

Psychology of Sport Injury: A Historical Perspective

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Not surprisingly, psychology of injury is an area of study that has seen dramatic growth over time. The literature on this topic is extensive and has origins dating to the early 1900's (Kotch, 2005). Early psychology of injury research began with military Doctors performing observational studies on injured soldiers (Goldstein, 1948). However, the vast majority of research done on this topic began in the 1970's as psychologists and sport psychology professionals began to investigate the psychology of sport injury (Heil, 1993). Early sport psychology professionals, such as Sanderson (1977), Tutko (1980), and Ogilvie (1971), spearheaded the work within this field. During this time period, researchers found that athletes going through injury often had a "mental" hurdle to overcome in their injury, rehabilitation, and recovery processes (Tutko, 1980). Other sport psychology professionals, such as Taylor (1997), Shelley (1999), and Shelley and Henschen (1999) continued to expand the sport injury research. No doubt, the topic of "psychology of sport injury" became more and more popular. This time period also brought about new findings and advancements in diagnosing various mental illnesses (Albin, 1999). However, due to the stigmas associated with the mental health field, few athletes sought clinical help. At this same time, sport psychology professionals began to focus primarily on the importance of an athlete's mental condition pre, during, and post-injury. For example, how the mind affected an athlete's recovery, as well as post-injury performance, and the relationship between the mind and body became important topics of study (Pargman, 1999). No doubt, the field of sport psychology and the psychological foundations of sport injury have continued to expand. Researchers continue to suggest that physical sport injuries may be healed quickly (Taylor, 1997), yet the psychological ramifications of injury may last well past the time many athletes return to play (Putukian, 2015). Recent years have also seen neuropsychologists and neuroscientists studying the effects of sport injury on the athlete's mental health and long-term brain functioning (Basel 2013). In summary, there continues to be a void in the literature detailing the psychological components at work pre, during, and post-injury for the sport and recreation populations. The purpose of this analysis is to document a visual "time-line" detailing the important and foundational research summarizing the ongoing study of athletic injury and the psychological components associated with such injuries. A poster board format will be the means for displaying this historical perspective surrounding this important topic of research.