**Running a Psyching Team: The introduction of mental support at endurance events in England**

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**Purpose:** To share and reflect on setting up and running a ‘Psyching Team’, where mental support is provided to endurance runners, in the United Kingdom.

**Background:** Participating in long distance running events can be mentally demanding, particularly for first time runners. Psyching teams provide brief psychological support to participants before, during, and after long distance running events such as marathons. This is a concept that is developed and refined in America over the past 30 years, and in addition to potential benefits to runners, it also provides mental skills training and hands on experience to team members, and helps to de-mystify sport psychology to those who do not normally have access to this service.

**Methods:** This presentation will focus on the development of a UK-based model of psyching teams. Strategies that have been used, such as mantras and anchoring where participants draw on their positive experiences, will be discussed. There will be a critical reflection of the potential benefits of a psyching team and an evaluation of the effectiveness of using brief, non-traditional interventions. In addition, areas of growth will be identified.

**Conclusions:** Psyching teams are becoming part of more endurance events across America and Europe. Although there are difficulties with evaluating the effectiveness, anecdotal evidence such as self-reported feedback points to psyching teams adding value. When setting up a psyching team, organisers need to carefully consider their philosophy, identify funding sources, ensure that race directors are on board, understand clinical issues, and provide training opportunities for psyching team members.