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## **CERTIFICATION MATTERS**

### **IN THE FIELD OF SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY**

#### **AASP Certified Consultants Are the Most Direct Route to Going with the Right Professional**

MADISON, Wis. – April 2011 – A champion figure skater nails a difficult jump after banishing a bout of vertigo. A Little League pitcher logs a winning record after overcoming ongoing performance anxiety. With her nerves in check, an aspiring concert violinist delivers a nearly perfect recital. And a recovering heart-attack patient sheds pounds after finding the motivation to follow his fitness plan.

Behind each of these success stories is a certified consultant in the field of sport and exercise psychology who helped the individual master the mental, behavioral, psychosocial, and/or emotional skills critical to conquering his or her challenge. But beware: If you're hoping to derive that kind of satisfaction from a name in the yellow pages or in a Google search, make sure the person you work with is specifically trained and certified in the field of sport and exercise psychology.

“As demand for sport and exercise psychology services grows, so does the number of people who claim to be qualified practitioners,” said Jack J. Lesyk, Ph.D., Past President of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) and Certified Consultant-AASP (CC-AASP). “Websites with official-sounding names and people who cite lengthy credentials are not always legitimate. Some people go so far as to buy credentials from a diploma mill.”

#### ***Look for AASP Certification, Membership at a Minimum***

Professionals in the field of sport and exercise psychology who are CC-AASP have met a high standard of education and training in the sport sciences and psychology and have undergone an extensive review process. Dr. Lesyk, who is Director of the Ohio Center for Sport Psychology, Beachwood, Ohio, has personally had to repair the work of uncertified professionals doing sport psychology.

“In one case, a young gymnast came to me because he suddenly could no longer perform a back handspring, after doing so many times. Unfortunately, he came to me second, after his mother had called a psychologist and asked if they ‘did sports.’ After three sessions with someone who was not experienced or qualified specifically as a sport psychology consultant, the gymnast knew he was not getting the help he needed. They were spending their sessions exploring his ‘unconscious need to fail’, which was far off track for the athlete. Luckily, his coach referred him to me because of my reputation in our area. I was able to help him work through the problem with a very successful outcome,” Dr. Lesyk explained.

“In the United States when someone is searching for a qualified sport psychology consultant, I recommend that when they call to inquire about their services, their first question should be, ‘Are you a CC-AASP?’ If the answer is no, the next question should be, ‘Are you a member of AASP or Division 47 (the sport and exercise psychology division) of the American Psychological Association?’ If the answer is still no, there are no other questions. The person is probably not qualified, and you need to look further,” said Dr. Lesyk.

To find an AASP Certified Consultant in your area, you can simply access the Find a Consultant section on the Association’s website, [www.appliedsportpsych.org](http://www.appliedsportpsych.org).