

COACHING EDUCATION

Preservice Coach Education Students' Rankings of Coach Characteristics: A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

Preservice coach education students (PCES) can provide valid insight into the most important coaching characteristics of the successful coach. Over the course of 21 academic semesters from 2002 to 2020, 1,464 PCES responded to a coaching characteristics survey while enrolled in a coach education course (CEC) at a university in the northern Rocky Mountain region of the United States. The PCES completed a survey that required the forced ranking of 10 coaching characteristics. The students' responses were compiled and analyzed for the categorization of the most important coaching characteristics. This study was to provide the opportunity for PCES to rank preferred coach characteristics, to determine whether significant differences existed between the coach characteristic rankings, and to establish if gender differences were present in the ranking of coach characteristics. Conclusions and recommendations are offered to contribute to the advancement of coach education and insight into the most valued coaching characteristics as determined by the PCES.

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Coaches' behaviors are the most important component affecting athletes' careers (Becker, 2009; Erickson et al., 2008; Vaughan, 2018). Unfortunately, research is limited on what coaching behaviors influence athletes the most. Coach education needs to be more realistic in relationship to the chaotic, multifaceted world of coaching (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Only then can coach educators develop a greater degree of relevancy for coaches and players at every level. Once achieved, a higher degree of personal reflection and interaction can occur. A similar process applies to preservice coaches as they share and debate reflective preferred coaching behaviors among their peers.

Coach Education

According to Cushion et al. (2006), coaches rely more on their own experiences and other coaches than on formal coach education (FCE). Today, through FCE there can be improved coaching practices and possibly strengthened short- and long-term objectives of sport participation (Cushion et al., 2003, 2006; Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2016; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Unfortunately, there continues to be disagreement even among professional coach educators (Kennedy-Clark et al., 2018) about how to implement the foundations of coach education, what foundations to implement of coach education, and when to implement the foundations of coach education.

While increasing in popularity in the last 20 years, the processes and roles of coach education at the entry level continue to be questioned (Kennedy-Clark et al., 2018). That observation reinforces the need for exploration of how coaches are educated in formal institutes of higher education (Gano-Overway & Dieffenbach, 2016). Additionally, as the evolution of coaching advances, there is a need to understand how FCE experiences can be improved to prepare coaches to meet the demands of their profession. Coaching education is ardently complex, fervidly idiosyncratic, and limited in continuity (Fawver et al., 2020). There are various conflicts in the literature (cf. Fawver et al., 2020 and Gano-Overway and Dieffenbach) from the very definition of professional coaching to the curricular content in coach education.

There is a gross underestimate of the scale of unqualified coaches and it continues to grow. For example, U.S. Department of Labor (Gano-Overway and Dieffenbach, 2016) statistics show the

employment of approximately 276,100 coaches in the United States in 2016. In contrast, Fawver et al.'s (2020) report of approximately 11 million youth participating in secondary school sports alone in 2016 makes this number seem underestimated. With Gano-Overway and Dieffenbach's (2016) totals, this makes for a nearly 40-to-1 ratio of players to coaches. Additionally, the Aspen Institute (n.d.) lists a breakdown by sport of player participation at different ages of youth. For example, it lists three youth sports (baseball, basketball, and bicycling) with over 4 million participants each; one sport, soccer, with over 2 million players; and three sports (gymnastics, tennis, and golf) with over 1 million. In 2019, US Youth Soccer's (n.d.) statistics show nearly 3 million registered players annually. By these figures alone, it is evident that the need for many more qualified, well-educated coaches exceeds the numbers reported by the U.S. Department of Labor. Unfortunately, many factors impede a unified front in the education of coaches (Gould, 2016).

According to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association and Aspen data (The Aspen Institute, n.d.), 7 of 10 youth sports coaches are not trained in even the six core competencies required to be a qualified coach. Those competencies are general safety and injury prevention, effective motivational techniques, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid, physical conditioning, concussion management, and sport-specific skills and tactics. Aspen officials (Bogage, n.d.) describe the issue as a public health concern with finding qualified coaches one of the largest challenges facing youth sports.

The lack of fiscal and administrative support for sport in the public domain also negatively affects coach education in institutes of higher education in the United States. The National Committee for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE, n.d.), in existence since 1995, has a foundation built by members in organizations such as the Program for Athletic Coach Education and American Sport Education Program. The NCACE staff provides coaching standards, examples of curricular specifics, and a professional process by which to evaluate institutes of higher education's attempts to offer coach education as a notable component of their curricula. Yet, a quarter of a century later, there are only 12 institutes of higher education that have accredited NCACE programs.

Coaching Characteristics

Coaches are responsible for developing athletes' mental, physical, technical, and tactical abilities while being expected to win (Becker, 2009). The art of coaching is less about order, prediction, or control, but it recognizes the complexity of sport and the need for creativity. Coaching interprets people as imaginative, evolving, living organisms. Therefore, the focus in developing coaches belongs on player-coach relationships and group dynamics. That process can assist in the construction of a deep, sincere understanding of each individual (Vaughan, 2018; Williams et al., 2003).

Stewart and Sweet's (1992) survey of over 400 coaches in the state of Montana determines educational and professional backgrounds for coaching, with a surprising 72% (288) response rate via U.S. Postal Service. This study's results show that most coaches have at least a bachelor's degree (94%), almost half have a degree in physical education (54%), and several teach in the school where they coach (87). However, these results look different in recent years. Today, there are challenges in finding and mentoring the numerous non-teaching coaches in many public schools as well as drastic changes in public school coaching (Woodall, 2017). Specifically, fewer teachers are willing to coach in their own schools (Woodall, 2017). This phenomenon has necessitated hiring individuals outside of the educational arena, creating even more issues related to variables such as the knowledge of the characteristics of young athletes and the willingness of coaches to learn, accept, and follow program rules and directives.

To continue, Stewart's (2014) survey of high school sport administrators (athletic directors and principals) determines the reasons for dismissal of coaches in the past five years and the primary weaknesses of young coaches. According to nearly 50% of respondents (84/179), poor teaching is the primary cause of dismissal. Similarly, Stewart and Koch's (2020) survey of over 400 coaches, with an approximately 25% (109) response rate, from a western U.S. university conference collects data in relationship to their general degree of education and their experiences in FCE programs. This survey shows that about one half of high school sport administrators have advanced degrees (undergraduate or master's) and less than one half have degrees in

anything related to coaching, exercise science, or teaching. As well, very few (4) have a minor or major in coach education.

Current and Former Athletes as Preservice Coach Education Students

In 2006, Bowes and Jones (2006) described the profession of coaching as “working on the edge of chaos” (p. 235). In the near 15 years since, the world of coaching has not diminished in complexity. Yet, it has been negatively affected by the reduction of trained teachers in the profession, the proliferation of elite teams, and private organizations with their own rules (Woodall, 2017). Many of those organizations have featured expanded seasons, overemphasis on specialization, elaborate facilities, eclectic coach education approaches, and the ever-rising costs of participation (A. L. Smith & Gould, 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising the structure of FCE remains chaotic with no unified agreement on its content, structure, or method of delivery.

Bowes and Jones (2017) recommend the use of players’ input in the development of future coaches’ personal approaches to coaching. This approach can greatly assist young coaches in understanding the chaos of coaching and how the eccentricity of coaching shapes their behaviors and attitudes. Through such involvement, novice coaches can initiate their own philosophical foundations of the profession. That process allows novice coaches to better understand not only their profession but also how players perceive their behaviors, the organization of the athletic structure in which they belong, and the many constituents to whom they are responsible. It is within this process that athletes’ preferred behaviors of their coaches play an essential role.

According to Anshel (2012), both current and former athletes are some of the most overlooked individuals for determining the variables associated with successful coaching. By projection, preservice coach education students (PCES) also represent an overlooked source of input on the development of future coaches. Players’ input is valid regardless of their age and/or experience (Anshel, 2012). The longer athletes participate in sport, the greater exposure they have to coaches’ behaviors. Unfortunately, players rarely have an opportunity to provide input on coaches’ behaviors during their athletic careers. Therefore, players must be given nonthreatening opportunities to

provide their observations to their coaches at the end of every season (Anshel, 2012).

Many professionals (Cushion et al., 2003; Cushion et al., 2010; Erickson et al., 2008) advocate the use of athletes' experiences in coach education. Past athletic experiences are primary factors in the evolution of coaches' development, attitudes, and beliefs (Cushion et al., 2003; Erickson et al., 2008), and athletes' personal interactions with their coaches have greater influence on learning than do their previous formal educational experiences (Erickson et al., 2008). Further, the use of previous athletic experiences may be a "lens through which new [coaching] knowledge is viewed" (Cushion et al., 2010, p. 69). While athletic experience may not be a requirement to be a coach, it remains a common factor at all levels of coaching (Cushion et al., 2010). Thus, the athlete-coach experiences are meaningful events in exposing the idiosyncrasies of the profession.

Recall

Research shows a significant amount of discussion concerning the use of human recall and perception. Human recall depends a great deal on individuals' perception or the process of recognizing, organizing, and interpreting sensory information (Gregory & Gombrich, 1973), and human perception is indeed both objective and reliable. One's perception of another's behavior is often more important than the behavior itself (Shaver, 1975). In regard to sport, when players are exposed to coaching behaviors, the effects of those behaviors on athletes are dependent on players' perceptions of them (R. E. Smith et al., 1978). To clarify, when the coaches exhibit certain behaviors, the athletes often interpret them with long-lasting results. Thus, the more meaningful the behavior, the easier athletes recall them. The athletes' recall of those behaviors creates more evaluative, cognitive, and affective reactions to the coach. Further, the perceived effectiveness of coaches is often based upon the athletes' recall of their coaches' behaviors (Smoll & Smith, 1989).

The art of coaching is best determined through examination of the "team's story" or the athletes' recall of coaching behaviors (Jones et al., 2003). Athletes' perceptions of coaching behaviors may even be related to team motivation and cohesion (Olympiou et al., 2008). As such, ignoring athletes' evaluation of coaching behaviors is problematic in the appraisal of coaching effectiveness (Jones, 2007).

Hence, the accusation that research has not adequately explored and interpreted coaches' subjective "life worlds" before developing recommendations for 'good practice' remains a valid one (Jones et al., 2003; Streaan, 1998).

Purpose of Study

While previous research has provided insight into coaching behavior, most of it has focused on sources of information other than the athlete. Thus, the primary aim of this study was to determine which of 10 preselected coaching characteristics were most important to PCES enrolled in a coach education course (CEC) at an institute of higher education. The secondary aims of this study were to establish if significant differences existed between the coach characteristic rankings and if gender differences existed in the ranking of coach characteristics.

Method

Participants

Over 21 academic semesters from 2002 to 2020, 1,464 PCES at a university in the northern Rocky Mountain region of the United States were selected to participate in the study. The PCES attended a lower division (freshman/sophomore) CEC at the university. The PCES were selected as a homogenous convenience sample primarily because of their enrollment in the CEC and status as a former or current athlete. Utilizing homogenous convenience sample allowed for focusing on individuals who share similar traits or specific characteristics. Further, it was assumed that PCES had past exposure to at least one coach and interest in at least one area of sport given their enrollment in a CEC. Thus, on the basis of the PCES' previous experience and knowledge (Bernard, 2002; Jager et al., 2017), a homogenous convenience sample was an appropriate sampling method because this population was best able to provide information on coach characteristics.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected from an introductory-level CEC. As part of the requirements for the class, focus activities were distributed to the PCES' at the start of class. The purpose of the focus

activities was to introduce a coaching-related topic and for PCES to complete an in-class activity. The results from the focus activity were used as a guide for the discussion for the next course meeting. Throughout the semester, 10 different focus activities were distributed and completed by PCES (Figure 1). One of the focus activities was associated with coach characteristics. This focus activity was used in data collection for this study and included the 10 most recognized coaching characteristics (Gilbert, 2017; Martens, 2012; Seefeldt, 1991). The focus activity was structured as a forced choice scale (Figure 1) and required the respondent to order certain variables; this eliminated neutral or repetitive responses (Jennings, 2007). In

Figure 1

Focus Activities From Introduction to Coaching Class

1. Demographics and description (words and/or phrases) of favorite and least favorite coach (no coaches' names allowed..... anonymous)
2. Ranking of coach characteristics^a
3. Hazing in sport – identification of required activities that could be identified as hazing
4. Time before a game – mathematical determination of practice time before first game
5. Sportsmanship scenarios (from Character Counts website http://www.partnerwithschools.org/character-education.html?gclid=EAIAIQobChMIuJH97sfX6wIVWx-tBh1wxQkOEAAYASAAEgLdo_D_BwE)
6. Favoritism (students required to define with specific examples)
7. Coaching scenario response 1 (cheap shot)... what would you do?
8. Coaching scenario response 2 (academic cheating)... what would you do?
9. Coaching scenario response 3 (breaking team rules)... what would you do?
10. Coaching scenario response 4 (bad parent at practice/after game)... what would you do?

^a Ranking of coach characteristics: This was the assignment used in this paper. Note, to counter order bias, we changed the sequence of the coaching characteristics throughout the semesters.

addition, the characteristics were reordered annually on the hand-outs for avoidance of order bias (Dueber et al., 2019; Harzing et al., 2009). The PCES were asked to force rank the 10 selected coaching characteristics from 1 to 10, 1 being the most preferred, 10 being the least preferred (Figure 2). The PCES relied on recalling past interactions with coaches to complete the survey. Thus, the ranking of coach characteristics was considered an exercise that used a reflective practice of past athletic experiences. Additional data collection included number of years of competitive play, gender, and both the number and highest level played.

Figure 2
Coach Characteristics

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A COACH?

(RANK THEM 1 FOR **HIGHEST**... DOWN TO 10 FOR THE **LOWEST**.)

(USE A RANK [1-10] ONLY ONCE)

Students using a ranking more than once will not receive class credit for the assignment. Remember, coaches at all levels are required to rank their athletes repeatedly. This exercise will prepare you for that expectation.

COACH CHARACTERISTICS: ^a	RANK:
A commitment to winning	
Development of players to play at a higher level of play	
The development of sportsmanship in players	
Fair & honest treatment of athletes	
Commitment to enjoyment of sport by players	
Knowledge of the rules of the sport they coach	
The ability to teach their sport	
Knowledge of the skills of the sport they teach	
Experience as a player of the sport they coach	
Prevention, care and rehabilitation of injuries to players	

^aOver the years/semesters, the order of the characteristics was randomly changed to avoid order bias.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized in the description and categorization of PCES information and additional data collected. The rankings of preferred coaching characteristics were averaged and compared; this determined which were ranked significantly different. Next, a nonparametric Friedman test was used for determination of differences of how coaching characteristics were ranked (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016). Given that the results from the Friedman test do not identify which groups are significantly different from one another, two-samples Wilcoxon rank sum tests were used with multiple comparison post hoc tests to determine the highest, middle, and lowest ranked coach characteristics. Additionally, differences between genders in the ranking of coach characteristics were ascertained with the Wilcoxon rank sum test (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016) comparing mean ranks between genders.

Results

The majority of the PCES were previous or current athletes at the time of data collection. PCES reported approximately 10 years (male = 10.53, female = 9.62) of competitive experiences (Table 1).

The gender ratio of PCES was 38% female and 62% male (Table 2). There was no significant difference in the average number of sports played during their secondary school years (Table 2). Further, most PCES competed at the high school varsity level (male 65%, female 60%), whereas about one quarter continued to compete at the collegiate level (male 25%, female, 24%).

The rankings of preferred coaching characteristics were averaged and compared; this determined which were ranked significantly different (Table 3). A nonparametric Friedman test determined if there were differences in how coaching characteristics were ranked. Overall results from the Friedman test determined that the differences among coaching characteristics were significant ($\chi^2_6 = 901.64$, $p < .001$).

Table 1
Years of Competitive Play by Year and Gender

Year	Males	Females
2002	11.04	10.18
2003	13.43	9.94
2005	12.58	10.10
2006	9.86	9.29
2007	9.60	8.64
2008	11.62	12.00
2010	9.91	8.86
2012	9.84	8.46
2013	10.23	9.82
2014	10.33	9.13
2015	11.28	9.16
2016	9.76	10.00
2017	11.08	10.17
2018	10.82	8.90
2019	9.12	9.66
2020	9.66	9.53
Overall <i>M</i>	10.63	9.62

Table 2
Number of Sports Played and Highest Levels

Gender	<i>n</i>	Avg. # sports played	Highest level played		
			College varsity	High school varsity	Other
Female	556	2.44	25%	65%	10% ^a
Male	908	2.46	24%	60%	16% ^b

^a Females: national team; professional; junior Olympics; junior varsity; club; junior varsity; U-16; U-14. ^b Males: national team; professional; semi-professional; high school junior varsity; U-16; U-14; middle school.

Table 3*Rankings of Coach Characteristics by Year/Semester*

Year/ semester	Coach characteristic rankings									
	Ability to teach	Fair & honest	Sportsmanship	Knowledge skills of the game	Enjoyment of players	Get players to higher level	Knowledge of rules of the game	Injuries: care & prevention	Commitment to winning	Experience as a player of sport coached
2002	2	1	3	5	4	7	6	9	9	10
2003/04	1	4	2	3	7	8	5	6	10	9
2005	1	2	4	3	5	6	7	8	9	10
2006	1	2	3	5	4	7	6	8	10	9
2007	1	2	3	4	7	8	5	6	9	10
2008	1	2	4	3	6	7	5	8	9	10
2009	1	2	4	5	3	6	5	8	9	10
2010 sp	1	2	4	3	5	8	7	6	9	10
2010 fall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2011	1	3	2	4	5	7	6	8	9	10
2012	3	1	2	4	5	8	7	6	9	10

Table 3 (cont.)

Year/ semester	Coach characteristic rankings									
	Ability to teach	Fair & honest	Sportsmanship	Knowledge skills of the game	Enjoyment of players	Get players to higher level	Knowledge of rules of the game	Injuries: care & prevention	Commitment to winning	Experience as a player of sport coached
2013	1	4	3	2	8	5	6	7	9	10
2014 sp	1	4	3	2	7	6	5	8	10	9
2014 fall	1	4	2	3	5	8	6	7	10	9
2015 sp	4	1	2	6	3	8	7	5	10	9
2015 fall	1	2	3	4	6	8	5	7	9	10
2016 sp	1	4	2	6	3	3	8	7	9	10
2017 sp	1	2	4	3	5	8	5	6	9	10
2018 sp	4	1	3	5	2	8	6	4	10	9
2019 sum	1	3	2	6	4	9	5	8	10	9
2020 sp	4	2	3	7	1	8	5	6	10	9
<i>M</i>	1.57	2.38	2.9	4.14	4.76	7.09	5.9	6.95	9.38	9.61
Sign diff:	Top 1/3	Top 1/3	Top 1/3	Mid. 1/3	Mid. 1/3	Bottom 1/3	Mid. 1/3	Mid. 1/3	Bottom 1/3	Bottom 1/3

Because the results from the Friedman test do not identify which groups are significantly different from one another, two-samples Wilcoxon rank sum tests were used with multiple comparison post hoc tests. On the basis of the outcomes, three characteristics were ranked significantly higher, four characteristics were ranked significantly in the middle, and three characteristics were ranked significantly lower. All significant results were at $p < .001$ (Table 4).

There were no practical differences found between genders. Those comparisons were made through comparisons of mean ranks with the Wilcoxon rank sum test (Table 5). Although there were some significant differences, the actual differences between means were very small. The effect sizes for mean differences were calculated none greater than .20 or a very small effect (Cohen, 1988) were found.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to determine which of 10 preselected coaching characteristics were most important to PCES enrolled in a CEC at an institute of higher education. The results of this study show the most important three coach characteristics are ability to teach, being fair and honest with players, and stressing sportsmanship. Similarly, the results from the Boardley et al. (2008) study show that coaches who have a strong ability to provide instruction, instill fair play, and promote sportsmanship positive affect numerous player variables.

Understanding which characteristics are most important to PCES has implications in coach education. Specific curriculum development and close examination of motivation and behavioral emphasis should stress the top preferred coaching characteristic, being a good teacher, while downplaying the least preferred, winning.

However, this may be an educational challenge for many reasons (Gould, 2016). This study shows that vigorous debate may ensue, especially in relationship to traditional characteristics as winning or getting players to the next level of competition. Loud minorities may forcefully argue that stressing winning and coaches' past playing experiences are more important. Likewise, teaching is often looked upon as a genetic skill that one is either born with or not. In conclusion, like coaches, coach educators should be good teachers first and content specialist second. In addition, coach education should be

Table 4*Final Mean Rankings (Most Important to Least)*

Characteristic	<i>M</i> rank
Significantly higher three characteristics	
1. Ability to teach	4.27
2. Fair & honest with players	4.65
3. Stress sportsmanship	4.71
Significantly middle characteristics	
4. Knowledge of skills of sport coached	5.08
5. Having players enjoy their sport	5.30
6. Knowledge of the rules of sport coached	5.62
7. Preparing players to advance to higher level	5.68
Significantly lowest characteristics	
8. Prevention, care of and rehabilitation of injuries	5.71
9. Stressing winning	6.83
10. Experience as player of sport coached	7.14

Note. All significant results were at the $p < .001$ level of probability.

Table 5*Preferred Rankings by Gender (F = 556; M = 908)*

Coach characteristic	Females (<i>n</i> = 556)		Males (<i>n</i> = 908)	
	Rank	<i>M</i> rank	Rank	<i>M</i> rank
The ability to teach	1	3.8	1	4.4
Stressing sportsmanship	2	4.2	3	4.7
Knowledge of the skills of the sport coached	3	4.7	5	5.2
Fair & honest treatment of athletes	4	4.8	2	4.5
Knowledge of the rules of the sport	5	5.2	8	5.7
Enjoyment by athletes	6	5.5	4	4.9
Prevention & care of injuries	6	5.5	6	5.5
Preparation of players for high levels	8	6.15	6	5.5
Experience as player of sport coached	9	7.3	10	7.3
Stress winning	10	7.4	9	6.8

individualized in relationship to the context of the sport program, its prioritized goals, and how success is defined.

From the results, it is obvious that experienced athletes of both genders highly value coaches who can teach. Teaching is a learned skill, not a genetic trait, and it must be a higher priority and emphasized above all other coaching characteristics. In addition to good teachers, PCES value coaches who are fair and honest in all aspects of their relationships. Yet few organizations have clearly defined coaching expectations in the vague areas of moral development. Moreover, PCES want their coaches to teach, model, and stress sportsmanship. Yet sport at many levels continues to be overtly or covertly a “win-at-all-cost” endeavor (Hyman, 2010) in which many offenses are expediently overlooked.

Limitations

As with any study, this study has limitations. One limitation was this study’s use of a homogenous convenience sample for participant sampling. Convenience sampling has recognized limitations such as the ability to generalize the results to the broader population and the possibility of underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a specific population. Yet, according to Jager et al., (2017) the use homogenous convenience sample as a sampling method is important when it comes to understanding population characteristics as well as subpopulation differences. PCES represent the most likely source of future coaches; therefore, it was necessary in this study to understand their perceptions more than other subpopulations’.

The use of recall is another limitation of this study. PCES were asked to recall their past experiences with coaches and to determine which of the 10 listed coach characteristics were most important to them. While the use of recall has limitations, when coaches exhibited certain behaviors, the athletes often interpret them with long-lasting results (Smith et al., 1978). Thus, the more meaningful the behavior, the easier athletes recall them. Such is the case in this study, not only are the PCES mostly former athletes, many plan to become coaches in their near future and may be more apt at recalling coaching characteristic than others who are uninterested in coaching.

Future Research

The findings from this study indicate that PCES find the ability to teach the most important characteristic of a coach. Thus, future coaches need to be taught “how” to teach. had suggested that coaching, like sport itself, should be categorized on the basis of the program objectives (Lyle, 2002). The profession can be separated into two distinct areas, participation and performance coaching, each unique, and it is imperative that the right coach be matched to correct level of coaching (Lyle, 2002). Yet coach education habitually exemplifies a one-size-fits-all approach that too often reflects the saying “Coach education means too little to any, until their child gets a bad one.” Additional research should examine potential and current coaches’ skills and objectives and how that relates to administration, parent, and athlete objectives and goals.

The complexity of coaching demands a more integrated examination of that profession (Gilbert & Côté, 2009). This may entail a multifaceted examination of a three-tiered structure. Those levels relate to coaches’ knowledge, athletes’ outcomes, and coaching context. Within those levels, good teaching is the overlying commonality. The expertise in teaching spans the frameworks of professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal coaching knowledge. Teaching of rules and skills, intercommunication abilities with players, other coaches and administrative/support staff require a higher level of pedagogical expertise (Gilbert & Côté, 2009).

Conclusion

According to the late, great John Wooden, a coach is first and foremost a teacher (Wooden & Walton, 1998). And at one time, many coaches in the public schools were professionally trained teachers. The aim of this study was to determine which coaching characteristics PCES found to be most important. According to the findings from this study, the top tier characteristics of a coach are related to being a teacher first. Furthermore, there are implications from the findings of this study to support the importance of and need for coach education. A pervasive myth that teaching is genetic, that teaching cannot be learned, has hindered coach education. Yet findings from this study indicate that teaching is the most valued

characteristic of a coach. Therefore, the importance of teaching and providing the opportunity for coaches to learn how to teach is vital to the practice of coaching.

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