

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING PATHWAYS OF PARALYMPIC HEAD COACHES WITH A DISABILITY

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OUTLINE

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LITERATURE REVIEW

PARALYMPIC SPORT

- ▶ In 1986, the US Olympic Committee created the Committee on Sport for the Disabled that recommended seven key areas, including coaching athletes with a disability (DePauw, 1986).
- ▶ Since 1986, there has been little growth and development relating to coaches in disability sport (Falcao, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2015; Robbins, Houston, & Dummer, 2010; Tawse, Bloom, Sabiston, & Reid, 2012).
- ▶ To date, research in disability sport coaching has almost exclusively come from Paralympic coaches who do not have a disability (U.S. Paralympics.org).

LITERATURE REVIEW

COACH LEARNING

- ▶ A significant portion of coaching science research focuses on understanding how coaches learn to coach (Cushion, Nelson, Armour, Lyle, Jones, Sandford, & Callaghan, 2010).
 - ▶ Formal Learning: coach certification programs
 - ▶ Non-formal Learning: coaching conferences
 - ▶ Informal Learning: personal experience, interactions with others
- ▶ Coaching research has found that coaches first learned informally through different types of experiences while they were athletes (Douglas & Hardin, 2014; Schinke, Bloom, & Salmela, 1995).



LITERATURE REVIEW

COACH DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Many Paralympic coaches started by chance, took coaching courses not tailored for disability sports, and were former able-bodied athletes (Cregan, Bloom, & Reid, 2007).
- ▶ Career path and learning opportunities of wheelchair rugby coaches (Tawse, Bloom, Sabiston, & Reid, 2012).
 - ▶ Learned to be creative and to adapt to athletes' needs
 - ▶ Learned from practical experiences
 - ▶ Acquired knowledge from other coaches
 - ▶ Relied on veteran athletes, family members, and support staff for knowledge



PURPOSE

- ▶ The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the career development and learning pathways of Paralympic head coaches who also previously competed as Paralympic athletes in a variety of sports.



METHODS

- ▶ Participants were 5 former and current Paralympic head coaches who also competed as athletes for Team USA in one or more Paralympic Games
- ▶ Semi-structured, open-ended interviews
- ▶ Thematic Content Analysis was used to inductively identify codes, lower-order themes, and higher-order themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).



METHODS

IPA METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA)
 - ▶ Primary objective is to explore and describe participants' perceptions of a lived experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).
- ▶ Dynamic interpretative process
 - ▶ Researchers must understand the meanings participants give to their own experiences, while knowledge is developed through a series of interpretations.



METHODS

- ▶ My athletic career and why we used an IPA methodology for our study.
- ▶ My history will allow me to make interpretations across cases according to my own lived experiences.



RESULTS

- ▶ 3 themes emerged from the analysis:

Athletic Background

Coaching Progression

Knowledge Sources



RESULTS

ATHLETIC BACKGROUND

- ▶ All the coaches participated in sport during their childhood (both before or after they acquired their disability)

“In high school, every sport I did, I did wholeheartedly, but the purpose was to be in shape for wrestling. I always kind of saw myself as a wrestler who also was on the track team. I just kind of liked being a jock, I guess. It kept me in shape and gave me something to do, instead of eating cookies.” (C3)

RESULTS

COACHING PROGRESSION

- ▶ As former athletes, all coaches went through a gradual progression between athlete and Paralympic head coach.

“I was starting to coach and help out a little bit with my coach’s Continuing Ed program. She brought me into help her just to get a little money. She knew I was a hard worker. She had me kind of teaching because I was going to all these camps. I would show techniques and the things I was learning at all these Paralympic camps.” (C5)

RESULTS

KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

- ▶ The main sources of knowledge were: playing experiences, peer coaches, and formal learning.
- ▶ Playing experiences:

“As a coach, the thing I learned the most from being an athlete is that whenever I see a problem in the way we’re playing, you have to go back a lot and look at the video. If you see in the video certain habits, it’s easy to point out because you bring them in and show them what they’re doing wrong.” (C2)

RESULTS

KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

► Peer coaches:

“I learn from other coaches in the wheelchair racing world. I learned a lot from one in particular and spent a lot of time with him when he was a national coach. Other than that, I talk to peers who are great technicians and very skilled.” (C3)



RESULTS

KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

- ▶ Formal learning:

“I took the ACEP (American Coaching Effectiveness Program) coaching certification courses when I was in undergrad. The [sport] association has a level one certification I had to pass to be allowed to coach in the league.” (CI)



DISCUSSION

ATHLETIC BACKGROUND

- ▶ Paralympic coaches with a disability rely heavily on their athletic experiences at different levels of their development (Cregan et al., 2007; Schinke et al., 2005).
- ▶ Paralympic coaches with a disability have a passion for sport - not only playing and competing in sport but watching sport and following their favorite athletes and coaches.

DISCUSSION

COACHING PROGRESSION

- ▶ Many of the developmental patterns of Paralympic coaches with a disability appear to be similar to those followed by elite coaches of individuals without a disability (Cregan et al., 2007; Duarte & Culver, 2014; Schinke et al., 1995).
- ▶ Most participants in this study started their early coaching experiences at instructional camps or clinics for athletes with a disability (Cregan et al., 2007; Duarte & Culver, 2014).



DISCUSSION

KNOWLEDGE SOURCES

- ▶ Paralympic coaches with a disability value practical experience, observation of other coaches , interactions with athletes, and other informal opportunities as the most influential factors involved in their acquisition of knowledge (Duarte & Culver, 2014; McMaster et al., 2012; Tawse et al., 2012).
- ▶ Paralympic coaches with a disability rely on learning from books, videotapes, internet, and a limited amount of formal learning (Cregan et al.,2007; McMaster et al., 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ This study provides an initial exploration of the development and sources of knowledge acquisition of a coach with a disability.
- ▶ Information from this study provides career guidance and advice for aspiring Paralympic coaches.





Thank You!

Questions / Comments

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