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Title: Situating coaching development needs within the community of Masters football in Ibagué, Colombia

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Masters athletes (MAs) are adults that engage in competitive leisure sport, train regularly, and are formally registered in clubs (Young, 2011). Research shows that Masters coaches (MCs) positively contribute to MAs' sport experiences (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2018). Masters are one of the fastest growing sport cohorts in many countries, including in the town of Ibagué, Colombia, where 280 male Masters football players and coaches participate in a league for players 55+ (Association of Masters Football Players of Tolima, ASOFAMTOL in Spanish; Silva, 2017). The aim of this league is to keep older adults active and improve their wellbeing. Properly trained coaches are key to this aim, as they contribute towards positive community development factors, such as social networks, collective identities, health, wellbeing and lifelong learning (Lawson, 2005). Callary and colleagues found that Canadian MCs want context specific coach education to more effectively coach their MAs. However, after conducting an international scoping review, Belalcazar and Callary (2017) found online coaching resources and education for MCs to be scant. Further, all the sources were from Western, developed countries. The cultural context of Colombian older male athletes in the sport of football is an important consideration in helping MCs develop. The purpose of this research is to explore the cultural context, evolution, and influence of the ASOFAMTOL in order to situate MCs' learning needs as drivers of athlete participation and community development in Ibagué. This case-study, grounded in a constructivist paradigm, uses current and past statistical records, textual and digital archives to examine the development of the ASOFAMTOL and coaches' development in this league. The data was thematically analyzed to understand the growth of the association and its impact on the community, as well as to understand the needs and preferences for MCs' development within the cultural backdrop of a popular sport in Colombia. Findings indicate that the MCs have had an important impact at the local and national levels as the league developed from an informal recreational activity to the formalized competitive association that it is today. The case-study highlights and supports the work of these MCs, while also suggesting the need for resources that they can access to learn to be more effective in order to drive Masters sport development and community development in Ibagué, Colombia. The research contributes to a growing understanding of the value of Masters sport coaching and the culture of Masters sport within a developing country.

Presenter Biography:

Catalina Belalcazar is currently completing a MBA in Community Economic Development at Cape Breton University in Nova Scotia, Canada with Dr. Bettina Callary as her supervisor. She is a scholarship recipient from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She received a BA in Community Studies from Cape Breton University. Research interests include Masters athletes' coach education and learning, and flourishing community development through sport.

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