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Organizational psychology in elite sport: Its emergence, application and future

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Abstract

Objectives

The rapid development of elite sport in Europe and across the world has had far-reaching psychosocial ramifications for those operating within its sphere of influence. Whilst sport psychologists in the latter part of the 20th century largely focused on the cognitive determinates of elite performance, the findings of recent research suggest that sport psychologists in the 21st century will need to better understand the organizational influences on world-class athletes. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to discuss the emergence, application and future of organizational psychology knowledge in elite performance sport.

Method

Narrative review and commentary.

Results and conclusion

The review discusses the findings of six lines of inquiry that point to the salience of organizational issues in elite sport: i) factors affecting Olympic performance; ii) organizational stress in athletes, coaches and parents; iii) perceptions of roles within sports teams; iv) organizational success factors in sport and business; v) performance environments in elite sport; and vi) organizational citizenship behavior in sport. The commentary then focuses on the theoretical underpinnings and practical implementation of organizational service delivery in elite sport, and concludes by reflecting on how developments in this area have the potential to inform future practice and research relating to the psychology of elite sport.



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Keywords

Athletes; Occupational; Olympic; Performance; Professional practice; Service delivery

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