

TOPIC 5 – Mental Wellness

Date: 5 December 2024 (Day Two)

Speakers: Dr Robert Schinke (Keynote)

Dr Chang Yu-kai (Keynote)

Dr Si Gangyan



Dr Robert Schinke (Keynote)

- President (International Society of Sport Psychology)

Dr Robert Schinke is the current two-term President of the International Society of Sport Psychology, and a fellow of multiple sport and exercise psychology societies. He was a former Canadian Equestrian Team Member and world cup equestrian coach before he returned to graduate school and studied a balance of sport psychology and educational leadership. Robert's research has been profiled by leading national and international granting agencies including the International Olympic Committee and his academic publications have spanned more than 200 scientific peer-reviewed manuscripts about inclusiveness, mental health, and life transitions. He is a distinguished professor in several high-profile international universities and now serves as Editor-in-Chief for the International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology and the Journal of Sport Psychology in Action. Robert has also been awarded a series of academic prizes, including a two-term federally endowed Canada Research Chair in Multicultural Sport Psychology. Since 2000, Robert has worked extensively with world champion professional athletes, and at many Olympic Games, including the recent Tokyo Olympics. His work and ideas have been featured in USA Today, Al Jazeera, The Globe and Mail, HBO, and ShowTime, among many media outlets.

Presentation Abstract: “The Vastness of Mental Health Inquiry Within Elite Sport”

Knowledge relating to elite athlete mental health has become prominent within the field of sport psychology (Moesch et al., 2018; Rice et al., 2016). Discussions relating to this topic were interspersed throughout five decades of sport science scholarship. Much of the earliest discussions focused on athlete burnout and athlete retirement transitional processes (see Stambulova et al., 2009 for a review). The International Society of Sport Psychology published a position stand situating the organization at the center of this subject area in 2018 (Schinke et al., 2018). Since 2018, there have been three international think tanks with accompanying consensus statements in Denmark (Henriksen et al., 2020a), the United States (Henriksen et al., 2020b), and China, a multiplicity of commentaries, and a recently updated position stand (Schinke et al., 2024a). Though there is considerable interest in the subject area of elite athlete mental health, understanding the complexities of this topic remain challenging, complex, and in some many regards, uncharted (Schinke et al., 2024b). Within this presentation, emphasis will be placed on the intersection of themes highly germane to elite athlete mental health, including athlete identity (Carless & Douglas, 2013), relocation centered transitional processes (Ryba et al., 2018), athletic career demands (Stambulova et al., 2021), and occupational health and safety (see Schinke et al., 2022) each considered in the broader lens of sport organizations, and in some cases, national societal contexts (Schinke et al., 2022). Given the sensitivity of the subject area, this presentation will also reveal emerging ecological research approaches through which to gather in-depth knowledge on elite athlete mental health status within the international community (see Schinke et al., 2024b). Recommendations will be provided to the audience in terms of how to augment athlete mental health status through the vantage of scientist practitioners, referring in this instance to elite sport psychology consultants trained in methodological approaches to augment evidence-based practice.



Dr Chang Yu-kai (Keynote)

- Chair (Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, National Taiwan Normal University)

Dr Chang Yu-kai serves as a Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at National Taiwan Normal University. He is also the Director of the “Physical Activity and Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory.” Dr Chang is actively involved in international organizations, holding the position of Treasurer for the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) and serving as Vice-President of the Asian-South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP).

Dr Chang’s research focuses on sports and exercise psychology, with an emphasis on exercise and mental health, sports/performance psychology, and mindfulness, all approached from a cognitive neuroscience perspective. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field, Dr Chang was inducted as an International Fellow of the National Academy of Kinesiology (NAK), USA. Since 2021, Dr Chang has been recognized as one of the World’s Top 2% Scientists in Sport Science. His notable accolades include the Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Health and Human Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), the Outstanding Research Award from Ministry of Science and Technology in 2019, and the Early Career Distinguished Scholar Award from the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) in 2014. Additionally, he received the Early Career Distinguished Scholar Award from ISSP in 2013. Beyond academia, Dr Chang is a skilled practitioner of Chinese martial arts, specializing in Bagua, Xingyi, Taiji, and Shaolin. He has demonstrated his expertise in numerous competitions across Asia and Internationally.

Presentation Abstract: “Mindfulness as a New Psychological Skill for Athletes’ Mental Health and Performance: Empirical Evidence”

This presentation examines mindfulness as a psychological skill for enhancing athletes' mental health and performance. Drawing on findings from two studies conducted in my laboratory, it explores mindfulness from both cross-sectional and intervention-based perspectives. The first study analyses the relationship between dispositional mindfulness, psychological skills, and mental toughness in collegiate athletes, revealing positive associations that highlight mindfulness as a valuable attribute for improving sports performance. The second study investigates the effects of a brief mindfulness intervention on state anxiety, emotional responses, and brain activity in athletes. The results show notable reductions in anxiety and negative affect, alongside evidence of enhanced frontal theta brain activity, suggesting improved attention control and emotional regulation. These findings emphasize the practical benefits of mindfulness for supporting athletes' well-being and performance. The presentation concludes with insights on future research directions and recommendations for integrating mindfulness into athletic training programs.



Dr Si Gangyan

- Expert consultant (Hong Kong Sports Institute), Honorary Professor (Wuhan Sports University, China)

Dr Si Gangyan is currently an expert consultant at the Hong Kong Sports Institute and an honorary professor at the Wuhan Sports University, China. He is a Certified Psychologist by the Chinese Psychological Society and has been an appointed expert by the Chinese Olympic Committee for the provision of psychological service of 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2024 Olympic Games. He received his PhD from the Bielefeld University Germany in 1993 and completed his post-doctoral research at the University of Bundeswehr Munich Germany in 1997. Gangyan Si was the president of the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP, 2013-2017) and the vice-president of the Asian and South-Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP) for more than 10 years. Over the years, he has worked directly with different Hong Kong teams providing sport psychology services and travelling with the teams together for Olympic Games,

Asian Games, and World Championships. He was a keynote speaker in the World Congress of ISSP and an invited speaker in the Olympic Scientific Congress of IOC. He has also been invited on many occasions by different National Olympic Committees, sport research institutes, and universities to share his knowledge and experiences. His current research interests include: applied sport psychology service, cultural sport psychology, and athlete mental health and mindfulness training.

Presentation Abstract: “Management Framework of Chinese Elite Athletes’ Mental Health”

This presentation describes a newly attempted practice of mental health assessment of Chinese elite athletes and introduces a contextually appropriate sport training centre-based mental health management framework for Chinese elite athletes. Regarding the assessment methods, we highlighted the two-dimensional measures of mental health including both the negative dimension of psychopathology and the positive dimension of wellbeing. With the comprehensive assessment of athletes’ mental health in terms of positive and negative mental health levels, tailor-made mental health interventions can be developed for different types of athletes. This presentation then introduces a recently developed mental health management framework for Chinese elite athletes that consists of three main parts: (a) Annual mental health screening, (b) Follow-up and mental health emergency intervention, and (c) Mental health literacy education. These three parts need to be coordinated by specialized agencies (i.e., research or science department of the training centre) or persons at the sport training centre to make sure the management work well. Hereafter, we refer it as a centre-based mental health team. We have preliminarily applied this framework at two provincial level high-performance sport training centres with satisfactory results. Future studies should consider expanding the scale of implementation, nationwide, at an increasing number of sport training centres to test its feasibility and effectiveness in different contexts. Further studies are also needed to examine and confirm the functions and mechanisms

	<p>related to the prevention or reduction of the negative dimension and the promotion of positive dimension of mental health.</p>
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