

**BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAMME (BIP) 2023**  
Master Degree in Psychology or Human Movement Science  
**Sport mental training in Europe**

**ABSTRACT BOOK**

**Host institution:**

University G. d'Annunzio (UdA) of Chieti-Pescara, DiSpuTer, DMSI.

**Partners institutions:**

University of Extremadura (Spain), Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University (France), University of Gdańsk (Poland), Karlstad University (Sweden), Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany).

Faculty:

- Marika Berchicci, Maurizio Bertollo, Selenia di Fronso, and Claudio Robazza from UdA (Italy)
- Francisco M. Leo, Tomás García-Calvo, Juan J. Pulido, and Miguel A. López-Garjardo from the University of Extremadura (Spain).
- Emma Guillet Descas, Virginie Nicaise, and Guillaume Martinent from the Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University (France).
- Dagmara Budnik-Przybylska, Maria Kaźmierczak, Jacek Przybylski from the University of Gdańsk (Poland).
- Henrik Gustafsson, Gabriella Torell Palmquist, and Stefan Wagnsson from the Karlstad University (Sweden)
- Franziska Lautenbach from the Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany)

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## **TOPIC 1 - Engagement process for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders.**

- A) Theories of engagement (Emma Guillet Descas, France).
- B) Antecedents of the athlete engagement: coaches and parents' influence (Virginie Nicaise, France).
- C) Strategies and scenarios for optimizing athlete' engagement (Guillaume Martinent, France).
- D) Perspectives on diversity and inclusion in sport (Gabriella Torell Palmquist, Sweden)

## **TOPIC 2 - Psychological (mental) skills training**

- A) Imagery in sport (Dagmara Budnik-Przybylska, Poland)
- B) Mental skills training (Jacek Przybylski, Poland)
- C) Developing pre-performance routines and mental plans (Henrik Gustafsson, Sweden)
- D) Goal setting strategies (Stefan Wagnsson, Sweden)

### ONLINE

- E) Empathic skills in sport (Maria Kaźmierczak, Poland)

## **TOPIC 3 - Optimal and non-optimal performance, physiological states, and stress-recovery balance**

- A) Theoretical and applied frameworks to understand optimal and non-optimal performance (Claudio Robazza, UdA)
- B) Understanding performance factors using a psychophysiological approach (Marika Berchicci, UdA)
- C) Yoga-based interventions for Stress-recovery balance (Selenia di Fronso, Uda)

### ONLINE

- D) Stress-recovery balance (Franziska Lautenbach, Germany)

## **TOPIC 4 – Team dynamics and leadership development in athletes and coaches**

- A) Group structure, group processes, and emerging states in collective sports (Francisco M. Leo, Spain)
- B) Leadership in sport teams (Juan J. Pulido, Spain)
- C) Antecedents and consequences of team resilience in collective sports. (Miguel A. López-Garjardo, Spain)

### ONLINE

- D) Group processes and performance in sports teams: Strategies and applications (Tomas G. Calvo, Spain).

# **TOPIC 1 - Engagement process for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders**

## **Theories of engagement.**

Emma Guillet Descas, France. Email: emma.guillet@univ-lyon1.fr

The stakes and demands are high with regard to the increasing professionalisation in the field of high performance sport. The main objective of this course is to provide the knowledge and the competences related to the athletes and coaches' engagement and motivation. After an introduction about the definition of sport engagement and burnout, four theories which explain engagement processes will be presented: the self-determination theory, the achievement goal theory, the expectation-value model and the social exchange theory.

## **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.

# **TOPIC 1 - Engagement process for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders**

## **Antecedents of the athlete engagement coaches and parents' influences.**

Virginie Nicaise, France. Email: virginie.nicaise@univ-lyon1.fr

This teaching course is focusing on the antecedents of athletes' engagement in relation with coaches and parents' motivational climates in using the tenets of the self-determination theory and the achievement goal theory. Coaches have to deal with pressure and expectations, managing the training and competition environment, dealing with conflicts. Parents have to deal developmental, organisational, competitive and personal parental stressors. Parenting styles represent a constellation of attitudes towards the child that are shared and that create an emotional climate reflected in the behaviour of the parents. The coaches' and parents' goals and emotional involvement related to athlete's sport project affect their own behaviors and thoughts. Therefore, coach and parents' interpersonal styles influence athlete's satisfaction or thwart competence, autonomy and relatedness.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Holt, N. L., & Knight, C. J. (2014). Parenting in youth sport: From research to practice. Routledge.

# **TOPIC 1 - Engagement process for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders**

## **Strategies and scenarios for optimizing athlete's engagement.**

Guillaume Martinent, France. Email: guillaume.martinent@univ-lyon1.fr

This teaching course presents the strategies available for coaches to create (or promote) quality motivation among athletes using the tenets of the self-determination theory and the achievement goal theory. Several problems experienced by athletes or coaches related to athlete engagement are examined. In particular, the preventive behaviors that coaches can use to prevent the occurrence of these problems are elaborated. Moreover, the possible solutions available to the coaches for solving these problems (or at least coping to these issues) are discussed.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Duda, J. L., & Balaguer, I. (2007). Coach-Created Motivational Climate. In S. Jowette & D. Lavallee (Eds.), *Social Psychology in Sport* (pp. 117-130). Human Kinetics.

# **TOPIC 1 - Engagement process for athletes, coaches, and stakeholders**

## **Perspectives on diversity and inclusion in sport.**

Gabriella Torell Palmquist, Sweden. E-mail: [gabriella.torell-palmquist@kau.se](mailto:gabriella.torell-palmquist@kau.se)

This presentation aims to highlight historical and contemporary perspectives on diversity and inclusion within sports. Concepts such as gender, intersectionality, and norms will be illuminated in light of existing challenges and opportunities. Specifically, the focus will be on leadership and organizational levels where there are several issues to raise awareness of: How can diversity and inclusion be promoted in sports? What strategies are needed to achieve equality and justice? Is it possible to change ideological and cultural norms? Ideas and proposals will be presented and discussed based on current research.

## **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Coakley, J (2020) Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies, chapters: 7-10.

## **TOPIC 2 – Psychological (mental) skills training**

### **Imagery in sport**

Dagmara Budnik-Przybylska, Poland. E-mail: [dagmara.budnik-przybylska@ug.edu.pl](mailto:dagmara.budnik-przybylska@ug.edu.pl)

In this presentation the concept of imagery in sport will be presented. Imagery is often used in mental skill techniques for performance optimisation. The main aim of this course is to provide theoretical and practical knowledge of how to use imagery properly, what is the difference between imagery and visualization, but also in which circumstances imagery can be used. The RAMDIU model as well as PETTLEP model will be presented. We will also focus on how to prepare imagery scripts.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Cumming, J., & Williams, S. E. (2012). The role of imagery in performance. In Murphy S. Eds. Handbook of Sport and Performance Psychology, Chapter: 11

## **TOPIC 2 – Psychological (mental) skills training**

### **Mental skill training**

Jacek Przybylski, Poland. E-mail: [jacek.przybylski@ug.edu.pl](mailto:jacek.przybylski@ug.edu.pl)

In this presentation, we will show how we can prepare before the start or the beginning of the performance and how we can use mental skills. The purpose of the presentation is to introduce Henschen's cardinal mental skills: relaxation, concentration, visualization, self-talk, pre-start routines. A brief description of these skills will be presented. Having and putting these skills into practice leads to greater success in achieving the reward of the flow state. We will also discuss what it is needed to be done to achieve success in a pre-start situation.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Vealey, R.S. Future directions in psychological skills training. *Sport Psychol.* 1988, 2

## **TOPIC 2- Psychological (mental) skills training**

### **Empathic skills in sport**

Maria Kaźmierczak, Poland. [Maria.kazmierczak@ug.edu.pl](mailto:Maria.kazmierczak@ug.edu.pl)

In this presentation, the concepts of empathizing, perspective taking and empathic accuracy will be presented. Empathy has been proved to facilitate social perception and prosocial activity, while helping decrease aggression. The focus will be on ways, in which empathizing might be used in sport in the context of communication, problems solving, management of anxiety in relations and competition. The benefits and risks of empathy will be introduced for management of emotions and quality of relationships. The specificity of action empathy will be discussed from the perspective of group dynamics and performance of athletes. Additionally, the goal of this unit is to provide the theoretical background for developing perspective taking and empathic accuracy in its various forms, to increase effectiveness in communication between athletes, athletes and coaches and in teams. Discussion is planned on practicing and developing skills connected with empathy.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Sevdalis, V., & Raab, M. (2014). Empathy in sports, exercise, and the performing arts. *Psychology of sport and Exercise*, 15(2), 173-179.

## **TOPIC 2 – Psychological (mental) skills training**

### **Developing pre-performance routines and mental plans.**

Henrik Gustafsson, Sweden. E-mail: [henrik.gustafsson@kau.se](mailto:henrik.gustafsson@kau.se)

In this presentation, we will present how pre-performance routines can be used to optimize performance and how to develop a mental plan for a competition. We will discuss how a mental plan can be integrated in practice and how mental skills can be combined with tactical, technical and physical preparation in to help athletes perform at their best when it matters the most. This teaching unit also contains an introduction to applied behavior analysis and in combination with performance profiling it will be used as a foundation for the implementation and tailoring the plans for individuals. Based on inputs from the participants, sport specific examples will be presented and discussed as a pedagogical tool.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Rupprecht, A. G., Tran, U. S., & Gröpel, P. (2021). The effectiveness of pre-performance routines in sports: a meta-analysis. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2021.1944271>

## **TOPIC 2 – Psychological (mental) skills training**

### **Goal setting strategies.**

Stefan Wagnsson, Sweden. E-mail: stefan.wagnsson@kau.se

In this presentation, we will discuss and analyze the concepts of goals and goal setting, as well as practical strategies for coaches to create effective goal setting plans with their athletes. The unit will follow the six phases of goal setting, which include 1) education, 2) commitment, 3) preparation and planning, 4) setting goals, 5) constructing action plans, and 6) following up and evaluation. The goal of this unit is to provide a practical example of an effective goal-setting plan, based on these six phases.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2019). The development of goal setting theory: A half century retrospective. *Motivation Science*, 5(2), 93-105.

## **TOPIC 3 - Optimal and non-optimal performance, physiological states, and stress-recovery balance**

### **Theoretical and applied frameworks to understand optimal and non-optimal performance.**

Claudio Robazza, UdA. E-mail: c.robazza@unich.it

In sport psychology, several theoretical and applied frameworks have been adopted for studying and understanding the optimal and non-optimal conditions underlying sport performance. According to the flow and peak performance conceptualization, a state of flow is experienced when the challenge is high and the performer feels they possess the necessary skills to deal with the situation successfully. Flow states can accompany peak performance, which is experienced as those magical moments in which the athlete feels in complete control of the situation and performance is above ordinary levels. The integrated model of flow and clutch states is another theoretical perspective that identifies peak performance in athletes' experiences, as well as clutch performance characterized by a deliberate focus on the task, heightened awareness of the situation and its demands, and intense effort toward task accomplishment. The individual zones of optimal functioning (IZOF) model is a further view to studying the relationship between emotion-related states and performance. The IZOF model inspired the development of the multi-action plan (MAP) model and the multi-states (MuSt) theory. The latter has been proposed as a dynamic, multidimensional, and multimodal perspective to account for the variety of performance states athletes experience in training and competition. The MuSt theory focuses on the effect of antecedents (i.e., the person, environment, and task) and mediators/moderators (i.e., individual appraisals, psychobiosocial experiences, and core components of action) on performance and wellbeing. According to the MUST theory, athletes should use a combination of emotion-focused and action-focused regulation strategies to effectively deal with situational demands.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Ruiz, M. C., Bortoli, L., & Robazza, C. (2021). The multi-states (MuSt) theory for emotion-and action-regulation in sports. In M. C. Ruiz & C. Robazza (Eds.), *Feelings in sport: Theory, research, and practical implications for performance and well-being* (pp. 3-17). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003052012-2>

## **TOPIC 3 - Optimal and non-optimal performance, physiological states, and stress-recovery balance**

### **Understanding performance factors using a psychophysiological approach.**

Marika Berchicci, UdA. E-mail: marika.berchicci@unich.it

Success in sport is partly a function of how well athletes deal psychologically with the demands of competition, which could be considered either as a challenge or a threat. Challenge and threat states have cognitive, emotional, and physiological impact on the athlete with potential performance consequences. Psychophysiology addresses the relationship between mind and body, the intrinsic integration and interaction across cognitive, emotional, and psychological factors with the environment. By means of a multidimensional approach, psychophysiological assessment is employed to improve our knowledge on the processes underlying performance to optimize it. Psychophysiological monitoring consists in the assessment of the activation and functioning level of both the central and peripheral nervous system using sensors. The measures used for this type of monitoring include, for example, heart rate variability, breathing rate, skin conductance response, gaze and pupil dilatation, but also electroencephalographic parameters. Multiple types of signals can be integrated, thus advancing the understanding of complex performance factors and self-regulation systems. There is also growing interest in biofeedback training to help athletes self-regulate and improve their performance.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Siekańska, m., Bondár, R.Z., di Fronso, S., Blecharz, J., Bertollo, M. (2021). Integrating technology in psychological skills training for performance optimization in elite athletes: A systematic review. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 57, 102008. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2021.102008>.

## **TOPIC 3 - Optimal and non-optimal performance, physiological states, and stress-recovery balance**

### **Yoga-based interventions for stress-recovery balance.**

Selenia di Fronso, UdA. E-mail: selenia.difronso@unich.it

Previous studies have shown that yoga-based interventions have a significant impact on both stress and well-being in various populations, and also in the sport and exercise contexts they are gaining increasing attention. In this unit we will present the state of the art of the yoga-based interventions for recovery and well-being in athletes of different levels. Specifically, we will describe (and experience) the usefulness of yoga nidra interventions. Yoga nidra practise, executed in supine position, naturally stimulates a hypnagogic state wherein an individual is physiologically asleep yet maintains a certain awareness to follow a guide's instructions. Yoga nidra interventions have been associated with significant improvements in sleep parameters such as sleep onset latency and sleep quality because of a general parasympathetic dominance. Consequently, they can improve sleepability, help athletes deal with sleep deprivation and lead to better recovery. The importance and usefulness of pranayama techniques and other restorative yoga practises/interventions will be also described

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

di Fronso, S., & Bertollo, M. (2021). The Thin Line Between Waking and Sleeping in Athletes: A Call for Yoga Nidra in the Sporting Context. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 654222. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.654222>

## **TOPIC 3 - Optimal and non-optimal performance, physiological states, and stress-recovery balance**

### **Stress-recovery balance.**

Franziska Lautenbach, Germany. E-mail: Franziska.lautenbach@hu-berlin.de

Stress is a common phenomenon in our society but particularly in sporting environments. Athletes and coaches experience a variety of stressors before, during, and after competitive situations. Therefore, recovery plays an important role in maintaining performance as well as mental and physical health. During this lecture, we will define stress and recovery and theoretically connect both concepts. We will then focus on and discuss specific recovery strategies.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Lautenbach, F., & Zajonc, P. (2023). The undoing-hypothesis in athletes-three pilot studies testing the effect of positive emotions on athletes' psychophysiological recovery. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 102392.

## **TOPIC 4 – Team dynamics and leadership development in athletes and coaches**

### **Group structure, group processes, and emerging states in collective sports.**

Francisco M. Leo, Spain. E-mail: [franmilema@unex.es](mailto:franmilema@unex.es)

Working with teams and training groups is a common and major challenge for sports mental coaches. This lecture will introduce the definition, conceptualization, and measurement of group dynamics in sports. Furthermore, an overview of recent studies conducted within the sport context to illustrate the diverse nature of group dynamics research in this area will be provided. Specifically, the summary of sport literature highlights the associations of group structure to emergent states, such as cohesion and collective efficacy, in addition to drawing attention to its potential adaptative and maladaptive effects related to group processes. Furthermore, practical strategies and recommendations to improve group dynamics will be discussed. Across 3 sections, we detail how group dynamics research can impact team performance. First, the lecture will present the group structure of teams focused on the integration of newcomers and their relationship with the main emergent states. Second, emergent states and the concepts of group cohesion and collective efficacy will be addressed, and the associations with group processes will be analyzed. Third, group processes focused on teamwork in collective sports will be provided. Finally, the contributions of coaches to enhance group functioning are discussed, including methods for enhancing socialization tactics, cohesion, communication, and coordination.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Eys, M., Bruner, M. W., & Martin, L. J. (2019). The dynamic group environment in sport and exercise. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 42*, 40-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.11.001>

## **TOPIC 4 – Team dynamics and leadership development in athletes and coaches**

### **Leadership in sport teams.**

Juan J. Pulido, Spain. E-mail: [jjpulido@unex.es](mailto:jjpulido@unex.es)

In sport teams, the figure of the coach-leader has acquired great importance for players, club administration, fans... to the point that in the choice of the position (i.e., coach) the criteria, on some occasions, focus on the leadership profile and, obviously, the professional career that the candidate has, before taking into account other types of professional qualities, such as the training methodology or the game style, among others. On the other hand, a new vision has emerged that has recognized the importance of players in leadership roles in sport teams. Within these roles, according to Loughhead et al. (2017), we can assume two types of leaders. Athletes who are given formal leadership status, such as the captain, are referred to as formal leaders (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). Informal leaders are not formally recognized as leaders but gain their leadership role through the interactions of group members (e.g., a veteran player in which other teammates ask leadership). Specifically, in this lecture we are going to focus on the Transformational Leadership Theory (Arthur et al., 2017; Avolio & Bass, 2005; Turnnidge & Côté, 2018) to have a theoretical understanding of some instruments designed to assess leadership in sport teams, as well as practical applications in simulated situations/scenarios that can occur during a season and, in turn, possible consequences in the adoption of each type of leadership.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Arthur, C. A., Bastardo, N., & Eklund, R. (2017). Transformational leadership in sport: Current status and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 16, 78-83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.04.001>

## **TOPIC 4 – Team dynamics and leadership development in athletes and coaches**

### **Antecedents and consequences of team resilience in collective sports.**

Miguel A. López-Gajardo, Spain. E-mail: [malopezgajardo@unex.es](mailto:malopezgajardo@unex.es)

Teams frequently experience difficulties or setbacks that can reduce optimal functioning. These stressful effects are present in many situations where there is a continuous quest for achievement and can affect both individual and team functioning. Resilience is considered a positive adaptation to the adversities that occur in dynamic contexts. Therefore, team resilience has become a variable of emerging interest in collective sports. This lecture will introduce the definition, conceptualization, and measurement of team resilience. In addition, an overview of recent studies conducted within the sport context will show the main characteristics of team resilience, several potential antecedents, and the outcomes related to team resilience. Specifically, the following variables will be analyzed to highlight the antecedents and outcomes of team resilience: athlete leadership quality, group cohesion, collective efficacy, teamwork, commitment to the team, and performance. Finally, practical strategies and recommendations to improve team resilience will be discussed.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

Morgan, P. B., Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2017). Recent developments in team resilience research in elite sport. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 16, 159-164.

## **TOPIC 4 – Team dynamics and leadership development in athletes and coaches**

### **Group processes and performance in sports teams: Strategies and applications.**

Tomas G. Calvo, Spain. E-mail: [tgarcia@unex.es](mailto:tgarcia@unex.es)

One of the biggest challenges a coach faces in a season is to achieve a united and effective team. If we understand unity as the ability of a team to work collectively and effectiveness as the different competencies that the group has to achieve its objectives (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008), a large part of the coach's efforts should be aimed at finding strategies that help the team to achieve that degree of unity that facilitates the group's effectiveness. So, we ask ourselves, what are the reasons for a team to stay together, be effective, and achieve its goals during a season? Thus, for the acquisition and improvement of group processes in a team, we must know two key concepts, team building and teamwork. Both concepts refer to two structured procedures that actively involve athletes to improve group processes and achieve their set objectives. In this presentation, we will focus on tools and practical applications that can help us to improve group processes from an integral perspective, favoring the collective functioning of sports teams.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

García-Calvo, T., Leo, F.M. y Cervelló, E. (2020). *Dirección de Grupos en actividad física y deporte*. Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanch.