
Applied Research

The Sport Psychologist, 1997, 11, 127-141
© 1997 Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.

Pre- and Postcompetition Routines of Expert Coaches of Team Sports

Gordon A. Bloom
California State University, Fresno

Natalie Durand-Bush and John H. Salmela
University of Ottawa

Little or no empirical research has examined the pre- and postcompetition routines of coaches. The purpose of this study was to address this oversight by conducting in-depth open-ended interviews with 21 expert coaches from four team sports. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and inductively analyzed following the procedures outlined by Côté and colleagues (1993, 1995). The results indicated that coaches had set routines for themselves and their players before and after a competition. Prior to the competition, coaches prepared and mentally rehearsed their game plan, engaged in physical activity to maintain a positive focus, held a team meeting, and occupied themselves during the warm-up. Their words immediately before the game were used to stress key points. After the competition, coaches emphasized the importance of controlling their emotions and adopted different behaviors to appropriately deal with the team's performance and outcome. A brief meeting was held to recapitulate the essential elements of the game and a detailed analysis was not presented until the next practice or meeting.

Researchers in sport psychology have studied various areas of coaching using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Earlier research generally encompassed the former method of data acquisition and analysis. For example, Chelladurai's (1980) research on leadership in sport led to the creation of the Multidimensional Model of Coaching. This in turn generated research on other aspects of coaching, such as decision styles of coaches (Black & Weiss, 1992; Gordon, 1988), the relationship between coaches and young athletes (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979), and the role of the coach in fostering team cohesion (Westre & Weiss, 1991).

Gordon A. Bloom is with the Department of Kinesiology at the California State University, Fresno, CA 93740-0028. Natalie Durand-Bush and John H. Salmela are both with the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5.