Are Athletes Really Getting Faster, Better, Stronger?

Investigative report and former senior editor at Sports Illustrated, David Epstein provides an engaging discussion on the history of athletic achievement. Epstein, also the author of the Sports Gene, shares many examples of the key factors that influence our ability as a human race to continue to shatter athletic records. Epstein notes, however, that current athletic records are not as impressive as we might think when advances in technology and talent recruitment are considered.

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Coach Behavior Scale for Sport

A factor analysis of the Coach Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S) was completed using data from three interactive team sports. The study results showed additional support for the psychometric properties of the CBS-S. Despite warnings from the authors about the homogeneity of the sample, it was concluded that the CBS-S is a valid assessment tool for measuring the ability of coaches to promote a range of athlete outcomes.

Athlete Impressions of a Character-Based Sports Program for Underserved Youth

Twenty-three (10 males, 13 females) participants were interviewed about their general impressions of a youth sport program that has multiple objectives but with a primary emphasis on teaching life skills and character development. Participants expressed that this type of youth sport experience was socially rewarding, inclusive, enjoyable and not only served as a buffer against negative behaviors but also resulted in improved sport and life skills.

Hard Fact or Illusion? An Investigation on (Psychological) Momentum in Female Elite Handball from a Team Perspective

This Swedish study was designed to investigate the prevalence of psychological momentum in female elite handball. Results showed that momentum was not found in every match, but five-minute periods of momentum do occur in nearly 75% of all matches. This result led to the conclusion that athletes base their belief in momentum on such short-term periods.

Looking at Success from its Opposite Pole: The Case of Talent Development in Golf in Denmark

The holistic ecological approach to studying athletic talent development environments (ATDEs) was used with a golf team in a sport academy in Denmark. The golf team was selected because of its limited success in developing its junior athletes into successful senior athletes. Using in-depth interviews with multiple stakeholders in the academy, it was found that the features of this ATDE were direct opposites of those features found in successful ATDEs in other studies: a lack of supportive training groups and role models; little understanding from non-sport environment; no integration of efforts among different parts of the environment; and an incoherent organizational culture.

Training Profiles and Motivation of Male and Female Youth Soccer Players.

This German study was used to survey 1075 youth soccer players (U15-U19) from the Bavarian Football Association (BFV) to learn about their training models and motivation levels. Aspects of training models included hours of training per week, and hours of training spent in endurance, sprint, technical/tactical, strength and other
training procedures. Significant differences (p<0.05) were found between elite and beginner male players in the amount of hours in sprint, technical/tactical and strength training. In females, the total amount of training increased significantly with age, but the only difference between high- and low-level players was in the amount of endurance training.

Coaching John Wooden’s Pyramid of Success: A Comparison to the Sport Psychology Literature


In this study, legendary American college basketball coach John Wooden’s Pyramid of Success was analyzed for scientific validity. Although the results of this study suggest support for all 15 of the Pyramid’s blocks, the scientific support varies widely among the 15 blocks. For example, much support was found for the building blocks of self-control, friendship, initiative, and intentness, whereas much less support was found for the building blocks of emergent leaders and team spirit. The article is complemented by three commentaries from leading scientists.

Do Elite Athletes Automatically Make Elite Coaches? Key Aspects of a First Year Coach’s Workshop that Could Help Elite Athletes Transition to Elite Level Coaching


Sharing insights from discussions with college coaches and students enrolled in coach education courses, the authors identified five critical areas of need for prospective and early career college coaches: motivating athletes, managing conflict, building relationships, communication skills, and management topics. In this article the authors focus on communication and motivation, providing the reader with specific strategies and reflection prompts related to these topics.

A Case Study of Excellence in Elite Sport: Motivational Climate in a World Champion Team


This case study of the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team during 2004 to 2011, authored by the team’s coaches, was used to examine the motivational climate created by the coaches during this time period (culminating with the 2011 Rugby World Cup Championship). The climate was built on the following eight themes: critical turning point, flexible and evolving, dual-management model, “Better People Make Better All Blacks,” responsibility, leadership, expectation of excellence, and team cohesion. The findings are discussed in relation to autonomy-supportive coaching, emotionally intelligent coaching, and transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership and Well-Being in Sports: The Mediating Role of Need Satisfaction


This study was used to survey 184 floorball players’ perceptions about the transformational leadership of their coaches. Both direct and indirect effects of coaches’ transformational leadership on athlete well-being were examined. Results show that a positive effect of transformational leadership on athletes’ well-being was mediated by athletes’ need satisfaction.

Reducing the Effects of Game Day Pressures through Stress Exposure Training


In this article the authors describe an approach to training that involves stress exposure to prepare players to maintain effective performance under high demands, including systematic attention to preparing for game day demands, actual competition demands, and game day distractions. The implications of this approach for sports training are discussed.

The Psychology of Ongoing Excellence: An NCAA Coach’s Perspective on Winning Consecutive Multiple National Championships


The lead author interviewed the head coach of an American collegiate volleyball team that won four straight national championships. The coach has the highest winning percentage (86%) in college volleyball history. The coach attributed his consistent success to the following components of his program development approach: recruiting athletes that are the right fit for the program, having a game plan to develop continuity and consistency across years, coaching for accountability and self-responsibility, teaching the essence of selfless service, and getting athletes to buy into the program and perform with pride.

From Winning-at-All-Costs to Give Us Back Our Game: Perspective Transformation in Youth Sport Coaches


This British study used Mezirow’s transformative learning theory to examine the process of perspective transformation in youth sport coaching. Youth sport coaches were exposed to the Give Us Back Our Game (GUBOG) approach to youth sport and athlete talent development. Based on analysis of interview data, there was a significant change in the coaches’ frame of reference towards a more child-centered focus.