

PROMISE25: Protecting Mental Health in Sport + Exercise Conference 2025
Speaker Bio and Abstract – David R. McDuff, M.D.



Bio

David R. McDuff, M.D., is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, USA and the founding Director of its Division of Addiction Research and Treatment and Addiction Psychiatry & Medicine Fellowship Programs. He has practiced sports and performance psychiatry for 30 years working with athletes and teams at all competitive levels including Olympic (Indian National Archery Team), Professional (MLB-Orioles, NFL-Ravens, Colts), Collegiate, and High School/Club. In addition, he is a member of the International Olympic Committee's Mental Health Consensus Panel, Working Group and Diploma Course Advisory Board and a Founding Board Member of the American Board of Sports and Performance Psychiatry, an independent, non-profit organization established in 2024 to credential and provide mentoring opportunities for sports and performance psychiatrists who demonstrate excellence in the comprehensive care of athletes and performers, fostering mental well-being and optimal performance. He is the author of *"Sports Psychiatry: Strategies for Life Balance & Peak Performance"* (APA Press, 2012) that has been translated into Korean and Portuguese and *The Mental Skills of Expert Archers and Coaches (D+T Peak Performance, 2024)*.

Abstract: "Hot Topics in Substance Misuse in Elite Athletes"

Sports medicine and mental health providers will routinely encounter substance misuse and use disorders in their work with elite athletes and teams. Substance misuse is defined using one or more substances in high dosages or potencies and/or in inappropriate situations that cause general/mental health or social problems (McLellan, 2017). Substance misuse is more common in active and retired male athletes who compete/competed in team or collision sports (e.g. ice hockey, rugby, lacrosse, soccer). This lecture will focus on early detection, brief intervention, and referral to treatment of elite and retired athletes who misuse alcohol (binge drinking), cannabis, simultaneous use of alcohol & cannabis, tobacco/nicotine, and fake pills or street drugs contaminated with synthetic opioids (e.g., fentanyl-McDuff et al, 2023, Stull et al. 2022)). The use of urine testing, screening instruments and negative consequences questionnaires will be discussed to facilitate brief individualized, motivational interventions for misuse or referral to treatment for more serious use disorders. Cases will be presented to highlight differences by substance/route of administration and to illustrate key clinical points (McDuff et al. 2023).

1. McLellan AT. Substance Misuse and Substance use Disorders: Why do they Matter in Healthcare? Trans Am Clin Climatol Assoc. 2017;128:112-130. PMID: 28790493; PMCID: PMC5525418.
2. McDuff DR, Garvin M, Chang J, Thompson D. Substance Misuse in Elite Athletes: Early Detection, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment. Clinics in Sports Medicine. Available online 18 July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csm.2023.06.008>
3. Stull T, Morse E, McDuff DR. Substance use and its impact on athlete health and performance. Psychiatr Clin North Am. 2021;44(3):405-417. doi:10.1016/j.psc.2021.04.006.
4. McDuff D, Garvin M, Thompson D. Substance Use and Use Disorders in Mental Healthcare for Elite Athletes edited by Reardon C. Springer Publishing (2022).