
MENTAL GAME WILL BE KEY DURING SUMMER OLYMPICS

Sport psychology support instrumental before, during and after the Games

CHAGRIN FALLS, Ohio – May 2012 – “Mental preparation and work in the field of sport psychology has been identified as the most important factor in Olympic success and failure by hundreds of Olympic athletes and coaches. The impact and involvement of sport psychology in elite sport continues to grow as coaches and athletes see the results of the work,” said Sean McCann, Ph.D., CC-AASP, Senior Sport Psychologist with the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), and Past President of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP).

In his USOC role, Dr. McCann will be traveling to London, his 10th Olympic Games. He explained, “Our philosophy at the USOC is that everything is a performance issue at the Olympic Games... We work with individual athletes and teams on managing the intense new pressures and stresses of the Games, executing mental plans and strategies we have worked together to develop over the last four years, and handling the crises issues that arise at every Olympics I have been a part of. We also continue to work extensively with the coaches of these athletes, who are also experiencing tremendous professional pressures in a Games setting.”

In addition to Dr. McCann, numerous professionals are providing services from the field of sport and exercise psychology before, during and after the Olympic Games, whether it is an Olympic hopeful making a bid to qualify for their first Games, or a medalist returning to represent their country in international competition. Most of the consultants in the field of sport psychology in the United States are on the USOC Sport Psychology Registry, a go-to referral network of the very best sport psychology professionals.

“At the USOC we refer individual Olympic athletes and teams to their local providers, and we also refer to the Registry when we receive referral questions from the general public. To be on the USOC Registry, you must have a doctoral degree, current AASP certification, and be a member of the American Psychological Association (APA),” explained Dr. McCann.

Like the USOC referral program for athletes, AASP offers an “on-call” media service for media covering sport and exercise topics, including the Olympic Games. This valuable service connects media with qualified authorities in the field, like Dr. McCann, for interviews via phone, email or in person. ***For more details on the AASP “On-Call” media service, see next page.***

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes ethical practice, science and advocacy in the field of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals in the field of sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,500 members in 39 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org.

AASP SPORT PSYCHOLOGY “ON-CALL” MEDIA SERVICE *Experienced Olympic authorities available for media interviews*

A sampling of authorities available for media interviews is listed below. All of the U.S. AASP members listed are Certified Consultants with AASP and on the USOC Registry. The authorities are experienced in gymnastics, track and field, soccer, equestrian sports, fencing, and many other Olympic disciplines. For additional information on the “On-Call” service or to arrange an interview, please contact the AASP Public Relations Office at 440-543-8615, or via email at bw@yp-pr.com.

Sharon Chirban, Ph.D.

Dr. Sharon Chirban is a licensed psychologist with private practices in both Boston and Concord, Mass. She regularly consults with athletes at the high school, college and Olympic level, and will be on site at the 2012 Olympic Games. Dr. Chirban is a staff psychologist and psychology instructor at Harvard Medical School. She also serves as a psychology consultant for the Boston Ballet.

Karen Cogan, Ph.D.

Dr. Karen Cogan is a senior sport psychologist with the USOC in Colorado Springs, where she works with acrobat and combat sports. She has consulted with numerous individual athletes and teams, including the U.S. Freestyle Mogul Ski Team and the U.S. Taekwondo Team. She has attended three Olympic Games as a sport psychology consultant for athletes, as well as coaches. Dr. Cogan is a former competitive gymnast and competed as part of the University of California, Los Angeles’ nationally ranked gymnastics team.

Kristin Dieffenbach, Ph.D.

Dr. Kristen Dieffenbach is a certified elite level USA Cycling coach and a certified U.S. Track and Field coach specializing in endurance training. She has coached athletes and teams at the high school, collegiate, masters, recreational, and elite Olympic levels. Dr. Dieffenbach is an assistant professor of athletic coaching education in the Department of Physical Education of West Virginia University in Morgantown. Her areas of concentration include performance enhancement, talent development and preventing overtraining and under recovery.

Ed Etzel, Ph.D.

Dr. Ed Etzel is an Olympic Gold Medalist in shooting. He works with a variety of athletes, including those at the Olympic level, in sports ranging from equestrian sports to gymnastics to shooting. Dr. Etzel is a professor in the Department of Sport Sciences program within West Virginia University’s (WVU) College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences and serves as the psychologist for the WVU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Colleen Hacker, Ph.D.

Dr. Colleen Hacker has served as the sport psychology consultant to the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team since 1995. During her tenure, the national team won an Olympic Gold Medal in 1996, Silver in 2000 and an unprecedented second Gold Medal in 2004. Currently, Dr. Hacker works with Olympic ice hockey athletes and a variety of other sports. She is also a professor in Movement Studies and Wellness Education at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. Dr. Hacker has conducted extensive applied research in the field of sport psychology.

John Heil, Ph.D.

Dr. John Heil has served as a sport psychology consultant for USA Fencing since 1995. He is trained as both a clinical psychologist and sport psychologist. Dr. Heil is a partner in the clinical and consulting firm, Psychological Health Roanoke in Virginia, and he is the author of *The Psychology of Sport Injury*, as well as numerous papers on sport, pain, and injury rehabilitation.

Kay Porter, Ph.D.

Dr. Kay Porter has been working with track and equestrian athletes preparing to qualify for the 2012 Olympic Games. She has also worked as a sport psychology consultant to the University of Oregon Athletic Department, USA Track and Field, and the U.S. Tennis Association. Dr. Porter is the author of *The Mental Athlete: Inner Training for Peak Performance*. She has also written and published numerous articles for national publications including *Runner’s World* and *World Tennis*. She operates Porter Performance Systems in Eugene, OR.

Kylie Wilson, Ph.D.

In 2010, Dr. Kylie Wilson was appointed as the Auckland-based Mental Skills Coach for High Performance Sport New Zealand. Prior to that, Dr. Wilson provided support to the British Gymnastics Association’s world-class program for three Olympic cycles and worked with many sports including rugby, netball and soccer. Dr. Wilson has played rugby at an international level and has coached national level rugby.