



An organizational perspective on applied sport psychology in elite sport

Paul Wylleman^{a,b,*}

^a Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium

^b TeamNL, Papendal, the Netherlands



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ABSTRACT

While research on applied sport psychology (ASP) has generally focused on the development and professional practice of its practitioners, less attention has been paid to the role of organizations. The aim of this article consisted of reflecting on the role of organizations on the development of ASP practitioners and the quality of their services. Using FEPSAC's position statement on the quality of applied sport psychology services, the role of two types of organizations - a sport psychology and an elite sport organization - on the development of ASP practitioners and the quality of their services was reviewed. After providing an overview of initiatives related to ASP as developed or supported by FEPSAC, the role of elite sport organizations ensuring high-quality ASP services was described. Throughout the article, reflections and recommendations are provided on how the development of ASP practitioners and the provision of ASP services can be supported and enhanced. The article concludes with suggestions on the role both types of organizations can play in the quality management of ASP services.

As professional practice in applied sport psychology (ASP) in Europe grew strongly during the past two decades (Wylleman, Harwood, Elbe, Reints, & de Caluwé, 2009), the European Federation of Sport Psychology (Fédération Européenne de Psychologie des Sports et des Activités Corporelles, FEPSAC) developed and supported several initiatives relevant to the development of ASP practitioners and the services they provide in the field of elite level sport (Wylleman & Seiler, 2016). One of these initiatives included the in 2006 published position statement (PS) 'Quality of applied sport psychology services' (FEPSAC, 2018a) proposing a framework of quality management of ASP services in relation to the individual ASP practitioner, the organizations (e.g., private practices, elite sport organizations) providing ASP services and the sport psychology organizations. As ASP practitioners were considered central to effective practice (Tod, Hutter, & Eubank, 2017), sport psychology researchers strongly focused on the development and professional practice of the ASP practitioners. Research revealed that during the past years clear steps forward were reported, among others, in the development of practitioners' competences (e.g., Eubank, Nesti, & Cruickshank, 2014; Hutter, van der Zande, Rosier, & Wylleman, 2016; Lubker, Visek, Watson II, & Singpurwalla, 2012) as well as in the content and quality of their services (e.g., McDougall, Nesti, & Richardson, 2015; Sharp & Hodge, 2014; Woolway & Harwood, 2018). The organizations however, considered to "influence the quality of work of individual sport psychology consultants in the field even if the

satisfaction of the client depends primarily on his or her individual experience with one consultant" (FEPSAC, 2018a, p. 1), received only limited attention with regard to their role in ASP service provision (e.g., Coumbe-Lilley, 2011; Portenga, Aoyagi, & Statler, 2012; Schinke, Stambulova, Trepanier, & Oghene, 2015). The aim of this article consists therefore to reflect on the role of organizations in the development of ASP practitioners and the quality of their services.

In line with the framework of quality management of ASP services (FEPSAC, 2018a) the focus will be on two types of organizations, namely a sport psychology organization and an elite sport organization (e.g., elite sport center, national Olympic Committee) providing ASP services. As the major player engaged in the development of ASP in Europe – and in light of its 50th anniversary – FEPSAC will be used as an example of how initiatives developed or supported by a sport psychology organization are relevant to issues of quality of ASP practitioners and of the services they provide. Taking into account the growing integration of ASP services as part of the support system available to elite athletes, teams and coaches (e.g., Ge et al., 2016; Larsen, 2018; Mellalieu, 2017; Moesch et al., 2018), different elite sport organizations will be used to exemplify challenges these organizations may face in order to ensure high-quality ASP services. Throughout this article reflections and recommendations will be provided on how the development of ASP practitioners and the provision of ASP services can be supported and enhanced. This article will conclude with suggestions

* Corresponding author. Research Group Sport Psychology and Mental Support, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, 1050, Brussel, Belgium.
E-mail address: Paul.Wylleman@vub.be.

on the role both types of organizations can play in the quality management of ASP services.

This article can be considered as a case conceptualization aimed at improving the understanding of the role of a sport psychology organization (i.e., FEPSAC) and elite sport organizations in the quality management of ASP services in elite sport by describing (past and present) initiatives developed or supported by these organizations and relevant to ASP practitioners and the services they provide in elite sport. Building upon this understanding, suggestions are then formulated on the initiatives these organizations can develop and the role they can (continue to) play in order to enhance the quality of ASP services in elite sport. This case conceptualization should also be contextualized in line with the author's educational background, experiential knowledge and professional multi-role perspective (Friese, 2018; Wylleman, 2017) in relation to ASP. These include (a) clinical psychology (children, adolescents, adults) and PhD in psychology; (b) ASP practitioner providing services to elite-level athletes, teams and coaches during the past 25 years (including on-site at European and World Championships, Universiade, Summer and Winter Olympic Games); (c) high performance manager in a national Olympic Committee responsible for the selection, organization and management of a team of ASP practitioners delivering, all-year round and country-wise, competency-based support to Olympic and Paralympic athletes, teams and coaches; (d) researcher focused on the holistic development of elite-level athletes' careers and the quality of ASP service provision; and (e) member of the managing council of FEPSAC (1999–2015) including an eight-year presidency. Finally, 'elite sport' (Swann, Moran, & Piggott, 2015) should be considered as referring to athletes, teams and coaches selected by their national sport governing body and/or national Olympic Committee to compete at minimal continental level (e.g., European championships, World championships, Olympic Games); 'ASP practitioners' will be considered to group those with an education in psychology (e.g., sport psychologist, performance psychologist, counseling psychologist, clinical psychologist) and those with an education in sport sciences with a specialization in sport psychology. When required, reference will be made to the specific sub-group under discussion.

1. FEPSAC and the development of ASP practitioners

Establishing an acceptance and a common (i.e., European) understanding of the field of sport psychology, and fostering mutual exchange between the different traditions and (scientific) developments of sport psychology in Europe – as stated in its statutes (FEPSAC, 2015) – have always been at the forefront of FEPSAC's activities. Clear results of this include, among others, FEPSAC's high-quality congresses, conferences, and scientific journal (i.e., *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*). FEPSAC's growing interest for ASP surged during the mid 1990s (Wylleman & Liukkonen, 2003) and was related, in general, to the unification of Europe and the opening of the European labor market – both of which necessitated a (more) unified definition of "sport psychologist" (Wylleman & Seiler, 2016) – and specifically to the increased representation and involvement of applied practitioners in its Managing Council. As will be described in the next section, this led FEPSAC not only to develop and propagate own initiatives, but to also provide support (e.g., patronage) to ASP-related initiatives initiated by its members. While not all initiatives may have had an exclusive ASP focus, those included have been found by ASP practitioners to be relevant to their own development as practitioner and/or to the provision of their services. The initiatives, developed over a period of 22 years, are categorized in terms of their aim, namely (1) as Position Statements (PS) aimed at making public the position of the Managing Council and FEPSAC on "topical and important questions" (FEPSAC, 2018a). Based on scientific knowledge their overall aim is "to promote a sound and professional performance in sport activities"; and (2) as continued professional development aimed, via different formats (e.g., master-class, conference, accreditation), at enhancing the competences of ASP

practitioners and the quality of ASP services. For each initiative the aim and content are described and elaborated with reflections on their relevance to ASP in elite sport. Finally, while a chronological representation of these initiatives could have provided insight into FEPSAC's development as an organization (for a more detailed overview of FEPSAC in the past and in the future of sport psychology in Europe, see Seiler & Wylleman, 2009 and Wylleman & Seiler, 2016), the aim of this article was restricted to the role of ASP in elite sport.

1.1. Position Statements

The first category of ASP-related initiatives consists of PS's which FEPSAC published since 1995 and of which six, out of the 12 PS published, are directly relevant to ASP practitioners and their services. These six PS can be grouped into three topics, namely the quality management of ASP services, the way in which ASP practitioners provide their services, and to the content of ASP services.

1.1.1. Quality management for ASP services

This PS, to which reference was made earlier, provides a framework of quality management of ASP services (FEPSAC, 2018b) which was addressed initially by Swiss sport psychologists Daniel Birrer and Roland Seiler during the 1999 FEPSAC Congress in Prague (Birrer & Seiler, 1999) and was published by the Swiss Association of Sport Psychology in 2004 (Baldasarre, Birrer, & Seiler, 2004). The framework is based in first instance on the analysis that while in elite level sport different support services are already provided (e.g., medical, performance diagnosis, nutrition, physiotherapy) "Additional assistance is required in the area of psychological support." (p. 1). Secondly, the framework defines the aim of ASP as providing efficient psychological support for athletes, teams, coaches, sport clubs, organizations and significant others through ... sport psychologists, mental trainers, psychological coaches or other sport psychology service providers ... [with] a central focus usually on optimising performance ... [and] other psychological themes such as well-being, work-life-balance or interpersonal issues (p. 1).

Third, it stipulates that as "a large number of intervention strategies and methods have been developed, scientifically tested and successfully applied in the past" (p. 1), practitioners and organizations need "to be professional and to deliver services of only highest quality" (p. 1). Finally, while the framework considers the quality of ASP services related to ASP practitioners and organizations (i.e., intervention centers, sport psychology organizations) it focuses specifically on how an organization can attend to the quality of ASP service provision. To do so, it proposes a quality management framework consisting of three factors which are cyclic interrelated and deemed as indispensable for quality improvement.

The first factor 'quality of the structure' refers to relative stable aspects such as the personal and professional prerequisites and the technical, infrastructural, organizational and financial resources available. This includes for example (a) the practitioners' competences (e.g., motivation, mentoring, internships, [continued] education, specialist expertise, attitude); (b) the co-operation and work with the coach; (c) the position within and integration of the ASP services in the sport system; (d) the access to and availability of the ASP practitioners (e.g., response time to the first contact); (e) types of interventions (e.g., mental skills training, clinical therapy); (f) the collaboration among ASP practitioners (e.g., teamwork); (g) the position towards and the integration with other services (e.g., sport medicine, sport sciences, dual career services); (h) the rules and regulations of the consultation process (e.g., professional code of conduct); and (i) the legal and economic aspects of the services provided (e.g., reimbursements, insurance policy). The second factor 'process quality' refers to the quality of the ASP service provision and includes (a) the professional relation between ASP practitioner, other professionals and the client; (b) the use of reliable and valid diagnostic tools; (c) the fit between method and

indication (c) the resources (e.g., time, finances); available; (d) documentary practices and data privacy; and (e) supervision and intervention (e.g., case presentation in peer group). The third and final factor ‘outcome quality’ refers to the (in)formal evaluation of set goals and output. This could include (a) the duration of the service provision, clients’ compliance and satisfaction with the services provided and (b) the acceptance and use of ASP service delivery by organizations (e.g., national Olympic Committee).

The value of this PS is its framework allowing to evaluate and manage the quality of ASP services. While it can also assist individual ASP practitioners to consider their services in terms of structure, process and outcome, its strength is that it is actually geared towards organizations such as national Olympic Committees and elite sport centers. In first instance it enables these organizations to pro-actively consider and ensure the organizational and financial resources required to provide for high-quality ASP services. Secondly, it situates the provision of ASP services and thus also the position of the ASP practitioner within an organizational perspective. This means that the framework requires organizations to reflect on, for example, the place of ASP service provision in relation to the other services (e.g., medical, physiotherapy, dietary, strength and conditioning) provided to its athletes, teams and coaches, and the professional context of the ASP practitioner within the section of the organization responsible for the provision of services (e.g., performance department). Finally, it provides a clear route to follow when evaluating the services provided. Particularly, it underlines that while the outcome or result of service provision (e.g., the coach’s satisfaction, the athlete’s progress) is important, aspects such as access to and availability of ASP practitioners and collaboration among ASP practitioners should also be considered.

1.1.2. Provision of ASP services

The next FEPSAC statements relevant to the way in which ASP services are provided include PS ‘9. Ethical Principles of the European Sport Psychology Federation’ (published in 2011) (FEPSAC, 2011) and PS ‘10. Culturally Competent Practice in Sport and Exercise Psychology’ (published in 2017) (FEPSAC, 2018b).

The first statement on ethical principles provides seven principles for “practitioners to act responsibly and ethically in the provision of sport psychology services” (p. 1). The first principle of professional and social responsibility requires practitioners to uphold professional standards of conduct and accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior. This includes for example safeguarding clients from those (e.g., colleagues) who are deficient in ethical and professional conduct, consulting and cooperating with other professionals to best serve the needs of recipients of the services, as well as the requirement for ASP practitioners to maintain their own mental and physical health. The second principle relates to upholding the highest standards of competence through ensuring the knowledge required to the provision of services by way of continued professional development (CPD), recognizing the limitations of one’s own expertise and boundaries of technique and methods used, referring from misrepresentation of qualifications or expertise, and restricting service provision to what they are qualified for by education, training, or experience and referring to a suitable colleague when requested to provide a service beyond the ASP practitioners’ competences. With the third principle ‘Consent’ indicating the requirement to receive the client’s informed consent (i.e., a document informing and signed by the client on the proposed intervention, treatment or test), the fourth principle relates to the matter of confidentiality with regard to obtaining or passing on information. The fifth (‘Integrity’) and sixth (‘Personal conduct’) principles delineate the need for ASP practitioners to be honest, fair and respectful, not consciously make misleading, fake or deceptive statements, and to conduct themselves in a manner beneficial to the well-being of their clients and the field of sport psychology. The final principle points to the need for the highest ethical and professional standards when conducting, publishing and disseminating research – a principle which is relevant when

an ASP practitioner publishes for example a case-study in a professional journal.

The statement on cultural competence is relevant to the field of ASP as it provides its practitioners with recommendations on the need for multicultural awareness and diverse client group inclusion, as well as with guidelines for working with culturally diverse populations. As first principle ASP practitioners are “encouraged to be aware of their own cultural context (e.g., of their own culturally constituted beliefs, values, attitudes, and any hidden philosophical assumptions) and its potential representation in their behavior and interactions” (p. 2) (FEPSAC, 2018b), by way of, among others, attending closely to stereotypes, biases, attitudes, beliefs and other unconscious and automatic phenomena which become apparent by means of self-reflections and self-awareness. A second principle states that practitioners should be aware and cognizant of the cultural background of their clients as this will influence not only their clients’ interactions with them but also the clients’ adherence to the interventions or program. The third principle addresses the need for practitioners to adopt multicultural approaches, for example, by frequent contacts with certain groups or by viewing individuals as individuals rather than as representative of a group of individuals. Principle four reflects the need for practitioners to engage in CPD in order to enhance their competencies related to multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion, principle five specifies this need in terms of sensitivity for clients’ linguistic requirements. Principle six delineates that practitioners should enhance athletes and coaches’ sensitivity for cultural differences and the way that these affect interactions, while principle eight encourages practitioners in their professional roles to be active agents of change promoting understanding and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds and contexts as well as preventing all forms of racism, discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatization. Finally, principle seven propagates the need for ASP services to be accessible to all, independent of cultural backgrounds.

The relevance of both PS to FEPSAC is in first instance the statement that ASP practitioners should not only “aspire towards the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct and practice ... [and] act in accordance, and not violate, the values and rules described in the ethical principles ...” (FEPSAC, 2011, p. 1) but at the same time acknowledge and respect cultural differences in their practice. Both statements also emphasize clearly the need for ASP practitioners to use them in conjunction with the Code of Ethics of their own national psychology association (e.g., British Psychological Society [BSP], 2018) or sport psychology society (e.g., *Vereniging van Sportpsychologie te Nederland [VSPN]*, 2018). In second instance these statements can be considered tools which ASP practitioners can use to inform their clients about ethics, guidelines of conduct and cultural competency to which practitioners should abide in their day-to-day professional conduct. This is especially relevant as clients may not always be knowledgeable about for example the Code of Ethics of the ASP practitioner’s own national psychology association. Finally, as the application of cultural competences may vary across countries, organizations and/or professional roles, these PS provide practitioners from around Europe with a basic set of principles which can be used, for example, when discussing case-studies or the boundaries of professional conduct during peer consultancy sessions, or as part of an international educational or CPD program.

1.1.3. Content of ASP services

Finally, FEPSAC presented three PS’s which provide information relevant to the content of ASP service provision, including PS ‘3. Sports career transitions’ published in 1997 (FEPSAC, 1997), PS ‘5. Sports career termination’ published in 1999 (FEPSAC, 1999) and the recently published PS ‘11. Mental health disorders in elite athletes and models of service provision’ (Moesch et al., 2018). PS 3 and PS 5 enable ASP practitioners to consider the significance of career transitions and career stages on elite athletes’ development throughout, as well as after their sport career. More specifically, PS 3 attends ASP practitioners

the different sport career transitions athletes will face, as well as to the factors which may lead to a positive (i.e., the athlete makes a relative quick and easy adjustment to the demands of the next career stage) or a crisis transition (i.e., the athlete is unable to adjust to the demands of the next stage). Furthermore, recommendations include how to inform and educate athletes, coaches and others relevant to athletes about stages and transitions and what type of support that could be provided to athletes in transition. With PS 5 the focus is specifically on the 'end of the sport career' transition by addressing some of the problems retiring/retired elite athletes may face as well as by formulating recommendations regarding which ASP interventions could have a positive influence on athletes' coping (e.g., assessing athletes' needs before making this transition, identifying and teaching transferable skills to be used in non-sport domains of life).

FEPSAC's most recently published PS (Moesch et al., 2018) on mental health is aimed at enhancing ASP practitioners' awareness of mental health disorders (MHD) in elite sport. A first section on research on MHD in elite athletes reveals not only that the prevalence of MHD is comparable to or greater than the general population, but also that "elite sport context-specific factors such as injury, excessive overtraining in combination with inadequate recovery, and career termination may increase vulnerability to certain mental disorders" (p. 62). The second section describes different aspects of service provision models used in six European countries, including elements related to the professional service providers (e.g., clinically trained [sport] psychologists, [sport] psychotherapists, psychiatrists), the organization of the support system, the process of diagnostic assessment, and the clinical treatment. Finally, it provides also an overview of screening strategies aimed at detecting mental health problems.

With these three statements FEPSAC confirmed the need to use a developmental, holistic and mental health perspective in support provision (e.g., Sheehana, Herring, & Campbell, 2018; Wolman & Fraser-Thomas, 2017). The need to consider athletes' mental health has recently also been confirmed by another major sport psychology association. The International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) published a Position Stand aimed at assisting practitioners to "become aware of the presence of subclinical and clinical mental conditions, cultivate help-seeking behaviours, and provide or refer athletes for evidence-based interventions" (Schinke, Stambulova, Si, & Moore, 2017).

1.2. Continued professional development

The second category of ASP-related initiatives has been categorized under the heading of continued professional development (CPD) – initiatives aimed at enhancing the development of ASP practitioners active in elite sport and of the services they provide. These included the Forum of Applied Sport psychologists in Topsport (FAST), the Masterclass Psychological Excellence for Elite Performance (PE4EP), the 2013 FEPSAC Conference 'Applied Sport Psychology in Europe' and the European Certification for Specialists in ASP.

1.2.1. Forum of Applied Sport psychologists in Topsport (FAST)

Since 2004 FEPSAC has patronaged the Forum of Applied Sport psychologists in Topsport (FAST). Developed as a continued professional development (CPD) initiative, FAST provides ASP professionals working at elite and Olympic/Paralympic level from around Europe a forum to "exchange experiential knowledge, have reflective conversations, act as a sounding board, and conduct peer consultancy within a structured environment based upon expertise, trust, respect, confidence, mutual support, and confidentiality." (Wylleman et al., 2009, p. 441). Bringing together ASP experts from 13 European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK), group sessions, workshops and peer consultancy sessions are used to discuss topics including, for example, the role of the educational background of ASP practitioners (e.g., continued professional development in ASP),

the functioning of ASP practitioners (e.g., on-site support during Olympic Games), the delivery of ASP services to athletes (e.g., interventions during acute situations) and coaches (e.g., psychological preparation for coaches), and the collaboration with other support service providers (e.g., the ASP expert as part of the Olympic multi-disciplinary team) (Wylleman et al., 2009). FAST meetings have generally been organized on invitation from a national Olympic Committee (e.g., the Italian Olympic Committee, CONI) or a national elite sport organization (e.g., the Norwegian Olympic Training Center, Olympiatoppen) and have also been located in some of the host cities of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (e.g., Athens in 2004, in Beijing in 2008). Furthermore, by providing workshops or symposia a close link has always been kept with the local FEPSAC member organization (e.g., the Norwegian Association for Sport Psychology, NFIP) or even organizations of sport psychology outside of Europe (e.g., the Chinese Sport Psychology Association, CSPA). Initiatives similar to FAST included, for example, the Redondo Beach Sport Psychology Consulting Think Tank joining established and young sport psychology professionals and experienced coaches in sharing lessons from applying sport psychology in competitive settings (Poczwadowski & Lauer, 2006).

This initiative contributed to the development of ASP practitioners and their services by providing a peer supervised forum which allowed, within the boundaries of professional conduct, the exchange of experiences and lessons-learned. As the members worked in the similar context of elite level sport, the practitioners were able to focus not only on the content of their service provision but also – and sometimes more importantly – on the organizational conditions imposed on them when providing ASP services. This included aspects such as the role and process of accreditation at major tournaments or Olympic Games, the remuneration of services provided, extending service provision to coaches, and the integration of ASP services in a multi- or interdisciplinary support team. As the forum ensured a safe (i.e., acceptance of confidentiality and openness to each other) and closed setting (i.e., no public attending as during a conference), participants also engaged into a second topic, namely how working in elite sport impact the ASP practitioners themselves. Topics discussed related for example to the high flexibility required to work as ASP in the setting of the Olympic Games, the impact of working at elite level on the ASP practitioner's personal life (e.g., long times of absence from home and family) and professional development (e.g., little time for continued professional development), and how working a long time with the same athletes and coaches may influence the way in which services are provided (e.g., developing friendship relationships interfering with professional judgements).

1.2.2. Masterclass Psychological Excellence for Elite Performance (PE4EP)

As education and training in the field of applied sport psychology in Europe was generally based within university programs (Hutter et al., 2016), FEPSAC's support for the international CPD initiative 'Psychological Excellence for Elite Performance' (PE4EP) can be considered as innovative. PE4EP, which joined FEPSAC with two centers of excellence in elite sport and performance in Europe (i.e., the National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance, INSEP; the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, VUB), provided ASP practitioners, elite coaches, and sport managers a platform to exchange professional experiences and develop their competencies. While coaches and managers had to be working at elite or Olympic/Paralympic level, ASP practitioners were required to have between three to five years of experience providing services in competitive sport at minimum national level. With a program combining presentations, workshops, group discussions, case studies, as well as individual and group exercises (e.g., observation exercises during the Grand Slam qualification rounds at Roland Garros), topics such as conflict and crisis management and challenges in providing ASP services in elite and Olympic sports were covered. Presenters and leaders of workshops included senior ASP practitioners from around Europe – some of which had their own sport background in elite or Olympic sport

– with expertise in, among others, working with elite youth players, injury prevention and rehabilitation, crisis management, and coaching behavior. In recognition of this CPD's academic and applied level successful participation in this PE4EP program led to a joint postgraduate certificate. Interesting to note is that several of the PE4EP participants continued or made their way professionally with their national Olympic Committee.

With this initiative FEPSAC complemented the other educational initiatives it supported at that moment (e.g., the European master's degree program in Exercise and Sport Psychology). Graduate and post-graduate level programs in ASP were thus elaborated with a CPD for ASP practitioners. Important was also that, contrary to post-academic ASP programs, participants were required to have a well-delineated level of experiential knowledge and applied practice. In this way, PE4EP set itself apart from other (especially post-graduate) ASP programs by being aimed at experienced rather than at neophyte ASP professionals (Hutter et al., 2016). Novel in comparison to other ASP programs was the inclusion of other professionals working in elite sport as participants rather than as presenters. Participants were thus always challenged and expected to apply their competences within a professional multi-disciplinary context. The significance of such a professional multi-disciplinary context was also enhanced by the fact that, contrary to most programs which are university-based, PE4EP was hosted within an elite sport environment (i.e., INSEP in Paris). Not only did this allow participants to get close to and visit elite sport infrastructure (e.g., training hall, indoor cycling track, strength and conditioning rooms, athlete restaurants, sport science labs, athlete accommodation) but also to be submerged in the day-to-day business (e.g., training, education, living) of elite athletes, teams, coaches and support staff. In light of the growing acknowledgement of the importance of CPD in ASP, Hutter et al. (2016) concluded that initiatives such as PE4EP, which are explicitly directed at the ongoing training for professionals, should be encouraged.

1.2.3. The 2013 FEPSAC conference 'Applied Sport Psychology in Europe'

Since its beginning FEPSAC organized a high-quality European congress. While the earliest congresses were organized in 1968, 1969, and 1975, the quadrennial cycle of the FEPSAC congresses only started in 1975.

In line with a decision of its Managing Council in 2011, FEPSAC organized its first conference, interceding between the quadrennial FEPSAC European Congresses of Sport Psychology 2011 (Madeira) and 2015 (Bern). From the perspective of the field of ASP, the significance of this first FEPSAC European Sport Psychology Conference organized in 2013 in Paris was that it was monothematically dedicated to 'Applied Sport Psychology in Europe'. The keynotes covered different aspects of ASP, including the situation of ASP within Europe, the career development of ASP practitioners, working as ASP practitioner at elite and Olympic level, and the possible role of ASP in Olympic success (Meijen & Adams, 2014). The program was completed with sessions related to the education and career development in ASP, work settings of ASP practitioners, the role of ASP in talent development, and working as ASP practitioner at Olympic and Paralympic level. Finally, a round table and 43 posters lead to ASP-relevant discussions and presentations.

While each quadrennial FEPSAC congress had always included ASP as a sub-theme – or had a FAST workshop in its pre-congress program – this was actually the first time that FEPSAC focused fully on the field of ASP. Moreover, as with this monothematic conference on ASP "FEPSAC responded to a clear need among a specific section of the sport psychology community" (Wylleman & Seiler, 2016, p. 19), it could be said that the following congress and conference followed suit by extending their section focused on ASP. For example, sessions relevant to the field of ASP, including 'Doing sport psychology? Critical reflections as a scientist-practitioner', 'Professional challenges working at the Olympic level', and 'Certification for sport psychology service delivery in Europe', were specifically programmed during the 2015 FEPSAC

European Sport Psychology Congress in Bern (and later made available as podcasts), while 'Developing a high performance culture', 'Mental health problems in elite athletes: systems, challenges, and recommendations for practice', and 'Challenges in the provision of psychology support for performance excellence during the Rio Olympic Summer Games' were on the 2017 FEPSAC Conference program. Finally, similar to PE4EP, the fact that the 2013 FEPSAC Conference on ASP in Europe was organized with, and in situ of an elite sport center (i.e., INSEP) certainly increased the attractiveness and the relatedness for its practicing participants.

1.2.4. European Certification for Specialists in ASP

FEPSAC recently focused on developing a 'Certification for Specialists in ASP' which should allow its members to be distinguished from other ASP practitioners such as mental coaches or mental skills trainers (Wylleman, Moesch, & Debois, submitted). With this initiative FEPSAC aims at defining "the minimum standards that should be met by individuals in order to qualify for safe and effective independent practice in the field of ASP" (p. 1). Based upon, among others, an analysis of post-graduate education programs and certification systems in different countries in Europe, FEPSAC formulated a minimum quality level in order for the certification to be applicable around Europe and allow for the inclusion of its members who cannot rely on or afford an education in ASP. In order to apply for the Certificate of Specialist in ASP, four criteria need to be met, namely (a) having an academic degree in sport psychology, psychology, or sport science (equivalent to 240 credits); (b) complemented their initial qualification in psychology or in sport science with a specialization in sport psychology; (c) gone through supervised applied practice including applied practice (e.g., counseling with athletes, providing workshops to coaches, observation during competitions) and supervision or intervision (e.g., feedback through guidance and counseling from professional peers); and (d) having experience with and commitment to culturally competent practice. Members who are certified may use the title 'Specialist in ASP' (acronym 'SASP-FEPSAC'). FEPSAC implemented a testing phase in 2018 and plans to open the certification process in 2019.

This certification is clearly aimed at establishing clear criteria for those providing ASP services. However, as the title of psychologist can only be used when the criteria of national psychology licensing boards are met, FEPSAC cannot establish a certification for 'sport psychologists'. In view of its members (i.e., with a background in psychology, in sport sciences or in both), FEPSAC has therefore chosen to denominate the recipient of this Certification for Specialists in ASP. Finally, it is important to note that in view of the diversity (or sometimes lack) of ASP-related education in European countries, this certification has been set at a level which ensures the greatest possibility for inclusion of applicants from around Europe.

As this review shows, FEPSAC has not only supported but also developed initiatives related to the development of ASP practitioners and of the services they provide. It has done so by means directly relevant to it, namely publications, congresses and conferences, and patronaging. Of course, as specified in the framework of quality management of ASP services, this development will also be influenced by elite sport organizations which provide ASP services.

2. Elite sport organizations and the services provided by ASP practitioners

Several indications support the perspective that ASP practitioners and their services are definitely finding their way in elite sport. In first instance, ASP practitioners are reported to provide services in view and during the Olympics (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; Birrer, Wetzel, Schmid, & Morgan, 2012; Elsborg, Diment, & Elbe, 2015; Henriksen, 2015). For example, during the 2016 Rio Olympic Summer Games 13 national Olympic teams involved 71 ASP practitioners (i.e., sport psychologists, mental performance consultants) of which 76% worked on-site, while

during the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games 36 ASP practitioners were in support of 11 Olympic teams with 75% providing services on-site (personal communication P. Haberl, July 13, 2016; February 27, 2018). Furthermore, ASP practitioners are reported to be part of centers providing (sport) psychology support services, including elite sport organizations and national Olympic Committees (e.g., Ge et al., 2016; Larsen, 2018; Mellalieu, 2017; Woolway & Harwood, 2018). Finally, research also provided insight into senior ASP practitioners' experiences working within elite sport (e.g., Cropley, Baldock, Mellalieu, & Neil, 2016; Eubank et al., 2014; McDougall et al., 2015).

In the following section the framework of quality management of ASP services will be used to reflect on challenges elite sport organizations may face when providing ASP services. As including all relevant aspects of each factor in this framework would go beyond the scope of this paper, a selection of topics will be addressed. Furthermore, it should also be noted that as the three framework factors "are considered to be in a cyclic interrelation" (FEPSAC, 2018a), the topics addressed cannot always be categorized exclusively to only one factor. Taking into account the lack of comparative research into how elite sport organizations fit ASP support provision into their system, three elite sport organizations were chosen which have developed as part of their organization an ASP support system employing a team of ASP practitioners to provide support to their elite athletes, teams and coaches, namely the English Institute of Sport (EIS) (2018a), Team Denmark (2018a), and TeamNL (NOC*NSF, 2018a).

2.1. Structure quality

The quality of the structure refers in first instance to "the competencies of the professionals including their motivation, education and further education, specialization and aptitude ... in relation to the potential intervention type" (FEPSAC, 2018a, p. 1). A first general, yet influential aspect related to this factor is the title used by these professionals. In the sport psychology literature a range of titles are used including sport psychologist (e.g., McDougall et al., 2015; McEwan & Tod, 2015; Tod et al., 2017), sport psychology consultant (e.g., Woolway & Harwood, 2018), ASP practitioner (e.g., Wylleman et al., 2009), performance psychology consultant (e.g., Portenga et al., 2012), or specialist in applied sport psychology (e.g., Moesch et al., 2018). As this is also the case with the sport psychology organizations (e.g., sport psychologist, sport psychology consultant, young specialist in sport psychology) (Schinke et al., 2018), it should not be surprising that the world of elite sport also uses different titles such as sport psychologist (English Institute of Sport [EIS], 2018b), performance psychologist (English Institute of Sport, 2018c), and expert in performance behavior (NOC*NSF, 2018b). The significance of the title is generally related to the process of accreditation which is found "necessary in fostering understanding about the competencies needed to practice effectively in this field" (Schinke et al., 2018).

As highlighted in relation to FEPSAC's Certification for Specialists in ASP, establishing these competences (e.g., academic degree, specialization in sport psychology, supervised applied practice and culturally competent practice) is important in order to provide for a safe and effective independent practice in the field of ASP (e.g., Winter & Collins, 2016). One way of understanding elite sport organizations' perspective on the relevance and content of these competences is by considering the roles and criteria set in the job descriptions of ASP practitioners as advertised by these organizations. The examples used include a sport psychology consultant at the Danish Team Denmark (2018b), an expert in performance behavior at the Netherlands' TeamNL (NOC*NSF, 2018b), and a sport psychologist with British Gymnastics (English Institute of Sport, 2018b).

Considering ASP practitioners' roles, it is in first instance interesting to note the place of work: for Team Denmark it is at their headquarters (i.e., Team Danmark Idrættens Hus), for TeamNL it is at their five regional multisport centers of elite sport and study (i.e., Centrum voor

Topsport en Onderwijs, CTO), and for British Gymnastics it is at the National Sports Center. Secondly, comparing the roles described in these three job descriptions, several similarities can be found. When grouped, then three roles emerge. The first role is being the 'port-of-call' for providing ASP services to athletes in a variety of formats (e.g., one-to-one, group sessions) within specific contexts (e.g., athletes' daily training, training camps, international competitions). This may also include setting up and leading a program allowing athletes to develop specific (sport) psychological competences, as well as ensuring the follow-up of the ASP support provided to athletes. It is interesting to note that providing services to coaches is also explicitly stated. The second role requires ASP practitioners to cooperate interdisciplinary with other performance experts (e.g., doctors, physiotherapists, elite sport lifestyle coaches) in order to ensure high-quality individual (psychological) support. This may also involve collaboration with ASP practitioners outside of the elite sport organization. In the third role ASP practitioners are required to use appropriate communication methods (e.g., workshops) not only to disseminate knowledge about ASP to athletes, coaches and other experts in the performance staff, but also to educate them in the effective use of psychology support. Finally, the differences between the roles described in these three job descriptions are also clear and include (a) taking on an administrative (e.g., maintaining a database of services having been provided) and a managerial role (e.g., project management across the elite sport organization, collaborating and providing regular reports to key stakeholders), and (b) taking on a researcher's role (e.g., by developing ASP projects in cooperation with research institutions).

When considering the professional and educational qualifications stipulated, then the basic educational qualification is set at Master level in all three job descriptions, specific to psychology or sport science for British Gymnastics or to clinical (or related health) psychology for TeamNL. In these two cases, being professionally registered and/or licensed as a practitioner is also required: for British Gymnastics with the Health & Care Professions Council in the United Kingdom, with the organization of professionals in individual health care (Beroepen in de Individuele Gezondheidszorg, BIG) in the Netherlands. All three require professional experience with providing (sport) psychological support specifying the target groups (e.g., athletes, coaches), the competitive level (e.g., minimum national level), or the extent of professional experience (e.g., minimum five years). Other professional experience required includes for example the ability to analyze a range of sports in relation to their psychological needs, working within a multi-disciplinary team and to modify psychological support programs according to the results of assessment data in conjunction with coaches and other support staff (British Gymnastics), or having provided support to adolescents and experience with developing talented athletes' (psychological) competences (TeamNL). All three emphasize the need for excellent presentation and communication skills (e.g., knowledge of English for Team Denmark and TeamNL; communicating complex data in terms that are easily understood by a wide range of audiences for British Gymnastics) and good cooperation (i.e., being a team player) and leadership (e.g., strong personality) skills. Finally, other requirements include, for example, promoting and supporting equality, safeguarding and anti-doping within sport; no 9-to-5 mentality; or being experienced at developing, executing and communicating development of research projects.

This 'broad stroke' analysis of the perspective of three elite sport organizations on the competencies required by ASP professionals reveals in first instance a fairly similar 'profile' with regard to qualifications and experience, namely an educational qualification at Master level specified to (sport) psychology, experience in working with athletes at minimum national level, and excellent presentation, communication, cooperation and leadership skills.

Secondly, while it could be expected that these examples describe in essence (very) similar ASP practitioner jobs, the descriptions of the requirements are diverse. This becomes already apparent when

considering the titles used (sport psychology consultant, expert in performance behavior, sport psychologist). Furthermore, as the work places under consideration (headquarters, regional multisport elite sport center, national center) differ, the set of requirements may also differ (e.g., cooperation with more types of experts such as elite lifestyle coaches or study advisors).

The diversity among the three examples is also related to the format used to describe the required competences. While one lists five and a second 11 qualifications and experiences, the third uses a multicategory system differentiating not only qualifications, knowledge, skills and experiences but also the degree to which a competence is required (i.e., desirable, essential). In these examples a desirable qualification includes having a PhD in psychology while a desirable experience refers for example to having travelled with a team to major international competition at senior or junior level (e.g., Olympic or Paralympic Games, World or European Championships). This type of description of competences presents thus, in comparison to the two others, a more exhaustive and detailed profile.

Finally, a significant difference consists also in the fact that for two job descriptions the basic educational qualification (in psychology or in sport science) is deemed insufficient and needs to be augmented with being registered/licensed as a practitioner with a national board of health professionals. This requirement is clearly indicative of the fact that these elite sport organizations wish to rely on qualifications stipulated by another national agency in order to secure, for example, that they meet national standards and that clients (and employers) are protected. The significance of this requirement is that it encapsulates a well-defined set of competences which are not (always) addressed in the job description of elite sport organizations.

2.2. Process quality

The quality achieved during the process of ASP service delivery includes, among others, the assessment of the needs of the clients and the coordinated activities between the ASP practitioner and other professionals (FEPSAC, 2018a). As part of her perspective onto future practices of ASP Oglesby (2016) considered that while “traditional sport psychology approaches and techniques are highly focused on the “now” of performance” (p. 537), ASP is also defined in terms of developmental personal growth over a lifetime. Consequently, when considering the first aspect of process quality, assessing the needs of the ASP client, the focus on the ‘now’ of performance should be elaborated with a lifespan approach which includes a perspective on personal growth – or what is also known as a ‘whole career/whole person’ approach. A tool which can be used as part of the assessment in such an approach is conceptualized in the Holistic Athletic Career model (HAC) (Wylleman, Rosier, & De Knop, 2016). In line with the study of life span, the HAC (cfr. Fig. 1) reflects stages and transitions in six domains of development (i.e., sport, psychological, psychosocial, academic/vocational, financial, legal) and allows ASP practitioners to identify (a) the requirements posed to athletes by the developmental tasks related to each of the stages and transitions, (b) the possible interactive and reciprocal nature between these stages and transitions, and (c) the impact of the development in one domain on the elite athlete’s development in other domains. Using a holistic perspective in ASP services at elite level will require ASP practitioners to have knowledge of, and experience with the different stages and transitions in the development of athletes towards elite level. ASP practitioners use this model for example when asking athletes to reflect and identify, among others, the challenges they perceive to face at each level of development; in what way these challenges (can) influence their own development, mental health and level of performance; how challenges can influence each other; and what kind of support (e.g., from coaches, from ASP practitioners, from other support staff) would enhance the way in which they are able to cope with these challenges. TeamNL coaches have used this approach themselves to work with their own athletes. ASP practitioners

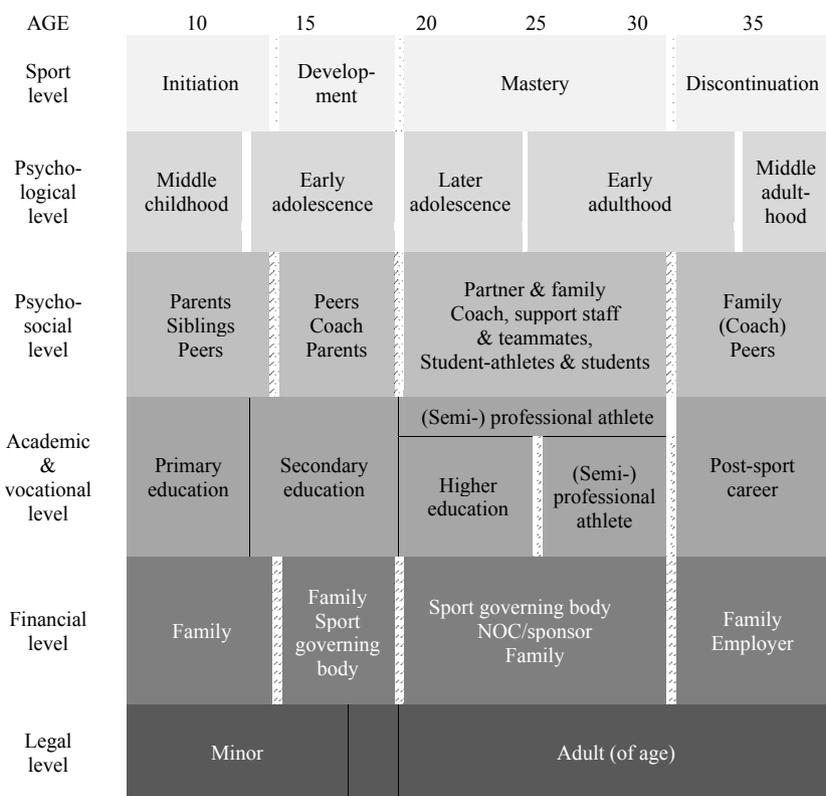
can also use the HAC model to discuss with coaches and their support staff (e.g., medical doctors, physiotherapists, strength and conditioning experts, and dietitians) how they can assist athletes to cope with these different transitional challenges in order to optimize athletes’ development, mental health, and level of performance. In this way, ASP practitioners can assist coaches in describing the competency profiles athletes need to develop at each of the different periods in their development (e.g., Blijlevens, Elferink-Gemser, Wylleman, Bool, & Visscher, 2018). TeamNL used this approach with sport governing bodies in developing a sport-specific multiyear program and the necessary tools (e.g., handbook, observation instrument, video- and podcasts) enabling coaches to develop during their daily training sessions a set of 14 competences in their athletes during a period of eight years before possibly achieving Olympic podium level (Bool, 2018).

The second element in the process quality of ASP services, namely coordinating activities between the ASP practitioner and other professionals, can be situated in an ‘interdisciplinary’ as well as of an ‘intradisciplinary’ context. In elite sport, the role of the ASP practitioner has generally been confined to working one-to-one with an athlete and, when required, consult or collaborate one-to-one with the coach and other experts (e.g., medical doctor, physiotherapist). This approach is slowly but surely evolving towards an interdisciplinary approach whereby the coach and athletes are supported by a team of experts. This ‘the team-around-the team’ (also known as ‘integrated support team’), which can include a technical director or team manager, a medical doctor, one or more physiotherapists, a strength and conditioning expert, a dietician, a video-analyst/technology expert, and an ASP practitioner will, after consulting each other, provide coaches and athletes with advice and support based upon their combined expertise. As part of such a team, the ASP practitioner may thus collaborate with the medical doctor, physiotherapist and strength conditioning expert in setting up an integrated rehabilitation program. This type of support requires from ASP practitioners a minimum of knowledge about the other domains of expertise and the effect their interventions may have on athletes’ cognitions, emotions and behavior (e.g., the psychological effect of tapering in preparation of a competition) as well as of the roles and perspectives of other support personnel (e.g., the role of the elite sport/performance lifestyle coach in the day-to-day functioning of athletes) (Chandler, Eubank, Nesti, & Cable, 2014).

The second approach, intradisciplinary collaboration, refers to a fairly recent development in elite sport whereby ASP practitioners (e.g., psychologists) with different competences (e.g., sport, health, clinical) and expertise collaborate in providing an integrated service to coaches, athletes and teams. For example, assessment may lead to a *triage* whereby a sport psychologist (non-clinician) and a clinical psychologist are asked to collaborate in providing support to an athlete coping with anxiety attacks before the start of a major competition. Intradisciplinary collaboration uses a ‘competency-based’ approach in order to join in a complementary way the competences of different ASP practitioners and thus increase the fit between indication and content of service delivery. This will require ASP practitioners to recognize the limits of their own expertise and have a well-developed knowledge about the other domains of expertise (e.g., a clinical psychologist should have knowledge about sport psychology concepts and interventions; a sport psychologist should have good knowledge about psychopathology). From an organizational perspective, this approach will require (a) a team of ASP practitioners with different competences to collaborate and (b) a lead ASP practitioner responsible for the process of triage. As an example, this intradisciplinary approach is used by TeamNL and involves a team including elite sport lifestyle coaches, sport psychologists, health psychologists, clinical psychologists, as well as psychiatrists, and is led by a clinical psychologist with expertise in sport psychology.

2.3. Outcome quality

The third and final factor, outcome quality is defined as the



Note. A wavered line indicates that the age at which the transition occurs is an approximation.

Fig. 1. The holistic athletic career model representing transitions and stages faced by athletes at athletic, psychological, psychosocial, academic/vocational, financial and legal levels of development. Note. A wavered line indicates that the age at which the transition occurs is an approximation.

difference between a set goal and the actual output and is assessed by formal and informal evaluation (FEPSAC, 2018a). While the client’s satisfaction with, and the perceived value of the service provided by the ASP practitioner(s) are important, this framework of quality management of ASP services also stipulates that from “the efficiency of the whole system, acceptance by relevant partner organizations (e.g. National Olympic Committee)” (p. 2) should also be assessed.

The evaluation by an elite sport organization of the ASP services it provides can in first instance be focused on the efficiency of the service provision. This may include assessing the knowledge of athletes, coaches, support staff and other stakeholders (e.g., performance directors) of the content and format (e.g., one-to-one, group session) of the services provided; the availability of ASP practitioners, the speed with which they initiate their services, and the frequency of contact with the ASP practitioner(s); and the quality of the assessment or intake and of the proposed plan of support provision.

A second aspect to be evaluated is the effectiveness of the support provided. For example, within the context of an interdisciplinary team ASP practitioners may be solicited by the national coach to report on the progress made by a player in order to avoid putting the player in situations with which she cannot yet cope, or by a physiotherapist with the aim to ascertain the athlete’s ability to be confronted with another setback in his rehabilitation. As sharing information about the services provided is strictly regulated by codes of ethics, different situations can be found in elite sport: the ASP practitioner may only be authorized to report whether the client (e.g., athlete, coach) is making progress without actually sharing information on the content of the progress; the client may authorize the ASP practitioner to share major points of the support provided and the progress made; the client grants the ASP practitioner approval to disclose in detail the content of the issues for which services are provided, the content of the services, and the

progress made by the client. Within the context of an ‘intradisciplinary’ team, intervention as a peer-supported or ‘inter-colleagial’ method aimed at improving treatment and care of work can be used (UNODC Project Office for the Baltic States, 2010). Supported by the expertise, experience and skill available of colleagues in the team, a case is discussed and ideas on applied practice are exchanged.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of ASP services will also include the elite sport organization’s own perspective on the acceptance and use of the ASP practitioner(s) and their services within the own organization. Reflecting back on the three examples of job description, the position of ASP is clearly acknowledged as being part of the support system. While their position in the organization may differ (i.e., national sports center with British Gymnastics, multisport center study and elite sport with TeamNL, the headquarter of Team Denmark), the position of ASP practitioners as employees and their services are clearly identifiable in the organizational chart. In other cases, such as in the Netherlands or Denmark, ASP practitioners may be positioned outside of the structure of the elite sport organization as part of a network of consultants employed on a regular basis to provide their services. These are generally self-employed practitioners or experts hired in from other expert centers (e.g., university).

The management of the ASP services and its practitioners will also be part of the evaluation of the outcome quality by elite sport organizations. In the case of Team Denmark this is in hands of its team of sports psychology consultants based at its headquarter (personal communication Kristoffer Henriksen, 27 August 2018). This central team is complemented by a network of 12 external sports psychological consultants (Master of Science or Master of Science in Sport Psychology and practical experience with elite sports) located at three sites around Denmark (Team Denmark, 2018c). TeamNL appointed in 2013, as part of its interdisciplinary High Performance Team, a ‘performance

manager' to ensure ASP support provision of its athletes, teams and coaches (NOC*NSF, 2018b). The performance manager develops, coordinates and works with a team of eight elite sport lifestyle coaches, 22 (sport, health, clinical) psychologists and 5 psychiatrists to provide across the Netherlands support within the spectrum between performance enhancement and clinical therapy. While the management of ASP service provision can be evaluated by using this three-factor framework of quality management of ASP services, the need remains to detail the competences of the individual or team coordinating these services. Competences essential to this function will include, among others, knowledge of the domains (e.g., sport psychology, clinical psychology) in which services are provided, of the field of elite sport (e.g., sport disciplines, selection procedures), of other support personnel and their services (e.g., physiotherapists, lifestyle coaches); skills and experience including organizing the service provision in function of the needs of the target population (e.g., athletes, coaches, support staff), setting up an organization of service provision which allows for optimal availability and speed and frequency of response, and manage individual or a team of ASP practitioners (e.g., selection and evaluation of practitioners, providing feedback and intervention, organizing CPD). All ASP practitioners will be evaluated on, for example, their expertise, availability, collaboration with other experts, continued development, and quality of services provided. This evaluation will be conducted with the recipients of the ASP services (e.g., athletes, coaches, teams), other experts providing support to the same recipients (e.g., medical doctor, physiotherapist), other stakeholders involved with the recipients (e.g., technical director, performance directors, chef de mission) and with the head of the team ensuring the provision of support services.

Finally, related to the acceptance and use of ASP service delivery by elite sport organizations is the focus on, and availability of services for specific aspects of elite athletes' lives. One particular aspect which has been receiving much more attention from elite sport organizations is the mental health of its athletes. As was reported recently, specific attention was already paid to providing mental health services in other countries such as France, Great-Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the Netherlands (e.g., Gouttebauge et al., 2016; Moesch et al., 2018). What is significant from an organization's perspective is not only that research is conducted in order to collect data on mental health (Gouttebauge et al., 2016), but that the topic of mental health is given its own and well-defined place in the organization's structure. For example, clinical psychologists and/or psychiatrists are part of the elite sport organization (e.g., France, Italy, the Netherlands), by psychiatric clinics specifically tailored and designated for elite athletes (e.g., Sweden), or in England by the appointment of a 'Head of Mental Health' who "will assist both the system, and individual World Class Programmes with their mental health support infrastructure" (English Institute of Sport, 2018d).

3. Future directions

Using a case conceptualization an overview was provided of the roles taken by two types of organizations in the development of ASP practitioners and the provision of ASP services. Relating back to the framework of quality management of ASP services, several suggestions for furthering these roles can be made in line with the structure, process and outcome of ASP services.

A first aspect reflects the title used by professionals providing ASP services. As noted, strong differences exist in the titles used, not only by sport psychology organizations but also by elite sport organizations. This diversity in titles is generally related to the educational background (i.e., psychology, sport sciences) and certification or registry status. While the title of 'psychologist' is related to those with a psychology background, it is recommended to specify the specialization of the psychologist (e.g., sport, counseling, clinical) as it sheds more light on the practitioner's competences. For those with a sport science background, it is important that the set of competencies is fully made

clear as the title used does not always allow to gain a complete and detailed overview of these competences.

Secondly, a need exists to clearly describe the competencies required by ASP practitioners. This need is not only related to the basic education of ASP practitioners, but also for example to the diversity in tasks (e.g., provide services to coaches, to Paralympians), in work environments (e.g., national training center, head quarter national Olympic Committee), in professional status (e.g., registration with a national governing body of health care), and in roles (e.g., member of an intradisciplinary team, as practitioner-researcher, managing a team of ASP practitioners). Sport psychology organizations can collaborate with elite sport organizations in developing (more) complete and detailed job descriptions.

Third, as not all competencies required to provide ASP services in elite sport are developed in (post-)graduate ASP programs, different initiatives can be provided by sport psychology as well as elite sport organizations. Sport psychology organizations could provide master-classes similar to PE4EP whereby ASP practitioners can address and exchange professional experiences on specific topics (e.g., providing on-site services, support provision for coaches) with elite coaches and other service providers such elite lifestyle coaches and dual career support providers (e.g., INSEP, 2018; Olympiastützpunkt Berlin, 2018; TeamNL, 2018). This kind of CPD initiative would also allow its participants to get acquainted with topics specifically relevant to elite sport such as those described in FEPSAC's PS. Expanding on the necessity of the tie of academic institutes with such programs (Schinke et al., 2018), experience with PE4EP has shown (a) that the organizers and lecturers should have substantial experiential knowledge of working in the elite sport context and (b) that the link with an elite sport organization or elite sport context is also of added value.

Elite sport organizations could ensure more opportunities for internships within an elite sport context for ASP practitioners with a specific profile of competences (e.g., having already acquired experience in working with young talented athletes or with national-level athletes) or specific pathway (e.g., specializing in support services within team sports). Interesting to note is that Team Danmark has established a development network of 18 talented sports psychological consultants, which have been graduated in recent years, and who receive ongoing training and supervision by Team Denmark's sports psychological consultants (Team Danmark, 2018c). Their training is based on Team Denmark's service model and consultants in the development network can carry out tasks in individual courses with young practitioners, workshops, etc. TeamNL is planning to provide internships for ASP practitioners with a specific set of competences within the context of their multisport elite study and sport centers in order to provide them with the opportunity to develop professional experience with an elite sport context and with providing support to specific groups (e.g., athletes making the transition into the center, providing workshops).

Both sport psychology and elite sport organizations could collaborate in establishing a forum (e.g., FAST) where ASP practitioners active in elite sport may exchange professional experiences and which would allow, on the one hand sport psychology organizations to distill specific topics which could be introduced in the ASP education programs or CPD initiatives, and on the other hand elite sport organizations to identify issues which could be optimized (e.g., in the competencies required, in the work conditions of ASP practitioners) in order to enhance the quality of ASP services.

As a case conceptualization approach was used, the analysis, reflections and recommendations formulated in this article should be contextualized in relation to the framework of quality management of ASP services and to the author's educational background, experiential knowledge and professional multi-role perspective on ASP. Of course, a strong need remains for research into the role of (sport psychology, elite sport) organizations in the development and organization of ASP services provided in elite sport. For example, best practices could be

distilled from comparing how various elite sport systems develop and organize ASP support within their own structures (e.g., [de-]centralized support provision, [full-/part-time] employment of ASP practitioners). Finally, and yet perhaps most importantly, colleagues organizing, managing or providing ASP services in elite sport are encouraged to share their experiential knowledge, lessons-learned, critical reflections and best practices with the aim to enhance the quality of the ASP support provided in elite sport. FEPSAC could, in combination with one or more elite sport organizations, play a facilitatory role in this process, for example, by patronaging a forum or think tank for experts on the provision and management of ASP services in elite sport.

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