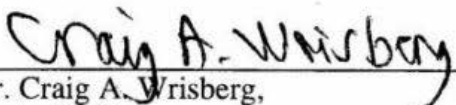


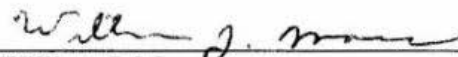
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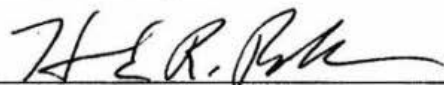
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Matthew Steven Johnson entitled "The Athlete's Experience of Being Coached: An Existential-Phenomenological Investigation." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.


Dr. Craig A. Wrisberg,
Major Professor

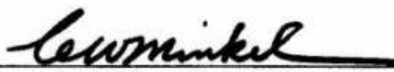
We have read the dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:


Mark A. Hector


William J. Morgan


Howard R. Pollio

Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

THE ATHLETE'S EXPERIENCE OF BEING COACHED:
AN EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Matthew Steven Johnson
August 1998

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated
to the awakening to
Truth
in whatever form it
manifests
itself...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While I would like to thank each of my committee members (my advisor, Dr. Craig Wrisberg; Dr. Mark Hector; Dr. Bill Morgan; and Dr. Howard Pollio) for their participation and guidance during this dissertation experience, I am even more appreciative of the three year period in which I have been able to know and interact with each of these individuals. I have learned more in my interactions with them than any one project could reveal.

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ABSTRACT

Several quantitative studies within the field of sport psychology examining the athlete-coach relationship have suggested that coaches influence both athlete's self-esteem (Barnett, Smoll, and Smith, 1992) and his/her satisfaction in performing in his/her sport (Riemer and Chelladurai, 1995; Schliesman, 1987; Horne and Carron, 1985; Chelladurai, 1984). Vernacchia's case study (1977) of a three-time All-American runner was the only study of qualitative nature to address the athlete's perspective of his/her relationship with her/his coach. Given this lack, the purpose of the present research was to study the athlete's "lived" experience of being coached from an existential-phenomenological perspective. Eight former Division I collegiate athletes, each from a different sport, were interviewed on their experience of being coached. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed using phenomenological methods outlined by Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997). Results revealed that three themes in the athlete's experience of being coached There for Me/Not There for Me, Knowing and Being Known Personally, and Authority/Power emerged from the "ground" of the athlete's experience of Previous Coaches he/she had known. The theme of There for Me/Not There for Me had six subthemes: Guidance/Knowledge of What I Should Do, Help Me/Pull Me Through, Confidence in Me, Care about Me, Abandoned Me, and Disrupted Me. The four subthemes of Knowing and Being Known Personally were: Open-Mindedness/Communication/Trust, Coach Knows How to Motivate Me, Knowing the Coach Personally, and Not Knowing the Coach (Unpredictable). The subthemes of Authority/Power were: Authority/Power Imposed Upon Me, Authority as a Source of Guidance, and Confronting the Coach as Authority. Results of the present study support and expand on previous research regarding the coach's impact on the athlete in relation to previous coaches, as a facilitating or abandoning presence, an open and trustworthy

communicator, an authority figure, and as a source of sport enjoyment or lack of enjoyment. The advantage of phenomenological methodology in understanding the meaning of behavior was also discussed in relation to previous research methods. This study concluded with recommendations for coaches, sport psychology consultants, and sport researchers.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"It was completely a positive experience with him. He just knew how to handle people really well and you really knew he cared for you as a person. And so if he didn't even know zero about track you had complete confidence in whatever he told you."

---Bill, a 3-time NCAA track athlete (Vernacchia, 1977)

"And then I was, then she (the coach) would make fun of me all the time, little cracks. I was not amused at all and I just would have a completely blank face and everyone knew that it was pissing me off and she just did not get it, I don't think...I kept thinking to myself and telling people, you know, 'if she does it again, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna leave practice, I'm just gonna explode.' Because then it was finally getting to me, and ah, and I don't know why it was getting to me, so, it hurt my feelings, it did hurt my feelings, a lot of the things she said. But, that would embarrass me and one day, she, I started to tear up cause I was so hurt by something that she said...I went back to the line and I was so, I was shaking I was so upset."

--Exotica, NCAA athlete (Wrisberg, Johnson, and Brooks, 1997)

Recently, two different basketball players discussed their experiences of playing for their coaches. In the Indianapolis Star, Jason Collier, a former Indiana University basketball player, cited his former coach Bob Knight as "yelling too much, being too demanding, playing mind games, and publicly criticizing him" (Cavin, pp. A1, 1997) among his reasons for leaving the university. Collier stated, "I knew some of that stuff would happen. But you never know how bad it is until it happens to you" (Cavin, pp. A1, 1997). Continuing, he asked, "If you were told day after day that you couldn't do your job, how would that make you feel? I didn't feel I should stay. Why should I?...I can't put up with his coaching tactics any longer...It's not any one thing I can pinpoint, it's all of it--the screaming, the yelling, all of it" (Cavin, pp. A2, 1997).

In another Indianapolis Star article, Mark Jackson, point guard on the Indiana Pacers, had this to say about his coach Larry Bird, "Sometimes he calls something, but even then he says, 'Hey forget what I say if you want. If you feel something, go ahead

and do it.' It just boosts the confidence level of everyone on the floor. You're not looking over there if you make a mistake. It's almost like a quarterback being able to step to the line and reading an audible and not being afraid to make a change. Coach Brown (his former coach) allowed me to call the plays, too. The difference was the yelling in the midst of it. Everybody pretty much froze and was afraid to do things. It affected the whole offense" (Montieth, pp. B2, 1997). He concluded by discussing Coach Bird's straight forward manner of coaching, "He doesn't play around with us and tell us what we want to hear. He tells it like it is. And when the players respect the coach, they're going to listen to what he says" (Montieth, pp. B2, 1997).

The statements from these athletes show that coaches can be experienced in very different ways. This is consistent with my sport psychology consulting experience with male and female collegiate athletes. While these athletes have had concerns on a variety of different topics from lack of confidence, to performance anxiety, to interpersonal conflicts, one topic that has surfaced in our consultation sessions was the athlete's interactions with her or his coach. Some athletes discussed their confusion regarding statements their coaches made to them such as telling them that they should never overtly express that they are tired or fatigued. Other times athletes expressed a feeling of constraint in their preparation for competition. Such feelings may have been due to overpractice and unnecessary drilling which they experienced as meaningless and something "to just get through" rather than a means to enhance and refine their skills. Several athletes mentioned their inability to stay focused on performance when their coach was "watching over them" and "making negative facial gestures" when they made an error or mistake.

Some female athletes expressed distress that their male coach "does not understand women." Some injured athletes reported that at times they felt both included and excluded as part of the team depending on how their coach responded to them during the time of their injury. Still other athletes discussed seeing two different sides of their coach. Off the court

or field, their coach was very nice and friendly with the players. While on the court or field, the coach was another person who harshly criticized them and their teammates.

Although athletes expressed difficulties in the athlete-coach relationship, they also discussed times that were both meaningful and pleasurable to them. Some athletes expressed their appreciation for their coach's help in improving their performance technique. Others mentioned "having faith in" or "trusting" their coaches to help them develop the skills to better their performance.

In perusing the sport psychology literature on the impact coaches have on athletes, several studies have shed light on the athlete-coach relationship. For example, coaches have been found to influence an athlete's self-worth and self-esteem (Barnett, Smoll, and Smith, 1992) as well as his/her satisfaction in performing his/her sport (Riemer and Chelladurai, 1995; Schliesman, 1987; Horne and Carron, 1985; Chelladurai, 1984). In particular, the type of feedback that coaches provided their athletes such as mistake-related feedback, reinforcement, and encouragement (Solomon, Striegel, Eliot, Heon, Maas, and Wayda, 1996) has been found to be influential in athlete's self-worth and satisfaction. Each of these studies, however, was conducted on the basis of either questionnaires or behavioral observation techniques. Few researchers have examined the athlete-coach relationship from a qualitative perspective.

Only Vernaccia's case study (1977) on a three-time All-American runner revealed how the runner's coach was more beneficial to him by providing encouragement and reinforcement of his beliefs in himself than as a supervisor and instructor in his training. Unfortunately, only a small part of this study spoke about the athlete's experience of his coach. What appears to be lacking in the current sport psychology literature is a systematic examination of the athlete's "lived" experiences of being coached. Thus, the present study was designed to expand on this area from the athlete's first-person perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present research project was to study the athlete's experience of being coached from an existential-phenomenological perspective. This was accomplished in two ways: (1) by allowing the athlete to be heard in his or her own language and (2) attempting to grasp the athlete's "lived" experience free of judgment, preconceived notions, and socially constructed labels.

Definition of Terms

Behavioristic/Mechanistic Paradigm. A paradigm that holds to the assumptions that the world consists of elemental parts which have a cause-effect relationship, are observable (can be seen through behaviors), are measurable, can be consistently seen by others, and can be experienced in terms of mathematical formulae. Scientific research in the form of quantitative methodologies exemplify this paradigm.

Being-in-the-World. Martin Heidegger's view that human beings are inseparable from the world. Since a human being and his/her world co-constitute one another, personal experience can be understood only as a co-creation between the person and his/her situatedness in the world.

Existential-Phenomenology. A philosophical discipline that seeks to understand the events of human existence in a way that is free of the presuppositions of our cultural heritage, especially philosophical dualism, as much as possible (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989, p. 6). Existential phenomenology means a return "to the things themselves" (Husserl, 1954/1970, p. 252) and its central focus is embodied consciousness: a return to awareness of embodied being (Inoue, 1984, p. 8).

Intentionality. The basic structure of human existence that human beings are fundamentally related to the contexts in which they live and that "human experience is continuously directed toward a world which it never possesses in its entirety but toward which it is

always directed" (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 7). Intentionality is not the same as intention however. Intention suggests that a person has made a plan or agenda to be carried out. Every act whether planned or not involves the intentionality of the relationship between the person and some aspect of his/her present world (Pollio et al., 1997).

Lebenswelt. It is the *life-world*, the world as lived by the person; the domain of "pure phenomena independent of and prior to any reflective interpretation, scientific or otherwise" (Valle and Halling, 1989, p. 9). It is the starting ground for all knowledge and is based on the person's direct and immediate experience. Hypotheses, theories, and causal thinking are *not* part of the life-world as they are not given in direct and immediate experience but rather are derivatives of the life-world (Valle and Halling, 1989).

Situational Freedom. Human beings have neither free will (complete personal choice) nor are they completely determined (Valle and King, 1978). Rather, they have the freedom to choose the environmental limitations, or the constraints, in which they live.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made in reference to this study:

1. The personal experiences of athletes are important in understanding the meaningfulness of being coached.
2. The participants in this study were able to articulate effectively their experiences of being coached and that they communicated their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions as openly as possible.
3. The phenomenological interview is a valid method for gathering an in-depth description of athletes' personal experiences of being coached.

Limitations of the Study

As with every study, this study has some potential limitations. First, the athletes that were interviewed were eight Division I collegiate athletes. While this sample size is low and is a limitation in terms of quantitative methods, it is not considered a limitation when conducting phenomenological research since the nature of this research is to identify the phenomenological structure of experience and not to make generalizations from a sample to a population.

Second, while the interviews were continued until the athletes felt they had presented the figural elements of their experience of being coached, they may have been able to recall more of their experience if additional interviews had been conducted. However, all of athletes were interviewed until a repetition of structural themes emerged.

Significance of the Study

As past researchers in sport psychology have noted (Dale, 1994; Hanson and Newburg, 1992), qualitative research procedures are able to bring another perspective to research in sport. This study was the first existential-phenomenological investigation to examine the experience of being coached. Gaining an understanding of the athlete's experience has the potential to provide insight for athletes, coaches, and sport psychology consultants. Athletes may be better able to understand how their relationship with their coaches affects them. Coaches may be better able to understand how athletes internalize their interactions. Sport psychology consultants may be able to assist athletes and coaches in working together to achieve excellence in sport and life.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter begins by exploring the nature of existential-phenomenology including its paradigmatic perspective of the world, its goals, and its focus on meaning and experience. Next, philosophical theories on the experience of the "other" and a recent phenomenological investigation on this topic are presented. Third, the recent shift in the field of sport psychology from quantitative research methods to qualitative research methods are briefly discussed. Fourth, a review of some phenomenological research studies in sport psychology is presented. The last section explores the specific literature on the athlete-coach relationship regardless of the methodology used in the particular study.

The Nature of Existential-Phenomenology

Phenomenological research has evolved from the thoughts of some of the most noted existentialist thinkers such as Feodor Dostoevski, Soren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century and Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre in the 20th century. These existentialists wrote about their understanding of human existence in the form of philosophy, literature, and psychology. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Edward Husserl wrote about phenomenology as a method that "allows us to contact phenomena as we actually live them out and experience them" (Valle and King, 1978, p. 7).

The nature of the existential-phenomenological paradigm (often referred to simply as phenomenology) holds the view that humans are not objects in nature (Valle and King, 1978). They are seen as inseparable from the world in which they live; not simply the physical world but the "experience of the world" as a "taking in" of one's perception. The human and his/her world seem to exist in a figure-ground (Gestalt) relationship since the

human being and his/her world cannot be isolated and described independently of each other nor can they be fully comprehended within this dualism (Kvale and Grenness, 1967). This Gestalt relationship is demonstrated in the face and vases drawing. The figural, black faces cannot be seen without the presence of their white background nor can the white vase be seen without its black background, just as humans cannot be understood without an understanding of the contextual ground of their world. Heidegger views a human being and his/her inseparability from the world as a "being-in-the-world," where a person and the his/her world co-constitute one another. Thus, personal experience is a co-creation between the person and his/her situatedness in the world.

Just as a dialogue between two people involves co-creation, and each person takes away different experiences of that interaction, so too a person's experience of life always involves a dialogical co-creation between the person and the world in which the person is actively directing himself/herself toward the world. The world, in turn, acts back by presenting situations in which the person must act (i.e., a death of a relative, a change of jobs, the birth of a child, a rain storm, the passing of time, etc.). The person is thus presented with having to receive the world's acts in some way and then to provide an active response back. This response always involves a choice by the person, which can include choosing not to perform some response. As in a dialogue between two people, the listener (receiver) must "do something" with the information the other person presents. The listener can understand what was said and disagree with it, agree with it, have no opinion about it (which is the opinion to have no opinion), choose not to want to understand it and deny its importance, or discard it as not making sense. Whatever the response of the listener, he/she is constrained to having to "do something" with the information. Thus from the time of birth, the dialogue between person and world is continuously taking place.

Valle and King (1978) describe this as the *situational freedom* of "beings-in-the-world" where human beings have neither free will (complete personal choice) nor are they

completely determined. Rather, situational freedom lies in having the freedom to choose the environmental limitations in which they live. In other words, people are free to choose their constraints. While they are free to choose, their choice has the consequence of limiting other possibilities. For example, they have the freedom to choose whether they want to go skydiving, scuba diving, or hiking. Once they choose, and are in the process of skydiving, they are then confined to be skydiving in the sense that they cannot simultaneously be scuba diving or hiking. They are confined to the situation that they are in even though they freely chose to be in that situation. Then, they must also accept the constraints of skydiving.

Just as humans are not viewed as objects in nature, the nature of consciousness is not viewed as a "thing" or "container" which fills up with ideas, feelings, or sensations (Valle and King, 1978); rather, consciousness is understood as a flowing, continuously changing awareness, such as William James' view of it as a "stream of consciousness." For example, right now I'm writing down whatever is coming to mind regardless of whether it seems to make sense or not but just is...it is whatever is coming to mind which I think may help you understand what I mean by consciousness of something and the flow of consciousness which James talked about and I like as a metaphor to use to explain this concept which I'm trying to write about but is sometimes difficult if I don't write it as clearly as I want to.....Thus, consciousness is not a "thing" but a "consciousness of" some "thing" (a computer screen, an ache in my back, what I'm having for dinner, what I should write down now, etc.). "Consciousness of," therefore, means that consciousness is always directed toward some object that is not in consciousness itself at that moment. This directedness toward something is called *intentionality*.

To view consciousness as intentional requires us to consider the *Lebenswelt*, or life-world--the immediate and direct awareness of one's present situatedness in life. The *Lebenswelt* is the "lived" experience of the person prior to any reflective thought. In

contrast, all organization and construction of knowledge (i.e., hypotheses, theories, etc.) depends upon reflective thought. The process of writing a paper, for example, is a reflective process designed to conform thoughts about what to write into words and putting those words into an established set of rules for writing called syntax. Mathematics is another example of an organized and constructed form of knowledge derived by reflecting on a certain way of viewing the world. In phenomenology, it is the *Lebenswelt* that is of primary concern.

The Goal of Phenomenology

The goal of phenomenology is to identify the meaningful structure of the phenomenon of interest. It does not attempt to coerce a phenomenon to present itself; instead, it seeks to *allow* the phenomenon to emerge as a figure would emerge from some background. For example, if a person had never seen a tree before and wanted to know what a tree was, then someone would need to show this person some trees. While the person would be able to see that all of these trees were unique in their own way, they might also be aware of a certain "tree-ness" about them which emerges. This "tree-ness" is the meaningful structure of a tree. Thus, *the* reality of "a tree" does not exist because every tree is different; what a tree is, however, is usually understood because of a certain awareness of the core structure of "tree-ness." Thus, the structure, or essence, of "tree-ness" is manifested in each tree encountered.

If the phenomenon of sadness were of interest, to take another case, then it would be important to speak with people who have experienced being sad and ask them to describe this experience. Just as each tree is different, the manifestation of each person's experience of being sad would be different. Again, just as each tree has the meaningful structure of "tree-ness", each manifestation of being sad has the essential structure of "sadness." By hearing other people's experiences of being sad, the meaning of "sadness" may

emerge through its various manifestations of their experiences of being sad. For example, one person may tell a story of how sad he was for several years after his brother was killed by a sudden heart attack while another person may talk about how sad she was after failing an exam for which she had spent several months studying. The meaningful structure of the experience of "sad-ness" would include the same themes, although each of its manifestations took place in different situations.

For this reason, phenomenology attempts to go "to the things themselves" (Husserl, 1954/1970, p. 252) in its attempt to discern both by the essential structure of human experience and to articulate that sense faithfully and without distortion (Husserl, 1962). It is an attempt to find "the way things hang together" (the essence of the experience) and to "grasp" the logical, fundamental structure of the experience as it is meaningful for the human (Dukes, 1984).

Meaning

In attempting to understand the structure of a phenomenon, we are trying to understand its *meaning* in and for human existence; in other words, the meaningfulness of a person's experience. Meaning is the world in which humans live. It is not a variable in an interactive model (e.g., the biopsychosocial model) but rather the background from which the person's participation in life arises (Fahlberg, Fahlberg, and Gates, 1992).

Meaning cannot be determined simply by observing behavior because the meaning of the behavior may be ambiguous. For example, if a man is seen raising his hand above his shoulder and out in front of him and moving his it back and forth, one person might interpret this behavior as the man waving to someone. However, another person may interpret this behavior as the man's attempt to allow his wristwatch to slide down his wrist to his forearm. From his own first-person perspective, what the man may be doing is testing the mobility of his recovering broken shoulder. Thus, the meaning of behavior is

dependent upon the perspective in which behavior is observed. As in this example, a third-person perspective may suggest a variety of meanings and still be different from the first-person perspective.

Subject Experience

A key point in understanding phenomenology is distinguishing between subjective experience and subject experience. Often, qualitative research, including phenomenology, has been discarded as questionable by reason of its being subjective (private mental processes of an individual) as opposed to objective (public, observable). Rather than subjective experience, phenomenology attempts to understand subject experience-"neither private nor arbitrary (mental processes) but publicly accessible experiences belonging to a subject, modes of being whose logic or sense is invariant for all subjects who live them, across time and culture" (Dukes, 1984, p. 198). As Patton (1990, p. 69) states, "There is no separate (or objective) reality for people. There is only what they know their experience is and means." Experience incorporates the objective thing and a person's reality. It is a co-creation between person and world.

The Experience of the Other

Within philosophy and theology, the relationship between two people has often been discussed and theorized. The theologian Martin Buber has portrayed the relationship between two people as being either an "I-it" or an "I-Thou" experience. In the "I-it" relationship, the person (or I) "relates to everything in his/her world as an object the I can use or manipulate. The world of I-it is set in time and space: It involves order, categories, laws, and regulations" (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 139). In this type of relationship, the person does not take into account the humanness of the other and, subsequently, treats the other as an object to be used and manipulated for the advantage of the self. In contrast, the "I-

Thou" relationship, is a "pure relation", a "meeting" of the other in which the person experiences the other with an equal humanness as himself/herself (Pollio et al., 1997).

The one commonality that May (1983) suggests we do share with Others as humans that differentiates a Me and You connection from a Me and some object connection is our experience of "being-to-death" in which all people have to face the ever-present possibility and eventuality of death. Heidegger (1927) notes, however, that others can become and often are distracters of the pursuit of our authentic being (Pollio et al., 1997). This may happen if our experience of others is thought to be a mirror for the self (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Significant others are directly influential in a punitive or rewarding way by providing feedback, acting as a mirror of the self, concerning the person's actions (Pollio et al., 1997).

Recently, Pollio et. al. (1997) conducted phenomenological research on the experience of other people. They found 9 situations, or "grounds" (as in figure-ground relationship), in which other people were figural. One situation involved unusual behavior or appearance, such as times people dressed in strange or odd ways or did unexpected things. A second situation of having a good relationship with someone involved feeling especially close to someone, feeling shut off from someone, or wanting to develop a relationship with someone. Third, there was a feeling of being judged by (and judging) others to the point of being embarrassed, ashamed, or feeling inadequate. Feeling concerned about and responsible for others and their well-being was a fourth situation. A fifth situation involved threatening situations and sometimes the threat of violence was prominent. Sixth, people were aware of times when either others were irritating them, such as distracting them during class, or when they were annoying other people. Seventh, when people felt supported, assisted, or encouraged by others, they were aware of others. An eighth situation was when some one noticed something familiar about the other person

Moving from Quantitative to Qualitative Research in Sport Psychology

Historically, research in sport psychology has been presented from a behavioristic/mechanistic perspective which assumes that "we come to really understand a phenomenon through studying the behavior of its elemental parts" (Harman, 1991, p. 2). This perspective, also known as logical positivism, attempts to explain the cause of behavior, and derives from "traditional" ways of viewing the world within the field of psychology. Sport psychology researchers and practitioners initially saw causation as the critical focus for understanding the behavior of athletes. To these researchers, identifying the "element," or factor, (e.g., high state anxiety) that was "causing" a certain sport behavior (e.g., poor free throw shooting percentage) allowed them to predict sport performance based on the presence or level of this factor or factors. For applied sport psychology researchers and practitioners, it was proposed that by identifying the element that was "causing" an athlete's poor performance (e.g., state anxiety) the sport psychologist could assist the athlete in changing his/her behavioral performance through changing the element (i.e., reducing high state anxiety).

Within the past twenty years however, researchers in sport psychology have begun to question the limits of this method of research (Dewar and Horn, 1992; Fahlberg, Fahlberg, and Gates, 1992; Streaan and Roberts, 1992; Martens, 1987a, 1979). For example, the literature on children's motivation for participating in sport has typically examined either individual factors within children (e.g., anxiety, motivation, self-esteem) or within the social environment (e.g., socialization). A problem occurs, however, in attempting to examine children's individual factors removed from the context of their environment. For example, results may show that children drop out of organized sport "because of" individual factors such as high anxiety or low self-esteem, yet it is possible that some of these children may demonstrate these individual factors because of experiences of oppression such as racism, sexism, homophobia, or other "isms" within the context of

sport. Therefore, examining individual characteristics or elements in isolation may be deceptive since results may suggest, as in this example, that youth drop-out in sport is "caused" by individual properties rather than by flaws in the social structure of the sport environment (Dewar and Horn, 1992). Similarly, quantitative questionnaires have the limitation of not being able to fully capture the experience of the participant, since they focus on certain aspects of interest to the researcher and may miss relevant information a participant can provide.

An alternative to the quantitative approach to research is provided by qualitative methods. In general, there are two types of qualitative approaches in sport psychology: qualitative inquiry and phenomenology. The nature of qualitative inquiry research and phenomenological research differs. Qualitative inquiry research is focused on the "things" that create an experience. For example, Scanlan, Stein, and Ravizza (1989) used qualitative inquiry methods in searching for the sources of enjoyment for athletes. Their research centered on understanding *how* enjoyment was manifested. The question they presented to the athletes was, "What are the sources of enjoyment in your sport?" Then they summarized these sources into concepts or categories in which athletes experienced enjoyment. In this way, qualitative inquiry is similar to conducting a content factor analysis.

Phenomenological research, on the other hand, focuses on the "lived" experience of the participant. The important question here is "What is the experience of enjoyment for athletes?" This approach focuses on the meaningfulness of enjoyment for an athlete. In phenomenology, the phenomena is not a "thing in the world" but rather a way the individual experiences his/her world. It is a mode of being-in-the-world. For example, experiencing enjoyment is not a "thing" to be gotten by someone. Rather, it is an embodied state of existing. When an individual experiences enjoyment, he/she *is* enjoyment.

These foundational differences in the nature of qualitative inquiry research and phenomenological research lead to differences in the interviewing methods and presentation of results. The first difference concerns the method of interviewing. Qualitative inquiry research uses a structured or unstructured interview guide to cover issues relevant to the researcher. For example, an interview guide may be divided into questions regarding positive experiences and negatives experiences. As part of this guide, the researcher has to establish *a priori* questions to promote standardized, consistency in dealing with participants. In some studies, the area of interest is operationally defined for participants by the researchers, i.e., "By enjoyment, I'm referring to the positive feelings or emotions that you could have had about your skating experience such as pleasure, fun, liking, or loving the experience" (Scanlan, Stein, and Ravizza, 1989, p. 67).

In phenomenology, only one primary question is usually provided to the participant. The work of the researcher is to develop questions based on the content of the participant's initial (and continuing) responses which allow the researcher to follow the participant wherever he/she takes the interview. Both methods seek clarification and in-depth information; phenomenological interviewing is meant to be more specific to the participant's experience. Thus, the intent of the phenomenological interview is a social encounter, not a question and answer session.

The same basic procedures involving interview transcription, development of meaning units, and clustering of units into themes are used in both methods. Phenomenological data analysis, however, entails a movement from a part of the text to the whole text in the development of the thematic structure, uses a research group in developing and validating this structure, and presents its results as a thematic structure of the phenomenon of interest. In contrast, qualitative inquiry uses triangulation and reliability checks as validity measures, and the results are presented as either descriptive

themes/categories or as higher order themes (hierarchical). The sample frequency of each theme provided is provided as additional information.

Both approaches are useful methods of research, yet they are different approaches to understanding the world of athletes, coaches, and the sporting environment. When conducting qualitative research in sport psychology, the researcher must pay careful attention to what he/she is interested in knowing so that proper methodology may be chosen and utilized.

Phenomenological Research in Sport Psychology

There are only a few existential-phenomenological investigations reported within the sport psychology literature. A study by Parker (1994) explored the experience of seven former NCAA Division I-A collegiate football players after they had finished their athletic eligibility. The question asked was, "Tell me what your life has been like since you played your last collegiate football game" (Parker, 1994, p. 289). If time was left after the interview the player was asked to describe his early experiences in sport, to discuss his expectations and plans for the future, and to contrast a typical day now with a typical day during football season. The findings of the study centered around four themes: the transition from high school to elite-level college football; changes in the relationships participants had with their coaches; the learning of behavior not positively transferable to the "real world"; the power and control issues surrounding a major college football setting and the manner in which participants perceived--and responded to--being controlled; and the ways participants were experiencing posteligibility life.

Fahlberg (1990) used phenomenological methods in his doctoral dissertation to examine the meaning of exercise behavior. Participants were fourteen women who engaged in aerobic exercise for at least forty-five minutes a day seven days a week. The major themes that emerged were that exercise was experienced as both a diversion from,

and a creative expression of, the self. As a diversion, exercise was engaged in as both psychological repression and oppressive social conditioning; for the former case, the results revealed that exercise was used to block out an awareness of deeper, disturbing life issues. Thus, when an injury or illness prevented exercise, repressed, disturbing life issues arose for some exercisers. In the latter case, the "self-fulfillment ethic" was a major theme that emerged as a response to social conditioning. When exercisers participated in behavior that was culturally defined as pleasurable or self-fulfilling, they believed they were acting freely when they were actually acting in a social conditioned and inauthentic way. This inauthentic behavior created a search for extrinsic meaning in the participant's life. However, when exercisers became aware of these repressive and social influences, they were able to find meaning in exercise as a process of self-creation.

A third existential-phenomenological study in the sport psychology literature was a dissertation examining the experience of elite decathletes competing at national and international levels (Dale, 1994). The purpose of this study was to describe the experience of seven elite decathletes during their most memorable or meaningful performance. Dale's dissertation yielded four major themes: "the 1500", distractions, awareness of the need to recognize and/or react to distractions, and focusing (see Figure 2). The figure illustrates the 1500 meter run (the last event in the competition) as continually in the background of the decathlete's competitive experience, and the other three major themes as figural aspects that emerge during competition.

There were several sub-themes within each of these four main themes. During distractions there was an awareness of level of talent, lack of confidence (preparation), fatigue, a bad event, pain, fear, weather, other competitors and camaraderie. Within the awareness of a need to recognize and react to distractions, there was the need to get rid of distractions and the need to focus. The last major theme involved strategies used in focusing on performing their best such as imaging/visualizing, being aware of keys,

competing only against the self, confidence (proper training), consistency, and camaraderie. Dale concluded by commenting on the importance of phenomenological research for coaches and sport psychology consultants with Hanson and Newburg's (1992, p. 48) question: "What better way for athletes or coaches to learn about success in their respective sport than through detailed, descriptive accounts of the lives of others who were in similar situations and have reached a high level of performance?"

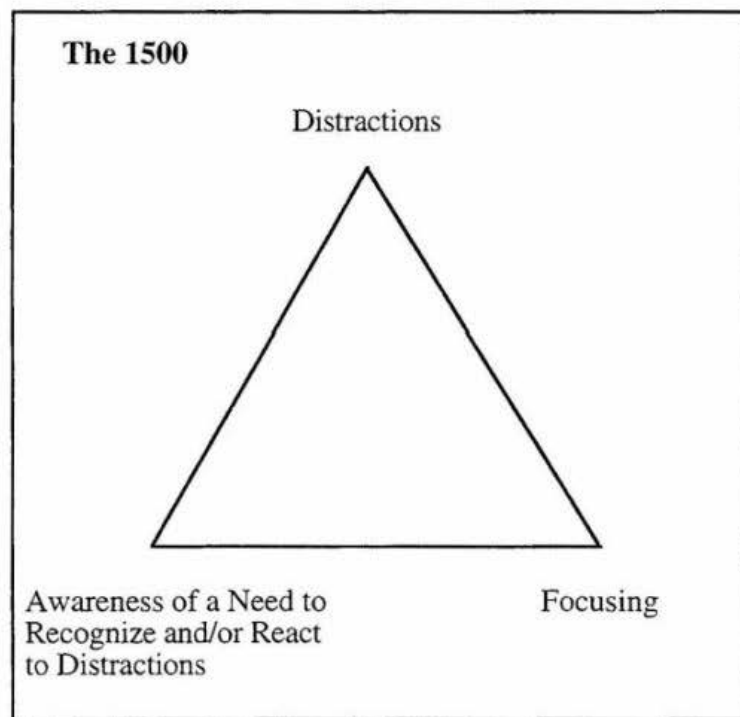


Figure 2. The 4 Major Themes in the Thematic Structure of Elite Decathletes' Most Memorable or Meaningful Performance (Dale, 1994, p.81)

Literature on the Athlete-Coach Relationship

A review of the literature on the athlete-coach relationship reveals that the majority of the studies are quantitative in nature and focus on three general areas. The first of these areas concerns communication and behavioral training for coaches. These studies

described the utility of coaching workshops implemented to improve the way coaches interact with their athletes. Results showed that youth athletes who were coached by individuals with behavioral training (Smith, Smoll, and Curtis, 1979) and were taught desirable athlete-coach interactions (Barnett, Smoll, and Smith, 1992) exhibited a significant increase in self-worth and self-esteem.

The second area examined personality traits and leadership qualities of athletes and coaches that may affect the athlete-coach relationship. Using the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), Garland and Barry (1990, 1988) found that collegiate football players who were extroverted, emotionally stable, tough-minded, group-dependent and who perceived their coach as higher on the leadership behaviors of training and instruction, democratic behavior, social support and rewarding behavior were associated with higher levels of performance than football players who received autocratic behavior from their coach. In another study, female collegiate basketball players who were high on competitive trait anxiety and state cognitive anxiety (SCA), low in state self-confidence, and perceived the coach as high in SCA evaluated the coach more negatively (Kenow and Williams, 1992).

In the third and largest area of research, differences between the perceptions of coaches and athletes regarding leader behavior were examined. The Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS; Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) has been a popular questionnaire used in this research to examine differences in the perceptions of coaches and athletes. The LSS consists of five dimensions of leader behavior and athletes are asked to rate their coaches' behaviors and their own leader behavior preferences. The difference between athletes' perceptions and preferences is termed the discrepancy score. The first dimension is training and instruction and indicates the degree to which the coach provides instructions to athletes about skills, techniques, and strategies to enhance their performance. The second dimension is democratic behavior, which measures the extent to which the coach permits

the athlete to be involved in the decision making process. The third dimension, autocratic behavior, indicates the extent to which the coach stresses his or her authority in making decisions and is strict in requiring athlete compliance with his or her decisions. The fourth dimension deals with the amount of social support the coach provides the athletes to satisfy their interpersonal needs. Social support can come from the coach directly, or through the coach establishing a climate in which athletes' needs can be met. The last dimension is positive feedback which is the extent to which the coach expresses his/her appreciation of and compliments the athletes' performance and contributions.

A review of the studies using the LSS to assess athlete satisfaction suggests that training and instruction (T/I), positive feedback, and social support are commonly related to satisfaction among collegiate athletes. Riemer and Chelladurai (1995) found that satisfaction among a sample of collegiate football players was related to perceived leadership behavior in T/I and the use of positive feedback. They also reported that football players' satisfaction was related to congruence between perceived and preferred social support. Two studies reported that discrepancy scores in T/I, social support, and positive reinforcement were related to the satisfaction of male track and field athletes (Schliesman, 1987) and could predict the satisfaction of female collegiate athletes (Horne and Carron, 1985). Training and instruction and positive reinforcement also were found to be common factors affecting the satisfaction of male collegiate basketball, wrestling, and track and field athletes (Chelladurai, 1984). While the LSS has provided important information relating to athletes' satisfactions with their coaches' behaviors, it is limited in attempting to assess the athletes' experiences of their coaches from their "lived" perspectives since the LSS is a questionnaire that has been constructed by researchers.

The Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS; Smith, Smoll, and Hunt, 1977) is another instrument that has been used to obtain information about interactions between athletes and coaches. This system involves one or more researchers observing in

a non-obtrusive manner a coach's behavioral interactions with his/her athletes and then categorizing these interactions according to predetermined categories. The two major categories are reactive behaviors, which are responses to immediately preceding player or team behaviors and spontaneous behaviors, actions initiated by the coach and not responses to immediately preceding events. There are three basic types of reactive behaviors: responses to desirable performances, reactions to mistakes or errors, and responses to misbehaviors. The two types of spontaneous behaviors are game-related and game-irrelevant. Reactive behaviors are further broken down into positive reinforcement and nonreinforcement for desirable performances; mistake-contingent encouragement, mistake-contingent technical instruction, punishment, punitive technical instruction, and ignoring mistakes for reactions to mistakes or errors; and keeping control for responses to misbehaviors. Spontaneous behaviors are separated into general technical instruction, general encouragement and organization of game-related behaviors, and general communication for game-irrelevant behaviors.

In a study by Solomon, Striegel, Eliot, Heon, Maas, and Wayda (1996), the CBAS was used to assess coach behavior. The results revealed that 8 college head coaches gave more mistake-related feedback to athletes while assistant coaches offered more reinforcement and encouragement. Results also indicated that head coaches provided more of all types of feedback to high expectancy male and female athletes (athletes rated highest on basketball skills by the 8 coaches), and these athletes perceived the coach more positively than did low expectancy athletes (athletes rated lowest on basketball skills). Salminen and Liukkonen (1996) used the LSS in conjunction with Smith's (1978) coaching behavior observation system which categorized coaching behaviors into primary coaching behavior, affective behavior, indirect behavior, direct behavior, positive behavior, negative behavior, primary coaching/affective, direct/indirect, primary coaching/monitoring, and positive/negative. Results showed that when coaches and athletes ratings

of the athletes' training and the coaches' instruction were incongruent, the observed behavior of the coach was more emotional and negative. In contrast, coaches who considered the feelings and opinions of athletes appeared to have more positive interactions with their athletes. An important limitation to be noted about these studies using behavioral observation systems are that they only examined athlete-coach interactions within the sport environment, in particular, practice and game settings.

Other research has indicated that athlete's perceive themselves to be more competitive than do their coaches even when there is no difference in coach and athlete perceptions of the athlete's win or goal orientation (Huddleston, Ahrabi-Fard, and Garvin, 1995). Similarly, coaches have been found to underestimate their athletes' ratings of perceived exertion and to perceive a dispositional cause to athlete's behavior (Rejeski, Rae, and McCook, 1981). In other studies, coaches have been found to view the team climate as more ideal and less in need of change (Fisher, Mancini, Hirsch, Proulx, and Staurowsky, 1982) as well as less cohesive (Carron and Chelladurai, 1981) than do their athletes. Interestingly, Percival (1971) noted that 72% of the coaches viewed themselves as having a positive coaching personality while only 32% of the athletes agreed.

What seems to be missing in the quantitative research exploring athlete-coach interaction is a more in-depth examination of the athletes' own experiences of their coaches. As Blumer (1966) says:

On the methodological or research side the study of action would have to be made from the position of the actor. Since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets, and judges, one would have to see an operating situation as the actor sees it, perceive objects as the actor perceives them, ascertain their meaning in terms of the meaning that they have for the actor, and follow the actor's line of conduct as the actor organizes it---in short one would have to take the role of the actor and see this world from his standpoint...The 'objective' approach holds the danger of the observer substituting his view of the field of action for the view held by the actor. (p. 542)

Existent studies in sport psychology have yet to examine the athlete's experience of being coached from first-person perspective. In fact, only Vernacchia's study (1977)

published twenty years ago seems to have addressed the athlete's experience of his coach. In that case study, Bill, a three-time college All-American track athlete, discussed his high intrinsic motivation and dedication to running, his feeling of running as a personal obligation, sometimes an escape, but certainly an emotional time for him to put things into perspective. He also discussed his shyness around others and his self-doubt by describing himself as a big self-doubter who needed support and encouragement from those whom he respected. One of these persons was his coach.

While Bill did not feel his coach held an important role in his supervision and formulation of training methods, he did experience his coach as an invaluable source of advice and encouragement. In particular, Bill was really attracted to his coach's "subtle" or "fireside manner" in personally communicating with him. This style of communication increased Bill's confidence and trust in his coach's advice. Discussing performance goals with his coach was also an important way for Bill to clear any self-doubts he had about his capabilities in running and to adjust his goals more realistically. Bill's personal relationship with his coach was meaningful to him because it allowed him to "reinforce his beliefs in his ability and worth as an athlete and a person" (Vernacchia, 1977, p. 108).

In this chapter, the nature of phenomenological research and a description of specific phenomenological research studies in sport psychology was discussed. The intent was to demonstrate how understanding the experience of the athlete and the exerciser can provide insight into the meaningfulness of sport and exercise performance. Quantitative studies and research instruments examining the athlete-coach relationship were also reviewed. Only one qualitative study was found that discussed the athlete-coach relationship from the athlete's perspective suggesting that an understanding of the athlete's experiential world in relation to his/her coach has not been reported within the existing sport psychology literature. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine the athlete's

experiential world of being coached. The phenomenological methodology that was used to investigate this experience is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the following methodological aspects of the present study are discussed or described: a) the role of the researcher as instrument, b) the preconceptions and a priori assumptions of my experiences of being coached, c) the participants in this study, d) the interview methodology, e) the method of data analysis, and f) validity concerns.

The Researcher as Instrument

In phenomenological research, the researcher is the major instrument in the study. Thus, it is important to gain an understanding of my own personal history which has led me to be interested in researching the phenomenon of being coached. Below is a description of my past experiences and my growing interest on this topic.

Currently, I am a third year doctoral student and a graduate assistant in sport psychology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK). I provide consultation for both men and women athletes at UTK on an individual and team basis to help them develop their mental approach toward sport competition. Ever since I could walk I have played sports. Regardless of the sport, I played it and was usually one of the more successful, regardless of the level of competition. During my sports career, I have had a variety of coaches. My experience has been that I have been able to perform better under some coaches than under others. It always perplexed me how with some coaches I seemed to be taken out of my game while with others my game was facilitated. In talking and consulting with other athletes, I heard similar patterns of experience--that is, of athletes being taken out of their game or facilitated in their game by their coaches. Since this phenomenon of

being coached began to present itself to me, I became very interested in investigating it in a more systematic manner.

Bias Exploration and Bracketing

In order to understand the experience of participants, it is important for an investigator to "bracket" his/her own "pretheoretical preconceptions of the subject matter (particularly those that might be taken over from natural sciences) and judgments of what really exists or does not exist" (Wertz, 1989). This allows the investigator the possibility of seeing a participant's world in a "purer" way (Husserl, 1954/1970). Bracketing will not remove an individual's presuppositions, as it is impossible to achieve total reduction of pre-conceived knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). What it will do is to allow the person to become conscious of these assumptions. Therefore, prior to interviewing the athletes in this study, I participated in a bracketing interview in an attempt to create an awareness of my own experience of being coached.

Several themes emerged as figural in my experience of being coached. The first theme was the desire to be recognized as a human being not an object. When I experienced a coach as concerned about my welfare (as a human) and wanting me to perform for myself rather than as an object for his service, I did not experience a hesitancy or resistance to being coached. At other times, I felt "objectified" by the coaches whose only uses for me were to service the starting team. Part of this experience of being "objectified" involved trying to perform within the context of expected failure. When performing with the first-string offense, I was given few repetitions and very few second chances. When performing with the "scout team" offense against the first-string defense, failing was expected since it meant that the defense was successful.

A second theme was my need for certainty on how to be or act. When I experienced the locus of authority as residing within me (usually when I was recognizably

the best), then I was embodied-play, playing freely without second-guessing myself. When I felt the locus of authority was located within the coach, then I was focused on not making a mistake and not "screwing up." A third theme was obedience to authority. When I felt tension between focusing on the coach (and whether to obey his authority) or focusing on playing, my obedience to authority over rode my focus on playing. The fourth theme was the meaningfulness of making a mistake. The meaning of making a mistake was experienced as dependent upon the status of the player. As a walk-on football player, "being thrown out" of the offense meant a termination of my opportunity and that I had "shown myself" (had my chance) and failed. Thus, I experienced a stressful need to perform correctly. For a scholarship player, "being thrown out" of the offense seemed to hold the meaning of a temporary challenge to prove himself since he would usually get another chance.

Participants

Participants of this study were eight former Division I collegiate athletes from a variety of sports who recently (within the past one to three years) finished their eligibility. The four male athletes participated in baseball, diving, football, and track. The four female athletes competed in soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball. Former athletes were chosen to be interviewed since athletes currently playing for their coach might have been more reluctant to discuss their experiences of being coached. These former athletes were also chosen for this study as a purposeful sample (Hanson & Newburg, 1992; Jackson, 1992) because they had the potential to provide a rich description of the experience of being coached and had a recent memory of this experience. Thus, participants were not randomly selected since statistical generalization is not the purpose of phenomenological research (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Procedure

I contacted each of the participants and explained the topic of this study. All indicated that they would be interested in participating so we established a date and time in which to conduct the interviews. Each interview was audio taped in a quiet room free from distractions. The interviews lasted approximately one to one and a half hours.

Interview Protocol

I began each interview session by asking the athlete to fill out an Informed Consent form (Appendix) that provided a brief description of the study, a statement of confidentiality, and the potential benefits for the athlete as a result of participating in this study. During this time, I asked the athlete for permission to audio tape the interview session so that later transcription would be possible. Once the athlete's consent was obtained and any questions about the procedures answered, I began the interview with the following question: "Can you tell me about some specific instances that stand out for you in your experiences of being coached?" This question set the direction of the interview (Dale, 1994) and provided the ground from which the phenomenon could emerge. From here, I allowed the athletes to dictate the direction of the interview by following up their responses with open-ended questions such as "Can you tell me more about that experience?" and "What was that like for you?" The questions were used in an attempt to "stay with" athletes and their experience. Such questions enabled them to expand on their "lived experience" without me trying to make any type of judgment about this experience. Thus, I avoided asking "why" questions since they could promote rationalizations by the athlete and create a feeling of being judged and having to provide defensive responses (Argyris, 1982).

By using this method of questioning, I allowed the athlete to control the interview so that what was "figural" for him/her was the focus of the interview. As Pollio et al. (1997) state:

...a phenomenological interview cannot (and should not) be conceived as a rule-driven, mechanical activity. There is no methodological guarantee that any rule applied in a specific encounter will have the same meaning or effect for the interviewer and the person being interviewed. For the interview to be a path or way of understanding the life-world of a co-participant, it must be allowed to emerge freely rather than to be constrained by predetermined injunctions. (p. 33)

In this sense, the present set of interviews are best characterized as a dialogue between the athletes and myself with the intent of understanding the athletes' lived experiences.

Data Analysis

The method of phenomenological research allows the researcher first to view the phenomenon experienced as "lived" by the participant, then to understand its meaning later by analyzing the description of the "lived" experience, and, finally, to report the "lived" experience in first-person terms. Polkinghorne (1989, p. 46) suggests three steps in a phenomenological investigation:

(1) Gather a number of naive descriptions from people who are having or have had the experience under investigation. (2) Engage in a process of analyzing these descriptions so that the researcher comes to a grasp of the constituents or common elements that make the experience what it is. (3) Produce a research report that gives an accurate, clear, and articulate description of an experience.

At the conclusion of the research process, the reader of the report should come away with the feeling that "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that."

Therefore, once the interviews were conducted, I had them transcribed into a hard copy (text) of the interview for data analysis. Each text was then thematized through the process of the hermeneutical circle. Hermeneutics is the "the study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts" (Palmer, 1969, p. 9). The hermeneutical circle in phenomenology is an attempt to understand the meaning of a text. This process involves moving from the whole of the text to a part of the text, to the whole text, back to another

part of the text and so on in a cycle or circle. The first step was for me to read the entire text to gain a sense of the whole. Then, I worked at grasping the meaning of a part of the text (a "meaning unit") and putting it into the context of the whole text.

As this was done, a cluster of the initial thematic meanings was derived from the various meaning units and from the whole sense of a specific athlete's text. I repeated this process for the next text. After an initial thematic meaning of the second text was derived, I conducted another (hermeneutic) analysis in which the second text's thematic meanings were compared with the first text's thematic meanings since each former text had an effect on the later one and vice versa (Pollio et al., 1997). I followed this procedure until all texts were thematized. Through this creative, artistic, and playful process (Locke, 1989), the structure of the phenomenon emerged.

Some of the process of hermeneutical circle thematizing occurred within the context of a research group. The main function of this group was to provide "critical" rather than "consensual" assessment of the text (Pollio et al., 1997). The members of the group suggested alternative perspectives of the texts and helped me become aware of any theoretical suppositions I may have had. I then reported the findings of the structure of the lived experience to the participants asking them if this structure was consistent with their experience. Each participant felt the structure I presented to him/her described the essence of his/her experience of being coached so no additions or deletions to the structure were necessary. The last step of data analysis was to assess the frequency of situations described by the athletes.

Validity Concerns

In discussing validity, it is important to understand that the validity of phenomenological research does not occur within an idealized natural science paradigm but rather within a judicial paradigm (Polkinghorne, 1989) where "validity is placed in the

realm of human practice...(and) absolute certainty is not a requirement. From this perspective, validity is not determined by the degree of correspondence between description and reality but by whether convincing evidence has been marshaled in favor of the aptness of the description" (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 53). Thus, the question asked by the reader is not, "How can I be certain these themes describe the phenomenon as it *really* is for the participant?" but rather "Is there convincing evidence for believing that the thematic description affords insight into the experiential world of the participants?" (Pollio et al., 1997).

The goal of this study was to describe an athlete's experience of being coached. To ensure credible procedures in arriving at this understanding, methodological and experiential validity (Pollio et al., 1997) were evaluated. Methodological validity deals with the rigor and the appropriateness of the procedures used to allow the phenomenon to emerge (i.e., using probing questions during the interview in an attempt to understand the meaningfulness of the athletes' responses). Experiential validity is based on the plausibility and illumination of the experience. Plausibility is whether the reader can see the relation between the interpretation and the data (Pollio et al., 1997) and is ensured by using the participant's language in reporting the thematic structure. Illumination is the process of being able to grasp a pattern (Koffka, 1935; Kohler, 1947), seeing something in a different light, or experiencing insight validated by being able to say, "Yes, now I see what is happening!"

The use of a research group was instrumental in helping me grasp the phenomenon as members of the group presented their understanding of the text. When the members and I could say that we were able to "see" the structural invariants of the experience as we would a poem or a novel, then we felt confident that the "essence" of the phenomenon had emerged. Now that the methods used in the present study have been outlined and discussed, the results of this investigation are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

After conducting, transcribing, and thematizing the interviews of four male and four female Division I collegiate athletes using the methodology described in the previous chapter, the structure of the experience of being coached could be discerned. This structure is presented in the present section via quotes from which the major structural themes emerged. In presenting the results of this investigation, it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of the study was to obtain an understanding of how the phenomenon of being coached was manifested and made meaningful in the lived experiences of Division I collegiate athletes. Before the themes are presented, a description of each participant is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Each of the Eight Athletes

Participant	Sport	Race	Colleges (# of Years)
Female	Soccer	Caucasian	Junior College (2); Division I (2)
Female	Softball	African-American	Junior College (2); Division I (2)
Female	Tennis	Caucasian	Division I (4)
Female	Volleyball	Caucasian	Division I (4)
Male	Baseball	Caucasian	Division I (1); Junior College (1); Division I (2)
Male	Diving	Caucasian	Division I (4)
Male	Football	Caucasian	Division I (4)
Male	Track	Hispanic	Division I (4)

Table 2 provides the situational contexts about which the athletes spoke. Each of the situations was grouped into a general category to provide a larger sense of the context about which the athletes in this study discussed their experiences of being coached. The percentage of situations in which these athletes spoke about practice related situations was 37%, game related situations was 27%, personal relationship situations between their coaches and them was 20%, recruiting or changing schools/coaches was 9.6%, fundamentals or strategy of their sport were 4.5%, and miscellaneous items were 1.7%. It is important to note that some situations were difficult to determine because athletes occasionally spoke about their experiences in non-situational terms such as "...they (coaches) all have different personalities. Like one is just really motivating and just always positive...he won't take anything" or "Being coached, you gain respect for someone, that authoritative figure, that's basically, if you listen to them they know what they are talking about." The results reveal that these athletes experienced their coach in a sport related context (game or practice) about two-thirds of the time. Interestingly, personal relationship situations stood out for the athletes one-fifth of the time. These results suggest three things: 1) for these athletes, a majority of experiences of being coached were related to the sport context, 2) at times, being coached was experienced by these athletes as occurring outside the context of their sport, and 3) even some situations discussed within the sport-related context do not occur on the field, court, track, or in the pool.

Three major themes in the experience of being coached were revealed: There for Me/Not There for Me, Knowing and Being Known Personally, and Authority/Power. Each of these themes was described, at times, in terms of the athlete's experience of Previous Coaches--hence, the overall context for these themes is grounded by the athletes prior and ongoing experiences of their coaches. During other times, the experience of Previous Coaches emerged as it's own theme.

Table 2. The Frequency of Situations Described by Athletes

I. PRACTICE RELATED	
During practice or practice related	57
Meeting before practice	3
Coach organizing practice	2
Practicing with team after athlete's career was over	2
Coach's punctuality to practice	1
II. GAME RELATED	
During game/match/meet or related to these	38
Talk after game/match/meet	4
Meeting before game/match/meet	2
Coach's speech night before game/match/meet	2
On the bus before the game/match/meet	1
Being injured during game/match/meet	1
III. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP OF ATHLETE AND COACH	
Talking/socializing outside sport environment	8
Coach dealing with athlete and other teammates	6
Talking in coach's office	6
Talking on the phone	3
Coach's response to athlete wanting to visit his family	3
Handling relationship with coach on and off the court	2
Listening to coach's message on answering machine	1
Letter from coach to athlete	1
In coach's home	1
Coach attempting to protect athlete from agent	1
Talking about athlete's grades	1
Communicating to coach (non-specific)	1
Issues dealing with athlete's injury	1
IV. RECRUITING/CHANGE OF SCHOOL OR COACH	
Involving being recruited	8
Coach preparing athlete for transition into college	5
Transferring schools	3
Change of coaches	1
V. FUNDAMENTALS/STRATEGY	
Talking about fundamentals/strategy/philosophy taught by coaches	7
Coach introducing athlete to the sport	1
VI. MISCELLANEOUS	
Talking about the pressure on the coach	2
Observing another team's coach	1

The first theme, There for Me, was the athlete's experience of the coach having a facilitating presence or a caring presence for the athlete. The contrasting part of this theme Not There for Me was experienced as being abandoned or being disrupted by the coach. The second theme, Knowing and Being Known Personally, detailed the development of the personal relationship between the athlete and the coach. The theme revealed how being known by the coach affects the athlete, and how the athlete experiences knowing or not knowing the coach. The third theme, Authority/Power, centered on how the athlete experienced the authority that resided in the position of coach. In this theme, the athlete spoke about the coach's authority as being imposed, being a guide, or being a source for confrontation. Figure 3 offers a graphical presentation of how the three major themes are grounded in the context of "Previous Coaches."

Although the three major themes are located at the ends of the axes in Figure 3, the interconnectedness of the triangle represents the interdependence of the themes to one another. The three themes are not independent of one another; rather, they are interdependent themes that create the experience of being coached and cannot be separated in the experience. One, two, or all three themes may emerge as figural aspects of the athlete's experience during a particular time or with a particular coach whereas the other themes may fade into the background, not appearing to be as present for the athlete.

The Ground: Previous Coaches

Having a coach seems to be an important part of being an athlete. As one athlete described it, "You can't be an athlete without a coach. You wouldn't know what to do." The experience of being coached, however, is not a static one. It not only emerges as a developing interpersonal relationship between an athlete and a coach but involves a process of comparing and contrasting experiences with previous coaches to current coaches. This is consistent with Freud's concept of transference as a "very human tendency to structure

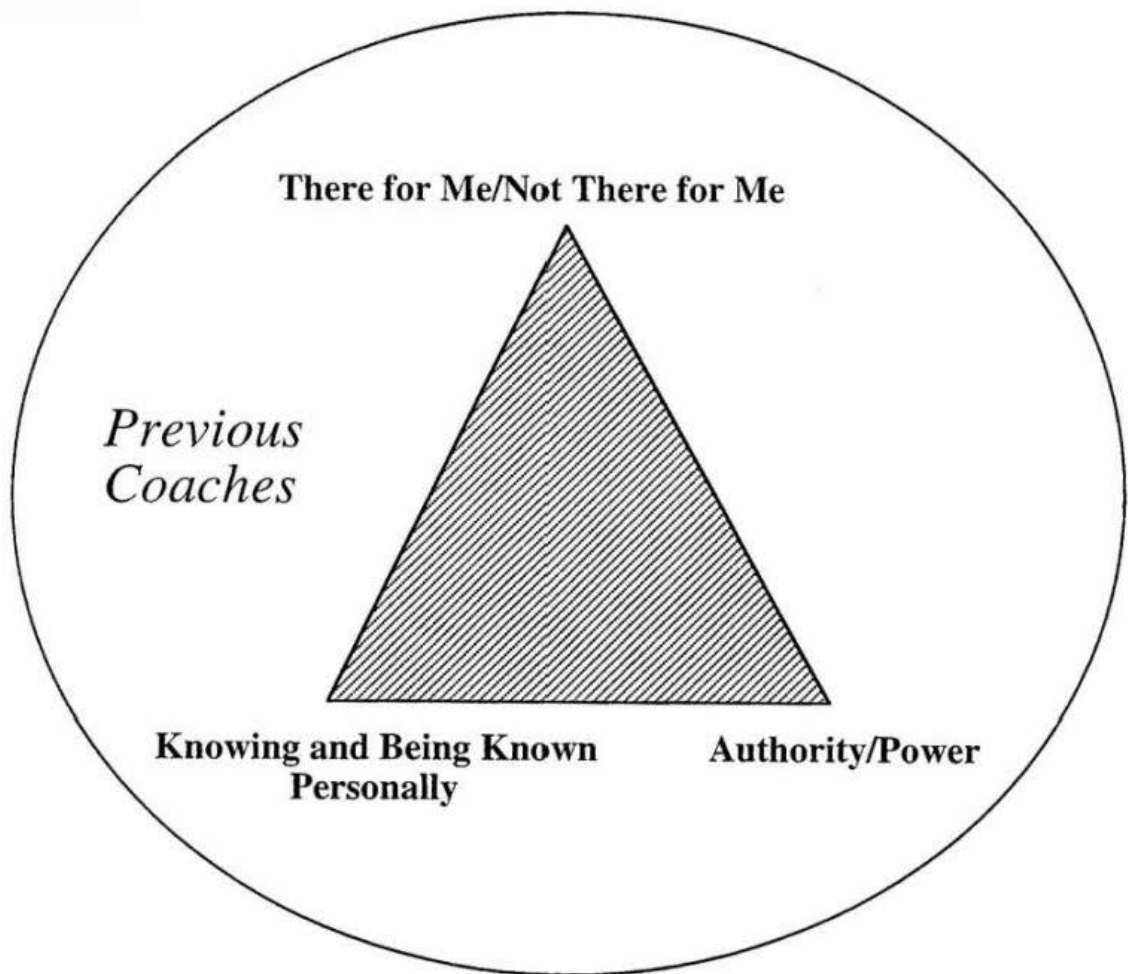


Figure 3. Pattern of Thematic Meanings Describing the Experience of Being Coached

present relationships in terms of past relationships, and to lose sight of present possibilities in the confusing jumble of interactions" (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 126).

Based on the findings of this study, athletes seemed to develop an experiential template of being coached and to use this template as a reference in comparing their present experiences of coaches (both their own and others) with their previous experience of coaches. This phenomenon is illustrated in the following comment of one of the athletes.

My friend played at California University soccer and when I watched the coach from California I saw Bert (her former coach) because he was just like Bert. It's so funny because you could see, I'm like, "God, he's just like Bert"...I'll see other coaches and I'll be like, "Oh, they are an easy coach." You know what I mean. They are not that hard on their kids (in comparison to Bert).

With each new coach, this template changed, often leaving athletes having to adjust, adapt, or get used to their new coach and his/her coaching style, coaching philosophy, or personality. At times, this change was experienced as having advantages and disadvantages. An advantage of having a previous coach that was "hard" on an athlete was that it sometimes made interacting with the next coach easier. For example, a soccer player who talked about the mental and verbal abuse and belittlement that she experienced while playing for her junior college coach also spoke of how this coach's harsh criticism helped prepare her for Division I soccer. While her junior college coach's abusive behavior took her out of her game mentally during her first year, in her second year under him she began to adapt to his coaching style. Then when she transferred to a Division I school for her last two years, the coaching and criticism that she received from her Division I coach "was nothing" compared to what she had experienced from her junior college coach and even seemed to make her stronger mentally.

I mean what they did to me was nothing compared to what I had before. So it was so much easier for me when I came here (Division I school) coaching wise...That was nothing to me because I had it the worst I could have had it when I was in my freshman and sophomore year (at junior college)....then I came here and when I did get yelled at I was used to it and I was able to take it in and say "okay" you know...He (junior college coach) mentally got me ready to come here. Then I came here and I was able to handle all the other pressures and made it a lot easier for me to come here.

As much as I hated what he did to me, it made me stronger mentally.

It is important to note, however, that while the abusive behavior of this coach had some positive future effects for the athlete, the negative effects of this behavior were that the athlete began to hate the sport and even thought about not playing anymore after her second year with her junior college coach and before she was recruited to play at her Division I school.

I started hating the sport...When I went to ALU (junior college), I was like, "If this is the way it's going to be, then I don't want to play. Because I'll stick with club where you have fun with the girls and go to tournaments..."

In discussing her experiences of being instructed, this same athlete spoke of how her Division I coaches' instructional styles were advantageous in facilitating her learning in comparison to the pressure she experienced during her previous coach's instructions.

They would teach you something and after they got done with what they were teaching they're like, "Okay, everything we taught you today. Forget about it. Don't let it bother you we will practice it again another day...and eventually you will get it." Where Bert (previous coach) was like, "You better today now, right now. If you don't get it today, you are never going to get it." And here, I was able to learn better because they didn't pressure me into learning. They were like, "You are going to get it. It just takes time." Where Bert was like, "You have to get it." And that was what was so different and it made it so much easier for me.

Another athlete became aware of the advantage of developing a two-way system of communication in his relationship with his coach after experiencing a one-way system of communication with his first coach (who was also his father).

...open lines of communication which, to me, are probably the most significant thing I've ever learned as being a coach-diver relation...And certainly between me and my father. We never used to communicate, my Dad and I...I think that coaching, too much of a hierarchical basis-they're the coach, you're the diver. They're the boss; you've got no say, which I don't think is the way to go about it...Yeah, when I was a kid if I didn't want to do something I didn't ever convey it to him. I just sucked it up and did it. (I: What was that like?) That was a one-way street communication wise. This is why I'm such an advocate of the two way, opening those lines, because I have experienced it for ten years man. Coming from God down to me. That's how it was.

Having a template of being coached can also be a disadvantage at times since breaking a habit is not easy to do. For example, when a coach that has a different coaching

style is encountered, the athlete can experience frustration and poor performance in trying to adjust to the new coaching style. The baseball pitcher in this study spoke of the difficulty in adapting to his new pitching coach after he had become comfortable with how his previous pitching coach would "call a game" and would direct him to focus on "getting the job done" rather than on his pitching mechanics. Having more pitching success under the guidance of his previous coach during his junior year made changing his mental approach to a focus on pitching mechanics under his new coach during his senior year a difficult task, and one in which he ran out of time.

It was just I was used to the way one style was and I got formatted and molded into the way (Coach) Dunn ran things. Then taking that mold it didn't fit right away into what (Coach) Morten did so I had to change. So like I said it got a little frustrating because I was so set in the ways Dunn did, how he would call the game. Then I had to adjust to the way Coach Morten called the game. I wasn't used to that so to me it was kind of like I didn't want to accept it because it was something new.

I was like, "I don't want to do it." I was so successful at this way that I want to keep it this way. But sometimes change is for the better... Sometimes people don't handle change as quickly as others and that's what happened to me.

I tried my hardest too. It's hard to bust an old habit. I had a lot of bad habits and to get them right it took more time than I had. It's unfortunate that I ran out of time. I wish I had another year here with him because I think I would be really successful.

Thus, it may be difficult for athletes to change especially when they have previous success in performing a certain way, do not know the philosophy of coaching of their new coach very well, and have difficulty making this adjustment quickly.

Adjusting to coaches when they do not provide what athletes expect can be a change for the athletes.

That was the kind of coach that a lot of us were used to. They catered to our needs, whatever we wanted to work on, they were there. We didn't get that from the head coach (at our current school).

Sometimes coaches were compared in terms of what they could or did provide an athlete. In this case, athletes acknowledged learning different things from different coaches and the benefits that each coach provided for them.

...they (my coaches) all had different focuses. One might be on strategies, one might be in technique. Obviously some are more knowledgeable than others so that's why we switched to different coaches. They all helped me along some way.

The offensive line coach when I got here was able to teach skills better than anybody I've ever been around but I had a real hard time learning the system from him as far as our offense was concerned. The guy that replaced him who is no longer with us now I learned the system in two weeks but he wasn't a technician like my former coach.

...So she gave me the basic knowledge of the sport, not just running knowledge, but knowledge across the board...but my other high school coach that came from Florida taught me everything else that goes along with it, how to handle situations, how to do this, how to get ready for college...So I had the best of both worlds in two different coaches...

Based on the findings of this study, the process of adjusting and adapting to coaches was a very prevalent aspect of the athlete's experience of being coached. This process of change was an advantage for some athletes, a disadvantage for others, and simply different for another group of athletes.

Theme One: There for Me

The first theme that emerged from the data was There for Me/Not There for Me. The theme of There for Me was comprised of four subthemes: Guidance/Knowledge of What I Should Do, Help/Pull Me Through, Confidence in Me, and Care about Me. The first three subthemes suggested the coach was experienced as a facilitating presence for athletes whereas the last subtheme connoted the coach's caring presence. Its contrasting theme Not There for Me consisted of the two subthemes: Being Abandoned and Being Disrupted. Being Abandoned occurred in two ways: not receiving the guidance that was expected from the coach and experiencing a broken sense of trust after being lied to by the coach. Being Disrupted involved being mentally taken out of the game by the coach's presence.

Guidance/Knowledge of What I Should Do

The facilitating presence of the coach was felt in his/her ability to provide guidance, structure, and knowledge for the athlete. The athletes experienced the coach as someone whom they looked to for guidance as to what to do in their sport. As one athlete described it, coaches are synonymous with parents and are essential for an athlete to know what to do.

A coach kind of is like a parent on the field when you are playing sports. They provide an outline. They show you the process and you are the one who is going to fly the process...Otherwise without that you wouldn't know what to do. You would be lost. I think that's what a coach does. He's kind of like a parent. Parents guide you in life. Well, they guide you in your sport. They kind of show you a guideline of how to play and how to go and then it's the athlete's responsibility to take it from there and apply it.

...you can't be an athlete without a coach. You wouldn't know what to do. I think being coached is being guided in the sport. You may have all the talent in the world and if you don't know what to do and how to apply it then you are worthless at that sport...Without their guidance and preparing me for, to deal with tasks at hand and adversity and everything I don't know who I'd be.

The coach also was someone who could provide the structure and organization that athletes needed to be efficient in their training.

It's great to be organized. Efficiency is the key. And when you are efficient in all aspects of training as far as knowing what you are going to do when, it allows you to prepare better...so having a very structured program and knowing what we were going to do...

A coach could also be a source of guidance by absolving the athlete from having to worry about irrelevant cues and directing him toward his pitching objective.

When I asked him one day about my mechanics and everything, he basically said, "Listen here Bruce, don't worry about your mechanics. You are fine." That conversation was basically a preparation mental wise to what I had to take on the mound. From that point on, I went 7-1 that year and lead the team in ERA and that little conversation we had, how he prepared me to play the game, how when I threw that bullpen...He was telling me to not worry about everything and to focus on the task at hand. I think that episode right there is one thing I will take with me when I coach...up to the time when Coach Dunn said that, I had a tendency to worry about so much stuff and forget about what I had to, what my objective was at the time.

One athlete spoke of her need for her coach to be on her and yell at her in order to guide her.

...I need someone who is like on me all the time. Someone who is like, "Hey, Terri do this." As much as I hate getting yelled at, I don't think it sinks in. I can't have someone be nice to me all the time because other wise I'm really not going to do anything. If I'm doing something wrong, someone needs to yell at me to tell me to move my feet.

More specifically, coaches provided athletes with knowledge about their sport.

...it was just like a book of information...And I was just sitting there going, "Is there anymore I can learn? Why do you pitch up here on this guy? Oh, it sets up that. Why do we do this hitting? Why do we bunt with a guy on second? When do you bunt? When do you hit and run? Really." Then learning little tricks and trades of the game...Well, there we had seven coaches and they all know everything so you just sit there and sit there like a little kid and you just listen to them and ask questions and then you go do it...Everything that I had heard and they preached about came true if we just listened to them and did what they said. And low and behold, it didn't take more than two months...and I was having colleges call me all the time, recruiting me. It was just applying their knowledge to the game when scouts where there. I was performing at another level.

...she taught me the basic movements of everything...she taught me everything from field events to even cross country...So she gave me the basic knowledge of the sport, not just running knowledge, but knowledge across the board.

In junior college I was coached, I mean fundamentally. She was there. She was special. She watched each individual player and either corrected them or praised them or whatever was needed for them to perform comfortably, effectively, and efficiently.

Some coaches, though not all, also provided guidance for their athletes in other areas of their life.

...my other high school coach that came from Florida taught me everything else that goes along with it, how to handle situations, how to do this, how to get ready for college. He got me prepped for college.

That was a huge part of the transition. His knowledge of college, but his knowledge of everything as far as life, that was a great, great, great step.

Help Me/Pull Me Through

Another aspect of the theme There for Me was when athletes experienced the coach as helping them learn new skills, reassuring them when they doubted themselves, or pulling them through during difficult times.

He loved the game. He loved baseball and he managed softball for awhile. He loved the game and was intense about the game. He was just there. He was there to help us with whatever we do. If he thought our hitting was wrong, he'd stand there and watch you like, "You are doing this wrong" or "You need to do this," or "Try this instead of this and see how it feels." Just anything like that, he was willing to help every person. You know. Instead of looking at my head coach or any other coach, I was interacting with Tom. "If I need help what can I do? Can I have some extra ground balls?" (He would say), "Sure come before practice or I'll stay after practice and I'll help you during practice." He was just there for us.

Just that, in order to get good, you have to practice and "I'm there for you as long as, I'll be there as long as you need me in order for you to be comfortable and in order for you to play your best for me or for the game or whatever." So they (Margaret's junior college coach and her infield Division I coach) were there. They both were there and they were good coaches. They knew the game. They didn't yell at you, scream at you. They were really nice, understanding, good people.

Sometimes the athlete's need for their coach's help through a situation came when they were feeling down on themselves and their performance. As one athlete noted, these were the times when the coach stepping in provided some needed reassurance.

I just get down on myself if I have one bad day...And, that's where it's important for a coach to step in, in those instances, and help out an athlete. And, Glen, to a degree, did...

I can remember we were warming up for the 1 meter prelim and I wasn't diving very well I didn't think. And, I get out of the water and I slapped my shammy on the ground and Glen walks over and gives me this pissed off look. And he starts a little bit of a cuss at me, "What the hell's your problem?"

"I just don't feel good. "

"You don't even know how good you're diving. Get out!"

So he kicks me out. I'm like, "Whoa, geez, I must be diving pretty good for him to get that mad." I got back in the water half hour later and it was sort of okay, relax, take it easy; couldn't have had a better warm up...But that really helped out..Sometimes I want that extra reassurance.

In a different frustrating situation, this same athlete needed help in a different way. He needed understanding and sympathy for what he was going through.

"I don't enjoy it anymore. I don't enjoy practices when I have to go through all that (getting down on himself). And, if I don't enjoy it how can you make me dive."

He said, "I agree with you. Take a day or two off. See how you feel. Reassess the situation." As I said, I was back the next day. That was an instance where him not being mad. Him being, controlling his emotions. I'm sure he wanted to ream me out, walking away from him like that. Um, really helped out as far as getting me going.

One athlete experienced her coach pulling her through when she was injured and when she was frustrated in not being able to score goals.

Here, it was Jim pulling you through himself. He was pulling you...When I was injured, some coaches might like not care or something. He always asked about me. Made sure I was keeping up with my fitness. He is like, "Breanne you are going to come back. He kept telling me I was coming back and I had doctors telling me I was going to be out the season and surgery. And Jim was like, "You're coming back." Or Linda was like, "You're going to come back. You'll be fine. You just tore some muscles in there."

I was always so close but I couldn't get it in and it was very frustrating for me. The coaches helped me through it. They were like, "Breanne it's going to get in. You are going to get one" before every game...They like helped my through it. They were like, "You're going to score today."

Confidence in Me

Having confidence in the athletes was often expressed as a crucial part of the coach "being there" for the athletes and facilitating them. A soccer player spoke of the way her coach provided a boost of confidence and the "little things" that helped her throughout the year.

Then after the first game, him just boosting my confidence. After that I felt like, "Okay, I know what I have to do this year." He would just tell me after every game, "You had a good game." He would ask me what I did, what I thought I did right and I'd tell him. They would basically just tell me after every game, he would talk to me after the game, where he would talk to me and tell me what I screwed up on so I can learn better. Then at practice he would say, "We'll practice it." He just like helped me through the year. When I had a problem, it was like he knew what I was struggling in. I wasn't afraid to go up to him and say, "Jim, us forwards aren't working together. I'm doing everything you said." I felt like I was able to tell him when I didn't think one of the teammates was doing what they were supposed to be doing. I thought that was good where I knew I didn't have to feel stupid...And it made me feel good like where he listened to me. He would change and adjust and we would work together. It helped so much. It was just the way he coached. Him and Linda both on the sideline. If I started getting frustrated he would pull me aside and say, "Breanne, you are doing good just keep it up." It kept me in the game where like some people, some coaches might not keep you going through the game but he would boost me a little bit in the middle of the game.

The ball would be on the other side of the net and I would be walking by and he's like, "Breanne, keep it up." I never got that before and that helped me so much. It was like the littlest thing helped me because when I'm not used to that. It helped. It helped me.

Helping the athlete through difficult times often meant the coach exhibited a sense of faith or confidence in the athlete. A tennis player spoke of the way both of her coaches helped and had confidence in her which enabled her to her through difficult matches.

Plus he (head coach) has a reputation of just being a real good coach and on the court they were always good at being motivating and helping you to get through your match or do something better. You know, not get all stressed out on the court or go all crazy. Help you calm down. Just have confidence in you that you can win or get you through the match...I would be behind and they would be on the court helping me through each point. Especially Missy, like I knew that they had confidence which gave me alot more confidence to get through the match...

A softball player's first college coach (her junior college coach) was especially helpful during the time she was trying to make the transition from slow pitch to fast pitch softball by continuing to have confidence in her and not letting her give up.

We made the transition from slow pitch to fast pitch in the second year. So it was kind of tough for me in the beginning, but she would talk to me, work with me, probably more than some of the girls and stayed with me until I got comfortable and started playing like she knew I had the potential to play. (I: There are times that you didn't feel comfortable at first, but then there is something about...) She wouldn't let me give up. You know, I was determined, but, you know, she just wouldn't let me give up. That was a huge thing to help toward success and she was like, "You are an athlete and I know you can do it. I will work with you, whatever kind of help you need. (I: Do you remember things she did to help you in that transition?) Just stayed with me. When we had scrimmage games, she'd put me in knowing I could barely hit the ball, just that kind of stuff. Kept at me, worked with me. Taught me the game, how to hold a bat in fast pitch, how to stand, how to see the ball, not see the ball, I have to do that myself, but just different, look at the seams...

I never thought I'd be able to play fast pitch. I was in college and I was a slow pitch player. I was a freshman in college and I thought I was too old to learn that game. I thought you had to be brought up in that game. Obviously she didn't think so. She had faith. She had confidence. She brought it out. She brought it out.

For some athletes, it just took a coach who had confidence in them and would give them an opportunity to show what they could do.

It was just a matter of him having some confidence in me is all that I needed.

He brought out everything that I had inside.

Care about Me

The last aspect of There for Me was the coach being experienced as having a caring presence towards the athlete. Two athletes talked about the feeling of being cared about by their coach outside of their sports.

I always thought that she just cared about you off the court too which helped you to respect her more on the court and you knew that she cared about you.

He cared about my grades so much. When I was doing bad, he would call and be like, "Breanne you are struggling in your classes. Let's get you help." That meant so much to me knowing that they cared about my grades.

Being cared about was experienced by one athlete during the time she was injured.

...And then I come here (Division I school) and I'm injured and I know I can take the pain and they are like, "No, you're not playing. We need you to rest." I had to adjust to that being like they look at you as being important and they don't want you to be hurt. They want you to play at 100% level and that was a change for me. They cared if you were hurt.

Being tough on and honest with the athlete were other ways in which athletes experienced being cared about by their coaches.

She has to be tough on me or she is doing that stuff because she cares. She is not doing that because she wants to be mean. She is doing that because she really cares about you and wants you to do better and I had to realize that.

I was coached by the same man from the seventh grade up through a senior in high school and he was on my case all the time, but I felt he was always honest with me and he would be in my face but I was used to that. I was used to working hard from giving him everything I had. But I always trusted him and I always respected him because he would tell me when you're not working hard, you are sitting on the bench. Never just blow whatever and trying to make me feel happy by lying to me or tell me what I want to hear. He'd always tell me exactly what he felt.

For some athletes, being cared about went beyond their playing career with their coach.

But they still want us to play and stuff so that makes me feel good. It's just cool knowing that they will always be there because they care. They still want us...Jim (coach) asked Susy, "Tell Breanne she should start coming because you know she's got shin problems and if she still wants to play soccer in the future she's still gotta keep those legs strong." So he is still caring and that just makes...That makes me feel good. That just shows how cool our coaches are.

Theme One: Not There for Me

Just as athletes experienced their coach as being there for them, they also, at times and with certain coaches, felt that their coach was not there for them. In these situations, athletes felt either abandoned or disrupted by their coach. This feeling of abandonment was not usually a physical absence of the coach but rather an experience of not receiving something from the coach that the athletes expected, wanted, or needed. When the coach was experienced as disrupting to athletes, he/she was not necessarily felt as physically impeding the athletes but rather as taking them out of their game. The two subthemes of Being Abandoned and Being Disrupted are presented below.

Being Abandoned

Out of the experience of being coached emerged an interesting phenomenon of being abandoned by one's coach. During this process of abandonment, athletes had expectations of their coach which seemed to be based on their template of being coached. Two crucial expectations that emerged from this study were the expectation of being guided by the coach and being able to trust the coach. Several athletes stressed their need for their coaches to provide instructional assistance during times when they were unable to make self-corrections. Unfortunately, there were times when they felt that their coaches didn't provide the guidance they desired.

I want you to tell me what to do, and how to get better and how our team can get better. We can't do it by ourselves....a lot of times if you are playing sports, you know what you are doing wrong. It's just a matter of fixing it, then when you don't know what you are doing wrong, you do need help. Sometimes it wasn't there then.

I remember my freshmen year that happened to me because I kept on doing it and I did not know what I was doing wrong. I asked her and she said, "You are 18 years old and you've been practicing for how long, and you should know?" I am like obviously I don't know because I keep on doing it. Am I dropping my arm? I don't know what I'm doing and she didn't care and I still didn't find out what I was doing. We just kept on running for the rest of practice and so then somebody else did it.

Other athletes expressed similar frustrations in not receiving the instructional feedback for which they were looking.

It was hard sometimes to take advice from somebody I didn't know if they knew. For a long snapper, anybody can look at it and say "it's wobbly" when you snap the ball. Or if it is slow or if it is not on target. Any idiot can do that. What I needed was not somebody who could tell me that it was wobbly. I just wanted him to tell me *why* it was wobbly...What I wanted was a coach that I could listen to and would tell me when I wasn't doing something right but that I could go to and talk to and enjoy being around because I was going to have to enjoy being around him.

...And so when I got here, my coach...I guess, this is what I got from him, "You are a D-1 softball player. You should know what you are doing wrong. You should be able to correct yourself." Just like I said before, learn your plays, learn your signs, you know, just play ball. (I: So not a lot of instruction?) Not a lot of instruction at all. Not from our head coach...

I asked him what did I do and he goes, "Don't talk to me." He goes, "You know what you did." And I had no clue what I did. I go, "Just so you know..." where I actually started getting smart with him I'm like, "That ball went off my shin." You know, and I never am disrespectful to an adult but I started being like that and that was just when I knew something was wrong.

In a similar way, when athletes were lied to by their coach, they experienced a broken sense of trust, a loss of respect for their coach, and ambiguity over whether to believe their coach or not. During this state of ambiguity, athletes often struggled in determining when to believe their coach.

...I need to get this straightened out or whatever and she did not tell me the truth and after that, just, I didn't really want anything to do with her. It changed the whole. I didn't really want to go to practice. I didn't want to be coached by her cause I just didn't want to have anything to do with her...I mean then whatever else she said to me I'm like, "Is she telling the truth? Is she lying?"

To resolve the tension and discomfort that existed within this state of ambiguity, some athletes found it easier to dismiss anything their coach said. In dismissing their coach's comments, they were able to relieve this state of ambiguity for some sense of certainty. This was not an easy process, and one in which the athletes had to exert effort in blocking out their coach as part of their experience. This was frustrating for athletes as they were in conflict over for whom they were performing. They wanted to perform for themselves and their teammates but not for the coach.

...I didn't want to believe that she (the coach) lied to me so then when I did finally find out, I was like, "Forget it." You know? You kind of get that attitude like you want to work hard for yourself, but I don't want to work hard for her so it was like a bad situation...I mean it was frustrating. It was like I didn't want to let myself down and at the same time I don't want to let her determine how I am going to do in this sport but even though I didn't want that, even though I felt that way, I didn't work as hard as I probably should of in some situations and when she got on me, I just blew her off.

...it got to the point where I just couldn't stand her anymore. So I tried not to let it bother me, but it's hard...Even the worst things, I tried to make light of them. Even though there was a time when I just wanted to get out of here altogether. I still had fun in practice just for myself. It got to the point where, "Okay, if I'm not having fun, I am not going to let her get me down, or him or whoever is coaching me. I need to have fun for myself.

Thus, athletes' awareness could shift from playing their sport to a focus on the coach.

At first I would seriously listen to her and like, "Yes, I need to get in the game." But after whatever happened (i.e., being lied to), I would seriously would not pay attention to what she said. I would be just like, "I just hate you."

When athletes did not receive the guidance that they were expecting, or were lied to by their coach, what was assumed to be true of the coach was now experienced as not true. For the athletes who realized that their coach would not provide them with the guidance they desired, they gradually came to abandon their expectations of being guided by their coach and shifted their attention toward playing for themselves.

You weren't coached here. We had to basically pull from our experiences in high school and junior colleges...because our coach was never a big help...we realized what we were against, our coaches...you just have to play for each other and play together...

We were just unhappy. I don't even want to be here, dragging. We still played ball because we loved it, but it's weird. We couldn't believe that this was, all of our expectations were let down. Here this is D-1 and he couldn't even talk to his players. There was no rapport at all. We had many a meeting and we just had to play for ourselves...

Well, you're kind of thinking okay. I mean we talked about it amongst ourselves, but we finally realized that this is how he was, this is how he coaches, and stand up and play ball and I guess we had to deal with it.

Similar to athletes whose expectations for guidance were not met, athletes whose trust was broken eventually resolved to play for themselves.

...no matter how much they yelled at you or whatever, as long as they are always truthful with you and I can. I don't care. I can take anything and that's how much I pretty much felt. But when I found out that she lied to me or whatever, it's like I lost all respect, all trust, everything there. I think after awhile it was just like kind of screw her and I'll just work for myself. It's not worth me going through this just to try to piss her off because it was only hurting me.

It got to the point where, okay if I'm not having fun, I am not going to let her get me down, or him or whoever is coaching me. I need to have fun for myself.

...my last couple games here, I just played for myself and wasn't going to worry about anything that was said to me about, by either coaches or anything. I tried to play my best.

Being Disrupted

Not only was the coach experienced as absent to the athlete, the coach could also be felt as having a disrupting presence. In this circumstance, the athlete expected to perform fluidly, yet his/her way of competing was disrupted in some way by the coach. Some athletes were "taken out of their game " because of their coach's yelling or belittling comments.

He would say, 'Don't you know what your right and your left is?' Because I would go to the wrong side when I would go to check back and he goes, 'Do you know what your right is?' It was just the littlest things he didn't have to do. He could have talked me through it but he would say, 'You guys are so stupid.' And you were just so shaken up that you could never do it right so you were always doing it wrong. He would teach you where you finally learned it but he would get mad at you in a game if you did it wrong in a game. He would say, 'How many times do I have to do it til you get it right?'

He just made me, he frustrated me so much in the game that I couldn't play.

You were scared...you were scared to get the ball because everything you did he basically yelled at you. I mean you would have to see a tape, like the tapes of my games from ALU all you do is hear him screaming.

He belittled me basically where I was mentally out of the game alot. I couldn't even play my game because he was so hard on me.

It was different for me sometimes, like sometimes it would just take my head out of it. I would be out there somewhere....It would make me nervous like I'd be thinking about what they said when I would hit it out.

better when I play like that." And I wish I would do that more often because I got into myself too much and I got worried about what I was going to do.

I just like was out there saying, "Okay I know it's going to happen. He's going to yell but just keep playing your game."

I finally decided that if I was going to succeed that I had to change and that I had to worry about my mechanics and had to do this or that because it was the right way and I needed it. I just started accepting it.

During the time when athletes experienced the disrupting presence of their coach, their love of the sport was all that allowed them to continue playing.

It was just that's how he coached...I guess if you want to play soccer bad you just took it. If you liked the sport. (I: And that's what you...) The love of the sport is what kept me in it.

In this section, coaches were experienced as either being there for the athlete in a facilitative or a caring way or not there for the athlete in an abandoning or disrupting way. Presented in the next section are athletes' experiences of knowing or not knowing their coaches and their coaches knowing them and their needs in a personally meaningful way.

Theme Two: Knowing and Being Known Personally

The third theme of Knowing and Being Known Personally centered on the development of a relationship between the athlete and the coach. This relationship was a process of the coach getting to know the athlete and the athlete coming to know the coach. The subthemes in Knowing and Being Known Personally were: Open-mindedness/Communication/Trust; Coach Knows How to Motivate Me; Knowing My Coach Personally; and Not Knowing My Coach (Unpredictable).

Open-mindedness/Communication/Trust

Since each athlete is unique and has different needs, it is important for the coach to recognize these differences and to work with athletes according to each individual's needs. One athlete talked about the common misconception of the relationship between a coach and

an athlete as one where the coach just told the athlete what to do and he/she did it and a true understanding of the athlete was never reached.

...most people think its...the coach knows what he is doing because he tells the athlete what to do and the athlete does it. I think that's a very. For anyone who has never been in that situation that's the most general misconception. But even for a lot of people, a lot of coaches that are out there that's still a misconception.

This athlete continued by describing the development of the coach getting to know the athlete and the athlete knowing the coach as a process that evolved over time, requires open-mindedness and communication, and was not limited to the sport environment.

The coach after five years may know his athlete really well. But til he gets to know them, there is alot of hit and miss as far as the athlete goes. I think that is what Glen and I have been experiencing for a long time...so it's important to be as open minded as possible. That's a part of that misconception. You do something with one athlete and it works really well for them...But everybody is different.

Only 50% of coaching actually goes on at the poolside...The other 50% is controlling your attitude, your emotions, building a friendship outside of the pool, getting to know the person, establishing channels of communication. That's a lot of involvement. In order to be successful, that's how it should be.

I think probably the most important thing I've learned in my entire career as a diver and having a coach, is communication. There is no substitute for it. There's no way you could ever be successful without it, without open lines of communication. I should be able to go to Glen and him be like a best friend...if something is bothering me, I'll tell Glen. I never used to want to because I never thought he would listen. He showed me signs that he is so I'm going to do it more often.

I can't emphasize enough if there is one thing any diver and any coach should ever strive to do is become good friends. To be able to, like you can go and tell your best friend anything. If he is pissing me off, tell him, "Buddy, you're pissing me off." He's not going to hate you for it. He might be a little pissed off at the time but the next day he is going to sit there and go, "That's cool. I realize." And that's the most important thing...if you are on an individual basis your coach needs to be close to your best friend. You need to be able to tell them, "Hey, I'm having trouble with this."

A football player also expressed a similar interest in wanting to develop a relationship with his coach.

What I wanted was a coach that I could listen to and would tell me when I wasn't doing something right but that I could go to and talk to and enjoy being around because I was going to have to enjoy being around them. The last thing I wanted was for there to be some nervous tension between all of us...

A runner spoke of the importance of his coach being open-minded in the process of developing their relationship which to him was like a marriage.

I had a coach that his ego wasn't that big that he wouldn't let me give him feedback so actually both of us have learned in the past seven, eight years. We have learned each other so we form a very, very, very, very, very good combination.

The reason why I chose (current college) was I went on my recruiting trips, and I found that the coach here would let me influence the workouts, would let me do my thing in the workouts. As far as, if he had a work out and I had a different work out that I wanted to do, he asked me why I wanted that and what would that achieve in that point in time of year. If he liked mine better, he had no problem with it. His ego was never bruised about it, and I questioned him, he questioned me, and we have a mature, respectful relationship from it. He calls on me still. I call on him. It's a very good marriage between athlete and coach.

This runner also confirmed the process of the athlete and coach knowing each other as something that was built over time and involved the athlete being guided in some way by the coach. He nicely portrayed the long process of developing trust as a time of questioning and doubt of the coach and the coach providing reassurance to the athlete amidst this doubt.

We would go to a meet in the beginning of the year. He'd have me run odd distances like whether it was a mile or whether it was a quarter. I mean, I knew that I might have needed the work, but he did it to do it as a work out. The thing that I wasn't used to was training through meets and then I would be very tired for a meet because I worked out hard two days before. Where as, some of the other guys on other teams kind of tapered some, and then I would just be tired, fatigued and I couldn't, my recovering rate wasn't very good, and then, you know, I was sitting there complaining and moaning saying, "Coach, I just ain't runnin' well because of this and this." He goes, "Julio, you're doing fine. Julio, you're doing fine." So then I was just like, "I don't feel like I am doing it. These other guys are showing more improvement. I just don't feel like it's happening." He goes, "Don't worry about it. This is a process. This is a process. This isn't a meet to meet thing. This is a process. It's going to go through the whole year." So, at first I just said, "This guy is full of shit. He doesn't really know what's going on. He's read a few books. He's run a few himself. He doesn't really know exactly what's going on." So in the process, though, towards the end of the year, the end of the process, I noticed the other guys who had been improving were running the same; whereas, I was getting more and more rest and then I started running faster and faster and faster. So when it came time for conference and nationals, I would just go out there and run two miles and stretch because all of the hay was in the barn already. So there is nothing else to do. So just run a couple miles, stretch. Just do some strides, some drills, some real easy stuff, getting plenty of rest, eight to ten hours sleep a night, and then when it came to these bigger meets, I just realized I was in the best shape of my life. I had better energy, better recovery time than anybody else on the track so I could do more than one event and just kick butt,

and then that's when I got the trust, and I was like, "This guy, you know, he's doing me right. He's peaking me and all that other stuff." That's when the trust built up. It's over a long process. There isn't one specific thing. It's just one process...

Not only was trust built by the athlete trusting the coach but also by the coach allowing the athlete to have input and to use his/her own strategies as described below.

What I have noticed with our relationship, and I have seen others, is that in times that I was absolutely shocked, just scared, just this little rabbit in a big old, big old track. He would just act relaxed. Like, in one instance, we were at NCAA's in track. Actually, my first one I was favored to win. I was a sophomore in college...He said, "Ah, Julio, don't worry. Go out there and have fun, and just run to win." He didn't bore me with a bunch of strategies, a bunch of his old college stories. He just wanted me to be relaxed. That was his main focus. Rather than sit there and beat into me the perfect race plan, he said, "Do this" and I told him, "If I do not feel good after the first lap, with 300 meters to go, I'm just going to take off." I mean elbows and assholes, just run, and he had this dumbfounded look like why on earth would I not wait until the last hundred meters because it is more logical to wait until the last hundred meters, and I just said, "Just trust me. I feel with 300 meters out I can get a long steady kick." He didn't feel like he took it in. When I was out there doing my warm ups, I could barely stand up I was so nervous. I just felt weak. I felt like I couldn't pick up a five pound dumbbell. I look up in the stands, and he's sitting down laid back with his arms on the bleacher behind him, thumbs up, no problem. Get up, I do some strides. I look up and he's pacing, has both his hands on his face. He's sitting there just, he looked like he'd just saw a ghost. He just goes like this. He looks up and sees me looking at him with this like, "Damn it. I thought you were the big strong corner stone, the framework." He just took a deep breath. He just waved, thumbs up. I was like, "Well, I know he's nervous too, so that makes me feel better." And I ended up with 300 meters to go, and I just made the unexpected move, and I won my first NCAA championship. I mean, I would say that a lot of other coaches would have told me to screw off and run. If I felt bad, go with one hundred meters to go, and I don't feel like I would have won the race, but I mean, he let me do the feedback. I mean, he let me use my own race strategies in the biggest race of my life at the time. So, I mean, with the type of trust that has been built. I could say a whole bunch of small stories about workouts, but I just use this big one as the stories through the trust that was built throughout those two years before he let me go ahead without question what I felt like doing in the biggest race of my life at the time. (I: What was it like those two years before?) The two years before it was all learning experience. I told him I said, "You know, I'm going to learn about you, you are going to learn about me."

Another athlete spoke of her appreciation of her coach's openness in telling her that he chose her teammate as captain rather than her. The coach knew that she didn't need the title "captain" to be a leader on the team.

But he thought it was important for me to know that I was a leader on the team. He wanted me to know that the team thought of me too. I just thought that was great

for him to do...He knew me as a person wouldn't take that to heart about him not picking me so that's why he was able to tell me...He knew that and...it meant a lot to me especially my senior year.

Coach Knows How to Motivate Me

The coach knowing the athlete also included knowing how to motivate the athlete.

He's a good coach. Motivates me better than anyone I know. Really appeals to me. He knows what to do. He builds me up like you wouldn't believe...He can motivate me like that....Sam (coach) came up to me before the first contest and said, 'Come on, you got it. Trust in yourself. Just relax.' I was feeling a lot of pressure...but Sam just pulled me aside and said, 'Look this is not about you. This is about the team.' I'm a team-oriented person. He knows that. He watches me on the side of the pool when the guys are swimming. I'm screaming the loudest. He knows...He knew exactly what to appeal to. He knows me. He has observed me."

I think Glen knows how to read me a little bit better now. And, he knows he can scream at me and I'm not going to cry in the corner. It's not in my nature. He knows that.

Knowing My Coach Personally

Another aspect in which athletes experienced knowing the coach was through the coach's own personal self-disclosure. One athlete spoke of how he and his teammates gained a sense of respect for their coach, had a greater knowledge about who their coach was, and felt their coach was more relaxed following their coach's personal sharing.

He gave the best speech I have ever heard the night before that game...See none of us knew anything about this guy...We knew he had coached before but...We didn't know anything personal about him. I had known this guy for almost three years and I learned more about him in ten minutes than I did in that whole three years. I mean, he was a green beret. He was in the Olympics. He was an Olympic sprinter and ran. He alluded about running against the Russians....He gained more respect from us after that than he ever had since the time we knew him. I think it was just because we didn't know him! We didn't know who he was. He never talked to us. Then when you did try to talk to him you never knew if he might just explode...

(After the speech)...It was almost like he became alot more. He was so much more relaxed. I think all of a sudden he was more of a like go with the flow type person.

Not Knowing My Coach (Unpredictable)

When athletes knew the coach, the coach became a predictable and stable part of the athletes' environments. Yet, when the coach was not known to the athletes or was unpredictable, it was difficult, frustrating, confusing, and even depressing for them. The pitcher in this study spoke about the difficulty in adapting to a pitching coach change and emphasized the importance of the coach and the athlete becoming comfortable with each other.

Then my senior year I was trying to adapt to coach Morton's style and stuff so quickly that I think I just started fighting myself...I had so many different theories and never really got comfortable...I wanted to understand it so that when I went into the season that I was comfortable...You can only be with them 20 hours a week for four weeks in the Fall so you can't really sit down with them everyday and get comfortable because you really don't know each other. So when the season starts, yeah we know each other but we don't know each other well.

For a football player who never knew what kind of mood his coach would be in, performing under this coach was frustrating and hard on him as a player. It made communicating with him an undesirable option.

He would just flip out sometimes. You could just be talking to him and asking him a question...Simple things like, "Coach are we going to get any 'pooch' punts today?"

"WELL, YEAH, WE'RE GOING TO DO SOME POOCH PUNTS. WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'RE DOING? YOU THINK I'VE BEEN DOING THIS SHIT FOR 20 YEARS AND NOT BE..." I mean just go crazy over something like that. You are just like, "Yeah, I was just wondering. Can I get some water?"...it almost seemed like he was a little senile at times. He would just flip out sometimes...he would just go nuts. Or he might just answer the question like a normal person would but he was funny. He was real hard to talk to at times because you never knew what kind of mood he would be in. He might just pop off at you. It was hard to overlook at times.

Another athlete spoke of the uncertainty of whether or not to believe her junior college coach and the confusion in trying to understand him.

You never knew when he was serious. He would get done yelling at me at a game and we would be on the way home on the bus and I'd be like actually in tears going home and he would come sit down on the bus next to me and kiss my butt...And everyone on the team would be like shaking their heads because they were so sick of him always yelling at us to death and then kissing our asses. It was so weird.

When this athlete received a call from her junior college coach that a Division I coach was interested in recruiting her, initially she was more upset and confused by the contradictory actions of her coach than she was excited about her opportunity to play Division I soccer.

The first thing I said was, "That asshole!"...he was like ecstatic on the answering machine about me...He's like all excited for me, telling me, "This guy's going to offer you money. He wants you bad."...All of a sudden he was so happy for me and saying that I could do this when all along he had been telling me I couldn't do this. I wasn't good enough...I was like more upset because I couldn't understand how he could have cared like that. Like a total switch of Bert. My season's over. Happy to be done playing. And I hated him. And then here he is like so excited and happy for me and I call him and he's like kissing my ass on the phone...Like so happy for me and I was like I can't believe it. I was like so, more hurt by the whole thing because I'm like how could you be so two-faced because one minute you're telling me "I suck" and the next minute your are telling me "I can do this."

Season long confusion and eventual depression was what another athlete felt in going to practices where her coach's actions were unpredictable. In the last quote, she expressed her desire for her coach to be consistent even if the coach was hard on her and her teammates.

It was confusing. After awhile I was just so depressed I didn't even want to go to practice. My freshman year I'd call home to my mom. It was weird because I'd never ever been scared to go to practice, but it was so weird because you never knew what was going to happen. Like she was so unpredictable.

I just wish she would have been like hard all the time and you would know what to expect all the time.

This section revealed how important knowing the coach and being known by the coach are for athletes in their experiences of being coached. In the last section, athletes revealed ways in which they experienced authority or power in their coaches.

Theme Three: Authority/Power

A third theme of Authority/Power emerged from the transcripts as another aspect of the athletes' experiences of being coached. Authority and power were experienced at times as the coach imposing himself/herself upon the athletes. At other times, the coach's

authority was welcomed as a source of guidance for athletes. Still other times, athletes spoke of the process of confronting the coach's authority.

Authority/Power Imposed upon Me

One athlete felt the coach's power as an infringement upon him.

...but once success kind of got there, he kind of tried to protect me from all the elements, from all the agents, all the shoe people, all the other coaches that wanted to put in their two cents, and that's when he started getting into too much of a...too much of a coach that was stepping over his boundaries. That's where the negatives started coming in.

The coach's power could also be felt during times when the coach's intentions were to motivate the team.

But sometimes I've sat in that team room and thought to myself, "He's not motivating us. He's unleashing his pressure that he's getting from the athletic director"...I think he was feeling a little heat from the powers that be.....

The track athlete in this study also talked about two specific times he had to deal with his coach wanting him to put track ahead of his family. The first situation was when he wanted to visit his family during semester breaks. The second situation was when Hurricane Andrew destroyed his family's home.

...You know, you are a student-athlete here and I wanted to have the breaks of a student...So I would just want to go home on a long weekend...It's not that he (the coach) didn't allow it, but he really voiced his opinion strongly...And after awhile, I was, I mean he was wanting me to go home less and less and spend more time here (at school) to do more work, and he did the classic screw up. Once you get success, you train more to achieve more success, and we trained more and never achieved the success that I had my sophomore year...

...It's tough having somebody tell you to do this and do this because track is life when your family is paying ten bucks for a bag of ice, and, to me, that just didn't make sense.

Another athlete talked about the oppressive nature of a hierarchical system of coaching where the athlete had no say in how he was being trained and felt scared to question his coach's authority.

You know, I think that coaching, too much of a hierarchical basis-they're the coach, you're the diver. They're the boss; you've got no say, which I don't think

Authority as a Source of Guidance

The coaches' power and authority was experienced as a source of guidance, direction, and certainty for the athlete.

Some authority that applies to. Being coached, you gain respect for someone. That authoritative figure that's, basically, if you listen to them they know what they are talking about and if you take them for what they say and entwine it into what you are doing...and apply it it helps.

He'd tell you a certain way to do something and that is the way you do it and don't even think about questioning him and that's what I was used to.

Confronting the Coach as the Authority

Confronting the coach as the authority was another aspect that was often a difficult process for athletes to go through. A softball player spoke about the process she went through in deciding to communicate with and question her coach about things that were on her mind.

I wasn't sure, because I have a lot of respect for adults and I didn't want to go off on him cause you know that's just how I was brought up, but should I question him again? Should I tell him I'm unhappy? I mean this man has given me a scholarship, and I'm supposed to be doing whatever he said. It was a lot easier than it was the first time (I questioned him), but because he had pushed me that far, I kind of, I'm going to do this. I have to do this, get it off my chest. I realized how I felt after the first time and a lot of things had built up inside me again and....

I knew I had to do it and I realized at that time that I'm an adult too. I am a junior in college twenty-one something, twenty-two years old. I am allowed to. I am allowed to question if I don't feel something is working, that questions it. So we questioned him.

After questioning her coach, this athlete experienced a sense of freedom in getting her concerns off her chest.

I got it off my chest. I was a lot happier. I am glad he knows. He knows how a lot of us feel. He knows how I feel so maybe he'll do something, maybe he'll change. Or I just had to get it off my heart, my mind. So when I did that it was a big stress, a big burden let off. I felt I was more efficient in playing. I thought my game improved after that. It's amazing, but that's happened to me a couple times. Like if I was holding a lot of stuff in, as soon as I let it out, then wow, I'm free.

Thus, athletes experience their coach's use of authority in imposing and guiding ways, and some athletes find confronting the authority of their coach as a difficult yet potentially liberating experience.

Interaction Between the Themes and the Ground

The following quotes are presented as examples of the interaction between the themes and the ground of the experience of being coached. The first quote involves the subtheme Open-mindedness/ Communication/Trust; the second quote reveals the subtheme Guidance/Knowledge of What I Should Do; and the third quote provides an example of the subtheme Being Abandoned. Each of these subthemes are grounded by the athlete's template of Previous Coaches.

...I am so used to working hard for other coaches...no matter how much they yelled at you or whatever, as long as they are always truthful with you...but when I found out she lied to me or whatever, it's like I lost all respect, all trust, everything there...

That was the kind of coach that a lot of us were used to. They catered to our needs, whatever we wanted to work on, they were there. We didn't get that from the head coach (at our current school).

...I did not know what I was doing wrong. I asked her (first Division I coach) and she said, "You are 18 years old and you've been practicing for how long? and you should know." I am like, "Obviously I don't because I keep on doing it. Am I dropping my arm, I don't know what I'm doing and she didn't care. And I still didn't find out what I was doing...In high school if I did that...he (high school coach) would tell me, "This is what you are doing, now do it, and fix it." I'd do it and it would be over with.

The three major themes and their subthemes as well as the ground of the experience of being coached were revealed in this chapter using quotes from the transcripts of the athletes. In chapter five, these results will be discussed in relation to previous research.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the first part of this final section, the results of the present study are discussed in relation to previous research on the experience of other people, the athlete-coach relationship, effective communicators, and the meaning of coaches' behaviors. The latter part of the chapter contains conclusions and recommendations for coaches, sport psychology consultants, and sport researchers that were derived from the findings of the current study.

The Experience of Being Coached in Relation to the Experience of Other People

The structure of the experience of being coached revealed themes that were similar to Pollio et al.'s (1997) themes concerning the experience of other people. In their study, Benefit, Comparison, and Relationship were the figural themes of the experience of other people. The theme of Benefit with its subthemes of utility, emotional support, encouragement, annoying, frustrating, and hindering can be seen in the facilitating and disrupting presence of the coach in the present study's major theme There for Me/Not There for Me. The theme of Comparison (Pollio et al., 1997) could be seen in the current study as the ground of Previous Coaches in which comparisons and contrasts occurred between previous coaches and current coaches. The theme of Relationship (Pollio et al., 1997) was present in the theme Knowing and Being Known Personally where the coach and athlete went through a process of learning about one another as their relationship developed. The emergence of common themes between these two phenomenological structures provides support for the phenomenological approach.

While themes similar to those found by Pollio et al. (1997) emerged, these themes were structured in a slightly different form in the athlete's experience of being coached. The differences in the configurations of the two structures seem appropriate, however, considering the type of participants chosen for the present study, the nature of the question raised, and the unique interpersonal relationship that exists between a coach and an athlete. First, Pollio et al. did not select a specific pool of participants for their study. Eleven female and nine male adults ranging from 22-45 years of age were the participants in the study. In the present study, a specific group of participants was chosen to be interviewed about their experiences of being coached.

Second, the nature of the question in the Pollio et al. study focused on describing a time when the person was aware of another person: "Can you tell me of some times when you are aware of other people?" The nature of the research question in the present study, however, was centered on the process of being coached: "Can you tell me about some specific instances that stand out for you in your experiences of being coached?" The difference in the two structures seems to be related to the focus of the questions: an awareness of other people versus an awareness of the process of being coached. The similarity of the themes may best be understood by if one views "being coached" as a process of being aware of another person, in particular, the coach.

Third, the athlete-coach relationship involves a unique interpersonal relationship that usually extends over a period of several years and is set within the sport context of the coach as the knower and the athlete as the learner. In the Pollio et al. study, the research question did not presuppose a certain contextualized relationship. Thus, within the sport context, it might be expected that the theme Authority/Power would emerge as an aspect of this relationship while not necessarily being a major theme in the experience of other people. Based on this analysis, it is reasonable to expect that similar themes might emerge from these two research investigations amidst different phenomenological structures.

The Experience of Being Coached in Relation to Previous Sport Psychology Research

The themes and subthemes that emerged from this study are also consistent with previous research in the leadership and sport psychology literature. The two subthemes found in the present study Guidance/ Knowledge of What I Should Do and Care about Me were similar to two of the three variables Hersey and Blanchard (1977) suggested to be important in leader behavior: the amount of guidance and direction a leader gives and the amount of socioemotional support provided by the leader. Similarly, two of the coaching behaviors found by Chelladurai and Saleh (1978) to be most desired by athletes were training for competitiveness and providing social support.

The Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) is an instrument that has been used in previous research to shed light on athletes' preferred and perceived behaviors of their coaches. The LSS identifies five factors that have been interpreted to be important in the athlete-coach relationship. Each of these factors can be related to the themes found in the experience of being coached as graphically depicted in Table 3.

Training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback are coaching behaviors that have been found to be related to athletes' satisfaction (Rierner and Chelladurai, 1995; Schliesman, 1987; Horne and Carron, 1985; Chelladurai, 1984); a finding congruent with the experiences of the athletes in this study. An interesting discrepancy between the research using the LSS and the current study, however, is that while the LSS identifies certain factors that are important in the athlete-coach relationship, it is limited in its ability to understand the complexities of the athlete-coach relationship, in particular, the development of the template of being coached that is, perhaps, unknowingly formed by athletes as they move from coach to coach. A benefit of the phenomenological perspective of the experience of being coached used in the present study was the discovery of the process of how the athlete's template of being coached was formed and molded.

Table 3. Comparison of the Five Factors in the LSS and the Themes and Subthemes in the Experience of Being Coached

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)	Themes/Subthemes in the Experience of Being Coached
Training and Instruction	There for Me (Guidance/ Knowledge of What I Should Do)
Democratic Behavior	Knowing and Being Known Personally (Openness/Communication/ Trust)
Autocratic Behavior	Authority
Social Support	There for Me (Care about Me) Knowing and Being Known Personally (Openness/Communication/ Trust)
Positive Feedback	Knowing and Being Known Personally (Coach Knows How to Motivate Me)

Literature on the Relationships of Effective Communicators

The themes of Knowing and Being Known Personally and There for Me/Not There for Me revealed several important aspects of the athlete's experience of being coached. These included the coach understanding that unique differences between athletes exists, being open to athlete input, developing a two-way system of communication, being predictable, caring about the athlete, and developing trust with the athlete. The existing literature on effective communicators and effective leaders is consistent with these themes. For example, Yukelson (1993) emphasized that coaches who are good communicators accept individuals for who they are; establish open lines of communication; are consistent, fair, and truthful; (and) care about athletes as people outside of athletics.

Orlick (1990) has discussed the self-evident truth that each athlete has a different personality and a different background which is why it is critical for the coach to know his/her athlete personally. "What works for Jane does not necessarily work for Joe or Jill:

Different approaches are needed for different people...The best way to know (how to respond to an athlete) is to consult with the individual athletes" (Orlick, 1990, p. 134). To do this, a two-way system of communication where the coach is an "active listener" (Martens, 1987a) or "effective listener" (Pietsch, 1974) who cares about hearing the athlete's viewpoint is needed.

The development of trust between an athlete and a coach was described by participants in this study to be an integral part of the athlete-coach relationship. The long process of the athlete getting to know the coach, the coach getting to know the athlete, and the coach being there for the athlete was the means through which trust was built. In Stephen Covey's (1989) book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, he describes the amount of trust that is built up within a relationship by using the metaphor of an Emotional Bank Account. He suggests that deposits and withdrawals are constantly being made by those in a position of leadership to an Emotional Bank Account the leader has with those for whom they are in charge. Deposits are made to the account through acts of courtesy, kindness, honesty, and keeping commitments while withdrawals are made by being discourteous, disrespectful, overreacting, ignoring the other, betraying the other's trust, threatening the other, or attempting to rule someone else's life.

Covey's concept of an Emotional Bank Account is a metaphor that is consistent with the development or deterioration of trust with their coach as described by the athletes in this study. When a coach was dishonest, disrespectful, or lied to an athlete, the "Emotional Bank Account" that the coach had with the athlete became overdrawn. As a result, the athlete felt hostility and defensiveness toward the coach, and, perhaps, the need for emotional withdrawal in which the athlete endeavored to play for himself/herself. As one athlete stated: "...But when I found out that she lied to me or whatever, it's like I lost all respect, all trust, everything there. I think after awhile it was just like kind of 'screw her and I'll just work for myself.' " And as Yukelson (1993, p. 126) expressed, "It's very

difficult to regain someone's trust once it is broken." When deposits such as encouragement, care, and an openness to athlete input were made by the coach, the trust in the Emotional Bank Account grew. Consistent with Bennis and Nanus' belief that "Trust is the glue that maintains organizational integrity" (1985, p. 44), trust seemed to also be the glue that allowed the athlete-coach relationship experienced by these participants to develop.

Previous Research on the Coach as Authority and Knowing the Coach

One school of thought that exists within the coaching ranks is that the coach should avoid developing close relationships or friendships with his/her athletes and should be an "objective" individual who provides positive reinforcement for correct behaviors and punishment and/or instructional feedback for incorrect behaviors. From this perspective, the coach is assumed to be the ultimate authority on all matters dealing with how to play the sport, and his/her authority is not to be questioned by the athlete. This authoritarian (Lenk, 1977) or autocratic (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980) style of coaching creates psychological distance between the coach and the athlete. It is a hierarchical stance of coaching that puts the coach above the athlete and suggests that the most effective way to coach is to be an "objective" and detached figure who functions by providing knowledge and direction to athletes and motivates them by using various forms of reinforcement and punishment.

An interesting finding of the present study was the effect that coaches' self-disclosure had on athletes. As mentioned previously, the results of this study and previous sport psychology literature (Weinberg and Gould, 1995; Yukelson, 1993; Orlick, 1990; Martens, 1987a, 1987b) suggest that athletes desire a two-way system of communication with their coach that is open (active listening) and honest. Yet, only Martens (1987a) has mentioned the impact of the coach's self-disclosure on the athlete-coach relationship. The findings in this study suggest that a coach's self-disclosure may enhance the other three

areas of the athlete-coach relationship (two-way communication, openness to hear athletes, and honesty) because it allows the athlete to feel more connected to the coach. Perhaps this is because in the other three areas, the center of focus is on the athlete and his/her self-disclosing and not on the coach and his/her personal sharing.

When coaches self-disclose, they allow athletes to see their humanness. Showing their humanness, however, is a scary venture for many coaches. These coaches assume that athletes do not care about their personal lives. Thus, they are reluctant to show vulnerability to athletes, fearing that it might promote the development of a relationship with athletes that would make coaching the athlete difficult, resulting in a loss of respect from the athlete, or a loss of power in the relationship. While all of these fears have the possibility of becoming real, the present results suggest that it is important for coaches to also be aware of the powerful and connecting effect that sharing about themselves can have on their relationship with their athletes ("...[our coach finally] talked on our level like we were in it together kind of thing"). As Martens stated, "...to disclose yourself with the intent of building a better relationship...means you are being "real," being honest and genuine, first to yourself and then to your athletes...if you are not appropriately self-disclosing, your athletes will not share their thoughts and feelings with you" (1987a, p. 9). Self-disclosure by coaches is important to athletes, however, it is also crucial for coaches to be mindful of what and how much they self-disclose. Sharing all their personal thoughts and personal history may distance athletes from them just as much as a lack of self-disclosure. Determining what and how much to share with athletes is a constant process of risking and assessing--assessing one's own comfortability as well as the feedback provided by athletes.

Based on these results, it seems the athlete-coach relationship can be founded on one of three modes of communication: 1) hierarchical, one-way communication where the coach tells the athlete what to do and is not open to his/her feedback (Chelladurai and

Saleh's autocratic style relationship), 2) open, two-way communication where the coach actively listens to the needs and concerns of the athlete, or 3) dynamic two-way process of communication that includes both the coach and athlete sharing personal thoughts and history about themselves, a more egalitarian style relationship.

Confronting Authority

One of Orlick's suggestions (1990) in discussing team harmony is for athletes to confront coaches if they are "doing something that is affecting the team's performance" (p. 144). He encourages the athlete to "express both your concerns and your appreciation in an open and genuine manner" (p. 144). While this is certainly an important way of enhancing the athlete-coach relationship, results of the present study suggest that communicating to the coach openly and genuinely may not be as simple as it sounds because of the potential power the coach has over the athlete. For example, several athletes in the present study seriously contemplated how wise it was for them to openly express their concerns to their coaches because they feared possible negative consequences such as their coach not helping promote them to Division I colleges, reducing their scholarships, breaking up team cohesion, or similar repercussions. Thus, confronting the authority of a coach may be an issue which takes time, thought, and sensitivity on the part of the athlete.

Coach as a Source of Enjoyment and Lack of Enjoyment in the Sport

Previous studies suggest that when athletes received encouragement, positive reinforcement, and sound technical instruction from their coaches, they liked their coaches better, enjoyed their athletic experience more, and performed at higher levels (Martin and Hyrcenko, 1983; Smith and Smoll, 1990). In a similar way, results of this study indicate that coaches are an important contributor to the enjoyment or lack of enjoyment athletes experience in their sport. The coach has the potential to facilitate in the athlete a feeling of

embodied play and a love of the sport ("When I think of Jim...I just see soccer all in front of it. I see the love of the sport...With Jim it was like, play, have fun, love the sport."). In contrast, the coach can be disrupting to the athlete and be a source of lack of enjoyment for the athlete ("When I think of Bert, I think of him yelling...Bert was getting out anger...when he watched us play or coached us...I was like if this is the way it's going to be, then I don't want to play...I started hating the sport.").

One athlete nicely summed up the impact a coach could have on the enjoyment of playing sports:

I mean coaches have the biggest impact. I mean if you have a bad coach you are not going to want to play your sport. Coaches mean more than you think. People are like, "The coach is bad but you still go to a cool school"...if the coach is bad you are not going to enjoy yourself and you are not going to want to be there and you are not going to play the way you want to play because in your head you are not happy. If you are happy with your coaches, you will be happy playing.

Playing for the Self

Another interesting finding that was nicely detailed in this study was the process by which some athletes learned to play for themselves when they experienced their coach as either having abandoned them or disrupted them. Their response is similar to Orlick's (1990) suggestions for dealing with distractions. The coach's absence or disruptive presence can be a distraction to the athlete that leads him/her away from peak performance. As the athletes in this study noted, a sense of loss, frustration, confusion, or anger was felt until they decided for themselves that the coach was no longer a source of help to them. Being coached had become such an experience of abandonment or disruption to them that they finally resolved to just accept it and expect that their coaches wouldn't be a source of help and that they could only rely on themselves or their teammates. In doing this, they freed themselves up to focus on performing.

The Impact of the Coach Being There for the Athlete in Relation to Positive Reinforcement

While positive reinforcement has been found to be important in helping athletes perform better and feel guided (Smith, 1993), it is also clear that positive reinforcement cannot occur without the facilitating presence of the other person. There can be no positive reinforcement without someone there to administer it. In addition, if positive reinforcement were enough, then the coach providing positive reinforcement would be all that an athlete needed. This conclusion is not consistent with athletes' experiences discussed in this study. In fact, positive reinforcement was most meaningful when it came from someone whose presence was felt to be meaningful to the athlete (a coach who was "there for the athlete"). This situation was present in one of the transcripts where the athlete's trust with her coach was broken. After being lied to by her coach, the athlete questioned and doubted her coach's sincerity in the compliments that she was given. She experienced these compliments as the coach's way of "kissing up" to her which only created more resentment toward her coach.

...when I questioned her out about the problem or whatever, then she was like kind of like kissing my butt kind of thing, you know. Like she knew I had something on her so she wouldn't get on me too much, like just be mean to me don't make sarcastic comments. (Interviewer: But she was even more kind of discrete to you?) Oh, she'd always just, you know, tell me things that I wanted to hear, I thought, rather than telling me the truth...That's the thing that pissed me off the most.

Thus, positive reinforcement (the coach's compliments) was not experienced by the athlete as reinforcing but as deceptive, insincere communication which distanced the athlete further from her coach. This suggests that it is important for both researchers and practitioners to understand how the meaning of coaching behaviors is interpreted by athletes.

The Meaning of the Coach's Behavior for Athletes

The results of the present study suggest that understanding the impact of coaches' behaviors can best be understood from the athlete's perspective because it is the athlete who

creates meaning from these behaviors. Thus, similar actions by coaches can hold different meanings for different athletes. Based on this awareness, some critical comments on past research concerning the athlete-coach relationship are warranted. Past research examining the athlete-coach relationship has used various instruments to describe this relationship. The Coaching Behavior Assessment System (Smith, Smoll, and Hunt, 1977) is one instrument in particular that has been used to identify behaviors of coaches in sport settings. It allows researchers and coaches an understanding of overt behaviors that coaches use with their athletes; however, it is limited in its ability to assess the meanings those behaviors hold for athletes.

In the present study, several athletes discussed their experience of being yelled at by their coaches and the meaningfulness that such yelling held for them. One athlete talked about the importance of the coach yelling at her to keep her focused on what she needed to do to improve. In fact, she even said, "I need someone who is like on me all the time. As much as I hate getting yelled at, I don't think it sinks in. I can't have someone be nice to me all the time because other wise I'm really not going to do anything. If I'm doing something wrong, someone needs to yell at me to tell me to move my feet." Thus, for this athlete, being yelled at was experienced as undesirable yet necessary for her to improve; as really "caring for me."

In contrast, another athlete talked about her coach's yelling as something that took her out of her game mentally to where she couldn't play any more. "I couldn't even play my game because he was so hard on me...When you were touching the ball out there, you weren't thinking about going to the net you were thinking, 'I hope I'm going the right direction on this side of the field because otherwise I'm going to get yelled at in 10 seconds...' " For this athlete, being yelled at was both undesirable and unhelpful (actually detrimental) to her performance.

If the CBAS was being used to record observations of the coaches yelling in both situations, the researcher/observer might record both situations as "punishment" or "punishment and mistake-contingent technical instruction." Yet, the different meanings of the coaches' yelling that were constructed by the two athletes could not be deduced by simply assessing coaching behaviors. Another athlete confirmed the different meanings that being yelled at had for her with two different coaches. "...in high school, when I got yelled at I still played better, but it was like it was during the time that I didn't have any respect for my (college) coach that I didn't care what she said." In this situation, a lack of respect experienced from being lied to by the coach superseded the athlete's desire to respond assertively to her coach's yelling.

Thus, recording overt behavior of coaches (as with the CBAS) may not represent the most useful way to understand how athlete's experience being coached, and may miss or distort the meaningful effect that coaching behaviors have on athletes. This discrepancy was observed by Pollio (1984) in a study examining the percentage of concordance between students' self-reports and observers' behavioral recordings of the students' class behaviors. Observers recorded whether students were on-target (following along with the lecture content) or off-target (not taking in the lecture material). Results revealed that observers' recordings were consistent with students' self-reports only 68% of the time which means that 32% of the time the observers were inaccurate in their observations of student behavior! Pollio, thus, concluded that observing behavior has limited accuracy if one is trying to understand the classroom awareness of students.

Based on this information, it seems important for coaches to know their athletes, their needs, what is helpful to them, and when it is helpful, because each athlete is unique. Simply using reinforcement, instruction, or punishment without a knowledge of how these are experienced by the athlete may not be helpful. As Smith (1993) confirms, "the best way for a coach to find an effective reinforcer is to get to know each player's likes and

dislikes" (p. 28). As coaches come to learn about who their athletes are, they should be better able to help them perform in their sport, enjoy their sport, and get through tough times. In addition, it seems important to be mindful that behavioral assessment of athletes by coaches may not necessarily be the most useful indicator of what athletes' are experiencing.

Conclusions

Conclusions that can be drawn from this study are that: (1) athletes can experience their coaches as individuals who are there for them providing guidance, support, and confidence to facilitate their performances; (2) athletes can also experience their coaches as abandoning and disrupting them, thus, hindering their ability to perform; (3) when a coach is unpredictable and not known to athletes, athletes can experience an emotionally unstable environment (of confusion, frustration and, at times, depression) in which to train and perform; (4) when athletes experience an openness from their coaches (open-mindedness, open communication, and open sharing of themselves), they feel capable of developing trust in their coaches; and (5) when the authority of a coach is experienced, this authority can be felt by athletes as either an imposition on them and a disconnection with their coach or as a confident source of guidance in how to train and perform.

Recommendations for Coaches

The following recommendations for coaches, sport psychology consultants, and sport researchers are offered. The following are five recommendations suggested for coaches.

1) The coach should try to find ways to spend as much time together with the athlete as possible so that the coach and the athlete may better come to know and familiarize themselves with each other's approaches and philosophies of their sport. Although the

current NCAA 20 hour contact rule limits the amount of time coaches and athletes can spend together on the field, athletes and coaches may be able to get better acquainted with each other during meals or in personal one-on-one meetings.

2) The coach should consider talking with the athlete and his/her previous coach about their relationship since this may be a valuable source of information in getting to know, understand, and connect with the athlete.

3) The coach should keep in mind Covey's (1989) Emotional Bank Account metaphor of putting in honest, encouraging, courteous, and kind deposits with athletes and continuing to monitor whether the athlete's Emotional Bank Account is getting low or remaining high in trust and openness. Coaches may want to monitor this by asking themselves, "To what degree do I feel that I know and am connected with this athlete?" If the Account is getting low, it may be helpful for coaches to communicate this to their athletes in some way.

4) The coach should communicate his/her desire for openness with athletes by sharing episodes and experiences from his/her own life. This may allow athletes an opportunity to know, respect, connect, and be relaxed with their coaches.

5) The coach should provide the athlete both with structure and direction *and* a free voice with which to communicate.

Recommendations for Sport Psychology Consultants

Several recommendations for sport psychology consultants can be made from the results of this study. Sport psychology consultants may be able to:

1) help athletes enhance their performance by being a source of encouragement and wisdom with respect to how and when to communicate with their coach. As one athlete stated about confronting her coach, "I felt I was more efficient in playing. I thought my game improved after that...Like if I was holding a lot of stuff in, as soon as I let it out,

then, 'Wow, I'm free.' " Viewing sport psychology from this perspective is synonymous to Wrisberg's (1998) view of a sport psychology consultant as a "performance liberator" who helps athletes free themselves from the constraints and limitations that they experience as hindering their performance and, at times, their life.

2) help coaches be mindful of the constraints that new athletes face in adapting and adjusting to their coaches.

3) encourage coaches to get to know their athletes and vice versa.

4) encourage coaches to share things about themselves with their athletes.

5) help coaches identify ways to use their position of power and authority in a way that is helpful and non-threatening to the athlete.

Recommendations for Sport Researchers

For future research, the following two recommendations are made.

1) A phenomenological investigation of the coach's experience of coaching may serve to enlighten both athletes and sport psychology consultants on the experiential world of the coach.

2) Research methods such as phenomenology, case studies, and qualitative inquiry should be used in an attempt to understand the meaning of behavior. Just as coaches can easily become overly concerned with the outcomes in sports, and forget about the processes that created these outcomes, so too sport researchers can be misdirected by focusing on the manifested behavior of individuals and ignoring the person's meaning of experience out of which the behaviors stem.

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APPENDIX

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FORM B

CRP# _____

Date Received in ORC _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE**Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects**

(In accordance with institutional assurance of
compliance to DHHS, dated January 18, 1982)

I. IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT

DATE _____

Principal Investigator: Matthew S. Johnson
Ph.D. Student, Sport Psychology
1914 Andy Holt Avenue
The University of Tennessee
(423) 974-8964

Faculty Advisor: Craig A. Wrisberg, Ph.D.
Professor of Sport Psychology
344 HPER Building
(423) 974-1283

Title of Project: Athletes' Experiences of Being Coached: An
Existential-Phenomenological Investigation

Department: Cultural Studies in Education

Starting Date: Upon CRP approval

Estimated completion date: August 15, 1998

External Funding Agency and Identification Number: None

Grant submission deadline: None

II. OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

The objective of this project is to interview Division I collegiate athletes about their experiences of being coached. Research in the sport literature has suggested there is a discrepancy between the perceptions of athletes and their coaches (Huddleston, Ahrabi-Fard, and Garvin, 1995; Horne and Carron, 1985; Fisher, Mancini, Hirsch, Proulx, and Staurowsky, 1982). Other research has focused on ways to enhance coach-athlete communication and interaction (Barnett, Smoll, and Smith, 1992). However, there is a paucity of research on the collegiate athletes' phenomenological experience of their coaches. Therefore, in this study, the researcher will attempt to understand athletes' experiences of being coached using qualitative analysis methods.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Male and female Division I collegiate athletes from the University of Tennessee will be recruited for this study. Approximately five male and five female athletes will be interviewed to obtain their experiences of their coaches. The duration of this study for each participant will be one interview lasting approximately one and a half to two hours. There will be no limitation regarding age or ethnicity. No payment will be provided and participation will be voluntary. Incentives for participation will be restricted to personal feedback on the study findings.

IV. METHODS OR PROCEDURES

Each athlete will be interviewed in a private room in Room 135 of the HPER Building. The interview will be designed to elicit their experiences of their coaches. Specifically, the athletes will be asked one principal question: "Can you tell me about some specific instances that stand out for you in your experiences of being coached?"

I, Matt Johnson, will be advised and assisted on this project by Dr. Craig A. Wrisberg, an experienced professor in the Cultural Studies Department. I will rigorously follow the interview guidelines by asking the specified question and pursuing as needed additional information with suitable queries such as: "Tell me more about that", "Describe that for me", or "Is there anything more you want to say?"

I will audio tape the interviews and transcribe them at a later time. Themes will be extracted through qualitative research methods.

V. SPECIFIC RISKS AND PROTECTION MEASURES

Risk to the athletes is minimal and constitute the effects of being interviewed. The interview process will follow a strict protocol which entails asking the question as specified above. Any narrative answer or no answer at all will be accepted.

So that confidentiality of the participants will be preserved, I will sign a "Confidentiality Agreement" (attached). Audio tapes and typed transcripts of interview data will be locked in a filing cabinet in Room 135-B of the HPER Building (office of the principal investigator) and will be removed only for the purposes of qualitative analysis. Only the researcher and members of a qualitative analysis group will view the transcripts during the thematizing of the data. Following the thematizing of all the transcripts, each transcript will be placed in this filing cabinet until the study is completed since periodic checks of the verbal interview may be needed. Once the study is completed, these audio tapes will be erased.

VI. BENEFITS VS. RISKS

As stated earlier, the risks to the participants is minimal and the potential benefit of the research includes the feedback on study findings. The data should provide an enhanced understanding of one group of collegiate athletes' experiential relationship with their coaches.

VII. METHOD OF OBTAINING "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM PARTICIPANTS

Each athlete will receive a consent form, be asked to read it, and sign it if he or she is willing to participate in the study. (Please see the attached consent form).

VIII. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR

I am a doctoral student in Sport Psychology and have had previous qualitative interviewing experience on several projects.

Dr. Craig A. Wrisberg is an experienced researcher, professor, and supervisor of this project who has also had considerable experience in qualitative research.

IX. ADEQUACY OF FACILITIES TO SUPPORT RESEARCH

The Cultural Studies Unit in the College of Education offers adequate research space and data storage space for conducting this study.

X. RESPONSIBILITY OF PROJECT DIRECTOR

By the compliance with the policies established by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Committee on Research Participation, the principal investigator subscribes to the principles stated in "The Belmont Report" and standards of professional ethics in all research, development, and related activities involving human participants under the auspices of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

- a. Approval will be obtained from the University Committee prior to instituting any change in the research project.
- b. Development of any unexpected risks will be reported to the University Committee.
- c. A status report (Form D) will be submitted at 12-month intervals or as requested attesting to the current status of the project.
- d. Signed consent statements will be kept for the duration of the project and for at least three years thereafter.

Project
Director _____
Name

Signature

Date

Faculty
Advisor Name _____

Signature

Date

XI. DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW
COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The application described above has been subjected to departmental review and has been approved.

Department
Head

Name

Signature

Date

Chair, Departmental Review
Committee

Name

Signature

Date

References

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The Athlete's Experience of Being Coached
Informed Consent

This is a research study on collegiate athletes' experiences of being coached and is a partial fulfillment of my dissertation requirement. During this interview, I will ask you to talk about some of your experiences with your coaches. This interview will be conducted in a private room in Room 135 of the HPER Building, and it will last approximately one and a half hours. The interview will be audio taped, transcribed by me, and transformed into thematic categories. Whatever you say will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. At no time will your identity be revealed in published reports without your permission. In addition, I may wish to conduct a later one hour follow-up interview if additional information is required. Only university members of the research team will have access to the transcribed interviews in which your identity will not be known. The audio tapes and transcripts that are used for this study will be stored at the University of Tennessee for 3 years past the completion of this study. Then the audio tapes will be erased and the transcripts will be destroyed.

Your participation in this study is based solely on your interest and, thus, it is voluntary. If you have questions about the study and/or your participation, please call Matthew S. Johnson, M.A., 135-B HPER Building, at 974-8964. Once the study is completed, I will discuss the findings with you.

I, _____ (print name), understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice, and still obtain information about the study results in a later meeting.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witnessed _____ Date _____

The Athlete's Experience of Being Coached Project

Interviewer Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____ (print name), am taking part in the Athletes' Experiences of Being Coached Project.

I understand that as an interviewer in this project, I am expected to maintain the confidentiality of the persons I interview to the best of my ability. I understand that I may have access to personal and private information in the course of this project. I agree to treat this information in the way that I would want personal information about myself treated.

I will treat all information about the participants I interview as confidential. I will not discuss the information given me by participants with anyone other than project staff. I will keep the identities of participants strictly confidential, unless they have consented to have their names used in the report.

The issue of confidentiality has been discussed with me and I agree to the terms of this agreement.

Signed _____

Date _____

Approved _____

Date _____

VITA

Matthew Steven Johnson was born in Kokomo, Indiana on September 16, 1970. He attended St. Patrick's grade school and Lafayette Park Middle School for his early education, and graduated from Kokomo High School in June, 1989. In August of that same year, he entered the University of Notre Dame where in May, 1993 he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. In the Fall, he entered the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and officially received his Master's degree in August, 1996 in Physical Education, Exercise and Sport Science with an emphasis in Sport Psychology. He began his doctoral program at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in August, 1995. During this time, he was employed by the Men's Athletic Department as a graduate assistant to work with male and female varsity athletes in the area of mental training. In August 1998, he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree in the College of Education (Cultural Studies Unit) with a specialization in Sport Psychology. His future plans are to teach English in Japan, and then pursue an academic position at a college or university in the United States as a professor of Sport Psychology.

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