This text marks a much-needed paradigm shift in the practice of applied sport psychology by providing practitioners with cutting-edge assessment methods, intervention procedures, and research that are critical to evidence-based practice. Dr. Carlstedt presents an integrative practice template that enables practitioners to draw on methods, procedures, research, and practical advice at a gold-standard level of evidence. The book describes the mechanisms that influence peak performance or psychological performance deficits and the mental training process, and provides procedures that will take the guesswork out of typical assessment and mental training of athletes. Moving beyond compartmentalized therapeutic sessions in the office, the book presents methods that directly observe athletic performance during training and actual competition. The text also contains individual and team case studies to enhance its focus on individualized, efficacy-tested protocols for each individual athlete. An ideal text for advanced courses in applied sport psychology, this book incorporates the American Board of Sport Psychology's protocols for athlete assessment and intervention.

“The presented protocol in this book is a shining example of the scientific rigor that should mark assessment and intervention in sport psychology. The eloquent integration of psychological theory, reliable and ecologically valid mind–body assessment techniques, along with sophisticated intervention efficiency and efficacy testing will certainly inspire dedicated sport psychology practitioners striving for the highest level of evidence-based practice.”

—Richard Temple, PhD, Neuropsychologist and Board-Certified Sport Psychologist

“Dr. Carlstedt's book contains a treasure trove of knowledge for sport psychology practitioners. It challenges us to take our practice to the next level by demanding adherence to gold standard athlete assessment, intervention, and intervention efficacy testing procedures. This book presents a comprehensive analysis of emerging theoretical and conceptual frameworks and an original validated applied sport psychological protocol that all practitioners should use to foster high evidentiary practice. The intellectual rigor and spirit of scientific discovery that it embodies are inspiring, an approach that I used at the 2012 Olympics with my medalist athletes.”

—Vaibhav Agashe, MS, India Olympic Team Sport Psychology Consultant

“Dr. Carlstedt's multi-modal assessment and mental training protocol stands out as an innovative major advance in applied sport psychology. It brings high-evidentiary accountability to what is usually a very eclectic, nebulous, and anecdotal process.”

—Ajay Wasan, MD, Harvard Medical School
Evidence-Based Applied Sport Psychology
Roland A. Carlstedt, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist, board-certified sport psychologist, is board certified in applied clinical psychophysiology and biofeedback, and chairman of the American Board of Sport Psychology. He is also licensed as an applied psychologist in the State of Virginia. Dr. Carlstedt earned his doctorate in psychology with emphases in health and sport psychology and psychophysiology) in San Francisco, under the renowned personality psychologist and behavioral geneticist Dr. Auke Tellegen. He has completed postdoctoral continuing education in psychiatric neuroscience through Harvard Medical School. He also received training in the joint Massachusetts General Hospital–Massachusetts Institute of Technology–Harvard Medical School Athinoula A. Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) Visiting Fellowship program and its NIH-sponsored program in multi-modal brain imaging. Dr. Carlstedt is a member of the Massachusetts General Hospital Psychiatry Academy and a research fellow in applied neuroscience with the Brain Resource Company. He is also the clinical and research director of Integrative Psychological Services of New York City.

Dr. Carlstedt’s dissertation on neuropsychological, personality, and performance processes in highly skilled athletes across seven different sports was the recipient of the American Psychological Association’s Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology) 2001 Award for Best Dissertation in Sport Psychology. It was also the basis for his book Critical Moments During Competition: A Mind–Body Model of Sport Performance When it Counts the Most (2004, Psychology Press). His edited book, Handbook of Integrative Clinical Psychology, Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine: Perspectives, Practices and Research was released in 2009 (Springer Publishing Company). Dr. Carlstedt’s research has been published in Biofeedback, Cortex, Brain and Cognition, and the Journal of the American Board of Sport Psychology. He has also presented papers and chaired symposia at numerous American Psychological Association and Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback conventions and has co-authored chapters in five academic books. He also served on Division 47’s science committee.

In his capacity as founder and chairman of the American Board of Sport Psychology (ABSP), Dr. Carlstedt has mentored dozens of practitioners pursuing certification in sport psychology, and over 100 undergraduate and graduate students in the ABSP annual summer research and visiting fellowship programs. He has also consulted with numerous athletes, teams, and organizations worldwide, including the Harlequins Professional Rugby Union Team (London, UK) and the Polish Tennis Federation, and has mentored and trained many international sport psychology practitioners, including India’s 2012 Olympic shooting team mental training coach. He is involved in numerous ongoing research projects in sport psychology, including in vivo qEEG and HRV studies of athletes from the sports of baseball, golf, tennis, basketball, football, and rugby. A former professional tennis player and full-time consultant and coach on the professional tennis tours, Dr. Carlstedt has been published and featured in the popular media over 500 times, appearing in magazines, radio, and television extending into more than 40 countries. Dr. Carlstedt has consulted with Niki Pilic, captain of the champion German Davis Cup Team and with Rohan Goetzke, coach of former Wimbledon Champion Richard Krajicek. He has also coached numerous top-ranked juniors and professionals, including Ronald Agenor, former world-ranked #22 and French Open quarter-finalist.
Evidence-Based Applied Sport Psychology

A Practitioner’s Manual

Roland A. Carlstedt, PhD
This book is dedicated to all of the American Board of Sport Psychology certificate holders, and especially undergraduate and graduate students and practitioners who have attended the annual ABSP summer visiting fellowship and research program and in the process helped acquire much of the data upon which this book is based.
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Systematic, higher evidentiary approaches to integrative athlete assessment and intervention are scarce in applied sport psychology, especially ones that have been validated and subjected to extensive accountability metrics. While numerous systems of athlete evaluation and mental training continue to be propagated among practitioners and researchers, most can be called into question when scrutinized in the context of gold-standard efficacy testing. Evidence-Based Applied Sport Psychology addresses this limitation head on by providing systematic, validated, step-by-step research and a data-driven road map for practitioners; from the initial intake session to the final report. Its author, Dr. Roland A. Carlstedt, convincingly argues that the practice of applied sport psychology has been given a “pass” as far as accountability is concerned. The field’s maxim, he contends, continues to assume treatment efficacy in the absence of determining to what extent the use of an array of mental training strategies and approaches to athlete assessment are valid and reliable predictors of improved performance. The efficacy of a recommended mental training method is often absent. The current practitioner-centered sport psychology services delivery paradigm makes it very difficult to practice gold-standard requisite comprehensive athlete assessment and intervention efficacy testing. The result is that sport psychology services often lack credibility, calling into question notions of intervention efficacy. Dr. Carlstedt correctly suggests that practitioners rarely leave the office and directly observe athletic performance, especially during the crucial stages of athlete assessment, mental training, and intervention efficacy testing. He contends that consulting sessions cannot be compartmentalized incrementally to accommodate practice and financial realities. Ultimately, effective consulting is about the science, and science cannot always be neatly packaged.

The book confronts practitioners with the question of whether verifiable changes in an athlete’s thoughts, emotions, or behaviors as a function of an intervention can be attained when administered in an ad hoc manner devoid of ecological validity. It is doubtful whether performance-relevant psychological deficiencies or maladaptive behaviors that have become habitual over many years can be eradicated or even remediated through infrequent and low intensity mental training intervention. If the answer is affirmative, then where is the evidence? Claims of high success rates seem pervasive, but where is the efficacy data?

Dr. Carlstedt’s book encourages and teaches practitioners to reexamine their practices critically and to go well beyond mere intuition and mythology, and to explore the causes, or mechanisms, of intervention outcomes. He presents an elaborate client-centered assessment and intervention paradigm, one that is marked by technology-supported systematic, step-by-step methods and procedures, and followed by efficacy testing. He maintains that if a sport psychology practitioner is not trained in a host of high-tech
applied neuropsychophysiological and advanced analytic procedures and methodologies, and does not devote sufficient time to comprehensive diagnostics, mental training, and outcome testing, athletes, coaches, and teams are being short-changed. The sport psychology practitioner must be able to distinguish himself or herself from the athlete’s coach, parent, friend, peer, colleague, or other advisor beyond the type of relationship or credential. Reputable professional services require empirical scrutiny.

The book presents a plethora of potent procedures, methodologies, and technologies for delving into mind–body processes that drive peak performance, psychological performance deficiencies, and the mental training process. For example, instead of requiring athletes to engage exclusively in visualization, the “Carlstedt Protocol” contains a visualization “efficiency” test paradigm that uses heart rate variability (HRV) to detect autonomic nervous system changes as a function of the manipulation of mental images. Then, in the context of time-outs during training and actual competition, visualization efficiency is assessed ecologically using HRV in real time. Subsequently, visualization efficacy is determined on the basis of visualization-mediated HRV changes and micro-outcome measures, such as critical moment analyses. What often emerges from this methodological procedure is that differential responding can be predicted on the basis of the athlete’s profile model of psychological peak performance. The presented paradigms and procedures provide practitioners with procedures that are novel, innovative, advanced, and methodologically sound that take guesswork out of typical assessment and mental training.

Evidence-Based Applied Sport Psychology is not a “guru”-driven book. That is, this is not a book that is based on some “expert’s” notion of how to “do” sport psychology. It is based on scientific approaches and principles that mark more mature and innovative fields in the behavioral sciences. Highest evidentiary methods, approaches, and procedures were used to develop an extensive practitioner-based database of psychological and mind–body predictor variables and micro-level outcome measures that span the last 25 years. These components form the book’s basis, critique, and recommendations. The bottom-line message of this ongoing extensive database project is that not everything one was told about athlete psychological performance is necessarily true, and that a major paradigm shift in the field of applied sport psychology is welcomed, needed, and timely. The extensive data – sets on personality, behavioral tendencies, mind–body responses, and performance outcome that the book presents convincingly makes clear that an intervention is just as likely to exhibit low to no efficacy (and even negative efficacy) as positive efficacy, making mental training a 50:50 proposition. Carlstedt contends that group studies that tout positive outcomes must be viewed with caution. Needed are extensive longitudinal single-case studies with repeated measures and concurrent psychophysiological monitoring to individualize psychological performance assessment and intervention efficacy testing.

The book presents compelling evidence in support of the extensive points of critique that it makes. Central to the advanced protocol’s evidence acquisition pursuits is using practitioner-friendly regression and statistical modeling to determine the amount of variance in an outcome measure that can be attributed to an intervention-based predictor or mediating variables. Working with an athlete can no longer just involve talking and other procedures devoid of accountability. A specific form of mental training, for instance, must be empirically justified, he claims. It is not tenable to merely “do what one does” without extensive high evidentiary efficacy testing supporting the use of a particular method with a particular athlete. In other words, the validation of mental training procedures must be an ongoing pursuit at the intra-individual level; each athlete’s mental training regime must be tested for efficacy, irrespective of global, group-based outcome studies. Hence, a practitioner must glean how much of the variance in an outcome measure can be attributed to an intervention-based predictor variable before ever remotely claiming “success.” To advance the applied perspective for graduate-level study and as a practitioner’s manual, the book is replete with actual data-sets, individual and team case studies, challenging practitioner questions, and advanced step-by-step methods and procedures.

Evidence-Based Applied Sport Psychology can be considered a seminal, watershed book, and a major contribution to the field. Ultimately, the book should mobilize practitioners to challenge the status quo in applied sport psychology by going well beyond the cursory, and become more critical thinkers and
practitioners. The book calls on all practitioners to be trained in the presented procedures and methodologies in order to become more credible practitioner-researchers, something that is crucial to the field’s credibility and long-term viability. Doing so is also vital to client-athletes, who must be sure they are being exposed to high evidentiary procedures and reliable information, and not mere “dual-placebo beliefs” (see Carlstedt, 2009) that do not hold up to empirical scrutiny. This book represents a significant advancement of the field of applied sport psychology.

Mark H. Anshel, PhD
Professor
Department of Health and Human Performance
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This book was first conceptualized in 2007. In 2008 I received a contract from Springer Publishing Company to prepare the manuscript. It was finally finished in late 2011 and has now, at last, been published, for which I thank Springer and Nancy S. Hale, who supported my project unwaveringly despite missing many deadlines. These deadlines were not missed due to laziness. They could not be met because of the fluid nature of my research and the need to continually integrate and analyze constantly acquired data and information that were crucial to advancing the message of evidence-based athlete assessment and intervention. In the process I learned many new things that had to be conveyed, including the use of methodological and analytic approaches, procedures, and new technology to better illuminate, delineate, and investigate vexing issues associated with athlete assessment and intervention. The adage “you don’t know how much you don’t know” had to be asked often throughout the research, analysis, and writing process, a question my first graduate school advisor Ian Wickramasekera\(^1\) demanded that his students continually ask themselves, which I did and continue to do. Doing so delayed the completion of this project, but in the end a much better book was produced.

The following people, even if they might not know it, in their unique ways contributed to the end product and some of the discoveries that it contains. So I thank them (some again) for their known and unknown contributions to my knowledge base, skills and, especially my motivation and drive, to do the work that is necessary to make discoveries. First, Auke Tellegen of the University of Minnesota, my dissertation committee chairman, along with Stanley Krippner (Saybrook University) and Eugene Taylor (Harvard University and Saybrook University; also my master’s thesis advisor), long-time mentors and dissertation committee members who taught me to think critically in the context of multiple research approaches.

In more recent years, Itay Perlstein, a distinguished scientist, has provided invaluable advice pertaining to heart rate variability, advanced methodology, and statistics in his capacity as Director of Statistics with ABSP. I have also had the pleasure of interacting with Fred Schiffer and Martin Teicher of McLean Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Dr. Schiffer’s contestation of simplistic conventional thinking regarding cerebral laterality led me to consider alternative assessment approaches to brain localization of strategic planning and emotions (affect) in the context of pre-action preparation and performance outcome. Dr. Teicher, a pioneer in the arena of psychopharmacology and the effects of psychotropic medication, AD/HD, and trauma, made me keenly aware of advanced biomarker-based approaches to intervention efficiency and efficacy testing, inspiring me to adopt and adapt his scientific philosophy and investigative strategies to the study of sport performance. I also found a kindred spirit in Ajay Wasan, a psychiatrist and researcher with Brigham & Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical

\(^1\)Dr. Wickramasekera’s High Risk Model of Threat Perception provides the foundational basis for much of my research.
School, an avid tennis player who underwent my protocol and in the process provided me with important scientific insights.

I’d also like to thank Mark Anshel of Middle Tennessee State University, a stalwart in the field of sport and exercise psychology, for his support and courage in challenging the status quo and the American Board of Sport Psychology’s quest to improve standards in applied sport psychology.

I would also like to thank Evian Gordon of the Brain Resource Company. His extraordinary work and vision in applied neuroscience has enabled myself and ABSP to develop one of the largest databases of athlete brain–mind–body and outcome measures. Thanks also goes out to BioCom Technologies and the Polar corporation for their technical and product support in the realm of heart rate variability.

Last, but not least, I’d like to thank my significant other, Denise Fortino, a clinical psychologist and addiction expert, my personal expert, who is always available to answer a question, look at my writing, provide critical advice, and keep me on the right track.
SECTION I

Conceptual, Methodological, and Practice Foundations of Integrative Evidence-Based Athlete Assessment and Intervention
Introduction: Perspectives on Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practice and empirically validated assessment and interventions have become catchphrases in psychology. However, what do they really mean, and what minimum standard or threshold is necessary before “meaningful” evidence-based practice in applied sport psychology has been established? Can we even talk about evidence-based interventions, assessment, and practice unless the most rigorous criteria for what constitutes such evidence are used? Although the American Psychological Association’s quest for empirically validated approaches to intervention and outcome assessment is commendable and necessary and should be heeded, one must ask to
what extent this pursuit has become a reality and whether it is even attainable, especially in the realm
of applied sport psychology. Can mental training interventions be considered evidence based if an
outcome assessment fails to address the ecological validity of data emanating from the office only or
on the basis of mere self-report? Without real-world monitoring and measurements in the context of
salient stimuli and stressors, do we really know if an intervention is having more than a cursory
effect? Because a large body of research contests the generalizability of data/responses obtained
in the practice (office or lab) to the real world, is the field of sport psychology being too hasty
when it professes the efficacy of certain interventions (e.g., mental imagery)? What about the longi-
tudinal staying power of a particular mental training method? Have our empirically validated inter-
ventions really demonstrated their potency over time, and if so, on the basis of what evidence at the
intra-individual athlete level? What is the minimum benchmark for constituting evidence? Does evi-
dence based mean merely conveying the impression that one is “doing sport psychology” by pursing
intervention and efficacy research in a perfunctory manner? Or should the standard be much
higher and based on hierarchical criteria that rank the potency of evidence in accord with accepted
scientific guidelines, an approach this book advocates and advances?

Although “empirically validated” assessment and intervention should drive the practice of sport
psychology, the reality is that few practitioners strictly adhere to scientifically based and validated
mental training protocols or engage in outcome studies to assess the efficacy of the methods that
they are using. This is understandable considering the practical constraints, financial realities,
and methodological requirements associated with systematic or controlled approaches to applied
sport psychology. In the context of private practice, it can be difficult to adhere to the rigorous
demands of a scientifically derived intervention protocol and assessment model. This presents a
problem for researchers seeking to generalize findings and protocols to the real world of applied
practice. Without the participation of sufficient numbers of practitioners and athletes in using
certain protocols, it is difficult to concurrently validate or replicate their utility and substantiate
their efficacy. Since the essence of replication or validation is control, it is imperative that your
“average” practitioner be given the tools and support necessary to participate in empirically vali-
dated approaches to treatment. This is vital to the credibility of the field of applied sport psychology.

Consequently, the main purpose of this book is to expose practitioners, educators, and students to
an integrative, interdisciplinary, and systematized approach to athlete assessment and intervention.
Too many sport psychology practitioners work within a vacuum; becoming too comfortable with
approaches they were trained in, that may be, at least to a certain extent, no longer adequate or
qualify as being evidence based. For example, mental imagery or visualization, the most widely advo-
cated and used mental training method, may not even work for many athletes. Although practitioners
may argue that meta-analyses of mental imagery research have shown this intervention modality to
be efficacious, effect sizes have been moderate at best and based on group results. Interventions need
to be individualized and based on intra-individual longitudinal outcome research using objective
repeated measures that are cognizant of key personality and behavioral measures that drive perform-
ance and intervention amenability. Yet, practitioners continue to apply methods that are cursory, lack
integration, and are not well controlled or rarely, if ever, tested for efficacy.

While grass-roots practitioners on the front line of applied sport psychology provide an invalu-
able service, in the rapidly advancing world of research and practice it is almost impossible to keep
up with key findings and methods in numerous subfields of psychology that are highly relevant to
athlete assessment and optimum performance. Although most credentialed sport psychology prac-
titioners are required to participate in continuing education, course offerings have become so vast,
diffuse, and even trivial that is easy to overlook or remain unexposed to sophisticated and potent
procedures and research in the field. Crucial findings and approaches frequently go unnoticed
beyond press releases and superficial presentations on television or radio. Moreover, many, if not the vast majority, of training programs in applied sport psychology have training gaps or oversights that preclude practicing at the highest levels in the evidence-chain hierarchy. Most have yet to integrate advanced methods and instruments that are vital to evidence-based athlete assessment and interventions. There is also an information and training gap that needs to be closed if we are to practice high-level evidence-based applied sport psychology. The field must advance beyond anecdotal and antiquated assessment and practice models and integrate multifaceted approaches and modalities.

This manual will facilitate these goals by exposing practitioners in applied sport psychology to cutting-edge assessment methods, intervention procedures, and research that are critical to evidence-based practice. Importantly, practitioners will be given a systematized, evidence-based blueprint for becoming integrative practitioners. A longitudinal and ecologically valid approach to applied sport psychology that incorporates objective predictor and outcome measures that have been shown to reflect behavioral change and improvement will be emphasized. This book was also designed to foster interdisciplinary understanding, information sharing, and integrative approaches to athlete assessment, mental training, and outcome research. It is made necessary by the fact that while applied sport psychology is booming, the majority of practitioners work in relative isolation and in the context of unidimensional assessment and intervention approaches that may no longer meet the gold standard for client services.

Practitioners tend to practice the way they were trained and often go through an entire career married to an assessment and intervention approach that is either antiquated, obsolete, or needs to be augmented with the best emerging evidence-based practices. While many practitioners would welcome being able to upgrade their training and approach to practice, most are mired in the realities associated with having to survive as a practitioner. Time is scarce, with little available to keep up with advances across numerous subdomains of psychology. In the end, we all suffer from this state of affairs, especially coaches and athletes who are not being exposed to the most advanced approaches to assessment and intervention that are now available. As a result, a road map is needed; a blueprint for a truly integrative applied evidence-based sport psychology that is designed to disseminate critical emerging research in an efficient and understandable manner, as well as expose practitioners to sophisticated methods and procedures that need to be integrated into all practices. Practitioners need to be aware that sophisticated brain imaging techniques are revealing things that are important to decision making about intervention selection. They need to know about practices being used by psychologists in the clinical realm who are demonstrating that heart rate variability biofeedback may be the treatment modality of choice for dealing with competitive anxiety or that neurofeedback can be used in attempts to enhance focus in athletes.

Sport psychology practitioners must be exposed to and trained in validated alternative evidence-based interventions that can help athletes deal with psychologically mediated performance issues in the moment, on the playing field, including respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA) biofeedback, active-alert self-hypnosis, and manipulation of brain hemispheric activation to better control cognitive processing. They need to consider ecological validity and the temporal dynamics of an intervention or longitudinal impact of certain mental training methods before marrying themselves to an intervention approach. Advanced assessment and monitoring methods such as quantitative electroencephalography (qEEG) and in-the-field ambulatory wireless monitoring of psychophysiological processes are capable of revealing things that previously were unobservable, allowing a practitioner insight in athlete performance tendencies at the beginning of a working relationship with an athlete to better guide subsequent mental training and predict its course.

These are a few of the many methods that this book presents, information and approaches that are critical to high-standard evidence-based applied sport psychology.
This manual will also illuminate select research, data, and methods from various subfields in psychology that are relevant to applied sport psychology but have yet to be considered or adopted as standard procedures. An applied integrative practice template will be presented, making it possible for practitioners to draw on methods, procedures, research, and practical advice at the highest level in the evidence hierarchy. Practitioners will be taught how to work within an integrative model; how to acquire and share data for the greater good of their clients and thereby contribute to the advancement of evidence-based applied sport psychology. It will consolidate the most sophisticated methods, cutting-edge research, and potent data to give practitioners of any persuasion and training background practical insight into how to provide best-evidence-based approaches to applied sport psychology. The book will foster a systematized and interdisciplinary approach to athlete assessment and mental training and facilitate a move toward integrative evidence-based practice.

Too many books in sport and applied sport psychology merely reformulate, reword, or present what has already been published numerous times before. They lack innovation, continue to propagate myth and anecdote, and fail to provide practitioners with an integrated, coherent, and, importantly, evidence-based practice template. Such a template is missing in the landscape of publications in applied sport psychology and in the real world of practice. This manual fills that gap. The procedures, methods, and applications that will be advanced in this book have been field-tested on hundreds of athletes and practitioners.

One of the motivating factors in writing this book was the fact that practitioners who have gone through the American Board of Sport Psychology training and certification program continued to comment that this was the first time they felt that they were practicing sport psychology in a competent manner. Many of these practitioners held graduate degrees in sport psychology, postgraduate training, and certification in applied sport psychology and were active practitioners who worked with athletes. Yet, almost all expressed that something was missing. They admitted to a training gap, and even though they were credentialed on paper and were able to present themselves as competent and confident practitioners to their clients, privately they conveyed their reservations about their training, what they were doing, or not doing, and stated they needed a systematized approach to working with athletes in which standardized methods and procedures could be applied that took the guesswork out of consulting with athletes.

The evidence-based athlete assessment and intervention protocol upon which this book is based gave these practitioners a systematized approach to applied sport psychology that made sense. It includes tools that make practitioners confident and more effective, something that is crucial to building rapport with athletes and coaches and for demonstrating the efficacy of one’s methods. Practitioners who are trained in these methods become part of a large network of sport psychology practitioner–researchers who have access to sophisticated methods, allowing them to contribute to the advancement of our knowledge of athlete psychological responding by submitting their findings and data to a database on athlete mind–body functioning. The methods taught in this book have been found to motivate practitioners to use evidence-based procedures, something that will help to advance the field.

It should be noted that although this book focuses on the American Board of Sport Psychology–Carlstedt Protocol (ABSP-CP), a system of athlete assessment and intervention that since originally being conceptualized (around 1995) has been applied to hundreds of athletes, leading to its validation; the main mission of this book is not to advertise or advocate for this model. Rather, the goal of this book is to raise awareness of critical issues in applied sport psychology pertaining to athlete assessment and intervention that all practitioners need to seriously contemplate and ultimately apply the herein recommended higher evidentiary approaches to the mental game. The
Accountability Challenge in Chapter 3 challenges practitioners to question and test their own approaches in each individual athlete with whom they work, and not rely on assessment and intervention approaches merely on the basis of group research findings or other influences of which they may be aware, such as educational background, training, or anecdotal beliefs.

The ABSP-CP approach provides a systematic methodological and procedural road map containing numerous validated assessment and intervention components. It is predicated not on claims, but demonstrated intervention efficiency and efficacy and valid and reliable comprehensive athlete assessments having strong predictive validity. It is an approach that should be considered by all practitioners. The protocol’s greatest strength lies in its methodological and accountability framework.

**Active Participation**

Readers of this practitioner’s manual have the opportunity to actively participate in the presented American Board of Sport Psychology–Carlstedt Protocol in the form of Practitioner, Practitioner-Researcher, and Student Challenges that are highlighted in black boxes throughout this book. Practitioners, researchers, and students are encouraged to take the challenge by responding to questions that are posed or completing data analysis and specific experiential tasks. Doing so will not only be a learning experience but can count toward American Board of Sport Psychology certification. Readers are encouraged to submit their responses and analyses for credit (submit to: rcarlstedt@americanboardofsportpsychology.org).

The book is also replete with extensive case studies of actual athlete assessment and intervention, bringing to life the perspectives, models, methodologies, and procedures that are presented in the form of real data sets and their step-by-step acquisition, analysis, and interpretation. The availability of such “real” assessment, intervention, and performance data allows readers to reanalyze and interpret the provided information as though they were these case study athletes’ sport psychologist.

Another unique component of the comprehensive athlete assessment and intervention protocol is that practitioners, researchers, and students can participate in the continued development of the ABSP assessment and intervention databases in the context of its Universal Applied Sport Psychology and Clinical trials and Accountability Challenge (see Chapter 3), the goal of which is to expand the already large and extensive database of athlete brain–heart–mind–body–motor and outcome responses emanating from the higher evidentiary assessment and intervention methodologies and modalities that are presented throughout this book.