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Title:

The ecological dynamics of cognizant action in sport

Abstract:

Our intellectualized society has a prejudice with movement. The traditional understanding of human action attributes to the brain the power of predicting action consequences, as well as predicting the immediate changes in the environmental circumstances where such action will occur. However, this view is quite 'sedentary' because it assumes that the brain is lagging, i.e. it is making inferences before the body moves, and that the body is simply input for brain inferences. I'll present an ecological dynamics approach to cognizant action, aligned with Gibson, where behaviour is understood in terms of self-organised action directed towards perceived affordances. Evidence from sport performance demonstrates how performers find solutions to the problems placed by the task environment, based on their active cognizant bodies, instead of bodies instructed by the brain. Consequences for how coaches and practitioners can enhance performers' behaviour are discussed at the end.