

Nomination Package for Dr Michael Passaportis



Position Applied For:

Members-at-Large of the ISSP Managing Council

Biography

I am a Chartered Psychologist (BPS), a Sport and Exercise Psychologist in Training (CASES), and an Honorary Lecturer in Sport Psychology (University of Sussex). Following a 12-year professional rugby career spanning Zimbabwe, South Africa, Italy, and France, I transitioned into sport psychology, completing my MSc and PhD at the University of Portsmouth. My doctoral research, in partnership with the UK Sports Institute, utilised participatory research approaches to foster thriving environments in Olympic sport organisations. My thesis was included in the Olympic World Library and nominated for Thesis of the Year by British Psychological Society. I have published several peer reviewed papers and book chapters on thriving in elite sport.

My applied work includes leading the provision of sport psychology support at Sussex Sport, delivering regular coach training courses in Zimbabwe and Zambia, and advising elite athletes and teams globally across rugby, golf, and tennis. Now based in South Africa, I provide pro-bono sport psychology consultancy to Connect High Performance Academy, an

NGO using sport for community development. Specifically, I support their elite and emerging athletes while advising leadership on psychologically informed practices. In addition, I spearhead Connect Academy's impact reporting to document and demonstrate their use of sport for social change, securing funding and advocating for the launch of a women's rugby programme. My research and practice prioritise inclusivity and the development of context-relevant sport psychology frameworks. With expertise bridging elite sport, academic research, and applied practice, I am dedicated to advancing and elevating sport psychology throughout Southern Africa.

Position Statement (249 words)

Sport is deeply woven into the fabric of Southern African societies, serving as a powerful vehicle for social change. Yet, athlete psychological development and well-being often remain overlooked. My vision is to raise the profile of sport psychology across Southern Africa by driving awareness of its importance and advocating for diverse and culturally appropriate education programmes within the region.

As Member-at-Large, I will focus on three priorities:

Building culturally grounded educational pathways: Aspiring sport psychologists in Southern Africa currently must train as clinical or counselling psychologists before specialising further. Drawing on my participatory research expertise, I will advocate for dedicated sport psychology training pathways that feature culturally relevant ISSP-R modules, assessment tools, and interventions that integrate local knowledge while meeting global standards.

Fostering global knowledge exchange: I will contribute to ISSP's education mission by hosting webinars showcasing Southern African practitioners and adapting global best practices to our context. I aim to build mentorship networks linking regional students and early career psychologists to international opportunities and expertise.

Leveraging sport for social change: Sport addresses challenges such as poverty and inequality. I seek to strengthen ties between ISSP and the region, advocating for frameworks and resources that empower practitioners to work in NGOs and grassroots organisations.

With experience spanning elite sport, academia, and applied practice, including delivering workshops in my home country of Zimbabwe, as well as Zambia, and soon Botswana, I am committed to ensuring Southern African voices shape ISSP decision-making and contribute to the advancement of global sport psychology.

Short Statement for Online Promotion

Drawing on my academic and applied experiences, I aim to promote and drive culturally grounded sport psychology practices across Southern Africa. My goal is to advocate for diverse education pathways, foster global knowledge exchange, and leverage sport as a catalyst for social change, elevating African voices within ISSP's global community.

Links

www.michaelpassaportis.com

<https://profiles.sussex.ac.uk/p547424-michael-passaportis>

Endorsement

My nomination is formally supported and seconded by ISSP members

Professor Ale Quartiroli

Professor Nikos Zourbanos

