

Canadian University Coaches' Perceptions on the Importance of Effective Planning and Communication Skills

Percepción de Entrenadores Canadienses Sobre la Importancia de una Planificación Eficaz y Habilidades de Comunicación

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Canadian university coaches' perceptions on how they prepared themselves, their athletes, and their support staff for continued success at National Championship tournaments. Interviews were conducted with five highly successful university team-sport coaches, who had combined to win nine coach-of-the-year awards and 19 National titles. Results of a thematic analysis revealed the importance of developing detailed seasonal plans of all aspects of training and competition – beginning with the first day of training camp and ending with the National Championship game. The coaches also highlighted the importance of communicating expectations and roles to athletes and support staff throughout the entire season, but especially leading up to the National Championship tournament. Findings from this study provide a rare glimpse into the knowledge and behaviors of expert coaches, including what they do to prepare their university sport programs for continuous success.

Keywords: University Athletics, Coaching Psychology, Communication, Planning, High Performance Sport.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue investigar la percepción de entrenadores Canadienses sobre lo que involucra su preparación personal, y la preparación de sus atletas y personal de apoyo para tener éxito continuo en campeonatos nacionales. Se realizaron entrevistas con cinco de los entrenadores más destacados al nivel universitario en Canadá, quienes han ganado un total de nueve premios como mejores entrenadores del año y 19 títulos nacionales. Los resultados del análisis temático revelaron la importancia de desarrollar una planificación detallada que incluya todos los aspectos del entrenamiento y competencias - comenzando desde el primer día de campamento de entrenamiento y finalizando con el último juego del campeonato nacional. Los entrenadores también resaltaron la importancia de comunicar sus expectativas y roles de cada atleta y su personal durante toda la temporada, especialmente durante los días previos al campeonato nacional. Los resultados de esta investigación nos dan una única perspectiva sobre el conocimiento y los comportamientos de entrenadores expertos, incluyendo lo que hacen para preparar a sus equipos de deportistas para ganar títulos nacionales año tras año.

Palabras clave: Deporte Universitario, Psicología del Deporte, Comunicación, Planificación, Deporte de Alto Rendimiento

1. Introduction

Researchers have meticulously studied sport coaches' roles, responsibilities, and behaviors due to their important role in the development of athletes [2][4][19]. Examinations of several renowned American university team-sport coaches like Pat Summitt, John Wooden, Anson Dorrance, and Russ Rose have helped broaden the understanding of the knowledge and behaviors used by successful university coaches [10][15][20][21].

For example, basketball coach Summitt, who won eight university basketball titles, emphasized the importance of adopting an athlete-centered coaching style based on respect and honesty, and being a good communicator and listener [4]. Coach Wooden, who won 10 university National Championships during his illustrious coaching career, highlighted the importance of caring for his players and teaching his athletes how to achieve their goals on and off the basketball court. Volleyball coach Russ Rose, who won four consecutive National Championships, stressed the importance of planning, establishing goals, and having a vision.