

Abstract (#164)

ID 4ae990c6c2f3696d46a0b6621

Decision: accepted

Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that your abstract submitted to the 2026 NASPSPA Conference has been accepted for presentation. We look forward to welcoming you to Montreal for what promises to be an outstanding conference.

Please share this notification with your co-authors, as acceptance communications are sent only to the lead author.

The Area Program Committees—led by Brandon Alderman (SEP; alderman@kines.rutgers.edu), Jared Porter (MLC; jporter@utk.edu), and Ryan Hulteen (MD; rhulteen@lsu.edu)—along with me as Program Chair, are currently developing the conference schedule. You will be notified in the coming weeks of your presentation format (oral or poster), along with formatting instructions and important deadlines.

Reminders:

- Register by April 1 for the best rate.
- Reserve your hotel accommodation as soon as possible, as conference rooms fill quickly.
- If travelling internationally, please ensure you have appropriate documentation to enter Canada, if applicable.

Additional conference information is available on the NASPSPA website. You will also find links to register and book your hotel room.

Best wishes,

Jeffrey T. Fairbrother, PhD, FNAK

NASPSPA Past President

2026 Conference Program Chair

#	164
Session ID	4ae990c6c2f3696d46a0b6621
If my abstract is accepted, I will present my paper at the conference during the time slot and format (podium or poster) assigned in the program. If I am unable to present my paper in person, I will designate a co-author to present on my behalf.	I agree
I will adhere to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct of the American	I agree

<p>Psychological Association and will contribute to ensuring the NASPSPA conference is safe and welcoming and free from harassment of any kind based on individual differences.</p>	
<p>I certify that the research I am submitting for presentation has not been published or presented at any other peer-reviewed venue.</p>	<p>I agree</p>
<p>Research topic</p>	<p>Sport and exercise psychology</p>
<p>Please select a preferred presentation type for your abstract</p>	<p>Poster presentation</p>

I am a student and would like to be considered for the NASPSPA Outstanding Student Paper Award.	Yes
This submission was funded by the NASPSPA Graduate Student Research Grant.	No
Abstract title	Perceptions of Psychological Mattering in Adaptive Sports
Keywords	adaptive sport; qualitative interview; psychological mattering; adaptive athlete; coach
Author 1: Given name(s)	Mathew
Author 1: Last name	Gibbs
Author 1: Email	mgibbs221002@gmail.com
Author 1: Primary university/affiliation	Auburn University - School of Kinesiology

Author 2: Given name(s)	Rachel
Author 2: Last name	Williams
Author 2: Primary university/affiliation	Auburn University - School of Kinesiology
Abstract	<p>Defined as a sense of feeling significant to those around you, psychological mattering can have a positive impact on one's well-being and health-related quality of life (HRQOL; Hamby et al., 2020). Psychological mattering draws upon well-established literature highlighting the importance of social connectedness for increased mental health (Tonini et al., 2025). Sport represents a salient context for the development of psychological mattering due to the close interpersonal relationships, shared goals, and challenges inherent in athletic participation. Adaptive sport constitutes a distinct sport environment in which additional barriers may shape the nature and meaning of these relationships, as well as their influence on athletes' sense of mattering, health-related quality of life (HRQOL), and well-being (Lape et al., 2017). Despite this, adaptive sports remain underrepresented in literature, limiting understanding of the adaptive sport experience. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to examine how adaptive sport athletes and coaches understand and experience psychological mattering. Adaptive sport athletes</p>

(n = 3) and a coach (n = 1) participated in semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used, and three themes were identified. Blazing A Path for Others reflected perceptions of mattering through purpose and influence, as participants described feeling valued when contributing to awareness, representation, and opportunities within adaptive sport. Social Inclusion and Belonging highlighted relational and environmental factors central to mattering, including social support, equitable participation, and a growth-oriented culture. Participants emphasized the importance of “variety without variance,” wherein necessary accommodations enable equal involvement without differentiation that undermines belonging. This sense of inclusion fostered self-efficacy, perseverance, and positive well-being. Threats to Mattering captured barriers that diminished perceived value, including inaccessible equipment, misperceptions about ability, and experiences of being underestimated or excluded, all of which were described as negatively impacting motivation, well-being, and quality of life. Findings extend understanding of psychological mattering in underrepresented sport populations, indicating that feeling valued and included in adaptive sport is linked to well-being and HRQOL.