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## **Coaches' Attitudes Towards Sport Psychology Services: A Study of NCAA Division I Head Golf Coaches**

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Justin Robert Smedley entitled "Coaches' Attitudes Towards Sport Psychology Services: A Study of NCAA Division I Head Golf Coaches." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Kinesiology.

Rebecca Zakrajsek, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Lars Dzikus, Leslee Fisher

Accepted for the Council:

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Coaches' Attitudes toward Sport Psychology Services: A Study of NCAA Division I  
Head Golf Coaches

A Thesis Presented for the  
Master of Science  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Justin Robert Smedley  
August 2013

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### **Abstract**

In this study a sample of NCAA Division I (D-I) head golf coaches ( $n = 84$ ) completed a web-based survey assessing their attitudes toward sport psychology (SP) services (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference), willingness to utilize SP services, previous use and perceived satisfaction with SP services, and if coaches' attitudes predicted their willingness to utilize SP services. This study also explored participating coaches' self-reported leadership behaviors (i.e., democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, training and instruction, social support, positive feedback, and situational consideration). Results indicated that coaches who more frequently used and perceived more satisfaction with SP consulting services were more confidence in SP consulting, had less preference for working with a SP consultant of similar cultural background to themselves, and were more willing to utilize SP services. Results also revealed confidence in SP consulting as the largest predictor of their willingness to utilize SP services. Finally, results indicated a weak corollary relationship between coaches' use of democratic behavior and confidence in SP consulting, and moderate relationships between social support and situational consideration behaviors and personal openness. The findings of this study support previous research on coaches' attitudes toward and willingness to utilize SP services. A discussion of major findings, implications for practitioners, and suggestions for the direction of future research is provided.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction and General Information**

#### **Personal Story**

Throughout my years in athletics, whether it was little league baseball or varsity high school basketball, I was always considered a “heady” player; one of the smart players, someone you could trust to know where he was supposed to be and what he was supposed to be doing. I took pride in that role, and nothing gave me more pleasure than succeeding in sport through skill and know-how when going against pure physical ability. I quickly identified my strength in understanding strategy and tactics, and unofficially assumed the “player-coach” role when on the floor. These rewarding experiences led to my personal interest in coaching and sport psychology.

In addition to formally playing basketball, I have been a recreational golfer with a great affinity for those players skilled enough to play in college. One of my friends, a woman I will call Beth, was skilled enough to receive a scholarship to a local National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II (D-II) university. At the time, I was a graduate student specializing in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior. Beth was aware of my area of study, and being an athlete, would bring up questions she had about her experiences with playing golf in college. Over the final two months of summer, every time I saw Beth she would have a new story about her coach. This man, according to these stories, was incredibly controlling and demeaning to the women on his team. One particular story Beth relayed was especially shocking. During one particular practice, this coach became so irate at the way Beth was hitting a shot that he got nose-to-nose and

began screaming in her face. In addition to stories like this, Beth would show me lengthy text messages from her coach demanding she either call him back or chastising her for not already doing so. Eventually, following one particularly bad occurrence, Beth withdrew from the university and quit the team to continue her career at a different school.

It was shocking to hear of a coach adopting such a demeaning, authoritative approach to coaching golfers. The sport of golf contains within it an inherent etiquette and sense of decency, something which was not at all conveyed through this coach's actions. As I began talking with some of my other friends who were either currently or previously involved in golf at the collegiate level, I began to learn that this was not an aberration. Actually, the more I talked with others, the more I gained the sense that this was, if not common, at least not rare. Given the nature of the sport of golf, such a style of leadership and coaching seems counterproductive at best.

As I began navigating ideas for a thesis topic, these stories stood out. One evening while standing outside on my patio, the thought occurred, "I wonder how golf coaches perceive sport psychology services and if different coaching styles might effect how coaches think about sport psychology." Below, I will briefly review this literature.

### **Brief Literature Review**

As a service-providing helping profession, sport psychology (SP) practitioners may benefit from having a more accurate knowledge of how potential clients perceive SP services. Accordingly, understanding athletes', coaches', and athletic directors' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of SP has gained attention in the SP literature.

The Multidimensional Model of Sport Psychology Service Provision ( $M^2SP^2$ ) (Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011) (see Appendix A) was developed from existing research within attitudes toward SP. The  $M^2SP^2$  model is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (see Godin, 1994), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (see Ajzen, 1991), and Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change (TTM) (see Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). These theories provide a framework to understand the relationship between attitudes and beliefs, intentions, and subsequent behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). The  $M^2SP^2$  model serves as a framework for SP professionals to better understand factors affecting an individual's (coach, athlete, athletic director, etc.) decision to seek, or not seek, SP services (Martin, Zakrajsek, & Wrisberg, 2012; Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011).

The  $M^2SP^2$  model is comprised of antecedents (i.e., situational characteristics, consultant characteristics, athlete characteristics, coach characteristics, and significant other characteristics), attitudes and beliefs (i.e., stigma tolerance, confidence, personal openness, and cultural preference; expectations; subjective norms; and perceived behavioral control), and consequences (i.e., intentions, behaviors, and satisfaction). Antecedent factors influence attitudes and beliefs concerning SP services and mental skills training. Those attitudes and beliefs influence various consequences, such as intentions to use (or not use) SP services, behaviors reflective of intentions, and for those who are open to SP services and mental skills training, satisfaction with the services provided. Finally, consequences influence and may alter attitudes and beliefs, which can influence future intentions, behaviors, and satisfaction with SP services; thus representing

a cyclical relationship between attitudes and beliefs and consequences. One purpose of the M<sup>2</sup>SP<sup>2</sup> model is to increase awareness of personal and situational characteristics that can influence potential clients' openness to SP or potential barriers to their receptivity to service use. The model is also designed to help facilitate research efforts in better understanding the factors that influence the use of SP services and satisfaction with services provided (Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011).

The bulk of this scholarly activity has focused on understanding athletes' attitudes and perceptions of SP services. However, coaches assume an integral and highly influential role within the team structure. The coach-athlete relationship is extremely powerful, in which coaches' attitudes and beliefs may influence the attitudes and beliefs toward SP consultation and services held by their athletes (Dieffenbach, Gould, & Moffett, 2002; Martin et al., 2001; Orlick & Partington, 1987). Additionally, coaches hold the privilege of being the "gatekeeper" of their team, often deciding whether to employ or continue working with a SP consultant (Partington & Orlick, 1987; Voight & Callahan, 2001).

Attitudes found to influence coaches' decisions to use SP services include stigma tolerance (belief that others will negatively label athletes as having psychological problems if they work with a SP consultant), confidence in SP consulting (belief that SP consulting is useful and can be effective), personal openness (willingness to try SP consulting and mental skills training), and cultural preference (identification with one's own cultural background and a preference to work with someone with a similar background) (Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; 2008). Confidence in SP

consulting has consistently been found as the strongest predictor of coaches' intentions to use or not use SP services (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek et al., 2011).

Although limited, results of studies with coaches' highlight various factors that may influence coaches' perceptions and attitudes toward SP consulting. Overall, coaches with previous experience working with a SP consultant, especially those with positive experiences, are more open to SP services, less likely to stigmatize SP, more likely to use or encourage the use of SP services, and have more accurate expectations of SP services compared to coaches with no experience or previous negative experiences (Nelson, 2008; Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Furthermore, female coaches have more personal openness toward SP, associate less stigma with SP services, and are more confident in SP consulting than their male counterparts (Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Older coaches (i.e., age 50 and older) and coaches with more coaching experience (i.e., more than 15 years of coaching experience) are more open to and associate less stigma with SP consulting compared to younger coaches (i.e., age 20-29) and coaches with less coaching experience (i.e., less than 7 years of coaching experience) (Zakrajsek et al., 2011), and coaches holding a master's or doctorate degree are more confident in SP services than coaches with a bachelor's degree or high school diploma (Zakrajsek et al., 2011). However, while studies have focused on collegiate coaches at various levels and sports, no such study to date has focused specifically on NCAA Division I (D-I) head golf coaches.

In summary, much is left to be explored with regard to understanding coaches' attitudes and the factors that influence attitudes toward SP services use. Specifically, little

is understood about the influence coaches' characteristics (see M<sup>2</sup>SP<sup>2</sup> model in Appendix A) have on their attitudes and beliefs about the use of SP services and mental skills training. One coach characteristic which has been widely researched in SP, yet has not been explored in relation to coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting, is that of coaching leadership behaviors.

Leadership has been defined as a “behavioral process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward specific goals and the achievement of those goals” (Murray, Mann, & Mead, 2010, p. 107). Trait, behavioral, situational, and relational approaches to understanding effective leaders and exploring the impact of leadership variables on athlete satisfaction, task- and social-cohesion, overall performance, athlete self-beliefs and identifications, athlete perceptions of competency, relatedness, and autonomy, and athlete development have all received attention from researchers (Black & Weiss, 1992; Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999; Gardner, 1990; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Hersey & Blanchard, 1982; House, 1971; Seltzer & Bass, 1990).

The Multidimensional Model of Leadership Behavior (MML), developed by Chelladurai and colleagues (1978, 1978, 1980, 1990, 2007), is one of the most widely recognized and accepted interactional approaches to understanding leadership effectiveness in sport. The MML incorporates three major components: antecedents (i.e., situations, leader, and team member characteristics), leader behaviors (i.e., actual, preferred, and required behaviors) and consequences (i.e., satisfaction and performance). According to the MML, an athlete's satisfaction and performance (i.e., consequences) depends on the different types of coach behaviors (i.e., required, preferred, and actual

behaviors), which are influenced by the situation, coach, and athlete characteristics (i.e., antecedents).

The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) was developed in conjunction with the MML (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). This instrument was designed to assess coach's leadership behaviors, which includes decision making, motivational tendencies, and sport-specific method of instruction. Specifically, the LSS measures the following five dimensions of leadership behavior: autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback. Further development of the LSS led to the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS), which established a sixth dimension of leadership behavior, situational consideration behavior (Zhang & Jensen, 1997).

Researchers using the LSS or RLSS have identified a number of factors related to certain coaching behaviors. For example, controlling coaching behaviors have been found to undermine athletes' feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thogersen-Ntoumanis, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have found task- and social-cohesion to be highly related to an athlete's perceptions of the relationship with their coach (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004). Rewarding, democratic, and social support behaviors have all been found to be highly correlated with team satisfaction (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986).

Given the depth of research conducted on leadership, some commonalities can be seen which may be of interest to researchers investigating SP attitudes and beliefs. The role of coaches, their actions, and their philosophies influence the effectiveness of team and athlete development. Perhaps coaches employing higher levels of instructional

behaviors for the purpose of competitive training would be more open and willing to seek SP services to enhance performance. Intuition might lead one to think authoritative coaches, in the effort to maintain complete control and power over his or her team, would be less open to SP services than coaches adopting more democratic styles; however this is a question yet to be answered through research.

Given coaches' central leadership role and the influence they have with their athletes, connecting leadership and SP attitudes literature might prove beneficial to consultants and researchers alike. Most immediately, this knowledge may help clarify any influence of a specific coach characteristic (i.e., leadership behaviors) within the  $M^2SP^2$  model. Linking these constructs could also be of practical significance in that it could help to guide SP consultants in adapting their consulting approach with coaches and their teams. Furthermore, understanding any leadership-attitudes connection may assist a practitioner in gaining access, building rapport, and maintaining a positive relationship with a coach or athlete. Therefore, an exploratory question this study is what relationships, if any, exist between coaches' leadership behaviors and their attitudes toward and willingness to use SP services?

### **Statement of the Problem**

Coaches hold a central and influential role within the athletic environment, in which their attitudes about SP may influence athletes' attitudes toward and willingness to use SP services. Yet to be explored by researchers is the population of NCAA D-I head golf coaches and their attitudes toward SP consultation and willingness to use SP services. Understanding these coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting and willingness to



use SP services, as well as individual factors which influence these variables, can assist SP consultants with how to gain entry and work effectively.

### **Purpose of Study**

The main purpose of this study was to explore NCAA D-I head golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services. Understanding the potential influence of coach characteristics, such as previous experience with SP, gender, age, years of coaching experience, and education, on their attitudes toward SP consulting was of interest. This study also investigated coaches' willingness to use SP services and how various factors may influence this willingness (i.e., attitudes toward SP consulting, previous experience with SP consulting, perceived satisfaction with previous SP consulting experience, and leadership behaviors). In investigating coaches' willingness to use SP services, this study sought to identify if attitudes (i.e. confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference) predicted coaches' willingness to use SP services. Finally, this study explored the potential influence of coaches' leadership behaviors on their attitudes toward SP services.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on previous research on coaches' attitudes and use of SP services it was hypothesized that:

1. Coaches with previous experiences working with a SP consultant, especially those perceiving their experience to be positive, would hold more favorable attitudes toward SP compared to coaches without previous experience. Specifically, coaches with previous positive experience would associate less stigma with SP, display higher

confidence in SP consultation, have more personal openness with SP consulting, and be more willing to use SP services.

2. Female coaches would report more favorable attitudes toward SP than male coaches. Specifically, female coaches would associate less stigma with SP services and be more open (personal openness) and confident in SP consulting.
3. Older coaches would associate less stigma and be more open (personal openness) toward SP consulting than younger coaches.
4. More experienced coaches would be more open to (personal openness) and confident in SP consulting compared to those with less coaching experience.
5. Coaches holding higher levels of education (master's or doctorate degrees) would report higher confidence in SP consulting than those with a bachelor's degree or high school diploma.
6. Coaches' more open to and confident in SP consulting (personal openness and confidence in SP) would be more willing to use or encourage the use of SP services than coaches less open to SP consulting.

Due to the limited research on the relationship between leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP consulting, no hypotheses were identified.

### **Limitations**

1. The sample was limited to NCAA D-I head golf coaches of men's and women's teams. Therefore, results may not be generalizable to other competitive levels (i.e., NCAA D-II, NCAA D-III, high school) or other sports.

2. Although a national sample of NCAA D-I coaches was recruited to participate, differences may exist between coaches who chose to complete the online survey and coaches who chose not to complete the online survey. This may limit generalizability due to those who volunteered to participate.

### **Delimitations**

1. Only current NCAA D-I head golf coaches of men's and women's teams were recruited to participate in the study.
2. Attitudes toward SP consulting were those identified and measured by the SPARC-2
3. Leadership behaviors measured were those identified and measured by the RLSS.

### **Definitions**

*Autocratic behavior* refers to “the extent to which a coach keeps apart from the athletes and stresses his or her authority in dealing with them. In such situations, it is expected that the coach would demand strict compliance with his or her decisions.” (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 41).

*Confidence in sport psychology consultation* refers to the “belief that SP consultation and mental training is useful” (Zakrajsek et al., 2011, p. 462).

*Cultural preference in sport psychology consultation*, refers to a person's “identification with own cultural background and preference for working with a SP consultant with a similar background.” (Zakrajsek et al., 2011, p. 462).

*Democratic behavior* refers to the “extent to which the coach permits participation by the athletes in decision making. These decisions may relate to the setting

of group goals and/or the ways in which these goals are to be attained.” (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 41).

*Personal openness to sport psychology consultation* refers to the “willingness to try SP consultation and mental training.” (Zakrajsek et al., 2011, p. 462).

*Positive feedback behavior* refers to motivational coaching behaviors which “...express appreciation and compliment the athletes for their performance and contribution.” This concept differs from social support behavior in that “Positive feedback can be motivational only if it is contingent on performance.” (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 43).

*Situational consideration behaviors* refer to “ proper coaching behaviors aimed at considering the situation factors (such as the time, individual, environment, team, and game); setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals; differentiating coaching methods at different stages; and assigning an athlete to the right game position.” (Zhang & Jensen, 1997, pp. 109-110).

*Social support behavior* refers to “the extent to which the coach is involved in satisfying the interpersonal needs of the athletes. The coach’s behavior may directly satisfy such needs or the coach may create a climate in which the members mutually satisfy their interpersonal needs.” (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 42).

*Sport psychology consultant* is defined as “persons with formal training in sport psychology who are capable of providing student-athletes with the psychological and emotional skills necessary for achieving peak performance and enhancing life quality.” (Donohue, Dickens, Lancer, Covassin, Hash, Miller, et al., 2004, p.182).

*Stigma tolerance with sport psychology consultation* refers to the “belief that athletes or coaches are negatively labeled if they seek assistance from a SP consultant” (Zakrajsek et al., 2011, p. 462).

*Training and instruction behavior* reflects the extent to which “The coach trains and instructs the athletes to help them reach their maximum physical potential...In addition, in the case of team sports, the coach coordinates the activities of the team members.” (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 41).

In the next chapter, I review the existing research relevant to this proposed study. In the review of existing literature, I highlight research related to attitudes toward SP and a model of SP service provision, a brief overview of leadership theory, and a multidimensional model of leadership behavior.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

Within the field of applied sport psychology (SP), as is the case with many other service-providing professions, understanding potential clients' attitudes toward the offered services can help practitioners understand how to gain entry and work effectively during the consultation process. Accordingly, researchers have sought to better understand SP attitudes from a variety of potential populations that may utilize SP services. This research has allowed SP practitioners to identify certain sets of subpopulations (e.g., male and female athletes, coaches with or without previous SP experience, etc.) which seem to be more open or, conversely, more closed to SP services. In this chapter, I review literature pertaining to: (a) a framework for SP service provision; (b) attitudes toward SP consulting; (c) leadership theory; and (d) a multidimensional model of leadership in sport.

#### **Multidimensional Model of Sport Psychology Service Provision**

The Multidimensional Model of Sport Psychology Service Provision ( $M^2SP^2$ ) (Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011) (see Appendix A) was developed from the available research on attitudes, perceptions, and use of SP services. This model can be used as a framework for practitioners and researchers to understand the potential factors that impact participants (i.e., athletes, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers) likelihood of using SP services and satisfaction with those services. Specifically, the  $M^2SP^2$  model highlights personal and situational factors (situational characteristics; consultant characteristics; performer characteristics; coach, leader, or instructor characteristics; and significant other

characteristics) that influence attitudes and beliefs (stigma tolerance, confidence, personal openness, cultural preference; expectations; subjective norms; perceived behavioral control) about SP consulting and mental skills training. Attitudes and beliefs lead to various consequences, such as intentions to use (or not use) SP services, behaviors of service use that reflect intentions, and for those who are open and use services, satisfaction with the services provided. A cyclical relationship exists between consequences and attitudes and beliefs, in which the consequences influence and may modify subsequent attitudes and beliefs, which may then influence future intentions, behaviors, and satisfaction with SP consulting.

The  $M^2SP^2$  model is grounded in attitude and behavior change theory, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Godin, 1994), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), and Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behavior change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). According to these attitude and behavior change theories, intentions to act out certain behaviors are consequences of attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (see Ajzen, 1991; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). Within the framework of TPB, attitudes and intentions can serve as predictors for some specific behavior. Therefore, as it applies to SP service use, a person's attitudes toward SP services can help to better understand their future intentions for usage and subsequent SP behaviors.

### **Attitudes toward Sport Psychology**

Researchers have primarily focused on understanding athletes' attitudes toward SP consulting. However, coaches assume an influential role within the structure of a

given team. Furthermore, coaches are viewed as the “gatekeepers” of their teams, holding a central position within the athletic environment, and often serve as the decision maker for the employment of or continued involvement with a SP consultant (Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Partington & Orlick, 1987). Coaches not only hold the power of access to a team, their relationships with athletes is one which can influence athletes’ attitudes and beliefs toward SP consultation and services (Martin et al., 2001; Orlick & Partington, 1987).

Although research on coaches’ attitudes toward SP is limited, it has become more methodologically uniform through the development of the Sport Psychology Attitudes Revised Coaches-2 form (SPARC-2; see Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; 2008; Zakrajsek, Martin, & Zizzi, 2011). The SPARC-2 measures coaches’ attitudes toward SP consulting. This instrument was modified from the Sport Psychology Attitudes Revised (SPA-R) form developed to measure athletes’ attitudes toward SP consulting (see Martin, Wrisberg, Beitel, & Lounsbury, 1997; Martin, Kellmann, Lavallo, & Paige, 2002). Attitudinal constructs measured by the SPARC-2 includes stigma tolerance, confidence in SP consultation, personal openness, and cultural preference.

Stigma tolerance reflects a negative attitude toward SP and refers to the belief that others will negatively label athletes or coaches as having psychological problems if they work with a SP consultant (Martin et al., 1997; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Stigma tolerance has been found to predict coaches’ intentions to use SP services (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). More specifically, as stigma tolerance increased coaches’ intentions to use SP services decreased. Some individuals may be hesitant to use SP services for fear that



others will perceive them as “weak” or having psychological problems (Martin et al., 1997). Recently, NCAA Division I (D-I) coaches have reported being more supportive of a SP consultant working within the athletic department than having one present at practices and competitions (Wrisberg, Loberg, Simpson, Withycombe, & Reed, 2010). Wrisberg and colleagues (2010) suggested that coaches’ may fear being stigmatized for including the SP consultant in their day-to-day team activities, as opposed to recommending athletes for weekly sessions.

Confidence in SP consulting refers to an individual’s belief that SP consulting can be effective (Martin et al., 1997; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). The level of confidence in SP consulting is a representation of the amount to which an individual perceives SP services and mental skills training as useful (Anderson, Hodges, Lavallo, & Martin, 2004). Studies have found confidence in SP consulting as the most significant predictor of intentions to use, or not use, SP services (Anderson et al., 2004; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek et al., 2011). This suggests that a coach’s lack of confidence in SP consulting may present a challenging barrier to SP consulting.

Personal openness addresses a person’s willingness to try SP consulting and mental skills training (Martin et al., 1994; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). This factor refers to openness with a SP consultant in discussing concerns, goals, apprehensions, and other issues which may influence willingness to be involved with SP services (Nelson, 2008; Zakrajsek et al., 2011). Personal openness has been found to predict coaches’ intentions to use SP services (Zakrajsek et al., 2011). Specifically, as coaches’ personal openness increased their intentions to use SP services also increased.

Identification with one's own ethnicity, culture, race, or nationality has been found to be an influential factor in perceptions of and attitudes toward SP services (Martin 2005, Martin et al., 2002). Cultural preference relates to the amount to which an individual identifies with his or her own cultural background as well as his or her preference for working with a SP consultant with a similar background (Martin et al., 1994; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Researchers have suggested that some coaches' preferences for working with a SP consultant may be influenced by their own cultural background as well as the cultural background of their athletes (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; 2008). In other words, coaches may prefer to work with a SP consultant with a similar background to themselves or a similar background with their athletes.

As previously described, the M<sup>2</sup>SP<sup>2</sup> model identifies several antecedents (situational and personal characteristics) that may influence attitudes and beliefs about SP services. Within the available literature, some factors have been found to influence coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting. For example, previous experience, gender, age, years of coaching experience, and education have all been found to influence coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting (Nelson, 2008; Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek, et al., 2011). Specifically, coaches with previous experience, particularly if those experiences were positive, were more open to using SP services, less likely to stigmatize SP, more willing to use or encourage the use of SP services, and have more accurate expectations about the process of SP consulting compared to coaches without previous experience ( Nelson, 2008; Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Female coaches reported more openness to trying SP consultation, associated less

stigma with SP services, and were more confident in SP consulting when compared to male coaches (Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). However, some studies have not found gender differences related to coaches' SP perceptions and attitudes (Bloom, 2003; Nelson, 2008). Lastly, older, more experienced, and more educated coaches have been found to have more confidence in SP services, higher personal openness to try SP consulting, and associate less stigma with SP compared to their counterparts (Zakrajsek et al., 2011).

Wrisberg and colleagues (2010) recently surveyed 815 NCAA D-I head coaches about their receptivity to SP consulting services. Overall, coaches were more willing to encourage their athletes to seek the services of a SP consultant for performance related purposes than for personal concerns. Coaches with access to SP services were more interested in mental training to enhance performance, which is consistent with results of previous research with Olympic coaches who preferred performance focused interactions with a SP consultant (Partington & Orlick, 1987).

While this research is limited, the variables of age, gender, education, experience with a SP consultant, and coaching experience have been identified as influential variables impacting attitudes and receptivity to SP service use (Nelson, 2008; Wrisberg et al., 2010; Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Continuing investigation of these factors can help to further clarify their connection with attitudes and beliefs. In addition, several antecedent factors related to coach characteristics and the influence on attitudes and beliefs have yet to be explored. One such coach characteristic yet to be studied is leadership behaviors.

Coaches hold a significant leadership role within the athletic environment and decide whether or not to use SP services with their athletes; therefore, understanding how (or if) coaches' leadership behaviors influence their attitudes and beliefs toward SP would be useful. For example, it would be useful to explore if some aspect of a coach's individual leadership behaviors closes (or opens) them to the use of SP services. Coaches that may be closed to SP services might perceive consultants as "outsiders" and a threat to their role as the head of the team. Although this is unknown, understanding any relationship between a coach's leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP could assist SP consultants in gaining entry and working effectively with coaches and their athletes.

### **Leadership Theory**

Leadership has been defined as a "behavioral process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward specific goals and the achievement of those goals" (Murray, Mann, & Meade, 2010, p. 107). Leadership has also been described as the science and art of influencing others through qualities such as credibility, capability, and commitment (Murray et al., 2010). A number of leadership theories and approaches have been developed to explain leadership effectiveness.

A great amount of scholarly attention has been given to the study of leadership. Trait, behavioral, situational, and relational approaches have all been the focus of many studies exploring effective leadership. Researchers adopting a more traditional trait-based approach, which has seen a decline in attention over recent years, have identified effective leaders through characteristics of trustworthiness, responsibility, and empathy towards others, just to name a few (Gardner, 1990). Leadership researchers adopting

behavioral approaches have found consideration (i.e., shows concern for others and respect for followers) and initiating structure (i.e., defines individuals' roles in pursuit of goals) related to leadership success (Murray et. al., 2010). Results of recent behavior-based studies have found that confident coaches were more likely to employ positive feedback behaviors (Feltz, Chase, Moritz, & Sullivan, 1999). Additionally, athletes whose coaches focused on instruction, encouragement, and enjoyment have been shown to have more self-belief in their abilities, be more likely to identify themselves as successful, and put forth more effort (Black & Weiss, 1992). Situational and relational approaches to leadership frame effective leaders as facilitators (House, 1971), adjustable to followers developmental needs (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982), able to negotiate the role of a leader (Graen & Cashman, 1975), and capable of stretching others' potential (Seltzer & Bass, 1990).

### **Multidimensional Model of Leadership Behavior**

The Multidimensional Model of Leadership Behavior (MML), developed by Chelladurai and colleagues (1978, 1978, 1980, 1990, 2007), is one of the most widely recognized approaches to understanding leadership effectiveness. In developing this multidimensional model, researchers sought to synthesize concepts pertaining to the coach, situation, and behaviors found within existing theory related to leadership effectiveness (i.e., path-goal theory, contingency model) (Chelladurai, 1978). The MML is comprised of three main components: antecedents (i.e., situation, leader, and team member characteristics), leader behaviors (i.e., actual exhibited behavior, behavior preferred by the athlete, and appropriate behavior required for a given situation), and

consequences (i.e., overall athlete satisfaction and objective outcome of group performance). An athlete's satisfaction and performance (consequences) depends on the different types of coach behaviors (required, preferred, and actual behaviors), which are influenced by the situation, coach, and athlete characteristics (antecedents). In congruence with the MML, Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) developed the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) to assess coach's decision making, motivational tendencies, and method of instruction within the context of sport. This instrument consists of three versions (athlete's preferred coach behavior, athlete's perceptions of actual coach behavior, and coach's self-evaluation), which can either be implemented together or individually. Researchers have used all three versions to assess congruence amongst all versions as a measure of effective coaching. However, versions can also be used independently to explore for specific responses (e.g., coach's self-evaluation) rather than general agreement amongst all three. The LSS incorporates five dimensions of leader behaviors: autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback. Thus, this instrument includes two decision-style components (democratic and autocratic behavior), one task-related component (training and instruction), and two motivational components (social support and positive feedback) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). The Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) is a modified version of the LSS that includes a sixth dimension of leadership behavior, situational consideration behavior (Zhang & Jensen 1997).

Researchers have explored these six dimensions of behavior in order to better understand both a coach's approach to leadership and the impact specific behaviors might

have on various outcomes with athletes (e.g., satisfaction, team cohesion, performance, self-determination, and well-being). With regard to the democratic and autocratic behavioral dimensions, coaches employing more controlling leadership behaviors (i.e., autocratic) have been found to negatively influence athletes' autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009). Additionally, a coach employing more controlling leadership behaviors (i.e. autocratic) may inhibit athletes' ability to self-regulate, limit the development of self-motivation, and negatively impact their well-being (Bartholomew et al., 2009). Training and instruction, democratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback have been found to positively influence levels of perceived task and social cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004). Researchers exploring the dimensions of training and instruction and positive feedback behaviors have found that a task-involved climate positively influenced athletes' feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Sarrazin, Guillet, & Curry, 2001). Furthermore, the dimensions of social support and democratic behaviors have been found to positively influence athletes' levels of enjoyment and satisfaction, as well as overall team satisfaction (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986).

Understanding leadership is relevant to effective SP service provision. According to the  $M^2SP^2$  model, coaches' characteristics influence their attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence their intentions, SP behaviors, and satisfaction with mental skills services (Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011). A relationship between coaching leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP services has not been explored. Future research would

benefit from understanding *if* coaches employing certain leadership behaviors have differing attitudes toward SP and willingness to use SP services.

A review of existing literature relevant to this proposed study falls within two general domains of SP research: leadership and attitudes and beliefs of SP. Within leadership, a diverse set of theories have been explored, including trait, behavioral, situational, and relational theories. More recently, multidimensional approaches to understanding leadership have become more popular. The catalyst of these approaches is the MML, which was developed in synthesis with a host of existing theories. Within SP attitudes research, stigma tolerance, confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, and cultural preference have emerged as factors influencing one's attitudes toward SP. Within the  $M^2SP^2$  model, these four attitudinal variables represent the core of the dimension of attitudes and beliefs. Specific to coaches, the SPARC-2 has been developed to assess coaches' attitudes toward SP. However, while some antecedent factors within the  $M^2SP^2$  have been studied, this research is limited. Therefore, exploring any connections between leadership behaviors and SP attitudes will further clarify the relationship between coach characteristics (see  $M^2SP^2$  model in appendix A) and attitudes and beliefs about SP.

In the following chapter, I discuss the methodology of this proposed study. Specifically, I provide an overview of participants, instrumentation, pilot study, procedure, hypotheses, and data analysis.



## Chapter III

### Materials and Methods

In this quantitative study, I used a descriptive correlational research design. Provided within this chapter are the following sections: (a) participants; (b) instrumentation; (c) pilot study; (d) procedures; (e) hypotheses; and (f) data analysis.

#### Participants

Upon IRB approval, a total of 452 NCAA D-I men's and women's head golf coaches were contacted and invited to participate in an online survey. Eighty-four completed surveys were returned following the first ( $n = 51$ ) and second ( $n = 33$ ) round of e-mails, resulting in a response rate of 18.6 %. This figure is similar to the response rate of previous research with all NCAA D-I coaches (17%; Wrisberg et al., 2010). Of the 84 coaches, 51 (60.7%) were male and 33 (39.3%) were female. The majority of coaches ( $n = 80$ ; 95.2%) identified as Caucasian, three (3.6%) as Asian/Pacific Islander, and one (1.2%) as African American. Coaches ranged from 25 to 74 years of age ( $M = 44.5$ ;  $SD = 11.73$ ), reported a range of 1 to 35 years ( $M = 10.68$ ;  $SD = 8.3$ ) of coaching experience, and 1 to 34 ( $M = 8.61$ ;  $SD = 7.37$ ) years of experience in their current coaching position. In terms of highest level of education, 48 coaches reported holding a B.S./B.A. degree (57.1%), 28 holding a M.S./M.A. degree (33.3%), 5 holding a M.B.A. degree (6%), and 3 holding a high school diploma (3.6%).

## **Instrumentation**

A web-based survey (see Appendix B) was utilized in this proposed study and consisted of four sections: (a) demographics; (b) leadership behaviors; (c) attitudes toward SP consulting; and (d) willingness to use SP services.

**Demographics.** Demographic items included the following information: gender, age, years of coaching experience, years of experience in current coaching position, highest level of academic achievement, access to a SP consultant, and prior experience and satisfaction with a SP consultant.

**Attitudes toward sport psychology services.** A shortened version of the Sport Psychology Attitudes Revised Coaches-2 Questionnaire (SPARC-2) (see Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; 2008; Zakrajsek et al., 2011) was used to assess coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting. The SPARC-2 Brief Questionnaire consists of 15-items and four subscales: Confidence in SP consulting (4 items); personal openness (3 items); stigma tolerance (5 items); and cultural preference (3 items). The SPARC-2 brief questionnaire uses a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Scores are obtained by averaging subscale responses. Higher average scores (closer to 6) reveal a more negative attitude toward seeking SP consultation (stigma tolerance), a belief that SP consulting and mental training is useful and effective (confidence in SP consulting), an unwillingness to try mental skills training and SP consulting (personal openness), and a stronger identification with cultural background and preference for working with a SP consultant of similar background to self or athletes (cultural preference). Cronbach's alpha, or internal consistency, scores have been found to be good to excellent: Stigma

Tolerance (.90); confidence in SP consulting (.87); cultural preference (.82); and personal openness (.79). Within the present study, reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) were found to be good to excellent: Confidence in SP consulting (4 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ), stigma tolerance (.70), personal openness (3 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .76$ ), and cultural preference (3 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .75$ ) (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2008).

**Leadership.** In an effort to assess coaches' leadership behaviors, previous researchers developed the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). This assessment was later revised into the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) (Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997). The RLSS has three separate versions- an athlete preference version, an athlete perception version, and a coach self-evaluation version. RLSS factor analysis revealed a 6-factor solution accounting for an average of 58% of total variance in responses to survey items (Zhang & Jensen, 1997). The RLSS consists of 60 items, comprised of six factors: Training and Instruction Behavior (TI) (10 items); Democratic Behavior (DB) (12 items); Autocratic Behavior (AB) (8 items); Social Support Behavior (SS) (8 items); Positive Feedback Behavior (PF) (12 items); and Situational Consideration Behaviors (SC) (10 items). Responses are on a 5-point Likert-scale: 1 meaning "always" (*100% of the time*), 2 meaning "often" (*75% of the time*), 3 meaning "occasionally" (*50% of the time*), 4 meaning "seldom" (*25% of the time*), and 5 meaning "never" (*0% of the time*). Composite scores for each factor are represented by the sum of all items within the given factor, and each factor is interpreted independently. Lower scores on each item (i.e., closer to 1) represent stronger self-perception of the specific leadership behavior in question. Possible total score ranges can be calculated and

represent the lowest and highest possible score for each subscale. Possible total score ranges include 12-60 (democratic behavior), 12-60 (positive feedback behavior), 10-50 (teaching and instruction), 10-50 (situational consideration), 8-40 (social support behavior), and 8-40 (autocratic behavior).

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the coach self-evaluation version were higher than .70, except for the factor AB (.35). Despite the inability of the AB factor to meet this standard, overall internal consistency of all factors over each of the three RLSS versions was shown to be acceptable (Zhang & Jensen, 1997).

For the purpose of this study, the 60 item RLSS was condensed into a six item self-response scale. Coaches were provided with definitions and examples of each of the six individual behaviors and asked to rate how frequently they demonstrated each behavior. With each individual behavior, a definition and examples of the behavior were provided. Coaches responded to each of the six items on a 5-point Likert-scale: 1 meaning 'always' (*100% of the time*), 2 meaning 'often' (*75% of the time*), 3 meaning 'occasionally' (*50% of the time*), 4 meaning 'seldom' (*25% of the time*), and 5 meaning 'never' (*0% of the time*), which is the same response scale used in the RLSS.

**Willingness to use sport psychology services.** Items assessing coaches' willingness to utilize SP services were adapted from NDAA D-I studies with coaches (see Wrisberg et al., 2010). Three items were included to assess coaches' willingness to use SP services. The first item asked participants to rate their willingness to utilize SP services for a variety of purposes. Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). The second and third items asked coaches how willing they

would be to encourage one of their athletes to see a SP consultant about personal concerns or performance related issues. Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*definitely*). A final optional open-ended item allowed participants the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding SP services at the NCAA D-I level.

### **Pilot Study**

Prior to the beginning of data collection, a pilot study was conducted via a web based survey. The main purpose of the pilot study was to allow for participant feedback on the appropriateness of items, readability of items, survey accessibility, duration of survey completion, overall survey structure, and any general feedback derived from the participant's experience. Pilot testing was conducted with NCAA D-II head golf coaches ( $N = 8$ ) of both men's and women's teams in in the southeastern United States. Participants' responses during pilot testing were not included in the final test data for analysis. Pilot participants did not provide feedback about specific survey items and no issues were found with completing the survey; therefore, no modifications were made. The approximate duration for survey completion was 10 minutes.

### **Procedure**

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, initial contact via email was made with potential participants. Head golf coaches' names and email contact were obtained from NCAA D-I Athletic Department web sites. Initial correspondence emails (see Appendix C) informed coaches of the proposed study and invited their participation. Additionally, the email informed coaches that participation in the study was entirely

voluntary, assured coaches that their participation and responses would remain confidential, and explained that accessing and completing the survey would serve as their consent to participate. The email contained an imbedded hyperlink to the web-based survey. A follow-up email (see Appendix D) was sent to all coaches one week after the initial contact in order to help increase participation and response rate (Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2011). Coaches were instructed to complete the survey only if they had yet to participate.

### **Data Analysis**

Several purposes of this study were to explore NCAA D-I coaches': (a) attitudes toward SP services; (b) willingness to utilize SP services; and (c) leadership behaviors. Descriptive analyses (i.e., means and standard deviations) were used to describe demographic information, access to and experience with SP consulting, as well as coaches' overall attitudes toward and willingness to use SP services. Analysis of response data was conducted through both descriptive and inferential statistical means through the use of a statistical analysis program, SPSS Statistics 20.

Inferential statistical methods were used to assess for significance of findings. A purpose of this study was to investigate demographic variables which influenced both coaches' attitudes toward SP services and willingness to utilize SP services. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to test for significant mean differences between dependent variables and independent variables having more than two levels (Thomas et al., 2011). Variables of interest included assessing possible differences between confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, cultural

preference, and willingness to utilize SP services (dependent variables) and previous experience with a SP consultant, perceived satisfaction with previous SP consulting experience, age, and coaching experience (independent variables). For all ANOVA testing indicating significant mean differences, post-hoc multiple comparison analysis (i.e., Bonferroni) was conducted to identify specific significant mean differences amongst variable groups. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to assess for significant mean differences between dependent variables and independent variables with two levels (Thomas et al., 2011). T-test variables of interest included assessing for mean differences between confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, cultural preference, and willingness to utilize SP services (dependent variables) and coaches' gender and education (independent variables).

An additional purpose of this study was to assess if attitudes toward SP services (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference) predicted coaches' willingness to use SP services. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore if attitudes toward SP consulting (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference) (predictor variables) predicted coaches' willingness to utilize SP services (criterion variable) (Thomas et al., 2011).

A final purpose of this study was to explore if there is a relationship between coaches' leadership behaviors (i.e., autocratic, democratic, instruction and training, social support, positive feedback, and situational consideration behaviors) and attitudes toward SP services (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and

cultural preference). Bivariate correlations were used to assess for any possible relationships between NCAA D-I head golf coaches' leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP consulting (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference).

For the purpose of analyses, the variables of age, coaching experience, and education were collapsed into categorical ranges consistent with previous literature (Nelson, 2008; Zakrajsek et al., 2011). Coaches were group by years of coaching experience: 6 or fewer years, 7-15 years, and 16 or more years. Likewise, coaches were grouped by age: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50 and older. Finally, coaches were placed into one of two groups based on highest level of education: high school or bachelor's degree and masters' or doctoral degree.

Within the following chapter, a review of results is provided pertaining to a description of the sample and the purposes of this study, including coaches': (a) access to and utilization of SP services; (b) overall attitudes toward SP services; (c) demographic influences on attitudes toward SP services; (d) overall willingness to utilize SP services; (e) variables influencing willingness to utilize SP services; and (f) leadership behaviors related to their attitudes toward SP services.



## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

Within this chapter, I will provide a review of the results of analyses pertaining to the purposes and hypotheses of this study, including: (a) NCAA D-I head golf coaches' access to and utilization of sport psychology (SP) services; (b) NCAA D-I head golf coaches' overall attitudes toward SP services; (c) demographic variables influencing head golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services; (d) NCAA D-I head golf coaches' overall willingness to utilize SP services; (e) factors influencing head golf coaches willingness to utilize SP services; and (f) preliminary exploration of the influence of leadership behaviors on coaches' attitudes toward SP services.

#### **Access to and Utilization of Sport Psychology Services**

Of the 84 coaches who participated in the current study, 42 (50%) reported having access to a SP consultant at their institution, 33 (39.3%) reported not having access, and 9 (10.7%) were unsure if they had access to a SP consultant. Out of the 42 coaches with access to SP services at their institution, 39 (93%) had used services while three (7%) had not used the services. Specifically, three (7.1%) coaches reported that they never utilized the SP services available at their institution, seven (16.7%) rarely utilized SP services, 18 (42.9%) occasionally utilized SP services, and 14 (33.3%) frequently utilized SP services.

#### **Overall Attitudes Toward SP Consulting**

The SPARC-2 Brief Questionnaire was used to assess NCAA D-I head golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services. This instrument is scored on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Overall, participants reported

generally positive attitudes toward SP consultant services (see Table 1). Coaches' reported a high level of confidence in SP consulting and indicated they would be open (personal openness) to using SP services and mental skills training. Participants' responses also indicated a weak preference for working with a SP consultant of similar cultural background to themselves or their athletes. Finally, coaches reported a low level of stigma associated with SP services.

### **Demographics and Attitudes Toward SP Services**

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate if there were any mean differences between the frequency of NCAA D-I head golf coaches' SP services use at their institution (i.e. never, rarely, occasionally, frequently) and their attitudes toward SP services (i.e. stigma tolerance, confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, and cultural preference). Levene's test for equality of variances between dependent-variable groups indicated acceptable levels of homogeneity. A moderate alpha ( $\alpha < .05$ ) was adopted for interpretation of results. Results revealed significant mean differences between coaches' frequency of SP services use and confidence in SP consulting [ $F(3, 41) = 3.996, p = .014, \eta^2 = .24$ ] and cultural preference [ $F(3, 41) = 7.907, p = .000, \eta^2 = .384$ ]. Multiple comparisons revealed that coaches who frequently used SP services were more confident in SP services ( $M = 5.66, SD = .54$ ) than coaches who rarely used SP services ( $M = 4.61, SD = .96$ ) ( $p < .05$ ). Multiple comparisons also revealed that coaches who rarely used SP services had a greater cultural preference ( $M = 3.71, SD = 1.06$ ) than coaches who occasionally ( $M = 2.13, SD = .85$ ) ( $p < .01$ ) or frequently used SP services ( $M = 1.67, SD = .81$ ) ( $p < .01$ ). No significant mean

differences were found between the frequency of coaches' SP services use and personal openness [ $F(3, 41) = .919, p = .441, \eta^2 = .068$ ] or stigma tolerance [ $F(3, 41) = .923, p = .439, \eta^2 = .068$ ].

Coaches' level of satisfaction with their use of SP services was also of interest. A one-way ANOVA was used to assess mean differences between satisfaction with SP services provided and attitudes toward SP consulting. Due to the disproportionately low number of participants reporting their satisfaction with SP services as “*not at all*” ( $n = 1$ ) and “*slightly*,” ( $n = 7$ ), both groups were combined for analysis. Levene's test for equality of variances was violated for stigma tolerance, with the remaining three (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, cultural preference) showing acceptable levels of homogeneity. For stigma tolerance, adjusted F and degree of freedom values were reported. A conservative alpha ( $\alpha < .01$ ) was adopted for interpretation of findings related to stigma, while a more moderate alpha ( $\alpha < .05$ ) was adopted for the remaining three variables (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, and cultural preference). Results revealed significant mean differences between perceived satisfaction with SP services and confidence in SP consulting [ $F(2, 38) = 5.49, p = .008, \eta^2 = .23$ ] and cultural preference [ $F(2, 38) = 4.97, p = .012, \eta^2 = .22$ ]. Multiple comparisons revealed that coaches' who were extremely satisfied with SP services were more confident in SP consulting ( $M = 5.54, SD = .58$ ) than coaches' only moderately satisfied ( $M = 4.67, SD = .85$ ) ( $p < .01$ ). Multiple comparisons also revealed that coaches who were not at all or slightly satisfied with SP services had a greater cultural preference ( $M = 3.25, SD = 1.22$ ) than coaches who were moderately ( $M = 2.08, SD = 1.13$ ) ( $p < .05$ ) or

extremely ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = .82$ ) ( $p < .05$ ) satisfied. Analyses failed to yield significant mean differences between coaches perceived satisfaction with SP services and stigma tolerance [ $F(2, 19.4) = 2.86$ ,  $p = .081$ ,  $\eta^2 = .15$ ] or personal openness [ $F(2, 38) = .942$ ,  $p = .399$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ].

A purpose of the present study was to investigate gender differences in attitudes toward SP services. It was hypothesized that female coaches would have more favorable attitudes toward SP services than males. An independent samples t-test revealed no significant differences between gender and stigma tolerance [ $t(82) = 1.37$ ,  $p = .17$ ,  $d = .303$ ], confidence in SP consulting [ $t(82) = -.89$ ,  $p = .38$ ,  $d = -.19$ ], personal openness [ $t(82) = 1.13$ ,  $p = .26$ ,  $d = .25$ ], or cultural preference [ $t(82) = 1.17$ ,  $p = .25$ ,  $d = .26$ ].

Another purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of coaches' age, coaching experience, and education on their attitudes toward SP services. It was hypothesized that older coaches, more experienced coaches, and coaches holding higher levels of education would have more positive attitudes toward SP services compared to their counterparts. A one-way ANOVA failed to yield significant results between coaches' age and stigma tolerance [ $F(3, 83) = 1.58$ ,  $p = .20$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ], confidence in SP consulting [ $F(3, 83) = .66$ ,  $p = .58$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ], personal openness [ $F(3, 83) = .49$ ,  $p = .69$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ], or cultural preference [ $F(3, 83) = .52$ ,  $p = .67$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ]. Likewise, a one way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between coaching experience and stigma tolerance [ $F(2, 71) = .194$ ,  $p = .824$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ], confidence in SP consulting [ $F(2, 71) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ ], personal openness [ $F(2, 71) = 1.07$ ,  $p = .35$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ], or cultural preference [ $F(2, 71) = .77$ ,  $p = .47$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ ]. Finally, an independent samples t-

test revealed no significant differences between coaches' education and stigma tolerance [ $t(82) = .43, p = .67, d = .09$ ], confidence in SP consulting [ $t(82) = .97, p = .33, d = .21$ ], personal openness [ $t(82) = -.44, p = .66, d = -.10$ ], or cultural preference [ $t(82) = .81, p = .42, d = .18$ ].

### **Willingness to Utilize Sport Psychology Services**

A purpose of this study was to investigate NCAA D-I head golf coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. Coaches' highest ratings (i.e.,  $M = 4.0$  or higher) of their willingness to utilize SP services were for "improving focus," "performing as well in competition as in practice," "managing emotions," "enhancing performance," "building confidence," "dealing with pressure," and "managing anxiety" (see Table 2). Mean scores for coaches' willingness to utilize SP services for personal ( $M = 4.05, SD = .96$ ) or performance related concerns ( $M = 4.37, SD = .83$ ) were also generally positive.

### **Factors Influencing Coaches' Willingness to Utilize Sport Psychology Services**

All survey items addressing participants' willingness to utilize SP services for a variety of purposes showed high levels of reliability (15 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .964$ ), and were combined into a single overall willingness variable for analysis (see Table 2).

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to assess mean differences between coaches' frequency of SP service use (i.e. never, rarely, occasionally, frequently) and willingness to use SP services. Levene's test of equality of variances yielded acceptable results and did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Results indicated a significant mean difference between coaches' frequency of SP service use and their willingness to utilize SP services,  $F(3, 41) = 2.87, p = .049, \eta^2 = .18$ .

However, multiple comparisons failed to yield a significant mean difference between any specific groups of coaches' use of SP services and their willingness to utilize SP consultation.

A one-way ANOVA was used to assess mean differences between coaches' perceived satisfaction with SP services and their willingness to use SP services. Again, participants' reporting satisfaction with SP services as "*not at all*" and "*slightly*" were combined for analysis. Levene's test of equality of variances yielded acceptable results and did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances. Results revealed significant mean differences between coaches' perceived satisfaction with SP services and their willingness to utilize SP services,  $F(3, 38) = 5.117, p < .001, \eta^2 = .39$ . Specifically, multiple comparisons indicated that coaches who were extremely satisfied with SP services were more willing to utilize SP consultation ( $M = 4.37, SD = .59$ ) than coaches' who were moderately satisfied ( $M = 3.21, SD = .66$ ) ( $p < .001$ ).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess mean differences between coaches' frequency of SP services use and their willingness to utilize SP services for personal or performance concerns. Results of Levene's test for homogeneity of variances between coaches' frequency of SP services use and willingness to utilize SP services for personal concerns were acceptable, and a moderate alpha was adopted for interpretation ( $\alpha < .05$ ). However, Levene's test indicated a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances between coaches' frequency of SP services use and willingness to utilize SP services for performance concerns. In response, a conservative alpha ( $\alpha < .01$ ) was adopted and adjusted F and degrees of freedom were reported. Results of the one-way

ANOVA between coaches' frequency of SP services use and their willingness to utilize SP services for performance concerns revealed significant results,  $F(3, 11.91) = 10.557$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .44$ . Multiple comparisons showed that coaches' who never or rarely used SP services were less likely to utilize SP services for performance concerns ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) than coaches who used SP services occasionally ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) or frequently ( $M = 4.93$ ,  $SD = .27$ ). Analysis of coaches' frequency of SP services use and willingness to utilize SP services for personal concerns failed to yield any significant results,  $F(3, 41) = 1.47$ ,  $p = .24$ ,  $\eta^2 = .10$ .

Finally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess for mean differences between coaches' satisfaction with SP services and their willingness to utilize SP services for personal or performance related concerns. As with previous analyses, coaches rating of satisfaction with SP services as "not at all" or "slightly" were collapsed into one category for analysis. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances met acceptable levels for both willingness to utilize SP services for personal and performance related concerns. As such, a moderate alpha ( $\alpha < .05$ ) was adopted for interpretation of findings. Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference between coaches' satisfaction with SP services and willingness to utilize SP services for performance related concerns [ $F(2, 38) = 4.58$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .20$ ]. Multiple comparisons revealed that coaches who were extremely satisfied with SP services were more willing to utilize SP services for performance related concerns ( $M = 4.83$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) than coaches who were either not at all or slightly satisfied ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = .64$ ). Results failed to meet the criteria for

significance for willingness to utilize SP services for personal [ $F(2, 38) = .72, p = .49, \eta^2 = .04$ ].

### **Attitudes Toward SP Consulting and Willingness to Use SP Services**

A purpose of the present study was to investigate if coaches' attitudes toward SP services predicted their willingness to utilize SP services. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting (i.e., personal openness, confidence in SP consultation, stigma tolerance, and/or cultural preference) (predictor variables) predicted coaches' willingness to utilize SP services (criterion variable). Bivariate correlations between independent variables and the collinearity statistics (i.e., tolerance, VIF) revealed that multi-collinearity was not an issue. The stepwise multiple regression revealed a two variable solution [ $F(2) = 111.74, p < .001$ ] accounting for 73.4% of the variance in coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. Confidence in SP consulting ( $\beta = .79, p < .001$ ) was found to be the most significant predictor of coaches' willingness to utilize SP services and accounted for 53.5% of the variance. Stigma tolerance ( $\beta = -.14, p < .05$ ) was also retained as a predictor of coaches' willingness to utilize services and accounted for 19.9% of the variance. As confidence in SP consulting increased and stigma tolerance decreased, coaches' willingness to use SP services increased.

### **Exploring Coaching Behaviors**

A final purpose of the present study was to explore any potential influence of coaches' self-reported leadership behaviors (i.e., autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, social support behavior, training and instruction, positive feedback, and



situational consideration) on their attitudes toward SP services (i.e., personal openness, confidence in SP consultation, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference). Leadership behaviors were scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*always*) to 5 (*never*). Means and standard deviations for each of the six leadership behaviors are provided in Table 3.

Bivariate correlations were used to investigate any relationship between coaches' leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP consulting. These analyses indicated a weak negative relationship between coaches' democratic behavior and confidence in SP consulting ( $r = -.258, p < .05$ ). As coaches' use of democratic behaviors increased, their confidence in SP consulting also increased. Moderate positive relationships were found between coaches' social support behaviors and personal openness ( $r = .321, p < .01$ ) and situational consideration behaviors and personal openness ( $r = .305, p < .01$ ). As coaches' social support and situational consideration behaviors increased, they became more open to being involved with SP services.

The following chapter will present a discussion of coaches': (a) use of SP services; (b) attitudes toward SP consulting; (c) willingness to use SP services; (d) relationship between leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP consulting; (e) potential implications for practitioners; and (f) limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

In the current study, NCAA D-I head golf coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting and willingness to encourage athletes to seek SP services were explored. A purpose of this study was to investigate factors which influenced coaches' attitudes toward SP consultation and willingness to utilize SP services. Specifically, previous experience with SP consultation, satisfaction with previous SP consulting experience, gender, age, coaching experience, and education influenced coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting were assessed within this study. Additionally, coaches' previous experience with SP consultation and satisfaction with previous SP consulting experience were investigated to determine if they influenced coaches' willingness to use SP services. Another aim of this study was to assess if attitudes toward SP services (i.e. confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference) predicted coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. A final purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between coaches self-reported leadership behaviors and their attitudes toward SP consultation.

#### **Use of SP Services**

Of the 84 NCAA D-I head golf coaches that participated in this study, 50% reported having access to a SP consultant at their current institution. This percentage is similar to what has been reported in recent research with a national sample of NCAA D-I coaches (45%; Wrisberg et al., 2010) and NCAA D-I, II, and III track and swimming coaches (43%; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Of the 42 coaches who had access to a SP

consultant, 32 (76%) reported utilizing SP services either occasionally or frequently. This number is also similar to reports of previous research with NCAA D-I coaches, in which 66% of the coaches with access to a SP consultant utilized services (Wrisberg et al., 2010). This finding in previous research as well as the finding of the current study suggests that, when coaches are provided access to SP services, they are likely to utilize them. Furthermore, coaches' participating in this study reported high levels of satisfaction with the SP services provided, with 79.5% of those having access indicating moderate or extreme satisfaction.

### **Attitudes toward SP consulting**

Head golf coaches participating in the current study reported positive perceptions of SP consulting (see Table 1). Means of all attitude variables (i.e., confidence in SP consulting, personal openness, stigma tolerance, and cultural preference) were slightly more positive than results of previous research with collegiate basketball, swimming, and track and field coaches (Nelson, 2008; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007).

Coaches' who reported frequent use of SP services, and were extremely satisfied with the services provided, reported more positive attitudes toward SP services compared to coaches who either used SP services rarely or reported moderate satisfaction with services provided. Use of SP services, and satisfaction with the services provided, has consistently been reported as a factor influencing athletes' and coaches' perceptions and attitudes toward SP consulting (Anderson et al., 2004; Martin, 2005; Nelson, 2008; Wrisberg et al., 2009; Wrisberg et al., 2010). Specifically, the present study identified a significant difference between coaches' use of SP services and confidence in SP

consultation and cultural preference. Previous studies with athletes have also found experience with SP to impact confidence in SP consultation (Anderson et al., 2004; Martin, 2005). Additionally, research with coaches has found previous experience with SP to influence cultural preference (Nelson, 2008). The findings of this study coupled with those of previous research (Wrisberg et al., 2010) continue to highlight the importance of not only previous experience utilizing SP services, but also the frequency of SP service use and satisfaction with the services provided. Specifically, exposure to SP consultation and satisfaction with the experience seems to play a vital role in influencing their attitudes toward and willingness to utilize SP services.

A number of other individual variables have been found to influence coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting. For example, researchers have found female coaches to be more confident in, associate less stigma with, and be more open to SP services than their male counterparts (Wrisberg et al. et al., 2010; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). However, significant findings related to gender differences and attitudes toward SP services garnered through Zakrajsek and Zizzi (2007) yielded minimal effect sizes for stigma tolerance ( $d = .22$ ) and personal openness ( $d = .32$ ). The relationship between gender and attitudes toward SP services was not reflected in results of the current study and is consistent with other studies that did not find gender differences in coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting (Bloom, 2003; Nelson, 2008). Given these contradictory findings, more research is needed to explore male and female coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting and how these attitudes might influence SP service use.

A recent investigation of high school football coaches identified a number of personal variables that influenced attitudes toward SP services (Zakrajsek et al., 2011). For example, older coaches, those with more coaching experience, and those with higher levels of education had more positive attitudes toward SP services than their counterparts. The current study did not find differences between coaches' age, coaching experience, or level of education and attitudes toward SP consulting. The disparity between these findings and those of previous research could most likely be attributed to differences in sample participants. Specifically, Zakrajsek et al. (2011) recruited a regional sample of high school level coaches within a specific sport (American football). Within the present study, a national sample of NCAA D-I coaches of a different sport (i.e., golf) were recruited. Undoubtedly, the potential influences imparted by these variables in question need further investigation.

### **Willingness to Utilize Sport Psychology Services**

Overall, coaches participating in this study reported willingness to utilize SP services. Individual items scoring the most positive (see Table 2) were those which directly impacted an individual athlete's performance (i.e., dealing with pressure, improving confidence, improving focus, managing anxiety, improving performance, and performing as well in competition as in practice). On the contrary, the lowest mean score was dealing with injury and rehabilitation. This finding is supported by previous research with NCAA D-I coaches, in which coaches were most interested in performance-related services and also reported injury or rehabilitation as a situation in which they would be less willing to seek the assistance of SP services (Wrisberg et al., 2010). Additionally,

coaches participating in the current study who had previously used SP services indicated more willingness to utilize SP services for performance related concerns than for performance related concerns. It would seem that the primary motivation for coaches to utilize SP services, as well as the most desired purpose of doing so, is to directly improve an athlete's performance. This may be especially true for coaches who have prior experience working with SP consultation and are familiar with the role of a SP consultant.

Results of the current study also indicated that previous experience and satisfaction with the SP services provided significantly influenced coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. This finding supports previous research which identified the coaches with more frequent interaction with a SP consultant as more willing to utilize SP services (Wrisberg et al., 2010). In the present study, satisfaction with SP services was shown to be a more meaningful influence on coaches' willingness to utilize SP services than merely the frequency of their use of SP services. These findings taken together highlight the important role which exposure to SP consulting, and even more so satisfaction with SP consulting, plays in influencing coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. Providing services perceived by coaches as highly satisfying can be a vehicle for increased SP service utilization, which may provide SP consultants better access to and more freedom in working with a coach or team.

Lastly, confidence in SP consultation and stigma tolerance were found to predict coaches' willingness to use SP services. Within this two-factor regression solution, confidence in SP consultation accounted for the largest amount of the variance in

coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. This finding supports those of previous studies, as researchers have identified confidence in SP consultation as the most significant predictor of athletes and coaches SP service use intentions (Anderson, et al., 2004; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek et al., 2011). Furthermore, this finding further emphasizes the need for SP consultants to instill confidence in their potential clients, and through doing so, increase the client's willingness to utilize services in the future.

### **Leadership**

The M<sup>2</sup>SP<sup>2</sup> model (see Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011) posits that a coach's characteristics are an antecedent factor influencing his or her attitudes toward SP consulting which, in turn, influence intentions to use SP services, behaviors directed toward service use, and satisfaction with the services provided. An exploratory component of the present study addressed the possibility of a relationship between coaches' self-reported leadership behaviors (i.e., coach characteristic) and their corresponding attitudes toward SP services. A weak relationship was found between democratic behavior and confidence in SP consultation. As coaches' reported a greater use of democratic behavior, they also reported greater confidence in SP consultation. Democratic behavior represents a decision-making style coaches adopt wherein the coach allows others (e.g., athletes) to have input in making decisions which relate to the team (e.g., goal setting) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). As it relates to confidence in SP consulting, this finding may suggest that coaches who adopt more democratic decision making styles have more confidence in other athletic support staff to effectively provide services; a category within which SP consultants would fall. In addition, a moderate

relationship was found between situational consideration and personal openness. As coaches' self-reported use of situational consideration behaviors increased, so did their personal openness to being involved in SP consultation and mental skills training. Situational consideration behavior refers to a coach's willingness to consider situational factors (e.g., environment, individual abilities, team makeup) in performing their role of coach (e.g., setting individual goals, adjusting coaching methods for varying abilities) (Zhang & Jensen, 1997). This leadership behavior is an open acknowledgment of individual differences and a willingness to adopt differing approaches to coaching. As it relates to this study and the association with personal openness, such a belief in situational differences may make coaches' more open to various methods for improving a team or athlete's performance; a willingness to try various methods which may include utilizing SP services. Finally, a moderate relationship was found between social support behaviors and personal openness. Social support behaviors refer to the extent to which a coach is invested in satisfying the interpersonal needs of his or her athletes. This type of leadership behavior is distinguished from some others, as it is considered independent of the athlete's performance (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). This may indicate a coach's compassion for the well-being of his or her athletes as people apart from their role within sport. The findings of this study might suggest that coaches adopting more social support behaviors may be more open to SP consulting which provides services aimed at enhancing an athlete's performance and overall well-being.

Leadership behaviors were a coach characteristic that had yet to be explored within the literature in relation to attitudes toward SP consultation and service provision;



therefore, much more needs to be explored to better understand the role of leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP consultation and service provision.

### **Potential Implications for Sport Psychology Practitioners**

Participants' responses to survey items addressing coaches' attitudes toward SP consulting and willingness to utilize SP services were generally positive. While 50% of participating coaches' reported having access to SP services at their institution, it is encouraging that the vast majority of coaches with access utilized the services available. It appears that coaches' positive attitudes and receptivity to utilizing services may translate to actual use of services, as long as a SP consultant is easily assessable. Previous literature has identified funding and access as two of the largest barriers to SP service use (Voight & Callaghan, 2001; Wrisberg et al., 2012; Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Therefore, two of the largest barriers were eliminated for those coaches who had a SP consultant available at their NCAA D-I institution. In order to gain entry into NCAA D-I athletic departments, it is important for SP practitioners to continually demonstrate the benefits of their role within team or athletic department settings. Previous research has highlighted the need for coaching SP workshops to go beyond merely supplying content about what SP is and delve into how SP services can be beneficial (Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). These researchers suggest creating a more interactive atmosphere for educational sessions wherein the stigma of SP can be openly discussed and dispelled. As coaches become more exposed to SP and informed on how SP services can be beneficial, they may become more open and willing to utilize SP services, increasing the demand for access.

The present study highlights the crucial influence of coaches' confidence in SP consultation on their willingness to utilize SP services. Researchers have suggested that building confidence in SP consultation can be addressed through adopting a holistic approach to designing educational programs beyond the basic facts of SP (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Such programs can serve as a vehicle for building confidence in SP consultation, which has been found to be in the strongest factor predicting coaches' willingness to utilize SP services. Previous research has shown that coaches who perceive SP consultants as more effective are also more willing to utilize SP services (Wrisberg et al., 2010). While not specifically targeted by this study, this may suggest that coaches who perceive SP services as effective have a greater belief in SP consulting and mental training as useful tools.

Coaches' satisfaction with the SP services provided at their institution influenced their willingness to utilize SP consulting. Perceived satisfaction with SP services could be a reflection of the degree to which the SP consultant meets the coach's expectations of effective service delivery. Through effectively providing services and meeting the expectations of the coach, the SP consultant may also increase the coach's confidence in SP consultation. Establishing guidelines and managing expectations at the beginning of the consultant-client relationship may help to build an effective relationship between the coach and SP consultant, and thus influence satisfaction and confidence in SP service delivery.

Athletes and coaches have identified qualities of an effective SP consultant (Orlick & Partington, 1987; Partington & Orlick, 1987). Accordingly, practitioners

should seek to address individual differences between athletes, provide applicable sport-specific information which directly relates to the athlete or coach, follow-up with consulting done with clients, and be honestly interested and invested in the clients' performance and well-being. For SP consultants working specifically with teams, maintaining social cohesion and "fitting in" with the team, long-term performance improvement, and enhancing team comradery, motivation, and problem-solving should all be areas of concern. SP practitioners should also strive to be effective communicators, energetic and hard-working, creative, possess useful and relevant skills which benefit the team, and relate to coaches and athletes. Through embracing these desirable characteristics identified by coaches and athletes, SP practitioners can deliver services more likely to be perceived as highly satisfying and effective.

While access to SP is a variable which is most often determined by the client or institutional athletic department, confidence in and satisfaction with SP consulting services can be influenced by SP practitioners. The variables of coaches' confidence in and satisfaction with SP consulting are not independent of one another. Rather, these two factors represent a dynamic relationship between two components which influence coaches' willingness to use SP services; and thus should be of high importance to those working within the field SP.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

A general limitation of the current study was a result of the population which was sampled, NCAA D-I head golf coaches from the United States. The results of this study which come from this particular group of coaches may not be representative of coaches

of other sports (e.g. football, track and field, swimming), coaches at different levels of competition (NCAA Division II or III, high school, club teams, professional), or coaches involved with teams or organizations within a specific region of the United States or other international teams. Approximately two-thirds of coaches who participated in this study were male, and an overwhelming majority identified as Caucasian. The lack of diversity within the sample is a limitation to consider in interpreting the generalizability of any findings.

Furthermore, this study did not assess the gender of the golf team coached, but only the gender of the coach themselves. The exclusion of this variable represents a limitation of the analyses of this study. The results of the current study did not reveal any differences between male or female coaches' attitudes toward SP services. However, this study did not assess for differences in attitudes toward SP services between coaches' of male or female golf teams, which is a question of interest that can be addressed by future researchers.

As an exploratory investigation, this study condensed the 60 item RLSS into six single item self-response questions for each of the six established leadership behaviors. In doing so, the results of analyses which incorporate these measures may not be representative of findings which could be derived from administering the entire 60 item RLSS questionnaire. Future researchers may want to consider using the 60 item RLSS questionnaire in addition to the condensed six item survey used in this study. Doing so could assess the appropriateness of using a 6 item measure, potentially validate the

relationships found in the present study, and expand the knowledge base for how coaches' leadership behaviors may impact their attitudes toward SP consulting.

Due to the lack of existing literature addressing the influence of coaches' leadership behaviors on attitudes toward SP services, there is a need for additional research to expand upon the present study. Such research could not only validate or expand upon the elementary findings of the current study, but also lead to a broader understanding of how coaches' of differing leadership styles may perceive SP. For instance, consider the example of Beth (see Chapter 1). Her coach was highly authoritative and demonstrative toward his players, and often acted in ways which made Beth feel uncomfortable. This coach also never provided or sought out any SP consulting services, even though the players, including Beth, were highly interested in the potential benefits of mental skills. If researchers were to further investigate coaches' leadership and attitudes toward SP, they might be able to clarify a number of lingering questions: are more authoritative coaches less receptive to SP services? If there is a relationship between leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP, does it hold true for all sports, or does it vary across sporting platforms? Are there differences in the relationship between coaches' leadership behaviors and attitudes toward SP which vary across different levels of competition? There are still many questions which can be addressed by researchers and may hold great value to practitioners trying to gain access to a team and work effectively with coaches and athletes.

As this study is the first to specifically focus on NCAA D-I golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services, future research is also needed to confirm or dispute, expand upon,

and provide depth to conclusions made for this particular population. SP practitioners have been visible within the culture of golf for almost 20 years, with major golf magazines dedicating entire sections of their publication to mental skills (Rotella, 1996; 2004; Rotella & Newell, 1998; Rotella, Pittman, & Iooss, 2009). Researchers have also highlighted a number of ways in which mental skills can be beneficial to golfers, including pre-performance routines (Cotterill, Sanders, & Collins, 2010), improving attentional focus (Bell & Hardy, 2009), modeling and feedback (Bertram, Marteniuk, & Stevenson, 2004), and imagery (Taylor & Shaw, 2002). With the visibility of SP within the sport of golf and the benefits of mental skills to golfers, further understanding golf coaches' attitudes and beliefs about accessing SP services could be useful to SP practitioners seeking out clients who either coach or participate in golf. Researchers should also target golf coaches of differing levels of competition to better inform practitioners working with those populations on how to gain access, overcome coaches' perceived barriers to SP service use, and raise coaches' confidence in SP consulting. Finally, to address one of the limitations of this study, future research with golf coaches' attitudes toward SP should assess for any differences between coaches of men's and women's teams. This is an area of interest left untouched by the current study and may be helpful in identifying any differing perceptions of SP services between coaches' of a men's or women's team, thus aiding SP practitioners in gaining access to working with a particular team.

Finally, future studies are needed to continually add to and clarify the growing bulk of knowledge concerning athletes, coaches, and administrators' attitudes toward SP

services. Such research will help to continually evaluate and develop the M<sup>2</sup>SP<sup>2</sup> model for SP service provision established through previous research (see Zakrajsek & Martin, 2011). Moreover, such future research will help to better guide SP practitioners in gaining entry and providing the most effective and successful service possible.

### **Conclusion**

The present study explored NCAA D-I head golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services. Considering both the visibility of SP within the sport of golf and existing research which identifies the wide ranging benefits of mental skills for golf performance, understanding golf coaches' perceptions of SP provides insight into a population which can possibly be a prime target for SP practitioners. The results of this study indicated that golf coaches' attitudes toward SP services may be more positive and receptive than other populations of coaches' previously studied (Nelson, 2008; Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi 2007). Specifically, this study showed that NCAA D-I head golf coaches' had high levels of confidence in SP consulting. Previous research, as well as the results of this study, has identified confidence in SP consulting as the strongest predictor of intentions to utilize SP services (Zakrajsek et al., 2011; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007). Therefore, the specific population of coaches' this study focused on may be more willing to utilize SP services than other sport coaches' previously studied. This line of reasoning may underlie the high rate of SP service use for coaches in the current study who had access to SP consulting. It appears that if golf coaches have access to SP services, they will utilize them.

The barrier of access to SP services was also evident in this study, with half of the coaches' not having access to SP consulting at their NCAA D-I institution. To further the upward trend of SP service access at college institutions, SP professionals must continue to demonstrate the benefits of their services and the high levels of satisfaction of coaches who have used SP services. Having coaches within institutional athletic departments support the employment and integration of SP consulting may influence athletic directors and their decision to hire, or not hire, SP consultants as part of the athletic department support staff. Coaches advocating for SP provides a voice of support from within the established athletic department staff; a platform many SP consultants on the outside do not yet have themselves.



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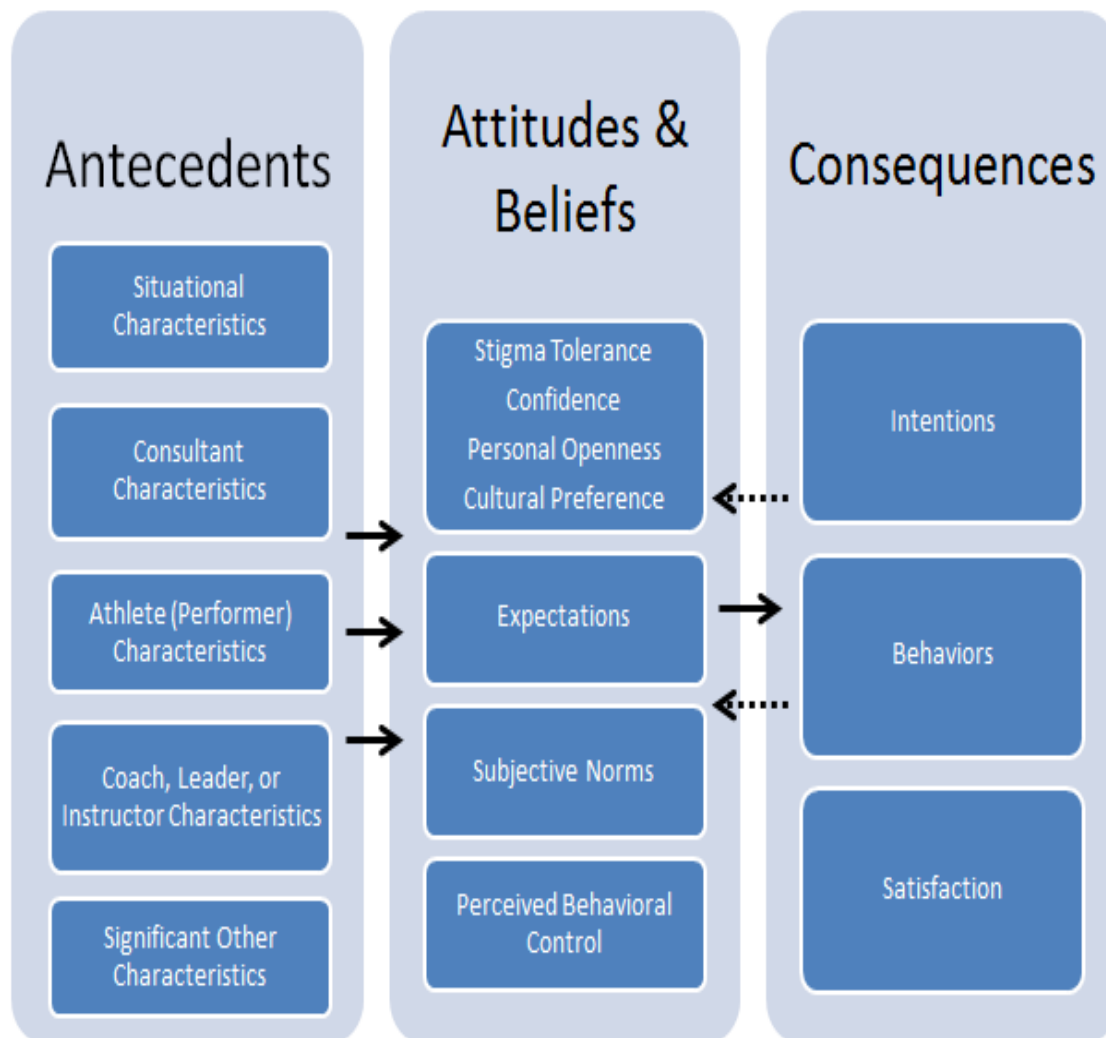
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## **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Multidimensional Model of Sport Psychology Service Provision



*Figure 1:* Multidimensional Model of Sport Psychology Service Provision. Adapted from Zakrajsek and Martin (2011).

## Appendix B

### Survey

1. **TITLE** Coaching and Sport Psychology Services at NCAA Division I Institutions  
Thank you for electing to complete the following survey. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be held in strict confidence. Any publications or presentations resulting from the study will be reported in summary form only. Your completion of the questionnaire will constitute your consent to participate and indicate that you are 18 years of age or older. **Display Text**

2. **GENDER** What is your gender? **Single response**
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
3. **ETHNICITY** What is your ethnicity/race? **Single response**
  - a. African American
  - b. Caucasian
  - c. Hispanic or Latino
  - d. Asian/Pacific Islander
  - e. American Indian
  - f. Two or more races (not Hispanic or Latino):  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Prefer not to answer
  
4. **AGE** What is your age? **Numeric Response**
  
5. **ACADEMIC\_ACHIEVEMENT** What is your highest level of academic achievement? **Single response**
  - a. High School
  - b. B.S. / B.A.
  - c. M.S. / M.A.
  - d. M.B.A.
  - e. Ph.D.
  - f. Other
  
6. **COACHING\_EXPERIENCE** How many years of experience do you have as a NCAA Division I head golf coach? **Numeric response**
  
7. **JOB\_EXPERIENCE** How many years of experience do you have as the head golf coach at your current institution? **Numeric response**

8. **RLSS\_DIRECTIONS** Directions: Each of the following statements describes a specific behavior that a coach may exhibit. For each statement there are five alternative answers, as follows: 5 means 'always' (100% of the time); 4 means 'often' (75% of the time); 3 means 'occasionally' (50% of the time); 2 means 'seldom' (25% of the time); and 1 means 'never' (0% of the time). Answer all items even if you are unsure of a response. Please note that this is how you describe yourself. **It is your own coaching behavior that is required.** There are no right or wrong answers. Your spontaneous and honest response is important for the success of this evaluation. **Display text**
9. **DEFINE\_AB** Autocratic Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**
- making independent decisions.
  - making and stressing personal authority.
  - using commands and punishment.
  - acting without considering the feeling and thinking of the athletes.
  - prescribing the ways to get work done.
10. **RLSS\_AB** In coaching, I demonstrate Autocratic Behaviors: **Single response grid**
- a. 5- Always (100% of the time)
  - b. 4- Often (75% of the time)
  - c. 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
  - d. 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
  - e. 1- Never (0% of the time)
11. **DEFINE\_DB** Democratic Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**
- allowing participation by the athlete in decisions pertaining to group goals, practice methods, and game tactics and strategies.
  - respecting and accepting the rights of the athletes.
  - encouraging involvement of the athletes in personnel selection and performance evaluation.
  - admitting mistakes and confronting problems.
12. **RLSS\_DB** In coaching, I demonstrate Democratic Behaviors: **Single response grid**
- a. 5- Always (100% of the time)
  - b. 4- Often (75% of the time)
  - c. 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
  - d. 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
  - e. 1- Never (0% of the time)

13. **DEFINE\_TI** Training and Instruction Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**
- improving the athlete's performance by emphasizing and facilitating hard and strenuous training.
  - instructing the athletes in the skills, techniques, and the tactics of the sport.
  - providing the athletes with facilities, equipment, and practice methods that allow for the safety of the athletes.
  - planning training practices and evaluating the performance of the athletes.
  - having knowledge and being responsible.
14. **RLSS\_TI** In coaching, I demonstrate Training and Instruction Behaviors: **Single response grid**
- a. 5- Always (100% of the time)
  - b. 4- Often (75% of the time)
  - c. 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
  - d. 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
  - e. 1- Never (0% of the time)
15. **DEFINE\_SS** Social Support Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**
- providing the athletes with psychological supports that are indirectly related to athletic training or competition.
  - helping the athletes with personal problems.
  - providing for the welfare of the athletes.
  - establishing friendship, positive group atmosphere, and warm interpersonal relations with the athletes.
  - making sport part of enjoyment of an athlete's life.
  - protecting the athletes from any outside harm.
16. **RLSS\_SS** In coaching, I demonstrate Social Support Behaviors: **Single response grid**
- a. 5- Always (100% of the time)
  - b. 4- Often (75% of the time)
  - c. 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
  - d. 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
  - e. 1- Never (0% of the time)
17. **DEFINE\_PF** Positive Feedback Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**
- reinforcing the athletes by recognizing and rewarding good performance.
  - encouraging an athlete after making a mistake.
  - correcting the behavior rather than blaming the athletes.
  - complementing the athletes properly.

- using body language properly

18. **RLSS\_PF** In coaching, I demonstrate Positive Feedback Behaviors: **Single response grid**

- 5- Always (100% of the time)
- 4- Often (75% of the time)
- 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
- 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
- 1- Never (0% of the time)

19. **DEFINE\_SC** Situational Consideration Behaviors refer to coaching behaviors aimed at: **Display Text**

- considering situational factors, such as time, game, environment, individual, gender, skill level, and health condition.
- setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals.
- differentiating coaching methods at different maturity stages and skill levels.
- selecting an athlete for the appropriate game position or line up

20. **RLSS\_SC** In coaching, I demonstrate Situational Consideration Behaviors: **Single response grid**

- 5- Always (100% of the time)
- 4- Often (75% of the time)
- 3- Occasionally (50% of the time)
- 2- Seldom (25% of the time)
- 1- Never (0% of the time)

21. **DEFINE\_SPC** For the purposes of this research, sport psychology consultants are defined as persons with formal training in sport psychology who are capable of providing student-athletes with the psychological and emotional skills necessary for achieving peak performance and enhancing life quality. **Display Text**

Specific areas where sport psychology consultants can have an impact include:

- confidence
- motivation
- communication
- team cohesion
- leadership

Skills they are capable of teaching include:

- goal setting

- imagery
- relaxation techniques
- anxiety management
- coping with stress
- thought control
- recovery from injuries
- burnout

*(Source: Donohue, B., Dickens, Y., Lancer, K., Covassin, T., Hash, A., Miller, A., et al. (2004). Improving athletes' perspectives of sport psychology consultation. Behavior Modification, 28(2), 182-193.)*

22. **SPARC-2** Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by circling the response that corresponds to your feelings towards each statement. Please respond to each statement as truthfully as you can. (SPC=Sport Psychology Consultant) **Single response grid**
- a. A sport psychology consultant (SPC) can help athletes improve their mental toughness
  - b. I would not want a SPC working with my athletes because other coaches would think less of me
  - c. I would like to have the assistance of a SPC to help me better understand my athletes
  - d. I would feel uneasy having a SPC work with my athletes because some people would disapprove
  - e. Having seen a SPC is bad for an athlete's reputation
  - f. Athletes emotional difficulties tend to work themselves out in time
  - g. I think a SPC would help my athletes perform better under pressure
  - h. A SPC could help my athletes fine-tune their performance
  - i. If my athletes working with a SPC, I would not want other coaches to know about it
  - j. My athletes would be more comfortable with a SPC if he/she were of the same race or ethnicity as them
  - k. I would think less of my athletes if they went to a SPC
  - l. Athletes with a strong character can get over mental conflicts by themselves
  - m. An athlete may relate best to a SPC if he/she were the same race or ethnicity
  - n. Athletes should know how to handle problems without needing assistance from a SPC
  - o. I would be more comfortable hiring a SPC if he/she were from the same cultural background
    - i. 1= Strongly disagree
    - ii. 2= Moderately disagree
    - iii. 3= Slightly disagree
    - iv. 4= Slightly agree
    - v. 5= Moderately agree

vi. 6= Strongly agree

23. **ACCESS** Is a sport psychology consultant available for coaches and student-athletes at the institution which you work? (i.e. employed by university, college, or athletic department) **Single response**
- Yes---go to question #24
  - No---go to question #26
  - Unsure---go to question #26
24. **FREQUENCY** How often have you used the services offered by a sport psychology consultant with your athletes/team? **Single response**
- Never---go to question #26
  - Rarely---go to question #25
  - Occasionally---go to question #25
  - Frequently---go to question #25
25. **SATISFACTION** How satisfied were you with the services provided by the sport psychology consultant? **Single response**
- Not at all
  - Slightly
  - Moderately
  - Extremely
26. **WILLING** How willing would you be to utilize the services of a sport psychology consultant for your athletes or yourself for the following purposes (assuming you had access to one): **Single response grid**
- Dealing with pressure
  - Dealing with injury / rehabilitation
  - Building confidence
  - Improving focus
  - Preventing burnout
  - Communicating with coaches
  - Communicating with teammates
  - Dealing with personal issues
  - Managing anxiety
  - Increasing enjoyment of sport
  - Enhancing performance
  - Performing as well in competition as in practice
  - Managing emotions during competition
  - Building team cohesion
  - Setting team or individual goals
    - Not at all
    - Slightly
    - Moderately



- iv. Highly
- v. Extremely

27. **PERSONAL** How willing would you be to encourage one of your athletes to see a sport psychology consultant about **personal concerns**? **Single response**
- a. Never
  - b. Doubtful
  - c. Maybe
  - d. Probably
  - e. Definitely
28. **PERFORM** How willing would you be to encourage one of your athletes to see a sport psychology consultant about **performance related issues**? **Single response**
- a. Never
  - b. Doubtful
  - c. Maybe
  - d. Probably
  - e. Definitely
29. **ADDITIONAL\_COMMENTS** Are there any additional comments you would like to make regarding these topics? (optional): **Open response**

## Appendix C

### Email (Cover Letter)

Dear NCAA Division I Head Golf Coach:

As the leader of the team, head coaches hold a significant role within the athletic environment. With the high performance demands expected at the NCAA D-I level, some coaches are using sport psychology services to prepare their student-athletes for the mental and emotional challenges of competitive sport.

In order to gain a better understanding of the influence coaches have as the leader of a team, I am inviting NCAA Division I Head Golf Coaches to complete a survey designed to assess their leadership behaviors and perceptions and use of sport psychology consulting.

The web-based survey can be completed in 10-15 minutes. Your participation is greatly appreciated and your responses will be held in strict confidence. Any publications or presentations resulting from this project will report summary statistics only.

Please click on the link below to activate the survey. Completion of the survey will constitute your consent to participate.

[Web Survey Link](#)

If you have any questions about the survey, please e-mail Justin R. Smedley, M. S. candidate in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior, University of Tennessee at Knoxville ([jmedley@utk.edu](mailto:jmedley@utk.edu)).

Thanks in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this request. I would greatly appreciate your completion of the survey within the next 5-7 days.

Best wishes in the coming year.

Justin Smedley

## **Appendix D**

### **Follow-Up Email**

Dear NCAA Division I Head Golf Coach:

This is a follow-up email. If you have already completed this survey, thank you and please do not complete it a second time. If you have yet to complete this survey, please take a moment to read this email and click on the link below. I would greatly appreciate your participation.

As the leader of the team, head coaches hold a significant role within the athletic environment. With the high performance demands expected at the NCAA D-I level, some coaches are using sport psychology services to prepare their student-athletes for the mental and emotional challenges of competitive sport.

In order to gain a better understanding of the influence coaches have as the leader of a team, I am inviting NCAA Division I Head Golf Coaches to complete a survey designed to assess their leadership behaviors and perceptions and use of sport psychology consulting.

The web-based survey can be completed in 10-15 minutes. Your participation is greatly appreciated and your responses will be held in strict confidence. Any publications or presentations resulting from this project will report summary statistics only.

Please click on the link below to activate the survey. Completion of the survey will constitute your consent to participate.

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Thanks in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this request. I would greatly appreciate your completion of the survey within the next 5-7 days.

Best wishes in the coming year.

Justin Smedley

### Appendix E

**Table 1.** Means and Standard Deviations of NCAA D-I Head Golf Coaches Attitudes Towards SP Services

Attitudes Toward SP Services <sup>a</sup>	Male (n = 51)		Female (n = 33)		No Access to SP services (n = 42)		Access to SP services (n = 42)		Total (n = 84)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Stigma Tolerance	1.39	.65	1.21	.43	1.36	.57	1.28	.59	1.32	.58
Confidence	5.07	.77	5.23	.87	5.14	.81	5.14	.81	5.14	.81
Personal Openness	2.78	1.07	2.52	.99	2.63	1.07	2.71	1.02	2.67	1.04
Cultural Preference	2.25	1.08	1.98	.93	2.03	.92	2.25	1.13	2.14	1.03

<sup>a</sup> Based on a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly agree*). Mean scores closer to six indicate a more negative attitude toward sport psychology consulting (stigma tolerance), higher confidence, lower personal openness, and higher cultural preference.

## Appendix F

**Table 2.** Means and Standard Deviations for Coaches' Willingness to Utilize SP Services

Purpose of SP Service Utilization <sup>a</sup>	Mean	SD
Dealing with Pressure	4.1	.845
Dealing with Injury/Rehabilitation	3.12	1.196
Improving Confidence	4.15	.814
Improving Focus	4.29	.785
Preventing Burnout	3.61	1.12
Improving Communication with Coach	3.85	1
Improving Communication with Teammates	3.86	1.031
Dealing with Personal Issues	3.88	1.034
Managing Anxiety	4.06	.896
Increasing Enjoyment	3.8	1.039
Improving Performance	4.21	.958
Performing as well in Competition as in Practice	4.29	.872
Managing Emotions	4.24	.926
Enhancing Cohesion	3.85	1.081
Setting Goals	3.65	1.081
<b>Total Willingness</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>.80</b>

<sup>a</sup> Based on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*). Scores closer to five represent a higher level of willingness to utilize SP services

### Appendix G

**Table 3.** Means and Standard Deviations of Coaches' Self-Reported Leadership Behaviors

<b>Leadership Behavior</b> <sup>a</sup>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Autocratic Behavior	3.44	0.923
Democratic Behavior	2.17	0.804
Teaching & Instruction	1.51	0.63
Social Support	1.55	0.684
Positive Feedback	1.67	0.545
Situational Consideration	1.71	0.651

<sup>a</sup> Based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*always*) to 5 (*never*). Scores closer to 5 indicate less frequent use of the leadership behavior

### **Vita**

Justin Smedley was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to parents Kevin and Susan Smedley. He attended Cave Spring High School in Roanoke, Virginia, where he was a member of the basketball team and graduated in 2007 with an Advanced Studies Diploma. His interest in sport led him to attend West Virginia University and pursue his academic interest in sport psychology. During these years, he became fascinated with research and sport psychology, which led to his involvement in research assistance for numerous professors and graduate students. Justin obtained a Bachelor's of Science degree in Sport and Exercise Psychology from West Virginia University in 2011 and decided to continue his education at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. While at The University of Tennessee, he was awarded a graduate teaching assistantship in the Physical Education and Activities Program and began researching athletic trainers' and coaches' perceptions of sport psychology. Justin graduated with a Master's of Science degree in Kinesiology with a concentration in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior in August of 2013.