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Training and Selection of Sport Psychologists: An International Review

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## Introduction

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In a world that seems to be changing ever more quickly, sport and exercise psychology has developed rapidly during the last 30 years. Many countries have recognized the political, economic, and social implications of sport and exercise in the era of globalization. As the importance of success in sport grows around the world, nations seek every avenue to enhance their achievements. Although sport psychology is not typically at the top of the list, sooner or later, those individuals and groups with the responsibility for delivering international sporting success in each country expect a contribution from this discipline. At the same time, in every country, scholars with training in physical education, sports science, or psychology, who are fascinated by the way people think, feel, and behave in sport, have studied sport from a psychological perspective. Largely through the interaction between the needs of sport and the interests of scholars, a profession of sport and exercise psychology has developed, or in many cases, is currently developing, in many nations around the world. The Managing Council of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) believes that ISSP has a responsibility to examine the development of sport and exercise psychology around the world and to state its position with regard to the way sport psychologists are trained and selected to work in service provision in a range of contexts. The aim of this paper is to report the findings of a review conducted on behalf of ISSP by four members of its Managing Council.

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Before describing patterns, it is important to clarify terms in the field of training and selection. Thus, this paper first considers a range of terms that are commonly used. Next the paper explains the main sources of information that were used in the review. In the main section of the paper, current practices around the world are described and discussed. To ensure that the review reflects the development of sport psychology training and selection processes worldwide, this section is divided along regional lines. It would take much more



67 Sciences (BASES). ISSP has chosen to retain its long-established and well-known title.  
68 Nonetheless, ISSP considers its interest to include the area of exercise, alongside that of  
69 sport. For the purposes of the present paper, the term sport psychology will be employed, but  
70 it should be considered to be inclusive of exercise.

71 Sport psychology is a profession of mixed parentage. In countries like the United  
72 States and the United Kingdom, sport psychology was nurtured through its infancy and  
73 adolescence by academics in physical education and human movement disciplines. In such  
74 cases, psychology has only latterly recognised the legitimacy of sport psychology and  
75 adopted the well-developed, late adolescent! In other parts of the world, psychologists have  
76 been drawn into the world of sport and shaped the profession of sport psychology  
77 accordingly. The question of what is a sport psychologist is critical to the determination of  
78 the appropriate training of professionals in this field and the selection of suitably trained  
79 individuals to provide services. Issues related to this question have been debated widely,  
80 especially within the largest and longest established community of sport psychologists, the  
81 profession in North America (e.g., Danish & Hale, 1991; Dishman, 1983; Heyman, 1993;  
82 Silva, 1989; Zaichkowsky, 1993).

83 Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) discussed the issue of certification as the basis for  
84 determining training and selection, with particular reference to North America, but also  
85 acknowledging other systems. They acknowledged that there is considerable lack of clarity  
86 about the use of terms related to what they call credentialing. Zaichkowsky and Perna stated  
87 that credentialing is a generic term commonly defined as "a process of giving a title or claim  
88 of competence (p. 396). It includes both statutory designations, which are enacted by  
89 legislative bodies and, thus, protected by law and non-statutory designations, such as  
90 recognition by organizations and registries. Such designations are not protected by law.

91 Zaichkowsky and Perna went on to define four terms within the generic area of  
92 credentialing. There are certification, registration, licensure, and accreditation.

### 93 *Certification*

94 Certification is described by Zaichkowsky and Perna as a non-statutory designation  
95 granted by an organization. It, typically, has no legal standing, because no legislation has  
96 been enacted, but it could be a step towards the establishment of statutory standards. A prime  
97 example of non-statutory certification in sport psychology is the program operated by the  
98 Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP), an American  
99 group that certifies sport psychologists.

### 100 *Registration*

101 Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) proposed that registration or "registry", as they called  
102 it, is also a non-statutory designation. It indicates that a person meets the qualifications  
103 specified by an organization. This makes the person eligible for formal listing. Typically, the  
104 identification and listing are public. A problem with this description is that some countries  
105 use the term in a different way. For example, some years ago, the Australian federal  
106 government required the states to enact legislation to make compulsory the registration of  
107 psychologists, in order for them to practice. In some Australian states there are specialist  
108 titles, including "sport psychologist", whereas in others, all psychologists, including those  
109 who specialize in sport, are designated by the general title "psychologist". The legal  
110 registration of psychologists is entirely independent of their membership of professional  
111 associations, such as the Australian Psychological Society.

### 112 *Licensure*

113 According to Zaichkowsky and Perna (1996) the statutory process is licensure. This  
114 indicates that, within a state or province, there is a legal process of regulation of  
115 "professional conduct within a particular field" (p. 397). Licensure as a psychologist is a

116 statutory process that is intended to protect the use of the title "psychologist" and the scope  
117 of practice. It is possible for the legislative body to adopt an organization's admission  
118 standards or code of practice as the basis for licensure. Zaichkowsky and Perna stated that it  
119 is even acceptable for the legislature to delegate its authority to a professional body, but the  
120 legislature retains the legal authority. In the United States, psychologists are licensed by the  
121 states, whereas in Australia, the same process is termed registration.

## 122 *Accreditation*

123 This is typically a process of recognition that a program of education or training has  
124 met a set of standards that has been determined by a professional organization in the field. It  
125 can also refer to a practice program. In the United Kingdom, for example, sport and exercise  
126 physiology and biomechanics laboratories are accredited by BASES. Accreditation indicates  
127 that the procedures employed in a laboratory meet the standards laid down by BASES for the  
128 provision of a range of testing services. Generally, whether the program involves education,  
129 training or practice, accreditation results from a review conducted by a panel of experts  
130 designated by and reporting to the professional organization. The American Psychological  
131 Association (APA), the British Psychological Society (BPS), and the Australian  
132 Psychological Society (APS) each accredits psychology programs in educational institutions  
133 throughout the country. This accreditation bears no formal relationship to registration or  
134 licensure, although regulatory bodies often include accredited educational qualifications  
135 among the criteria, when deciding whether to license people. Again, somewhat confusing is  
136 the example in the United Kingdom, where individuals are accredited by BASES as sport  
137 psychologists. This terminology can be interpreted as a historical accident, resulting from the  
138 effort of BASES to be consistent across physiology and biomechanics, where laboratories  
139 are accredited, and psychology, where the professional standards are vested in the individual.  
140 To complicate matters further, to practice as psychologists in the UK, individuals must be

141 "chartered", a term deriving from the legislative process in that country being the granting of  
142 a royal charter.

143 To minimize confusion, in this paper, we will refer to certification as the non-  
144 statutory recognition of professional standards attained by an individual, licensure as the  
145 statutory regulation of professional practice, and accreditation as the non-statutory  
146 recognition of programs. Exceptions will be acknowledged. Thus, Australian registration and  
147 UK chartering are considered to be examples of licensure, and UK accreditation of  
148 individuals as sport psychologists is classified as a certification process.

#### 149 Information-gathering Activities

150 The research group aimed to gather as much information as possible about the  
151 training of sport psychologists and the processes by which they are selected to provide  
152 services from countries all around the world. To achieve this aim, a range of possible sources  
153 of information was identified. These were publications about training and selection in books,  
154 journals, and conference proceedings; the statutes and other official documents of national  
155 and regional sport psychology organizations, whether published in hard copy or lodged on  
156 the internet; and direct contact with officers from societies and associations around the  
157 world. Members of the review group volunteered to search for information in various  
158 sources and meet again to collate their findings.

159 On reconvening, we found that this approach had not been very fruitful. The main  
160 reason for this was that there was not a great deal of documentary information to examine. A  
161 small number of well-established organizations have produced substantial written material  
162 about their procedures, including training and selection. In some cases, there has been a large  
163 amount of public debate, in journals and magazines, among members of these organizations  
164 or the sport psychology profession in a particular country. The vast majority of countries do  
165 not have such a tradition of discussion of professional issues and publication of

166 organizational procedures for matters like accreditation and certification. Direct contact was  
167 also of limited value, as it was often not clear who to contact and it was difficult to make  
168 contact with the appropriate person in many cases. It was agreed that alternative should be  
169 tried. This involved examination of the relevant sections of the reports submitted by sport  
170 psychology organizations from many countries for the third edition of the *World Sport*  
171 *Psychology Sourcebook*, which ISSP members were concurrently collating.

172         The Sourcebook reports proved an effective source of information on a wide range of  
173 countries. Papers and documents of those organizations that had a tradition of official  
174 documentation and information dissemination, whether produced in paper or electronic  
175 format, supplemented Sourcebook information. In addition, scientific and business meetings  
176 of several regional groups provided the opportunity for some direct questioning of officers of  
177 national societies. This happened in particular for German-speaking countries, Scandinavian  
178 countries and Russia, and Asian countries. The review is based on collation and analysis of  
179 this information.

#### 180                     Training and Selection Procedures around the World

181         Description of the typical training and selection processes derived from the review is  
182 accompanied by analysis. It was felt that separation into results and discussion sections was  
183 not appropriate for this review. To provide a reflection of trends around the world,  
184 information is discussed by region. The regions are presented in alphabetical order. For each  
185 region, a dominant pattern is described first and then any exceptions to the typical approach  
186 are described. It should be noted that this exercise was undertaken to provide greater  
187 understanding of current training and selection processes in sport psychology. It should not  
188 be considered to be comprehensive or definitive. ISSP welcomes any information from  
189 organizations or individuals that adds to, contradicts, or clarifies this review. Depending on  
190 the scale of such information, ISSP will publish it in some form.



191 *Africa*

192           In general, sport psychology is in its infancy in Africa, particularly in organized form.  
193 Thus, it has been difficult to obtain information on training and selection in most countries in  
194 this region. The 2001 Sourcebook entry for Africa indicates that key countries in sport  
195 psychology currently include Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Morocco, Egypt,  
196 Botswana, and South Africa. Yet few of these countries provided national reports for the  
197 2001 edition of the Sourcebook. In 1999, the All African Games Scientific Congress was  
198 organized in Johannesburg to coincide with the gathering of sport scientists from all over the  
199 continent for the All African Games. Sport psychology was prominent and practitioners  
200 discussed the idea of establishing a continental federation. As yet, nothing formal has  
201 emerged from these discussions.

202           South Africa is a country that has developed sport psychology training and service  
203 provision. There is no official, national sport psychology organization, but the South African  
204 Association for Applied Sport Psychology (SAASP) has a substantial membership, for  
205 whom a Newsletter has been produced. Sport psychology is offered as part of undergraduate  
206 physical education and sports science programs at many universities and technicons.  
207 Postgraduate study is also available at selected universities. The relationship of sport  
208 psychology with the general discipline is unusual. Psychologists are currently registered in  
209 South Africa by specialism. This is an example of statutory licensing. Sport psychology is  
210 not considered to have sufficient numbers of practitioners to become a specialism. The South  
211 African government proposes to revise the registration process, so all psychologists will be  
212 registered simply as psychologists. Then sport psychologists will not be excluded.  
213 Presumably they will need to meet the criteria for registration as a psychologist and currently  
214 most sport psychology training is done outside psychology departments, so it is not  
215 accredited. The only training specifically for applied work appears to be done through the

216 SAASP, which presents workshops and seminars for this purpose. Service is provided to  
217 elite sport, in both the professional and Olympic arenas. Selection of service providers  
218 occurs partly through the Sports Institute of South Africa (SISA), which employs three sport  
219 psychologists to work with national Olympic teams. Other practitioners arrange their work  
220 with individual athletes or clubs. Sport psychology in South Africa is, like many countries,  
221 currently poised between the disciplines of psychology and sports science.

222         Aside from South Africa and Nigeria, sport psychology in Africa is emerging  
223 relatively slowly. The recent emergence of African countries in a number of sports at the  
224 world level might herald the acceleration of development of the field. Presently, Africa as a  
225 whole would appear to offer the least in terms of education and training, as well as service,  
226 of any region in the world.

#### 227 *Asia and the South Pacific*

228         The history of sport psychology in this region reflects a broad range of national  
229 development in sport psychology. A small number of countries, including Japan, Korea, and  
230 Australia, can report long traditions of organization of the field in terms of professional  
231 associations. Sport psychology service is relatively new to a substantial group of countries.  
232 There are other countries that have yet to embark on this path. The creation of a regional  
233 association, the Asian South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP), has led to  
234 greater communication within the region, increased understanding of the current status of  
235 sport psychology in a number of countries, and an acceleration in the development of sport  
236 psychology in several of these nations.

237         Most common among developmental patterns is the recent development of efforts to  
238 achieve success in world competitive sport from countries that have little cultural tradition in  
239 those sports. These countries often have long traditions in the practice of other forms of  
240 physical activity, often reaching outstanding levels of accomplishment. Frequently, the

241 refocus onto traditionally Western sports has been driven, or at least strongly supported, by  
242 government policy. In these countries, sports administration and training has typically been  
243 the first step in the development of sport at the elite level. Following the establishment of a  
244 national sports council or sports authority and the appointment of high level coaches, sports  
245 medicine and sports science have been put in place. Sport psychology has then been  
246 considered. In most of these countries, there is a well-established education and training  
247 route for psychologists, typically with little or no recognition of the sport psychology  
248 specialization, and, at least, undergraduate level training in physical education, usually  
249 including some sport psychology. Sports authorities, either directly or through administrators  
250 and coaches at the national team level, have sought sport psychology service support from  
251 two sources. First, they have explored the ranks of trained psychologists for individuals with  
252 an interest in sport or a past record as a high level sports performer or coach. Second, sports  
253 administrators have considered people with physical education training, who have developed  
254 some special skills and knowledge in sport psychology, either through individual research,  
255 personal study, or the acquisition of formal qualifications in sport psychology in other  
256 countries. Psychology graduates also seek such overseas specialist training, although less  
257 frequently than those in physical education, because they can acquire professional  
258 psychology qualifications at home.

259         The emphasis on recruitment of psychologists or physical educators varies from  
260 country to country. Often, the relatively small number of individuals who have obtained  
261 sport psychology doctoral qualifications in North America, Europe, or Australia are quickly  
262 recognized as leaders in the field in their own country. To summarize, in many countries  
263 expediency has led to a process whereby selection for service is based on identification of  
264 individuals with the most suitable training from existing programs, supplemented by  
265 personal efforts. Interestingly, few institutions in these countries have responded to the needs

266 of elite sport by establishing professional training programs in sport psychology. Thus, in  
267 many countries in the region, there is no formal training that qualifies an individual to  
268 practice or to conduct research in sport psychology. Individuals are sometimes sponsored to  
269 go overseas for such training. As a consequence, there is no certification, accreditation, or  
270 licensure for sport psychology in these countries, although most have at least non-statutory  
271 procedures for the practice of psychology itself.

272         The course of development of sport psychology in other countries is idiosyncratic,  
273 but has, over a substantial period of time, lead to the establishment of formal procedures.  
274 Japan has probably been longest organized at the national level. There have been Japanese  
275 representatives on the Managing Council of ISSP since its inception. The Japanese Society  
276 of Sport Psychology (JSSP) is one of the largest in the world, with around 500 members. In  
277 Japan, training in sport psychology is almost exclusively conducted in physical education  
278 programs, at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It is possible to obtain a  
279 doctorate in sport psychology in a number of universities in Japan. The JSSP has recently  
280 established a certification process. The provisional title of certification is "approved mental  
281 training instructor". Requirements are a masters degree in sport psychology, supplemented  
282 by some applied experience and supervision at a number of JSSP workshops. Selection by  
283 Olympic and professional sports for the provision of sport psychology services occurs at an  
284 individual level. There is no established process and, although the JSSP has good relations  
285 with the Japanese Olympic Committee, no special recognition of JSSP membership as a sign  
286 of special expertise and no preference given to JSSP members in selection.

287         Sport psychology has also developed over a substantial period of time in Korea. The  
288 Korean Society of Sport Psychology (KSSP) has a similar membership to JSSP. Sport  
289 psychology training in Korea is typically conducted in university physical education  
290 departments, of which there are approaching 150. Some sports sciences programs also exist

291 and these offer sport psychology subjects. There are no specialist postgraduate training  
292 programs in sport psychology. In Korea, there is no certification process in sport psychology.  
293 Selection of individuals to provide psychological services in elite sport is based on  
294 individual training and experience. Much of it is still voluntary.

295         In Australia, individuals have studied and practised sport psychology for several  
296 decades and sport psychology has been part of many undergraduate physical education  
297 programs for many years. Until 1991, there were several national groups, each with a  
298 different emphasis, such as elite sport servicing, the dissemination of knowledge about sport  
299 psychology, or interest in the field in general. At that time, these groups came together with  
300 a commitment to develop education, training and practice within the profession of  
301 psychology. The Australian Psychological Society (APS) supported a proposal for the  
302 establishment of a College of Sport Psychologists (CoSP), Which became the national body  
303 in sport psychology. CoSP had status equivalent to that in traditional areas like clinical,  
304 educational, and organizational psychology. CoSP developed a training route that met APS  
305 guidelines, being equivalent to training in the other specialties. This process comprises four  
306 years of undergraduate psychology, in programs formally accredited by the APS, followed  
307 by a two year masters program, predominantly involving coursework and 1000 hours of  
308 practical experience, with a minor thesis on an applied issue. Finally, full membership of  
309 CoSP requires 100 hours of supervised practice. There is no formal certification process, but  
310 full members of CoSP are recognized as qualified to practice sport psychology. Currently,  
311 there are four masters programs in sport psychology in Australia. The College of Sport  
312 Psychologists has informal agreements, that reflect mutual understanding regarding the  
313 exclusive selection of CoSP full members as service providers, with major bodies, such as  
314 the Australian Olympic Committee. There is no formal arrangement, however, so some  
315 Olympic sports do employ individuals with whom they feel comfortable, but who are not

316 recognized by the College. CoSP exerts less influence over the selection of people to provide  
317 sport psychology services to professional sports organizations, but, as education increases,  
318 more professional clubs choose CoSP members, because their education, training, and  
319 experience is strong. Separate from the processes established by APS, the main professional  
320 association for psychologists in Australia, the states have enacted registration of  
321 psychologists. This is a form of statutory licensure. Some states have established specialist  
322 registers and sport psychology is recognized as a specialist area in all these states. Only those  
323 individuals on the specialist register are entitled to call themselves sport psychologists. In  
324 other states, only the title of psychologist is registered. Here, any psychologist can claim to  
325 provide sport psychology services. In those states where specialist title exists, although it is  
326 quite separate from membership of CoSP, the criteria for specialist registration currently  
327 mirror those for membership of CoSP. The Australian system is clear and straightforward,  
328 with close coordination of registration (licensure) and professional membership with  
329 education and training, which is accredited by the professional association. Yet, people who  
330 do not possess the required qualifications or registration do still provide services in  
331 Australia, due to the lack of education and information of many sports organizations. In  
332 addition, practitioners can offer services legally, provided they do not claim the title of sport  
333 psychologist.

334         Training and selection of sport psychologists in the Asia South Pacific region reflects  
335 a wide range of well-established and emerging systems. Cultural and historical factors  
336 clearly influence the development of sport psychology in many countries. The creation of  
337 ASPASP and the attraction of more countries into its network is beginning to provide a  
338 forum for discussion of the issues concerning training and selection that will help sport  
339 psychologists from different nations to understand each other better. This interaction has the  
340 potential to promote the shaping of training programs and selection processes that suit

341 particular cultural traditions and ensure the employment of individuals with good credentials  
342 in sport psychology practice.

343 *Europe*

344           In the German-speaking countries of Europe, there is no accreditation of sport  
345 psychologists within general psychology. There is a licensure process for psychologists, by  
346 which they become registered, but sport psychology is not included in this process. Sport  
347 psychology is taught within sport science programs in universities, where some study of  
348 sport psychology is typically considered to be obligatory, whereas sport psychology is, at  
349 best, a voluntary or elective area in psychology programs. National groups attempt to exert  
350 some sort of influence on the question of who is considered to be a sport psychologist for the  
351 purposes of employment. Groups like the German Sport Psychology Association are well  
352 established. That group has 250 members, but their guidance is nevertheless advisory.

353           The Franco-Latin countries reflect a similar pattern. In countries like France, Spain,  
354 Portugal, and Italy, sport psychology has largely developed through the physical education  
355 and sport science disciplines. Typically, undergraduate courses in sport psychology are core  
356 components of human movement, physical education and sports science programs, whereas,  
357 if they are included at all, they are elective subjects in psychology degrees. Specialization in  
358 sport psychology at the postgraduate level is usually restricted to a small number of  
359 institutions, such as the Universities of Reims and Montpellier, in France, the Universities of  
360 Lisbon and Minho, in Portugal, and the Universities of Barcelona (Autonoma) and Madrid,  
361 in Spain. In Italy the Italian Association of Sport Psychology offers short courses in sport  
362 psychology. In all these countries, where a regulatory licensing system is in place for  
363 psychologists, sport psychology is not a part of it. Sport psychologists are selected to work  
364 with national teams based on word of mouth contacts or their involvement in generic sport  
365 organizations that permit them to network with administrators and coaches from national

366 teams or professional clubs. Most of these countries have well-established national sport  
367 psychology organizations, such as the Portuguese Society of Sport Psychology, which was  
368 founded in 1978, the Italian Association of Sport Psychology (AIPS), and the French Society  
369 of Sport Psychology (SFSP). Each of these groups has well in excess of 100 members and  
370 pressure seems to be growing in many of these groups for formal recognition of sport  
371 psychology. It will be interesting to see the paths down which these organizations travel over  
372 the next few years.

373         In the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden the term  
374 "psychologist" is protected under law. Individuals who call themselves psychologists must  
375 be licensed. This is a statutory process in the four Scandinavian countries. To claim the title  
376 of "sport psychologist" a person must have both met the general psychology licensing  
377 criteria and have special training in sport and exercise science. There is currently no separate  
378 system of certification in sport psychology. Very few licensed psychologists call themselves  
379 "sport psychologist". It appears that there is also no formal recognition of the term sport  
380 psychologist within general psychology. There is much greater recognition of the role of  
381 sport psychologist within the world of sport and even by the general public, than there is by  
382 the profession of psychology.

383         Educational programs that include sport and exercise psychology and act as a  
384 foundation for practice, exist mainly in sport and exercise science programs. Across the four  
385 countries only a handful of programs exist. Typically, a three-year undergraduate training in  
386 sport and exercise sciences is followed by a two-year masters degree in sports science, in  
387 which sport psychology can be the major. There are also only a few doctoral students in  
388 sport psychology.

389         Each Scandinavian country has its own national organization in sport psychology.  
390 These provide the basis for communication between those people who are interested in sport



391 psychology. They also organize conferences, seminars, and workshops that provide  
392 opportunities for interaction between practitioners, educators, and researchers. In Finland, a  
393 network (listing) of sport psychology consultants has also been established and there is a  
394 committee for sport psychology within the Psychologists Union of Finland. The aim of  
395 Finnish sport psychologists, with reference to the national psychological organization, is to  
396 educate psychologists about sport psychology. In Denmark, a government organization,  
397 Team Denmark, coordinates the provision of sport psychology support to elite sport. This  
398 group has employed one consultant in sport psychology since 1992. In the main, procedures  
399 for the selection of sport psychologists to work with elite teams are *ad hoc*, although the  
400 listing of practitioners in Finland is an interested, recent development.

401         Russia is one of the longest established supporters of sport psychology. Teams  
402 representing the former USSR were supported by sport psychologists, in most events, as  
403 early as the 1980 Olympic Games. They worked as full-time or part-time employees and  
404 were part of a multi-disciplinary scientific group. For the Sydney 2000 Olympics only 12  
405 sport psychologists worked with the large Russian team. Education up to doctoral level is  
406 offered in a number of major Universities and Physical Education Academies. Psychology as  
407 well as physical education departments are involved. These qualifications stand in the place  
408 of formal certification as a practitioner. The Russian Association of Sport and Physical  
409 Education Psychologists (RASPEP) attempts to play the role of mediator between its  
410 members and national sport federations. Typically, however, individual psychologists are  
411 selected by athletes and coaches, mostly for specific sessions to work on a particular  
412 problem.

413         Little information has been forthcoming from the Baltic countries. In Lithuania and  
414 Estonia, education that includes sport and exercise psychology and acts as a foundation for  
415 practice, exists entirely within sport and exercise science programs. Across these two

416 countries, only a few programs are currently active. The term "psychologist" is strictly  
417 reserved for those who have graduated from psychology training programs.

418         Although Eastern European countries reflect more varied histories in terms of the  
419 development of sport psychology, most of them were influenced by the Soviet sport system  
420 until the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989. Countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia,  
421 and Poland typically had state-driven training of sport psychologists, who were then  
422 involved in training athletes and coaches through one or more national sports academy. In  
423 some cases, individuals trained in psychology have made their way into sport psychology.  
424 Certification often takes place, again being organized by the state and usually recognizing  
425 the sports academy training, rather than psychology qualifications, which are typically of a  
426 general psychology nature. Fortunes of these countries have varied since the change in  
427 political climate. Bulgaria is one of the countries that has a long tradition in sport  
428 psychology, dating back to the work of Ema Geron in the early 1960's. Geron was a member  
429 of the first Managing Council of ISSP. Since 1989, the Bulgarian Society of Sport  
430 Psychology, established in that period by Geron, has not operated. Slovenia has programs at  
431 the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor. A certification system was established in 1998,  
432 but it has not really operated fully as yet. Poland is another country that has a long tradition  
433 in sport psychology. Nonetheless, there is no formal training system or accreditation. Efforts  
434 are currently in train to introduce licensing through the Sport Psychology Section of the  
435 Physical Culture and Tourism Authority, which is equivalent to the ministry of sport. The  
436 Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia) also has a long tradition of sport psychology.  
437 Miroslav Vanek was also on that first ISSP Managing Council and he became the second  
438 President of ISSP. Vanek established a formal group in sport psychology in Czechoslovakia,  
439 as far back as 1953. Today, the organization of sport psychology in the Czech Republic  
440 resembles that in other former Soviet influenced countries.

441 Sport psychology was formally established in the United Kingdom in the 1970s  
442 through the creation of the British Society of Sports Psychology (BSSP). In 1985, BSSP  
443 federated with the national physiology of exercise and sports biomechanics groups to form  
444 the British Association of Sports Sciences (BASS). The aim of this federation was to create  
445 an organization with greater political influence in sport. During the mid to late 1980s, BASS  
446 moved to develop accreditation of laboratories in physiology and biomechanics and its sport  
447 psychology section concurrently developed a system of accreditation for individual  
448 psychologists. A revised system of accreditation was developed in 1994, by which time the  
449 organization had changed its name to the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences  
450 (BASES). The present accreditation system distinguishes between researchers and service  
451 providers. To be accredited as a sport and exercise psychologist, members of BASES must  
452 hold undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in sports science, psychology or related  
453 disciplines. In the UK, there are around 50 undergraduate sports science-type programs that  
454 include sport psychology and a much larger number of psychology programs. A number of  
455 institutions now offer postgraduate programs in the sports sciences, but stand-alone sport  
456 psychology qualifications have not been widely developed. Thus, to demonstrate suitability  
457 for research accreditation, members must also present at BASES conferences, have an active  
458 involvement in the scientific study of sport and exercise, facilitate communication among  
459 those interested in the area, and publish in relevant academic and professional journals. For  
460 accreditation in service provision members must submit a portfolio of evidence of their  
461 involvement in the scientific study of sport and exercise. The portfolio must also  
462 demonstrate an ability to apply and disseminate knowledge to individual clients and groups.  
463 The specific criteria for the portfolio are stringent, ensuring the demonstration of good  
464 practice in all aspects of service provision. Written support is also required from a  
465 recognized sport organization or exercise group. Aside from the substantial opportunities for

466 formal education in the UK, BASES offers prospective sport psychologists the chance to  
467 gain experience of practice under the supervision of an accredited service provider. This is  
468 not a requirement for accreditation, nor a guarantee, but it represents the most job-specific  
469 form of training offered in the UK system. The UK process of accreditation is a non-  
470 statutory certification system. Its authority is vested in the close working relationship  
471 between BASES and the British Olympic Committee, as well as, more broadly, with the  
472 British Sports Council. These connections ensure that sport psychology services to Olympic  
473 teams and many other elite groups and individuals are provided by BASES-accredited  
474 individuals, who operate within what has become a substantial support network.

475 *North America*

476 Canada and the United States share much in terms of the professional development of  
477 sport psychologists, but their formal systems are separate. The Canadian Registry of Sport  
478 Behavioral Professionals was established in 1987. This was a non-statutory listing that was  
479 developed by the Canadian Olympic Committee. In 1994, it was replaced by the Canadian  
480 Mental Training Registry, which is also a non-statutory listing of professionals. The Registry  
481 serves to identify people who can assist coaches and athletes with mental training and  
482 performance enhancement. Criteria for listing on the Registry include academic training in  
483 an appropriate area, personal experience in sport, and completion of a supervised internship,  
484 with favourable client evaluations. The academic training normally includes a masters or  
485 doctoral degree with specialization in sport psychology or mental training. Professionals on  
486 the Registry do not conduct psychometric testing, provide psychotherapy, prescribe drugs, or  
487 deal with deep-seated personality disorders or mental illness. Thus, it does not appear that  
488 this Registry is restricted to psychologists. Training in sport psychology is widely available  
489 in Universities in Canada and mental training qualifications can also be readily acquired.

490 There does not appear to be any accredited sport psychology training, although psychologists  
491 are licensed in Canada.

492         Although US sport psychologists have provided support for professional and  
493 Olympic teams and individual athletes for more than 30 years, formal structures have  
494 emerged more recently. In 1983, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) established  
495 a sport psychology registry. This was a non-statutory listing of three categories, namely  
496 clinical counseling, educational, and research sport psychologists. In 1985, the Association  
497 for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) was founded to promote  
498 service provision. This organization rapidly gained support as the professional association  
499 for applied sport psychology in the USA. AAASP developed a set of criteria for the  
500 certification of sport psychologists. This was another form of non-statutory credentialing. A  
501 partnership was established between the USOC and AAASP, in 1995, that meant that all  
502 consultants certified by AAASP, who were also members of the American Psychological  
503 Association were accepted for registration in the USOC registry. The criteria for AAASP  
504 certification are stringent, including completion of a doctoral degree from an accredited  
505 institution of higher education; knowledge of professional ethics, sport psychology,  
506 physiology, biomechanics, history, philosophy, and motor behavior; knowledge of  
507 psychopathology and its assessment; training in basic counseling skills; supervised  
508 experience; and knowledge and skills in research design, statistics, and psychological  
509 assessment. The US criteria cover the fields of psychological counseling and psychotherapy,  
510 as well as human movement and sports science. In the USA, psychologists are licensed by  
511 individual states. This is a statutory process, which is independent of AAASP certification.  
512 The agreement between AAASP and the USOC means that sport psychology support  
513 services are frequently provided to Olympic teams by AAASP certified consultants.



539 developed as a profession, and is developing right now, in different countries. Nonetheless,  
540 several patterns can be drawn from the information reported in this review.

541         One, almost self-evident, point is that it has been difficult for sport psychology to  
542 develop as a profession in any country, until that nation has made a political and economic  
543 commitment to international sport. Although sport psychology has been a subject within  
544 physical education programs for many years, typically, it is only when countries seek  
545 international success in sport on a large scale that sport psychologists are invited to provide  
546 support services that comprise a substantial involvement, in terms of time and personnel. In  
547 addition, the involvement of sport psychologists in high profile international sport, especially  
548 when their contribution is publicly recognized, frequently raises the status of sport  
549 psychology in sport, in psychology, and in the community. There are few examples of  
550 national sport psychology organizations driving the establishment of the profession, although  
551 the development of national learned societies in sport psychology has often pre-dated the  
552 professionalization of the field in that country by a considerable time. Instead, such groups  
553 have usually responded to the demands of sport for the provision of professional services.

554         Education in sport psychology has predominantly been developed in physical  
555 education departments in universities. Often, sport psychology is only one discipline within  
556 broader programs, although some countries have been able to develop specialist programs in  
557 sport psychology at the postgraduate level. It is most common for the psychology  
558 departments of universities and national professional associations in general psychology to  
559 ignore or even to actively shun sport psychology. In a relatively small number of countries,  
560 sport psychology is taught as a subject within psychology programs and/or is recognized  
561 within the professional association. The non-statutory certification of sport psychologists by  
562 professional bodies in psychology is unusual, however, and statutory licensing of sport





588 encourage or drive such developments. They can establish guidelines to help  
589 members construct appropriate programs in their own institutions. Later, they can  
590 devise accreditation processes to further enhance the standing of professional  
591 programs. Based on this, certification of individuals as practitioners can be  
592 developed.

593 4. The provision of professional services in sport psychology, typically, is enhanced  
594 by strong associations between the national professional association in sport  
595 psychology and major national sports organizations. This can lead to agreement  
596 by those organizations to prefer, or even to select only, certified members of the  
597 professional organization. In such discussions, the professional organization  
598 needs to be represented by its most eminent members and those with strong  
599 advocacy skills.

600 5. Increasing knowledge and understanding about sport psychology among athletes,  
601 coaches, and administrators is important to the success of service provision in  
602 countries where sport psychology does not have a substantial history. In some  
603 cases, a new professional association must change negative attitudes, based on  
604 experiences that athletes, coaches, and sports administrators have had with non-  
605 qualified individuals, calling themselves sport psychologists.

606 6. Without doubt, association with the national professional association in general  
607 psychology has the potential to add status and credibility to sport psychology  
608 education, training, and practice. It is also the case that such relationships are  
609 difficult to develop. Strategies need to match the current view of sport  
610 psychology by the psychology profession. Such strategies can range from the  
611 provision of information, to the negotiation of collaborative activities, to the  
612 establishment of formal structures. Put another way, dissociation of sport

613 psychology from the psychology profession raises questions in the minds of  
614 many, whether they are involved in sport or psychology. Linking up with general  
615 psychology will often need to be based on a long-term strategy, but it is ignored  
616 at great risk to the future of sport psychology, especially in countries that do have  
617 statutory licensing of psychologists.

618 It is emphasized that the specific ways in which these recommendations might be  
619 enacted will vary depending on the cultural, social, political, and economic realities of each  
620 country. The rate of change, as well as the processes through which it occurs, will also vary.  
621 Many of the developments proposed here also depend on the adoption of an altruistic  
622 philosophy on behalf of the current leaders in the field. They are the people whose  
623 reputations are established, and, thus, they are presently favoured in any form of competitive  
624 service provision process. Nonetheless, leaders in the field are in the strongest position to  
625 gather support from others in the profession, to establish new, specialist programs in their  
626 own institutions, and to negotiate with major organizations from sport, and perhaps from  
627 psychology. They need to recognize that development of the profession will have long-term  
628 benefits for them, as it will for those who are coming after them. Contribution of their time  
629 and effort to this cause is essential.

630 Training and selection are both closely intertwined with the question of what sport  
631 psychologists should know and what skills they should possess. Analysis at the level of the  
632 competencies needed to practice sport psychology was considered to be beyond the scope of  
633 this review. It was considered to be a broad enough brief to examine whether training occurs,  
634 where it occurs, how it relates to selection for service provision, and what role national,  
635 professional sport psychology organizations play in training and selection in the profession.  
636 Nonetheless, an appreciation of competencies needed to practice sport psychology will assist  
637 those who aim to develop training programs or selection criteria for service provision. To

638 access the competency considerations of national bodies that have explored these issues,  
639 those interested are advised to examine the electronic and paper documentation of  
640 professional psychology bodies, such as the American Psychological Association, the British  
641 Psychological Society, and the Australian Psychological Society. Sport psychology-specific  
642 deliberations have been produced by the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport  
643 Psychology in the USA, the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences in the UK,  
644 and the College of Sport Psychologists in Australia.

645 ISSP Managing Council sponsored this review, because of a strong commitment to  
646 support the continued development of sport psychology around the world. ISSP and its  
647 continental federations, such as FEPSAC and ASPASP, are eager to support all countries in  
648 the development of their sport psychology profession. The review indicates that there are  
649 few, if any, nations that have attained a full-fledged professional status for sport psychology.  
650 We encourage those who wish to support the development of sport psychology in their own  
651 country to develop and work through organizations at home and link up to their continental  
652 body and to ISSP for further support. At the same time, we acknowledge that this review is  
653 not comprehensive. Information on countries not covered in the review and on directions of  
654 development not considered here would be welcomed by the authors and by ISSP Managing  
655 Council. We look forward to stimulating discussion on this issue, as well as continued and,  
656 where possible, accelerated development of our field all around the world.

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