

Sport Psychology Authorities Offer Advice to Improve Mental Skills and Golf Game

Madison, Wis.—April 27, 2011—As golfers prepare for the season and explore every aspect of getting the most from their game, they know physical readiness isn't enough--golf is regarded as mostly a mental game.

Dr. Rob Bell PhD, who recently published *Mental Toughness Training For Golf*, addresses the importance of preparation for the game, whether you are a novice, student athlete, coach, seasoned professional or Sunday player.

The Ball State University assistant professor, professional golf caddy and Certified Consultant of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (CC-AASP) said the key to building mental toughness is looking at adversity as a challenge, not a threat. From the tee to the rough, from the sand trap to the green, golf is a constant battle of challenges vs. threats.

Qualified sport psychology consultants, who are certified by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology, can offer golfers valuable assistance including:

- How to build mental toughness
- How to mentally prepare for a game
- How to focus on what can be controlled
- How to control performance anxiety

Authorities Available for Media Interviews

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) is pleased to offer the media the resources of a number of members who are authorities on the mental game of golf. The AASP members (their bios are attached), who are available as part of the organization's Sport Psychology On Call program, are national and international sport psychology practitioners who offer expertise in a wide variety of specific sport psychology issues relating to golf.

About the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,500 members in 38 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org and on its Facebook fan page.

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Association for Applied Sport Psychology Golf Authorities On Call

Dr. Rob Bell, PhD, CC-AASP

In his cutting-edge book, *Mental Toughness Training for Golf – Start Strong Finish Strong*, Dr. Bell provides insight for athletes, coaches and parents about how to develop the mental toughness they need to succeed. The book is centered around working on ourselves as well as our game.

Dr. Rob Bell currently is an assistant professor of sport psychology at Ball State University. A sport psychology consultant and a professional caddy, he specializes in coaching the mental game with athletes at all levels. He also presents his research and applied experience at various conferences and clinics across the nation.

Dr. Bell is the co-recipient of an AASP grant on “Utilizing Solution-Focused Guided Imagery for Golfers with the Yips,” and has published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *Journal of Sport Behavior*, *Encyclopedia of Sports*, and *Journal of Athletic Insight* and has written about the mental game of golf for a variety of golf websites.

Dr. Bell received a bachelor’s in psychology from Shepherd University, a master’s in kinesiology with a specialization in sport psychology from Temple University, and a doctorate in sport psychology at the University of Tennessee.

John Lubker, EdD, CC-AASP

An avid golfer, John Lubker, associate dean of the College of Nursing and Health Science at West Texas A&M University, has assisted numerous college-level athletes with the mental side of sports.

He is the co-recipient of an AASP grant on the “Qualities of Effective Sport Psychology Consultants: A Conjoint Analysis,” and author of *College Adjustment Experiences of First-year Students: Disengaged Athletes, Non-athletes and Current Varsity Athletes*, and has written for numerous publications.

His research has focused on athletic disengagement, college adjustment issues for student athletes, as well as professional issues in sport and exercise psychology.

Dr. Lubker teaches sport psychology, exercise psychology and sport sociology in addition to a variety of other courses in the department of sports and exercise sciences.

He received a bachelor’s in history and psychology from the University of Notre Dame, a master’s in community counseling from James Madison University, and a doctorate in sport and exercise psychology from West Virginia University.

Brandonn Harris, PhD, CC-AASP

Brandonn Harris is an assistant professor with the Department of Special Education, Counseling and Student Affairs at Kansas State University. He has taught golf courses at the collegiate level in addition to having worked with both individual golfers and golf teams at the junior level. He also works with a variety of collegiate athletes.

Dr. Harris specializes in consulting and teaching in a number of areas including: intercollegiate athletics and the college student athlete, youth sport, coach and athlete burnout, academic support and counseling,

motivation, stress management, team building and cohesion, psychological skills training and both team and individual sport athletes.

Dr. Harris earned his bachelor's in exercise science from Truman State University, and his master's in community counseling and doctorate in sport and exercise psychology from West Virginia University.

Angus Mugford, PhD, CC-AASP

As head of IMG Academies Mental Conditioning Division, Angus Mugford helps integrate mental conditioning into the daily training of athletes, from youth through professional.

He and his staff have been featured at international sport psychology conferences, published in peer-reviewed academic journals, and interviewed for major magazines and newspapers on the benefits of sport psychology for performance.

Reflecting a 360-degree approach to sport performance and demonstrating evidence based practices, "Combine360," under the leadership of Dr. Mugford, was developed to reflect the authenticity of the IMG Performance Institute Team's research work. The most relevant and appropriate testing protocols were developed with integral involvement from athletes, coaches, and professional peers.

Dr. Mugford trains individual athletes and sports organizations, consulting with NCAA Division 1 programs as well as professional teams.

He earned a bachelor's in sport science and psychology from the University of Birmingham, and a master's in sport psychology and doctorate in sport studies (specialization in sport/counseling psychology) from the University of Kansas.

He is a certified consultant with AASP and British Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences, and is a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee Sport Psychology Registry for the 2008-2012 Quadrennium.

Eddie O'Connor, PhD, CC-AASP

Clinical Sport Psychologist, Eddie O'Connor, founded the Performance Excellence Center at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital in Grand Rapids, with an emphasis in youth sport. He is director and chief psychologist at the Pain Center at Mary Free Bed.

A media spokesman on the benefits of sport psychology for performance, the pursuit of excellence and the improvement of the youth sport experience, Dr. O'Connor frequently has been interviewed on a variety of topics, from successful sport parenting, to how to turn a losing team into a winner.

With extensive experience in leadership, he works with athletes, coaches and teams in developing mental toughness, helping them develop skills for rebounding from mistakes and for improving focus. Dr. O'Connor offers consultations and workshops and presentations for sports organizations and parents.

Dr. O'Connor recently was inducted as a fellow of the AASP and is listed in the U.S. Olympic Committee Sport Psychology and Mental Training Registry. He also is a member of the American Psychological Association, Division 47 and the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science.

In his clinical work he has specialized in injury rehabilitation and treatment of chronic pain and headaches. He earned a bachelor's in psychology from State University of New York at Binghamton and did his graduate work at Illinois Institute of Technology.

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