

Coaches

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ABSTRACT

In sport, coaches and athletes work closely together and often form long-term, mutually dependent relationships. The manner in which coaches and athletes interact can have a profound impact upon the effectiveness of their training sessions and their relationship may directly or indirectly influence such factors as personal satisfaction, enjoyment, motivation, and performance. The aim of this chapter is to provide a critical overview of this area of research with explicit focus on the 3+1 Cs conceptual model. It defines the coach-athlete relationship and provides an overview of how this relationship has been operationalised and measured. Moreover, aspects that may potentially contribute to developing quality coach-athlete relationships are discussed. Finally, practical methods for developing and maintaining a harmonious relationship are put forward.

INTRODUCTION: COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP AS A PHENOMENON

Relationships are one important key ingredient for a fulfilling and successful life. People are surrounded by relationships in diverse domains of life including familial, marital, social, work, school, and sport. Relationships can have the capacity to either promote growth or thwart it. It is thus essential to ensure that the relationships people develop are harmonious and stable. A relationship is an association between two or more people and usually involves a level of interdependence. Being interdependent implies that most factors that are likely to influence one member of the relationship will likely influence the other relationship member (Kelley et al., 1983). Like other interpersonal relationships, the coach-athlete relationship can be described as the interdependence of a coach and athlete's emotions, actions, and thoughts,

with the coach and athlete interacting with the main aim to develop skill, tactical awareness, and succeed in their designated sport (Jowett, 2007). Thus, the relationship itself can provide the vehicle for a long journey that aims to transport the athlete and the coach to performance-related development and ultimately success. Moreover, the relationship as a vehicle also aims to make the journey a positive experience and this can only be achieved when the relationship is harmonious; a discordant relationship is more likely to make the journey less positive, fulfilling, and satisfying (Jowett, 2005).

There are numerous anecdotal examples within competitive sport that highlight the nature and functions of interdependence between coaches and athletes. One fine example is coach Sally Pearson and athlete Sharon Hannah (100m Hurdles World Gold in Daegu 2011; Olympic Silver in Beijing, aiming for Olympic Gold in London 2012), their relationship has spanned over a decade and has been characterised as one of the most perfect partnerships in sport due to their shared respect in and belief for one another, unshaken commitment to their relationship and the goals they set to achieve, as well as tireless mutual support and endless hard work. The nature of their interdependence has propelled them to extraordinary performance heights while making the process personally rewarding and satisfying.

OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the importance of coaches for the development of athletes
2. Define the phenomenon of the coach-athlete relationship
3. Outline operational and measurement issues of the coach-athlete relationship
4. Review factors that are associated with effective relationships
5. Examine what athletes/coaches should look for in an effective relationship
6. Discuss how coach-athlete relationships are maintained

THE 3+1CS MODEL OF THE COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP

The coach-athlete relationship has been conceptually defined as a social situation in which coaches and athletes' feelings, thoughts, and behaviours are interconnected (see e.g., Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). The 3+1Cs model provides an operational definition whereby coaches and athletes' feelings, thoughts, and behaviours can be systematically studied through the constructs of Closeness, Commitment, Complementarity, and Co-orientation (Jowett, 2007). The construct *closeness* characterises the perceived affective experience between the coach and the athlete, and represents the emotional element of their relationship. It refers to the coach and athlete feeling emotionally close to one another and reflects positive mutual feelings of trust, respect, and interpersonal liking, as well as emotional supporting, caring for, and appreciating one another.

Commitment expresses the coach and the athlete's long-term view of the direction of their relationship and their strength of proximity within it and refers to the cognitive aspect of the relationship. It represents the future expectations of the coach and athlete and their intention to maintain the relationship over time through good times and not so good ones.

Complementarity is concerned with a coach and an athlete's actions, the interaction between them during training or competition, and refers to the behavioural element of the coach-athlete relationship. It embodies the type of interaction that the coach and athlete perceive as co-operative and useful. Complementarity reflects two sets of interpersonal behaviours: (a) behaviours that are corresponding and affiliative (e.g., both coach and athlete are responsive to each other's efforts) and (b) behaviours that are reciprocal and role-based (e.g., coach instructs and athlete executes). Reciprocal and role-based complementarity is a newly introduced construct (see Yang & Jowett, in press). It highlights that on average coaches are likely to be in charge, lead, and direct and athletes are more likely to execute, consider, and follow. It is worth noting, however, that this notion doesn't mean that athletes are not in

charge, leading, and directing. On the contrary, when in training executing instructions athletes are in control of their actions and when in completion leading the proceedings athletes are again in control of their actions. What has been proposed is that for complementarity to be maintained the coach needs to be in charge even when the athlete is in command (Yang & Jowett, in press). For example, consider this case: a coach has suggested to the athlete to play as centre forward in the next game, his athlete doesn't agree with the coach's decision. If the coach dismisses the issue raised by the athlete it would result in non-complementarity (both in control without any positive effect; this is opposite to co-operation). If however the coach deals in a way that truly puts him back in a position of leadership through negotiation such as, "How about you play centre forward for the first half and then based on performance we consider changing you to an outside forward position?", then he confidently takes *charge* and maintains a sense of reciprocally complementary transactions given the athlete responds "On that basis I am willing to try" as the athlete is prepared to try/*execute*.

The construct of *co-orientation* forms the final part of this model (i.e., +1C) and brings together the other three Cs. It represents the level of understanding and similarity between the coach and the athlete; essentially the concurrence of closeness, commitment, and complementarity; it considers the coach and the athlete's interpersonal perspectives. Co-orientation encapsulates two interpersonal perspectives of the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2009). The *direct-perspective* refers to the coach and the athlete's self-perceptions about how they feel, act, and think in regards to their relationship. In contrast, the *meta-perspective* refers to coach and athlete's perceptions of how they believe their partners feel, act, and think in regards to the relationship. While the individual perspectives are important in themselves, the combination of the different perspectives allows the examination of co-orientation from a number of dimensions: (a) *actual similarity* (the congruence of the coach and athlete's direct-

perspective); (b) *assumed similarity* (congruence of an individual's own direct-perspective and meta-perspective); and (c) *empathic understanding* (congruence of an individual's own direct-perspective and their partner's meta-perspective). These three dimensions describe the degree to which the coach and the athlete are co-oriented in the ways they view and understand the quality of their relationship and each other (Jowett, 2007) and thus provide valuable prognostic and diagnostic information to coaches and athletes as well as sport psychology consultants.

The Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire. While the definition of the coach-athlete relationship has served as a guide for its operationalisation through the 3+1Cs model, the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) has provided a means to measure the quality of the relationship. The CART-Q comes in two forms; one questionnaire for the coach (example item: I trust my athlete) and one for the athlete (example item: I trust my coach). Furthermore, for each coach and each athlete questionnaire, there are two versions one that assesses the direct perspective (e.g., I trust my coach/athlete) and one that assesses the meta-perspective (e.g., My athlete/coach trusts me). Finally, there are short versions of these questionnaires (see Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) and long versions of the same questionnaires (Rhind & Jowett, 2010a). The choice of what questionnaires to use is dependent on the objectives of the research or practice. If used correctly the CART-Q is an effective and valid psychometric tool (see e.g., Balduck & Jowett, 2010; Balduck, Jowett, & Buelens, 2011; Jowett, 2006, 2009, Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2003, 2004, Yang & Jowett, 2012).

Research. Since the development of the CART-Q, Jowett and colleagues have undertaken a series of studies examining important correlates of the coach-athlete relationship. This series of works has focused on identifying antecedent and consequent variables, as well as exploring moderating and mediating links, in a concerted effort to fully

describe and understand the content and functions of the coach-athlete relationship with the view to develop interventions that aim to promote and enhance the quality of coach-athlete relationships. For instance, studies have explored the links between the coach-athlete relationship and variables such as gender, level of performance, and type of sport (e.g., Jowett, 2008a; Jowett & Nezlek, 2012), different facets of satisfaction (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Lorimer, 2009), team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), collective efficacy (Hampson & Jowett, in press; Jowett, Shanmugam, & Caccoulis, 2012), achievement goals and motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda 2005), passion for sport/coaching (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008; Lafraniere, Jowett, Vallerand, Carbonneau, 2011), physical self-concept (Jowett, 2008), attachment styles (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Felton & Jowett, in press), and also empathy and interpersonal perception (Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009a).

Research in this area has predominantly focused on the perspectives of the athlete. For example, Jowett and Chaundy (2004) hypothesised that an athlete's perception of team cohesion would be influenced by that athlete's perception of coach leadership and also the quality of the relationship between the athlete and coach. They found that the athletes' perception of their relationship perception predicted more variance in team cohesion than just coach leadership alone. This established that the relationship formed between a coach and an athlete was at least as important as simply how a coach chose to lead and behave towards athletes. In addition, the direct- and meta-perspectives of athletes have been independently linked to positive motivational climates (Olympiou et al., 2005), while Adie and Jowett (2010) have shown that athletes' perceptions of their coach (i.e., meta-perspective, how they believed their coach viewed them) predicted the likelihood of athletes taking up a mastery goal approach (i.e., task or self-referenced goals), which in turn promoted those athletes' intrinsic motivation.

Nonetheless, there is some research that has explored coaches' perceptions of relationships with their athletes. For example, Lorimer and Jowett (2009a) have shown that coaches' meta-perspectives are positively associated with their own ability to accurately understand the moment-to-moment thoughts and feelings of their athletes. Furthermore, Lorimer (2009) found a strong association between coaches' direct- and meta-perspectives and their satisfaction with the performance of their athlete and the way that athlete acted towards them in training sessions. The work of Lafrenière *et al.* (2008) also has shown a similar association, but between coaches direct- and meta-perceptions of their coach-athlete relationship and their harmonious passion for their sport.

There is also research that has considered the coach-athlete dyad as the unit of analysis. For example, Jowett and Clark-Carter (2006) explored the interdependence of both coaches and athletes' direct- and meta-perspectives. The results indicated that the dyads had a level of empathic actual and assumed similarity, as well as empathic understanding of each other's perspectives of their relationship. Additionally, athletes in moderately developed relationships (6-months to 2-years) were more capable of understanding their coaches', than athletes who were in more established relationships with their coaches. This suggests that coaches and athletes who had worked together longer seemed to understand each other less well, perhaps because of habitual behaviours and thoughts. Nonetheless, Jowett and Nezlek (2012) have shown that associations between satisfaction with training and interdependence (as defined by the 3Cs) were stronger for longer relationships and same-gender dyads (all male and all female dyads) than other-gender dyads (female coach-male athlete/ and male coach-female athlete). In addition, they revealed that interdependence and satisfaction with training were weaker for lower level (i.e., club) competitors than for higher-level (i.e., regional, national, and international) competitors. Lorimer and Jowett (2009a) investigated if coaches and athletes' meta-perspectives are associated (e.g., My coach is committed to me & My athlete

is committed to me). They found a level of actual similarity yielded by correlating coaches and athletes' perspectives (e.g., I am committed to the coach & I am committed to the athlete) but there was no association between their meta-perspectives as well as their ability to understand each others' moment-to-moment thoughts and feelings. Lafraniere et al. (2011) have highlighted that how coaches' behave impacts their athletes' perceptions of relationship quality and in turn their wellbeing (i.e., happiness). They found that coaches with harmoniously passionate about coaching are more likely to choose behaviours that support the autonomy of the athlete allowing them to develop positive perceptions about the relationship quality with the coach. Good quality relationships (as defined by the 3Cs) have been shown over the years to be associated with athletes' wellbeing including happiness (Lafraniere et al., 2011), physical self-concept (Jowett, 2008a), satisfaction (Jowett & Nezelek, 2012) and so on. There is a huge scope of research in this area as it would help understand the dyadic processes of what is truly going on in the coach-athlete relationship. Overall, this research has indicated that relationship quality, as captured by both positive direct- and meta-perspectives, is associated with a range of beneficial effects for coaches, athletes and their individual and joint outcomes.

ASPECTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT WORK

Sport is a social environment that provides frequent and varied opportunities for interaction between an athlete and their coach. Coaches have a fundamental function in the performance and effectiveness of their athletes, especially as the performance level heightens and competition intensifies. Ultimately, coaches direct and orchestrate their athletes' development both physically, technically, and psychosocially, through their knowledge, experience, and expertise. Thus, on one hand athletes need to acquire knowledge and develop skill, and on the other hand coaches need to guide and instruct their athletes, and both together need to work hard towards achieving positive outcomes such as refining skill and developing game

awareness, as well as experiencing a sense of happiness, satisfaction, and success. Coaches and athletes therefore work closely together, have a high degree of interaction, and inevitably increased reliance upon each other. Thus, it would seem important that both athletes and coaches know what to look for in order to form a relationship that is both effective and successful. The section below discusses what athletes and coaches should look out for in their relationships.

Individual and team sports. Coach-athlete relationships are shaped by the environment in which they unfold (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 1997). Perhaps the most obvious being the type of sport. Lorimer and Jowett (2009b) have found that coaches and athletes demonstrate better empathic understanding (a dimension of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of co-orientation) in individual sports compared to team sports. Coaches in team sports are more likely to interact with a group of athletes as a whole than those involved in individual sports, and interactions with any given individual athlete may be limited. This means that in team sports what the coach is saying/doing may not apply to each one member of the team or group but to some or few or the majority. In another study, Rhind and colleagues (in press) found that athletes in individual sports were much more close, committed, and complementary with their coaches than athletes in individual sports. They further found that athletes in individual sports were more satisfied than their team sports counterparts. It may be that athletes in team sports may experience increased satisfaction if their coaches created a relational environment; an environment that promoted mutual trust, respect, interpersonal liking, a long-term orientation between the coach and the athletes, as well as a sense of co-operation in terms of responsiveness and directiveness.

As a coach in a team sport it is particularly important to prioritize time to get to know each and every one of the athletes, both through formal meetings and in the informal chats (see Rhind & Jowett, 2011). Athletes need to be aware that coaches working with larger

groups will not always be focused on the same things as them nor will they see things in a similar way. It is therefore important to work with a coach that encourages open channels of communication, especially feedback. Athletes should provide feedback that goes beyond simply acknowledging their understanding of technical instruction and movement execution but also include information regarding how they think and feel about the present, past, and future in and outside the domain of sport. Communication in the form of relationship enhancement strategies as put forward by Rhind and Jowett (2010a, 2010b, 2011) not only is likely to enhance the relationship quality but also its effects may transfer to the individual athlete and coach as each may start feeling more satisfied, happier, positive, energetic, and successful.

Level of competition. Another important environmental factor is the level of performance that an athlete trains at and coach instructs at. At a recreational level most athletes participate in a sport because they are intrinsically motivated for the activity (e.g., enjoy being with friends, learning new skills, challenging their abilities), while at higher levels of performance external reasons and goals may become more important (e.g., ranking, winning, trophies, fame). Research has shown that elite coaches and athletes who are closer and more co-orientated increase the likelihood of achieving their shared goals such as performance success (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Frost, 2007) while coaches and athletes who are distant, isolated, and discordant increase the likelihood of failing to achieve performance-related goals (Jowett, 2009). Additionally, Jowett and Meek (2000a) explained that a high performance-level coach-athlete dyad with poor relationship quality was more likely to experience conflict and decline in effective interaction. More importantly, it would appear that coach-athlete dyads at the highest level of performance are both highly interdependent and satisfied with different facets of satisfaction including satisfaction with training, instruction, and performance (Jowett & Nezelek, 2012).

This research highlights the importance athletes and coaches attach to their relationship for successful performances. While, successful performance is highly prized by both coaches and athletes, it would appear that when athletes are successful both the athlete and the coach are praised and their roles acknowledged, whereas, when athletes are unsuccessful, the coach more often than not receives a large portion of the blame and responsibility. Nonetheless, it is important that coaches and athletes communicate about all the aspects that might affect performance this will help ensure that both the coach and athlete operate as a unit toward performance excellence. Subsequently, an athlete should look for a coach who has interpersonal skills; such skills include (a) the skill to develop a relationship that is respectful and trusting, (b) the skill to make the athlete feel comfortable and relaxed as opposed to feeling uneasy and stressed, (c) the skill to make the athlete feel that he/she is a valued member of the team or squad, (d) the skill to transfer confidence in the direction employed and practices applied to improve performance, and (e) the skill to inspire a sense of connectedness in terms that “we are together in this”. Performance success takes time and thus a coach and an athlete would need to be committed and assured that the relationship formed will serve them well over a period of time where both individuals take responsibility for successes and failures.

Relationship duration. Relationship duration may be linked to the level of performance (see Jowett & Nezlek, 2012) in that it takes a considerable time for an athlete and a coach to progress to the higher levels of performance. It has been suggested that as long as 10 years of training (or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice) is required to develop the expertise needed to develop one’s talent (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993). Whether an athlete and a coach stay in an athletic relationship for 10 years or not is not the issue here. The issue here is that when a relationship is started coaches and athletes will have to invest time, energy, and effort if they are to enjoy the benefits of an effective relationship.

A decline in the relationship quality is often associated with a decline in performance accomplishments (see Jowett & Cockerill, 2003) and thus maintaining the quality of the relationship at a desired state may be as important as ensuring continuous performance development. Jowett and Clark-Carter (2006) have demonstrated that in more long-term coach-athlete dyads, co-orientation or a sense of a common ground can decline. Co-orientation typically increases during the initial phase of relationships as individuals get to know each other before decreasing in the later phases of the relationship as the coach and athlete fall into habitual behaviours. Moreover, Jowett and colleagues (2008a; Jowett & Nezlek, 2012) have found that the quality of coach-athlete relationships were much stronger associated with them feeling competent and skilful performers as well as more satisfying and fulfilled when the relationship was long-term than short term.

Thus, coaches and athletes both need to acknowledge the importance of long-term relationship if the dyad's goal is to progress to higher performance levels. Relationships develop in the mind of its members and in the physical world where dyads interact and their relationship unfolds. It is as important to continuously and consciously to try to update the information about the people we relate, communicate, and interact, especially if we wish their connections with them. People and relationships change and thus it becomes imperative to remain sensitive to one another's needs, values, opinions, preferences, likes, and dislikes as they are subject to change over time. Athletes and coaches need to ensure a high level of communication because it allows them to continuously update their common ground by sharing their experiences, joys and fears. Relationship strategies proposed by Rhind and Jowett (2011) may help enhance the quality and maintenance of relationships that are effective and successful.

Age. To an extent, competitive level and relationship duration are both associated with the age of athletes. At an early age social development and self-esteem are important factors

for those involved in physical activity (Marsh, 2007). Research has shown that younger individuals are more sensitive to punitive actions on one hand and positive encouragement on the other of their coach (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007). Moreover, coach behaviours that aim to pressure and control are thought detrimental for athletes' motivation and wellbeing (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thogersen-Ntoumani, 2009). As athletes develop, particularly during puberty and beyond it, the need and demands for technical development increases and they are likely to focus more on the instructional feedback and social support of their coach (Chelladurai & Carron, 1983). Athletes become increasingly independent of their parents (e.g., Wylleman et al., 2007) and more reliant on their coach and the quality of the relationship they start to form (e.g., Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005). At a later stage as athletes continue to mature they may even want to take a greater role in the coaching process and practice by taking an active role in the decision making, the direction and intensity of their training. Such a balanced mutuality of dependence between the coach and the athlete may arise when "coaches and athletes alike possess experience, knowledge and skill-based 'power' that permits them to establish a relationship on equal terms" (see Jowett, 2007, p. 21). Such a "power shift" is important for quality coach-athlete relationships (e.g., Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000a).

Coaches need to be aware of the differences in athletes' needs depending on their age and stage of development. They need to understand their athletes' specific needs, wants, and aspirations in any given time. Parents are advised to find coaches who are interpersonal rather than impersonal and thus have the capacity to create an interdependent relationship that can serve as a facilitative and positive learning environment for the developing athlete. A coach that has the young athlete's development and well-being at heart is also the coach that is likely to create an interpersonal environment that the athlete wants to go again and again and is prepared to work hard and enjoy the process of skill development and participation in sport.

Older athletes should look for a coach that has the interpersonal skills that are needed to foster an interdependent relationship. Coaches who are inherently interested, supportive, and caring for all individual athletes in the team or squad as well as provide opportunities for the athletes to express themselves in an environment that is positive, happy, and light hearted while there is a clear direction and structure, are more likely to develop rapport with each one athlete. While the coach-athlete relationship's backbone ingredients and strength of dependence may be reflected in closeness (e.g., trust, respect), commitment (e.g., staying close over long period of time), complementary (e.g., responsiveness, directiveness), and co-orientation (e.g., similarity and understanding), mutuality (e.g., the degree to which coaches and athletes share responsibility) and basis (e.g., the degree to which coaches and athletes influence one another's outcomes) of dependence may shift as athletes, coaches, and their dyadic relationships develop and grow (see Jowett, 2007).

Personality. Personality can play a crucial role in determining the nature of close relationship. Personality describes intrinsic differences in individuals that are thought to influence how they think, feel, and behave. Currently the most established theory in personality research is the Big Five Factor model that describes personality in terms of five basic traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect. Jowett, Yang and Lorimer (in press) found that those athletes with high levels of agreeableness viewed their relationships as having higher quality. This is likely because they are more capable of interacting in a pleasant and accommodating manner and this higher level of complementarity allows other areas of the relationship to more easily develop. In addition Yang and Jowett (2012) have argued that as the coaches' main role is to support and instruct their athletes their personality will have a minimum affect on athletes, making athletes' personality the dominant factor in determining relationship quality. Moreover, one's attachment style (e.g., reflects the type of bonds one develops with others) has also shown to

influence both one's own and other's perceptions of relationship quality in the coach-athlete dyad (Roberts & Jowett, in press). Athletes and coaches should be aware of how personality is likely to drive their behaviour and influence their interactions and perceptions. Such awareness could help explain their own behaviour relative to others and others relative to them. Awareness can further help an athlete and a coach maximize their interactions by acknowledging their shortcomings.

Gender. Another potentially important factor is the gender of the coach and the athlete in the coach-athlete dyad. The relationship quality can be affected by whether it is an opposite-gender relationship or a same-gender relationship. In friendships it has been shown that female-female relationships are closer than male-male relationships (Unger & Crawford, 1992). Jowett and Nezelek (2012) have found that athletes and coaches in same gender relationships were more close, committed and complementary as well as more satisfied than other-gender relationships. However, Lorimer and Jowett (2010a) have shown that female-female relationships can be less co-orientated and therefore less effective than male-male or male-female ones. Coach-athlete relationships with their greater focus on external performance goals may have different dynamics than friendships. Nonetheless, the key is that coaches and athletes are on the same page because this allows them to interact more effectively by understanding the reasons behind why they act and interact in the ways they do.

Relationship type. The quality of the coach-athlete relationship can depend on what other relationships the coach and athlete share. In a *typical* relationship, the coach and the athlete have no other relation to each other outside of the sport. However, in an *atypical* relationship they already share another bond such as parent-child or husband-wife. Jowett and Meek (2000b) suggest that in an atypical relationship coaches and athletes will have a stronger emotional connection and a greater degree of interdependence than a typical

relationship. While this higher level of closeness can be viewed positively there also exists the chance that this over familiarity can lead to the blurring of relationship boundaries and in turn to the decline of its effectiveness.

The risk of distinct roles being fused together is a problematic one (see e.g., Jowett, 2008b; Jowett, Timson-Katchis, & Adams, 2007). Conflict can occur if individuals use their additional relationship roles to influence the coach-athlete relationship, or if the interactions are carried across relationship contexts. An example may be a parent/coach grounding their child/athlete at home for not behaving at a training session. It is important for an athlete that clear boundaries are established so that the roles are kept separate. This is not to say atypical relationships cannot be successful or effective, but instead that in these relationships the coach and athlete need to be aware of how and why their roles change depending on the context in which they operate. Based on the limited research, it would appear that sport roles are preferably kept distinct from other roles.

Culture. Culture and ethnicity has been shown to influence how athletes perceive their coaches and hence the quality of the relationships they form. Cultural background can potentially influence an individual's views of a sport and the purpose and meaning of the coach-athlete relationship. Jowett and Frost (2007) found that footballers working with coaches of different ethnicities reported that they didn't think their coach understood them as well. It was further uncovered that athletes also felt that closeness, commitment, and complementarity would have been heightened if their coaches were of a similar cultural background as them. In another study, Jowett and Ahmad (2012) uncovered that athletes were much more interdependent with local Kuwaiti coaches than foreign coaches yet athletes acknowledged that although cultural including religious homogeneity may promote the coach and the athlete bond, coaches' knowledge and expertise may also help these bonds. It is important to invest time, effort and energy in developing quality relationships regardless of

one's background. Communication and getting to know one another could facilitate greatly perceived understanding and similarity. It is important that coaches and athletes maximize their common ground. They need to establish a central focus when interacting and make frequent checks to ensure that they understand what is going on and that both are addressing the same topic and hold the same views. While coaches and athletes of similar cultural background may find it easier to form high quality relationships athletes should not shy away from working with coaches of different backgrounds. Diverse views may aid in the development of the athlete and make the relationship greater than the sum of its parts. Instead an athlete should seek out a coach who is sensitive to their culture and adaptive to their views and needs.

Coach education and experience. Coaches who have been coaching for longer, have more varied experience, or hold higher level coaching qualifications are more likely to have a closer understanding of their sport, its requirements and demands. It is possible that coaches with coaching qualifications and greater experience may be able to respond better to an athlete's needs and deal with several of the previous issues raised such as differences in competitive level, age, relationship needs, and different cultures. Additionally, athletes may respond better to coaches who they perceive to be more knowledgeable and skilled. If this is the case then these coach-athlete relationships would display higher levels of such relational properties as complementary behaviours and co-orientated perspectives. This would in turn lead to the development of a more interdependent relationship.

While athletes may need to be careful of working with coaches who lack the relevant education or experience to meet the requirements of their own athletic development they also need to be aware a good coach is the coach that continuously update his/her information about the sport and about each one of his/her athletes in the team or squad. Lorimer and Jowett (2010b) have shown that coaches with greater experience may believe that they 'have

seen it all' and in turn display a limited ability to understand and respond to the individual needs of their athletes. Essentially their greater experience and knowledge can lead to over confidence; this in turn causes them to make wrong assumptions about their athlete because they do not pay the attention to the on-going, up-to-date, and available information. Both athletes and coaches need to be aware that knowledge gained from education and past experience may not always be directly transferable without careful consideration of the specifics of the current situation, athlete, and coach-athlete relationship.

MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP

Even if coaches and athlete can form effective relationships there is no guarantee that these relationships will have a substantial duration. While the 3+1 Cs concept of commitment expresses the coach and the athlete's long-term view of the direction of their relationship and their intention to remain together, this desire for a long-term and stable relationship is not enough in itself to sustain it. Instead a great deal of time and effort must be invested in preserving this relationship. One method that can be employed by both coaches and athletes is the use of maintenance strategies. These strategies can be thought of as any action by the coach or athlete that attempts to keep their relationship in a specific state or condition, such as being open about problems or minimising conflict. Coaches and athletes can use a variety of strategies to (a) prevent the decline their relationship, (b) further enhance their relationship, and (c) repair and re-establish a relationship that has already experienced decline or conflict. The use of these maintenance strategies is associated with positive outcomes such as satisfaction and success, and it has been suggested that use of maintenance strategies is the primary method via which coaches and athletes within close relationships sustain their relationship quality.

The COMPASS model of relationship maintenance. Rhind and Jowett (2010a, 2010b) have proposed a model of maintenance strategies that can be used by both coaches and athletes to help sustain and improve their relationships. This model encompasses seven strategies that form the acronym COMPASS; *conflict management, openness, motivational, positivity, assurance, support* and *social networks*. The first strategy, *conflict management*, reflects cooperation in the discussion of conflict and the both proactive and reactive reactions to unmet expectations. *Openness* relates to discussion of feelings and individual thoughts and full and honest disclosure. *Motivational* strategies are about demonstrating your willingness to work with your partner and includes aspects of demonstrating your ability, enjoyment, effort, and attempting to motivate your partner. *Positivity* is about changing one's behaviour to suit the preferences of your partner and positively dealing with events outside of sport. *Advice* is defined as giving opinions on problems encountered and providing and receiving feedback in a positive and open way. *Support* strategies are about demonstrating your commitment and providing both sport-specific and personal support. Finally, *social networks* relates to spending social time with your coach or athlete, along with team/squad mates, outside of the sport context, away from training and competition.

The use of maintenance strategies can be assessed using the Coach-Athlete Relationship Maintenance Questionnaire (CARM-Q; Rhind & Jowett, 2010a) which contains 28 questions items that measure the use of the seven relationship maintenance strategies. Although this is more of a tool for researchers or psychologists examining correlates of maintenance strategies such as relationship quality. Instead coaches and athletes should be aware that the COMPASS model suggests they should actively focus on motivating their partner to work with them and not purely to continue in the sport. The 3+1Cs model shows that the quality of coach-athlete relationship is not static. Coaches and athletes' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are constantly changing and interacting. Therefore coaches and

athletes must be constantly monitoring and interacting in a way that enhances their relationships if they do not wish to experience enduring conflict or see their relationship decline or break up.

CONCLUSION

There is an obvious need for the development of knowledge in sport psychology regarding the influence of coaches on athletes and how the two form effective and successful partnerships. This highly complex and interdependent process primarily unfolds in training, during periods of practicing the requisite skills and techniques needed to develop sport talent. While the coach-athlete relationship has been placed at the heart of sports training/coaching and cited as being a key ingredient in athletic performance and success, its impact can potentially have ramifications beyond sport. Recent years have seen researchers developing a growing understanding of the quality and functions of the coach-athlete relationship. Underpinning this has been the definition and conceptualisation of the coach-athlete relationship using the 3+1Cs model and its accompanied psychometric tools. It can capture the interdependent and for ever changing nature of these relationships and provides a vehicle in understanding how coaches and athletes interact to generate individual and joint outcomes such as personal satisfaction and performance accomplishments.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of the coach-athlete relationship?
2. How do the constructs of Closeness, Commitment, and Complementarity (3Cs) describe the content and quality of the coach-athlete relationship?
3. How does Co-orientation assess coaches and athletes' actual and assumed similarity as well as empathic understanding as this relates to the coach-athlete relationship quality?

4. How could relationship enhancements strategies such as these proposed by the COMPASS Model be used to promote better quality coach-athlete relationships?
5. Can you explain aspects that play can play an important in the formation of quality coach-athlete relationships?
6. Can you consider the implications of unstable, discordant, and ineffective coach-athlete relationships on athletes and coaches' performance and satisfaction?

EXERCISE A

Observe a coach-athlete dyad over a period of week and record your thoughts about the quality of the relationship as this pertains to their closeness, commitment, and complementarity. Following the observations, organize to meet the dyad for a short interview that aims to explore and examine the coach and the athlete's perceptions about their relationship in regards to closeness, commitment, and complementarity. Read the transcribed interview carefully and make some notes. Are they both affectively close (e.g., is there mutual trust, respect, appreciation)? Is their relationship close enough to last over time? Do they work co-operatively in an environment that is friendly and responsive but also well-structured so that there is the necessary direction from the coach and acceptance from the athlete? Are they co-oriented; does the dyad view the relationship in similar terms? Finally, ask them to complete CART-Questionnaires (direct and meta-perspectives). Are the findings of the questionnaires consistent with the observations and the interviews? Ensure that any necessary ethical-related procedures are in place to undertake this mini-project. There are a number of variations you could apply. For example, you could observe, interview, and assess more than one dyad with the focus to discern any differences in the quality of the relationship:

1. A dyad that has a long-term and a dyad that has a short-term relationship;

2. A dyad that has same gender composition such as male/coach-male/athlete and a dyad that has other gender composition male/coach-female/athlete;
3. A dyad that has different cultural composition such as a foreign coach-local athlete dyad and a dyad who has similar cultural composition such as local coach-local athlete;
4. A dyad that has been undergoing injury or burnout with a dyad that has been healthy.

EXERCISE B

Drawing upon your own experiences as either a coach or an athlete, consider how your relationship with them influenced your/their performance. Think on how much you liked, trusted, and respected them, the level of commitment you both had, and how well you worked together. Reflect on how you believe they felt, thought, and acted towards you.

1. How does this related to Closeness, Commitment, and Complementarity?
2. How is this linked to Co-orientation?

Write a list of bullet points about what were important factors in your relationship. Think about what helped your/their performance and what didn't. Reflect on if there was ways in which you or your coach/athlete behaved that may have damaged your relationship.

1. Is there any factor that was particular important?
2. Was how you felt about each other linked to your/their performance?

Finally, write a list of the things you both did to maintain your relationship. Consider your everyday actions as well as anything special you did in order to promote the quality of your coach-athlete relationship.

1. How does this relate to the COMPASS model?

2. Is there anything you will change or would differently next time to maintain your relationship?

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