

Performance Excellence Movement

Association for Applied Sport Psychology's Student Newsletter:
Increasing Awareness of Sport Psychology in other Performance-related Contexts

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What's Inside?

- Page 1 Introduction
Jessica Lutkenhouse, Psy.D.
- Page 2 The Good Body
Gloria Park-Perin, M.A.P.P.
- Page 4 Coaching Ed. and Personal Training
Erin Kennedy, M.A.
- Page 6 Character or Caricature
Rob Price, M.S., L.C.P.C.
- Page 8 Wearing Two Hats
Joseph Spano, M.A.
- Page 9 Sport Psychology: A Mode to Promote Peace in Israel
Tayna Prewitt, M.S.
- Page 13 Professional Profile
Arlene Engels, M.S.
- Page 16 Sport Psychology Internships
Jessica Lutkenhouse, Psy.D.

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AASP Students Model a Mindful, Multidisciplinary, and Collaborative Approach to Newsletter Writing

By Jessica Lutkenhouse, Psy.D.

When I work with athletes I often self-disclose about two situations that contributed to me developing my own performance-related anxiety during childhood athletics. One was when parents of children on my 5th grade soccer team got into a physical fight with parents of the other team, and the other was when my church league basketball coach threw his chair on the court out of anger after I missed a foul shot. I disclose this information to help validate and normalize what an athlete is feeling, and also to encourage the athlete to contemplate his or her own childhood experiences that may have contributed to his or her current performance-related barriers.

Too often coaches and parents model an unhealthy competitive mindset that prevents an athlete from achieving his or her optimal performance in certain contexts, as it did with me in the aforementioned situations. As sport and exercise psychology professionals we know first hand that a certain amount of competition is healthy and adaptive. However, too much often leads to emotional avoidance and reactivity that creates

dysfunctional cognitive and behavioral patterns, which stunts the developmental growth of the individuals involved. I bring this up because I think it applies to AASP as an organization. We are all human beings; therefore, sometimes even we may blindly slip into to an unhealthy competitive mindset when working with professionals from other disciplines who have different theoretical approaches. It is important to be mindful of our own personal triggers and to honor our colleague's subjective experience before reacting. By presenting ourselves in this manner we will be a good role model for our clients and help our organization prosper.

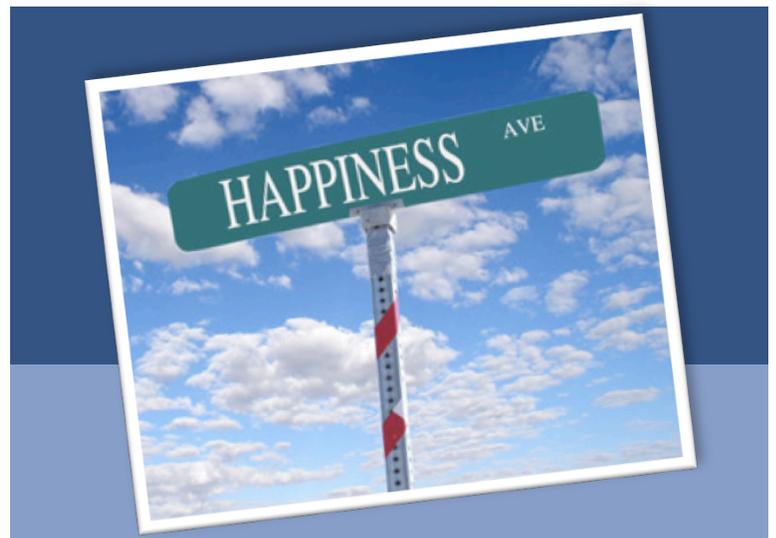
Dr. Burt Giges humbly portrayed this perspective during his presidential address at the 2007 AASP Annual Conference when he spoke about the importance of working together as an organization in order to achieve our main goal of improving the physical health, mental health, and well-being of our clients through sport and exercise. His wisdom was brilliantly portrayed when he said, "this means we need to pull together toward common goals, support each other by listening with an open mind, communicate in ways that accept our differences even when we disagree, and work toward resolving whatever problems interfere with our performance." His words set a wonderful example for future students interested in the field of sport and exercise psychology.

My main goal for this newsletter was to emulate this same perspective by involving students from different disciplines to foster the member collaboration and connectedness Burt spoke about. The students that contributed did an amazing job working together with both me and my co-editor to disseminate exciting articles about their sport and exercise psychology-related interests. I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and that you too will follow Burt's lead.

The Good Body: Sport and Exercise Psychology in the Pursuit of the Happiness

By Gloria Park-Perin, M.A.P.P.

There is a definite buzz around the "new" science of positive psychology, which is not really new at all. The positive psychology movement represents a resurgence of themes previously explored in philosophy, religious studies and humanistic psychology: Human strength and virtue, optimal functioning, and all that goes right in life (Peterson, 2006). With solid empiricism as its backbone, positive psychology seeks to illuminate the conditions that enable individuals, groups, and larger social institutions to thrive. If the mission of



positive psychology sounds familiar to you, it should – sport and exercise psychology practitioners have been drawing on many of the same theoretical foundations and bedrock assumptions for years. Goal setting and self-efficacy theory, mental toughness, and resilience, are just a few topics that have garnered extensive research in sport psychology, and have been translated and applied to promote performance excellence in sport and encourage the adoption and maintenance of healthy exercise habits.

What I see conspicuously missing from positive psychology is the human body. Centuries ago, philosopher and scientist René Descartes argued that mind and body were separate entities, entirely independent of each other in function and condition, intersecting at just one point – the pineal gland (Descartes, 1649). We know that

that mind and body are intricately intertwined and, it is the somatopsychic and psychosomatic connections that sport and exercise psychology have been illuminating for decades. I believe there is such a thing as a “Good Body”, or one that enables thriving and contributes robustly to well-being. The human body is not simply a physical vehicle that houses higher order cognitive and affective functions: it is a source of competency beliefs and aesthetic beauty; an instrument of success and achievement; a mechanism for building psychological resilience and self-regulation; the enabler of sensual pleasure; and an ally in combating illness and psychopathology. As positive psychology continues to capture global attention and momentum, sport and exercise psychologists have a fertile opportunity to inform the study of the good body and augment practices focused on supporting well-being.

According to the World Health Organization (2004), insufficient physical activity accounts for \$75 billion dollars in healthcare costs. Exercise psychologists have been played a critical role in researching how to promote physical activity. Exercise has long established health benefits: it builds and maintains bone health, helps with weight control, builds lean muscle and reduces fat, lowers blood pressure, and decreases the risk of many chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease (Sallis, 2009). More recently, exercise and physical activity have also drawn much attention as a low-cost strategy to support mental health, by regulating mood, buffering stress, and as an effective method of preventing and treating psychopathology such as depression and anxiety (see Mutrie and Faulkner, 2004). Physical activity has also been researched as an avenue for restoring well-being in clients recovering from eating disorders, healing and adjustment after cancer, and coping with chronic conditions. Sport and exercise psychology practitioners can lend their expertise in the development of new interventions, evaluation of existing methods, and the administration of therapeutic programs.

In the workplace, employee wellness initiatives have become increasingly popular among forward-thinking corporations who have realized that there is a connection between employee physical health and engagement, job satisfaction, and performance. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz published an article in the *Harvard Business Review* drawing parallels between business executives and world-class athletes. In order

for executives to perform consistently under pressure and have the stamina to sustain a high level of excellence, Loehr and Schwartz (2001) argue that they must train much in the same way as athletes by cultivating spiritual, mental, emotional, and particularly physical capacity. The demand for health and fitness coaches for companies who provide wellness services for employers appears to be on the rise. Healthy sleeping and eating habits and a routine of regular exercise are the foundations for building requisite physical strength, energy and stamina. Coupled with competencies in mental skills training and team development, sport and exercise psychologists can help others make better health decisions, adopt new exercise habits, and take better care of their physical and psychological health. Expanded competencies in coaching can be acquired through training programs offered through companies like Wellcoaches (www.wellcoaches.com).

In schools, positive psychology practitioners have successfully delivered cognitive behavioral and strength-based approaches for supporting youth well-being to schools in the US, Australia and the United Kingdom, through programs like the Penn Resiliency Project. Sport and exercise psychologists have similarly argued for the social, psychological, and physical benefits associated with sport participation, and researchers like Steven Danish and Jack Watson have catalyzed interest in examining sport as a positive institution. Sport provides lessons on morality, character, fair play, life skills, and can be rich with opportunities to try on leadership roles, experience flow and positive emotion, and interact with peers (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). With the economy and educational systems in crisis, physical education classes and extracurricular activities, like organized sport and music, are continually cut from schools. Further, community-based programs are distributed inequitably (see Eccles et al, 2003), making them even less accessible to marginalized and at-risk populations, where they could be making the greatest impact. Numerous nonprofit organizations, like Figure Skating in Harlem (www.figure skating inharlem.org) have been born with the mission of using sport or physical activity to engage and protect youth, and similar programs,

or as beacons for public policy changes that would make funding more available for these causes.

As a graduate of and former instructor in the Applied Positive Psychology Master's program at the University of Pennsylvania, I have seen my classmates and subsequent students bring positive psychology to life by applying their knowledge creatively to a wide variety of domains: life, executive, and wellness coaching; organizational development; leadership training; education; public health; to name a few. Given the similarly ambiguous career paths in sport and exercise psychology, I often get the sense that job and career prospects are viewed through a lens of scarcity. While professionals in both fields still grapple over competency, licensure, and legal issues (for good reason), it is clear that there are many opportunities to make a difference in the world when viewed through a broadening lens of abundance. With an entrepreneurial and pioneering spirit, a little ingenuity, a lot of hard work, and a firm awareness of your skills/competencies and boundaries, the possibilities for meaningful work in promoting well-being seem boundless.

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“Coaching education and sport and performance psychology are fields that are very versatile and can be applied to various settings, not just athletics”.

Coaching Education and Personal Training

By Erin Kennedy, M.A.

Coaching education within the United States is a relatively unexplored field with little research on its effectiveness on coaching performance. Although much research has been done on coaching alone, the state of coaching education programs throughout the nation remains inconsistent when compared with international counterparts. Research that has been conducted within the field has explored some of the many aspects of coaching education that help coaches within their roles. Some of these findings include different topics such as athlete development (Quain, 1989), communication (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007), parents and community (Vargas-Tonsing, 2007), reflection (Knowles, Tyler, Gilbourne, & Eubank, 2006), and mentoring (Erickson, Côté, & Fraser-Thomas, 2007), among many others. The literature points to the fact that coaching education is something that better prepares an individual for the many roles they will take on as a coach. Students and professionals trained in

the area of sport and exercise psychology can play an integral role in the development of coaching education programs. In the following article, I discuss my own experience developing a program to be utilized with coaches. I hope that this will help students realize that there are endless opportunities in the field, and that with creativity, determination, and commitment one can combine their previous training with their passion.

During the pursuit of my Master's degree in Sport and Performance Psychology at the University of Denver I decided to obtain a job where I could utilize the knowledge I was attaining in class. I applied to become an employee of an outdoor fitness company called BCOR Fitness in Colorado, where I have now been working for 2 years as a personal trainer and fitness instructor. The company is unique in the fact that it is based on the principle of social fitness for everyone. The trainers are called coaches and work hard to create a social, fun environment while delivering great workouts. As I was preparing to become an instructor in this company, I found that there were many aspects of performance within the position. I found myself utilizing my knowledge in sport and exercise psychology almost everyday at work, especially my academic training and research in self-reflection and mentoring. As a graduate student, my main research focus has been on these concepts and in my current job I have been able to implement various self-reflection and mentoring tactics to help improve my performance in the fitness field.

After working at BCOR Fitness for several months, I started to advance within the company. Eventually, I was responsible for training the other fitness coaches. During this transition I looked to my educational training and the coaching education literature for resources that I could use. I found several studies (only one is referenced here, if there were several it is best to list them) suggesting that most coaches are not aware of their own actions within their own environment (e.g. Coaching Behavior Assessment System; Curtis, Smith, & Smoll, 1979). Similar to athletes, coaches that have greater self-awareness are more likely to have better focus and think more quickly under pressure. Various methods of formal and informal self-reflection, such as journal writing or process and feedback sessions with mentors, have been successfully applied in the organizational setting to enhance employee leadership and performance (Knowles et al., 2006). Based on this research, as well as my own experience with self-reflection, I thought these methods could help our coaches at BCOR Fitness through exploration of their areas of strength and growth, and ways in which they could improve as coaches. I had already been implementing these techniques to enhance my own performance as a coach in an informal manner and found them to be effective. For example, after every class I taught I would ask myself the following questions: 1) "What is one thing I did well?" ; 2) "What is one thing I could improve upon?"; and 3) "What can I do between now and next class to improve?" In my opinion, this process helped increase my own self-awareness and to become a better coach.

Along with reflection, I knew that mentoring was important in coaching and training. Throughout my preparation to become a fitness coach I had a seasoned coach with me through every step of the process. She was a great resource to bounce ideas off of and she assisted me in enhancing my own self-reflection methods. This mentoring relationship was one of the keys to my success. In addition, I had done research in this domain, which indicated that mentoring is one of the greatest roles that a coach can adopt because athletes and assistant coaches look to head coaches for advice and leadership (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Erikson et al., 2007). Due to this research, in conjunction with my own personal experience, I decided to develop a self-reflection and mentoring component to enhance the overall coach training for the company. I designed a reflection journal and mentoring piece to be incorporated into the coach training process. The component is structured to have an initial educational session during the certification training. From here the coaches in training are required to fill out a post-workout reflection, which they review with their head coach. Then, they collaboratively make a plan and set goals about how to improve during their next workout. As a seasoned fitness coach, I remember that having another coach as a



mentor through the training process helped me overcome many barriers. Some of these barriers included overcoming my own lack of confidence when leading a workout, generating solutions to problems such as stale workouts, or how to address problems within class such as injuries. The combination of both self-reflection and mentoring positioned me to be in the supervisory role where I am today. Reflecting on where I was struggling and where I was excelling helped me objectively view my job in a different light. I was able to help more clients instead of getting stuck in a rut or ineffective routine because I was more self-aware of my actions and performance.

At this point in time the reflection and mentoring component is being finalized and will be implemented into future training classes within the BCOR. Continual assessment will be done in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Further areas of exploration will center on incorporating more sport and performance psychology topics into the training of group fitness instructors and personal trainers. Specific topics include the Transtheoretical Model's concept of Stages of Change (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007), motivational techniques, communication, and goal setting.

It is my hope that this program will improve my company and positively contribute to fitness companies training programs in the future. Coaching education and sport and performance psychology are fields that are very versatile and can be applied to various settings, not just athletics. I believe professionals trained in the area of sport and exercise psychology can quickly develop their own niche in the fitness industry by incorporating such formal reflection and mentoring techniques into the training of a personal trainer or group fitness instructors. By being creative and taking a risk, anyone can find ways to improve the settings in which they work.

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Character or Caricature

By Robert W. H. Price, M.S., L.C.P.C.

The opportunities in the field of sport psychology are endless. One of the newest crazes, which has become a recent career endeavor of mine, is occurring within the National Football League (NFL). In the NFL, sport psychology consultants are being hired to help coaches and management understand the personality profiles and "character" of their potential athletes.

In the following article, I discuss how I became involved in this exciting consulting opportunity. I also briefly outline what the job entails and talk about why I feel this is the perfect position for someone with a theoretical training background in performance enhancement. As a graduate student searching for opportunities to put the theoretical approaches from textbook to practice, I contacted several NFL teams' player personnel directors and general managers. This required relentless drive and persistence because I was turned down many times. Finally, Mr. Jerry Reese (at the time Director of Player Personnel for the New York Giants, now General Manager) was intrigued by my proposal and provided me with a trial opportunity. When I was hired for the position I was worried that I would not be utilizing my graduate training in sport psychology.



I have been pleasantly surprised at how the delicate process of assessing character has become quite the opportunity to insert many sport psychology, performance enhancement, and clinical psychology theories. In fact, I am utilizing my basic psychology training in assessment and observation almost every day at work! I assess the athlete by analyzing what traits he or she exhibits that may be detrimental or advantageous to the team. Basically, I am comparing an athlete's "character" (personality profile) with their "caricature" (personality characteristics that come to the forefront when an athlete is experiencing pressure). Many times the caricature is a picture of the player's actual character, but with an exaggerated effect. An easy way to think of caricature is the exaggerated qualities that rear their head when an athlete gets into trouble. My role within the organization is to find those potential qualities before the athlete gets into trouble, noting them and providing strategies to address them once this athlete is selected to the team. This is not always an easy process, but has been an amazing experience! I encourage future graduate students in the field of sport psychology to pursue their dream position, as I did mine. The perseverance and determination that most of us share due to our history of athletics can go a long way.

Wearing Two Hats: Lessons Learned from Sport Psychology Coaching and Having a Dual Role with Your Co-Worker

By Joseph Spano, M.A.

Recently I learned that topics in the field of sport psychology can be used beyond sport performance. One area that has benefited from the branching out of sport psychology is the business world. My exposure to this domain was limited until I was recently asked to consult for a local athletic training company. At first I was somewhat hesitant about how my skills could be applied to this setting. However, after consulting with several professionals, and perusing the organizational performance enhancement literature, I realized that my sport psychology studies provided me with the necessary skills to take on this challenge. The following article discusses the steps I took, along with the challenges I faced, when initiating my own performance enhancement program in the business setting.

The opportunity to consult with a business arose when I was working as a coach for athletes at an athletic training facility. My main role was to work hands-on in an interactive manner with all athletes that come through the facility. For example, I often spent time on the court with tennis players or conducted structured psychoeducational groups for the tennis academy. I also held private mental skills sessions throughout the week, and had the opportunity to travel to various sporting events with athletes. Although I served as a support system for all members of the academy, I was mainly there to help individual athletes improve their mental skills. Recently, my role as a performance enhancement consultant was challenged in a positive way due to new management and other structural changes within the organization. This change forced me to start thinking differently about how sport psychology may be valuable beyond the playing field. I am now utilizing my sport psychology skills, specifically goal setting and communication skills, to do more than just work with athletes. I have become a resource to help the employees improve their mental skills and become more efficient with their work.

Once my role changed, I was faced with several ethical challenges to consider. The main dilemma was that of wearing two different hats. Not only was I now the counselor/coach for the employees, I was also their co-worker and friend. This could have been problematic for several reasons, mostly because of my previous role in the facility and the relationships I had already developed with other employees. At first, it was difficult for them to see me in a different role. Because of this, it was very important for me to be genuine and spend time establishing a good relationship with my colleagues. I was concerned that they would have trouble trusting and respecting me, since I was now working with them in a consulting role. Establishing clear boundaries became very important. I tried to emphasize very stringent guidelines for both myself and for management. First, I made sure I did not work with someone I considered a friend. Second, I made it clear that I was not a “spy for management.” While this was not explicitly expressed as a concern for my co-workers, this was a true fear for me. Not only did I want to set clear boundaries to maintain control of the situation, but I wanted to assure that I was respecting my clients and maintaining the mutual trust we had already established. Also, as a fellow employee I did not want my coworkers to complain that these sessions were too invasive. I was there to help employees find a balance between enjoying their work environment and reaching their personal and occupational goals. I also wanted to assure them that the situation and relationship was productive for everyone involved. My main goals were for the employees to learn new personal skills, for me to benefit by allowing them to see and understand what I do on a day-to-day basis, and for management to benefit from having more efficient and effective employees. With these guidelines set, I was able to expand my work and professional opportunities at the facility.

Altering my role was easier than expected. Because many of the employees were former athletes, this allowed me to use the same sport analogies when introducing skills. While many of the techniques I utilized with the employees were the same as those I've used with athletes, their response and expectations varied. I found that the athletes tended to look for specific techniques to improve their performance, whereas the employees were looking for a brief support system and not necessarily any tangible skills. This difference in expectations highlights the importance of being able to understand your clientele, both for their performance needs and psychosocial needs. The individual needs of the person should always be met, yet in performance situations those needs are usually focused on improving one's abilities. Thus far, the personal needs of the employees have played an equally large role in improving their work performance.

The role of supporting employees is also self-serving for me in a few different ways. For example, my new role challenged me to be more creative in preparing sessions, and to be aware of how I addressed the different populations (i.e., language used, examples, etc.), and clarified the focus of each session. Unlike performance based counseling, the needs of the employees were often focused on personal issues rather than work. This new role was a reminder that sport psychology is not just about athletic performance, but also life skills. Performance enhancement is important in all areas.

There are some clear lessons learned from this experience. First, I learned that there are parallel pressures in the business and athletic world. Both employees and athletes expect to perform at their best, reach particular goals, and consistently meet their potential. Second, I have gained an understanding of how to effectively implement a program in the business setting. Third, this experience has taught me how to tackle the ethical and political dilemmas that are inevitable in our field. Lastly, working with a population like the employees has reinforced my role as a sport psychology consultant. I now know that I can be someone who can provide guidance for the path towards achievement, but it is up to the individual how to use that information. My role is to be supportive and help individuals reach their personal and work-related goals.

Sport Psychology: A Mode to Promote Peace between Girls in Israel

By Tanya Prewitt, M.S.

In the spring of 2006, as a first year master's student, I was passionate about sport psychology and the opportunities available in our growing field. As a result, when presented with the chance to travel to Israel to assist in facilitating teambuilding activities, I was ecstatic. I would be working with a camp designed to bring together Palestinian and Israel girls from the ages of 12 to 16 through sport. It was an opportunity I could not pass up. Throughout this article, I hope to share with you what I learned and how, due to my experience, I will never view sport psychology the same.

Rina's Story'

Rina is from the West Bank and has been shot at before but never been wounded. She is a 21-year-old counselor who is going to school in Holland next fall. She has no idea what she will ever do in such a peaceful place because whenever she is in a calm, quiet place she feels uneasy. Fighting and chaos is all she has ever known so it is where she is most comfortable even though it hurts. She is adamant that the people of Israel are doomed and will never know peace; yet, she wants to show them just a glimpse of it for a week. She explains that her reality will never be mine. I cry with her because of her pain and tell her I did nothing to deserve freedom. She doesn't blame me.

Notah's Story

We took the campers to the ocean today and for a number of the campers it was their first time even though they lived so close. Notah's parents had also never been to the ocean. She took her cell phone, called her parents, and let them listen to the sound of the crashing waves. She cried with them over the phone. She soon would turn 16 and may never be able to leave Palestinian territory again without Israeli permission. This may be the first and last time she sees the ocean. When she asks me, as she wades in the water, "Is this what freedom feels like?" It takes all I have to fight back the tears and say, "yes."

Anna's Story

Anna is a wealthy Russian Israeli Jew with a cute smile and long blonde hair. Her father is a surgeon and she tells us that he has no idea what the camp is about but her mother wanted her to come. Her father only knows that she is at a sport camp being held at the Wingate Institute, the university training facility where many Israeli Olympians train. If her father knew, he would never had let her come and would probably drive to come take her out of the camp immediately. She says she and her mother will tell him some day but she is so glad she came. She had never spoken with Palestinian girls before.

Dora's Story

Dora is Palestinian and she told a story about going through a security checkpoint to enter Israel. She is only 13 years old and said that she was questioned with a gun pointed at her head when interrogated by soldiers. They wanted to know why she needed to enter Israel. She said she was all alone and scared. She also saw a woman give birth at the checkpoint because the soldiers would not let her leave to make it to a hospital to deliver the baby. I listened in shock.

After reading these stories, many may be asking themselves, "What does this have to do with sport psychology?" My response, "More than what it appears". Allow me the opportunity to explain. These email excerpts come from correspondences between myself and Israeli and Palestinian girls I met in the summer of 2006 at the Sport for Peace Camp in Netanya, Israel.

When I planned and prepared for my trip to Israel, my naivety was a blessing in disguise. If I would have known the complexity and potential danger in traveling to Israel at this time, I may have been more hesitant than exhilarated. I was on fire with the idea that I could use what I had been learning in my academic career at the Sport for Life Camp. While historically sport psychology consultants are concerned with improving performance and enhancing the experience of athletes, coaches, and exercise participants, in July 2006, I also used sport psychology as a mode to promote peace between groups of girls where abhorrence between them was alive and real.

As the conflict in the Middle East continued to escalate into the summer of 2006, I traveled to Israel with nine other American female athletes and sport studies graduate students to facilitate an inaugural sport development and peace camp for 35 Israeli and Palestinian girls. The purpose of the Sport for Life Camp was to provide a safe environment where girls from different backgrounds could share ideas, feelings, and experiences with sport being the medium to bring the girls together in peace. I viewed this as an opportunity of a lifetime to incorporate my love for social justice with my love of sport psychology. Yet, it was not until we had arrived in Israel for counselor training that I comprehended even a small portion of the complexity that facilitating teambuilding activities between these young girls would be. There are several reasons why conflict resolution is difficult in Israel: (a) the conflict is complicated by several factors including religion, culture and history; (b) there are external powers involved (i.e., WWII, United Nations, the United States); (c) there is an imbalance of power so that when conducting conflict resolution the dominant group wants to solve the problems from their point of view (i.e., the Israelis are

much more powerful than the Palestinians; thus, they want to solve the problems their way) and; (d) there is dehumanization of the “other” (i.e., by the age of four or five Israeli and Palestinian children “know who the enemy is” (personal communication, S. Munayer, July 9, 2006). Even more so, conducting a sport camp involving conflict resolution and teambuilding between Israeli and Palestinian girls is complicated by the fact that both Israelis and Palestinians are victims. Unfortunately, the current conflict is the result of neither groups’ doing nor responsibility (personal communication, S. Munayer, July 9, 2006). In addition, neither group sees their personal attitudes towards the conflict as part of the problem. Thus, it was the task of American, Palestinian and Israeli counselors to collaborate to bring young girls together regardless of nationality or religion. It was our mission to show them their commonalities, not their differences. In addition, as an American it was imperative that I realized and was sensitive to the fact that coming into this camp, I was coming from the most powerful and dominant group. Along these lines, it was important for me to recognize that as a counselor silence on my part meant approval; therefore, it was vital that I acknowledged and noted the unique perspectives of all the campers. Likewise, I needed to ignore the imbalance of power and understand that both Palestinians and Israelis felt incredibly rejected. This feeling of rejection was real and, thus, the bottom line was that all campers needed and wanted to be accepted for who they were and to be loved (personal communication, S. Munayer, July 9, 2006).

I recall vividly when campers entered the cafeteria on the first day of camp. While I spoke neither Hebrew nor Arabic, the divide between Israeli and Palestinian was undeniable, noticeable by stares and groupings of “others”. Yet, day-by-day, hour-by-hour and activity-by-activity, communication and cultural exchange between the Israeli and Palestinian girls increased through sport. The girls played ultimate Frisbee, basketball, and volleyball together on teams. They paired up, one Palestinian and one Israeli, and competed against other teams in blindfolded obstacle courses and scavenger hunts. We discussed body image, played “Two truths and a lie”, made a human knot which the girls had to work together to untangle, wrote team rules, and decided on team mascots and chants. Soon, it became more difficult to see the difference between Israeli and Palestinian girls.

With regard to sport, the young girls could not imagine having the opportunity I had had as an American girl growing up involved in basketball, soccer, baseball, and track. While the boys in Palestine and Israel had school-sponsored teams at their middle and high schools, the girls had club teams where at maximum they played six to eight games per year. Often times, there were few sports to choose to play. While some had high passion to learn and play others did not; however, all of their skills were lower than or equivalent to those of the average athletic skill level of young girls in the United States.



It was inspiring to see their desire to compete despite their lack of opportunity and skill development. My belief that sport psychology could be used for more than just assisting elite athletes in attaining their peak performance was reaffirmed. We set goals and established affirmation statements to build confidence and help track improvement. I then became convinced, in fact, that sport psychology could be used in non-historical ways to foster relationships otherwise seen as impossible amongst children who had been taught to hate one another.

In discussion activities the values, stereotypes and goals of these girls were brought up. These discussions often times became emotionally draining yet enlightening. They challenged all of us, counselors and campers, to get out of our comfort zones and share. One of many examples was when the girls participated in a word association activity. We began the activity by having the girls state the first things they heard of when they heard the words “rich,” “pretty teeth,” “greedy,” “stuck up,”

“ignorant” and “Paris Hilton” were among words that came to mind for the campers. Then, we had an American counselor stand up and asked the girls, “Is Elizabeth (another American counselor) ignorant, stuck up, or greedy?” The campers responded “no” and commented on how she was not any of those things. We continued on and the activity became more intense. We asked what came to mind when they heard the word “Israeli.” Amongst the words chanted included “murderer”, “stealer”, “resilient”, “strong”, and “victim.” Again, a young Israeli girl was chosen from the group and she did not fit the stereotypes. Lastly, we asked the girls what came to mind when they heard the word “Palestinian.” Words shouted included “survivors”, “terrorists”, “killers”, unified”, “resilient”. Of course, once again, the young Palestinian girl chosen did not fit all of the stereotypes of those shouted by the campers. Through this activity, conversations began to trickle out where girls told their stories of death, loss, and fear from both sides, Palestinian and Israeli. For some of the girls, it was the first time they realized that their “enemy” had pain, too, maybe just as much as they felt. As an American, I could not relate to their suffering; however, my heart ached for the horror these young girls had already endured in their lives. The stories were unimaginable for me yet very real and vivid for these young campers.

When we were all asked if we knew anyone - whether it was a family member, neighbor, or friend that was killed in the conflict - everyone in the room raised their hand except the 10 American camp counselors. As each Palestinian and Israeli girl shared her story, I could no longer fight back my tears. I cried with the Israeli girls and I cried with the Palestinian girls. No better yet, we all cried together. After hours of daily discussion, these girls talked into the night finally exchanging experiences and feelings on a variety of topics such as dreams, school, and sport.

Needless to say, the campers became dear to one another and to me throughout our week together. It is heartbreaking to realize what innocent people in Palestine and Israel have to endure. For me, personally, the conflict hit home because I can put names and faces to those that suffer and are victims of the violence in Israel. In light of all the turmoil, many would say that our Peace Camp was unsuccessful. Indeed, we did not change the world or bring peace to Israel. However, to these 35 girls I am certain we made an impact. Girls who have been taught to hate one another were playing sports together, eating with one another, talking and laughing, exchanging stories, hugging and did not want to part ways at the end of camp. Additionally, the girls were appreciative of the opportunity, begged us Americans not to leave, and pleaded for us to return soon. In my mind, the camp was a success despite the circumstances beyond all of our control. By far, it was an adventure that opened my eyes to hurt, pain, and conflict that I had previously been unable to imagine.

“Girls who have been taught to hate one another were playing sports together, eating with one another, talking and laughing, exchanging stories and hugging.”

The opportunity came to me because of my interest in social justice and sport psychology. Moreover, I feel that I learned more in one week facilitating sport psychology activities to these young girls than I ever could in a year of consulting with high school or collegiate athletes. Together, we overcame barriers of language, culture, trust and sport knowledge – all in one team, all in one week. This opportunity better prepared me for the very real challenges of team consulting early on in my exposure to sport psychology.

Yet, for me, more important than what I learned professionally, I will forever be changed because of the relationships formed with the young girls at the sport camp. Their wisdom, determination, and passion continue to fascinate me, and their charm and hospitality made me feel at home during our time spent with them. To this day, we keep in touch through Facebook, instant messaging and email. They continue to bring me joy and a broader perspective through our correspondence. In return, I hope that I can continue to give them faith that an understanding amongst people is possible. I may have begun

the adventure intending to serve and give of myself. However, I departed Israel with more experiences, knowledge, and love than I could have ever been capable of giving. I guarantee I will never look at life or sport psychology the same. The liberties I have, for too long, taken for granted as an American are now aspects of my everyday life that I make a conscious effort to appreciate, and I will continue to do so not only in my personal life but in my career endeavors. I am grateful the trip to Israel was presented to me and that I seized the chance; I will never be the same because I did so.

Sport psychology is about maximizing performance and self-confidence in order for athletes to reach their fullest potential. Sometimes these athletes are elite Olympians and other times they are girls who are victims of war and conflict desiring the opportunity to not only play sport but to also be free. I encourage you to think of groups of people without privilege who may benefit from the teachings of our field and to stray from thinking that sport psychology can only be done the way it has always been done. Then, I encourage you to have the courage to act. The tools of sport psychology can serve all exercisers, athletes and people. I believe this - do you? In closing, for your reflection, I leave you with emails from campers.

July 13, 2006 - First of all, thank you for thinking of us and keeping an eye on the news. Everything here is still the same, no change. There is nothing to do but I pray every night that this war could end already.

July 14, 2006 - Your e-mails just brighten up my life like a star in a midnight sky, and that puts a big smile on my face because I know somewhere overseas you are there putting time and effort to send me an email. Here in Nazareth everything is just fine, the bomb alarm goes on sometimes but fortunately no missiles follow. So, it is pretty good except that this is really scary.

July 14, 2006 - Two hours later - Remember when I told you there were no bombs in Nazareth? Well, an hour ago 3 bombs landed in Nazareth. Two children were killed. Luckily, my family, friends and I are okay. I just hope that it would be the first and last day bombs land here. I wanted to tell you this because you asked me to tell you about what is going on in Nazareth before you left Israel. Missing you, with love.

July 15, 2006 - Thank you so much for checking up on me. I'm ok here in Nazareth. No rockets ended up here in the city but they were nearby. Anyways, it is so nice to have someone thinking of me in times like these. I'm really grateful to have you.

July 15, 2006 - I miss you so much and I really hope I'll see you soon. In Israel, we are in a state of war with Lebanon and it's very difficult especially because I realized that all we talked about in the camp may have been for nothing because we kids don't have any hand with what's happening. If we did, there would be no war. But, I thank you for coming to teach me sport and listening to my goals. Oh and thanks for helping me believe that in some places there is peace.

** All names are pseudonyms chosen by the author.*

Professional Profile: Dr. Chris Janelle

By Arlene Engels, M.S.

Christopher Janelle, Ph.D., is an associate professor and the director of the Performance Psychology Laboratory in the Department of Applied Physiology and Kinesiology at The University of Florida. He is also the department's graduate coordinator. Janelle has published more than 50 scientific articles and book chapters, and he co-authored the *Handbook of Sport Psychology*. He reviews papers for the leading journals in the field and sits on four editorial boards. Janelle was awarded the 2002 Dorothy Harris Memorial Award for early career excellence by the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology, and was named one of five university wide recipients of the 2007-2008 University of Florida Doctoral Mentoring

Tell us about the Performance Psychology Laboratory at the University of Florida.

>>>The mission of the Performance Psychology Laboratory is to understand how emotion influences the thoughts and behaviors of participants in health and performance settings. We study how emotion influences attention and, ultimately, the motor actions of elite athletes and other performers. We are also interested in the role of attention and emotion in anxiety and movement disorders.

Emotion and Performance

Close scrutiny of the extant literature on motor expertise reveals that little attention has been directed toward understanding the influence of emotion on the mechanisms underlying visual selective attention, automaticity, and self-regulation. For the past several years, our multimethod approach has contributed novel understanding of how process oriented behavioral and psychophysiological indices [heart rate, cortical activation levels, electrodermal activity, eye movements, EMG, force parameters, etc.] permit an expert advantage among accomplished athletes, drivers, and military marksmen, to name a few. Our findings reliably indicate that visual search strategies are significantly different when under stressful conditions as compared to relatively benign conditions. These changes in search strategy appear to be related to the narrowing of the visual attentional field that occurs when anxious, resulting in inefficient search patterns and a tendency to be distracted by irrelevant environmental cues. Though the same trends are noticed among relative experts, they are not as pronounced. Experts are more capable of dealing with stress than are novices, allowing them to maintain or improve their performance in stressful situations. Our research in the area of performance expertise has been paralleled and integrated with a current line of inquiry focused on the specific process oriented behavioral manifestations of emotional input on basic movement parameters. We have demonstrated clear behavioral effects of emotion on numerous indices of movement quality, including response time and accuracy, as well as force production and EMG components. This work has led to a better understanding of the stress - performance relationship by evaluating the mechanisms that underlie the efficiency and effectiveness of performance under stress. Likewise, our findings have provided greater insight concerning what experts do to maintain a quiet state of focused attention, yielding effective performance.

Emotion and Health

In addition to the performance research with which we have been involved, the other primary arm of our research has concerned understanding the role of attention and its interaction with emotion in the health and exercise domain. A specific interest has been determining how emotion, attention, and automaticity interact in a potentially harmful manner as pertaining to emotional problems such as anxiety and body image dissatisfaction. The principal initiative is to understand how emotional responses elicited while viewing various environmental stimuli lead to the formation and maintenance of maladaptive emotional states. Our findings exhibit a high degree of conceptual similarity to the expertise work with which we have been involved. As described, elite performers perform with a high level of automated adaptability and exceptional attunement to relevant sport-specific cues in their respective sports. They are also resistant to dramatic emotional changes as related to how incoming information is processed. In a similar manner, individuals with body image problems, for example, become experts at attending to and interpreting environmental information, but do so in a self-deprecating, dysfunctional manner. Preliminary studies have revealed an attentional bias characterized by the dominant finding that individuals with body image disturbance reliably differ from others in visual search patterns to specific body locations. These types of biases are also being evaluated with respect to anxiety problems. Future investigations in which emotion and exercise paradigms are used to examine affective reactivity among individuals with body image disturbance and high levels of anxiety are currently being planned in addition to current projects funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the American Heart Association.

Can you tell us more about your research emphasis and how you apply it in the Performance Psychology Lab?

>>> I optimistically and sincerely believe that our continued examination of emotional influences on behavioral processes will allow the advancement of practical recommendations to maintain a positive, productive, and efficient performance state. Likewise, by creating a more comprehensive account of the underlying interactions between the environmental cues and attentional allocation tendencies that perpetuate and precipitate emotional problems, the development of interventions to alleviate these problems can be further specified and evaluated. Indeed, the pursuit of related yet different questions in performance and health domains is challenging, yet I feel that a degree of diversification is advantageous as it enables us to pursue a general area of research while protecting against stagnation in specific paradigms and methodologies. In addition, I strongly feel that maintaining multiple related interests will enable the development of logical, comprehensive yet united theory of emotion and behavior that is enriched through the multiple perspectives from which it emerges.

How did you get started in this field?

>>> In the field of sport psychology?... it was an accident!... I had graduated from Miami University in Ohio with a Psych degree and was perfectly content to take a year off and continue tending bar in Oxford when I stumbled upon a bulletin board on sport psychology outside Robin Vealey's office at Miami ... without going into great detail, I eventually was admitted to the sport psych program at Springfield College, and then did my doctoral work at UF, where I developed a primary interest in how emotion influences attention and motor function.

Have you used performance psychology in areas outside of sport and exercise?

>>> Yes... with performing artists and an occasional pilot

What sport psychology techniques do you find the most applicable in your work?

>>> Like many sport psychologists, much of what I do is centered on creating a maximally functional preparatory state that the performer can both identify and consistently create... with an emphasis on being able to attend to the right thing(s) at the right time and then generating the most appropriate action(s). Motivational, emotional, and attentional mechanisms that yield expert performance are closely intertwined, though temporally contribute to performance outcome in different ways. It is through this framework that I employ such interventions as goal setting, emotion regulation, attentional focusing. The primary vehicle through which I train this skills is imagery, our "built in simulator"... with a strong emphasis on the maximal preparation to build greater confidence and firmly rooted expectations for future success.

Do you have any suggestions for students who are interested in a performance psychology route?

>>> Develop a strong background (and balance) in kinesiological and psychological science, and training / experiences working with clients. Most importantly, I believe it is critical to understand the psychological mechanisms that can impact movement quality as ultimately, our goal as performance psychologists is to optimize these mechanisms at critical times (which vary widely from person to person and situation to situation).

Can you tell me about your experience with applied sport psychology consulting?

>>> My primary appointment at UF is as a researcher and teacher. Applied work is not a part of my academic assignment. However, applied work is something I enjoy, devote significant "extracurricular" time to, highly value, and take very seriously. As is likely clear from my other answers, I buy wholeheartedly into the model of a "scientific practitioner" in my work with athletes and other performers.

Sport and Exercise Psychology Internship

By Jessica Lutkenhouse, Psy.D.

The following was obtained from the 9th edition of *The Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology*, (Burke, Sachs, Fry, & Schweighardt, 2008), a book that provides information to student interested in careers in sport and exercise psychology. Below, I have provided a list of internships in Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology. This list was originally developed by Dr. Sam Maniar from West Virginia University (now at PRADCO, Twinsburg, OH) and recently updated by myself, with the assistance of Dr. Chris Bader from University of North Texas. I encourage you to refer to *The Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology* if you are interested in applying for an internship, as the book provides more detailed information about each internship, such as how to apply, how many hours of face-to-face contact you will have with athletes, and questions that will assist you with the application process. The directory can be purchased through the publisher's website (www.fitinfotech.com).

Applied Internship / Fellowships

- American Board of Sport Psychology
- Evert Tennis Academy
- Human Kinetics
- IMG Academies – Mental Conditioning Division
- United States Military Academy
- University of St. Francis, Athletics

Pre-doctoral Psychology Internships

- All Saints Healthcare System, Mental Health & Addiction Services
- Appalachian State University, Counseling and Psychological Services Center
- Arizona State University, Counseling and Consultation
- Ball State University, Counseling and Psychological Services Center
- Bowling Green State University, Counseling Center
- Brigham Young University, Counseling and Career Center
- Colorado State University, Counseling Center
- Emory University, Counseling Center
- Erie Psychological Consortium, Northshore Psychological Associates
- Harvard Medical School / Mass General Hospital
- Harvard Medical School / McClean Hospital
- Iowa State University, Student Counseling Service
- James Madison University, Counseling and Student Development Center
- Kansas State University, Counseling Services
- Lake Forest College, Health and Wellness Center, Counseling Services
- Lakeview Specialty Hospital and Rehabilitation Center
- Meharry Medical College, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Miami University, Student Counseling Service
- Montana State University, Bozeman, Counseling and Psychological Services
- Nebraska Internship Consortium in Professional Psychology
- New Mexico State University, Counseling and Student Development
- Northern Minnesota Internship Consortia, Range Mental Health Center
- Northwestern University, Counseling and Psychological Services
- The Ohio State University, Counseling and Consultation Service

- Oklahoma Health Consortium, Goodard Health Center
- Pennsylvania Counseling Services
- Penn State University, Center for Counseling and Psychological Services
- Purdue University, Counseling and Psychological Services
- State University of New York at Albany, Health and Counseling
- State University of New York at Oneonta, Counseling Health and Wellness
- Stony Brook University, Counseling Center
- Suffolk University, Counseling Center
- Texas A&M University, Student Counseling Services
- University of Akron, Testing and Career Center
- University of California, Los Angeles, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior
- University of California, Los Angeles, Student Psychological Services
- University of California, Davis, Counseling and Psychological Services
- University of California, Irvine, Counseling Center
- University of California, Riverside, The Counseling Center at UCR
- University of California, San Diego, Psychological and Counseling Services
- University of California, Santa Barbara, Counseling Services
- University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology
- University of Florida, University Counseling Center
- University of Idaho, Counseling and Testing Center
- University of Maine, Counseling Center
- University of Massachusetts Health Services, Amherst Counseling and Assessment Services
- University of Miami, Counseling Center
- University of New Hampshire Counseling Center, Schofield House
- University of Pennsylvania, Counseling and Psychological Services
- University of Rochester, University Counseling Center
- University of South Carolina, Counseling and Human Development Center
- University of Southern California, Student Counseling Services
- University of Tennessee, Student Counseling Center
- University of Texas, Austin, Counseling and Mental Health Center
- University of the Pacific, Cowell Wellness Center Counseling Services
- Utah State University, Counseling Center
- VA Medical Center, Salem VA
- Vanderbilt-VA Internship Consortium, Psychological Service
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools
- Virginia Tech, Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center
- Washington State University, Counseling Services
- West Virginia University, Carruth Center for Counseling and Psychological Services
- Wichita Collaborative Psychology Internship Program

* Burke, K. L., Sachs, M. L., Fry, S. J., & Schweighardt, S. L. (2008). *The Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology, 9th edition*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.

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