Sport Psychology as Mental Equipment

Steven A. Christensen and Andrea Lamont-Mills, PhD.
Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health
University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba QLD 4350 Australia

Peter Annis-Brown (nias@nias.org.au)
Northern Inland Academy of Sport, Tamworth NSW 2340 Australia

Abstract

This presentation describes how we have constructed sport psychology as mental equipment for adolescent athletes living in northwest New South Wales (NSW). Using local materials readily found in Moree, Gunnedah, Tenterfield and other towns in northwest NSW, we have been able to introduce adolescent athletes living in regional, rural, and remote NSW to basic sport psychology concepts using mental equipment packs. These low-tech, low-cost, and local resources contrast sharply with the high-tech, high-cost, and imported physical equipment required for most sports. We produced the first mental equipment packs for $1.06 in 2003, and we have continued to use them with athletes and their families and friends via the Northern Inland Academy of Sport (NIAS) Regional Athlete Coach Education (RACE) program. This high-cost/low-cost contrast is an important asset in constructing sport psychology as accessible to regional, rural, and remote athletes, and their families and communities. We understand that these packs, and the service delivery system that accompanies them, is the first program specifically designed for regional, rural, and remote athletes. This work is unconventional because it puts aside the orthodox view that equates basic sport psychology with mental skills. It does this by questioning the view that mental skills are the dialogical opposite to the physical skills needed for success in sport.

Introduction

Despite the developments in psychological skills training (PST) in recent years, there is a gap in literature describing how to service athletes living in regional, rural, and remote locations. Christensen, Lamont-Mills, and Annis-Brown (2007) have shown how the Australian and international sport psychology community have responded to Robin Vealey's suggestions for advancing psychological skills training (PST) in her influential article, "Future directions in psychological skills training" (Vealey, 1988). A strong record of published works has since emerged that display a variety of approaches and delivery systems aiding a range of performers across many different domains of human activity (e.g., Dosil, 2006). However one group that has been overlooked in these developments has been adolescent pre-elite athletes living in regional, rural, and remote locations. In large countries, such as Australia, adolescent athletes can grow up in areas that are located hundreds of kilometres away from major metropolitan centres. What compounds this issue is that important social services such as health, education, and welfare can be absent or severely limited in these areas, and specialist sporting services rarely exist.

Athletes from regional, rural, and remote areas have made a significant contribution to Australia's sporting success (e.g., Don Bradman, Evonne Cawley [nee Goolagong], Greg Norman, Cathy Freeman, Glenn McGrath). Abernethy (2005) argues that Australian regional, rural, and remote athletes are disproportionately represented in elite athlete ranks. That is, these groups of athletes are overrepresented when considering the population, services, and resources of their home towns. Thus their representation and influence is far greater than what would be expected given their access to services, support, and competition. Not surprisingly, talented adolescent Australian athletes from regional, rural, and remote areas are highly regarded by leading coaches and talent scouts in a range of sports (Bennett, 2002; Charlesworth, 2001).

Notwithstanding these findings, we were surprised that there is an absence of peer-reviewed articles specifically about providing sport psychological services to this particular group of athletes when we searched the sport psychology literature. So despite the developments in PST over the past 20 years, we feel that there is a gap in the sport psychology literature in describing how to provide sport psychology services to adolescent athletes living in regional, rural, and remote locations.

In this paper we describe our experiences in developing and implementing a basic sport psychology program for NIAS athletes over the past seven years. Central to this program has been constructing sport psychology as mental equipment.

NIAS and North-West Region of NSW

NIAS is one of ten regional sports academies located throughout NSW. These regional academies are fully incorporated, autonomous, and community-based organisations that are administered by a Board of (unpaid) Directors and who are members of the local community. Each academy receives an annual operation grant from NSW Department of Sport and Recreation (NSW DSR), and then supplements this with sponsorship and fundraising activities to run various sport development programs.

NIAS commenced in November 1992 and has two paid employees: an Executive Officer, Peter Annis-Brown, the third author of this article, and a Sports Administration Officer. NIAS offers between 150-180 scholarships to talented adolescent athletes aged between 14-18 years who live in the New England and North West region of NSW each year (see Figure 1 for a map of the region covered by NIAS).

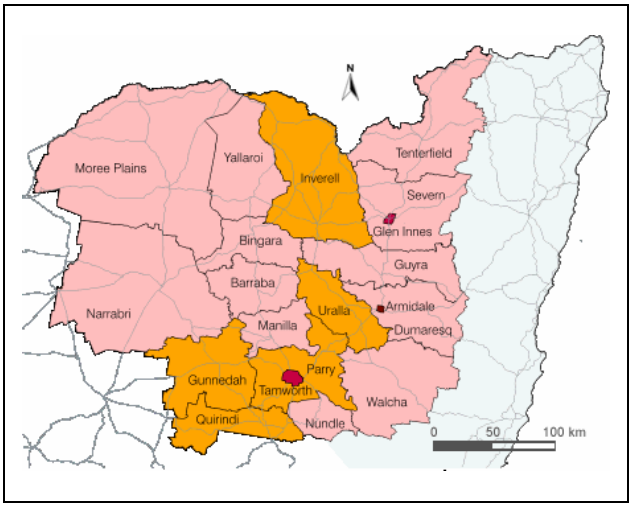

Figure 1: New England and North-west Region of NSW

Adolescent athletes are offered a NIAS scholarship on the basis that they apply, submitting a resume of their sporting, school, and community accomplishments, and that they are recognised as talented and conscientious young athletes by their local teachers and community sport coaches. A panel comprising of the Executive Officer, the respective NIAS head coach, and a Board Member select scholarship recipients from these applications for each sport. These scholarships are for 12-months duration and provide opportunities for: (a) specialist sport skills training; (b) introductory sports medicine, nutrition, psychology and media training; (c) physiological testing conducted by the Sydney Academy of Sport mobile-testing laboratory; and (d) a short competition program, including participation in the Academy Games[1].

However NIAS is a small organisation. In 2006, it received an annual grant of $130K from NSW DSR and worked with an annual turnover of approximately $800K to provide ten different sports programs for athletes living in this large and sparsely populated region of NSW. The northwest region of NSW has a population of a little over 180,000 people that are spread across an area of over 98,000 km^2. This region has a population density of between 0.5-1.1 persons per km^2 for most of the region, and between 1.1-2.8 persons per km^2 for some central areas, and includes three larger population centres in Glen Innes, Armidale, and Tamworth (NSW Government Department of Planning, 2005). But when this region of NSW is compared to Europe and North America, the area covered by NIAS is equivalent to the size of Greece and Oregon. Greece and Oregon each have population densities of 81 persons per km^2 and 35.6 persons per km^2, respectively (Wikipedia, 2007). When compared to the area serviced by NIAS, this large area of NSW is closer to Alaska (0.42 persons per km^2) in North America, and to Namibia (2.2 persons per km^2) in Southern Africa (Wikipedia, 2007) than Greece or Oregon. Table 1 displays some of the key geographical and demographic characteristics of this region.

[1] The Academy Games is a 3-day multi-sport competition currently held on the NSW Central Coast that involves athletes from Regional Academies in New South Wales and Victoria.

Australian Athletes from the Country

As displayed earlier, athletes from regional, rural, and remote areas in Australia have made a significant contribution to the nation's sporting success (e.g., Don Bradman, Evonne Cawley [nee Goolagong], Greg Norman, Cathy Freeman, Glenn McGrath). Australian regional, rural, and remote athletes are also disproportionately represented in elite athlete ranks (Abernethy, 2005). This is far from a unique Australian phenomenon. Côté and his colleagues have pointed to the disproportionate success of athletes from regional, rural, and remote areas in the United States and Canada across a range of sports (Côté, Macdonald, Baker, & Abernethy, 2006).

Returning to the Australian context, Abernethy (2005, 2006) refers to the success of Australian athletes from regional, rural and remote locations as the Wagga-effect. He found that elite athletes from regional, rural, and remote areas have typically played many different sports before settling into their chosen sport, completed in multi-age and adult competitions from a young age, and were discouraged from an early or premature specialisation in one sport (see also Abernethy, Côté, & Baker, 2002). Abernethy argues that the above may be part of the reason for the regional, rural, and remote success story. These aspects are also recurrent themes in Coates' (2005) book on raising (Australian) champions, and Atkinson's book on great Australian Olympians (Atkinson, 1999).

Table 1: Geo-demographic Characteristics of the New England and North West Region of New South Wales[2].

Characteristics	
Area	98,606 km^2
Population	180,576
Northern border	Tenterfield
Southern border	Quirindi
Western border	Walgett
Eastern border	Ebor

Initiating a Problem

In July 1999, John Crampton, the then Manager of Athlete Management Services at the New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) contacted the first author to ask him whether he could help provide sport psychology services to NIAS athletes. Crampton who was based at Homebush, site of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, had been contacted by Peter Annis-Brown early in 1999 asking for help from NSWIS sport psychologists. Annis-Brown hoped to include sport psychology in the 2000 NIAS athlete development program. However Annis-Brown recognised that providing sport psychology to NIAS athletes would be complicated by several issues related to the tyranny of distance. The first most obvious issue was how to provide sport psychology services to approximately 150 adolescent athletes who came from such a large geographical area. The second issue was that these 150 athletes from, then, eight different sports were scattered sparsely across this area with no great critical mass of athletes from one sport being located in any one particular area.

[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 Census (NSW Records)

However the most immediate limiting factor facing NIAS at the time was that there was no psychologist with specialist training in sport psychology living and working in this region of NSW. Hence Annis-Brown requested whether NSWIS could help by providing basic sport psychology skills to NIAS athletes in the athletics, netball, rugby, swimming, rugby league, soccer, touch, and softball squads.

NSWIS was unable to provide these services, in part, because their mission was to support elite athletes with NSWIS scholarships. Secondly, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games were being held in less than 18 months and this was the primary focus of Crampton and his staff at NSWIS Athlete Management Services at the time.

Crampton contacted the first author of this paper, Steven Christensen, to explain the NIAS situation and to ask whether this might be a meaningful practicum experience for a University of Southern Queensland (USQ) postgraduate student training to become a sport psychologist. After some discussion between Christensen and Annis-Brown and a presentation to the NIAS Board in January 2000, Christensen and then USQ sport psychology postgraduate student, Adrian Schonfeld[3], began providing sport psychology services to NIAS athletes in 2000. The formal agreement established between NIAS and USQ was that Schonfeld would deliver a basic sport psychology program for NIAS athletes under Christensen's supervision and as part of his Doctor of Psychology (Sport) practicum requirements.

Preparing and Delivering a Solution

The NIAS sport psychology program is marked by two different phases that display how we understood and approached providing basic sport psychology to adolescent athletes living in regional, rural, and remote NSW. The first phase of the NIAS sport psychology program occurred from 2000-2002 with the second phase from 2003-2007.

During the initial phase, the NIAS sport psychology program was based on orthodox practices that were recommended in the sport psychology literature for providing PST to adolescent athletes (e.g., Martens, 1987; Martens, Christina, Harvey, & Sharkey, 1981; Morris & Summers, 1995; Murphy, 1995; Smith & Smoll, 1996). Secondly, the NSWIS service delivery model for disseminating sport psychology knowledge and skills to NSWIS Tier-3 Squad-sports was adopted as the delivery system. Between 1998-2000 NSWIS classified sports involving adolescent pre-elite athletes as Tier-3 Squad-sports and provided a sport-specific group-based intervention program during training camps and other training events. It seemed to Christensen and Schonfeld, at the time, that the most practical and logical approach was for the NIAS sport psychology program to draw on recommendations from the Australian and international sport psychology literature, and the delivery system framework that had been successfully used by NSWIS.

This initial phase involved three main components. Firstly, it focused on basic sport psychology topics like goal-setting, stress management, and imagery, and these were modified to include sport-specific explanations, examples, and activities. Secondly, these topics were introduced using orthodox group presentations that focused on psycho-educational methods and practices. Thirdly, the presentations were delivered to athletes during the sport-specific squad training camps that were held on two or three weekends during the year. For example, Schonfeld delivered presentations on goal-setting to rugby players at Lake Keepit[4], stress management to softballers and touch players at Tamworth State High School, and imagery to soccer players at The Armidale School during 2000-2001. These NIAS squad camps typically involved morning and afternoon training sessions with the sport psychology presentations sandwiched into the busy program either before or after dinner on Saturday night, or after lunch on Sunday afternoon.

Preparing and Delivering a Revised Solution

In 2002 Christensen and Annis-Brown began to feel uneasy about the nature and direction of the sport psychology program. This uneasiness and concern was motivated by at least three events. Firstly, Schonfeld had completed his practicum, graduated, and moved to Canberra where he took up the Australian Institute of Sport postgraduate scholarship in sport psychology. Secondly, the evaluations of the sport psychology presentations that were completed by NIAS athletes showed that the athletes found them interesting and helpful, as did the NIAS coaches. But while the formal evaluations from NIAS coaches were positive, our informal discussions with these same coaches signalled that time, travel and timetabling issues constrained what could be accomplished at the squad training camps. These were issues because the squad training camps lasted for two days and occurred only two or three times a year. This meant that a 12 month program of specialist sport skills training, introductory sports medicine, nutrition, psychology and media training, and any physiological testing needed to be conveyed in six to eight days of face-to-face contact. In addition, parents were often absent from the camps having driven anywhere between one and four hours to get their child to the camp, these parents often then turned around and drove straight home, or went shopping for goods and services not easily found in their home town. Thirdly, Christensen and Annis-Brown began questioning whether the NSWIS model was adequate in meeting the unique issues of delivering sport psychology to adolescent athletes living in north-west NSW.

So what began as concerns about servicing broadened to include a more critical consideration of the conceptual and technical assumptions underpinning PST. Thus as we began to consider alternative ways of providing sport psychology for regional, rural, and remote athletes, and we also began to question the conceptual, technical, and service delivery assumptions of PST. Our ensuing discussions, subsequent

[3] Adrian Schonfeld is currently a senior lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK. He also works with a range of different sports in the Leeds and Yorkshire region.

[4] The Lake Keepit Sport and Recreational Centre is located in Lake Keepit State Park between Tamworth and Gunnedah. It is managed by the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation.

debates and planning led to a new sport psychology program being developed in late 2002 and implemented in 2003. This was labelled the NIAS Regional Athlete Coach Education (RACE) program. It introduced a new approach to providing sport psychology, and for delivering sport medicine, nutrition, and media training to adolescent athletes living in north-west NSW. Table 2 displays the program for the first year of the NIAS RACE Program.

Table 2: 2003 NIAS RACE Program

Date	Town
29 April	Armidale
30 April	Tamworth
19 May	Glen Innes
20 May	Inverell
21 May	Moree
22 May	Narrabri
17 June	Gunnedah
18 June	Tamworth
19 June	Armidale
12 August	Tamworth
13 August	Armidale

Constructing Sport Psychology as Mental Equipment

The centre-piece of the NIAS RACE program was delivering sport science knowledge and skills on a town-by-town basis rather than the previous sport-specific, squad-based approach. That is, sport psychology and the other sport-science topics would be presented in a country town in or near where the athlete, and his or her family, lived.

This innovation involved departing from the NSWIS Tier-3 dissemination model, where sport psychology and other topics are delivered via sport-specific group presentations during squad training camps. Embedded in this town-based delivery system was an explicit action to invite and include the athlete's family, friends, and their local community[5] to the RACE presentations. In this way the NIAS RACE program serviced not only the athlete and their immediate family but also their wider local community.

This notion was founded on the premise that when athletes leave their communities for higher levels of competition, they often take with them the skills and knowledge that they have gained from being a talented athlete. Whilst these athletes may leave behind memories and a potential sense of community pride for having done so well, they often take away more than they leave behind. The NIAS RACE program explicitly intended to leave behind skills and knowledge in regional, rural, and remote communities that could benefit a whole community rather than just one or two talented individuals.

[5] Local mayors, school children and athletes who are not NIAS scholarship holders, and local business owners have been some of the community members who have also attended the RACE workshops.

However it occurred to us when planning the RACE sport psychology program that it was incongruent to bring sport psychology to a country town while at the same time continuing to present it in an orthodox and mainstream way. That is, to display sport psychology as an intangible, and a largely mentalist and abstract body of skills, knowledge, and recommended behavioural practices (e.g., Gould & Damarjian, 1999; Smoll & Smith, 1996, 2002; Weinberg & Gould, 1995). In effect such a talk might be done in a local town hall or a local Returned Services League (RSL) club but the ideas were still foreign to many regional, rural, and remote adolescent athletes and their families. They still represented ideas and practices that were more in-place or characteristic of NSWIS at Sydney Olympic Park or the Sydney Academy of Sport at Narrabeen than sport in a small NSW country town.

Instead we felt that we needed to find an identity for sport psychology that matched a town-by-town delivery system. RACE sport psychology somehow needed to become local, accessible and relevant to country people to be congruent with the notion of a sport psychologist travelling to small towns and talking to NIAS athletes and their families. So in response to these concerns we constructed sport psychology as mental equipment, and packaged this construction of sport psychology as mental equipment packs.

How did we accomplish this? Firstly, those sport psychology topics that were considered important for young athletes were constructed as items of mental equipment. This largely involved some imaginative and unrestrained thinking by Christensen and the second author, Andrea Lamont-Mills.

Secondly, Christensen and Lamont-Mills then developed a number of activities that were engaging to young people and their friends and family, and that were consistent with treating sport psychology as an item of mental equipment. These activities were based on active learning principles (Pike, 1989).

Thirdly, we chose a number of small inexpensive items or objects that could typically be found in small towns and connected them to the idea of sport psychology as mental equipment. These small objects were connected to sport psychology through the activities performed by participants during the sport psychology presentation. Some of the items included in the mental equipment packs included bubbles, balloons, smile-face stickers, and raffle tickets.

Fourthly, these objects were neatly packaged in small transparent sandwich bags, and given the title, *NIAS Mental Equipment Packs*. We were able to source local materials for the mental equipment packs that were originally produced in 2003 for $1.06 per pack.

Finally, we developed a barebones or basic Powerpoint presentation for the talk where the central question was, 'what mental equipment do you take to training and competitions?' During the RACE sport psychology presentation we co-produced with participants an answer to this question, which replied, "some simple items that could be obtained locally could be taken along and used in practices and competitions, as the circumstances demanded". A NIAS Mental Equipment

Pack was handed to everyone who attended the RACE sport psychology presentations. Table 3 displays the local objects and accompanying mental skills that make up the NIAS Mental Equipment Packs.

Table 3: The Composition of the NIAS Mental Equipment Packs

Topic	Item of Equipment
Relaxation	Bubbles
Motivation	Balloon
Visualisation	Chupa-Chup
Concentration	Smile-face Sticker
Communication	Soft Foam Ball
Approach Behaviours	Raffle Ticket

So what is Unorthodox and Unconventional about this?

The principal issue involves developing an alternative construction of sport psychology that moves away from rarefying it as skills and methods. Instead, it moves towards displaying sport psychology as simply resources that could be brought to a situation (i.e., match, practice, or other event) and put into action. This view departs from an orthodox PST approach, which typically uses a skills/skills training metaphor to construct an identity for sport psychology. The analogy between the mental skills and the physical skills needed for sport competence is an orthodox and prevailing view in the sport psychology literature (see Klavora & Daniel, 1979; Martens, 1987; Tenenbaum, 2001; Van Raalte & Brewer, 1996; Williams, 1993).

The central theme of RACE sport psychology presentations was the question, 'what mental equipment do you take to training and competitions?' A conventional approach would instead typically pose three questions to adolescent athletes: 'How important are mental skills to sport performance? What mental skills are important for success in your sport? What mental skills do you have proficiency in?' It is then common for some form of performance profiling (e.g., Butler & Hardy, 1992; Jones, 1993) to be used with adolescent athletes to help them self-assess their mental skills proficiency and plan some mental training for their sport. Of course this orthodox approach is difficult to do well unless an athlete has ready and continuing access a sport psychologist.

However by treating sport psychology as mental equipment we allowed sport psychology to become analogous to the physical equipment (i.e., uniform, playing equipment, safety equipment) that a NIAS athlete would typically take to their trainings and competitions. We believe that this comparison is a more local, accessible, and relevant construction of sport psychology for people living in the north-west region of NSW. Furthermore, we made no distinction between the mental equipment that an adolescent athlete would take to training compared to competition; neither was a distinction drawn between the mental equipment used in family backyard 'test-matches' verses that used in more formal school, club, regional, NIAS, or state-representative sporting activities.

Notwithstanding, this construction of sport psychology as mental equipment and the accompanying service delivery system departs from the orthodox and recommended models for delivering PST to athletes (e.g., Martens, 1987, Morris & Thomas, 1995; Vealey, 1988).

So when taken together these three premises - town-by-town delivery, sport psychology as mental equipment, and active learning - meant that we could invoke a more immediate and local relevance for sport psychology into the lives of young people growing up in country Australia than was possible from our earlier conventional approach. Table 4 displays some of the conceptual, technical, and service delivery innovations developed for the NIAS RACE sport psychology program.

Table 4: Conceptual, Technical and Service Delivery Innovations in the NIAS RACE Sport Psychology.

Innovations	Orthodox From	Alternative To
Conceptual	Abstract	Concrete
	Knowledge	Equipment
	Skills	Actions
Technical	Powerpoint	Packages
	Hi-tech	Lo-tech
Service Delivery	Squads	Towns
	Weekends	Evenings
	Athletes	Families

The NIAS Mental Equipment Packs were handed to everyone who attended the RACE sport psychology presentations, in part, because the mental equipment packs were produced so cheaply. That is, there were no financial impediments or cost constraints imposed by the NIAS Executive Officer that limited us from giving a NIAS mental equipment pack to each RACE participant. But the key issue was not about costs of these packs, as this was used as a rhetorical device in the sport psychology talks. Rather, the low-cost and low-tech character of these packs was important to the trajectory of the NIAS sport psychology presentation.

This low-cost and low-tech character provided us with some traction by which we could talk to talented adolescent athletes about our key point, what mental equipment do you take to competition and training? It allowed us to contrast the high-cost, high-tech, and logo-laden physical equipment (e.g., shoes, bats, goggles, bikes, etc.) that is common in contemporary sport against the low-cost, low-tech, and local mental equipment for sport. So we could introduce sport psychology to athletes and their families as mental equipment that was immediately accessible to them. The tyranny of distance was no impediment to regional, rural and remote athletes using mental equipment. Rather, sport psychology was within the reach of every NIAS athletes regardless of where they lived in north-west NSW. Of course, a NIAS athlete could take, or not take, mental equipment to training and competition. But central issue became that it was their

choice. And an athlete's choice was not compromised by geographic, political, economic, or cultural processes that so often shape the lives of young people growing up in the country. We delivered these points explicitly to participants by contrasting mental equipment with the expensive and sophisticated physical sporting equipment that could only be purchased from sports stores in larger regional cities and metropolitan Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong. We coined the phrase, made from 'local and imported materials' to describe how the NIAS mental equipment packs were constructed from local items and some ideas introduced by interstate sport psychologists.

Conclusion

So what might South Australian sport psychologists who are members of the Australian Psychological Society College of Sports Psychologists make of this work? Many different things, we suspect - some that we could anticipate and others that we could not. We are comfortable leaving decisions about the relevant take home-points to members of the audience rather than prescribing what they should be taking note of.

Instead we are more comfortable simply closing this paper by displaying some of the things that we have learned, and that we have taken away from our experiences working with regional, rural and remote athletes and their families and communities over the past seven years.

Firstly, we have learned that innovation in sport does not necessarily mean adopting practices that have been designed in large institutions based in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Adelaide, and simply implementing them in a small country town. Moreover, sport psychology innovations can be accomplished by working closely with those people who are experiencing the problems and who are expected to benefit from any solution. We are particularly proud to have presented sport psychology as mental equipment for NIAS athletes using local and imported materials. In our NIAS experience, simply implementing practices that have been designed in metropolitan centres with little consideration of how these practices are experienced in regional, rural and remote Australia did not provide a best solution for NIAS athletes, coaches, and their families. Our original NSWIS model, reinforced with information from the contemporary sport psychology literature was inadequate for the needs of NIAS athletes and their families. It did not present a best practice approach to providing sport psychology to regional, rural, and remote athletes. This is our most significant learning point from working with NIAS since 2000.

Secondly, we learned that there is an alternative to viewing sport psychology as mental skills and delivering it using an orthodox psycho-educational model, such as those proposed by Martens (1987), Thomas (Morris & Thomas, 1995), and Vealey (1988). Faced with some uneasiness about providing sport psychology to adolescent athletes across this large and sparsely populated region of NSW, we began to question the conceptual, technical and service delivery assumptions imbedded in PST. And so we learned that there is an viable alternative to constructing mental skills as the dialogical opposite to the physical skills needed for competence and success in sport. Instead we were able to construct basic sport psychology concepts as mental equipment, and package these ideas into low-cost and low-tech mental equipment packs.

Finally, we learned that any meaningful progress to making sport psychology accessible to regional, rural, and remote athletes and their families and communities needed to work with locally available resources. It involves conceptual, technical, and service delivery innovation. It seemed quite incongruent to physically bring sport psychology to a local country town, and yet still present it as something more suited to elite athletes living in a major city than adolescent athletes, and their coaches, family and friends, living in small country towns in northwest NSW.

In closing, we hope that our narrative has interested sport psychologists during this 2007 professional development event. And we hope that some of our experiences help South Australian sport psychologists to consider regional, rural and remote adolescent athletes a little differently in the future.

Acknowledgments

The work in this paper has been supported by a $5K grant from NSW Department of Sport and Recreation.

We also thank our colleague, Adrian Schonfeld, for his help on earlier versions of this paper.

Additional Information

This paper should be cited following the APA Style as: Christensen, S. A., Lamont-Mills, A., & Annis-Brown, P. (2007, January). *Sport psychology as mental equipment*. Paper presented at the APS College of Sport Psychologist (South Australian Branch) Professional Development Program, Adelaide, South Australia.

References

Abernethy, B. (2005, August). *Sport expertise: From theory to practice*. Paper presented at the Applied Sport Expertise and Learning Workshop 2005, Canberra, Australia.

Abernethy, B. (2006, July). *Skill acquisition.* Paper presented at a professional development presentation of the Queensland Academy of Sport, Brisbane, Australia.

Abernethy, B., Côté, J., & Baker, J. (2002). Expert decision making in team sports. *Report to the Australian Sports Commission*. Brisbane, Australia: University of Queensland.

Atkinson, G. (1999). *100 great Australian Olympians* (2nd ed.). Noble Park, Australia: Five Mile Press.

Bennett, W. (2002). *Don't die with the music in you*. Sydney, Australia: ABC Books.

Butler, R. J., & Hardy, L. (1992). The performance profile: Theory and application. *The Sport Psychologist, 6*, 253-264.

Charlesworth, R. (2001). *The coach: Managing for success*. Sydney, Australia: Pan Macmillan.

Christensen, S. A., Lamont-Mills, A., & Annis-Brown, P. (2007). *Providing sport psychology to regional, rural, and remote adolescent athletes*. Manuscript in preparation.

Coates, P. (2005). *Raising champions: A parents' perspective*. South Melbourne, Australia: Lothian.

Côté, J., Macdonald, D., Baker, J., & Abernethy, B. (2006). When "where" is more important than "when"" Birthplace and birthdate effects on the achievement of sporting expertise. *Journal of Sport Sciences, 24*, 1065-1073.

Dosel, J. (Ed.). (2006). *The sport psychologist's handbook: A guide to sport-specific performance enhancement*. Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Gould, D., & Damarjian, N. (1999). Mental skills training in sport. In B. Elliott (Ed.), *Training in sport: Applying sport science* (pp. 70-116). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Jones, G. (1993). The role of performance profiling in cognitive behavioral interventions in sport. *The Sport Psychologist, 7*, 160-172.

Klavora, P., & Daniel, J. V. (Eds.). (1979). *Coach, athlete and the sport psychologist*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Martens, R. (1987). *Coaches guide to sport psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Martens, R., Christina, R. W., Harvey, J. S., & Sharkey, B. J. (1981). *Coaching young athletes*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Morris, T., & Summers, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Sport psychology: Theory, applications and issues*. Brisbane, Australia: John Wiley.

Morris, T., & Thomas, P. (1995). Approaches to applied sport psychology. In T. Morris & J. Summers (Eds.), *Sport psychology: Theory, applications and issues* (pp. 215-258). Brisbane, Australia: John Wiley.

Murphy, S. M. (Ed.). (1995). *Sport psychology interventions*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

NSW Government Department of Planning. (2005). *ProfileNENW*. Retrieved January 5, 2007, from http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/profilenenw/index.jsp

Pike, R. (1989). *Creative training techniques handbook*. Minneapolis, MN: Lakewood Books.

Smith, R. E., & Smoll, F. L. (1996). Psychosocial interventions for youth sports. In J. L. Van Raalte & B. W. Brewer (Eds.), *Exploring sport and exercise psychology* (pp. 287-316). Washington, DC: APA.

Smoll, F. L., & Smith, R. E. (Eds.). (1996). *Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective*. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

Smoll, F. L., & Smith, R. E. (Eds.). (2002). *Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective* (2nd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendal/Hunt.

Tenenbaum, G. (Ed.). (2001). *The practice of sport psychology*. Morgantown, WV: FIT.

Van Raalte, J. L., & Brewer, B. W. (Eds.). (1996). *Exploring sport and exercise psychology*. Washington, DC: APA.

Vealey, R. S. (1988). Future directions in psychological skills training. *The Sport Psychologist, 2*, 318-336.

Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (1995). *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Williams, J. M. (Ed.). (1993). *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (2nd ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Wikipedia (2007, January). Countries by population density. Retrieved Jan 15, 2007, from Wikipedia: The free encyclopedia website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density

Biographies

Steven Christensen is a lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland where he teaches courses in motivation and emotion. He is a registered psychologist who works with athletes and their coaches. His research examines how elite coaches describe decision-making. He has a small private practice at Peak Performance Sports Medicine, Toowoomba. Steve can be contacted at christen@usq.edu.au

Dr. Andrea Lamont-Mills is a lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland where she teaches courses in sport psychology and research methods. She is a registered psychologist who works with adolescent athletes and their parents. Her research examines how injured athletes describe their injuries and pain to physiotherapists. She has a small private practice at Peak Performance Sports Medicine, Toowoomba. Andrea can be contacted at lamontm@usq.edu.au

Peter Annis-Brown is the Executive Officer for the Northern Inland Academy of Sport and is based in Tamworth, NSW. He is a graduate from Southern Cross University with he obtained a Masters degree in International Sport Management. Peter can be contacted at nias@nias.org.au