

ICCE Abstract

Coaching research abstract

Other (general) coaching research

Coaching a female Masters team sport: Considerations of interdependent relationships

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Research into the Masters (or adult) sport context has revealed important socially-mediated participatory motives for Masters athletes (MAs), including a strong connection between their learning in sport and the relationships they have with their coaches (Callary et al., 2017; Young et al., 2018). Models of coach-athlete (C-A) interdependence have been considered in past coaching research (e.g., Jowett, 2007); however, dyadic relations have been scarcely investigated within female team sports, and have not been explored within a Masters sport setting. The purpose of this study was to investigate how a Masters coach (MC) cultivates relationships with a group of unique individuals on a competitive adult synchronized skating team with an age span of 18-55. Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with one MC at the beginning, middle, and end of the season, and with 11 of her female skaters over 2 time points (first half and second half of the season) for a total of 25 interviews. An additional 30 hours of observation were done during training and competition to provide a more in-depth interpretation of the MC's and MAs' relationships and sport experiences. Findings suggest that MAs demonstrated interdependent relationships with their coach, but equally so with their teammates. The dyadic relationships were influenced by others within the team, outside of the coach-athlete (C-A) dyad. The MC proved to be an essential facet of the team's interdependence; she depended on her MAs as much as they depended on her, specifically for functions relating to information dissemination/collection, planning, feedback, conflict resolution and other important team functions. Sub-groups formed around the members' ages, which resulted in age-related nuances of interdependence between the coach, older, and younger members. These athletes reported additional feelings of pride, anxiety, indifference, and closeness in relation to their teammates and coach, both in and out of sport. These results add practical and theoretical insights into adult C-A relationships. Theoretical implications hold that in team sports, C-A dyadic interdependence is influenced by broader factors that exist outside of the dyad and unique constraints associated with adult teams. Practically, with this understanding of mutual interdependence, MCs are encouraged to work with their athletes as a means to provide satisfactory programming, communication and support, and complementarity, which could improve both dyadic relationships, and the overall team sport experience. This research informs coaches of adult women of any age to facilitate participation in sports where they may remain active, create social relationships, and engender a feeling of belonging to a team.

Biography of presenter:

Chelsea Currie is a second-year masters student from Sydney, Nova Scotia studying at the University of Ottawa under the guidance of Dr. Bradley W. Young, and Dr. Bettina Callary (Cape Breton University). She has been involved in sport consistently throughout her life, including as captain of a varsity women's soccer team, coaching girls' soccer, and now conducting qualitative research in adult sport coaching and women in sport. She has been to six Canadian conferences, and ICCE 2019 will be her first international conference.

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