NOT ALL GOALS HAVE NETS:

Coaching Life Skills through Sport
The Good and Bad in Sport
Outline

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Research
3. Refining your coaching philosophy
4. Strategies for Facilitating Development
5. Practical applications
6. Conclusion
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Ph.D. Human Kinetics (2012)

Teaching:
• Physical Activity & Health
• Development through Sport
• Research Methods

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Experiences in organized sport:

- **Elementary School**
  - Swimming
  - Soccer
  - Martial Arts

- **Middle / High School**
  - Track and Field (2 years)
  - Basketball (6 years)
  - Volleyball (6 years)
Positive Youth Development

Theoretical Framework

- Shift: Deficit reduction paradigm → Asset building paradigm
- Focus on the promotion of competencies (e.g., life skills, values)
- Understand how youth can:
  - Develop in a positive manner
  - Contribute to their communities
Positive Youth Development

Fundamental Principles

- Reducing human development to genetic influences is invalid
- The plasticity of human development make positive change possible
- Youth can develop positively and don’t necessarily go through a crisis
Life Skills

Enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live

- School, Work, Community

Life Skills can be:

- Behavioural: Communicating Effectively
- Cognitive: Making Effective Decisions
- Social: Teamwork
- Personal: Setting Goals
Values

Characteristics shared by members of a certain society
Enable human beings to:

- Fulfil themselves
- Live cooperatively with others

- Examples:
  - Fairness, Loyalty
  - Respect, Honesty
Analysis of High School Sport in Canada

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University of Ottawa

Research funded by the:
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
High School Sport

- 750,000 student-athletes
- 52,000 coaches
- 3,200 schools

Why is it important to study high school sport?

- Mission Statement:
  
  • To encourage, promote and be an advocate for good sportsmanship, citizenship and the total development of student athletes.

Adopt a PYD approach  
Teach Life Skills and Values

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High School Sport

Purpose:
- To understand stakeholders’ perspective on student development

Studies:
- Coaches, Parents, Students
High School Sport

Expected Positive Outcomes

• Students
  – Life Skills: Time management, leadership, teamwork
  – Social Benefits: Making new friends, expanding their social network

• Parents
  – Sense of belonging, increase their school engagement
  – Become autonomous, be in better shape

• Coaches
  – Global development of students (e.g., academic, social, physical)
High School Sport

Areas to Improve

• Students
  – Gamesmanship tactics: dubious methods to gain an advantage
    • Ex: pulling shirt, making inappropriate comments
    • Overemphasis on competition
      → Barrier to positive development

• Coaches
  – Few strategies to promote development in a deliberate manner
  – Development → Automatic
Facilitating Positive Youth Development through High School Sport

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Research funded by the:
Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship (SSHRC)
Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)

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Rationale

- Previous research: Few coaches facilitate development in a deliberate manner
- Examine successful examples of how high school sport can be framed as a context that facilitates development

Phase 1: Case Study of an Ice Hockey Program

Phase 2: Interviewed Model Coaches and their Athletes
Phase 1

Unique Features

- Sport-study format
- Player’s handbook
- Life skill classes
Phase 1

Results

Strategies:

- Volunteer Work
  - Social Skills
- Captain’s Election
  - Democracy, Equality

Keys to Success:

- Developmental Philosophy
- Deliberate Strategies
- Trained/Dedicated Coaches
Phase 2

Participants: (Quebec, Ontario)

- Model Coaches: (n = 16)
  - OFSAA Leadership in School Sport Award (Ontario)
  - Entraîneur par excellence (Quebec)

- Athletes: (n = 30)
Phase 2

Coaching and transferring life skills: Philosophies and strategies used by model high school coaches

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Phase 2

Coaches:

• Philosophies: global development
  – Shared with athletes, parents

• Deliberate strategies to coach life skills
  – Practices, games, team bus

• Constantly talked about transfer beyond sport
  – Messages adapted to their clientele

Athletes:

• Believe they benefited from being coached by these coaches
  – Prioritized academics, excellent role models, taught important life lessons
Phase 2

Examining how model youth sport coaches learn to facilitate positive youth development
Phase 2

Coaches:

- Genuine openness to learning
- ‘Lifelong learners’, ‘Reflective practitioners’

Learning situations:

- University education = solid foundation, confidence, pedagogical skills
- Motivated to attend conferences but found it difficult (time, money)
- Becoming a parent = changed outlook on sport, prioritize development
- Interactions with colleagues = Learn new strategies for development
Phase 2

Preferred sporting environment and coaching behaviours: Perspectives from Canadian high school athletes
Phase 2

Preferred environment:

- Competition (important)
- Participation (more important)
- Equal opportunities
- Pleasure for all

Preferred coach:

- Supportive
- Knowledgeable (respect)
- Prioritizes athlete development
- Good motivator
- Organized

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Helping coaches learn how to teach life skills through sport

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Research funded by the:
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

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Rationale

- Use the developmental strategies identified in previous studies
- Provide coaches with on-site coach education opportunities
High School Football

Purpose

– Develop a collaborative partnership with coaches of one high school football team and help them learn how to teach life skills through sport
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>June:</td>
<td>Pre-Season Interviews (Expectations)</td>
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<td>August-October:</td>
<td>Intervention:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life Skill Workshops</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Observations</td>
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<td>• Reading Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>November:</td>
<td>Post-Season Interviews (Reflections)</td>
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High School Football

Coaches

– Beneficial process, stimulated reflection, provided useful tools
– Captains’ Breakfast: Promote Leadership, Team Ambassadors
– Goal Setting: Involve players, promote mastery-climate, evaluate goals
Strategies for helping coaches facilitate positive youth development through sport

Five simple strategies coaches can use

1. Carefully develop your coaching philosophy
Refining your Coaching Philosophy

Carefully develop your coaching philosophy

• The Task (15 minutes)

• Think & Share - reporter for the group
  - 3 common themes from philosophies
  - How will you communicate philosophy?

• Examples

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

TEN MOST IMPORTANT REASONS CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN THEIR FAVORITE SPORT

1. Have fun
2. Improve my skills
3. Stay in shape
4. Do something I am good at
5. Excitement of competition
6. Exercise
7. Play as part of a team
8. Challenge of competition
9. Learn new skills
10. To win

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

11 MOST IMPORTANT REASONS CHILDREN STOPPED PARTICIPATING IN THEIR FAVORITE SPORT

1. Lost interest
2. Not having fun
3. Too much time
4. Coach was poor teacher
5. Too much pressure
6. Wanted non-sport activity
7. Tired of it
8. Needed more study time
9. Coach played favorites
10. Sport was boring
11. Overemphasis on winning

CODE OF SUCCESS

1. PASSION
   Your heart must be in it always.

2. RULES
   Academics, Attendance, Appearance, Uniform, Behaviour, Communication

3. STYLE
   Play a Dynamic Game of Speed & Support

4. SKILL
   Always looking to improve

5. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
   Emphasize Fun, Friends and Teamwork at all times

6. COMPETITIVENESS
   Always compete to be great!

7. PHYSICAL
   Be Agile, Assertive, Committed and Tough

8. RESPECT
   For self, family, teammates, coaches, school, referees, opponents, and the game

9. SELF CONTROL
   Only worry about what you can do

10. LOYALTY
    To those who depend on you and those who depend on you

11. HONESTY
    With self and those around you

12. PATIENCE
    Good things take time

13. CONFIDENCE
    Believing that you are great!

14. DETERMINATION
    Willing to fight and never giving up

15. RESPONSIBILITY
    To self, family, academics, team, and friends

EXAMPLES
Strategies for helping coaches facilitate positive youth development through sport

1. Carefully develop your coaching **philosophy**

2. Develop meaningful **relationships** with your athletes

3. Intentionally plan developmental **strategies** in your coaching practice

4. Do not just talk about life skills, make your athletes **practice** life skills

5. Teach your athletes how life skills **transfer** to non-sport settings
Strategy 1

Carefully develop your coaching philosophy

– Important questions to ask yourself:

• In what sporting context am I operating?
• What are the demands of my sport?
• What is the developmental level of my athletes?
Strategy 1

Carefully develop your coaching philosophy

– Discuss your coaching philosophy with athletes and parents
  • Advantage: Allows athletes and parents to be exposed from the onset to your approach to coaching

Activity:

• Take time to sit down and reflect
• Write the core concepts part of your philosophy
• Regularly consult your philosophy, share it with others
Strategy 2

Develop meaningful relationships with your athletes:

• Get to know your athletes’:
  – **Internal Assets:** Life Skills, Personal Attributes, Physical Abilities
  – **External Assets:** Family Background, Socio-Economic Status

  ***Athletes do not enter the sporting context as blank slates***

  – **Activities:**
    » Team Dinners
    » Coach-Athlete Meetings
    » Journal
Strategy 3

Intentionally plan developmental strategies in your coaching

• Development is not automatic; life skills must be taught in a systematic manner in order to be learned

Activities:
  – Teach fundamental concepts:
    • What is a life skill?
    • Why are life skills important?
  – Goal-setting
  – Leadership
  – Time-management

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Strategy 4

Don’t just talk about life skills, make athletes practice life skills

• Life skills must be experienced in order to be effectively learned

Activities:

- Involve your athletes in team decisions (initiative)
  • Practice drills, game tactics
- Provide athletes with leadership roles
  • Lead team pep-talk
- Volunteer work
  • Coach younger athletes, food bank

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Strategy 5

Teach your athletes how life skills transfer to non-sport settings

• Transfer is not an automatic process and must be reinforced continuously
• Take advantage of teachable moments when they present themselves
• Provide examples of situations in which life skills can be transferred
Best Practices, Barriers & Solutions

• The Task (10 minutes)

• Brainstorm & share - reporter for the group
  - Best practices you have heard of or do
  - Barriers to implementation
  - Possible strategies to overcome barriers

• 2 Best practices from each group, barriers & solutions
Conclusion

The Challenge: How do I embed PYD in my coaching?

Important points to remember:

1. There is nothing magical about sport, sport is neutral. Positive or negative developmental outcomes are strongly influenced by the adult leaders in organized sport.

Coaches: You are pulling the wagon, you are in a preferred position to use the power of sport to positively influence the lives of your athletes in a lasting manner.

How will you pull that wagon?

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Conclusion

The Challenge: How do I embed PYD in my coaching?

Important points to remember:
1. A minuscule number of athletes become professionals in their sport.

Will you focus on developing:

1. Professional athletes?
2. Professionals at life?
Thank You

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