



Final Report: International Think Tank on Mental Health of High Performance Athletes

Hosts: Team Denmark and University of Southern Denmark
Odense, Denmark

In September 2018 the International Society of Sport Psychology, the University of Southern Denmark and Team Denmark, launched the first International Think-Tank on mental health on high performance athletes. The organizing committee, comprised of Carsten Hvid Larsen, Kristoffer Henriksen, and Robert Schinke, invited practitioners and researchers from several key international sport psychology societies and selected the following panel of seven experts, listed alphabetically:

- Kristoffer Henriksen (PhD) is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern Denmark. He is a Sport Psychologist in Team Denmark, a member of the ISSP Managing Council and the Think Tank co-organizer residing in Denmark.
- Carsten Hvid Larsen (PhD) is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern Denmark. He is also a Sport Psychologist in Team Denmark, representing the Local Organizing Committee as a co-organizer, and resides in Denmark.
- Sean McCann (PhD) is a Licensed Psychologist and Sport Psychologist with the United States Olympic Committee. He was nominated by AASP and resides in the United States.
- Karin Moesch (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at Halmstad University. She is employed as a Sport Psychologist for the Swedish Sports Confederation, in the Managing Council of, and nominated by FEPSAC, and resides in Sweden.
- William D. Parham (PhD, ABPP) is a Professor at Loyola Marymount University and Director of Mental Health and Wellness Programme at the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA), who resides in the United States.
- Robert Schinke (PhD) is a Professor at Laurentian University, a Canada Research Chair, President of the ISSP and an experienced, nationally registered mental performance consultant who resides in Canada.
- Peter Terry (PhD) is a Registered Psychologist, a Professor at the University of Southern Queensland and Dean of Graduate Studies. He is an experienced sport psychology practitioner, nominated by ASPASP, who resides in Australia.

The purpose of the think-tank on mental health

Mental health is a major resource for Olympic athletes and aspirants in relation to their performance and development. However, these athletes experience additional mental health risk factors compared to non-athletic populations, such as high training loads and overtraining syndrome, tough competitions, transitional challenges, identity crises, substance misuse, and a stressful lifestyle. Across two days, the members of the think tank discussed: 1) key concepts and definitions related to high performance athletes mental health, 2) methods of doing research in mental health and bridging these to applied practice, and 3) future perspectives and approaches through research and practice to mental health. From the discussions, and the resulting notes derived, the members co-authored a consensus statement publication, recently printed in the International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology.

Henriksen, K., Schinke, R., Moesch, K., McCann, S., Parham, W. D., Larsen, C. H., & Terry, P. (2019): Consensus statement on improving the mental health of high performance athletes. International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/1612197X.2019.1570473

Future perspectives

In 2019 US Olympic Committee in Colorado Springs, USA, will host the second international think-tank on mental health in high performance sport. The aims of further discuss concepts, methods and future perspectives on mental health for high performance athletes and coaches. Additionally, the organizing committee would like to encourage diversity among the members in gender and culture.