

The IJSP: from an idea to an established Journal

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The International Journal of Sport Psychology was the very first journal specifically committed to sport psychology, and it was created almost 10 years before the Journal of Sport Psychology that was published for the first time only in 1979, founded by Rainer Martens. Few people know about the many difficulties associated to its founding and development. It was created following a decision of the Managing Council of the recently founded International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP), led by Ferruccio Antonelli, to be the Society's means of communication, as well as to promote this, then, new professional and scientific field, and to enable the diffusion of research all over the World. However, it was hard to find a publisher for this worldwide diffusion scientific journal.

Initially, the IJSP was supposed to be published in Norway, directed by Alfred Morgan Olsen of the Norwegian School of Sport and ISSP vice-president, but problems with the alleged publisher prevented this objective from being achieved. In fact, Antonelli wrote in the first issue:

"The Managing Council appointed an Editorial Board (led by Olsen), and I, too, signed a contract with a Norwegian publisher (...) and I received a good number of subscriptions. Because of the problems that Dr Olsen refers to, I have found myself obliged to take on the position of Chief Editor and to find another publisher at all costs and without any delay in order to start the journal. A journal that would inform all members (...) had become a necessity, a duty" (Antonelli, 1970, p. 3-4).

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Antonelli would found the solution in his friend Luigi Pozzi, the publisher who would accept this challenge. Many years later, Pozzi told Alberto Cei that when Antonelli approached him to make the proposal of establishing this new journal, just a few words were necessary to persuade him to accept. One can only agree with John Salmela (1999), when he stated that this was truly a heroic challenge, achieved only thanks to Antonelli's solitary determination, without financial coverage:

"For \$10 a year I am able to offer only two small, unassuming, issues, so there is another matter which I must reveal. When registration to the ISSP was free of charge, I received 1500 applications. When I asked for 10 dollars, not for the ISSP, that sustains no expenses and thus requires no money, but for the subscription, only 10% paid this fee. I have found a very understanding publisher, who has agreed to give up all his profit, and for this I publicly thank him from the bottom of my heart; but printing and mailing expenses are enormous. I will be able to print and send out the first issue with what I have received to date. And I will send it to all 1500 members. If necessary, I will then go ahead at my own expense ... this is not an exhibition of crazy heroism ... I am sure that when they receive this first issue, many members will pay the subscription fee for the second issue of 1970 (Antonelli, 1970, p. 4-5).

The first issue started with the "Editorial" by Ferruccio Antonelli, followed by the "Letters to the Editor", where congratulations and greetings were expressed by Ernst Jokl, President of the International Council of Sport and Physical Education (ICSPE) of UNESCO, and Giuseppe La Cava, President of the International Federation of Sports Medicine.

The third section included six scientific articles in English or in French with English and French abstracts, by authors from different countries, most of whom History would come to regard as key sport psychology pioneers:

- Pre-match anxiety in a group of college wrestlers, by William P. Morgan (USA);
- Effects of middle-high mountain conditions upon balance induced in weightlifters, by Ema Gueron and A. Dimitrova (Bulgaria);
- Mésure du temps de reaction simple a l'aide de compteurs manuels (*Simple reaction time measurement using manual counters*), by Y. Girardin, R. Montpetit and J. N. Manceau (Canada);
- Dependence of Voluntary effort upon the magnitude of the goal and the way it is set in sportsmen, Svetla Dimitrova (Bulgaria);
- Psychological problems of top-level athletes, by Ferruccio Antonelli (Italy);
- La monographie psychologique des sports conditions méthodologiques pour l'introduction des épreuves psychométriques dans le sport (*The*

psychological monograph of sports methodological conditions for the introduction of psychometric tests in sport), Mihai Epuran (Romania).

The following sections were:

- the “Statute of ISSP”;
- “Book Review”
- “Abstracts” of articles published in other journals and reports of meetings (1st International Congress of the South-American Federation of ISSP, Antofagasta, Chile; Symposium on Top Level Sport Scientific Bases, Bucarest and Mamaia, Romania; various sport psychology events in Greece; 1st Canadian Psycho-Motor Learning and Sports Psychology Symposium, Alberta, Canada)
- “Forthcoming Events” announcements
- “News Bulletin” related to sport psychology, including reports on the newly created South-American Federation of Sport Psychology, Middle-American Federation of Sport Psychology, and European Federation of Psychology of Sports and Body Activities (FEPSAC), as well as the miscellaneous “Sport Psychology in the World”, where information concerning 15 countries was published.

Taking into account the communication means at that time, far from the fast and global communication solutions of the 21st Century, we can hardly imagine the workload underlying such a publication.

Some years later, when the Journal finally became well known and successful, some of the main publishing firms did show interest in purchasing it which was always refused by Luigi Pozzi in order to keep the “soul” of the journal preserved. Today there are more than 10 journals devoted to this discipline, as well as many other sports sciences journals that regularly host contributions related to sport psychology.

After 10 years of continuous publication, Antonelli organized a special issue to celebrate

“...the tenth anniversary of the Journal and the fifteenth anniversary of the Society. It will reach its readers while European Section of ISSP – the FEPSAC – is holding its fifth Congress (September 1979) in Varna, Bulgaria, and celebrating its tenth anniversary” (p. 149).

A group of prestigious international authors were invited to contribute to that special issue on the following proposed topics:

- Psychological management of top-athletes (John Salmela)
- Coaches and sport psychology (Brent S. Rushall)

- Female sport today: psychological considerations (Dorothy Harris)
- Psychology of children in sport (Frank L. Smoll and Luc M. Lefebvre)
- Critical issues in the application of clinical psychology in the sport setting (Bruce C. Ogilvie)
- Sport psychology for handicapped (Hermann Rieder)
- Research in sport psychology (Robert N. Singer and John E. Kane)

The success of the publication is well documented by the congratulation letters sent to Ferruccio Antonelli:

"My congratulation to the special issue. It is really a very good one" (Miroslav Vanek, ISSP President);

"Congratulations on the Tenth Anniversary Special Issue of the International Journal of Sport Psychology. I hope that you have had good reactions and reviews for your efforts" (Dorothy Harris);

"Thank you for sending a copy of the anniversary issue of IJSP. You are to be commended for initiating such an ambitious project and congratulated for the quality of the final product" (Frank L. Smoll);

"Each issue of the International Journal of Sport Psychology seems to get better and better" (Robert N. Singer).

However, some conflicts regarding the management of the journal emerged years later between Antonelli and the ISSP Managing Council. One of the items in the agenda for the MC meeting of Varna, Bulgaria, in 1987, was the discussion about the IJSP. Antonelli – who had been nominated the Honorary President, but was no longer a MC member – decided not attending the meeting and asked the young Alberto Cei to participate on his behalf, being very kindly and friendly received by the big names of the MC. His mission was to discuss about the future of the Journal and above all to get one of them – Robert Singer, John Salmela, Lars Unestahl, Miroslav Vanek or Glyn Roberts – to take over the its scientific responsibility.

Yet, no one wanted to take such a responsibility. They knew Antonelli's strong character and anticipated that it would be difficult to collaborate with him in order to give a more reliable review procedure and rigorous publication process. Cei agreed with the need to improve the scientific quality but admitted not being prepared to manage the journal given his lack of experience. At the end of the discussion, John Salmela raised his hand and said:

"– Okay, I'm willing to help the Journal, because in any case it represents the International Society of Sport Psychology".

His terms were that Cei and himself would be the new co-editors, that Antonelli would withdraw, and the two of them would build the system to

improve the scientific quality of the Journal. Although Antonelli kept the title of Editor-in-Chief for some time, it was possible for Cei and Salmela to go on with the planned system that worked well. In those years, the Journal's scientific quality improved significantly. The new co-editors worked hard spending a lot of time together in Canada, first in Montreal and then in Ottawa when Salmela moved to this University, and in Italy, in Rome. A deep friendship developed and they met every year for more than twenty years until Salmela passed away in 2014.

This Issue

Fifty years after the appearance of the first scientific journal of sport psychology that paved the way for the emergence of many others over time, the IJSP celebrates its continuous publication again, this time with two special issues, the first of which is now printed. It looks back at the history of sport psychology with the purpose of keeping alive the memory of how we have come to the current development and who were the most prominent players in this path.

We are very grateful to the Italian publisher Luigi Pozzi who, despite the passing away of Ferruccio Antonelli in 2000, has kept faithful for 50 years to his friend's dream of giving life to "his" IJSP, in spite of not getting any financial profit for a long period. Pozzi's outstanding role was recognized in 2015 by the ISSP during the commemoration of the Society's 50th Anniversary, in Rome, by awarding him a recognition plaque. The *Journal* is now spread across the five continents and its Editorial Board reflects this important international character.

For the second time in its history, the IJSP decided to mark its anniversary. Two special issues celebrate the 50 years of the journal, this being the first one, in a look at the History of sport psychology, while the second mostly looks into the future, identifying some new trends of research, as well as the reorientation of some classic topics according to the Society changes.

The purpose of the current issue is double. On one hand, to preserve the memory of the path taken by sport psychology so far, as well as paying tribute to those who contributed to its development. On the other hand, by reflecting on the History, to understand better the present situation and, thus, working more efficiently for the future applied and scientific developments.

A look was taken into the development of sport psychology in the five Continents through the eyes of a number of senior invited authors whose

knowledge comes from many years of readings, research and working in the field. Moreover, the experience in the field of many of them, made them witnesses and actors in the evolution of international sport psychology.

The evolution of European SP is approached in relation to the inception and development of the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC) and of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) that, starting from the idea of European psychiatrists interested in sport, made it expand to the other Continents. Additionally, a deeper look into the former Socialist European countries that represented a different philosophical attitude and way of life completes the historical view of the European sport psychology. These are the aims respectively of the articles by Roland Seiler "The early years of FEPSAC – Challenges for sport psychology in a divided continent", Sidonio Serpa "The Cold War, the International sport psychology and the ISSP" which also refer to the American and Asian Continents, and Jan Blecharz & Joanna Basiaga-Pasternak "Sport psychology in selected post-socialist countries".

Seiler took the opportunity coming from the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of FEPSAC in 2019, to investigate its early years through the analyses of historic documents and interviews with some of the surviving protagonists of those times. He focused in the aims, difficulties encountered and achievements of the organization's working committees in search of common concepts, terminology, and procedures among the European countries.

Blecharz and Basiaga-Pasternak selected the most influential Socialist countries in what sport psychology is concerned according to their perspective, not considering the Soviet Union that was a main subject of Serpa's article. The authors characterized the evolution of this field in that part of Europe by three different phases including the period before the World War II, the Socialist period and the period after the political change following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thus, analysis was developed in relation to the main research areas, applied approaches, and organizational activities.

Serpa documented and discussed the influence on the development of sport psychology by the international political and social situation arising from the Cold War that resulted from the competition between the USA and the Soviet Union. The two political blocks led by these countries aimed to assert their power to the world, including through sports achievements, that promoted the development of sport sciences where sport psychology is included. The inception of ISSP is reported in the Cold War international context, as well as the impact of the Society on the development of this scientific and professional field.

The American Continent is considered in what regards North America, as well as Central and South America. Gloria Balagué, Daniel Gould and Glyn Roberts wrote on the “North American sport psychology pioneers”, and Emily Roper on the “Women in Sport and Exercise Psychology: A North American perspective”. On the other hand, the “History and development of Sport Psychology in Latin America” is the subject of the article by Lenamar Fiorese, Renan Codonhato, José R. A. do Nascimento Júnior, Alejandro García Más, and João R. N. Vissoci. The above mentioned Serpa’s article also approached the role of Northern and Latin American countries.

Balagué, Gould and Roberts provided an overview of the American sport psychology from its more significant developments and main influential individual, starting with the studies and interventions in the XIX Century. The yearly years (1895 – 1960) and the later years (1960 – Present) were the two periods considered by the authors, and a special approach was given to the preparation and development of applied SP, both in USA and in Canada. Moreover, the complementary contribution of professionals with background in psychology *versus* sport sciences was discussed, as well as what concerns the social, cultural and economic constraints to the evolution of this field.

Still in the context of North American sport psychology, Roper’s article aims at fulfilling the lack of literature on the role of women in the field of sport and exercise psychology, as researchers, applied professionals, and mentors. The author referred to the contribution of feminist sport psychology to enhance the comprehension of female sports behavior, and feminist cultural perspectives in highlighting the women’s work in this field. The career experiences of several American female prominent professionals was also analyzed and discussed. Moreover, the article reflected on the situation of women at the international level, namely in what concerns female representation in the international organizations of sport psychology.

The historical development of sport psychology in fifteen Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of the American Continent was approached in the article by Fiorese, Codonhato, Nascimento Júnior, García Más, and Vissoci, and organized into four periods: initial period (1930-1960), advancements in the applied and scientific field (1960-1980), consolidation of SP (1980-2000), and recognition of SP (after 2000). The importance of ISSP as the turning point motivator was highlighted, followed by other International Latin-American societies. The authors reported that the evolution in this part of the American Continent was mostly influenced by Western European and North American sources, despite of the Cuban exception due to its political connection with URSS. Moreover, the goal of improving sports per-

formance, namely in soccer, was a common characteristics in most of the countries.

Sport psychology in Asia and Oceania, was approached through the perspective of the publications in the IJSP over its 50 years by Peter C. Terry, Renée L. Parsons-Smith, Alessandro Quartiroli and Susan Blackmore in their article “Publishing trends in the International Journal of Sport Psychology during the first 50 Years (1970–2019), with a particular focus on Asia and Oceania”. Although there is a specific focus on Asia and Oceania from where the percentage of articles have progressively increased, the authors developed a wider scope over the general international trends, which allows an interesting look on the features of the evolution of global research expressed in the pages of IJSP.

Finally, the history of African sport psychology and current state was reported and discussed by Tshepang Tshube in his article “Sport & Exercise Psychology in Africa”. In order to facilitate understanding the evolution of this scientific and professional discipline in Africa, both in what regards research and consultancy, the author contextualized sport and physical activity, as well as the development of general psychology in this Continent that he divided into North, East, South and West regions having different characteristics among them. The Colonial and Post-Colonial periods were discussed in their relation with the development of traditional physical activities, European sports, educational systems and sport psychology. The author referred to the communication problems that it is also connected to the poor organization level that have prevented a better development of this discipline.

In conclusion, we truly believe that this first special issue celebrating the IJSP 50th anniversary is a unique publication where reliable historical information about the five continents is collected and, therefore, an outstanding opportunity to understand the development of sport psychology all over the World.