

PSI/NIBPS All-Ireland Psychology Careers Event UCD - 2nd March 2024

The 'What, Where, How & Why' of **Sport Psychology**

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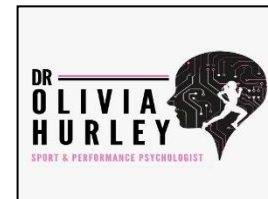
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Presentation Overview

- **What** is Sport Psychology?
- **What** do Sport Psychologists do?
- **Where** do Sport Psychologists work?
- **How** can you qualify as a 'Sport Psychologist'?
- **Why** Sport Psychology [***Some Notes of Caution & Self-Reflections***]

What is Sport Psychology?

- **Sport psychology** is ... *“understanding the performance, mental processes and well-being of people involved in sport”* (Moran & Toner, 2017) / *“the study of behaviour in sport ... how thoughts, feelings, behaviour and environment interact during sport”* (Tod, 2022).
- **Applied sport psychology** is ... *“the scientific study and application of psychological principles of human performance in helping athletes consistently perform in the upper range of their capabilities and more thoroughly enjoy the sport performance process”* (APA, 2014).

What do Sport Psychologists do?

Performance
Enhancement

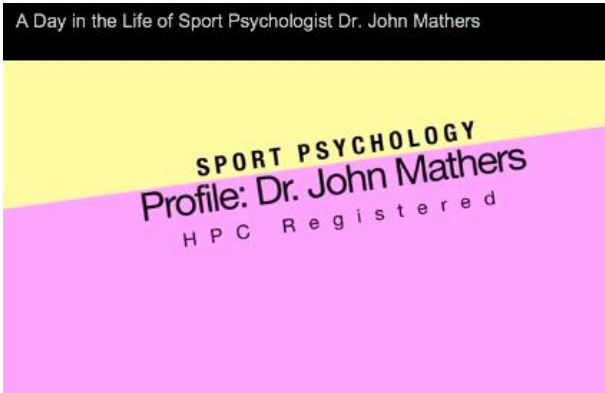
Team Cohesion
& Leadership

Injury
Rehabilitation

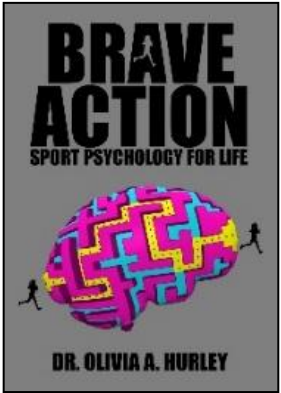
Athlete
Lifestyle

Skill
Acquisition

Coach/Referee
Development



YouTube



YouTube



Where do Sport Psychologists work?

- Wide range of settings; diverse range of clients; across all levels of performance [novice to elite; amateur to professional; individual to group; schools, colleges, clubs, provincial, national level].
- Private consultants: Historically ‘part-time’ positions [professional sport teams / NGBs; *more ‘full-time’ positions now emerging (+)*].
- Most practitioners combine their consulting work with other role(s): in teaching / research / other specialism areas -> such as in academic / clinical / occupational settings].

How to become a Sport Psychologist

- Currently, 'Psychologist' is not a protected term in Ireland -> Statutory registrations via **CORU** for **3** specialisms [prioritised for **Spring 2025 (Clinical, Counselling, Educational)**]; The '**chartership model**' is likely to be recommended for *all* specialisms in the future (as the standard of proficiency to reach; by *PSI) -> Advised to work toward this standard.
- In the UK, SP practitioners must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (**HCPC**) -> Requirements = Stage 2 BPS qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology / an equivalent qualification approved by HCPC; See: <https://www.bps.org.uk/bps-qualifications/sport-and-exercise-psychology>

How to become a Sport Psychologist

- ✓ Complete an accredited **Undergraduate (Hons) Psychology degree** (PSI/BPS).
- ✓ Complete an **appropriate Postgraduate Masters degree** [Currently, there is no PSI accredited Sport Psychology programme; UJJ's MSc programme is accredited by the BPS; See UL / SETU / Setanta College for other relevant Level 9 (in Rep. of Ireland)].
- ✓ PSI/BPS **Supervised Experience** (typically ~2 years / 200 hours).
- ✓ Apply for **HCPC membership / *Irish Sport & Exercise Sciences Association Accreditation** [see ***ISESA (Previously the remit of SII)** website for details regarding how to become accredited and then join their Professional Sport Psychology Services Provider panel; *Posts are advertised/issued via eTenders.ie].
- ✓ ****Other Options =>** Complete a recognised Doctorate related to the domain of Sport / Clinical Psychology + a Masters degree in Sport Psychology.

Some Notes of Caution

- ❖ Be prepared for scepticism.
- ❖ Be prepared for some sport organisations not following established routes for appointing their 'practitioners'.
- ❖ Be prepared for the 'popular experts' (i.e., 'expert athletes', 'mental skills coaches', 'performances coaches').

Why SP? -> Some Personal Reflections

- ❖ Being passionate about sport helps
- ❖ BUT, that's not enough ... **Perseverance** is also needed ...
- ❖ Be prepared to work weekends / travel / teach / research / work in other psychological domains.