

Youth athletes' perceptions of humanistic coaching

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Humanistic coaching focuses on promoting athletes' personal growth and development by empowering athletes and fostering positive interpersonal coach-athlete relationships. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the experiences of student-athletes coached by individuals using humanistic principles to foster personal development through sport. A collective case study with focus group interviews was employed with 23 student-athletes (Age = 13-18 years old; Mage = 14.5; SDage = 1.75) from three schools. An inductive thematic analysis revealed that athletes perceived their coaches as someone who cared about them beyond sport, supporting them through academic and personal challenges. This led athletes to build trusting relationships with their coaches, as well as to positive sport experiences that fostered feelings of success, motivation, autonomy, and responsibility both in sport and school. Athletes' descriptions of coaches' behaviours aligned with humanistic coaching principles illustrating its value in fostering youth development through sport.

KEY WORDS: youth sport; coaching; athlete development; focus groups.

Youth sport participation is considered an effective way to foster life skills and personal development because it is an intrinsically motivating and popular activity (Fraser-Thomas, Falcão, & Wolman, 2016; Gould & Carson, 2008). Studies have shown youth sport can promote positive developmental outcomes such as improved confidence, self-esteem, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and respect for others (Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Koh, Camiré, Bloom, & Wang, 2017; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013). Although some believe these positive outcomes are an implicit consequence of sport participation, research has indicated they depend to a large extent

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