

AASP International Regional Conference - Loughborough, UK, February 21-22, 2015.
Conference Report

Submitted by: Aleksandra (Ola) Krukowska - Conference Chair.

Supported by AASP and Loughborough University (School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences), the conference brought together 111 students and 19 invited presenters from across the UK and Europe (e.g. Poland, Sweden, Ireland) to share their work and take part in numerous workshops. The conference was opened by a special guest, Professor Kerry McGannon of Laurentian University (Canada) who spoke about the mission of AASP and the idea behind student conferences. There were three key themes attached to the conference, these were (1) Applied and Performance Enhancement Psychology, (2) Interpersonal Relationships in Sport and Exercise and (3) Psychology of Exercise, Health and Well-Being. Each of the themes were introduced with a keynote lecture presented by (respectively): *Pete Lindsay*, Head of the English Institute of Sport Psychology, *Dr Chris Harwood*, Reader in Applied Sport Psychology at Loughborough University, and *Professor Urban Johnson* of Halmstad University, Sweden.

Students submitted 35 oral and 14 poster presentations and were invited to take part in various workshops. Some of the workshops were organised by industry leaders in the domain of applied sport psychology. For example Dr Jamie Barker delivered a very interesting workshop on hypnosis (and students had a chance to experience the hypnosis process on themselves), professor Susan Backhouse shared her expertise in the domain of anti-doping, and Dr Anthony Papathomas informed participants about issues of eating disorders in the sport environment. Novice practitioners were asked to provide reflections on the process of carving out a career in this competitive field of sport psychology as part of CPD-style workshops called 'My story so far'.

A conference social on the Saturday evening provided ample opportunities for networking. Students also took part in a sport and conference related quiz where they were divided into groups which competed against each other. Afterwards, many of the quiz participants enjoyed a night out in the Loughborough Students Union.

Human Kinetics, The British Psychological Society (BPS) and The British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) were also in attendance at the conference and helped to sponsor the event. Moreover, Human Kinetics awarded best oral (Andrew Wood) and best poster (Lara Naqui) presentations with the newest edition of the book "Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology".

Feedback gathered after the conference showed that participants found the topics interesting and relevant for their careers, and that they enjoyed networking with students from various countries. One of the participants said: "*All of the sessions I attended promoted discussion and asking questions which was good as it really got you to think about certain situations. And thanks to the conference, I now want to try and do a PhD and attend more conferences*".

Thanks to hard work and dedication of the organising committee (Ruth Boat, Svenja Wachsmuth, Katy Garnham-Lee, Nick Caddick and Hamish Cox) and support from conference supervisors (Professor Brett Smith and Dr Chris Harwood) it was a great

experience to host the inaugural AASP Student Conference in Loughborough, and we hope that this initiative will be sustained.

