What is Sport Psychology?

• The application of psychological theory and methods to the study of behavior resulting from or directly related to involvement in sport and physical activity.

• Examining the psychological and emotional factors that influence sport performance and exercise behavior.
Sport Psychology Issues

• Psychological and emotional effects of sport on the competitor (e.g., winning, losing, perceived competence, stress, anxiety)

• Ways in which thoughts and emotions influence sport performance.
Sport Psychology Issues (con’t)

• Particular characteristics of individuals who are drawn to exercise versus those who remain sedentary.
Sport Psychology Issues

• Dealing with coaching concerns; how to best motivate athletes, develop team identify, and maintain optimal performance.
Sport Psychology Issues

• Predicting sport success (e.g., personality? skills tests? talent ID?).
Sport Psychology Issues

• Effectiveness of interventions on the athlete’s/exerciser’s thoughts, emotions, and performance outcomes.
The Dimensions of Sport Psychology

- Experimental
- Social
- Clinical
- Educational
- Developmental
- Personality
- Sport and Physical Activity
Social Psychology of Sport

- Examining different leadership styles and their effect on team and individual performance;
- Influence of environmental and situational factors (e.g., audience, pressure, competition, coaching interventions) on sport performance quality;
- Does gender matter?
Educational Sport Psychology

• Influence of proper instructional strategies on learning and remembering sport skills;

• Ways to improve speed and accuracy of information processing;

• Use of different communication techniques on changing the athlete’s mental or emotional status, and performance.
Personality Sport Psychology

• Can personality tests predict sport success?

• What is the relationship between certain personal traits or dispositions and performance outcomes (e.g., trait anxiety and performing under pressure; coping style and successful coping with stressful events).

• Talent identification programs.
Experimental/Cognitive Sport Psychology

• Examining the effects of interventions on selected outcomes (e.g., performance, emotions, attitudes);

• Determining the antecedents, mechanisms, or causes of certain behavioral outcomes (e.g., what factors influence sport participation or engaging in regular exercise?)
Experimental/Cognitive Sport Psych
(con’t)

• What is the relationship between performer characteristics and the environment that explains performance?
Experimental/Cognitive Sport Psychology (con’t)

• How do cognitive strategies influence performance or other outcomes?

• What is the psycho-behavioral profile of elite athletes?

• What factors improve motivation?
Experimental/Cognitive Sport Psych (con’t)

• What is the influence of goal setting on performance outcomes?

• How can we promote intrinsic motivation?
Clinical Sport Psychology

• Providing athletes or exercisers with counseling to overcome certain thought processes, emotions, or behavioral tendencies;

• Helping participants deal with depression, chronic anxiety, irrational thinking, low self-esteem, relationship problems, and other psychopathological issues;
Clinical Sport Psychology (con’t)

• Dealing with drug-taking in sport
• (e.g., different types of drugs, causes and antecedents of drug-taking, interventions to prevent it)
Developmental Sport Psychology

• How are child athletes different from their adult counterparts?

• What are the special needs of child athletes that should influence coach and parent behavior?

• Why do some kids drop out of sport, while others remain?
Developmental Sport Psychology (con’t)

• What socialization processes contribute to a child’s decision to compete in sport versus not competing?
Exercise Psychology

• What are the personal factors that lead to developing an exercise habits as opposed to living a sedentary lifestyle?
• What interventions best promote exercise participation and adherence?
• Why do some individuals maintain an exercise habit, while others drop out?
• What is the effect of exercise on personal characteristics?
Sport Psychophysiology

• What are the physiological mechanisms or processes that influence performance (i.e., accuracy, speed, steadiness) in sport?

• What are the underlying physiological factors that influences performance when experiencing stress or anxiety?
Sport Psychophysiology

• How do physiological measures (e.g., heart rate, blood pressure, muscular tension) predict performance quality?
 Roles of Sport Psychologists

• Clinical Services

• Educational Services (usually performed by consultants rather than licensed psychologists)

• Research Services
Ethics in Sport Psychology

• 1. Using the title of “psychologist;”

• 2. Coach approval of sport psychology intervention;

• 3. Testing (proper tests, test validity, how test scores are used)
Ethical Issues (con’t)

• 4. Separating clinical work from performance enhancement;

• 5. Confidentiality

• 6. Team role of the sport psychology consultant