



BARÇA
INNOVATION HUB
Universitas

GETTING TO KNOW THE COACH

The Coaching Experience

1.1 Coaching Roles and Competencies

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Introduction

The critical role of a coach in sport is widely recognized, as is the influence that they have on player performance and psychological well-being, both on and off the field. Thus, in order to encourage and develop the best possible training conditions throughout the different stages of a coach's career, it is key to understand the factors that make up the reality of a coach's environment.

Moreover, both the nature of sport in the 21st century and the principal requirements involved in modern-day athletic training, highlight the need to examine all of the factors that contribute to optimizing athletic performance and the role of key figures in sport.

Despite the importance of coaches in sports, their role has traditionally received less attention than that of the athlete. For this reason, in this unit, we'll address some of the factors that affect a coach's working life with the hope of providing you with a better understanding of the key role that coaches play in the world of sports.

The topics covered in this unit include a modern understanding of the role of a sports coach, their main duties, career stages, areas of knowledge to be mastered, and the skills necessary to perform the coaching role. Finally, we will present recommendations for how coaches can work to develop their competencies.

Today's Sports Coach

Coaches play a central role in promoting athletic participation and improving performance both for individual athletes and teams.

The European Sport Coaching Framework (2017) estimates that within the 28 countries in the European Union, there are as many as nine million coaches (whether volunteers, part-time, or full-time) offering a variety of athletic opportunities to hundreds of millions of participants.

In addition to their main role, coaches contribute to the personal development of athletes, by shaping teams into cohesive units, and by providing communities with a shared interest. They also contribute socially by promoting physical activity and health and creating social bonds through a common identity. Furthermore, coaches generate economic activity through employment, training, equipment, facilities and other resources.

Coaches work with an increasingly diverse group of athletes and face ever-greater challenges. These challenges go beyond their direct work with athletes, and relate to the families of athletes, institutions, clubs, federations and fans. Coaches must fulfill a number of roles, including teacher, guide, mentor, sports psychologist, and businessperson, to name but a few.

Viewed in these terms, coaches have an ongoing responsibility to improve and broaden their skill set in order to meet their own requirements as well as those of the athletes they train. Likewise, athletic organizations need to ensure that they have sufficient resources available to meet the needs and responsibilities of their work.

The critical role that coaches play in athletes' lives—both with regard to performance and psychological well-being—is widely recognized. Research papers view the coach's role as a “principal actor” in the world of sports. Coaches, like athletes, often have to work in high-pressure environments, make critical decisions, and manage challenges and expectations.

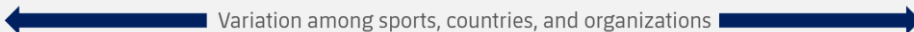
Coaching Commitment and Occupational Status

One important aspect of the present-day coaching landscape is the varying degree to which coaches are employed and the salaries they receive. Athletic coaches are different from other professions due to the high proportion of

volunteers in the profession, many of whom are parents or adult athletes who meet immediate training needs. For this reason, athletic coaching is seen as a mixed occupational field.

Research in this area demonstrates that coaches are a mix of volunteer coaches, paid part-time coaches, and paid full-time coaches. In the United Kingdom, 76% are volunteer coaches, while 21% are employed part-time and only 3% are employed full time. On the other hand, in Lithuania, all coaches were found to be employed on a part-time or full-time basis (Lara-Bercial, 2017). Variations in the ratio of paid to unpaid coaches, depending on the sport and the context, lead to contrasts in how the identity of a coach is perceived. The following table shows differences in identity among coaches based on their status (that is, paid or unpaid).

Table 1: Coaching Status and Identity

Professional identity	Combined identity	Identity as a volunteer
A high proportion of paid coaches are committed to professional standards, organization, and professionalization.	The majority of unpaid coaches with a substantial number of paid functions.	High proportion of volunteer coaches with few or no paid functions. Committed to service and volunteering. Varied interests with regard to professionalization and organization.
 Variation among sports, countries, and organizations		

Source: The European Sport Coaching Framework (2017)

Principal Duties of Coaches

In recent years, significant attention has been paid to a coach's main functions (for example, Abraham, 2007; Coté and Gilbert, 2009). New research has added to the existing body of literature on coaching functions. The International Sport Coaching Framework and the European Sport Coaching Framework, define six main functions that coaches fulfill in order to guide athletes' development and improvement. These functions reflect, to some extent, a coach's day-to-day work. These six functions are as follows:

- 1. Establish the vision and strategy.** The coach, in partnership with athletes and teams, creates a vision and a strategy based on the

- athletes' needs and developmental stages, and the organizational and social context of the sporting program.
2. **Shape the environment.** The coach works with a group of athletes and takes responsibility for individual objectives as well as the institution's goals. In order to do so, the coach seeks to optimize the environment where the sports program occurs, through the procurement and maximization of resources.
 3. **Build relationships.** The coach must build positive, effective relationships with athletes and other people associated with the program. This includes the personnel at the club, school, federation, and other levels. The coach is responsible for engaging in, contributing to, and influencing the organizational context.
 4. **Conduct training sessions, prepare and manage competitions.** Coaches must prepare for and take the lead in training and competition. They need to organize appropriate and challenging training sessions, while making use of effective pedagogy and a methodology that promotes learning and improvement. They need to prepare for competition and supervise and manage the athletes who are competing. They also need to create appropriate internal and external opportunities for competition in order to promote both individual and team growth.
 5. **Read and react to situations.** The coach must observe and respond to events appropriately, including all on-field and off-field matters. Effective decision making is essential to fulfill this function and is a skill that all coaches must refine at each stage of their development.
 6. **Reflect and learn.** The coach evaluates the program as a whole, as well as each training session and match, and is continually seeking improvement. In addition, personal evaluation and reflection underpin a process of ongoing learning and professional development. An important element of this process is the coach's efforts to support the education and development of other coaches.

The primary functions, as seen in the following figure, are interrelated and interdependent. They occur within a cyclical process of continuous improvement that includes planning, implementation, review and adjustment.

Figure 1: Functions of the coach



Source: The European Sport Coaching Framework, 2017, p24.

These primary functions describe in general terms how coaches can meet the demands of the present-day coaching context. However, these functions may vary greatly, depending on the environment the coach finds themselves in and the specific circumstances in each context. Experienced coaches typically take on more functions than early-stage coaches. However, all coaches—regardless of experience—should be aware of and strive to fulfill these primary functions.

Stages in a Coach's Development

One important component in understanding each coach's situation has to do with the differences that stem from their stage of development. Schempp, McCullick and Sannen Mason (2006) identify four stages of development:

- a) Beginners;
- b) Cultivating competence;
- c) Mastering proficiency; and
- d) Experts.

The following table outlines the main characteristics of each stage.

Table 2: Stages of Development in Sports Training

Stage of development in the expertise of an athletic coach	
Beginner	• Less than three years of experience • Learning the rules and norms of coaching • Holding structured training sessions and managing athletes' behavior is more important than athletes' learning • Feels like they have lost control when the situation is outside of the rules and norms • Less than three years of experience • Learning the rules and norms of coaching • Holding structured training sessions and managing athletes' behavior is more important than athletes' learning • Feels like they have lost control when the situation is outside of the rules and norms
Cultivating competence	• More experience and knowledge • Recognizing patterns within events • Developing strategic knowledge • Contingency planning (if... then...) • Working toward farther-reaching goals
Mastering practice	• Significant number of years as a head coach • More focused on athletes' learning, including individualized learning • Stronger perception skills • More intuitive, with a greater sense of control and responsibility
Standing out as an expert	• Consistently exceptional performance • Broad knowledge • Committed to learning and to internalizing new knowledge • A variety of strategies for a single task

Source: Schempp, McCullick and Sannen Mason, 2006, pp. 145-161.

As we can see in this table, the stages are not merely associated with years of experience; they also relate to an individual coach's commitment and

desire to learn and improve. Therefore, it is critical for coaches to always be developing, improving and broadening their skill set.

1.1.1 Coaching Knowledge Areas and Skill Sets

In order to fulfill their functions and offer athletic programs that meet athletes' needs and stimulate their development, coaches must develop a number of skills across a variety of areas. These skills and knowledge areas can be developed through additional experience, as part of on-the-job learning, and through formal and informal education, either by participating in training activities or networking with other coaches.

Knowledge Areas

For coaches to be effective, they need to internalize and apply three types of knowledge: professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Côtê and Gilbert, 2009). Professional knowledge refers to the sport in question and how to teach it. Interpersonal knowledge refers to the ability to connect with people and is closely tied to emotional intelligence. Intrapersonal knowledge relates to knowledge of self and is based on experience, self-awareness, and reflection.

The following table outlines the main characteristics of each area of knowledge.

Table 3: Knowledge Areas

Knowledge areas	Example topics
Professional knowledge	The sport Athletes Sport science Training theory and methodology Fundamental skills
Interpersonal knowledge	Social context Relationships
Intrapersonal knowledge	Values and coaching philosophy

Source: Prepared by the author, based on Côté and Gilbert, 2009.

Competence

To be effective in their role, coaches need to develop skills associated with each of the six main functions (previously outlined in section 1.2). The extent to which each of the skills needs to be developed varies depending on the developmental stage of the coach in question (The European Sport Coaching Framework).

The following table shows the relationship between coaching functions and the specific skills based on the coach's developmental stage.

Table 4: Levels of Competence, Responsibility, and Coaching Experience.

Principal functions*	Task-related competence The coach is capable	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Advanced / expert
Establishing the vision and strategy	Understanding the big picture and adapting practice to local, regional, and national goals and policies.				
	Developing a suitable vision for the program that is relevant to the participating athletes and institutional priorities.				
	Establishing a pertinent strategy that will help fulfill that vision.				
	Making effective, informed decisions related to planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of training and competition programs in the medium and long term based on the needs of the athletes and the institution.				
Determining the environment	Effectively identifying and recruiting athletes and staff				
	Identifying, evaluating, and challenging the beliefs, values, and assumptions that predominate within the training setting so as to establish an acceptable culture.				
	Identify and obtain the resources (human and physical) that are required to meet participants' needs as well as those of the program				
	Deploy all reasonable measures to protect athletes and staff				
Developing relationships	Guide and influence all key parties' attitudes, behaviors, and understanding (such as that of parents and representatives) by presenting ideas in a meaningful way.				
	Build and maintain ethical, effective, inclusive, and empathetic relationships with athletes, staff, and other interested parties.				
	Value the cultural, mental, and physical diversity of participants and adapt practices accordingly.				
	Comply with established codes of conduct and legal requirements for coaches.				
	Teach athletes, staff, and other interested parties to improve in order to achieve their own goals and enhance their general well-being				
Lead training sessions, prepare for and supervise matches	Perform exhaustive analyses of the needs of athletes and teams, with the goal of designing and implementing personalized training programs that take into account the skills and needs of participants within the broader context of goals, policies, curricula, and programs.				

Lead training sessions, prepare for and supervise matches	Select, design, and defend the relevant pedagogy, training practices and communication methods needed to facilitate participant learning in the short, medium, and long term.				
	Carry out a functional analysis of a multiskill activity or any given sport, and identify its repercussions on training practices.				
	Identify the key elements of the selected sport during the different stages of a participant's development.				
	Create, understand, and apply a curriculum appropriate for a multiskill environment or for the selected sport, according to participant needs and to industry standards.				
	Give talks during training sessions as part of a planned program of practices and matches in the medium and long term, while using a broad spectrum of learning tools appropriate to coaches' and players' behavior.				
	Perform a risk assessment in order to provide safe and ethical coaching.				

	Identify, create, and supervise appropriate competitive opportunities in order to encourage the athlete's continual development.				
	Develop appropriate competitive strategies to maximize the potential for learning and success.				
	Always maintain a professional attitude when observing coaches, athletes, and other relevant parties.				

Understanding and reacting on the field	Carry out a deep analysis of coaching practices to develop a justifiable rationale for the effectiveness of the existing learning environment.				
	Carry out a deep analysis of an athlete's or a team's performance to make informed decisions about immediate adjustments to an athlete's performance.				
	Carry out a deep analysis of the program to develop a justified rationale for the effectiveness of the existing setting.				
	Make good decisions in the heat of the moment and afterward, in order to increase the likelihood of meeting goals.				

Reflect and learn	Identify assumptions and behaviors and reflect on them, as a coach and as a student, while demonstrating the ability to carry out meaningful analysis and the desire to apply the principle of continuous improvement to your own training methods.				
	Identify your own learning needs and take responsibility for developing and applying strategies to keep evolving, as part of an ongoing process.				
	Approach the process of identifying problems and solutions in a critical, objective way, using an evidence-based approach and undertaking the appropriate research.				
	Develop, from the beginning, a personal coaching style and philosophy, recognizing the need for greater growth through learning, testing, and experience.				

*Gray shading denotes no expected responsibility or expertise. Blue shading denotes progressively greater levels of expected responsibility and expertise in a particular functional task (lighter shade = lower; darker shade = higher). The capacity to engage in meeting these primary functions requires a synoptic application of knowledge, skills and professional competences, and each coach's contribution depends on the specific context and demands.

*Multiskill activities refers to sport sessions aimed at the development of overall psychomotor skills, typically in children, sometimes referred to as fundamental movement skills. These types of activities can be part of a sport-specific session (e.g., multiple skills in tennis) or as outright multiskill sessions.

Source: Adapted from the European Sport Coaching Framework (2017).

1.1.2 Practical Resources: Working on the Coach's Skills

The competencies defined by international (ISCF, 2013) and European (ESCF, 2017) frameworks as competencies for coaches to develop can provide a good starting point for coaches with regard to reflection and self-knowledge. To that end, we recommend an exercise designed to identify skills requiring further development.

Using the list of 23 skills grouped by the primary functions, shown in the previous section, coaches can score themselves on how well they perceive their level of acquisition of each.

Below is a list of skills relevant to carrying out job functions as an sports coach. Think about the extent to which you possess each one of these skills and assign yourself a score.

Table 5: Skills

Competence	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Build and maintain ethical, effective, inclusive, and empathetic relationships with athletes, staff, and other interested parties.	1	2	3	4	5
Identify learning needs and take responsibility for developing and applying strategies for growth as part of an ongoing process.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Prepared by the author

Once you have assigned a score for each skill, select those where you have the most room for improvement. Reflect on the aspects you could optimize to better develop those skills.

With the following tool, coaches can develop a concrete action plan and visualize how they are going to work on the skills that they have decided to improve. The intention is for coaches to take the full list of skills and use self-evaluation to determine a possible score.

Table 6: Skills to Improve

Skill to improve	Note that I have	Note that I want	What I'm going to do to attain it	When I'm going to do it
Build and maintain ethical, effective, inclusive, and empathetic relationships with athletes, staff, and other interested parties.	3 (medium)	4 (high)	Include other staff and explain my ideas to them. Ask athletes about their personal lives with the objective of resolving sports-related issues.	Before conveying them to athletes. Generate time before and after training sessions.

Source: Prepared by the author

This exercise can also be completed in other ways. For example, the coach can ask a close sports colleague to assign them a score based on what that other person perceives as the degree to which the coach has acquired each skill. In this way, a coach can compare their own perceptions with those of

others. This allows them to identify discrepancies and consensus, and makes the coach aware of other points of view with regard to the skill areas to be developed.

The coach can also perform the exercise by first determining the degree of importance they wish to assign to each one of the skills, and later, by calculating the degree to which they believe they have acquired each one of them. In this way, coaches can base their work on their own established priorities, developing those skills perceived to be most important and with the most room for improvement, as per the assigned perceived grade of acquisition.

These tools can help coaches to improve not only with regard to professional skills, but also at an interpersonal and intrapersonal level, both of which are highly important to the coach's development.

1.2 The Psychological Well-being of Coaches

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Introduction

Coaches perform a critical role in sports. They are present throughout the many stages of an athlete's career, and regardless of the level at which they work (be it during the early years or at the level of high performance sport), or the stage of their own coaching career, they play a fundamental role in athletes' experience. For that reason, understanding the elements that contribute to a coach's well-being is an important factor when it comes to ensuring the best possible conditions for the coach to optimally perform their job functions.

The main objective of this unit is to describe how the coach's mental health can be nurtured or undermined, and to explore the consequences that such processes can have on both coaches and athletes.

This unit will explore the main pressures and demands that coaches face, as well as the contextual aspects that encourage or discourage good mental health. The coach's context does not just have repercussions on their own experience; we will also address how their psychological well-being or lack thereof can affect an athlete's performance and well-being.

Finally, we will offer guidelines and recommendations designed to improve the coach's experience by offering actions, suggestions, and practical exercises that can affect a coach's well-being by working on themselves and their environment.

1.2.1 Principal Stressors and Demands on Coaches

The role of sports coach has been identified as a highly stressful occupation (Fletcher and Scott, 2010). The coach is often exposed to high-pressure situations, is required to make critical decisions and deal with adversity, and is subject to high expectations. This is due in part to the complex demands imposed by their job, which requires the use of professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge, all aimed at optimizing athletes' performance, as discussed in the previous unit.

Sports coaching is a multifaceted and demanding profession. It includes demands related to performance as well as organization, with inconvenient work schedules, frequent travel, limited time with family, and the risk of being fired when athletes don't compete or perform as expected. Pep Guardiola mentioned this last subject when he was asked about Mourinho's ousting from Manchester United. At the time, Guardiola mentioned the pressure and loneliness that coaches often feel: "Coaches are all alone. We're hired to win, and if we don't do that, well, you know what happens. Unfortunately, our work is judged by the results. When we win, we're good; when we lose, we're not so good."

An analysis of the existing body of work shows five major areas of reported stressors:

- Performance stressors, which refer to stressors related both to athletes' performance (for example, an athlete performing below his or her potential, or injuries) as well as the coach's own performance (for example, obtaining results, maintaining a high standard during training).
- Organizational stressors are those related to one aspect or another of the athletic organization (for example, overwork or opportunities for professional development).
- Contextual stressors refer to factors such as age or years of coaching experience.
- Interpersonal stressors refer to relationships between people (for example, relationships with athletes or other coaches). Intrapersonal stressors related to the coach himself or herself; a lack of control, for example.

Psychological stress can have a negative affect on the coach's performance and well-being. It can even lead to burnout, depression, and leaving the coaching profession.

Table 7: Sources of Stress

Stressors	Full-time coaches	Part-time coaches	Volunteer coaches
Relationships with athletes	– Athlete injuries – Building relationships with athletes – Conflict between coach and athlete – Day-to-day athlete management – Managing disappointment – Managing lower-level athletes in the same group as elite athletes – Player development – High levels of player turnover – Inappropriate player behavior – Critical or important matches – Managing full-time, part-time, and amateur players – Managing group dynamics – Olympic cycles: One opportunity every four years – Persistent questioning from athletes at inappropriate times – Planning for major games – Confrontation between players – Player contracts – Players' response to change – Relegation – Analysis of poor performance – Insufficient results/unsuccessful season	– Athletes who want to win above all else – Building relationships with players – Immature behavior – Competitions – Managing confidential information about athletes – Managing player frustrations – Injuries – Managing group conflicts – Not connecting with players or athletes – Participation numbers and objectives – Recruitment – Results	– Competition – Athletes in development vs. high-performing athletes – Managing athlete disappointment – Managing athlete relationships – Managing athlete expectations – Managing successful performances – Olympic/Paralympic cycles – Attendance at training

	–Winning games, tournaments, or cups		
Related to the coach	–Descending from a coaching position at an elite or professional level to one at the developmental or amateur level –Overwhelmed by the situation –Building relationships with athletes –Bullying –Managing disappointment –Desire to win –Fear of failure –Fear of the consequences of losing –High expectations of oneself –Managing expectations –General enjoyment –Overanalysis –Pressure to get results –Pressure on oneself –Reputation –Returning from maternity leave –Partners observing performance –Time –Player-to-coach transition with regard to control over games –Transition from other work to full-time coaching –Insufficient results and unsuccessful seasons –Wanting to succeed –Winning games, tournaments, or cups –Self-employment	– Being a new coach – Developing relationships – Decision-making – Meeting others' standards – Not connecting with players or athletes – Planning – Wondering if you are doing the right thing – Time	– Balancing a variety of roles – Saying yes and accepting more than what is possible – Time
Related to the Organization	– Backlash from other clubs	– Administrative and organizational tasks – Self-employment	– Administrative duties – Major competitions or events

	- Descending from a coaching position at an elite or professional level to one at the developmental or amateur level - Balancing various coaching roles - Being in the midst of conflict - Bullying - Changes to the program - Club-community links - Complaints - Funding - Inappropriate environment for the coaching level - Loss of facilities/facility assignment - Absenteeism among team members and coaching staff - Not breaking even - Other people's opinions (usually those of one's superiors) - Knowing when to take leave - Other coaches - Resources and support that do not correspond to the level - Being results-driven - Watching other coaches develop and progress - Selection - Starting mid-season and cleaning up a mess - Trying to create opportunities or synergies with others - VC micromanaging schedules and results - Working at a university	- Being watched, judged, or observed - Contracts - Achievement expectations - Facilities and equipment - Job security - Lack of incentives for the coach - Managing a national team - Managing other coaches - Dealing with the unexpected - National governing bodies - New team, coach, and environment - Not receiving recognition for hard work - Not having scholarships or incentives to attend a university - Parents - Promotion - Re-applying for roles - Transitioning from an assistant to a head coach - Uncertainty in the role - Unstable programs (external) - Working outside normal hours - Self-employment	- Overlapping commitments - Coaching college students - Funding - Game logistics (ex. time, location, etc.) - Male-dominated environment - Organizational tasks - Other coaches within the organization - Parents - Player vs. NGB conflict - Tournament formats - Climate - Working with children - Working with national governing bodies - Working with volunteers - Working at a university
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Source: Retrieved from Potts, Didymus, and Kaiseler (2018).

As we can see, there are many stressors that can affect a coach, regardless of their occupational status. Therefore, learning strategies to manage these stressors will serve the coach well. At the end of this unit, we'll share some tools to help address this issue.

1.2.2 The Coach's Well-Being

Coaches are very significant to the performance and experience of athletes. In addition to studying the coaches' perceived demands and stressors and their consequences (for example, coach motivation, burnout, resignation), literature has also explored how factors in a coach's environment can predict well-being, as well as how they behave with athletes (in other words, does their style support athletes' autonomy, or is it controlling) which will, in turn, have an impact on athlete motivation.

As people, we are likely to achieve well-being and personal growth, provided that our basic psychological needs are met. Our basic psychological needs include autonomy (feeling that we are capable of making choices and decisions about our own actions), competence (feeling that we have the ability and skills to meet our goals) and relationships (feeling as if we're respected, supported socially by others, with good relationships). Moreover, following on from this theory, how strong our motivation is to do a given activity is the result of contextual factors and the degree to which our three basic psychological needs are met—or not—by participating in said activity. Contextual factors include how the environment is structured (for example, conflict between departments, organizational hierarchy) and the people within that sphere (for example, athletes, parents, and coordinators). Self Determination Theory (SDT) stipulates that if the context (for example, club policy) fosters support for these three basic psychological needs, the coach is more likely to feel that those needs are satisfied.

When those needs are fulfilled, the coach tends to acquire stronger motivation. In other words, they are independently motivated with regard to their job—they participate voluntarily and by choice, and they identify with their work. Autonomous motivation is seen as stronger motivation because it supports positive outcomes such as better learning, interest, effort, persistence, well-being, and good mental health for people who are autonomously motivated.

On the other hand, if the setting does not foster their needs being satisfied, the coach is more likely to feel that his or her are not being met. People tend to feel like their needs are not being met when they feel as if they are being pressured to follow certain guidelines or perform specific actions (in other words, their autonomy is undermined), they feel useless, incompetent, and criticized (their competence is undermined); or they feel rejected by others (their relationships are undermined). Coaches who feel that their basic psychological needs are not being met are likely to develop a controlled motivation with regard to their job. This means that they perform it due to pressure and external factors such as pay, the satisfaction of others, or to avoid feelings of blame. Controlled motivation is seen as low-quality because it leads to negative outcomes such as burnout, poor performance, distress, and poor mental health.

The Well-being of Coaches: Contextual Precedents and Their Consequences.

In Rocchi and Pelletier's work (2017) using the lens of Social Determination Theory, eight contextual factors that influence a coach's well-being were identified. They are:

Administrative. Related to what clubs and organizations promote through their policies and value systems. Many coaches feel pressured when working in clubs where a competitive environment is prized above all else. Organizations where coaches feel less support have been shown to have a negative influence on a coach's well-being, while in clubs where coaches feel supported, they experience a greater degree of well-being and more positive outcomes.

Job security. When the coach feels that their position is secure and stable, they will feel that their basic psychological needs are being met (Stebbing, Taylor, Spray, Ntoumanis, 2012) and psychological well-being will be positively impacted. Clubs can take this into account by offering contracts that last for more than one season.

Professional development. Formal training, mentoring initiatives, and educational activities contribute to a coach's development (Allan and Shaw, 2009) and well-being (Stebbing et al., 2012).

These educational activities must consider both collective needs and the coach's individual needs.

Parents. Parental demands and expectations are one of the main stressors for non-elite coaches (Knight and Harwood, 2009). Resources that are useful to address this issue include training courses aimed at parents, and training for coaches designed to help them learn to work with the different stakeholders that surround athletes. In addition to training, coaches need to feel that their club supports them when there are conflicts with parents. In some cases, this doesn't happen, and clubs prioritize parents' needs out of fear of losing a source of income.

Athlete motivation. Coaches' perception of their athletes' motivation has a positive relationship to their own motivation to coach (Rocchi, Pelletier and Couture, 2013).

Scrutiny. This refers to the scrutiny that coaches are subjected to *vis-a-vis* their performance; this can arise from any number of sources within the broader sporting environment (for example, other coaches, club members, or the media). Performance-based scrutiny has been identified as a source of pressure (Taylor, Ntoumanis and Smith, 2009). In the majority of clubs, competitive results are the only thing that counts, and the coach is only evaluated on that one aspect. However, beyond the results, one can also take an interest in what has been achieved during competition, what needs to be improved, and how said areas can be worked on the following week as a result of these observations.

Time. In other words, a coach's belief that they have the time and resources to do their work. Time-related pressure creates a conflict between what coaches want to teach their athletes and what they are actually able to teach them. This often arises for those coaches who are at a lower professional level, but who are expected to produce elite-level results. It can also occur for coaches who have a very clear idea of what they want to teach but who find themselves limited in terms of being able to dedicate the necessary time for each concept they want to develop.

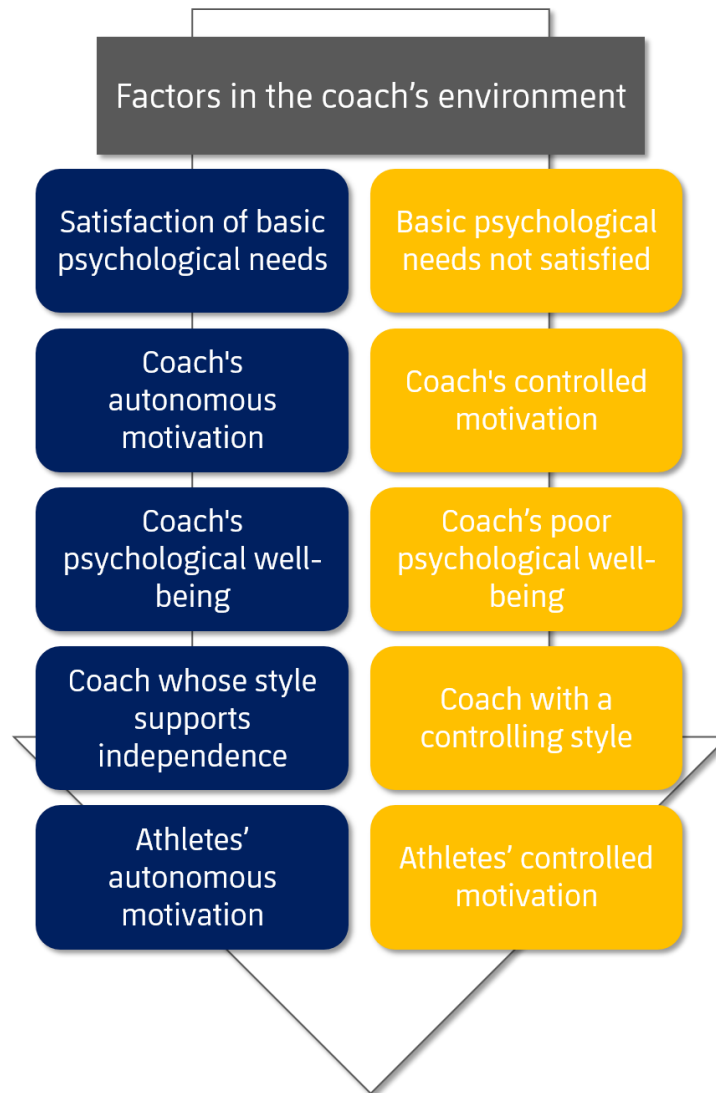
Work-family conflict. This refers to a conflict between roles; the overlap and incompatibility between a coach's working and family lives (for example, time outside the house, busy weekends). These conflicts are a negative predictor of whether basic psychological needs are being met (Bentzen et al., 2016).

The second figure, based on what has been discussed here, shows the sequence of relationships that are established, from factors within the environment that influence the coach's well-being, up to athletes' motivation.

Factors within the coach's environment influence their motivation by satisfying—or not—basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relationships). In environments where the coach is encouraged to meet these needs and to develop autonomous motivation, that leads to well-being; in environments where these needs are not met and where controlled motivation is encouraged, this can lead to reduced well-being. Likewise, a coach's mental well-being influences their behavior and favors a coaching style that supports independence, which promotes autonomous motivation among athletes. When a coach feels good, it will have a positive effect on the way they conduct training sessions and relate to their athletes. Because of this, coaches are likely to perform their job better, become more hands-on with the tasks assigned to them, and contribute to an environment where cooperation, participation, and learning are welcomed. This will have a positive effect on athlete motivation.

Likewise, when coaches are experiencing distress, it influences their behavior by favoring a controlling coaching style, which promotes controlled motivation among athletes. When coaches feel frustrated, they are more likely to perform their job poorly. They will decrease their involvement with assigned tasks, and create an environment of high pressure or disinterest for athletes, which in turn will have negative repercussions for the motivation of athletes.

Figure 2: From the coach's environment to the athletes' motivation.



Source: Prepared by the author.

A coach's mental well-being or lack thereof has consequences for the quality of coaching they provide, as found by studies which have analyzed the relationship between the two variables. A coach's mental well-being has been linked to an adaptive coaching style, while poor mental health is related to a low-quality coaching style.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is the contagious nature of good or bad mental health. A coach's mental well-being or lack thereof influences their behavior toward athletes, which in turn affects an athlete's well-being. This influence can also move in the other direction; in other words, the athlete's well-being can affect the coach. To this end, it has been shown how athlete motivation influences the coach's interbehavioral style. There is also evidence showing that coaches' own perception of their training style (in other words, whether they foster independence or are controlling) is associated with their own mental well-being after training sessions. For example, a coach that provides information and offers opportunities for discussion, input, and decision-making (in other words, a style that fosters independence) may feel more satisfied with the training session and may feel more competent in their role.

Let's take a look at a concrete example by putting ourselves in one coach's shoes:

Pedro is a volleyball coach who has been with his current club for five years as a part-time coach. He also works as a schoolteacher. In this club, a supportive atmosphere prevails, in which the sporting coordinator encourages autonomy. In other words, it is an environment that aims to ensure that employees feel that their three basic psychological needs are being met. Which, as we explained previously, are autonomy, competence, and relationships. Therefore, in this club, the coordinator makes decisions that will foster that satisfaction, even if they do not do so consciously. Below, we'll explore several of the manager's actions and their relationship to each of the basic psychological needs.

Autonomy: the coordinator takes an interest in what coaches are working on with their athletes, and gives their opinion when they think it is appropriate. However, the manager never interferes, nor do they demand that coaches only work in one way or by doing exercises that the manager suggests. When there is a task that is mandatory, the coordinator always explains why it is important that it be performed in a given way and takes time to answer questions. These actions help Pedro feel as if he can carry out his work duties freely, in accordance with his coaching style. When it comes to tasks that he does not like to do, he at least recognizes their importance and does them because he knows they fulfill an important role.

Competence: the coordinator has scheduled meetings for the coaches so that they can discuss and share experiences related to training, and share resources and methodologies for training. Pedro likes to attend these

meetings since he feels as if they help him to improve as a coach and to perform his job better. He also feels reinvigorated after hearing about other coaches' experiences, and seeing that his knowledge is useful for other coaches makes him feel competent.

Relationships: The coordinator meets periodically with Pedro and the other coaches to ask how they are doing and how they are feeling, what difficulties they are experiencing as part of their routine, and what they need from the coordinator to improve. The coordinator also organizes some social activities for the group of coaches, such as group dinners, Secret Santa, or simply a coffee hour at the end of practice. Pedro feels like the coordinator cares about him and respects him, but he also feels like he has good relationships with the other coaches, since they enjoy their time together and they have a good working relationship.

Since Pedro feels that his basic psychological needs are being satisfied, he is internally driven to do his work, even though his pay isn't especially high since he is only a part-time employee. He enjoys his work, he feels comfortable, and he feels good about himself as he does it. Since Pedro is deeply motivated, he often watches YouTube videos to learn new ways of teaching his athletes, and so that he can share them with other coaches during meetings, which shows his desire to learn, interest, and effort with regard to his work. Because of this, Pedro's athletes have a highly motivated, happy coach who takes initiative. He helps them to improve due to the fact that he's always innovating and thinking of ways for them to learn and to develop their own internal motivation.

1.2.3 Recommendations for Improving Coach Well-Being

Suggestions and Recommendations Within an Organizational Context

Organizations, federations, and clubs should promote opportunities for professional development and growth by creating educational programs based on coaches' needs and focused on the knowledge areas and competencies established in the International Coaching Framework (2013) and the European Sport Coaching Framework (2017). They should also encourage coaches to participate in educational opportunities by offering subsidies and flexible scheduling. Developing peer learning opportunities,

such as mentoring programs or round tables, can also improve coach well-being, as well as enriching the resources available to them.

Organizations should also ensure job security, reduce uncertainty, share information, and make coaches active participants in future strategy and management initiatives. They should explain how the role of the coach fits in with the organization's goals.

As far as the work-life conflict between being a coach and having a family, organizations need to be aware of coaches' needs—which may change over time—and should aim to adjust expectations as well as time- and resource-related demands. For example, they can employ the necessary resources to offer families the opportunity to travel with coaches to matches, which involves the families as participants. Organizations can also offer childcare facilities and be as flexible as possible with regard to workload and hours in order to create a work-life balance.

Just as coaches must do with their athletes, organizations should ensure that they foster independence, give coaches a voice, listen to what they need, ask them their opinion, and allow them to participate in areas which are key to how the organization functions. Organizations should recognize coaches' ideas and input, encourage their implementation, and be aware of how they align with the organization's values. When people work in environments that offer opportunities to participate in decision-making, where they have good relationships and are given opportunities for learning and development, it can mitigate the negative effects of workplace demands and overwork on their personal and family lives.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Coaches

Coaches should be aware of fluctuations in their well-being, as well as of the repercussions that these fluctuations can have on how they interact with players, in training and in games as well as on a more general level.

Activities based on training principles or on emotional regulation and mindfulness techniques designed to improve the coach's self-knowledge and self-awareness can be useful tools when it comes to minimizing the negative effects of poor well-being on mental health and the way the coach interacts with athletes.

Training programs that address the benefits of creating a psychologically healthy atmosphere for training (in other words, fostering independence and limiting authoritarianism) can be a useful resource for both coaches and

athletes. These training programs can encourage the coach to gain experience with techniques and strategies that lead to an interpersonal style that fosters independence; they will also make coaches conscious of training techniques that favor such a style.

Psychological Recovery. In order to strike a balance between a highly demanding environment and the ways in which such an environment interferes with personal and family life, psychological recovery skills become an important factor in well-being, mental health, and performance (Siltaloppi, Kinnunen and Feldt, 2009; Sonnentag and Fritz, 2007).

In particular, for those coaches who have significant work commitments and who are also experiencing work-life conflict, it's very important to be able to disconnect from their role as a coach when they are at home, and to take actions that encourage ideal psychological recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). One important factor in recovery is psychological distance; distraction and rest are a second key factor.

Psychological distance. This refers to the ability to avoid thinking about work or doing work-related tasks outside of working hours, a skill which fosters mental disconnection, key to rest and recovery. For coaches, this means not doing any of the following outside of work: answering work-related phone calls, consuming media related to their work, reading e-mails, watching and analyzing game tapes, or planning for training sessions and games. Furthermore, coaches need to have the ability to control work-related thoughts and not be consumed by such thoughts. If these elements are not addressed, then psychological recovery becomes quite challenging.

Distraction and rest. This refers to a process associated with leisure activities and downtime, characterized by decreased activity, in which people select pastimes that lower their stress and increase their well-being. Some examples are: reading a book, taking a walk, stretching out on the sofa, or listening to music. Distraction and rest are linked to greater sense of calm in the mornings and a positive affect at work.

Below, we suggest a series of practical exercises that coaches can work through (Thelwell 2012).

Identify the Coach's Different Roles and Functions

The first topic focuses on identifying the different roles and functions that the coach carries out, so that they can prioritize each of them based on the moment of the season. Coaches who know their roles and functions, and who are able to focus on what is most important at a given moment in the season, experience less stress and uncertainty compared to those who lack this awareness.

Use the following table to identify the different roles and functions that a coach may perform. Also consider how a coach can fulfill each role, and when that role needs to take priority.

Table 8: Roles and Functions

Role and function	How to fulfill it	Priority
Make clear demonstrations	Be competent and practice	Always, but specially when I teach a new skill

Source: Adapted from Thelwell (2012).

Identify the Coach's Stressors

For this task, it is important not only to identify perceived stressors but also *why* those situations are perceived as stressful and what consequences or impact they have. This allows us to become aware of the thoughts associated with a stressful situation, and to come up with ways to address them that are designed to change our beliefs and thoughts when we are unable to directly change the stressful situation itself.

Based on your experience as a coach, use the following table to identify the main stressors that you have experienced, where they come from, and where they have an impact.

Table 9: Sources of Stress

Stressor	Reasons	Consequences
Selecting the athletes to be invited	Poor performance on other occasions where similar selection dilemmas have arisen	Lack of confidence in decision-making Lack of trust in athletes Inefficient communication

Source: Adapted from Thelwell (2012).

Another Way to Address Stressors

The goal of this task is for the coach to become aware of how they can address a stressful situation in a different manner; what consequences this new approach may have; and what resources or behaviors they need to carry out the approach.

Use the following table to propose different ways of handling stressors and identifying the consequences that this approach may have and what you would need to undertake it.

Table 10: Approaches

Stressor	What can I do differently?	What consequences will that have?	What do I need in order to do that?
Analyze match videos at home.	Establish a rotating schedule among staff for video analysis.	Quality time with family. Give more importance to other staff members.	Develop the proposal and present to staff. Plan and distribute the work among members.

Source: Prepared by the author.

Over the course of this module, we have looked at the elements that comprise a coach's present-day reality. In closing, we would like to note the following:

- Coach must be experts in their given sport, but they also need interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge.
- When coaches are aware of their functions, the skills needed to perform their job, and the main pressures that they will face, it provides them with a starting point that they can use to improve their coaching experience.

- If we want committed and skilled coaches, as well as highly-motivated athletes, a coach's environment must foster well-being by meeting their individual needs.

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