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# Coaching Behaviors and their Impact on Burnout of High School Athletes

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**Coaching Behaviors and their Impact on Burnout of High School Athletes**

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**A Synthesis Project**

**Presented to the**

**Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education**

**The College at Brockport**

**State University of New York**

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**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree**

**Master of Science in Education**

**(Athletic Administration)**

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**By**

**Zachary Monell**

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THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT  
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Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education

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### **Abstract**

Through sport activity, coaches can impact, effect, and influence their athletes in many ways. The purpose of this synthesis was to review the literature on coaching behaviors and their impact on burnout of high school athletes. There is an association between controlling coaching behaviors and athletes' negative experiences in their respective sports. Negative experiences, such as emotional abuse, is a key issue that was brought up in youth sport that can have long term effects on athletes. Coaches may not know the impact that they have on athletes. Coaches may think that they are motivating the athletes, but in fact they may be discouraging the athletes by a lack of communication on their performance. Research has indicated that athletes themselves serves as the dependent variable in terms of the effect controlling coaches have on athlete burn out. The key categories found in this synthesis are coaching behaviors, controlling coaching behaviors, and athlete mental toughness and burnout.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The purpose of organized sport is to promote an enjoyable mode of physical activity for athletes as well as establishing the physical health benefits that go along with the sport (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Physical activity is more than getting ones' heart rate up. There are many benefits to physical activity through competition. Competing in a sport has been shown have a positive impact on student-athletes. Some examples include those that participate in sports are positively linked to better cognitive functionality, they perform better academically than non-athletic peers, and that it supports academic achievement through the structured schedule to assist with task completion (Blom, Bronk, Coackley, Lauer, & Sawyer, 2013). There are positives through competition. Through competition, athletes will experience strong emotions, such as anger and anxiety. Athletes are able to manage these emotions better (Blom et al., 2013).

Coaches play an important role in sport at every level of participation. The athletic environment is an environment where a coach can have a strong influence on the athletic experience that their athletes have. Including their enjoyment level, memories of playing time, overall well-being, preparation to continue competition, and the strategies the athletes use to set and attain performance goals (Buning & Thompson, 2015). Their behaviors, standards, and goals contribute to the motivation and development of the participating athletes (Conroy & Coatsworth, 2007). Research has demonstrated that athletes are affected by their coaches' behaviors, motivation tactics (both positive and negative), and athlete perfectionism variables (Buning & Thompson, 2015). Coaches can have a critical role in the psychological development of the sport participants (Ye Hoon, Seunghyun, & Youngjun, 2017). One aspect of psychological development is mental toughness. According to Madrigal, Gill, and Willse (2017) mental

toughness is defined as “being able to cope with the pressures of sport while remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control” (p. 69). Athletes who possess strong levels of mental toughness have more control over situations, commitment to the team, challenge the situation (believing that events are changeable), and are more confident (Nicholls, Morley, & Perry, 2016). Though there are many stressful situations in sports, an athlete that is mental tough may alter how they perceive and respond to stress (Madrigal et al., 2017). Both coaches and athletes strive to enhance their mental toughness because it “has been related to lower perceived stress and the use of problem-focused or approach coping rather than avoidance coping” (p. 70). Mental toughness also relates to hardiness and optimism, where these characteristics suggest to be conceptually related either as a correlation or outcome of being mentally tough (Madrigal et al., 2017).

Research indicates that there is a correlation between coaching behaviors and athletic performance (Gucciardi, Stamatis & Ntroumanis, 2017). For example, Gucciardi et al. (2017) found that controlling coaching behaviors contributed to stronger mental toughness in athletes. In addition, coaches can influence the psychological response from their athletes by performance-related feedback. The quantity and quality of feedback provided by coaches and what is or what it not said has an influence on athletic performance (Amorose & Nolan-Sellers, 2016). However, coaching behaviors can also have a negative impact on athletic performance and can increase the likelihood of athlete burnout leading to athletes quitting their sport. This in turn reduces the number of athletes participating in sports (Barcza-Renner, Eklund, Morin, Habeeb, & Morin, 2016).

The understanding of the factors that influence athletes and how they act around their coaches can have a long-term impact on their relationship and sport participation. At the youth

level, a “bad” coaching experience can result in athletes quitting the sport. Coaches whose behaviors are perceived as controlling tend to place more of an emphasis on winning rather than encouraging daily improvement (Barcza-Renner et al., 2016). Contrarily, a “good” coaching experience can have a positive impact on athletes resulting in persistence in sport participation and enjoyment of the game. Coaches play a significant role in the shaping of character by the environment that their athletes experience (Ye Hoon et al., 2017). This can have a significantly positive impact on the athletes and their long-term look at sports and how they view their coach. Identifying the different coaching styles that can be utilized in the relationship between athletes and coaches is key.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Every athlete responds to coaching styles differently. Understanding the impact of coaching behaviors on athlete performance and sport persistence is essential to promoting long term sport participation and minimizing athlete burnout.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this synthesis is to review the literature on coaching behaviors and their impact on burnout of high school athletes.

### **Research Questions**

The following are questions that this synthesis will answer:

1. How do the athletes react to their coaches’ behavior?
2. What is the impact on coaching behaviors as it relates to burnout in high school athletes?

### **Optional Definitions**

The following presents the operational definitions used in this synthesis:

1. **Coaching Behaviors:** Refers to how the coaches interact with their athletes in practices and games (Nicholls et al., 2016).
2. **Burnout:** An aversive chronic experiential state that can develop when individuals undergo prolonged exposure to stress (Barcza-Renner et al., 2016).
3. **Sport Persistence:** Refers to the sustained participatory involvement, defined as continued participation in sport (Calvo, Cervelló, Jiménez, Iglesias, & Murcia, 2010).
4. **Democratic Behavior:** Refers to the involvement the coach provides greater opportunities for the athletes to participate in a group decision-making process, such as practice schedule, game strategies, and team rosters (Yee Hoon et al., 2017)
5. **Autocratic Behavior:** Refers to a top-down management style, with the leaders making all the decisions and members being expected to follow those decisions (Yee Hoon et al., 2017).
6. **Social Responsibility:** Refers to the “set of prosocial values representing personal commitments to improve one’s community and society” (Yee Hoon et al., 2017, p. 1387).

### **Delimitations**

The synthesis is delimited to the following:

1. Research on coaching behaviors and its’ impact on burnout of high school athletes.
2. Research consisted of both male and female participants.
3. All sports were considered for this review, not just one specific sport.
4. Peer reviewed articles from 2007-2017.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methods**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the methods used to find literature on coaching behaviors and its' impact on burnout of high school athletes. The studies collected for this synthesis were located using the EBSCO database from The College at Brockport's Drake Library. Within the EBSCO database the following databases were searched: SPORTDiscus and Physical Education Index. Within these databases a total number of 15 articles and sources met the criteria for inclusion as part of the critical mass within this literature review. In order for an article to meet the criteria for selection in this synthesis it must have been published between 2007-2018, this will provide the synthesis with the most up to date and current information available. Other criteria for selection included scholarly and peer reviewed articles that were full-text. Having scholarly and peer reviewed articles provides more validity within the articles and better overall quality. Other articles or sources selected as part of this literature review provided context about the topic, background information and supplemental information to complete the review. All articles and sources are appropriately cited in the reference section of this paper.

#### **Data Collection**

In order to gather valuable articles for this synthesis certain keywords and phrases were used when searching the data-base. The first keyword searched was "coaching" which yielded 4,022 articles that were peer-reviewed and were academic journals ranging from 2007-2018 from SPORTDiscus (EBSCOhost). This was the first and main topic searched because it is most relevant to the purpose of this synthesis, which is to review the literature on controlling coaching behaviors. Using the keywords "coaching + impact" resulted in 552 articles and "coaching + impact + athletes" resulted in 204 articles. Searching for the "athlete burnout" resulted in 263

articles. Under “controlling coaching behaviors”, there were 35 articles that appeared. Using keywords “controlling coaching behavior + athlete burnout” resulted in two articles. The final keywords and phrases searched included “coaching behavior + athlete burnout” resulted in 12 articles. Also, when selecting articles for use in this synthesis it was important that each article selected had valuable information on the consequences of controlling coaching behaviors and athlete burnout.

Specific criteria were used in order to be a part of the literature review. All of the articles selected were related to athletics. The participants in the articles were both male and female athletes and coaches that had participated in one or more sports at one point in their high school athletic career.

Continuing this process for the other keywords listed above in the other databases, I was able to find 15 solid articles that relate to my synthesis and topic. There were other articles that I would have liked to have used for this synthesis, however EBSCOhost could not find the original piece of work and I was only left with the abstract of the article.

### **Data Analysis**

For this synthesis, a total of 15 articles were used to compile data for the topic of controlling coaching behaviors and burnout. There were nine different journals used for this synthesis. Two of the journals provided multiple articles, while the other seven provided single articles. The International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching provided four articles and the Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal provided two articles. The journals that provided single articles used for this synthesis include the Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, Sport Science Review, Psychology of Sport & Exercise, Journal of Science & Medicine in Sport, Strategies (A Journal for Physical and Sport Educators), Spanish Journal of

Psychology, and JOPERD: The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, Journal of Sports Sciences.

The types of articles used in this synthesis include ten quantitative articles, two qualitative article, and three research review articles. In the majority of the articles the data was analyzed through surveys, questionnaires, and grading scales. This included using the Coaching Feedback Questionnaire (CFQ), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the Controlling Coaching Behaviors Scale (CCBS), Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS), Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS-H), Autonomy-Supportive Coaching Questionnaire (ASCQ), Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ), Perceptions of Coaches' Interpersonal Behavior Questionnaire (PCIBQ), Behavioral Regulations in Sport Questionnaire (BRSQ), Leadership Scale for Sports (LLS), Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationship Scale (BNSRS), Basic Need Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSGS), Comprehensive Meta-Analysis, Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML), Health Care Climate Questionnaire (HCCQ), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire-6 (BRSQ-6), Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale (MDSS), Personal Response System (PRS), and the Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Sport Scale (PABSS). In the qualitative article, an interview process was used to examine the stressors within sport coaching. In both research reviews, they describe the importance of youth sport, coaches, and how coaching behaviors impact athletes.

The critical mass for this synthesis is comprised of 2,523 total participants. Within the 15 articles used for the literature review there was a total of 615 males, 896 females, and 1,012 participants that did not have their gender identified in the surveys or questionnaires. There was one article that had twelve different parents complete the questionnaires, but other than that the ages of the participants ranged from 7 years old up to 30 years old. Every participant was

currently playing at least one sport or more, or previously had played one sport or more.

However, the majority of the articles in this study focused on youth and high school athletes.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature on athlete burnout and controlling coaching behaviors. More specifically the following topics will be reviewed: coaching behaviors, mental toughness, and athlete burnout.

#### **Coaching Behaviors**

According to Nicholls et al. (2016), coaching behavior “refers to how coaches interact with their athletes” (p. 172). Coaches and their behaviors play a vital role in a team atmosphere as they can create the ideal condition for players to achieve their fullest potential (Hyun-Duck & Cruz, 2016).

According to Gervis, Rhind, and Luzar (2016), non-contact behaviors by coaches and those that possess power are potentially harmful to their athletes. For example, emotional abuse includes physical and/or verbal statements, as well as denying attention/support to those that need it. Which can be harmful to an individual’s behavior or physical well-being.

Buning and Thompson (2015) believe that coaches’ behaviors can influence the self-determination motivation of their athletes. The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine female softball athletes’ perceptions of how their coaches’ behaviors influence their motivation. This study used 12 structured open-ended interview questions to examine the athletes. Participants included 41 female athletes that participated in softball. The findings in this study concluded that 87.8% of the athletes were predominantly self-determined to participate. The athletes were motivated to play for their current team due to the value placed on the teammate relationships, excitement or enjoyment of the sport, and to be the best or win. There were three superordinate themes that emerged from at least 44% of the sample that included perceived

confidence, coach-related factors, and perceived communication between the coaches and athletes. 90.2% of the participants believed that their current head coach influenced their competence level during instruction sessions or after a skill performance. An outcome of this study demonstrated that coaches' behaviors and words enhanced athlete motivation and confidence when the athletes were able to perform successfully.

In a similar study, Conroy and Coatsworth (2007) looked at the autonomy support style of coaching as a component of the motivational climate for athletes. The purpose of this study was to examine the psychometric properties of the Autonomy-Supportive Coaching Questionnaire (ASCQ) through autonomy-supportive coaching perceived by their athletes. The participants included 165 athletes from a summer recreation swimming league that aged from 7-18 years of age. There were 66 males and 99 females. The average age was 11.2 with a standard deviation of 2.2 years. The researchers used five different instruments to evaluate the participants which included the 9-item ASCQ, the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS), the 12-item Perceptions of Coaches' Interpersonal Behavior Questionnaire (PCIBQ), the 21-item Basic Need Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSGS), and the 9-item Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationship Scale (BNSRS). Each of the questionnaires evaluated something different. The ASCQ was developed to assess two different forms of autonomy support: the interest in the athletes' input and praise for autonomous behavior. The CBAS assessed the reactive and spontaneous behaviors corresponding to reinforcement, nonreinforcement, encouragement after mistakes, mistake-contingent technical instruction, punishment, punitive technical instruction, ignoring mistakes, keeping control, general technical instruction, general encouragement, organization, and general communication. The PCIBQ evaluated commonly observed coaching behaviors. The BNSGS evaluated satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in life.

The BNSRS assessed the extent to which athletes felt that their coaches were satisfying their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their instruction. Through all of the questionnaires, the results demonstrated that the athletes' favored autonomous coaching behaviors. The results demonstrated that coaches who praise their athletes for decisions that they make, attitude, and effort in practice created positive behaviors among their athletes. This suggests that the athletes value their coaches' behavior and that the autonomous behavior is important to their attitude and effort.

Thelwell, Wagstaff, Rayner, Chapman, and Barker (2017) define stress as “an ongoing process that involves individuals transacting with their environments, making appraisals of the situations they find themselves in, and endeavoring to cope with any issues that may arise” (p. 44). The researchers in this study looked at stress factors created by coaches and how that influences/impacts their athletes. This study is important and related to other literature because “not only have athletes reported their stress to be influenced by the behavior and actions of coaches, but coaches themselves also acknowledge how their negative reactions to stress can affect athletes” (p. 45). The purpose of this study was to provide a systematic examination of how athletes respond to coach stress. The participants in this study consisted of 13 athletes (9 males and 4 females) representing five different sports (5 soccer, 3 cricket, 2 hockey, 2 athletics, 1 rugby union). The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 years old. In this study, the participants were interviewed by the same researcher to keep consistency. The researchers transcribed the interview data and coded key words, phrases, quotes, and sayings for each of the main interview questions. From the results, there were three major categories that were produced. These categories included signals of coach stressors, effect of coach stress on athletes, and coach effectiveness. Through signals of coach stressors, the participants felt a negative

change in their coaches' verbal communication, negative behaviors when talking, and negative physical appearance when talking. Effects of coach stress on athletes resulted in negative personal nature, that included reduced confidence, increased negativity about self-worth, and demotivation. Coaching effectiveness resulted in reduced competence that related to poor strategy and decision making, indifferent technical advice, and being unable to motivate others. This study proves that coaches and their behaviors have a tremendous impact and effect on their athletes.

In a related study, Amorose and Nolan-Sellers (2016) explored the importance athletes place on the behaviors their coaches moderate the relationship between athletes' perceptions of their coach's feedback and their own perceptions of competence. The participants of this study included 155 female softball players that were aged between 17 and 30 years of age. The average age was 21.26 years old with a standard deviation of 3.08 years. This study used a questionnaire to evaluate perceptions of competence, perceived coach feedback, and perceived importance of coach feedback. The questionnaire utilized the Coaching Feedback Questionnaire (CFQ), as well as two 7-point scales. The first 7-point scale was used for perceptions of competence (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The second 7-point scale was used for perceived importance of coach feedback where higher scores indicated greater endorsement that the coaches' behaviors were important. Overall, the relationship between coach feedback and perceived competence was varied by the importance that each athlete placed on the coach. While analyzing the extent athletes perceived their coaches to ignore their performances revealed that the importance placed on the coach was a positive predictor of perceived competence and the frequency that athletes perceived their coaches ignore their performances was a negative predictor. The results support the importance that athletes placed on the coach to moderate the

magnitude of the relationship between coach feedback patterns and athletes' perceptions of competence.

### **Controlling Coaching Behaviors**

According to Hyun-Duck & Cruz (2016), coaches can play an important role in sports as they can create the ideal condition for players to achieve their maximum amount of potential. Controlling coaching behavior can impact the communication between the athlete and their coach. "The coaches' behaviors will mediate the relationship between the coaches' actual behaviors and the athletes' responses to those behaviors" (Amorose & Nolan-Sellers, 2016, p. 789-790). Zuosong, Dong, Kun, Ronkainen, and Tao (2016) states that there are two styles that make up coaching. This includes autonomy-supportive and controlling. The autonomy-supportive style involves coaching athletes to participate in decisions regarding tactics and techniques and respecting the other athletes' opinions and feelings (Zuosong et al., 2016). The controlling coaching style involves the coach using more of an authoritarian and coercive communication where this gives little attention to the athletes' opinions and feelings, and is also used for guilt induction, manipulation, or threats as a persuasion technique (Zuosong et al., 2016). Stress can also cause athletes to change their behavior. According to Thelwell et al. (2017), athletes have reported that their stress has been influenced by the actions or behaviors made by their coaches. Coaches have also acknowledged that their negative reactions may affect their athletes. Coaches have more authority over their players than they think they do. If a coach starts to panic due to a stressful situation, that will cause the athletes to start stressing out.

In a study conducted by Zuosong et al. (2016), they examined the effects of coaching style, motivation style, and moral disengagement on prosocial and antisocial behaviors among athletes. This study looked at both coaching styles; autonomy-supportive and controlling

coaching styles. Autonomy-supportive style involves the coach allowing their athletes to participate in the decision-making process and techniques, while respecting the athletes' opinions and feelings. Controlling coaching style involves the coach using authoritative and coercive communication, which allows little attention to the athletes' opinions and feelings, and uses guilt induction, manipulation, and/o threats as persuasion techniques. The participants included 75 female and 128 male athletes with an average age of 19 years and a standard deviation of 2.6 years. All of the participants competed in football, volleyball, taekwondo, wrestling, badminton, fencing, or free combat for 6.6 +/- 3.0 years. The researchers used five different instruments within the questionnaire to evaluate the participants. This included: the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) used a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) to measure autonomy-supportive coaching styles; the Coach Controlling Behaviors Scale (CCBS) used a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) to measure controlling coaching styles; the Behavioral Regulation in Sport Questionnaire-6 (BRSQ-6) was used to measure the motivational regulation in sport; the Moral Disengagement in Sport Scale (MDSS) used a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to measure the moral disengagement in sport; and the Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior Sport Scale (PABSS) used a Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = very often) to measure the prosocial and antisocial behavior in sport. The results demonstrate that the autonomy-supportive coaching style was positively correlated with autonomous motivation and prosocial behavior, while negatively correlated with controlling coaching styles. The controlling coaching style was positively correlated with controlled motivation, moral disengagement, and antisocial behavior. Autonomous motivation was positively correlated with prosocial behavior, while controlling motivation was positively correlated with moral disengagement and antisocial behavior.

According to Gervis et al. (2016), controlling coaching styles may cause emotional abuse in sport. Since coaches hold a significant position of power over their athletes, it can leave young athletes vulnerable to abuse. Gervis et al. (2016) studied the coaching behaviors of coaches. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of emotional abuse on athletes that are influenced by situational factors. There were 208 participants that included 101 coaches and 107 athletes. Of the 208 participants, there were 106 males and 102 females. There was a total of 107 athletes in this study. The study used a personal response system (PRS) when completing the series of vignettes. Each of the vignettes was followed by four questions that asked the participants to respond based on a 1-5 rating scale. The four questions included: "How common is this coach's behavior in youth sport; What impact is the coach's behavior having on the athlete's performance; What impact is the coach's behavior having on the athlete's well-being; and How acceptable is this coach's behavior?" (Gervis et al., 2016, p. 775). On a scale of 1 (very common) to 5 (very rare), the vignettes/questions that related to perceived commonality received an average response of 3.25 with a standard deviation of 1.02. This means that it is likely to occur. Many of the questions received an average of a 3.25 which meant that the situation was likely to occur. On a scale of 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative), the vignettes/questions that related to perceived impact on performance received an average response of 3.54 with a standard deviation of 0.96. The results of this section showed that the behavior was perceived as having a negative impact on performance. On a scale of 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative), the vignettes/questions that related to the perceived impact on well-being resulted in an average answer of 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.72. The results of this section showed that the behavior was perceived as having a negative impact on well-being. On a scale of 1 (very acceptable) to 5 (very unacceptable), the vignettes/questions that related to

the perceived acceptability resulted in an average answer of 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.86. The results of this section showed that the behavior was very unacceptable. The overall results from this study showed that the behavior performed by the coach does have a direct correlation on the athletes.

In a similar study, Ye Hoon et al. (2017) stated that “coaches have a critical role in the psychological development of youth sport participants” (p. 1386). Controlling coaching behaviors impact the athletes in the short-term development and the long-term development of their psyche. This study investigated the relationship between young athletes’ perceptions of their coaches’ behaviors and athletes’ levels of social responsibility. The participants included 204 high school athletes from five high schools. The participants consisted of 79 males (38.7%) and 125 females (61.3%), with a mean age of 16.10 years old and a standard deviation of .89. This study used a 40-item Leadership Scale for Sports (LLS) where responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The findings of this study concluded that the coaches’ behavior, the relationships of autocratic behavior, and positive feedback and social support with social responsibility were all negative toward the athletes. The democratic coaching behavior was positively related to social responsibility. These results also implied that the democratic coaching behaviors are more likely to increase social responsibility than is autocratic coaching behavior, which is more likely to decrease social responsibility.

### **Mental Toughness**

According to Quinn and Cavanaugh (2017), mental toughness is defined as “a set of attributes that allow an individual to persevere through difficult circumstances that ultimately can lead to successful outcomes” (p. 36). Gucciardi, Stamatis, and Ntoumanis (2017) believes that “mental toughness is conceptualized as a personal capacity to produce consistently high levels of

subjective (e.g., goal progress) or objective performance (e.g., sales, race time, GPA), despite everyday challenges and stressors as well as significant adversities” (p. 718). Mental toughness is also related to athletic performance.

Gucciardi et al. (2017) examined the association between controlling coach behaviors and athlete experiences. This study specifically looked at 232 female athletes between the ages of 11 and 17 years of age that participated in elite developmental athletics. Questionnaires were used to retrieve the data. The participants answered questions regarding the behavior made by their coaches, controlling use of rewards, negative condition regard, and excessive personal control. They also answered questions with the Mental Toughness Inventory that reflected how they typically thought, felt, and behaved in sports. Once the data was collected it was analyzed through *Mplus 7.4* using a robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) and full information maximum likelihood (FIML). The findings suggest that controlling coaching interpersonal styles may not influence all of the athletes equally. Mental toughness as the individual difference variable may strengthen the association between controlling coaching behaviors and the valued outcomes of the experience. This could be due to the fact that individuals find motivation through various sources, such as through the coach and their behavior or the individual motivating themselves.

### **Athlete Burnout**

According to Barcza-Renner et al. (2016), athlete “burnout is as aversive chronic experiential state that can develop when individuals undergo prolonged exposure to stress” (p. 30). This concept relates to controlling coaching behavior and their mental toughness. A major example of athlete burnout is described when coaches are being less empathic, more autocratic, poor communication, and placing more of an emphasis on winning over improvement (Barcza-

Renner et al., 2016). Data from 487 Division I swimmers, who completed an e-mail survey, were analyzed. Interested participants answered questions from the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ) to look at athlete burnout. The Behavioral Regulations in Sport Questionnaire (BRSQ) was used to measure the athletes' forms of motivation. The Controlling Coaching Behaviors Scale (CCBS) was used to look at the multidimensional measure of the athletes' perceptions of their coaches' controlling behaviors. After data was screened for any outliers and unanswered question that would skew the data, the analyses were conducted. The findings in this study link controlling coaching behaviors as potentially contributing to athlete perfectionism, shaping athlete motivational regulations, and possibly increasing the burnout of athletes.

Perfectionism was another cause of athlete burnout. There are two types of perfectionisms, the first being self-oriented perfectionism and the second is socially prescribed perfectionism. "Self-oriented perfectionism was positively associated with autonomous motivation and negatively associated with amotivation, while socially prescribed perfectionism was negatively associated with autonomous motivation and positively associated with controlled motivation and amotivation" (Barcza-Renner et al., 2016, p. 30). Through controlling coaching behaviors, athletes try to perform at a perfect level to keep their coaches happy. Unfortunately, negative perfectionism may cause the athletes to burnout.

### **Summary**

Coaches should be aware of the impact they have on their athletes in relation to their behaviors that occur during stress induced situations. Various influences, negative effects, negative behaviors, and positive behaviors are reviewed in the literature. As athletes may or may not be directly impacted by their coaches' behaviors, actions, controlling behaviors, and/or

situations, more research needs to be conducted to evaluate the direct correlation between the coaches' behaviors and the short-term and/or long-term effects on their athletes.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Discussion**

The impact that coaching behaviors have on mental toughness and burnout on their athletes was reviewed in this synthesis project. Based on the review, there are various conclusions that were discovered. The research questions focused on coaching behaviors as it related to burnout of high school athletes. There were more negative impacts through the coaches' behaviors on the athletes which would cause the athletes to stop participating in their respective sport(s). The negative impacts are due to the coaches' behaviors that include emotional abuse, physical/verbal statements, denying support/attention, stress factors, autocratic behaviors, and controlling coaching styles. A coach has a powerful influence over their athletes. Some coaches believe that motivating their athletes with negative behaviors will help them perform at a higher level in practice and in games. Unfortunately, coaches might not be aware of the negative impact their actions have on their athletes.

Within the literature review there were various negative effects on athletes through their coaches' behaviors. The direct relationship between controlling coaching behaviors resulted in athlete psychological stress and unacceptable coaching behaviors determined by the athletes. Although, athlete burnout was not directly impacted by the coaches' behaviors, the coaches may cause their athletes' decisions to stop participating and burnout. However, a positive effect for an athlete that experienced controlling coaching behavior is that it can help with the athletes' mental toughness and persistence to keep competing in their respective sport. Athletes may find motivation from these behaviors that are put upon them in stressful situations.

Coaches have an enormous influence on their athletes. As a coach for two different sports, including an elite travel team, it is valuable to gain a better understanding controlling

coaching behaviors have on athletes. Gaining this knowledge will allow coaches to heighten their awareness on the various effects that their behaviors have on their athletes. Overall, the results and findings in this synthesis demonstrate and support that coaching behaviors may cause athlete burnout. The most important dependent variable is the individual athlete and their mental toughness and if they are persistent enough to keep participating in their respective sport(s).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In terms of this synthesis and the articles that were reviewed in the literature, there are many recommendations for future research to gather more valuable data. In terms of influences, Thelwell et al. (2017) only collected data from 13 participants which may affect the external validity of the study. Future studies can provide a much larger sample size that focuses on a more specific age group. Amorose and Nolan-Sellers (2016) examined athletes between the ages of 17 and 30 years of age. The 13-year gap between the youngest and oldest participants may cause outliers in the research. Some of the studies also only looked at either male or female athletes. When conducting future research, it is vital that both genders are utilized when conducting research and collecting data. Some of the studies used a small sample size which could certainly deter the external validity of the findings and results. With future research, it should provide a larger sample size that includes a diverse range of participants. Using participants that compete in different sports in a more concentrated age group will allow for more consistent results. Overall, this topic is very important in today's society as it is very relevant. More research needs to be conducted to gain a better understanding on the direct relationship between coaching behaviors relating to athlete mental toughness and burnout of athletes. To find out the cause of athlete burnout, future research should look at other factors that include, but are not limited to parent and/or teammate actions/behaviors.

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**APPENDIX**

**ARTICLE GRID**

Author	Title	Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Recommendations
Amorose & Nolan-Sellers (2016)	Testing the Moderating Effect of the Perceived Importance of the Coach on the Relationship Between Perceived Coaching Feedback and Athletes' Perceptions of Competence	<i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>	To explore whether the importance athletes place on behaviors of their coach moderates the relationship between athletes' perceptions of their coach's feedback and their own perceptions of competence.	155 female softball players, between the ages of 17 and 30, all players completed the questionnaire following a game in the second half of the season	Questionnaire	Strength of relationship between coach feedback and perceived competence varied by the importance the athletes placed on the coach	30 years old is too old for the relationship between player and coach at a recreational level, would like to have seen teenager to 23 years of age
Barcza-Renner, Eklund, Morin, Habeeb, & Morin (2016)	Controlling Coaching Behaviors and Athlete Burnout: Investigating the Mediating Roles of Perfectionism and Motivation	<i>Journal of Sport &amp; Exercise Psychology</i>	Investigates earlier studies of student-athlete burnouts by examining the controlling coaching behaviors and athlete perfectionism variables	3600 Division I swimmers, ages between 18 and 23 years of age, 487 responded to the survey	Surveys completed by the student-athletes	The authors found that coaches impact the student-athletes in regards to athlete perfectionism, shaping athlete motivational regulations, and possibility increasing	Compare findings to those from Division II and III, different levels have different standards. Also look at the differences between high school and collegiate athletes.

						athlete burnout.	
Blom, L., Bronk., Coackley, J., Lauer, L., & Sawyer, T. (2013).	Maximizing the Benefits of Youth Sport	<i>JOPERD: The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation &amp; Dance</i>		This article examined other pieces of literature on the topic of benefits of sport.	The entire article lists bullet points on the benefits of youth sport. Research Review		
Buning, M. M., & Thompson, M. A. (2015).	Coaching Behaviors and Athlete Motivation: Female Softball Athletes' Perspectives.	<i>Sport Science Review</i>	To investigate the relationship that the athletes had toward the coaching behavior that they received.	41 female participants from one Division I softball team in the 2012 season in the United States. Where 87.8% were Caucasian, 9.8% were Hispanic, and 2.4% were African-American. From the sample, it included starting players (75.6%) and non-starters	Questionnaire	The authors identified that the athletes were predominantly self-determined in their motivation to play softball. 87.8% were self-determined.	Look at other schools and their softball programs. Analyzing just one team is too small of a sample size.

				(24.4%). Average age was 19.73 with a standard deviation of 1.27.			
Conroy & Coatsworth (2007)	Assessing Autonomy-Supportive Coaching Strategies in Youth Sport	<i>Psychology of Sport &amp; Exercise</i>	Focuses on coaching that supports athletes' autonomy	165 youth (66 boys, 99 girls) from 7-18 years old who participated in recreational summer swimming league, participants gave their perceptions of their coaches' behavior	Participants were given coaching behavior assessments	Shows the impact that coaches can have in an age range of 11 years and a short amount of time	The study was over a 6-week period, look at a longer period of time to analyze
Gervis, M., Rhind, D., & Luzar, A. (2016).	Perceptions of Emotional Abuse in the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Youth Sport: The Influence of Competitive	<i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>	To investigate how perceptions of emotional abuse influence situational factors.	208 participants, over the age of 18 years old, 102 females, 106 males	Questionnaire	There needs to be a safe environment for the youth to participate in sports. Emotional abuse scars the participants.	The participant had to either coach 14-year-olds or participate and a 14-year-old. That is a very specific age group.

	Level and Outcome						
Gucciardi, Stamatis, & Ntoumanis (2017)	Controlling Coaching and Athlete Thriving in Elite Adolescent Netballers: The Buffering Effect of Athletes' Mental Toughness	<i>Journal of Science &amp; Medicine in Sport</i>	Examine the association between controlling coach behaviors and athlete experiences	232 female athletes who participate in elite developmental sports. Ages 11-17	Participants answered a 15-question survey with a grading scale from 1-7, 1 was strongly disagree, 7 was strongly agree	Coaching behaviors were related to experiences with mental toughness	Look at male athletes in similar sports and see the differences between genders
Hyun-Duck, K., & Cruz, A. B. (2016).	The Influence of Coaches' Leadership Styles on Athletes' Satisfaction and Team Cohesion: A Meta-Analytic Approach.	<i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>	To examine the significance the coach has on the athlete, as it relates to their success.	After looking at 1,091 articles, they narrowed their search to 24 articles that fit their criteria. There had to have been surveys done within their articles.	Research Review	Coaches should be intentional about communicating performance expectations clearly and consistently directly to athletes. The psychological effect it can have on their athletes is huge as this will enhance	Use more of a mix of qualitative and quantitative papers.

						the athletes' motivation.	
Nicholls, A., Morley, D., & Perry, J. (2016).	Mentally tough athletes are more aware of unsupportive coaching behaviours: Perceptions of coach behaviour, motivational climate, and mental toughness in sport	<i>International Journal of Sports Science &amp; Coaching</i>	To examine the difference between supportive and unsupportive coaching behaviors and how it impacts the athletes.	This article used 290 (227 male, 63 female) athletes that were aged between 12 and 27 years of age.	Questionnaires	The research conducted provided support for linking the motivational climate with the development of mental toughness.	This article primarily focused on the male gender. I would have liked to see if females would've resulted the same way.
Thelwell, R. C., Wagstaff, C. D., Rayner, A., Chapman, M., & Barker, J. (2017).	Exploring Athletes' Perceptions of Coach Stress in Elite Sport Environments	<i>Journal of Sports Sciences</i>	To investigate research that has focused on the identification of stressors associated with coaching.	13 athletes (nine males and four females) representing five different sports (5 soccer, 3 cricket, 2 hockey, 2 athletics, 1 rugby union), participants ranged in age	Interview	There was a reduction in communication between the players and coaches.	Use more athletes for a greater sample size. 13 athletes is too small of a sample size.

				from 18 to 25 years			
Ye Hoon, Seunghyun, & Youngjun (2017)	Relationship Between Coaching Leadership Style and Young Athletes' Social Responsibility	<i>Social Behavior &amp; Personality: An International Journal</i>	To investigate the relationship that the athletes had toward the coaching behavior that they received.	Convenience Sampling Method. 204 high school participants (79 males, 125 females), mean age was 16.10 with a standard deviation of .89.	Surveys completed by the athletes	They identified that the boys had a lower level of social responsibility than the girls.	Compare different regions of the US instead of one specific region
Zuosong, C., Dong, W., Kun, W., Ronkainen, N. J., & Tao, H. (2016).	Effects of Coaching Style on Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior Among Chinese Athletes.	<i>Social Behavior &amp; Personality: An International Journal</i>	To examine the effects of coaching style, motivation style, and moral disengagement.	203 athletes (75 women, 128 men), average age of 19 years with a standard deviation of 2.6 years.	Surveys	Autonomous motivation positively correlated to prosocial behavior.	Have a more balanced size of gender.