

# Novel strategies for endurance performance

*Paul Antiss, Chris Fullerton, Chiara Gattoni,  
Alistair McCormick, Carla Meijen*



# Overview

- Talks

The role of sources of self-efficacy in endurance performance. *Paul Anstiss*

- Effect of a pacemaker on 1600m time trial running performance. *Chris Fullerton*

- The effects of mental fatigue on long-term endurance performance. *Chiara Gattoni*

- Application of the facial feedback hypothesis to endurance performance: Does frowning modulate perception of effort? *Alister McCormick*

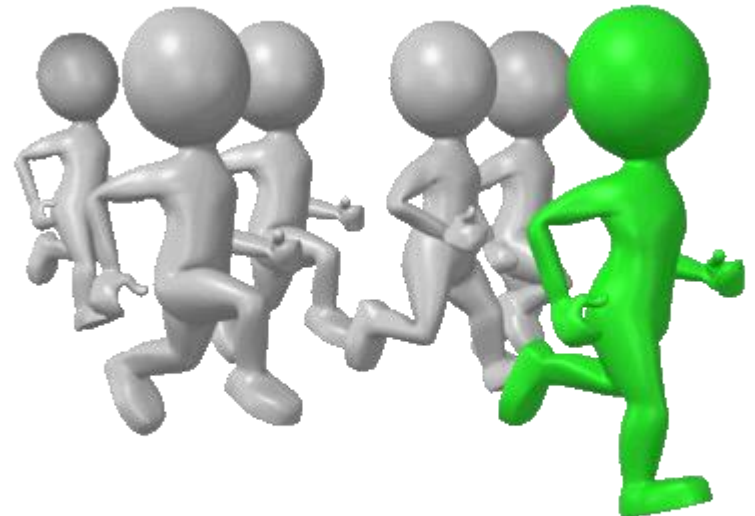
- Running a psyching team: The introduction of mental support at endurance events in England. *Carla Meijen*

- Discussion and future research directions



# Running a psyching team

- Mental demands of endurance runners
- History of psyching teams
  - What is it?
  - Setting up and running a psyching team
- Brief psychological support provision
- Assessing effectiveness and critical reflection



# Mental demands of endurance runners

## Pre-race

- Have I done enough training?
- Weather conditions

## During the race

- Emotional responses during a marathon
- Pain and dealing with discomfort (Buman et al., 2008)
- Motivation
  - Wanting to give up
- Optimising pacing
- Practical worries – where are the toilets?
- Psychological demands encountered away from the competition (pre, during, and post-race) (see also McCormick et al., 2016)



# What is a psyching team?



- Provide mental support pre, during, and post race
- Team of (sport) psychology professionals and those in training
  - Provide opportunities for training
- Presence pre-race, during race, and post race
  - Expo at bigger events
- Short and brief interventions
  - “Giving sport psychology away” to the public



# Some issues that we dealt with as a psyching team: Pre-race



- Nerves, particularly first timers
- Worries about goals
  - Working towards a challenging goal; feeling pressure to qualify for a big marathon
  - Coming back from an injury
- Negative thoughts
  - Dealing with the pain
  - Boredom
- Have I done enough training?
  - Injury worries
- Tough year with personal issues, how will I deal with this during the event?
  - Particularly for the bigger events
- Pacing
  - Starting too fast – getting caught up in the moment
- Worries about practicalities
  - Where are the toilets?
  - What do I do with my layers?

# Some issues that we dealt with as a psyching team: During and post-race

- On the course:
  - Dealing with pain
  - Injuries
  - Goal achievement
- Post race:
  - Post-race blues, unhappy with performance or trying to make sense of it



# How to do it? Using brief interventions



- Arousal management
  - Relaxation strategies
- Goal-setting
  - Assess and manage pain (process goals)
  - Different levels of goals
- Imagery
  - Direct attention and pain management
- Cognitive strategies
  - Self-talk: 'control the controllables'; pacing
- Anchoring
  - Recall past successes (trust your training)
  - Pieces of finish line ribbon
    - Recall key points of the intervention
    - Attach a mantra, or statement to it that reminds you to keep going when it gets difficult





# Critical Evaluation/ Brief interventions



- Can brief interventions have a measurable impact on affective experience and/or actual performance?
  - Lane et al. (2016) – online training effectiveness on competitive performance
  - Yeager in Walton (2011) – effectiveness of brief interventions in education
- How to assess?
  - Mostly cross-sectional research
    - Limited time for controlled interventions
    - Difficult to control the environment
- What to assess?
  - Effectiveness of brief interventions
    - Anchoring, finish-line ribbons, self-talk

# Critical Evaluation/ Practicalities



- What is your philosophy?
  - Training of sport psychologists
  - Promoting sport psychology to a wider audience
- Who to include as a psyching team volunteer?
  - Undergraduates, post-graduates, those in training, qualified professionals
- How to deal with 'negative' attitudes towards sport psychology provision?
  - Important to prepare volunteers for this
- Race selection
  - Distance
  - Number of runners
  - Access to the course

# References

- Buman, M. P., Omlil, J. W., Giacobbi Jr, P. R., & Brewer, B. W. (2008). Experiences and coping responses of “hitting the wall” for recreational marathon runners. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 20*(3), 282-300.
- McCormick, A., Meijen, C., & Marcora, S. (2016). Psychological demands experienced by recreational endurance athletes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 1-16*.
- McCormick, A., Meijen, C., & Marcora, S. (2015). Psychological determinants of whole-body endurance performance. *Sports Medicine, 45*(7), 997-1015.
- Meijen, C., Day, C., & Hays, K. F. (2016). Running a psyching team: Providing mental support at long-distance running events. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action, 1-11*.

# Questions?

# THE UK'S EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



[www.kent.ac.uk](http://www.kent.ac.uk)

University of  
**Kent**