

### **3.3 THE EARLY YEARS OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY: THE WORK AND INFLUENCE OF PIERRE DE COUBERTIN**

The history of sport psychology is currently an area of interest (Vealey, 2006). Although, much is known about the history of sport psychology after 1965, little detail about the development of the field before that time is available. A notable exception, however, is the work of Gould and Pick (1995) who detailed the work of Coleman Griffith from the early 1920s until the mid 1960s. Generally, historical analysis of the early years of sport psychology described research and writings of psychologists and physical educators involved in the study of sport (Cratty, 1989; Silva 2002; Wiggins, 1984). Norman Tripplet, a student of G. Stanley Hall, examined the relationship of competition to bicycle racing in the late 1800s (Tripplet, 1898). Although the work of Tripplet is oftentimes cited in the literature, work by Scripture (1894, 1895) and Fitz (1895) rarely receives attention: For example, Scripture while the supervisor of the Yale Psychology

---

Laboratory studied the reaction time of fencers and runners. Similarly, Fitz a professor at Harvard, studied the reaction time of athletes.

Literature describing the early years of sport psychology also discussed a series of essays published by Pierre de Coubertin in 1913 titled *Essais de Psychologie Sportive* (Cratty, 1989) and the first sport psychology congress, the Congress of Psychology and Physiology of Sports held in 1913 (Feige, 1977; Silva, 2002). Although the Congress of Psychology and Physiology of Sports organized by Coubertin has been discussed in the Olympic literature (e.g., *Olympic Review*), little has been written in the sport psychology literature about Coubertin's influence on the development of the field of sport psychology. Thus, the purpose of this article is to describe the work of Pierre de Coubertin in relation to the development of the field. First, the writings of Pierre de Coubertin related to the psychology of sport are presented. Secondly, various developments that led to the organization of the 1913 Olympic Congress in Lausanne are described. Thirdly, the events of the International Congress on the Psychology and Physiology of Sport are discussed. Finally, events that occurred after 1913 related to the development of the field of sport psychology are presented.

Pierre de Coubertin and his Writings on the Psychological Aspects of Sport

Pierre de Coubertin was born on January 1st, 1863 in Paris, France (Madre, 1971), and attended school at the Jesuits College in Rue de Madrid (Madre, 1971). In general, during this time many individuals were prepared for a career in the military, but Coubertin chose instead to pursue a liberal arts education at the School of Political Sciences (Madre, 1971).

In the 1880s, Coubertin made many trips to England, where he became interested in educational reform ("Coubertin, Pierre, Barron", 2004). Through his study of the English educational system he began to develop his philosophy of the importance of character building through sport ("Coubertin, Pierre, Barron, de", 2004). During the late 1880s, Coubertin was asked by the French government to create a world sports association. Also, during this time, Coubertin traveled to the United States to study American colleges and universities and the field of physical education. Interestingly, Coubertin attended a National Physical Education conference in 1889 held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with leading physical educators in the United States. The main themes of this conference were the discussion of various systems of gymnastics. Coubertin presented a lecture about the strength of the English system of sport (MacAloon, 2001).

As a result of the French governments request for Coubertin to create an international sport association and his study of the values of the English sport

system, Coubertin invited individuals throughout the world to attend an athletic congress in 1894. At this congress, Coubertin proposed and received support to organize the modern Olympic Games ("Coubertin, Pierre, Barron, de", 2004). Subsequently, the Olympic Games began in Athens, Greece in 1896. From 1896 until 1925, Coubertin was the President of the International Olympic Committee ("Coubertin, Pierre, Barron, de", 2004). Coubertin died on September 2nd, 1937 in Geneva at the age of 74 (MacAloon, 2001).

During his lifetime, Coubertin published 1,300 articles, 30 books, 50 pamphlets, and 30 posters and leaflets comprising over 15,000 pages of text (Muller, 2000). According to Muller (2000) who compiled a list of articles that Coubertin published, Coubertin wrote many articles that pertained to the psychological aspects of sport participation. For example, in 1900, Coubertin wrote an article published in the *La Revue des Deux Mondes* titled "La psychologie du sport" (Coubertin, 1900, as translated in Muller, 2000) (1). Pereira (2004) suggested that this article is historically significant because this may have been the first time the term sport psychology was used.

In the article "La psychologie du sport" Coubertin posited that children and adolescents participated in sport for competitive aspects and for recognition from the crowd. However, when competitive sport ended Coubertin believed children and adolescents would stop participating. Coubertin explained that adults who participate in sport are those who work and have jobs, and thus participation in sport should be for recreational purposes.

In the second part of the article, "La psychologie du sport", Coubertin described two types of sport, balance and combat. In describing sports of balance, Coubertin discussed a rower's state of mind and the satisfaction a rower obtains from participation. Another area that Coubertin described in the article was the ability of an athlete to exhibit self-control. He noted that ball games were difficult because of the necessary self-control and described these types of games as sports that have much nervous energy related to them.

In the last section of the article, Coubertin (1900) described psychological aspects of sport participation including the importance of will, and how individuals strive to reach the highest levels of sport even when fatigued. Coubertin stated, "These days the physiological effects of sports are studied in great detail. Curious experiments are being conducted that will fully elucidate that matter. But the psychological side has remained in the shadows" (Coubertin, 1900, as translated in Muller, 2000 p. 146).

Coubertin continued to write about the psychology of sport throughout his career (Muller, 2000). In one of his final papers, "Le sources et les limites du progress sportif" translated as the "Origins and Limits of Athletic Progress"

(Muller, 2000) (2), Coubertin suggested that various elements relate to the improvement of athletic performance. Coubertin explained that physical development was an important component of improving athletic performance, and thus, an individual can improve through strength, balance, and skill. He also stated that "mental properties play a major role, at times even a preponderant one" (Muller, 2000, p. 195). Coubertin further stated that "Sometimes the most physically gifted athletes are eliminated by others who, though less well off in that regard, used greater energy and force of will to achieve their victories" (Muller, 2000, p. 195). He noted that, "This then is a second, psychological source of development. One can train one's will and perseverance just as well as one's muscular capacity" (Muller, 2000, p. 195).

### *The Olympic Congresses*

Coubertin organized the first Olympic Congress in 1894 and the first modern Olympic Games soon followed in 1896. Although Coubertin was successful in gaining support from the international community to organize the Olympic Games, Coubertin espoused the belief that the Olympic Games should be more than only a sport competition. He argued that the Olympic Games should have an educational purpose and that the International Olympic Committee should be more than just an organization that only governed sport (Muller, 2000). Thus, Olympic Congresses were organized to study the moral and educational aspects of sport. Congresses were held on various topics related to sport including hygiene, pedagogy, physical education, literature, art, physiology, and psychology. Two Olympic congresses included a focus on the psychology of sport, the Second Olympic Congress in Le Havre France in 1897 and the fifth Olympic Congress in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1913.

The purpose of the second Olympic Congress in Le Havre was to emphasize the intellectual and philosophical aspects of the Olympic idea, and to show that the Olympic Committee was more than an association that focused only on sporting events (Coubertin, 1936/1979). Thus, Coubertin organized the conference and scheduled two well-known individuals, Father Didon and Gabriel Bonvalot to speak (Coubertin, 1936/1979).

The program for the Congress consisted of three main areas including education, hygiene and sport (Coubertin, 1936/1979). In the Education section of the Congress, "The psychology of physical exercise: characteristics of each type (Coubertin, 1936/1979, p. 547)" was a topic of discussion. According to Muller (1994) the impact of sport on youth was a main issue of debate. In fact, Muller (1994) stated that, "At the centre of the debates was the issue of the psychological impact of sport on young people (p. 334)." Also, in the education section of the congress at Le Havre other related topics discussed included "The moral effect of physical exercise on children, adolescents; influence of effort on

the formation of character and the development of personality (Coubertin, 1936/1979, p. 547)."

In the early 1900s Coubertin began to consider planning a congress related to the psychological aspects of sport based on his belief that the medical profession was overly focused on physiology and did not focus enough attention on the psychological aspects of medicine (Coubertin, 1936/1979). Thus, one of the main purposes of having a congress on the psychological aspects of sport was to focus the medical profession on the psychological impact of sport (Muller, 1994). Specifically, Coubertin stated, "The Lausanne Congress was held for the purpose of launching a brand new science or, more precisely, a brand new branch of sport science: sports psychology" (Olympic Review, 1968, p. 358)

In 1909, Coubertin began planning for the 1913 congress (Coubertin, 1936/1979). Two years later at a meeting in Budapest, Coubertin provided the Olympic Committee with a proposed program for the sport psychology congress. Subsequently, he was given support to begin organizing the conference (Coubertin, 1936/1979). The proposed topics of discussion included: "The Origins of Sporting Activity," "Continuity and Methods," and "Results" (Olympic Review, 1912). In preparing for the Congress, Coubertin prepared a series of essays related to the psychology of sport titled, "Essais de Psychologic Sportive" (Muller, 1997). In general, these essays pertained to the philosophical aspects of sport. Most of the chapters and articles from the book were previously published in the Revue Olympique between 1906 and 1913 (Muller, 2000).

Coubertin described his beliefs about the development of the sport psychology conference in Lausanne in his memoirs (Coubertin, 1936/1979). In analyzing Coubertin's thoughts it appears that he had great difficulty defending the program and topics of discussion before those individuals involved in the medical field. It seems that Coubertin may also not have been given a lot of attention about studying the psychological elements of sport as he stated in his memoirs that, "He [Dr. Morax] immediately took a keen interest in the Congress, grasping right away my half-voiced thoughts and the profound reasons for its Olympic, and even Swiss, opportuneness (Coubertin, 1936/1979, p. 632). Apparently, Coubertin also felt that it was necessary that the medical profession take his thoughts about the psychological aspects seriously as he showed that he had often interacted with individuals in the medical profession and had even published an article in a medical journal (Coubertin, 1936/1979). Coubertin believed that he was successful as he stated that the International Olympic Committee was very enthusiastic in accepting his ideas for the conference.

Articles promoting the congress appeared in the New York Times and other papers throughout the United States. For example a New York Times article stated, "In Lausanne next year a new congress will be held and on this

occasion it will be scientific in character and will be devoted to the study of questions in the domains of physiology and athletic psychology" ("World Sport Congress", 1912, p. C9). In December of 1912, the New York Times reported that three members of the American Olympic Committee, William M. Sloane, Allison V. Armour, and Evert J. Wedell were invited to the congress, which would include the physiology and psychology of sport as topics ("World Sport Congress," 1912). Also, a call for papers was issued stating that papers related to the stated problems of the congress could be sent to the committee and could be no more than 3,000 words, written in either, French, German, English, or Italian, and sent with 5 francs for professionals and 2 francs for students ("World Sport Congress," 1912).

In March of 1913 the New York Times reported that the officers of the Amateur Athletic Union (A. A. U.) as well as officers from A.A.U.-related associations were invited to attend the scientific congress (A. A. U. men," 1913). Coubertin was hopeful that many Americans would attend the Congress in Lausanne. The Indianapolis Star reported that, "A letter received recently by Col. Thompson of the American Olympic Committee from Baron DeCoubertin says that the latter hopes to have as many Americans attend the congress as possible ("Athletic Officials to Gather", p. 4)" (3)

In preparation for the congress, Coubertin asked Theodore Roosevelt to present a paper at the conference (Muller, 2000). Although Roosevelt was unable to attend, he sent a paper that was read at the congress ("To hear Roosevelt Essay," 1913). Coubertin also asked Guglielmo Ferrero a well-known historian, to provide the opening address (Coubertin, 1936/1979).

The International Congress of the Psychology and Physiology of Sport began on the morning of Thursday May 8th and lasted until May 10th, 1913 (Coubertin, 1936/1979; Muller, 1997; "Olympic Congress," 1913). Approximately 400 people attended the start of the congress with an average of 91 individuals attending 5 half-day meetings (The Olympic Review, 1973; "Olympic Congress," 1913). (4) Overall, 37 reports were submitted (Congres International de Psychologie et Physiologie Sportives, 1913; Muller, 1997). Fifteen reports were presented on the subject of "continuity and forms of realization" (Muller, 1997). The personal experience of individuals while participating in sport was the basis for many of these reports (Muller, 1997). The first session was held at Lausanne University in the Palais du Rumine (Chappelet, 1997). According to the table of contents of the conference program the first individual to speak was Guglielmo Ferrero an Italian historian (Congres International de Psychologie et Physiologie Sportives, 1913). He spoke on the "The limits of sport," which focused on how sport could provide an outlet to rid oneself of nervous energy (Muller, 1997).

Professor Ferrero discussed the impact of sport in modern life ("Sport in Modern Life," 1913). His lecture began with a discussion of the relationship of sport to modern life and the limits of sport. He suggested that most individuals in an area of work tend to see what they do as very important, and thus overrate the importance of their own work ("Sport in Modern Life," 1913). Ferrero discussed the fact that this was a time in society when there was much nervous energy, and thus individuals in society needed something to counterbalance tension. He described the importance of sport as being a diversion that would help individuals recover and to help rid them of excess nervous tension ("Sport in Modern Life," 1913).

After the opening presentation, the lectures were divided into three main areas, including the "Origin of Sporting Activity," "Continuity and Methods," and "Results" (Coubertin, 1936/1979, pp. 630-631). The first group of lectures discussed was the Origin of Sporting Activity which was begun by a reading of a paper written by Theodore Roosevelt (Muller, 1997). Roosevelt's paper emphasized the positive benefits he had received through participation in boxing ("Sport in Modern Life," 1913; "Roosevelt Praises Boxing", 1913). He also suggested that as long as the sport did not become brutal and the betting component of the sport was eliminated, then boxing was one of the best sports ("Sport in Modern Life," 1913).

Throughout the conference many lectures related to the three various areas were provided. Coubertin (1936/1979) believed that a lecture by Louis Dedet the head of Normandy College was important. The lecture presented was entitled the "team" (Muller, 1997). Dedet discussed the forming of teams, the processes of group dynamics that occur within the team, and the break up of the team (Coubertin, 1936/1979; Muller, 1997). Another lecture by a former successful cyclist was given titled a "Record holder's state of mind" (Muller, 1997). Paul Rousseau identified the technique of autosuggestion (5) as important for the cyclist (Muller, 1997). Specifically, Rosseau noted that autosuggestion could help high level athletes to overcome fatigue and to control their emotions.

Another presentation at the congress was given by Dr. Philippe (Olympic Review, 1973). Philippe, from the Psycho-physiological Institute of Paris, discussed the idea of studying sport from a laboratory perspective. Philippe's lecture was titled, "Apropos de l'automatisme". He suggested that a main difference from one individual to another in terms of sport ability was mental rather than physical (Olympic Review, 1973). Philippe explained that the time of muscular contraction of fencers, runners and tennis players is very similar from one athlete to another. (6) Philippe suggested that what differs is how quickly athletes respond once they have a goal in mind (Olympic Review, 1973). Professor Millioud from the philosophy department at the University of

Lausanne evaluated the conference in May of 1913 and felt that that Philippe's idea of laboratory experimentation in sport was important. Millioud (Olympic Review, 1973, p. 337) stated: "I do not know if sufficient attention has been paid to the address delivered by Dr. Philippe of the Psycho-Physiological Institute of Paris. The idea to apply laboratory experimentation to the study of a subject as complex as sports is interesting enough in itself."

Paul Christmann a French gymnastics teacher discussed the important need for intense physical pleasure at the Lausanne congress (Coubertin, 1919 as translated in Muller 2000). Christmann's lecture was titled, "De la volupte sportive" and he pointed out that the body needs intense physical pleasure that sport can provide. Christmann suggested that if individuals have a choice of a low intensity activity versus a highly physically intense activity, they would prefer the highly intense physical activity (Coubertin, 1919 as translated in Muller, 2000).

According to Chappalet (1997), the congress in Lausanne in 1913 was highly successful. In fact, Chappalet (1997) stated "The congress was a great success and can be said to have marked the beginnings of the scientific study of sport (p. 22)". See Table 1 for Highlights of the International Congress on the Psychology and Physiology of Sport.

In Coubertin's opinion, the discussions of the congress were not as serious as he would have liked them to have been (Mueller, 1997). He also felt that many individuals on the International Olympic Committee did not have much interest in the discussions that were taking place at the Congress. However, Mueller reported that many years later Coubertin would often state that he considered the Lausanne Congress to be the "birth of the psychology of sport (Mueller, 1997, p. 54).

### ***Events Related to Sport Psychology after 1913***

After the congress at Lausanne in 1913, World War I occurred and for about 15 years little attention was given to sport psychology ideas discussed at the congress (Coubertin, Rosset, Guisan & Rubattel, 1929). However, in 1928 two organizations were developed that had as an objective, a focus on the psychology of sport. These two associations included the Association International Medico-Sportive (AIMS) (7) and the International Bureau of Sport Pedagogy.

The Association International Medico-Sportive (AIMS) was organized in 1928 after F. J. J. Buytendijk's communication with the Netherlands Olympic Committee in which he asked if he could conduct sport physiology research during the summer Olympics of 1928 ("Official report of the 9th Olympiad the Netherlands Committee"). Also, the Dutch Medical Association for Physical Culture planned to hold a congress related to sports medicine in conjunction



with the 1928 summer Olympics and asked the International Olympic Committee for approval. In their application they wrote that they believed that a congress related to physical culture should not only include research related the physiology of sport, but it should include sections of discussion related to the psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and techniques of sport. In their application to hold the congress, the Dutch Medical Association for Physical Culture defined the psychological section as "Psychological--What action and reaction exists between sport and mental processes" ("Official report of the 9th Olympiad the Netherlands committee," p. 956). The cooperation of the International Olympic Committee was given to the Dutch Medical Association for Physical Culture to hold the congress.

Months before the first International Congress of Sports Medicine, 33 physicians met and organized the Association Internationale Medico Sportive (AIMS) on February 14th, 1928 (LaCava, 1956). According to LaCava (1956), Buytendijk (8) was asked to organize the first International Congress on Sports Medicine. The first congress met in August 1928 and approved the first constitution of the organization. LaCava (1956) listed the three main purposes of the organization from the first constitution: (1) to inaugurate scientific research on biology, psychology, and sociology in their relation to sports; (2) to promote the study of medical problems encountered in physical exercises and in sports to be done in collaboration with various sports federations and organizations; and (3) to organize international congresses to be held simultaneously with the Olympic games (pp. 1109-1110).

Thus, the first sport psychology congress was held in 1913, and by 1928 an international association had declared as one of its main purposes the scientific study of psychology in relationship to sport.

Also, in 1928, Pierre de Coubertin and colleagues created the International Bureau of Sport Pedagogy in Lausanne, Switzerland. This organization developed objectives related to sport psychology. The first five main objectives described the problems of overemphasizing sport in a child or adolescents life and the sixth objective was related to the psychology of sport. Coubertin, Rosset, Guisan, and Rubattel (1929) wrote:

The International Bureau of Sport Pedagogy organized two conferences related to the psychology of sport. The first conference was held in 1944 and the second took place in 1949. The 1944 conference was held in conjunction with the congress on sport pedagogy. It commemorated the 50th anniversary of the first Olympic Congress in 1894 ("Celebration du Cinquantenaire du Retablissement des Jeux Olympiques, 1944"). The second conference, The Congress of Physiology and Psychology in Sports was held from September 6 to September 10, 1949 in Lausanne, Switzerland (Moret, 1949). The congress was attended by over 100

participants from 25 countries. Although physiology was discussed at the conference, the delegates of the congress were most interested in the psychological aspects of sport (Moret, 1949). Specifically, a main topic of discussion and interest at the congress was the influence of heredity in the development of athletic skill. Within the discussion of heredity and sport, modeling and imitation were noted as important factors in helping athletes develop into champions (Muret, 1949).

In addition to the Association International Medico-Sportive (AIMS) and the International Bureau of Sport Pedagogy which focused parts of their organizational work on sport psychology, the American Olympic Committee was also aware of the psychological aspects of sport. Medical professionals working with the U.S. Olympic teams in 1928 and 1932 were aware of how mental aspects could affect athletes. Lawson (1928), the medical officer for the American Olympic Committee reported that the medical staff found many cases of nervous tension in Olympic athletes. He posited that the excess tension was related to a lack of rest, close living quarters on the ship, worry, excessive heat, and noise. Lawson (1932) believed that since the athletes had an Olympic Village free of noise and distraction, the athletes were better able to obtain a peaceful state of mind and necessary rest. However, the medical staff still encountered athletes who had nervous tension before competition. Lawson (1932) suggested that helping athletes relieve anxiety before competition was an important role that the medical officer and the nurse provided. Lawson (1932) stated:

Also, in 1932 the International Olympic Committee appointed a medical staff for the Olympics in Los Angeles with many committees representing various areas of medicine (10th Olympiade Committee, 1933). One committee of the medical staff was the psychiatry committee, which included H. Douglas Eaton, M.D., and Arthur R. Timme, M.D (10th Olympiad Committee, 1933). Unfortunately, a report of the psychiatry committee for the International Olympic Committee was not located.

#### The Influence of Coubertin's Work on the Development of Sport Psychology

The purpose of the previous section was to highlight main events that occurred in various international associations and organizations related to sport psychology after the Lausanne congress of 1913. Perhaps, it was Coubertin's writings and organization of a congress dedicated to the study of topics related to the psychology of sport that influenced an international sports medicine association to focus on the scientific study of the psychology of sport as a purpose of the organization. Clearly, it would seem likely that when the Dutch Medical Association was inquiring to receive permission from the International Olympic Committee to hold a Congress in conjunction with the Olympics, they

knew that it would be important to propose the congress as a multidisciplinary study of sport. Most likely, they proposed it that way since Coubertin was an important individual affiliated with the International Olympic Committee. Thus, because he had much influence within the International Olympic Committee, the Congresses he organized probably also influenced the Association International Medico-Sportive to include as a main purpose of their organization the study of the psychology of sport.

In addition to Coubertin's possible influence on a main sports medicine organization to study the psychology of sport, Coubertin also hoped to influence the medical profession to devote more attention to the psychological aspects of sport. This was a main reason he organized the International Congress on the Psychology and Physiology of Sport. Seemingly, it appears that his hope for the medical profession to pay more attention to the psychological aspects of sport began to occur in the 1920s and the 1930s. For example, the American Medical Officers of the American Olympic Committee were aware of the psychological side of athletics.

Did Coubertin's work organizing congresses, and starting a bureau influence the academic study of the science of sport psychology? In one instance it may have. Specifically, Dr. J. Philippe from the Psycho-physiological Institute of Paris, discussed the idea of studying sport from a laboratory perspective at the 1913 Olympic Congress. Philippe's lecture was titled, "A propos de l'automatisme". He suggested that a main difference from one individual to another in terms of sport ability was mental rather than physical (Olympic Review, 1973). Philippe explained that the time of muscular contraction of fencers, runners and tennis players is very similar from one athlete to another. What is most interesting is that Philippe cited the work of E. W. Scripture who was conducting investigations related to sport in the Yale psychology laboratory in the early 1890s. Thus, Coubertin may have influenced Philippe, through his organization of the sport psychology congress to continue to think about applying and studying psychology in athletic situations.

Based on Coubertin's memoirs it seems that his attitudes did not have as much influence on the development of sport psychology as he would have liked. For example, he published many articles from 1906-1913 expressing his attitudes towards the topics that were to be discussed at the congress. In analyzing his own influence on what was discussed at the sport psychology congress in 1913, Coubertin (1936/1979, p. 632) stated:

As Muller, (1997) pointed out the organizers of the congress asked the presenters to stay close to topics that were printed in the congress invitation. However, many of the presenters did not follow this suggestion as they presented their own views related to the topics of the congress (Muller, 1997).

Thus, it seems likely that although Coubertin was influential in organizing the meeting, much influence in thinking about the psychological aspects of sports was based on the views and attitudes of the presenters. Also, during the debates of the Lausanne Congress in 1913 individuals participating in the congress felt that experimental evidence should have been provided in relation to the psychological and physical aspects of physical activity in order provide support for presenters and participants views at the conference (Muller, 1997).

In addition to the question of how much influence Coubertin's attitudes had on the field of sport psychology, Coubertin's attitudes toward the participation of women in sport has been critiqued. Although Coubertin's views on whether or not women should participate in the Olympic games have been criticized, Boulongne (2000) suggested that Coubertin's views had changed in the later years of his life. For example, Coubertin supported women's participation in athletics and felt sport was beneficial for women. Thus, because he supported women's participation in athletics, it is suggested that his philosophies about the benefits of sport participation would pertain to both men and women.

How much influence did Coubertin have on the present day study of sport psychology? In general, similar conclusions can be drawn about Coubertin's influence to the field of present day sport psychology that Gould and Pick (1995) drew in relation to Coleman Griffith's work. They suggested that Griffith's work is interesting from an historical perspective, but that his work did not have much impact on the research and practice of sport psychology. Similarly, it does not appear that Coubertin's efforts influenced the development of sport psychology in North America Coubertin may have had little influence in North America because during the early part of the 20th century sport was not viewed as being important to the discipline of psychology (Gould & Pick, 1995). However, it should be noted that Coubertin had great influence in the field of sports education in which there is great amount of psychology within that field (Muller, 2004).

Finally, another question of interest is why were the events of the 1913 Olympic Congress and the dedication of an association to study the science of psychology applied to sport not recognized in the sport psychology literature? Perhaps the answer is due to the lack of literature that was published in sport psychology between the 1890s and 1965 that would have continuously documented the work of the Olympic Congress related to Sport Psychology. Also, other reasons may have been that few professionals in psychology or physical education were reading the Olympic literature that documented the 1913 Olympic Congress on Sport Psychology or that the Congress did not receive

much coverage in the professional academic literature in psychology or physical education.

### ***Summary and Conclusions***

The present article has summarized the influence of Pierre de Coubertin's work on the field of sport psychology. Specifically, information was presented on Pierre de Coubertin's beliefs and writings related to sport psychology, as well as events leading to the development of congresses related to sport psychology. Finally, information was provided on events related to the development of the field of sport psychology after the first sport psychology congress in 1913. Future researchers might translate the conference proceedings so that we can understand the presentations and thoughts of the individuals in the congress.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Research for this paper was conducted from a grant received from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the University of Akron. The author would like to thank Britt Brewer for his critiques of an earlier version of this article.