize when I can help other athletes/teammates with their training.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Occasionally	8	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Sometimes	15	11.8	11.8	18.1
	Frequently	32	25.2	25.2	43.3
	Usually	47	37.0	37.0	80.3
	Almost Always	25	19.7	19.7	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that most post-traumatic footballers recognize opportunities to support their teammates during training. Out of 127 valid responses, the majority—47 participants (37.0%)—selected “Usually,” followed by 32 (25.2%) choosing “Frequently” and 25 (19.7%) “Almost Always.” These responses indicate that 104 participants (81.9%) often identify moments to assist others in training. Additionally, 15 participants (11.8%) responded with “Sometimes,” and only 8 (6.3%) reported “Occasionally.” These findings suggest that peer support and

teamwork remain strong even after injury, which may contribute positively to group cohesion, shared motivation, and a supportive environment that enhances both individual recovery and overall team performance.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

I can tell the difference between being sore and being hurt.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	5	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Rarely	1	.8	.8	4.7
	Occasionally	16	12.6	12.6	17.3
	Sometimes	39	30.7	30.7	48.0
	Frequently	17	13.4	13.4	61.4
	Usually	21	16.5	16.5	78.0
	Almost Always	28	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report being able to distinguish between general soreness and actual injury. Among the 127 valid responses, 28 participants (22.0%) selected “Almost Always,” 21 (16.5%) chose “Usually,” and 17 (13.4%) responded with “Frequently,” indicating that 66 participants (51.9%) have a strong ability to differentiate between soreness and injury. Additionally, 39 participants (30.7%) reported “Sometimes,” suggesting moderate awareness. However, 16 (12.6%) chose “Occasionally,” while a small number indicated limited recognition, with 5 (3.9%) selecting “Almost Never” and 1 (0.8%) “Rarely.” These findings suggest that while most athletes demonstrate a sound understanding of physical sensations—a crucial skill in injury management and safe return to sport—some may benefit from further education to reduce the risk of overlooking or misinterpreting pain-related signals.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPSS

When injured I do what I can to heal fully before returning to my training.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Occasionally	5	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Sometimes	16	12.6	12.6	16.5
	Frequently	40	31.5	31.5	48.0
	Usually	34	26.8	26.8	74.8

Almost Always	32	25.2	25.2	100.0
Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that the majority of post-traumatic footballers report prioritizing full recovery before resuming training after an injury. Out of 127 valid responses, 40 participants (31.5%) selected “Frequently,” 34 (26.8%) chose “Usually,” and 32 (25.2%) responded with “Almost Always,” totaling 106 participants (83.5%) who actively take measures to heal completely before returning. Additionally, 16 participants (12.6%) reported “Sometimes,” while only 5 (3.9%) indicated “Occasionally.” These findings suggest a strong recovery-oriented mindset among most athletes, reflecting awareness of the importance of complete healing in preventing re-injury and ensuring long-term performance sustainability. However, the small portion who recover inconsistently may benefit from targeted education or medical guidance to reinforce safe return-to-play practices.

#### Frequency/Percentage of SPPS

When injured I do what I can to heal fully before returning to competition.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Almost Never	12	9.4	9.4	9.4
	Rarely	5	3.9	3.9	13.4
	Occasionally	13	10.2	10.2	23.6
	Sometimes	17	13.4	13.4	37.0
	Frequently	36	28.3	28.3	65.4
	Usually	11	8.7	8.7	74.0
	Almost Always	33	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

This table illustrates that a majority of post-traumatic footballers report taking appropriate steps to heal fully before returning to competition. Out of 127 valid responses, 33 participants (26.0%) selected “Almost Always,” 36 (28.3%) chose “Frequently,” and 11 (8.7%) responded with “Usually,” making a total of 80 participants (63.0%) who consistently prioritize full recovery before competing. Additionally, 17 participants (13.4%) reported “Sometimes,” and 13 (10.2%) “Occasionally,” indicating moderate recovery practices. However, 5 (3.9%) selected “Rarely” and 12 (9.4%)

“Almost Never,” showing that a small but notable group may return to competition prematurely. These findings suggest that while most athletes exhibit a strong commitment to responsible injury management, some may benefit from enhanced guidance or medical supervision to reinforce safe return-to-sport behaviors.

#### Descriptive Statistics of SPPS (Athlete Development)

Statistics		
Athlete Development		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		5.0682
Median		5.1667
Std. Deviation		.65713
Variance		.432

The mean score was 5.07 (SD = 0.66), indicating that participants generally perceived themselves as having a moderately high level of athlete development. The median score was slightly higher at 5.17, suggesting that over half of the participants rated their athlete development above the mean. The relatively small standard deviation reflects moderate variation in responses, implying that while most participants clustered around the mean, there was some diversity in how they perceived their own development as athletes.

#### Descriptive Statistics of SPPS (Athlete Development)

Statistics		
Mastery and Development		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		5.2081
Median		5.2857
Std. Deviation		.70739
Variance		.500

The mean score was 5.21 (SD = 0.71), indicating that, on average, participants perceived a moderately high level of mastery and development in their sports performance. The median score was slightly higher at 5.29, showing that over half of the respondents rated their mastery and development above the mean. The standard

deviation suggests a moderate spread in responses, implying some variation in how participants perceive their progress and skill development.

### Descriptive Statistics of SPPS (Athlete Development)

Statistics		
Strategy and Preparedness		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		4.8999
Median		4.8571
Std. Deviation		.67375
Variance		.454

The mean score was 4.90 (SD = 0.67), indicating that, on average, participants perceived a moderately positive level of strategy and preparedness in their sports performance. The median score was 4.86, which is very close to the mean, suggesting a fairly symmetrical distribution of responses around the average. The standard deviation indicates a moderate level of variation, showing that while most participants had similar perceptions of their strategy and preparedness, some variability still exists among individual responses.

### Descriptive Statistics of SPPS (Athlete Development)

Statistics		
Recovery and Injury Prevention		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		4.9016
Median		5.0000
Std. Deviation		.73894
Variance		.546

The mean score was 4.90 (SD = 0.74), indicating that, on average, participants reported a moderately positive perception of their recovery practices and injury prevention strategies. The median score was slightly higher at 5.00, suggesting that half of the participants rated their recovery and injury prevention at or above this level. The standard deviation shows moderate variability in responses, implying that while most participants share similar perceptions, there is some diversity in how they approach

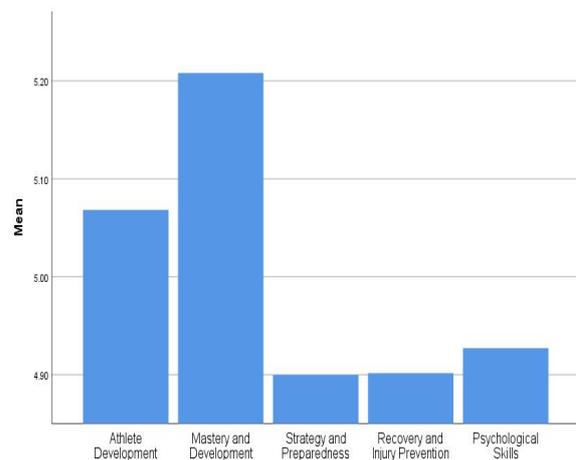
recovery and injury prevention in their sports routines.

### Descriptive Statistics of SPPS (Athlete Development)

Statistics		
Psychological Skills		
N	Valid	127
	Missing	0
Mean		4.9272
Median		4.7500
Std. Deviation		.82922
Variance		.688

The mean score was 4.93 (SD = 0.83), indicating that, on average, participants reported a moderately positive perception of their use of psychological skills in sports. The median score was slightly lower at 4.75, suggesting that half of the participants rated their psychological skills just below the mean. The relatively larger standard deviation compared to other subscales reflects moderate to substantial variability, indicating that participants differed more widely in how they perceived their psychological skills for sports performance.

### Graphical Representation of SPPS Subscales



The results revealed that footballers returning post-injury reported the strongest self-perceptions in Mastery and Development and Athlete Development, indicating confidence in skill progression and athletic growth. Lower scores in Strategy and Preparedness and Recovery and Injury Prevention suggest potential gaps in planning and physical rehabilitation

strategies. The highest variation was noted in Psychological Skills, reflecting differing levels of mental readiness. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive support, particularly in psychological resilience and recovery planning, to optimize return-to-sport outcomes.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The study evaluated how post-traumatic footballers perceive their sports performance after returning to play, using the Sports Performance Perception Scale (SPPS). The overall mean score ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ) reflected a moderately high level of perceived performance. The strongest domains—**Mastery and Development** ( $M = 5.21$ ) and **Athlete Development** ( $M = 5.07$ )—showed athletes' confidence in skill recovery and progress. However, relatively lower scores in **Strategy and Preparedness** and **Recovery and Injury Prevention** pointed to ongoing gaps in planning and rehabilitation, while variability in **Psychological Skills** indicated differing levels of mental readiness.

These findings align with prior studies emphasizing psychological readiness as key to successful return-to-sport outcomes. Similar to Ardern et al. (2013), the footballers who reported greater confidence and emotional control also perceived stronger performance. Consistent with Chyi et al. (2024) and Yang et al. (2022), the results suggest that while athletes often regain technical and developmental confidence post-injury, underlying stress and inadequate recovery strategies may still affect readiness and injury prevention.

Unlike Ríos Garit et al. (2021), who linked poor psychological skills with increased injury risk, this study found that most footballers retained **high self-confidence (72.4% in training; 62.2% in competition)** and **strong focus (72.5% in training; 55.9% in competition)**—indicating resilience and mental stability. Compared with mentor-based coaching research by Lervold et al. (2025), which showed only slight performance gains, the present study revealed higher **recovery commitment**

**(83.5%), peer support (81.9%), and strategic awareness (57.5%)**, underscoring athletes' proactive rehabilitation engagement.

Overall, the study concludes that **post-traumatic footballers maintain strong perceptions of performance and recovery**, with notable strengths in mastery and development but remaining needs in strategy, preparedness, and injury prevention. These insights reinforce the importance of integrating psychological resilience and structured recovery planning into post-injury sports rehabilitation.

#### **SUMMARY:**

This cross-sectional study assessed the perception of sports performance among 127 post-traumatic footballers aged 18–35 years who had returned to play after completing at least six months of rehabilitation. Conducted over six months in Fame Football Club Lahore, participants were selected using non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Sport Performance Perceptions Scale (SPPS) and analyzed with SPSS version 25. The overall mean SPPS score was 5.00 ( $SD = 0.51$ ), indicating a moderately high perception of performance. Among the five SPPS domains, the highest mean scores were in Mastery and Development ( $M = 5.21$ ) and Athlete Development ( $M = 5.07$ ), reflecting strong confidence in skill progression and athletic growth. In contrast, Strategy and Preparedness ( $M = 4.90$ ), Recovery and Injury Prevention ( $M = 4.90$ ), and Psychological Skills ( $M = 4.93$ ) showed slightly lower scores, highlighting areas where additional support may be needed. The greatest variability was observed in Psychological Skills ( $SD = 0.83$ ), suggesting inconsistencies in mental readiness post-injury. Overall, the findings emphasize the need to integrate psychological and strategic support with physical rehabilitation. While most athletes were confident in their return to play, targeted interventions are recommended to

strengthen recovery planning, emotional resilience, and injury prevention strategies.

#### CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, post-traumatic footballers generally perceived their sports performance positively after returning to play, especially in areas related to skill development and athletic growth. However, lower scores in recovery, injury prevention, and psychological skills highlight the need for more comprehensive rehabilitation approaches that address both physical and mental readiness to optimize return-to-sport outcomes.

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