

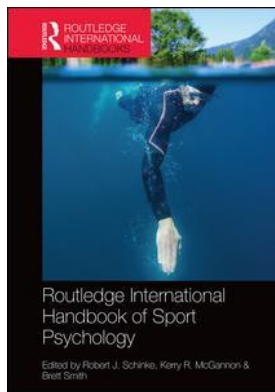
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# THE UNITED STATES

*Craig Wrisberg and Lars Dzikus*

While most published accounts of the history of sport psychology<sup>1</sup> in the United States (U.S.) trace the field's inception to the 1890s, its formal emergence as a discipline is relatively recent, with the bulk of primary source literature dating to around the mid-1960s. The intent of the present chapter is to construct a critical and analytical history (Booth, 2005; Struna, 1996) of two issues that have shaped the development of the field, and in so doing provide important "back story" to previous work (Gill, 1995, 1997; Gould & Pick, 1995; Kornspan, 2012; Silva, 2001). Specifically, we examine the persistent tension that has existed between (a) proponents of academic and applied approaches to sport psychology, and (b) professionals trained in departments of kinesiology and psychology.

## **Origins of the discipline**

The academic roots of sport psychology originated almost exclusively in departments of physical education during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Wiggins, 1984). Prior to that time, curricula were focused on the preparation of teachers and coaches, with most coursework emphasizing pedagogical methods for teaching physical activities. This started to change in the late 1950s when a number of prominent individuals began advocating for specialized areas of study, including sport psychology (McCloy, 1958). Among the more vocal was Franklin Henry (1964), who argued that the discipline of physical education should be centered on the "study of man [sic] as an individual, engaging in the motor performances required in daily life, and in other motor performances yielding aesthetic values or serving as expressions of his [sic] physical and competitive nature" (p. 32). Henry also believed students should be adept at conducting basic research, "without any demonstration or requirement of practical application" (p. 32). His views, which were not well received by traditionalists, marked a turning point in the field; from then on physical education professionals would be primarily dedicated to either research or practice.<sup>2</sup>

By the late 1960s many research universities had developed graduate specializations in motor learning and sport psychology and research professors began shifting their allegiance from the more practitioner-oriented American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER) to the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and

Physical Activity (NASPSPA) (Kirkendall, 1975).<sup>3</sup> From its inception in 1967, NASPSPA's stated purpose has been "to encourage and promote the study of the relationship of various behavioral sciences to sport and physical activity through meetings, research, publications, and like means of cooperative endeavor" (Kirkendall, p. 1). Put simply, the organization's primary intent has always been to emphasize scholarship rather than service or pedagogy (Kirkendall). However, tension between researchers and practitioners began to surface at the 1970 NASPSPA conference when several academicians offered a scathing indictment of Bruce Ogilvie and Thomas Tutko's work on the personality of athletes (see Roberts, 1995). The resulting debate revealed a considerable philosophical divide between physical education professors and practicing psychologists.

In the late 1970s, some with training in the discipline of physical education began to worry that the field was moving back in an applied direction. At the same time, sport psychology in the Soviet Union was attracting attention in the U.S. due in part to the successes of their athletes in Olympic competition. In an interview published in the *NASPSPA Newsletter*, the prominent Soviet sport psychologist Yuri Hanin (1978) stated his opinion that the most puzzling aspect of sport psychology in North America was "the failure of sport psychologists to help athletes and coaches in their practical work" (p. 3).<sup>4</sup> In the first issue of the *Journal of Sport Psychology*, the field was defined as "the scientific study of behavior in a sport or sport-related context," with only brief mention given to "a clinical dimension, where qualified clinicians diagnose and treat the psychological problems of athletes" (Landers, 1979, p. 2). At the same time, some psychologists argued that the field was "still in search of a definition" (Nideffer, DuFresne, Nesvig, & Selder, 1980, p. 174). Moreover, in anticipation of the possibility of forthcoming consulting opportunities, some scholars began discussing the necessary credentials of practitioners. For example, Harrison and Feltz (1979) warned of the possible conflicts that might arise between unlicensed sport psychologists and state licensing boards that considered the practice of any kind of psychology without a license to be a legal offense.

### **The growing emphasis on professional practice**

In 1979, NASPSPA established an ad hoc committee to examine the ethical practice of sport psychology, chaired by Robert Nideffer, a clinical psychologist. Despite concerns that the committee's recommendations were clinically biased ("Update on ad hoc committees," 1979), an Ethical Standards document (Nideffer, Feltz, Heyman, & Salmela, 1982a, 1982b) was passed at the annual conference a few years later (Roberts, 1982).<sup>5</sup> While some NASPSPA members worried about the growing emphasis on professional practice issues, those who aspired to be consultants were invigorated by the United States Olympic Committee's (USOC) decision to add sport psychology to its support services for athletes (U.S. Olympic Committee, 1983). More specifically, an advisory committee comprised of individuals trained in physical education and psychology had identified three possible categories of sport psychology services, determined the minimum credentials for practitioners in each category, and developed a registry of individuals who met those requirements (Nideffer, 1984).<sup>6</sup> The categories of service consisted of "clinical" (i.e., assessment of psychopathological disorders), "educational" (i.e., performance enhancement assistance), and research (i.e., evaluation of service quality). Almost immediately, critics argued that the guidelines exacerbated "tensions between individuals with backgrounds in physical education departments and those with backgrounds in psychology" (Heyman, 1984, p. 131). In an attempt to defuse the situation, USOC committee chair, Kenneth Clarke (1984), stated that, "eligibility was assured for both

those coming out of physical education and clinical psychology, or related fields” (p. 366). However, friction between professionals representing the two camps was already evident in the sport psychology literature. Some authors continued to emphasize the legalities of the psychologist label (Brown, 1982; Nideffer, Feltz, & Salmela, 1982), while others questioned whether licensing ensured competence (Gross, 1978; Koocher, 1979) or suggested that clinically and nonclinically trained practitioners merely operated in different ways (Heyman, 1982). Danish and Hale (1981) opposed licensing, arguing that “the prevailing remedial (i.e., clinical) intervention models presently in use in sport psychology are not in the best interests of either the individual athlete or for the development of sport psychology as a separate discipline” (p. 90). As an alternative they proposed an educational model based on a human development framework (see also Danish, Pettipas, & Hale, 1992). Subsequent rounds of discussion centered on the relative merits of educational (Boutcher & Rotella, 1987; LaRose, 1988; Petruzzello, Landers, Linder, & Robinson, 1987) and clinical (Davies & West, 1991) approaches to service provision (Vealey, 1988).

### Science vs. practice debates

The escalating tension between research- and practice-focused members of NASPSPA came to a head in the 1980s. Dishman (1983) observed that the legal and ethical ramifications of professional practice were commanding “a progressively large and conspicuous amount of the field’s attention” and that “in order to sanction applied services (the field) must possess an applied body of knowledge and a reliable technology” (p. 123). More pointedly, Newell and Wade (1983), professors of motor behavior, voiced their opinion that the NASPSPA organization was “currently at a crossroads ... in danger of losing its significance as a scientific society” (p. 6). More specifically, they worried that the counseling of athletes was beginning to dominate conference sessions and the critical mass of clinicians in the organization would soon have the votes to “turn the clock back so that professional interests surrounding sport are centerpiece” (pp. 6–7). In response to the growing concern over this issue, the executive board of NASPSPA charged an ad hoc committee of past presidents to explore the matter of professional service and offer their opinion as to whether or not the organization should expand its purpose to include applied activities. Though unanimity was not achieved, the committee recommended that NASPSPA add professional services, based on the observation that “sport psychology in the last few years has witnessed considerable development in what may be termed service activities – e.g., the dissemination of knowledge to coaches and athletes, counseling athletes, and providing clinical assistance for athletes who experience psychological problems” (Martens, Ryan, & Schmidt, 1983, p. 1).<sup>7</sup>

News of the recommendation prompted an impassioned and divided response among NASPSPA members, ranging from “I am opposed to expanding the society to ‘include professional activities’ in any way, shape, or form” (Keogh, 1984, p. 2) to “If NASPSPA does not assume this role, some other organizations will, resulting in a division of membership, leadership, and scholarly activities” (Harris, 1984, p. 5). The Spring newsletter contained a ballot, which members were instructed to fill out and mail back to the Secretary-Treasurer by September 1, 1984. However, the wording of the motion was altered by the executive board to read that, “NASPSPA will *not* [italics added] expand its function to include professional activities”; meaning that those who *opposed* the expansion of NASPSPA’s purpose were to vote *for* the motion. Moreover, in the same newsletter, Henry (1984) reminded members of Keogh’s earlier observation that NASPSPA had been “born out of difficulties in having professional and scholarly functions in one organization” (p. 11) and expressed the fervid

hope that it would “remain true to its original and undiluted scholarly purpose, refusing to serve as handmaiden for applied professions such as education, health, sport psychology, and such others as may intrude” (p. 11).

Landers (1984), a sport psychology professor, further echoed Henry’s sentiments, citing the earlier “misfortune” of the APA:

If we are wise enough to learn from the experiences of other organizations, we would vividly see the adverse consequences of allowing a voting majority of nonresearchers to change the very nature of a scientific group. The formation of such splinter groups as Psychonomic Science Society and Society for Psychophysiological Research were largely a result of the “take over” of APA by practicing professional psychologists. (p. 12)<sup>8</sup>

During the business meeting at the 1984 conference, 30 minutes of discussion were devoted to the motion with strong arguments presented on both sides. The results of the subsequent mail-in vote were 49 in favor of the motion and 24 against (“Executive committee minutes,” 1985, p. 3), assuring that NASPSPA would stay true to its original purpose and not concern itself in any way with issues of professional practice.

### **The creation of AAASP and APA Division 47**

Undeterred by the NASPSPA vote, a contingent headed by John Silva met in Gulf Park, Mississippi, to discuss the formation of a new society, the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP), “designed to promote research and examine professional issues in three areas of Applied Sport Psychology: Intervention, Health Psychology, and Social Psychology” (“AAASP,” 1985, p. 15).<sup>9</sup> The president-elect, Ron Smith (1979), declared that, “our field will best be served by a scientist-practitioner model. The most tragic error we could make is to affirm explicitly or implicitly that science and application are two different domains of activity” (p. 3). In contrast, NASPSPA president, Mary Ann Robertson (1987), stated, “with the creation of AAASP to act as a vehicle for those with more clinical interests, NASPSPA is now freed to do what it has always done, only better: promote and share research” (p. 3).<sup>10</sup>

In an address given at the first AAASP conference in 1986, founding president Silva (1987) identified the following “crucial questions” facing the field:

- Who qualifies as a sport psychologist or sport psychology consultant?
- What defines quality graduate training?
- What competencies should one have?
- Should one be in a physical education or psychology department?
- Does one have to be a sport psychologist or can anyone practice?

Silva also contended that sport psychology must be an interdisciplinary specialization, that the “artificial division between research and practice” had to be removed (p. 13), that dogmatic approaches which promote elitist attitudes had to be avoided, that AAASP must be a competency-based organization, and that it was imperative for the field to advance. Earlier, Silva had informed members that (a) the organization would be launching an official journal, the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology (JASP)*; (b) he would be seeking an opportunity to speak at meetings of the governing body for collegiate athletics in the U.S., the National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA); and (c) he had charged a committee with the task of exploring a process for the credentialing of sport psychologists.

Concurrent with the creation of AAASP in 1985, some psychologists were beginning to discuss the possibility of an emphasis on sport psychology within APA. According to Nideffer (1984) the latter organization had historically,

shown very little interest in the area of sport. For many members, sport psychology represented at best a diversion from the real issues of pain and human suffering that a psychologist faces. So it might be viewed as a hobby, a time-out from more important clinical issues. Others saw sport psychology as a total waste of time and as demeaning to the profession. Their view was that clinicians were trained to help reduce the pain in the world, to help the oppressed, not to indulge the elite.

(p. 39)

Nevertheless, the persistent effort of a few eventually resulted in the official recognition of APA Division 47 (APA 47), Exercise and Sport Psychology in 1986 (Swoap, 1999). Comprised primarily of licensed practitioners and interested individuals from the field of exercise and sport science, APA 47 offered another forum for exchanging information about the practice of sport psychology.

Before long, it became evident to some that the existence of NASPSPA and recent emergence of AAASP and APA 47 represented “a partial reflection of disagreement about the boundaries of sport psychology and its scientific, educational, and/or professional purposes” (Rejeski & Brawley, 1988, p. 236). Around the same time, the results of a survey of chairpersons of APA-approved clinical psychology programs (LeUnes & Hayward, 1990) revealed no major movement to absorb sport psychology into mainstream departments and a lingering skepticism regarding the validity of the discipline. In the first issue of *JASP*, Ogilvie (1989) acknowledged that, in his experience, the label “psychologist” seemed to diminish coaches’ perceptions of the credibility of sport psychology, echoing the words of Nideffer (1981), who had earlier warned that clinical training and licensure might inadvertently perpetuate the idea that sport psychologists are “shrinks” who deal only with crazy athletes.

Encouraging evidence of an advancing field was the publication of the first edition of the *Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology* (Sachs & Burke, 1986), with virtually all of the programs listed being housed in departments of physical education. The following year another a new journal, *The Sport Psychologist (TSP)*, was launched and purported to be “a vehicle that bridges the gap between sport psychology research and practice” (Gould & Roberts, 1987, p. 2). In the inaugural issue the co-editors stated that,

some individuals working in the field see academic and applied sport psychology as two competing forces – one proper, scholarly, and aloof from practice and the other practical, but nondisciplined and nonscholarly. Such a dualistic approach is inappropriate, for both academic and applied sport psychology have much to offer. Moreover, to have the greatest impact the practicing sport psychologist must be knowledgeable in both areas.

(p. 2)<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this initiative, some researchers continued to worry over what they perceived to be an increasing emphasis on practice issues at the expense of research (e.g., Streat & Roberts, 1992). At the same time, those conducting studies on the effectiveness of sport psychology



interventions in applied settings were beginning to hear criticism regarding the internal validity of their research (cf., Locke, 1991; Weinberg & Weigand, 1993). In response to such a charge, one group argued that previous scientific approaches had failed because investigators “jumped right into attempting to conduct empirical mostly laboratory-based studies” without first achieving an understanding of sport from the athletes’ perspective (Weinberg, Burton, Yukelson, & Weigand, 1993, p. 278). Such debates were reminiscent of the turmoil prompted a decade earlier by Martens (1979), who had voiced his disenchantment over the inability of conventional research approaches to capture the complexity of athlete behavior. At that time, Marten’s call for a shift of research focus to the sporting context generated considerable discussion (see Landers, 1983; Siedentop, 1980; Thomas, 1980).

### **Controversy over the qualifications of practitioners**

As the 1980s drew to a close, AAASP began to develop a process for certifying sport psychologists. From the beginning there were serious differences of opinion on the specifics of certification, largely between members trained in physical education and psychology (“AAASP executive board minutes,” 1989a). Considerable care was taken in choosing the most appropriate certification title, with the label “Certified Sport Psychologist” being rejected in favor of “Certified Consultant AAASP” for legality purposes.<sup>12</sup> Gould stressed the importance of stating up front what certification would and would not mean (“AAASP executive board minutes,” 1989b). He worried that distrust between educational and clinical sport psychology specialists, the research-practice schism, unrealistic certification expectations, and a focus on territorial protection could be potential obstacles to the advancement of the field and the AAASP organization (Gould, 1990). His concerns were soon reinforced when clinical psychologist Frank Gardner (1991) took issue with Silva’s (1989) comments in an earlier paper dealing with the professionalization of sport psychology. Specifically, Gardner expressed concern over what he perceived to be a minimization of the role of the science of psychology in the development of applied sport psychology, the condescending tone toward licensed psychologists, and questioning of the competence of licensed psychologists to do sport psychology.

The eventual acceptance of AAASP certification criteria (“AAASP passes,” 1990) did little to defuse tension over the qualifications necessary for providing sport psychology services for athletes. One opponent of certification (Anshel, 1992) argued that it was the only way (presumably unqualified) psychologists would be able to gain professional credibility in sport psychology. In contrast, several licensed practitioners (e.g., Zaichkowsky & Perna, 1992) endorsed the AAASP procedures and certification criteria. Still others, mostly trained in physical education, felt the whole issue was “much ado about nothing,” arguing that coaches could assist their athletes in managing the mental challenges of their sport by simply availing themselves of credible resources. Perhaps most notable of these was Rotella (1990) who, in a review of Martens’ (1987) book, *Coaches Guide to Sport Psychology*, stated, “If every coach in the country could read and apply the information in this book, it is possible that there would no longer be a need for sport psychologists to work with teams and coaches” (p. 78). Later, Anshel (1993) offered the more ominous view that the “worst case scenario” for certification was not that it would harm the profession but that practitioners and consumers would simply ignore it.

The tension surrounding the issue of certification prompted Weinberg (1998) to call for a “more concerted effort within AAASP and among other organizations so that the field doesn’t become more fractionated” (p. 3). However, his appeal did little to alleviate the

friction between licensed and non-licensed practitioners. In a point-counterpoint column in the *AAASP Newsletter*, Rotella (1992) declared, “There is no such thing as clinical sport psychology. There is sport psychology or, if preferred, educational sport psychology” (p. 9). In response, Andersen (1992) attempted to defuse the situation by calling for AAASP to be “united in its direction and not let models of turf and power fighting, present throughout the history of professional psychology and physical education, distract us from our exciting mission” (p. 9). In a similar vein, Taylor (1994, 1995) stated the opinion that cooperation and harmony between practitioners trained in psychology and sport science was largely a matter of remaining within the boundaries of ethical practice, irrespective of one’s educational background.

Evidence of AAASP’s commitment to ethical practice was the addition of a new column in its newsletter, entitled “Considering Ethics,” beginning in the summer of 1993. AAASP president and clinical psychologist Andrew Meyers (1995) also declared that membership required a commitment to adhere to the AAASP ethics statement, which as noted earlier was based essentially on APA guidelines for psychologists. However, Giges (1995) cautioned, “When one discipline tells another what it may not do, an implicit hierarchy develops, which can breed resentment and create antagonism and distance” (p. 17). Regardless, the available evidence suggests that with respect to issues of ethics, certification, and the supervision of aspiring certified consultants (Andersen & Williams-Rice, 1996), AAASP’s decisions were largely based on the recommendations of psychology-trained members. Moreover, it is reasonable to presume that this trend will continue given the fact that over half of current members hold their highest academic degree in psychology (Williams & Krane, 2015).

In the early 1990s, Silva (1992) issued the first of several calls for the accreditation of sport psychology graduate programs to assure the proper training of students interested in full-time consulting (Silva, Conroy, & Zizzi, 1999). However, not everyone concurred with the need for such an initiative. Hale and Danish (1999), citing an earlier post by Patrick on the SportPsy listserv,<sup>13</sup> suggested that issues like certification, accreditation, and licensure depended on the existence of three factors: (a) a need within an appreciable segment of society, (b) evidence that the public can’t provide the service for itself, and (c) evidence of some cost due to inadequate service provision. In their view these factors were not only *not evident* but the field of sport psychology was not attracting the interest of the sporting public in the ways Silva had originally anticipated. In some cases there even appeared to be a resistance to the use of consultants among prospective clients. For example, the results of one study (Maniar, Curry, Sommers-Flannagan, & Walsh, 2001) revealed that NCAA Division I (D-I) student-athletes preferred to seek psychological assistance from their coaches somewhat more than from sport psychology professionals and considerably more than from counselors or clinical psychologists. Perhaps the most glaring examples of institutional resistance were the restrictions imposed by the NCAA on the involvement of sport psychology consultants with athletes and coaches at the D-I level (see Bemiller & Wrisberg, 2011, for a more detailed discussion).<sup>14</sup> In his President-elect candidate statement, Danish (2000) posited that,

AAASP has reached a turning point. Although our numbers grow, many of the new members are joining under false assumptions relative to career opportunities in the field. ... There are not enough jobs for everyone who wants careers enhancing athletes’ performance. ... The decision to expand our focus to other domains should be an easy one.

(p. 13)



Soon thereafter, a special issue of *JASP* was published entitled: “Moving beyond the psychology of athletic excellence” (Gould, 2002). The issue contained a number of papers addressing ways sport psychologists might assist individuals in non-sport performance domains and participants representing a wider variety of skill levels.

### Attempts to reintegrate research and practice

The 1990s also witnessed a call for greater emphasis on the integration of theory, research, and intervention/practice within AAASP (Carron, 1993), as well as a renewed commitment to the scientist-practitioner model (Williams, 1995). However, some expressed concern that research presentations by academics were becoming more prevalent at the annual conference while those given by applied practitioners were diminishing (Krane, 1997). Robin Vealey (2000), observed that,

the current organizational structure of AAASP and the Executive Board represents a research society model which is incongruent with the efficient pursuit of the Association’s missions. ... AAASP was formed to meet the needs of a developing *profession* [italics added] that includes not only knowledge development and dissemination (research activities), but also professional issues such as service delivery to society and the development and maintenance of rigorous professional standards for the competent and ethical practice of sport psychology.

(p. 12)

Regardless, the rift between researchers and practitioners continued to widen, with little apparent concern evidenced among the parties on either side. Moreover, Gould worried that researchers were “not getting valid information to people who can use it in a form they can understand. Researchers are focusing on issues and concerns that are sometimes different from what coaches, athletes, and exercisers experience” (as quoted in Giacobbi, 2003, p. 29).

A number of AAASP presidents lamented the organization’s inability to expand career opportunities in sport psychology (Zaichowsky, 1998) and warned that professional infighting was distracting members from the larger problem of credibility with the sporting public.<sup>15</sup> In her presidential address, Vealey (1999) emphasized the importance of achieving a greater level of interorganizational communication by suggesting that AAASP’s relationship with APA 47 become more explicitly defined. She warned that if the legitimate organizations “don’t consider alternative ideas for advancing the field, we will lose it to emerging fringe outfits who will convince the public that they have the goods to deliver sport psychology” (p. 16).<sup>16</sup> Evidence of such attrition surfaced in a subsequent paper (Ward, Sandstedt, Cox, & Beck, 2005), where the authors speculated, “There are currently psychologists working with athlete clients who have not received the specialized training necessary to develop their athlete-counseling competency” (p. 330). However, evidence also indicated that reputable individuals with advanced training in either sport science or psychology were providing consulting services for athletes without the AAASP CC credential, including Ron Thompson (clinical psychologist and consultant with the Indiana University Athletic Department) (Clarke, 2005), Joe Whitney (Ph.D. in Sport Psychology and Director of Mental Training with the University of Tennessee Athletic Department) (Hankes, 2005b), and Jim Bauman (counseling psychologist and full-time staff member with the USOC) (Roche, 2006).

In 2003, the efforts of licensed psychologists working with athletes were impacted by the formal recognition of a proficiency in sport psychology within APA 47 (Hays, 2003). The

intent of the proficiency was to encourage licensed practitioners to seek additional sport-specific knowledge necessary for more effective service provision. However, the proficiency appeared to have meaning “only as a descriptor of a particular sub-area of psychology” and no formal mechanism had been developed for evaluating the competence of licensed practitioners (Clarke, 2003, p. 21). Nevertheless, some in APA 47 began to emphasize the importance of evidence-based practice and vigilant attentiveness to academic contributions from the field of sport and exercise psychology (Carr, 2008). Moreover, the science committee of APA 47 increased its efforts to “actualize the scientist-practitioner model” and “assure that science will solidify its proper place as the foundation upon which the profession of sport psychology is built” (Aoyagi, 2011, p. 16). Yet, one practicing sport psychologist, Charlie Brown, acknowledged the ongoing challenge of cultural differences (between academicians and licensed practitioners) at an organizational level, stating that, “the culture of academia and the culture of a free market system are quite different” (as quoted in Shannon, 2009, p. 5). While it appears that both APA 47 and AASP<sup>17</sup> have periodically endorsed the importance of a scientist-practitioner model for sport psychology professionals, to date neither has discovered a successful formula for actualizing the model on a consistent basis among its constituents.

In his presidential address, McCann (2009) warned AASP members that the organization was at a critical juncture in its history. Key groups were beginning to feel that AASP didn't work for them anymore. Some academics were choosing to go to conferences that focused precisely on their area of research while applied consultants were beginning to convene meetings dedicated exclusively to the practice of sport psychology. Equally alarming was the apparent fact that the field was not generating an evidence base for the work of practitioners. Put simply, it seemed that researchers and practitioners were drifting further apart at the expense of the future of sport psychology. In 2010, AASP launched the *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action* in an effort to encourage papers that would provide practitioners with research-based strategies. Subsequent to that event, the AASP Futures Committee (2010) recommended that the scientist-practitioner model become a regular conference theme. However, in spite of these efforts, the results of a 2011 AASP survey revealed that members were now “equally likely” to prefer the organization serve as a trade association and as a scientific network (Berger, 2011, p. 5). One interpretation of these results is that members valued *both* research and practice equally. Another interpretation is that approximately half of the members prefer a focus on research, while the other half prefer an emphasis on practice.

During an invited keynote given at the 2010 AASP conference, founding president Silva (2011) cited the serious lack of advancement of the organization in three areas: proper training for practice, consensus on the necessary educational and training experiences, and impact in creating jobs for practitioners. He then proposed a uniform model of graduate training consisting of a master's degree in sport psychology and a Ph.D. (and licensing) in either clinical or counseling psychology. During an earlier executive board meeting, McCann moved to create a committee to determine the feasibility of a unified training model for sport psychology, which he subsequently withdrew after a period of discussion (“Executive board minutes,” 2009).<sup>18</sup> Currently, the two rival views regarding “appropriate” graduate education/training for aspiring practitioners differ primarily with respect to the issue of licensing (Portenga *et al.*, 2011; Wrisberg, 2012). The major controversy continues to be whether competence in mental health counseling (i.e., licensure) is a necessary requirement for practitioners who wish to provide performance consulting with athletes or non-athletic populations. Currently only a handful of counseling and clinical psychology graduate programs possess a concentration in sport psychology and, as mentioned previously, AASP CC guidelines have never included a licensing requirement. Given the low admission rates

and philosophical orientation of graduate programs in psychology departments, it might be unrealistic to assume that more than a handful of students interested in sport psychology would gain admission.

### Some final thoughts

Critical self-reflection appears to have been a periodic activity in the history of U.S. sport psychology over the past 30 years. However, the evidence examined in this chapter suggests that the field continues to struggle with an “identity crisis” (Dishman, 1983, p. 131) that has hampered its advancement. While it might be unreasonable to expect the question of identity to be settled once and for all, it would appear that a more frank and open discussion of ways to bridge the gap between research and practice and “mend fence” between licensed and non-licensed practitioners is necessary for the field to achieve the credibility it desires with the general sporting public (Heil, 2014). The NASPSPA organization continues to remain faithful to its sole focus on research with little apparent interest in professional practice issues, while AASP and APA 47 continue to pursue their respective research and practice functions in virtually parallel streams.

In recent years, several initiatives have been undertaken to distinguish performance psychology from other aspects of the field of sport psychology. In 2007, AASP members approved a change in the name of one of its focus areas to Performance Psychology (AASP, 2007). In 2012, APA 47 proposed the creation of a new section on Performance Psychology, which would allow individuals from various disciplines and training to join that division without joining APA. Such initiatives could represent an important “paradigm shift” in the field of sport psychology. In a recent interview, Brown referred to the following statement made by past APA president Ron Fox: “If you want to make any progress you’ve got to let go of what you’ve been holding on to” (Peterson, Brown, McCann, & Murphy, 2012, p. 751). Brown then predicted that in the future,

the field will let go of insisting that sport, exercise, and performance be melded together. Although commonalities exist related to physiology and activity, three areas with distinctly different applied goals will evolve. Sport psychology will focus on the developmental benefits of sport, such as character development, leadership, life skills, and team building. Exercise psychology will address issues of developing and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Performance psychology will emerge as a field specializing in helping individuals achieve and sustain performance in pressure situations ... in any domain. There will always be a need for quality research, but in 2020, the areas of research will be directed by what will help applied practitioners be more effective.

(pp. 751–752)

Inspection of the current AASP website suggests little controversy and considerable resources for the general sporting public regarding the benefits described in Brown’s first two areas. However, it remains to be determined whether the persistent tensions that have lingered between researchers and practitioners and between licensed and non-licensed consultants over the issues of evidence-based practice and necessary credentials of one aspiring to provide it for performers in various domains will be alleviated in the coming years.

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## Notes

- 1 In this chapter we do not address the history of exercise psychology, which is an area often associated with sport psychology.
- 2 See Park (1980) for a more detailed discussion of the rift between scholars and practitioners in the field of physical education during the 1960s and 1970s.
- 3 See Loy (1974) for a more precise account of the early history of NASPSPA.
- 4 In the same interview, Hanin (1978) proclaimed, “the success of the German Democratic Republic in Montreal (at the 1976 Olympic Games) can be explained by very serious and systematic application of sports science in the preparation of their athletes” (p. 1).
- 5 It should be noted that these standards were adapted from the document “Ethical Principles of Psychologists,” developed by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1981.
- 6 The committee agreed that a person with at least the “competence of a clinical sport psychologist should be available at the Olympic Training Center” (U.S. Olympic Committee, 1983, p. 7). Not surprisingly, therefore, the first full-time sport psychologist hired by the USOC, Shane Murphy, and all subsequent permanent staff have been licensed practitioners. However, in 1988, Murphy stated that while he was trained as a clinical sport psychologist, most of his work with Olympic athletes was educational, and expressed the opinion that “sport psychology should stay away from” licensure (as quoted in Vealey, 1988, p. 10).
- 7 One member of the committee, Richard Schmidt, whose research was in the area of motor learning, informed the chair, Rainer Martens, that he could not totally support the report.
- 8 Later Landers (1995) noted that the formative years of sport psychology (1950–1980) included criticism of the tools of several licensed practitioners (i.e., Suinn’s Visual-Motor Behavior Rehearsal technique and Nideffer’s Test of Attentional and Interpersonal Style) on the basis of inadequate scientific support. Ogilvie and Tutko’s (1966) work with athletes and coaches was criticized on both ethical and scientific grounds and, when the validity of their Athletic Motivation Inventory (AMI) was called into question by Martens, they filed a lawsuit against him for \$6 million. Ogilvie later expressed regret over his experience with the AMI and the denunciation it had evoked from academics (Straub, 1986).
- 9 Perhaps not coincidentally, a similar membership split occurred in the summer of 1988 prior to the annual APA convention. In response to the perception that the APA was becoming dominated by psychologists in professional practice, a band of scientists announced the creation of a new organization, the American Psychological Society (APS), devoted to psychology as a discipline of science (The Scientist, 2014). Like NASPSPA, APS became the go-to organization for individuals primarily interested in research rather than issues of professional practice.
- 10 The number of professional members of NASPSPA who listed their occupation as “clinical/counseling” psychology dwindled from 72 in Fall 1984 (“1984 NASPSPA membership,” 1984) to 38 in Fall 1985 (“NASPSPA membership report,” 1985) to 15 in 1991 (“1991 NASPSPA membership,” 1991). Soon thereafter, NASPSPA ceased publishing those statistics. Overlooked during the exit of NASPSPA members to AAASP was the fact that many of those who remained included nearly the entire contingent of scholars from the discipline that historically had been most closely aligned with sport psychology: motor learning. Particularly ironic about this “divorce” is the fact that most of the research conducted by the acknowledged father of sport psychology, Coleman Griffith, involved motor learning variables (Landers, 1995). Regardless, there appears to have been relatively little interaction between researchers in motor learning and practitioners in sport psychology since the inception of AAASP.
- 11 In February 2012, APA 47 began publication of the *Journal of Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology*, which is similar in format to that of *TSP*, but deals with a broader range of physical activity than that of sport alone.

- 12 It should be noted that licensure has never been a requirement for AAASP certification, which continues to be the only officially sanctioned credential available in the United States for individuals interested in offering consulting services for sport and exercise participants. However, at its 2012 mid-winter meeting, APA 47 announced the intent to pursue the creation of a specialty in sport psychology within APA ("Minutes of the APA Division 47," 2012), which could possibly lead to some form of credentialing.
- 13 This listserv is maintained at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, USA, and is primarily designed to promote informal discussion of issues pertaining to the practice of sport psychology ("Becoming a Sport Psychologist," n.d.).
- 14 While the NCAA continues to display little enthusiasm for sport psychology there appears to be some increase in the creation of full-time positions at the D-I level (see Portenga *et al.*, 2011). However, the majority of athletic administrators continue to cite insufficient funds as a deterrent to hiring a full-time consultant (Wrisberg, Withycombe, Simpson, Loberg, & Reed, 2012). Moreover, D-I programs with a history of funding for a full-time staff member differ with respect to the primary role/scope of the consultant's duties (e.g., performance consulting at the University of Tennessee and life skills/academic counseling at the University of Oklahoma) (Hankes, 2005a, 2005b).
- 15 Over 21 years after the founding of the organization, then president Burt Giges (2008) stated, "the first issue I want to address is the relationship between psychologists and sport scientists" (p. 1), which continued to show evidence of strain.
- 16 Interestingly, at that time an issue of the AAASP newsletter also included a brief article (Bowman, 1998) discussing the integration of clinical psychology and sport psychology, which seemingly downplayed the need for specialized training for consulting with athletes. Among other things the author encouraged licensed practitioners to just prepare a brochure, distribute it everywhere they went, and "get out there" and demonstrate their skills.
- 17 In 2006, members voted to change the name of the AAASP organization to the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP).
- 18 McCann (2009) also endorsed a standardized model of training and an inevitable move to licensing.

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