



The University of Sydney



The Retention of Youth Sport Coaches

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SPORT KNOWLEDGE AUSTRALIA



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PRESENTATION AIMS

- Introduction of the issue
- Who are youth sport coaches?
- Motives for coaching
- Coach withdrawal
- Coach retention
- Conclusions and future research





INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE



- Youth sport coach can have a significant impact on young athletes
- Enormous participation rates of youths in sport in Australia and worldwide



INTRODUCTION contd.

- Little support exists for the retention of youth sport coaches given their importance
 - Coach turnover in youth sport settings is a major cause for concern
 - Research has concentrated on reasons for withdrawal, rather than retention
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YOUTH SPORT COACHES?

- Difficulties with definitions, age categories
- Participation vs. Performance (Lyle, 2002) – not specifically linked to youth sports
- Volunteer vs. Paid coaching





YOUTH SPORT COACHES contd.

- Three potential categories for youth sport coaches:
 1. Volunteer 'participation' or 'performance'
 2. Paid 'participation' or 'performance'
 3. Professional 'participation' or 'performance'





MOTIVES FOR COACHING



- An awareness of motives may assist sports organisations in developing strategies to retain youth sport coaches
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MOTIVES contd.

- Various contexts examined
 - American:
 - Sage (1989); Schinke, Bloom, & Salmela (1995); Salmela (1995)
 - Australian:
 - Dickson (2001); Walsh (2004)
 - English:
 - Coleman (2002); Eley & Kirk (2002); English Sports Council (1997); Lyle, Allison, & Taylor, (1997)
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COACH WITHDRAWAL

- New or existing work, study and family commitments,
- Being physically and/or mentally burnt out,
- Pressures of primary employment





WITHDRAWAL contd.

- Lack of administrative support
- Lack of financial remuneration
- Parents may only seek a coaching term for the duration of their child's involvement in a certain team





WITHDRAWAL contd.

- Overall, the prevailing situation seems to be that youth sport coaches are being asked to do more and more often resulting in their commitment being 'less and less'!





COACH RETENTION

- Continuity in coaching roles is integral for sustaining quality sport programs and maintaining athlete participation (Raedeke et al., 2002).
 - Maximising adherence to sports coaching may increase the breadth from which to choose future coaches.
 - Yet little is being done...
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RETENTION contd.



- Côté (2005) claimed that sport programs which focus on fun, maximum participation and skill development, encourage people to stay involved and achieve success at all levels of sport.



RETENTION contd.

- Raedeke et al. (2002) and Vealey et al. (2002)
 - intrinsic factors were the most notable indicators of commitment to coaching.
 - Hence, coaches who feel that their work is rewarding, exciting and valued by others are likely to remain committed to their work.
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RETENTION STRATEGIES

- Despite the literature identifying several reasons concerning coach commitment and withdrawal, few recommendations were identified as to what can be done to retain more coaches in youth sport.





RETENTION STRATEGIES contd.

- Pastore et al. (1996), identified a conceptual framework of retention factors, namely:
 - work balance and conditions;
 - recognition and collegial support;
 - Inclusivity
 - Although not in the youth sport context, these results provide strategies to retain individuals in ‘performance’ coaching and management positions in supportive work environments.
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RETENTION STRATEGIES contd.

- Seek out social support during times of stress
 - Form support networks:
 - officials and administrators
 - organising meetings where club coaches or networks of coaches within similar age groups could share ideas - 'coach camps'
 - Mentoring or e-mentoring
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RETENTION STRATEGIES contd.

- Is financial remuneration an influencing factor when considering continuing as a youth sport coach?
 - Mulholland (2005)
 - Kim & Cunningham (2005)





RETENTION STRATEGIES contd.

- Coaches who feel valued, supported, recognised and rewarded for their efforts are more likely to be retained by their sporting organisation.
 - The goal should be to develop a sense of organisational commitment amongst coaches by providing psychological, social, legal and financial support for coaches.
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RETENTION STRATEGIES contd.

- In England, the Community Sports Coach Scheme (CSCS)
 - The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) in Australia has highlighted the benefits of introducing mentor arrangements.
 - The Coaching Association of Canada recently developed 'Coaching Internship Programs' in order to provide career-related work experience in the field of coaching
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CONCLUSIONS



- It appears that some sources of stress across different levels of coaching (e.g. from club to elite levels) share some similarities.
- However, dealing with these issues in the same manner across each level may not be plausible due to the contextual differences of each coaching position



CONCLUSIONS contd.

- Studies have not suggested *how to implement* such strategies nor *who* should take responsibility for their operation.
 - As there has been minimal research with youth sport coaches in this area, there is no certainty that such intervention strategies would be plausible for ‘participation’ coaches
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CONCLUSIONS contd.



- Despite the extensive focus on research into coach burnout, little has been done in relation to coach retention or how to address the issues associated with burnout and other reasons for withdrawal.
- Research is needed ...



FUTURE RESEARCH

- It is imperative that each individual's motives for participating or withdrawing are considered, and that substantial effort is made to cater for their needs in order to maintain youth sport coaches' interest and active participation at both the 'participation' and 'performance' level.
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FUTURE RESEARCH contd.

- Future research should focus on identifying what coaches enjoy most about their coaching roles in order to direct future coach education and policy for youth sport.
- For the same reasons, it may be fruitful to discover more about what leads to burnout





FUTURE RESEARCH contd.

- Finally, research needs to determine whether it is commonly the sport or non-sport influences, or a combination of both elements that determine the reasons for coaches dropping out or committing to sports coaching at the youth level





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THANK YOU

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