Fact File

Age: 57

Current Position: Head, Department of Sport Psychology and Research Director of the College of Sport Sciences, Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, German Democratic Republic.

Research Work: Over 70 research articles in the German research literature, and 7 books. Dr. Konzag publishes in the areas of action control in sport activity, attention, cognitive demands of team sports, and psychology of team sports.

Applied Experience: He advises the coaches of the National Soccer Team and the Halle-Wittenberg Soccer Team.

Education: He was educated at Humboldt University in East Berlin, and his graduate education was at the Martin Luther University at Halle-Wittenberg.

Editor's Note: During March and April of 1988, Dr. Gerd Konzag of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) visited several universities in the U.S. and Canada as part of a faculty exchange program: the University of Florida at Gainesville, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and at Chicago, and the University of Montreal. While at the University of Illinois, he was interviewed by Dr. Glyn Roberts on the topic of sport psychology research in the GDR.
There has been much speculation relative to the Eastern Bloc approach to sport science, and to sport psychology in particular. The speculation typically assumes that the knowledge and applications of sport psychology are so much more advanced than the Western approach. Certainly a great deal of admiration for East Germany’s (GDR) "sports miracle" is understandable, especially given that country’s excellent showing in the Winter and Summer Olympics. Coaches, athletes, spectators, and the media from Western countries wonder how a country of only 18 million people can produce gold medalists in so many sports. Thus we were happy to have the opportunity to interview Dr. Gerd Konzag, who visited the U.S. and Canada in the Spring of 1988.

Dr. Konzag is one of the best known sport psychology consultants in the GDR and is head of the Department of Sports Psychology, as well as Research Director of the College of Sports Sciences, at Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg. He is also a member of the national Scientific Council of Physical Culture, a member of the Managing Council of the International Society of Sport Psychology, and a member of the Editorial Board of The Sport Psychologist.

TSP–Konzag Interview

*The Sport Psychologist (TSP): How are sport psychologists utilized in your country?*

*Konzag:* We don’t believe that sport psychologists have to do all of the psychological skills training with the athletes. Our teachers and coaches are actively involved in mental training within the bounds of their professional activity in the process of teaching and training. That means that they must also be trained in sport psychology. In our country, the sport psychologist is responsible for the...