The Assessment of Psychological Resilience in Sport Performers

Why is it that some athletes are able to withstand the pressures of competitive sport and attain peak performances, whereas others succumb to the demands and under-perform? It is the study of psychological resilience that aims to address this question. To significantly advance psychologists’ knowledge and understanding of this area, there exists an urgent need to develop a sport-specific measure of resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Gucciardi, Jackson, Coulter, & Mallett, 2011). The purpose of this presentation, therefore, is to discuss a PhD programme of research that investigated the assessment of psychological resilience in sport performers. To this end, the presentation is split into three sections. Drawing directly from current measures of resilience in other psychology sub-disciplines, in the first part of the presentation, I review psychometric issues in resilience research and discuss the implications for sport psychology (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2013). In the second part of the presentation, I discuss psychological resilience in sport performers via a review of the stressors athletes encounter and the protective factors that help them withstand these demands (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Drawing on these reviews of resilience in sport, in the third part of the presentation, I outline the development and initial validation of the first sport-specific measure of resilience, namely the Sport Resilience Scale (SRS). It is hoped that the SRS will provide an accurate and reliable measure that researchers and practitioners can use to assess, and better understand, psychological resilience in sport performers.