The World Sport Psychology Sourcebook (Second Edition)

By John H. Salmela. Published 1992 by Human Kinetics, Box 5076, Champaign, IL 61825-5076. (184 pp., U.S. $32.00)

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Advances in information technology allowed me to convey this review to the resource editor in seconds from across the Atlantic. Language barriers may also be broken soon with computerized translation systems. Accompanying these advances, The World Sport Psychology Sourcebook makes a significant contribution to enhancing information exchange and networking among a global body of listed sport psychologists which has grown from 858 in 1981 (the first edition of the Sourcebook) to over 1600 in this second edition.

The book is, however, much more than a world Who’s Who in Sport Psychology that identifies each individual’s highest academic degree, address, telephone number, FAX number, electronic mail address, language skills, and key interest areas. The first part of the book also provides a collaborative synopsis of the development, current status, and future, of Sport Psychology in each of 42 countries, following a six-page introductory chapter.

The introductory chapter provides an interesting framework from which to assess the relative state of sport psychology’s professionalization in a particular country by adopting Welinsky’s conceptual model of the evolution of work groups. The state of development is reflected in the number of active sport psychologists, the extent of training in sport psychology, the extent of a professional association, the establishment of a professional “territory” through political lobbying, and the existence of a code of practice. These criteria are considered for each country together with details about topics of study, publications, and the role of sport psychology. Within this introductory chapter it would also have been interesting to have examined the development of the International Society of Sport Psychology.

The respective countries are examined within eight chapters based on region: Oceania, Asia, Middle East and Africa, Latin America, North America, Scandinavia, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe. I believe that an overview of each region with common discussions about such topics as culture, educational and sport systems, and sport psychology developments (e.g., the history of FEP-SAC in Europe) may have reduced overlap between individual countries. Regional contrasts were sometimes repeated under different countries, and this could also have been avoided with a different structure. Having said that, it is unfair to be too critical of the mammoth task that the author has admirably undertaken in producing this comprehensive work.

Part I, therefore, offers much more than a history of sport psychology in each country. As barriers come down, there are greater opportunities to meet colleagues from other countries at conferences, on exchange or sabbatical, or
with sports teams, as well as new opportunities for collaborative work. A framework from which to discuss common interests can certainly be guaranteed from this book, and I now look forward to the 8th World Congress of Sport Psychology in Portugal with a great deal more awareness. As Salmela states, “In any country, an observer has to understand the underlying value of its people before attempting to unravel the complexities of its sports systems” (p. 73).

The book itself is intended for sport psychologists, carefully defined to encompass “professionals in motor behavior, sport social and educational psychologists, researchers, practitioners, counselors; and others interested in developmental, experimental, and social psychological approaches to sport” (p. v). The recent term, exercise psychology is conspicuous by its absence and reflects an overall focus within the book on sport as a competitive form of physical activity. Certainly within the entry for each country there is an inherent interest in elite-level sport. Some countries, such as Finland, note their emphasis on “sport for all” or “Health Sport” but strangely there is little North American discussion on this growing field. For example, there is no mention of “Participation” in Canada. Although many people listed in Part II note health-related interests, numerous health psychologists with interest in exercise have not found their way into this book.

Interestingly, Part I reveals three major evolutionary origins for sport psychology, namely among physical educationalists, mainstream psychologists, and sport medics. The recent role within multidisciplinary sport science is also identified. Each origin has shaped the respective growth of sport psychology to the point that, in countries at an advanced state of development, accreditation requirements are significantly influenced.

Physical education students have traditionally studied history of sport coursework: For the same reasons this book should become required reading for any serious student of sport psychology, not only to increase global awareness but to appreciate developments and issues in one’s own country. A growing number of students from around the world are entering the “established” nations’ educational systems for training in sport psychology, and English-speaking students will find this book a valuable source for appreciating their adopted system.

Also of use to students, researchers, and practitioners would have been an accessible introductory section on publications. Apart from the exclusion of *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, journals from around the world were identified under their respective countries. I would still not be aware that the *Scandinavian Journal of Sport Science* or the abstracts of the *Japanese Journal of Sport Psychology* are published in English had I not done a thorough review of each country in this book. Further details (e.g., trends in the proportion of specific interest areas published, acceptance rates and addresses of publishers) about these journals (and sport science publications in which psychological topics appear) would also be useful.

One of the inevitable concerns about a book of this nature is the speed with which it becomes dated. Nowhere was this more obvious than the sections of Eastern Europe in Part I, although who is to say what changes will have taken place by the year 2001 (when the next edition will be due!). The author, rightly I believe, selected not to speculate on the implications of German reunification (late in 1990), and could certainly not have predicted the break-up of the Soviet block. Part II was “flash-updated” as of January 1991, and of course the Who’s Who will progressively become dated as employment and interests change.