



*Kristin L. Zomermaand*  
*Dept. Sport Psychology, Florida State University*  
[klz06@fsu.edu](mailto:klz06@fsu.edu)

---

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## THE VIEWS AND ROLES OF COACHES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH ATHLETE MOTIVATION: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

### *Abstract*

*The coach's influence on youth sport motivation and adherence to sport has been studied previously (Conroy and Coatsworth, 2007; Smith et al., 2007) mostly from the perspective of the athletes. This study examines the way youth and high school coaches view the motivations of young athletes. Six coaches, identified by their peers as quality coaches, were interviewed. Content analysis of the tape recorded semi-structured interviews revealed several main themes including: coaches' role in encouraging motivation; the balance between praise and accountability; empowering the athletes; building personal relationships with the athletes; and focusing on improvement throughout the season. These themes show support for need satisfaction in self-determination theory and the role of the coach in supporting a task-involved motivational climate.*

**Key Words:** *Youth sport, Motivation, Coaching, Qualitative method*

## Introduction

Youth participation in sport has continually increased over the years (Ewing and Seefeldt, 2002), especially with the growth of agency-sponsored sport programs across the country (Seefeldt and Ewing, 1997). With this growth, coaches have become influential in the building of prosocial behaviors in young athletes by the type of leadership and motivational styles they utilize (Ntoumanis and Standage, 2009; Rutten et al., 2008). The current study focuses on the role of the coach in the motivation of young athletes.

Most theorists agree that environmental factors play a fundamental role in a young athletes' motivation (Ames, 1992; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Researchers have shown that parents, peers, and coaches have an influence on the motivation of athletes within sport (Keegan et al, 2010). However, most of these studies have come from the perception of the athlete (Keegan et al., 2009; 2010; Smith et al., 2007). The perspective of the coach is rarely considered.

There are several motivational theories and constructs each with differing perspectives on the role of the coach in sport psychology literature. Self-determination theory researchers focus on the role of the coach in supporting the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness which are necessary for fostering the internalization of motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003; Conroy and Coatsworth, 2007; Gagneet al., 2003).

Self-determination theory (SDT) posits an extrinsic-to-intrinsic continuum of motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the innate propensity to accomplish a task. Extrinsic motivation is characterized by the desire to accomplish a task to earn an external reward or avoid a consequence (Deci and Ryan, 1985, Ryan and Deci, 2000). SDT suggests a process of moving from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. In order to make that transition, an individual's psychological needs have to be met. An individual has three main needs according to SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These needs, once satisfied, lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

This concept is represented by a continuum ranging from *amotivation*, an aimless form of motivation, through four regulations of extrinsic motivation, and finally intrinsic motivation. The four regulations of extrinsic motivation are: *external regulation*, *introjected regulation*, *identified regulation*, and *integrated regulation*. External regulation and introjected regulation are considered less self-determined and more extrinsic than identified and integrated regulation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). For example, athletes may start to play sports for extrinsic reasons, but if their needs are satisfied, they will start to internalize their motivation and begin to play for an intrinsic reason. If athletes feel competent in their skills, feel a level of control over the environment, and feel a sense of relatedness to those around them, they will be more intrinsically motivated to participate (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The more aspects of the environment that support the internalization of motivation, the more the internalization process will occur. These factors include autonomy support, a meaningful reason for the activity, and the instructor's care for the feelings and well-being of the youth (Deci et al., 1994). Similar to an instructor, coaches' behaviors are considered essential features of the youth sport environment. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) suggest that coaches should "provide choice, rationale for tasks, acknowledge their athletes' feelings, allow opportunities for independent work, provide non-controlling competence feedback, avoid controlling statements, and not promote ego-orientation" (p. 886) to promote the satisfaction of their athletes' psychological needs. Negative-focused coaching strategies have a negative effect on the situational motivation of athletes (Conroy et al., 2006). So once a coach promotes autonomy and uses praise instead of punitive techniques, the athletes will acquire higher levels of self-determined motivation (Conroy and Coatsworth, 2007).

Coatsworth and Conroy (2006) found that coaches who were trained to support the psychological needs of the athletes produced athletes with higher levels of self-esteem, especially for those athletes who had low self-esteem before the coaches' training took place. Likewise, Gagne et al. (2003) found that gymnasts reported the highest levels of well-being when they felt that their needs were being satisfied. If the coach was perceived to be personally involved, the gymnasts had higher levels of self-esteem, and if the coaches and parents were autonomy supporting, the gymnasts were more likely to have a self-determined form of motivation. Additionally, girls who had low self-esteem at the beginning of the season seemed to benefit more from having a need-supportive environment than those who began with medium or high self-esteem (Gagne et al., 2003). Researchers found that coaches who were perceived to be supportive of the three motivational needs had athletes that had higher levels of self-determined motivation. In turn, the athletes also had higher levels of enjoyment in their sport. In other words, coaches who provided choice, opportunities for success, and took a personal interest in their athletes coached those who had more fun overall (Alvarez et al., 2009).

While SDT researchers focus on an individual's needs satisfaction to promote intrinsic motivation, motivational climate researchers focus on how the coach promotes a task-focused environment versus an ego-focused environment (Smith et al., 2007). Therefore, coaches' actions, whether intentional or not, are factors in their athletes' motivation to play sport. Authority figures are extremely influential on the motivational climate of the situation (Ames, 1992). In sport, Reinboth and Duda (2006) found that coaches have strong influences on the athletes' perceptions of the motivational climate and on the athletes' feelings of competence. Several studies have focused on coach-initiated motivational climate, which focuses on the role of the coach in creating the climate for the athlete. Bengoechea and Streat (2007) reported that coaches were involved in many factors of motivational support for youth athletes including task-focused support, autonomy support, and information on competence.

Mastery climate has been shown consistently as more beneficial to the athletes than performance climates (Cumming et al., 2007). Cumming et al. (2007) found that children who perceived a mastery-oriented climate tended to like their coach more and enjoyed playing for their coach more than children who perceived the climate to be performance oriented. Also, those who perceived the climate as mastery-oriented thought more highly of their coach and perceived the coach to be more sport knowledgeable and a better teacher of skills. In addition, they also showed greater desire to play for their coach in the future. Using the MAC (Mastery Approach to Coaching) intervention, Smoll et al. (2007) found that teaching coaches concrete methods of creating a mastery-involved climate also affected the athletes' dispositional goal orientations. Coaches receiving the training were more effective in creating task-orientations over the length of the season in their athletes than the coaches in the control group where athletes' goal orientations did not change over the course of a season.

All of the previous research denotes the vital role of the coach in athletes' motivation, whether in producing a mastery climate or supporting psychological needs to increase intrinsic motivation. Coaches work sometimes up to eight hours per day with their athletes, and all of this interaction has a dynamic impact on young athletes' lives. Coaches have the ability to challenge and encourage athletes, but they also have the ability to discourage athletes on a daily basis. If coaches do not understand the importance of motivation or do not value motivation in their athletes, they will not work in such a way as to develop athlete motivation. It is imperative to assess coaches' understanding of motivation and the actions they take on a daily basis to support and develop motivation because of the impact of motivation on performance outcomes. Yet, the awareness of coaches to their impact on motivation has yet to be evaluated.

In order to better understand the depth and scope of the roles of coaches in developing youth athlete motivation, qualitative research needs to be done. Qualitative research leads to a more comprehensive understanding of concepts that empirical measures may be limited in assessing (Smith and Sparkes, 2009). However, qualitative inquiries on motivation in youth sport are not common. Keegan et al. (2009; 2010) recently assessed the responses of focus groups of youth athletes as to their perceived motivational climate. The content analysis of the focus group data suggested that coaches have a large role in the motivational climate perceived by the athletes. They also revealed themes that supported both goal orientation literature and the basic tenets of autonomy and competence in self-

determination theory (Keegan et al., 2009). Keegan et al. (2010) found that those who surround the athlete have an influence on the motivation of athletes. This includes coaches, parents, and peers. These influences all interact with each other. The researchers also surmised that the actions that promote autonomy support, competence-building, and the feeling of relatedness between coach and athlete might all be intertwined. This suggests that providing choice to an athlete may encourage a feeling of ownership which also promotes competence and creates a sense of trust between the coach and athlete (Keegan et al., 2010). The multifaceted implications of one action on motivation would be very difficult to assess via a traditional empirical measure.

The previously mentioned research is indicative of the importance of the coach in youth athlete motivation. However, as previously mentioned, these studies look at the sport situation through the perception of the athlete. Even in intervention training, the coaches' perspective of how the intervention was working or if the coaches themselves recognized change in their teams is not reported because the purpose of the study does not require it (Smoll et al., 2007). Nevertheless, coaches' perspectives should be assessed because they are the ones interacting with the athletes on a daily basis. In light of that, the purposes of the current study are to explore coaches' views on their athletes' motivation, their influence on the development of that motivation, and, finally, examples of how coaches work to support motivation in their athletes in competition and in practice.

## Method

### Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select the coaches for this study (Patton, 2002). The participants were coaches who were respected by their peers and were recruited based on the recommendations of their peers as successful and knowledgeable coaches. The participants consisted of 6 youth sport coaches (4 males and 2 females). They were contacted by the researcher and all volunteered to participate. The coaches' experience ranged from 6 to 33 years ( $M = 14.5$  years,  $SD = 9.59$  years) with youth, high school, and college sport. The majority of their experience was at the youth and high school levels, coaching both boys and girls. Several sports are represented by the coaches with two of the coaches working in multiple sports (Table 1). Before beginning the interviews institutional approval to conduct this study was obtained and all informed consent procedures were followed.

**Table 1.** Participants

Participant	Gender	Years of Experience	Sport	Level
Participant 1	Male	9	Soccer	Youth (age 6 to 8) High School College
Participant 2	Male	6	Soccer	Youth (age 10 to 14) High School
Participant 3	Male	33	Soccer	Youth (age 2 to 14) High school College Semi-pro
Participant 4	Male	13	Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer, Softball, Baseball	Youth (age 12-14) High School College
Participant 5	Female	11	Volleyball	High School
Participant 6	Female	15	Soccer, Track	High School

### **Procedures**

**Interview Method and Questions.** The participants were interviewed face-to-face in a place of their choosing. After the interviewer described the general nature of the study, the participants signed an informed consent form. The interview guide consisted of 10 semi-structured questions (Appendix A). The first question pertained to the qualifications and experience of each coach. The remainder of the questions was designed to directly and indirectly assess coaches' views of motivation based on self-determination theory and motivational climate. These questions included facets of motivation such as rewards and punishments, autonomy, the coach's role in athlete motivation, and goal-setting. The interview guide was used to provide comprehensive and consistent responses, but the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the interviewer to follow-up responses for clarity and elaboration (Patton, 2002). At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher debriefed the participants and discussed the purposes of the study with them.

**Data Analyses.** The interviews were each tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the interviewer. Any identifying information was removed from the transcripts to maintain participant confidentiality. Each interview was listened to carefully in an effort to understand not only the words that the participant was saying, but the meaning and emphasis put on those words. Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher analyzed and formed themes from the responses using a content analysis procedure as an effort to identify consistencies and meanings within the responses (Patton, 2002). Several steps of coding were used to form the themes. The first step grouped the responses in terms of the questions that were asked (Patton, 2002). The following step systematically grouped question responses into general categories. Some of the question responses had two or three of these categories represented. Thirdly, those response categories were evaluated as to the overarching theme of each category. Eventually, five major themes emerged from the responses. Each theme was carefully drawn from the responses in order to keep the intended meaning in tact of each response. Once the themes were determined, quotes and themes were checked by a third party to assess validity of the themes (Sparkes, 1998). If any discrepancy was found, it was discussed until agreement between the researcher and third party could be attained.

### **Results**

Five major themes were determined to be evident from the interviews: (a) the coach's role in athlete motivation, (b) the balance between praise and accountability, (c) empowerment of athletes, (d) building of coach-athlete relationships, (e) and the focus on improvement throughout a season. These themes represented the coaches' perceptions about how they act to develop athlete motivation.

#### ***The Coach's Role in Athlete Motivation***

The coaches mentioned consistently throughout the interviews that motivation is individual to the athlete, but that the coach does play a role developing motivation. They believed that motivation is the individual's desire, drive, and commitment towards accomplishing a goal. However, they mentioned several ways that a coach can influence an athlete's motivation. They believed that the coach's role is to guide and encourage the athlete to become or stay motivated by providing opportunities for the athlete to be successful and minimizing failure. Participant 3 summed up his role in developing motivation with this statement, "Motivation is going to be different for each individual. You have to try to tap into why that person is here."



Participant 4, a volleyball coach and high school principal, said, "Motivation is getting people, whether in the classroom or on the field coaching, to perform to their best ability. How do you get them to do that? Providing opportunities for success." This coach saw his role as finding ways each of his athletes could succeed. In practice, the coaches mentioned doing specific drills to allow the athletes a chance to succeed at a particular skill. Participant 5 mentioned that depending on the athlete, she might provide more one on one instruction in order provide an opportunity for that athlete to succeed. The coaches also mentioned, in their respective interviews, that they did not allow their athletes to spend a lot of time failing at an activity because frustration impedes motivation. Participant 3 said, "...an athlete misses a couple serves in a row, and is starting to get frustrated, they may need to stop serving because it will just get worse."

Participant 6 believed that athletes sometimes do not see what they can do. It is the coach's job to help the athlete to see her potential, "... I think that a lot of it is helping athletes see themselves and their potential. Because everyone can improve and everyone can do better and a lot of times people don't see that..."

The coach's role in athlete motivation also seems to be one of guidance and not one of creating an athlete's motivation. Each athlete already has motivation; a coach's role is one that cultivates motivation within each athlete. Participant 2 thought:

I don't actually think they [coaches] motivate their athletes. I see it more as keep them involved, keep them engaged in what they are trying to do. As a coach, I don't necessarily see that you can motivate a player who's not willing to be motivated. You have to point them in the right direction. And if they accept the challenge, and they see where they will be benefited, they will be motivated.

Participant 3 agreed that the coach should find a way to have each athlete feel as if he/she were successful. He said, "How do we get every player to feel like they are contributing? Each athlete has a valuable and meaningful contribution." He felt that he needed to verbalize the strengths of each athlete so that he could understand his contribution.

### ***The Balance between Praise and Accountability***

The use of rewards and punishments and the role these play in the development of motivation is debated by researchers. When asked about rewards and punishments, the coaches believed that the best way for them to utilize rewards and punishments within their coaching was to keep a balance between praise and the need for accountability. They felt that the best reward should be reaching a goal or a feeling of accomplishment. They felt that when one of their athletes reached a goal, the success not only produced confidence, but also motivation to strive for more difficult goals. Another form of reward that the coaches endorsed was copious amounts of verbal encouragement. This type of reward was essential for daily motivation in practice. Any tangible reward like trophies needed to be used very carefully because of the negative response of the rest of the team to a tangible reward for one individual. On the other hand, punishments were only used in the sense that coaches needed their athletes to be accountable for their actions and to instill a sense of discipline in their athletes. The coaches emphasized that they do not punish for mistakes made on the field or court as that decreases confidence, but only for attitude and lack of proper effort.

Participant 6 thought that rewards and punishments had a place in sport, but that a coach needed to find the middle ground. She said, "There is a time and place for both of them [rewards and punishments]. I think the balance of them in the middle is where truth is at." Participant 5 also strived for middle ground, not wanting to overuse either rewards or punishments. She stated:

... You can have a little bit of punishment so that they can learn self-discipline and be better down the road. I don't think I do a lot of rewarding except for encouraging.

Playing well is the reward in itself, and I think the kids know that. They feel that.

Participant 1, a soccer coach, discussed the use of a tangible reward like a game ball. He struggled with the appropriateness of this type of reward for one member of his team. He thought that a public display would only encourage the “winner” of the reward, while discouraging the rest of the team. He explained that this happens especially when one player may have more ability than her teammates. The extremely talented player would score a majority of the goals because of her ability and, thereby, receive the game ball. As a coach, understanding how that could undermine the motivation of some of his other players, he compromised, claiming, “...the game ball goes to whoever performed the best on their own, judged by their own criteria.” The reward in that situation goes to an individual who had personal success based on her own personal ability.

In regard to rewards, Participant 3 looked at rewards in terms of positive verbal feedback.

Being positive with his athletes was important to him. He said, “...Praise, praise, praise. You got to be able to recognize the little things. So you praise.” The use of this positive verbal feedback was one way of building motivation in his athletes.

### ***Empowering the Athletes***

The coaches each mentioned that they wanted their athletes to work hard and have fun at the same time. The mindset that they endorsed was one of respect and encouragement of their fellow athletes. They differed somewhat on whether athletes should be allowed to make decisions in their sport, and the role that played in their practices and competitions. However, they seemed to say across the interviews that athletes need to feel empowered and have a sense of ownership over their performance within the framework provided by the coach to be motivated in their sport.

Participant 6 endorsed allowing her athletes to have a choice. She described how a couple times a season she allows her athletes to choose the soccer formation which they would play in a game. She claimed that this freedom of choice drew out the leadership that her athletes had and gave them a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership motivated her athletes to perform at their highest level. Similarly, Participant 1 said that he allows his athletes in practice to determine what they think they need to work on. He thought that this helped to maintain their motivation. He said, “I think that giving them choice helps increase motivation and creates a better environment.”

Participant 3 commented that at times allowing the athletes the freedom to make decisions means that as the coach, he must be willing to allow his athletes to fail. He said, “...they need the freedom to create and experiment. That means being able to accept some failures and praise their effort.” This coach felt that his athletes must be able to make the wrong decision so that they can learn from their mistakes and become a better player.

### ***Building Relationships with Athletes***

These coaches emphasized building relationships with the players. Each mentioned in their respective interviews that the most important job they had as coaches was to build relationships with their athletes. The only way they could work to develop motivation on a daily basis was if they had a personal relationship with each of their athletes. They wanted to show that they cared about more than just what was happening on the field. They desired to know about their athlete’s schoolwork, their family life, and their friends. The coaches felt that this open communication was the best way to build a relationship with an athlete.

Participant 4 especially emphasized building relationships with his athletes. He made a specific point to mention that his athletes are motivated by the interest a coach takes in them. He said:

I think encouragement is a lot of relationship-building. I think players, if they buy into you, have respect for you, and they enjoy the game, that's going to go a long way in encouraging. Then, just a simple 'Hey, hello,' is an encouragement.

Participant 6 thought that building relationships with her athletes gave her credibility to ask more of her athletes. She commented, "I talk to them about their life and building that relationship with them so that I have a basis to ask them to work harder." If she wanted to be motivated to work hard, she needed the credibility that comes from having a genuine caring relationship.

Participant 3 looked at relationship building as a part of how a coach works to develop motivation in his athletes and how a coach becomes a mentor to his athletes. He stated, "... the number one encouragement you can give an individual player is to know them personally. The greatest coaches are mentors. You can't mentor somebody if you don't know them."

The coaches also spoke about specific examples of how they work to build relationships in order to develop motivation. They did team-building exercises like going out to dinner or bowling trips. They endorsed an "open-door" communication policy where any member of the team can come to them with any situation to talk. Participant 2 addressed his use of humor. He said that if he can get his athletes laughing, they are more comfortable talking about any issue they may have. All of these activities, led to better relationships between coach and athlete, and, therefore, the athlete would have increased motivation in the sport.

### ***Focusing on Improvement***

Another important theme that the coaches mentioned was the need to improve throughout a season. They all thought having tangible goals was important for each athlete to be motivated. The coaches emphasized hard work to achieve these goals, and developing as a whole person, not only as an athlete. These coaches felt that their role in the young athletes whom they coached was more than teaching skills. They wanted the athletes to improve on the field, but also to develop as people learning life skills through sport.

Participant 4 thought of his athletes as more than just players on a field. He wanted them to grow in every aspect of their lives. He questioned, "Has a person grown spiritually, mentally, physically? Are they a better person at the end of the season? Did we grow together as a team? And did they develop a love for the game?"

Participant 5 stated in her interview that she wanted her athletes to have respect for each other in their pursuit of excellence on the field and off. She said, "The first thing that comes to mind is that I like to have my athletes pursue excellence from within, and have that drive and integrity that when no one is looking, you are giving 110%."

Participant 1 summed up what he felt was his role as a coach in his athletes' lives by saying that his goal was to see improvement from each of his athletes and to observe commitment from his athletes daily. He stated, "Personally, I feel that it is a failure on my part if I have a single athlete that doesn't improve from season's beginning to season's end." That individual improvement serves as a marker for him as a coach, but also as the impetus for motivation for improvement in the off season.

### **Discussion**

The purposes of this study were to explore coaches' views on their athletes' motivation and their influence on that motivation, and provide examples of how coaches work to motivate their athletes on a daily basis whether in competition or in practice. Data were



collected by interviewing six youth sport coaches about their views of athlete motivation in sport and their influence on that motivation. Five main themes resulted from the interviews. These themes demonstrated the overall perceptions of the coaches about athlete motivation.

The coaches' perceptions agreed with the ideas about motivation in youth sport such as self-determination theory and motivational climate. Although not directly mentioned in the interviews, the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness of self-determination theory. The coaches emphasized the need for building relationships with their athletes. They felt that the more the athletes felt related to the coach, the more the athletes would be willing to work hard in practice and competition. This finding suggests that relatedness is a vital component of building intrinsic motivation. They also understood the need for athlete ownership, empowerment, and the freedom to make decisions in their performance. In essence, the coaches believed that autonomy was important even though the word autonomy was not mentioned in the interviews. These coaches stressed the importance of each athlete having success and feeling competent. The coaches thought that it was essential for the coach to be able to provide every person with an opportunity for success, and to praise the little successes as much as the large ones. Competence was imperative for the coaches in this study to support in order for their athletes to feel motivated. This upholds the self-determination theory literature in which one's psychological needs ought to be met in order for one to be engaged in an activity (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The environmental influences that are present in motivational climate were discussed by the coaches. The findings showed that coaches believe that, although motivation is individual to the athlete, they have an influence on that motivation. This view is in line with motivational climate literature where the coach is seen as having a large impact on athlete's perceived motivational climate (Cumming et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2007). The coaches in this study described adjusting to individual needs of their athletes. They did not have one set way of doing things, but acknowledged that each athlete may need to be encouraged in a different way. This shows a support for Smoll and Smith's (1989) claim that coaches change their leadership style based on their views of their athletes' needs.

One aspect of motivational climate, which was supported by the interviews, was the need for a generally positive approach from the coach. All of the coaches mentioned the need to praise the little things, especially with the younger children. They also mentioned focusing on improvement instead of winning and losing. They believed that this was the best way for their athletes to perform to their potential. This gives credence to motivational climate findings suggesting that children prefer and perform better when in a positive task-involved climate (Ames, 1992; Newton et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2007).

Reinforcing the idea that good youth sport coaches view motivation as multi-dimensional in accordance with motivation literature (Ntoumanis, 2001), the coaches took a more holistic view of the athlete. The coaches stressed that their athletes develop and improve not only athletically, but also spiritually, psychologically, and socially. They thought that when they did this, the athlete responded better to them as coaches, and were more willing to play for them. The coaches believed that taking this holistic view made for more motivated athletes.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

There are limitations to this study. First, this data cannot be generalized to every youth coach because of the limited scope of qualitative research and small sample size. Also, only one of the coaches coached an individual sport (track and field). Individual sport coaches may take differing views on their role in the motivation of athletes. For instance, a tennis or golf coach who spends more one on one time with the athlete may look at motivation in more specific terms than a team sport coach would.

The emergence of the importance of relatedness to the coaches adds emphasis to the necessity of continued research on relatedness in motivation of youth athletes. From the coaches' perspectives, relationships were important. Future research may assess whether athletes have the same perspective and if different types of relationships have more influence on the development of motivation. In addition, improvement of the whole person and finding success in and out of sport was shown to be an important variable for further study. Questions could be raised about whether success outside of sport does indeed develop motivation for sport or leads to motivation for other activities and more in-depth study is needed.

In regard to the purposes of this study, the coaches provided their views and perceptions on the development of youth athlete motivation. They thought that motivation was necessary for athletes to achieve success, but that motivation was individual to the athlete. They also provided concrete ways in which they work to increase motivation on a day to day basis. They set goals with their athletes, challenged each athlete based on his or her own ability, and built positive relationships with their athletes. Each of the coaches across the interviews believed that they had an impact on the development of their athletes' motivation to play sport. For instance, they spoke to the value of encouragement, praise, and accountability.

In conclusion, these coaches demonstrated that good coaches, when building motivation within their youth athletes, focus on the athlete as person, not just a player on the court or field. They viewed their responsibility as one that promoted a positive, hard-working, fun, and welcoming atmosphere. These are the traits that successful and respected youth sport coaches aspire to create with their teams to develop youth sport motivation.

## References

1. Alvarez, M. A., Balaguer, I., Castillo, I., and Duda, J. L. (2009). "Coach Autonomy Support And Quality Of Sport Engagement In Young Soccer Players", **The Spanish Journal of Psychology**, 12, pp: 138-148.
2. Ames, C. (1992). "Classrooms: Goals, Structures, And Student Motivation", **Journal of Educational Psychology**, 84, pp: 261-271.
3. Bengoechea, E. G. and Streat, W. B. (2007). "On The Interpersonal Context Of Adolescents' Sport Motivation", **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 8, pp: 195-217.
4. Coatsworth, J. D. and Conroy, D. E. (2006). Enhancing The Self-Esteem Of Youth Swimmers Through Coach Training: Gender And Age Effects, **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 7, pp: 173-192.
5. Conroy, D. E. and Coatsworth, J. E. (2007). "Assessing Autonomy-Supportive Coaching Strategies In Youth Sport", **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 8, pp: 671-684.
6. Conroy, D. E., Kaye, M. P. and Coatsworth, J. D. (2006). "Coaching Climates And The Destructive Effects Of Mastery-Avoidance Achievement Goals On Situational Motivation", **Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology**, 28, pp: 69-92.
7. Cumming, S. P., Smoll, F. L., Smith, R. E., and Grossbard, J. R. (2007). "Is Winning Everything? The Relative Contributions of Motivational Climate And Won-Lost Percentages In Youth Sports, **Journal of Applied Sport Psychology**, 19, pp: 322-336.
8. Deci, E., Eghari, H., Patrick, B. C., and Leone, D. R. (1994). "Facilitating Internalization: The Self-Determination Theory Perspective", **Journal of Personality**, 62, pp: 119-142.
9. Deci, E. L. and Ryan, R. M. (1985). **Intrinsic Motivation And Self-Determination In Human Behavior**, Plenum Press, New York.
10. Ewing, M. and Seefeldt, V. (2002). Patterns Of Participation In American Agency-Sponsored Youth Sports. In R. Smith And F. Smoll (Eds.), "**Children And Youth In Sport: A Biopsychosocial Perspective**", Dubuque, Kendall-Hunt.
11. Gagne, M., Ryan, R. M. and Bargmann, K. (2003). "Autonomy Support And Need Satisfaction In Motivation And Well-Being Of Gymnasts", **Journal of Applied Sport Psychology**, 15, pp: 372-390.
12. Keegan, R., Spray, C., Harwood, C., and Lavalley, D. (2010). "The Motivational Atmosphere In Youth Sport: Coach, Parent, And Peer Influences On Motivation In Specializing Sport Participants", **Journal of Applied Sport Psychology**, 22, pp: 87-105.
13. Keegan, R. J., Harwood, C. G., Spray, C. M., and Lavalley, D. E. (2009). "A Qualitative Investigation Exploring The Motivational Climate In Early Career Sport Participants: Coach, Parent, And Peer Influences On Sport Motivation", **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 10, pp: 361-372.
14. Mageau, G. A. and Vallerand, R. J. (2003). "The Coach-Athlete Relationship: A Motivational Model", **Journal of Sports Sciences**, 21, pp: 883-904.
15. Newton, M., Watson, D. L., Kim, M., and Beachum, A. O. (2006). "Understanding Motivation Of Underserved Youth In Physical Activity Settings.", **Youth and Society**, 37, pp: 348-371.
16. Ntoumanis, N. and Standage, M. (2009) "Prosocial And Antisocial Behavior In Sport: A Self-Determination Perspective", **Journal of Applied Sport Psychology**, 21, pp: 365-380.

17. Patton, M. Q. (2002). **Qualitative Research And Evaluation Methods**, Third edition, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
18. Pittman, T. S., Emery, J., and Boggiano, A. K. (1982). "Intrinsic And Extrinsic Motivational Orientations: Reward-Induced Changes In Preference For Complexity", **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 42, pp: 789-797.
19. Reinboth, M. and Duda, J. L. (2006). "Perceived Motivational Climate, Need Satisfaction, And Indices Of Well-Being In Team Sports: A longitudinal study", **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 7, pp: 269-286.
20. Rutten, E. A., Dekovic, M., Stams, G. J. J. M., Schuengel, C., Hoeksma, J. B., and Biesta, G. J. J. (2008). "On- And Off-Field Antisocial And Prosocial Behavior In Adolescent Soccer Players: A Multilevel Study", **Journal of Adolescence**, 31, pp: 371-387.
21. Ryan, R. M. and Deci, E. L. (2000). "Intrinsic And Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions And New Directions", **Contemporary Educational Psychology**, 25, pp: 54-67.
22. Seefeldt, V. D. and Ewing, M. E. (1997). "Youth Sports In America: An Overview", **Research Digest**, 11(2), pp: 1-19.
23. Smith, B. and Sparkes, A. C. (2009). "Narrative Inquiry In Sport And Exercise Psychology: What Can It Mean And Why Might We Do It?", **Psychology of Sport and Exercise**, 10, pp: 1-11.
24. Smith, R. E., Smoll, F. L., and Cumming, S. P. (2007). "Effects Of A Motivational Climate Intervention For Coaches On Youth Athletes' Sport Performance Anxiety", **Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology**, 29, pp: 39-59.
25. Smoll, F. L., Smith, R. E., and S. P. Cumming (2007). "Effects Of A Motivational Climate Intervention For Coaches On Changes In Young Athletes' Achievement Goal Orientations", **Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology**, 1, pp: 23-46.
26. Smoll, F. L. and Smith, R. E. (1989). "Leadership Behaviors In Sport: A Theoretical Model And Research Paradigm", **Journal of Applied Social Psychology**, 19, pp: 1522-1551.
27. Sparkes, A. C., (1998). "Validity In Qualitative Inquiry And The Problem Of Criteria: Implications For Sport Psychology", **The Sport Psychologist**, 12, pp: 363-386.
28. Vanreusel, B., Renson, R., Beunen, G., Claessens, A. L., Lefevre, J., Lysens, R., and Vanden Eynde, B. (1997). "A Longitudinal Study Of Youth Sport Participation And Adherence To Sport In Adulthood", **International Review for the Sociology of Sport**, 32, pp: 373-387.

## Appendix A

### Interview (Semi-structured) Questions

1. Please tell me about your coaching experience. How many years have you coached and at what levels?
  2. What is motivation to you?
  3. Given your views on motivation, can you tell me about your views on the role of coaches in motivating their athletes? How might this play out in practice in terms of what you are trying to do on a day-to-day basis? How might this play out in competition?
  4. Some books on coaching have encouraged using rewards and punishments with athletes and some have discouraged their use. What are your beliefs in regards to the use of rewards and punishments?
  5. How do you encourage your athletes on a day to day basis? When they are frustrated? When things are going well? Can you tell me about the role that athlete decision-making plays on your team?
  6. What are your views on coach-athlete communication? Please describe to me how you and your athletes communicate with each other.
  7. What kind of team environment do you try to have with your teams?
  9. Can you tell me about the kind of mind-set you would like for your players to have in practice and in competition?
  10. Can you tell me about the goals you have as a coach for your athletes and teams and how you evaluate whether or not progress is being made toward attaining those goals?
- \*\*\*All of these questions were asked to each of the participants. The order of questions may have been changed given the flow of the interview. Follow-up questions were asked in order to gain a more detailed description from the participant.