

Sport Psychology Authorities Offer Advice to Improve Mental Skills for Running

Madison, Wis.—July 1, 2011—Whether you're gearing up to tackle a 26-mile marathon, or running for your own health and fitness, mental skills can be key to attaining the desired outcome and meeting your goals.

Just as athletes exercise their bodies for peak physical performance, sport psychology consultants can assist runners in maximizing their mental performance. While it's crucial to have a positive outlook about an upcoming race, sport psychology techniques go far beyond the basics.

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

- How to mentally prepare for a race
- How to focus on what can be controlled
- How to control performance anxiety
- How to adhere to a training or exercise program

Authorities Available for Media Interviews

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

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology 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.

Association for Applied Sport Psychology Running Authorities On-Call

Kristen Dieffenbach, Ph.D., CC-AASP

Dr. Kristen Dieffenbach is an assistant professor of athletic coaching education in the Department of Physical Education of West Virginia University in Morgantown. Her areas of concentration include performance enhancement, talent development, overtraining and under recovery.

As a performance enhancement consultant and sport psychology educator she has worked in coaching education, sport parenting education, and with a variety of team and individual athletes from youth developmental through the collegiate and elite levels. In 2003, Dr. Dieffenbach earned the status of certified consultant (CC) with AASP, which qualified her for the U.S. Olympic Committee Sport Psychology list of providers.

In addition to her academic credentials, Dr. Dieffenbach is a certified elite level USA Cycling coach and a certified U.S. Track and Field coach specializing in endurance training. She has coached at the high school, collegiate, masters, recreational, and elite levels for both athletes and teams.

A former runner and cyclist at Boston University, Dr. Dieffenbach now competes in road, cyclocross, and mountain bike races. However, her main emphasis is on endurance and ultra endurance endeavors, especially professional level multi-day, multidiscipline adventure racing.

She received her doctorate in exercise and sport psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, her master's in physical education with an emphasis in sport psychology from the University of Idaho and her bachelor's in biology from Boston University.

Kate F. Hays, Ph.D., C. Psych, CC-AASP

A licensed psychologist in New Hampshire and Toronto, Canada, Dr. Kate Hays founded and directed the Toronto Marathon Psychology team from 1999-2000. She is listed in the U.S. Olympic Committee Sport Psychology Registry.

A distinguished author and lecturer, Dr. Hays has written several books relating to sports psychology. Her most recent work, "Performance Psychology in Action," complements a co-authored work, "Consulting for Peak Performance." Both works give insight on how the mind-body connection affects sports performance. She has lectured widely throughout North America, England and Australia presenting her findings.

Dr. Hays obtained her doctorate in psychology from Boston University. In 2010, she served as the chair of the American Psychology Association's Committee on Structure and Function. She is a past chair of the International Sport Psychology Council and is a past president of the American Psychological Association's Division of Exercise and Sport Psychology.

Cindra S. Kamphoff, Ph.D., CC-AASP

An accomplished runner, Dr. Cindra Kamphoff touts a 3:17 marathon time as a personal best. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Human Performance at the Minnesota State University and specializes in the psychology of running and marathon running. She has worked with athletes of all ages; ranging from youths and college age runners to recreational and elite athletes during her 12 years of practice.

Dr. Kamphoff is currently conducting two studies focusing on the psychology of marathon running, including interviewing qualifiers of the 2012 Olympic Trials to determine how these athletes have developed and maintained their mental toughness.

Dr. Kamphoff obtained her master's and doctorate in sport and exercise psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her bachelor's was obtained at the University of Northern Iowa. Her dissertation received the 2006 Sport and Exercise Psychology Academy Dissertation Award from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

Barbara Walker, Ph.D., CC-AASP

As a high-level competitive triathlete, marathon runner and business owner, Dr. Barbara Walker has faced many of the same challenges as her fellow runners, and knows first-hand what it takes to reach your goals. Her experience as an athlete and her extensive background as a sport psychologist provide her with the perfect combination of knowledge and ability to help excellence-seeking individuals realize their potential.

Dr. Walker is an internationally and nationally experienced performance psychology consultant for individual athletes and teams at multiple athletic levels, from professional to high school sports. She also works as a consultant for businesses and the performing arts.

Dr. Walker, a former team member of the U.S. National Duathlon Team, serves on the board of the Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon. She is a guest expert on radio and television shows, presents at national professional conferences, and works as a consultant to Fortune 500 companies.

Dr. Walker holds a doctorate in clinical psychology, with an emphasis in exercise and sport psychology, and is a licensed psychologist.