

Development and Acquisition of Knowledge of Youth Paraspport Coaches

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The purpose of this study was to understand the learning experiences and acquisition of knowledge of youth paraspport coaches. Five able-bodied male participants ($M = 39$ years old), who coached youth with a physical disability for an average of 7.4 years, participated in individual interviews. An inductive thematic analysis identified patterns within and across the data, allowing for description and interpretation of the meaning and importance of the themes. The results showed that coaches learned mostly from informal experiences, particularly through mentoring, trial and error, or use of technology. In addition, these learning opportunities were influenced by personal, environmental, and social factors. These findings can help to guide current and future generations of coaches of youth participants with a physical disability by highlighting available resources and addressing several barriers and facilitators to their learning.

Keywords: coach learning, mentoring, youth sport

The World Health Organization (2017) recently estimated that over 1 billion individuals have reported a disability. Within this population, 180–220 million are youth, 80% of them living in developed countries (United Nations, 2016). For example, the United States has over 5 million youth living with a disability, with nearly 1 million having a physical disability, whereas approximately 300,000 youth reported at least one physical disability in Canada (Brault, 2011; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2006). Physical disabilities range from visual impairments to gross motor functioning (Longmuir & Bar-Or, 2000).

Youth with physical disabilities are statistically less physically active than youth without a disability, which, in turn, affects their health and quality of life (Goodwin, 2016). Having youth with physical disabilities engaged in sport constitutes a way to increase their level of physical activity and improve their health (Giacobbi, Stancil, Hardin, & Bryant, 2008). The benefits from sport participation range from physiological to psychosocial factors (Malone, Barfield, & Brasher, 2012; Martin, 2013). More specifically, some physiological capacities that can be enhanced include an increase in stamina, flexibility, and strength, as well as the

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