

1

Introducing Sport  
Psychology



# 1.1: The History of Sport Psychology

**Definition:** The chronology of key events in the development of sport psychology from its earliest roots through to the present day.

Contrary to popular opinion, sport psychology is not a new phenomenon (Kremer and Moran, 2008). From the time of the Ancient Greeks there is strong evidence to show that preparation for sporting competition has been willing to acknowledge the mental alongside the physical. Indeed, the standard four-day procedure followed by Greek athletes in the build-up to their games (known as the tetrad) incorporated specific time set aside for psychological skills training, including concentration (Day 2) and relaxation (Day 4).

Given the importance that commentators, both paid and unpaid, routinely attach to 'the mind' in athletic performance, it should come as no surprise to learn that the world of sport has long recognised that success will depend on 'total preparation' involving the mind as well as the body. However, despite this tacit acceptance, sport psychology had to wait several centuries before finally being afforded due recognition as an academic enterprise in its own right (Green and Benjamin, 2009), and even today there is still resistance from traditionalists who resent the interference of 'shrinks' in what they see as their unsullied world of sport.

From ancient roots it took until the early 20th century to see the coming-together of the subdiscipline from diverse sources – but not before a number of false trails had been laid. While there had been some interest in sporting personalities, play, motor learning, reaction times and transfer of training around the turn of the 19th century, the individual who is now generally credited with carrying out the earliest systematic sport psychology research is Norman Triplett.



Born in Illinois in 1861, Triplett was awarded his baccalaureate degree by Illinois College (Jacksonville) at the age of 28, followed by his Masters two years later in 1898, and finally his PhD from Clark University in 1900. Although his interests were wide ranging (his PhD was on the topic of conjuring deceptions), it is his Masters' thesis that has become his lasting legacy not only to sport psychology but also another subdiscipline, social psychology. His dissertation was based on archival and experimental investigations of what he coined 'dynamogism' (now known as social facilitation, or the improvement in performance in the presence of others – see 5.25). The archival research considered recorded cycling times either alone, paced or in competition, while his experimental work involved children winding silk line onto a fishing reel so as to pull a flag around a track. A keen sportsman (he was one of the first US athletes to run the 100 yards in under 10 seconds) and active supporter of all forms of sport, in 1901 he became Head of the Department of Child Study at Kansas State Normal School (KSNS) where he continued to work until his retirement in 1931, all the while extending his fulsome support to all forms of sporting activity within the college (Davis et al., 1995).

While Triplett had made some important observations, his academic legacy was not strong and until the 1930s evidence of sport psychology activity in the western world was sparse. In contrast, from the late 19th century onwards in eastern European universities there had been more concerted efforts to establish sport psychology as a scientific discipline. The world's first dedicated sport psychology laboratory opening in 1920 at the Deutsche Sporthochschule (German Sport University) in Berlin under Dr Carl Diem, a person who played a positive and significant role in the development of European sport, a role later overshadowed by his involvement as chief organiser of the infamous 1936 Berlin Olympics (later referred to as Hitler's Games).

In the former USSR, from the 1920s onwards both Avksenty Cezarevich (A.C.) Puni (1898–1986) and Piotr (Peter) Roudik played key roles in the establishment of sport psychology (see Ryba et al., 2005). Professor Puni opened a sport psychology laboratory at the Institute of Physical Culture in Leningrad in the 1920s and had a wide ranging interest in both pure and applied sport psychology. At around the same time Roudik established the first Soviet sport psychology laboratory in Moscow (1925), where he focused his attention not on competitive sport but the psychophysiology of motor behaviour. These endeavours reflected in





longstanding interests in the psychology of sport that stretched throughout the 20th century in eastern Europe.

It was in that decade that the person now generally regarded as the founding father of contemporary western sport psychology began to carve out his career at the University of Illinois. Born in 1893, Coleman Griffith was a lecturer in educational psychology at the University of Illinois when, with the help of his Dean and mentor Professor George Huff, he turned his sights towards sport psychology. Following his introduction of taught courses in sport psychology from 1923, in 1925 he set up the Athletic Research Laboratory and worked frenetically, writing more than 20 sport psychology articles and two books up until 1931. Sadly, the entire enterprise within the University then came apart for reasons now obscure but perhaps related to the Great Depression, or perhaps because the college's head football coach, the legendary and highly influential Robert Zuppke, failed to see any benefit accruing to his team from all this academic research (Green, 2003).

Disillusioned, Griffith then turned his attention back towards educational psychology, only once returning to sport psychology in 1937 when he was asked to work with the Chicago Cubs Baseball Club by the club's owner, Philip Wrigley. Griffith worked more or less closely with management for three years but the relationship eventually petered out. The Cubs' manager, Charlie Grimm, referred to Griffith as the 'headshrinker', and would have nothing to do with his work (Gould and Pick, 1995) despite the considerable investment that the club had made in recording equipment and the huge investment that Griffith himself made in time, effort and report writing, including detailed analysis of every players' performances, a very early forerunner of what is now so influential in most professional sports, notational analysis or the systematic recording and analysis of performance.

The years following Griffith were fallow for most of sport psychology in the West, apart from a continuation of the longstanding interest in motor learning and motor control on both sides of the Atlantic. In eastern Europe the early work involving competitive sport continued to be studied in European universities, such as Leipzig, often in conjunction with applied research, for example involving the mental preparation of Soviet cosmonauts. By 1960, sport psychologists were routinely working with elite Eastern Bloc athletes, and from the 1970s onwards Olympic competitors from countries including the USSR, East Germany, Hungary





and Czechoslovakia used sport psychologists to help with self-regulation, mental practice and imagery (Roberts and Kimiecik, 1989).

It was around this time that sport science began to truly emerge (Massengale and Swanson, 1997) as coaches considered how various disciplines, including psychology, could help improve performance. Ahead of its time, the Brazilian soccer team that won the World Cup in Sweden in 1958 had brought along not only a nutritionist and a dentist but also a psychologist, Prof. Joao Carvalhaes. Carvalhaes conducted various tests on the players to determine their mental toughness, including asking them to sketch pictures of men. From such tests he concluded that the 17-year-old Pelé was, 'obviously infantile. He lacks fighting spirit. He is too young to feel aggression and react in an adequate fashion.' Fortunately the team coach Feola trusted his instincts. According to Pelé's autobiography, 'He just nodded gravely at the psychologist, saying: "You may be right. The thing is, you don't know anything about football. If Pelé's knee is ready, he plays." Which he did' (Pelé, 1977).

Prominent among European practitioners at this time was Dr Miroslav Vanek (Vanek and Cratty, 1970). As well as working directly with athletes, and including the Czechoslovakian team that travelled to the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968, along with Ferruccio Antonelli, he was instrumental in helping found a pioneering body specifically constituted to further the advancement of sport psychology. This was the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP), and its first congress was held in Rome in 1965.

Over the next ten years a succession of other organisations sprang up on either side of the Atlantic including the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Activity (NASPSA, 1969), the Fédération Européenne de Psychologie de Sport et des Activités Corporelles (FEPSAC, 1969) and the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP, 1986) (see 1.4). However, the driving force behind all these initiatives came not from within psychology but from physical education and sport science, and the major 'players' within sport psychology all came from these disciplines. Indeed, the first body to regulate the practice of sport psychologists in the UK was not the British Psychological Society but the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES, first founded in 1984), and it was not until the late 1980s that the parent discipline of psychology slowly began to take greater interest in sport psychology. For example, the American Psychological Association (APA) formed a separate division in 1987



(Division 47: Exercise and Sport Psychology), and it was in 1993 that the British Psychological Society (BPS) first set in motion the long procedure that eventually led to the creation of a separate BPS division 'Sport and Exercise Psychology' in 2004. Nowadays the discipline's governing bodies are increasingly concerned with regulating the use of the term 'sport psychologist'. For example, in the UK only those who are chartered through the BPS have the right to describe themselves by this title, and currently there are around 200 individuals who are either chartered or are in the process of becoming chartered.

The history of sport psychology has been divided, chequered and tortuous, and it continues to make its mark to this day. Those who did not graduate as psychologists feel disenfranchised now that the parent discipline has attempted to exert greater control, while across sport psychology there continues to be tension between those who 'do' or practice sport psychology, and those who teach or research. Despite these tensions, the subdiscipline continues to grow and flourish.

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# 1.2: Practising Sport Psychology

**Definition:** The translation of sport psychology theory into practice through appropriate professional interventions with athletes and teams.

In the first instance, how does someone become a practising sport psychologist? On the one hand, the trite answer would be 'it is not difficult as anyone who voices an opinion on sport performance by definition becomes a naïve sport psychologist'. These views may not be informed, solicited or even welcomed, but if they have an effect on an athlete's thoughts, feelings or performance, either positively or negatively, then unwittingly that person will already have practised as a sport psychologist. However, that type of spontaneous intervention is quite different from one that has been grounded in the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to make a positive and long-lasting impact for the good of the athlete or team. Good sport psychologists try to sort the wheat from the chaff in terms of helping the psychological work in harmony with the physical in improving sport performance and athlete wellness (Andersen, 2000, 2005).

To ensure that the goods on offer are not damaged, psychology's governing bodies have worked hard to establish strict criteria and regulations governing the use of the title 'sport psychologist'. To become accredited as a sport psychologist in the UK, at the time of writing, you can follow one of two routes. The body that oversees the governance of professional psychology across the UK, the British Psychological Society (BPS), normally requires a first degree in psychology (or a closely related discipline) which qualifies the person for Graduate Basis for Chartered Member (GBC), followed by an approved higher degree related to Sport and Exercise Psychology, followed in turn by a lengthy period of supervised experience. In contrast, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences







(BASES) requires a first degree in either psychology or sport science, followed by a higher degree in the other discipline, together with a period of supervised experience, and there are moves to try to harmonise the two systems.

Today there are a growing number of accredited sport psychologists working across the globe, and the number seems set to continue to rise for the foreseeable future (Lidor and Bar-Eli, 2001). However, operating outside the bounds of these professional bodies, there are a great many self-styled 'sport consultants' who often have no formal training in psychology but who adopt the role of sport psychologist or mental coach. When choosing a sport psychologist, the watch-words for any athlete must be *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) for, as with any profession, the potential to harm as well as help is ever present. Many sportspeople have had difficult experiences with sport consultants whose advice may have been given with the best of intentions but which has lacked the psychological know-how to ensure good quality control.

Having first established the credentials to be able to work with teams and athletes, a great many ways to practice then present themselves. Typically sport psychologists operate in at least three ways: as basic researchers (investigating the science of sport psychology but not necessarily working with athletes or teams); as educational sport psychologists (teaching and educating athletes and coaches); and as clinical sport psychologists (counselling or supporting individual athletes with problems). In reality, many sport psychologists will fulfil all three roles at some stage in their careers, but the primary focus of this chapter will be on those who work directly with sportspeople and teams, in either educational or clinical roles, or a combination of the two.

The distinction between the educational and clinical role can be blurred but was neatly characterised by Rainer Martens (1987) as the difference in the direction of travel of the intervention: either from abnormal to normal (clinical), or from normal to 'supernormal' (educational). That is, clinical sport psychologists will tend to use their clinical training to help address psychopathologies, including emotional, behavioural and personality disorders, while educational sport psychologists will aspire to enhance 'normal' sports' performance through appropriate interventions with both athletes and their coaches. When these two worlds come together, ethical problems can arise. In particular, an intervention may reveal an underlying clinical condition





that would go beyond the professional competence of the practitioner, raising serious ethical and professional considerations (see 1.3).

The work of a clinical sport psychologist is likely to vary depending on the 'practice philosophy' that he or she brings to the intervention (Stainback et al., 2007). This is likely to incorporate personal beliefs and values along with a theoretical paradigm that has been acquired through appropriate training which then reflects in a model of practice and ultimately in particular types of intervention that are used. Given the wide range of perspectives that can underpin clinical psychology, it is not surprising that the types of intervention can vary considerably, including psychodynamic (Freudian), humanist (Rogerian), cognitive-behavioural (CBT) and systems or family therapy. While very different in approach, all rely on a good relationship between client and therapist, and are primarily underpinned by a medical model of intervention.

Educational sport psychologists often are first confronted with 'problems' (e.g. confidence, concentration, stress), but these issues are not typically pathological but instead they are obstacles that stand in the way of optimal performance. Furthermore, while one specific concern may trigger the engagement with a sport psychologist, it rarely remains the dominant issue over time as performance enhancement in more general terms is addressed through a wider array of interventions.

The practice model underpinning a clinical intervention is probably best characterised as medical, aimed at 'curing' or healing the athlete, but over recent years it has become apparent that this model is less effective in helping athletes to truly grow and mature. Instead, it is argued that the goal of the sport psychologist may be different, to carefully nurture independence and self-reliance to a point where the athlete is equipped with the right skills and techniques to be able to self-regulate performance as and when required. That is not to say that there may still be the need to seek out occasional advice and support but this need is likely to diminish, not grow, over time if the intervention has been successful.

In addition, according to Kremer and Scully (1998), the best person to help this process may not be the sport psychologist but rather the person who on a daily basis works most closely with the team or athlete, the coach or manager. This opens the possibility of an alternative model where the coach or manager becomes the primary point of contact but supported in this role by the sport psychologist. This has advantages in many ways, not least because it avoids the player or team potentially being caught in the crossfire between different messages, and at the same time it ensures that the 'naïve psychology' that may have informed





the coach's previous interactions has now been cross referenced and balanced by input from sport psychology. In this way the sport psychologist becomes an integral part of the support team used by the coach or manager but is not centre-stage. Indeed, most coach development programmes now include significant elements devoted to sport psychology, and this model then becomes the natural progression.

Robin Vealey (2007) has suggested that apart from distinguishing between educational and clinical approaches, it is also useful to categorise interventions as being either programme-centred (i.e. pre-planned sequence of activities) or athlete-centred (i.e. an interactive, needs-based approach), and also whether the intervention is concerned primarily with performance enhancement or with personal development. The suggestion is that the most successful are not narrowly confined but succeed in addressing not only immediate performance concerns but also broader lifestyle issues, and are tailored to the needs of individual athletes.

Beyond this point the model of intervention will vary depending on the perspective of the sport psychologist and the context. According to Vealey (2007), these include the following models:

- systems for individual, team, organisational and family interventions;
- self-regulatory or cognitive-behavioural models;
- behavioural management models;
- educational mental skills models;
- developmental models;
- sport-specific mental skills models;
- clinical intervention models;
- perceptual training models.

Whichever model is adopted it is likely to follow a particular strategy. Over the years a number of staged practice strategies have been suggested, but all are broadly similar in approach. Among the most popular is Morris and Thomas's (2003) seven-phase model or strategy. The first stage is *orientation*, where the purpose of the intervention is clarified, objectives identified, and commitment determined in relation to performance enhancement. Once the task is identified, the sport psychologist then conducts an *analysis* of the particular sport, followed by an individual/team *assessment* that is completed to develop a profile of strengths and weaknesses. This profile can be based on a number of quantitative and qualitative techniques including psychological tests and inventories, interviews, observations of the athlete performing (via





videos, diaries and/or performance statistics) and talking to coaches and significant others about the athlete. The fourth stage is *conceptualisation* through a profile analysis, where the personal characteristics of the athlete are placed in the context of his or her sport. The fifth stage is *psychological skills training*, involving practical skills relating to e.g. imagery, goal setting, cognitive techniques, stress management, attention/concentration skills, thought stopping and building self-confidence. These skills are then *practised* in the sixth stage before being implemented within competition. The seventh and final stage in this process is *evaluation*, and this considers evidence of performance enhancement, improved personal adjustment and adherence to the psychological skills training programme.

In essence, the seven steps describe the process of action research and while it may appear overly prescriptive, as a general framework for describing the stages that comprise a systematic intervention it is valuable. Beyond this, however, there is a widespread agreement that the cornerstone of a successful intervention must be establishing and developing a trusting relationship with the athlete. This is not to imply that the relationship is equivalent to that between a counsellor and client. Instead, counselling skills may be brought to bear at certain occasions during the intervention but at others times the relationship may be fundamentally different, for example when testing an athlete or instructing in the use of mental skills.

To many athletes and coaches, professional sport psychologists are still viewed with a degree of suspicion, perhaps because of previous negative experiences or stereotypical images of 'The Motivator' type characters, as falsely portrayed in the media. For most practising sport psychologists nothing could be further from the truth, but these stereotypes can be difficult to dispel. However, as the subdiscipline continues to mature and the profession regulates the work of those who describe themselves as sport psychologists, so it is to be hoped that the image will change to reflect reality more closely.

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## 1.3: Ethical Issues

**Definition:** A code of moral and professional principles and associated procedures to ensure that practising sport psychologists act responsibly at all times and in accordance with the profession's primary values and ethical standards.

In keeping with other branches of applied psychology, sport psychologists must adhere to professional principles and codes of conduct in relation to their work and engagement with clients. The codes attached to each international professional body may vary but all are governed by similar principles. As one example, the American Psychological Association (APA) recently (July 2010) revised their ethical principles and code of conduct. The revised guide includes the following five general principles, along with 10 standards:

- *Principle A: Beneficence and Non-maleficence* – Psychologists strive to benefit those with whom they work and take care to do no harm.
- *Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility* – Psychologists establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work.





- *Principle C: Integrity* – Psychologists seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in the science, teaching, and practice of psychology.
- *Principle D: Justice* – Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access to and benefit from the contributions of psychology and to equal quality in the processes, procedures, and services being conducted by psychologists.
- *Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity* – Psychologists respect the dignity and worth of all people, and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination.

While it would be expected that any professional sport psychologist would have little difficulty in adhering to these principles, the special nature of sport psychology interventions do present real and significant challenges that must be addressed in order to balance effective practice with ethical good practice (Sachs, 1993; Moore, 2003; Andersen, 2005). Unfortunately, history would suggest that many previous interventions may not have achieved this balance.

In a survey of 508 professional and student members of the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP), Petitpas et al. (1994) asked respondents to indicate their engagement with, or awareness of, the existence of 47 different behaviours, 24 of which were deemed to be ethically controversial (e.g. 'Including athlete testimonials in advertising', 'Using profanity in your professional work', 'Serving concurrently as coach and sport psychologist for a team', 'Being sexually attracted to a client'). In a further open-ended question, participants were asked to describe ethically challenging or troubling incidents that they or a colleague had faced in the last two years. Of the 89 incidents mentioned, 78 referred either to General Standards (e.g. providing services without training, engaging in dual role relationships, failing to make referrals), or to Confidentiality (e.g. coaches who want information on athletes, responding to coaches who abuse their athletes). While acknowledging the real difficulties faced by practitioners out in the field, the authors nevertheless concluded that many reported practices could correspond to violations of APA Ethical Standards, and hence recommended that all applied sport psychologists should routinely be trained in ethical considerations and how to deal with ethical dilemmas.

A follow-up, on-line survey of AAASP members was issued subsequent to the publication of the AAASP ethics code in 1992 (Etzel et al., 2004). This survey found fewer examples of controversial behaviour but more differences within the sample (e.g. men v. women; professionals v. students;





certified v. non-certified consultants; PE v. psychology background), suggesting on the one hand that awareness of ethical issues had been raised since the earlier survey, but on the other hand flagging that there were now worrying inconsistencies in knowledge/awareness/practice across the membership.

As to what makes sport psychology so unique within the discipline, there a number of issues that warrant close attention relating to the consultant/athlete relationship (Kremer, 2003), and these will be discussed later. While being unique in certain ways, applied sport psychology is not exceptional in others, including the need to base the intervention on a good personal relationship with the athlete or team. In common with other client/consultant relationships, by its nature, it will be characterised by a power imbalance and hence has the potential to become abusive.

In order to begin to operate according to clear ethical standards there is a need to identify a sovereign regulating body, and this can present immediate problems given the fractured history of sport psychology (see 1.1 and 1.4). Within the UK, some practising sport psychologists would regard themselves primarily as sport scientists but with a specialism in psychology and so align themselves with the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES). Others would see themselves as psychologists but with a specialism in sport, and be chartered as sport psychologists under the aegis of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and hence are bound professionally by its ethical code (Kremer, 2003).

This can obviously lead to confusion and divided loyalties as to which professional standards apply. In the US this issue has been avoided as all those who work as sport psychologists, including the broad church of sport counsellors, therapists and consultants, have agreed to adopt the American Psychological Association's (2010) revised Ethical Standards. This includes those members of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) and AAASP who may not belong to the APA, nor necessarily be trained or qualified as psychologists.

Within the UK and Ireland, the picture is rather murkier as potentially three separate bodies (BASES, BPS and the Psychological Society of Ireland [PSI]) can claim to govern the work of sport psychologists and each currently operates according to separate codes of conduct. The BPS most recently updated its code in August 2009 to coincide with the date from which regulation of activities of UK applied psychologists fell under the governance of the Health Professions Council (HPC).





All practising sport psychologists should be guided by the code of ethical conduct as agreed by the professional body or bodies to which he or she belongs, and should regularly keep up-to-date through a working model of reflexive practice (Moore, 2003; Anderson et al., 2004). While it is unlikely that the guidance offered from each body will be contradictory, from a practical, ethical and legal standpoint where there are differences then common sense would dictate that the more rigorous code should be adhered to.

Having established a set of guiding principles for practice, a number of authors have gone on to describe the special ethical characteristics attaching to a sport psychology intervention (Biddle et al., 1992; Sachs, 1993; Moore, 2003; Andersen, 2005; Pope and Vasquez, 2011), and these are summarised below.

*Confidentiality and Allegiance* – In the first place many interventions are set up not by the client (the athlete) but by a third party (e.g. the coach, manager or parent), immediately creating the possibility of divided loyalties with regard to confidentiality. This dilemma is familiar to many applied sport psychologists and can undermine the personal relationship with the athlete unless handled carefully. The 2009 BPS Code states that psychologists should ‘Restrict the scope of disclosure to that which is consistent with professional purposes, the specifics of the initiating request or event, and (so far as required by the law) the specifics of the client’s authorisation.’ (p. 11). From the first meeting it is important to establish ground-rules with the athlete, followed by an open and honest discussion of the nature of the relationship, and including the rules of confidentiality, with all those involved (see Andersen et al., 2001).

*Competency* – This can become problematic where an intervention opens up issues which are beyond the professional expertise of the sport psychologist. This could include the need for: a) other sport science specialisms (e.g. biomechanics, physiology); b) knowledge of the sport or c) psychological competence. In relation to the first two areas then common sense must prevail in establishing the extent of ‘knowledge and expertise boundaries’, and being disciplined not to move beyond that point. In relation to the third area, Heyman and Andersen (1998) suggest the following three criteria should be used to establish when the issues are of a clinical nature and deserving of a referral: how long a problem has existed, its severity and its relationship with other life







events; unusual emotional reactions (e.g. depression and anger); lack of efficacy of traditional performance enhancement interventions.

While the list of issues which have the potential to become problematic is considerable, any of the following may warrant a specialist intervention: eating disorders; drug and alcohol abuse; psychopathology/personality disorders; anger and aggression control; identity issues and sense of self; sexuality and sexual orientation; relationship issues.

To help deal with such situations quickly and effectively it is useful to have an established network of contacts, although recent research would suggest that many sport psychologists are disturbingly reluctant to pass clients on (Gayman and Crossman, 2006). For those applied sport psychologists who are trained in counselling and/or clinical psychology the boundaries of competence will be broader, but even here there may be particular issues which arise which are beyond their experience and once more a referral network that is readily to hand is likely to be useful.

*Dependency, Attachment and Abuse* – Any one-to-one counselling relationship has the potential to be problematic, especially when the athlete comes to depend overly on the person providing him or her with specialist or expert knowledge. To counter this danger, the fundamental goal of the intervention should be clear from the start. The sport psychologist is not setting out to foster long-term dependency but rather to empower and equip the athlete with a set of skills and knowledge so that he or she can become independent and in control of future life events (Kremer and Scully, 1998). These matters aside, where a relationship begins to become unprofessional or dysfunctional then the onus falls on the sport psychologist to take whatever steps are necessary to remedy the situation, including terminating the relationship if necessary.

*Use of Psychometric Tests* – The use of psychometric tests in applied sport psychology has attracted some attention over the years. Lay people can often place uncritical faith in results obtained from such tests, reinforcing the need to use tests sensibly and ethically. Where tests are employed, it is important that the measures are appropriate, that their psychometric properties are robust, that they are used for the purpose and population for which they were designed, and that they are not used to inform selection procedures. Interpretation of the results and subsequent feedback must be appropriate and written consent should be obtained for the release of any data.





*Drugs, Cheating and Illegality* – When a sport psychologist becomes aware that a client is using drugs or any illegal means to enhance performance, does this create an ethical dilemma? The answer should be ‘no’, because it would be difficult to imagine how any meaningful intervention could continue in such circumstances.

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# 1.4: Organisations, Sources and Resources

**Definition:** Organisations, sources and resources devoted to the science and practice of sport and exercise psychology

Sport psychology can be defined as the application of psychological theory and methods to the understanding and enhancement of athletic performance (Kremer and Moran, 2008). As the history of this discipline is well documented (see 1.1), it is sufficient to note here that empirical research on mental aspects of athletic performance is at least as old as psychology itself. Unfortunately, despite this research tradition of over a century (Green and Benjamin, 2009), the field of sport psychology is difficult to define precisely. This imprecision is due, in part, to the ‘twin-track’ nature of the discipline. To explain, sport psychology is not only a growing field of mainstream psychology but is also a key component of the sport sciences. Not surprisingly, therefore, sport psychology organisations may be found both in psychology and in sport science. Against this background, here is an alphabetical list of the main contemporary sport psychology organisations and their respective mission statements, along with key publication resources for members (where such information is available).

## AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA)

APA Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology, founded in 1986) seeks to further the clinical, educational and scientific foundations of exercise and sport psychology. Applied service interests include: promoting best practices in mental training techniques; ethical considerations in sport psychology service provision; practitioner self-care; and clinical issues. Areas of scientific inquiry include: motivation to persist and achieve; psychological considerations in sport injury and rehabilitation; counselling



techniques with athletes; assessing talent; exercise adherence and well-being; self-perceptions related to achieving; expertise in sport; youth sport; and performance enhancement and self-regulation techniques. Among its resources are an official newsletter (*Div47 News*) which is published three times a year (Spring, Fall and Summer) and convention .

### **ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED SPORT PSYCHOLOGY (AASP)**

AASP (founded in 1986) aims to promote the science and practice of sport and exercise psychology. It advocates the application of psychological principles that have been supported by research in sport and exercise. It is an interdisciplinary organisation, drawing from the fields of exercise and sport sciences as well as psychology. AASP provides opportunities to share information-related theory development, research and the provision of psychological service to consumers. Among its resources are:

- Journal of Applied Sport Psychology
- Journal of Sport Psychology in Action
- AASP Newsletter
- Member Directory
- Position Statements

### **BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES (BASES)**

BASES offer a number of interest groups, one of which is the Sport Psychology Interest Group (SPIG) whose objective is to promote the progression of evidence-based practice, support innovative research and establish stronger communication links between sport scientists with an interest in the field of sport psychology. In particular, SPIG aims to:

- promote sport psychology as a field within sport science in relation to both research and applied practice;
- establish a network of sport psychology researchers and practitioners in the UK with a common interest in the psychological aspects of sport performance;
- provide a forum for members to develop and discuss theories of best practice when working with athletes;
- provide an opportunity for collaboration between researcher and practitioners as a means of furthering knowledge in our field;





- establish effective working relationships with key organisations and associations such as the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP);
- contribute to continuing professional development of members.

### **BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (BPS)**

The BPS Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology (DSEP, established in 2004) represents the interests of psychologists working in sport and exercise settings and aims to further the development of sport and exercise psychology. It draws its membership from a broad range of psychologists including those working in academic settings and professional practice. The Division was formed in 2004 in response to the increase in academic status and public recognition of sport and exercise psychology and ensures that members who practise and offer services within sport and exercise psychology are qualified and trained according to the Charter, Statutes and Rules of The British Psychological Society. Among its resources are:

- DESP journal – *Sport and Exercise Psychology Review*.
- *How to become a Chartered Sport and Exercise Psychologist* – For students of psychology, there are four steps to becoming a Chartered Sport and Exercise Psychologist. First, one has to obtain a BPS-accredited undergraduate qualification in Psychology (i.e. by having a recognised undergraduate degree or a recognised graduate conversion course in this subject). Second, one has to obtain a BPS-accredited master's degree in Sport and Exercise Psychology (or pass the Society's Stage 1 qualification. Third, one must obtain either the BPS's own Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology or a Society-accredited Stage 2 Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Fourth, one can apply for Registration as a Chartered Sport and Exercise Psychologist.

### **EUROPEAN NETWORK OF YOUNG SPECIALISTS IN SPORT PSYCHOLOGY (ENYSSP)**

ENYSSP is an international organisation concerned with the promotion and dissemination of knowledge in the field of sport and exercise psychology in the areas of research, education and applied work.





## **FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE DE PSYCHOLOGIE DES SPORTS ET DES ACTIVITÉS CORPORELLES (FEPSAC; EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY)**

FEPSAC consists of 24 group members (associations of sport psychology) and a small number of individual members. It aims to promote scientific, educational and professional work in sport psychology.

## **INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY (ISSP)**

ISSP (founded in 1965) is a worldwide organisation devoted to promoting research, practice, and development in the discipline of sport psychology. Its members are those whose research interests focus on some aspects of sport psychology. The Society aims to:

- encourage and promote the study of human behaviour within sport, physical activity, and health settings;
- facilitate the sharing of knowledge through a newsletter, meetings and a quadrennial World Congress;
- improve the quality of research and professional practice in sport psychology.

## **NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHOLOGY OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (NASPSA)**

NASPSA is a multidisciplinary association of scholars from the behavioural sciences and related professions. The Society aims to:

- develop and advance the scientific study of human behaviour when individuals are engaged in sport and physical activity;
- facilitate the dissemination of information;
- improve the quality of research and teaching in the psychology of sport, motor development, and motor learning and control.

## ***LISTSERV INFORMATION (A BULLETIN BOARD ON SPORT PSYCHOLOGY)***

If you would like to learn more about sport and exercise psychology using the Internet, you can subscribe to an electronic bulletin board called SPORTPSY that is devoted to sport and exercise psychology. SPORTPSY can be found at <http://listserv.temple.edu/>.



The purpose of this list is to post issues, questions and findings concerning research in sport and exercise psychology as well as related professional practice issues in this field.

To join SPORTPSY, go to <http://listserv.temple.edu/archives/sportpsy.html> and select 'Join or leave the list' which will take you to a secure page or send a message to [listserv@listserv.temple.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.temple.edu) with nothing in the subject heading and only the following in the text: SUB SPORTPSY [your name].

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