

# COACH AND ATHLETE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT

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Leadership has traditionally been assigned great importance by coaches, athletes, spectators, and media. In the sport context, coaches such as Sir Alex Ferguson, Phil Jackson, and Pat Summitt, and players such as Derek Jeter, Michael Jordan, and Sheryl Swoopes were highly regarded for their leadership abilities. Historically, coaches have been viewed as the leader of their respective teams. However, the importance of athlete leadership has received increased attention lately from both the media and academic communities. A recent example of strong coach and athlete leadership can be seen with the San Antonio Spurs of the National Basketball Association (NBA). Based on their years of consistency, the Spurs are viewed as the model franchise in the NBA. Their head coach, Gregg Popovich, has won three coach of the year awards and four NBA championships, and has a career winning percentage of 68.9 – third best in league history. Despite being considered one of basketball's best leaders, Popovich has always credited the team's leadership core (Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili) as a key element of their success. Consequently, the objectives of this chapter are to present an overview of the models and theories of coach and athlete leadership, as well as the research that has been carried out in these contexts.

## **Models and theories used in the study of sport leadership**

### *Multidimensional model of leadership*

The Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML; Chelladurai, 1978, 2007) has been one of the most widely used models for the study of leadership in sport. The majority of research using this model has examined the leadership behaviors of coaches and has been recently used in the study of athlete leadership. The MML is a linear model composed of antecedents, leadership behaviors, and consequences. The antecedents within the model directly affect leader behaviors. The antecedents are divided into three categories: situational, leader, and member characteristics. Situational characteristics include group goals, task type, and social norms as well as other factors such as organizational regulations. Member characteristics represent the attributes of the follower which may include personality, gender, and ability.