The Psychology of Sports Coaching

This is the first book to offer a comprehensive review of current research in the psychology of sports coaching. It provides detailed, critical appraisals of the key psychological concepts behind the practice of sports coaching and engages with contemporary debates in this field. Organised around three main themes, it discusses factors affecting the coaching environment; methods for enhancing coach performance; and how to put theory into practice through coaching work.

Written by an international team of researchers and practitioners at the cutting edge of psychology and coaching, each chapter introduces a key concept, defines key terms, provides a comprehensive literature review, and considers implications for future research and applied practice. Encompassing the latest developments in the field, it addresses topics such as:

- the theory behind effective coaching
- creating performance environments
- promoting psychological well-being
- developing resilience through coaching
- transformational leadership and the role of the coach.

*The Psychology of Sports Coaching: Research and practice* is an indispensable resource for sport psychologists and sports coaches, and is essential reading for all students and academics researching sport psychology.

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The Routledge Research in Sports Coaching series provides a platform for leading experts and emerging academics in this important discipline to present groundbreaking work on the history, theory, practice, and contemporary issues of sports coaching. The series sets a new benchmark for research in sports coaching, and offers a valuable contribution to the wider sphere of sports studies.

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*Edited by Richard Thelwell, Chris Harwood and Iain Greenlees*
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The Psychology of Sports Coaching
Research and practice

Edited by
Richard Thelwell,
Chris Harwood and
Iain Greenlees
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Welcome to The Psychology of Sports Coaching: Research and Practice, a text that reflects both the development of psychology research focused on the sports coach, and the editorial team’s extensive practitioner experience of working with such individuals. In addition to the increased research interest in the area in recent years, there is a developing acceptance that practitioners are spending more time working with, and through, sports coaches. Despite the maturing of the area, it is surprising that to date, no text or collection of works exists to comprehensively review and summarise the scientific literature in the area, or to direct future investigation and recommendations for applied practice. Our response is to provide a text that reviews the conceptual and theoretical components of the selected topic areas while also detailing how the research informs practice application. In doing so, the text moves beyond the existing available resources that focus on enhancing coaches’ awareness of psychology (e.g. Burton & Raedeke, 2008), integrating psychology into coach practice (Nicholls & Jones, 2013), and outlining how coaches become more successful (Martens, 2012). The result is a distinctive three-part text comprising reviews of the most prominent thematic areas in which the majority of the coaching psychology research has been conducted. The first part addresses factors that affect the coaching environment and provides coverage of topics ranging from athlete-development phases, developmental environments, to parental involvement. The second part provides a focus for how coach performance can be enhanced, in which demands and development of high performance coaching, understanding of athlete expectations, and impacts of coach psychological well- and ill-being are among the topics covered. Attention in the final part is directed to how psychology practitioners work through coaches, with chapters covering, for example, transformational leadership, enhancing coach efficacy, and the integration of decision-making strategies in training.

As outlined, our intention was to assemble a collection of in-depth literature reviews on key areas that have emerged within the last decade to assist future research and practice within the fields of sport psychology and coaching science. Further to this, we also wanted to invite contributions from emerging researchers in addition to established international experts, so that fuller coverage of areas are presented with a distinctive conceptual, theoretical, and practical focus. It is
hoped that the empirical evidence presented within each chapter, together with
the dissemination of this body of research into practical implications for applied
practice, offers a comprehensive, thought-provoking essential library for stu-
dents, graduates, doctoral students, academics and professionals working in the
fields of applied sport psychology and coaching science. The format of each
chapter has been standardised as much as possible to resemble the works pub-
lished in academic journals, with chapters divided into several sections: an intro-
duction; a section clarifying and defining key terms; a comprehensive and
contemporary review of literature; the directions for future research; and the
implications of the work for applied practice.

The first part, *Factors that affect the coaching environment*, commences with
Paul Wylleman, Nathalie Rosier, Koen De Brandt, and Paul de Knop who criti-
tique key coaching considerations through athlete development phases. The
chapter details the transitions and stages athletes face in different domains of
development using both a lifespan model and a holistic perspective to outline the
development of the elite athlete career, before considering future research direc-
tions and implications for professional practice. In Chapter 2, Andrew Mills and
Matt Pain critically review the creation of development and performance
environments for adolescent athletes. Factors perceived by successful coaches to
underpin optimal development environments are examined prior to critiquing the
research findings that, when put together, highlight the importance of establish-
ing cohesive player-centred environments guided by a clear vision and philo-
sophy. Chapter 3, written by Megan Gilchrist and Cliff Mallett, reviews the
theory behind effective coaching. Using self-determination theory as a frame-
work, the authors unpack the complexity associated with why coaches coach the
way they do, and provide direction on future research, and the relevance of this
knowledge and understanding to coaching practice. In Chapter 4, Sophie Yang
and Sophia Jowett use the 3+1Cs model to evaluate the understanding and
enhancing of coach–athlete relationships in relation to individual differences,
relationship characteristics, and environmental factors. In doing so, they explore
key determinants of coach–athlete relationships, and how relationship quality
associates with motivation, self-concept, team cohesion, and collective efficacy.
In Chapter 5, Chris Wagstaff considers how sport psychologists can support
coaches during organisational change, and provides a comprehensive review of
research examining change in these domains. Given the increased focus of
research in the area, the authors provide an insight to how coaches may seek to
maintain effective performance during periods of substantial change. The final
chapter within Part I by Camilla Knight and Daniel Gould reviews the coach–
parent interaction and covers issues that coaches encounter with parents, and
potential strategies to optimise parent–coach relationships. Given the paucity of
literature examining coach–parent interactions, the chapter concludes with future
research options focused around education and intervention strategies.

The second part, *Enhancing coach performance*, starts with Paul McCarthy
and Burt Giges who, in Chapter 7, examine how the needs of coaches are met.
The chapter highlights how coaches satisfy particular psychological needs
through the coaching process and in particular how psychological needs are identified, satisfied, or unsatisfied. Having highlighted future research priorities, the authors comment on how practitioners may wish to integrate such material when consulting with coaches. Steven Rynne, Cliff Mallett, and Martin Rabjohns, in Chapter 8, consider research examining the work of high performance coaches, the factors that influence coach performance, and the qualities of successful coaches. The authors illustrate the concept of the coach as a learner, individual strategies to enhance coach performance, and organisational strategies to support coaches, prior to highlighting future research opportunities in the area with a focus on performance development. Chapter 9, written by Peter Olusoga and Richard Thelwell, reviews the literature examining coach stress and coping. In addition to reviewing the salient literature, the authors consider potential intervention strategies to manage stress experiences, before reviewing the implications for professional practice and future research. In Chapter 10, Andrew Manley, Iain Greenlees, and Richard Thelwell outline the key components associated with expectations that athletes have of coaches. The critique examines the subsequent effect of athletes’ coach expectations on their attention, effort, and general behaviours prior to concluding with suggestions for applied practice and future research. Chapter 11, by Ryan Flett, Sarah Carson-Sackett, and Martin Camiré, reviews literature associated with the actions that coaches take to promote effective outcomes. In addition to critically reviewing the antecedents of effective coaching across the context of participation coaching, performance coaching, and high-performance coaching, the consequences and outcomes of both positive and negative actions are discussed in order to provide practitioner implications and future research directions. Juliette Stebbings and Ian Taylor bring Part II to a close with their chapter on coach well- and ill-being, and impacts on coach and athlete performance. Literature examining the influence of sporting environments on coach well-being is also reviewed, before the authors explore the often ignored processes for how athletes influence coaches’ psychological health. The chapter concludes with suggestions as to how research can stimulate and improve applied practice.

The final Part of the text addresses issues associated with Working through coaches and starts with Calum Arthur and Alan Lynn, who review transformational leadership and how it may be used for, and by, the sports coach. A comprehensive review of the literature is presented, outlining how coaches can engage with the theory. Having identified a number of future research directions, the chapter closes with a detailed description of the potential applied implications within the sport, and, in particular, the coaching domain via use of the Vision, Support, and Challenge model. In Chapter 14, Chris Harwood discusses the concept of coaching efficacy with a specific focus on the importance of developing the confidence of coaches to integrate mental skills and psychological strategies into their daily coaching practice and philosophy. In addition to potential research directions, attention is given to the methods and behaviours by which coaches shape the psychosocial development of young athletes. Matthew Smith, Sean Figgins, and Chris Sellars, in Chapter 15, review the inspirational
communication literature with a particular focus on how coaches interact with their athletes. Throughout, future research ideas to further our understanding of this process are offered in addition to practical suggestions on how coaches might inspire their athletes. Chapter 16, by Mustafa Sarkar and David Fletcher, synthesises the research evidence regarding the effectiveness of resilience training. Best-practice approaches to resilience development are presented in addition to explanations of how resilience training can enhance well-being and performance. The authors conclude by exploring what resilience training can achieve in the context of coaching, and what coaches should consider when developing resilience in athletes. Matt Dicks and Mark Upton, in Chapter 17, review decision-making research with a particular focus on coaching applications. Adopting an ecological psychology approach, the authors consider how the theory of affordances can be used as a framework for studying real-time decision making, with suggestions for future work to bridge the gap between theory, research, and practice presented. The final chapter by Andrew Evans, Matthew Slater, Pete Coffee, and Jamie Barker details how social identity theory can be used by coaches to enhance team functioning. In doing so, a discussion of the applied implications (e.g. creating team identities and contents) for coaches and practitioners is provided, with a narrative centred on future research opportunities.

Notes

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The coach-parent interaction


**Helping coaches meet their psychological needs**


High performance coaching


Coach stress and associated impacts


Athlete expectancies of coaches and their consequences


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### Transformational leadership and the role of the coach


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