

Wheelchair Basketball Athletes' Perceptions of the Coach–Athlete Relationship

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The majority of research on the coach–athlete relationship has been explored from the perspective of able-bodied athletes. The purpose of this study was to explore wheelchair basketball athletes' perceptions of the coach–athlete relationship. Timelining and semistructured interviews were conducted with six wheelchair basketball athletes, and data were analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis. Athletes highlighted the important role that parasport coaches played in fostering an enjoyable wheelchair basketball environment and valued coaches who displayed expertise regarding their athletes' equipment and had personal parasport athletic experiences. Additionally, athletes identified personal preferences, including coaches who addressed sex differences and maintained professional relationships at the national level as contributing factors to the coach–athlete relationship. The current results benefit both parasport coaches and athletes by providing a portrayal of coaching behaviors, characteristics, and expertise that not only influence the parasport coach–athlete dyad but also affect the well-being and athletic development of parasport athletes.

Keywords: parasport, coaching, impairment, team sports

Over 1 billion people across the globe have reported living with an impairment (World Health Organization, 2021), which has the potential to affect functionality on an intellectual (e.g., Down syndrome) and/or physical (e.g., amputation) level (International Paralympic Committee, 2016). As a result, people with impairments often encounter environmental and social barriers that impact the quality of their life (e.g., Wareham et al., 2017), including a reduction in physical activity (Martin, 2013). Sport participation is one way to enhance physical activity participation and provide a number of benefits for athletes, including improved health and functionality (Day, 2013) and a sense of accomplishment (Day & Wadey, 2016).

One person who can influence the benefits of participation for athletes with an impairment is the coach (Allan et al., 2018; Bentzen et al., 2021; Dehghansai et al.,

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