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# A Foundation for Coaching Success: Coaching Philosophies in Youth Sport

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A Foundation for Coaching Success:  
Coaching Philosophies in Youth Sport

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### **Abstract**

Coaching philosophies in youth sport contain multiple aspects of coaching and by creating a formal philosophy coaches can improve on their coaching success. Research demonstrates coaches that possess different philosophies have greater success. Athletes that are coached by an individual who has failed to consider their personal philosophy may fail to reach their fullest potential. It is unclear how the success in Section V might be explained by the experience of training and the knowledge of all the coaches. The current study explores coaching philosophies of male coaches within Section V in Monroe and Wayne Counties in New York. From what the researcher gathered, a coach should possess a professional relationship with athletes and the coaches should base a coaching philosophy on what your sport can teach. This can provide knowledge for Section V and the development of new coaches that acquire formal training that include seminars and accredited licensing courses to develop a successful coaching philosophy and coaching career.

### **A Foundation for Coaching Success: Coaching Philosophies in Youth Sport**

Youth sport participation in America is significantly dropping. In 2009, youth participation in soccer from ages 7 to 17 was 61.6%, in 2017 it is at an all-time low of 52.1%. (Sport Market Analytics, 2006). This may be because of multiple factors, people are having less children, school enrollment is low, or it may be the parents holding their kids out of sport. It simply could be the coaches that do not have a proper experience and education to create a philosophy that keeps their athletes engaged and continuing to play in sport. Little attention however, has been given to the education that the coaches may have. There are many coaches out there with multiple levels of training. But there is a difference between 30 minute online training and credited licensure coaching training. For the coaches who simply search the internet for the fastest coaching certificates, and watch a 30 minute video to receive a license at the end. Do you really watch the presentation or video? But then there are coaching courses that take up 3-5 days or multiple hours worth of classes, with these classes include hands on training. At the end of the day which coach is going to have more of a successful coaching career?

Coaching philosophies create an environment for young athletes which develops a reasoning for why athletes are involved in youth sport. 57.3 million youth are involved in sport (McGladery, Murray, & Hannon, 2010). Coaches use their philosophies to create a particular environment for athletes during practices and games. Some coaches only think their job is to coach the fundamentals of the sport and win games, but there is more to it. It should involve creating a relationship with athletes and connecting with them on a personal level in order to keep young athletes involved in youth organized sport (Allen, 2009). Many coaches do not know what a coaching philosophy is, or how to develop one. This may be because many coaches are

volunteers and they do not have enough experience and knowledge on what their philosophy may look like and how they can receive a philosophy in youth sport that best fits their needs. When coaches implement a quality philosophy into their coaching, it can have a positive impact on both the organization and players.

## **Literature Review**

### **Development of Philosophy**

While many people can choose to coach, not all coaches have taken the time to explore their personal coaching philosophy. Research by McGladrey and colleagues (2010) found that philosophies can include personal and social values associated with life skills that can be learned from participation, character, morals, teamwork, resilience, sportsmanship, fair play, time management and the value of hard work. How a coach chooses to address these factors can influence whether or not youth athletes stay involved with an organized sport. With coaching, teaching the fundamentals of the sport is important, but what also is important is to create an environment where youth athletes can feel comfortable approaching their coaches and talking about personal issues or just talk about what they did over the weekend. The development of a philosophy is important to be seen as a consistent, quality coach, but what it contains is a separate matter. Gary Allen, who played a major role in the development of soccer in the United States and the development of coaching education once said,

”Your coaching philosophy can determine whether you are willing to spend the time required, and have the patience to provide a decision-making environment for players, allowing them to gain the experience needed to overcome unpredictable game situations.” (Allen, 2009, p.29).

What Gary Allen is attempting to point out in this quote is that a coaches philosophy will dictate how you display effort and spend your time as a coach, especially regards to player development.

If coaches put in the time and effort, patience and decision-making will be needed in your coaching philosophy to be successful in unpredictable gametime decisions.

Using a coaching philosophy may create an environment that will make an organization and players more successful on and off the field. With an athlete-centered coaching philosophy, coaches focus on the athlete's personal achievements. This is very important in youth sports because it makes the athlete feel welcomed. Athletes participate for a variety of reasons among which is the desire to meet their full athletic potential (Milbrath, 2017). This full potential can have different meanings for each person; for one it could be getting a Division I College offer, for another it may be just going out there to improve in a certain skill or area of the sport. Athlete-centered coaching philosophy can be easily taught through formal coaching education or through a coaches career as a coach.

Even if a coach doesn't have a formal coaching education or a mentor, they can develop a coaching philosophy that is based on their personal characteristics. When creating a coaching philosophy that is most effective for the coach, experts advocate for coaches to give it time to grow without putting any limits or preconceived notions into the mix (Gillham, Schofield, Doscher, Dalrymple, & Kenn, 2016). When looking to create a coaching philosophy there are many factors that can be explored that are both good for sport and also fit with one's self. During the development, coaches should consider their priorities for their athletes, winning or development. They should consider how decision making will occur in a team environment and during unpredictable game situations. There are benefits and drawbacks to a coach making all the decisions versus allowing the players to problem solve and experiment (Allen, 2009). A coaching philosophy should articulate what the athletes can expect from their coach (McGladrey

et al. 2010). This will help build a solid foundation for relationships between athletes and coaches.

For a coach it is essential to have a process for creating a coaching philosophy, taking into account those factors and creating a foundation on what you are trying to accomplish. When developing a coaching philosophy, care should be taken that it isn't dependent on external factors. Rather, philosophies should reflect internal markers that depend on the skill of the athlete (Gillham, Schofield, Doscher, & Kenn, 2016). Diefen an Lauer (2009) suggested that coaches should develop a coaching philosophy that mainly is related to their personal and social values (McGladrey et al. 2010). A clear coaching philosophy will articulate a coach's beliefs, values, and morals; support the goals and objectives of the team and serve to guide a coach's practices and season (McGladrey et al. 2010).

Positive youth development (PYD) is a framework that has been widely used within sport to outline sport's potential as a developmental context (Santos et al, 2017). Past research shows how coaches play an important role in facilitating PYD through sport. To increase the likelihood that coaches would better understand their responsibilities, coaching education courses were created to help new and younger coaches to develop a fun and positive climate and help foster communication skills and promote leadership (Santos et al., 2017). Leadership and communication are very important character traits to have when developing a coaching philosophy. Communication with an athlete is important and can go a long way if a coach takes the time out of their day to communicate with his players on and off the field. According to one coach, as published in the International Sport Coaching Journal,

“Some young players come from tough neighborhoods; they only have one father, or one mother or a grandmother. It's not easy because they don't get a lot of attention, so we're very concerned with their educational growth. We invite them



to come and have other experiences with different people” (Santos, et al. 2017, p. 42).

Athletes come to a sport because they want to get rid of all their troubles, and a coach that is there to talk with them makes the athletes want to come back because they feel a part of something.

For all coaches, coaching systems should be put in place to provide guidelines that enable PYD (Santos, et al., 2017). These types of guidelines can be taught through coaching education programs available to those who wish to use them. There are many offerings that include online and classroom settings. Coaches Effectiveness Training (CET) was created to aim and help youth coaches develop a fun and positive climate, and foster communication skills and promote leadership (Santos, et al., 2017). Coaching education programs are effective systems that help to develop positive climates and practices, create communication skills and promote leadership. Often times, completion of an education program results in a type of licensure. Within New York, there are licensing levels between coaching 101, F, E, D licenses (U.S. Soccer Digital Coaching Center, 2018). With these courses coaches will be able to create a foundation of what they want their coaching philosophy to look like. These courses in New York are there for different levels so they are able to start with the most basic and improve from there. U.S. Soccer's new education process is to start with the introduction to grassroots coaching. This is a coaches general starting point to a coaches license pathway. If a coach wants to make a career out of it many colleges offer coaching programs where you can earn your degree in coaching. There are many courses and paths you can take to become a coach which will help lay out your coaching philosophy (Santos, et al., 2017).

### **Content of a Philosophy**

J Robinson, a former NCAA wrestling coach, has a coaching philosophy that shows his core values and assumptions about society. His purposes, teaching and learning, are clear links between his experiences as a player and coach (Gould, Pierce, Cowburn, & Driska, 2017).

Robinson said that,

“Give them certain talks on certain days – redefining what ‘hurt’ means, reframing thoughts to take action, and a gradual improvement focus...Match talks to what is going on in their heads...Lay it in a certain way. The foundation first, once you have the foundation add to it...It doesn’t do you any good to tell them to be tough the first day they are scared to death.”(Gould et al., 2017, p. 25).

It is smart to create a coaching philosophy that has a caring mentality; this is important not only to the coach but to the athletes as well. Being a caring coach and talking to them about topics other than the sport or talking to them one on one about their personal lives really stands out to the athletes and the parents. This makes the athletes remain committed to a sport and not drop out. It is important to have a clear vision on what you are trying to do, create an environment that makes the athletes want to stay and come back the next time, and ultimately make them enjoy their experiences as they learn the technicality of the sport. One of the things Robinson pointed out was that young athletes “learn by doing”, and learn through challenging experiences (Gould et al., 2017). When coaches create a philosophy that challenges kids, it will require hard work and discipline from the athletes where they can learn from the adversity they face.

Development from an athlete, which may include skill of the sport or the use of transferable skills can be used as a tool of development for coaching. The development of the athlete can determine the success of a coach. Some coaches only use their wins and losses to determine how successful they are (Santos et al., 2017). Coaches who only count their wins and

losses as the measure for success are missing some critical things. There are many different ways to determine success other than wins and losses, one would be to set small, measurable and attainable goals throughout the season. This gives a better indicator of success and improvement than the product or outcome (Collins, Barber, Moore, & Laws, 2011). Process goals are prominent in sport, whether in life skill development or coach-athlete relationships (Collins et al. 2011). Process goals are all about the process, they show that the coach is doing the right thing regardless of the outcome, knowing that the right activities will allow the team to achieve success, however that is defined. Simply using the outcome to measure success should not be used because it also shows the athletes that wins are the only thing they should focus on. It is important to teach athletes to that they should focus on their technical and tactical skills rather than the outcome to measure their success (McGladrey, Murray, and Hannon, 2010). Goals along a coaching career should reflect to the seasonal structure and quality of athletes. By implementing these goals throughout the season, an environment is created that fosters both success for athletes and their goals as well as coaches and their goals. Coaches are influential in creating positive and achievement-oriented sport environments which can be key to successful coaching (Collins, et al. 2011).

Athlete-centered coaching philosophies have emerged from coaches with the proper education and been promoted in coaching practices (Milbrath, 2017). In this philosophy, athletes are empowered through encouragement to discover their full potential, increase independence and control, prioritize personal goals and ownership of responsibility for success. A coach who has an athlete-centered philosophy will support the athletes through the highs and lows of sport involvement (Milbrath, 2017). In an athlete-centered sport system, coaches and administrators

have responsibilities to protect and enhance the well-being of athletes beyond the athlete's career (Kerr & Stirling, 2008).

To be a truly athlete-centered coach, it is important to effectively communicate with athletes. In fact, effective communication is necessary not only for athletes to improve skills, but also to develop a positive relationship with the coach (McGladrey et al. 2010). This develops and maintains a quality coach-player relationship; without communication many teaching-learning opportunities would be lost (McGladrey, et al. 2010). Surveys indicate that a coach offers positive reinforcement to athletes only 1% to 2% of the time or basically or hardly at all. Positive reinforcement needs to be a coaching constant (Smelley, 2013). Communication also involves listening to the athletes and picking up on nonverbal and emotional cues about how the athlete is doing. If an athlete feels the coach is working in the athlete's best interest, then the athletes are more willing to be pushed (Smelley, 2013). These factors all tie into the content of what a coaching philosophy should detail and how to develop a coaching philosophy.

### **Maximizing the Athlete-First Mentality**

Enjoyment in youth sport is considered the greatest predictor of commitment, and lack of enjoyment is the most frequently cited predictor of dropout (Gardner, Magee & Vella, 2017). Knowing this, when coaches remove the fun from practice, this may lead to a young athlete dropping from that sport. Athletes focus a lot on what their coach is doing whether it is during a game or practices. It is important that athletes have a lot of confidence in their coach so they don't have to worry about what the coach is doing, "Athletes must learn to believe in the coach so that they can learn to believe in themselves" (Smelley, 2013, p. 6507). Participation in youth sport is based mainly on the enjoyment of the activities and the "fun" factor. Fun is an important

factor when it comes to practices and it can drive more athletes to stick with it. Too often, coaches conduct practices that are unnecessarily lengthy (McGladrey, et al. 2010). Even when coaches create practices that focus on the fundamentals and basics of the sport, they can do so in an enjoyable way so that the athletes want to return and continue playing the sport. Within these practices there should be moments where the focus shifts from individual fundamentals to teamwork, perseverance, and competition. This can be done within the drills that coaches create (Huston, 2017).

Sport is a place where coaches can develop the skill of that specific sport, but what they also learn is other characteristics and moral development that can be transferable to other areas of life (Huston, 2017). As youth athletes start to mature and put these transferable skills in their life, they can look back at these opportunities as time of growth and can be grateful that they stayed in the sport and never backed out. The coaches are training their athletes to the full potential of the athlete's ability while also they are developing a person of high character that they can take with them their whole life (Smelley, 2013). With a coaching philosophy that is athlete-centered it helps athletes learn to be self-reflective by discussing what matters to them and what they need to learn, it also helps athletes believe in themselves and that can be taken into effect especially when the coach is not around (Smelley, 2013).

### **Purpose Paragraph**

As the previous review of literature displayed, coaching philosophies are important to have as a youth sport coach. As an athlete gets older they start to make decisions whether they want to continue to play sport or drop out and this decision will highly affect their playing career. This huge commitment and decisions are empowered by a coaching philosophy that their

coaches have throughout the athletes playing career. These philosophies help coaches create a framework on how they want to coach, interact with their athletes, and reach goals they create in the beginning of the season. An athlete-first mentality creates enjoyment and a relationship with the coach that keeps athletes involved within sport. It is unclear on how to develop a coaching philosophy and what a philosophy may involve. For coaches who are new to coaching or are just volunteers they may start their careers with no knowledge on how to develop a philosophy to deal with athletes in youth sport.. The purpose of this study is to examine, what are the coaching philosophies in youth sport and how the coaching philosophies guide coaching practices.

## **Method**

### **Description of Research**

Exploring coaching philosophies in youth sport and how they guide coaching practices can be classified as applied research because it can help to address a specific concern of youth soccer coaches early in their coaching career. This research will help coaches who are new to coaching and to coaches who may not have developed a coaching philosophy and help them form a philosophy. The different knowledge that the researcher will find is post-positivist, this is because some coaching philosophies can be replicated with the majority of the research process, there are trends and generalizations that are common and it will be able to be replicated in different environments and the researcher can expect similar outcomes. (Jones, 2015). This research will be collected by cross-sectional interview process as the researcher will conduct interviews with different coaches and will be using qualitative data collection methods. (Jones, 2015). The data that will be collected by the researcher is primary data because it is original data that is collected from multiple, individual coaches experiences (Jones, 2015). Explanatory

research is found in this study because the data collected is explaining the development and the implementation of coaching philosophies in youth sport and the age group that they coach (Jones, 2015).

### **Participant Selection**

The participants that will be participating in this study will be Section V (New York) mens coaches from Monroe and Wayne County. These coaches are at the levels of modified, junior varsity and varsity. A master list of participants was gathered from the use of Section V and school websites and New York State coaches directory online. Within the websites and directory coaches emails and contact information was collected and added to the master list. When the participants were collected into the master list, each coach was placed with a number from 1-30. Then using a random number generator, up to 15 coaches were selected within that master list and put into a separate list of the coaches to contact for the interviews (see Appendix A). When these coaches were selected by simple random sampling selection their email address were used to send out a cover email asking to participate in this study. A back up list full of participants was put together including Monroe and Wayne County coaches. This list was put together for the participants who did not answer after the cover email and the follow up email. These back up participants were randomly selected the same way as the original participant list, including the random number generator and selecting another 10-15 coaches. After a few weeks of no responses from the original participants, the back up list was put into action by sending the cover email to the back up coaches.

### **Variables and Measures**

Several different independent variables are important for this study; most do not have a

scale because they are measured as qualitative data (Jones, 2015). There are also many quantitative information that is reported throughout this research. One of the variables is years spent as a soccer coach, this variable is a quantitative and is an independent variable. This is measured by an ordinal scale because they reported on an exact number (Jones, 2015). Another variable in this study is different levels of coaching, the researcher wants to know if they have started coaching young athletes or have jumped right into a higher level. This is an independent qualitative variable and can be measured using nominal scale. This is a nominal scale because it will be labeling coaches into three categories, Modified, Junior Varsity or Varsity. Another independent and quantitative variable is player experience, this is whether or not a coach has any experience playing the sport that they coach. Also, how this might affect their coaching philosophies and if it makes any difference in it. Player experience can be measured using a nominal scale because it is a yes or no question (Jones, 2015). Measuring the relationship with the athletes is measuring the type of relationship they have and what type of relationship the coaches think they should have with the athlete the choices include Professional, Friend, or Holistic. This is a relationship that can be on the field and transferable to off the field. The role of the coach this is an independent variable that measures what role the coaches should have as a coach and in the athletes lives. The researcher will measure the attributes as a coach, asking these coaches what their top three attributes they have as a coach, this focuses more on character traits that a coach might possess. The dependent variable measured in this study is the overall philosophies that the coaches have. This is going to be a qualitative measurement because they will be expressing their coaching philosophies in words and what their coaching philosophy consists of.



### **Data Collection Instrument and Procedure**

Selected participants will take part in face to face, semi-structured interviews (Jones, 2015). These interview questions will be broken down into four categories, experience and background, the general philosophy, behaviors and actions, and final the reflection, this adds up to a total of 16 questions (see Appendix B). The researcher sent out a cover email to all 15 participants and wait for a response, after waiting a week the researcher will send out a follow up email to those coaches who did not respond right away (see Appendix C). For the coaches who did not respond to the follow up email after a few days, the researcher contact coaches from the alternative list using the same cover email. For those coaches who respond back and were willing to conduct interviews, the researcher will set up a time that worked within the coaches' free time. Interviews were conducted either in person or over the phone. This will help to where both the researcher and coach feel comfortable enough to talk about more information that will help with the study (Jones, 2015). For protection purposes, the participant will sign a consent statement and be given a pseudonym of their choice (see Appendix D). To make the interviewee feel more comfortable the researcher will establish rapport, jargon and abstractions will be avoided and double negatives and loaded expressions will be avoided as well (Jones, 2015). During the interviews, the researcher will record the audio using a cellphone and later review and transcribe. The interview will begin by asking the coach about their experiences and the background; this will get the participant warmed up with basic questions to where he feels more comfortable. Then the questions will be getting into the generality of the coaches philosophy and the behaviors and actions of their philosophy. At the end of the interview the researcher will ask reflection questions, this will help to make the coaches reflect on their coaching philosophy and

their actions as a coach. As the researcher poses these reflection questions, he will take note on the coaches facial expression as the coach answers to determine if his coaching behaviors are held to his standard. After the interviews are completed and information is collected, thank you notes will be written and sent out to each individual coach that participated in the interviews.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The data that was collected from the interviews will be analyzed and the information that was recorded will be reviewed multiple times and the responses will be put into transcripts. Transcripts will be read 2-3 times and broken down to minimize irrelevant information. From there the data will be coded and the interview answers will be categorized for easier access. After the coding, the data will be carefully read and answers that fit into the categories will be given a code to break up the information. The data will then be displayed in Microsoft Excel with the independent variables listed in columns and dependent variables listed in the rows of the spreadsheet. The next step in the analysis is to make comparisons across questions and respondent groups. To do this the researcher will draw a Y-Chart with the respondents groups that the research wishes to compare then the tail of the Y will be the interview questions for comparison. The researcher will use other tools to help him compare participants and their answers. This will help the researcher collect data and compare the different types of answers and find different relationships between coaches. From there the researcher will begin to develop conclusions regarding the study and presenting those conclusions (Jones, 2015).

Other data collected will be quantitative variables, these variables include whether or not the coaches have any formal training. The researcher will begin by asking if they have had formal training as a coach and if so how many years. This will be analyzed by breaking into into

two categories coaches yes and no also coded as 1 or 2. Another quantitative measurement that will be analyzed will be the relationship the coaches have with the athletes, this will be Professional, Friend, or Holistic. These options will be coded by numbers and then analyzed in an excel spreadsheet and put into a chart and later put into a graph for easier analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

Through a long process of interviews, the researcher found a lot of interesting findings between the different participants interviewed. All these coaches were very willing to provide the researcher great information to help explore the different coaching philosophies in youth sport and how they guide their coaching practices. To break down the information that was found during these interviews it will be broken down into three categories, coaching relationships, formal training, and coaching philosophy. Coaching relationships will explain the types of relationships these coaches have with the athlete. The formal training will describe if the coaches have formal training and what type of formal training and how that has helped them develop a coaching philosophy. The third section, coaching philosophy will explain the different types of coaching philosophies the coaches have developed as their time as a coach. What the researcher found was very interesting and very helpful to this research.

#### **Coaching Relationships**

With the 9 coaches interviewed, the average age was 39 years old, with the sample having an average 12 years of experience (Appendix E). Interview length varied ins that the coaches that had more than 10 years experience (n=5) had more to say and the interviews lasted longer than the coaches with less than 10 years (n=4).

Interesting differences emerged when comparing coaches of different levels of experience and their attitudes towards the types of relationships with athletes (see Appendix F). What was found interesting was the coaches with more than 10

years experience (n=4) all said that coaches need a professional relationship with their athletes. The coaches with less than 10 years either have a friendly, holistic, or professional relationship with their athletes (Appendix G). Timmy, a coach with 25 years experience stated coaches must be “Professional, you are not their friend. You can be close but when it comes down to it you have to be able to instruct discipline or call out an athlete. Maybe later in life you can become friends”

He explained that when you are their friend you tend to let certain things go and sometimes when it comes time to learn, the athletes don't take in the knowledge or skill that needs to be taken in.

He explained that the coach's role is to be a mentor, a role model, and a support system. He stated “you are like a 2nd dad, you support your athletes unconditionally but you also have to be able to discipline or tell them tough things from time to time” (Timmy). Jack, one of the coaches with less than 10 years of experience, thinks you should be the athlete's friend. He rationalized his choice in the following way,

“I think the role of the coach is to be a support to the team. The coach can only teach so much, but the athletes need to produce it. As a coach you can only teach you can't do. I have a friendly relationship with my athletes because I feel as if that's when they respect you as a coach and take your advice.”

This coach only had three years of experience with no formal training and only player experience. Joe, a coach with less than ten years experience, felt that coaches should have a holistic relationship with their athletes. Joe expressed this holistic relationship by saying, “ I think the role of the coach is to be a role model to your team and have a relationship where these athletes feel comfortable enough to come to you with any type of situation”, being in a holistic relationship this coach expressed that seeing the whole picture is the way that is easiest for him to coach. Being both professional and being a friend helps him keep a relationship with his athletes and his team. This population of respondents indicate that with more experience comes a consistent belief that professional relationship with athletes is best. Although that coaches with

less than 10 years experience have a variety of different type of relationship, they all believe that the role of the coach is to be a mentor and a support system as well as teaching them the skill of the sport.

### **Formal Training**

Most coaches had a variety amount of formal training. One of the most popular forms of education between these coaches were attending a coaching conference. However, the utility value and content of these conferences were expressed differently amongst the respondents. Timmy stated that “These helped a lot, you learn more than the x’s and o’s but about management of a team, dealing with discipline, and how to deal with the parents.” Other coaches thought differently, like Billy who said that “These formal training sessions have only taught me different type of practice plans and tactics of the game.” Even though both of these coaches have had formal training and coaching conferences, each conference taught a different objective.

The coaches who did not have formal training did have the experience as a players. Jack and Dave have both indicated that they have gained experience by playing the game and learning from coaches that they have had. Jack said “ experience as a player has helped me learn different coaching tactics as I had different coaches who had different styles.” Although this coach did not have any formal training he taught himself styles and philosophies based on the past coaches he had and by his own playing experience. There were two coaches who have completed US Soccer coaching training and achieved multiple licenses within the US Soccer coaching training.. Sam and Brad were the two that have A through E licensing, they explained that it showed them different age groups and how to manage each group, they showed different level of practice plans and ingame situations for the appropriate age group. Formal training is very important

when it comes to the development of a coaching philosophy. The education and training can teach a coach different factors and ideology that can help with their coaching success that will lead to their overall coaching philosophy within their sport.

### **Coaching Philosophy**

Another emerging theme seen within the researched gathered was the differences in the coaches overall coaching philosophy and what their sport can teach, and how their sport can teach transferable skills. Four out of the nine coaching philosophies involved teamwork in their coaching philosophies, Jack displayed this by saying,

“ I think that the biggest skill that is taken out of soccer is the teamwork. Without teamwork you will never win games or complete tasks. Without teamwork your team chemistry isn't going to be good either. Soccer is a team sport for a reason. Every person on the team is a support to the structure. The stronger the teamwork is the more confidence the team will have throughout the season.”

Asking the research questions was to find the difference in how you surround your coaching philosophy with skills that the sport can teach, Dave showed a great example of this by saying that his overall coaching philosophy is Athlete-Centered, he wants to be there for his athletes and help them with life skills as well as sport skill.

“I think in my style it can teach that you can reach your goals and you can achieve most of them. This sport can also teach that you may not achieve your goals but it teaches you to overcome those obstacles” (Dave).

In this result we can see that a coach can base their overall coaching philosophy on what they think their sport can teach. One theme that seems to emerge is the younger coaches who have coached less than 10 years are focussed on the team and teamwork. This is displayed by what Jack said,

“Without teamwork you will never win games or complete tasks. Without teamwork your team chemistry isn’t going to be good either. Soccer is a team sport for a reason. Every person on the team is a support to the structure. The stronger the teamwork is the more confidence the team will have throughout the season.”

With Jack having only three years of experience you can see that he really likes to focus on teamwork and what the structure of teamwork can do for the team. This is while the older coaches seem to focus on the athlete as an individual, even if some of these coaches just focus on their skill, they want to focus on individual skill while the younger coaches focus on the whole team. This can be seen from a Billy a coach with 20 years experience,

“In the end I want what is best for the athlete, sometimes they won’t know this until they mature and that’s when they realize how much their coach has impacted their life.

It is seen that with more experience a coach can’t focus on a whole team because they can leave people out because of a large focus. With focusing on each individual athlete there is more connection with each individual.

There are a lot of attributes needed when it comes to coaching, that is one of the reasons the researcher asked the question, what do you feel are your three best attributes as a coach? One of the common answers from four out of the nine coaches was caring. Johnny said,

“ I care about every athlete I coach but they need to know that they are there to get better and get the job done so I could be tough on them but it because I care and want them to become better people and athletes.”

This also connects to what Johnny wants the athletes to feel about their coach he explained that,

“I want them to feel cared about and I want them to know that I want what's best for them and the team. I am not only focusing on one child but the whole team.”

Caring is one of the occurring themes by these coaches and it is displayed in each one of their philosophies. When the coach cares it means something to the athlete and a coach is able to make that connection with the athlete the coach can become more successful on and off the field.

When asked about if the coaches thought their coaching philosophy was being fulfilled every coach said yes, they all believe their athletes show them that their philosophy is being fulfilled. One answer that stood out was the coach who had the most experience coaching experience, Timmy who said that it took 25 years and having his own kids to become the person he is and the philosophy he created. What is shown here is that no matter how long you coach and how much experience you have, your philosophy will always change and sometimes will stay the same but the process in creating takes time and experience helps with the creation of a philosophy.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the interview process these coaches have shown a clear picture of their thoughts and their great understanding and knowledge of the game they love. They also displayed immense care of their organization and experience with their own philosophy that guide their coaching practices. Regards to coaching philosophy it is shown that with time comes a coaches philosophy. Not many coaches even realize that they have a coaching philosophy until they really think about what they want within their team to become successful. It is also shown within this research that, to help develop a certain coaching philosophy it is important to be involved with serious coaching education and training, with coaching education it is more important to be involved in hands on learning rather than online coaching education that includes of a video and powerpoint slides that might take up to 30 minutes. Coaching philosophies are



highly recommended as a key to success in coaching, moving forward it is important for schools to either provide coaching with coaching training or education as well as to look to hire coaches that have formal training under their belt if they want to be successful.

When coaching a higher level team like Junior Varsity or Varsity they may provide a coach with invitations to coaching conferences with many coaches that participated in the research attend one almost every year. Included in the formal training, it will teach you what type of relationship to have with the athletes. From the research given, professional relationships are important to have with the athletes. You are not their friend, it is all business to get the teams and individual goals accomplished. Coaching philosophies should limit a coach to just a professional relationship until the athlete moves on from high school or until the athletes are done with that certain coach. Developing a coaching philosophy for future coaches may help participation in youth sport increase as athletes start to realize how coaches want to be successful as well as let the athletes be successful both on and off the field. Coaching philosophies can also go a long way to help coaches be successful with their team and with their life. The more knowledge the a coach has, the more effective and more successful the coach will be. No matter how long a philosophy may take to develop, it may change not only the life of the coaches but the life of the athletes as well.

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## Appendix

A)

Dear Participant:

My name is Zack Sharrow and I am sport management major and senior at St. John Fisher College. For my final project, I am exploring coaching philosophies in youth sports and how different philosophies guide coaching practices. Because you are from Monroe county and are involved in modified, junior-varsity, or varsity school-based soccer teams, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing a person to person interview or by phone.

The interview will require approximately # minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, you will be asked to select a pseudonym; your real name will not be used in a public disclosure of information. Details of the project will be shared with my St. John Fisher instructor, Dr. Emily Dane-Staples, and the conclusions of the project will be shared through a campus-wide poster session.

If you decide to consent to be interviewed, please email me back at this email address. I will work with your schedule to set a time that is mutually convenient. Your participation is greatly appreciated. The data collected will provide useful information regarding coaching philosophies and the effect of them on youth athletes. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me or my supervising instructor using the information listed below.

Sincerely,

Zack Sharrow

sharrowza9@gmail.com / (585)-545-0337

Dr. Dane-Staples

(Instructor's Phone Number and/or e-mail address)

**B)**

## Interview Questions

## Experience/Background

1. How many years have you spent as a soccer coach?
2. What are the different levels that you have coached throughout your career?
3. Describe your soccer playing experience.
4. What formal training, if any, did you receive that helped you become a coach/be a better coach/learn about coaching?
  - a. How did this formal training help you?

## Philosophy- General

5. What is your overall/how would you articulate/describe your coaching philosophy?
6. In what ways do your actions (planning practices, designing seasons, interaction with players) represent/reflect your coaching philosophy?
7. To what extent do you feel your coaching philosophy is being fulfilled?
8. What kind of relationship do you think coaches in general should have with their athletes?

## Behaviors and Actions

9. What do you think is the role of the coach? What kind of relationship do you have with your athletes?
10. What do you think your sport can teach? In what ways do you feel that sport can teach transferable skills? Aside from soccer, what other things (if any) are you trying to teach your athletes?
11. In what ways does your primary job impact your coaching?

## Reflection

12. What attributes do you have as a soccer coach? What do you feel are your three best attributes as a coach?
13. What are three words/phrases that you think your athletes would use to describe you?

- a. To what extent is that an authentic representation of what you want them to think of you?  
To what extent do you agree with that assessment?
- 14. What do you want your athletes to feel about you as their coach?
- 15. At the end of a practice what is the main objective you want athletes to take home?

C)

Dear Resident,

Last week I sent you an email inviting you to participate in an interview, I would like to follow up with you to participate in the interview, this interview is to help explore coaching philosophies in youth sport and how different philosophies guide coaching practices. Your name was drawn randomly from a list of Monroe County Schools involved in modified, junior varsity, or varsity soccer.

Again, this interview will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, you will be asked to select a pseudonym; your real name will not be used in an public disclosure of information.

If you decide to consent to be interviewed, please email me back at this email address. I will work with your schedule to set a time that is mutually convenient. Your participation is greatly appreciated. The data collected will provide useful information regarding coaching philosophies and the effect of them on youth athletes. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me or my supervising instructor using the information listed below.

Sincerely,

Zack Sharrow

Sharrowza9@gmail.com

**D)**Consent Statement Form for Interviews

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby choose to participate in the research done by Zack Sharrow.

In this interview, I understand I will be asked questions pertaining to the idea coaching philosophies in youth sport. The focus of this research is exploring coaching philosophies in youth sports and how different philosophies guide coaching practices. As a soccer coach in Monroe County who is involved in the coaching of modified, junior varsity or varsity, I understand that I likely possess the knowledge necessary to assist this researcher.

I understand the interviews will be (insert type here), will have 16 questions, and should take 25 minutes of my time. I understand that participation in the interviews is completely voluntary, and I have the right to decline questions or stop the interview at any time during the interview.

I have been informed that there are no known physical or psychological risks inherent in participating in this research.

All digital audio recordings and transcriptions of interviews will be maintained using a private, locked, and password-protected file and password-protected computer stored securely in the private home of the principal researcher. Electronic files will include assigned identity codes and pseudonyms; they will not include actual names or any information that could personally identify or connect participants to this study. Other materials, including notes or paper files related to data collection and analysis, will be stored securely in unmarked boxes, locked inside a cabinet in the private home of the principal researcher. Only the researcher will have access to electronic or paper records. The digitally recorded audio data will be kept by this researcher for a period of five years following publication of the dissertation. Signed informed consent documents will be kept for five years after publication. All paper records will be cross-cut shredded and professionally delivered for incineration. Electronic records will be cleared, purged, and destroyed from the hard drive and all devices such that restoring data is not possible.

By signing below, I give permission to have the audio recordings from the interviews to be used by the researcher for educational purposes like papers or presentations.

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym I would like to use \_\_\_\_\_



**E)**

Pseudonym	Job Title	Gender	Age	Years Experience
Timmy	Varsity Boys Soccer	M	58	25
Billy	Modified Boys Soccer	M	50	20
Jack	Club U17 Boys	M	22	3
Johnny	JV Boys Soccer	M	31	5
Brad	U18 Girls Club	M	45	24
Dave	JV Boys Soccer	M	34	15
Smith	JV Boys Soccer	M	43	2
Joe	Girls JV Soccer	M	28	8
Sam	Modified Boys Soccer	M	40	10

F)

<b>Coaches &lt; 10 Years Experience</b>	<b>Coaches &gt; 10 Years Experience</b>
Jack	Timmy
Johnny	Billy
Smith	Brad
Joe	Dave
Sam	

**G)**

Coaches < 10 Years	Type of Relationship #9
Jack	Friend
Johnny	Holistic
Smith	Professional
Joe	Holistic
Sam	Holistic
Coaches > 10 Years	
Timmy	Professional
Billy	Professional
Brad	Professional
Dave	Professional