



Review to:

FOUNDATIONS OF SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY, Robert S. Weinberg & Daniel Gould

2006, Human Kinetics Publishers (608 pp.)

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This book with its over 600 pages is a large and comprehensive introductory textbook on the subject of sport and exercise psychology. It is designed both for instructors and students approaching sport psychology for the first time and seeking an accurate and complete text. This book aims at giving the readers a well combined mixture of information coming from research and practice as well. The authors build a “learning environment” which is very user-friendly and is intended to facilitate the learning process. The fourth edition of the book starts with an explanation on how to access on-line supplemental material and, thereafter, two different introductions, targeted one to the instructor and the other to the student.

The text is made of seven parts guiding the reader throughout an ideal journey: Part 1, “Beginning your journey”, welcomes the reader setting out differences between two specialties, giving an historical review and exporting basic concepts as well as the existing different orientations in the field. Part 2, “Learning about brokerage firms”, focuses on personality and sport, motivation, arousal, stress and anxiety, while Part 3, “Understanding sport and exercise environment”, aims at making the reader understand sport and exercise environment covering competition and cooperation issues as well as feedback, reinforcement and intrinsic motivation. Part 4, “Focusing on group processes”, analyses group and team dynamics, group cohesion as well as leadership related issues and communication board as a process and as a strategy in sports. Part 5, “Improving performance”, is one of the largest sections of the text: consisting of six chapters, this is the place where the reader will discover how a psychological skills training program can be developed in order to regulate arousal, as well as to use imagery to improve performance. In this part the student will also find out how to gain self-confidence, make concentration stronger and better ways to set effective goals. Part 6, “Enhancing health and well-being”, gives as an introduction to the joint rules of psychology and physical development as a factor pushing people in doing exercises. Enjoying the benefit of sport activities is also addressed in this part, together with treatments that may be associated with athletic injuries. Here the reader can find critical information about aiding rehabilitation, eating disorders, drugs abuse and overtraining as well. In the end Part 7, enti-

tled “Facilitating psychological growth and development”, concerns three issues: character development, children and their psychology and aggression in sport. The book ends with a concluding section, “Continuing your journey”, in which the authors give tips on how to pass from theory to practice.

This textbook is designed to be easy to read and beguiling in its layout: each chapter begins declaring what are the expected knowledge targets which the reader can reach at the end, so that the reader is guided step by step. The two-columns structure of each page, as well as the fonts chosen, avoid the reader to get tired in reading. The large use of bullet points and focusing colored-boxes helps the student to keep attention to key facts while pictures, often present in pages, give to the text a non-boring look (which is quite important, in light of the extension of the textbook which may appear heavy in its hard-cover A4 format). A number of boxes invites the reader to check his/her knowledge using the on-line services related to the textbook. In addition, each chapter ends with a “Learning aids” section profiling a summary, a key items list, and – crucial in the learning process – some review questions and items made to encourage critical thinking. Accessibility of the text for readers with disabilities, which is in part already favoured, could have been further improved by enclosing to the textbook a CD-ROM providing its electronic version.

The features described above make this book a powerful tool to understand sport psychology: readers will enjoy a complete, structured and practical textbook which is up-to-date and does not neglect historical aspects of the research field.