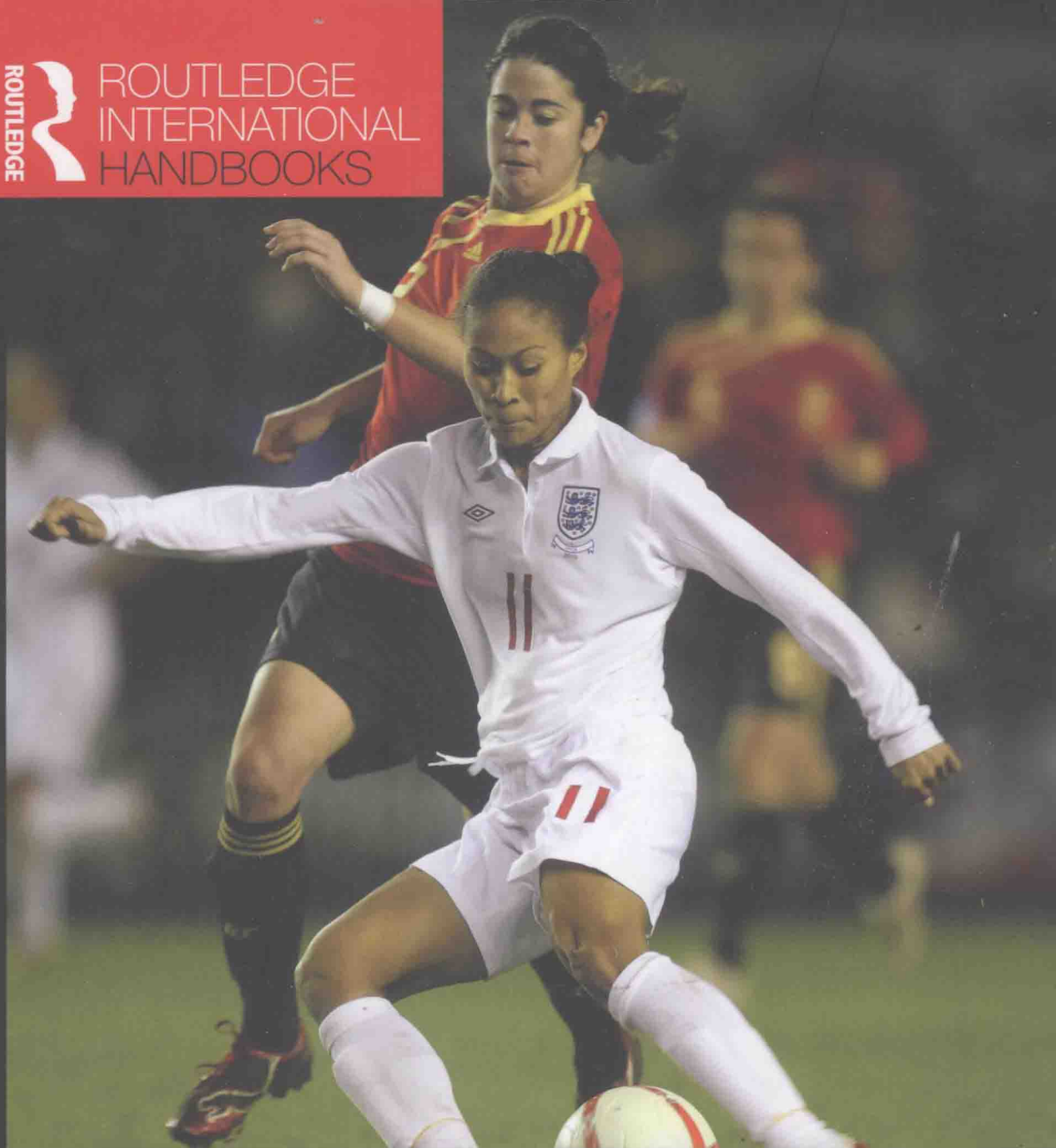


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Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology

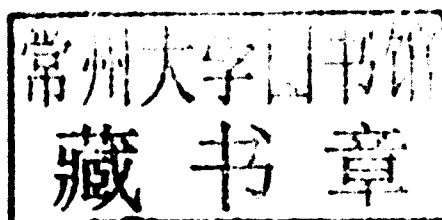
A comprehensive guide for students and practitioners

Edited by Stephanie J. Hanrahan and Mark B. Andersen

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Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology

The *Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology* is a definitive guide to the theory and practice of applied sport psychology. It goes further than any other book in surveying the full variety of issues that practising sport psychologists will confront in their working lives. It introduces the most important tools and skills that psychologists will need to be truly helpful to their clients, and it also adopts a holistic definition of the role of the sport psychologist, explaining how effective counseling, assessment, and therapeutic models can add important extra dimensions to professional practice. The book is divided into seven thematic sections, addressing:

- counseling;
- assessment;
- theoretical and therapeutic models;
- issues for the individual athlete, from injury and overtraining to depression;
- issues for teams, from conflict resolution to travel;
- working with special populations;
- mental skills, such as imagery, goal setting, and concentration.

Moving beyond the traditional tracks of clinical psychology and performance enhancement, the authors in this book argue convincingly that psychologists would benefit from attempting to understand athletes' social and familial contexts, their health, happiness, and interpersonal dynamics in the broadest sense, if they are to serve their clients' best interests. With contributions from many of the world's leading sport psychologists, and with clear descriptions of best practice in each chapter, the *Routledge Handbook of Applied Sport Psychology* is essential reading for all serious students and practitioners of sport psychology, counseling, applied sport science, health psychology, and related fields.

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Preface

“What? *Another* handbook for sport psychology? There are already about four handbooks out there.” That was what a colleague said to one of us early in the development of this book. It’s a good question, and part of the answer lies in the professional and personal experiences of both of us who have been training and supervising applied sport psychology students and practitioners for the past 15 to 20 years. Another part of the answer as to “why another handbook on sport psychology?” stems from the experiences of our students as they have explored the landscapes of employment and service after leaving our universities.

To begin answering the question, we would like to go back to a story told in the Coleman Griffith Keynote Address at the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) 2005 annual conference in Vancouver, Canada. Rainer Martens opened that conference with a talk titled “Does Sport Psychology Matter?” In his speech Martens described the growth of two sport service delivery fields, athletic trainers and strength and conditioning practitioners, over the past 30 to 35 years. These two fields’ histories have followed similar paths. For example, Martens related, around 30 to 35 years ago a small group of about 300 athletic trainers came together, formed a professional organization for support in practice and research, and today there are about 30,000 athletic trainers in that association working in service and academic settings. In the previous sentence one could replace “athletic training” with “strength and conditioning,” and the story would be essentially the same.

The historical tale for sport and exercise psychology starts out similarly (a group of about 300 people coming together some decades ago), but the ending is quite different. Today there are about 1200 members of AASP, and that membership number is about the same for, or considerably more than, other sport psychology professional organizations (e.g., Division 47 of the American Psychological Association, European Federation of Sport Psychology, the Sport and Exercise Psychology Division of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, International Society of Sport Psychology). There is also considerable overlap in membership among these organizations, and although it cannot be determined precisely, the world-wide figure for sport and exercise psychologists in professional associations probably does not exceed 3000. AASP is also one of the few certifying bodies for practitioners in the world, and currently there are approximately only 200+ certified consultants. The difference between the numbers of sport and exercise psychology practitioners and

academics and the professionals in each of the fields of athletic training and strength and conditioning is about a factor of 10.

Martens answered the question he posed in the title of his keynote address in the affirmative, "Yes, sport and exercise psychology does matter." Many of us in the audience, however, heard a less optimistic message. The perennial complaint from students at most of the sport and exercise psychology conferences is: "There aren't enough jobs," and the number of employed practitioners in the field seems to support that complaint. But the numbers we have reported here are most assuredly deceptive. If we only consider jobs that are supposedly the bread-and-butter of sport psychology practitioners (i.e., performance enhancement through cognitive-behavioral interventions such as imagery, relaxation, concentration, goal-setting, and self talk), then the students are probably correct. If, however, we consider all the psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, psychotherapists, hypnotherapists, and social workers who, as some part of their professional lives, work with athletes, coaches, and exercisers (especially in sport-mad countries such as Australia and the USA), then the number of clients involved, and the number of practitioners working, could well be equal to or exceed the total number of people involved in the athletic training and strength and conditioning professions.

For students who want to be performance enhancers, we believe they are correct; there aren't enough jobs if one's focus is on the narrow band of specific behaviors around the execution of physical skills. Taking this approach to sport and exercise psychology service delivery is like a house painter who is more than happy to paint your home, but only if you want it done in one specific shade of blue. The book you are holding is not blue; it covers a great deal of the visible spectrum of athletes' and coaches' lives. It also delves into the usually unexamined infrared and ultraviolet realms of hidden fears, desires, abuse, trauma, and shattered dreams.

Why another sport and exercise psychology handbook? Because we wanted to present the full spectrum of the issues psychologists, counselors, and consultants encounter when they focus on working with people, and not just when they dip their brushes into blue paint. There is a reason as to why we relegated the performance enhancement section of this book to the last chapters. It's not because we think such interventions are unimportant; we think they can be of tremendous value. Those cognitive-behavioral techniques have been covered many times in other books, but we still needed to include them here. What's a rainbow without some blue in it? But we wanted to present the rest of the spectrum first: the full range of what may be encountered when we look at whole people rather than specific behaviors such as sport skills and mental training. Even when we focus on performance, we have to see how sport behavior fits, or doesn't fit, in the lives of those we serve. An 800-meter run does not take place in a vacuum. All the relaxation exercises in the world will probably have little effect on competition anxiety if those fears are tied to some dire imagined and real consequences of failure such as parental psychological abuse, the withdrawal of love, and feelings of worthlessness and emptiness.

As educators, researchers, and practitioners, we have tried to help make applied sport psychology, in a word, more "psychological." We have tried to move the focus from a set of behaviors (i.e., performance) to a broader lens of the entire person, the social and familial contexts, the intrapsychic and interpersonal struggles and successes, and the health and happiness of those we serve.

As the title suggests, this book is intended to be a handbook of applied sport psychology that can guide advanced students as well as be a useful source of information for practitioners and academics who are training future sport psychologists. The central idea of the book

is to combine the knowledge from counseling, assessment, therapeutic models, and mental skills as they apply to the practice of applied sport psychology. We want to present a picture of service that is more complex and multi-faceted than most other applied sport psychology texts have done in the past.

The book contains seven sections. The first focuses on counseling, from establishing to terminating therapeutic relationships and many things in between. Having a toolbox or a bag of tricks that can help people improve their performances or their lives will be of little use to clients if practitioners cannot develop rapport, establish mutual respect, and communicate effectively. The second section contains information about assessment, a necessary step often overlooked in many sport psychology textbooks. How can practitioners determine what interventions may be useful if they don't first establish what is actually going on with the client? Many of the questionnaires developed within the field of sport psychology have been created for research purposes. Although they may demonstrate validity and reliability when comparing groups or establishing trends, they may not be appropriate for obtaining information on which to base a case formulation of a single individual. In this section the authors explore objective and projective tests as well as observations and intake interviews.

The third section of the book includes descriptions of nine different theoretical or therapeutic models on which interventions can be based. The old adage of "if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see everything as a nail" unfortunately parallels the work of some practitioners who only consider their clients from a single viewpoint. Sometimes the situation calls for a tool other than a hammer. This section looks at a variety of different frameworks as they can apply to sport. The fourth section delves into how to help athletes (and coaches) cope with specific individual issues. There are guidelines for dealing with issues specific to sport (e.g., injury rehabilitation, career termination, overtraining) as well as non-sport-specific issues often ignored in the applied sport psychology literature (e.g., eating disorders, depression, anxiety). The fifth section provides similar views on team-related issues (e.g., conflict resolution, travel, death of a teammate).

Considerations when working with specific populations are the spotlight of the sixth section. Too often sport psychology knowledge has been presented in ways that suggest that once students learn particular techniques, they can apply them to most if not all athletes, with few variations. What makes for appropriate content and structure of sessions will differ if the athletes are children or older adults, novices or professionals. In addition, individual factors such as sexual orientation, disabilities, nationality, and ethnicity can affect attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of both clients and practitioners. The final section focuses on mental skills, the tools in the toolbox that practitioners often teach to athletes to help them enhance the quality and consistency of their performances.

The contributors to this book have a range of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, but what they all provide is concise expertise based on a combination of research and professional experience. The chapters should provide guidance to graduate students undertaking their first placements as well as seasoned professionals exploring new frameworks or dealing with specific issues.

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Section I

Counseling

Therapeutic relationships in applied sport psychology

Mark B. Andersen and Harriet D. Speed

We begin this book with the topic of relationships because we believe that in applied sport psychology there is no aspect of service that is more important or central to the quality and outcomes of the collaborative work than how the two parties involved get along with each other. The issue of establishing therapeutic relationships or working alliances, between psychologists and their clients forms the underlying connective thread throughout most of the chapters in this book. The editors did not think they were being redundant in having authors repeat the relationship importance litany over and over again. Rather, they were being emphatic.

One could argue that relationships in sport are the foundations upon which performance, satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with participation, and happiness are built. If we consider the most obvious working relationship in sport, the coach–athlete dyad, then it becomes immediately apparent how the quality of that relationship underpins performance, happiness, effort, and a whole host of positive or negative results and outcomes. We know what happens when coaches are loving, caring, respectful, and genuinely concerned with the health and welfare of athletes in their charge (athletes usually thrive). We also know what happens when coach–athlete relationships are chaotic, manipulative, exploitative, and inconsistent (athletes fall into anxiety, acting out, depression, and victimization). Relationships fuel outcomes in both positive and negative ways.

We (the authors) are both psychotherapists, and we firmly believe that most of the issues in psychotherapy, and even sport psychology performance enhancement work with athletes, are almost always about love. For example, in working with athletes who only want to learn some mental skills for performance enhancement, we may teach those skills, and then the athletes go on their way. But why did the athletes want to learn mental skills to improve performance? We don't know, but the underlying reasons probably have something to do with love. For example, "I really want to perform better so I can feel good about myself (self-esteem, self-love)," or "I want to get better so my parents will love me because when I perform poorly they withdraw love (seeking the parental contingent love reinforcement)," or "I love my coach, and I want to give her a gift that proves my love and dedication (good performance as an expression of love and devotion)." Freud supposedly said, "All giving is