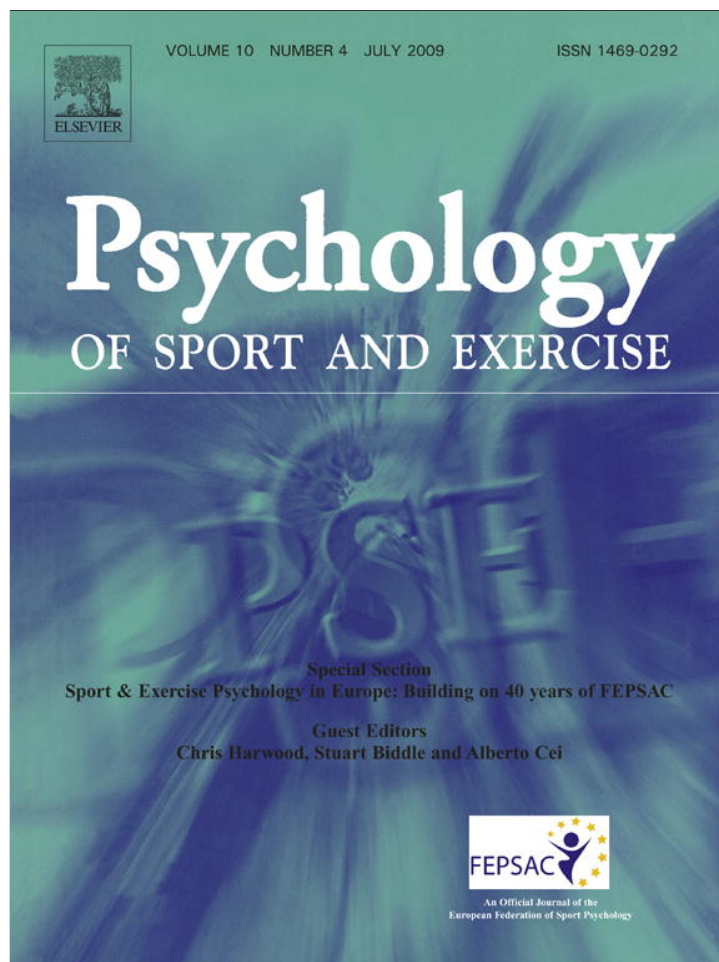


Provided for non-commercial research and education use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.



This article appeared in a journal published by Elsevier. The attached copy is furnished to the author for internal non-commercial research and education use, including for instruction at the authors institution and sharing with colleagues.

Other uses, including reproduction and distribution, or selling or licensing copies, or posting to personal, institutional or third party websites are prohibited.

In most cases authors are permitted to post their version of the article (e.g. in Word or Tex form) to their personal website or institutional repository. Authors requiring further information regarding Elsevier's archiving and manuscript policies are encouraged to visit:

<http://www.elsevier.com/copyright>



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Psychology of Sport and Exercise

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/psychsport

A perspective on education and professional development in applied sport psychology

P. Wylleman^{a,b,*}, C.G. Harwood^c, A.-M. Elbe^d, A. Reints^b, D. de Caluwé^b

^a Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

^b Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

^c School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Loughborough University, UK

^d Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15 March 2009
Received in revised form
17 March 2009
Accepted 17 March 2009
Available online 25 March 2009

Keywords:

Applied sport psychology
Practitioner
Career development
FEPSAC
FAST
Europe

ABSTRACT

Objectives and method: As the field of applied sport psychology (ASP) is witnessing a growth in interest in professional practice, it is also faced with the challenge of developing its professional status. Taking into account the lack of research on the career development of ASP practitioners, this article reviews research and information relevant to two major career phases: a) education in preparing for ASP practice, and b) initiation and development of professional ASP practice. The paper also provides an initial collation of information and research regarding ASP education, professional development, and service provision in Europe.

Results and conclusions: Results revealed that the field of ASP still faces the challenge of formulating an encompassing and uniformly used definition of ASP; of gaining a better understanding of the career development of ASP professionals, with particular attention for female ASP practitioners; of gaining insight into, analysing and providing quality management in the educational pathways preparing for ASP practice; and of optimising the vocational development of the ASP professional by way of ensuring the quality of ASP service delivery and the development of competencies in ASP practitioners. In conclusion, recommendations are formulated for furthering the development of ASP in Europe, and on the possible role of the European Federation for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (FEPSAC).

© 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The field of applied sport psychology (ASP) has met with different challenges during its relatively young history. It faced a significant challenge some four decades ago when trying to establish its *raison d'être* during the 1970s. Concerns raised on the ecological validity (i.e., the lack of attention to the unique context of sport) of laboratory-based sport psychology observations (Silva, Metzler, & Lerner, 2007), the growing need for field-based observations and research, as well as the evolution of the scientist-practitioner model in (sport) psychology brought the need for distinguishing the practices of academic sport psychology and that of ASP (Giacobbi, Poczwadowski, & Hager, 2005) to the forefront and championed the establishment ASP as a full sub-discipline of

sport psychology (Petrie & Diehl, 1995). The field of ASP received its recognition in Europe when, in 1995, the European Federation for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (Fédération Européenne de Psychologie des Sports et des Activités Corporelles; FEPSAC) recognized that application, together with education and research, was one of the three interrelated tasks of sport psychologists (Apitzsch & Schilling, 2003).

Related to establishing itself as a sub-discipline within the domain of sport psychology, the field of ASP faced another major challenge in finding an encompassing and uniformly used definition of its aim. This needs to define the aim of ASP remained a topic of discussion for almost three decades. This is exemplified by Maureen Weiss who, in her Presidential address to the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) in 1998 clearly stated that “the lack of a clear definition of applied sport psychology perpetuates the cloud of uncertainty many individuals have about their identity” (Weiss, 1998, p. S14). The use of expressions such as ‘the application of sport psychology’ (Silva, Conroy, & Zizzi, 1999), ‘doing sport psychology’ (Andersen, 2000) or ‘the practice of sport psychology’ (Silva et al., 2007) during the past

* Corresponding author at: Research group Sport Psychology and Mental Support (SPMB), Department of Sport Policy and Sport Management, L413, Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, B1050 Brussel, Belgium. Tel.: +32 2 6292712; fax: +32 2 6292899.
E-mail address: Paul.Wylleman@vub.ac.be (P. Wylleman).

decade reflected that ASP was indeed “not easy to pigeonhole” (McCann, 2005, p. 283) and that a more elaborate description of the aim of ASP was needed. A relevant step was taken by Silva et al. (1999) when noting that ASP “has taken on two very different meanings. One interpretation focuses on ... conduct[ing] applied research while the second interpretation describes ... the application of sport psychology principles with clients.” (p. 301). Anderson, Miles, Mahoney, and Robinson (2002) added that both the research-oriented and the practice-oriented branch of ASP influence and inform each other.¹ The practice-oriented branch was primarily described in terms of athlete performance enhancement, a focus on ASP which is still strong, as exemplified by Roper (2002) who translates ASP as “the application of psychological techniques and strategies that are aimed at aiding athletes in achieving greater performance” (p. 53). Several authors identified the need to elaborate this perspective on the practice-oriented branch of ASP by including, beyond intervention work, diagnosis, psychological testing and assessment (e.g., Gardner, 2001), counselling, consulting in special problem situations, and the provision of clinical services (Apitzsch & Schilling, 2003).

Another step forward in outlining the aim of ASP was taken in the wake of sport psychologists using a more holistic perspective on the development of athletes (e.g., Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). For example, Anderson et al. (2002) elaborated that the aim of ASP should include athletes' development when describing it as “principally concerned with the application of theories, principles, and techniques from psychology to induce psycho-behavioural change in athletes to enhance performance, the quality of the sport experience, and the personal growth of the athlete” (p. 434). Thus, beyond psychological skills training and use of mental skills (McCann, 2005), ASP also focused on lifestyle development, and use of life skills amongst athletes. FEPSAC (2008a) supported this perspective recently in its position statement on the quality of ASP services by referring not only to athletes' personal growth, but also to their relational and vocational development, and by including a reference to athletes' well-being. FEPSAC stated that while in ASP “...a central focus is usually on optimising performance, other psychological themes such as well-being, work-life-balance or interpersonal issues may also come across”. In fact, by stating in this position paper that its services should not be geared solely towards athletes, but also to provide “efficient psychological support for ... coaches, sport clubs, organisations and significant others”, FEPSAC added a new element and took another step in elaborating on the aim of ASP. This broadening of the target group of ASP also led ASP to be linked to other, non-sport populations (e.g., managers, CEO's), thus bringing it into the remit of another psychology sub-discipline, namely organisational consulting (Meyers, Coleman, Whelan, & Mehlenbeck, 2001).

During the past decade the field of ASP has witnessed a growth in interest in professional practice (Meyers et al., 2001) as well as in the number of practitioners (Roper, 2002). These developments confronted ASP with another major challenge, namely, that of delineating its practitioners. Traditionally, practitioners were described in terms of their education and training (e.g., Knowles, Gilbourne, Tomlinson, & Anderson, 2007; Weigand, Richardson, & Weinberg, 1999), their qualifications (e.g., McCann, 2005), as well as their acquired accreditation and certification in ASP (e.g., Anderson & Lavallee, 2005; Hale & Danish, 1999). For example, Hack (2005) used education and qualifications to delineate two types of service

practitioners, particularly to the United States: (a) sport psychologists or sport psychology consultants typically holding a PhD in clinical or counselling psychology (and can thus be licensed as psychologists), having obtained additional specialised education and training by taking courses in sport psychology and sport sciences, and having conducted supervised work with athletes; and (b) mental skills coaches at the leading edge of sport psychology research, often employed in an academic setting, having expertise in understanding the interplay of athletes' physical and mental processes and their social culture, and trained in the development and interpretation of sport psychology-related tests.

A second body of literature has developed focussing on the services ASP practitioners provide as well as how these are provided. This perspective includes aspects such as the provision of specific (on-field/on-site) ASP support and services (e.g., Bull, 1995; Gardner & Moore, 2005; Gilbourne & Richardson, 2006; Van Raalte, 2003), the effectiveness of ASP practice (e.g., Anderson, Miles, Robinson, & Mahoney, 2004), ethical issues in ASP (e.g., Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001; Moore, 2003), or the quality of ASP services (e.g., FEPSAC, 2008a). At present, a third research strand is being developed which focuses on the way in which the career of ASP practitioners develops. While research on the career development of talented and elite athletes is well established (e.g., Wylleman, Alfermann, & Lavallee, 2004), the literature on the career development of ASP practitioners (e.g., Roper, Fisher, & Wisberg, 2005) is agonisingly scarce.

In the present paper, the authors aim to contribute to the process of delineating the ASP practitioner by focussing particularly on the way in which the career of ASP practitioners develops. Taking into account that “much remains to be learned about sport psychology maturation, such as the ways that practitioners change throughout their careers” (Tod, 2007, p. 94), this article will present research and information particularly relevant to two major career phases, that of the education required in preparing for ASP practice, and that of the initiation and development of professional ASP practice.

When reviewing the ASP literature, it becomes obvious that the majority of the publications relate to the United States (USA), with little information on the situation in Europe. While relevant research on ASP in the USA will be reviewed, the second aim of this article is to provide an initial collation of information and research regarding ASP education, professional development and service provision in Europe. Our intent is not to achieve a detailed and complete review but rather to provide a starting point for discussions about, and recommendations for, the development of the field of ASP in general, with particular attention on its development in Europe. With this goal in mind, this article will conclude by specifying future needs in, and recommendations on, furthering the development of ASP in Europe and address the possible role of FEPSAC herein.

Education preparing for ASP practice

As the education, training and preparation to practice ASP are generally linked to the phase of the student (beginning or advanced) (Tod, 2007), research and information on programmes aimed at preparing for ASP practice will be reviewed first. Second, a retrospective view will be used by evaluating the educational background of the actual ASP practitioner in light of their ASP practice.

Education programmes preparing for ASP practice

Programmes preparing for ASP practice can be organised by educational institutes, associations representing sport psychology,

¹ It is interesting to note that ‘applied exercise psychology’ described as “the study of psychological factors underlying participation and adherence in physical activity programmes” (Anshel, 2006, p. 4) is in fact solely linked to conducting research.

or by a combination of both. In the USA, programmes preparing for ASP generally emanate from educational institutes and are relatively well described (e.g., [Burke, Sachs, Fry, & Schweighardt, 2008](#)). The Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) have certification standards recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the only measure of training competence in the field. These guide the minimum training requirements to be developed by graduate programmes training individuals in the practice of ASP. It is also advocated that these programmes should include modules on ethics; sport psychology; biomechanics and/or physiological bases of sport; historical, philosophical, social, or motor behaviour bases of sport; psychopathology; counselling; skills and techniques within sport or exercise; cognitive–affective basis of behaviour; social bases of behaviour; and individual behaviour ([Van Raalte, Brown, Brewer, Avondoglio, & Hartmann, 2000](#)). Notwithstanding the availability of these certification standards, Van Raalte and colleagues concluded, after analysing the curricula of graduate programmes in ASP in 79 institutions, that there was no consensus among sport psychology programmes on the content offered: a basic core of courses was only available at 75% of the institutions included in the survey, while the 12 academic content areas required for AASP-certification were provided by just 27% of these institutions.

Throughout Europe several ASP-related (post-)graduate programmes are provided by educational institutes. At pan-European level, the European Masters' Programme in Sport and Exercise Psychology (EMPSEP), initiated by FEPSAC ([FEPSAC, 2008b](#); [Vanden Auweele, 2003](#)), is organised by a consortium of European universities. This 60 ECTS² credits programme is open to students holding a degree in Sport Sciences, Physical Education or Psychology and provides advanced knowledge and skills through a joint intensive course, a jointly developed advanced study module similar in all participating universities, lectures and seminars, an extensive thesis, as well as a mobility period of 4–5 months at an EMPSEP host university. As the programme aims at educating highly qualified researchers and professionals for the growing field of sport and exercise psychology, it does offer ASP-related course work on topics such as coaching, team dynamics, mental skills training, talent development, and eating disorders.

In Sweden, the two-year part-time advanced level programme "How to work as an applied sport psychologist" (Att arbeta som idrottspsykologisk radgivare) was initiated in 2002–2003 by Halmstad University. The programme, which is open to students who have already completed a minimum of 90 ECTS credits in psychology/sport psychology or in sport sciences/sport psychology, provides a broad orientation of models and communication skills (including ethical issues, professional philosophy) in ASP, and helps students to develop skills to work with clients ([Johnson & Stambulova, 2006](#)). While the first year of study consists of courses focussing on the individual athlete (client), second year courses centre on group and team dynamics. Students initiate, follow-up and evaluate, during a five to six month period, the progress of applied case work with one athlete (during the first year) and a team or sport organisation (the second year). Supervision by experts, as well as peer-group meetings, is continuously offered throughout the year.

In Germany, the University of Halle initiated a full-time two-year 120 ECTS credits masters' programme in ASP in the autumn of 2008. The Hochschule Vechta (120 ECTS credits) and the Private Hochschule für Gesundheit und Sport (90 ECTS credits) have

recently established a masters' programme in sport psychology designed for people working full-time. All programmes are open to students with a degree in either sport science or psychology and involve applied work in sports as part of their study.

Other programmes preparing for ASP practice in Europe are developed and run by a combination of educational institute and sport psychology association. In Switzerland the course entitled Post Graduate Curriculum Sport Psychology (Postgraduales Weiterbildungscurriculum Sportpsychologie) for psychologists, is organised by the Swiss Institute of Sports in Magglingen (Eidg. Hochschule für Sport Magglingen) in cooperation with the Swiss Association for Sport Psychology (Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sportpsychologie; SASP) and is open to psychologists as well as sport scientists. The course, which entails 51 days of instruction (25 credits) and takes from two to four years to complete, provides also for supervision of applied work. Another course entitled Certificate of Advanced Studies in Psychological and Mental training in Sport (ZFH Psychologisches und mentales Training im Sport) has also been developed by both organisations, is open for sport scientists, coaches, physical therapists and involves 20 days of instruction and 8 days of group learning to be completed in one and a half years.

In the Netherlands, a two-year part-time 80 ECTS credits Post-academic programme for applied sport psychologists (Post-academische opleiding tot praktijksportpsycholoog) was initiated in 2007 by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VUA) in cooperation with the Dutch Society of Sport Psychology (VSPN: Vereniging Sportpsychologie in Nederland). Candidate-students need to have finalised a master or doctoral programme in psychology or in movement sciences and must have acquired a minimum of 30 ECTS credits in sport psychology as recognized by the VSPN. The programme provides not only courses (e.g., test construction, psychodiagnostic and interview skills, psychology of motor behaviour/learning, performance physiology, working with teams, intervention techniques) but also supervised applied work with athletes, coaches and/or teams. It is important to note that this programme provides accreditation as an ASP practitioner with the VSPN as well as with the Dutch Olympic Committee (Nederlands Olympisch Comité* Nederlandse Sport Federatie; NOC*NSF).

Finally, postgraduate supervised training programmes in ASP are also developed by national associations representing sport psychology professionals. In Germany, two courses, offered by the German Association of Sport Psychologists (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sportpsychologie; asp) in collaboration with the German Association for Psychologists (Berufsverband Deutscher Psychologinnen und Psychologen; BDP), incorporate 120 h of instruction, 30 h of 'hospitalisation' (watching another sport psychologist at work), and a case-study report. The first course on 'Sport Psychology in Prevention and Rehabilitation' (Sportpsychologie in Prävention und Rehabilitation) is hosted by the University of Freiburg, whereas the second course on 'Sport Psychology in Competitive Sports' (Sportpsychologie im Leistungssport) is organised by Munich Technical University.

In Austria, a similar course, 'Sport Psychology and Mental Coaching in Competitive Sports' (Sportpsychologie und Mental-coaching im Leistungssport), is organised by the Centre of Mental Excellence-Tirol Platform for applied sport psychology (Tiroler Plattform für angewandte Sportpsychologie) in collaboration with the Austrian network for sport psychology (Österreichisches Bundesnetzwerk für Sportpsychologie) and the Sport Psychology Section of the Austrian Association for Psychology (Section Sportpsychologie des Berufsverbands der Österreichischen Psychologen; B.Ö.P). This course is open not only to psychologists, but also to sport scientists, coaches and medical doctors and consists of 100 h of instruction, individual supervision, and a practical phase of 100–300 h.

² ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) was introduced in 1989 in higher education and aims at improving transparency and facilitating the recognition of study components done in another programme of study within the European Community.

The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) both offer supervised experience programmes that result in, respectively, Accreditation or Chartered Status in sport and exercise psychology. In order to enable a comparison, both programmes will be described in more detail. The BPS route is limited to those individuals who have gained a psychology-accredited undergraduate degree (or equivalent) before progressing onto a one year MSc programme in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Following completion of the masters' degree, both organisations offer independent supervised experience pathways whereby the trainee practitioner, or probationary sport and exercise psychologist, complete a self-directed supervisor-supported programme of work designed to fulfil further knowledge and practical competencies. The latter are most significant here in requiring the trainee to build up a repertoire of professional skills and client experiences by going through the processes that are implicit to effective professional practice.

Within the BASES programme, having rated themselves against these competencies (guided by written criteria that underpin a certain rating), the trainee then sets appropriate yearly goals and self-directed consulting and training activities (aided by a privately-organised supervisor) to progress themselves through the rating scale. As the trainee progresses, a yearly report and portfolio of work are submitted and assessed by the organisation. When their final supervised experience report is passed (usually three years), they can then apply for full accreditation which includes a detailed case-study and reflective summary of their applied experiences and competency developments.

The BPS model of post-MSc supervised experience (termed the Stage Two Qualification, launched in 2008) is very similar in its independent 'self-assess-plan-do-review' protocol alongside a supervisor who is also a BPS Chartered sport and exercise psychologist. However, it differs from the BASES programme in four fundamental ways. Firstly, it requires the trainee to become proficient in four key roles that are related to National Occupational Standards in psychology. These relate to the development and practice of ethical principles; the application and delivery of psychological services; expertise in research and research methods; and the communication and dissemination of psychological knowledge. In essence, these roles, and their sub-competencies, revolve around experiences in consulting, teaching/educational and research-related activities, and the supervisee's plan of training is segmented into these four key roles. The second difference, therefore, lies in the requirement to complete a further research project (key role no. 3) as part of the qualification programme. Third, the BPS model is based on two years 'full-time' (460 days) work in developing competencies in these key roles. Given the modest market demand for full-time consultants, very few students, unless they have financial stability, will be in a position to complete the hourly/daily requirements of this programme within two years. It is likely that the qualification may take these practitioners three to four years to complete. Finally, whilst assessments of the trainee psychologist are based on self-submitted yearly reports, practice diaries and an on-going portfolio, there is also a need to complete four different consulting case-studies and an oral examination when the final documentation has been submitted. In these respects, it is fair to say that the process is more onerous, yet necessarily in accordance with the training requirements of other divisions of psychology regulated by the BPS (e.g., clinical psychology).

The educational background of ASP practitioners

A second perspective on the education, training and preparation to practice ASP is provided by research reflecting the educational

background of ASP practitioners, as well as their perceptions and evaluation of their education and training in view of their ASP practice. In the United States, a survey (Williams & Scherzer, 2003) monitoring the training and career paths of 1994–1999 sport psychology graduates revealed a preponderance for graduation in kinesiology ('sport science') over psychology/counselling (respectively 73–26% at master, 88–11% at doctoral level). Of the 60% of master and 65% of doctoral graduates who selected consulting/counselling with athletes as an initial career goal, only respectively 80% and 77% of graduates had enjoyed practicum experience during their education with athletes. Significantly, as an alarming drop was witnessed amongst doctoral graduates (kinesiology or psychology) in the taking of sport psychology course work, supervised sport psychology practicum, and counselling skills courses, the authors concluded that in comparison to an earlier survey (Andersen, Williams, Aldridge, & Taylor, 1997) "the present doctoral graduates are even less prepared to meet the criteria for certified consultant status" (p. 348). While not exclusive to those practicing ASP, respondents felt that supervised practicum/internships working with individuals and teams and/or observations of other consultants, attending and presenting at conferences, having an excellent mentor, coaching experience, and training in counselling were particularly beneficial to their functioning as a practitioner.

It should be noted that research also has shown that the educational background of professional psychologists who provide psychological services to athletes or sport teams does not always include sport psychology-related courses: the majority of 489 professional psychologists randomly selected from the members of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Division 12 (Clinical Psychology) who consulted with athletes or sport teams, had never received any formal training (e.g., course work) or supervision in the area of sport psychology (Petrie & Diehl, 1995). Interestingly, while 64% of these professional psychologists perceived an interdisciplinary programme (i.e., combining psychology and sport science) to offer the most comprehensive training in sport psychology, less than 3% read sport psychology journals, less than 2% were associated with APA Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology), or less than 1% with AAASP (Petrie & Diehl, 1995).

From a pan-European perspective, a survey conducted amongst 70 EMPSEP graduates (1996–2007) revealed respondents to recommend participation in this programme due to its provisions for: gaining expert knowledge (international), networking opportunities and experiences, and enhancing career development (Elbe, Strengell, & Lintunen, 2008). Of the thirteen graduates who had been or were ASP practitioners, the educational background was in physical education/sport sciences or psychology (four each), in psychology and sport science (three), or in sport psychology (two). Notwithstanding almost half (46.2%) of these ASP practitioners felt that gaining the EMPSEP degree was a requirement for their job, awarding the programme an average satisfaction rate of 4.9 (on 6-point scale with 6 = extremely satisfied) and with the participation in the international network as a particular benefit to 69.2%. The need to strengthen the applied focus of the programme was also highlighted.

At local level, 60% of members of the Flemish Society for Sport Psychology (Vlaamse Vereniging voor Sportpsychologie; VVSP) in Belgium who consult with athletes and coaches indicated that their academic training in behavioural therapy (50%), communication and group dynamics (44%), systems therapy (33%), psycho-diagnostics (11%), and developmental psychology (6%) was most relevant to their current consultation service (Wylleman, De Knop, Delhoux, & Vanden Auweele, 1999). Consultants' sport psychology experience was generally acquired via sport psychology seminars and international congresses, or (in)formal contacts with more senior sport psychology consultants with only two consultants

having actually done supervised ASP work under the guidance of a senior sport psychology consultant with a doctoral degree. Finally, practitioners also indicated that ASP practitioners' education should include a combination of courses on theoretical and methodological aspects of sport psychology; counselling; behavioural (e.g., behavioural routine planning, self-reinforcement) and cognitive intervention strategies (e.g., goal-setting, self-focussing, visualization); knowledge of sport sciences (e.g., exercise physiology) and sport management; and use of sport-specific diagnostic instruments and tests (11%). These findings were later corroborated by Sanchez, Godin, and De Zanet (2005) with consultants in the French-speaking part of Belgium.

A final, and perhaps sobering, note is warranted when considering the importance of ASP practitioners' educational background in view of the findings by Hanks (as cited in Martin et al., 2001) from a study using videotaped sport psychology consulting vignettes. In this research, the authors found that except for their use of positive interpersonal skills, ASP practitioners' academic training (or their past athletic experience) had little or no influence on athletes' perceptions about these consultants.

The initiation and development of professional ASP practice

While some data can be related to specific phases in the development of the ASP professional (e.g., Tod, 2007; Wylleman, de Caluwé, & Borgoo, 2009), the literature reveals limited research on how novice professionals mature into experienced or senior professionals. The following section will therefore focus on how ASP practice is established, on the delivery of ASP services, and on the vocational maturation of the professional ASP practitioner.

Establishing and developing an ASP practice

An awareness on how ASP practice is initiated, is provided by research on the professional positions taken up by novice and experienced professionals. Information on novice ASP professionals is provided by research on the professional development of graduates from an ASP-related programme. The Williams and Scherzer (2003) US survey, for example, shows that while 53% of the master and 79% of the doctoral graduates between 1994 and 1999 reported to hold a sport psychology-related position, only seven master (5%) and 13 (12%) doctoral graduates actually worked in ASP: nine practitioners in a sports group structure (e.g., national governing body, provincial team, national sports centre, professional team, university athletic department, United States Olympic Committee), four in private practice, four in a medical setting (e.g., hospital sports medicine centre, medical clinic), and three as performance coach. From a European perspective, Elbe et al.'s (2008) survey revealed that 10 (14.3%) master and three (4.3%) (pre-)doctoral EMPSEP graduates had worked or were currently working in ASP, using the job title of sport psychologist, sport psychology consultant, or exercise consultant: two practitioners within the setting of a sport organisation/federation, eight in private practice, one in a clinical setting, and two in an exercise setting.

With respect to the professional development of the experienced ASP professionals, Petrie and Diehl's (1995) study of 489 professional (clinical) psychologists in sport offers an insight from the USA. Their results illustrated that 52% of their sample provided consultation services and (individual) therapy to athletes and sport teams as independent practitioners, 14% worked in a hospital/medical centre and 21% at a university/college psychology department. Meyers et al.'s (2001) survey of 433 members of AAASP or APA's Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology) revealed that 20% of sport scientists, 87% of clinical and 81% of counselling psychologists were primarily in an applied position. Data from sport

psychology associations around Europe provides some insight into the development of professional ASP practice: seven members from the 124 of the Finnish Association for Sports Psychology (Suomen Urheilupsykologinen Yhdistys; SUPY) worked full-time in ASP with 77.5% on a part-time basis (FEPSAC, 2002); in Flanders 5.5% of VVSP members developed a full-time professional career in sport psychology, with 78% being involved in ASP alongside a non-ASP-related occupation (Wylleman et al., 1999); a majority of the 28 members of the Swiss Association of Sport Psychology (Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sportpsychologie/Association Suisse de Psychologie du Sport; SASP/ASPS) worked as an ASP-consultant on a part-time basis (FEPSAC, 2001); and only one member of the Dutch Society for Sport Psychology (Vereniging voor Sportpsychologie in Nederland; VSPN) was reported to actually have developed a full-time career as ASP professional (Dudink, 2002).

A more detailed insight into the development of experienced ASP professionals is provided in a case-study of three professionals (one at university, two in private practice) who describe the advantages and disadvantages of their current professional position in view of working within ASP (Wylleman & Liukkonen, 2003). The ASP professional working in academia found the autonomy in her work and the possibility to combine teaching, research and applied work advantageous, and considered the lack of time (e.g., to publish) due to a high teaching load was clearly considered a restriction. For the two professionals in private practice, the autonomy and independence were seen as very advantageous, while a lack of time and restricted possibilities to cooperate with other sport psychologists were felt as being disadvantageous. Both practitioners reported having had a clear need for information on how to start in private practice, describing their career paths as "learning the job" as an apprentice trained by an expert ASP professional, learning to know the business world, and then finally making a start.

As their ASP practice is being established, practitioners will require financial means (e.g., remuneration) to support its further development. While exact data is scarce, Williams and Scherzer (2003) do provide insight in the remuneration of novice professionals by noting that 49% of master and 40% of doctoral graduates provided paid sport psychology consulting without holding a full position in consulting, and that doctoral graduates did more paid athlete consulting compared to masters' graduates. As the opportunities for individuals finding work as an ASP practitioner were reported to be still minimal, the authors concluded that part-time, supplemental involvement in ASP was more practical than full-time employment. Insight into the remuneration of more experienced ASP professionals is provided by Meyers et al.'s (2001) survey of 433 members of AAASP or APA's Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology). Results showed that of the six professionals in ten that reported receiving compensation for their sport psychology work, 52% identified academia and 48% private practice, mental health clinics/hospitals or professional sport organisations as their primary employment setting. Results revealed also that 37% of professionals affiliated to an organisation and involved in sport psychology work, reported receiving no payment for these activities. Average income from ASP was \$24,627 and varied according to the work setting and area of speciality: sport scientists in academic settings derived a larger amount of their income from ASP work than did clinical and counselling psychologists or sport scientists in an applied professional setting. Sport scientists were also reported to spend significantly more of their work in sport psychology-related work compared to both categories of psychologists. While the employment opportunities for sport scientists trained in the delivery of ASP services were found to be sparse (with the academic setting being most promising), an applied training programme in

clinical or counselling psychology including sport psychology preparation was evaluated as the best opportunity to practice ASP.

In Europe, few figures are known regarding the remuneration of ASP practitioners. As an example, the remuneration of Flemish ASP practitioners involved in a governmental sport agency-funded project providing ASP support service to sport federations (Blosso, 2008), is set at €40 per hour while that of ASP practitioners in private practice may vary between €25 and €65 per hour. While establishing an ASP practice and the amount of remuneration are important, the content of the ASP services remains, of course, central.

The delivery of ASP services

Important in the development of ASP practice is service delivery. While the literature offers insight into the different types of ASP services (e.g., Bull, 1995; Gardner, 2001; Gardner & Moore, 2005; Gilbourne & Richardson, 2006; Hoigaard & Johansen, 2004; Tkachuk, Leslie-Tosgood, & Martin, 2003; Van Raalte, 2003), it is not always clear what and how services are actually provided in ASP practice. Research reflecting on the type, extent and target population of ASP service provision includes Petrie and Diehl's (1995) survey of 489 US professional (clinical) psychologists. This revealed that 22% consulted with athletes or sport teams, and that 46% provided individual and 8% group therapy to athletes. Consultations related to sport (34%) (e.g., performance, anxiety and stress, interpersonal and relationship, team dynamics), as well to general psychological problems (e.g., depression, family problems, marital or relationship conflicts), were addressed by applying a variety of cognitive and behavioural techniques (e.g., cognitive restructuring, imagery, relaxation, biofeedback).

Flemish ASP practitioners reported half of their consultation work to include athletes from individual sports, 30% to team players, and 20% with coaches, officials from sport governing bodies, or parents (Wylleman et al., 1999). Athletes were generally referred to the practitioners by persons in the athletes' networks (79%), with only 21% of consultations being initiated by athletes themselves. Consultations were generally related to intra-individual (e.g., lack of self-confidence, heightened levels of anxiety) rather than to interpersonal issues (e.g., communication problems), and employed generally intra-individual counselling or intervention strategies (e.g., level of arousal, visualization, goal-setting). Consultants in the French-speaking part of Belgium reported similar reasons for consultations (e.g., stress management, lack of self-confidence, motivational issues), and comparable psychological skills training as well as psychotherapy as counselling/intervention strategies (Sanchez et al., 2005).

While type and content of service delivery are pertinent, the extent to which these services are delivered effectively will also have a significant influence on the continued development of ASP practice. The question to what extent ASP services are delivered effectively was posed two decades ago (e.g., Gould, Murphy, Tammen, & May, 1991; Orlick & Partington, 1987; Partington & Orlick, 1987a, 1987b, 1991) and has since been approached from different perspectives, including that of the ASP practitioners themselves, the recipients of the services (e.g., athletes), and the process of the service delivery.

Recent research has more closely investigated the influence of practitioners' characteristics on athlete service delivery. A study with 30 male elite United Kingdom athletes revealed that being personable, a good communicator, knowledgeable and experienced in sport and sport psychology, honest and trustworthy, and providing good practical service and exhibiting professional skills were perceived to be desirable in the ASP practitioners with which they had worked (Anderson et al., 2004). Other characteristics of

ASP practitioners found to be of influence on service delivery included the failure of ASP practitioners to clarify their services (to coaches) or to integrate with players and coaching staff (Pain & Harwood, 2004), and even practitioners' physical appearance (Lubker, Watson, Visek, & Geer, 2005).

An additional line of research has examined the way in which ASP service delivery is influenced by the characteristics of the recipients of this service. Research by Martin (2005) and colleagues (Martin, Kellmann, Lavallee, & Page, 2002) revealed that aspects such as athletes' beliefs about the usefulness of sport psychology and mental training, or their willingness and ability to discuss their problems or concerns with an ASP practitioner, played a role in athletes' expectations and attitudes towards ASP consultations. Martin and colleagues also suggested, on the basis of research with high school and college athletes, that ASP practitioners should differentiate in their service delivery depending on the gender and competitive level (high school or college) of athletes. Amongst college student-athletes (without prior sport psychology consulting experience) females had higher expectancies of personal commitment to the consulting process than their male counterparts, while the latter believed ASP practitioners were more capable of solving problems quickly than female athletes did.

A final research strand has targeted different aspects of the process of ASP service delivery itself, including the activities perceived by athletes to be desirable in ASP service delivery. The Anderson et al. (2004) study showed that these included provision of mental skills training (e.g., relaxation training, developing coping strategies, post-competition evaluation) and activities other than mental skills training (e.g., chat to athletes, empower the athlete, address issues outside of sport/sport psychology). Other research revealed the importance of delivering information well, applying sport psychology to practical/competition setting, and timing sport psychology appropriately (Anderson et al., 2004), as well as the influence of other practical constraints such as time, space, or funding (Kremer & Marchant, 2002; Pain & Harwood, 2004; Voight & Callaghan, 2001).

Related research has also identified the influence of coaches (Partington & Orlick, 1987a) on ASP practice delivery, and included coaches' knowledge and perceptions of ASP or their attitudes towards employing an ASP practitioner. For example, a study of 374 track and swimming coaches with varying coaching experience (from high school to Olympic level), and varying experience with ASP service delivery, revealed that confidence in sport psychology consultation, stigma tolerance, and expectations of the process of sport psychology consultation were significant predictors of coaches' intentions to use ASP services (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). In their survey on the knowledge and perceptions of ASP of eight national coaches, 21 youth academy directors and 27 academy coaches in English soccer, Pain and Harwood (2004) revealed that respondents' lack of knowledge of sport psychology within their work setting and their perceptions that sport psychologists lacked knowledge of football, were seen as major barriers to entry of ASP practitioners. These included misconceptions, negative perceptions or perceived lack of value of ASP (e.g., psychology is just common sense, only for problem players, benefits difficult to prove in terms of actual performance).

Overall, successful implementation and effectiveness of ASP support seem to be influenced by the characteristics of the clients (e.g., athletes, coaches, managers), of the service delivery setting/context (e.g., financial possibilities, time investment, sport-specificity), as well of the ASP practitioners themselves. Some of these perspectives were integrated in the four broad effectiveness indicators suggested by Anderson et al. (2002) to evaluate ASP practice (primarily oriented towards educational performance enhancement), namely (a) quality of support which assesses not only the

practitioner's knowledge, delivery style, and characteristics, but also the satisfaction of the client (e.g., athlete, coach); (b) the assessment of the way in which psychological skills have been learned and are being used to regulate performance, as well as the assessment of the client's (emotional and physical) well-being; (c) the client's responses to support including change in knowledge of and attitude towards ASP practice, as well as the client's adherence to and the actual use of mental skills; (d) the outcome of the client's performance.

The professional development of the ASP practitioner

The practitioner is central to the development of ASP practice. While an ASP-related educational background will provide a sound basis for a novice practitioner, other factors will enable practitioners to develop from a novice into a mature, experienced ASP professional. Two factors which have received particular attention include competency development and continued professional development (CPD). Competence refers to the professional's overall suitability for the profession, reflecting her or his knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and their integration (Rubin et al., 2007).

In one of the few studies related to competencies in ASP practice, Ward, Sandstedt, Cox, and Beck (2005) found that 20 clinical sport psychologists, members of APA Division 47 and AASP Certified Consultants, rated counselling awareness and sensitivity within sport culture as essential competencies. More specifically, practitioners' awareness of their values and biases in respect of athletes and the sport environment were seen as essential competencies in the domain of attitudes/beliefs; practitioners' understanding and respect of organisational/institutional regulations that may govern athletes' behaviours reflected essential competencies in the domain of knowledge; and the referral of athletes to more qualified professionals when appropriate in the domain of skills. Non-essential competencies included sources of information valuable to psychologists working with athletes but not directly impacting their work (e.g., having expertise in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments; being AASP certified).

Building upon the Ward et al. study, Wylleman et al. (2009) found that 12 ASP practitioners used 57 different concepts to describe ASP practitioners. These included flexibility, being able to be part of the sport culture, reticence, and modesty as important attitudes/beliefs competencies; knowledge on clinical and other psychology disciplines, sport, sport psychology, sport sciences as knowledge competencies; and personal (e.g., creativity, mental skills, self-confidence), social/interpersonal (e.g., communication skills, networking, giving presentations), and therapeutic skills (e.g., empathy, individual counselling) as competencies in the domain of skills.

Taking into account the developmental, incremental, and context-dependent nature of competencies (Rubin et al., 2007), Wylleman and colleagues elaborated their study by investigating the way in which competencies changed throughout the career of ASP practitioners. Based upon Rønnestad and Skovholt's (2003) multi-phased therapists career model, respondents described the required competencies in the domains of attitudes/beliefs, knowledge, and skills for the novice and the experienced ASP professional. Results showed that respondents felt that most of the attitudes/beliefs required by an ASP practitioner had already to be gained by the novice professional and should include interest in people, openness, passion for/interest in sport, perseverance, and modesty. In the domain of knowledge, the novice professional should already have self-knowledge, as well as knowledge on how to (initiate) work with people and on mental skills; knowledge of (the requirements of) sport was more related to the mature ASP

practitioner. With counselling skills, communication and social/interpersonal skills deemed to be important throughout both phases, diagnostic skills and coping with frustration were more linked to the novice professional, while being able to work individually, use and learn from experience, and provide supervision were linked to the experienced professional.

Wylleman and colleagues have recently initiated a study looking at what competencies ASP practitioners feel are required throughout athletes' careers as described in the developmental and holistic model of the athletic career (Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004; Wylleman et al., 2004). In this context, attention is also being focussed on the growing emphasis on ASP practitioners to integrate in a multi-disciplinary service model (e.g., Reid, Stewart, & Thorne, 2004; Wylleman, 2005; Wylleman & Kahan, 2004). Finally, it is interesting to note that BASES is one of the few associations that more precisely stipulates the specific and practical process competencies required by ASP practitioners. Within its post-MSc supervised experience programme, competencies include counselling skills, understanding the demands of a range of sports, psychological assessment techniques and processes for individuals and teams, negotiation skills regarding service roles, applications of ethical principles; monitoring and evaluation practices, reflective practice, support within interdisciplinary sport science teams, and experiential, face to face work across a range of client populations, age, gender, team and individual sports. ASP practitioners go through re-accreditation every five years by putting together a case with reflective summary work.

Inherently linked to the professional development of ASP practitioners in general, and to their competency development in particular, is the process of continued professional development (CPD). A CPD initiative which has gained specific interest from ASP practitioners is that of the professional workshop whereby participants seek experiential knowledge of fellow-practitioners with the aim to reflect on, learn, and develop their own practitioner competencies. While professional workshops are sometimes organised alongside sport psychology congresses, similar stand-alone initiatives have also been developed, including the Redondo Beach Sport Psychology Consulting Think Tank (Poczwadowski & Lauer, 2006). This informal meeting in 2003 brought together 10 established ASP professionals, 14 young professionals/graduate students, and 9 experienced coaches with the aim of sharing ideas, techniques, and philosophy in view of continued learning and improvement of ASP practice. The participants reported gaining knowledge about ASP, the delivery of ASP services, and personal growth and inspiration, as well as having had the opportunity to reflect on the challenges of the field of ASP.

From a European perspective, 2003 saw the initiation of the Forum of Applied Sport psychologists in Topsport (FAST) as a CPD initiative. Taking into account the lack of opportunities (e.g., time restrictions, confidentiality issues) for ASP practitioners to have in-depth discussions on their personal experiential knowledge within the context of the 11th European Congress of Sport Psychology in Copenhagen, the first author initiated FAST under the patronage of FEPSAC. Professional practitioners from around Europe who provide ASP services at the elite/Olympic level were invited to exchange experiential knowledge, have reflective conversations, act as a sounding board, and conduct peer consultancy within a structured environment based upon expertise, trust, respect, confidence, mutual support, and confidentiality. To enable this, during the initiation process of FAST several guidelines were discussed and set at individual, content, and organisational level. At individual level, participants were required to show a high level of practitioner experience (e.g., having provided ASP services to elite/Olympic-level athletes, players, teams, or coaches for at least three to five years). In this way, experienced ASP professionals from

private practice, academia, and elite sport organisations were gathered from France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and Belgium³.

Regarding content, participants were solicited to talk openly about their ASP practice within deontological and ethical boundaries, while each discussion, workshop, and peer consultancy session was prepared and delivered by two participants in order to increase differentiation of input and views. In this way, the following topics were raised and discussed during the past six FAST meetings⁴: (a) the role of the educational background of ASP practitioners (e.g., education, training and continued development in ASP, characteristics of the ASP practitioner); (b) the functioning as ASP practitioners including ethical issues in ASP, peer consultancy and peer consultation protocols, preparing for the Olympic Games, tasks of ASP practitioners and coordination of ASP services during Olympic Games (e.g., the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, 2006 Torino Winter Olympic Games, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games); (c) the delivery of ASP services to athletes (e.g., on-site interventions at Olympic Games; team development; interventions during acute situations at major championships; psychological programme and mental skills for elite (young) athletes, lifestyle and career management; detection, diagnosis and treatment of (non-functional) overtraining; mental preparation routines for competition; work with athletes who are opponents in competition); (d) the delivery of ASP services to coaches (e.g., getting coaches to instil more mental skill-related coaching in their sessions, working with a coach in handball or in preparing a gymnast for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, psychological preparations for coaches, managing your [Olympic] staff, collaboration with coach, using an emotional reprocessing technique); (e) collaboration with other support service providers (e.g., functioning in multi-disciplinary teams, the ASP practitioner as part of the Olympic team).

At the organisational level, stability in organisation of the forum (i.e., annually) as well as in number and participation rate of participants during consecutive meetings were found to be important in order to facilitate conducting group sessions, to provide for a significant variability of experiential knowledge, and to enable stability of working relationships. Furthermore, as FAST is generally invited by a national Olympic Committee and/or high-performance centre before or during a major sport event (e.g., in Athens before the 2004 Olympic Games, in Beijing before the 2008 Olympic Games), members are asked to link up with the local elite/

Olympic setting, to provide professional workshops for elite coaches, athletes, managers, and local ASP practitioners (e.g., a 2007 pre-congress workshop to FEPSAC's 12th European Congress of Sport Psychology; two day 2008 International Sport Psychology Congress in Tianjin, China), and to visit high-level competitions as well as high-performance training centres.

As part of the continuing evaluation of this CPD initiative, participants reported as major benefits of participating in FAST, being a good learning experience, the opportunity to discuss case-studies (e.g., on ethical issues) with other practitioners working with high-level performers, the possibility to exchange experience and knowledge, reflection upon the own practitioner competencies, doing peer consultancy, and communication with other members in-between meetings. In addition, it was also felt that specific reflections were gained on how to advance the development of the field in Europe, including the need for a continued education programme for experienced ASP practitioners, and a specialised handbook for ASP practitioners. Finally, in view of the positive benefits of this CPD initiative, it was decided not only to continue FAST but also to look into the possibility for current FAST members to organize this kind of forum at regional level in order to share experiential knowledge with other ASP practitioners.

Discussion and recommendations

Student: "Professor, what is applied sport psychology?" Eminent sport psychology professor: "A pleonasm".⁵ This part of a two decades-old conversation reflected not only a feel for linguistics – sport psychology is an applied sub-discipline of psychology, thus ASP is 'applying the applied' – but more importantly also a weariness towards a part of sport psychology which was seemingly profiling itself as being more applied, or even more applicable, than other fields. While this response represented a personal reflection on ASP, it could be argued that it was also reflective of an inability of the field of ASP to meet the challenge of defining its aim, or even stating a convincing case for its reason for being. While the field of ASP has developed, the current review makes clear that it faces at least three major challenges on its way towards gaining greater professional status (Anderson & Lavallee, 2005).

Meeting the challenges in definition, education, and vocational development

The first challenge is in clearly defining itself and its practitioners. With the surge of professional interest in this field, it is particularly important that an encompassing and uniformly used definition of ASP is made available. However, as research on the field of ASP, and in particular on its ASP practitioners, is still scarce – and certainly scant in Europe – an immediate need exists for more and in-depth research into the field of ASP and its practitioners. In fact, although the development of ASP practitioners may be considered to be multi-phased, the data available on the development of ASP practitioners is not only disproportionately represented over all career phases, but sometimes almost non-existent for specific phases (e.g., the student engaging in an ASP-related education, the highly experienced ASP practitioner). In line with Roper (2002), it can be concluded that this lack of empirical data is even more conspicuous when considering women working in ASP. Specifically, the few studies documenting female ASP practitioners (e.g., Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May, 1989; Roper, 2002) lack data

³ Nadine Debois (France), Gregor Kuhn (Germany), Maria Psychountaki (Greece), Einar Gylfi Jonsson (Iceland), Alberto Cei (Italy), Hardy Menkehorst (the Netherlands), Sidonio Serpa (Portugal), Tomas Gursky (Slovakia), Beatriz Galilea Ballarini (Spain), Urban Johnsson (Sweden), Daniel Birrer (Switzerland), Chris Harwood (UK), and Paul Wylleman (Belgium). Anne Marte Pensgaard (Norway), Sophia Jowett (Greece/UK), Phil Moore (UK), Nathan Kahan (Belgium), and Jan Mayer (Germany) have also participated in one FAST meeting.

⁴ FAST1 was hosted in 2004 in Athens by the Hellenic Olympic Committee (Ελληνική Ολυμπιακή Επιτροπή; EOE) and the Hellenic Society of Sport Psychology (Ελληνική Εταιρεία Αθλητικής Ψυχολογίας; EAΨ); FAST2 was hosted in 2005 in Rome by the Italian Olympic Committee (Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano; CONI) and the Italian Society for the Psychology of Sport (Società Italiana di Psicologia dello Sport; SIPsIS); FAST3 was hosted in 2006 in Oslo by the Norwegian Olympic Training Centre (Olympiatoppen), the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (Norges Idrettsforbund og Olympiske og Paralympiske Komité; NIF), the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, and the Norwegian Association for Sport Psychology (Norsk Forening for Idrettspsykologi; NFIP); FAST4 was hosted in 2007 in Halkidiki by EAΨ and FEPSAC; FAST5 was hosted in 2008 in Tianjin and in Beijing by the Chinese Association of Sport Psychology, the Tianjin Institute of Physical Education (TIPE), and Beijing Sport University (BSU); FAST6 was hosted in 2009 in Larnaca by the Cyprus Olympic Committee (Κυπριακή Ολυμπιακή Επιτροπή; KOE) and/or the Cyprus Sports Organization (Κυπριακός Οργανισμός Αθλητισμού; KOA).

⁵ Personal communication to the first author.

on their career development as an ASP professional. It is clear that more research is required on ASP practitioners in general, and on the career development of the ASP practitioner from student to senior professional in particular. This research should focus on the processes and factors of influence during each distinctive career phase and transition, with specific attention for the career of female ASP professionals (e.g., Roper, 2008).

The second challenge facing the field of ASP is gaining insight into the quality management of the educational pathways that prepare people for ASP practice. In this article, insight into this pathway was gained by looking at not only research on programmes aimed at preparing for ASP practice, but also on how ASP practitioners retrospectively evaluated their educational background in light of their ASP practice. Findings showed that an overview of the programmes available *en route* to ASP practice is lacking, particularly in Europe. Furthermore, the information made available (e.g., eligibility, content) not only varies in amount and detail provided, but also shows strong diversity in organisation, structure and content of programmes. Programmes may be organised by an institute of higher education or a sport psychology association (or combination), and may vary in duration from 150 h to two years and in credit structure between 25 and 120 ECTS credits. Only a few programmes provide a detailed overview of its courses or modules, with a description of the competencies to be developed in students being the exception to the rule.

Not all programmes provide supervised training to its students and periods of supervised experience and contact hours may differ greatly when compared to traditional psychological training in other applied professions (e.g. clinical psychology). Further, of the programmes in Europe reported in this article, only three explicitly ensure full accreditation as ASP practitioner. The perspective on ASP practitioners' educational background required a graduation in psychology or physical education/sport sciences, sometimes including or extended with ASP coursework and supervised ASP training. While practitioners deemed an interdisciplinary training programme in ASP to be important to, or even a requirement for, ASP practice, it becomes clear that not all professionals working in ASP (in the US or in Europe) prepared in this way. These findings suggest a clear need to compile, structure and make available information on all ASP-related education programmes throughout Europe. Such a directory should provide more insight into the education leading up to ASP practice by way of detailed information on the provider of programmes (e.g., educational institutes, sport psychology associations), entry requirements for prospective students, content of programme, the expertise of the teaching staff and supervisors, the manner and extent to which students' prior acquired/experiential knowledge is taken into account, the amount of supervised training, the possibilities for long-distance or individualized study, the certification of the programme, and the degree to which programme leads to vocational opportunities in the labour market.

As Europe is characterised by a great diversity of education and training institutions and systems (Commission of the European Communities, 2008), this directory will certainly reflect a variety of ASP-related programmes. Taking this variety into account, this directory should not only enable a detailed analysis of the structure and content of programmes, particularly in view of the development of the competencies required by ASP practitioners, but could also be utilized to recognize the quality of existing programmes. In view of its applied nature, this process of quality management will need to ensure both a well-developed supervisory programme, and quality supervision. This is central to the development of neophyte ASP practitioners, yet few associations refer to any processes that assure quality or train supervisors for their role with the supervisee.

The third and final challenge coming forth from this review is the need for the field of ASP to optimize the vocational development of the ASP professional by way of ensuring the quality of ASP service delivery and the competency development of ASP practitioners. As a clear and urgent need was revealed for more empirical investigations into the developmental process from novice towards experienced, senior ASP professional, research findings reported in this article showed that 5–15% of graduates from an ASP-related programme developed a career as a novice professional. Of these, the majority practiced ASP on a part-time basis within private practice, a medical setting, academia, or a sport organisation as work setting. Research using a case-study approach exemplified the major advantages and disadvantages for ASP practitioners working in academia (e.g., autonomy in work, lack of time due to academic requirements) or in private practice (e.g., independence, restricted possibilities to cooperate with other ASP practitioners).

Taking remuneration of ASP service delivery as an indicator of professional development confirmed not only a clear lack of information but also little uniformity in the way ASP practitioners were paid for delivering services. These findings seem to confirm Wylleman and Liukkonen's (2003) conclusion that "sport psychologists are still far away from being able to commit to a professional career in the field of sport psychology" (p. 58) as well as their recommendation for more research and information on vocational pathways in ASP. In order to optimize ASP professionals' development, more information should be made available on the challenges and needs of establishing ASP practice from the different work settings (e.g., academia, private practice, sport organisation, medical centre). Taking into account the restricted number of professional opportunities in academic, sport, and medical settings, it is particularly important to supply novice professionals with information on setting up a private practice and on the remuneration of ASP service delivery. This may aid practitioners to envisage whether or not to develop practice on a part- or full-time basis.

Findings showed practitioners providing services to a wide array of service recipients related to sport as well as to general (psychological) issues using a variety of counselling and intervention strategies, and with the effectiveness of its service delivery being influenced by specific factors (i.e., the practitioner, the clients, the service delivery process, the coaches). The final point in this review on the development of professional ASP practice included the practitioners' competency development and the role of CPD in this process of development. Research on competencies in ASP practice revealed that these are not only developmental and incremental in nature – and thus may change throughout the career of ASP practitioners – but also context-specific. Interestingly, in Europe few associations representing ASP practitioners were found to stipulate some of the specific process and experiential competencies required by its ASP practitioners. At the same time, however, a final segment of this review also revealed that CPD was being actively used by senior ASP professionals as a way towards competency development and professional maturation. More particularly, the initiative of FAST was construed as a structured way in which its members could share and gain access to each others' experiential knowledge in order to develop their practitioner competencies.

While the reviewed research sheds some light on the competencies deemed important by ASP practitioners, future competency-based research will be needed to further uncover the attitudes and beliefs, the knowledge, and the skills and their integration throughout the practitioners' career. In line with recommendations formulated by Ward et al. (2005), this research should not only further the development of ASP-related education and professional training, but should also be used for the regulation and measurement of service delivery quality within the field of ASP. For

example, it may assist in the development of a means to assess competence beyond initial licensure (e.g., midcareer competency assessment) (Lichtenberg et al., 2007). As ASP services are delivered to a wide variety of clients, future research into service delivery effectiveness should include all funders of ASP services including parents, and sport governing bodies. Further studies should also be conducted with regard to the competencies required by ASP professionals to work within a multi-disciplinary setting.

The role of FEPSAC in furthering the development of ASP and its practitioners

As the foremost organisation representing the domain of sport psychology in Europe, FEPSAC needs to play an active role in furthering the development of the field of ASP in general, and of its practitioners in particular. In line with its Position Statement on quality of ASP services (FEPSAC, 2008a), FEPSAC should develop and support initiatives which allow for the development and use of quality control and quality management in ASP. These initiatives should enable guidelines for high-quality education and service delivery within the criteria set for the European educational system and labour market, as well as linking with the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Europa, 2008).

In order to fulfil this role, FEPSAC should lead and support the gathering of information. In view of the need for more information on the field of ASP and on its practitioners, FEPSAC could survey its member associations on the way ASP is developed (e.g., training) and represented (e.g., membership criteria, accreditation) within their organisation; its individual members could be surveyed on their preparation for and functioning in practicing ASP. FEPSAC could also take the lead in cooperating with academia in order to survey and analyse ASP-related programmes throughout Europe, and to conduct research, ideally longitudinal, into the careers of students, trainees, and professionals in ASP, with specific attention to the career development of female ASP practitioners. In this way, FEPSAC should be able to take the lead in publishing a directory on the education, training and vocational development in ASP in Europe. This could include information specific to quality control and management in ASP (e.g., Baldasarre, Birrer, & Seiler, 2004) as well as on how to develop a career as an ASP practitioner.

Second, FEPSAC could use all relevant data to develop guidelines on quality control and management in ASP-related education and ASP service delivery. These guidelines should reflect the clear need for a competency-based approach, and supervised and experiential skills training in education and training for ASP, and for accreditation, competency assessment, and CPD for ASP practitioners. While national standards for professionals in psychology need to be adhered to, a clear need exists to take a pan-European perspective on how ASP education is aligned with European directives for psychology professionals. This process could induce benchmark research leading into the development of a 'best practice model' for ASP including structure, focus (e.g., performance enhancement, personal, clinical), promotion and marketing, and quality management of ASP service delivery. In addition, FEPSAC should take the lead in developing ASP-related guidelines, instruments and programmes. In line with its initiative-taking role (e.g., the EMPSEP), FEPSAC should develop new, or support existing, initiatives which are complementary to regional/European initiatives. This includes supporting the initiative to develop a European programme for ASP professionals which builds upon existing high-quality programmes in Europe. This expert programme should be aimed at the novice to experienced practitioners, allow for entry from

psychology and sport science graduates, ensure the input from professional and seasoned practitioners in order to deliver and share experiential knowledge, provide for closely monitored and high-quality supervision and supervisor training, be supported by high-quality hands-on tools (e.g., handbook, video), lead to an accreditation carried by candidate employers of ASP practitioners, and carry the FEPSAC trademark as mark of quality insurance.

While organised by institute of higher education, active cooperation with other stakeholders should be ensured, including associations of psychology and sport psychology and of sport sciences, sport governing bodies, and senior professionals (e.g., FAST). A similar initiative could be taken in view of the growing demands in the domain of health and exercise psychology (Johnson, 2006), namely training of ASP practitioners to provide personalized mental health and rehabilitation support services in the health and wellness industry and in sport medical and rehabilitation centres. FEPSAC could also elaborate on initiatives such as FAST by providing opportunities for enhanced cooperation between professionals work in different settings. For example, networks could be established joining practitioners in private practice and in academia to open for the first group a wider variety of scientific tools, while for the academicians providing more opportunities for ASP consultations; another example consists of establishing peer consultation forums (Menkehorst & Gursky, 2007) or peer sounding boards (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001) to enhance exchange of knowledge and provide for reflective practice.

Finally, at European level, FEPSAC should liaise with other stakeholders related to the practice of ASP, including European organisations representing ASP-related professionals (e.g., the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, EFPA; the European Network of Sport Science, Education & Employment, ENSSEE; the European College of Sport Sciences, ECSS), sport governing bodies, athletes and coaches (e.g., the European Olympic Committees, EOC). This will enable better support for the education and functioning of the ASP practitioner. In order to enhance recognition of high-quality ASP service delivery, FEPSAC could develop an instrument to monitor quality in service delivery and reflect on awarding together with its group members, an FEPSAC quality label in ASP. In this way, a contribution could be made to increase accountability to the funders of the ASP services.

References

- Andersen, M. B. (Ed.). (2000). *Doing sport psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Andersen, M. B., Van Raalte, J. L., & Brewer, B. W. (2001). Sport psychology service delivery: staying ethical while keeping loose. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32, 12–18.
- Andersen, M. B., Williams, J. M., Aldridge, T., & Taylor, J. (1997). Tracking the training and careers of graduates of advanced degree programs in sport psychology, 1989 to 1994. *The Sport Psychologist*, 11, 326–344.
- Anderson, A. G., & Lavallee, D. (2005). Professional development issues in Britain: lessons from Australia and the USA. *Sport & Exercise Psychology Review*, 1, 12–16.
- Anderson, A., Miles, A., Mahoney, C., & Robinson, P. (2002). Evaluating the effectiveness of applied sport psychology practice: making the case for a case study approach. *The Sport Psychologist*, 16, 432–453.
- Anderson, A., Miles, A., Robinson, P., & Mahoney, C. (2004). Evaluating the athlete's perception of the sport psychologist's effectiveness: what should we be assessing? *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 255–277.
- Anshel, M. H. (2006). *Applied exercise psychology. A practitioner's guide to improving client health and fitness*. New York: Springer.
- Apitzsch, E., & Schilling, G. (Eds.). (2003). *Sport psychology in Europe. FEPSAC – An organisational platform and a scientific meeting point*. Biel: European Federation of Sport Psychology.
- Baldasarre, C., Birrer, D., & Seiler, R. (2004). Quality management in Swiss sport psychology. [Quality management in der Schweizer sportpsychologie]. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Sportmedizin und Sporttraumatologie*, 2, 54–56.
- Bloso. (2008). Sportpsychologische begeleiding. [Sport psychological support]. <http://www.bloso.be/public/topsport/mentaal.asp> Retrieved 01.12.08.
- Bull, S. J. (1995). Reflections on a 5-year consultancy program with the England women's cricket team. *The Sport Psychologist*, 9, 148–163.

- Burke, K. L., Sachs, M. L., Fry, S. J., & Schweighardt, S. L. (2008). *Directory of graduate programs in applied sport psychology* (9th ed.). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Commission of the European Communities. (2008). Proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/com_2006_0479_en.pdf Retrieved 01.12.08.
- Dudink, A. (2002). Sportpsychologie in beweging. [Sport psychology on the move]. In P. P. Moorman, & R. Pijpers (Eds.), *Proceedings Congres Sportpsychologie VSPN* (pp. 1–3). Leiden, the Netherlands: Universiteit Leiden.
- Elbe, A. M., Strengell, A. M., & Lintunen, T. (2008). *Career and employment survey for the former students of the European master's programme in sport and exercise psychology (EMPSEP)*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Copenhagen.
- Europa. (2008). System for the recognition of professional qualifications. <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11065.htm> Retrieved 01.12.08.
- FEPSAC. (2001). Annual reports: Switzerland. http://www.psychology.lu.se/FEPSAC/Annual_reports-01.htm Retrieved 20.05.03.
- FEPSAC. (2002). Annual reports: Finland. http://www.psychology.lu.se/FEPSAC/Annual_reports-02.htm Retrieved 20.05.03.
- FEPSAC. (2008a). Position statements – 8. Quality of applied sport psychology services, 2006. Available from www.fepsac.com/module.asp?page=detail&XModuleId=8243&ProductId=9392.
- FEPSAC. (2008b). European master's programme in sport and exercise psychology. <http://www.fepsac.com/module.asp?XModuleId=8458> Retrieved 31.10.08.
- Gardner, F. L. (2001). Applied sport psychology in professional sports: the team psychologist. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32, 34–39.
- Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2005). Using a case formulation approach in sport psychology consulting. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 430–445.
- Giacobbi, P. R., Poczwadowski, A., & Hager, P. (2005). A pragmatic research philosophy for applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 18–31.
- Gilbert, W. D., & Trudel, P. (2001). Learning to coach through experience: reflection in model youth sport coaches. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 21, 16–34.
- Gilbourne, D., & Richardson, D. (2006). Tales from the field: personal reflections on the provision of psychological support in professional soccer. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 7, 325–337.
- Gould, D., Murphy, S., Tammen, V., & May, J. (1991). An evaluation of U.S. Olympic sport psychology consultant effectiveness. *The Sport Psychologist*, 5, 111–127.
- Gould, D., Tammen, V., Murphy, S., & May, J. (1989). An examination of US Olympic sport psychology consultants and the services they provide. *The Sport Psychologist*, 3, 300–312.
- Hack, B. (2005). Qualifications: education and experience. In S. Murphy (Ed.), *The sport psych handbook* (pp. 293–304). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hale, B. D., & Danish, S. J. (1999). Putting the accreditation cart before the AAASP horse: a reply to Silva, Conroy and Zizzi. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 11, 321–328.
- Hoigaard, R., & Johansen, B. T. (2004). The solution-focused approach in sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 18, 218–228.
- Johnson, U. (2006). Sport psychology – past, present and future: the perceptions of Swedish sport psychology students. *Athletic Insight*, 8, 64–78.
- Johnson, U., & Stambulova, N. (2006). Performance enhancement issues in sport psychology consulting: seventeen cases summary. In: *Paper presented at the 11th Annual Congress ECSS, Lausanne, Switzerland, 05–08 July*.
- Knowles, Z., Gilbourne, D., Tomlinson, V., & Anderson, A. G. (2007). Reflections on the application of reflective practice for supervision in applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 21, 109–122.
- Kremer, P. J., & Marchant, D. B. (2002). Reflections and considerations of providing sport psychology services with professional football players. In W. Spinks (Ed.), *Science and football IV* (pp. 294–299). London: Routledge.
- Lichtenberg, J. W., Portnoy, S. M., Bebeau, M. J., Leigh, I. W., Nelson, P. D., Rubin, N. J., et al. (2007). Challenges to the assessment of competence and competencies. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38, 474–478.
- Lubker, J. R., Watson, J. C., II, Visek, A. J., & Geer, J. R. (2005). Physical appearance and the perceived effectiveness of performance enhancement consultants. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 446–458.
- McCann, S. (2005). Roles: the sport psychologist. In S. Murphy (Ed.), *The sport psych handbook* (pp. 279–292). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Martin, S. B. (2005). High school and college athletes' attitudes toward sport psychology consulting. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17, 127–139.
- Martin, S. B., Akers, A., Jackson, A. W., Wrisberg, C. A., Nelson, L., Leslie, P. J., et al. (2001). Male and female athletes' and nonathletes' expectations about sport psychology consulting. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 13, 19–40.
- Martin, S. B., Kellmann, M., Lavallee, D., & Page, S. J. (2002). development and psychometric evaluation of the sport psychology attitudes – revised form: a multiple group investigation. *The Sport Psychologist*, 16, 127–139.
- Menkehorst, H., & Gursky, T. (2007). *Peer consultancy and the Balint method: Share to learn*. Presentation at the FAST professional workshop. Halkidiki, Greece: Forum for Applied Sport psychologists in Topsport, 04.09.
- Meyers, A. W., Coleman, J. K., Whelan, J. P., & Mehlenbeck, R. S. (2001). Examining careers in sport psychology: who is working and who is making money? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 32, 5–11.
- Moore, Z. E. (2003). Ethical dilemmas in sport psychology: discussion and recommendations for practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34, 601–610.
- Orlick, T., & Partington, J. (1987). The sport psychology consultant: analysis of critical components as viewed by Canadian Olympic athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 1, 4–17.
- Pain, M. A., & Harwood, C. G. (2004). Knowledge and perceptions of sport psychology within English soccer. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 22, 813–826.
- Partington, J., & Orlick, T. (1987a). The sport psychology consultant: Olympic coaches' views. *The Sport Psychologist*, 1, 95–102.
- Partington, J., & Orlick, T. (1987b). The sport psychology consultant evaluation form. *The Sport Psychologist*, 1, 309–317.
- Partington, J., & Orlick, T. (1991). An analysis of Olympic sport psychology consultant's best-ever consulting experiences. *The Sport Psychologist*, 5, 183–193.
- Petrie, T. A., & Diehl, N. S. (1995). Sport psychology in the profession of psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 26, 288–291.
- Poczwardowski, A., & Lauer, L. (2006). The process of the Redondo Beach sport psychology consulting think tank. *The Sport Psychologist*, 20, 74–93.
- Reid, C., Stewart, E., & Thorne, G. (2004). Multidisciplinary sport science teams in elite sport: comprehensive servicing or conflict and confusion? *The Sport Psychologist*, 18, 204–217.
- Rønnestad, M. H., & Skovholt, T. M. (2003). The journey of the counselor and therapist: research findings and perspectives on professional development. *Journal of Career Development*, 30, 5–44.
- Roper, E. A. (2002). Women working in the applied domain: examining the gender bias in applied sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 14, 53–66.
- Roper, E. A. (2008). Women's career experiences in applied sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 20, 408–424.
- Roper, E. A., Fisher, L. A., & Wrisberg, C. A. (2005). Women's experiences working in the field of sport psychology: A feminist standpoint approach. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 32–50.
- Rubin, N. J., Bebeau, M., Leigh, I. W., Lichtenberg, J. W., Nelson, P. D., Portnoy, S., et al. (2007). The competency movement within psychology: an historical perspective. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 38, 452–462.
- Sanchez, X., Godin, P., & De Zanet, F. (2005). Who delivers sport psychology services? Examining the field reality in Europe. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 81–92.
- Silva, J. M., III, Conroy, D. E., & Zizzi, S. J. (1999). Critical issues confronting the advancement of applied sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 11, 298–320.
- Silva, J. M., III, Metzler, J. N., & Lerner, B. (2007). *Training professionals in the practice of sport psychology*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.
- Tkachuk, G., Leslie-Tosgood, A., & Martin, G. L. (2003). Behavioral assessment in sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 17, 104–117.
- Tod, D. (2007). The long and winding road: professional development in sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 21, 94–108.
- Vanden Auweele, Y. (2003). Sport psychology and education. The European masters in exercise and sport psychology. In E. Apitzsch, & G. Schilling (Eds.), *Sport psychology in Europe. FEPSAC – An organisational platform and a scientific meeting point* (pp. 39–50). Biel, Switzerland: FEPSAC.
- Van Raalte, J. (2003). Provision of sport psychology services at an international competition: the XVI Maccabiah Games. *The Sport Psychologist*, 17, 461–470.
- Van Raalte, J. L., Brown, T. D., Brewer, B. W., Avondoglio, J. B., & Hartmann, W. M. (2000). An on-line survey of graduate course offerings satisfying AAASP certification criteria. *The Sport Psychologist*, 14, 98–104.
- Voight, M., & Callaghan, J. (2001). The use of sport psychology services at NCAA Division I universities from 1998–1999. *The Sport Psychologist*, 15, 91–102.
- Ward, D. G., Sandstedt, S. D., Cox, R. H., & Beck, N. C. (2005). Athlete-counseling competencies for U.S. psychologists working with athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 19, 318–334.
- Weigand, D. A., Richardson, P. A., & Weinberg, R. S. (1999). A two-stage evaluation of a sport psychology internship. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 22, 83–104.
- Weiss, M. R. (1998). "Passionate collaboration": reflections on the directions of applied sport psychology in the coming millennium. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 10, S11–S24.
- Williams, J. M., & Scherzer, C. B. (2003). Tracking the training and careers of graduates of advanced degree programs in sport psychology, 1994 to 1999. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 15, 335–353.
- Wylleman, P. (2005). *The sport psychologist as member of the multidisciplinary team working with Olympic athletes*. Presentation at the 2005 World Congress of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Reims, France: SFPS – Université de Reims. 04–07.07.
- Wylleman, P., Alfermann, D., & Lavallee, D. (2004). Career transitions in perspective. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 5, 7–20.
- Wylleman, P., de Caluwé, D., & Borgoo, P. (2009, June). *Career development and job profile of European and Flemish sport psychologists*. Paper presented at the 12th World Congress of Sport Psychology, Marrakesh, Morocco.
- Wylleman, P., De Knop, P., Delhoux, J., & Vanden Auweele, Y. (1999). Current status and future issues of sport psychology consultation in Flanders. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 99–106.
- Wylleman, P., & Kahan, N. (2004). *The cooperation between an elite archer, the coach, team manager, physiotherapist and sport psychologist: A case-study*. Presentation at the 9th annual conference of the European College of Sport Sciences. Clermont-Ferrand, France: ECSS. 03–06.07.04.

Wylleman, P., & Lavallee, D. (2004). A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 507–527). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology.

Wylleman, P., & Liukkonen, J. (2003). Sport psychology as a profession. Case studies from around Europe. In E. Apitzsch, & G. Schilling (Eds.), *Sport psychology in*

Europe. FEPSAC – An organisational platform and a scientific meeting point (pp. 50–63). Biel, Switzerland: FEPSAC.

Zakrajsek, R. A., & Zizzi, S. J. (2007). Factors influencing track and swimming coaches' intentions to use sport psychology services. *The Online Journal of Sport Psychology*, 9. <http://www.athleticsinsight.com/Vol9Iss2/CoachesIntentions.htm> Retrieved 31.10.08.