A Comprehensive Understanding of the Coach-Athlete Relationship:
A Post-Secondary Canadian Team Sport Perspective

by

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M.Ed., University of Victoria, 2002
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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This dissertation is comprised of three main sections. The first chapter is a historical overview of the coach-athlete relationships literature within sport. The review was conducted to consider as much empirical evidence as possible concerning coach-athlete relationships. This chapter examines and provides a comprehensive overview of past and current literature examining the coach-athlete relationship. Historical origins, contemporary models, other influences on the relationship, and coach-athlete interactive behaviours were examined.

The second chapter is a qualitative study, guided by a phenomenological method of research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded with 10 of the most successful team sport coaches within Canadian Inter-university Sport (CIS) from 2002-2012. Following in-depth coach interviews, interpretive research and bracketing and themes were used to identify key components from the interviews. A final thematic structure disclosing five major dimensions contributed to common factors the role relationships play in coach-athlete success, identified as: recruitment, communication, caring, culture, and trust. Findings resulted in the creation of a tool that assists in visualizing the reciprocal relationships between revealed dimensions and themes within a coach-athlete relationship (R-CART; Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool).

Finally a qualitative longitudinal case study was conducted examine the evolution of the CAR over a season and to assess the impact of a visual tool to help guide coaches in enhancing the CAR. Two post-secondary teams and head coaches were chosen, one female and one male. The process of the study included an initial modification process of the R-CART, initiating the R-CART through a multiple qualitative case study, data analysis of case studies and further amendment of the R-CART. Team athletes were
provided with an 11-item Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) and additional comments to evaluate the coach-athlete relationship. Results from the CART-Q were considered and cross-referenced with the R-CART, coach interviews and interventions ensued based on the student-athlete feedback. The findings suggested subtle amendments to the model and the R-CART potentially is a trustworthy tool for coaches developing, maintaining, and repairing the coach-athlete relationship. Collectively, this dissertation has expanded the current knowledge of coach-athlete relationships, providing coaches with a prospective tool for advancement in the area of coach-athlete relationships. Future research should aim to examine the role coach-athlete relationships in different context, such as grassroots sport, and look at the potential impact of the R-CART in those areas.
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Dedication

To my father, who during this time engaged in a tough battle with cancer, and sadly, passing away but leaving behind a lasting influence on everyone he came in touch with. My man, I thank you for making me a better person, being such a positive influence, teaching me to put in the work, showing me the cowboy way, just being a breathe of fresh air in my life, to laugh hard, smile, appreciate it all, love what you do, enjoy each day, each meal, each dessert, believe in myself, and never leave the dishes for later. I love you forever and miss you everyday bud.
Chapter 1

The relationship between coach and athlete is viewed as central to effective coaching and in turn athletic performance and development (Jowett 2005, Lyle, 2002, Yang & Jowett, 2012). In sport the coach-athlete relationship plays an integral role in both the team and individual setting (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). This relationship provides the means by which coaches and their athletes develop basic practical, emotional, social, and psychological needs (Jowett, 2009). A coach-athlete relationship takes understanding and commitment; it can be dynamic in nature, and changes within the interactions of the coach-athlete conditional state of affairs. Perhaps initially, an observer could describe the coach-athlete relationship in terms of tough love, respectful, hierarchical, motivating, honest, and trustworthy. However, the depth and challenges encompassing the timing and intimacy of successfully applying and maintaining these concepts are is difficult to achieve. Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) conceptualized the coach-athlete relationship as the situation in which coach and athlete “emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are mutually and causally interconnected” (p. 245), denoting that if a change of emotion occurred within the athlete, then this can result in an often predictable modification within the coach and vice versa (Jowett, 2009).

Athletes and coaches form relationships in sport. They are associates, and in many cases they are under the assumption that they typically come together for common goals, ultimately to be the best, to win, and achieve success. Coaching is dynamic, it is comprehensive, and it is truly its own science and “no longer a subset of physical education or sport psychology but is rather an established vocation for research” (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p. 366). It is a process by which a coach asks a question (i.e.
is this athlete shooting the basketball at a good percentage?); designs an intervention (i.e. breakdown the follow-through of the player’s shooting technique); creates an hypothesis (i.e. the player will increase his shooting by 5% within the next 2 weeks); analysing the data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention, then deciding to continue on or modify the intervention based on the results. The coach-athlete relationship is an interpersonal dynamic and it is within this relationship that a coach’s and an athlete’s cognitions, feelings, and behaviours mutually impact each other (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002).

Sport performance is enhanced in many ways through avenues such as analytics, practice settings, team environment, stress, level of competition, mental preparation, self-confidence etc. However the coach-athlete relationship has significant impact on these elements of performance, and serves as the focus of this paper. Jowett and Lavallee (2007) stated “the significance of the coach to the performance, investment, and cognitive and emotional experiences of athletes is readily apparent to anyone who has played or watched competitive sport” (p. 118). Within this contextual relationship it is essential that both parties learn to manage their interpersonal relationship optimally. Effective coaching is comprised of interpersonal contexts in which the coach and the athlete interact to maximize their potential regardless of the sport, level, age, and gender (Jowett, 2009). It is proposed that a fundamental dimension of coaching is the coach’s and athlete’s ability to accurately perceive each other’s thoughts and feelings (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). “When the behaviours that the athletes prefer their coach to exhibit are congruent or consistent with both the coaching behaviours that the coach actually exhibits as well as the coaching behaviours that are required/desirable in that particular sport context, then
maximum performance and athlete satisfaction can be achieved” (Horn, Bloom, Berglund & Packard, 2011, p. 191). Working so closely together, coaches and athletes may form significant relationships and become more involved in aspects of each other’s lives within and out of the sport context (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). This leads one to consider what lies at the center of the coach-athlete relationship.

Sport presents a variety of challenges, with achieving excellence at elite levels being one of them. Excellence is a process, it is a goal that is worked for, requires a committed athlete and coach, and potentially can be achieved over time. However, a coach and his/her athlete(s) need to work at their respective relationship in order to achieve performance excellence at a consistent level. It is suggested by Becker (2009), that the most effective coaches who have achieved long-term success tend to avoid breakdowns within six coaching dimensions. (1) Coach attributes which are core qualities or internal makeup (e.g., leader, mentor, personality, ability, experience and imperfections etc.); (2) the environment that governs the overall context in which all coach-athlete interactions and actions occur (e.g., practice, one on one communication); (3) the system (the framework in which coaches implement their philosophies), which includes actions/interactions based on established beliefs (e.g., coach/athlete belief in system etc.); (4) relationships, which include both professional and personal (e.g., belief in athlete, inspiration, accountability, allow for individuality, etc.); (5) coaching actions around how they operate (e.g., teaching quality, life skills, sport skills, communication, motivation, preparation, etc.); and (6) athlete influences, where athletes’ are influenced by all the above (e.g., influencing self-perceptions, development, and performance).

Upon closer examination of the above dimensions, the coach-athlete relationship
influences each dimension in some capacity. Given that personal and performance goals within elite sport are common, the potential exists to experience setbacks and challenges along the way. As a result, being perceptive as a coach towards examining his/her relationship can include finding the methods for establishing positive relationships and repairing unhealthy relationships so that goals can be met. Rhind and Jowett (2010) outlined that “unless people use effective maintenance strategies, their relationships will weaken, and ultimately end” (p. 107). Thus, maintenance of effective coach-athlete relationships is not simple and often necessitates awareness and conscious effort from both parties given the dynamic and complex environment of sport.

Since the 1970s, research has aimed to examine the interpersonal dynamics between coaches and athletes; predominantly guided by a variety of coach leadership models (Riemer, 2007; Smith & Smoll, 2007). Such models place an emphasis on coaches’ behaviours, what the coach does, and how these behaviours influence important outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, commitment and self-confidence within the athlete(s). Much has been learned about the nature of the coach-athlete relationship through a variety of measures over the past 12-15 years, where an emphasis on examining the content of the relationship, as well as numerous exchanges specifically concerning interpersonal relationships between coach and athlete interactions, has gained interest (Jackson, Gucciardi, & Dimmock, 2011). Due to this research influx, growing interests in theoretical approaches that examine the coach-athlete relationship have become evident (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011). As the coach-athlete literature develops, various models and frameworks that outline and evaluate the quality of the coach-athlete relationship have paved the way for future enrichment within
this area. Further studies that examine the quality of the coach-athlete relationship continue to be recognized (Jowett & colleagues 2000, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Poczwardowski et al., 2002). For example, an important contributor to research in this area, Jowett and colleagues have provided statistical evidence for the development of the coach–athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007), for the purpose of enabling the assessment of coaches’ and athletes’ self-perceptions and meta-perceptions of the relationship, as defined by the three dimensions of closeness, commitment, and complementarity (Jowett, 2007).

**Rationale for Present Research**

In theory, a strong coach-athlete relationship provides the foundation upon which a productive environment can be developed, leading to enhanced performance, psychological well-being, trust, respect, and motivation (Werthner, 2009). “The significance of the coach to the performance, investment, cognitive, and emotional experiences of athletes is readily apparent to anyone who has played or watched competitive sport” (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007, p. 118). It is the most important relationship that exists within athletic communities (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Jowett & Nezlek, 2011) and, within the past decade, scholars have seen growing interest in theoretical approaches that examine the coach-athlete relationship (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011). The work on the coach-athlete relationship has provided research with insight into the outcomes of this relationship and reliable and valid tools to measure the quality of this relationship. Despite the abundance of work in the area we still know little about the process of how these crucial relationships develop, dissolve or maintain.

Given the lack of disseminated coach-athlete relationship literature, coaches will be hard
pressed to locate any type of structure, scientifically supported tools, and/or models for individual use concerning the whole of the coach-athlete relationship. Despite the importance of the coach-athlete relationship to many outcomes desired by coaches and athletes they seem to little practical information or focus on teaching of how to build and maintain these relationship in much of the publically available coach information and education.

It is within this dissertation that supporting literature surrounding the strength of the coach-athlete relationship is outlined and discussed. Media, fan’s, athletes, coaches, often hear the statement, “success is more than just the X’s and O’s.” Understandably, a great coach is often associated with profound knowledge of their respective sport, which includes tactical strategies and technical fundamental understanding. However, one could dispute that over a period of time if fundamentals and tactics are the backbone to success than this could cause a shortened coaching career if the coach-athlete relationship is to become controversial or strained. Being overly focused on tactics, and not investing in the interactions with the athlete(s), could weaken the relationship and potentially create a disconnect within the dyad if individual player care and attention is diminished. The coach-athlete relationship is underlined by respect, belief in, knowledge of, and contribution to the other’s goals, and the element of care on the part of the coach is essential in the relationship (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002).

This dissertation makes several theoretical and practical contributions to social psychology literature encompassing the coach-athlete relationship. Aiming to explore the content, quality, maintenance, growth, repair, and evolution of the coach-athlete relationship at the University team sport level in Canada, an area that has not been thoroughly explored. Theoretically, it extends the developing body of coach-athlete literature to elite team sport athletes at the post-secondary level of play. The research within this dissertation reveals coach-
athlete relationship information at a pedagogical, developmental, and social level. Since coach education has such a profound impact on coach efficacy, it is imperative that sport organizations and institutions support the continuing education of their coaches through certified coach education programs (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005), thereby recognizing their respective coach weaknesses. Providing knowledge and education supporting the coach-athlete relationship would appear to be a wise investment in terms of their effect on coach efficacy, coach behaviours, and ultimately the experience of the athletes. Through the research of this dissertation it is recommended that post-secondary institutions enable policies and procedures that allow for effective evaluative coaching practice by placing emphasis on the development of the coach-athlete relationship.

Models and psychometric measures exist within the pedagogy of coaching science, offering both a structural and contextual flavour to coaching practice. This structure can be of concern when it comes to explaining the unpredictable social psychology nature of coaching (Cushion, 2007). Little qualitative work has taken place to examine what occurs inside the black box of how the coach athlete relationship plays out. What the coaching discipline requires is a frameworks that is user friendly, trustworthy, and practical for use in the real world setting. These need to be concepts a coach can apply, reflect upon, and follow daily. Abraham and Collins (2011) supported an expansion in the call for an improved “pedagogical stance, (i.e., how coaches create meaningful learning and development opportunities for athletes and/or teams)” (p. 368). Further adding that there appears to be an absence of a “big picture outlook to really guide pedagogical integration into coaching development and/or practice” (p. 368). “It is not always apparent whether research within the coaching domain is working toward actually directing the coaching process…the ideographic nature of coaching is missed” (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p.
There is reference to coaches needing to change behaviour and develop the skills necessary to prosper within the coach-athlete relationship, this may require explicit reflections on current ways of thinking and behaving in this area (Abraham & Collins, 2011). The coach-athlete relationship is a multi-faceted connection and can greatly enhance the development of the athlete(s), where coaching behaviour, practice design, social environment, inter and intra personal skills, leadership, and playing politics are all factors impacting the coach-athlete relationship (Abraham & Collins, 2011).

While research on the coach-athlete relationship has become increasingly prevalent, there has been considerably more research on the outcomes (both positive and negative) of the coach-athlete relationship in comparison to its predictors and/or process of getting to a functioning state between both parties. For example, Sánchez, Borras, Leite, Battaglia, and Lorenzo (2009) found that increases in athletic performance, interpreted as improved effectiveness of training and satisfaction with personal development, resulted from the close and positive relationships built between coaches and athletes. Further, the coach-athlete relationship has also been linked to other outcomes, such as coach and athlete satisfaction with personal treatment and training (Jowett & Don Carolis, 2003), acquisition of technical and physical competencies (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007), emotional support from parents (Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005), levels of team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), passion for coaching (Lafrènigre, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011), and perceived coach-created motivational climate (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008).

The coach-athlete dyad matters in part due to the capacity of athletes and coaches to develop rapport in order to fundamentally work together and interact effectively (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). Coach-athlete interactions are recognized as being particularly significant, not
only in terms of fostering athletes’ technical and performance capabilities, but also with respect
to promoting character development, sport enjoyment, and prolonged participation (Jackson,
Dimmock, Gucciardi, & Grove, 2011). Still, many of the processes that enable a coach and an
athlete to connect with one another remain unclear. Notwithstanding the beneficial outcomes
reported in the research (and noted above), more work needs to be done to identify additional
factors that could lead to a better understanding of how to create and/or maintain effective, high-
quality coach-athlete relationships that underpin these positive outcomes. Interestingly,
contemporary coach training and/or education “best practices” appear to be founded on limited
empirical research evidence around the processes that contribute to the outcomes purported. This
presents a gap in the literature relating to the effect on coach development and education
(Abraham & Collins, 2011).

A qualitative approach within this dissertation was considered ideal in order to seek out
and attempt to identify key factors towards building, repair, and maintenance of coach-athlete
relationships. Given that there is still a considerable gap in literature with respect to interpersonal
relationships in sport (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012), this research looks to provide more insight
into the processes underlying the coach-athlete dyad. Therefore, being mindful of this demand,
choosing a qualitative methodology was important. It was determined significant to be present
within the coaching environment and establish a rigorous first-hand experience when it comes to
coach-athlete relationships (Thomas, Silverman, & Nelson, 2015).

**Organization of Dissertation**

Chapter two consists of a historical overview of the literature on the evolution of the
coach-athlete relationship. This includes original work by early researchers in this field, various
frameworks, popular models, coach behaviour concepts, psychological and sociological
influences, the current state of research in this area, and the foreseeable direction with respect to existing scholarly research.

This is followed by chapter three which includes an in-depth phenomenological qualitative study examining the intricacies, meanings, experience, and opinions of the coach-athlete relationship through the eyes of 10 of the most successful team sport University coaches in Canada. Interviews were open-ended, semi-structured, and explored questions concerning the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches of team sports (both male and female team sports) were chosen, asked a series of eight questions, and were given the opportunity to describe the experience in specific details. From there, transcription and coding methods were applied to generate a thematic structure from the interviews (Finlay, 2012). This structure consisted of larger dimensions and smaller themes pertaining to the coach-athlete relationship. The interviews provide voice to the coach’s feelings on coach athlete relationship and helped create a potential useful tool that could help with the building, maintenance and repair of the coach-athlete relationship (Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool; R-CART). This tool is discussed in relation to its potential to contribute to the framework surrounding the coach-athlete relationship and its development in various sports and in various levels of competition.

In chapter four, the application of a visual tool designed from study one, R-CART was applied as a longitudinal study (full season of play) incorporating two Canadian post-secondary teams. Coaches received player feedback and evaluated interpersonal summaries throughout the season as well as implemented the R-CART to assist their coach-athlete behaviours. A logical progression was to strive towards continual refinement and trustworthiness of the model (to develop as a useful coaching tool) discovered through the previous study’s phenomenological design. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire/survey design was administered to various
varsity coaches in Canada of student-athletes outlining the discovered themes and sub-themes. In order to provide endorsement to the model, reflecting on the relationship between variables and themes discovered within the study is required. Following trustworthiness, we then proceeded with implementing the model for coach purpose. Once the model was applied and/or used in the coach-athlete environment, it was necessary to evaluate the coach-athlete relationship; the 11-item coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CARTQ; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) was used for this purpose.

Although recently there has been an increase of research surrounding the coach-athlete relationship, its complex nature would suggest that it is well suited to be studied through a qualitative lens to continue furthering our understanding of this dynamic field of practice. The reader may question the critique of quantitative methods in this and subsequent chapters and the use of the CART-Q as a small part of the longitudinal study. It is important to make clear that quantitative methods, in particular the work of Jowett plays a valuable role in helping understanding the quality of the coach athlete relationship at a particular point in time, however it does not effective tells us about the complexity that results in the score of ones relationship. For this the in depth interviews and longitudinal case studies used in this study would be more appropriate. The methods of data collection and analyses for each of the studies are further detailed later in the respective dissertation chapters, including specific information on subject criteria and study procedures.

Finally, chapter five summarizes the cumulative findings from the studies, discusses implications and potential contributions to advancing the knowledge around coach-athlete relationships, disseminating the findings by providing educational material outlining essential factors that can potentially assist in the improvement and maintenance of interpersonal
relationships in team sport; and present future avenues of research that may be of interest in furthering the field based on the findings presented in this dissertation.
Chapter 2

The Coach-Athlete Relationship: Historical Literature Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed substantive overview of literature examining the coach-athlete relationships within sport and athletics. The review was conducted to consider as much empirical evidence as possible concerning coach-athlete relationships. Numerous electronic databases were searched, with a date range of 1977-2015. The main search engine used within this review was Summon 2.0, an intuitive search engine uncovering relevant information concerning topic of coach-athlete relationships from the University of Victoria libraries collections. Databases searched were ERIC (EBSCO), SPORTDiscus, Academic Search Complete, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, PsycArticles, International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences, and identified citations from scholarly papers were retrieved. There were no limitations with the exception of non-English publications. This chapter aimed to examine and provide an overview of past and current literature investigating the coach-athlete relationship. Historical origins, contemporary models, other influences on the relationship, and coach-athlete interactive behaviours were examined. A more targeted literature review is presented as part of each of the next two subsequent studies in the dissertation.

“The coach–athlete relationship is not an add-on to, or by-product of, the coaching process, nor is it based on the athlete’s performance, age or gender, instead it is the foundation of coaching” (Jowett, 2005, p. 412). Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) conceptualized the coach-athlete relationship as the situation in which coach and athletes “emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are mutually and causally interconnected” (p. 245), denoting that if a change of emotion occurred
within the athlete, then this can result in a predictable change within the coach and vice versa, revealing the connection between the coach and athlete (Jowett, 2009).

Coaching in the sporting environment is considered to be an interpersonal situation involving interactions between individuals—primarily the coach and the athlete (Sager & Jowett, 2012). The nature and quality of their interpersonal interactions have important implications for the athlete’s well-being, skill development, and sporting performance (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Jowett, 2007). The coach-athlete relationship is dynamic in nature and can change within the interactions of the coach-athlete conditional state of affairs; meaning that it’s a relationship that is always active requiring plenty of energy. The relationship has been viewed as a key component to effective coaching, as the dyadic relationship provides the means by which coaches and their athletes fulfill basic practical, emotional, social, and psychological needs (Jowett, 2009). The past decade has witnessed a proliferation of interpersonal relationship research in sport that has sought to examine numerous important dyadic exchanges, specifically concerning interpersonal relationships such as the coach and the athlete interactions (Jackson, Gucciardi, & Dimmock, 2011).

The coach-athlete relationship serves as the motivation and soul of this paper. Practice settings, hard work, analytics, level of competition, mental preparation, passion, self-confidence, trust, are only a few factors enhancing an individual athlete’s sport performance. However the coach-athlete relationship may be the one singular foundational influence behind many of these elements. Given the importance of this, both the coach and athlete need learn to manage their interpersonal relationship as optimally as both are capable. Effective coaching is comprised of interpersonal contexts in which the coach and the athlete interact to maximize their potential regardless of the sport, level, age, and gender (Jowett, 2009). It is proposed that a fundamental
dimension of coaching is the coach and athlete’s ability to accurately perceive each other’s thoughts and feelings (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). Coaches and athletes often form significant relationships while working closely together and thus become more involved in aspects of each other’s lives within and outside of the sporting environment. These connections that form between athlete and coach frequently act as one of the primary influences on an athlete (Jowett & Poczwardowski 2007; Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). To better understand the connection between coach and athlete, researchers have begun to question what lies at the heart of the coach-athlete relationship.

A strong coach-athlete relationship may provide the foundation upon which a productive environment can be developed, leading to enhanced performance, psychological well-being, trust, respect, and motivation (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Jowett, 2006). A reputable image as a great coach can be associated with a profound knowledge of the sport he or she coaches (e.g., tactical strategies and technical fundamental characteristics). However, over a period of time if fundamentals and tactics are treated as a coach’s backbone to success, plausibly this could cause a shortened profession if the coach-athlete relationship is to become controversial or strained—meaning the coach is ignoring or placing less emphasis on other factors of coaching, such as relationships. A coach and his/her athlete(s) need to work at their respective relationship in order to achieve performance excellence at a consistent level. Awareness of the coach-athlete relationship, finding the methods for establishing positive relationships, and repairing unhealthy relationships can assist in participants in meeting these goals successfully.

Within the social psychology of sport literature, research examining the coach-athlete relationship has grown recently, with an increased focus on understanding the elements influencing the coach-athlete dyad (Jowett, 2005; Davis & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, & Cramer,
As a growing area of study, the majority of coach-athlete relationship empirical findings have occurred since the year 2000 (e.g., Becker 2009; Jackson et. al., 2010; Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Stirling & Kerr, 2014; Wylleman, 2000).

The quality of the coach-athlete relationship research continues to be developed through several research methodologies, triangulation, interrelations, focus groups, surveys, observations etc. Specifically, over the last decade, concentration on (a) developing a theoretical network involving propositions that concern the coach-athlete relationship, (b) linking the concept of the coach-athlete relationship and the constructs of which it is comprised to its developed questionnaires, and (c) relating the concept of the coach-athlete relationship to other relevant constructs have been at the forefront of current research (see, e.g., Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004).

Coach-athlete interactions are recognized as being particularly significant, not only in terms of fostering athletes’ technical and performance capabilities, but also with respect to promoting character development, sport enjoyment and prolonged participation (Jackson, et al., 2011). Findings generally suggest that coach–athlete relationship quality is associated with situational circumstances (between coach and athlete), athletes’ perceptions of satisfaction with training and performance (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011), physical self-concept (Jowett & Cramer, 2010), achievement goals and intrinsic motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010), coach motivational climate (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008), passion for sport (Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008), team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), and interpersonal perceptions (Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006). The models and frameworks reviewed are widely used, contemporary, and implemented within the coach-athlete relationship literature, with some
having gained more scholarly support over their counterparts.

The following review will provide a summary of coach-athlete literature focusing on the various models, influences, and frameworks that outline and evaluate the quality of the coach-athlete relationship through both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (e.g., Jowett & colleagues 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Poczwardowski and colleagues, 2002). A chronicled coverage of the coach-athlete relationship will be presented, beginning with part I historical sport origins, followed by part II contemporary models of coach-athlete interactions, part III other influences on the coach-athlete literature, part IV coach-athlete interactive behaviours, and concluding with future research and literature gaps.

**Chronicle of the Coach-Athlete Relationship**

### Part I. Historical origins of coach-athlete interactions

Initial research focused on identifying various leadership styles of coaches aimed to understand the effectiveness of coach-athlete interaction (e.g., Chelladuria & Carron, 1978; Smith, Smoll & Curtis, 1979). This generated a broad understanding of how coaches make decisions based on athlete’s preferred leadership style through analysis of coach behaviour.

**Leadership.** Although not directly focused on the coach-athlete relationship, research on coaching behaviour and leadership styles received considerable attention in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, when researchers began adopting models and theories from general psychology and management literature. However, when demand of sport specific research emerged, the results provided minimal support to theories derived from contexts outside of sport (Horn, 2002), prompting research from investigators attempts to analyze leadership of coaches and the coach–athlete relationship. Ultimately leading to three key approaches of early leadership effectiveness within the sports domain: (a) the mediational model (MM) of leadership and the coaching
behaviour assessment system (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll, Smith, Curtis, & Hunt, 1978); (b) the multidimensional model (MML) of leadership and the leadership scale for sports (LSS) (Chelladurai, 1993; Chelladurai & Arnott, 1985; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980); and (c) coach-athlete compatibility (Carron & Bennett, 1977).

Athlete perceptions of a coach’s behaviour play an important role in several theoretical models of sport coaching (Myers, Beauchamp, & Chase 2011). The mediational model (MM) of coach-athlete interactions (Smoll & Smith, 1989) sought to identify, develop, and enhance our understanding of leadership in the sporting domain. The athletes’ perceptions of a coach’s behaviour predict athletes’ evaluative reactions. Following the mediational model of leadership (MML), Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1978) developed a coach behaviour assessment system (CBAS) that endorsed coding of coaches leadership behaviours in practice sessions and direct observation. The CBAS instrument focuses on measuring how coaches and their behaviours are perceived and recalled by their players; the player’s attitudinal responses to the total situation; and finally, what the coach(s) does. The CBAS is observational in nature, where behavioural dimensions are recorded in the following categories: (a) supportiveness-reinforcement and mistake-contingent encouragement; (b) instructiveness-general technical instruction and mistake-contingent technical instruction versus general communication and general encouragement; and (c) punishment and punitive technical instruction versus organizational behaviours.

Following the CBAS instrument, a coach effectiveness-training (CET) program was created. The program was designed to further train coaches, specifically in the areas of feedback (positive) and climate (nurturing) (Smith, Smoll, & Curtis, 1979). Within their research, Smith et al. (1979) suggested that coaches could increase their effectiveness within athletes by simply increasing the levels of support and encouragement. Coaches whom were trained (CET program)
had a stronger interpersonal environment resulting in evaluations from their players in a more positive light. Participants low in self-esteem were impacted by the use of encouragement, punishment, and technical instruction, resulting in high variances in attitudes between trained and untrained coaches (Smith et al. 1979).

The multidimensional model of leadership (MML) (Chelladurai, 1990) comprised of multiple aspects of the coaching process. The MML considered the interaction of the leader, the situation, and the group in the coaching process, which was is in contrast to previous leadership models that focused on single entities, such as the coach or the situational context. The multidimensional model of leadership focused on decision-making styles of coaches (Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1978) and proposed three styles of decision-making: autocratic, consultative, and delegative (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Subsequent studies recognized that the delegating style was not acceptable in the context of team sports; consequently, a continuum of decision styles ranging from autocratic to consultative to group decision-making was employed (Chelladurai, Haggerty, & Baxter, 1989). In 1978, Chelladurai and Haggerty identified three different states of coaching behaviour: a) actual leader behaviours, b) required leader behaviours, and c) leader behaviours preferred by the athlete. Chelladurai’s MML model insinuates the manner in which the coach, the athlete, and the situation interact to determine the nature of the coach’s behaviour, which, in turn, influences the athlete’s performance, satisfaction, and well-being (1990). The MML model proposes five coach leadership behaviours or styles: (1) a democratic style encompasses behaviours that encourage athlete participation in sport-related decision-making; (2) an autocratic style includes behaviours that coaches employ to establish authority as coach; (3) a training and instruction style includes coaches’ behaviours that aim to develop athletes’ knowledge and skill; (4) a positive feedback style comprises coaches’ behaviours aimed to
communicate their appreciation for their athlete; and (5) a social support style serves to satisfy the athlete’s interpersonal needs. The model suggests that, although coaches often enact a combination of all five styles, one leadership style will emerge as the one used most often, depending on the specific situation the coach is facing.

Both Chelladurai’s (2001) multidimensional model and Smith and Smoll’s (1990) meditational model of coach leadership suggest that situational factors such as performance level, competition versus practice, practice outcomes, previous success and failure record, organizational structure, and cultural factors; are likely to influence both coaches’ actual behaviours and athletes’ perceptions and evaluative reactions of their coaches’ behaviours. (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 150) Although this research provided a means for measuring specific qualities of coach-athlete relationships such as reward versus punishment and positive versus negative feedback, it failed to address how coaches attempt to develop productive and meaningful relationships with their athletes.

The leadership scale for sport (LSS) (Table 1 see Appendix A) was developed in conjunction with the multidimensional model of leadership (MML) to measure constructs and test the multidimensional model of leadership (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). The Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) is a questionnaire made up of 40 items that is divided into 5 subscales (dimensions of leadership behaviour in sport). Thirteen items relate to a) training and instruction, 9 items relate to b) democratic behaviour, 5 items relate to c) autocratic behaviour, 8 items relate to d) social support, and 5 items relate to e) positive feedback. The LSS has been divided into 3 versions over time that can be used to evaluate (a) athletes’ perceptions of the coach’s behaviour, (b) athletes’ preferred coach behaviour, and (c) the coach’s perception of their own behaviours (Sullivan & Kent, 2003).
Zhang, Jensen, and Mann (1997) modified the LSS maintaining the older versions of the scale, with similar preceding phrases, along with the same 5-point response scale. Additional factors added by Zhang et al. (1997) were two dimensions of leader behaviour, directed towards group maintenance behaviour and consideration of situational factors. Group maintenance “aimed at clarifying the relationship among the team members, structuring and coordinating the athletes activities, and improving the coach-athlete relationship and team cohesion” (Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997, p. 109). Situational consideration behaviours were:

Aimed at considering the situation factors (such as the time, individual, environment, team, and game); setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals; differentiating coaching methods at different stages; and assigning an athlete to the right position. (Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997, p. 109)

The revised leadership scale for sport (RLSS) measures behaviours along the following 7 dimensions: maintenance, situational consideration, autocratic, democratic, positive feedback, social support, and training and instruction. RLSS research demonstrates that coaches’ perceived behaviours (e.g., positive feedback, training and instruction etc.) are associated with observed behaviours (Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996). Although the RLSS is in place and considered acceptable for measurement (Jambor & Zhang, 1997) research and application remains scarce employing the RLSS within coach self-evaluations and perceived leadership behaviours in sport.

Rushall and Wiznuk (1985) provided a more sport appropriate coach evaluation questionnaire (CEQ) (Table 2 see Appendix B). Rushall and Wiznuk (1985) considered how a coach believes how he/she performs necessary coach duties and how athletes perceive those duties which, up until this point, was rarely contemplated. This suggests that a lack of congruency between the two (athlete and coach) would result in a difference between both
perspectives (Rushall & Wiznuk, 1985). The CEQ looks at the performance of the coach via the athlete’s viewpoint; an evaluation from the CEQ is then provided (Rushall & Wiznuk, 1985). The intention of using the CEQ is to determine strengths, weaknesses, and provide information to enhance a coach’s ability to interact more effectively with his/her athletes (Rushall & Wiznuk, 1985).

Research concerning coach-athlete relationships focused on coaching behaviour and/or leadership styles and therefore yielded a more broad understanding of how coaches make decisions and athlete’s preferences of leadership styles. The material within the CEQ is more sport relevant, however, coaches and athletes’ opinions and experiences were never taken into account during its developmental phase (Becker, 2009). The earlier research concerning leadership behaviour and coach–athlete compatibility demonstrated that athletes were more satisfied with their coaches if they received a lot of positive feedback, trusted the coaches ability to provide sound instruction, and felt some degree of independence and input in the training and playing environment—even if the coaches had autocratic leadership styles (Becker, 2009). Not only are the most commonly used questionnaires considered to be inadequate within coaching research, but the literature is incomplete due to the select focus studying coaching behaviours and failing to address characteristics of the coaching process that are not observable (e.g., athlete experiences) (Becker, 2009).

Therefore, the evaluative coaching literature has limitations as the two commonly used questionnaires, the leadership scale for sports (LSS) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980), and the coach evaluation questionnaire (CEQ) (Rushall & Wiznuk, 1985), do not provide a comprehensive assessment of perceived coaching behaviours (Becker, 2009). Becker (2009) highlighted that the LSS was developed in accordance with knowledge obtained from industrial and organizational
psychology, suggesting, “the five dimensions of the LSS were validated solely based on responses provided by physical education students and male athletes” (Becker, 2009, p. 94). Although this early research improved our understanding of leadership and communication styles in sport as well as how they influenced an athlete’s perceived level of satisfaction, this line of research was incomplete in several areas. First, the research lacks a sophisticated investigation into the interpersonal and affective qualities of the coach-athlete relationship. Little is known about how coaches relate and attempt to relate to their athletes. Second, while these studies offer conclusions of athlete’s preferred leadership behaviours, they do not reveal how athletes’ perceptions of their current coaches compare to their ideal levels. Lastly, little is known about how leadership styles are related to athletic performance. Fortunately, research has recently gone beyond these initial approaches to study coach-athlete relationships and more thoroughly explored the affective components involved in the coach-athlete relationship.

It appears advisable for coaches to continually strive to adopt a positive mindset, even during negative times or setbacks within the coaching environment, and especially in dealings that have the potential to impact coach-athlete relationships. According to Sagar and Jowett, negative coach behaviours and reactions appear to have a damaging effect on some athletes, seemingly producing favourable effects under various circumstances. These effects are in reference to positive interpersonal situations (2012). “Coaches can create an optimal learning environment for their athletes by enacting a democratic leadership style that offers supportive forms of messages and feedback, and pro-social communication, when their athletes lose competitions and make mistakes in training” (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 171).

In order to enable a conducive learning environment for athletes, Coatsworth and Conroy (2009) concluded that the conduct of a coach in the form of “praising youth autonomous
behaviour appears to be a coaching strategy that effectively contributes to youths’ feelings that their basic human needs of competence and relatedness are being met” (p. 327). As well, it was determined “that variability in coaching influences changes in self-esteem indirectly through perceived competence” (p. 327), which in turn can lead to positive developmental outcomes (e.g., initiative, goal setting, and identity reflection). Research in this area is scarce and therefore the quality of the coach behaviours and causal mechanisms that may impact the athlete’s outcomes are not well documented (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013). With regards to various leadership styles in existence, an encouraging direction has been that of transformational leadership. “Transformational leadership is a form of leadership that occurs when leaders broaden and enlarge the interest of those whom they lead; act morally; motivate their followers to go beyond individual self-interest for the good of the group; and address and engage each individual follower in true commitment” (Vella, et al., 2013, p. 551). Further, Vallee and Bloom (2005) indicated that a coach’s transformational leadership behaviour provides the basis for overall holistic development of athletes and the university program. Transformational leadership distinctively consists of intellectual stimulation and strength-based individual consideration, which are key determinants of positive developmental and motivational outcomes in athletes (Vella, et al., 2013). A high quality and positive coach-athlete relationship potentially can be better predicted by coach leadership behaviours, suggesting that positive developmental experiences aimed at facilitating positive outcomes for athletes may best be considered combining transformational leadership behaviour and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Vella, et al., 2013). “Thus, establishing positive coach–athlete relationships is an important developmental tool for coaching practitioners that may enhance the gains made by athletes through the use of coaching behaviours. Coaches are urged to channel some of their time
and efforts into establishing positive coach–athlete relationships as a matter of priority” (Vella, et al., 2013, p. 551).

**Part II. Contemporary models of coach-athlete interactions**

Since the turn of the century, researchers have increased investigation and methodological advancements to improve our understanding of the interpersonal dynamics in coach–athlete relationships (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Davis & Jowett, 2010; Lorimer, 2009; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Jowett, 2006; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; LaVoi, 2007; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Recent literature outlines that Jowett and colleagues have been the frontrunners in coach-athlete relationship research and maintain the idea that this relationship is at the core of sport and substance of coaching (Jowett, 2005).

**Interpersonal elements.** Poczwardowski and colleagues proposed a contemporary model that encompassed the importance of individual factors (e.g., personality traits), interpersonal factors (e.g., interpersonal needs, the interpretation of interpersonal behaviours), as well as social/environmental factors (e.g., roles, norms) on the coach-athlete relationship (Poczwardowski, Barrot, & Peregoy, 2002; Poczwardowski, Barrott, & Henschen, 2002). In this qualitative-interpretive framework, aspects of activity (e.g., instruction), care (e.g., providing support) and interaction (e.g., performance-related tasks) are incorporated. Following qualitative analysis and exploration, Poczwardowski and colleagues identified three dimensions in the development of the coach-athlete relationship that considered the cognitive and affective characteristics of coach-athlete relationships from a dyadic perspective. Poczwardowski and colleagues (2002) defined the coach-athlete relationship as a recurring pattern of mutual care. The phases are as follows: a) the pre-relational and/or interpersonal activity phase; b) transition/conclusion and/or interpersonal interactions phase; c) and post-relational and/or caring
aspect phase. Overall, this reflects the coach and the athletes’ influence over each other in both professional and personal levels (Philippe et al., 2011), recognizing the importance of the impact of interpersonal processes on the quality of athletes and coaches (Poczwardowski et al., 2002). Although there have been recent advances in this area, there still remains limited empirical work towards both individual and interpersonal perspectives within the coach-athlete relationship.

Additional research, such as Wylleman (2000), suggested that the coach-athlete relationship can be defined based on the behaviours coaches and athletes exhibit (perceived interpersonal behaviours) within the sporting domain. Wylleman (2000) advocates that there are three dimensions that define this relationship and that this model attempts to explain the complementarity within the dyad: a) an acceptance-rejection dimension, outlining either a positive or negative attitude toward the relationship; b) a dominance-submission dimension, which reflects a strong or weak role in the relationship; and c) a social-emotional dimension which refers to taking a personal or social role in the relationship. This model does however posit that its limitation is the lack of explanation of when, how, and why these behaviours occur in the coach-athlete relationship (Philippe et al., 2011; Jowett, 2007). Philippe et al. (2011) suggest that this “model appears to provide limited explanations on the nature of the coach-athlete relationship” (p. 3).

**Motivation.** There is strong support in the literature behind the notion that the coach-athlete relationship is an influential factor in sport (Becker, 2009; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Peregy, 2002), surprisingly though, little research has been concluded on the outcome(s) of coaching and its effectiveness. Mageau and Vallerand (2003) suggested that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship was fundamental in the athletes’ contentment, motivation, and performance, and proposed a
motivational model of the coach-athlete relationship describing how “personal orientations and perceived interpersonal behaviours impact athletes’ intrinsic and self-determined types of motivation within the coaching context” (Davis & Jowett, 2010, p. 113). “Coaches could improve many aspects of athletic welfare and performance by providing opportunities for choices, emphasizing task relevance, explaining reasons underlying to take initiative, providing non-controlling competence feedback, avoiding controlling motivational strategy, and preventing ego-involvement in their athletes” (Stewart & Owens, 2011, p. 95).

The coach-athlete relationship is pivotal in the athletes’ satisfaction, motivation, and performance. It was noted that the coach-athlete relationship influenced the athlete’s intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through the athletes’ perception of self-sufficiency, proficiency, and relatedness. In the end, an autocratic or controlling leadership style has the potential to destroy the coach-athlete relationship thus affecting player performance and overall satisfaction (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Promoting healthy coach-athlete relationships often results in quality sport performances and positive affective outcomes (Stewart & Owens, 2011).

Mageau and Vallerand’s (2003) motivational model aims to understand coach-athlete relationships from a motivational aspect in terms of how coaches’ behaviours may influence athletes’ motivation while focusing on being autonomy-supportive. Black and Deci (2000) defined autonomy-supportive as “an individual in a position of authority (e.g., the coach) takes the other’s (e.g., the athlete) perspective, acknowledges the other’s feelings, and provides the other with pertinent information and opportunities for choice, while minimizing the use of pressures and demands” (p.742). Autonomy-supportive behaviours are considered to promote the athlete’s level of intrinsic motivation and self-determined aspects of extrinsic motivation and sport performance (Gillet, Vallerand, Amour, & Baldes, 2010). Grounded in this framework,
self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) is a motivational theory that is useful for understanding individuals’ motivation, its causes, and its consequences. Self-determination theory has been a framework occasionally applied to broaden research concerning coach-athlete relationships. The satisfaction of three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) contributes positively to athlete’s well-being and functioning within these environments (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012). Similarly to the earlier leadership behavioural models, this model focuses on the behavioural aspects of the relationship, therefore, not being able to provide a comprehensive picture of the content of social relationship like the coach-athlete dyad (Hinde, 1997).

Parents and coaches can influence the psychosocial well-being of youth in sport via such areas as emotionality, self-esteem, attitudes and values, moral development, motivational processes, cooperation, and competition (O’Rourke, Smith, Smoll & Cumming, 2014). A change in coach (or adult) behaviour can benefit the athlete through areas such as “self-esteem, anxiety, sport attrition reduction, and achievement goal orientation” (O’Rourke et al., 2014, p. 395). O’Rourke et al. (2014) compared the relative relations of coach and parent-initiated motivational climates of youth athletes and found that “a parent-initiated motivational climate was a significant predictor of self-esteem, trait anxiety, and autonomous regulation at end-season over and above coach-initiated motivational climate” (O’Rourke et al., 2014, p. 404). In reference to coach-initiated motivational climate in youth sport, this was not supported in the investigation suggesting the coach-initiated climate was not associated with higher self-esteem (Reinboth & Duda, 2006; Smith & Smoll, 1990) higher intrinsic motivation (Reinboth & Duda, 2006), and lower levels of anxiety. Therefore indicating the “parent-initiated motivational climate may have influence in multiple achievement domains, whereas the coach-initiated motivational climate is
limited largely to sport” (O’Rourke et al., 2014, p. 404).

Documented in previous literature (Langan, Blake, & Lonsdale, 2013; Smoll & Smith, 2011), both the coach and parent(s) play a central role in youth sport. With further education and training, the parents and coaches can assist in providing a more productive motivational climate among youth in sport by being mutually reinforcing and influential. Coach training and interventions towards an enhanced motivational climate and approach could aid in athletes experiencing an increased self esteem, reduced anxiety, reduced sporting dropout, and greater team cohesion (Smoll & Smith, 2011). These findings focus on outcome measurements between the athlete and his/her parent(s) and do not fully explore or explain the processes underlying that coach-athlete relationship within a youth context.

3+1C’s model. The 3+1C’s model has received significant research attention, focusing itself on the coach and the athlete’s interdependent feelings. Behind the surge of both qualitative and quantitative research (Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006) Jowett work was spurred on that most of the conceptual models of the coach-athlete dyad emphasized coaches and athletes interpersonal behaviour and did not address the affective or cognitive domains of interpersonal relationships. As such, Jowett and colleagues (2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011) created a framework of constructs that are hypothesized to account for coach-athlete relationship quality. This is conceptualized in the multidimensional 3+1C model of: (a) closeness, (b) commitment, (c) complementarity, and (d) co-orientation of closeness. This model systematically provides evidence linking the concept of the coach-athlete relationship and the elements of which it is comprised to its developed tools (e.g., questionnaires). The relationship is “defined as a situational phenomenon in which coaches’ and athletes’ affective closeness, thoughts of
commitment and complementarity behaviours are interconnected” (Yang & Jowett, 2012, p. 36); thus the coaches’ and athletes’ emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are causally and jointly interdependent. The 3+1C framework is comprised of four interpersonal constructs representing affective, cognitive, and behavioural elements of a relationship (long version coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) version contains 29 items). Closeness refers to the affective meanings that the athlete and coach describe to their relationship (e.g., trust, liking, and respect) and can be represented by positive feelings that bond the relationship members (Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Commitment is defined as the athlete and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship and therefore maximize its outcomes. Complementarity represents the athlete and coach’s corresponding behaviours of affiliation (e.g., athlete’s friendly and responsive attitude is likely to elicit the coach’s friendly and responsive attitude) and reciprocal behaviours of dominance and submission (e.g., coach instructs and athlete executes). Co-orientation includes the athlete and coach’s interpersonal perceptions and reflects the degree to which they have established a common ground in their relationship. Both the coach and athlete are able to accurately infer how each is feeling, thinking, and behaving (this summarizes how those involved in the relationship perceive the original first 3 constructs of closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation; Jowett, 2007).

Jowett (2009) suggests that two or more individuals exemplify a relationship; in this case it is the coach and the athlete(s). The connection between them tends to lead towards intrapersonal (motivation, self-concept), interpersonal (conflict, stability, harmony) and group outcomes (cohesion, social acceptance) (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). The development of nomological networks towards the coach-athlete relationship continues based on the principle that a positive interdependent relationship is likely to generate positive outcomes
(e.g., cohesion, task motivational climate) as opposed to negative outcomes (e.g., ego motivational climate, performance avoidance goals) (Jowett, 2009). A nomological network includes a theoretical framework for what is intended to measure, an empirical framework for how it will be measured, and specification of the linkages between these two frameworks (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). In accordance with Yang and Jowett (2012), coach-athlete relationships within this network that possess cooperativeness, commitment, and closeness can assist with providing a sense of security during tough times on and off the court, field, ice etc. For example, an athlete experiencing anxiety or nervousness at the start of competition needs to feel safe and secure, a calming voice, patience, and encouraging coach could potentially re-focus the athlete into the rhythm and flow of the game, match etc.

The CART-Q has proven to be a valid and reliable instrument for researchers interested in assessing the nature, content or quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Jowett (2009, p. 165), stated it is “...validated to measure coaches’ and athletes’ self-perceptions of feelings in terms of closeness, thoughts in terms of commitment, and behaviours in terms of complementarity.” Direct and metaperspectives of the CART-Q (Table 3 see Appendix C) have been performed and sequentially accumulated suitable construct, concurrent, and content validity (Rhind & Jowett, 2010; Jowett, 2009), thus assisting in the development of a more complete backdrop of the interpersonal dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006). Research, has broadened the “network of the coach-athlete relationship while validating the various predictions set and, in turn, the claim that the CART-Q measures the intended concept and its constructs” (Jowett, 2009, p. 168). The 11-item CART-Q model depicts two viewpoints: the direct (how a single person thinks, behaves, and feels towards the other), and the metaperspective (outlined in how the coach/athlete perceives how the other(s)
thinks, feels and behaves), sharing an understanding between both the coach and the athlete (Rhind & Jowett, 2012). Evidence supports the CART-Q as a way of measuring the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009). Within the framework of the CART-Q, “the direct-perspective refers to how coaches and athletes themselves view the relationship (e.g., I trust my coach/athlete), and meta-perspective refers to how coaches and athletes think their partners view the relationship (e.g., my coach/athlete trusts me)” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009, p. 202).

In addition, early research evidence supported the direct perspective version of the CART-Q; however, the psychometric properties of the metaperspective version were less known (metacloseness, metacommitment, and metacomplementarity) (Jowett, 2009). In 2009, Jowett set out to evaluate the CART-Q’s metaperspective construct validity and found that “results not only provided evidence of the concurrent validity of the CART-Q (metaperspective) relevant to athlete and coach satisfaction, but also, lend support to the discriminant validity of the subscales contained in this measure” (Jowett, 2009, p. 174). Therefore, evidence to date proposes that both the direct- and meta-versions of the CART-Q are reliable and valid tools to measure the role of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009), however further research and psychometric testing is also warranted to determine the robustness of these findings.

The CART-Q and its psychometric properties were researched and implemented cross-culturally (7 countries). The results discovered by Yang and Jowett (2012) revealed an overall similarity of the model supporting the importance and strength of the structured CART-Q components, indicating that both coaches and athletes shape the relationship dyad, suggesting the coach-athlete relationship is viewed as a universal phenomenon. Cross-cultural research is important to assess the universality of the psychometric scale (CART-Q) that is used to measure the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Yang & Jowett, 2012). A series of qualitative
studies guided by the 3C’s model in seven cultures worldwide were administered to “assess the universality of the psychometric scale that issued to measure the quality of coach-athlete relationships” (Yang & Jowett, 2012, p. 36). Results indicated an overall congruence in the CART-Q; however, potential discrepancies in two items were highlighted concerning athlete’s respect and commitment (Yang & Jowett, 2012). It was suggested that “there is potential variation in the ways participants of different cultural groups...are likely to perceive and respond to these items” (Yang & Jowett, 2012, p. 40). For example, in accordance with Yang and Jowett (2012), respect may be interpreted as an emotional tie to some, while others may interpret it as a moral commitment towards the other (e.g., coach). Nonetheless, the CART-Q measurement that defines the quality of the coach-athlete relationship through the 3C’s appears to be an effective tool regardless of cultural context and/or location. Therefore, research supports that the coach-athlete relationship appears to have some degree of universality, and as such its content and functions may be applied across cultural boundaries (Balduck & Jowett, 2010).

The 11-item coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) has been established as a reliable tool and is “currently the only instrument in the literature that allows researchers to assess the quality of the coach–athlete relationship” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 290). To date, there has been support for the factorial validity and internal reliability of the 11-item CART-Q across the various countries and cultures in which it has been subjected to psychometric testing (Balduck & Jowett, 2010; Yang & Jowett, 2010).

Additional strengths of the CART-Q are its relatively short length and it being a user friendly tool, however researchers and practitioners have expressed interest in having the option between using either a short or longer versions of the direct and meta-perspectives of the CART-Q (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). The need for expansion is based on a number of important
theoretical, applied, and research related factors. From a research perspective, expanding the collection of questions or topics within each of the properties (e.g., closeness) would result in a more comprehensive outline within the dyadic measurement. Enabling a more detailed appraisal providing greater details behind the collection of coach-athlete relationship quality. In 2010, Rhind and Jowett expanded to a longer version of the CART-Q, containing 29 items from coaches and athletes direct and meta-perspectives. Rhind and Jowett (2010) outlined within the long version of the CART-Q that 7 items measured closeness, 10 items measured commitment, and 12 items measured complementarity. The 29 items were trimmed from 64 originally proposed in the initial version, 21 items being grouped for “closeness”, 20 items “commitment”, and 23 items for “complementarity”, feedback from expert panels was reviewed and evaluated (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Support from acceptable error variances suggested keeping only 29 items in the final direct and meta-perspective version of the long CART-Q. Yang and Jowett (2013) suggested that further analysis of the longer version is required in order to be on par (with 11-item) as a trustworthy instrument across countries and cultures (Yang & Jowett, 2013).

Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, and Jowett (2011) classified the 3+1C model as one of the leading contemporary models to investigate the coach-athlete relationship within the past decade. Jowett and Cockerill (2003) suggested that coach-athlete relationships should be “reciprocal, trusting, genuine, and helping in nature and go beyond merely teaching and instructing skills, techniques and tactics” (p. 314).

**Complementarity.** “The psychometric properties of the CART-Q have been extensively examined and the findings consistently highlight that the 3Cs (closeness, commitment, and complementarity) are distinct, yet interconnected components of coach-athlete relationships” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 831). A recent study (2013), conducted by Yang and Jowett,
investigated the construct of complementarity to “include not only co-operative behaviours that are corresponding but also cooperative behaviours that are reciprocal in nature” (p. 831). Complementarity has been described in research literature as coaches’ and athletes’ behavioural transactions of cooperation, responsiveness, and affiliation—typically in similar corresponding ways (Jowett, 2009). Behaviours between the coach and athlete that are reciprocal in nature reveal interaction in “divergent ways (dissimilar) manifesting reciprocal (give-and-take) levels of dominance/direction on the part of the coach and submissiveness/acceptance on the part of the athlete (reciprocal complementarity)” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 831). Previous literature (Rhind & Jowett, 2011; Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) suggests that reciprocal complementary can be a positive predictor of satisfaction, negative predictor of conflict, and can be associated with maintenance strategies, all within the coach-athlete dyad.

Yang and Jowett examined two measures designed to look at coaches’ dominant behaviour (CDB-S) and athletes’ submissive behaviour (ASB-S), collectively reflecting the new construct of reciprocal complementarity within the 3C’s. Initial items were generated and reviewed; an item pool of 54 was consistent with the definition of the coach dominant and athlete submissive behaviours. The items measured “dominant behaviour represented coaches’ capacity to lead, take charge, direct, control, support, and instruct. The items developed to measure submissive behaviour represented athletes’ capacity to accept, approve, allow, follow, and understand their coach’s direction” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 838). Varied items were eliminated from both the dominant and submissive pools due to clarity, specificity, and representational limitations, resulting in 20 total items (e.g., I enjoy following my coach’s instruction and lead). Jowett and Yang determined “both the coach dominant behaviour (CDB-S) and athlete submissive behaviour (ASB-S) are psychometrically sound self-report measures that can be
employed to assess coaches and athletes’ reciprocal complementarity either independently or in combination with closeness, commitment, and corresponding complementarity” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 838). Of note, further cross-cultural context is empirically needed as to further investigate reciprocal complementarity as a “global psychological phenomenon in coaching behaviours” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 839). Historically the CART-Q’s primary direction has been on the development or disillusion of a coach-athlete relationship, while more recently the focus has been on the importance of the relationship and how relationships are impacted by unique settings and environmental factors. Wylleman (2000) originally brought this analysis forward suggesting that research has been too focused on the coach-athlete relationship thus ignoring the unique environment in which each individual relationship is established.

**Maintenance.** Rhind and Jowett (2011) suggested that interpersonal relationships have demonstrated positive associations with maintenance strategies. These associations occur within the cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements of the quality of the relationship. In 2010, Rhind and Jowett considered how coaches and athletes could maintain the quality of their respective athletic relationships via different strategies; the COMPASS model evaluates such an approach. This model has been used to help maintain effective working partnerships within the quality of the coach-athlete relationship—affecting both direct and metaperceptions (see Jowett: CART-Q) within the relationship. The COMPASS model is thought to have a positive effect on the quality of relationship within the 3+1C’s conceptualization and address the literature gap with regards to relationship maintenance (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). The model is “...an integrated approach to the understanding of the nature, content and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship” (Rhind & Jowett, 2010, p. 118).

The COMPASS model (Figure 1 see Appendix D) proposes seven main categories: (1)
Conflict management: reflects expectations, consequences of unmet expectations, and cooperation in the discussion of conflict (includes themes such as proactive and reactive strategies); (2) Openness: addresses disclosure of one’s feelings (includes themes such as non-sport communication, talk about anything, and other awareness); (3) Motivation: indicates individuals’ motivation to work with coaches/athletes or coaches/athletes motivating their athletes/coaches to continue working with them (themes includes were effort, motivate the other, fun, and sowing ability); (4) Positivity: reflects adaptability, fairness, and acting positively regarding issues that were outside of the sporting environment (themes include adaptability, fairness, and external pressures); (5) Advice: captures giving one’s opinions on problems encountered by the coach or the athlete, as well as giving and receiving feedback in a positive way (sport communication, reward feedback, and constructive feedback were three themes emerging from here); (6) Support: involves showing that one was committed to the coach-athlete relationship and available for the coach/athlete in terms of both sports-related and personal issues (assurance, sport-specific support and personal support emerged as the themes); and (7) Social Networks: includes spending social time with the coach/athlete as well as mutual friends, and involved interactions that took place away from the sporting location (includes the two themes of socializing and shared network) (Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

Rhind and Jowett (2011) recently developed a coach-athlete relationship maintenance questionnaire (CARM-Q), which contains 28 items intended to measure the 7 relationship strategies outlined in the COMPASS model. This model suggests that implementing the use of these strategies assists to maintain coach-athlete relationship quality. Although youthful in its stages of development, it is important to note that both the CARM-Q and CART-Q when complimenting one another can be a useful tool gaining valuable insight within the coach-athlete relationship.
relationship and its effectiveness. The implementation of the CARM-Q tool can provide an increased understanding of the coach-athlete relationship by measuring the use of conflict management, openness, motivational, preventative, assurance, support, and social network strategies within the coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2011). Rhind and Jowett (2010) outlined that “unless people use effective maintenance strategies, their relationships will weaken, and ultimately end” (p. 107). Thus, maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship is not simple and often necessitates awareness and conscious effort from both parties.

**Qualitative dimensions.** While the bulk of the work in the area of coach-athlete relationship has been quantitative, two other studies (Becker 2009; Stewart & Owens, 2011) have also examined the coach-athlete relationship using a qualitative methodological approach (interviews) to capture the athlete experience(s). These two studies developed important dimensions of coaching by hearing the voice of athletes. It is suggested by Becker (2009) that great coaches tend to avoid breakdowns within six coaching dimensions: (1) Coach attributes which are coaches core qualities or internal makeup (e.g., leader, mentor, personality, ability, experience and imperfections etc.); (2) the environment in which all coach-athlete interactions and actions occur (e.g., practice, one on one communication); (3) the system, which include actions/interactions based on established beliefs (e.g., coach/athlete belief in system etc.); (4) relationships, which include both professional and personal (e.g., belief in athlete, inspiration, accountability, allow for individuality, etc.); (5) coaching actions, it is not about what they do, but how coaches do it (e.g., teaching quality, life skills, sport skills, communication, motivation, preparation etc.); and finally (6) athlete influences, where athletes’ are influenced by all the above (e.g., influencing self-perceptions, development, and performance).
Stewart and Owens (2011) found that coaches showing concern for the welfare of the individual athlete was a behaviour belonging to a social support dimension. Coaches should address the need for relatedness by accepting, caring for, and valuing players as people and not just performers (Stewart & Owens, 2011). The more traditional training and instructional dimension are highly valued; however, it was noted that knowledge is very important, but not enough. The coach must be able to teach the skills that accompany that knowledge in a way that athletes adopt and execute them (Stewart & Owens, 2011). Interestingly, coaches who were characterized as hard-nosed and competitive were shown to be both effective and perceived as favourites within their findings. The more positive the athletes perceived their coaches behaviours to be, the more positive was their athletic experience. One of the more important roles of a coach in competitive sport is to improve athletic performance; therefore, coaching styles and behaviours have a great effect on team performance (Stewart & Owens, 2011).

LaVoi’s conceptualization. LaVoi (2004) proposed a conceptual model suggesting the coach-athlete relationship is developed psychologically by each person’s “authenticity”, “engagement”, “empowerment”, and “capacity” to deal with conflict (referred to as “ability” in this model). LaVoi’s conceptualization investigating the nature of closeness was based on the idea that interdependence, connection, and feeling close to, nurtures a more genuine caring relationship. Authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and the ability to deal with conflict are the foundation of each relationship (LaVoi, 2004). Authenticity refers to how genuinely authentic the athlete and coach express themselves in the relationship. Engagement within the coach-athlete relationship is measured by how committed and responsive the coach and the athlete are towards their dynamic relationship. Empowerment within the coach-athlete relationship reflects the degree to which both the coach and athlete inspire each other and have
equal input within the dyad. Ability refers to the coach and the athlete’s capacity to deal with any conflict that might occur along the way with the relationship.

Athletes’ interactions and relationships with a coach can predict satisfaction, self-perceptions, and motivation in sport (Horn, 2008). Closeness between athlete and coach involve knowing and caring about many aspects of an athlete’s life, rather than only aspects directly related to the sport context (Stuntz & Spearance, 2010). As described by LaVoi (2007), “…the nuances and relational meanings associated with communication are at least as, if not more important, than the content of communication” (p. 507). Stuntz and Spearance (2010) suggested that LaVoi’s conceptualization of closeness represents “not only the functional descriptions of communication and closeness, but illustrate the importance of considering the content of these [coach-athlete] interactions” (p. 268).

Contemporary models have made a significant contribution and taken aim to the advancement of coach-athlete relationship research during the initial decade of the 2000s. Despite the growth in this area it remains that research investigating interpersonal bonds within athletics is minimal (Davis, Jowett, & Lafrenière, 2013). Jowett and Wylleman (2006) advocated “research that takes into account the relationship environment or context” is important to further “generate knowledge and understanding about human behaviour, affect and cognition and their associations” (p. 122).

**Part III. Other influences on the coach-athlete literature**

In an effort to further generate a deeper understanding of the coach-athlete relationship and gather data that can be incorporated into the development of sport specific measures, investigators have engaged in researching various components and/or themes of the coach-
athlete relationship. These components are considered to be significant to the overall quality, growth, and substance of the coach-athlete relationship.

**Personality.** Personality traits are intrinsic differences and remain relatively stable throughout most of our life; traits have a genetic basis and are constant aspects of our individuality (Digman, 1989). *Personality* is an individualized characteristic, where individuals behave accordingly to situations consistent with their own innate patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Bootzin, Bower, Crocker, & Hall 2011). The big five-factor trait model (FFM) (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Soto, Gosling, & Potter, 2008) predicts relationship commitment and relatedness (e.g., closeness and trust) and it is the construction of this model that has encouraged personality research in sport for members of established coach-athlete dyads (Jackson, Dimmock, Gucciardi, & Grove, 2011). The FFM was developed to represent as much of the variability in individuals’ personalities as possible, using only a small set of trait dimensions. Personality researchers proposed five basic dimensions of personality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism (sometimes referred to by its polar opposite, emotional stability), and openness to experience (sometimes referred to as intellect) (Table 4 see Appendix E). Current research has shifted somewhat and is not only focused on intrapersonal effects within the big five model but also how the model supports various interpersonal consequences. Research is now acknowledging that personality traits are influencing how people move ahead within and view their respective relationships (e.g., coach-athlete) (Jackson et al. 2011).

Levels of extraversion that tend to be higher align closely with increased communication, sensitivity, disclosure, argumentative tendencies, and provision of social support (Jackson et al. 2011, Revelle & Scherer, 2009). Highly extraverted individuals are assertive and sociable, rather
than quiet and reserved (Soto et al., 2008). These behaviours are not typically shared if working alongside a person more introverted in nature; therefore, conflict and the threat of relationship processes could become a factor (Jackson et al. 2011).

Openness was also associated with coach-athlete incompatibility—corresponding to coach-athlete closeness and trust (relatedness); less desired future interaction, as well as commitment reduction (Jackson et al. 2011). Openness, if shared and recognized within the coach-athlete relationship, lends itself to be an ideal component within the dyad. A highly open individual with a broad rather than narrow range of interests, are sensitive rather than indifferent to art and beauty, and prefer novelty to routine (Soto et al., 2008). If such concepts as training, discussion, relationship flexibility, and tactical execution become more balanced, then coach-athlete interaction lends itself to be more positive. If the coach is open and the athlete is closed, both the individuals will find it difficult to co-exist within the dyad (Jackson et al. 2011), turning the relationship into a disruption that could affect goal achievement.

“Working alongside agreeable individuals has been shown to predict reduced conflict, increased comfort. With regards to agreeableness, the athlete or the coach reported increased perceptions of closeness and trust within their dyad; liking, rapport, and relationship commitment perceptions” (Jackson et al. 2011, p. 228). Agreeable individuals tend to be cooperative and polite, rather than antagonistic and rude (Soto et al., 2008).

Research suggests that conscientious individuals are task focused and orderly, rather than distractible and disorganized (Soto et al., 2008). Conscientiousness was reported alongside greater relatedness, meaning, “conscientiousness may promote positive partner experiences due to actors increased responsibility, responsiveness and reduced condescending communication towards the partner” (Jackson et al. 2011, p. 228).
Neurotic individuals are prone to experiencing negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and irritation, rather than being emotionally resilient (Soto et al., 2008). Jackson et al. (2011, p. 223) outlined, “people scoring high on neuroticism have been shown to consistently encounter relationship difficulties and develop unfavourable interpersonal perceptions”. For example, “neuroticism is associated with relationship dissolution reduced relationship satisfaction, enhanced interpersonal insecurity, as well as increased conflict and derogation of partners” (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 223).

When discussing the coach-athlete alongside with the big five model this dyad may represent a way by which individuals assess their relationships. The big five may also facilitate the interaction styles and interpersonal outcomes that are foundational attributes within either the coach and/or athlete. Highly agreeable and extraverted athletes and coaches reported stronger personal relatedness, feelings of trust and friendship, as well as commitment within the relationship (Jackson et al. 2011). With regards to commitment and relatedness within the quality of the relationship, Jackson et al. (2011) demonstrated that dissimilarity on extraversion, openness, and agreeableness may obstruct the formation and maintenance of mutually beneficial interactions.

A newer study, by Yang, Jowett, and Chan (2014), outlined the influence of the big five personality traits on the quality of the Chinese coach-athlete relationship and satisfaction. Associations between personality traits, such as neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, and relationship quality were in line with previous research of relationships in sport. However, the personality traits of openness and agreeableness, statistically failed to reach acceptable levels of significant associations between the two. “While it would seem reasonable to suggest that both openness and agreeableness are important traits that serve important functions in the
development of harmonious, stable, and positive coach-athlete relationships, this would need to be substantiated in future research” (Yang et al., 2014, p. 9). These findings support that Chinese athletes and coaches generally tend to experience a strong emotional cognitive approach placing an emphasis on interdependence through close emotional and cognitive ties (Yang et al., 2014; Yang & Jowett, 2010, 2012). In addition, “Findings also suggested that coaches’ perceived social-relational environment, reflected in the quality of the coach-athlete relationship, related negatively to their athletes’ personality trait of neuroticism and positively to their athletes’ personality traits of extroversion and conscientiousness” (Yang et al., 2014, p. 9). Nervousness, rigidity, hostility, and emotional insecurity are traits characteristic of a neurotic athlete, and these were seen to have a negative affect on the athlete when perceiving their relationship quality with the coach (Yang et al., 2014). “In contrast, athletes with a sense of purpose, self-control, and commitment (e.g., conscientiousness), responsiveness, friendliness, and energy (e.g., extroversion) appeared to be in favour of coaches’ perceived relationship quality and interaction” (Yang et al., 2014, p. 9).

As defined by both the direct and meta-perspectives of the 3Cs, Yang et al., (2014) found coaches’ personality did not seem to have the capacity to predict athletes’ perceptions of the quality of the relationship. Interestingly, athletes’ relationship quality may be a “function of how well their coaches lead (coaches are expected to provide leadership), instruct, and support their athletes toward skill acquisition and achievement of performance goals, as opposed to what individual characteristics (enduring personality traits) their coaches possess” (Yang et al., 2014, p. 9). The overall quality of the relationship appears to be affected optimistically by positive personality traits and vice versa for negative personality traits. “Thus, it is possible that coaches’ positive beliefs of their athletes’ view of the athletic relationship (coaches’ meta-perspective of
3Cs) are transferred into, or picked up by their athletes, making them feel positive and satisfied” (Yang et al., 2014, p. 10).

**Efficacy.** “The concept of efficacy in the context of sport has seen a conceptual, empirical, and methodological advancement over the past decade” (Jowett, Shanmugam, & Caccoulis, 2012, p. 66). “Self-efficacy corresponds to a person’s confidence in his or her own capabilities to perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1997), and in the context of sport, this construct has been studied extensively across athlete and coach populations” (Jackson, Knapp, & Beauchamp, 2009, p. 203). Collective efficacy has been connected with team cohesion and can be defined as a group’s confidence in performing collective tasks successfully whereas confidence is an essential component when discussing the concept of collective efficacy within team sport (Bandura, 2007; Jowett et al., 2012).

“The coach-athlete relationship is a psychological concept that is characterized by its social and interpersonal nature and is developed as a function of the socialization and interaction that occur within sport teams much like team cohesion and collective efficacy” (Jowett et al., 2012, p. 66). Research that has been dedicated to examining various interpersonal settings (e.g., the coach-athlete relationship) (Jackson, Gucciardi, & Dimmock, 2011) has provided important knowledge into better understanding the mechanics at the center of the most favourable coach-athlete encounters.

Lent and Lopez (2002) looked to broaden Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy (SET) and research how it may be observable within closer relationships, more specifically, the coach-athlete relationship. Jackson and Beauchamp (based on Lent & Lopez, 2002) outlined that “when people form close partnerships, they not only hold a set of self-efficacy beliefs related to their own capabilities, but they may also develop a set of efficacy cognitions about their significant
other, or partner” (2010, p. 221). The “tripartite (3 parties) efficacy model”, outlined by Lent and Lopez (2002), is an additional group of constructs that surrounds efficacy beliefs associated within a coach-athlete framework. Jackson et al. (2011) outlined, through dyadic interaction, a set of complementary efficacy beliefs comprising an individual’s confidence in his (athletes) own capabilities (e.g., self-efficacy); his confidence in other person’s (coach’s) capabilities (e.g., other-efficacy); and his estimation of the other person’s confidence in him or degree of confidence in his coach’s ability (e.g., related-inferred self-efficacy or RISE). In the coach-athlete environment, qualitative studies have been conducted to examine Lent and Lopez’s (2002) framework (Jackson et al., 2011).

Lent and Lopez (2002) extended their theoretical model and identified two other types of relational efficacy: a) other and b) relational-inferred self-efficacy (RISE). Other-efficacy is stated by Lent and Lopez (2002) as an “individual’s beliefs about his or her significant other’s ability to perform particular behaviours” (p. 264). Possibly, this could be a measure of athletes’ confidence in their coaches’ abilities. Relational-inferred self-efficacy (RISE) “represents an estimation of how confident one’s partner is in oneself” (p. 268). Therefore, RISE is considered as a meta-perception, forming estimations that one person holds about another person’s perceptions (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010). Together, SET, RISE and other-efficacy formed a tripartite model, as outlined by Lent and Lopez (2002). Athlete dyads, like the coach-athlete relationship, have assisted in providing evidence that the tripartite model may be applicable towards desirable consequences within close-relationships (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010). Research findings (Jackson, Grove, & Beauchamp, 2010) revealed efficacy beliefs within the coach-athlete dyad are independently related to key relational consequences and suggest that the “tripartite efficacy beliefs may play an important role in shaping the quality of relationship
processes, as defined by the 3Cs of closeness, commitment, and complementarity” (p. 1047).

Furthermore, if an athlete perceives that his/her coach is confident in his/her abilities, regardless if they actually are or not, then this may influence the self-efficacy beliefs of the athlete (Jackson et al., 2007). Bandura (1997) suggests mastery experiences, modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological tasks are sources behind efficacy influence and information. This offers the prospective for better understanding relationship cognitions in sporting social frameworks (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010). “Research involving the athletic dyads (e.g., coach-athlete, athlete-athlete) has provided preliminary evidence for the utility of these tripartite constructs in predicting a range of desirable relational outcomes” (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010, p. 189).

Jackson and Beauchamp refer to the tripartite model as estimations of the other person’s self-efficacy (EOSE) beliefs—advocating self-efficacy as a meta-perception within the dyadic setting. For example, “when athletes and coaches estimated that the other person in the dyad was highly confident in his or her own abilities (e.g., positive EOSE perceptions), this was associated with greater relationship satisfaction and adaptive affective responses” (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010, p. 194). Therefore, the tripartite model is suggested as a network of efficacy beliefs that are made up of four constructs: “self-efficacy (my confidence in my ability), other-efficacy (my confidence in my partner’s ability), RISE (how confident I think my partner is in my ability), and finally, EOSE (how confident I think my partner is in him/herself)” (Jackson & Beauchamp, 2010, p. 189). Interview and self-report data have provided some support for an individual’s other-efficacy and RISE beliefs, which in turn may predict confidence in their own ability and within their respective coach-athlete relationship (e.g., Jackson, Knapp, & Beauchamp, 2009). “Existing tripartite efficacy research in dyadic settings [such as coach-athlete] has provided
insight into the social cognitive factors that underpin relationship processes” (Jackson, Myers, Taylor, & Beauchamp, 2012, p. 16). However, current tripartite efficacy research “has yet to explore the model in its entirety by testing the range of direct and indirect pathways associated with self-efficacy, other-efficacy, and RISE” (Jackson, Myers, Taylor, & Beauchamp, 2012, p. 16) in relation to important outcomes.

In 1999, Feltz, Chase, Moritz, and Sullivan proposed a coaching efficacy model and developed a coaching efficacy scale (CES) containing 41 items to measure various dimensions of the model. Coaching efficacy is the coach believing in his/her ability to affect the performance and learning of their athletes (Feltz et al. 1999). Feltz et al. (1999) suggested that coaching behaviours and tasks be grouped into four dimensions: motivating athletes (confidence that coaches have in their ability to affect the psychological skills and states of their athletes); strategy use (confidence that coaches have in their ability to coach during competition and lead their team to successful performance); coaching technique (confidence that coaches have in their instructional and diagnostic skills); and character-building skills (confidence that coaches have in their ability to prepare their athletes physically for participation in their sport) (Myers, Feltz, Chase, Reckase, & Hancock, 2008). According to Feltz et al. (1999) coaching efficacy beliefs are influenced by coaches’ extent of coaching experience or preparation, prior success, perceived skill of athletes, support from the school, community, and parents. Feltz et al.’s (1999) research acknowledged the CES as being a reliable instrument measuring the multidimensional nature of coaching efficacy investigating its sources and outcomes. The model postulates that coaching efficacy beliefs influence coaching behavior, player or team satisfaction, performance, and efficacy.

Myers and colleagues (Myers, Feltz, Chase, Reckase, & Hancock, 2008; Myers, Chase,
Pierce, & Martin, 2011) explored ways to improve the measurement of coaching efficacy by developing a revised version of Feltz et al.’s (1999) coaching efficacy scale (CES). The premise for revising the scale stemmed from the researchers’ conclusions from other research that “coaching efficacy has been linked with a host of theory-based external variables: coaching behaviour (Feltz et al., 1999); team winning percentage (Myers, Vargas-Tonsing, & Feltz, 2005); player improvement (Chase, Feltz, Hayashi, & Hepler, 2005); playing experience (Sullivan, Gee, & Feltz, 2006); imagery (Short, Smiley, & Ross-Stewart, 2005); leadership style (Sullivan & Kent, 2003); and team efficacy (Vargas-Tonsing, Warners, & Feltz, 2003)” (Myers, et al. 2011, p. 780).

There are currently two revised versions since Feltz et al. (1999) outlined the CES. Myers, Feltz, Chase, Reckase, and Hancock (2008) put forth the coaching efficacy scale II—high school teams (CES II-HST) and following this, Myers et al. (2011) continued to improve the measurement of coaching efficacy by developing a revised version of the coaching efficacy scale (CES) for head coaches of youth sport teams (CES II-YST). The original four-dimension CES by Feltz et al. (1999) was slightly amended and suggested that coaching behaviours and tasks be grouped into five dimensions. The five dimensions included motivation efficacy (ME), game strategy efficacy (GSE), technique efficacy (TE), and character-building efficacy (CBE), with physical conditioning efficacy (PCE) being added as the fifth addition. PCE is defined as the confidence a coach has in his/her ability to prepare his/her athletes physically for participation in their sport (Myers et al. 2008).

Within their research, Jowett et al. (2012) examined whether collective efficacy can explain how or why the coach-athlete relationship and athlete satisfaction, as well as team cohesion (social and task) and athlete satisfaction, are related. For elite coaches and athletes who
are part of a team sport, the number one belief and outcome of team cohesion is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003). Within the overall concept of team cohesion, social cohesion reflects an individual’s attraction, feelings towards the group because of positive relationships and acceptance with other members of the group, while task cohesion refers to an individual’s attraction to the group because of shared commitment and personal involvement to the group tasks and goals (Jowett et al., 2012).

Jowett et al. (2012) were the first to examine these potential associations between the coach-athlete dyad and collective efficacy. Jowett et al. (2012) discovered support from previous research of Jowett (2007) noting that the coach-athlete relationship provides a social condition for developing beliefs of collective efficacy and impacting the athlete’s overall satisfaction. “Central to this study was the potential mediating role of collective efficacy for the association between the coach-athlete relationship and athlete satisfaction as well as for the association between team cohesion and athlete satisfaction” (Jowett et al., 2012, p. 77).

Hampson and Jowett (2014) suggested with a more concentrated focus on “whether coach leadership variables can predict more variance in their athletes’ perceptions of collective efficacy when coach–athlete relationship variables are included” (p. 457). In general, the findings by Hampson and Jowett (2014) revealed the significance behind developing the relationship for collective efficacy between coaches and athletes.

A coach that is more personally supportive, takes a more interpersonal approach, and is perceived in that context by his/her athletes hold higher efficacy levels within their players and team. In contrast, if a coach is perceived to be making all the decisions surrounding the team then the collective efficacy among the athlete’s will be lower (Hampson & Jowett, 2014); “social support (taking a more interpersonal and relational approach) and autocratic behaviours are
significantly associated with collective efficacy” (Hampson & Jowett, 2014, p. 458). In summary, Hampson and Jowett (2014) determined the extent to which different leader behaviours and the coach–athlete relationship independently and together associate with sport teams’ levels of collective efficacy.

**Attachment.** Davis and Jowett (2010) explored attachment theory within the context of sport, specifically, the coach-athlete relationship. “The need for the field of sport and exercise psychology to employ concepts and ideas located beyond the social-cognitive lenses that currently dominate the field is warranted” (Carr, 2009, p. 95). Carr suggests that it is important to investigate other domains of psychology within a sport-related context as it “provides invaluable insight into how such traditional concepts and ideas might be validated, transformed, or played-out in an increasingly important applied setting” (2009, p. 95). Attachment theory is derived from the work of John Bowlby in 1969 and:

"It provides a well-respected psychological framework that has contributed significantly to the understanding of the emotional bonds that are formed in close relationships. Attachment reflects the child’s emotional connection to a figure upon whom the infant relies for comfort, protection, and reassurance during times of need. (Davis & Jowett, 2010, p. 113)

Davis and Jowett (2010) were influenced by the work of Bowlby, Ainsworth and colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) that embodied tangible psychological constructs known as attachment styles. Ainsworth et al. (1978) referred to three primary attachment styles: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant (Table 5 see Appendix F).

Davis and Jowett (2010) discovered that the coach was viewed by their sampling of post-secondary student-athletes as a “figure that is likely to fulfill the basic attachment functions of
secure base, safe haven, and proximity maintenance” (p. 126). Therefore, the secure student-athlete was looking for a certain level of closeness with the coach. Avoidant athletes, who have a discomfort with intimacy and closeness, “typically tend to distrust their coach, and remain both behaviourally and emotionally disconnected” (Davis & Jowett, 2010, p. 127). In accordance with Davis and Jowett (2010), these athletes are less likely to experience satisfaction within their sport and own coach-athlete relationship, suggesting “avoidantly attached athletes, because of their specific dispositional orientation, may view their involvement with the coach and their engagement in sport as a less positive endeavour” (Davis & Jowett, 2010, p. 127).

Based on adult attachment theorists (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), as suggested by Davis and Jowett (2010), insights of coach portraying insensitivity, disinterest, or inconsistencies can contribute to the development of an avoidant or anxious attachment orientation. Davis and Jowett suggested that an:

Accepting, responsive, and supportive coach can help facilitate a perception of being understood, appreciated, cared for, and respected. Such positive beliefs and expectations may enhance perceptions of relationship quality and well-being and allow a person to become more involved in their relationship. (Davis & Jowett, 2010, p. 127)

Felton and Jowett (2013) proposed that athletes with an avoidant attachment style could function optimally, with optimally being indicated as synonymous to psychological and subjective comfort within the dyad. If the athlete(s) were able to identify that their basic psychological needs are fulfilled within their coach-athlete relationship then optimal functioning would occur. “Therefore, even athletes with an avoidant attachment style are more likely to feel that their potential is realized if their needs are satisfied within the coaching relational context” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 62). This implies that for an avoidant attachment style athlete the
dysfunctional levels within the coach-athlete relationship could be removed as long as his/her basic needs are being met (Felton & Jowett, 2013). As such, the “social and autonomy supportive behaviours from the coach could influence avoidantly attached athletes’ basic psychological needs satisfaction” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 626).

This was not the case with anxious attached individuals from the research findings (Felton & Jowett, 2013). By definition (derived from Ainsworth et al. 1978), “anxious attached individuals are clingy, needy, and their level of closeness with others may remain unfulfilled despite caregivers or attachment figures (in this case, coaches) best attempts to connect emotionally and behaviourally” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 63). Consistent with Felton and Jowett (2013), it was found that athletes with anxious attachment styles did not satisfy basic psychological needs within the coach-athlete relationship (Davis & Jowett, 2014). Therefore, these coaches are unable to satisfy the athletes’ psychological needs. “Although coaches may not have the time, continuous effort, or endless energy to satisfy these athletes’ basic psychological needs and in turn well-being, the findings of this study would seem to suggest that the parents of these athletes may be better placed to do so” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 63).

Felton and Jowett (2013) demonstrated the potential influential roles a coach can have with differing attachment types. The level of psychological needs being met within each coach-athlete dyad is important to the athlete to achieve a productive and positive relationship. This study reveals, “potential interventions aimed at enhancing well-being in insecure athletes” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 63). The cross-fertilization of conceptual and theoretical models from psychology literature to sport and exercise research has become more prevalent in recent years (Davis & Jowett, 2013). Within organized sport, it has been purported that athletes’ relationships with their coaches can become an important aspect of growth, development, and can fulfill the
three basic attachment functions (e.g., a secure base, safe haven, a target for proximity), (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Jowett, 2008; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003).

Davis and Jowett (2013) aimed to develop and validate a coach-athlete-specific self-report instrument that measures the three attachment styles: secure, anxious, and avoidant, as well, a potential measure that investigates the two insecure attachment styles (see Ainsworth et al., 1978).

The development of the coach-athlete attachment scale (CAAS) could permit research that aims to understand relational (e.g., coach-athlete relationship quality), motivational (e.g., coach-created motivational climate), group (e.g., team cohesion, collective efficacy), leadership (e.g., coach leadership behaviours), and other such phenomena without having to rely on instruments that have been developed for use in different contexts (e.g., family, education) and with different attachment figures (e.g., romantic partners). (Davis & Jowett, 2013, p. 125)

This is a newly developed instrument within the coach-athlete relationship field and, in particular, relationship satisfaction. Further psychometric testing of the CAAS is needed, as well as “assessing the predictive validity against other important variables (e.g., positive/negative affect, depression, sport satisfaction, 3Cs, self-concept, team cohesion, collective efficacy) would have added further evidence to the possible validity and utility of the CAAS” (Davis & Jowett, 2013, p. 141).

Numerous researchers within the social-psychology domain of the coach-athlete relationship have suggested that “a high-quality interdependent coach–athlete relationship is central to effective coaching and is a fundamental precursor of athletes’ optimal functioning” (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p. 1454). As such, Davis and Jowett (2014) set out to discover potential connections between attachment styles, relationship quality, and subjective well-being in the
context of the coach-athlete dyad. Interestingly, athletes with an avoidant attachment style perceive the coach-athlete relationship as less important to them due to the athlete(s) having the perception of lower levels of support from his/her coach (Davis & Jowett, 2014). The avoidant athlete who has a preference for emotional distance, independence, and self-reliance is less likely to experience conflict with the coach therefore “they may find it especially difficult to interact in a manner that requires them to depend and rely on their coaches for support, guidance, instruction, and advice” (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p.1460). When dealing with an avoidant-attachment style athlete it may require time for athlete to realize the positive; “coaches may have to deliberately create situations that provide opportunities to connect with the athlete and create an environment that is genuinely and constantly nurturing, supportive, and caring” (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p.1460).

Secure attached athletes (or low levels of insecure attachment/athletes who are comfortable with emotional closeness and interdependence) perceive that coaches are available to provide support and value the importance of the coach-athlete relationship as well as experience less interpersonal conflict (Davis & Jowett, 2013, 2010). “One reason for this may be that these athletes, within their supportive and valued interpersonal environments, have developed the capacity to use constructive resolution skills or relationship enhancement strategies” (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p.1461). Within the study, it is suggested that if a coach-athlete relationship was suffering, it may be worthwhile trying to identify attachment styles that are involved within the dyad—especially focusing on the athlete’s attachment needs (Davis & Jowett, 2014). As a coach, it is imperative to continue to be available and responsive with his or her athletes. This may benefit such athlete’s that are avoidant, because overtime the athletes may update what Bowlby (1988) identifies as their internal working models (IWM) of themselves and
coaches (Davis & Jowett, 2014). Bowlby (1980) suggests IWM’s are mental and/or internal representations that consist of expectations of self and significant others (e.g., coach-athlete), and the mutual relationship between the two. In accordance with Bowlby (1969), humans possess a biologically programmed system. This encourages each individual to form emotional bonds and attachments, typically with people who have the potential to provide a sense of security and protection when needed (Bowlby, 1969).

Over time, increasing and consistent availability and responsiveness may help athletes update their IWMs so that they begin to value themselves and others more positively (positive IWM); this in turn may help develop more interdependent coach-athlete relationships (Davis & Jowett, 2014).

Those who are securely attached tend to have positive IWMs of the self, as they feel worthy of the love and attention they receive and of their attachment figure as they perceive them to be available and responsive. Those who are insecurely attached tend to hold negative IWMs of the self as they feel unworthy of the love and affection they (may) receive and the attachment figure, as they perceive them to be unavailable and unresponsive. (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p. 1461)

Typically, an athlete with feelings of positive affect (e.g., vitality, energy, excitement) would possess lower levels of interpersonal conflict and operate more efficiently within a performance-oriented environment (Davis & Jowett, 2014). In contrast, athletes possessing feelings of negative affect (e.g., tiredness, upset, irritability) potentially having higher levels of interpersonal conflict, lack of communication, distrust, unclear roles, and harmful effects on athlete’s performance (Davis & Jowett, 2014). “To date, there has been very little research that has examined the impact of athletes’ and coaches’ individual difference in characteristics on the
effectiveness of coaching, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship, and in gauging the athletes’ well-being” (Davis & Jowett, 2014, p.1462).

**Interdependence.** Through learning, teaching, and evaluative processes, both the coach and athlete articulate needs and satisfy goals. Nonetheless, the coach-athlete relationship has been hindered by a lack of a comprehensive framework (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011; Wylleman, 2000). Jowett & Nezlek (2011) set out to inspect part of this framework by examining the coach-athlete relationship within the context of interdependence theory (IT; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Interdependence theory provides a comprehensive analysis of interpersonal structure, social situations shape both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes; feelings, emotions, beliefs and thoughts of present, past and future are examples of this (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). This is an important framework for understanding personal and social relationships and how relational partners can influence each other’s outcomes (Kelley, 2013), which are typically outlined as positive consequences (rewards) and negative consequences (costs) depicting high levels of reward and low levels of costs. The coach-athlete relationship encompasses the elements of interdependence; “satisfaction with a relationship per se is a function of comparing the rewards and costs of that relationship with some type of internal standard” (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011, p. 2).

An extension of IT is that of the 3C’s model developed by Jowett (2003), which was discussed earlier in this review. Coaches and athlete’s interdependence, as measured by the 3C’s, are positively related to satisfaction with training and instruction and performance accomplishments, and to dedication to sport and social support. For example, “coaches’ interdependence with their athletes was positively related to their satisfaction with the quality of instruction and performance” (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011, p. 3).
Jowett and Nezlek (2011) determined that higher end (elite) competitive levels may provide important support during intense, stressful, and extreme events, thus demonstrating strong association between interdependence and satisfaction with training, instruction, and personal treatment. Stronger bonds between satisfaction and interdependence also were evident in longer-term coach-athlete relationships. Typically long-term connections are more likely to have survived more dynamic relationship events (e.g., conflict and intimacy). As time progresses within a relationship more resources, time, and energy are invested. This may be why time (in longer relationships) moderates the association between coach-athlete interdependence and their members’ satisfaction.

Jowett and Nezlek (2011) have portrayed both theoretical and practical significance towards the association between interdependence and satisfaction to the coach-athlete relationship.

[It] remains unclear whether relationship interdependence leads to satisfaction or relationship satisfaction leads to interdependence or indeed they are cyclically related and together are caused by such factors as individual difference characteristics (e.g., personality) and sociocultural variables (e.g., culture), as well as other factors (e.g., similarity, empathy). (Jowett and Nezlek 2011, p. 12)

Coaches and athletes develop close relationships with a high degree of interdependence, which are typically formed through interactions occurring within the training atmosphere (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Both the coach and the athlete value their respective relationship and, in turn, desire it to be beneficial for both parties, so that together they can continue on with it in a productive manner (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). The coach-athlete relationship is both complex and unique; empirical evidence over the past decade indicates that there are various dimensions
within this dyad that assist in strengthening the relationship such as Jowett’s conceptualized items of closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation, which were discussed earlier as the 3+1C’s Model (Jowett, 2009). Within this benchmark of the coach-athlete relationship model, there remains a strong emotional bond between the coach and athlete; potentially this emotional bond may well be the foundation for creating a strong coach-athlete relationship.

The complexity of the coach-athlete relationship continues to reveal itself through empirical findings, however, in many instances factors of the dyad continue to be presented and examined both individually and through segmented processes. Consequently, it appears as though a majority of research to date in this area has been somewhat random and is lacking an overall consideration of systematically and sequentially exploring how these relationship factors are interrelated and impact each another. The next section focuses on the interactive behaviours associated with the coach-athlete relationship.

**Part IV. Coach-athlete interactive behaviours**

Athletes that feel connected with their coaches believe that this is an important requisite towards their athletic success (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). The coach can play a vital role in the personal development of an athlete and guide an effective coach-athlete relationship in which an athlete feels connected to his or her coach (Swanson, 2014).

**Self.** Relationships are closely associated with people’s self-concept (Jowett & Cramer, 2010; Hinde, Finkenauer, & Auhagen, 2001). Both coaches and parents can be influential and should transmit positive feedback to the athlete to assist in putting together high perceptions of self-competence (Jowett & Cramer, 2010). Jowett and Cramer (2010) investigated whether young athletes’ descriptions of physical self are predicted by perceptions of the relationship
quality of coaches and parents. The physical self can be identified “as an athlete’s sense of worth as a competent and skilful performer in their chosen sport” (Jowett & Cramer, 2010, p. 141). Physical self is the perception about one’s skill ability, body shape, mental competence, physiological competence, and overall performance (Marsh, Hey, Johnson, & Perry, 1997). Limited numbers of studies have been conducted to assess whether the quality of social (coach-athlete) and personal (parent-athlete) relationships relate to important psychological outcomes including sport competence within sport (Jowett & Cramer, 2010).

Athletes’ relationships with coaches and parents affect their sense of self-worth and, in turn, can influence the performer and the overall depth of the relationship. Necessities for support are positively associated within dimensions of physical self (Jowett & Cramer, 2010). According to Jowett and Cramer (2010), a “meaningful and a supportive coach-athlete relationship can potentially make a positive contribution to how young athletes view their physical self” (p. 145).

Within the sporting environment, both coach-athlete and parent-athlete relationships play an influential role on the athlete. They can complement one another or in some cases can be completely separate from one another. Jowett and Cramer (2010) suggested that “one type of relationship is capable of affecting the athlete’s physical self-concept and the other is not” (p. 145). Within this example it is the coach-athlete relationship that is influential on physical self-concept. This suggests that the coach-athlete relationship may be more important in determining athletes’ physical self than the parent-athlete relationship (Jowett & Cramer 2010).

The coach-athlete and parent-athlete relationship can portray synergistic qualities; for example, if conflict were to occur within a coach-athlete relationship, the parental relationship might act as a safeguard to assist in coping strategies, especially if the parent-athlete relationship...
is “warm”, this can provided the necessary resources for support and management Jowett and Cramer (2010). In contrast, if both relationships are “cold” then athletes’ physical self has the potential to be affected negatively (Jowett & Cramer 2010). Social and personal relationships within the young athlete are important to understand so researchers can devise strategies to that would aim to assist the athletes’ development of physical self.

**Mental.** Coach-athlete relationships have been highlighted as one of the most important elements for developing life skills (Gucciardi, Gordon, & Dimmock, 2008; Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). Much research has supported this notion and recognizes that personal and professional components promote the development of skills related to improved performance and psychosocial development within the coach-athlete relationship (Gucciardi et al., 2009; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007).

The coach-athlete relationship can be an influential factor in developing and shaping mental toughness, which, in turn, can be a potentially decisive factor for performance in sport (Gucciardi et al., 2009). It has been documented that both trust and respect are key factors within the relationship towards the athletes’ success and/or failures while contributing to mental toughness development. “If coaches are to effectively coach their players through their methods and techniques, there needs to be a common ground of trust and respect for that individual, otherwise players won’t be as willing to use that information in their physical and mental development” (Gucciardi et al., 2009, p. 1490).

Mental toughness enables a person to be persistent through adversity and/or pressure scenarios while at the same time maintaining focus and motivation even when things may not be going as planned (Gucciardi et al., 2008). In a previous study by Gould, Hodge, Peterson, and Petlichkoff, (1987), 83% of coaches rated mental toughness as the most important psychological
characteristics for determining competitive success. Further, Loehr (1982) provided a comprehensive discussion of mental toughness in sport and declared that mental toughness is acquired and not inherited. Eleven key mental toughness characteristics outlined by Gucciardi et al. (2008) are self-belief, work ethic, personal values, self-motivation, tough attitude, concentration and focus, resilience, handling pressure, emotional intelligence, sport intelligence, physical toughness (see Table 6 Appendix G).

Research has indicated that coaches can facilitate the development of mental toughness. This can take form through many avenues (Gucciardi et al., 2009), such as: maintaining and developing positive coach-athlete relationships, setting clear standards and expectations, providing encouragement and support, a philosophy of winning which emphasizes learning, effort and improvement, continuous challenges provided for athletes, social support, and coach leadership (Gucciardi et al., 2009). Just as coaches can facilitate and enhance mental toughness, in contrast, coaches can also impede the process as well through negative influences and experiences (e.g., prioritizing success over player development) (Gucciardi, Gordon, Dimmock, & Mallett, 2009)

Elite levels of sport typically consist of four key elements to performance, being physical, technical, tactical, and mental (Gucciardi et al., 2009). Gucciardi et al., 2009 propose that at the higher levels of play the physical skill differences are not as drastic and, in many cases, it’s an equal playing field. However, athletes that possess a higher degree of mental toughness appear to prevail in many instances over athletes of inferior levels (Gucciardi et al., 2008). Gucciardi et al. (2009) also emphasized five categories (in Australian football) that appeared to be central to the coach’s role in the development of mental toughness. Four of these categories (coach-athlete relationship, coaching philosophy, training environment, and specific strategies) were all thought
to facilitate the developmental process, whereas the final category (negative experiences and influences) was said to impede progression. However, for the field to progress research efforts to further develop an understanding of mental toughness in differing contexts, groups, and categories is required.

**Humanism.** The humanistic model of athletic coaching is “athlete-centered, and focused on enhancing the self-awareness, and growth and development across the athletes’ cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning” (Lombardo, 1999, p.4). Athlete or player-centered coaching incorporates the needs, goals, values, problem solving, and the total development of the athlete (Souza & Oslin, 2008). Within literature, the terms athlete-centered and humanistic coaching are used interchangeably (Kidman, 2006). Both the humanistic model and athlete-centered coaching share the same focus of the pursuit of personal and performance excellence through sport. The humanistic model includes many athlete-centered characteristics, such as recognizing athletes as whole and developing people; whereas, athlete-centered coaching highlights the importance of building humanistic interpersonal relationships. Both value holism within the process of athlete development. These characteristics are used to help create a sporting environment that supports and encourages personal, as well as performance excellence (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003).

Lombardo (1999) suggests that humanistic coaches are authentic, real, and empathic people who actively remember what it was like to be an athlete and therefore draw on their positive playing experiences as a means of influencing the athletes behaviours—creating more excitement and enthusiasm among the athlete sport experience. Positive developmental and interpersonal experiences in sport have the capacity to foster athlete success in both personal and performance outcomes (Lyle, 1999). As a result, “the humanistic side of coaching may be
associated with the display of a deep interest in the welfare and development of the athlete on the part of the coach” (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003, p. 320). In contrast, an athlete’s development may become stunted or even regress if coaching practices are more dictating and focus only on performance, therefore, in essence, not being humanistic (Lyle, 1999). According to Lyle (1999): The humanistic approach to coaching, views the sporting context and the athlete’s training and performance as a vehicle through which the athlete can be influenced to develop and grow. The technical aspect of improving performance and taking part in competition is perceived to be just one aspect of a process involving interpersonal relationships, social meaning, relationships to other parts of the athlete’s life and an emotional and psychological engagement in the commitment to the process. (p.38)

The humanistic model is portrayed to be a preferred way to coach and foster athlete empowerment (Lombardo, 1999), however, there are challenges within this athlete-centered approach. Coach education is essential to provide coaches with the necessary tools so that they can develop a supporting humanistic and/or athlete-centered approach within respective teams. What is important is to teach coaches a positive and enabling set of principles and get them to follow and instil a humanistic philosophy. Lyle (1999) suggested that promoting and teaching humanistic coach education and training can be difficult as it seems easier to prescribe inappropriate coaching practices than specify appropriate humanistic coaching behaviours. For example, Lyle (1999) outlined 12 truly humanistic coaching practices, some of which describe what coaches should not do or are phrased in the negative, such as:

Do not use the threat of disapproval or punishment to coerce athletes to behave in a way that the coach perceives to be appropriate…value each individual’s contribution equally (this does not mean that they each make the same contribution to performance)…do not
allow the athlete to become too dependent on the coach…never fail to exercise a caring, athlete-welfare centered approach. (p. 39-40)

According to Lombardo (1999, p. 5) “The humanistic model requires a major shift in the thinking and actions of sport leaders. However, such changes would make sport much more congruent with the needs of the athletes and also respond to demands of society.” Effective athlete-centered coach-athlete relationships implement humanistic characteristics, creating an environment that supports and encourages personal and performance excellence (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003).

**Empathy.** Empathic accuracy is defined as the “accuracy of an individual’s moment to moment perception of the psychological condition of another” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009, p. 202). This is referring to the ability to perceive, recognize, appreciate others’ behaviours, feelings, attitudes, and intentions (Eisenberg, Losoya, & Spinrad, 2003); in other words, it is mutual understanding. The connection between the coach and the athlete has been recognized as one of the major influences on the elite athlete (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). It is proposed within the literature that a fundamental dimension of coaching is both coaches’ and athletes’ ability to accurately perceive each other’s thoughts and feelings. Therefore, interaction becomes effective and efficient even amongst misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflict; this idea has been linked to empathy (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). The importance of empathic accuracy suggests that both coach and athlete need to try and maximize their ability to understand each other (Lorimer, Jowett, Philippe, & Huguet, 2011).

Recent literature outlines how empathic accuracy can play a foundational role in our “understanding of the dynamics between a coach and an athlete” (Lorimer, Jowett, Philippe, & Huguet, 2011, p. 52). Lorimer et al. (2011) further suggested that empathic accuracy is
foundational when investigating coaching models, leadership, and coach-athlete relationships. Since coaches and athletes often work very closely together, there is an opportunity to form significant relationships and become more involved in the aspects of each other’s lives within and out of the sporting context. “It can be argued that the capacity of a coach to accurately understand their athlete is a vital factor in achieving a working partnership” (Lorimer, 2013, p. 26). One way to achieve accurate understanding is for coaches and athletes to focus on conversing and questioning to confirm that content is comprehended (Lorimer et al., 2011). Coaches need to follow up with athletes, inquiring and testing the athlete if they fully understand what is being asked of them. For example a particular position on the court, do they know why they are required to be there during that time?

Lorimer and Jowett’s (2010) research aimed to explore the concept of empathic accuracy between coach and athlete in different sporting contexts. Interestingly, coaches within team sport environments typically displayed less empathic accuracy due to inconsistencies in thoughts and feelings, in comparison to their counterpart coaches involved in individual sports (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). This suggests that in team sports “the majority of the time coaches are unaware of what their athletes are thinking and feeling” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010, p. 16). Qualitative research encompassing the coach-athlete relationship supports the idea that high levels of empathy possess more effective and successful dyadic interactions (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010) and vice versa. Further qualitative research focusing on various contextual sports, teams, genders, and levels of play would be added value to the dyadic relationship between coach and athlete.

In accordance with Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997), the interpersonal affiliation between coach and athlete may intrinsically be about the power exerted by the coach over the athlete. This notion suggests that the less dependent and more powerful member of the dyad (coach) is
more likely to exert greater control over the athlete (Beauchamp & Jowett, 2010). This disparity of power is a direct cause of decreased levels of empathy by the coach while the athlete demonstrates increased levels of empathy (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). Lorimer and Jowett outlined that “coaches in team sports display significantly less empathic accuracy than coaches in individual sports” (2010, p. 207). In such a relationship, it is implied that “coaches do not need to rely on an accurate understanding of their athletes to accomplish their goals and are less likely motivated to do so” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010, p. 207). Barriers between men and women can make it difficult to achieve high levels of empathic accuracy within the coach-athlete relationship, such as expectations placed upon the coach and the athlete (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010). These barriers are addressed and outlined within the concepts of social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggests that men and women behave differently, and contain sex differences in social situations taking on different roles due to the expectations that society places upon them (including gender stereotyping). With regards to the coach-athlete relationship, “the traditional gender roles of males and females may interact differently with the traditional roles of the coach and athlete. It is within the dyadic relationship the coach and athlete play very different roles (submissive vs. control)” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010, p. 207). “The pressures placed on individuals to act in a certain way may lead them to interact and react differently to each other depending on the specific expectations of their gender and role within the coach-athlete relationship” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010, p. 207). Therefore, one can argue that gender and role of an individual may influence their ability and motivation to make accurate inferences in understanding a partner and perceiving either a coach or athlete’s thoughts and feelings. Future research should continue to examine various social conditions within the coach-
athlete relationship, addressing gender differences and whether or not these athlete psychological needs are being met.

Meta-perspectives are supported in various qualitative research findings; “research highlights that coaches and athletes who believe that their partners hold positive views about relationship issues are more successful” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009, p. 202). In retrospect, a number of interpersonal benefits from the coach athlete relationship have been established due to a positive meta-perspective dyad (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Lorimer and Jowett (2009) suggest that both “coaches and athletes perceptions of their partners’ viewpoints were positively associated with empathic accuracy” (p. 209). Empathic accuracy studies and research remains fairly new to examining the coach-athlete dyad, in comparison to more personal and even romantic relationship research (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Obviously there are differences between these relationships, with one being a potential hierarchy that exists within the coach-athlete relationship (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). “Coaches’ power over athletes may mean that their satisfaction with personal treatment is not strongly associated with their empathic accuracy” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009, p. 210). Coach authority may allow them to enforce behaviours in the athlete without the need to understand the athlete, however, this “would not be true for the athlete, who instead, would need to anticipate the coaches’ behaviours” (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009, p. 210).

Coaching is often a hierarchical arrangement; therefore, it is possible that power and dissent can be present and closely linked within the coach-athlete dyad. Referring to a business structure (due to minimal research encircling the coach and the athlete), the “mismanagement of power generally and supervisors’ abuse of power specifically can lead to dissent expression” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 176). “Given that power functions in both superior–subordinate
relationships and that it features in coach–athlete relationships too, there should be some overlap between the organizational and sport contexts with regard to the factors that influence the expression of dissent in response to power embedded in hierarchical (e.g., coach–athlete) relationships” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 176).

Within the business context, “upward dissent was a form of employee voice because it sought to improve the situation by targeting audiences that could enact change…lateral dissent was akin to neglect in that it reached audiences that were comparatively ineffectual…to mobilize change” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 176). Kassing and Anderson (2014) thought that if conditions for an athlete under the guidance of his/her coach became dissatisfying, that particular athlete might have to make comparable choices to that of an employee within a corporate domain. Similarly to a corporate or business structure, athletes (like employees), “appear more readily to express upward dissent when they have more assured organizational footing” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 181). As such, an athlete may communicate more openly if they perceive that they are one of the better players on the team (and have “organizational footing”), and their coach(s) may be more receptive to what they have to say (analogous to “upward dissent”) (Kassing & Anderson, 2014). To the contrary, “lateral dissent appears to be a function of a lack of openness demonstrated by coaches, coupled with a lack of athletes’ involvement” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 182). Kassing and Anderson seem to suggest that “coaching and coaches’ communication more closely resembles superior–subordinate communication, at least with regard to factors that prompt or deter dissent from athletes. Overall the work demonstrates that athletes like employees are more likely to share dissent in particular circumstances” (Kassing & Anderson, 2014, p. 183). At a fundamental level between coach and athlete, power can be a factor that underpins the relationship (Kassing & Anderson, 2014).
Lorimer (2013) continued to investigate the empirical research understanding empathic accuracy within the sporting context. Lorimer (2013) explored how “coaches can be taught to refine their skills and increase the accuracy of their evaluations and the inferences they make about their athletes” (p. 28). Findings identified four areas that coaches can focus on as being “loose” categories in order to increase the correctness of their assessments about their athletes (2013). Briefly, the loose categories were gathering information, avoiding biases, maintaining appropriate levels of empathy, and being reflexive. The first category, gathering information, encompasses the application of knowledge; Lorimer (2013) suggests there are three levels of knowledge ranging from general to specific. These are: (a) knowledge of athletes or sport in general (i.e., “I know when athletes raise their voice they are generally angry”), (b) knowledge about a particular type of athlete or type of sport (i.e., “I know when athletes raise their voice in competition they are generally excited”), and (c) knowledge about a specific athlete or situation (i.e., “I know when John raises his voice in training he is generally worried or upset”). The more specific the knowledge that a coach can apply, the more accurate the evaluation can be and the more accurate inferences of the athlete’s current mental state can be (Lorimer & Jowett, 2010), which demonstrates the importance of the coach and athlete’s ability to accurately perceive each other.

The second category, avoiding bias, is important when seeking out thorough empathic accuracy towards an athlete, a coach must become aware of the possible biases and stereotypes that may be of influence (Lorimer, 2013). Lorimer stated that, “a bias is a tendency to emphasize factors that are irrelevant to the situation or athlete with whom you are working with” (Lorimer, 2013, p. 29). It’s important for a coach to not get caught up in his/her own past coaching experience and claim there is nothing out there they haven’t seen. This may lead to making
wrong notions about athletes simply because the coach was not attentive enough to the available information (Lorimer, 2013). Possessing information or having insight into an athlete’s situation based on previous experience could be good, but making generalizations may not be the right fit for that specific athlete at that time. Therefore, it is important to be “considerate of the specifics of the current situation” (Lorimer, 2013, p. 30), which will contribute to the degree of empathic accuracy, which is vital because it can facilitate positive interactions between player and coach, leading to satisfying relationships (Lorimer, & Jowett, 2009).

Maintaining appropriate levels of empathy (third category) is critical when trying to be an effective coach. “A level of detachment is necessary so that a coach can make difficult decisions about the athlete’s progress such as whether to drop them from a squad/team or to continue pushing them despite their physical discomfort” (Lorimer, 2013, p. 30). Self-awareness allows the coach to separate their sense of self from that of the athlete. This prevents a coach from becoming too involved, but still being a coach and being a separate entity so there is no emotional biases allowing them to understand the mental state of the athlete (Lorimer, 2013).

The fourth category, being reflexive, involves the coach being aware of his/her own psychological state and actions within any given situation (Lorimer, 2013). Lorimer outlines that as a coach it is important to take a step back and evaluate the current situation by not relying on stereotypes, biases, or becoming too involved (2013). This is essentially a self-analysis that continually forces the coach to challenge themself, generate further knowledge, and seek out feedback, which is important in being consciously aware of their respective coaching behaviour (Lorimer, 2013).

To date, limited research has examined the concept of empathy in sports and sport coaching. Literature in this area of empathic accuracy is important towards the growth of the
interpersonal relationship between the athlete and the coach. It is within social-psychology literature and research that empathic accuracy is more widespread. With regards to sport, researchers should try to identify user-friendly instruments that can potentially gauge empathy-related constructs and are specific to sport performance domains (novice, amateur, expert). Such research could assist in growing the leadership quality and teaching of group dynamics, adopting and mastering fundamentals, and connecting with gender differences.

**Social behaviour.** Demands placed upon young athletes are frequent within the sporting environment. Social challenges in the sporting context can parallel those of other important life settings, such as home and school environments (Rutten, Schuengel, Dirks, Stams, Biesta, & Hoeksma, 2010). Sport may be a relatively benevolent and protective environment for some young athletes whereas it may be an unpleasant environment for others (Rutten et al., 2010). Rutten et al. (2010) examined possible predictors of antisocial and prosocial behaviour that may vary within the sports context and which may be open to intervention of choice at the level of individual athletes, the team, and adults who are involved as coaches. These predictors are characterized as fair play attitude, moral reasoning, moral atmosphere, and (more so for our purpose of interest) the quality of the coach-athlete relationship.

The sports coach is in the position to influence antisocial behaviour; he/she can play an important role in developing or helping to facilitate prosocial behaviour by the way they structure the moral climate of the sport framework. This can be in the form of modeling empathic relations, mentoring, and guiding youth towards more prosocial behaviours and responsibilities (Rutten et al. 2010). Empirical evidence suggests that positive expectations within positive working models of relationships (coach-athlete) predict positive outcomes (e.g.,
prosocial behaviour); this may promote regulation of emotional behaviour in times of stress as well (Rutten et al. 2010).

Research in the sports context shows that mutual trust, care, open communication, and acceptance of individual differences (e.g., ability) and emotions (e.g., sadness during the game) are core elements of the coach-athlete relationship, based on relational support (Vallee & Bloom, 2005). These supportive coach-athlete relationships have been shown to be associated with less antisocial and prosocial behaviour in adolescent athletes (Rutten et al. 2010). In accordance with Rutten et al. (2010), a coach-athlete relationship that tends to be more supportive is associated with prosocial behavioural increase. Within this sporting context “coaches may have a positive impact by being psychologically available and trustworthy” (Rutten et al. 2010, p. 308). The essence of trust in a relationship between both the coach and athlete can be a sensitive matter—one that may take considerable time to develop, but very little time to destroy. A research article by Toner, Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne and Marshall (2012) centered on a personal narrative of a particular athlete and outlined the fragility and importance of trust within the coach-athlete dyad. “I came to the view that I couldn’t trust coach. He had let me down. There was no forgiving…he let me down and that was it” (p. 72).

Current research within achievement goal theory has suggested the importance of both person and contextual variables when discussing antisocial and pro-social behaviours. The term person is referring to an individual’s goal orientations, whereas the term contextual is referring to the motivational climate (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2009). Self-determination theory (SDT) is a theory of motivation, Ntoumanis and Standage (2009) supported SDT as a motivational framework to explain psychological foundations behind prosocial and antisocial variables in sport. Hodge and Lonsdale (2011) examined whether the relationships between contextual
factors (e.g., autonomy-supportive coaching style vs. controlling coaching style) and person factors (e.g., autonomous vs. controlling motivation) outlined in SDT were related to prosocial and antisocial behaviour towards peers in sport.

Within the coach-athlete domain there are other social behavioural relationships that can influence those dynamics (e.g., peer leaders). Peer leadership within the sport setting and coaching context appears to be very minimal in terms of literature research (Balduck & Jowett, 2011). Peer leadership can be differentiated into two categories: a) peer leader, someone identified by at least two members of the team; and b) team leader, someone who can be identified by at least half the team (Balduck & Jowett, 2011; Loughead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). In accordance with Balduck and Jowett (2011), research outside the sport and coach domains suggest that peer leaders act as an additional source of leadership within team settings. Peer leaders are important within team leadership because not only are they looked upon by way of example and a representative voice, but also commonly have a direct connection with the coach.

Balduck and Jowett (2011) “examined the quality of three dyadic relationships found in triangular system of coach-athlete-peer from both coaches’ and athletes’ perspectives” (p. 92). The CART-Q assisted with the evaluation of these three types of relationships. Results indicated that athletes demonstrated closeness, commitment, and complementarity to their peer leaders over their coaches. This was opposite for coaches who were more committed to their athletes rather than the peer leader (Balduck & Jowett, 2011). Athletes’ relationships with peer leaders were higher in the 3C’s in comparison to their relationships with their coaches (Balduck & Jowett, 2011). From these findings one can conclude “peer leaders may play an important role in the complex interpersonal dynamics that unfold within team concepts” (Balduck & Jowett, 2011,
Peer leaders arguably play a principal role to support and perhaps optimize interpersonal relationships within team dynamics and assist in the bridge between coach and athlete.

Hodge and Lonsdale (2009) suggest that an autonomy supportive coaching environment may provide acceptance of explicit and implicit moral valued messages. Amorose and Butcher (2007) stated that “the more athletes felt competent, autonomous, and senses of relatedness, the more their reasons were self-determined in nature” (p. 666). Dependent upon the level to which athletes perceived their coaches to be autonomy-supportive in their interactions, this positively affected competence, relatedness, and autonomy, as well, effected the athlete’s motivational orientation (Amorose & Butcher, 2007). Autonomy-supportive environments should be stressed within the coach-athlete relationship in order for athletes to develop a sense of independence and self-regulation (Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). In further support of this, Felton and Jowett (2013) concluded, “in order for the athlete to experience need satisfaction the coach should use autonomy supportive behaviour to develop a positive environment” (p. 62).

Coach-autonomy, well-being, and basic need satisfaction among athlete’s has been gaining momentum recently within team sport research. Within these sport studies, included is the work of Deci and Ryan (2000) and their proposed basic psychological needs theory (BPNT). BPNT elucidates that psychological well-being and optimal functioning is predicated on autonomy, competency, and relatedness and must be satisfied to ensure “ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229). Adie, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2012), within their longitudinal study, discovered support for autonomy and BPNT. All three basic psychological needs were supported and “appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning…for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being” (Ryan, & Deci. 2000, p. 68). The findings suggest that the longer the
athletes remained in the “program the more they experienced feelings of positive energy, and adapted to the physical and emotional demands of training and competition” (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012, p. 56).

Adie et al. (2012) also reported that athletes provided with continuous opportunity for input and decision-making (perceived autonomy) had implications of reducing burnout symptoms during longer durations of sport participation, as well, the more autonomy support perceived (by the athletes) the higher the levels of basic need satisfaction experienced. It was suggested that:

A coaching environment perceived to empower athletes with choices and decision making (e.g., autonomy support), which conveys trust in their abilities whilst utilizing non-controlling feedback (e.g., competence support), and that takes and respects their perspective (e.g., relatedness support) would correspond to satisfaction of each of the three needs. (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012, p. 57)

Adie et al.’s (2012) findings suggest that focusing on interpersonal behaviours combined with an autonomy supportive environment provided by the coach would benefit the basic needs satisfaction for autonomy, competence, and relatedness among their players. Coaches should consider the perspectives of his/her athletes and aim to foster an environment that provides positive competence feedback as well as affording choice and decision making on behalf of the athlete, by doing so, this could help maintain the sense of positive energy within the athlete(s) (Adie et al. 2012). Felton and Jowett (2013) examined the associations between different dimensions of the social environment (e.g., coach–athlete relationship quality), athletes’ experiences of psychological needs satisfaction within the coach-athlete framework, and well-being. The study revealed that autonomy-supportive coach behaviours positively predicted
satisfaction of all three basic needs within the basic psychological needs theory (BPNT; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Felton and Jowett (2013) confirmed that autonomy-supportive behaviours are associated with need satisfaction, which has been suggested in previous research within sport and psychology (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thogersen-Ntoumani, 2011). Felton and Jowett (2013) stated:

In order for the coach to create an environment in which the athlete can satisfy their basic needs, the coach must allow the athlete to feel that they can openly contribute to training sessions and have input into what they do. Correspondingly, athletes’ perceptions of the quality of the coach–athlete relationship were found to positively predict satisfaction of the competence and relatedness needs. (p. 136)

Interestingly, within their research, Felton and Jowett (2013) discovered that the quality of the coach–athlete relationship was not associated with the need for autonomy, suggesting that the use of the studies participants were young adult athletes.

A quality coach–athlete relationship that is highly interdependent may allow young athletes to increase their perceptions of autonomy in the knowledge that their coach will be there for them regardless of the outcome be it a failure or success. (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 136)

Autonomy-supportive coaching style, in accordance with Hodge and Lonsdale (2011), revealed weak negative relationships with antisocial behaviour toward teammates and opponents. Empirical research revealed prosocial behaviour and autonomy-supportive coaching was related to prosocial behaviour toward teammates (weak relationship), but not with prosocial behaviour toward opponents. Hodge and Lonsdale (2011) stated that the “coach is more likely to directly influence factors more closely related to the team (e.g., behaviour toward teammates), rather than
factors related to the opponent” (p. 541). Coaching style findings of Hodge and Lonsdale (2011) concluded that the relationship between autonomy-supportive motivation and prosocial behaviour of athletes was positively related, whereas controlled motivation was positively related to an antisocial behaviour. This also showed the autonomy-supportive coaching style to affect teammates but no relationship between opposing teams. Moral disengagement was observed in relation to antisocial behaviour observed by the athlete individually. Although the individual motivation correlated to positive social behaviour, and controlled motivation demonstrated antisocial behaviour, this may have also had other uncontrolled factors determining the outcome such as the personal relationship between teammates and the lack of relationship between opponents.

Hodge and Lonsdale (2011) suggested that controlled motivation was moderately positive with moral disengagement; as well, moral disengagement displayed a strong positive relationship with antisocial behaviour towards both teammates and opponents. It was noted that moral disengagement decided the effects of controlled motivation on both antisocial behaviour toward teammates and opponents. In accordance with Hodge and Lonsdale (2009), coaches that exhibit controlling conduct may have athletes with higher levels of moral disengagement due to increased exposure to coaching behaviours promoting fulfillment with authority (e.g., coercion, obedience etc.).

Social support in relation to coping with competitive stressors is considered important within the coach-athlete relationship. Coach social support has been found to initiate a stress-buffering effect, aid in athlete satisfaction, and assist with the ability to adapt to new challenges that may arise (Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010). Social support can be divided into three types (Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010; Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981): a) Emotional support, which
reflects feeling loved and cared for, and is achieved, through resilience and confidence in other persons; b) Tangible support, which involves more direct aid through loans, gifts, favours etc.; and c) Informational support, where information provided, advice or feedback given, provides support to the athlete.

Coping coincides with competitive stress on sporting performance; it is “viewed as a dynamic process following appraisal because of a situation (identified as threatening, challenging, etc.) Where an individual perceives an imbalance between the situation and his/her resources” (Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010, p. 686). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest eight fundamental properties of stress can occur amongst athletes; these are novelty, predictability, event uncertainty, imminence, duration, temporal uncertainty, ambiguity, and timing of events in relation to life cycle.

The content of social interactions in sport varies, and therefore, not all sporting relationships are equal (Stuntz & Spearance, 2010). In order to facilitate motivation in an athlete towards an event, game, or competition it is important to recognize cross-domain relationships (CDR’s), where coaches are “involved with knowing and caring about many aspects of an athlete’s life, rather than only aspects directly related to the sport context” (Stuntz & Spearance, 2010, p. 267). It’s important to note that the CDR covers all aspects of the athlete’s life constantly, not just when an issue or problem arises. Arguably, CDR’s with coaches and teammates help further understanding of motivational responses in sport as well; high quality coach athlete interactions extend the content of their interactions with athletes beyond just sport-related topics (Stuntz & Spearance, 2010). Peer leadership, autonomy supportive coaching, social support, and cross-domain relationships are factors of meaningful influence within the coach-athlete relationship. Ryan and Deci, (2000) suggested that coach actions and behaviours
could create environments that promote athletes’ empowerment and self-motivation (autonomy supportive). This is important because motivation is key to those who influence others (e.g., peer leaders), care for others (e.g., social support) because their roles involve, in some part, mobilizing others (e.g., cross-domain relationships) to act and perform.

**Passion.** The terms great, passionate, and committed seem to amalgamate well together when discussing solid coaching and coaches (Sugarman, 1999). Vallerand (2000) views passion as a combination of love, importance, and the investment of a significant amount of time and energy towards a self-defining activity, a valued component within the coach-athlete relationship. Passion has been known to arouse both positive and negative emotions such as fuelling motivation, well-being enhancement, providing meaning, and interference in the achievement of a happy balanced lifestyle (Marsh, Lafreniere, Carbonneau, Bureau, Guay, Vallerand, Parker, Morin, Jowett, Fernet, Abduljabbar, & Paquet, 2013). Passion can be represented in a variety of means, such as towards an activity, a person/partner, or an object (Marsh et al, 2013). Vallerand, Frederic, and Genevieve (2003) outlined a dualistic model of passion, which includes two types of passion, harmonious and obsessive, “which can be differentiated in terms of how the passionate activity has been internalized into one’s identity” (Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand & Carbonneau, 2011, p. 144). “Obsessive passion (OP) refers to a controlled internalization of an activity in one’s identity that creates an internal pressure to engage in the activity that the person likes. Harmonious passion (HP) refers to an autonomous internalization that leads individuals to choose to engage in the activity that they like. HP promotes healthy adaptation whereas OP thwarts it by causing negative affect and rigid persistence” (Vallerand et al. 2003, p. 756).

Lafreniere et al. (2011) set out to evaluate and test a proposed scale that looks at how
coaches’ passion influences their athletes’ awareness towards the quality of the coach-athlete relationship with their coach as well as athletes’ well-being. Evidently, harmonious passion ultimately predicted high quality relationships through independent-supportive behaviours. Results indicated “... high quality coach-athlete relationships were beneficial to athlete’s happiness” (Lafreniere et al., 2011, p. 150). Coaches’ obsessive passion predicted controlling behaviours toward the athletes, high quality coach-athlete relationships driven by harmonious passion lead to athlete happiness. These conclusions correspond with previous research in this area (Lafreniere et al., 2011, Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lorimer, 2008). Most recently, Marsh et al. (2013) demonstrated that the passion scale has a “sound factor structure, good internal consistency, and construct validity” (Marsh et al., 2013, p. 807). The passion scale provides a brief, psychometrically strong outcome measure for research seeking to measure, understand, or intervene in relation to participants’ gender, and engagement in a specific task and/or activity domain (Marsh et al., 2013).

Autonomy-supportive behaviours are reflected more so in harmoniously passionate coaches, which involves considering the athletes’ perception (Lafreniere et al., 2011). Lafreniere et al. (2011) suggest autonomy-supportive behaviours within the coach-athlete dyad promote higher quality relationships, athletes feeling more respected and understood tend to develop stronger, more closer emotional connections. On the other hand, coaches that demonstrated obsessive passion forecasted controlling behaviours toward the athlete, this is characteristically due to the high ego-involvement within this relationship (Lafreniere et al., 2011). Research has revealed that coach-athlete relationships high in quality are a precursor towards athletes’ overall happiness (Lafreniere et al., 2011). This is aligned with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) in that fulfilled relationships are subject to higher well-being because
the need for feeling connected has been satisfied. Passion within the coach matters with regards to the coach-athlete relationship and HP is more effective and positive than that of OP (Lafreniere et al., 2011). Such harmonious behaviours could possibly produce conditions that are conducive to positive interpersonal relationships (Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, Lorimer, 2008). As well, coaches that promote and facilitate autonomy-supportive behaviours seem to contribute to athletes’ health, welfare, safety, and happiness, (Jowett, 2007). However, “future research is needed to more firmly establish when each type of passion may affect the coach–athlete relationship, and identify the nature of the psychological processes mediating such effects” (Lafreniere et al., 2008, p. 557)

**Commitment.** “Sport commitment represents a psychological state reflecting an athlete’s desire and resolve to continue his or her sport participation, and there is empirical support for the view that high levels of sport commitment accompany greater behavioural persistence” (Jackson, Gucciardi, & Dimmock, 2014, p. 53). Jackson et al. (2014) “aimed to provide insight into the commitment perceptions that develop within two of the most pervasive interpersonal networks that exist in sport” (p. 53). The first interpersonal network is an adolescent athlete’s commitment within his/her respective team, referred to as the interdependent context, the second, and a relationship with the athlete’s coach in individual sports. Although commitment has been assessed in previous literature, Jackson et al. (2014) aim to capture an alternative multidimensional perspective rather than just the supported one-dimensional construct of commitment shown in previous literature (e.g., Jackson, Grove, & Beauchamp, 2010; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Jackson et al. (2014) outlined three distinct (three factor) commitment dimensions that could potentially develop among those athlete’s within team-based and/or one on one setting:
First, individuals may be committed to staying with their team/in their relationship due to their emotional and affective attachment to, and identification with, the team/relationship; in the organizational literature this dimension is referred to as (a) affective commitment (or personal commitment in the relational literature). Second, it is also possible that individuals might resolve to continue with their team/in their relationship due to a feeling of being “locked in” that arises from the perceived costs associated with ending one’s participation; this dimension is typically termed (b) continuance (or structural) commitment. Finally, individuals may desire to remain with their team/in their relationship due to a sense of obligation, or moral attachment, termed (c) normative (or moral) commitment. (Jackson et al., 2014, p. 53)

From their research, Jackson et al. (2014) revealed support for an original 17-item, three-factor (affective, normative, continuance) representation of commitment within coach-athlete relationships and teams (Table 7 see Appendix H). Jackson et al. (2014) provided introductory evidence for instruments designed to look into the commitment perceptions within the coach-athlete relationship and assess these commitment views within interdependent team settings. The athlete’s completed the 17-item instrument, which included a response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The athletes were instructed to use the scale and respond to “a series of statements that may or may not be reflective of your relationship with your coach; please respond to all the statements according to how you feel about your relationship with your coach right now at this moment in time” (Jackson et al. 2014, p. 57).

Practically speaking, this study highlighted the importance of examining commitment through a multidimensional lens and establishing support for a three-factor model. It was suggested, “the study of affective, normative, and continuance commitment perceptions (both together and in isolation) might provide novel information about the psychological factors that
anchor athletes’ participation in sport” (Jackson et al. 2014, p. 65). With particular relevance for continually understanding coach-athlete relational processes and group dynamics in team sport, Jackson et al. (2014) encouraged “future research regarding the measurement, conceptualization, antecedents, and implications of commitment to one’s relationship and/or team” (p.65).

Communication. By studying how coaches communicate with their players, the potential exists to identify how coaches can adapt their communication in order to be more effective; such studies have indicated that coaches’ communication will have a direct influence on how players perform and behave (Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, & Weber, 2009). Coaches that demonstrate autocratic behaviour (creating distance between themselves and determining authority) reportedly have athletes with negatively associated affective learning (Turman & Schrodt, 2004). Athletes that display higher affective learning usually perceive their coach as democratic, socially supportive, encouraging, positive, while providing feedback, training, and instruction (Martin et al., 2009). An exclusive use of an autocratic leadership style (e.g., antisocial or punitive behaviours enacted by coaches) is negatively correlated with athletes’ affective learning (Turman & Schrodt, 2004). Interestingly, Bloom, Schinke, and Salmela (1997) discovered coaches at beginner levels were more susceptible to operate under a more autocratic communication style, whereas coaches at the more advanced levels employed a two-way communication style with their elite athletes. Potentially this could be due to the overall experience of the coach or lack there of.

In order to become more rehearsed in the role of communication strategies within the coach-athlete relationship, Behaviour Alteration Techniques (BAT’s) can be of affective guidance and influence within the dyad (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984; Martin et al., 2009). Derived from classroom management strategies with the understanding of power-
based teacher authority not in line with contemporary educational strategies, Kearney et al. (1984) outlined a typology of communicative strategies (BAT’s). Twenty-two Behavioural Alteration Techniques were generated, no singular BAT is the ideal fit in all circumstances; some are more effective than others depending on the situation, of note, pro-social strategies within BAT’s are equated with learning effectiveness (Kearney et al. 1984). Table 8 in Appendix I presents an overview of the BAT’s and concepts, which include such items as reward from coach, punishment from behaviour, coach modeling, coach feedback, and positive coach-player relationships (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984). Both Kearney et al. (1984) and Martin et al., (2009) purport BAT’s to be effective in motivating, supporting, or promoting alternative behaviours.

Turman (2006) suggested that if coaches implement positive control (e.g., smiling, positive head nods, purposeful gestures, relaxed body positions) over punishing stimuli (e.g., antisocial, tense, reserved, avoidant, insulting) players would report greater liking for their coach, teammates, and sport they participate in. As well, other research documented that players and athletes also report less motivation and a higher fear of failure if the coach relies more on punishment and threats (Smith & Smoll, 2007). As supported by Martin et al. (2009), coaches want to avoid negative BATs (e.g., punishment from behaviour, punishment from coach, punishment from others, guilt, debt) as “none of the [negative] BATs appear to be effective in increasing motivation or creating affect” (p. 236). Other BATs that had zero effect or a negative effect on player motivation or affect for their coaches were some of the positive BATs (e.g., reward from coach and reward from other), while external rewards appear to be less effective in behavioural alterations than internal rewards (Martin et al., 2009). Verbal aggression was also negatively related to player motivation and affect towards their coaches. Martin et al. (2009)
states, “there is no evidence in being verbally aggressive is effective in motivating players” (p. 236). In order for coaches to experience growth and maturation in communicating with his/her athletes it is important to be mindful of various communication strategies, and continually strive to understand their audience. For example, a coach at the post-secondary level needs to attain a communicative balance between athletic refinements; as well ensuring the athletes are succeeding in in other areas such as the academic and personal avenues (Bloom et al., 1997).

Research within the coach-athlete relationship dates back to the 70s, where leadership models were featured as the primary impact of situational factors on coach behaviour. “Despite these models highlighting the influence of interpersonal situations on coach–athlete communication and social interaction, research on the influence of specific interpersonal situations on coach–athlete communicative acts of interaction has been scant, and often not well documented” (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 150). Sagar and Jowett (2012) provided further insight into the deficient literature surrounding communication within performance-oriented coach-athlete interactions. Results signified that perceiving positive coach reactions by the athletes “appears to illicit overall positive emotions and mood in the athletes, while negative reactions appear to elicit negative emotions in the athletes” (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 164) (Table 9 see Appendix J).

Although these findings are not revolutionary, discoveries but do make reference to explicit reactions of coaches, as professed by their athletes. The findings contribute to the coach-athlete relationship research suggesting, poor expression of “coach reactions can be ineffective and have negative impact on athletes’ psychological performance-related factors (e.g., motivation, determination) and overall well-being (e.g., affect, satisfaction)” (Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 164). Interestingly, if behaviour of the coach aims to be positive, even during
undesirable times, such as losing competitions and when athletes are making mistakes, these:

Positive coach reactions can potentially have beneficial and desirable outcomes for the athlete. From an applied perspective, this suggests that positive interactive communication in negative interpersonal situations may have a more beneficial impact on the people involved than in positive interpersonal situations (e.g., winning competitions).

(Sagar & Jowett, 2012, p. 165)

In accordance with Kassing and Anderson, “communication styles shape the sporting experience for athletes and the relative success or failure of the team” (2014, p. 173). Along the way, an athlete’s satisfaction can increase with recurrent and positive interactions with a coach, can lead to increased effort, fulfillment of goals, and positive attitudes (Kassing & Anderson, 2014).

**Technology.** An increasingly big part of coaching is the implementation of analytics in sports. Analytical episodes can provide a linkage between the coach and athlete and further deliver opportunities in growing and building the relationship (i.e. one on one episodes of communication and openness, allowing for discussion and conversation, opportunity for athlete empowerment, building trust etc.). Within performance analysis research, minimal support and consideration has been devoted to how such socio-pedagogical factors impact upon coaching practice (Stratton, Reilly, Williams, & Richardson, 2004) albeit, “coaching scholars have illustrated the value of a socio-pedagogical analysis of practice to better understand the messy realities of sports coaching” (Groom, Cushion, & Nelson, 2012, p. 439). Currently, and increasingly, there is a variety of analytic programs to choose from, this movement was heavily influenced with the “Moneyball” approach from Billy Beane and the Oakland A’s baseball team during the 2002 campaign.
Analytics can become convoluted when looking at the delivery of coach to athlete video-based performance analysis (Groom, Cushion, & Nelson, 2011), potentially; analysis can become a great tool for furthering coach-athlete relationships. Understanding each of the athletes as separate individuals and knowing their individual preferences when receiving performance analysis feedback is significant when knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say the pertinent information in an effective manner (Groom et al. 2011). Additionally, “the effectiveness of coach–athlete interactions has been affected by a number of social factors such as coaching knowledge, power, respect, and the suitability of the learning environment” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 440). Groom et al. (2012) explored the applied use of video-based performance analysis and the interactions that occur between coach and athlete in order to provide a detailed examination of the pedagogical interactions during video-based performance analysis coaching sessions. The researchers examined video-based technologies, combined with verbal communication, in an attempt to coach the athletes and “examine how interactional tasks are accomplished through the use of talk” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 441). Findings within this study “added to the growing body of research in sports coaching, which highlight the dominant authoritarian discourse within coach–athlete relationships” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 453). “Coaches’ should be cautious of how the power relations within such feedback sessions may impact upon athlete learning. Interrogating practice in this way could impact upon the nature of the coach–athlete relationship” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 454). Coaches need to be cautious in analytical situations to not come across as too interrogating. A relationship based on authoritarian coaching behaviours can potentially effect the closeness and trust factors that are associated with the well-being and development of athletes (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). In recent years, there have been an increasing number of studies exploring the benefits of performance
analysis both for sports and the sport sciences. Although gaining in popularity, comparatively little empirical research exists pertaining directly to the application and use of performance analysis.

Debriefing, which can be used as a component within technological advancement in sport draws parallels to the educational setting, analytical setting, and military setting of debriefing and, in the sporting environment; it is mainly used for learning purposes (McArdle, Martin, Lennon, & Moore 2010). Positive outcomes such as confidence, motivation, recovery, improvement, increased learning, etc., (McArdle et al. 2010) are all factors within the environment of debriefing or post performance assessment (McArdle et al. 2010). There is very little support and research to date for expressing the value of exploring athletes’ and coaches’ experiences of debriefing. McArdle et al. (2010) indicated the need to increase athlete’s active participation in the debriefing process, which typically is targeted to improve coaches and athletes’ understanding of psychological recovery. “Debriefing is a collaborative, variable process with two primary aims: a) facilitate learning and improved performance and b) aid the recovery process” (McArdle et al. 2010, p. 329). McArdle et al. (2010) confirmed that debriefing was delivered for assessment and/or learning purposes and was linked to the practice of goal setting, more specifically, new short term or process goals rather than long term goals.

The analytical evolution in sport looks to be a mainstay at various levels of play and sport types. Beyond the analysis of teams, players, data collection, accessing more resources, and overall scouting tendencies, spending time with athletes through analytical sessions can potentially increase the depth, trust, and effectiveness of the coach-athlete relationship. Empirical research in the area of analytics, conducting private intimate or one on one individual session is deficient. Potentially this is an area that can be of benefit to continue developing or perhaps
building upon a struggling coach-athlete relationship, an opportunity to connect with players in more casual, vulnerable, and friendlier settings.

**Future Research and Literature Gaps**

Interpersonal dynamics have been studied within the fields of psychology, sociology, and education since the 1970s. Current research indicates that positive relationships between the coach and athlete can have a profound impact on how an athlete experiences their sport (Olson, 2014). Many studies have been conducted that highlight the link between the coach-athlete relationship, such as motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), team cohesion (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), achievement (Adie & Jowett, 2010), athletic performance (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002; Mullen & Copper, 1994), and self-concept (Jowett, 2008).

While evaluating the whole of the coach-athlete relationship, it is important to note considerable advancements have been made (specifically the last 12-15 years; e.g., Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Jowett, 2009; Jowett 2007; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003) within social psychology and sport research. Empirical evidence over this time indicates that there are various dimensions within the coach-athlete dyad that assist in strengthening these relationships, such as Jowett’s conceptualized items of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation (2009). Earlier researchers, prior to Jowett and colleagues, identified the coach-athlete relationship as an important component to interpersonal satisfaction and athletic performance and/or achievement factors (Salimen & Liukkonen, 1996; Smith & Smoll, 1996). Significant performance, influence, interpersonal satisfaction has been identified within the coach-athlete relationship as being fundamental towards further development of these relationships (Jowett & Meek, 2000). The coach-athlete relationship involves various elements in order to build, maintain, and repair the interconnected dyad, these processes can be multifaceted in nature, therefore the journey behind
the development of the coach-athlete relationship is viewed as a complex and dynamic process that evolves and changes over time (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004). Further advancements in studying the coach-athlete dyad are important so that the intricacies concerning the relationship can be further understood.

Although previous studies have provided tremendous insight into what coaches do, questions still remain regarding how coaches exhibit and apply these behaviours, these behaviours that make up these relationships have yet to be fully empirically evaluated (e.g., communication, caring, empathy, commitment, trust, respect, and personality) (Turnnidge, Côté, Hollenstein, & Deakin, 2014). Further to this, scholars still believe that research investigating interpersonal bonds within athletics and educational institutions remains a relatively unexplored area of research (Davis et. al., 2013; Olson, 2014). This dissertation contributes to the literature on coach-athlete relationship within post-secondary institutions by applying and focusing on important dimensions and themes embracing the relationship among student-athletes and coaches.

Further details and gaps remain obvious in the literature; therefore, attention to several issues in future research is warranted:

- Increased efforts of researchers to understand and communicate the components of the relationship to coaches and practitioners (improving and bridging the gap between practitioner (applied) and scholarly research (theory) by providing current and user friendly material to coaches).

- Analyzing the coach-athlete relationship during different junctures, such as recruitment, preseason, competitive season, and post/off-season (longitudinal designs depicting changes over the course of the season).
• Exploring changes in the CART-Q or other frameworks overtime as relationships develop and demands on both players and the team evolve (evaluations of the players and coach would potentially reveal changes).

• Research focused on best practices for working with post-secondary athletes, adolescents, team, gender, and/or various levels of competition (increased studies representing a variety of sports and athletes).

• Increasing applied coach-education frameworks and curriculum to the coaches (providing coaches with more tools to implement and attempt to improve upon coach-athlete relationships) that include more focus on the processes around building relationships, and not just on observable / measurable behaviours.

• Considering the impact of more qualitative and holistic elements that into the relationship environment, such as history, context, or socio-demographic aspects.

• Continually increase the comprehensiveness of literature to systematically capture the expanse of outcomes that have been published by various scholars (literature has become too segmented and lacks user friendly flow for practitioners and/or the coach).

• Demonstrate how differing factors with the relationship are interrelated and can influence one another (not just focusing on one single specific characteristic of the athlete or relationship).

• Continue growth in developing theories and methods of coach-athlete relationship building linked to both psychological and physical development of athletes.

• Furthering research that examines the emotional bond between coach and athlete, and the potential for creating a positive learning environment, developing athlete confidence, enhancing respectful behaviours, and building trustworthy coach-athlete relationships.
• Continued investigation on the how and why behind coach behaviours (this line of research could help build on the existing knowledge of how coach behaviours and the coach-athlete relationships contribute to athlete experience in sport).

• Conducting research with multiple programs congruently (to see how generalizable findings are to other sports or competitive contexts, such as with team sports or with elite level athletes).

• Further qualitative research and understanding of the aims, processes, and outcomes associated with the practice and impact of debriefing through analytics is greatly needed within the context of the elite coach-athlete relationship and athlete performance.

• An increase conducting qualitative case-study research with multiple programs, sports, genders, coaches, big and small athlete populations, to see how generalizable findings are to other sports or competitive contexts, such as with team sports or with elite level athletes.

• Examining and further understanding the coach-athlete relationship among introverted athletes participating in team sports that consist of extroverted peers, coaches, and extroverted characteristics of the sport.

• Investigating student-athlete’s personality traits affecting the relationship, role behaviour, performance, and commitment to his/her coach and team.

**Conclusion**

The coach–athlete relationship has commonly been perceived as both a complex and unique dyad in nature (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2004), previously mentioned in this review, the importance of establishing a positive coach-athlete relationship has been emphasized throughout recent theoretical frameworks. Côté and Gilbert (2009) defined coaching effectiveness as the
“consistent application of integrated professional, intrapersonal, and interpersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts” (p. 316). Coaches and athletes develop close relationships with a high degree of interdependence, which are typically formed through interactions occurring within the training atmosphere (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). These essential interpersonal relationships in the sporting atmosphere are formed between both the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2002). Since the coach and the athlete value their respective relationship, in turn, there is a desire for it to be beneficial for both parties, so together, they can continue on with it in a productive manner (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009).

Both the athlete and coach associate with each other at various levels, literature suggests a strong relationship would reveal a close connection with each other and their affiliation. Each relationship will develop in its own unique way, typically through increasing collaboration and/or partnership. If researchers are able to continue to seek out and generate developmental strategies to improve, maintain, and mend the relationship between coaches and athletes, it is reasonable to assume that these relationships will flourish for both athletes and coaches.

Although earlier coach-athlete research often focused on interpersonal dynamics between the coach and athletes from leadership approaches (Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996) more recent efforts have focused on investigating the effects of coaching behaviours on coach-athlete relationships and the impact on outcomes such as satisfaction. Further diversification is required in this area (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Jowett, 2006), the forthcoming (within this dissertation) qualitative in-depth studies will address this need and continue towards developing research approaches further increasing our understanding of coach-athlete relationships. By providing support and addressing the need into what coaches actually do within the context of the coach-
athlete relationship, potentially, this can serve as an important foundation for future research, coach guidance, and coach education curriculum. The two studies within this dissertation will address the need for furthering the multifaceted interrelational coaching process. Understanding of this process will be extended within the post-secondary student-athlete team sport population while observing multiple behavioural dimensions of the coaching-athlete relationship. Studies will perceive how coaches exhibit and manage these behaviours; consider situational and environmental impacts within the relationship; improve the communication gap between coach and scholarly research by providing current and applicable material; and finally a look into the coach-athlete relationship as a whole.

The next step is to continue to broaden our understanding of the coach-athlete relationship, which will be represented within this dissertation, outlining an in-depth systematic qualitative approach. Although research into understanding the coach-athlete relationship is being approached from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, a necessity for more user-friendly and disseminated material for applied qualitative practice is required. As a coach developing a range of skills including organizational, safety, building rapport/relationships, providing instruction and explanation, demonstrating, observing, analyzing, questioning and providing feedback etc., may enhance coach-athlete relationships (Mackenzie, 2005). In order to continue with progress within the coach-athlete dyad, addressing the demands for guidelines and furthering educational tools to continually develop within the coach profession needs to persistently grow. It is the intent of this dissertation to add to the body of knowledge within the coach-athlete literature by qualitatively examining the central phenomenon of elite post-secondary team coach perspectives. Developing curriculum, guidance, and thoughts in building, maintaining, and if need be, mending the coach-athlete relationship.
Chapter 3

The Binding Force: A Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport

Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport

Coaches at Canadian post-secondary institutions have immense responsibilities: operating a successful sport program, managing both academic and athletic success, and ultimately, delivering results in competition “When athletes first join a team, they begin to familiarize themselves with their coach, the coach-athlete relationship, the environment, and the system” (Becker, 2009, p. 97) in which they will compete in. Successful coaches are consistent in who they are (coach attributes), how they maintain relationships, manage the team environment, and carry out their system (Becker, 2009). Throughout the process a reputable coach provides a stabilizing environment to aid in developing the overall person and student-athlete. To date, the coach-athlete relationship remains to be an area of continued exploration within team sport environment’s and is defined as a situation shaped by coaches’ and athletes’ interconnected feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Jowett, 2005, 2007; Jowett & Poczardowski, 2007). This present study addresses the need for a more systematic qualitative understanding of the coach-athlete relationship through the eyes and personal experiences of successful post-secondary team sport Canadian coaches. The emergence of various dimensions and themes within the coach-athlete relationship are discussed, these themes demonstrate a reciprocal bond that leads to, and continually feeds the connection between the coach and athlete, and even afterwards, once the relationship has been established. The importance of the coach-athlete relationship, its impact, the growth, and continuation are discussed with reference to the findings from this current study. Within coach-athlete relationship literature, there is a need to conduct further in-depth qualitative
studies utilizing the experiences of team sport coaches. Efforts by researchers to understand and communicate the components of the relationship to coaches and/or practitioners remain uncommon. Therefore, bridging the gap between applied and scholarly research is a needed step in this area of study. The findings of this study has practical insight for the overall development, maintenance, and repair of post-secondary team sport coach-athlete dyads.

Building a program of excellence and maintaining a level of superior results year after year is a major challenge that coaches face. Understanding what makes a coach or leader successful on a consistent basis is fascinating to researchers in various domains outside of sport, such as: peer coaching (Showers, 1985), classroom management coaching (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & McKale, 2006), content focused coaching (Staub, West, & Bickel, 2003), blended coaching (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005), organizational coaching, and executive coaching (Peltier, 2001). Within the sporting context, there are a multitude of factors that need to occur both through the season and over the course of multiple seasons for long-term program success. According to Vallee and Bloom (2005), there are four higher-order categories that determine how university coaches of team sports can build successful programs. The categories are outlined as follows: Coaches’ Attributes, Individual Growth, Organizational Skills, and Vision. Within this arrangement, Vallee and Bloom (2005) summarized these categories as being coaches’ attributes, and stated that they “encompassed coaches’ traits, personalities, characteristics, and knowledge” (p. 190). Vallee and Bloom stated, “results suggested that success may be partly attributed to the relationships these coaches formed with their athletes” (2005, p. 187). Accordingly, over the past decade there has been a growing interest in theoretical approaches that examine the coach athlete relationship (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011).
It is clear that the coach-athlete relationship is central to effective coaching (Jowett, 2009; Lyle, 2002). The history of the coach-athlete dyad reflects success as a partnership wherein escalated levels of achievement can be realized when the coach and athlete are working productively together, (Jowett, 2009). Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) conceptualized the coach-athlete relationship and partnership as the situation in which coaches’ and athletes’ “emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are mutually and causally interconnected” (p. 245). Advancements in this area of research are still growing and the vast majority of empirical studies surrounding the coach-athlete relationship have been published within the last 12 to 15 years. Throughout the contemporary discoveries, Jowett and colleagues (2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, & 2011) have been among the leaders in advancing our understanding of the coach-athlete relationship. Jowett and colleagues have provided comprehensive empirical evidence linking the concept of the coach-athlete relationship and the elements of which it is comprised, including the development of measurement tools (e.g., CART-Questionnaire) to help researchers explore elements of the coach-athlete relationship in more detail. Jowett and colleagues’ research has provided statistical evidence with the development of the Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire, portraying four interpersonal and interconnected constructs (CART-Q; Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett, Poczwardowski, & Lavallee, 2007). The CART-Q is an instrument that has been validated and measures quantitatively the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. Jowett’s framework outlines that the quality of the relationship as a situational occurrence in which coaches’ and athletes’ affective closeness (feelings), commitment (thoughts), and complementarity (behaviors), are interconnected (co-orientation) (Yang & Jowett, 2012). This definition led to the development of a conceptual model known as the 3+1Cs model (Jowett, 2007). The direct-perspective version of the CART-Q consists of 11 items, which
measure three relational constructs: (a) closeness with the coach describes the affective ties of the relationship members and represents such interpersonal feelings as trust, respect and liking one another (three items; e.g., “I like my coach”) (Hampson & Jowett, 2014); (b) commitment to the coach reflects the cognitive element of the relationship and defines coaches’ and athletes’ desire to continue the relationship in the future (Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008) (four items; e.g., “I am committed to my coach”); and (c) complementarity with the coach captures the degree to which coaches’ and athletes’ affiliation transpires through what each relationship member does in relation to the other during practice (Hampson & Jowett, 2014; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008) (four items; e.g., “I am responsive to my coach’s efforts”).

The meta-perspective version of the CART-Q contains 11 corresponding items that are arranged to ensure that they reflect athletes’ meta-perceptions (Hampson & Jowett, 2014). For example, an item from the meta-closeness subscale is “My coach likes me,” an item from the meta-commitment subscale is “My coach believes that I am committed to him/her,” and an item from the meta-complementarity subscale is “My coach believes that I am responsive to his/her efforts” (Hampson & Jowett, 2014, p. 456). The response scale for items on both versions of the CART-Q was organized on from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Open communication and dialogue helps to facilitate co-orientation, which is represented by beliefs, values, interests, and goals (Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Within the concept of co-orientation, there are three dimensions: (a) actual similarity, (b) assumed similarity and (c) empathic accuracy or understanding (Jowett & Clark-David, 2006; Jowett, 2007). Jowett and colleagues’ 3+1C model facilitates much of our current empirical knowledge of the coach-athlete relationship today.

dynamics between the coach and the athlete are central to the coaching process” (p. 423). An athlete’s level of confidence can increase by simply having the coach understand them, and this often leads to the athlete feeling a sense of comfort and trust within the corresponding relationship (Kidman, 2005). Werthner (2009) investigated identifying factors that contributed to successful or unsuccessful performances, from both the coach and athlete’s perspectives; for example, what produced a personal best or had a strong influence behind an athlete’s medaling performance. Five key themes were discovered by Werthner (2009) and outlined as: (1) a high degree of athlete self-awareness; (2) the importance of a strong coach–athlete relationship; (3) the creation of an optimal training environment; (4) the creation of a strong support system, from both financial and human resource perspectives; and (5) excellent management of the Olympic environment (Werthner, 2009, p. 1). It was suggested that the second theme, the importance of a strong coach–athlete relationship, clearly emerged as a central factor in winning an Olympic medal or producing a personal best at the 2008 Olympic Games. Each of the 27 athletes interviewed spoke at length about her or his coach and how they worked together to create an environment that enabled them to succeed. This is in line with empirical evidence suggesting that performance success is positively influenced by coach–athlete partnerships that are stable and harmonious (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003), rather than unstable and conflicting (Jowett, 2003).

“The Coach-Athlete Relationship is recognized as the foundation of coaching and a major force in promoting the athlete’s physical and psychosocial skills” Jowett (2005, p. 412). Mageau and Vallerand (2003) suggest a strong interpersonal coach-athlete relationship contains positive growth and enhances motivation to perform well. This is aligned with athlete’s views of the motivational features of the coach-created environment in which they train and compete; therefore, suggesting those athletes’ perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship has
motivational significance (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda 2008). According to Jowett (2009) “studying the nature and content of the coach-athlete relationship as well as its functions would help discern what makes a coach-athlete relationship positive and successful” (p. 35). She further stated, “the generated knowledge will help design strategies for the development of effective, supportive, and successful athletic relationships” (Jowett, 2009, p. 35).

“The coach-athlete relationship has been found to relate in theoretically meaningful ways, to such constructs as personal and interpersonal satisfaction, social cohesion, and motivational climate” (Jowett, 2009, p. 48). Therefore, this current study involving coach-athlete relationship research focuses on personal views of the dyad between elite head coaches within team sports. Despite the mounting evidence on the assessing the quality of the coach-athlete relationship the primarily quantitative approach have failed to develop rich detail and insight into how these relationships form and sustain themselves. The present study aims to get at the essence of the coach athlete relationship through the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach. The study’s methodological approach describes and explores phenomena, generating explanations by means of interviews of participants (head coaches), and their lived experiences (Giorgi, 1997).

With the increased knowledge and understanding that previous research in this area has provided, Merriam (2014) suggested that the next step is to broaden our understanding of the coach-athlete relationship through in-depth qualitative approaches; In order to demonstrate how authentic and tangible meaning is constructed and how the coaches and athletes make sense of their association within their respective athletic environments. “The coach-athlete relationship has been found to relate in theoretically meaningful ways, to such constructs as, personal and interpersonal satisfaction, social cohesion, and motivational climate” (Jowett, 2009, p. 48). Therefore, the purpose of this present study is to continue to address the gaps within the coach-
athlete literature by qualitatively examining elite post-secondary team coach perspectives, personal views, and thoughts regarding the relationship, the contributing coaches are representative of the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) system. The present study complements previous, and expands on current empirical evidence surrounding the coach-athlete relationship through a qualitative phenomenological approach. The study’s methodological approach describes and explores phenomena, generating explanations by means of interviews of participants (head coaches), and their lived experiences (Giorgi, 1997). This study is important to not only the research literature encompassing the coach-athlete relationship but provides further investigation into the deficient Canadian sport and research content within the area of coach-athlete relationships. Given that the dyadic relationship between coach and athlete is considered to be at the heart of athlete development (Jowett, 2003; Lyle, 1999; Rhind, Jowett, & Yang, 2012), it is important that researchers continual to investigate how these relationships impact the both the coach and athlete in the sport environment, as well as to what extent in relates to performance success.

**Method**

Existential-phenomenology is a qualitative approach that strives to uncover meaning in experience (Secrest, 2007). For this study an existential phenomenological approach was selected in order to capture the central meaning of the lived experience of the concept and phenomena (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007); such as common factors the role relationships play in coaching success. Phenomenology reaches back to the nineteenth century, a philosophical tradition developed by Husserl (1859-1938) and Heidegger (1889–1976). It is an approach that seeks to understand a phenomenon in the everyday world, investigating people’s life experiences and the meanings these experiences have to them (Cohen, 1987). According to
Cresswell (1998) “researchers search for essentials, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning” (p.52).

Husserl (1965), considered as the founder of phenomenology, developed a philosophical method for systematically investigating one’s directed awareness of consciousness (essences) of an object or event, attempting to uncover answers by being critical to his own (Husserl) question: What do we know as persons (Reiners, 2012)? He concluded that essences are, for example, the things that make a phenomenon what it is, exist in conscious experience, and that it is through consciousness that a person is present to the world (Husserl, 1965; Giorgi, 1985; Koch, 1995; Moyle & Clinton, 1997, Sadala & Adorno, 2002). The essence of consciousness is intentionality, which means that all mental acts are intentional in that they point to something or some object that is not consciousness itself, including mental objects such as memories and anticipations (Husserl 1965; Giorgi 1985; Moyle & Clinton, 1997). The building of our knowledge of reality should therefore start with conscious awareness (Giorgi, 1985; Koch, 1995; Sadala & Adorno, 2002).

Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997), guided the phenomenological method within this study, encompassing essential steps that have previously been established as means to enhance it’s rigor: (1) an interpretive research group, (2) a bracketing interview, (3) themes stated in words of the participants, and (4) a thematic structure (1997). Pollio et al. (1997) suggested, “the description of an experience as it emerges in a particular context is the experience” (p. 31), which is the main emphasis of the existential phenomenological pathway. The dialogue presupposes an unforced flow of questions that arise from the inter-subjective space of the two
people’s conversation and in this sense radically differs from the course of a traditional interview, which is structured to obtain answers on the questions that have been determined in advance (Pollio et al., 1997). Following the proposed steps outlined by Pollio et al. (1997), the coach descriptions of their experiences were analyzed and interpreted. Pollio et al.’s (1997) phenomenological method outlines description and reduction leading up to the building of ideographic and nomothetic analyses, unveiling and describing general truths about the phenomenon studied (Pollio et al.’s, 1997). Ideographic is a technique the researcher(s) “continuously relate parts of a single interview to the whole text…to ensure that all parts of the text are always understood in terms of their relationship to the larger whole” (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2014, p. 213). Once all the units of significance in each interview have been obtained, the next function behind the analysis of transcripts is nomothetic; “this is considered the analysis of each transcript in the context with the other transcripts” (Skinner et al., 2014, p. 213). This is convergence of the data, attempting to develop a general thematic structure of all the interviews combined (Skinner et al., 2014). By demonstrating convergence, this unwraps the consistent aspects of the phenomenon studied, its essence (Pollio et al.’s, 1997).

Within Secrest’s (2007) study, outlining Pollio’s existential phenomenology, Secrest notes that the model is not meant to be rigidly prescriptive, but rather to be mindful of different foci as the research progresses. Within this study it is important to note that each coach will offer differing views, sports, interpretations, stories, anecdotes, quotes, opinions, and the journey and experiences they encountered to achieve their successes. Each coach is unique in their own entity and each story, experience and/or viewpoint is important in itself and to the findings. These findings may or may not overlap with their respective coaching colleague’s experiences and opinions but will offer broader insight and perspectives within the area of coach-athlete
relationships. For the purposes of this study, the authenticity of the coach-athlete relationship, as conceptualized within the consciousness of each of the interviewee’s (coaches), will be examined applying Pollio et al.’s (1997) progressive steps.

Step 1: participants. In this study, data was gathered via an open-ended, semi-structured interview process with questions concerning the coach-athlete relationship. Ten coaches of team sports (both male and female team sports) were chosen and asked eight questions that asked them to describe the experience, in specific details. The coaches selected had to meet the following criteria, and head coaches were selected from team sports within the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). The sports chosen were team sports and had to have both sanctioned male and female divisions. For example, football was not included in this study due to it being strictly a male CIS sport. Men’s and women’s basketball, volleyball, rugby, hockey, and soccer were chosen based on the number of teams and popularity within CIS. The coaches identified as potential interviewees were required to be the most successful amongst their respective peers between the years 2002-2012. For the purposes of this study, success was defined as having the best winning percentage, a high overall wins to loss ratio, many playoff appearances, and finally, the most conference and national championships during the selected time frame. Based on these criteria for selection, the ten coaches that were interviewed ended up representing a variety of regions in Canada, rather than all of them solely coming from one region. Due to logistics, seven of the interviews were done via conference call and three were conducted in person. Following proper ethics standards and review policies for the study to take place, coaches were provided with the topic of discussion at the time of consent to participate.

Step 2: self. All interviews were reviewed, listened to, and read in full in order to begin to develop and understand the whole, communicated by the coaches. This was done repeatedly
until an extensive understanding of each interview was established; upon conclusion of the review process it was more straightforward to comprehend viewpoints from the coach’s perspective. The intentions of achieving this sense of self was to set aside any and all prejudgments with regards to coach-athlete relationships and opening the research interview with an unbiased receptive presence. This step can be better understood in terms of the “unwrapping” of phenomena.

Pollio et al. (1997) propose that “bracketing” previous understandings, past knowledge, and assumptions about the phenomenon is critical and is viewed as a positive process by way of seeing (Pollio et al. (1997). Bracketing, or epoché, is an important component of Pollio et al.’s phenomenological research, which refrains from positing altogether and raises the researchers awareness of presuppositions (1997). Once interviews have been transcribed, interpreted meanings and relationships are further identified and discussed, potentially the researcher(s) may reflect back to the group of ideographic narratives and nomothetic themes (Pollio et al. (1997).

**Step 3: text and collection.** Phenomenological researchers generally agree that our central concern is to return to represented, experiential meanings (Finlay, 2012), each interviewed coach was guided by open-ended questioning. Concluding each participant’s response, further questioning occurred for clarification, or simply to acquire additional instances of the queried phenomenon. To ensure that nothing was overlooked, participants concluding the interview were asked to add any additions about their shared experiences. The aim is for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived. Phenomenological research involves rich description of the live world or lived experience. Husserl’s (1983) idea that varying modes of “givenness” (to accept phenomena just as they give themselves from themselves) can only be expanded through the reduction (Marion, 2002) and, as Marion (2002) suggested; with
more reduction we get more givenness, wherein phenomena appear unconditionally and show themselves from themselves within their own creativity (2002). Interpretation and the actual words of participants are used (strict focus on the text), avoiding any misinterpretation and therefore avoiding any researcher perspective or bias (Secrest, 2007).

**Step 4: data analysis.** In accordance with Pollio et al.’s (1997) approach, patterns, relationships, and/or themes from the transcriptions were described in a thematic structure. Pollio et al.’s (1997) approach is to recognize patterns or themes, and to describe relationships in the themes in a thematic structure. Pollio et al. (1997) suggested that this is a way of interpreting texts through a part-to-whole process. This approach offers a contextual basis for all interpretations through an understanding of the relation between a passage (part) of an individual transcript and the entire (whole) transcript. Therefore, the “wholes” are in turn understood in relation to the “parts”. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and reviewed thoroughly while developing an understanding of the pages of transcriptional data. In order to understand the whole, complete transcripts were read. With each return to the part or whole, a deeper understanding of the interviews was attained. Throughout the second reading of the interviews, significant statements were listed and the units were transformed into meaningful clusters, which is a process referred to as “horizontalization” of the data (Creswell, 1998); tying the transformation together to make a general description of the experience, including textural description, of what is experienced and structural description, how it is experienced. The researcher and an assistant formed an interpretive research group identifying significant statements, meaning units, and themes derived from the interviews.

The use of an interpretive research group is important in establishing the rigor and trustworthiness of phenomenological research methods (Finlay, 2012), they are familiar with the
phenomenological research and bracketing procedure, serving to look over the interpretation process (Pollio et al. 1997). The end result was developing a thematic structure outlining a view of the whole experience and the relationship amongst the themes. After themes were identified for each individual transcript, the next step was to develop general themes. This was achieved by making comparisons across the 10 transcripts. This led to the development of a general thematic structure, which was further examined and refined by the researcher and members of the interpretative group (Pollio et al., 1997). Coach interviews explored coach-athlete relationship phenomena, generating explanations by means of discussions with head coaches, and their lived experiences. From this, a model was derived in order for coaches to use and potentially implement and use on a daily basis to further his/her coach-athlete relationship.

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness within the study implementing Pollio et al.’s (1997) existential phenomenological approach; interview recordings and familiarity with transcriptions, a detailed bracketing process, coding illustrations, a resolved research group, and aligning richly detailed descriptive phenomena (i.e., dimensions, themes, meaningful units) were thoroughly documented and transparent (see Appendix K Table 10).

**Step 5: research / practice community.** To verify the interviews and findings, each coach received their respective transcribed interview, and was instructed to review the transcription and return it back with any revisions, feedback, additions, and/or deletions. The majority of coaches did not require any amendments. Three coaches did make changes, however, only adding to their original interview and not changing or deleting any phrases, comments or words. Once the corresponding coach approved their personal interview, the process of bracketing, horizontalization, and coding the transcribed interviews ensued.
Participants

This qualitative study included 10 coaches from team sports competing in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) system and used in-depth semi-structured interviews to discuss the coach-athlete relationship. The CIS is the national governing body of university sport in Canada. It is composed of the majority of degree granting universities in the country, with 52 member institutions and over 10,000 student-athletes and 550 coaches, all who vie for one of 19 National Championships in 11 different team sports each year (CIS Scoreboard, n.d.). For this study, coaches from the most prevalent dual gendered team sports were chosen, men’s and women’s soccer, rugby, basketball, volleyball, and ice hockey. The criteria on how each coach was selected for interview was based on the level of success they have had within their respective programs over a 10-year span, from 2002-2012. Simply, the coaches had to be the most successful within their sport during that time frame, where success was measured based on national championship appearances, national championship titles, and overall conference record. Statistics indicated these coaches are considered the best within the past decade of Canadian University sport. It was important that success be defined over an extended duration, and not a one off scenario (e.g., one/two year success), as the concept of relationship building and its maintenance is also a long-term process. Amongst the 10 coaches interviewed, a total of 67 national appearances, 39 national championships, and over 2000 wins were dispersed between them. Of note, although there were equal male and female teams represented (5 and 5), the coach interviews entailed 9 male coaches and only 1 female, reflecting the historical prevalence of male head coaches in CIS sport (CIS Scoreboard, n.d.). The overall coaching experience within their current respective programs ranged from 11 to 25 years.
Procedure

All 10 coaches were interviewed individually, with each interview lasting between 30-60 minutes in duration. The majority of the interviews (seven) took place via conference calling procedures due to the coaches being distributed across the country. Three coaches that were in local proximity/region were interviewed in person. Regardless of the interview method (in person or via distance), there was no apparent difference in the quality of the interviews, as all open-ended questions were solicited and recordings were of clarity and transparency. Prior to conducting the ten interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted in order to test the procedure and identify any limitations or changes needed. One interview was conducted in person and the other via conference call, with each interview being recorded and transcribed verbatim. Both coaches that were interviewed were highly successful coaches themselves at the collegiate level and within their respective team sport, having won multiple championships. As a result from the pilot interview process, the interviewer was able to practice the administration of the interview, familiarize technology procedures, and adjust or add to any of the interview questions regarding the coach-athlete relationship topic. Of note, the original questions were not altered nor adjusted in any form following the pilot reading, however, one additional question was added. This question was; “have you or your relationships with student-athletes changed over time?” For full disclosure of the open-ended questions that guided the semi-structured interview probing the coach’s description of his/her experience see Appendix K.

The 10 coaches for this study were first contacted by email (all contacted coaches accepted participation), followed by a phone call if necessary in order to recruit them for the study. Each coach was then sent a brief outline of the study and topic, and was asked to provide ethical consent for their participation (see Appendix L). During the interviewing process,
coaches were asked eight open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview process aimed at examining the coach-athlete relationship. This study was given consent through the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board.

**Results and Discussion**

Dimensions and general themes were revealed and are understood as structures of experience (see Table 10 Appendix K for brief outline of procedure). Appendix K reveals a singular illustration of the phenomenological coding process due to the original work and transcripts containing over 40 pages and 21,000+ meaning units. Appendix K notes the degree of support from a particular coach and provides additional text that revealed themes enclosed within a singular dimension. One can only gain a deeper understanding of the findings by reviewing the entire 21,000+ meaningful units of text associated with each higher-order dimension and respected theme(s).

Grounded in Husserl’s (1965) early work, the aim of Pollio et al.’s (1997) phenomenological data analysis is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence, not being rigidly prescriptive, but rather to be mindful of different foci as the research develops. The transcripts revealed meaning units that were grouped into dimensions and general themes. The units within the dialogue were identified and facilitated by an interpretive research group (i.e., doctoral student, student researchers, and faculty) so that the processing of data could be dealt with in manageable portions (Pollio et al., 1997), as illustrated in Appendix K. According to Pollio et al. (1997), it is important the researcher is clear about what his/her biases are and must remove all suppositions on the topic, referred to as bracketing; the interpretive group assists to aid in this process. This led to the development of a final thematic structure revealing five major dimensions that branded elite post-secondary coach-athlete relationship
success. The five dimensions were “culture”, “caring”, “communication”, “recruitment”, and “trust”. To aid in understanding the themes a simple model that visually illustrates the reciprocal relationships between the themes and coach-athlete relationship are illustrated in Figure 2 Appendix M.

The model depicts an overall essence in establishing, developing, and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship. Presently there is no orderly fashion to which the relationships are developed in terms of which theme is the more important over the other, and whether or not there is any established hierarchy within the development of the relationship. However, the initial recruitment phase of a post-secondary student-athlete potentially could be the start of such a relationship, as suggested by one of the interviewed coaches, it begins “right from the recruiting phase, I take a very personal approach.” In addition, this tool indicates that the coach-athlete relationship is neither cyclical nor hierarchical, but rather interwoven. Suggesting the tool’s dimensions and themes may be visited in separate entities at any time, and potentially the themes may act as a ripple effect throughout each other. As suggested in the following recruitment setting by one coach:

Knowing what they are doing, and paying attention to what they are doing is [important]…I’ve emailed them [recruits], and said there are a couple of things that are going to happen when you come to the university…We like to take care of these things early, so that your life is easier. Start to show ways that we are going to help them out…you are showing you care.
The above quote outlines a situation where the coaches actions are delineating all three themes working in combination of one another within the caring dimension of R-CART (i.e., authenticity, empowerment, making it personal), see Table 14 Appendix R.

Consideration from the interviews, one could derive from an interpretive viewpoint a coach with a solid grasp at developing and maintaining such a relationship may understand that each theme and its components can be just as important as the others. Each athlete and his/her relationship with their respective coach are different. The same thing can also be said for each coach and his/her athlete. Coaches may argue that select players may require more communication and a caring environment throughout their entire career, while other players may experience during the recruitment phase an instant bond or connection with the coach and players (team culture) and may not require high degrees of attention and communication as they develop within the team. It’s important to note that it is possible at any time during the relationship either the coach or the athlete could enter, re-enter, introduce, or revisit, anyone of the dimensions identified within the model. The five main dimensions of culture, caring, communication, recruitment, and trust that were generated from the coach interviews are presented in more detail in the following sections.

**Culture**

Elite coaches strive to have his/her team perform at a high level, it is your role as a coach, to establish this within your team culture; as stated by one of the interviewed coaches, “results are a by-product of culture.” Martens (1987), suggested the foundation of coaching is to develop an effective team culture, where an environment includes a social and psychological component assisting in maximizing a team’s ability to achieve success. Culture creates an environment in
which team members, “think alike, talk alike, and act alike so they can support and reinforce the best in one another” (Voight & Carroll, 2006, p. 324). Much of this is done through a strong social component of verbal communication; therefore, relationships are important because without them a coach may struggle to establish the appropriate culture to achieve success. Focusing on building that culture through coach-player relationships can be of great benefit, as supported by one of the coaches in this study who stated “to be honest, the least technical coaching I ever did was actually the three years we won national championships.” The results of the existential-phenomenological process as per Pollio et al. (1997) supported the main dimension of culture being further subdivided to include six themes. These six themes are outlined below as: “climate”, “credibility”, “natural respect”, “method to madness”, “practice setting”, and “player fit”.

Climate. Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a “good atmosphere” amongst the players, coaches and staff. One coach expressed how a “strong atmosphere can help deal with problem athletes.” In light of the coach interviews, dealing with issues in a manner that is successful and non-detrimental to the team appears to be near the top of coach lists when establishing a strong environment. “Dealing with issues as soon as possible” and “dealing with issues within a team environment” were seen as being crucial in “having a real tight family group.” In order for this to occur, other factors are involved such as having solid athlete-athlete relationships. “If that [climate] is there first and they are enjoying it and having a good time, they are meshing with their teammates, and the cohesion is [evident]; it can make your coaching job a lot easier.” From a coach perspective, “you run a program that when people come into the dressing room they’re happy.” As such, climate [environment] appears to be vital
within team atmosphere and dynamics, and the following coaches quote summarizes the general findings in this area.

Stronger the environment, [the] stronger the relationship, players feel more safe in surroundings [with] who they are and feel like they are contributing...we have been fortunate to have a real tight family group and we try to make this the best opportunity of their life, and in turn the best experience of their lives…it’s wanting them to thrive in the environment that they are in and trying to get the best out of themselves while they are here.

In addition, another coach made the suggestion, “veterans help paint [a clearer] picture, which is important in running a five year program.” One coach further supported stating, “solid veteran leadership, helps everybody, I mean they even help the coaches.” The climate of the team is aided with experienced players, as one coach stated, “older players now know what is expected, and they sort of feed the information along to the younger [players].” Equal treatment throughout the team was also noteworthy, “dressed or not dressed, play or not play, everybody is as equally important...even with the good kids that you bring in, we don’t treat anyone different than anyone else.” Regarding the notion of having a strong team climate, a coach suggested, “when there is a respect and the athletes believe they are being treated fairly and openly, than their willingness to follow that leader and that leader’s decisions and path are in place.” A respectable team climate should include every team member, as a single coach outlined, “It’s important to appreciate everybody and their contributions…not succumbing into egos.” Arguably when a person feels appreciated they feel more confident, and according to one interviewed coach, “creating more confidence in the athletes is critical.”
Credibility. From examining the interviews, coach credibility appears important to strong leadership and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key and an important characteristic for a coach to possess; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). It is important to maintain integrity within the team, as a coach you are “essentially relying on these relationships to assist with your credibility.” One coach believed, “your past success plays some role in the relationships you have right now; however you can’t rely on your past successes to build great relationships. I think it acts like an ice breaker.” Another added, “maybe you have one step up to start, but if you don’t perform, you can lose that step pretty quick.” Many coaches agree, “It builds an expectation of credibility.” One coach used the comparison of “bringing in an NHL player as a coach, he’s going to have some respect to start with but he’s going to have to continue to earn what he’s already [developed].”

Natural respect. A common consensus among the coaches suggests a coach “needs to be respected” by his/her athletes; “if a coach does not have the respect from the team, you might as well pack your bags.” Respect can develop through many avenues within a team, “the more respect you have from each component within the team, the more [well-defined] the picture is going to be at the end.” Becker’s (2009) findings supported the emergence of this theme. Becker (2009) outlined that as a coach if you work hard each day, do a good job, and exhibit these qualities the athlete’s respect will follow. When athletes viewed their coach’s level of professionalism as possessing character, class, respect for others, humbled approach, and a gracious winner and loser, this aided the athlete’s views of admiration and coach respect (Becker, 2009). As one of the coaches in this study stated, “I think when there is a respect and
athletes believe they are being treated fairly and openly, then their willingness to follow that leader and that leaders’ decisions and path are in place.”

In support of this theme, an additional coach suggested:

There will be a natural respect because of what you’ve accomplished as a coach and as an athlete, and we always look up to our hero’s right? So somebody that we consider to be successful we [would] look up to them and say that person was great or good.

Perhaps at times where the team is experiencing success, respect may be readily present, as one coach suggested, “you could argue that if you are winning it’s a lot easier to coach then if you are losing.” As well, if the coach is viewed in a respectful manner, winning and success could soon follow, as suggested by one coach; “you get a coach in there that people respect; all of a sudden results tend to turn around.” Within their research, Jones and Wallace (2005) outlined the coach-athlete relationship is an evolving process and is both dynamic and complex in its nature. The relationship between both coach and athlete is developed through appreciation and respect for each other (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002).

**Method to madness.** “Though this be madness, yet there is method in’t” (Shakespeare, trans. 1992, 2.2.203-204). Within the phenomenological reduction of interviews, it was revealed that coaches should exhibit to the players that there is a method to their madness in tactical strategies, technical development, in order to assist with gaining respect and credibility among coach-athlete relationships within the team. Even though the relationship may appear to be unreasonable on occasion from an athlete’s perspective, belief that there is an overall plan in place for the betterment of the team is needed for the athletes to comprehend and believe in. Zang and Chelladurai (2012) captured this notion with respect to the concept of benevolence, where an athlete’s perception of a coach’s benevolence reflects the “extent to which a trustee
does good to the trustor; is loyal to the interests and well-being of the trustor; and care for
trustor’s needs” (pg. 2). Accordingly, Zhang and Chelladurai (2012) indicated that this has a
positive effect on the athlete’s trust in the coach. When players understand that there is a process
“it brings some confidence to...you know [to] what I’m bringing” said one coach. Another
suggested, “building confidence which turns into belief is probably the biggest attribute a coach
can do nowadays...[with] relationships, it’s all about trying to build confidence in your group.”
Creating a good environment in the locker-room was important to a couple of the coaches,
stating, and “Build what you do in your team room.” The team room is important in terms of
both team and player growth. In the “dressing room there’s lots of anecdotes, lots of pictures up
and different things, articles. I think the tradition is important...we use themes...a common theme
we’ve used in the last two years is protectors, builders and believers.” “Protecting is what we’ve
already accomplished...we built this...these championships.” By building athlete confidence,
providing motivation, and showing program tradition and past successes, these factors can
provide athletes with an overall look at various methods to the madness—each characteristic
outlining a direction to buy into the coach and/or the overall program’s plan to achieve the
desired result.

Further support for method to madness, was heard through one coach who stated:
Now does it help that we’ve won because they’ve seen success and they’ve seen that if
they do it [commit to working]...those other guys that have had success, that helps a lot,
has it gotten a little easier in terms of having people follow? Sure, because you’ve got
guys who’ve had the success, and when they start—when younger guys (start)
questioning stuff, they (veterans) go, are you serious? What have you done to justify
[your] questioning? As opposed to look what has happened here, which justifies following [the teams plan].

Additionally, the same coach added, “they’re 19 year old kids; certainly if you don’t have success, they tend to question [you] more, if you have success they tend to assume there is a method to the madness a little bit more.” One coach further suggested, “you have to have adversity, all these championships have been won by handling adversity…say this [certain situation] happened before, this is how we did it [at] one time…you want to build [off that].” In relation, another coach believed, “every group that comes in, this is yours, this is your chance to add to our legacy…you have to sell them an idea, you have to sell a concept, and they have to believe in that concept…they have to believe [it], they have to really [buy in], and I think believe that they are able to achieve that [goal].” Within team culture, it’s important for the athlete’s to believe in and understand what the team wants to achieve and how they will proceed. One coach further added, “The bottom line is players have to play for you, they have to play for you and they have to believe in what you are doing, you know I can roll out a tactical plan and it might be crazy but if they respect me and they believe in me, then they will execute.” It’s critical that coaches, “through their motivation and passion, they [are] able to convince the players to follow them and to buy into their system” (Vallee & Bloom, 2005, p. 189), understanding the method to madness within the teams’ culture.

**Practice setting.** A coach opinion within the interviews revealed, “Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.” Frey, Laguna and Ravizza (2003) reinforced the practice setting by suggesting, “It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition” (p. 115). Poczwardowski, Barott, and Peregy (2002), concluded that the relationship some athletes have
with their coaches shapes their entire sport experience and, in turn, has a profound impact on the quality of both practice and performance during competition. McCann (1995) suggested that athletes who are committed spend up to 99% of their time in practice, rather than competition. Within this present study of team sports, the athletes spent between 92-99% of their time in practice in comparison to competition, dependent upon the player and sport. Given the high practice to games ratio that exists, one could conclude that the practice setting is where much of the coach-athlete relationship really develops. It was suggested in the coach interviews that communication between the coach(s) and athlete(s) occurs within both the practice setting and away from the field of play. According to one coach, practice was essential, he said, “Through training, it is done through training. I would say very little [coach-athlete relationship building] in terms of off field.” Yukelson (1997) outlined in his study that “a premium is placed on quality practice” (p. 81) in order to develop the overall positive team culture.

The importance of the practice setting was further suggested by another interviewed coach, “I think it’s important to get to know those athletes and get to know what makes them tick…I’ll pull them aside during warm up, and say ok, how’s it going, what’s up with you?” Within the practice setting one of the coaches prefers to be up front with the athletes, “I’m pretty straight forward with the guys…they know that they can come and see me at any time, open door policy; lot of it is sorted out at the training [practice]…[we] talk about school, life, workload, family.” Another coach believed that it’s really about each coaches personality when it comes to dealing with the athletes during practice time or outside of it, “I think that’s part of the [coach] personality, I mean, some coaches are a lot friendlier with players than others [coaches].” The practice setting can be effective environments to further grow the relationship amongst the coach and student-athlete. Research continues to evolve and investigate the effect of coaching
behaviors on the coach-athlete relationship and its impact in various settings and on its outcomes, such as relationship satisfaction (Poczwardowski et al. 2006).

**Player fit.** Exceptional players are the key to team success this belief is shared by coaches, sports fans, and general media (May, 2014). However having the elite athlete, as a member of your team is valued, it is arguably more important the intra-team coordination and the ability to work collaboratively drive’s the team to it’s effectiveness (May, 2014). In support of this, one coach suggested, “athletes with a team of people around them are able to constantly outperform those [that are] without.” Often defined in trait terms, solid team players are described as dependable, flexible, or cooperative (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, & O’ Shea, 2006).

Player fit within this study is in reference to the elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism, skill level, and the ability to work within intra-team dynamics. John Maxwell (2002), author of *Learning the 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player* stated, “You cannot build a great team without great players. You can lose with good players, but you cannot win without them” (p. xi). One of the coaches interviewed believed, “the right type of athlete and the right type of person needs to be here, and then for an athlete to achieve success the fit also has to be good.” Another coach added, “I try and find the best people and I think they can evolve into great players as they go through our program.” In terms of player fit, a coach stated, “I’ve said this many times, the best teams I’ve had here are the teams that by the end of the season they are running the show…in order to have winning teams you’ve got to have the right players in here.” A coach went as far to say that their “program is not for every person, if you have a great work ethic and you have a great attitude and you want to get better and you’re willing to do that type of stuff, than this is a great program for you.” Further support to player fit, one coach added:
We’ve not found or succumbed to buying into egos or any of those of things, and I think that the players see that the culture is more important than results, and then the results are basically a by-product [of the culture].

An overall commitment to excellence is a predictable focus behind successful programs. Building a level of excellence within the team culture requires a multidimensional approach influenced by a variety of personal, situational, and team aspects. These factors (themes) were outlined here within the culture dimension of the coach-athlete relationship: climate, credibility, natural respect, method to madness, practice setting, and player fit. Although these emerged from the data as separate themes within the culture dimension, they share a strong relationship in creating an ideal working culture, as expressed by the coaches in this study. The degree to which these themes fit together can differ within each team on a yearly basis. Two of the interviewed coaches supported this by saying; “you’re dealing with different kids, in different ways, because they respond differently” and “you’re dealing with human’s so it’s not a straight road.” Ultimately, given that teams are composed of student-athlete’s all working together it is not an exact science to get each and every one on the same page at the same time. Dale Carnegie, American lecturer and author (1888-1955), supports this notion; “when dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudice, and motivated by pride and vanity” (Carnegie, 1981, p. 28). Although effective cultures within a team environment can exist, they may differ within any given team and/or program. Amongst the players and coaches of the team, there needs to be an agreed-upon vision that everyone strives towards; along with complementary roles, collaborative and synergistic teamwork, individual and mutual accountability; a positive team and cohesive group
atmosphere, a system of communication that enhances task and social cohesion, peer helping, and social support (Yukelson, 1997). One coach even went as far as suggesting:

Even when we bring them [players] in for a recruiting trip, a lot of times I’ll ask my team, ok, what do you see here? [The] guys are pretty good, we have passed up some pretty good players [in the past] because we just didn’t see that, didn’t know how they’d fit in here.

The overall culture of post-secondary team sport programs can be influenced and directed by the coach and staff, however players may be just as if not more impactful to the overall growing and maintenance culture of the team. Potentially older veteran players can serve as impactful team culture representatives, being dependable and competent teammates. One coach suggested, “the kind of players you bring in can help the culture that is created, it has to be maintained, I think [this] is crucial”.

Caring

There is strong support for the role of caring behaviors within the coach-athlete relationship (see Jowett & colleagues, 2004, 2006, & 2009). “A critical relationship, also referred to as a caregiving relationship, is a relationship that has significant influence over an individual’s sense of safety, trust, and fulfillment of needs” (Stirling & Kerr, 2013, p. 87). Stirling and Kerr (2013) suggested that the coach-athlete relationship is an example of a caregiving relationship that occurs in the sport environment. Stirling and Kerr further suggest, “the coach may play the role of the caregiver, as he/she may be entrusted with ensuring the safety and fulfillment of many of the athlete’s physical and emotional needs” (2013, p. 87). According to Fry and Gano-Overway (2010), “this is seen as an important component of an effective relationship that allows the relationship to thrive and lead to a long term commitment among the athlete and coach that could
foster psychological well-being” (p. 295). Several coaches within the interviews shared these sentiments, as one coach stated, “one of the most important concepts is developing that caring relationship, but the whole notion is that we are all trying to take care of one another.”

Additionally, another coach believed the caring component is vital within their team dynamic, “most importantly as a person I think that’s probably primarily the biggest thing, [caring].”

The findings from the present study further support the dimension of caring as major component within the coach-athlete relationship, as denoted by the following statements made by several coaches:

- “Players need to see somebody who has passion and somebody who cares.”
- “I’ve talked to other coaches and mentored young coaches, I think that’s probably the most important word, the one word that seems to always come back, it’s caring.”
- “[Coaches need to establish] some level of caring, or the athletes knowing that you care about them.”
- “Helping young people to grow to be the best they could be in any area of their lives.”
- Further analysis of the caring dimension revealed three themes. These were: “make it personable”, “authenticity”, and “empowerment”.

**Make it personal.** Within the dimension of caring, coaches expressed that each relationship you have with a player is diverse. As a coach, you “have a different sort of relationship with every player that you coach”. One coach suggested that relationships differ, “my relationship isn’t the same with any two people.” Supporting this theme, a coach added, “I probably would lean more towards the uniqueness…each relationship will be unique.” Other coaches commented further on making it personal and said:

- “First value them as a person…as a player second.”
• “The person is just as if not more so important than the athlete.”
• “For me it’s one of those things where I try and get to know the person the best that I can.”
• “I make certain that I go around to practice and say hi to everybody. But say hi, in hey, how was history class this morning? Knowing what their classes are. How was the assignment you worked on last week?”
• “What did the professor say about it when you handed [your assignment] in early?”
• “Start to show ways that we are going to help them out; showing you care.”
• “I think, probably the biggest foundation is the trust factor.”
• “You know it’s a two way trust, obviously the players got to build that with the coach but I try to with our first year players.”
• “First year’s [athletes] I try and give them a lot of opportunities right off the bat.”
• “Vets assist in bridging the relationship gap with the younger players.”
• “If everything isn’t working perfectly, I’ll make sure that I spend individual time with them.”
• “I make things personal even in the competition setting…and as well in other environments…remember what we talked about? On the court [in practice]? In terms of development of your role this is important, it doesn’t seem to be happening.”

Literature proposes it is important that student-athletes and/or team members feel valued and cared for as individuals and the need for coaches to always have their athletes’ interests at heart. According to Gunnink (2014), “if the student-athlete’s social environment does not support their well-being, significant negative outcomes can occur” (p. 1). Considering this, looking out for players as individuals will help to increase their engagement, motivation,
productivity and happiness. Some coaches suggested, “in terms of developing the relationship, showing that you’re interested in other parts of their lives”, such as “asking questions about them and their lives and demonstrating interest beyond them being an athlete” to facilitate personal investment and acceptance. For example, as stated by one coach:

You meet them in the hallway and you make a point of stopping and chatting and asking how things are going and you know you’re not just talking whether they’ve done their workout or what their role is going to be that night in the hockey game or whatever it is, it’s simply stopping and talking.

Other coaches advocated the importance of, “just showing that you’re interested in other parts of their lives” and “knowing what they are doing, and paying attention to what they are doing.” Building a team is not something that just happens nor does it occur quickly, it is a dynamic process that evolves over time, and is influenced by a variety of things such as personal factors and getting to know your athletes (Yukelson, 1997).

**Authenticity.** Being authentic was discovered as an important theme within the research and coach interviews. One coach suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” Another added, “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.” According to one coach, he tries:

[To do their] best to help them [the athletes] see that I do care about them and I care about them as people primarily…I think that kids can see insincere, and they can see phony, and they can see, they can feel it—so I don’t think that works.

Regarding authenticity, one coach stated, “my dad was a salesman, and I always resented his ability to pretend to like people, and pretend to observe people, when I knew in fact he didn’t.” Within the exploratory nature of this study, authenticity continued to be revealed as an
important factor, as one coach states, “I think that when you show people sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing, and where they are trying to go and that you show you are there to help them, and that you are a good listener, and that you listen far more than you talk.” Additionally, another coach thought that paying attention to both personal and competitive needs is important to the athletes, stating, “finding out what their needs are, which I think is really important...now I can kind of see when they’re struggling a bit...it shows them empathy to the fact that you want these kids to be successful.” Further comments disclosed by the coach interviews portraying the theme of authenticity are as follows:

- “Not being satisfied but accepting them for who they are, for what they are, and what they represent in all aspects of their lives; regardless of where they are that you accept them and that you care for them regardless.”
- “Finding out what their needs are, which I think is really important.”
- “Now I can kind of see when they’re struggling a bit...it shows them empathy to the fact that you want these kids to be successful.”
- “They care that you care, and at the end of the day you’re going to go to bat for them regardless.”
- “Players will go to the wall for a coach if they feel that the coach has their back and that the coach is ultimately there [for them].”

**Empowerment.** Kimball and Freysinger (2003) suggest that empowerment within sport can enhance the overall health and well-being of athletes. Athletes want to achieve and succeed both individually and as a supporting team member. High-level athletes typically share a desire to win, and as they go through this process, they also desire to experience both fun and enjoyment through competition and training. Student-athletes want to win for themselves, their
teammates, their institution, and their coach. Demonstrating caring, effective, and empowering communication with athletes can be an effective way to both teach and motivate. A coach during the interview process suggested that confidence is a major factor in an empowering performance. The coach considered it be a key element and stated, “I think I go back to relationships, I think part of the relationships is to build confidence and I think that’s the one attribute every successful team has, is that they [players] play with confidence.” More coaches added:

- “You probably need a relationship with the player in order for that player to be confident.”
- “It’s important that players experience some ownership in what they’re doing or the team is doing.”
- “It’s about just trying to figure out what they need the most, then trying to give it to them, so that you could continue moving forward in terms of your relationship.”
- “So I think one thing that I try and do here is build up the trust and the belief, continue to nurture it and always expecting, understanding where your athletes are at.”

Doing the right thing for the player at the right stage in their development is significant, as outlined by Souza and Oslin (2008):

The coach has the primary responsibility for assessing game problems and formulating solutions. A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game. (p. 24) During the interview process, it was suggested that coaches want to “develop the individual player; secondly, relating to the group as a whole in terms of where the player stands on the team” is also important. “We just tell them where they stand and how they can move up
and why they are moving down.” Within a situation like this “we don’t pretend that they’re not moving down, we don’t assume that they know because you’re mad at them or something, if they [don’t] realize they’re moving down we tell them.” One coach stated, “I start to look at who are these individuals, how am I interrelating with them; relating to the group as a whole.” This is analogous with Souza and Osling (2008), where it’s understood that empowering your athletes to take ownership of their own performance and of their team’s performance can only help with overall development in terms of standards within team and individual performance. Given this information a coach suggested within their team:

[They] have to treat everyone the same because if we don’t, those guys will never get to the next level, bench players, starters etc. …At the end of the day you still have a plan that, we need to get these kids to do this in order to be successful, but now how do we get them to believe that this is what they want to do?

One coach revealed in their interview:

Empowering her and giving her control was what she needed, simply in talking to her about some of the plans that we were making [as coaches]. You know, asking what her opinion is in certain situations, [providing] ownership, putting a little bit of control into her hands.

In support of this, an additional coach stated that players:

Will require ownership in what they’re doing…if they feel that it’s your plan and not their plan, and then they’re going to approach it totally different. I don’t know how they’re going to approach it but they’re going to approach it totally different. I mean, if I’m doing something for me I’m going to approach it differently than if I’m doing it for you.
When looking to enhance player development, within an environment that is caring, there tends to be a connection to empathy-related responses and positive social behaviors (Gano-Overway, Newton, Magyar, Fry, Kim, & Guivernau, 2009). From the current study, the themes of “make it personal”, “authenticity”, and “empowerment” were highlighted throughout the coach interviews as themes supporting the formation of the caring dimension within the coach-athlete relationship of team sport. All three share the need for relatedness; which pertains to the desire to feel connected with significant others (e.g., the coach and the athlete) (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Caring is an overarching component to solid team culture, athlete’s need to know that the coach cares about them as people and showing interest outside of sport (Janssen & Dale, 2002). Mike Krzyzewski, one of the most successful NCAA basketball coaches of all time, stated from his book entitled Beyond Basketball: Coach K’s Keywords for Success, “in the development of our basketball teams, care is as crucial an aspect as any” (2006, p. 19). Further, Coach K believed in order to establish care in individual relationships it is important to care for the whole basketball team/player’s both on and away from the court, this could be demonstrated in showing interest and having empathy towards the athlete (Krzyzewski & Spatola, 2006)

Theorists have proposed that individuals develop most optimally within an environment that cultivates a warm atmosphere (Deci & Ryan, 1991). The concept of caring within sport, as long as the coach’s behaviors are perceived by the athlete to be caring, can positively influence the overall development of the athlete (Gano-Overway et al., 2009). To further strengthen the bond within the coach-athlete relationship, Fry and Gano-Overway (2010), suggested, “the caring climate also contributes to positive evaluations of and exhibiting caring behaviors toward one’s coaches and teammates” (p. 300).
Communication

In accordance with Jowett (2003), “communication is the building block of all relationships” (p. 445). Talk, self-disclosure, and dialogue, are considered components of communication and provide coaches and athletes with an opportunity to share one another’s experiences and thoughts (Duck, 1994). According to Quick and Macik-Frey (2004), communication and behavior that fail to originate in the core of who we are and what we believe lack personal integrity and fail the test of authenticity. “I’m really pretty anti ‘rah-rah-rah, pat him on the back, how are you? Great to see you, you’re the best guy I’ve ever seen today, kind of mentality.” Athletes who feel more compatible also feel more supported by their coach and in turn evaluate his/her communication ability as more encouraging (Kenow & Williams, 1999).

Coaches strive to motivate their athletes as they develop and provide information in hopes to permit each of them to train effectively, efficiently, and improve performance. Communication from the coach to athlete potentially could initiate appropriate actions. Research has commonly shown that effective communication requires the development of trust and respect between coach and athlete (Yukelson, 1984). Deep interpersonal communication is the key to building healthy, supportive, positive relationships and is essential to working together (Quick & Macik-Frey, 2004). Jowett and Meek (2000) suggested that via verbal communication, the coach and athlete share each other’s experiences, and consequently a co-oriented view develops. “Co-orientation occurs when relationship members have established a common frame of reference, namely shared goals, beliefs, values, and expectations” (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003, p. 315). This however, would require the athlete to receive the information from the coach but also to understand and accept it. From the data in this study, this dimension included seven general
themes: “honesty”, “consistency”, “player-player”, “emotional state”, “conflict resolution”, “coach-player”, and “one on one listening”.

**Honesty.** Integrity in the coach-athlete relationship advocates that the coach’s relationships with others should be honest and sincere. Headley-Cooper (2010) explained that values of integrity are upheld when coaches possess a high degree of self-awareness and are able to reflect critically on how their behaviors and perspectives influence the interactions with their athletes in particular. Examples of this theme derived from the coach interviews suggest that players “have to see integrity.” Furthermore, a coach stated players have “to trust you, and you’ve got to trust them…in order for you to trust them, you need to be a little bit more lenient because they are at the university level, [and] they are still kids.” In accordance with Becker (2009), consistency and integrity that coaches exhibited were some of the more prominent qualities that helped achieve athletes’ trust and respect. Consistent with Becker, one coach suggested that, “in order for kids to trust you, you have to be honest with them each day…you’ve got to stay within your personality and you’ve got to be honest each day and sometimes honesty isn’t what they want to hear.” Further adding, “we inform the kid, if you want to change, this is what you’ve got to change. If you’re not going to change that, this is going to continue to happen.” Further supporting honesty, a coach stated:

> The relationship has to be open, communication is crucial…when I first started coaching I tried to sugar-coat things, so if we had an individual meeting I would say along the lines of, you’re not that great in this and this, but I would try to be really nice about it. I was just very nice about the way I would say things, I started to believe they might not be getting the message. I decided to just say it—I actually think they appreciate it more.

Bennie and O’Connor (2012) within their study provide support to this theme, and
indicate that in order for coaches to be considered effective by their athlete’s, they must develop open and honest relationships with their athletes. Further stating, “a relationship with the athletes can't exist without honesty and trust” (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012, p. 60).

**Consistency.** The effectiveness of any coach and his/her successes can be determined by his/her ability to effectively communicate with the athlete in a mutually supporting manner (Steuerwald, 2002). Steuerwald (2002) suggested that communicating with athlete’s requires that “positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust.” Further, Steuerwald (2002) states:

Athletes must know that they can depend on their coach to be fair and positive, even in intense competition. Coaches can criticize but must leave personality out of it. Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance.

No player improves when made to feel worse about him/herself.

With regards to the athletes, consistency is important within the relationship, especially when trust is involved, as suggested by one of the coaches:

It’s a different relationship like they have to trust you and in order for them to trust you, you can’t screw up, you can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever; you can’t turn on them for little mistakes, but you can’t ignore them either…you have to be consistent, just have to be an everyday thing, and if you can’t keep it an everyday thing, then you’re going to lose their trust.

Another coach added “you have to be consistent, no question.” For example, a player: would say why am I not playing? I would say because you are doing exactly what we just talked about, opposite the benefit of the team…[as a coach] if you are consistent and you follow through the same sort of rules with everybody, usually it works out.
The coach-athlete relationship, as stated by one of the coaches, it’s “a different sort of relationship with every player that you coach.” Moreover, the interviewed coaches revealed that being consistent and fair within your program and team is an important component. Various coaches made suggestions towards this notion:

- “You get respect by hard work and being consistent, treating every athlete fairly [not necessarily equal] but being consistent in the messaging.”
- “You can be consistent with the team, knowing that some people might need a little bit more care, or more attention.”
- “You’ve got to keep repeating, and keep working at it ...you need that base level and then you got to build from there.”
- “It’s very hard to treat everybody equal, if you know anything about the opposite sex obviously it’s treating them fair.”
- “It’s a “different sort of relationship with every player that you coach.”

**Player-player.** A storied American industrialist by the name of Henry Ford was once quoted as saying, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success” (Henry Ford, 2013). It would be fair to say that players at elite levels typically play for and play with a cause when in competition. Crouch (2009) states, a “cause is something that is conceived by its loyal servant as unifying the lives of various human beings into one life” (p. 121). The cause in sport could be many things, anywhere from winning a championship, making the playoffs, or simply serving a purpose or fulfilling a role within team dynamics. While players serve the cause, the cause “appear as givers of purpose and meaning” (Crouch, 2009, p.122), as well, in the process providing players with direction and fulfillment. Potentially, an athlete and/or team demonstrating loyalty to the cause will “actually perform
concrete actions aimed toward it” (Crouch, 2009, p. 121). Player-player relationships to each other are, therefore, mediated by the cause. This unites the players, builds emotional connections, and assists as the basis for relationships amongst each other (Crouch, 2009).

As one of the coaches supported the notion of player-player togetherness, “it’s players helping players, and we talk about the word leadership a lot, everybody is a leader no matter what role you’re in.” One can conclude that the players must have a bond with each other, take the time to create, develop and work at the relationship. Throughout the interviews, one coach revealed:

[My] seniors committee is good that way [developing team relations]…now I can just pull four or five people aside and communicate to the whole group and get their feedback on the team as a whole and get a sense…they have more responsibilities, whether that’s buddy systems, whether that’s hey, check in on this first year kid, it puts a little more onus on them.

Many of the coaches interviewed, indicated the importance that each player develops a relationship with one another in order for positive team dynamics to occur during competition. At times, as one coach stated, “I think the older guys have abused their leadership and basically just screamed at a guy without taking the time to [get to know their teammates], so you know [they just] scream at guys who they don’t have close relationships with.” The same coach continued to say, “if the [athlete] is not that self-confident enough and he doesn’t have a relationship with him; then it’s rarely a good situation.”

“Many former athletes report that their fondest memories of playing team sports involve their relationships to one another” (Crouch, 2009, p. 125). Crouch (2009) suggested what was
lost when an athlete’s season or careers ended was not primarily the opportunity to win but the opportunity to be with one another in those settings.

**Emotional state.** Cowie and Cornelius (2003) suggested, “the word emotion refers to an aspect of most (or all) mental states, rather than to a special kind of state” (p. 7). Thoughts can shift from one to another when you move from one state of feeling into another; it is important to be in the right emotional state in order to communicate and act in the right way (Cowie & Cornelius, 2003). Episodes of full-blown emotion tend to involve elements of at least the following categories (Cowie & Cornelius, 2003; Frijda, 1993): affect (the irreducible aspect that gives feelings their emotional, non-cognitive character); appraisal (categorization of an event or situation that marks it as having a distinctive kind of significance for the organism), valence (a quality of being subjectively charged with positive or negative significance, which is inherent in emotional appraisal and experience); action readiness (may take the form either of generalized activation or a disposition to follow preset courses of action related to the appraisal); communicative behavior (conveys information about affect, appraisal and action tendency to other individuals, often without deliberate intention); and physiological adjustments (may be related to arousal and/or autonomic nervous system activity).

Different emotions can be accompanied by different bodily states (when you act from the right states, you will have the right effects); an emotional state such as anger is a function of the interaction of cognitive factors with a state of physiological arousal (Schachter, 1964). In terms of an athlete’s emotional state, and the coach’s relationship with those athletes, one coach believes that:

You have to get them [the players] to an emotional state at some point early on [in their career] where they’re willing to be honest with you…you need to get them to a point
where they’re willing to tell you that they hate your guts and that they think you are an idiot.

This same coach stated:

Most coaches live in a world where their players never snap on them, my guys, everyone of them has snapped on me at least once in the first two years. Because once you get to that point [emotional state] then you can get somewhere.

Further, in accordance with this particular coach, the process “is basically just kind of pushing them, talking to them, and pushing certain buttons.” In addition, another interviewed coach stated, “sometimes they [athletes] need a little drudgery, that’s the most compelling part of it is knowing when to push what buttons, as far as your team, and then certainly as far as individuals go.” Yukelson (1997) outlined that in order to build a team it must be understood that it is dynamic, evolves, and changes each year with each group, and “it’s a process that unfolds over time and is the result of coaches and athletes working together” (p.82). In order for a positive team atmosphere to occur, a mechanism to openly and honestly discuss the quality of group functioning and team efficiency must be in place (Yukelson, 1997).

Within the interviews, one coach suggested, “sometimes you need people to be emotional, if they [athletes] are not emotional they are not honest…not when there is a definite, sort of hierarchy [amongst the coach and athlete’s].” In accordance with Boone and Buck (2003), “being more emotionally expressive makes being trustworthy harder to fake and players would have greater confidence that what they see is the true state of the person in question (p. 171). In an online article by Cuthbert (February, 2016) interviewing professional hockey coach John Tortorella he prefers aggressive interactive nature of communication at times, and understandably or deliberately may turn it into conflict in order to attain constructive interaction.
I even try to manipulate situations to try and cause an argument. I want an argument. I want the conversation. If they're not going to come in and talk to me, I'm going to cause something so you have to talk to me…It may turn into conflict…But I think that's some of the most important stuff you can have with the player…When there's conflict, there's honesty.

Providing further thoughts behind emotional state, and drawing upon previous experience and getting an athlete towards an emotional state, one coach stated:

Once they [the player] snap…now we can talk. I calm him down and then we talk…that is where a lot of honesty and trust comes from…because you know I don’t disagree with them. I mean, they [players] start saying stuff in which they are probably not off base, so it’s not [as if] I sit there and say how dare you, I mean, I would respond that way too.

Further, the interviewed coach asked the question, “Can trust and honestly develop without an emotional state?” He responded, “I suppose there can be, but I’ve never seen it…getting to the emotional state of an athlete can be challenging and of course is dependent upon the individual.” The same coach added:

[It] depends how tough the kid is and how stubborn he is…the more stubborn he is the earlier it [emotional state] happens because…he can get to that point where you can tick him off enough that he snaps on you at an earlier stage.

Further statements from coaches outlining the significance of the emotional state within the coach-athlete relationship are listed:

• “The emotional state with the first year [player], usually comes because of the fourth and fifth year guys putting pressure on them; I mean I’m almost the guy who calms the first
year [player] down a bit but I tell them it’s not going to change they’ve got to have a relationship with those [athletes].”

• “I don’t get on my young [players], it’s their teammates who are going to get on them; I get on the old guys and the old [players] get on the young guys…I tell my veterans on the team that if you’re going to scream at him and he’s going to react towards you by putting his tail between his legs, or react towards you by swearing at you and going nuts on you; and he’s a freshman…well then obviously you don’t have a great relationship with him so you probably shouldn’t be the [person] screaming at him…you should leave that to someone who actually has that relationship with [him], or you better build it.”

• “I just find that that’s the day where it all changes; I mean it’s just a situation where you got to get to, that point where they’re honest with you.”

• “Because any coach who thinks that their kids don’t think that they are wrong 80% of the time is crazy.”

• “[Sometimes] they question the technical stuff, they question the emotional stuff, but if they never say it to you then how do you get everybody on [the same] page? I think people all around, they want to feel that they are always right, but the players don’t think they’re always right.”

• “I don’t think it’s a big deal if they question you, because they typically have some logical backing as to why they are questioning. At times I’ve had guys who’ve questioned me and they’ve had logical backing and I’ve said, you know what you are right, so let’s change it.”

• “Especially with some of the most talented players, the straight on performance side, they need an emotional release sometimes with the coach.”
• “But just the listening, her able to get that out, right, and then have her come back a day later, [she said], thanks very much that just helped me so much.”
• “I try and tell myself…which is emotionally engaging the positive experience, but intellectually engage the negative experience.”

Bringing coaches and athletes together to accomplish a mission is important. “If a group is to function effectively, members must be able to be open and honest with one another about the efficiency of group functioning and/or quality of interpersonal relationships” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 84). For coaches and athletes to learn how to express themselves, both thoughts and feelings effectively about various issues that affect them directly within the team atmosphere, the conversation between coach and athlete can become emotional (Yukelson, 1997). Therefore emotions can arise, and a premium must be placed on learning how to communicate more effectively. Yukelson (1997) noted that effective communication is based on trust, honesty, mutual sharing, and mutual understanding.

Conflict resolution. Sport can play a key function in building social networks via providing a shared experience (Lea-Howarth, 2006), and within these networks, Kriesberg suggests that conflict is not preventable (2007)—in some cases (e.g., emotional state), it is encouraged. However, if conflict exists, and it is not viewed as a productive behavior, then perhaps this is where all good coaches must rely on their conflict resolution abilities. Resolution, a component in conflict management, is directed towards solving problems and immediate issues in the short-term; reconciliation is a longer-term process aimed at (re)building positive relationships (Lea-Howarth, 2006). “Relationships and the building of social networks are conceived as central to the reconciliation process” (Lea-Howarth, 2006, p. 15). A large part of
the value of any model of team culture is its ability to diagnose problems within team culture, as supported by one of the interviewed coaches:

Conflict resolution is a big part of coaching, there is no question…if there is a problem, make sure you deal with it right away, don’t wait and see what is going to happen, [you] don’t want to see if it goes away, I think for guys that’s really important.

When dealing with issues immediately within the team, one coach stated, that players “respect that and they also can handle it…I think experience though, is recognizing and having athletes appreciate there will be conflict right, there will be disagreements.” Other coach statements that provided further support for conflict resolution management were:

- “Those cracks are things that you see come up [and] that can be divisive in any way, I say when you see a crack it needs to be addressed. So, if it is a crack between you and another person, you need to be able to address it.”
- “Needing to go in more strongly and say to an individual…this has to stop; that’s where the democracy gets thrown out.”
- “Talking to them about why…instead of just nope.” When there are issues, I have to hit them head on. Like come in to my office we got to talk about this…talking through it resolves things.”
- “It’s not in your face; I mean you’re just having a conversation.”
- “Try and find out get all of the information possible; responding to he said she said can be very dangerous.”
- “Two sides to a story, there are always those things you hear about so I think it’s really important for me to take the opportunity to communicate.”
• “So there’s a research process that goes into it; is it a problem or is it just, you know a perceived problem?”

• “I’ll have an initial and individual discussion with that player; understand their perspectives first, then telling them that basically what the scenario is and this is how other people have seen the behavior...[then stating to the athlete], what are you going to do about it, you know to address it.”

• “So first acknowledgement of where they are; acknowledgment of where the team is at and then third, question how they are going to deal with it; generally we’ll give them time to deal with that on their own; we’ll ask them if they need help or support.”

• “Most of these young people don’t have very good practice in how to deal in confrontational ways with other people.”

• “I mean the way our guys lead they have to be logical because if they are not it just becomes a bully system sometimes.”

• “I think that the number one thing is I’ve learned, is that you don’t want to inflame a situation with someone who is a bit hot, a player who is disappointed, or maybe challenged something, probably the best way to diffuse it is, and I’ve used it in the past, is just say, I can tell this is really bothering you we need to talk about it, and I make an appointment with him.”

In order to solve a problem it’s important to have productive communication between the coach and athlete, provided the coach is willing to have a dialogue with the athlete (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2000). Support for this concept of problem solving was expressed through one coach suggesting:
I think the coaches that are more successful don’t blast back, because that actually…can backfire on you if the player that you are targeting is maybe a very influential person on the team, [especially] if that person feels that they are being belittled or put down in front of their peers you know…you don’t want to be getting into confrontations.

One coach thought it was important for the players, “to just sort of let them vent, and then I [usually] say, hey you have some good points [here], let’s talk about it…sometimes they just need to vent and there’s nothing wrong with [that].” It’s about being consistent in your approach believed one coach, “as long as you are consistent, with all players I’ve never really had a problem.” A single coach views practice time as an opportunity and moment in time to manage any on or off court issues:

I mean I’m not down in the team room [everyday], I [would] go down there, [and] if there are individuals I want to talk to I’ll leave a note on the whiteboard, hey I need to see you right away. But I’m usually on the court ahead of time, just to make sure if the guys have any issues that there’s an opportunity to speak about it, [as well] we stay after every practice.

However, it is possible conflict can exist over a period of time and potentially could be a positive outcome towards strengthening the relationship, as acknowledged by one coach. “If there is conflict with the relationship, [as in] ongoing conflict throughout the course of those five years, [it] could be the reason why that bond seems to be a little stronger after we’re done (graduated)”…the coach further stated:

You have the opportunity to really work together to overcome those differences and find success, [it] seems like the ones that I have [had] the most conflict with, [and] they stick it out and put up with me…and I can put up with them for five years…those one’s


[relationships] seem to be the closest after it’s all said and done…the longer a player is here, obviously you get to know them more and more but I think the relationship is a coach player but also a father son.

Conflict resolution and post-secondary team sports are common place, and even the “best laid plans can have roadblocks” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 89). Coach intervention is both critical and necessary at times “when groups are not functioning up to their potential…and at the same time generating interpersonal communication problems and conflict” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 89).

**Coach-player role and accountability.** Another area that emerged from the data in relation to a positive coach-athlete relationship was having accountability, establishing roles, and understanding them between a coach and player. Examples of this were evident in the following interview statements:

- “Are my teaching abilities compatible with theirs? Are they getting full benefit out of what they want and the program?”
- “Uniqueness...your relationship with one athlete of course...will be unique.”
- “There’s got to be repercussions, so that others can learn from the other person’s mistakes, but I mean it can’t be a personal thing; get mad but you do not disown the player.”
- “We hold everybody accountable for everything.”
- “There’s got to be some accountability, I’ll say listen, you need to do this and this, and if you do this I think this can happen.”
- “All of these things help build trust, honesty within everything right…it’s there, there to be seen, we have a one on one chart, a post [position] one on one chart, and a shooting chart. We have certain rules for all of them. They can challenge guys anytime they want.”
• “I mean, hopefully they start doing stuff for someone other than themselves.”

• “You’ve got to relate to them and I think that you get more confident obviously as a coach about what works, and I think that you can get more defined like where maybe the spectrum was a little wider ten years ago for me.”

• “I mean ultimately I’m the person that when things go bad I’m the one who is ultimately responsible and I’m the one who screwed up.”

• “To me it’s simple, coach within your personality because everything is about trust. But also realistic enough that if you’re yelling and screaming you better have great relationships with your guys.”

• “You have to work extra hard and you have to be yelling and screaming at them based on the things that they want to do not the things that you want them to do.”

• “Part of the coach athlete relationship is on the court in the heat of the moment as well, so there’s the practice coaching there’s the off court stuff that you’re doing to build the [team]…but there’s the straight on game, and learning, as well, I think you know again the coach has to be in control, emotionally there and bring in something to the equation if you want success…the coach has to be has to recognize all of these different environments and not just one.”

• “The relationship is a yearlong process and every year is a different year. It’s a challenge; you’ve got to be a student of people.”

As a coach it’s important to know and understand the fundamentals of your sport, the offence, defense, motivation, tactics, periodization, vocabulary, and communication are all significant aspects needed to coach/teach within a respective team sport environment (Gamba,
Every athlete a coach comes in contact with will be different, therefore as a coach and leader it is advised that:

[Coaches] must always consider the individual differences, age, playing level, experience, personality, emotional stability, and make-up. Know the total person and remember that the younger the athlete, the more sensitive he or she will be…be aware at what level of coaching you are expressing. (Gamba, 2005, p. 35)

One coach simply stated that “it’s not a perfect life, it’s not a perfect gig, and basketball’s not a perfect game…it’s not a perfect life everyone makes mistakes.” Based on this statement, it is important for a coach to evaluate whom he or she are coaching, have patience with each player as they discover their role, while at the same time try to connect with him/her on a level that is effective.

**One on one listening.** How you communicate with your athletes directly affects how they perceive you and how they feel about themselves. “Open channels of communication allow athletes a chance to respond to demands placed on them, so they can subsequently carry out responsibilities to the best of their capabilities” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 78). Communication can also be nonverbal, a coach’s gestures, body positions, facial expressions, and actions have the potential to be more important than what you say.

It is imperative for coaches and athletes to learn how to express themselves about various issues that affect them and the team directly, listening to others is very important, as a coach, putting yourself in the athlete’s shoes, and trying to understand where he/she is coming from (Yukelson, 1997). During the interview process one coach suggested that, “relationships between the coach and the athlete has to be a two way street so that both are benefiting from the relationship…the athlete and coach relationship has to seem valuable to both.” Another coach
sated, “relationships start, with what I think is called, open two way communication.” In addition, a coach revealed that, “it’s important, I think it’s important to get to know those athletes and get to know what makes them tick.”

Techniques to communicate with athletes has changed over time, as one coach said, “this generation of athletes, that is their first mode of communication [technology]; I think it’s created a less personal environment; that [type of] communication used to be much stronger…face to face communication has really changed.” Communication between the athlete and coach can be a distinctive challenge, therefore it’s important for the coach to go out of his/her way to attend to talking and listening to athletes in person. As one coach stated, “I find I repeat myself a lot, I find I give them the opportunity to communicate with me anytime anywhere…we spend so much time talking to them that it’s so different with each guy…more individualized attention”

Additional examples of the importance of one on one listening between coach and athlete can be seen through the following direct quotes from the interviewed coaches:

• “Spending time with them usually helps develop relationships.”
• “The more time that you spend with players, the more time that they know you and that they value the things that you’re doing.”
• “We have good meetings, one on one meetings and some of those are really tough meetings, but it seems that we get a little bit closer.”
• “For me it depends on the person, it’s a bit of a panic for me every day; there’s always someone, a couple guys that I’m panicking over that they’re going to quit; because you’ve got 16 guys and somebody’s usually struggling.”
• “Not quite heavily involved with these guys’ lives outside of practice time. Not in their lives, not so much their social life, just in basketball, obviously, and their school life, and their career.”

• “Really, it’s about listening and talking based on what they say; 12 months a year.” “For example, “I’ll just messenger a kid and just start a conversation and generally you can get a feel for their mood on things and then you can direct a conversation where you need too and then you try and listen.”

• “Listening to the athletes, they go [say] that was really good, that was great, loved that.”

With one on one listening, comes feedback, players need to be provided with feedback. Research suggests positive feedback that encourages autonomy-supportive behaviors may facilitate athletes’ intrinsic motivation (Vallerand, 1983; Vallerand & Reid, 1984; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). In order for it “to be beneficial it needs to; (1) promote perceptions of autonomy and competence, (2) target behaviors that are under the athletes’ control and (3) convey high but realistic expectations” (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003, p. 890). Autonomy-supportive behaviors relative to controlling behaviors enhance intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Feedback can be provided in a one on one situation or to the entire group, as one coach stated, “sometimes I just give our athletes [team] five or six bullet points prior to the game to give them some feedback.” Another coach reflected upon his past playing experience and said, “I know I enjoyed it a lot when I got some feedback, I think we probably don’t do it enough.” The same coach went onto suggest:
I think the one that is probably the best is to give them written feedback with some suggestions of things that they are doing well and things that they could work on; and try and get them to focus on two or three things and not overloading them with too many things to work on.

In addition to just providing feedback, one of the interviewed coaches maintains track of his feedback that he provides to his athletes, “I try and do a fair amount of feedback we do a lot of goal setting throughout the season…I do feedback even before any recruiting process…I keep charts, combination of one on one time on and off the ice.” As a coach coaching a team you are dealing with many athletes at a time, it’s important to do your best in getting feedback to all of them, as one coach stated, “I think it’s important to try and get regular daily incremental feedback to them.” In dealing with teams you have different player roles and personalities, as stated by one coach:

You just have to be cautious with whom you are dealing with…I’ve had the best players I’ve ever had here, [they] didn’t really need any feedback and if you gave them too much or you’re on them too much they shut down.

As a coach its important the players are enjoying themselves but still learning and improving, as suggested by one coach, “[players] want to have fun when they play, they go into survival mode because the abuse they’re taking is just too much they eventually just shut down and then [as a coach], [you] get rid of the person.”

As a coach it’s important to be patient, continue with the feedback on a regular basis, as one coach suggested:

There is patience, but I think that the relationship where the player has [faith] in the coach, and the coach can see something more than just what’s happening September 20th... and [come] March, this guy is going to be key for us.
Another coach believes that feedback is an important tool to go reflect back upon during competitive environments:

All that feedback and emphasis on development can be seen in competitive environments. For example, during playoffs our best player was struggling. We sat her down in the game, you can do this, we believe in you, think about what we’ve done and how you’ve prepared for this. She just kept cutting and moving and banging and getting flopped down, and she finally got a call, and finally went to the line. I don’t think she ever would’ve been able to do that without the relationship piece. She was able to kind of revert back to that, and it was calming to her.

Other feedback statements and comments from the interviewed coaches were as follows:

- “When you ask for feedback you got to be prepared for stuff that you may not want to hear as a coach, you know because you want your players to be honest and have integrity—so a one on one meeting you can find out a lot about yourself, but I think if I give you a sheet [of paper] and some specific questions, [they will] tell you.”
- “Well you know what I think the one on one meetings are really important to a team.”
- “You’ve got to be prepared you know some of them say good coaching in the moderate era is one hour before practice and one hour after practice, and it’s not specifically what you do at practice it’s bringing them in and spending some time.”

In order to synchronize and be on the same page both as a team and as a coach and athlete, the essential communication required for that coordination, it’s regarded as serious pieces of team performance (Eccles & Tenenbaum, 2004). In accordance with Yukelson (1997) “communication is directly related to group cohesion and team effectiveness, and success is highly dependent upon teamwork and having consensus on group goals and objectives (p.74).”
Yukelson (1993) recommends for improving team communication, there should be opportunities created for team member socialization, promoting member discussions, and modifying member differences. Throughout the coach interviews the following themes were identified as important to the building and maintenance within the communication dimension of the coach-athlete relationship: honesty, consistency, player-player, emotional state, conflict resolution, coach-player, and one on one listening. Together, a trend shared within this dimension amongst the coaches, was sending the right message, in the correct manner, at the most opportune time, potentially this can be an effective tool for supporting these themes of communication.

**Recruitment**

In accordance to Klenosky, Temple, and Troutman (2001), the “recruitment” dimension of the student-athlete to choose a college over other institutions is “a major life decision” (p. 95). Recruitment of a student-athlete can entail numerous schools, coaches, and athletic programs, depending on the talent level of the athlete; “the competition to recruit talented student-athletes is often fierce between universities” (Klenosky et al., 2001, p. 15). This emphasizes the importance of the student-athlete’s relationship that he/she has with his/her coach(s) during the recruitment phase. The relationship is considered to be important with regards to the actual commitment to the institution and/or decision making process (Judson, James, & Aurand, 2004). Within the interviews, it was revealed that “enlistment” and “quality identification” were discovered as significant parts and contributed to the progress of the coach-athlete relationship within the recruitment dimension. These themes appear to serve as vital components to establishing the relationship and setting the foundation for building and maintaining the relationship. Essentially, this dimension is different than the other dimensions of communication, culture, and caring which are developed and nurtured throughout the athletes’ tenure as a team member. In contrast,
recruitment appears not to be as reciprocating as the other dimensions; but nonetheless, recruitment emerged from this data as a valuable dimension for establishing the relationship.

At the post-secondary level, potentially recruitment can be a precursor to a meaningful and positive coach-athlete relationship, as well, a successful program. An issue that has raised lots of discussion and concern throughout the USA’s National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the number of incidences, as well, how often and when a coach can contact his/her recruits. Kelvin Sampson, a current coach for a professional basketball team (the NBA Houston Rockets), and ex-head coach of Indiana and Oklahoma in the NCAA, stated in a newspaper article (1998) that; “we need more than one phone call per week; it is very difficult to establish a relationship, to get to know a student-athlete and his family with only one call.” Eighteen years later the NCAA Division I Council passed a policy how coaches are able to communicate with recruits:

[With] coaches and their recruits [it’s] giving them the leeway to send unlimited text messages to prospects. It also allowed coaches to indicate approval of recruits' social media posts, meaning they're now allowed to retweet or like or share these high schoolers' tweets and Facebook posts. (Kirshner, April 15, 2016)

The first impression is a concept that can start or put an abrupt end to a relationship. Forming an impression is an active process in which the perceiver (recruit) forms or associates the information provided about a target person (coach), in an effort to develop a cognitive representation (drawing information and inferences) of him/her (Hamilton, Katz, & Leirer, 1980). It is believed for a post-secondary athletic program to be successful; recruiting is a major lifeline to the athletic program (Clarke & Batista, 2009). Not only is this dimension critical in establishing the relationship, but also it’s essential in creating a program of excellence and
tradition. In accordance with Poczwardowski, Barott, and Jowett (2006), phases in the coach-athlete relationship were identified, the pre-relationship phase (recruiting) is a relationship phase with the following stages: initial, transition, productive, concluding, after-eligibility, the post-relationship phase of two kinds: sentimental or extinct. The focus for the purpose of this section is the pre-relationship phase, being consistent with the dimension of recruiting that emerged from the data in this study. Within this recruitment dimension, two general themes of “enlistment” and “quality identification” were identified from the data in this study.

**Enlistment.** The building of relationships between post-secondary coaches and high school players and their coaches can range between days, months and even years, prior to the actual player being an official part of the program and/or team. The enlistment phase, essentially a recruitment period, is part of the foundation for shaping the team into a tightly interwoven family. An enormous investment must be made during the initial stages of establishing relationships with recruits, understanding which factors are most important to prospective student athletes when making a college choice will benefit coaches in formulating efficient, effective recruiting strategies (Lee, 2002). At the post-secondary level the coach-athlete relationship can begin, as one coach stated, “right from the recruiting process”, also, another coach suggested, “Early contact by coaches means a whole lot.” “Research has indicated that the principles of relationship marketing for colleges and universities are highly relevant and applicable to student-athlete recruitment” (Johnson, Jubenville & Goss, 2009, p. 6). Relationship marketing is a course of direction to try and entice, maintain, and at the same time enhance relationships with key constituents of a post-secondary institution (Berry, 1983; Johnson, Jubenville & Goss, 2009). Within an athletic environment this could be the coach, coaching staff, distinguished alumni, athletic director, university vice president and president, academic
advisors, and chairperson’s of the student-athlete’s desired faculty. In the case of the prospective student-athlete the overall primary purpose of relationship marketing is reducing the student’s uncertainties and enhancing the prospective student-athlete’s commitment and assurance to the program (Anderson, 2001; Johnson, Jubenville & Goss, 2009). “Student-athletes bring a unique quality to the table when it comes to college admissions. They offer a special talent that can improve the institution’s visibility and raise the level of popularity among future attendees” (Kovic, 2011). The top three most important college choice factors for entering freshmen student-athletes, both male and female were (not in any order); the opportunity to play, the coach-athlete relationship, and degree’s or programs offered at the institution (Johnson et al., 2009).

When discussing recruitment, the team atmosphere is important, one coach stated, “the players are getting a pretty good experience here…not only to be successful at school, but, to be successful outside of school…everybody’s valued [within the program]”. The overall team environment and first impression can be a deal breaker during the recruitment dimension, as one interviewed coach suggested, “[you] have to get your kids to buy into that [enlistment phase] right from the get go…the importance of the process.” Within this theme, the coach establishes early on his/her communication and caring skills, attempting to outline the team’s cultural lineage, it cannot be a broad stroke approach, where a coach recruit’s each athlete the same way, as one coach stated, “each recruit is a separate entity in itself.”

Optimistically, during the early phases of building trust, trust can be aided, as one coach said, “[by] taking a very personal approach [in the prospective student-athlete]”. Additionally, another coach states, “[it’s significant to] present realistic eventualities that connect the player to the program without over-selling or over-promising elements of the program or their [student-
athlete] potential role in the program”. Recruitment can be a sensitive phase where trust can perhaps be fractured before it is even established. An example of this is the assurance of certain levels of playing time and never delivering on this promise, which was supported by some of the findings in this study. For example, during the interviews, one coach stated:

I underrate what they are going to get in terms of minutes, in terms of playing time, I try to decrease their expectation of what they personally might get and try and sell them on the fact that the process they go through is going to be a good one.

Moreover, another coach believed, “with recruiting, I take a very personal approach, these are the things I/we have to offer, I think you’d be a good fit for these reasons and I try and be as open as possible.” Additional examples of the importance of recruitment between coach and athlete is provided through the following quotes from the interviewed coaches:

- “I always say this program is not for everybody…you know if you have a great work ethic and you have a great attitude and you want to get better and you’re willing to do that type of stuff than this is a great program for you.”
- “Try to be as honest as I can and I don’t promise the world, I don’t recruit athletes using information about other programs, which is often a process some coaches go into.”
- “Parents [are important] in each of the relationships of the athletes I have or/are involved with in different degrees too.”
- “I think that’s made a big difference [early contact] in the relationships, so the relationships I think are a little bit more personal before they even get here.”

Recruitment of the elite student-athlete can create winning programs, one coach stated, “success breeds success…I think that success has helped me try to build upon success…[and] it certainly builds huge recruiting relationships [as well].” Additionally, one interviewed coach
stated, “parents and kids come to you knowing that you’ve been successful [assuming] you must know what you’re doing.” Poczwardowski, Barrot, and Peregoy, (2002) defined the coach-athlete relationship as a recurring pattern of mutual care. One of the phases outlined was a post-relational and/or caring aspect phase. In support of this phase, one coach made the statement emphasizing the importance of alumni, stating:

What has really helped in terms of new players coming to us, is all of our alumni that are out there in the community teaching and [coaching]…without them, without phone calls, without emails, without information being passed on back to me…that just tells me that they’ve enjoyed [their time here].

Further examples of the importance of recruitment and having a successful program is provided through the following quotes from the interviewed coaches:

- “We were in the national finals 8 years in a row...people look at that and go oh well there must be something good going on at the University…[people start to think] hey, there’s success there, there is a large number of athletes from that program going onto the national team program.”

- “It causes someone to say, I want to hear what this guy has to say, or I want to have the chance to meet with this guy or work with this guy because he’s done these things.”

Recruiting the best student-athletes is a challenge, not only one on one but also versus other institutions. Past successes, personality, tradition, degree offerings, team atmosphere are all-important to prospective student-athletes when deciding on a post-secondary school to attend. However, as suggested by one coach, “even with all of those things the relationship and the ability to communicate with the individual still needs to be there; because those things alone aren’t going to bring people [prospective student-athletes] in.”
Quality identification. It is within this theme where a coach has the ability to identify who he/she wants to be a part of the team. This theme underlies the recruitment process and interconnects both talent identification and the quality player. Initially, talent immediately draws a coach’s attention to that potential athlete; however, talent can be quickly overlooked if the player’s principles are not harmonious with that of the prospective team’s. Longer term, this arguably can be detrimental to overall trust and team culture. The identification of talent is a process; it is more complex in team games than in individual sports (Reilly, Williams, Neville & Franks, 2000). Talent identification is the process of analysis and is fundamental to the preparation of recognizing current participants with the potential to elite athletes (Vaeyens, Lenoir, Williams, & Philippaerts, 2008). Literature supports that successful teams that consist of group members who possessed complementary skills, were committed to shared values and common purposes, and were able to work in unison to translate these shared purposes into achievable performance goals (Zander, 1982; Yukelson, 1997). Selecting the player of “best fit” to the program ideally encompasses above average ability and quality team players; as stated by one coach, “finding the right guys…[and] recruiting guys who I think are good players and who seem like decent people.” Having talented and skillful players is important, as outlined by one coach, “in order to be successful you need the horses, so the first relationship I think is talent identification.” In support of this, another coach suggested, “[the] key to a successful university program, is only one thing...recruiting.” Getting the very best athletes available is important, however there may be some challenges, as suggested by one coach; “[athletes] come in, then you have to deal with them, and sometimes there are a few egos in there…but without the elite kid, doesn’t matter what you do from a coaching point of view…you need enough talent.” Obviously athlete development is important and the responsibility of the coach, as one suggested, “you can
certainly develop players and I’ve developed lots of players over 5 years.” However the same coach stated, “but they [less talented athletes] are not to the level of winning national championships.” Talented athletes are essential, even the most capable tactician or motivator will be rendered unproductive as a coach if they don’t have enough talented players available to them (Dailing, 2002). However; one coach suggested, “[its important to] be careful, [and] don’t fall in love with talent; [its] sort of like ethical blurring, you’re not breaking a rule…but you may be allowing certain aspects of team culture to slip and your rationalizing it.” It’s important to get to know the student-athlete in question as mentioned by one coach, “I try to visit or get to know every player, and if I can...meet their parents and get a feel of how they’ve been brought up and what kind of character and what kind of attitude they have.” Having effective interpersonal recruiting strategies and guidelines for a coach in place is a critical pathway for coaches to follow while trying to identify the overall quality of the prospective student-athlete (Short & Short, 2005).

While identifying and recruiting athletes can be a process, it’s important to honest with the recruits as well, not only for them, but also for the coach, athletes, and program. As outlined by one coach, suggesting:

We don’t sugarcoat it because there’s no point sugar coating it…when we bring recruits in it’s not a happy, it’s not a fun weekend…I mean we’ve had kids after the first day not say a word; like we’ve had probably four or five kids who just wanted out. They’re good kids, we wouldn’t have had them in (for a visit) if they weren’t good kids, and we wouldn’t have had them in if they weren’t good talents, but they wanted no part of it. For whatever reasons, some just because they didn’t want to work that hard and some because
they didn’t want to get called out if they weren’t doing things they had to do…or they
didn’t want to wait that long to be the main guy.

Recruiting isn’t an exact science; coaches will experience student-athletes that just don’t
work out, even after a year or two of playing within the program. This is reflected in one of
coach’s statements, “With failures, I’ve done a bad job recruiting, I thought a kid was a certain
type of kid and he wasn’t, but also things have gotten out of control.” “Ultimately I’m the person
that when things go bad, I’m the one who is responsible [the coach], and I’m the one who
screwed up.” Quality identification through recruitment is important to what was discovered
within this study, due to its direct link into the team culture and trust dimensions. For example,
although winning and success is important in building a program, you also require a strong
balance within your program, as outlined by one of the interviewed coaches:

You don’t always need the best players, I try and find the best people…[with what I
believe] they can evolve into great players…as they go through our program…the culture
is more important…then results; and then the results are basically a byproduct.

“Recruiting student-athletes is a time and labour intensive process” (Magnusen, Kim, &
Perrewe, 2014, p. 1291), but is required in order to achieve athletic success and manage the
added pressures to achieve in team sport amongst post-secondary institutions. Recruiting
competition for the best athletes with the highest potential and skill level to perform continues to
increase alongside the challenges of winning. A sustainable and effective recruitment strategy is
needed to ensure the recruitment and identification of the highest calibre athletes, as well,
athletes that will be good students and ambassadors of the school and athletic program.

According to Magnusen et al. (2014, p. 1301), “efforts by sport scientists to better understand the
relationship between recruiter [coach] characteristics and student-athlete college decisions are
lacking in the sport and higher education literatures”. Magnusen et al. (2014) explained that the student-athlete across various sports have identified “the head coach above all, as one of the most important factors influencing” (p. 1292) a student-athlete’s decision to commit to that particular school. However, “little is known about whether a relationship exists between recruiter [coach] characteristics and the actual commitment decisions of student-athletes” (Magnusen et al. 2014, p. 1301). Successful coaches that can achieve recruitment success on a continuous basis are thought to, “be better able to recognize and efficaciously navigate numerous interpersonal relationships…to achieve recruiting success” (Magnusen et al. 2014, p. 1304).

**Trust**

Throughout the coach interviews various dimensions and their respective themes were revealed, one important factor that kept surfacing was the development of trust, and how significant it was for the functioning of the coach-athlete relationship. Within sport teams, the quality of the coach–athlete relationship includes mutual trust and respect, commitment, and cooperation (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Trust involves simultaneously individual processes, group dynamics and organizational contingencies (Rousseau, Stikin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Research has generally shown that effective communication requires the development of trust and respect between coach and athlete (Yukelson, 1984). Defining trust to one single definition is challenging. Although not entirely agreed upon, various definitions throughout literature do support common elements that comprise trust. The willingness to be vulnerable from Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), is one of the most cited definitions of trust. Others are included in Mayer et al.’s definition, such as risk taking behavior, the willingness to engage such behavior (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), and the expectation or belief that others will act in a way that is beneficial or at least not detrimental for the relationship (Gambetta, 2000). However, for
purposes of this study, the definition outlined by Costa, Roe, and Taillieu (2001) seems to be of best fit, due to trust being a multi-faceted construct and is believed to vary with tasks, situations, and people (Hardy & Magrath, 1989). This definition is applicable to working relationships in team contexts (Costa et al., 2001), such as the coach-athlete relationship.

Trust is a psychological state that manifests itself in the behaviors towards others, is based on the expectations made upon behaviors of these others, and on the perceived motives and intentions in situations entailing risk for the relationship with those others. (Costa et al. 2001, p. 228)

Interestingly, trust is one of the most discussed topics in organizational sciences within the past decade (Costa et al., 2001). Within the functioning of organizations, trust is viewed as one of the critical elements (Costa et al., 2001). If trust is absent, no one will risk moving first and all parts will sacrifice the gains from collaboration and cooperation in increasing effectiveness (Costa et al., 2001; Sabel, 1993). The interviews outlined that trust within team sports, and how it relates with overall performance output, is important. All 10 coaches mentioned the term trust at some point in time during the interview process. It is important because an athlete’s trust in his/her coach is a psychological state, in reference to emotional bonds between athlete and coach “emphasizing empathy, affiliation, and rapport on the basis of shared regard for one another” (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011, p. 864). One of the interviewed coaches suggested, “I [believe] that the trust between two people needs to be there to have any relationship strive.” Arguably, trust is a critical component within each dimension of the coach-athlete relationship, and the coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART model) revealed throughout the coach interviews, demonstrates that trust impacts each dimension. For example, if one dimension is breaking down, the potential for a negative effect on trust may likely occur, as
one coach suggested, that “[the trust factor] is probably the biggest foundation within [the relationship]. Lack of trust between the coach and athlete can deteriorate the relationship fabric, it’s important for coaches to continue to work on relationships, communicate, demonstrate care, be respectful, establish a strong team culture, develop consistency, and follow through on their word consistently (Lynch, 2001). Aforementioned, trust is important to a team, one coach stated in the interview:

If you don’t have the relationship [as a coach with the players], and the kids don’t have the relationship with their teammates [player-player]…where they trust each other; [as in] truly trust each other, I’m not saying like, I am saying trust, [it is going to be difficult].

The same coach went onto state that it is not all about liking each other, but rather trusting; “some of our guys do not like each other, and I can guarantee you a lot of our guys do not like me; but we trust each other.” The coach further added that you can never breach that trust, “in order for kids to trust you, you have to be honest with them every day…you’ve got to stay within your personality…you can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever.”

Closeness, in accordance with Jowett and Clark-Carter (2006), is synonymous with trust and is reflected in both coaches’ and athletes’ expressions of interpersonal liking, trust, and respect. In 2003, Jowett and Cockerill examined the interpersonal relationships of 12 Olympic medalists and discovered that these former athletes viewed their coach as a close friend, or as a father or mother figure. The affective bond was further evidenced through expressions of trust (i.e., “I trusted his/her judgment”). Trust is an important aspect that is influential to the coach-athlete relationship, and as one of the coaches suggested, “[it is] probably the biggest foundation, the trust factor…I think one thing that I try and do here is build up the trust.”
The essence of trust within the coach-athlete relationship is complex, sensitive, takes time to develop, and varies from athlete to coach in each relationship dyad. The coach interviews revealed, that trust appears to be a multi-faceted component present in all dimensions within the R-CART: recruitment, communication, caring, and culture within the development of the coach-athlete relationship. Further research is required, but potentially, trust could serve as the underpinning concept that requires constant consideration and mindfulness within the R-CART dimensions, and would therefore require continuous attentiveness.

**Discussion**

Numerous empirical frameworks reflect the comprehensive knowledge collected surrounding the coach-athlete relationship over the previous 15 years. However, the 3+1Cs conceptual model, the coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) is a framework that has received substantial empirical support, offering a comprehensive analysis of what goes on between the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2001; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Olympiou, et al., 2008). The model is comprised of three original interconnected constructs and a fourth added subsequently in research: closeness (emotions), commitment (thoughts), and complementarity (behaviors) (see Jowett, 2005, 2006, 2007). The fourth construct within this model is characterized co-orientation, capturing how those athlete’s and coach in the relationship perceive the first three constructs (Jowett, 2007).

The reciprocating coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART) proposed in this study, and Jowett’s 3+1C’s Model (CART-Q), share similarities. Both are a multidimensional situational construct encompassing the coach-athlete relationship, providing interconnections that link to the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. The five dimensions portrayed in the R-CART entwine Jowett’s 3+1C’s. For example; the closeness component within Jowett’s
model describes the emotional tone of the relationship and reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete are connected and depth of their emotional attachment, expressions such as like, trust, respect, appreciation are included (Jowett, 2005). These qualities of closeness can be found within the caring (e.g., let’s make it personal); communication (e.g., Honesty); culture (e.g., Method to madness); recruitment (e.g., enlistment); and trust dimensions of the R-CART. The qualities of Jowett and colleagues closeness are reflected within all 5 dimensions discovered within this study. It’s possible that both models combine interconnecting characteristics that lead to interpersonal (e.g., satisfaction with relationship, stability, harmony), intrapersonal (e.g., motivation, performance, self-concept), and group outcomes (e.g., team cohesion, role clarity, social acceptance) (Jowett, Poczwardowski, & Lavallee, 2007). The CART-Q and R-CART could work synonymously with each other, the CART-Q evaluates the behaviors and the overall quality of the coach-athlete relationship and the R-CART provides direction to the coach on how to develop, maintain, and repair the relationship.

Jowett and colleague’s work is an innovation in the area of coach-athlete relationships, helping to explain how coaches and athletes are capable to perceive their relationship from two different perceptual perspectives, both of which can define the quality and, in turn, the functions of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2006). Jowett and colleagues CART-Q framework encompasses tools that include direct-perspectives (how one feels about the other), meta-perspectives (how one feels the other perceives them), and the maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship.

The R-CART proposed in this study is a descriptive, reminiscent piece; a visual tool, derived from open-ended interview questions through a phenomenological process. It outlines how relationships are built, provided by coaches, whom of which have vast experience,
knowledge, and have been in the trenches (elite coaching), and highly regarded as successful university team sport coaches of Canada. The R-CART provides an overview of key dimensions and themes (constructs) that the coaches in this study identified as elements impacting effective and successful coach-athlete relationships. This model does not measure nor evaluate the concept of the dyad, but rather provides descriptions of the key dimensions and constructs impacting the dyad. Although not used as a foundation to the development of the R-CART, potentially, this model may well support the base and design of further developmental initiatives within the CART-Q assessment tool. Pertaining to, if a coach applied and implemented the R-CART as a practical guide within his/her relationship development/maintenance strategies, it is conceivable that the tool could improve the coach-athlete relationship. Naturally, this could be discovered through evaluative measures such as direct and meta-perspectives of the CART-Q. Suggesting the direct perspective, in reference to how coaches and athletes themselves view the relationship (i.e., I trust my coach/athlete), and the meta-perspective signifying how coaches and athletes think their partners view the relationship (i.e., my coach/athlete trusts me) (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Hypothetically, if a coach used the R-CART as a reference tool towards his/her athlete’s relationship development, perception surrounding the importance of the trust dimension may transpire. If trust was a focal point and effort existed to build this dimension, then potentially, a meta-perceptive assessment (i.e., my coach/athlete trusts me) could materialize, indicating a meta-closeness category reflecting an individuals’ affective interdependence measuring expressions of mutual liking, trust, and respect (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Therefore indicating an assessment from either an athlete’s (or coach’s) judgment of how the other thinks of the relationship in terms of the 3C’s (Olympiou, et al., 2008).
An area of future research that may shed more detail on the dyad would be to examine a more intricate view towards the importance, growth, and continuance of trust within the coach-athlete relationship. In accordance with Jowett and Meek (2000), it would be intriguing to explore the connection on player confidence and the effects of the trust dimension within the coach-athlete relationship, and is this confidence reflected in the overall player performance within the competition and practice scenarios. Within the R-CART it would interesting to determine if trust was breached within one of the dimensions, what the procedures would be to mend such an issue, and whether or not trust is effected anywhere else within the R-CART. Perhaps suggesting an additional question, is trust one dimension or its very own entity, or is trust a sub-dimension within each of the other dimensions of the model? Or in contrast, is the ability to trust an overarching macro-dimension that impacts everything within the coach-athlete relationship? For example, can a coach-athlete relationship’s caring dimension operate at an optimal level without or encompassing a minimal trust component? If trust is lost in one dimension, is trust lost everywhere? If this is the case, is trust the be-all and end-all of a successful coach-athlete relationship? If trust is lost, can it be fixed? What is the relationship between trust, time, and performance? Relationship marketing literature (Gummesson, 2002) suggests that the longer the relationship with a customer, the higher the profit will be. Is this finding relevant to coaches whom work with athletes over longer periods of time (e.g., five year university career)? Reichheld (1996) claims that high turnover of employees can deny an organization of human intellectual capital, including internal relationships. Theoretically, this notion can be pragmatic to team sport, therefore, a coach, experiencing high athlete turnover each year or every other year, possibly will discover his/her relationship with athletes may be relatively superficial. It would be interesting to discover whether or not trust can be salvaged
easier, or if at all, if the coach-athlete was a longer term affiliation in comparison to a shorter term coach-athlete relationship and vice versa.

The recruitment dimension discovered within this study is of interest and would be noteworthy to determine just how much recruitment shapes the development and further maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. Exactly what draws Canadian student-athletes to the institutions of choice and whether or not the anticipated relationship with his/her future coach played a significant role? More interpersonal research is needed through diversifying approaches such as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. This would be valuable given the humanistic and social complexities when discussing human relationships. Differing genders of coaches, athletes, and team sports specifically need to be compared and contrasted in more detail. Do differences exist in the implications of recruitment (or any other R-CART dimension) when the following matrix of coach gender ‘x’ athlete gender ‘x’ short and/or long term engagement is considered for team sports? For example, a male coach leading a team of female athletes in a team sport for a short season may experience differing R-CART impacts on the dyad than a female coach leading a team of female athletes over multiple seasons. Although the R-CART model proposed in this study is representative of both post-secondary athletes and coaches, differentiating between the timing and delivery of the dimensions may vary or become prioritized if further factors are considered, such as the communication and recruitment dimension. For example, perhaps the athlete A and coach were able to connect on a deeper personal level during the recruitment phase, whereas athlete B was more closed and shy during this phase, limiting the level of relationship maturity. During the preseason it would be productive for coach and athlete B to spend time connecting and communicating, working
diligently to improve whereas athlete A and coach would be maintaining the developed relationship. 

It’s highly likely certain dimensions of the R-CART may be more critical at different times throughout the season over other dimensions, and therefore further research is warranted so to gain a better understanding of the intricate and complex nature of the dyad. Further, research contrasting short and long term relationships or seasonal and/or yearly programs performance levels (college team vs. national) would be of value to view perhaps different dimensions and quite possibly placing more emphasis and prominence on one dimension over the others. If variances are discovered, then this could provide a platform for generating very valuable and practical information relative to how coach’s coach and the emphasis placed on the quality of coaching relationships within teams of seasonal or more permanent nature (Hampson & Jowett, 2014). Further and varied sampling would continue to place emphasis on various individual and team sports as well as performance levels such as national, high school, and club, and how the R-CART dimensions vary within each context. A study that mirrors this current study by addressing the coach-athlete relationship through phenomenological processes and views of successful student-athletes under the guidance of their coach would be beneficial, and would provide further insight into understanding the dyad from both perspectives. 

An effective coach-athlete relationship is an important component to any Canadian post-secondary team sport environment, underestimating the dyad within team sports could potentially cause adversity within the team, athlete’s psychological state, performance levels, enjoyment, and team culture. It within the climate of the program those veteran players and their respective coach-athlete relationships could potentially have an impact of the overall culture and team. Vincer and Loughead (2010) insinuated that coach and athlete leader behaviors, and the
relationship between athlete contentment, leadership, and the coach has its insufficiencies in research. Future research would of interest collecting veteran team leaders experiences in building their relationships with the coach over a period of time. Outlining challenges, anecdotes, and successes throughout their career. With thoughts on the influence and roles the veteran leaders also assume within their position of effectual teachings, and relationship progressions within freshman athletes.

This study revealed through 10 interviewed elite university coaches that the coach-athlete relationship is of great importance suggesting a high ranking within team sport success, as stated by one coach, “I think that it [coach-athlete relationship] is the be all end all.” In addition, another coach further supported the importance of the relationship and said, “I feel that relationships are adamant.” Another coach took it even further and made the following statement; “the player role is number two, to player-player relationships...and then the coach-athlete relationship is next, because you can’t do any of the other stuff without those things.” This statement suggests, team tactics, execution, and passion, winning, belief in the team vision, and journey would be greatly challenged if the relationship is deficient or missing.

The coach-athlete relationship as proposed in the R-CART model (see Figure 2 Appendix M) can be viewed as a reciprocating process that demands a lot of work and constant attention throughout various times of the in-, pre- and off-season(s). Consistent with this, previous research has demonstrated that shared trust, respect, and communication are found to be essential interpersonal factors that contribute to healthy and successful relationships (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Wylleman, 2000). In terms of work and attention to the coach-athlete relationship, one could use the analogy of juggling balloons, with the aim of never allowing one (a dimension) to touch the ground and potentially burst, while continually going back and forth touching on each
dimension just enough to satisfy the flight of the balloon. For example, the dimension of culture, within the proposed R-CART, entails five themes, method to madness representing one of the themes. Hypothetically, this balloon could risk rupture if the coach fails to provide a visual path, and a constant and communicated outlook of the team, all while trying to help the players make sense of a variety of factors impacting the team that may appear random or even contradictory at times. This could simply be through a drill in the practice setting, outlining the purpose for it, and where it fits in the bigger scheme of things, and why they are targeting it now when the impact from the drill may not come into effect until a later time. It is important that the coach understands that the coach-athlete relationship requires constant attention and interaction. The connection is unique to each individual player and the timing and relevancy of each dimension and theme’s within the R-CART will fluctuate and may be more or less essential to varied individualized dyadic relationships.

The goal of this study was to obtain insight surrounding the coach-athlete relationship at the highest level of sport in Canada outside of the professional leagues; this league is Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). This study encompasses both male and female team sport coaches focusing on the various (10) head coach perspectives and expanding on a more comprehensive and broader understanding of the coach-athlete relationship. Within this study, major dimensions of the coach-athlete relationship were revealed through a methodological approach that described and revealed phenomena, generating dimensions and themes by means of coding the transcribed interviews of head coaches and their experiences (Giorgi, 1997). This qualitative data analysis revealed five major dimensions of culture; caring, communication, recruitment, and trust were serving as the foundation to the overall establishment, development, and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. According to Jowett (2005), “the coach-athlete relationship is
recognized as the foundation of coaching and a major force in promoting the athlete’s physical and psychosocial skills” (p. 412). Thus, the findings in this study examining the coach-athlete relationship identified essential dimensions that are proposed to encompass meaningful themes of what drives the relationship dyad between coach and athlete towards an ideal relationship in differing post-secondary sports.

A logical progression is to strive towards continual refinement and developing trustworthiness of the model (to develop as a useful coaching tool), which was discovered through a phenomenological design. The next study in this paper will include a questionnaire/survey design administered to various varsity coaches in Canada of student-athletes, which examines the discovered themes (R-CART; aforementioned in this paper). This is a significant step to provide endorsement to the model (R-CART), by reflecting on the relationship between the dimensions and themes discovered within the study. Following refinement and establishing this model as a trustworthy tool, we can then proceed to implementing the model for coach purpose and practice. The model will be applied and/or used in the coach-athlete environment; this is necessary to further evaluate the coach-athlete relationship. Two university teams and their respective coach-athlete relationships will be discussed, reviewed, and evaluated. This study will include an intervention component providing feedback and implementing the coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART) for coaches while evaluating the relationship using Jowett and colleagues (2000, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011) coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q). Results of the student-athletes evaluation of their coach-athlete relationship will lead to a collection of data. Each student-athlete evaluation will shape the compilation of data and intervention strategies within the coach interview, outlining steps to create and enable further coach-athlete relationship development.
Chapter 4
Examining the Usefulness of the Coach-athlete Relationship Tool (R-CART)

In a Post-secondary Team Sport Environment

Conceivably, “the most important encounter [in sport] may be the one between the athlete and their coach” (Ayer, 2015, p. 28). Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, and Carbonneau (2011) suggest that there has been a surge of research in this area and this “may be due to the recognition that the coach-athlete relationship is a crucial antecedent of athletes’ optimal functioning” (p.144). Numerous authors suggest that an effective coach-athlete relationship is necessary for a successful outcome (Jowett, 2007; Lafrenière, et, al. 2011; Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997) and it is likely that the key to a successful coach-athlete relationship is the development of human relationships by the coaches (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Philippe et al., 2011), such as interpersonal dynamics between the coach and athlete (Jowett, 2005). This relationship is dynamic, unique, and complex, it can vary in both depth and quality, and simultaneously influences and is influenced by a number of variables and contexts (Ayer, 2015; Allen & Eby, 2012; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). Broadly the coach-athlete relationship is defined as a situation in which two individual’s (coach and athlete) feelings, thoughts, and behaviours are mutually and causally interdependent (Jowett & Meek, 2000). Research has shown that the athletes’ perceptions of their coaches’ behaviours have an impact on academics, performance, actions, leadership, morals, and beliefs (Horn, Bloom, Berglund, & Packard, 2011; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003); plausibly, athletes can be manipulated by the coach-athlete relationship (Felton & Jowett, 2013; Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, & Jowett, 2011).

Despite the importance of establishing mutual respect and rapport amongst athletes and coaches, a sense of ambiguity still exists in relation to the most suitable type of
interpersonal relationships in team sport settings. If a coach does not interact positively with the team, the effectiveness of instruction and athlete application to training may be undermined. (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012, p. 63)

The more that athletes held positive and favourable perceptions of their relationships with coaches, the greater was their satisfaction in terms of basic psychological needs being met (e.g., competence, autonomy, and relatedness) (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda 2008). Reimer and Chelladurai (1998) suggested that the coach-athlete relationship is very important because an athlete that is satisfied interpersonally is a noteworthy criterion for athletes to perform at the highest levels; a major influence behind this is desirable interdependent coach-athlete behaviours. For example, adopting practices that focus on training and development, sharing of information, and encouraging teamwork (Rezania & Gurney, 2014).

The current research project was prompted by a previous study (see chapter 3), *The Binding Force: a Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport*. In this previous study a tool that demonstrates the reciprocal relationships between the themes and dimensions of the coach-athlete relationship was uncovered through existential phenomenology (R-CART; coach-athlete relationship tool). Secrest (2007), describes existentialism as a “philosophy concerned with questions of human existence, and phenomenology with the methods needed to study existence”(p. 5). The coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART) depicted an overall representation establishing the coach-athlete relationship (Figure 2 Appendix M).

As with any study of dyadic relations the coach-athlete relationship research is complex (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). The breadth of the relationship is continually being
documented as a far-reaching and highly valued component to successful athlete’s and teams; the
majority of significant research has occurred since the new millennium. “This unique two-person
relationship has been viewed as an important medium (Jowett, 2005) for performance
accomplishments (Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002) and psychological well-being (Mageau
relationship is reflected within such areas of team cohesion and coach leadership (Jowett &
Chaundy, 2004), passion for sport (Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011), coach-
created motivational climate (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008), conflict and support (Jowett,
2009), empathic accuracy (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), attachment styles (Davis & Jowett, 2010),
achievement motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010), sport satisfaction (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011;
Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), relationship satisfaction (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), physical self-
concept (Jowett, 2008), and collective efficacy (Jowett, Shanmugam, & Caccoulis, 2012). In
accordance with Yang and Jowett (2013), the aforementioned studies suggest, “evidence of the
networks of social psychological constructs that link to the coach-athlete relationship” (p.831).
To date the majority of research conducted on coaching behaviours has focused on documenting
and analyzing perceived and observable coaching behaviours (what they do), such as factors
affecting athlete needs satisfaction and psychological well-being (Felton & Jowett, 2013). A
prominent researcher in evaluating the overall quality of the coach-athlete relationship is the
work of Jowett and colleagues (Jowett, 2009; Jowett, S. 2008; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006;
Jowett, S., & Nezlek, J. 2011; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). The CART-Q is a model that jointly
connects coaches’ and athletes’ interpersonal feelings, thoughts, and behaviours, and has been
developed to assess the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Clark-
According to this model, the coach–athlete relationship is viewed as a situational context that is characterized by a coach’s and an athlete’s closeness (i.e., emotional connection reflected in trust, like, care, respect), commitment (i.e., motivation to maintain a close-tied relationship over time), and complementarity (i.e., collaboration reflected in interactions that are responsive, relaxed, and friendly). (Davis, Jowett, Lafreniere, 2013, p. 156)

Following player feedback (collection of CART-Q), a total of three interventions and interviews with coach using the R-CART and reflecting back to the CART-Q results was the critical path of action during the full competitive year. Additionally, much less attention has been given to the reasoning behind (the why) of effective coach behaviours (Cushion, 2010), and its attention on the effects of the coach–athlete relationship independently and together with coach behaviours (Felton & Jowett, 2013). “More research that extends conceptual, operational, and measurement issues would add to the evidence-base and further support the central role coach-athlete relationships play within the sport-coaching context” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 831).

Social psychology of sport literature suggests that athletes concern themselves as feeling positively connected with their coaches as an important requisite for their competitive success (Gould, Damarjian, & Medbery, 1999; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). For many athletes, their identity and sense of self is seen through their involvement within sport (Lally, 2007). Therefore, coaches must be attentive in their coach–athlete relationships and respect the effect they can have on the personal development of players. It has materialized that for coaches to be successful, they must be able to connect with their players as people on and off the competitive field of play, and not simply as athletes. According to Lorimer (2013), it is
important for a coach to accurately evaluate and connect with the athlete by being in tune with verbal and non-verbal cues.

Earlier literature demonstrates that methodology used to study the coach–athlete relationships have primarily omitted affective components within coach–athlete relationships. As supported by Jowett and Chaundy (2004), stating, “[until recent years] research has largely focused on relationships between coach leadership and team cohesion without considering the contribution of relationships formed between coaches and their athletes” (p. 308). Historically coach-athlete relationships have taken a variety of approaches, assessment of coaching behaviour has been wide with the dominant method being systematic observation or questionnaire administration with a recent increase in the application of multi-method studies and qualitative methods.

Within the atmosphere of sport, coaches and athletes are entangled in an interpersonal relationship. The way the athlete interacts with those significant others (coach-athlete; athlete-athlete) may potentially influence their performance as well as their psychological well-being (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). “In the sporting environment, coaches are instrumental in creating a social environment that has the capacity to influence the physical growth and development as well as the psychological and subjective wellbeing of their athletes” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 130) Therefore, researchers have noted that sport is a mature social environment in which to explore the nature of interpersonal relationships, because it involves frequent and varied opportunities for social interactions, especially between the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2007). To date, the current existing literatures in this domain have investigated athlete-athlete relationships (e.g., Smith, 2003, 2007), parent-athlete relationships (e.g., Chan, Lonsdale, & Fung, 2012; Harwood & Knight, 2009; Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005), and the coach-athlete
relationship (Becker, 2009; Jowett, 2007).

According to Olson (2014), “if coaches are to be successful, it is imperative that they acquire knowledge as to what types of coach behaviour(s) are most effective for motivating and connecting with their athletes” (p.8). Lack of scholarly research has reinforced the need for further research into the influence and developmental processes coaches have with their athletes. As Olson further suggests, “the behaviours associated with being a good mentor are not specifically defined” (2014, p.8). The current study’s aim is to further develop the tool and evaluate its overall fundamentals and effectiveness in a real world context. The study continues the investigation towards increased trustworthiness via coach application and implementation of the R-CART alongside student-athlete feedback regarding their respective relationship with coach. This strategy would act as a practical guide within his/her relationship development/maintenance strategies among athletes, and conceivably demonstrate improvement within the coach-athlete dyad. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide a coach with a user-friendly educational model and thematic summary of what was determined within the previous phenomenological study (The Binding Force: a Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport). The coach would then incorporate the R-CART within his/her personal coaching schedule and implement and be mindful of the tool. The present qualitative study is aimed to address abovementioned gaps in literature and help nurture further knowledge acquisition discovering the reasons for and how-to behaviours within the coach-athlete relationship dynamics of development, maintenance, and repair.

**Research Design and Purpose**

Due to limited research on understanding the development, maintenance and repair
involved within the coach-athlete relationship it was determined that a qualitative longitudinal multiple case study design was needed. In accordance with Creswell (2009), qualitative research enables researchers to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups attach to social phenomena. This is important due to the athletic relationship reflecting both the coaches and athletes’ affective, cognitive, and behavioural interdependence (Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett & Meek, 2000). Research employed a multiple case study approach to facilitate exploration of the coach-athlete dyad using various data sources. Emphasis was on the exploration of realities from the participating post-secondary coaches and student-athletes. Research duration was over the full post-secondary athletic year, September to March; which included pre-season, competitive season, exam break, and playoff season. The qualitative methods used in data collection questioned student-athletes from two different post-secondary team sports about the quality and behaviours of their coach-athlete relationship. Based on the athlete feedback their head coaches were interviewed discussing the overall relationship, coach-athlete behaviours, in-person feedback, coach intervention, questionnaire distribution, text coding, R-CART application, interview transcriptions, and involvement with the tool prior to the next evaluative session. Encouraging individuals to provide in-depth information that on a personal level would capture subjective meaning in related coach-athlete situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This ensured that the coach-athlete relationship was not explored through a single lens, but rather a variety of lenses (both student-athletes and coaches), which allowed multiple facets of the relationship to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The central focus of research within this case study was to provide a potential avenue of trustworthiness and further insight to the R-CART and continued advancement within coaching practice and science. As Yin (2003) stated, “you would use the case study method because you
deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (p. 13).

**Philosophical Approach: Social Constructionism**

Epistemology refers to the philosophical beliefs about what can be known and how knowledge may be acquired (Hatch, 2002). Social constructionism best describes the overall epistemological position that guided this research study. It takes the epistemological view that social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus, and view knowledge as constructed as opposed to discovered (Andrews, 2012; Young & Colin, 2004) and “generally put, social constructionism contends that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together. It is less interested, or not at all interested, in the cognitive processes that accompany knowledge” (Young & Colin, 2004, p. 376). Within this study, a social constructionism approach engaged student-athletes and coaches in connecting their experiences on and off the court, in a relational setting to their real and sporting lives to enhance and provide feedback of their overall coach-athlete relationship. According to Andrews (2012) its important that reality is socially defined within a social constructionist view “but this reality refers to the subjective experience of every day life, how the world is understood rather than to the objective reality of the natural world” (Andrews, 2012, para. 6). In complete contrast, a positivism (objectivist) view is unacceptable when approaching a social science phenomenon like the coach-athlete relationship involving human beings and real-life experiences. Treating the coach and athlete(s) as independent non-reflective objects, “ignores their ability to reflect on problem situations, and act on these [in an interdependent way]” (Robson, 1993, p. 60).

**Rich Description and Clarification of Bias**

Providing detailed descriptions of the results adds to the trustworthiness of the study
(Creswell, 2009). A significant effort was made to provide an understanding of the coaches’ perspectives, both shared and distinctive. The results are reported as they relate to the research questions and tie into the current coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART), emerging themes are noted that added new depth and understanding to the questions asked. For example, when coaches discussed the effect a socially disruptive player would have on the performance of men’s and women’s teams, important variables emerged that would mediate the overall impact. These variables might include performance success of the team, the individual ability of the players involved, whether or not the players received special treatment, athletic trust, and the competitiveness of individual players on the team.

The current study did not have quantitative statistical procedures to produce numerical correlations and establish statistical significance nor would it be appropriate given the approach taken. However, results are reported by the degree to which coaches agreed or disagreed, and detailed descriptions of coaches’ position are provided. Additionally, when reviewing and reporting the data it was made sure that both coaches as much as possible were well represented, and the results were not determined and reported through only a single coach interviewed.

From a social constructionist researcher’s point of view, it’s important to note the interviews represented a semi-structured conversation with open-ended questioning (Jennings, 2005) (see Table 11 Appendix N). As a participant in this process, and recognizing that as a possibility, inadvertently influencing the coaches’ perceptions and opinions or somehow inhibiting them from speaking openly and freely was conceivable. Acknowledging these possibilities, it is understood the account of the coaches’ perceptions and experiences reflect a truthful, real, and candid disclosure of the distinctive thoughts and ideas shared at the time of the interviews.
A neutral stance was vital in collecting data, important to note, no specific agenda upon
the start of the study existed and support that the findings are an authentic rendering of the data.
Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings are determined by the subjects and not the
biases, motivations, or interests of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); all data collection was
recorded and transcribed verbatim. Having experience as a coach and researcher from previous
studies led to the understanding of unique roles, involvements, and perspectives of the coaches
interviewed. It was important to try not to allow previous comprehension and understanding to
create bias among data coding, this was significant in seeking out specific themes and
dimensions from the coach transcriptions, thoroughly checking the interpretation and analysis to
avoid unnecessary study limitations (Kolb, 2012). It’s maintained that the coding, and ultimately
the findings of themes and dimensions, emerged from the data, accurately reflect the feelings of
the coaches interviewed. Being reflexive is an essential requirement for good qualitative
research, and can help minimize the effects of researcher bias. “Reflexivity in researched content
refers to the process of critically reflecting on the knowledge we produce, and our role in
producing that knowledge” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 37). This is viewed as part of quality
control in qualitative research. Being reflexive in this study meant the researcher’s techniques
incorporated continuous awareness of review, exploring, and thoroughly examining the coach
interview transcriptions through all stages of the research process. Important to note, Braun and
Clarke (2013) suggested that, “in the same way objectivity is valued in a quantitative paradigm,
subjectivity is positively valued in the qualitative paradigm” (p. 36). As subjective qualitative
researchers, our histories, values, assumptions, and perspectives are brought into research,
therefore, it is not possible in laymen’s terms—to check it all at the door (Braun & Clarke,
2013). “The topics we find interesting to research, and ways we ask questions about them, the
aspects of our data that excite us…reflect who we are, our subjectivity” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 36). Any knowledge produced is going to reflect that, even if only in some minor way. “In qualitative research, our humanness, our subjectivity, can be used as a research tool” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 36).

Although quantitative research would be concerned with aspects of validity, reliability of data collection, and analysis, these terms are not typically used in qualitative investigation (Shenton, 2004). The validity procedures within this present study are “distinct from typical quantitative approaches, such as concern for trustworthiness (e.g., credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability), and authenticity (e.g., fairness, enlarges personal constructions, leads to improved understanding of constructions of others, stimulates action, and empowers action)” (Cresswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be established in many ways, including triangulation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement in the field, researcher reflexivity, audit trail, rich description, and member checks (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation refers to a researcher’s crosschecking information from multiple perspectives (capturing different dimensions of the same phenomenon). This can entail using different investigators, different methods (e.g., observations and interviews), or even different data sources (Shenton, 2004). Within this study triangulation by the researcher meant using more than one method to collect data on the same topic (the coach-athlete relationship), striving towards dependability and credibility within the research (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Such as investor triangulation, this method demonstrating more than one coder and data analysis being used (Thurmond, 2001). Additionally, methodologic triangulation was used because more than one method of data collection occurred (Thurmond, 2001). Within this study, athlete questionnaires, athlete written feedback response, and transcribed coach interviews were
incorporated (a variety of methods and perspectives to collect data on the coach-athlete relationship topic) (see Appendices O, P, Q, R, S, U, V, X, & Y). Data collection by using different methods, facilitated determining rigor and trustworthiness of the researcher, and therefore the ability to decrease the biases that stem from using only a single method (Anfara et al., 2002; Shenton, 2004).

**Methodological Framework**

This study obtained ethical consent from the University of Victoria human ethics research board (HREB). Collecting rich data from various perspectives (coaches and athletes) assisted in promoting greater insight into the coach-athlete dyad and R-CART tool. Interviewing has long been a fundamental method for data collection. In 1954, Hyman, Cobb, Feldman, Hart, and Stember published *Interviewing in Social Research*, noting that “interviewing, as a method of inquiry is universal in the social sciences” (p.1). Interviewing has evolved and taken on a variety of forms and characteristics. However, regardless of the type of interview employed, by their nature, “interviews are social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective (and prospective) accounts or versions of their past (or future) actions, experiences, feelings, and thoughts” (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2004, p.16).

Rubin and Rubin (2005) define qualitative interviews as “conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (p.4). While interview methods vary, they are primarily classified along a structured versus unstructured continuum, however, interviews can have both structured and unstructured elements (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). Structured interviews have pre-existing topics and questions while unstructured interviews are more open-ended, allowing the subject to determine more of the content and direction (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). No interview can truly be considered unstructured; however,
some are relatively unstructured and are more or less equivalent to guided conversations (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Qualitative interviews are based on a topic or conversational guide, which is a list of areas the researcher wants to cover with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Topic guides vary in length and form, being as simple as a checklist or a detailed outline with main questions and pre-existing probing questions. Nevertheless, in qualitative interviews researchers have autonomy over the order of questions, how they are phrased, and are free to expand beyond initial questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The type of qualitative interview employed in this study was semi-structured; interviewing forms the cornerstone of qualitative data collection in sport and exercise psychology (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001). Semi-structured interviews are a widely used data source for qualitative research. Interviews are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events, in our case, the team practice setting. “They are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee(s)” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). For the predetermined coach interview guide and intervention script following the first set of athlete questionnaires refer to Table 11 Appendix N.

The use of open-ended questions within this study allows participants to express their feelings, experiences, and perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The process of qualitative research for the social constructionist is largely inductive, with theory and meaning being generated after data is gathered (Creswell, 2009). Consistent with the view of social constructionism, the coach-athlete relationship, would suggest that coaches and athletes do not
discover knowledge. Rather, for example, a coach would build knowledge (as being engaged in the field) by using concepts and schemes, which are continually worked on, revised and repeated (Murphy, Mahoney, Chen, Mendoza-Diaz, & Yang, 2005). Additionally, these concepts are socially constructed in shared social contexts rather than individually developed (Murphy, Mahoney, Chen, Mendoza-Diaz, & Yang, 2005). A purpose of social constructionism is to uncover the nature and construction of knowledge, “how it emerges and how it comes to have the significance” (Andrews, para. 7) for the coach-athlete relationship. Therefore, viewing these practices from a social constructionist perspective allows for a better understanding of how the coach-athlete relationship occurs and coaches and practitioners can further enhance critical thinking through appropriate learning methodologies. This study was broken down into a three phase process, which further explains how coaches and student-athletes are developing and experiencing the coach-athlete relationship in elite post-secondary sport, addressing “potential valuable variables and categories of interest” (Creswell, 2012, p. 88). The three phases were: 1) Initial modification process of the R-CART, 2) Initiating the R-CART through a multiple qualitative case study, 3) Data analysis of case studies and further amendment of the R-CART.

**Participants and data collection, phase I.** Prior to its distribution for the participating case study coaches, the R-CART and its properties were evaluated by a cohort of 13 coaches enrolled in the Masters of Education coaching science program at the University of Victoria. These coaches ranged from various levels of sport (middle school, high school and post-secondary), differing levels of experience (elite, amateur, beginner), age groups (24-40 years), genders, and sports (rugby, basketball, baseball, volleyball etc.). The focus of the Masters cohort was to provide an increased understanding of the statements and findings from the R-CART elite (post-secondary) coach study. Intentions were to refine and build the R-CART statements more
clearly and concisely. This was necessary to ensure the next step of further (online) refinement by numerous post-secondary coaches reaching across the country (Canada). This was accomplished by providing a more broad based appeal, and further refinement of the meaningful units pertaining to each theme and dimension prior to advancing further with online evaluation (see Appendix O).

**Data generation.** Systematically, the cohort advanced through each dimension and theme outlined from the R-CART phenomenological study. Refinement, exclusions, and supplementation were results of the evaluative process. Each student was provided with the R-CART phenomenological study results as well as its elements/comments. They were divided into focus groups of three, concluding with whole group in class discussion. Meaningful units within the themes were trimmed down to a more manageable number for an online survey, sentence structure was adjusted, some units completely omitted, and others were moved to another more suitable theme. An evaluative snapshot is provided in Table 12 (see Appendix P) for theme 2: Authenticity from the dimension of caring. This phase was important to further refine the themes in preparation for the next step of creating an online survey to enhance trustworthiness to the R-CART. Table 12 Appendix P outlines 11 meaningful units, far too many for an online survey when other themes and dimensions are present. A basic rule-of-thumb outlined by (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006), the longer the questionnaire, the more burdensome the task, the lower the response rate will be. Within the themes we wanted to tailor the meaningful units within the Masters cohort in preparation for distribution of an online survey questionnaire, therefore minimizing or all together, avoiding poor questionnaire design and the employment of adaptive questions to reduce the number and complexity of questions presented to users (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Understanding the value in a coaches’ time and availability, attitudes,
perceptions, needs, lifestyle, and demographics, all had implications for how the online survey was prepared (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). The online survey was particularly attractive due to the targeted coaching population being spread across a large Canadian region (Mann & Stewart, 2000); and reach being a critical component to touching on various post-secondary team sport coaches of both genders. Reach referring to the ease by which potential respondents can be approached (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Other advantages as to why we wanted to conduct an online survey was to create an absence of interviewer bias, speed of delivery (point-and-click responses), removal of the need for manual data entry and create the ease of data analysis/transfer, targeted audience, provision of structured responses, the convenience for the respondents due to many coaches being technologically savvy, flexible time constraints for respondents, and anonymity (Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Sills & Song, 2002).

Participation in this online survey was solicited by sending an email to Canadian college and Canadian university team sport coaches, such as hockey, basketball, volleyball, rugby, football, soccer, and field hockey. Coaches were provided with explanations and objectives behind the research and were requested to confirm or refine the information concerning revealed themes from the study, *The Binding Force: a Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport*. It was disclosed to the coaches that this is a potential tool for a coach to use and implement in the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship as a whole. Ravizza (2002) advocated that it is important to deal with an athlete as a whole person in terms of his or her identity, since sport often encompasses many areas of an athlete’s life.

It was identified that this is an important step in furthering the development and delivery of the coaching curriculum, specifically at the university and college levels. Within the email, a
link to the Web based questionnaire was included. The software offered transformation of the URL into a direct link to the Website, hence reducing additional actions on behalf of the respondents (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). The survey was simple in design with intentions of better coach response rate, completeness, and completion time (Dillman, Tortora, Conradt, & Bowker, 1998). Each coach was encouraged to participate in the survey, as each would be contributing greatly to the growth of our coaching education and profession.

Following the Masters cohort validation procedure, an online survey (approx. 20 min completion time) was emailed to 110 post-secondary coaches in Canada, resulting in a combination of 40 male and female coaches responding and completing the survey. The directive here was to provide further trustworthiness towards the R-CART concerning the previous disclosed themes and dimensions, building upon the cohort’s corroboration and responses. Before the coach could begin the survey, each was requested to provide consent; first page of the online survey was a click through consent form. It was outlined to the coaches that completing and submitting the survey online, their free and informed consent is implied and therefore indicates that they understand the conditions of participation in this study. A statement “I understand the above conditions of participation in this study and hereby give my free and informed consent” was provided. They were instructed to click yes or no. By clicking on “YES”, each coach understands the aforementioned conditions of participation in this study and hereby give their free and informed consent.

The coaches that were participants in this study were team sport coaches of post-secondary institutions, both male and female teams from the Canadian College Athletic Association (CCAA) and Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). Similar to the Masters students they were provided with the R-CART in its entirety. In order to make this online survey
seamless, stimulating, and aware of time constraints, with each question the coaches were provided a dimension or theme and asked simply a yes or no response to the statement. For example, under the dimension of caring (theme one), making it personal, it states, “relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people”, coaches were asked yes or no, which meant do they agree or disagree with the statement they just read. Awareness of time constraints, following only each section (theme) was comment boxes provided. Various comments and remarks were considered and further refinement to the model ensued. An example of a comment that was adopted took place within the culture dimension under theme four method to madness, it states, “a coach needs to get the players to believe that what the team is doing and where it wants to go, is also what each individual wants to do personally.” A comment that was omitted along with its respected theme was theme five—practice setting. The comment stated, “On court in practice I tell myself to emotionally engage the positive experience, but intellectually engage the negative experience.” If the theme was tabulated above an 85% response rating from the coaches it remained unaffected. If it dipped below an 85% rating and a comment(s) was provided to support the theme in an effective manner then it was amended and included. Less than an 80% the theme and comment was removed in its entirety. See Table 13 Appendix Q for an overview of the online coaches survey and endorsement process.

To date, the field of social psychology in sport is incomplete, specifically the area of coach-athlete relationships (see Bennie & O’Connor, 2012; Colvin, Blom, & Baston, 2012; Jowett, 2009; Manley, Greenlees, Smith, Batten, & Birch, 2014). For example, literature has not been developed to assess the impact that the coach-athlete relationship has upon athletic performance, changes in the dyad over the course of a season or career, and nor does it provide any educated guidance on the everyday development and repair of the connection. Due to the
remaining gaps in research dedicated to the coach-athlete relationship dyad, it was deemed necessary that a qualitative approach would more effectively elucidate the experiences and perceptions of both athletes and coaches participating/coaching men’s and women’s post-secondary teams. Researchers in sport and exercise psychology have maintained that qualitative inquiry is a credible technique to gain valid information (Munroe-Chandler, 2005). For example, Partington and Orlick (1991) reported qualitative inquiry as being an effective consulting experience, suggesting that a central qualitative template within sport and exercise psychology is a combined protocol of semi-structured interview(s) and content analysis (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993). This interwoven procedure still remains an efficient framework and forms the cornerstone of qualitative data collection in sport and exercise psychology (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001).

**Participants and data collection, phase II.** Following the modification process to the R-CART (phase I), the Masters cohort and online coaches’ feedback, a daily coach tool was produced (Table 14, see Appendix R). This tool incorporated the R-CART, dimensions, themes, and meaningful units included on a single laminated reference page. Two post-secondary sports teams were selected along with their respective head coaches that provided the landscape for the next component of research. Women’s basketball and men’s volleyball were selected as the post-secondary teams. Fittingly, both team sports reflected a very similar length and timing of schedule, each have a comparable number of team members, competitions, practices, and both representing dual genders not only in the sport but the head coaches too, made for an ideal scope of study. Both teams were selected due to proximity and representative of post-secondary team sports. This was important for accessibility to athlete questionnaire collection/disbursement, feedback, and recording in person open-ended interviews with coaches. Both teams were ideal
choices since they both fit the profile of post-secondary team sport coaches and student-athletes outlined within the aforementioned study I.

**Data generation, phase III.** In the final phase, a multiple qualitative case study was the pragmatic method selected to further research and facilitate exploration of the coach-athlete phenomenon. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time. Specific techniques could be detailed in-depth data collection, organizing, analyzing data involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports) and reporting a case description and case-based themes (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Two post-secondary teams were used, making it a multiple-case study to help illustrate the issue while exhibiting diverse perspectives (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The issue of focus was to further refine the R-CART and comprehend whether the feedback provided through the student-athlete CART-Q interviews would be useful in conjunction with the R-CART and coach interventions.

All athlete interviews occurred just before or just after training sessions three times during the competitive season (beginning, middle, end), each lasting approximately 15 minutes. Student-athletes were provided the 11-item CART-Q (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), which outlined three interpersonal constructs seeking evaluative information underpinning each athlete’s relationship with coach. The three constructs were: closeness (four items, e.g., ‘‘My coach trusts me’’), commitment (three items, e.g., ‘‘My coach is close to me’’), and complementarity (four items, e.g., ‘‘My coach adopts a friendly stance’’). All items were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), based on the 3+1C’s validation process and conceptual model of the coach–athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009) (see Table 15 Appendix S). The questionnaire is restricted by the questions asked and does
not allow the freedom to probe beyond them to gain a richer description of both experiences and perceptions. However additional investigative questions were implemented to confirm or provide specific examples from their individual contexts following the CART-Q. Aiming to go beyond the conceptual themes that framed the questionnaire in order to gain more insight into the each player’s coach-athlete relationship.

Semi-structured coach interviews were recorded, played back, and transcribed verbatim, resulting in 65 single space pages of text based data for the analysis. Consent forms were delivered at the time of the interview and participants read and signed the forms prior to starting the interview (see Appendix T). Semi-structured interviews offered a sound balance of structure and flexibility (Walker, 2011). Interviews with the coaches occurred upon completion of transcription and student-athlete CART-Q data collection/feedback, at the beginning of, middle, and end of the season. The semi-structured format contained specific questions and follow-up questions to the CART-Q student-athlete response, while providing the freedom to ask unique questions and expand beyond the queries and content areas established in the interview guide. By having the coaches speak freely about their coach-athlete relationships within their respective teams, this supported the notion of incorporating context, which according to Creswell (2009) is a critical component of qualitative approaches. Incorporating context within this study yielded a deeper understanding of what the coach-athlete relationship is like for this unique interconnected dyad. For example, one of the coaches commented on specific or precise thoughts and areas of behaviours that they wanted to focus on coming into the season:

One of the main areas for me is being more attentive to players off the court. If they need to talk about school, having an open door policy to talk about basketball/personal stuff, more scheduled meetings with players, and making them aware of that. We are meeting
with our younger players more often; we are doing more of that stuff this year than we did in the past.

**Data Analysis**

Within the two case studies, the constant comparative method (CCM) (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993) was used to generate qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach from the perceptions of post-secondary team sport coaches and including their athletes. Constant comparative method (CCM) together with theoretical sampling constitutes the core of qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1968; Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Constant comparison is the investigative process involving the identification of key text segments or meaning units, which contain ideas relevant to a research topic, and what data will be gathered next (Côté et al., 1993). By comparing, the researcher is able to do what is necessary to develop a concept seeking to supply strong evidence, new emergent themes is analyzed, in the form of tagging and coding, data matrices, diagrams, differentiating categories, and comparing them for similarities and differences to prevailing themes (Boeije, 2002). Transcripts were independently coded and text based meaningful words units and phrases were captured within the data. The codes were then compared with those already existing from a previous study, *The Binding Force: a Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport*.

For example, in the following meaningful unit, extracted from one student-athlete’s comment section, stating, “It revolves around open and honest communication in which both of us agreed to speak candidly and transparently. We share mutual respect for each other’s efforts and accomplishments”. From here, a coding process begins, again, coding involves
“systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can readily retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207). Open, honest, communication, speak candidly, transparently, and mutual respect provided the tags for this statement from a single student-athlete. Once the codes were isolated, they are then placed in appropriate themes to later be re-evaluated (Côté et al., 1993). The major dimensions within the R-CART; recruitment, caring, culture, communication and trust were reflected upon throughout the year amongst the coaches providing pertinent feedback within each dimension.

In accordance with Boeije (2002), “constant comparison goes hand in hand with theoretical sampling. This principle implies that the researcher decides what data will be gathered next and where to find them on the basis of provisionary theoretical ideas” (p. 393). Theoretical sampling (guided by emerging theory) occurs when “the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (Glaser & Strauss, 2009 p. 45). Initial sampling decisions are based on a general sociological perspective and a general problem, but once data are collected and coding begins, the researcher is led in various directions, which seem relevant and work towards generating theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). This process was replicated for each line of comments from each and every student-athlete in all interview sessions (three times during the season). Extraction, organizing, and evolving codes can be challenging, therefore keeping the purpose of the research in mind as the codes were obtained had to be logical and consistent with how to organize the data.

Ensuing each student-athlete session, coach interviews/interventions occurred. These were recorded sessions concerning their respective student-athlete feedback and evaluation
(comments and CART-Q), the continuing implementation of the R-CART, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended coach-athlete relationship discussion. The interviews from each coach were transcribed and reread to check for links or disparity between relevant meaning units, they were then refined and given tags and coded (Côté et al., 1993). The following is a meaning unit(s) identified by the research group during an interview with one of the coaches:

I think we have to have a professional relationship…it really isn’t surprising when players would say it’s a sports specific relationship. It is, but except for the fact that each year, there are probably three or four players that I have a much deeper relationship with.

From this statement, particular meaningful units, such as professional, sport specific relationship, and deeper relationships were coded. In the analysis process, professional became one of the themes, creating this theme allowed for similarities or differences between the tags to be collated (Côté et al., 1993). This procedure was replicated for each individual coach interview, and again as part of the cross-case analysis between the two participating coaches.

Prior to coding the data, the interviews were reviewed again and an initial code list was developed that followed the organization of the open-ended questions, taking into account information provided by the summary sheets. For example, coaches discussed their experience building a relationship and mentioned characteristics associated with having a strong coach–athlete relationship. After reviewing the interviews frequently an understanding of essential coach-athlete qualities were specified into the initial coding structure (see Table 16 Appendix U). For example, some of the initial codes regarding qualities of successful coach–athlete relationships were: honesty, consistency, communication, trust, and respect. The process of defining codes was helpful as it further clarified and distinguished how to pull apart the data. Definitions and findings needed to be clear and consistent, aligned with the purpose of research,
and able to be applied across all interviews.

Succeeding data generation and analysis of athlete remarks and CART-Q response, coach interviews and interventions ensued. Interventions were straightforward in nature and only focused on weaknesses outlined by the CART-Q results. Weaknesses were categorized as an overall score of within the statement revealing a minimum of 35%. Responses on the 7-point scale that were considered as weaknesses were sorted as, agree somewhat, undecided, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For example, Table 17 (see Appendix V) depicts results from the item of commitment, defined as the athletes and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship and therefore maximize its outcomes (Jowett, 2009). Athletes specified the results and “my coach is close to me” was tagged as an area that needed to be examined with the coach during the interview/intervention phase; 85% of the team’s scale responses were between agree somewhat and strongly disagree.

The purpose of the intervention was to take a closer look into the coach weakness(s) (areas of lower scores). For example, within the item of commitment and the statement “my coach is close to me”; the coach tool (R-CART; see Appendix R) was made reference to by employing the applicable dimensions and themes. An athlete whom responds poorly to “my coach is close to me” prompted a closer look into the dimensions of caring, communication, and trust within the coach tool (Table 11 Appendix N). In person discussion with the coach ensued encouraging an increase in attentiveness to the above-mentioned dimensions and themes prior to the next evaluation. The term “mindfulness” was often used within the interventions and can be defined as “an openhearted, moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 24). “Mindfulness may increase well-being and quality of life, potentially through facilitating engagement in meaningful activities or relationships, and helping individuals to be aware of and
maintain contact with positive emotions” (Erisman & Roemer, 2011, p. 30). The themes that were outlined in this example were: making it personal (caring), authenticity (caring), making it personal (caring), trust (trust), consistency (communication), and one on one listening (communication).

Results

The results indicate that the coach-athlete relationship is multifaceted, highlighting the implications of various elements behind the growth, upkeep, and fixing of the connection. Analyses of the player feedback, comments, and coach interview transcripts constructed information pertaining to the coach-athlete relationship. As research continues to be accumulated surrounding coach-athlete interactions, it has become clear that coaches can have either a positive or negative impact on the athlete’s competitive performance and life outside sport, at all levels of competition (Smoll & Smith 2006). A positive coach-athlete relationship can enhance athlete’s psychological and social vigour; foster the development of self-efficacy, and positive values and coping skills. In contrast, negative coach-athlete relationships create distress, foster the development of dysfunctional attitudes toward achievement and competition, create needless interpersonal stress, and contribute to sport competition attrition (Smith & Smoll, 2002, Smoll & Smith 2006). Given the influential role that coaches play in athletes’ psychosocial development and well-being, sport psychologists can have a notable positive impact by researching the consequences of particular coaching styles and behaviours on athletes who play for them (Smoll & Smith 2006).

Within the coach interview transcripts and player feedback, a total of 262 meaningful units were constructed and coded. Table 19 Appendix X provides an example of the process of extracting meaningful units from one of the questions as a result from student-athlete feedback.
and responses. This process was carried out with both the coaches and student-athletes resulting in delineating further support of the R-CART, its dimensions and themes, suggesting new findings within the coach-athlete relationship, the development of a final thematic structure of the R-CART tool, and a critique of the CART-Q model (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett, 2007).

**Culture.** Team culture refers to the psychosocial factors that influence team chemistry and group synergy, such as internal leadership within the team, team motives, team identity, team spirit, and collective efficacy (Martens, 1987). On both an individual and joint collective basis, players buy into the traditions, culture, and core values that govern the program and are willing to sacrifice self-interests for the betterment of the team (Yukelson & Rose, 2014). It has been noted that when team culture is not adequately developed; or is incompatible with the direction the team is heading, the team will most likely function below its performance capabilities (Martens, 1987). As such, the coach needs to be aware of the prevailing attitudes and feelings that exist within the team at all times (Yukelson, 1984). Moreover, every team member should be made to feel valued, appreciated, and empowered.

Coaches spoke freely about the culture of their respective programs. *Culture* was described as encompassing a large field within the sporting environment, the R-CART reveals a sound representation of this within culture and its themes; *climate, credibility, natural respect, method to madness, practice setting,* and *player fit.* Culture and its extent to the overall operation of a team within an academic institution is widespread, as one coach within this study outlined:

I mean the overall program…I’m responsible for the team because our team exists in a larger program that has other pieces to it, (such as) girls’ volleyball, basketball, golf etc. I’m trying to manage my team within the framework of the college…I have to look at the
team as a whole before I look at the team as individuals, and make sure that the team as a whole is functioning well...I was impelled to do some strategic planning within the program, covering different areas, one of them was team culture. To me that referred directly back to relationships with the team.

The climate the coach creates via his/her relational methods can be influential with respect to athlete motivation and consequent behaviour (Gagné, 2003). The coaches’ interpersonal style pertains to the values emphasized by the coach and coaching behaviours designed to influence their athletes’ motivation and behaviour (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The semi-structured interviews with the coaches provided further support for the aforementioned themes of culture. In accordance with one coach, “having veterans from the previous year(s), currently on the team permits a pathway to creating and continuing a consistent and existing climate.” As one coach further supported, “if I do have the guy who will stay four or five years, they become a student of the game, and they know exactly what I’m talking about, and they can then impart [communicate] that to the younger kids [teammates].”

The climate that is built within the culture of the team is a feeling of support and inclusion for one another, a family team atmosphere that continues on, even after playing careers have expired as maintained by one coach:

Players come back all the time. I like to think it’s because the culture that we created as a family…one for all and all for one, and supporting each other. It’s supporting each other both on and off the court. I’m trying to establish relationships with these guys.

Being attentive that the sporting climate can change as the season progresses, but having an understanding that if the overall culture is solid and trustworthy, it can retain the shape and identity of the program. This is supported in one of the interviewed coach’s statements:
In my experience there can be a culture or environment that exists prior to real competition that maybe isn’t or won’t sustain itself…I think my relationships definitely can be mood based at times…and that’s why having a strong culture base is so important because you can quickly be brought back to it.

Within team culture, specifically the climate theme, is an important entity as one coach recommended for establishing a wholesome and healthy atmosphere amongst the players, coaches, and staff:

For the team, they will look back and keep those friendships forever. It’s not because we won that one point or that one match, it’s because they went through that struggle for a year and that to me, is way more valuable than beating one team. It’s rewarding and satisfying. That’s important to me because it’s about the journey. It isn’t about the destination.

John Wooden, a hall of fame basketball coach and arguably the most successful coach of all time was quoted in saying; “be more concerned with your character than your reputation because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are” (Wooden, n.d.). Your credibility as a coach and leader begins with you, perhaps it is as simple as asking yourself how you want to be remembered by the athletes you coach. In this respect, one coach was able to recognize this as an area of weakness and therefore made an effort in preseason to focus on this area as a leader:

We’ve talked about my behaviour and my consistent behaviour in practice or in the office with players. But now lets start to talk about how that looks in games; because I’ve been known to freak out a little bit in a game.

Gaining and maintaining respect with your athletes is vital to ultimate team success
Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). Great coaches are great because they see the importance of respect outside of just knowledge of the game. Coaches know how fragile it can be, and therefore working hard to maintain it is fundamental (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007), respect is essential as one coach states:

Respect is really important in the dynamic of your team; for example, our culture is founded on respect. It’s not founded on trust; it’s founded on respect. That is, there’s no difference on our team between a first year and fifth year guys.

Within team sport, it is possible a group culture and the respect within it can significantly shape member cognition, behaviour, development, well-being, and performance (Andersen, 2011). In this regard, one coach noted: “We don’t have to demand that [respect]...respect exists as a part of the culture of our program, because of what you see around you [as a player]… if I want to be respected I have to give them respect.”

When you have success players tend to assume there is a method to the madness a little bit more with things that you do in preparation and practice. Mike Kryzewski of Duke University suggests that a quality coach portrays to his or her athlete’s the importance of understanding the method to the madness within a team dynamic. “A leader may be the most knowledgeable person in the world, but if the players on his team cannot translate that knowledge into action, it means nothing” (Krzyzewski & Phillips, 2010, p. 90). A good coach helps his players prepare for what’s coming and guides them throughout the game, this is where a coach has to execute due diligence and have trust in their preparation, and from there, allow the game to unfold (Kaufman, 2013). Former president of the United States Dwight Eisenhower once said, “In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless; but planning is indispensable” (n.d.).

Professional football’s New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick suggested that in relation
to Eisenhower’s quote “no matter how much preparation you do, it’s still going to be different in
the game, preparation is everything until the battle starts and then it doesn’t mean anything”
(Perry, 2015). Coach Belichick was suggesting the game becomes the game, and as a coach you
have to deal with that. The coach preparation can only be done to a point, the nature of team
sport is dynamic, and therefore the plan is going to change to some degree. In essence it’s
important to embrace the method to madness in carrying out and executing a game plan, but
being prepared enough to make adjustments along the way.

As a coach and leader of a team, you have a plan, you need to execute that plan and get
the players to believe in that plan and that this plan and path they are on is essentially what they
want to do. According to one coach, in order for this to work it must be meaningful:

The players have to want to do this in order for it to be meaningful, that it’s their
plan…otherwise; it’s just a checking the box exercise. The guys that want to embrace it,
will, and the guys that don’t, will not.

Suitable player fit is important when looking for guys that fall into a certain niche within
the team and the respective coach profile, and that the coach is going to build his/her team
around, as one coach advised:

It’s not the best players who will play. It’s the players who play best together that will
play, because the strength of our team is only as good as the strength of the team that
plays together, not the individuals.

The culture dimension within the R-CART encompassed such themes as climate,
credibility, natural respect, method to madness, and player fit. Being a great teammate is
representative of a positive attitude that is woven within the culture dimension and themes. As a
student-athlete, committing yourself to a team-first approach demonstrates to your teammates
and coaches that you deserve their respect, you fit in, and you are committed to the process. In this respect, one coach stated, “Some guys might be good players, but they are poor teammates, so we’ve tried to provide them with a bit more insight as to what that means”. Selflessness is a team first quality a good teammate can have, it’s about not what can I get as an athlete but instead it’s about what can I give (O’Sullivan, n.d.). Success in sports is measured by how your team finishes, not by individual efforts. When a team plays well, each and every player will receive notice and recognition. However, it is not all about the statistics of that game or season, as one coach suggests, “the statistics only tell you part of the story…what I look for is, what is the story that the statistics are telling me, so I can tell you that story.” The overall culture quality of the team can “significantly shape member cognition, behaviour, development, well-being and performance” (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012, p. 338)

Caring. Dating back to the early 1900’s, Theodore Roosevelt once said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” (Atkins, 2012). Today, this simple quote is still used within coaching circles. Overall, the social relationship developed between the coach–athlete relationship in which a sense of a strong affective bond can be compared to what Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; and Jowett and Cockerill (2003) have called the human relationship. This part of the coach–athlete relationship may reflect the more personal and humanistic side of coaching where the coach cares about their athletes welfare, interests, preferences, and needs (Jowett, 2005). The results suggest that the social relationship or human relationship is an important facet because it promotes the professional relationship (i.e., the part of the relationship that is most concerned with performance enhancement). This is a dimension where “empowerment”, “making it personal”, and “authentication” are important components. In order to empower both females and males athletes
through sport, it is important they feel significant, valued as a whole, and they are a center of focus in hopes all their needs are being taken care of (Kidman, 2005). Coaches facilitate the empowerment of athletes by working with them and encouraging them. Empowerment enables the athlete to become more independent and self-sufficient in competition as they grow as athletes and as individuals (Miller & Kerr, 2002). As one coach suggests:

Providing them with some playing time gives me a better chance to identify what there needs are, and it will also give him some satisfaction of being on the floor seeing what that’s like (in actual competition). What this has kind of done is to help me try to figure out how I can help them to work hard and feel good about themselves. I think in my life, not just as a coach the empowerment piece is another, I think as coaches we are often control freaks. So giving back some of that control is a big one…because in a game you lose a bit of control and sometimes you can’t just stop the game, your players have to be able to perform, so giving some of that control back to your players.

Coaches can and should focus on building player confidence within each of their student-athletes, spending more time with them, and placing more effort on communicating, timely interventions, tactical and technical related tasks, how to taking responsibility for failures, and as stated by one coach, providing confidence:

Trying to pump confidence into every guy on the team…will we continue to work on the relationship? Absolutely. [This time of year] it will be about pumping up your tires, making you feel like you can run through that wall.

One coach suggested further support for confidence building within the coach-athlete relationship:

My job is to get them to learn how to build that [confidence], how to feel that when it’s
coming [along] and how to help a guy who’s lagging a little bit…[to] bring him on. This process, I think, in the coach-athlete relationship is helpful because it makes you more aware of what things you can do that will pay dividends in February [playoffs]. According to Adie, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2012):

A coaching environment perceived to empower athletes with choices and decision making (e.g., autonomy support), which conveys trust in their abilities whilst utilizing non-controlling feedback (e.g., competence support), and that takes and respects their perspective (e.g., relatedness support) would correspond to satisfaction. (p. 57)

Regarding empowerment, an interviewed coach disclosed, “one of the ways is I want to address that in games and let things go, letting them play more, as I’m trying to do in practice.” The concept of empowerment was further discussed as the coach stated:

Not stopping and screaming as much, obviously still coaching but letting them problem solve. That is part of our job as well, empower our leaders to lead. I felt good about that.

Caring, I can be hard to play for at times. One thing I need to improve on is letting go of control.

Within the caring dimension, making it personal is important in an athlete’s success and outcome. One on one meetings with student-athlete’s in order to get a better understanding of what players personal goals are and to ensure as a coach you are doing everything to help the student-athlete move in that direction is key. Being flexible and accommodating at times may be required from a coach when dealing with the numerous everyday lives of busy young student-athletes. In respect to this, it was suggested by one of the coaches:

Being more mindful of [getting personal], modifying my behaviour a little more. For example, sticking around a little longer after practice, asking questions like, how is
school, how are you, how are your courses, how are your folks doing, how do you like this experience, what can we change, what should we change?

Further supporting the theme of making it personal, one coach stated:

Trying to think of ways in which I can be able to closer to them. Maybe, get a little more personal as opposed to its another year, another group, and you’re just going through the process…I have been doing kind of more of that, I little more personal than the coach.

In today’s coaching environment with student-athletes its becoming more of a common practice for coaches to made available to their athletes prior to practice and remain behind following practice; “staying late to help an athlete meet his/her goals” (Miller and Carpenter, 2009, p. 9). In support of this, one of the interviewed coaches stated:

I try and make an effort to be more attentive and not be running off the court and out of the building as soon as practice has ended… As a staff we have definitely continued to make that a big focus, to find time to have real interactions with all the players as much as possible.

Part of the holistic development of the athlete entails developing the core of which they are as human beings aside from just athletes. Life gets complicated and if coaches have personas that apply in different contexts, this can be a dangerous place to live. It’s important to accept your own frailties as a human being, Authenticity, be authentic with your player’s and at times show your athletes that you don’t have it all figured out but are willing to work for them and with them. Authenticity according to LaVoi (2007) is a person’s genuine self-expression in the relationship that is respectful, in this case, towards the athlete. As stated by one coach, “it all ties back to knowing yourself because one of the biggest things in this work is you have to stay within your personality.” It’s important to show who you are, and be interested in who they are
As a leader you’ve got to be authentic, real, stay within your personality, and be true to themselves in order to be a good leader that delivers results (Nyberg & Sveningsson, 2014). In respect to showing authenticity as a leader, one coach stated:

I spent some time with the national team and [their] coach. You try to emulate some things but some of that stuff is just not your personality, that’s their personality, not yours…I’m not like all of a sudden going to be super chilled out in practice I guess, but just maintaining and be consistent in my behaviour, not being high or too low.

Hill (2001) provided a variety of philosophical perspectives related to basic components of a humanistic (person-centered) model to include: establishing a client-practitioner relationship, genuineness, nonjudgmental, caring, empathy, and particular attention to the human experience; all of which relates to the dimension of caring. As well, Jowett and Cockerill (2003) suggested that coach-athlete relationships should be genuine and facilitating in going beyond teaching and instruction skills, which is reflected in the following coach statement:

I have one on one, sometimes it’s two on one, three on one, and we’re sitting together at dinner. Sometimes I tell them stories about my own shenanigans when I was younger. I will tell them from a volleyball perspective, but again, you have certain affinities for certain guys that share characteristics that you can identify with more than say, other guys on the team…I try to show them what I’m like. Some of them find that intimidating, because I’m a competitive person. Am I responsive? Totally…I’m interested in them as people too, and I’m interested in how they’re going to turn it out.

The caring dimension while building the coach-athlete relationship is an important outcome (Miller & Carpenter, 2009). According to Miller and Carpenter (2009) if the team you are coaching knows that you care about everyone, you’ll have a chance to develop those caring
relationships. “The ultimate motivation is not winning, but rather the giving of care and concern to student-athletes” (Miller & Carpenter, 2009, p. 11).

**Communication.** Athletes who feel more compatible also feel more supported by their coach and evaluate his/her communication ability more favourably (Kenow & Williams, 1999). If the athletes’ goals, personality, and beliefs are consistent with those of their coach, the interaction of the individuals will likely be satisfactory to both parties producing a positive interpersonal atmosphere (Kenow & Williams, 1999). Communication between coaches and athletes has great potential for sport to be an important socializing strength (Turman, 2006). A coach’s communication style can have an affective influence and can mold the experience and success or failure of the team and athlete(s) (Turman, 2006; Turman & Schrodt, 2004). The communication that develops between coach and athlete influences characteristics of the sport experience; from athlete preparation, to how well they perform, to how they make sense of their successes and failures (Kassing & Anderson, 2014). If feelings towards communication are felt inadequate within the athlete towards the coach, this could affect unity of purpose, role acceptance, athlete’s perception of coach, and ongoing communication about the efficiency of team functioning (Yukelson & Rose, 2014). The “communication” dimension within the R-CART included 7 themes: “honesty”, “consistency”, “player-player”, “emotional state”, “conflict resolution”, “coach-player role and accountability”, and “one-on-one listening”.

Effective coaches are known to develop open, caring, honest, and respectful relationships within the dyad of their corresponding athletes (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012); encompassing a common practice of being blunt and straight up with his/her athlete(s), and at the same time truly caring for the athlete (Werthner, 2009). In this respect, one coach stated:

I am going to be honest and open with them…I made a promise to myself that my players
would know where they stand with me and I wouldn’t play any head games with them. I wouldn’t tell them stuff that wasn't true just to get them to come or to keep them happy… Just because he’s a really good guy, I won’t be telling the kid, I’m sure you’re going to get lots of court time, when I know that’s not going to happen anytime soon.

Successful coaches develop honest and respectful relationships with the athletes they work with, without honesty and trust, constructive relationships with athletes can’t exist (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012). As supported by the following interviewed coach’s quote:

I’ve been pretty straight with a couple of guys this year because I really felt that they needed to hear the truth. I thought they were hiding behind some excuses relative to their play...I said to one, you’ve got to stop riding that horse, you got to step up and do what you can do, what you are capable of, and stop hiding behind excuses about why you didn’t perform well.

Continued support for the importance of honest communication, the same coach further stated:

I try to listen, sometimes I do find myself inside thinking, man, enough already, let me give it to you straight. So I give it to them straight…then, asking them, can you live with this? Are you going to be happy with this? Is this going to work for you? As opposed to just doing it in my mind, but not necessarily telling every guy. This year, I did it with every guy. It made a difference. It made a difference when this season went on.

In accordance with Bennie and O’Connor (2012), the coach-athlete relationship cannot exist without honesty, and therefore have more positive and respectful relationships. Once coach stated, “I try to be pretty transparent with guys. As they get to know me and am challenging them, they’re going to sour a little bit because it’s like anything…you have got to get worse to
Another coach suggested that being honest in player meetings has made improvements with the team:

I think sometimes that I can be my own worst enemy with enabling players and try to make every meeting a feel good meeting, because that only lasts until the next practice and the next game. So I’ve tried to be zoned in on being more honest, truth over harmony, try to say the hard truth because that’s better in the long run.

Coach further suggested:

What I’ve tried to change in my communication with the players is to not make it emotional…to try to make it more about, ok, lets watch video, these are the [facts], to make it more like analytics and then there’s real evidence harvested.

Bennie and O’Connor (2012) suggested by initiating and having regular dialogue is integral when dealing with athletes on a regular basis. Both coaches emphasized the importance of consistency in communication. “It is not easy being consistent [don’t start behaviour patterns that you can’t maintain], and doing something on an everyday basis…when results can’t always be seen immediate isn’t something that appeals to everyone, but successful coaches get it.” In respect to consistent communication, it was further suggested:

[The relationship] has got to be continuous…trying to be more balanced in that area is one thing that I’ve certainly at least tried to pay some attention to with varying degrees of success obviously because we’re different people. I have tried to know the athletes a little more…expanding that time with your bottom group who you may not spend as much time with in comparison to your top group.

Trying to be more balanced and consistent is one thing that I’ve certainly at least tried to pay some attention to with varying degrees of success obviously because we’re different
people. I have tried to know the athletes a little more to help this.

Playing together, committing, and dedicating oneself in pursuit of a common goal over the course of a season is known to develop various relationships amongst players (Gaffney, 2015). As one coach reflected back to childhood; “as a youngster, one of the first lessons learned when joining a team sport is the importance of teamwork and being a good teammate.” This concept was echoed throughout the study. Interestingly, Gaffney (2015) said that, “to be called a good team player seems to connote something nobler than a talented player or even a well-trained player” (p. 1). One coach stating, “The understood thought is no one is bigger than the team, no matter how good or bad you are you must respect this unwritten foundational code”, supported this.

Player-player relationships is a challenge and vital to teams in order to develop chemistry, especially within a post-secondary setting when recruitment of players from various geographical regions are concerned. With respect to the challenge of teamwork development, Gaffney (2015) suggests, “the principle of teamwork presents roughly the same challenge to all players, regardless of their natural abilities or their level of play” (p. 2). Throughout the interviews, one coach stated:

Every single player on this team has an equal voice and part of it is the relationship with each other…guys fit together, they like each other…they train together, they compete against each other, they support each other…not all the time, but they hang out with each other.

In further support of player-player relationships, coach stated:

That whole experience of being together, to me is what this is all about…the winning part is the icing on the cake. If the process is not good, then I don’t think even if you win, it’s
not as rewarding, it’s not as satisfying...definitely the interpersonal relationship side of
this off the court has been a big one...but for guys, they’ll look back and they’ll keep
those friendships forever. It’s not because we won that one point or that one match, it’s
because they went through that struggle for a year and that to me, is way more valuable
than beating one team. Is it rewarding and satisfying? Totally. It’s great.

Generally speaking, at a particular level of sport, coaches have a comparable level of
expertise. What sets great coaches apart is their emotional intelligence (EQ). In his book,
Goleman (1996) cited emotional intelligence as “being able to rein in emotional impulse; to read
another’s innermost feelings; to handle relationships smoothly (p. xiii).” In respect to EQ, and in
light of sport, Aristotle once stated, “to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the
right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way.” Goleman (1996) understood the
importance of developing an awareness and ability to control our emotions in developing and
maintaining positive relationships. Having an extensive understanding of the various nuances of
a particular sport is critical, but it is important that one is able to regulate his/her own emotions
(and subsequent behaviour), as well as the athlete’s themselves (Goleman, 1996). It is commonly
accepted that playing sport can produce strong emotional responses, for a coach and his/her
athletes; establishing productive, empathetic, and positive relationships with athletes is an
essential element to sporting success (Wood, 2014). Further advocated for this notion of EQ, one
coach outlined:

I don’t feel threatened because an athlete says, hey, why are we doing this? What about
doing that? Then, we have a discussion. If they can make a compelling argument, then I
change. If I don’t think the argument is compelling because of the set of guys, I’ll tell
them but I also tell them why...I encourage my guys that if they’ve got a problem, come
see me, or come with a solution. Don’t just come with a problem. Come with a suggestion.

Emotion can be understood as a feeling of state, categorized by our evaluation of a stimulus, by changes in bodily sensations, and by displays of expressive gestures (Parkinson, Fischer, & Manstead, 2005). It is normal that when a person’s relationship with another person changes, so do their emotions toward that person (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). The notion of emotional state was stated by one coach, “I think all of our moods can affect each other’s moods; they can also negatively or positively affect your relationships. I try to be stable as the leader of the program…that takes effort.”

With student-athletes participating on post-secondary teams for the duration of a season, conflict is inevitable, and will arise at some point within the team environment. One of several key models in literature can serve as a lens towards a useful analytic tool for understanding and resolving conflict. One particular framework that can help analyze and address conflicts is the circle of conflict, which classifies disputes into six categories: interests, structure, data, values, relationships, and externals or moods (Furlong, 2005). In accordance with Furlong (2005), “interests, structure, and data are far more tangible…and a meaningful place to start to understand where emphasis should be placed in terms of making changes stemming from that conflict” (p. 22). The remaining three categories of, “values, relationships, and externals, are important to understand but are less tangible and may not be something the other party can address” (Furlong, 2005, p.22). How a coach can handle conflict could be the difference between running a successful team and getting run down by a history of bad blood (Furlong, 2005). Verma (1998) revealed, the most successful methods for resolving conflict are discussion and open communication; avoidance will not resolve the conflict, at best; it will only delay conflict.
With respect to conflict resolution, one coach described using a specific player example:

I would get on her about talking back, it would just be this constant back and forth. We were both having these outbursts but everything is now on the table…I was becoming increasingly frustrated and then it just amps up and nothing comes of it. We agreed that we need to talk more regularly and not let it get to that point. I keep those lines up [open] and agree to disagree sometimes, but understand what my role is, understand what her role is, and just trying to get towards an achieved goal…she agreed to try to be more open and come talk to us more, and I agreed to do the same and try to be more understanding…everybody’s an individual in how I deal with them and sometimes I need to find a better way to communicate.

Athletic identity (coach-player role and accountability) has been defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role” (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993, p. 237). As a coach it is important to see the bigger picture, “a good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are” (Coaching Inspiration, n.d.). One of the consequences of the demands of high-level competition such as post-secondary team sport can be the over-identification with the athlete role or lack of role consideration (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Strong identification with the coach-player role can have functional benefits because it is related to commitment in training and focus on sport goals (Horton & Mack, 2000). One coach outlined this concept of coach-player roles and responsibilities:

The one thing that I do, is that there is no, rookie do this, rookie do that (on this team)...it’s a really good chemistry and it’s a really good group of guys. I think that share a similar bond, I think they know what their role is on the team, how they contribute.

Early in the season, the athlete’s roles have not truly been defined. They haven’t been
tested, we haven’t been tested as a team, and people may change. May not be playing as much as they think they should be, that kind of thinking.

Moreover, coach-player role’s and responsibilities is to make sure there is some separation between player and coach. “I have the philosophy that it’s important to have the separation and not be too close to the players, because you have to make hard decisions about them every day.” However it’s important to make all team personnel feel important and included:

I remember when I was playing, as a captain; I would try and make the players at the end of the bench feel included. As a coach, I don’t think I am doing a good job of that right now. Perhaps it is because I am prioritizing and I have other things on my plate. I could do a better job of making those players feel like they are more part of the process. I have to make them feel included.

It’s important that coaches encompass within their profession, specific psychological attributes and skills, such as the ability to listen and communicate with his/her athletes (Weissensteiner, 2015). “It is critical that the development and refinement of a coach’s interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and ability to effectively interpret, understand and respond to the athlete’s perspective is prioritized in the professional development of all coaches at all levels of the athlete pathway” (Weissensteiner, 2015, p. 1). Being well prepared, ability to converse, and listening, is important when engaged in one-on-on occurrences, as reflected in the following coach comments:

- “We have social activities that are sort of more structured, where we can have fun and a good time. I do have conversations with player…do I listen? I try to listen when I think what they’re saying makes sense.”
• “With everybody I am now trying to not be critical in front of the whole group in kind of a show me kind of way. Such behaviours like pulling people aside, not being as demonstrative to players on a stage like setting.”

**Recruitment.** Berkman (2015) suggests the recruiting process begins with a two-way exchange between coaches and prospective student-athletes; from there it can filter between other staff members, administrators, current players, family and friends. The key is recruiting student-athletes who have the desire and mindset of wanting to be good, as opposed to choosing an institution because the reputation of the program is good, or individually, they have been socialized and reinforced to believe they are the best without having to work at developing their game (Yukelson & Rose, 2014). It starts with recruiting talented athletes that are the right fit with his system, philosophies, and coaching style, dedicated team players with a great work ethic and an internalized motivation to succeed. It’s not always recruiting the best athletes or players available, rather looking for coachable and reliable people first, with great athletic potential coming second (Vallee & Bloom, 2005). According to Yukelson and Rose (2014), “They [athletes] need to be passionate about their pursuit of excellence and committed to the core values and operating procedures” (p. 55) of their prospective teams.

Once groundwork is developed, whether it be a solid foundation of staff and coach members, program reputation, or simply a winning record, coaches can recruit and enrol student-athletes that are the best fit for their sport program (Huffman, 2011). Coaches “recruit student-athletes via a relationship-oriented environment to continue to build the desired brand and add to the value of the sport program. For example, coaches can emphasize best fit when pitching a strategic combination of the academic, athletic, and personal attributes that are deemed as important extensions to the program, athletic department, and university brands. To be effective,
collegiate administrators and coaches must be aware of the college-choice factors of student-athletes and build relationships with recruits in order to achieve a win-win-win scenario involving the university, coach, and student-athlete” (Huffman, 2011, p. 15). With recruitment of student-athlete’s, philosophies differ among coaches, as one coach stated:

You know, I got a lot of emails right after the conference finals. Most of them, I will ignore. I’ve always thought there’s two ways to recruit. One way is that you just recruit the best guys and then you figure it out. The second way is to have a vision for your team and you go get guys that you seek who can play those roles to make that vision a reality…I’ve always recruited based on the second one. I recruit based on the vision I have for the style we want to play. I have a picture of how I want our team to function with on and off the court. When I go after guys, or if they send me an email, I talk to them. I talk to their coaches, I talk to their teachers, I watch their video, I try to get a sense of what kind of person they are, see if they are smart and have grades, and are they going to fit within our style. Then, I’ll make a decision on those guys. Will I pass on some guys? Absolutely.

According to one coach, making visiting recruits feel welcomed and a part of the program is important; it helps when current players buy in as well:

Even when we bring our recruits in, my expectations [are] that they’ll be treated with respect. If they’re just trying out for the team at the start of the season or attending training sessions, and I’m not really sure about them, they will still be made to feel as part of the family. With recruitment, I think it’s important for your current players to understand the recruitment piece as well. With regards to athlete-athlete [relationships] when a new person comes to the program for a visit etc.
Perhaps the greatest college sport recruiter in the history of amateur sport, John Calipari of Kentucky basketball, preaches that it’s all about the players. Calipari conveys openness to the athletes during the recruiting phase; it will be the hardest place they’re going to attend because of them learning how to make sacrifices as an individual (Peter, 2015). As a coach, it can’t be about you, the players are the main focal point of the program, as one of the interviewed coaches suggested:

They have got to know we’re about them…you have to move from self-serving to serving [them]…you have to be on the athlete’s side right from the initial recruitment phase, understanding that kids are wanting honesty, wanting to get pushed, wanting to be developed.

Additionally, the program’s optics should demonstrate a sense of proficiency to each recruit, as one coach suggested:

As a head coach, I think that I have to be responsible for the program, because if the program doesn’t function correctly, players won’t come. If the program isn’t perceived as being a quality program that you’re going to come to and feel supported in and that you’ll learn, players won’t come.

Recruitment at the post-secondary level is the first step to player and coach relations, as portrayed by one coach:

My relationship with the players is an interesting one because this is my first group of kids I have recruited. So I feel different about that. I feel I have more ownership, and you know, these days when you recruit kids, you have lots of conversations on the phone, in person, with their families etc. I feel more responsibility that they enjoy their experience, and we are living up to our side of things.
As a coach inheriting athletes (i.e., players that have been a part of the program prior to the coaches arrival), it takes work to build these relationships. As stated by one coach:

It’s interesting because overall I feel I have a pretty good relationship with the returning players, but I didn’t recruit them. But what I’ve made an effort to do and that I don’t know if I have been successful is perhaps mending some relationships with players where there was maybe no relationship or not a very good relationship.

Recruiting a well-rounded, elite and skilful student-athlete requires time and attention through lines of communication such as email messages, phone calls, texts, campus tours, alumni, visits from coaches, and communication from potential future teammates (Judson, James, & Aurand, 2004). Without a coordinated, consistent messaging, committing to the required time and effort, athletic teams, and coaches will struggle in their attempts to recruit the most talented student-athlete’s necessary to build a successful intercollegiate athletic program (Judson, James, & Aurand, 2004).

**Trust.** Trust in some sense of the word, is implicated in most of our sporting relationships, such as competitors, team, coaches, captains, leaders, referees etc. (Jones, 2001). Trust is an integral part of teamwork because team tasks require a high level of interdependence between its members and arises from repeated exchanges between different parties (Mach, Dolan, & Tzafrir, 2010). This mutual dependence may generate synergy in the form of cooperation and interaction among team members (Fiore, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Trusting team environments that encourage clarity, reliability, concern for others, and openness, and in which there is a relatively high degree of harmony and cohesion among the players and coaches, have the potential to improve their performance. In contrast, environments in which players do not trust each other, the coach, or top management will likely have poorer results.
Trust is freeing, allowing the athlete to focus on performing at his/her best and not on the possible reaction of the coach, allowing the athlete to focus on his/her performance and able to compete fearlessly. Lack of trust leads to hesitation, if coaches cannot get to the point where they can trust their athletes, potentially this can lead to poor performance (Brown, 1998). In respect to trusting an athlete, sometimes being committal to providing an opportunity is a good starting point, as stated by one coach:

It’s that balance between do I trust that athlete enough to go into this situation [on the court]? Previously I might have said, no, he’s not ready. This year I’ve said, you know what? I’m going to do it and if it’s not successful, I’ll bring him out [of the game]. We’ll work on things from there.

Additionally:

I’m learning to trust them more in terms of their play...we use trust as an on-court thing…this year I’m like, let’s see where you are [in development]. Whereas I would say in the past, you’re working real hard, keep it going, I wouldn’t put them in. Thinking I will put them in maybe after Christmas, maybe next year. I think that [on-court] trust piece has been really big for us…showing my trust in them, by subbing them in, in game situations.

There are various methods to develop trust within the coach-athlete relationship. This can range from, the level of technical knowledge, the ability of that coach to teach and pass on that knowledge, the coach’s philosophy and coaching style, the everyday organization and preparedness, good judgment, treating athletes with fairness, and being a consistent leader (Perdew, n.d.). When a coach’s style promotes respect, the athlete(s) is generally willing to trust
that coach more (Brown, 1998). Demonstrating trust as coach towards his/her athlete’s is important, as one coach stated:

I recognized that if I have 16 guys, I’m going to have 16 different relationships. Some are going to be real tight. Others are going to be not so tight. What I tried to do in this last semester is just infuse a bit more trust in there, by demonstrating that I trust them.

With respect to trust, it was stated within one of the interviews, “from what I know, what it shown is that you can never breach that trust with the athlete…if you breach that trust, then you end up losing a respectable athlete.” Throughout the development of trust, communication between the coach and the athlete encourages shared experiences and consequently a co-oriented view can develop (Jowett, 2003). Co-orientation is operationalized through the means of communication and communication is thought to be the building block of all relationships (Jowett, 2003). Verbal communication is thought to produce and sustain relationships while building trust (Duck, 1994). In order for athletes to trust their coach it is important that they interpret their coach as trusting them, as one coach stated:

It goes back to the trust thing, and your players start thinking you have more trust in them. Or if you’re on them lots, they don’t feel that way [that you trust them]. That’s a big part of that communication piece. You know, if you develop trust, then you can probably be harder on them and challenge them a little more.

One of the most significant aspects of building trust amongst athletes is demonstrating consistency and having an attitude of integrity as a coach (Perdew, n.d.). “A coach will be very successful in earning players’ respect and trust by demonstrating a high level of character and integrity at all times, both on and off of the field” (Perdew, n.d.).
The Application of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool

This qualitative study viewed the world through the lens of an epistemology social constructionist worldview. Data was collected through interviews, and feedback from both coach and athlete(s). The qualitative process occurred alongside coach application and intervention, as well as student-athlete feedback and evaluation regarding their respective relationship with the coach. Creswell (2009) explains that when using qualitative research “the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of the participant” (p. 16). The aim is to enrich trustworthiness and provide further insight underpinning the coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART). Simply, this was a visual tool that helps the coach visualize the reciprocating content of the coach-athlete relationship. Our aim is to enrich trustworthiness and provide further insight and underpinning into the coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART). Simply, this was a visual tool that helps the coach visualize the reciprocating content of the coach-athlete relationship.

Through the year long case study the coaches appear to see value in the tool, “I think the tool has helped and enabled me to just be more mindful of this [relationship].” Further support, as stated by a coach, “I think there’s been an evolution of my relationship with each guy on the team. It is interesting because I have been attentive of this project, which probably has caused me to focus a little more time on some guys.” In respect to the R-CART and its practicality, one coach suggested:

What the tool has kind of done is help me try to figure out how I can help the players to work hard and feel good about themselves. Feel good about the process of working hard and then to reward them with the opportunity to compete on the floor.

The modern day coach is an expert at production, organizing, and getting the best out of
the individual players and team (Beswick, 2010). He or she teaches the physical, technical, tactical components of the sport; and of course, developing and maintaining coach-athlete relationships (Beswick, 2010). One of the most important roles of a coach is to use sport as a microcosm of what happens in the real world to help young people differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, learn harmonious behaviour for resolving conflicts, while thriving to achieve personal and team goals in a group environment (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). By paying more attention to the relationship aspect of sport, coaches will boost an athlete’s aptitude, confidence, connection, and character (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). This is in line with one of the coach’s statements, “to me, this whole experience is preparing the athletes for the next stage of their life, the next phase.”

In accordance with Beswick (2010), coaches begin their career fully focused on production and the end result of winning. It is true however, that most coaches end their careers absorbed in the power of relationships and attitude, understanding both are essential to peak performance (Table 18 see Appendix W). In order to achieve peak performance you need effectual production and effectual relationships to be working together at high levels (Beswick, 2010), as indicated by one coach:

Part of it is the relationship with each other [coach and athlete]. Part of it is as you win, the more you win, the more confidence you get, and more you want to win. I think that because I’ve been trying to focus a little bit more on that relationship side of things, some guys have a little more confidence in themselves.

Beswick (2010) suggests that it is important that coaches build positive relationships within their respective teams. Further suggesting that the relationships are succinct, where the relationships act as the bond that locks the players into the cause and fortifies them together as a
tight group. A positive relationship creates meaning for the individual, as well, an environment where players feel their feelings are being attended to. Beswick (2010) further contends that a coach adept in generating an atmosphere of significance is positive, caring, approachable, a good listener, tuned into emotions, shows genuine interest, optimistic, humorous, and secure in himself or herself. In relation to Beswick’s approach, one coach stated:

I’ve been more cognizant of modifying my behaviour a little more, as in sticking around a little longer after practice, checking in, conversing, and asking questions, like how is school? How are you? How are your courses? How are your folks doing? …I hadn’t really done that as much before. To me, practice is an hour before and an hour after practice; I have been doing kind of more of that, I little more personal, I think it makes it more enjoyable for the athletes.

The mindset of the players is largely determined by the personalities and actions of the coach and the actual coaching environment (Beswick, 2010). “It is still very much a peer relationship within the team, but I am seen as the head of the clan if you will, so I want to have a relationship with the guys”, as suggested by one coach. By being an emotionally intelligent coach, and being in tune with yourself and with the players, can assist in creating a positive emotional climate, that can potentially draw out the best the players can offer (Beswick, 2010).

With regards to the coach-athlete relationship, one coach made the statement:

Focusing on the relationship is not something different, but without a doubt it has increased. I am interested in them as people, and I’m interested in how they’re going to turn it out. What I would like, is for them to look back on this as they get older and say, you know what, that was awesome as an experience.

In respect to the R-CART tool and its application, one coach made the statement:
What this process has done is to help me try and figure out how I can help my athletes work hard and feel good about themselves, feel good about the process of working hard and then to reward them with the opportunity to compete on the floor.

That whole experience to me is what this is all about…if the process is not good, and then I don’t think even if you win, it’s not as rewarding as it could’ve been. It’s not as satisfying.

Providing the coaches with a tool for application embracing the coach-athlete relationship assists the coaches in coaching the coaches. Many national sport organizations and countries have in place well developed programs to educate coaches (Clark, 2000). However not all aspects of coaching are covered within coaching certification and programming, especially disseminated coach information stemming from research that encompasses the coach-athlete relationship. As Clark (2000) stated:

At best, the aspiring coach is ill prepared for the challenges to be met but finds a way to muddle through without doing too much damage. At worst, the person makes poor decisions or acts inappropriately. (p. 56)

The Effectiveness of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire

The coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) is a self-report instrument that evaluates the nature of the coach–athlete relationship, measuring affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of the dyad (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). This framework has received consistent research over the past decade (e.g., Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008). “The coach–athlete relationship is currently defined as a situation shaped by coaches’ and athletes’ interconnected feelings, thoughts, and behaviours” (Jowett, 2009, p. 164). As well, regarded as the 3+1C’s conceptual model, “the model has been viewed as an extension
of the existing leadership models in that it offers a comprehensive analysis of what goes on between the coach and the athlete” (Jowett, 2009, p. 164). The current usage, psychometric properties, reliability, construct and criterion validity, and internal consistency for the CART-Q were motivation for implementing the Jowett and colleagues (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett, 2009) model into this study. Additionally, the CART-Q model has been considered an extension of existing leadership models surrounding the coach, in that it offers an inclusive breakdown of what goes on between both the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2009).

The constructs (3+1C’s) that comprise the CART-Q are closeness, commitment, complementarity; the +1 is termed co-orientation. These four interpersonal constructs linked in an interrelated way provide reasonable descriptions relative to the research setting. The 11-item coach–athlete relationship questionnaire (figure 5; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) has been “validated to measure coaches’ and athletes’ self-perceptions of feelings in terms of closeness, thoughts in terms of commitment, and behaviours in terms of complementarity” (Jowett, 2009, p. 165).

According to the 3+1Cs model, coaches’ and athletes’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviours have been operationalized as follows. Interpersonal feelings are reflected in relationship members’ affective closeness as these are manifested through liking, respecting, trusting, and appreciating one another. Interpersonal thoughts are reflected in relationship members’ commitment as this is manifested in their expectation to establish a relationship that is united and long term. Interpersonal behaviours are reflected in relationship members’ complementary or cooperative behaviours; complementarity is manifested in such interpersonal exchanges where members are at ease, responsive, and friendly with one another. (Jowett, 2009, p. 164)
The direct-perspective version of the CART–Q measures three relational constructs and contains 11 items, the response scale for both versions of the CART–Q ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Table 15 see Appendix S).

Feedback provided by coaches and athletes encompassing the coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) provided further insight into the models criteria and measurements. A simple statement disclosed by one of the coaches; “you’re trying to numerically quantify the relationship, I’m not sure you can do this”, hypothetically this opens up discussion and further debate surrounding the quantitative evaluation when discussing the coach-athlete relationship and its evaluation and development. Concerning quantifiably measuring the coach-athlete relationship, one coach stated:

I don’t know how you can capture the full scope of that [quantitative evaluation]. Maybe you can and you have to have this moment in time. Or, maybe, like what you’ve done, it’s done in three different moments in time, which do reflect different phases. Then, maybe you take an average, or if you’re looking for trend lines etc.

Of note, this is not interpreted as the questionnaire being unacceptable for this study; due to the fact the CART-Q model has proven to be reliable and valid in numerous studies measuring the overall quality of the coach-athlete dyadic behaviours (see Jowett and colleagues 2000, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2011). Rather this highlights the need for qualitative approaches aimed at a deeper understanding of the process through which the coach-athlete relationship is impacted. The CART-Q remains a useful tool for measuring and tracking outcomes of the coach-athlete relationship and served that purpose in this study.

The process entailed that each team of athletes were administered the 11-item questionnaire three times during the competitive year (beginning, middle, end), providing
feedback and completing the evaluation of the multidimensional nature of the coach–athlete relationship.

Comments from coaches and players critiquing and providing feedback of the CART-Q are represented below:

• “My relationship is going to be fundamentally distinctive [with older players] because of the level of which we can communicate, is different…between the first year kids, and fourth years, my relationship and my dialogue and everything are completely different. There are some immeasurable attributes or situations not on the scale. History for example, what has happened in the past success/failure [life situation], off the court relationship, with parents/public, his/her health etc.”

• “The coach is close to me personally. I think it’s a loaded question and requires context. The coach is close to me as an athlete or as a volleyball player? There are so many dimensions to that. It’s a really wide open question that’s subject to amazing interpretation… If the context of, is my coach is close to me, is that of knowing who I am and my family, what I like and I don’t like, knows my music, girlfriend etc. I’d say probably not going to score well.

• “I think the phrase ‘at ease’ is somewhat difficult to measure or objectify, our coach is a very passionate and verbal person, and that stands out about her, but does that infer that she is not at ease? I don’t believe so.”

• “Maybe if there was a box under each statement so they can expand. For example, I don’t really understand how a kid can be undecided [on a statement], and what they interpret as being committed etc. Responses would be different if it was my fifth year captain or a
third year that sits on the bench. It could probably use a little more clarity and is most likely is affected by mood etc. The question isn’t like, how’s your jump shot?”

- “Those relationships with sixteen guys are a complicated thing. Some guys I’m never going to be close to. They’re going to be gone the next year. They might be in my bandwidth, so I’m not going to do some heavy relationship building with a player who are in my bandwidth. I’m going to focus on those guys that are outside my bandwidth. Try to bring them into the bandwidth.”

- “My coach trusts me in a personal sense but on the court I am still undecided if this is true.”

- “It’s been a fun season. It is because of the coach-athlete relationship. Is the tool valuable? Totally. Can you score it? I don’t know. Can you quantify it? I don’t think so. It does [measure] to a degree, its difficult to a sense of a relationship between a player and coach through scales.”

- “The off-court relationship is extremely important, but may not be alluded to in this scale. Our coach is great at this skill and this is a huge reason for our success…I think the scale does not measure his/her efforts in trying to keep up to date with the player’s life outside of the basketball and sees how we are on an emotional standpoint.”

- “Parts of the survey, I am guessing, is not clear to them, the merits of the survey, it’s just a word that they may interpret differently. For the responsive question, if you are not doing well, he will be responsive. If he is pleased with you then he probably won’t say much. There is not a question that focuses directly on communication [in my opinion].”

Intriguingly, Abraham and Collins (2011) points out:

It is not always apparent whether research within the coaching domain is working toward
actually directing the coaching process. As such, a consensus often has to be inferred from research choosing to generate results of the coaching process rather than for the process, per se. For example, approaches such as Jowett and Cockerill (2003) have delivered vast amounts of data relating to coach-athlete relationships and interactions, yet this work has become so reliant on questionnaire data that the ideographic nature of coaching is missed. (p. 368)

The value of the CART-Q in this study was to provide snapshot measures along the way and track over quality of the relationship at times throughout the season. As noted however the weakness of the tool is the inability to gain insight in how things have progressed in the relationship and what actions the coach may wish to take. It is this here that a tool such as the R-CART may be of great value, helping focus on behaviour and process rather than just on an outcome. Of note, it would interesting to view whether or not all statements within the CART-Q have equal weight amongst athletes or amongst each other within the direct perspective statements. Potentially this could change from team-to-team, time of year, practice-to-practice, and athlete-to-athlete. For example, is it really an issue within the coach-athlete relationship that the coach is at ease during certain times of the season, days of the week etc.? Is it to be expected? Is it perhaps acceptable during certain in-season or out of season instances?

Does such a statement “my coach believes his/her sport career is promising with me” really effect the overall coach-athlete relationship? Is this statement applicable to all levels of play or is it more pertinent in different countries? What was determined within this study was direct perspective statements were interpreted differently by athletes. For example, the statement “my coach is close to me” was confusing for some players because many have differing views on what closeness between an athlete and coach should be. A couple players had history with the
coach and viewed their relationship as close, and others only had known coach for a few months but still viewed their relationship as close. Is closeness off the court more important than on? Arguably, this finding could add further credibility to the proposition that personality trait is a crucial antecedent of interpersonal relationships, as suggested by Yang and Jowett (2010). It may be required to describe explanations on what each statement encompasses in a closer coach-athlete relationship or at least provide a comment section as one coach suggested. “I think there should be an opportunity to make a comment under each of the phrases. I think this is subject to interpretation with some of these statements…maybe have an option to add a comment [to the 3C’s statement].”

With the regards to both the R-CART and CART-Q, during the interview process, one coach made the statement:

Is [the relationship] founded in communication, respect and all those things? Absolutely. Does the model (R-CART) make me more mindful of that athlete and how I would treat that athlete and so on and so forth? Absolutely. But I don’t believe that the numerical score (CART-Q) will be that of over 16 players. It will be different…when you look back at some of the comments by the players, perhaps the dimensions mean different things to a fifth year player. For example, a fifth year player would understand the culture piece better than a first year guy. I think with the model, you may need to take it to varying levels of depth when taking into consideration a fifth year [student-athlete] for example.

Several researchers have worked towards conceptualizing the coach-athlete relationship, such as, Jowett, 2005; LaVoi, 2007; Poczwardowski, Barott, Henschen, 2002. Although Jowett and colleagues (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Felton, 2014) are clearly leaders embodying the coach-athlete relationship within sporting literature in recent
memory, a researcher would be hard pressed to reveal evidence of the questionnaire being recognized, accepted, implemented, or disseminated in amateur or professional team sports, coaches, and competition environments. Simply put, there remains a need for more real-world, user-friendly distribution between scholarly research in the area of coach-athlete relationship evaluation and application for the coach. The researcher believes the use of a tool such as the R-CART is a small step in this direction.

**Improvements to the Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool**

**Respect within the coach-athlete relationship.** Research has generally shown that effective communication requires the development of trust and respect between coach and athlete (Yukelson, 1997). Philippe and Seiler (2006) suggest that essential coach-athlete requirements refer to feelings that have bearing on the development and effectiveness of the dyad and become prominent when two people work together for a period of time; respect is viewed as being an essential requirement in forming a good relationship (Philippe & Seiler, 2006).

If the feeling of respect is under distress, within the relationship there is typically a sense of distance and animosity between the coach and the athlete, and typically, a lack of overall respect is at the heart of any problem (Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005). “Sometimes, individuals do not feel valued, appreciated, accepted, and respected. This can subsequently lead to problems in performance and feelings of withdrawal or resentment” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 74). Respect and its significance to the team was discussed by one coach:

Respect is really important in the dynamic of your team. That is at the core of everything we do on this team. It’s not founded on trust; it’s founded on respect...I do think that the respect between each other is really important for your team to be a functional property… That is, there’s no difference on our team between a first year and a fifth year…I believe
I still have really good relationships with every single I have on the team. It’s a relationship that’s built on respect and I try to respect them.

Within team sport, partnership and teamwork are the absolute standard, with work being accompanied by trust and respect within the practice environment (Yukelson, 1997). Both parties involved, as stated by the following coach, must represent respect:

I show them respect right from the get go, with what I’ve accomplished and the teams and players that have come before them that have gone onto bigger and better things including the national team…if I want to be respected I have to give them respect…I think there is a natural respect that comes with that…I believe, I still have really good relationships with every single guy I have on the team. It’s a relationship that’s built on respect and I try to respect them...our whole program is founded on respect…that to me is a really core value. That’s respect for myself, the coaches, and respect for each other whether you are the best player on the team or the worst player on the team. Without you (the player), we aren’t as strong. We need to respect each other.

Regular team meetings, individual player contact to share information and discuss what is going on lends depth to the relationship, builds support, shared understanding, and mutual respect (Yukelson, 1997). The relationship you have with the player(s) assists with evolvement of respect, as suggested by one coach:

That is what respect is. That’s what I’m talking about when I say respect. The relationship you have with the athlete and with the team and to be mindful of that, [it] means that I would take Bob aside and I would have the discussion with Bob one on one, not in front of his peers…I would say, Bob that was a really poor match. Here’s what we need to work on next week. Here’s the stuff that I felt you were not up to par on this
week. I wouldn’t do it in front of a group of people that are his friends and his peers. Why? Because I have too much respect for that kid…that’s part of the respect piece, even more than the trust piece. Athletes that feel comfortable in talking to their coach, or challenging their coach, in a respectful way, they’re going to be way more productive, in my mind.

**History of the relationship between coach and athlete.** The second dimension disclosed and considered during post interview analysis was history and previous depth of the coach-athlete relationship. When considering the coach and the athlete, previous contact time and perhaps knowing one another can occur at an earlier moment or over a period of time. This is common within amateur sport, due to coaches coaching at various levels, running camps/clinics, club teams, and having family and friend connections to players etc. If this is the case, then potentially the coach-athlete relationship can be affected due to historical contact. This is important to consider when there are historical factors that underpin the relationship of the coaches and athletes alike. Literature outlines various relationship stage models, and “there is not one stage model that best accounts for all relationships” (de Tormes Eby & Allen, 2012, p. 11). Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) outline an example of a five-stage model; relationship model exhibited evolution and termination, consisted of (1) awareness, (2) exploration, (3) expansion, (4) commitment, and (5) dissolution. Dwyer et al. (1987) note that each phase represents a major transition in how the dyads view and interact with one another. Relationships reflect the sum of experiences and episodes that in the collective are used to evaluate the relationship in its entirety. Relationships are built upon the nature of individual episodes (de Tormes Eby & Allen, 2012) and this is where the history of a relationship can matter, whereas repetitive episodes and sum of experiences can build the relationship.
Coaches and players supported the addition of a “history” dimension the coach-athlete relationship. This was viewed as an important component to the existing model due to the significance of knowing the coach or athlete for a period of time, as stated by one coach:

With the older players, our relationship has been good, and we have grown. I personally (as a coach) have changed a lot, from my first year till now. I have adopted more of a process rather than an outcome mindset. I believe the players that have observed this, recognize the change and that has helped our relationship.

Thus, it’s when evaluating the dyad it is significant to recognize the current and historical aspects underlying the communication exchange between coach and athlete. In doing so, it is maintained that the coach and athlete can foster improved interpersonal dynamics and the increased likelihood for personal and athletic growth (Schinke & Tabakman, 2001). As one coach stated:

With some guys, it’s partially based on years with me [the relationship], but also partially based on chemistry, some guys are just more closed off…I still have more intimate relationships with some guys than others. My relationship with a fifth year player is going to be way different than my relationship with a kid that I just recruited and I’ve only known since September…with these first year’s here, and these fourth year’s here, my relationship and my dialogue are completely different…the relationship is considerably different, and what I can talk to them about and how I can talk to them, is different.

Historical aspects of the relationship between the coach and athlete are important to note, according to one coach:

My relationships aren’t going to be super close. It might be with a few kids that are fourth
and fifth years because they’ve been around for so long, and we’ve had a beer and stuff. I know what they like, but if it’s a first year kid just coming in, I’m not going to know who they are. I barely know them. I have five rookies this year who are right out of high school. Some of them I know because I coached them on the provincial team. This scale doesn’t measure that.

Regarding the CART-Q, one coach eluded to certain phrases within the scale as being subjective in individual connotation:

The statement, “my coach is close to me”, I think it’s probably fair to say you’re going to have a group that’s said yes [we’re close] and a group that says, I’m kind of [close]. Then you have your third, fourth, and fifth year guys probably saying, yes [we’re close]. You probably have second year guys saying, it’s getting there. The first year guys are probably saying, no [we’re not close], with the exception of one or two who I might know [previously].

In respect to the notion of trying to quantify the coach-athlete relationship of a first year vs. fourth year student-athlete is difficult, as one coach stated:

I’m talking about…if you’re going to score a relationship, then if you’re doing this, because you scored based on this, you’re getting [an] opinion. You’re trying to numerically quantify the relationship. It’s very difficult to numerically quantify in an equal way a relationship that has the benefit of four years, as opposed to a relationship, which has three months. It’s like one’s an apple, one’s an orange but they’re both fruit. One is morphing from the orange into the apple, eventually.

**Bandwidth and the coach-athlete relationship tool.** Through the process of qualitative inquiry and following the procedures of collecting rich data from three separate coach
interviews, player evaluations, and perspectives throughout a full season of play, greater insight into the coach-athlete dyad within a post-secondary team sport environment was provided. Analysis revealed, through both the coaches and players, without being prompted or enticed, conversed on the R-CART content and themes, from there, relationships were determined between the developing themes of data (see Table 19 Appendix X). Table 19 depicts a snapshot of one singular question during the first phase of student-athlete feedback pertaining to their respective coach-athlete relationship. It outlines athlete’s answers from one question with key words and statements identified to begin the coding process. All dimensions of the original R-CART remained to be supported, unchanged, and emerged from the data collection. These were the six higher-order dimensions, harmonious with previous findings in the aforementioned study, *The Binding Force: A Practical Tool for Building and Maintaining the Coach-Athlete Relationship in Canadian Intercollegiate Team Sport*: “caring”, “communication”, “culture”, “recruitment”, and “trust”. See appendices U and X for a succinct look at both the coaches and athletes coding schema that outline support for the six higher-order dimensions.

Importantly, upon the post interview qualitative analysis process, two additional emerging dimensions were exposed. Already present within the culture dimension, but existing as a supportive theme within the R-CART, was Natural respect. This finding has prompted further inspection into the addition of respect as a dimension in itself, and not just representing a theme within the R-CART, but rather a more prominent presence as a dimension. In accordance with one of the interviewed coaches, “respect” needs to be established within a coach-athlete relationship and emphasized more in the model:

I do think the tool needs to have it [respect] as a core value [dimension]…to me; respect is at the core of everything we do…I think it’s more than a component [theme]. It’s an
integral piece similar to recruitment, caring, culture, and communication. Respect has to be in there.

Again, respect is not newcomer to the model, however within the original R-CART it was only represented as a theme within the dimension of culture. It was evident throughout this study that respect needed to be a focal point (dimension) and therefore is partnered with trust at the heart of the model, which overlaps between caring, communication, and culture dimensions.

Respect was not the only addition to the model, as aforementioned, the history of the relationship between the coach and athlete appeared to be significant when evaluating the depth and substance of the coach-athlete dyad. History was paired with recruitment as representative as the beginnings of the relationship. Both dimensions of history and respect were viewed as important dimension within this study due to their effectiveness and influential position on the overall quality of the coach-athlete relationship, this was echoed by both coaches.

Following the analysis of the qualitative information gathered, notably, design advancement led to an amendment to the R-CART. The biggest addition was the inclusion of a bandwidth component that places emphasis towards a behavioural model approach (Figure 3 see Appendix Y). It is evident throughout the interviews that coaches must continually progress and work towards mastering their craft. It’s important for coaches to persistently enhance the coach-athlete relationship’s needs to further develop their role as the leader and person in charge of the team. The concept of bandwidth feedback has been existent within the discipline of motor performance and skill acquisition; “fundamental to the acquisition, improvement, and mastery of any skill (or ability) is feedback” (Chambers & Vickers, 2006, p. 185). Bandwidth feedback is related to athlete performance, and is a method a coach can provide to his/her athletes when motor performance leaks outside of respectable skill standards as determined by the coach.
(Chambers & Vickers, 2006). If leakage occurs, where one dimension or one or two or three of the themes has moved outside of the preferred individual coach bandwidth of the coach-athlete relationship, the coach can then employ the concept of bandwidth feedback/behaviour. For example, as a coach you may notice that an athlete’s mood and response lately in practice has not been favorable with the team and staff; behaviour has changed towards the negative or he/she is just not him/herself. Perhaps due to a lesser role and diminished playing time, therefore the communication dimension and more specifically the coach-player role theme needs to be addressed. Supporting the concept of using bandwidth feedback, one coach outlined in an interview:

Those relationships I have with 16 guys are a complicated thing. Some guys I’m never going to be close to. They could be gone the next year. They might be in my bandwidth, so I’m not going to do some heavy coaching, with a player who is in my bandwidth. I’m going to coach and spend time with those guys that are outside my bandwidth. Try to bring them into the bandwidth. That bandwidth can be a relationship bandwidth.

Bandwidth feedback when concerned with the social-psychology element of coaching could foster the maintenance, development, and repair of the coach-athlete relationship. Similar to bandwidth feedback in motor skill(s), this is a critical component towards utilizing methods that encourage long or short-term development within the relationship. In accordance with Chambers and Vickers (2006), “bandwidth feedback and questioning methods may have the power to affect positive advances in performance, athlete-coach relationships, and overall development of athletes of all levels” (p. 194).
Discussion

It is evident that coaches assume a role of leadership within team sport, the diversity of leadership is extensive and remains a very well researched and discussed topic in organizational science (George, 2000). In addition, George (2000) states:

While existing studies detail what leaders are like, what they do, and how they make decisions, the effects of leaders’ feelings or their moods and emotions and, more generally, the role of emotions in the leadership process, are often not explicitly considered in the leadership literature. (p. 1028)

Quite possibly this could be the position from a student-athlete’s perspective as well, where mood during that particular moment in time during the evaluation process affects some of the responses and evaluation. Not to be confused with emotion, according to Pitts (2013), mood is different in its nature than that of emotion:

Mood differs from emotion in that emotions are made in response to an event or situation that is appraised to be personally significant. Mood is less intense and more prolonged than emotions and relate to the individual and not the event. Personality traits such as confidence and self-esteem are also not classified as mood but can affect it. (para. 1)

One coach within the interviews suggested, “athlete’s mood of the week could be a factor in the evaluation, maybe the guy had a bad match, maybe he had a bad week of training.” The coach further stated, “you could have had a bad week with the kid personally, and then all of the sudden you hit him with this [evaluation]. But, you have a great relationship overall. There are some things that this [CART-Q] doesn’t measure.” In respect to further feedback surrounding the CART-Q, one coach made the following statement:
I am sure a fifth year’s mood wouldn’t show up as affected as much in comparison to a first year’s. There would be more substance to the vet’s relationship. A fifth year who is there for a while would know that there will be some ups and downs but knowing we are still pretty solid. But with first years it’s taking more time to build…our relationship is going to be fundamentally different because the level, of which we can communicate, is different. It’s still rooted in respect. What you’re going to have if you’re trying to score relationships, you’re probably going to have a halo effect with a first year kid who’s come to the program because of me, but doesn’t really know me, but thinks I’m fantastic.

Mood may also assist the coach with calculating performance, in accordance with Pitts (2013), “mood is relevant to sport because it may be possible to use mood as a predictor for athletic performance. If mood can be found to predict performance it may be possible to manipulate an athlete’s mood to improve performance” (para. 2). In respect to mood of the coach, it’s a challenging state to be in, and must be made aware of and remain under watchful eye, at times that means being critical of one’s self:

I think mood exists from a coaching perspective. As a coach I hope that my mood isn’t wavering. But when you lose badly on Friday night for example, and then lose again on the following night, it can get stormy, really gloomy in my attitude, moments where my mood has even been altered towards the players.

The evidence that currently exists not only from this present study, but previous coach-athlete literature, reveals that it is obvious the relationship between an athlete and their coach is often in need of improvement and attention (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Rarely are we done working on athletic relationships, it is an ongoing task for a coach to grow and or maintain coach-athlete relationships. This is critical due to the influence of the coach and survival of the
athlete within an atmosphere that embraces enjoyment, involvement, development, performance, motivation, and attraction. Continuous steps need to be taken to consistently make this relationship as strong as possible. If researchers are able to find ways to improve this relationship between coaches and athletes, it is reasonable to assume that athletes will not only play sports longer, but also enjoy them more and play them at a higher level (Blom, Watson II, & Spadaro, 2010).

One potential method to improve the coach-athlete relationship is through coaching education. Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) stressed the importance of formal education and certification for coaches to increase the opportunity for children to experience positive outcomes in youth sports. Coach education should focus on providing coaches with the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and professional knowledge that would result in more favourable coach–athlete relationships (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Providing educational curriculum for sports coaches (various levels and ages) has shown to result in increases in positive behavioural outcomes such as individual confidence, self-esteem and social skills (Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Coatsworth & Conroy 2009).

As suggested by Bennie and O’Connor (2012) the need for additional personal development of the coach, (requiring greater attention personal skills and people management) as opposed to the mere technical, tactical and physical training of their athletes is becoming more obvious within the profession. Since 1974, the national coaching certification program (NCCP) in Canada launched and has been delivering coach education in partnership with the government of Canada, provincial/ territorial governments, and national, provincial, territorial sport organizations, providing coaches at all levels to flourish and improve their craft. Coaching education programs are continually developing and refining themselves to continually make
advancements within the profession; recently (April, 2014) the coaching association of Canada (CAC) and coaches of Canada (CofC) merged as one organization dedicating to supporting coaching excellence and meeting the needs of the Canadian coaching community.

There are various paths and education courses that are available tailoring to the needs of the coach. Basically three types of coaches exist, community, competition, and instructor coach. The NCCP offers various levels of certification based on the individual’s coach goals and his/her levels of achievement. The advanced coaching diploma (ACD) is the apex of coaches’ education within the NCCP. The diploma consists of four core themes, coaching leadership, coaching effectiveness, performance planning, and training and competition readiness. Each theme requires coaches to complete a series of modules; coaches enrolled in the diploma program will work with a designated master and mentor coach who will support them in their completion of program requirements (Coaching Association of Canada, n.d.).

Interestingly, the coach-athlete relationship and its components of development, maintenance and repair, are for the majority, deficient in coach education. Possibly the most important component to develop as a coach (the relationship), this social-psychology piece is seriously lacking. Much of the education literature excludes teaching coaches about the socio-emotional (e.g., feelings of caring, support, and respect) and interpersonal aspects of the coach-athlete dyad. In understanding how to be effective in a dynamic environment, coaches need to know how to analyze and interpret individual player needs. Perhaps a more effective method for improving coach-athlete relationships would be to teach coaches how to identify and then address the relationship-oriented needs of their specific athletes (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). “The greatest merit in having a tool like this, is that identifying
some big things and having it in front of coaches so they are consistently mindful of the human side of coaching, its development of caring, respect, and trust.”

Further, one of the interviewed coaches said:

It is really good to know these things. Obviously when they have to put their name on it they don’t feel that can be completely anonymous. I think this process [study] is good because the players are allowed to be anonymous, and therefore can be honest. It is taken throughout the year, which is good. It is a catch-22 here…how do you do it in the season [on your own]? How can you get honesty [from the athletes] without making it anonymous? Even so, you could probably figure out who said what when dealing with a smaller sample.

Regarding R-CART application, one coach stated, “overall [the R-CART], it’s a tool that could be relatively helpful, but it’s only beneficial if you read it and you understand what it’s trying to do and you make the time to really get into it.” Further, having a tool present (R-CART) and at one’s dispense can be of value, as outlined by one coach:

Prior to this year, I was prompted by somebody else to do some strategic planning within the program and it was supposed to cover different areas, one of them was team culture. To me that referred directly back to relationships with the team. There are so many balloons in the air with the relationship, and when you feel like what the heck is happening? To have something you can reflect back on is good, it has been useful to organize how I can make relationships with players work.

Paul Barron, a goalkeeping coach at for the professional football club, Newcastle United, is an advocate of relationship coaching and once described his philosophy as relationship coaching being about coaches establishing an association with their players (Beswick, 2010).
“Relationship coaching is about coaches connecting with their players, getting to the real pulse
do the team, and releasing a powerful collective emotional energy” (Beswick, 2010, p. 196).
Barron believes that often, this is what allows “teams to survive the bad times and go on to
remarkable achievements” (Beswick, 2010, p. 196). “They forget what you say to them. They
forget what you do with them. But they never forget how you made them feel” (Beswick, 2010,
p. 196). Having the model (R-CART) present and immediately available can be a great reminder
for coaches as the season progresses through its trials and tribulations. As one coach suggested, it
was valuable to have present throughout the season:

> It’s useful for me to look at just a few categories and focus on them. Like any tool you
> have to know how to use it. Probably more of a reminder at times, I do think it helps. It’s
> something that I think I would like more visible, not just in my desk. I think it helps to
> focus you and the program…having something like this in front of you, to remind you of
> what the big things are in the coach-athlete relationship is valuable.

With respect to the coach and athlete, this study highlighted the importance of attention,
time, elements, and the work the coach-athlete relationship requires being healthy and functional.
The literature embodying the coach-athlete relationships has made reference in which gaps
between research and its actual impact upon coaches and athletes is still evident
(Poczwardowski, 1997). Teaching technical skills and providing tactical knowledge remain an
integral part of the coach’s duties, however maintaining the multifaceted and interpersonal
relationship between coach and athlete is central to the coaching profession (Lyle, 2002).
Implications for coach practical use were a focal point within the present study; aimed to conduct
research that has significant implications for both the coach and athlete(s). The findings of this
study can be transferred into a real interpersonal sport setting (practice and competition) to help
coaches and athletes develop, maintain, and potentially mend relationships in order to improve athletic performance. Featured, are several aspects that could theoretically be used by team sport coaches in an attempt to benefit both the coach and athlete while establishing and maintaining an effective relationship. In addition, within social psychology literature of sport, there is vacancy for a practical universal tool for coaches to make reference to, implement, and make use of while building affectively strong coach-athlete relationships.

Within a team dynamic the relationships can range in complexity and detail due to the number of athletes on the team. The model outlined within this study is intended to assist and act as a vehicle in the growth of the coach-athlete relationship, while providing a framework for the post-secondary coach to implement and reference within his/her student-athletes. One thing that is clear, each coach-athlete relationship is unique, and therefore, all dyads will require to be treated as its own separate entity. For coaches to develop an understanding of the dimensions and respective themes comprising the coach-athlete relationship, aiding the growth, maintenance, and repair of the relationship potentially is a promising end product.

The findings of this study contribute to the body of evidence-based research that exists to examine and build upon the coach-athlete relationship. The conceptual framework outlined (R-CART) exhibits enough promise to merit further investigation into coach’s development, maintenance, and continuation of the interpersonal coach-athlete relationship. The findings within this study support and expand upon much of the global literature surrounding the coach-athlete relationship. In accordance with research (Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, & Jowett, 2011), “the ideal coach-athlete relationship is the one that reflects a personal and humanistic side of coaching where care for athletes’ needs, welfare, interests, wishes, and preferences is evident” (Ayer, 2015, p. 35). “Coaches need to work on their interpersonal qualities such as ability to
motivate and encourage, provide support, listen, and help their players solve problems” (Ayer, 2015, p. 35), in order to have a successful relationship.

Interestingly, Ayer (2015) noted, most of the existing literature that embodies the coach-athlete relationship originates from countries outside of Canada and North America. The most referenced, current, and perhaps influential is from the United Kingdom, the work of Jowett (Lorimer & Jowett, 2011; Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Chaundy; Rhind & Jowett, 2011). Amusingly, “the North American studies tend to focus on using previous perspectives (e.g., Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory, Social Exchange Theory) to explain the relationship, while the British studies (mainly Jowett) focus on developing new conceptual models (e.g., 3+1C’s)” (Ayer, 2015, p. 34).

Given the comprehensive range of empirical research on the coach-athlete relationship we will limit our implications of theory and literature to the most recent contemporary models involving the coach-athlete relationship. These models maintain the importance of focusing on the whole substance of the interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete. Since the new millennium, research has emphasized and embraced an interpersonal approach towards the social relationships between coach and athlete (Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002). This current influx has brought meaningful influence and contribution upon the development of theory and methodology in furthering our understanding of coach-athlete relationships.

The innovation behind the amended coach-athlete relationship bandwidth model (CAR-BT) is that it provides us not only with concern for the behavioural perspective of the interpersonal dynamics, but also other aspects of the relationship. Poczwardowski and colleagues (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Peregoy, 2002)
identified three dimensions of coach-athlete interactions, interpersonal activity, interpersonal interactions, and the caring aspect of the relationship. The CAR-BT provides support for this model by postulating affective and cognitive aspects of coach-athlete relationships from a practical dyadic tool perspective. By implementing the CAR-BT on a regular basis a coach for example is able to concern him/herself about coach-athlete communication in terms of instructional or technical aspects, and social-psychological or affective aspects. For example, one of the CAR-BT themes via the dimension of communication is Honesty. Being mindful and providing honesty amongst athlete’s each and everyday can be a great advocate towards the further development of emotions, respect, goal achievement, psychological needs satisfaction, and performance-related tasks.

Mageau and Vallerand’s (2003) motivational model outlines coach-athlete relationships from a motivational aspect in terms of how coaches’ behaviours may influence athletes’ motivation; within this model coach behaviour is directed towards an autonomy-support style. Individuals “in a position of authority (e.g., the coach) takes the other’s (e.g., the athlete) perspective, acknowledges the other’s feelings, and provides the other with pertinent information and opportunities for choice, while minimizing the use of pressures and demands” (Black & Deci, 2000, p.742). The CAR-BT supports this model within the dimensions of trust, caring, and communication. For example, the dimension of caring depicts the theme empowerment. Part of autonomy-supportive behaviour provided by the coach is developing the athlete. Getting that athlete to feel powerful; they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause of the team; empower your players; providing the athletes with ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hand. Coaches should provide opportunity for the athlete’s getting to know him/her in order to assist them in feeling more comfortable within
their own skin. “A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game” (Souza & Osln, 2008, p. 24).

LaVoi (2004) proposed a conceptual model suggesting the coach-athlete relationship is developed psychologically by each person’s authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and ability to deal with conflict. LaVoi’s conceptualization was based on the idea that interdependence, connection, and feeling close to, nurtures a more genuine caring relationship. Authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and the ability to deal with conflict are the foundation of each relationship. Authenticity refers to how genuinely true the athlete and coach express themselves in the relationship (LaVoi, 2004). Engagement within the coach-athlete relationship is measured by how committed and responsive the coach and the athlete are towards their dynamic relationship. Within the coach-athlete relationship, empowerment could ensue if both the coach and athlete inspire each other and have equal input within the dyad (LaVoi, 2004). Ability refers to the coach and the athlete’s capacity to deal with any conflict that might occur along the way with the relationship (LaVoi, 2007). Support for this conceptual model is exhibited within the CAR-BT dimensions of trust, caring, and communication. One example is the theme Authenticity, from the dimension of caring. It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” A coach should show his/her athlete’s sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing; demonstrate to his/her athletes that they are there to help them. “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.”

The conceptualization of the 3+1C’s model over the past decade entails the design of several psychometric scales (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2003; Jowett & Ntoumanis,
2004; Rhind & Jowett, 2010) that empirically measures the validity and reliability of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation within coach-athlete relationships (e.g., 11-item coach-athlete; 29-item long version; 13-item Greek version; cross-cultural validity of CART-Q’s). Aforementioned, the 11-item CART-Q was used to evaluate the coach-athlete relationship to help guide the coach interviews and interventions of this study. When weaknesses or areas of improvement were identified from the athlete CART-Q evaluation, dimensions and themes were applied from the CAR-BT (Figure 3 Appendix Y). The CAR-BT supported and provided a useful tool that could be functional to CART-Q results in order to aid in coach behavioural improvement surrounding the dyadic relationship (see CART-Q section).

In order to continue advancement and gain more apprehension in effective detail how the coach-athlete relationship bandwidth model’s (CAR-BT) development, maintenance, and mending the coach-athlete dyad more research is required. Continued longitudinal implementation of the CAR-BT is required, drawing upon contributions made by a variety of coaching contexts, such as varying competitive levels of play, similar and assorted sport focus (e.g., larger and smaller teams), gender specificity, sport types, and a combination of formal and informal coach-athlete settings. All of the above would be beneficial towards developing a greater understanding of the coach-athlete relationship as a whole.

Unfortunately, coaches may lack the prerequisite education or relational ability to build a successful coach-athlete relationship; “new coach training initiatives often show little or no evidence of a research influence” (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p. 367). In short, what applied disciplines need to generate are theories, which can strongly influence professional practice in the real world, where coaching behaviour, session design, social environment, and playing politics are all part of the one essential game. Furthermore, develop a comprehensive
understanding of essential factors that can potentially assist in the improvement and maintenance of interpersonal relationships in team sport.

Curriculum development and educating emerging coaches about the coach-athlete relationship are vital to the impact it may have on performance. Effective coach-athlete relationships and understanding factors that make important contributions to success in both performance and personal development is fundamental for the management of athletes at various levels of sport (Rezania, & Gurney, 2014). To date, there is a non-existent all-encompassing disseminated framework that provides coaching reference to the development of the relationship dyad; a niche expressing how coaches develop the necessary methods to manage coach-athlete relationships is absent.

Coach-athlete relationship building and advancement in interpersonal sporting interaction is done through gaining knowledge via practical experience, a learn-as-you-go approach. The lack of dissemination and awareness of conceptual models from social psychology sporting literature is deplorable. An inexperienced (or experienced) uneducated coach lacking tools such as relationship components is neither recommended nor an intelligent approach to building a successful athletic program and team. Within this study, frameworks and models are discussed for evaluative purposes and feedback embodying the coach-athlete relationship, but what remains limited is scientifically supported educational guidance developing coach-athlete relationships. This is not the case for many or most professions; for example, when a graduate within a school of business sets a goal to continue on with his/her education, a potential route could be chartered accountant. A charted accountant needs to be qualified (graduate) and acquire a solid grounding in all aspects of business and financial management to be considered a chartered accountant. In order to do this, training and course work follows suit. Once completed,
they possess knowledge and background in their profession that they can continually reflect upon and look back to as they continue on in their respective profession (they are trained and prepared), generating knowledge, and education before their career and job.

Supported in coach-athlete relationship literature we are at a fashionable time of measuring and analysing interpersonal dynamics predominantly guided by coach leadership models (Riemer, 2007; Smith & Smoll, 2007) and affective, cognitive, behavioural aspects of the dyad through contemporary frameworks (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008; Jowett & Nezlek, 2011); with no educational background on how to develop and further maintain the coach-athlete relationship. The models and frameworks provide trustworthy merit for evaluative purposes (in which serves their purpose and intent) however, much less attention has been given to the reasoning behind, or the why, what-can-be-done-from-here, and how of effective coach comprehension (Cushion, 2010). Future research is required to implement the coach-athlete relationship bandwidth model (CAR-BT) among coaches at various levels of sport, types of sport, and sport genders in order to provide the coach with informative tools to further the coach-athlete relationship, while continually building upon the evaluation process. Coaches, can potentially gain value from a poor evaluation such as “my coach is responsive to my efforts”, a statement from the CART-Q, potentially make reference to the (CAR-BT) dimensions, themes, and implement a course of action. If questionnaires and observations were the main technique in measuring coach behaviours and the impact on athlete’s performance, further research building guidance behind coach-relationship management would be a proactive measure. Postulating coach reasoning and understanding effective relationship management that leads coaches to exhibit certain
behavioural patterns could prove effective towards the improvement and growth of the relationship.

Of note, it would interesting to view whether or not all statements within the CART-Q have equal weight amongst athletes or equal weight amongst each other within the direct perspective statements. Potentially this could change from team-to-team, time of year, practice-to-practice, and athlete-to-athlete. For example, is it really an issue within the coach-athlete relationship that the coach is at ease during certain times of the season, days of the week etc.? Is it to be expected? Is it perhaps acceptable during certain in-season or out of season instances? In order to examine how coaches’ decisions inform observable coaching behaviours, researchers must investigate coaches in their natural environments, and go beyond labeling behaviours and connecting these behaviours with athlete outcomes (Buckham, 2013). This would be beneficial to both the athlete and coach, therefore potentially each acquiring a deeper understanding of effective relationship management.
Chapter 5

Discussion

A relationship between an athlete and coach is a challenging complex entity that needs to be examined in detail in order to fully understand the overall scope. As Jowett and Cockerill (2003) suggest, the coach-athlete relationship is intentionally developed through appreciation and respect for each other. It is understood that interpersonal relations within the sporting world, such as the coach-athlete relationship, are vital to successful coaching (Lyle, 2002). The coach-athlete relationship remains a topic of significant interest where much time, energy, and effort continues to be dedicated to research (Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Investigation behind the influence of the coach-athlete relationship on the athletes’ overall success, behaviors, attitudes, actions, and perceptions has been considered (Felton & Jowett, 2013; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Cramer, 2010; Jowett & Frost, 2007; Lisha & Sussman, 2010; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008; Philippe et al., 2011; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Zourbanos, Hatzigeorgiadis, Goudas, Papaioannou, Chroni, & Theodorakis, 2011).

Outcomes from the two studies in this dissertation suggest that a strong coach-athlete relationship is not only rewarding to both the coach and athlete but also can assist in developing the player to his/her fullest potential. Both studies indicated that coaches should consciously attempt to build and be aware of the assortment of components involved in each relationship with their athletes. This potentially could lead to further enjoyment, problem solving, improvement, motivation, and ideal performance by both parties.

Additional Implications for Research

The findings of the work completed within this dissertation support the continuation of qualitative studies emphasizing deeper analysis, detailed lived experiences, and observable
actions that encompass the whole of the coach-athlete relationship. This dissertation provides encouragement for future qualitative studies that can potentially better serve researchers within the social psychology domain of coach-athlete relationships. Scholarly research needs to continue to examine the qualitative dimensions of the coach-athlete relationship which, would be helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of how coaches and/or athletes perceive the quality of the relationship, gaining greater understanding of the subjective experience of the athlete and coach in hopes of developing theoretical implications to various sport populaces, and further the advancement in social psychology literature. However, for the field of social psychology in sport to continue its growth and prosperity, it must embrace qualitative approaches. Sport specific qualitative studies like the coach-athlete relationship have the potential for more comprehensive analyses of athletes’ and coaches’ experiences that might otherwise never surface.

Despite support for more diverse methodologies (e.g., combining quantitative and qualitative approaches), mixed methods studies remain scant amid existent coach-athlete relationship empirical literature. A mixed methods approach would employ both qualitative and quantitative approaches; this is necessary to overcome limitations in previous research and focus on future progress in coach-athlete relationship literature. The coach-athlete relationship requires the discovery and fulfillment of needs within both participating parties. This dissertation indicates that being mindful of and adopting practices that focus on development, sharing of information, openness, and spending time with each athlete, can contribute to the maturity of high quality relationships—which in turn results in the athlete’s willingness to do more and raise his/her confidence levels. Within team sport environments a multitude of personalities exist, this can be a challenge to every head coach in combination with all other responsibilities of team building, advancement, and management. Surrounding the head coach and building a positive
coaching team can benefit everyone involved within the program, potentially the assistant coach role can play a great part in the overall management of the coach-athlete relationship. Outside of the many roles an assistant assumes responsibility for (varies amongst teams), future research looking into the overall influence, connection, and perhaps bridging between athlete’s and coaches relationships would be of value. A greater look into the assistant coach and his/her effect and role within coach-athlete relationships would be an area ripe for future study.

**Practical application and coach education.** Coach education has been established as a powerful source for coaching success (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005), and research has shown that coaches who complete formal coach education coursework, diploma, or certification demonstrate significantly greater coach efficacy (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005; Lee, Malete & Feltz, 2002; Malete & Feltz, 2000). However, what remains alarming is the lack of coach education and prevalence of methodological issues associated with coach education research and coach education interventions towards the coach-athlete relationship (Langan, Blake, & Lonsdale, 2013). Coaches will be hard pressed to discover a course educating them on the nuances of coach-athlete relationship development, maintenance, and repair. As a component that is viewed as being the number one or two most important qualities in coaching, rarely, if at all, it is taught or guidance is provided to coaches. Potentially, this can be an intimidating factor for any coach at any level of competition; a message to coaches that perhaps you are set up for failure before you even begin. Different coaches within this dissertation supported the importance of the coach-athlete relationship:

- “You can’t do any of the other stuff without those things [the coach-athlete-relationship].”
- “It’s bigger in my eyes then like the x’s and o’s and technical stuff, [to me] it’s not even
close. I mean if you can’t do certain things without it, then it’s bigger [the coach-athlete relationship].”

- “If you can’t do any of the technical stuff, [as in] you can’t do them at the level you want to do them, [then] you don’t have those relationships.”
- “Well for me its number one; you have to have those relationships-it doesn’t really matter what kind of athletes you have or x’s and o’s you’re doing with your team.”
- “If it’s not the top thing it’s going to be one of the top things just because relationships covers such a broad section.”
- “The bottom line is players have to play for you, and they have to believe in what you are doing. [At times] I may roll out a tactical plan and it might be [a little] crazy but if they [the players] respect me, believe in me, and have a relationship with me [it will have a chance to work].”

Given the lack of disseminated coach-athlete relationship literature, coaches will be hard pressed to locate any type of structure, scientifically supported tools, and/or models for individual use concerning the “whole” of the coach-athlete relationship. The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), which includes coach education programs such as the Canadian National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), is lacking such frameworks or guidance for coaches at all levels, team, and individual sport. The delivery of strategies, innovating knowledge, and unearthing discovery to coaches in the competitive field of sport is well overdue.

**Theoretical implications.** This dissertation makes several theoretical and practical contributions to the social psychology literature elucidating the coach-athlete relationship. Theoretically, it extends the developing body of coach-athlete literature to elite team sport athletes at the post-secondary level of play. Since coach education has such a profound impact on
coach efficacy, it is imperative that sport organizations (local to national) and/or post-secondary institutions support the continuing education of their coaches through certified coach education programs (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005), recognizing their respective coach weaknesses. An analysis of the coach perceptions within this dissertation revealed a variety of thoughts, perspectives, insightfulness, lived experiences, and essential components behind a concrete coach-athlete relationship—many of which supported and extended previous coach-athlete relationship research (e.g., Becker 2009; Jackson et. al., 2010; Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Stirling & Kerr, 2014; Wylleman, 2000). Such concepts included caring, culture, communication, respect, trust, recruitment and history of the coach-athlete relationship. Transcribed interviews, coding, discussion, observations, all revealed dimensions ascribed to the coach-athlete relationship. These important dimensions and respective themes for building, maintaining, and repairing the relationship all have implications for national sport policy and ethical practices, coach education at potentially various levels of competitiveness, long-term athlete development (LTAD), technology advancement, and future research in this area of study.

Providing disseminated knowledge from empirical evidence and education supporting the coach-athlete relationship would appear to be a wise investment in terms of their effect on coach efficacy, coach behaviors, and ultimately, the experience of the athlete. Through the research of this dissertation it is recommended that post-secondary institutions enable policies and procedures that allow for effective evaluative coaching practice placing emphasis on the development of the coach-athlete relationship. The coach-athlete relationship is important to continually study and place emphasis on, not only in post-secondary team sport, but also at youth levels and individual sport context because it can lead to coach and athlete approval, happiness,
and overall athletic performance. The relationship requires work and commitment; it is a human encounter and therefore nothing within the relationship is certain nor should be assumed or taken for granted.

Limitations

Although the research outcomes offer valuable findings, there are limitations that must be acknowledged and addressed with respect to the two studies within this dissertation:

**Study I (chapter 3).** The study was limited by the selection criteria of the participants: the sample of 10 head coaches was small and restricted to a handful of specific sports offered at the Canadian University level. A more comprehensive study would include an increased sample size with coaches representing all school-sponsored sports, both individual and team. The study was limited to elite post-secondary coaches within Canadian institutions, their individual successes, records, playoff appearances, championships, team sport athletes, and same gender team sports. The study’s results may not apply to other populations, such as community and high school coaches and sports, as well as individual sports. This study would have benefited from a greater number of female coaches. Within the phenomenology study, only one of the nine coaches interviewed was female. As well, all coach participants were Caucasian, potentially the study would have benefited from a greater ethnic diversity in coach participants.

Another limitation of this study was related to the coaches’ accountability of their responses. This study strictly relied on individual perspectives, experiences, and memory during the interview. As a result, a social desirability bias (respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably) and retrospective memory bias by may have affected the coaches’ responses. Interview questions were open-ended and did not consistently ask specifics regarding the coach-athlete relationship; coaches may have felt obligated to give answers that
would be viewed auspiciously and interpreted positively by the researcher and topic in question. Accuracy in the transcription process was confirmed by only five of the participating coaches; accuracy following researcher coding with respect to coach’s implementation and agreement of the suggested dimensions and themes was not established. A personal bias from the researcher may have also crept into the coding process, the researcher himself has 15 years of coaching experience at the post-secondary level, so inadvertently coding and bracketing processes may have been skewed unintentionally due to the previous experiences and knowledge in this area of the researcher. Despite these limitations, this study was exploratory in nature and therefore, the perspectives the coaches shared form a valuable contribution to coach-athlete relationship team sport research.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study was that athlete perspectives were not solicited. While the focus of this research was the coach-athlete relationship, only the perceptions of coaches were explored. Accounting for both individuals in the coach-athlete dyad could contribute significantly to this work by ensuring that the post-secondary student-athlete perspective is considered and reflected in the research.

**Study II (chapter 4).** This study entailed three phases. The first phase included a graduate cohort of 13 Master’s students enrolled in a University coach education program. Coach participants provided amendments and increased understanding of the statements and findings from study 1. Selection bias of coaches could have potentially occurred due to the coaches ranging from various levels of sport (middle school, high school and post-secondary), differing levels of experience (elite, amateur, beginner), age groups (24-40 years), genders, and sports (rugby, basketball, baseball, volleyball, etc.). Potentially some of the answers and feedback from the elite University coaches from study 1 may not have pertained to some of the coaches and
coaching levels within the cohort.

In phase two of the study 110 post-secondary coaches in Canada were emailed asking their participation in an online survey, response was a combination of 40 male and female coaches responding and completing the survey, due to the survey being anonymous, there is no way of knowing the ratio of male to female responses. In addition, it was uncertain what coaches represented which type of sport. The directive in this phase was to provide further validation and clarity towards the R-CART concerning the previous discovered dimensions and themes in study I, as well, building upon the cohort’s corroboration and responses.

Self-selection bias during the recruitment process may also have affected coaches’ interest in participating in the study. For example, coaches who are familiar with the concept and characteristics of establishing strong coach-athlete relationships and therefore, more comfortable talking about its principles and practices may have been more likely to agree to participate. Conversely, coaches who felt uncomfortable about discussing the topic may have chosen not to respond to the recruitment email, or simply, coaches did not have nor want to spend the time completing the survey. Seventy coaches did not respond; perhaps the length of time required to complete the online survey was a factor. Therefore, this bias may have limited the number of coaches who could have made positive contributions to the field of the coach-athlete relationship research.

Within phase 3 social desirability biases is possibly present within the study by both the student-athlete’s and coaches. Conceivably, the coaches and athletes may have felt compelled to provide answers that would be viewed favorably and interpreted positively by the researcher and topic in question. The athletes, even though their responses were kept anonymous, it is plausible they were not completely honest during the direct perspective CART-Q phase completions.
Perhaps not trusting the process and anxious to disclose complete honesty and evaluation of their coach-athlete relationship with someone they do not know.

This phase is limited to its homogeneity of the sample in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status. Generalizability is also restricted because all participants were drawn from only two post-secondary team sports within the same affluent city of similar demographic and season/sport duration. The study focused exclusively on post-secondary athletes and coaches, the elite level of the sport and, as such, does not inform us about the nature of the coach-athlete relationship in other sports (e.g., other team sports, individual sports), larger athlete-coach ratio (e.g., football, hockey) and at other levels (e.g., primary and secondary school level, club, recreational level). Both teams were located in western Canada, where the pressures of winning are not as significant stressor in comparison to that of the states. Therefore, one might expect that different challenges would emerge in the coach-athlete relationship if the context of the coach were altered. Finally, it will be beneficial to examine the nature and quality of the relationships between coaches with different levels of expertise (e.g., coaching at the non-elite level such as at school and recreational levels) and their athletes, to determine how the different levels of coach expertise influence the relationships.

Future research should engage in measures over the course of two or three year time periods. Ideally it would be interesting to view the coach-athlete relationship from the initial recruitment phase until the end of the student-athletes school career or at the very least for a period of a few years. This potentially could provide more detailed evidence of the coach-athlete relationship development, maintenance, and repair strategies.

Nonetheless, the strength of the present dissertation and the study’s within contributed to further knowledge and its theoretical and practical implications for building, maintenance, and
repair of the coach-athlete relationship. The findings enhance an understanding of the nature of the dynamically evolving coach-athlete relationship, thus, contributing to theorists, coaches, and practitioners needs. It is the belief that the findings here have began to address the need for a practical pedagogic domain for coaches to implement, follow, and make use of to guide their coaching-athlete relationships throughout each athlete's tenure.
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## Appendix A

Table 1
*Leadership scale for sports* (adapted from Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and instruction</td>
<td>Behaviour aimed at athletes’ performance by emphasizing and facilitating hard and strenuous training; instructing them in the skill, techniques, and tactics of the sport; clarifying the relationship among the members; and structuring and coordinating the members’ activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic behaviour</td>
<td>Behaviour that allows greater participation by the athletes in decisions pertaining to group goals, practice methods, and game tactics and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic behaviour</td>
<td>Behaviour that involves independent decision making and stress personal authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support behaviour</td>
<td>Behaviour characterized by a concern for the welfare of individual athletes, positive group atmosphere, and warm interpersonal relations with members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
<td>Behaviour that reinforces an athlete by recognizing and rewarding good performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

**Table 2**  
*Coach evaluation questionnaire (CEQ) (adapted from Rushall & Wiznuk, 1985)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The coach is dedicated to the sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The coach is patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The coach communicates with the athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The coach uses abusive and foul language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The coach dresses appropriately, setting a good example for athletes to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The coach is a source of motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The coach’s judgment is based on reasoning and is well thought-out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The coach is strict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The coach gives attention to each athlete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The coach encourages athletes even after a loss or defeat in competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The coach’s physical appearance sets a good example for the athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The coach has a sense of humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel that I can trust the coach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I like the coach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I respect the coach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The coach is interested in me as a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The coach finds ways to make all the athletes feel good about themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>At meetings of athletes, the coach gives everyone a chance to make their opinions known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The coach sets a positive example during competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The coach’s conduct toward athletes at competitions is sportsmanlike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The coach’s conduct toward officials at competitions is sportsmanlike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The coach encourages social activities for the athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The coach is interested in the athlete’s schoolwork or occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The coach provides training sessions that are organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The coach is in command during practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The coach is concerned about the health and safety of the athletes during practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The coach makes the best use of the time available for practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The coach interacts with each athlete at training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The coach encourages athletes to keep logbooks so they can measure their own improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The coach makes sure the athletes are prepared physically for each competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>The coach’s instructions are easily understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The goals that the coach sets for the athletes are possible to achieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>After a performance, the coach indicates the good part of the performance but also points out the areas that could be improved upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The coach knows how to teach difficult skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The coach attends clinics and workshops to stay abreast of new coaching methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The coach knows when to use discipline and when not to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C

Table 3
*CART-Q direct and metaperspective version (11-item version; adapted from Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Meta)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>1. My coach (athlete) likes me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. My coach (athlete) trusts me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. My coach (athlete) respects me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. My coach (athlete) appreciates the sacrifices I have experienced to improve performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Meta)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>5. My coach (athlete) is committed to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. My coach (athlete) is close to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. My coach (athlete) believes that his/her sport career is promising with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Meta)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity</td>
<td>8. My coach (athlete) is at ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. My coach (athlete) is responsive to my efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. My coach (athlete) is ready to do his/her best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. My coach (athlete) adopts a friendly stance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Figure 1: COMPASS model (adapted from Rhind & Jowett, 2010)
## Appendix E

Table 4  
*Big 5 dimensions of personality and human behaviour (adapted from Jackson et al. 2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Extraversion:</th>
<th>This trait includes characteristics such as excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and high amounts of emotional expressiveness.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Agreeableness:</td>
<td>This personality dimension includes attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection, and other pro-social behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conscientiousness:</td>
<td>Common features of this dimension include high levels of thoughtfulness, with good impulse control and goal-directed behaviours. Those high in conscientiousness tend to be organized and mindful of details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neuroticism:</td>
<td>Individuals high in this trait tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability, and sadness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Openness to experience:</td>
<td>This trait features characteristics such as imagination and insight, and those high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 5
**Psychological constructs, attachment styles (adapted from Ainsworth et al. (1978))**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Type</th>
<th>As a Child</th>
<th>As an Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Able to separate from parent</td>
<td>Have trusting, lasting relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek comfort for parents when frightened</td>
<td>Tend to have good self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Return of parents is met with positive emotions</td>
<td>Comfortable sharing feelings with friends and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefers parents to strangers</td>
<td>Seek out social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious-ambivalent</td>
<td>May be wary of strangers</td>
<td>Reluctant to become close to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become greatly distressed with the parent leaves</td>
<td>Worry that their partner does not love them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not appear to be comforted by the return of the parent</td>
<td>Become very distraught when a relationship ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>May avoid parents</td>
<td>May have problems with intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not seek much comfort or contact from parents</td>
<td>Invest little emotion in social and romantic relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows little or no preference between parent and stranger</td>
<td>Unable or unwilling to share thoughts and feelings with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Table 6
11-strategies and mechanisms associated with the development of key mental toughness characteristics (adapted from Gucciardi et al., 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Mentally tough” pole</th>
<th>“Mentally weak” pole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-belief</td>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-ethic</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal values</td>
<td>Poor integrity &amp; personal philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td>Extrinsically and unmotivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough attitude</td>
<td>Weak attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration &amp; focus</td>
<td>Distractible and unfocussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Fragile mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to handle pressure</td>
<td>Anxious and panicky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Emotionally immature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport intelligence</td>
<td>Lack of sport knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical toughness</td>
<td>Weak sense of physical toughness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix H

Table 7
17-item, three-factor (affective, normative, continuance) representation of commitment within coach-athlete relationships and team sports (adapted from Jackson et al. 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Relationship- and Team-Based Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective Commitment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my sporting life with this coach [team].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel as if my coach’s [this team’s] problems are my own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging in my relationship with this coach [to this team].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I do not feel emotionally attached to my relationship with this coach [this team].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My relationship with this coach [being part of this team] has a great deal of personal meaning for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Normative Commitment**                  |
| 6. I do not feel any obligation to remain with this coach [team]. |
| 7. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my relationship with this coach [this team] now. |
| 8. I would feel guilty if I left this coach [team] now. |
| 9. This coach [team] deserves my loyalty. |
| 10. I would not leave this coach [team] right now because I have a sense of obligation to him/her [the people in it]. |
| 11. I owe a great deal to this coach [team]. |

| **Continuance Commitment**                |
| 12. Right now, staying with this coach [team] is a matter of necessity as much as desire. |
| 13. I feel that I have too few other options to consider leaving this coach [team]. |
| 14. If I had not already put so much of myself into this relationship [team], I might consider playing under a different coach [joining a different team]. |
| 15. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this coach [team] would be the lack of available alternative coaches [teams]. |
| 16. It would be very hard for me to leave this coach [team] right now, even if I wanted to. |
| 17. Too much of my sporting life would be disrupted if I decided to leave this coach [team] now. |
Appendix I

Table 8  
*Behaviour alteration techniques (22 Item; BAT’s adapted from Kearney et al., 1984)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Reward From Behaviour</th>
<th>Deferred Reward From Behaviour</th>
<th>Reward from Coach</th>
<th>Reward from Other</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Punishment From Behaviour</th>
<th>Punishment From Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punishment From Others</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Coach-Player Relationship: Pos.</td>
<td>Coach-Player Relationship: Neg.</td>
<td>Legitimate Higher Authority</td>
<td>Legitimate Coach Authority</td>
<td>Personal Player Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility to Team</td>
<td>Normative Rules</td>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Peer Modeling</td>
<td>Coach Modeling</td>
<td>Expert Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix J

Table 9

*Expression of positive and negative emotions (adapted from Sagar & Jowett, 2012)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression of Positive Emotions</th>
<th>Expression of Negative Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being calm and relaxed, congratulating the athletes, showing positive appearance and outlook (expression of positive emotions)</td>
<td>Anger, disappointment (expression of negative emotions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving athletes feedback and instructions on performance (provision of post-competition analyses)</td>
<td>Aggression, blame (hostile reactions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting, consoling, reassuring (encouragement and motivation)</td>
<td>Threat, punishment (punitive behaviours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K

Table 10
*A ‘snap shot’ outlining the phenomenological epoché and complete coach interview questions. Table illustrates a single interview question, a single coach response, and a prospective dimension and sub-theme(s) derived from the meaningful units of the coach response.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach Interview Open-ended Questions:</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Meaningful units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How would you describe what has lead to your success thus far?</td>
<td>What does the coach-athlete relationship mean to you?</td>
<td>• Trust</td>
<td>• Honesty</td>
<td>• They got to trust you, and you got to trust them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What does coach athlete relationship mean to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistency</td>
<td>• For me it’s a different relationship like they have to trust you and in order for them to trust you; you can’t screw up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do these relationships impact your success?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do relationships develop? Examples and common elements?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In order for you to trust them you need to be a little bit more lenient because they are at the university level they are still kids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What about maintaining the relationships? Examples?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You can’t turn on them for little mistakes, but you can’t ignore them either.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We all encounter challenges in relationships, how do you deal with those? Examples common issues? Successes? Failures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In order for kids to trust you, you have to be honest with them everyday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Have you or your relationships with student-athletes changed over time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You’ve got to stay within your personality and you’ve got to be honest every day. And sometimes honesty isn’t what they want to hear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Earlier you told me about a number of things that lead to your success, how does relationships rank? In what way and any specifics?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• You have to be consistent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response: Coach 3

• Trust

• Honesty

• Consistency

• They got to trust you, and you got to trust them

• For me it’s a different relationship like they have to trust you and in order for them to trust you; you can’t screw up

• You can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever

• In order for you to trust them you need to be a little bit more lenient because they are at the university level they are still kids

• You can’t turn on them for little mistakes, but you can’t ignore them either.

• In order for kids to trust you, you have to be honest with them everyday

• You’ve got to stay within your personality and you’ve got to be honest every day. And sometimes honesty isn’t what they want to hear.

• You have to be consistent

• Just have to be an everyday thing. And if you can’t keep it an everyday thing then you’re going to lose trust

• We just tell them where they stand and how they can move up and why they are moving down.

• We don’t pretend that they’re not moving down, like we don’t assume that they know because you’re mad at them or something, if they realize they’re moving down we tell them.
Appendix L

Free and informed consent for CIS coaches

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Coach-athlete Relationships: An in depth look from the perspective of elite Canadian University coaches; that is being conducted by Craig Behan and Dr. John Meldrum.

Craig Behan is PhD student in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and will be working as the primary researcher on this project. Dr. Meldrum is an Assistant Professor in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria. You may contact him if you have further questions by email at jmeldrum@uvic.ca or by phone at 250 721-8392.

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this research project is to gain perspective from a social-psychology perspective on the coach-athlete relationship from the viewpoint of selected Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) head coaches. The most successful coaches within the past the 10 years in their respective sports will be chosen and interviewed (based on specific criteria). The criteria required to meet interview standards are as follows: two or more championships; multiple trips to their respective sporting national championships; and an above average high win/loss ratio. Sports that will be included within this study will be from the “traditional team” university sports; as part of the requirement, both men’s and women’s sport must be offered; these include volleyball, soccer, basketball, rugby and hockey.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because it will look into the effectiveness of the coach-athlete relationship from a successful elite team head coach perspective; optimistically assist in the discovery of what lies at the center of the coach-athlete relationship. Working so closely together, coaches and athletes form significant relationships and become more involved in aspects of each other’s lives within and out of the sport context. We would like to know and understand how vital the coach-athlete relationship is in order to achieve championship status. The established coach-athlete relationship is believed to create a productive environment for athletes to be successful in and paves the way for enhanced performance, psychological well-being, trust, respect, and motivation (all very important in the area of social psychology in sport). We are hopeful that this research will provide a more informed, methodical and enlightened route in establishing the coach-athlete relationship in team sports.

Participants Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study because you are the head coach at a Canadian University level and have achieved consistent championship level success within your sport and or program.

What is involved?
If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include participating in an individual interview and reviewing you transcribed comments following that interview.

Audio-tapes/and-written notes, observations/ will be taken. A transcription will be made and shared with you.

Inconvenience
Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including your time of 45 min to 1 hour for an interview and approximately 30 min to review the transcript of that interview.

Risks
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.
Benefits
The participant may learn from the study some technique, tool or strategy that may help their coaching. Although exploratory in nature findings that move toward a better understanding of the coach-athlete relationship, its formation, maintenance and impact may have a positive impact on coaching, on athletes and on the overall state of coaching knowledge.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in any way and will be destroyed.

Anonymity
Given the nature of this study, face to face discussions, anonymity is not possible however you identity will not be reveal and will be protected beyond the research team.

Confidentiality
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by the use of pseudonyms and changed location or other identifiers in all oral and written work. Of note, limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants. All efforts will be used to protect confidentiality such as the use of pseudonyms; the changing of places and other identifying information but due to the small number of people eligible for the focus of this study confidentiality may be limited.

Dissemination of Results
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways academic papers and presentation and in more general forms through speaker’s bureau or other presentation to those in a similar role as yourself. In addition, a copy will be sent to the participant(s) outlining the results.

Disposal of Data
The erasing of any electronic or digital material and the confidential shredding of paper material will dispose of data from this study in 5 years.

Contacts
Please contact the lead researcher on this project PhD student Craig Behan cbehan@uvic.ca (250) 686-8151 and Dr. John Meldrum jmeldrum@uvic.ca or at (250) 721-8392 if you have any questions.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project.

__________________________  ______________________  __________________
Name of Participant            Signature             Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
Appendix M

Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool

Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation demonstrating the interrelationship of the themes and showing the “whole” essence of common factors associated with the Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Tool (R-CART)

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# Appendix N

## Table 11

*Coach interview and intervention guide, post athlete questionnaire and feedback*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport B intervention intent: to provide constructive feedback, not destructive, and no pointless criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Since our meeting back in the summer, did you begin paying more attention to your coach-athlete relationships heading into the new season? Any specific thoughts, areas or behaviours that you wanted to focus on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are your early thoughts on this year's team and your relationships with the team overall? Have there been any behaviours that you have focused more so on or newly introduced to develop your relationships?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport B - Strengths (85%+) Agree to Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport B - Weaknesses (35%+) Agree somewhat, Undecided, Disagree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From what has been shared today; what are your immediate thoughts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making it personal (Caring) --- Authenticity (Caring) --- Making it personal (Caring) --- Trust (Trust) --- Consistency (Communication) --- One on one listening (Communication)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix O

Masters coach cohort tool & trustworthiness procedure

Coach-athlete relationship tool (R-CART)

Tool Validation:

* Using the Likert Scale for each statement below, indicate the level of agreement you have in accordance within its respective theme.
  - (5) Strongly Agree
  - (4) Agree
  - (3) Undecided
  - (2) Disagree
  - (1) Strongly Disagree

Dimension 1: Culture - Culture creates an environment in which team members, think alike, talk alike, and act alike so they can support and reinforce the best in one another.

  Theme 1: Climate - Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a “good atmosphere” amongst the players, coaches and staff.

  It’s important that the athlete-athlete relationship is there first. If that’s there first and they’re enjoying it and they’re having a good time, they’re meshing with their teammates, and the cohesion is there, environment will be pretty good


Build what you do in your team room; there are lots of antidotes lots of pictures up and different things, articles, in our dressing room because I think the tradition is important


They have to see a process, that they want to be a part of and that they recognize as valuable


Theme 2: Credibility - Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernandez-Broome & Hughes, 2004)

Essentially you are relying on these relationships to assist with your credibility


I think the day-to-day routine, will maintain or keep that credibility and build a relationship. I think relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people


Theme 3: Natural respect - The majority of coaches would likely suggest that a coach “needs to be respected”; “if a coach does not have the respect from the team, you might as well pack your bags.” Respect can develop through many avenues within a team; the more respect you have from each component of within the team, the more successful the painting is going to be at the end.”

You get respect by hard work and being consistent; treating every athlete fairly (not necessarily equal); consistent in the messaging
I think when there is a respect and athletes believe they are being treated fairly and openly, then their willingness to follow that leader and that leaders’ decisions and path are in place.

The bottom line is players have to play for you – they have to play for you and they have to believe in what you are doing so – you know I can roll out a tactical plan and it might be crazy but if they respect me and they believe in me, they buy into it.

Theme 4: Method to madness - There needs to be a ‘method to the madness’ so to speak when striving for respect and credibility within coach-athlete relationships. Even though it may appear to be crazy, there is an effective plan in place.

With 19 year old kids, certainly if you don’t have success, they tend to question more, if you have success they tend to assume there is a method to the madness a little bit more

I have to show them that I have a better idea then they think

I guess at the end of the day you still have a plan that, hey we need to get these kids to do this in order to be successful, but now we need to get them to believe that this is what they want to do

Theme 5: Practice setting - Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.” “It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition” (Frey, Laguna & Ravizza, 2003, p. 115).

I make certain that I go around to practice and say hi to everybody. How was history class this morning? Know what they’re classes are. How was the assignment you worked on last week?

On court and in other environments, I try and tell myself to emotionally engage the positive experience, but intellectually engage the negative experience

I personally develop relationships with the guys through training/practice. They come and see me and again a lot of that is sorted out at training. Whether it is before practice or even sometimes during training

Theme 6: Player fit - Teams need strong team players to perform well. Often defined in trait terms; solid team players are described as dependable, flexible, or cooperative (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, & O’Shea, 2006). Player Fit is in reference to the obvious elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism and skill level.

This program is not for every person, if you have a great work ethic and you have a great attitude and you want to get better and you’re willing to do that type of stuff than this is a great program for you.

I don’t recruit guys who I think will be leaders. I recruit guys who I think are good players who seem like decent people

Be careful don’t fall in love with talent; you’re not breaking a rule or anything, but you may be allowing certain aspects of team culture to slide and your rationalizing it, well this kid, you know, for this reason...its critical whom you bring into the group

Dimension II: Caring - “reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete feel emotionally attached” (Jowett, 2006, p.70). According to Fry and Gano-Overway (2010), “This is seen as an important component of an effective relationship that allows the relationship to thrive and lead to a long term commitment among the athlete and coach that could foster psychological well-being” (p. 295).
Theme 1: Making it personal - Within the dimension of Caring, coaches expressed that each relationship you have with a player is diverse. It is important that student-athletes and team members feel valued and cared for as individuals, and the need for coaches to always have their athletes’ best interests at heart.

You can be consistent with the team, knowing that some people need a little bit more care, or more attention

In terms of developing the relationship; asking questions about them and their lives; interest beyond them being an athlete

Finding out what their needs are, which I think is really important

Theme 2: Authenticity – It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.”

My dad was a salesman, and I always resented his ability to pretend to like people, and pretend to observe people, when I knew in fact he didn’t

I think that when you show people sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing, and that you show that you are there to help them, that you are a good listener, and that you listen far more than you talk, they appreciate that.

Regardless of where they are at, you accept them and that you care for them regardless

Theme 3: Empowerment - Athletes want to feel powerful, they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause; as well, athletes want to achieve and succeed both individually and as a supporting team member. A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game” (Souza & Oslin, 2008, p. 24).

Empower them and give him/her some control; talking to the athlete about some of the plans that we were making, you know asking him/her what their opinion is in certain situations; ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hands

The athlete felt empowered and I was hopefully meeting their needs; I guess that’s what it’s about is just trying to figure out what they need the most

Spend more time on just developing the relationships, for them to get to know me and feel comfortable in their skin

Dimension III: Communication - “communication is the building block of all relationships” (p. 445). Talk, self-disclosure, and dialogue, are considered components of communication and provide coaches and athletes with an opportunity to share one another’s experiences, thought’s etc. (Duck, 1994).

Theme 1: Honesty - Integrity in relationships advocates that the coach’s relationships with others are to be honest and sincere. The values of integrity are upheld when coaches possess a high degree of self-awareness and are able to reflect critically on how their behaviours and perspectives influence the interactions with their athletes in particular (Headley-Cooper, 2010).

The relationship has to be open; communication is crucial

You’ve got to stay within your personality and you’ve got to be honest everyday, and sometimes honesty isn’t what they want to hear.
We inform the kid; if you want to change, this is what you’ve got to change. If you’re not going to change that, this is going to continue to happen.

Theme 2: Consistency - Positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust. Your athletes must know that they can depend on you to be fair and positive, even in intense competition. Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance. A coach should criticize behaviours or decision-making, and leave personality out of it. Improvement will be diminished if they are made to feel inferior about themselves (Steuerwald, 2002).

I think the day to day routine, will maintain or keep that credibility and build a relationship. I think relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people.

You have to keep repeating, and keep working at it and working at it, you know, you need that base level and then you have to build off there.

You have to be consistent; just have to be an everyday thing. And if you can’t keep it an everyday thing then you’re going to lose trust.

Theme 3: Player-player - A storied American industrialist by the name of Henry Ford, once quoted, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success” (“Henry Ford,” 2013).

Ability to communicate between each other and to be able to understand each other.

It’s players helping players and we talk about the word leadership a lot.

I get mature leaders to mentor first year players.

Theme 4: Emotional state - Cowie and Cornelius (2003) suggested that, “the word emotion refers to an aspect of most (or all) mental states, rather than to a special kind of state” (p. 7). Thoughts can shift from one to another when you move from one state of feeling into another; it is important to be in the right emotional state in order to communicate and act in the right way.

You have to get them to an emotional state at some point early on where they’re willing to be honest with you.

My guys every one of them has snapped on me at least once in the first two years. Because once you get to that point then you can get somewhere. I calm him down and then we talk; that is where a lot of honesty and trust comes from.

Sometimes you need people to be emotional; if they are not emotional they’re not honest. Not when there is a definite, sort of hierarchy.

Theme 5: Conflict resolution - Sport can play a key function in building social networks via providing a shared experience (Lea-Howarth, 2006); and within these networks, Kriesberg suggests that conflict is not preventable (2007); in some cases (e.g., Emotional State), it is encouraged.

Try and find out get all of the information possible; responding to he said she said could be very dangerous. Two sides to every story, there are always those things you hear about so I think it’s really important for me to take the opportunity to communicate.

I think that the number one thing I’ve learned is that you don’t want to inflame a situation with someone who is a bit hot; a player who is disappointed, or maybe challenged something. Probably the best way to diffuse it I, and I’ve used it in the past, is just say, I can tell this is really bothering you and me need to talk about it, and I make an appointment with them.
Now I just sort of let them vent and then I say hey you have some good points here let’s talk about it: Sometimes they just need to vent and there’s nothing wrong with that

Theme 6: Coach-player role and accountability - As a coach you must know and understand the fundamentals of your sport; offence, defense, motivation, tactics, and vocabulary are all important aspects needed to coach within a respective team sport. In order to teach in any environment, you need communication skills. Every athlete a coach comes in contact with is different. Therefore, it is important for a coach to evaluate, whom they are coaching and try to connect with him/her on a level that is affective,

You cannot be too concerned about being liked; you don't have to like them, but you've got to love them; appreciating them for who they are

You have to be prepared to spend time on your relationships; there are no short cuts; you have to be abreast of what the players now are thinking

It’s a yearlong process and every year is a different year. It’s a challenge; you’ve got to be a student of people

Theme 7: One on one listening - How you communicate with your athletes directly affects how they perceive you and how they feel about themselves. Communication can also be nonverbal. Your gestures, body positions, facial expressions, and actions are more important than what you say. “Open channels of communication allow athletes a chance to respond to demands placed on them, so they can subsequently carry out responsibilities to the best of their capabilities” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 78).

Really just listening and then talking based on what they say; 12 months a year

I’ll just message a kid and just start a conversation and generally you can get a feel for their mood on things and then you can direct a conversation. You just try and listen.

You have to evaluate the relationship to the negative; you have to assume they see me as an old guy who has no idea what’s going on in 2012, so you have to prolong the conversation to make them understand that you kind of do get it. Talk with your athletes

Dimension VI: Recruitment - In accordance to Klenosky, Temple, and Troutman (2001), the recruiting dimension of the student-athlete to choose a college over other institutions is “a major life decision” (p. 95). Recruitment of a student-athlete can entail numerous schools, coaches, and athletic programs, depending on the talent level of the athlete; “the competition to recruit talented student-athletes is often fierce between universities” (Klenosky et al., 2001, p. 15). This emphasizes the importance of the student-athlete’s relationship that he/she has with his/her coach(s) during the recruitment phase.

Theme 1: Enlistment - Relationships begin “right from the recruiting process.” The building of relationships between post-secondary coaches and high school players and their coaches can range between days, months and even years; prior to the actual player being an official part of the program and team. Enlistment phase, essentially a recruit period, is the foundation of shaping the team into a tight interwoven family.

Trying to find ones that fit into the university environment

Early contact by coaches means a whole lot; each recruit is a separate entity in itself

With recruiting, I take a very personal approach, these are the things I -- we have to offer I think you’d be a good fit for these reasons and I try and be as open as possible
Theme 2: **Quality identification** - This theme intertwines both talent identification and quality players. Typically, talent immediately draws a coach; however, that talent can be quickly overlooked if the player’s principles are not harmonious with that of the prospective team’s. Longer term, this can be detrimental to overall trust and team culture.

I try to visit or get to know every player. If I can, I hope to visit and meet their parents. Get a feel of how they’ve been brought up and what kind of character and what kind of attitude they have

I try and find the best people and I think they can evolve into great players as they go through our program

In order to be successful you need the horses, so the first part of the relationship I think is talent identification

**Dimension V: Trust** - The coach interviews acknowledged through the dimensions that trust is important for the functioning of the coach-athlete relationship. Within sport teams, the quality of the coach–athlete relationship includes mutual trust and respect, commitment, and cooperation (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Trust involves simultaneously individual processes, group dynamics and organizational contingencies (Rousseau, Stikin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998).

In order for you to trust them you need to be a little bit more lenient because they are at the university level, they are still kids

It’s a different relationship like they have to trust you and in order for them to trust you, you can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever

To me it’s simple as coach within your personality because everything is about trust. But also realistic enough that if you’re yelling and screaming you better have great relationships with your athletes.
### Appendix P

**Table 12**

*An evaluative snapshot for theme 2: authenticity from the dimension of caring.*

Theme 2: Authenticity – It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaningful Units</th>
<th>1st Amendment</th>
<th>2nd Amendment</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Players need to see somebody who has passion and somebody who cares</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The athlete and coach relationship has to seem valuable to both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole notion is that we are all trying to take care of one another</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dad was a salesman, and I always resented his ability to pretend to like people, and pretend to observe people, when I knew in fact he didn’t</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach shouldn’t pretend to care about their athletes</td>
<td>Rating a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m really pretty anti “rah rah rah, put him on the back, how are you? Great to see you, you’re the best guy I’ve ever seen today” kinda mentality</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that when you show people sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing, and where they are trying to go and that you show that you are there to help them, and that you are a good listener, and that you listen far more than you talk.</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach shows his/her athletes that they are there to help them.</td>
<td>Rating a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m pretty straightforward with the guys</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regardless of where they are at, you accept them and that you care for them regardless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the kids can see insincere. And they can see phony. And they can see….They can feel it. So I don’t think that that works.</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach should show his/her athletes sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing.</td>
<td>Rating a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A coach should listen far more than he/she talks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes I think figure it out pretty quickly, whether generally — right, this coach is competent and whether this coach has character</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix Q

### Table 13

**Online coaches survey and endorsement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100%</th>
<th>90%+</th>
<th>&lt;85%</th>
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</table>

### DIMENSION 1: CULTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3: “Natural respect”</th>
<th>Theme 1: “Climate”</th>
<th>Theme 1: “Climate”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Players have to believe in what you are doing as a coach</td>
<td>- Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a “good atmosphere” amongst the players, coaches and staff - Build what you do in your team room</td>
<td>- The team needs to visualize a process, something each athlete wants to be a part of and that they recognize as being valuable (82%) (ADAPTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 6: “Player fit”</th>
<th>Theme 1: “Climate”</th>
<th>Theme 2: “Credibility”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teams need strong team players to perform well. Often defined in trait terms; solid team players are described as dependable, flexible, or cooperative (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, &amp; O’Shea, 2006). Player Fit is in reference to the obvious elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism and skill level. A student-athlete must be strong in at least one of these areas - We look for players with a strong work ethic and great attitude</td>
<td>- I think tradition of the program is important</td>
<td>Coaches need to have as accurate an idea as they can of what their athletes think of them (OMITTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 6: “Player fit”</th>
<th>Theme 2: “Credibility”</th>
<th>Theme 4: “Method to madness”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- We look for players that want and are willing to get better</td>
<td>- Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernez-Broome &amp; Hughes, 2004) - I rely on my coach-athlete relationships to assist with my credibility as a coach</td>
<td>- A coach needs to get the players to believe that what the team is doing and where it wants to go, is also what each individual wants to do personally (82%) (ADAPTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5: “Practice setting”</th>
<th>Theme 4: “Method to madness”</th>
<th>Theme 5: “Practice setting”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.” “It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition” (Frey, Laguna &amp; Ravizza, 2003, p. 115). I make certain that I go around in practice and say hello to everybody each day</td>
<td>Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.” “It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition” (Frey, Laguna &amp; Ravizza, 2003, p. 115). I make certain that I go around in practice and say hello to everybody each day</td>
<td>Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.” “It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition” (Frey, Laguna &amp; Ravizza, 2003, p. 115). I make certain that I go around in practice and say hello to everybody each day (OMITTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix R

Table 14

Daily coach tool (outlining the R-CART)

DIMENSION I - CULTURE

Theme 1: Perfect storm - The tradition of the program is important. Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a “good atmosphere” amongst the players, coaches and staff. Coaches should try and build what they do in their team room. Your team culture must be conducive to achieving the mission your team has set out for themselves. It is a critical component within a program of excellence.

Theme 2: Credibility - Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernandez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). A coach can rely on their respective coach-athlete relationships to assist with their own credibility as a coach. The day-to-day routine will also assist, maintain and keep credibility as a coach/leader.

Theme 3: Natural respect - The majority of coaches would likely suggest that a coach “needs to be respected”. “If a coach does not have the respect from the team, you might as well pack your bags.” Respect can develop through many avenues within a team; the more respect you have from each component within the team, the more successful the painting will be in the end.” A coach gains respect by hard work, players have to believe in what you are doing as a coach. A coach should be treating every athlete fairly, not necessarily equal, but fair.

Theme 4: Method to madness - There needs to be a ‘method to the madness’ so to speak when striving for respect and credibility within coach-athlete relationships. Even though it may appear to be crazy, there must be an effective plan in place. If you have success, athletes tend to accept there is a method to the madness a little bit more within your approach. The coach must sell the players an idea, sell a concept, and the players have to believe in that concept.

Theme 5: Player fit - Teams need strong team players to perform well. Often defined in trait terms; solid team players are described as dependable, flexible, or cooperative (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, & O’Shea, 2006). Player Fit is in reference to the obvious elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism and skill level. A student-athlete must be strong in at least one of these areas. We look for players with a strong work ethic and great attitude. Coaches should look for players that want and are willing to get better. A coach needs to be careful not to fall in love with talent; players must fit into the group regardless of talent.

DIMENSION II - CARING

Theme 1: Personal Investment - Within the dimension of Caring, coaches expressed that each relationship you have with a player is diverse. It is important that student-athletes and team members feel valued and cared for as individuals, and the need for coaches to always have their athletes’ best interests at heart. Coaches should ask questions about their athletes and their lives; coaches need to find out what their athletes needs are.

Theme 2: Authenticity - It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.” A coach should show his/her athlete’s sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing; demonstrate to his/her athletes that they are there to help them.

Theme 3: Empowerment - Athletes want to feel powerful, they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause; as well, athletes want to achieve and succeed both individually and as a supporting team member. A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game” (Souza & Oslin, 2008, p. 24). Empower your players; providing the athletes with ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hand. Coaches should provide opportunity for the athlete’s getting to know him/her in order to assist them in feeling more comfortable within their own skin.

DIMENSION III - COMMUNICATION
Theme 1: Honesty - Integrity in relationships advocates that the coach’s relationships with others are to be honest and sincere. The values of integrity are upheld when coaches possess a high degree of self-awareness and are able to reflect critically on how their behaviours and perspectives influence the interactions with their athletes in particular (Headley-Cooper, 2010). Within the coach-athlete relationship communication is crucial. As a coach, you’ve got to be honest everyday with your athletes; I treat my players and recruits with total honesty - at times it is not what they want to hear but eventually it builds a strong relationship.

Theme 2: Consistency - Positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust. Your athletes must know that they can depend on you to be fair and positive, even in intense competition. Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance. A coach should criticize behaviours or decision-making, and leave personality out of it. Improvement will be diminished if athletes are made to feel inferior about themselves (Steuerwald, 2002). Relationships are built by day-to-day interactions with people; a coach must consistently keep working at the coach-athlete relationship.

Theme 3: Player-player - A storied American industrialist by the name of Henry Ford, once quoted, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success” (“Henry Ford,” 2013). It’s important to encourage our player’s to communicate between each other; it is also important to work hard to enhance our player’s ability to understand each other. As a coach, you want to see players helping players.

Theme 4: Emotional state - Cowie and Cornelius (2003) suggested that, “the word emotion refers to an aspect of most (or all) mental states, rather than to a special kind of state” (p. 7). Thoughts can shift from one to another when you move from one state of feeling into another; it is important to be in the right emotional state in order to communicate and act in the right way. Emotional state is not a reflection of an actual state of performance. Off the court, it's important to get your players to an emotional state; especially early on in the season so they’re willing to be honest with you. When conversing, sometimes you need your athletes to be emotional with you. Coaches shouldn’t mind student-athletes getting upset as long as it's for good reason. However, a conversation and one on one discussion are important as an immediate follow up, so both parties can come to terms.

Theme 5: Conflict resolution - Sport can play a key function in building social networks via providing a shared experience (Lea-Howarth, 2006); and within these networks, Kriesberg suggests that conflict is not preventable (2007); in some cases (e.g., emotional state), it is encouraged. When dealing with human conflict, it's important to remember that there are two sides to every story.

Theme 6: Coach-player role and accountability - As a coach you must know and understand the fundamentals of your sport; offence, defense, motivation, tactics, and vocabulary are all important aspects needed to coach within a respective team sport. In order to teach in any environment, you need communication skills. Every athlete a coach comes in contact with is different. Therefore, it is important for a coach to evaluate whom they are coaching and try to connect with him/her on a level that is affective. A coach should appreciate their athlete’s for who they are. A coach has to be prepared to spend time on their coach-athlete relationships and become a student of people.

Theme 7: One on one listening - How you communicate with your athletes directly affects how they perceive you and how they feel about themselves. Communication can also be nonverbal. Your gestures, body positions, facial expressions, and actions are more important than what you say. “Open channels of communication allow athletes a chance to respond to demands placed on them, so they can subsequently carry out responsibilities to the best of their capabilities” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 78). As a coach it’s listening and then talking to them based on what the players are saying.

DIMENSION IV - RECRUITMENT

Theme 1: Enlistment - Relationships begin “right from the recruiting process.” The building of relationships between post-secondary coaches and high school players and their coaches can range between days, months and even years; prior to the actual player being an official part of the program and team. Enlistment phase, essentially a recruit period, is the foundation of shaping the team into a tight interwoven family. Trying to find players that fit into the university environment (as student-athletes). Coaches need to treat each recruit as a separate entity in itself.

Theme 2: Quality identification - This theme intertwines both talent identification and quality players. Typically, talent immediately draws a coach; however, that talent can be quickly overlooked if the player’s principles are not harmonious with that of the prospective team’s. Longer term, this can be detrimental to overall trust and team culture. I try and find the best people and I think they can evolve into great players as they go through our program. I recruit athlete’s who I think are good players and who seem like decent people. The process needs adaptability for each recruit with a reminder of building a team within it. One year you may need to recruit a personality and the next, a talent. Be careful you don’t fall in love with strictly talent; you may be allowing certain aspects of team culture etc. to slide and your rationalizing it.

DIMENSION V - TRUST

Trust: Its important to continue to develop and maintain the trust between you and your athletes, it’s simple, coach within your personality. Its important to continue to develop and maintain the trust between you and your athletes.
### Appendix S

Table 15  
*Direct-perspective version of the CART–Q measuring three relational constructs (adapted from Jowett, 2009).*

**Direct Perspective (through the athlete eyes)**  
7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Closeness** - refers to the affective meanings that the athlete and coach describe to their relationship (e.g., trust, liking, respect); can be represented by positive feelings that bond the relationship members | 1. My coach likes me  
2. My coach trusts me  
3. My coach respects me  
4. My coach appreciates the sacrifices I have experienced to improve performance |
| **Commitment** - defined as the athletes and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship and therefore maximize its outcomes. | 5. My coach is committed to me  
6. My coach is close to me  
7. My coach believes that his/her sport career is promising with me |
| **Complementarity** - represents the athletes’ and coaches’ corresponding behaviours of affiliation (e.g., athlete’s friendly and responsive attitude is likely to elicit the coach’s friendly and responsive attitude), and reciprocal behaviours of dominance and submission (e.g., coach instructs and athlete executes) | 8. My coach is at ease  
9. My coach is responsive to my efforts  
10. My coach is ready to do his/her best  
11. My coach adopts a friendly stance |
Appendix T

Free and informed consent for student-athletes, CCAA, and CIS coaches (online survey)

Section I - Recruitment Materials:

Thank you in advance for your time,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study titled, “The Coach-athlete relationship tool: Further Development and Initial Validation.”

Specifically, I am requesting that you participate by completing a questionnaire/survey designed to gather information concerning discovered themes and dimensions outlined in a previous study. This study encompassed the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship at the post-secondary team sport level. Further, a model was outlined from various interviews (phenomenological study), we now are seeking validation for use as a potential tool for coaches in developing the coach-athlete relationship as a whole.

At this point, I hope that you will take approximately 20 minutes to provide your responses to a short set of statements about the themes of specific dimensions contained in the questionnaire, these statement were statements made from interviews of high level post-secondary coaches to assist in the creation of the model: www.surveymonkey.com/ This invitation to complete the survey is being delivered as a component of my dissertation through the University of Victoria Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education faculty.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or the project, please feel free to contact me at cbehan@uvic.ca or 1-250-686-8151. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Research Ethics Office at 250-472-4545.

“Please be advised that this research study includes data storage in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.”

Section M - Free and Informed Consent:

You are invited to participate in a study entitled, “The Coach-athlete relationship tool: Further Development and Initial Validation” that is being conducted by PhD student Craig Behan. This project has been approved through the University of Victoria Human Research and Ethics Board and is supported through the faculty of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education. This study is being conducted by Craig Behan and Dr. John Meldrum.

Craig Behan is PhD student in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and will be working as the primary researcher on this project. Dr. Meldrum is an Assistant Professor in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria. You may contact him if you have further questions by email at jmeldrum@uvic.ca or by phone at 250 721-8392. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Research Ethics Office at (250) 472-4545.

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this study is to develop, implement, and evaluate a tool for post-secondary team coaches to use and assist in the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. Specifically designed for coaches to understand the various dimensions and themes required to maintain and develop such a relationship. This study is derived from a previous study, protocol 12-052 (Coach-athlete Relationships: An in depth look from the perspective of
elite Canadian University coaches). This was to gain a social-psychology perspective on the coach-athlete relationship from the viewpoint of selected Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) head coaches. The most successful coaches within the past 10 years in their respective sports will be chosen and interviewed (based on specific criteria).

**Importance of this Research**
Research of this type is important because it will look into the effectiveness of the coach-athlete relationship from a successful elite team head coach perspective; optimistically assist in the discovery of what lies at the center of the coach-athlete relationship. Working so closely together, coaches and athletes form significant relationships and become more involved in aspects of each other’s lives within and out of the sport context. We would like to establish a tool that is user friendly that which coaches can make use of and implement on a daily basis. The established coach-athlete relationship is believed to create a productive environment for athletes to be successful in and paves the way for enhanced performance, psychological well-being, trust, respect, and motivation (all important in the area of social psychology in sport). We are hopeful that this research will provide a more informed, methodical and enlightened route in establishing the coach-athlete relationship in team sports.

**Participants Selection**
You are being asked to participate in this study because you have experience as a coach at the post secondary level in team sport, either in the CCAA (Canadian Colleges Athletic Association) or the CIS (Canadian Inter-University).

**What is involved?**
If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will complete a web-based survey that will take approximately 20 minutes.

**Inconvenience**
Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including completing this survey online.

**Risks**
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

**Benefits**
Coaches and athletic departments may be able to use this tool or strategy that may help and further develop and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. Participation in this study may generate a heightened sense of awareness towards your own athlete relationships. In addition, you are helping to validate and instrument that could be used in coach education programs, from the community level to high school and even national level.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. However, if you do withdraw from the study, due to the methods of collection (online survey) your data will be used in the study.

**Anonymity**
To protect your anonymity, neither the Principal Investigator (PI) nor anyone else will be able to see the responses that link to your name. In the survey, you will have the option to provide your contact information if you are open to us getting in touch with you for further clarification or elaboration on your survey responses. If you do not wish to be identified, please do not put your name or any identifying information in your responses, so as to keep your identity confidential.

**Confidentiality**
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. The data collected will be used solely for the purpose of this research and your identities will remain undisclosed. The analyses will involve the participant groups as a whole. As such, each individual participant will be identified by a number code for data analysis and by a pseudonym that ensures privacy in the presentation of findings.

**Dissemination of Results**
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: academic papers and presentation and in more general forms through speaker’s bureau or other presentation to those in a similar role as yourself. In addition, a copy will be sent to the participant(s) outlining the results.

**Disposal of Data**
The erasing of any electronic or digital material and the confidential shredding of paper material will dispose of data from this study in 5 years.
Contacts
Please contact the lead researcher on this project PhD student Craig Behan cbehan@uvic.ca (250) 686-8151 and Dr. John Meldrum jmeldrum@uvic.ca or at (250) 721-8392 if you have any questions.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

By completing and submitting the survey online, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and it indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

I understand the above conditions of participation in this study and hereby give my free and informed consent.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Section I (Coaches) - Recruitment Materials:

Thank you in advance for your time,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study titled, “The Coach-athlete relationship tool: Further Development and Initial Validation.”

Specifically, I am requesting that you participate by completing a questionnaire/survey designed to gather information concerning discovered themes and dimensions outlined in a previous study. This study encompassed the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship at the post-secondary team sport level. Further, a model was outlined from various interviews (phenomenological study), we now are seeking validation for use as a potential tool for coaches in developing the coach-athlete relationship as a whole.

At this point, I hope that you will take approximately 15-20 minutes to provide your responses to a short set of statements about the themes of specific dimensions contained in the questionnaire, these statement were statements made from interviews of high level post-secondary coaches to assist in the creation of the model https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/coachvalidation. This invitation to complete the survey is being delivered as a component of my dissertation through the University of Victoria Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education faculty.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or the project, please feel free to contact me at cbehan@uvic.ca or 1-250-686-8151. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Research Ethics Office at 250-472-4545.

*Please be advised that this research study includes data storage in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.*

Section I (Student-athletes) - Recruitment Materials:

Thank you in advance for your time,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study titled, “The Coach-athlete relationship tool: Further Development and Initial Validation.”

Specifically, I am requesting that you participate by completing a questionnaire/survey designed to gather information to assess the quality of different types of personal and social relationships within sport (three dimensions: support, conflict, and depth). The Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI; see Pierce et al., 1997) is a self-report instrument that will be used. The QRI will be evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all, to 4 = very much. Student-athletes are requested to go through the QRI dimensions using the provided Likert scale, evaluating their own coach-athlete relationship. This study encompasses the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship at the post-secondary team sport level.

At this point, I hope that you will take approximately 10-15 minutes to provide your responses to a short set of
questions contained in the questionnaire, these statement were statements made from interviews of high level post-secondary coaches to assist in the creation of the model: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/athletevalidation This invitation to complete the survey is being delivered as a component of my dissertation through the University of Victoria Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education faculty.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or the project, please feel free to contact me at cbehan@uvic.ca or 1-250-686-8151. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Research Ethics Office at 250-472-4545.

“Please be advised that this research study includes data storage in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.”

Section M - Free and Informed Consent (athlete version):

You are invited to participate in a study entitled, “The Coach-athlete relationship tool: Further Development and Initial Validation” that is being conducted by PhD student Craig Behan. This project has been approved through the University of Victoria Human Research and Ethics Board and is supported through the faculty of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education. This study is being is being conducted by Craig Behan and Dr. John Meldrum.

Craig Behan is a PhD student in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and will be working as the primary researcher on this project. Dr. Meldrum is an Assistant Professor in the School of Exercise Science Physical and Health Education at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by email at jmeldrum@uvic.ca or by phone at 250 721-8392. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Research Ethics Office at (250) 472-4545.

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this study is to validate a tool for post-secondary student-athletes to use and assist in the development and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. The tool, titled the Coach-athlete Questionnaire (CART-Q), has been built by Sophia Jowett and colleagues (2003, 2004, 2006, and 2009) but never validated for its use in Canadian sport. This study is aimed to examine the structure of the direct and meta-perspective versions of the CART-Q in a sample of Canadian post-secondary student athletes.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because it will look into the effectiveness of the coach-athlete relationship from a Canadian post-secondary student-athlete perspective; optimistically assist in the discovery of what lies at the center of the coach-athlete relationship. Working so closely together, coaches and athletes form significant relationships and become more involved in aspects of each other’s lives within and out of the sport context. We would like to establish validation for Jowett’s CART-Q (coach-athlete relationship questionnaire) within Canadian post-secondary student athletes. It is important to have a tool that will evaluate the coach-athlete relationship from the Canadian student-athlete perspective. This can potentially assist with the process the coach goes through implementing the R-CART tool (see coach version).

The established coach-athlete relationship is believed to create a productive environment for athletes to be successful in and paves the way for enhanced performance, psychological well-being, trust, respect, and motivation (all important in the area of social psychology in sport). We are hopeful that this research will provide a more informed, methodical and enlightened route in establishing the coach-athlete relationship in team sports.

Participants Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study because you have or are currently a Canadian post-secondary student-athlete, within the CCAA (Canadian Colleges Athletic Association) or the CIS (Canadian Inter-University).

What is involved?
If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will complete a web-based survey that will take approximately 15 minutes.

**Inconvenience**
Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including completing this survey online.

**Risks**
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

**Benefits**
Coaches and athletic departments may be able to use this tool or strategy that may help and further develop and maintenance of the coach-athlete relationship. Participation in this study may generate a heightened sense of awareness towards your own athlete relationships. In addition, you are helping to validate and instrument that could be used in coach education programs, from the community level to high school and even national level.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, stop responding at anytime, or skip questions you do not want to answer, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. However, if you do withdraw from the study, due to the methods of collection (online survey) your data will be used in the study.

**Anonymity**
To protect your anonymity, neither the Principal Investigator (PI) nor anyone else will be able to see the responses that link to your name. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity.

**Confidentiality**
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. The data collected will be used solely for the purpose of this research and your identities will remain undisclosed. The analyses will involve the participant groups as a whole. As such, each individual participant will be identified by a number code for data analysis and by a pseudonym that ensures privacy in the presentation of findings.

**Dissemination of Results**
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: academic papers and presentation and in more general forms through speaker’s bureau or other presentation to those in a similar role as yourself. In addition, a copy will be sent to the participant(s) outlining the results.

**Disposal of Data**
The erasing of any electronic or digital material and the confidential shredding of paper material will dispose of data from this study in 5 years.

**Contacts**
Please contact the lead researcher on this project PhD student Craig Behan cbehan@uvic.ca (250) 686-8151 and Dr. John Meldrum jmeldrum@uvic.ca or at (250) 721-8392 if you have any questions.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

“Please be advised that this study includes using a web program with a server located in the US. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for the research may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.”

By completing and submitting the survey online, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and it indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

I understand the above conditions of participation in this study and hereby give my free and informed consent.

- [ ] Yes  [ ] No
### Table 16
*Initial stages of data coding*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach &amp; Stage</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Coach Comment</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach A (1)</td>
<td>Generally speak about your relationship with your players from the first time. Your thoughts till now, just doing the whole first time till now. Your thoughts, the general perspective, you can pull a couple of examples. Whatever you wish just real wipe what your CAR is like so for first time.</td>
<td>There has been an evolution of my relationship with each guy on the team</td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s interesting because I have been mindful of this project</td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Been pretty straight with the couple of guys because I really felt that they needed to hear the truth</td>
<td>Communication – Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hiding behind some excuses relative to their play, there has been an amazing transformation in our team</td>
<td>Communication – Honesty, honesty, E state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of it is the relationship with each other</td>
<td>Communication – Player-player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I’ve been trying to focus a little bit on that relationship side. Like maybe some guys have a little more confidence, our last kind of self-doubting.</td>
<td>CAR - Confidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Think they know what their role is on the team, how they contribute</td>
<td>Communication – Coach-player role and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It's that balance between do I trust to that athlete enough to go in this situation and previously, I might have said, &quot;No, he's not ready.&quot; This year I’ve said, &quot;You know what? I'm going to do it and if it's not successful, I'll bring them out. We'll work on it.&quot;</td>
<td>Caring - Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Give me a better chance to identify what his needs are and it will give him some satisfaction of being able to actually get it</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Partially, based on years with me, but partially based on chemistry. Some guys are still...They're just more closed off.</td>
<td>Culture - Method to madness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I believe I still have really good relationships with every single I have in the team. It's a relationship that's built on respect and I try to respect them. I'm learning to trust them more in terms of their play.</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I still have more intimate relationships with some guys than others.</td>
<td>CAR - History?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Partially, based on years with me, but partially based on chemistry. Some guys are still...They're just more closed off.</td>
<td>Communication – Coach-player role and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I believe I still have really good relationships with every single I have in the team. It's a relationship that's built on respect and I try to respect them. I'm learning to trust them more in terms of their play.</td>
<td>Culture - Respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17
*CART-Q results for coach intervention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment - athlete’s and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship &amp; therefore maximize its outcomes</td>
<td>My coach is committed to me</td>
<td>1 1 3 1 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My coach is close to me</td>
<td>1 1 2 7 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My coach believes that his/her sport career is promising with me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix W

Table 18  
*Coach-athlete relationship & peak performance (adapted from Beswick, 2010)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach-athlete relationship &amp; peak performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectual production + Effectual relationships = peak performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectual production + Inadequate relationships = potential to win but little commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate production + Effectual relationships = commitment to win but little ability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix X

**Table 19**

*A ‘snap shot’ outlining the coding of student-athlete’s responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player/Athlete</th>
<th>What changes have occurred within your relationship with your coach? Provide examples? These can be positive or negative.</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Octopus</td>
<td>He tries to keep up with our personal lives (as much as is appropriate of course) and creates a genuine connection with some to most of his players</td>
<td>• Approachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The fact that he is friendly and has a good sense of humor outside of practice tells us that he respects us as people and anything said or done in practice is business and for the best interests of the team as a whole</td>
<td>• Keeps up with personal lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooster</td>
<td>Checks in with us players about school, the type of training and life generally is</td>
<td>• Genuine connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>Attention to detail, attention and recognition of my efforts, respect of my fatigue, and care about my life away from sport - how I'm living, eating etc. Care for how I feel about him and our relationship</td>
<td>• Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cougar</td>
<td>My coach asks me how I am doing, he give me technical advice, he sometimes tells generally what he expects of me and gives me encouragement</td>
<td>• Good sense of humor outside of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>He gives me advice almost every practice</td>
<td>• Respects us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zebra</td>
<td>Constant interest, further development, continued scholarship, mentoring</td>
<td>• Best interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow</td>
<td>Big smile on his face, always asking if school is going good, as well as social life</td>
<td>• Checks in with school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panda</td>
<td>He's just an easy guy to talk to off the court if you want. Still has a bit of a teenage boy to him when it's just the team he is generally a hard working man.</td>
<td>• Checks in with life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panther</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attention to detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognition of my efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Care about my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CARES HOW I FEEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Technical advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encouragement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What he expects of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Gives advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy to talk to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Asking social life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Never upset when criticizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fair but stern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Constant interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Y

Coach-Athlete Relationship Bandwidth Tool

Figure 3. Revised coach-athlete relationship tool: Coach-Athlete Relationship Bandwidth Tool (CAR-BT) copyright © 2015 Behan