

Coaches' Perceptions of a Coach Training Program Designed to Promote Youth Developmental Outcomes

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The purpose of this study was to investigate coaches' perceptions on the impact of a coach training program designed to promote youth developmental outcomes. Participants were coaches of youth sport teams. Multiple methods were used to collect data. Coaches reported many benefits for themselves, their athletes, and their teams. They reported an increase in knowledge and a better understanding of their players. Participants perceived that the activities promoted cohesion and communication, while also contributing to the development of athlete competence, confidence, connection, and character/caring. The results provide guidance for creating and delivering coach training programs designed to promote youth developmental outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Organized youth sport has long been considered one of the prime settings for developing a wide range of positive outcomes (De Knop, Engstrom, Skirstad, & Weiss, 1996; Holt, 2011). Well-established theoretical frameworks such as achievement goal theory have strongly influenced recommendations for youth sport setting design and coaching practices, based on evidence showing a strong correlation between mastery-oriented climates and a range of desirable motivational outcomes (e.g., Horn, 2008; Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999). With continued growth and interest in youth sport as a prime developmental setting, several other broad conceptual frameworks have recently appeared in the applied sport psychology literature. The literature review conducted in preparation for the present study revealed three overlapping conceptual frameworks guiding current efforts to understand how sport promotes positive outcomes for youth: positive youth development (PYD; Holt & Sehn, 2008; Jones, Dunn, Holt, Sullivan, & Bloom, 2011; Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011; Zarrett et al., 2008), life skills (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Danish, Taylor, Hodge, & Heke, 2004; Gould & Carson, 2008), and athlete development (Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010; Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995). PYD is a general term used to describe the promotion of any desirable outcome (Benson, 2006). Life skills are specific skills that can help a young person succeed in sport and life (Gould & Carson, 2008). Athlete development focuses on

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