Coaches health and performance – A sustainable perspective

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PhD in Sustainable High-Performance Coaching

Background
- National team coach, male & female seniors
- Former national team athlete in karate
- Civil career in Health Promotion and Public Health

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The Nature of High Performance Coaching

- Long irregular hours (Norris et al., 2017)
- Prioritize athlete well-being (Olusoga et al., 2012)
- Job Insecurity (Bentzen et al., 2020)
- Work-Home Interference (Bentzen et al., 2016)
- Culture of HP sport (Olusoga & Kenttä, 2017)
  - Mental toughness vs. vulnerability and help-seeking
Examining coaches' perceptions of how their stress influences the coach-athlete relationship

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ABSTRACT
This study extends recent coach stress research by evaluating how coaches perceive their stress experiences to affect athletes, and the broader coach-athlete relationship. A total of 12 coaches working across a range of team sports at the elite level took part in semi-structured interviews to investigate the 3 study aims: how they perceive athletes to detect signals of coach stress; how they perceive their stress experiences to affect athletes; and, how effective they perceive themselves to be when experiencing stress. Following content analysis, data suggested that coaches perceived athletes able to detect when they were experiencing stress typically via communication, behavioural, and stylistic cues. Although coaches perceived their stress to have some positive effects on athletes, the overwhelming effects were negative and affected "performance and development", "psychological and emotional", and "behavioural and interaction" factors. Coaches also perceived themselves to be less effective when stressed, and this was reflected in their perceptions of competence, self-awareness, and coaching quality. An impactful finding is that coaches are aware of how a range of stress responses are expressed by themselves, and to how they affect athletes, and their coaching quality. Altogether, findings support the emerging view that coach stress affects their own, and athlete performance.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Accepted 21 September 2016

KEYWORDS
Appraisals; interviews; stress; transactional stress

You cannot manage other people unless you manage yourself first.

Leadership pioneer, Peter F. Drucker
"But if you're strong and able then you don't ask for help"

"There were more expectations, high standards to live up to. Some ideal image that doesn't really exist but that you fantasized about."

"You try and hold up a mask. I didn't say anything at home."

"I knew that I wasn't giving 100%... I felt completely exhausted when I went home every day."

"I just wanted to escape and get away and didn't know where to go."

"You take much of the irritation home. You have no patience with the children and indirectly it impacts on your wife or partner."

"When I got home, I found it hard to cool down."

"You're strong and able "

"Impact of Job Insecurity on Psychological Well-and Ill-Being among High Performance Coaches"

Marte Bentzen 1,2, Göran Kenttä 1,3, Anne Richter 4,5,6,7 and Pierre-Nicolas Lemey 4

"Elite Football Coaches Experiences and Sensemaking about Being Fired: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis"

Marte Bentzen 1,2, Göran Kenttä 1,3 and Pierre-Nicolas Lemey 4

"Coach Burnout: A Scoping Review"

Peter Olusoga
Sheffield Hallam University
Marte Bentzen
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences
Göran Kenttä
GHI - The Swedish School of Sport & Health Sciences
13 different position statements...

Review
A systematic review and meta-synthesis of mental health position statements in sport: Scope, quality and future directions
Stewart A. Vella, Matthew J. Schweickle, Jordan T. Sutcliffe, Christian Swann

Who cares about the coach?

Review
A systematic review and meta-synthesis of mental health position statements in sport: Scope, quality and future directions
Stewart A. Vella, Matthew J. Schweickle, Jordan T. Sutcliffe, Christian Swann
The Recovery Umbrella in the World of Elite Sport: Do Not Forget the Coaching and Performance Staff


Abstract: In the field of sports science, the recovery umbrella is a trending topic, and even more so in the world of elite sports. This is evidenced by the significant increase in scientific publications during the last 10 years as teams look to find a competitive edge. Recovery is recognized to be an integral component to assist athlete preparation in the restoration of physical and psychological function, and subsequently, performance in elite team sports athletes. However, the importance of recovery in team staff members (sports coaches and performance staff) in elite sports appears to be a forgotten element. Given the unidentifying intense nature of daily tasks and responsibilities of team staff members, the elite sports environment can predispose coaches to increased susceptibility to psycho-socio physiological fatigue burden, and negatively affect health, wellbeing, and performance.
Your best recovery – self-care, when you are really exhausted?

Please use last 5min to summarize your discussion into 3 bullet points, “best practice”.

Evaluation of a mindfulness intervention for Paralympic leaders prior to the Paralympic Games

Carolina Lundqvist¹, Linda Ståhl², Göran Kenttä³ and Ulrika Thulin⁴
Promoting self-care:

Mindful self-reflection

**SMS-monitoring**: mood, energy and daily highlight

Self-awareness
Mindful self-reflection to support sustainable high-performance coaching: A process evaluation of a novel method development in elite sport

Karin Häggjund, Göran Kenttä, Richard Thelwell & Christopher R. D. Wagstaff


To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2021.1925782

Mindful Self-reflection → Self-awareness about self-care needs → Value-driven self-care behavior
Self-compassion entails adopting a kind, connected and supportive attitude towards oneself.

The three dimensions of self-compassion (Neff, 2003)

1. **Self-kindness**: extending kindness and understanding to oneself rather than hard harsh judgment and self-criticism
2. **Common humanity**: the ability to see one’s experiences as a part of a larger human experience rather than seeing them as separating and isolating
3. **Mindfulness**: the holding of one’s thoughts in balanced awareness, simply noticing thoughts and emotions in the current situation without evaluation
Self-compassion in sports?

- Research from other domains show that self-compassion promotes several indicators of mental health and motivation
- Applied interventions with athletes with promising results. However, frequently reported barrier is fear of becoming self-compassionate leads to mediocrity and undermine the motivation to work hard (Röthlin et al., 2019)
- No research so far with coaches

Based on your experiences when struggling with difficulties, discuss self-care and what would happen if you would include self-compassion?

Please use last 5min to summarize your discussion into 3 bullet points, „best practice”.
An Australian study found more than 40% of coaches from Olympic sports reported mental health symptoms at a level that would warrant professional treatment, but fewer than 6% reported seeking treatment at the time (Pilkington et al., 2022).

Self-Compassion – A Key Strategy to Support Mental Health, Well-Being and Sustainability among High-Performance Coaches

Göran Kenttä & Karin Hägglund
Thank you for your attention!