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BOOK REVIEW

Title: **SPORT PSYCHOLOGY: An Analysis of Athlete Behaviour**
Editor: William F. Straub
Publisher: Mouvement Publications, Ithaca, New York
Price: \$9.95 £2.95 Paperback

As the Editor states in his Preface to this selection of American, Canadian and British readings: "The mind is sport science's last frontier. All other systems have been extensively used to improve athletic performances." Although interest in the psychology of sport has been around for as long as sport itself, it is only the past 10 or so years that the science of behaviour has begun to be applied systematically. The expressed intention of this book, according to Straub, is to "help coaches and students of sport behaviour become more aware of the techniques available to change athlete behaviours."

The emphasis is placed deliberately on topics usually studied in undergraduate and graduate physical education courses, and Straub's idea was for the readings to be used in conjunction with a standard text (though he does not specify which ones he had in mind). Half the contributions — there are 32 in all — were commissioned and the others chosen for inclusion as "classics" in their field. Straub wanted very much to help the "coach on the job" with factors affecting an individual's performance and team success, and the contents reflect this.

The text is divided into 11 sections: Introduction (which includes a general overview of the subject, and deals with the following aspects: developmental, personality and clinical, learning and training, social and psychometrics; this is followed by a run-down of behavioural principles and applications; and an account of the USA's first sport psychologist who was active over 50 years ago); Motivation of Athlete and Team; Aggression; Humanism and Performance; Attention and Anxiety; Meditation and Performance; Social and Cultural Aspects; Psychological Health; Personality; Leadership Style; and Team Cohesion. There is no index.

This wide-ranging compilation provides a happy marriage of contributions by clinically-orientated psychologists and those with a physical education background, of which the following are of particular interest: Suinn on behavioural assessment and modification, especially his cognitive approaches; Halliwell on intrinsic motivation; Nideffer on attention and anxiety; Loyman on the role of meditation in sports performance; Burke and Kleiber on psychological pressures of competitive sports on children; and that seldom dealt with topic — psychological problems encountered at the end of an athletic career, by Jack Cratty.

Theories abound over the 295 pages but not many hypotheses are put to the test. However, the book's heuristic value should compensate for that; it provides a rich supply of source references, and is definitely one of the most comprehensive and accessible texts on the still young field of sport psychology. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the person behind the performance. Perhaps we can look forward, in due course, to a second edition with more data to back up the theorising.

Maurice Yaffé