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### Article

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1           **Current Reflections on Publishing in the Journal of Sport Psychology in Action**

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21           The Journal of Sport Psychology in Action (JSPA) is now in its thirteenth year. There is  
22 as rich a past to this journal, which has informed its evolution and place in our field, as there is  
23 an exciting present and future. Though 2010 was the official launch of the JSPA, its roots trace  
24 to earlier discussions that were held as early as 2007 within the Association for Applied Sport  
25 Psychology's Executive Board. Discussions were about the need for a new type of AASP journal  
26 with as strongly weighted emphasis on the practical component of the science to practice model.  
27 The Executive Board of the time envisioned a journal that would inform sport and exercise  
28 psychology by adopting a vastly different vantage to any other of the increasing outlets within a  
29 growing profession. The E-Board understood many of the existing journals were requesting  
30 expanded sections and integrations of practice within their science-based peer-review journals.  
31 However, much of the emphasis in these sport and exercise psychology journals began with  
32 science and parlayed to practice. Consequently, authors submitting their writing for  
33 consideration were trained from a young age to view science as the starting point in their  
34 professional writing and practice as the consequence of theoretically informed work with clients.  
35 Though journal practices were serving the field relatively well, there was also a siloed flavor to  
36 our field, evident in national and international conferences; one written about by Martens five  
37 decades earlier (1987), though also considered in more recent years (Winter & Collins, 2016).  
38 For many years, our co-authors observed that researchers and practitioners often travelled in  
39 different circles and attended different conference sessions. Picking up on what was somewhat of  
40 a fractured approach to the field, the task brought forth through JSPA was to develop and launch  
41 a peer-reviewed publication where scholars would need to emphasize the practical application of  
42 their theoretical and scientific underpinnings. There would also be a place for practitioners to  
43 share their intervention strategies and situate these in terms of some key empirical scholarship

44 and past writing. In summary, there needed to be a home for a practical exchange of ideas, a  
45 dialog among scholars, practitioners, and potential consumers. The emphasis within the  
46 exchange would be placed squarely on systematic provision of services and how they were being  
47 delivered through the transparent articulation of interventions.

48         With guidance from Mary Fry, Jack Lesyk, Mary Ewing, and Founding Editor, Melissa  
49 Chase, the Journal of Sport Psychology in Action was launched by AASP in partnership with  
50 publishing house Taylor and Francis. From the very beginning of this journal to present day, the  
51 hope has always been that it would attract a high volume of professionals from AASP and other  
52 international and national societies to share their applied practices in a free and open exchange or  
53 idiosyncratic approaches, as a sort of connoisseurship. Earlier editorial boards sought one or two  
54 pages of introduction and scholarly underpinnings, followed by eight to 10 pages of practical  
55 substance, where the author could unpack their signature, contextualized work for a wide  
56 readership of sport psychology professionals, people in allied professions who were working  
57 with athletes and coaches, and for coaches, athletes, and sport administrators. The initial group  
58 just named envisaged that coaches and athletes might also one day share their experiences  
59 performing with the support of people from the field of sport and exercise psychology, thus  
60 providing a 360-degree feedback loop that infused, science, practice, and the intended  
61 beneficiaries. The request was that references be limited to approximately 10, again suggesting  
62 more printed space be devoted to a transition from “knowing of” how the theories and  
63 applications in our field worked to understanding and then “knowing” these applications first-  
64 hand through uptake and refinement. Writers were also not to be lost in academic jargon, again  
65 averting siloes.

66           The idea of JSPA was enticing and intuitively sensical, but the submission numbers were  
67 initially relatively low, likely because of the unfamiliar request made of the authors. The task of  
68 writing for JSPA was unique and unconventional. The challenges associated with growth could  
69 be explained exclusively by the journal’s stylistic expectations, but one reason alone does not  
70 account for modest growth. A second consideration is whether the targeted contributors might be  
71 interested in submitting their ideas to the journal. Practitioners by their nature are immersed in  
72 practice. They must earn their wage supplying services to clients. Therefore, any request or  
73 inspiration to submit to JSPA was likely not among the highest of priorities for many full-time  
74 frontline professionals, that is unless one was also a scholar and adding to a curriculum vitae.  
75 There was also a stylistic question in this journal of limited length for those straddling the  
76 academic and applied worlds, requiring authors who might have been accustomed to at least a  
77 200% increase in page allowance being asked to realign their standard writing practices to  
78 accommodate a burgeoning journal. Certainly, there were further considerations adding to the  
79 uncertainty whether to submit to JSPA or elsewhere, such as a journal’s established reputation  
80 versus one new to the marketplace.

### 81 **Embracing Uniqueness**

82           With the contemplations outlined above, a well thought out idea in the form of JSPA has  
83 grown modestly, and yet, consistently, since 2010. The number of submissions to this journal in  
84 2021 exceeded 60, and the diversity of accepted submissions has been comprised of book  
85 reviews and smaller “in the huddle” contributions, in addition to a variety of differently styled  
86 manuscripts. Some of the practical manuscripts accepted since JSPA’s inception have matched  
87 with the earliest conceptions of what the journal was conceived to be. Others have included more  
88 substantive reviews of literature and abbreviated methodologies, leading to decreased space for

89 applications. The senior members of the current editorial board recognize that breadth of styles  
90 reflects the diverse contributors to this journal. Stylistic differences in submissions have been  
91 evident and have also been on point with a meeting of the minds. JSPA is a peer-reviewed outlet  
92 where science and practice must intersect front and centre. We profoundly thank all contributing  
93 authors for their written work and diverse approaches. We believe it is important for  
94 professionals in our field and for anyone reading this journal to understand that there are as many  
95 styles to writing in an applied sport and exercise psychology journal as there are professionals in  
96 our field. We intend to remain open and somewhat flexible in the styles of submissions we look  
97 forward to receiving. We welcome a wide range of ideas and approaches, and we also recognize  
98 that by sharing your ideas, you are also revealing how you apply what you know with clients and  
99 organizations, granted safeguarding identities and anonymity. The contributions to this journal  
100 are intended to provide a more expansive dialog about how to work with clients and why it is  
101 thus. We welcome your ideas and applications. What we leave you with before outlining a few  
102 suggestions and reflections of how to maximize your contribution within the JSPA, is an open  
103 invitation to share your ideas with the readers of this journal, past, present, and future. With  
104 diversity in mind, we also are hoping to provide some suggestions in this manuscript in terms of  
105 how best to write for JSPA and serve our intended breadth of readership.

## 106 **A Starting Point**

107 Before delving into how to develop your applied writing for this journal, there are a few  
108 resources that might be of some benefit. The editors from several key sport and exercise  
109 psychology journal already engaged in discussions and developed a manuscript titled “Getting  
110 Published: Suggestions and Strategies from Editors of Sport and Exercise Psychology Journals  
111 (Schinke, Mellalieu, Ntoumanis, Kavussanu, Standage, Strauss, & Papaioannou, 2021). Their

112 pre-emptive guidelines were written based on a convergence and divergence of ideas from  
113 established journals in our field, where the expectations from authors aligned with more  
114 traditional approaches. The editors from each of these journals permitted at least 25 pages of  
115 manuscript length, a careful, interpretive situating of literature, clear research questions, a  
116 coherent and systematic methodology, a substantive presentation of results, a robust interpretive  
117 discussion, and a well-developed reference section. Though the guidelines outlined above do not  
118 clearly fit JSPA's context, at very least, not in large proportions, there are certain parallels with  
119 previous suggestions that we seek. Though the style of JSPA writing should be highly practical,  
120 and the ideas should be easily understood and applied by lay readers and practitioners to create  
121 bridges across a diverse audience, a few key considerations need to be adopted from Schinke and  
122 colleagues' recommendations.

123       **The introduction and literature review.** Among these, a primary suggestion is one we  
124 encourage of every author: Manuscripts need to have a coherent structure to their ideas and how  
125 these are presented to readers. What we suggest is that there be one or two pages of introduction  
126 and review of literature, which together are meant to frame the practical approach to come, while  
127 not consuming too much space. Perhaps the easiest approach is an introductory paragraph, which  
128 could be followed by one or slightly more than one page of tightly written literature from sport  
129 psychology, psychology, or an allied profession, with ties to our field. The scholarship opening  
130 your manuscript should contain a few of the most cited foundational writings as well as a few of  
131 the most recent state of the art contributions, informing your up-to-date approach to intervention.  
132 When writing these first few pages, there is added value when you move progressively from the  
133 introduction, and through the review of literature always narrowing your thinking to a specific  
134 context and reasoning for your interventional choice.

135           **Context setting.** Your manuscript will likely be set within a sport or physical activity  
136 context where you have worked or conducted research to practice. The context is important.  
137 What do we mean by context? There are two important vantages to the rich unpacking of any  
138 context. The first vantage was identified by Fletcher (2013) in a first guide to JSPA authors as  
139 reflective processes. Each author comes to a context with a background. The reader would  
140 benefit knowing about what your background is. You might have several layers of sport  
141 experience, such as former athlete, recent or current coach, and you might have a concurrent  
142 background as a mental performance consultant (this term represents sport psychologists, mental  
143 training consultants from sport science, and practitioners from allied professions, such as social  
144 work, see AASP, n.d.). Your experience is multifaceted, and you need to pick and choose the  
145 important parts that brought you to the context being presented, your knowledge base, and  
146 finally, the reasoning behind your signature intervention, whilst ensuring authors' names are not  
147 mentioned, given the blinded peer-review process being used.

148           There is also the context you are presenting, meaning the performance environment  
149 where you have delivered your craft. When considering the performance environment, you can  
150 consider the people working within the environment, such as athletes, coaches, management,  
151 staff trainers, and physical activity participants. There is seldom one person in any work context.  
152 Therefore, try and consider the interrelated roles of people in the environment as they relate to  
153 human performance, your choice of intervention, how you applied the framework, and its  
154 efficacy. These two considerations of (a) you and (b) the place where you applied the  
155 intervention, might consume an additional page of writing. Context setting is important and  
156 should not be rushed or superficially presented, as interventions happen within contexts  
157 (Stambulova & Schinke, 2017).



158           **Methodology.** Within this journal, there have been several accepted manuscripts that  
159 included methodologies. The integration of projects that reveal research to practice are well-  
160 received within JSPA, when they are received. Should you be seeking to submit a manuscript  
161 with a methodology, the length of this section should be succinct and no more than one page.  
162 Within this section you can summarily introduce the methodology, with reference to another  
163 publication or written document where the details of the methodology can be found, should they  
164 be sought by the reader, including contacting the author directly for more information about  
165 methods and procedures. A methodology section should then be confined to who the participants  
166 are, the number of people who engaged, and any further essential characteristics. Next, a brief  
167 explanation of the methodology within one or two sentences should be followed by the data  
168 collection and analysis strategies. JSPA is primarily focused on practical interventions,  
169 necessitating a brief overview of the methodology and nothing more.

170           **Practical intervention.** The practical intervention component is the central part of this  
171 manuscript, and all previous parts are meant to be the lead up to this most important part of the  
172 manuscript. With the context set before this section, the focus in this proportionate majority of  
173 the manuscript is on (a) what you did, (b) how you did it, and (c) how the reader may gain by  
174 applying the intervention in one way or another to their setting. We start with what the  
175 intervention is and why it has been chosen to facilitate improved experiences and performances.  
176 You likely held several possible interventions, but the one you are presenting was deliberately  
177 chosen as a “best fit” choice given specific characteristics of the application in relation to the  
178 context. Next, take the time to explain your choice. Then proceed to explain in detail what you  
179 did, chronologically from beginning to completion. You might consider not only what you did in  
180 relation to convention, but also whether there were nuances to your intervention that better

181 aligned the approach with the context. Explaining practical alignments will provide the reader  
182 with some additional insight of how they might align what you are writing to their contexts.  
183 Finally, if a formal evaluation of the intervention was not conducted and reported as part of the  
184 manuscript, we encourage the authors to provide guidelines for conducting such an evaluation.  
185 You can also provide some additional suggestions of how the reader can transfer the proposed  
186 intervention to different sports, levels, cultural contexts, and even various national sport systems  
187 where the intervention might fit. The readership of this journal, much like its authors, is  
188 international. Therefore, transferability of practice to diverse contexts is well appreciated.

### 189 **The Reader's Vantage**

190         The Journal of Sport Psychology in Action's inception came from a recognition that sport  
191 psychology practice needs to be several things to several people. The writing must be  
192 demystified, meaning that how you write should be of a style easily understood by professionals  
193 outside of sport and exercise psychology as easily as people within the domain. The writing must  
194 equally to be highly practical and easily applied by the readership, comprised of people from  
195 sport and exercise psychology, but equally, people from the fields of coaching, sport  
196 management (as an organizational consideration), and by athletes. Therefore, when you read  
197 over your manuscript, try to imagine you are an athlete, coach, or sport manager working on the  
198 frontlines of sport and physical activity. As a reader of what was just written, would you  
199 understand the language? Could you understand why the intervention was presented in relation  
200 to the context? Could you see understand the intervention well enough to have some takeaways  
201 of your own, either in terms of its direct use or through support form a mental performance  
202 consultant? Finally, was the read enjoyable to you as someone looking at the profession or sport

203 and exercise psychology from your vantage point? Do you see the utility of what was written?  
204 Are you enthused?

205 The Journal of Sport Psychology in Action was conceptualized for good reason, with a  
206 novel purpose in mind: utility. This journal holds tremendous opportunity to open windows into  
207 the field of a profession often not understood by a broad enough base of people. The style of  
208 writing and content are meant to be not only accessible but thought provoking to a wide audience  
209 of people. This journal is your opportunity to connect with a wider audience than many orthodox  
210 peer-reviewed journals. This manuscript is then, your call to engage with this wide audience and  
211 help make an inspiring profession readily accessible.

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