

A tribute to Professor Edward Winter

Edward Winter 28 June 1950 – 18 July 2020

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Summary

This tribute honours Professor Edward Winter who, during a distinguished career, made a substantial contribution to the discipline of Sport and Exercise Science. Edward authored more than 200 publications, was involved in the review of more than 2000 manuscripts and abstracts and had extensive experience of supervising and examining research candidates. Specifically here, Professor Winter made a major contribution to the Journal of Sport Sciences as section editor for Sport Performance for over a decade. The editorial Board wishes to formally acknowledge the contribution made by Edward to; the work of the Journal, the development of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences and the science of sport and exercise. This editorial comprises contributions from colleagues across the sport and exercise community that are published elsewhere (Copeland et al., 2020).

Professor Edward Winter was born in Penrith in Cumbria, to William (Bill) and Nancy on 28 June 1950. Educated at Cockermouth grammar school, Edward was a keen sportsman with county honours in cricket and an accomplished 800 m runner. Edward set the Cumbrian schoolboy record for 800 m, which lasted over 20 years. His participation in competitive sport continued to be an important part of his life, captaining Yorkshire squash teams at several age-groups. Indeed, more recently, he was very close to representing England in the Over 65s – he ranked ninth in the country (when the top eight got selected).

After leaving school, Edward graduated with a BEd in Geography and Physical Education from Bedford College of Higher Education, (later part of De Montfort University) and subsequently an MSc and PhD award by Loughborough University. Edward made various contributions to the science of sport and exercise in his role in physical education at Bedford College of Higher Education. Indeed, sport and exercise science spawned from physical education, and Edward was one of the founders of the discipline.

In the early 1980s, the first seminar of the newly formed British Association of Sports Sciences (BASS, now BASES) was held, at which members and their students were invited to present their research. One of the aims of this first get together was to set a format for the communication of research studies. Professor Clyde Williams recalls that the intention was to adopt the well-established format of the Physiological Society's meetings, namely 10 minutes presentation, followed by 5 minutes of questions. Unfortunately, most of the presenters were unfamiliar with or unrehearsed in keeping to time: sad to say, the supervisors were the greatest delinquents. Therefore, when Edward offered to host the first formal meeting of BASS at Bedford, optimism for a successful and productive meeting wasn't high. However, BASS needn't have worried because Edward ran the meeting so successfully that it became the "exemplar" that was followed at subsequent annual conferences. High standards and precision were in fact Edward's "hall mark".

From the inception of BASS, Edward committed himself tirelessly and unselfishly to the aims and promotion of the Association for over 35 years. Edward organised the very first BASES Student Conference in 1988 and as secretary, he dealt with the many challenging issues facing the growing Association, not only efficiently but with diplomacy and great insight into the long-term consequences of many day to day decisions. When BASES introduced "laboratory accreditation" Edward was a key member of the team, and went on to edit the Association's two volume "Sport and Exercise-Physiology Testing Guidelines". The Guidelines for "Sport testing and Exercise and Clinical Testing" have shaped and set the standards of "good practice" for laboratories around the country and beyond. Another important contribution to the profession was the publication of the Expert Statement on "Ethics and Participation in Research of Young People" co-authored by Edward. As a member of the Association's Award's Committee, Edward applied himself readily because of his commitment to promoting high standards of professionalism in research and education. Edward's commitment to BASES and the sport and exercise profession was recognised with the award of a Fellowship in 1988. Latterly, as a non-executive director of the BASES Board, Edward continued to make significant contributions to the Association with his wise council and extensive experience of all aspects of the profession. If there was a difficult task needing completion before an impending deadline, the Association's officers would turn to each other and say "phone Edward" knowing that they would receive an immediate offer of help.

In 1988, funding from the Sports Council of Great Britain supported the establishment of the Sport Science Education Programme. This programme brought together institutions in Higher Education with national governing bodies of sport to support the development of national teams, the identification of talent and to enhance coaching. The scheme also provided opportunities for doctoral students to contribute, through rigorous research methods, to key challenges faced by national teams. The squash programme, originally overseen by the late Professor Craig Sharp, was taken on by Edward in 1992. Edward's steadfast belief that interventions should be research-informed and embedded in practice with the utmost rigour, underpinned the approach he took to physiological testing in laboratory and field-based procedures to drive performance. National senior teams as well as the development squads benefitted greatly from Edward's work.

It was at the British Association Sport Sciences (BASS) annual conference in Bangor 1989 that Alan Nevill (Editor in Chief of the Journal of Sports Sciences, from 2001 to 2016) first met Professor Winter. At the conference, Edward was asking a presenter to justify the use of ratio standards (per body mass), and why he/she was not adjusting for differences in body size using regression standards. His thought-provoking question "how should we adjust for differences in body mass" turned out to be the start of a hugely successful collaboration between Edward and Alan on the topic of "Scaling". Their mutual interest in scaling led to numerous publications (both together and separately), two book chapters, organizing two BASS/BASES workshops, writing several review articles and editorials (both for PES) all on the topic of scaling.

In 1999, Edward, alongside his wife Anne, arrived in Sheffield. Recruited by Professor Roger Bartlett as part of a triumvirate, alongside Professor Ian Maynard, the "3 Profs" were provided with a mandate to establish the discipline of Sport and Exercise Science as a core offer at the University. Over the next decade, the Centre for Sport and Exercise Science (CES) at Sheffield Hallam, would grow to become

one of the largest sport science related research centres in Europe. In his capacity as Professor of the Physiology of Exercise at CSES, Edward had a leading role in shaping the physical environment and the culture of the centre. Edward led the design of the physiology laboratories at Collegiate Hall, pioneering the concept of applied research alongside teaching laboratories. This approach is now commonplace across the sector, testament to Edward's vision for sport and exercise science.

In 2004, the Journal of Sports Sciences invited Edward to become the Section Editor of Sports Performance. Professor Alan Nevill commented that Edward's talent for asking the right question at the right time made him an ideal candidate for the job; a decision that was proved to be emphatically correct. After 12 years on the journal's editorial board, his enthusiasm and dedication to the Journal can be characterized by the number, frequency and subject of his editorials.

A trawl through the archives reveals at least 16 editorials, many of which have become "classics" informing authors, readers and even members of the editorial board of journal's policy and the correct procedures we should adopt. These include "Metrics of meaningfulness as opposed to sleights of significance" (Winter et al., 2014), "Terms and nomenclature", "You've told me what you have found, but you haven't told me the so-what" (Winter and Nevill, 2014) and more recently after retiring for the editorial board, "Can we trust "Magnitude-based inference?" (Nevill et al. 2018). These are all valuable resources, some of which are well cited including "Metrics of meaningfulness as opposed to sleights of significance" that has been cited over 70 times. In some way, these editorials are his legacy to the Journal of Sports Sciences.

As a keen historian, Edward was at pains to ensure that alongside rigorous methods, all research was undertaken within a robust ethical framework. At CSES, Edward established the structures, documentation, processes and procedures required for governing research and ensuring appropriate ethical scrutiny. He went on to be Faculty Head of Ethics for over a decade, leading ethics and research governance across academic departments and research centres in the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Sheffield Hallam. Edward commonly referred back to the crimes against humanity that occurred during the Second World War, the subsequent Nuremberg trials and the discovery of experiments that prisoners of war were "subjected" to by the Nazis. He would cite the cold-water immersion experiments of Professor Ernst Holzlohner and Dr. Sigmund Rascher as examples of why humans are to always be considered participants in research trials, not subjects. Every student of Edward's was left in no doubt as to the importance of this message.

Throughout his career, Edward remained resolute in his determination to ensure that sport and exercise science upheld the principles and practices of science and this is perhaps encapsulated in one of his latter contributions – leading the submission for the award of Chartered Scientist status by the Science Council on behalf of BASES in 2013. This work meant that BASES Accredited members became eligible to gain Chartered Scientist (CSci) status. No more fitting accolade for Edward given the Science Council objectives to promote high standards in science and recognise the professionalism of practicing scientists.

Edward's legacy can be observed in the contribution he made to Postgraduate Research at Sheffield Hallam and beyond. For many years he acted as Postgraduate Research Tutor for Sport and led research degree provision as Head of Research Degrees, during which he was prolific in his support and training of PhD students. He developed and ran a doctoral training programme and was devoted to supporting his students along their journey and preparing them to supervise their own students when the time came.

It is perhaps Edward's consideration for his fellows, especially those under his academic mentorship, that will truly define how he will be remembered. Working with young people in roles that included teacher, research supervisor and mentor of early career researchers enriched Edward's professional life. He was a role model for all those who had the good fortune to be taught, supervised or mentored by him. Tributes to Professor Winter from colleagues, former students and friends have been received from far and wide, some of which have been captured in a pre-publication (Copeland et al., 2020).

Edward was not just a notable academic and as indicated in tributes from former colleagues and friends, he is also remembered for his passion (he rarely liked this term as he opined that passion clouded judgement) for engineering manifest in driving (and building) fast cars and flying (a connection with his late father whom he was immensely proud of). Indeed, he once ran a small business tuning and re-boring engines to the finest of tolerances. Edward was a wonderful raconteur and magician and a member of the Magic Circle. His sleight of hand and diversionary commentary were legendary at BASES conferences and CSES Christmas parties.

Edward Mitchell Winter died on July 18th, 2020. leaving his wife Anne, two children (Holly and Michael) and 3 grandchildren. He had just returned from his routine morning run. He will be greatly missed by family, friends and colleagues. Edward's legacy across sport and exercise science in the UK and beyond was profound.

References

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