The University of Southern Mississippi

The Aquila Digital Community

Dissertations

Spring 5-11-2023

An Examination of Organizational Influences on Coach Decision Making

Arien Elizabeth Faucett
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations

 Part of the Human Factors Psychology Commons, Other Psychology Commons, Sports Sciences Commons, and the Sports Studies Commons

AN EXAMINATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES ON COACH

DECISION MAKING

by

Arien Elizabeth Faucett

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Education and Human Sciences
and the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved by:

Dr. Melissa Thompson, Committee Chair
Dr. Morgan Eckenrod
Dr. Laurie Neelis
Dr. Charles Wilson

May 2023

Published by the Graduate School

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI.

ABSTRACT

Sport coaching occurs in an ambiguous, complex, and dynamic environment bounded by rules, structures, and traditions unique to the context in which it occurs (ICCE et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Nash & Collins, 2006). Coaching is therefore not only pedagogical in nature but also features social and political elements (Abraham & Collins, 2011) focused on athlete development within a specific social and organizational context (ICCE et al., 2013). At the heart of this coaching practice is a constant process of decision-making (Abraham et al., 2006; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013; Vergeer & Lyle, 2009). However, research on the decision-making processes that focus on holistic athlete and program development (i.e. those that occur out of action), is absent from the literature.

The Mosier and Fischer (2010) human factors decision framework, which highlights that influences on real-world decisions can come from one of five areas: the organization, available technology, the decision-making team, the task environment, and the individual, was adopted as the theoretical framework for the present study. The researcher targeted two primary research questions: what elements of the organizational environment influence the out-of-action decisions made by coaches? and, how were these organizational elements influential in the course of making a difficult, out-of-action decision? Fourteen interscholastic head coaches from schools in the southeastern United States participated in semi-structured interviews. Following thematic analysis, four themes emerged: school environment, the decision-making team, administrators, and parents of athletes. These results support the influence of organizational elements as suggested by Mosier and Fischer while also extending the conceptual understanding of the impact of organizational influences on coach decision-making.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my most heartfelt and sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Melissa Thompson. Your support and encouragement throughout not only the dissertation experience but the entire doctoral student process have meant more to me than you know. I am so grateful to have been able to learn from you.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the methodologist on this project Dr. Morgan Eckenrod. This qualitative project would not be what it is without you. The expertise you so graciously shared absolutely improved the quality of this study and I am beyond appreciative that you were so willing to come on board when you joined the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition faculty.

To Dr. Laurie Neelis, your kindness and warmth were always such a blessing as I progressed through the grind of the doctoral experience. I am thankful to have had another coach here for this journey.

For Dr. Hal Wilson, I cannot say thank you enough for your willingness to join me in this process and for your consistent positivity. You jumped in and not only made the project better but always had a kind word that lifted my spirits. I am indebted to you.

I would also like to thank the University of Southern Mississippi professors whose teaching made this project possible. To Dr. Trent Gould, Dr. Kyna Shelley, Dr. John Meyer, and Dr. Lilian Hill, thank you for your time, energy, and dedication to student learning.

Lastly, to my best good buddy Ray, thanks for being here for all my bad ideas.

DEDICATION

For all of the lessons and all of their teachers, I am grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vii

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

xiii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

USM	The University of Southern Mississippi
ICCE	International Council on Coaching Excellence
ISCF	International Sport Coaching Framework
RTP	Return-to-Play
ACL	Anterior Cruciate Ligament
NBA	National Basketball Association
MLB	Major League Baseball
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NHL	National Hockey League
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
MANOVA	Multivariate analysis of variance
SRO	School Resource Officer

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Effective sport coaching is characterized as a practice requiring professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge, which is used to improve athletes' personal and sport specific outcomes (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). This occurs in an ambiguous, complex, and dynamic environment bounded by rules, structures, and traditions unique to the context in which it occurs (ICCE et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Nash & Collins, 2006). Coaching is therefore not only pedagogical in nature but also features social and political elements (Abraham & Collins, 2011) focused on athlete development within a specific social and organizational context (ICCE et al., 2013). However, because the primary focus of coaching researchers has been the pedagogical aspects of the practice, a lack of dedicated attention on complexities stemming from social and political aspects has resulted in gaps in our understanding (Cushion et al., 2006). Because sporting culture and politics within sport and/or specific organization influence how coaches approach their roles (Coté & Salmela, 1996; d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998) organizational culture should be explored in the development of a broader conceptualization of coaching (Cushion et al., 2006).

It has been posited that there are six primary functions of the coach: set the vision and strategy, shape the environment, build relationships, conduct practices and prepare for and manage competitions, read and react to the field, and learn and reflect (ICCE et al., 2013). Examination of these functions highlight that coaches are responsible for all aspects of the sport environment including the culture, relationships, and broader direction of the program and its participants. As coaches are responsible for all on-field

and off-the-field matters (ICCE et al., 2013), coaching actions, behaviors, and activities occur in situ or out-of-action. Yet current coaching research solely focuses on the in-situ coaching actions and behaviors or those off-the-field activities devoted to the planning of the in-situ actions. Focusing entirely on the practice of improving and managing sport performance is insufficient and overly generalized definitions of coaching excludes a range of coaching behaviors and processes (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013). However, at the heart of the coaching practice is a constant process of decision-making (Abraham et al., 2006; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013; Vergeer & Lyle, 2009) which has been identified as one of the most important characteristics of quality coaching (Lyle, 1999).

Decision-making in real-world settings differs from laboratory based, or controlled condition decision-making (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). A framework has been proposed for the exploration of real-world decisions that outlines various mechanisms that have the potential to influence the decision maker within the naturalistic, real-world environment (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Specifically, the task environment, personal characteristics of the decision maker, the team of individuals involved in the decision-making process, available technology, and the organization have the potential to influence a decision maker (Mosier & Fischer, 2010).

Specific elements within the naturalistic task environment have been identified as influential, which may act alone or in conjunction with each other: ill-structured problems; uncertain, dynamic environments; shifting, ill-defined, or competing goals; action/feedback loops; time stress; high stakes; multiple players; and organizational goals and norms (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). There is philosophical support for adopting a naturalistic decision-making framework in coaching (Abraham & Collins, 2011; Collins

2

& Collins, 2013; Cushion et al., 2006; Lyle, 1999, 2002; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013).

Empirical research on task environment elements in coaching has adopted both

qualitative (Abraham & Collins, 2015; Collins et al., 2016; Harvey et al., 2015; Saury &

Durand, 1998) and quantitative methodologies (Debanne & Laffaye, 2015; Debanne et

al., 2014). However, each of these studies has focused entirely on in situ coaching

decisions using elite level coaches as research subjects.

Personal characteristics of the decision maker have the potential to influence the

decision made (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). One of the more influential characteristics is the

experience and expertise of the decision maker (Mosier & Fischer, 2010; Salas et al.,

2010). Expertise and experience as they relate to decision making have been explored in

coaching despite a lack of consensus of a definition/criteria for coaching expertise (Giske

et al., 2013; Jones et al., 1997; Vergeer & Lyle, 2009). Additionally, the values

(Verplanken & Holland, 2002), stress (Starcke & Brand, 2012), and emotions (Lerner et

al., 2015) of the decision maker have the potential to shape and influence the decision

ultimately made. However, empirical research on the role of values in coach decision

making is scant (Jenny & Hushman, 2014). Furthermore, despite the prevalence of

research on stress and stressors in coaching (Frey, 2007; Norris et al., 2017; Olusoga et

al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008) empirical evidence for how this stress influences coach

decision making is incredibly limited (McCluney et al., 2018). To date, no dedicated

research efforts to the role emotions play in decision making in coaching currently exists

(Potrac et al., 2013).

Decision-making teams comprised of individuals with different skill sets and

expertise are frequently created and require team members to work together when making

3

decisions (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). It is suggested that cooperative decisions made in these decision-making teams may be better than decisions made by individuals on their own (Eisenberg et al., 2014). Yet, despite the fact that coaches are frequently working with a variety of individuals within the sport environment (e.g., assistant coaches, interprofessional team members, administrators; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Lyle, 2002; Shrier et al., 2010), no research currently explores how coaches make decisions within decision-making teams. Research conducted with sport recruiters (MacMahon et al., 2019) suggest that a relationship can exist between the decision maker and those around him/her can influence the decision-making process.

The final influential area in real-world decisions is devoted to the role organizations can play in influencing the decision makers within organizational settings (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Organizational norms and culture, review and reward systems, expectations and goals the organization sets for its members, as well as the organizational mission and vision have the potential to frame and encourage and/or discourage decisions made (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). This layer features elements of the social and political nature of the coaching practice including the interpersonal relationships between the stakeholders within the organization as well as the organization itself (Coté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion et al., 2006; d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998). Although when faced with a crisis, sport organizations may investigate the ways the organization encouraged negative behaviors or discouraged positive behaviors (Gravill & Thompson, 2010) however, empirical research exploring how the organization influences the coach as he/she makes decisions in sport is absent in the literature.

Statement of the Problem

Current research into coach decision-making in sport is entirely focused on the in-situ elements of the coaching practice with no studies exploring the out-of-action decisions made by coaches. Our understanding of coaching is therefore limited to one specific, situated context. In focusing entirely on one specific element of the coaching practice to the exclusion of others our understanding of what coaching is is limited. Furthermore, if we are to fully understand coach decision-making, this limitation to the in-situ element of the practice must be addressed.

Research Questions

To address these gaps, this project will address the following two research questions:

- What elements of the organizational environment influence the out-of-action decisions made by coaches?

- How were these organizational elements influential in the course of making a difficult, out-of-action decision?

Delimitations

The proposed study is delimited to interscholastic coaches with a minimum of five years of coaching experience who are the primary decision maker for their sport team. Additionally, coaches must be employed at the same school at which they coach.

Limitations

Limitations of the proposed study include the small sample size of the participants ($n = 15$) as well as the focus on one geographical region of the United States (i.e., southeastern United States). Additionally, average daily enrollment of schools

participating in interscholastic sports within their respective states was limited to establish homogeneity across organizations. This may result in low generalizability.

Definitions of Terms

1. Classical Decision Making: Collection of decision-making models whereby the decision maker uses rationality to arrive at an optimal choice among competing alternatives (Beach & Lipshitz, 1993). Synonym: Deliberative decision making.

2. In-situ: In action, on-the-field actions and behaviors

3. Intuitive Decision Making: Decisions rapidly made on the basis of experience or affect (Burke & Miller, 1999)

4. Out-of-action: Elements of the coaching practice that occur off-the-field

5. Participation Coaching Context: Coaching within an environment where satisfaction of sport participants is derived from participation in sport in and of itself (Lyle, 2002).

6. Performance Coaching Context: Coaching within an environment "in which there is extensive preparation, intensive commitment, and a focus on competition goals" (Lyle, 2002, p. 4).

Significance of the Research

By exploring the out-of-action decision making of coaches, we can begin to address some of the gaps in our understanding of coaching that includes the complex, messy elements of the social and political nature of the practice. Furthermore, this understanding will allow coach educators and developers to better prepare coaches for various decisions they will face instead of a fraction of them. This more complete

conceptualization of coaching can benefit the coaches and important sport stakeholders,

especially athletes, whose ongoing development is the focus of coaching.

CHAPTER II - BACKGROUND

Complexities of Coaching

Despite decades of research effort and work by coach developers and coaching researchers globally, a comprehensive definition of what an effective coach does within their sport had not been developed prior to 2009 (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). In an effort to promote a unified direction to coach developers, coach educators, and sport governing bodies, Coté and Gilbert (2009) developed an integrated definition of coach effectiveness which synthesizes what effectiveness and expertise in coaching consists of. Specifically, effectiveness in coaching is demonstrated by the "consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts" (Coté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 316). This definition was developed after identifying components within the coaching practice: the coach's knowledge, athlete outcomes, and specific coaching context (Coté & Gilbert, 2009).

While these three broad components highlight aspects that contribute to coaching expertise, the process of coaching itself, in reality, is quite complex (Jones & Wallace, 2005). This complexity stems from the system of social interactions (Coté & Gilbert, 2009), ambiguities (Jones & Wallace, 2005), and the "ill-structured, constantly changing environment" (Nash & Collins, 2006, p. 472), which is further complicated when one takes into consideration that the coaching process "occurs through diverse sporting codes, each with unique rules, structures and traditions" (International Council for Coaching Excellence [ICCE] et al., 2013, p. 11). Researchers who adopted qualitative methodologies to examine the coaching process have been successful in recognizing the

8

inherent complexity (Cushion, 2007). However, recognition of a complex system does little to shape our understanding of the processes that occur within it.

Gaps in the coaching process knowledge base exist due to a lack of focus on complex issues and tensions that underpin the act of coaching (Cushion et al., 2006). This is problematic as coaching process models that fail to account for these complexities (Cushion et al., 2006) are used as the foundation for developing coaches who may be ill-prepared for the complex reality that awaits them. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers devote time and effort to examining the coaching process while "remaining true to its dynamic, complex, messy reality" (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 84) so that coach developers and educators, sport organizing bodies, and coaches themselves can "know where and how such information can 'fit' into what they do" (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 84).

Functions of the Coach

While the broad components of coaches' knowledge, athletes' outcomes, and coaching context serve to shape an effective coaching process (Coté & Gilbert, 2009), the International Sport Coaching Framework specifies six primary functions effective coaches will undertake in an effort to "fulfill the core purpose of guiding [athlete] improvement and development" (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16). Specifically, the International Sport Coaching Framework (ICCE et al., 2013) identifies the following as key functions for sport coaches: set the vision and strategy, shape the environment, build relationships, conduct practices and prepare for and manage competitions, read and react to the field, and learn and reflect (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16). Examination of these core responsibilities shows that coaches are responsible for more than just the teaching of sport skills and management of competitions. Rather, it is clear that coaches are responsible for all

aspects of the sport environment including the culture, relationships, and broader direction of the program and its participants. These primary functions are similarly reflected in the United States in the National Standards for Sport Coaches which includes the broad functions as well as specific standards representing the "knowledge and skills coaches should possess" (Gano-Overway et al., 2021). Although these functions explicate how effective coaches approach their goals in general terms, the specific implementation of each of these functions will vary depending upon the context and circumstances of the position and the coach himself/herself (ICCE et al., 2013).

Nature of the Coaching Practice

Effective coaches embrace and implement the functional areas outlined in their efforts to develop athletes within "a given social and organizational context" (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 31). For this to occur, the complexity of coaching must be acknowledged as well as the understanding that coaching extends beyond the on-the-field activities where coaches focus on the pedagogical responsibilities of their practice (ICCE et al., 2013). This is accomplished by synthesizing the core components of the coaching process (coaches' knowledge, athletes' outcomes, and context; Coté & Gilbert, 2009) with the functional competencies identified in the International Sport Coaching Framework. Figure 1 highlights the relationship between these concepts.
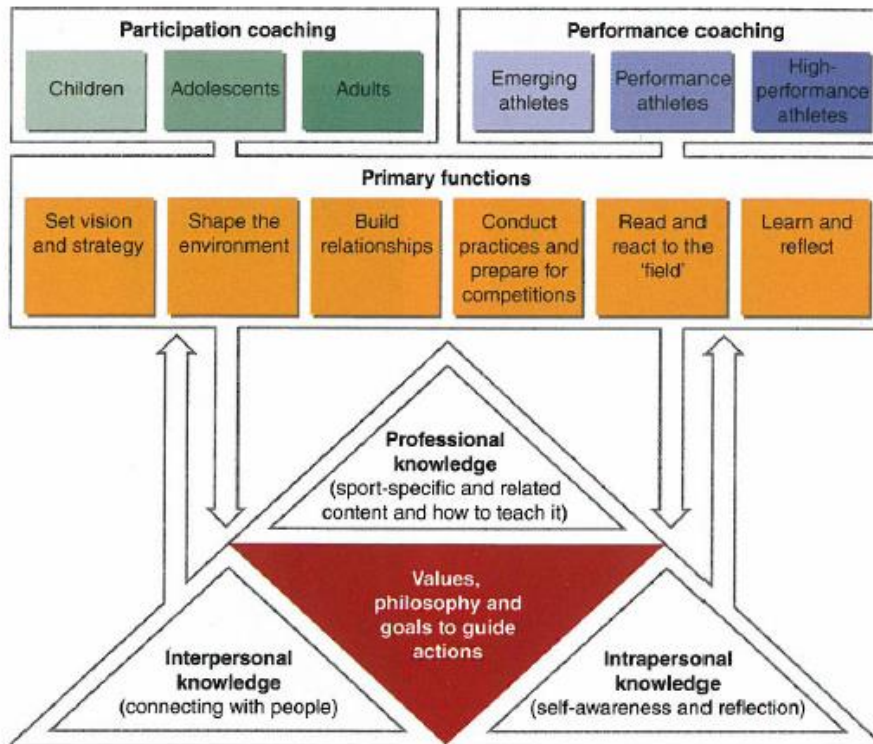
FIGURE 6.1 Functional coaching competence and coaching knowledge.

Figure 1. Functional Coaching Competence and Coaching Knowledge

From *International Sport Coaching Framework, Version 1.2* (p. 31), by the International Council for Coaching Excellence, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, and Leeds Metropolitan University, 2013, Human Kinetics. Copyright 2013 by the International Council for Coaching Excellence, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, and Leeds Metropolitan University. Reprinted with permission.

Ultimately, it can be argued that, at its core, coaching is pedagogical, social, and political in nature (Abraham & Collins, 2011). However, the understanding of the social and political aspects of coaching are not as developed compared to the more heavily researched pedagogical functions. This is problematic as the complexities inherent to the coaching practice feature social and political elements. It is important that coaching researchers explore these social and political elements as they relate to the coaching

11

process so gaps in our understanding can be identified, and future coaches can be better prepared.

Pedagogical Nature of Coaching. An established coach function centers on their role in conducting practices and preparing for and managing competitions (ICCE et al., 2013). To accomplish this function, coaches are responsible for teaching the sport skills, game nuances, and tactics necessary for athletes to improve their skill and be successful during sport competitions. Therefore, coaches must have the knowledge base and competencies to identify the sport skills required for the athletes' ongoing development but also how best to approach the teaching of these skills. This means practice planning becomes a necessary process where coaches must elicit optimum performance and enhance athlete development (Cratty, 1970) through planned sport skill progressions as well as the training/competition/rest calendar (Coté & Salmela, 1996). However, planning for development is only one piece of the pedagogical role of the coach, it is not the only element coaches must address.

As the level of sport increases (i.e., interscholastic to collegiate, collegiate to professional, or through the amateur elite ranks) the nuances of game tactics become more advanced. Coaches are, therefore, not only teaching technical sport skills but also how those skills fit into game tactics. One element is teaching athletes how to identify pertinent information within their specific sport environment. Identifying and describing how to best address opponent strategies is incredibly important, especially in sports where the coach may not be able to speak with athletes during competition (e.g., tennis, soccer, distance running, etc.). Teaching technical and tactical skills is a fundamental responsibility of coaches at all levels; however, additional areas must also be addressed.

Athletes' outcomes focus on sport specific development as well as personal development (ICCE et al., 2013) which includes the positive psychological components found in the integrated definition of coaching effectiveness (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). As Coté and Gilbert (2009) noted, coaches are not only working to develop athlete competence (i.e., sport skills), they are also developing athletes' confidence, connection, and character. Coaches' pedagogical approach used to address these other outcomes may overlap with how they teach technical and tactical skills but will also require additional pedagogical strategies. While a deep review of those strategies is beyond the scope of this paper, more detail about strategies to elicit these outcomes in athletes can be found in these seminal works (morality in sport, Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; motivation, Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002; coach-athlete relationships, Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004).

Social Nature of Coaching. Coach knowledge is primarily social in nature (Pope et al., 2018) as reflected by the interpersonal knowledge and skills needed to address athletes athletic and personal development (ICCE et al., 2013). This includes the relationship the coach has with the athletes in their care as well as the educational community in which the program is found and the local community as a whole (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). Similar to classroom teachers, coaches do not work in isolation; rather, coach effectiveness is dependent upon the coach's ability to successfully work with individuals and larger groups comprised of athletes, assistant coaches, parents, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders (Coté & Gilbert, 2009).

The interpersonal nature of coaching, at one point, was difficult to study (Cratty, 1970) however, significant strides have been made in exploring social elements of a coach's practice. These social interactions and relationships are part of the organizational

responsibilities of the coach (Coté & Salmela, 1996) yet, social aspects feature prominently in the primary functions of the coach. As coaches endeavor to shape the environment, build relationships, and read and react to the field (ICCE et al., 2013), the social nature of the coaching practice is addressed.

One of the most prominent interpersonal relationships within the sport environment is the coach and the athlete relationship. This relationship is interconnected between the coach's and the athlete's "emotions, thoughts, and behaviors" (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) and occurs between each athlete and his or her coach. In team settings, coaches will have various individual interpersonal relationships (i.e., between the coach and each individual member of the team) as well as the larger team. Researchers have found that the way a coach approaches the motivational climate of the team has a direct impact on the way the athlete perceives his/her relationship with their coach (Olympiou et al., 2008). This finding highlights how the social components of the coaching practice can have direct implications on athlete perceptions of their sport experience.

Additionally, as the competitive level of sport increases the social obligations of the coach can extend beyond interactions with the athletes, athletes' parents, and assistant coaches. Athletic department booster events, media appearances, athlete recruitment, and a host of other social commitments become part of the coach's role. Successfully recruiting a highly sought-after athlete, navigating a post-game appearance with the media after a big loss, or wooing a booster who could donate a large sum of money requires a coach to use a different skill set than when teaching at practice or drawing up a last second play during a highly contested game. The social nature of coaching plays a

prominent role in addressing a variety of responsibilities and requirements in an effort to develop athletes and the athletic program.

Political Nature of Coaching. There are various stakeholders holding roles within sport organizations, each with a unique perspective and, potentially, a different goal for achievement within the organization. The coaching process is a constantly dynamic set of intra- and inter-group interpersonal relationships between the individuals within the organization, but relationships also exist between the individuals and the organization as well (Cushion et al., 2006). With data cited from an unpublished study, Cushion (2001) concluded that the organizational culture influenced the interactions between coaches and players and had both direct and indirect influences on the working practices of both the coaches and the players (Cushion et al., 2006). This working with and within organizational environments represents the political nature of the coaching practice. Although an athlete's goal may be to achieve a specific feat, the athletic administrator who oversees the entire organization may expect the organization to achieve a certain reputation within the field. Frequently, these goals and expectations intersect at the coach since they are responsible for the development of the athlete/s and program "including the personnel at the club, school, federation and other levels" (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16).

It has been suggested that a wider conceptualization of the coaching process should include the "pervasive cultural dimension" of the organization/s within which the club, the coach, and the athletes interact (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 95). Additionally, intra-, and inter-group relationships featuring individual stakeholders interacting and their interactions with the larger organization should be included (Cushion et al., 2006). Sport studies have highlighted the political and sport cultural setting that coaches coach and

athletes participate in can impact on how coaches approach their roles (Coté & Salmela, 1996; d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998). Thus, the context in which the coach operates must be explored.

Coaching Context

The coaching context varies as the age, developmental level, goal, and needs of the athlete change (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). These contexts "are unique settings in which coaches endeavor to improve athlete outcomes" (Coté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 314). It is critical that coaching researchers appreciate and understand how these settings influence effective coaching, but also, and arguably even more important, that coaches themselves must understand the context in which they work, if they are to truly be effective (Coté & Gilbert, 2009). As the context changes (i.e., participation coaching or performance coaching; Lyle, 2002), the athletic characteristics and outcomes will change (ICCE et al., 2013). Specifically, performance coaches work with athletes emerging as potentially performance focused or those athletes who are already performance or high-performance focused (see Figure 1) whereas, participation coaches work with athletes focused on skill development and participation for enjoyment or well-being. The context and goals of the program go hand-in-hand and therefore, frame the coach's process (Cushion et al., 2006) and necessary coaching skills. More specifically, "…there will be great variation between each context as to the nature of the knowledge required to develop athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character" (Coté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 317).

Situated Context. While the context of the program (i.e., participation or performance focused) has implications for the coaching process (Cushion et al., 2006), there is a situated coaching context that can be found across sports and levels.

Specifically, coaching actions, behaviors, and activities can take place either in situ or in-action or off-action/out-of-action as well. In the ISCF (ICCE et al., 2013) discussion of coach functions, it is noted that:

Read and react to the field. The coach observes and responds to events appropriately, including all on- and off-field matters. Effective decision making is essential to fulfilling this function and should be developed in all stages of coach development. (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16)

This delineation of both on-field (i.e., in situ) and off-field (i.e., out-of-action) responsibilities and authority supports the idea that there is a situated context to coaching at all levels. Given that context has direct implications for the coaching process, devoted effort is necessary in understanding the coaching process in both situated contexts.

In-situ/In-action Context

Many of the pedagogical responsibilities of the coach are addressed in the in-situ actions across all levels of sport. These actions include the specific tasks devoted to on-the-field athlete development (e.g., teaching skills, facilitating drills, planning for these activities, etc.) and dedicated efforts in developing the tactical skills needed in the competition and practice setting (e.g., chalk talks, film sessions, etc.). Coaching education research into best practices focus on the in-situ activities and behaviors of coaches. These actions are the direct mechanism by which coaches seek to improve athlete performance in practice. Within competition, coaches are responsible for the management of and ongoing safety of the athletes. These in situ, on-the-field activities are therefore incredibly important for the development of the athletes.

Off action/Out-of-action Context

Coaching is a complex practice (Abraham & Collins, 2011) that requires coaches to utilize a variety of skills and knowledge. Yet, conceptualizations of coaching are traditionally framed in the best practices of coaching behaviors and actions that lead to successful athletic performance. However, it is clear that coaching not only consists of the in-situ coaching actions such as organizing practice plans, facilitating drills, and game or contest management, but also features out-of-action elements that require skill sets more commonly found in managers, counselors, or diplomats, such as the navigating the social and political nature of the practice. While the in-situ behaviors of coaches directly impacts the development of athletes, the out-of-action, situated context of coaching is filled with tasks, behaviors, and decisions that could indirectly shape how the athletes grow and compete, how the coach and relevant stakeholders interact in and with the organization, and who joins and remains part of the organization itself.

Working with various stakeholders to develop athletes has been characterized as a "socially complex organizational structure" in which coaches work (Coté & Salmela, 1996, p. 251), while others have noted that this environment features ambiguity and obscurity (Bowes & Jones, 2006). Within these spaces, coaches are still making decisions (ICCE et al., 2013) and dedicating time and energy to ongoing individual and group development. Still, there are many aspects of coaching that are indirectly related to improvement and performance (recruitment and retention of athletes and support staff for instance) but are not accounted for in the research on coaching, which neglects some of the more complex elements of the coaching practice (Cushion et al., 2006).

In fact, Lyle & Vergeer (2003) suggest that focusing solely on the practice of improving and managing sport performance is insufficient and rather, the social reality of coaching necessitates a range of behaviors and processes that are missing in overly generalized definitions of coaching. By making the distinction between the situated coaching contexts while dedicating efforts to understanding both, our conceptualizations of the coaching process may begin to shift.

Coaches as Decision Makers

It has been noted that at the heart of a coach's expertise and practice is a constant process of decision-making (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013). Some decisions may be pedagogical, such as planning practices that will best facilitate athlete development, socially motivated such as developing team cohesion through off-the-field team activities, or managerial such as the coordination of team travel, the coaching practice features constant dilemmas and decisions that must be made (Bowes & Jones, 2006; Vergeer & Lyle, 2009). Yet, regardless of the task, the cognitive behaviors inherent to the coaching process are evidenced by the near constant state of problem solving and decision-making (Lyle, 2002). Decision-making is fundamental to the coaching process and researchers have noted, "every deliberate coaching act is a consequence of a prior decision" (Pope et al., 2018, p. 146) which is ultimately, one of the most important characteristics of quality coaching (Lyle, 1999). Decision-making scenarios are pervasive in the coaching environment and researchers have concluded that directly or indirectly, "coaching is, fundamentally, a decision-making process" (Abraham et al., 2006, p. 549).

Although coaching is accepted as a decision-making process (Abraham et al., 2006), there is "far less of a consensus as to the types of decisions that are made or what

knowledge is required to make these decisions" (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p. 367).

Researchers examining decision making in coaching have noted that coaches are

constantly making decisions related to personnel selection, organizing drills, planning

training regimen, developing game strategies, and tactical variations during the course of

competition (Debanne & Laffaye, 2015; Lyle, 1999; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013; Pope et al.,

2018). While there are a variety of situations where coach decision making is evident,

other areas of equal importance, such as decision making related to coaching

interventions and athlete relationships, are crucial, even if the decision making is less

evident (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013, p. 122).

While the competencies and expectations for coaches are succinctly stated and

reference decision-making functions (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16), the decision making that

must occur in the pursuit of these outcomes is taken for granted. For instance, coaches are

responsible for setting the vision and strategy, keeping the context in mind (ICCE et al.,

2013). Where the long-term holistic development of the athlete may be the focus of

coaches around the world, the mechanism of how coaches determine the specifics of the

behavioral and social development has yet to be determined. The out-of-action context

specific coaching decisions that contribute to the overall development of the athletes need

dedicated attention by coaching researchers because understanding how coaches

approach these decisions will inform how coach educators develop the decision-making

skills that are critical in coaching.

Influences on Decision Making

Contextualized, real-world decisions are subject to a variety of potential

influences. This is due to decisions being made while fulfilling professional or personal

responsibilities occurring in environments where the conditions are not controlled. These decisions cannot be "examined in a vacuum" but rather must be examined within the context in which they occur since contextual variables influence the decision maker just as the decision maker influences the context (Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 199). Mosier & Fischer (2010) posit a model of decision making that accounts for certain variables impacting the decision-making process. Figure 2 illustrates the variety of influences on decision makers who act within an organizational environment. Each layer delineates a potential influential factor, depending on the specific context in which the decision-maker works, that can impact decision-making. Mosier and Frasier (2010) argue that these contextual layers should be included in efforts to explore decision-making processes within these environments because of the "profound effect" the context has on the decision maker (p. 215).
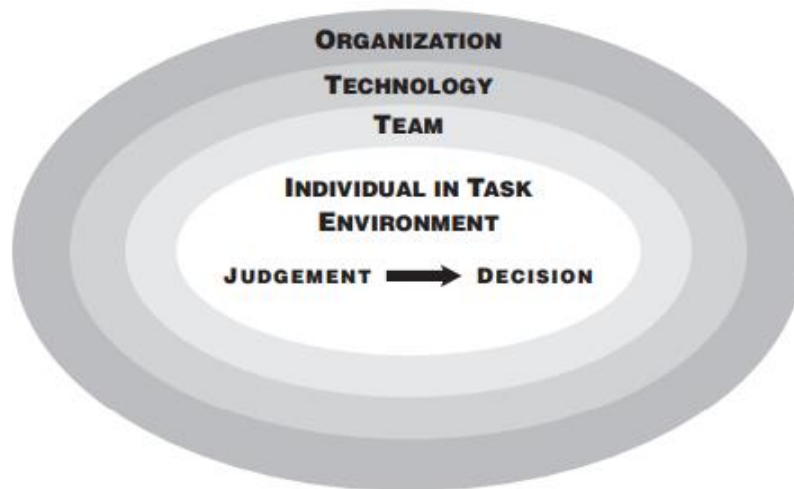
Figure 6.2. Human factors decision framework.

Figure 2. Human Factors Decision Framework

Task Environment

The center of the Mosier and Fischer (2010) model highlights the role the task environment can play on decision makers in real-world settings. Researchers studying decision-making initially focused on identifying how decision makers selected the optimal choice among competing alternatives (Klein, 2008). This research centered on answering the question of how a person accumulates and synthesizes information in an effort to pick the best option however, it was conducted in a lab, under controlled conditions, and required participants with no experience at the decision task (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Yet, decisions made in real-world settings are often "vastly different" from the controlled conditions where decision-making has been frequently studied (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). The task environment where the decision takes place features a

variety of potential influences on the decision-maker (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Because of these complexities and complications that can be found in dynamic task environments where many decisions are made, efforts to understand decisions using classical models of decision-making will result in "something [getting] lost" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, p. 5).

Field researchers in naturalistic settings found that decision makers went through a different process compared to decision makers in controlled, laboratory-based studies. These researchers sought to determine the strategies people used when faced with decisions to be made "under difficult conditions such as limited time, uncertainty, high stakes, vague goals, and unstable conditions" (Klein, 2008, p. 456). Researchers found that "leaders who were actively trying to shape events" utilized similar strategies to approach decision making (Klein, 2008, p. 457). Since coaches are responsible for leading and shaping events within the sport environment (ICCE et al., 2013), a strategy for examining their decision-making should include the constraints of the task environment in which their decision-making occurs.

One approach to conceptualizing the task environment constraints that can influence the decision maker is naturalistic decision-making. This approach proposes eight factors that characterize decisions made within a real-word or naturalistic setting including: ill-structured problems; uncertain dynamic environments; shifting, ill-defined, or competing goals; action/feedback loops; time stress; high stakes; multiple players; and organizational goals and norms (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). The coaching task environment has the potential to feature all eight of these factors; however, it should be noted that while many of these characteristics will be present in scenarios found in these

environments, all eight factors will not necessarily be present in every decision-making situation (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Additionally, there is also the potential for factors to interact with one another (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993) as opposed to acting alone.

Influential Factors. Within a task environment a variety of factors may influence the decision maker, including:

1. Ill-structured problems: As previously discussed, situational factors have the potential to influence decision-making. Rarely do problems present themselves in the complete form with all relevant facts as some traditional models suggest (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Instead, some information is provided where other facts must be searched for. As such, decision makers frequently attempt to collect pertinent information relevant to the presented problem or dilemma (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). The effort required to collect information comes as the decision maker attempts "to generate hypotheses about what is happening, to develop options that might be appropriate response, or even to recognize the situation is one in which choice is required or allowed" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, pg. 8).

2. Uncertain dynamic environments: When faced with real-world decisions, information is frequently incomplete and imperfect and as such, decision-makers have "information about some part of the problem…but not about others" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, p. 8). This situational uncertainty makes the decision all the more difficult (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Furthermore, this uncertainty can be complicated by two additional factors:

    a. Frequently, the environment itself will change before a decision is made (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). This may be due to the problem being

dynamic in nature (e.g., fires spreading, hospital patients developing

complications, etc.); or, it may be the result of additional information

about the problem emerging before a choice can be made. Thanks to social

media and other technological advances, information was once difficult to

come by but now, it is entirely plausible for the public to gather

information about an ongoing situation via local or national news

coverage. The scrutiny that comes from outside attention would add a

layer of complexity to the problem before a solution could be

implemented.

b. Another potential complication relates to the validity of the information

(Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Should the source of the information be

someone who is motivated to deceive or manipulate, the very nature of

that information might be called into question (Orasanu & Connolly,

1993). When faced with difficult or complex decisions, reliable

information is paramount. However, if the facts are questioned, making

that decision becomes even more difficult. The solution is dependent upon

the problem; but, if the decision-maker is unsure about the accuracy of the

identified problem, the best way to approach solving the problem can be

called into question.

3. Shifting, ill-defined, or competing goals: When faced with a dilemma, inevitably

the decision-maker is motivated to find a solution that somehow meets, pursues,

or satisfies a goal. Orasanu and Connolly (1993) explain:

Outside the laboratory, it is rare for a decision to be dominated by a single,

well-understood goal or value. We expect the decision maker to be driven

by multiple purposes, not all of them clear, some of which will be opposed

by others. (pg. 8)

Frequently, the decision-maker will make a decision related to some goal that

might be juxtaposed or competing with another goal. Here, coaches may have to

contend with personal goals, organizational goals, and possibly goals for people

involved in the situation being in direct conflict with each other. The reality that

multiple areas of possible influence can simultaneously exist, therefore,

complicates other factors. This leads to individual goals of everyone involved in

the sport environment having the potential to put pressure on coaches who face

important or difficult decisions.

4. Action/feedback loops: Where traditional models of decision-making are

concerned with a single decision event, naturalistic decision-making provides for

the decision maker to engage in "an entire *series of events* [emphasis in original

text] …a string of actions over time that are intended to deal with a problem, or

find out more about it, or both" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, pg. 9). With each

step in the process of clarifying the problem, generating potential solutions, or

implementing the selected solution, feedback or information naturally follows. It

has been previously noted that the coaching process is "continuous and

interdependent" (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 94). Athlete development and program

management is a constant process for coaches and they face a series of decisions

in an effort to fulfill the multitude of responsibilities inherent to the coaching process.

5. Time stress: Decisions within real-world contexts are frequently made against a deadline or time constraint. Researchers have found that "decisions made over several days as well as those made in less than one minute" (Klein, 1993, p. 144) will be complicated by the need to make a quick decision. These time pressures will increase the decision maker's "stress with the potential for exhaustion and loss of vigilance" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, pg. 9). Coaches are frequently required to make time pressured decisions (Abraham & Collins, 2011) and it is entirely plausible that the time stress can add pressure to the decision maker, which is a personal factor (i.e., dispositional characteristics of the decision-maker) that can influence the decision being made. Furthermore, situational specifics may force the decision to be made more quickly such as if a solution is being sought prior to media or stakeholder scrutiny. Lastly, the time stress may come from organizational deadlines or member expectations which may force the hand of the decision-maker.

6. High stakes: Decisions in real world settings can frequently have lasting outcomes. While some decisions may result in personal consequences, such as having that extra piece of cheesecake, other decisions have a greater potential for long-lasting consequences. Within naturalistic environments, the outcomes of decisions may be the difference between life and death, such as decisions made by firefighters and physicians (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Yet, life and death scenarios are not the only instances where the stakes are high enough that the

stress related to these decisions can complicate the decision-making process (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). These higher stakes make the decision-making process different due to the level of investment present in natural environments that may not necessarily be there when making decisions in laboratory-based settings (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). In real-world situations "the stakes matter to the participants who are likely to feel stressed but who will take an active role in arriving at a good outcome" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, pg. 10).

7. Multiple players: Decisions made in naturalistic settings will frequently involve many people who have one role or another in the decision-making process (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). As previously discussed, situations are apt to change in a moment. For this reason, decision makers may realize they need help in staying on top of the information. In other cases, it may be necessary for multiple people to work simultaneously on different aspects of the problem. These multiple players complicate the decision-making environment as "it can be hard to make sure all team members share the same understanding of goals and situational status so that relevant information is brought forward when needed in the decision process" (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993, pg. 10).

8. Organizational Goals and Norms: Naturalistic decisions are frequently made within organizational environments (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). This context is significant in that organizational goals and norms are potential influences on the decision maker in addition to their own personal preferences (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). Further, because the decision maker may be operating with some authority within the organization, organizational policies, procedures, and

rules could offer parameters that encourage or prevent some behaviors (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993).

Sport provides an interesting context with regard to organizational norms and goals. The goal of the team, the goal of the athletic department, the goals of individual athletes, and the goal of the school/environment can all be different. Ultimately, the coaching process is constrained by the club's, coach's, and athletes' goals and objectives (Cushion et al., 2006). An athlete may have a goal of setting him or herself up to move on to the next level of sport, whereas the athletic department may focus more on the long-term financial viability of the programs within the department. Further, coaches may have personal objectives regarding the program they are building or long-term career goals. While the individual characteristics of the coach play a role in decision-making, these characteristics are also influenced by the coach's expectations and the organizational environment (Lyle, 1996). Additionally, the organizational goals can be complicated when the larger governing body goals come into play. Institutions and/or organizations who represent high profile entities (e.g., teams that represent NGB's, major collegiate sport conferences, or teams representing professional sport associations) may face additional pressures that come from this affiliation. Coaches may be asked to select an option that best serves the organization itself as opposed to individual members of the organization. Additionally, the norms and culture of each team and athletic environment can vary or be in competition with each other. Furthermore, it has also been suggested there are specific norms for sport (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), and each of these areas warrant consideration when exploring coach decision making.

Coaching researchers have noted that due to the "dynamic and complex" nature of the coaching process, which is often filled with uncertainties, "naturalistic decision-making may prove to be a very valuable avenue for research into coaching behaviour" (Lyle, 2002, p. 136). The naturalistic framework provides an opportunity for scholars to account for the nuances in the environment, which will be missed if the primary focus is on the pedagogical setting (Abraham & Collins, 2011). It has been noted that a broader conceptualization of the coaching process would account for the "continuous and interdependent" nature of coaching as well as the fact that the process of coaching is constrained by the goals and objectives of the club, coach, and athletes (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 94). These complex intra- and inter-group interpersonal relationships are not simply between the people involved but also between the people and the organization or culture (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 95). Naturalistic decision-making provides a lens for examining decisions and behaviors that take into account the complexities in the coaching practice. This led Lyle to state, "explanations for coach's decision-making are best considered within a Naturalistic Decision-Making framework" (Lyle, 1999, p. 212).

Existing Research in Coaching

Researchers interested in sport coach decision-making offered philosophical support for exploring the task environment and its influence on coach decision-making. Scholars have posited that complexities inherent to the coaching practice have largely been "played down" by researchers which has resulted in "blank spaces in our current knowledge of coaching" (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 95). It has been asserted that focused efforts to examine specific and controlled elements of coaching, while ignoring the dynamic nature of the practice, have resulted in "much of coaching often [going] unsaid

30

and unrecognized by researchers" (Abraham & Collins, 2011, p. 370). Adopting an

approach that includes the dynamic, messy, and complex reality is needed so that

coaching scholars and educators can influence professional practice (Abraham & Collins,

2011). Therefore, it has been suggested that when exploring issues in coaching, adopting

a naturalistic decision-making lens provides researchers an opportunity to examine the

practice using a framework that accounts for complexities (Abraham & Collins, 2011;

Collins & Collins, 2013; Lyle, 1999, 2002; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013). However, each of the

papers presents a theoretical foundation for exploring and understanding decision-making

within coaching, empirical evidence supporting these claims is limited.

A study by Saury and Durand (1998) not specifically focused on decision-making

highlighted that the knowledge sailing coaches draw upon when conducting sailing

sessions is often influenced by constraints in the task environment. The authors noted that

"because our goal was to study this situated knowledge, data were gathered on site in a

real-life situation" (Saury & Durand, 1998, p. 256). Five coaches who were classified as

Olympic level by the French Federation of Sailing were observed during five practice

sessions before the 1996 Olympic Games. Additionally, in-depth interviews were

conducted following each of the training sessions to discuss what coaches were

perceiving, thinking, and feeling that led to specific coaching behaviors during relevant

moments identified by the coaches as significant to the practice session. Results indicated

that coaches' efforts were directed toward coping with a variety of constraints including:

principles of training efficiency, temporal situation of the actions, and uncertainty

inherent in the athletes' actions and weather conditions. Although naturalistic decision-

making was not included as a framework, these results highlight that within coaching

contexts, factors such as time and uncertainties within the environment (e.g., athletes'

actions and weather) influence coaches' behaviors. This study supports the notion that

complexities within the environment play a role in the actions and behaviors of coaches

and should therefore, be considered when studying coaching.

Naturalistic decision making and recognition primed decision making were used

in conjunction with regulatory focus theory to examine decision-making in professional

handball coaches (Debanne & Laffaye, 2015). Professional handball coaches from the

French first division professional male championship ($n = 14$) were selected. Defensive

phases ($n = 3,416$) of handball games ($n = 41$) were recorded and coded based upon a

number of variables including: defensive strategy utilized, number of players on the

court, score differential between the teams at the time, and period of the game. Results of

the regression analyses suggest that the task environment factors of time (i.e., period of

the game), shifting goals (i.e., score differential), and multiple players (i.e., number of

players on the court) are partially responsible for the defensive strategy chosen by the

coach, however, other decisions may have been the result of additional cues or processes.

These researchers used defense selected as evidence of the decision made by the

coach. Yet, the decision-making process and influences on that process were not

explored. Rather, the relation between task environment constraints and demonstrated

behavior of the team were analyzed. While it can logically be assumed that demonstrated

player behavior (i.e., presented defense) was at the direction of the coach, and thus a

reflection of a coach decision, on-the-court adjustments as determined by the athletes

could have played a role. Further, when the decision was made (e.g., in the moment, at

halftime, in the weeks leading up to the game) was not explored. This limits our

understanding of coach decision-making as it is uncertain whether the task environment influenced in the moment decision making by the coach or whether the defensive approach speaks to a coach's ongoing preference in specific situations. Still, these results offer promising evidence that task environmental factors influence decision-making.

An additional study by Debanne and colleagues (2014) examined coach decision-making using quantitative methodology. In this study, professional handball coaches ($n =$ 30) from two professional divisions (first division and second division) in France were recorded in 36 randomly selected games. Defensive strategy and defensive performance were selected as dependent variables and the situation's reward structure (combination of two situational factors: number of players on the court and score differential) and period of the game were selected as independent variables. These researchers also used defensive strategy to represent coach decision-making. After recording the games, defensive phases meeting specific criteria (i.e., set defenses occurring either after stoppage in play or after a counterattack was successfully stopped) were coded ($n =$ 3,134). For the dependent variable representing coach decision-making (i.e., defensive strategy presented), an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted using coach level (first or second division), situation's reward structure, and game period as the independent variables. Results indicated significant main effects for reward structure and game period on defensive strategy. Significant interactions were also reported for reward structure * game period as well as coach level * reward structure. These findings, much like the Debanne and Laffaye (2015) study, suggest that elements from the task environment influence the choice made by professional handball coaches. Again, athlete

33

behavior was used as a proxy for coach decision, which limits what conclusions can be drawn as it relates to the decision-making process of the coach.

There have been few studies adopting qualitative methodologies that examined in situ decision-making in coaching using the naturalistic decision-making framework. In one study with elite British and Irish long jump coaches ($n = 12$; elite status based upon having at least one athlete compete in at least one national championship in the course of their career), researchers examined what kind of decision-making approaches coaches adopt when faced with a hypothetical athlete struggling with performance issues (Abraham & Collins, 2015). Participants were provided with video footage, records, training data, and personal best jump information of a hypothetical athlete (information provided was an amalgamation of information on several North American athletes developed in concert with two non-participant coaches) at least five days prior to a two-stage, semi-structured interview. In stage one, coaches were asked for their athlete evaluations, aims for future development, and examples of activities or strategies to be used when addressing performance issues. Next, researchers told the coaches to assume their first plan "was not working" and prompted coaches to develop a second plan. This was done to "introduce an element of uncertainty" (Abraham & Collins, 2015), which is one characteristic of a naturalistic task environment.

When asked to provide a solution, the coaches used naturalistic decision-making approaches initially and when researchers requested next steps should their first approach fail to work. Although this study provides evidence supporting the use of the naturalistic decision-making framework, characteristics of this study limit our understanding. By offering a contextualized hypothetical scenario, researchers controlled the information

available to coaches and the manner in which it was provided. This control is rarely found in real-world, dynamic settings and, although researchers tried to mitigate this by intentionally introducing uncertainty, this uncertainty only influenced the second decision where coaches were asked to develop a second plan of intervention. Additional research is needed to determine if the findings would be similar had the study been conducted in a task environment that was not controlled. Furthermore, uncertainty is only one element of a naturalistic environment, meaning more research is needed to understand how other factors influence coaches faced with decision scenarios. Lastly, researchers examined whether coaches use decision-making processes that reflect a naturalistic decision-making approach or a classical decision-making approach (i.e., deliberative, rational decision-making; Beach & Lipshitz, 1993) in the context of their sport decision-making. While this study provides evidence supporting the use of naturalistic decision-making, it did not explore how the task environment influences the decisions.

An additional qualitative study was done with rugby union ($n = 8$) and adventure sport ($n = 10$) coaches documented that each coach recognized using both intuitive/naturalistic and deliberative/classical decision-making processes within their sport in-situ decision-making (Collins et al., 2016). Participants in this study met inclusion criteria related to years of coaching experience (i.e., minimum of 10 years) and qualifications (i.e., holding highest possible level of coaching certification in the sport). To explore the professional experiences of these coaches, Collins and colleagues conducted semi-structured interviews focusing on types of decision-making used in-situ (i.e., deliberative or intuitive). Each coach ($n = 18$) reported using both intuitive and classical/deliberative decision-making strategies in-situ. However, the frequency with

which intuitive decision-making was used varied between sports and participants. Where adventure sport coaches reported using intuitive decision-making more frequently and, rugby coaches reported using intuition less frequently. Whether this is a result of personal preference or as a function of the sporting context in which these coaches work, most coaches acknowledged advantages and disadvantages based upon the particular context. While these findings are promising, how the task environment influenced the coach's decision-making is still unknown. [It is worth noting that the authors of the last two referenced studies (Abraham & Collins, 2015; Collins et al., 2016) used naturalistic decision making synonymously with intuition. Where intuition is defined as rapidly made decisions that are the result of experience or affect (Burke & Miller, 1999), naturalistic decisions are those that occur within a naturalistic, real-world environment (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). The authors used these terms synonymously based in part on their view of naturalistic decision making through Klein's recognition primed decision-making model. Personally, I do not support using naturalistic decision making interchangeably with intuition, as they owe their interpretation to their reading of time stress as immediacy. Klein himself provided that these decisions in naturalistic settings may take moments to days (Klein, 1993).]

These results were similarly found in a study that examined whether naturalistic decision making is a useful framework for understanding coach decision-making behaviors (Harvey et al., 2015). In a longitudinal, season-long study, three collegiate coaches in the United Kingdom who were also development directors participated in three phases of data collection. In the first phase, which was "not about the process of decision-making" (Harvey et al., 2015, p. 157), researchers reviewed relevant naturalistic

decision-making and recognition primed decision-making literature in an effort to develop a conceptual framework for coach decision policies. After the conceptual framework was developed, researchers employed a stimulated recall interview technique where each coach was filmed in three practice sessions and three competitions. Coaches were then asked to identify decision incidents where they remembered making a conscious decision during the practices or games. Next, each coach was shown video footage of the second half of the practice or the competition as a means of stimulating their recollection of other decision incidents. Once incidents were identified, the coach and researcher came to consensus on the six "action decisions" that would be examined in the interview. Following incident selection, video footage of the incidents was examined and the coach was prompted to generate a narrative about the incident, including a description of the decision, rationale for making the decision, and any elaboration on "any element of the decision" (Harvey et al., 2015, p. 159). Researchers were intentional in their efforts to discuss decision elements only after the element had first been identified by the coach. After discussing the six decision incidents, the coaches completed a semi-structured interview regarding their perceptions of how and why they came to that decision. Interviews were coded and analyzed based upon the conceptual framework developed in phase one, which featured naturalistic decision-making elements. Harvey and colleagues (2015) concluded that applying naturalistic decision-making framework to coaches' in situ decision-making is "both valid and useful" (p. 160).

While these studies each concluded that a naturalistic decision-making approach is useful in exploring the decision-making of coaches, the populations of interest and the

decision scenarios considered were all incredibly similar. Each study considered the

perspective of elite level coaches working at some of the highest levels of sport. Given

that context is critical in the development of athletes' outcomes (Coté & Gilbert, 2009),

focusing entirely on elite coaches severely limits our understanding of coaching and how

coaches make decisions in a variety of settings. Additionally, each study only

investigated in situ decisions. How coaches make out-of-action decisions that shape the

environment, culture, and, indirectly, the athlete experience remains unknown.

Personal Factors

The center of the Mosier and Fischer (2010) framework includes the decision

maker him/herself in the task environment. Within any decision-making situation, the

person responsible for the decision brings to the situation their own personal

characteristics (Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 199). These specific factors can be influential

as the person moves through the decision-making process. Furthermore, these personal

components have the potential to interact with other pieces of the decision context

(Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 199) and as such, should be examined in the course of

exploring complex decision situations. For the purposes of this review, personal factors

will be discussed generally and then with specific focus on how they present in the

coaching literature.

Expertise. Considered to be one of the "most influential [variables] at the

individual level" (Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 215), expertise of the decision maker, or

lack thereof, can have a tremendous effect on the decision-making process and the

decision made. This expertise refers not to expertise in decision-making itself, rather, in

the decision maker's knowledge and experiences that make them more familiar with the

environment, and therefore, information used in contextual decision-making (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). "Extensive experience" within a field can provide decision makers with a level of automaticity when faced with decision scenarios (Salas et al., 2010). This automaticity results in the decision maker reading and quickly reacting to the environment, shortening the time it takes to make a decision. Because experts are better adept at coping with the conditions of the task environment (Mosier & Fischer, 2010; Orasanu & Connolly, 1993) they are better able to make decisions.

Existing Research in Coaching – Expertise

The connection between expertise and decision-making in coaching has received some attention by scholars. Jones and colleagues (1997), explored expertise and the adapted interactive decision-making model for coaches. In this study, coaching expertise was based upon years of coaching experience (at least 8 years), prolonged coaching success (winning record for 8 or more years), peer recognition (e.g., coaching awards at the sectional or regional level), professional involvement (e.g., by establishing camps or clinics, attending workshops, etc.), and teaching certifications. Demographic questionnaires were mailed to 145 high school, junior high, and middle school head boys' basketball coaches to determine who qualified for inclusion. After ranking the 80 responses received, the top 10 coaches were selected for inclusion as well as two alternates. These 10 expert coaches had an average of 15 years of experience as a head coach at the high school varsity level. The inexperienced coaches were first- and second-year junior varsity and middle school coaches identified by head boys' varsity coaches in the same area as the expert coaches. Fifteen inexperienced coaches were identified as potential participants and ranked based upon their years of experience (i.e., first- or

second-year) and playing record either over .500 or below .500. Following this procedure, the bottom 10 coaches were selected.

Decision-making was explored using the interactive decision-making model, originally developed for teachers (Snow, 1972), which models the decision path analysis of coaches as they teach or instruct the athletes on a pre-planned drill (Jones et al., 1997). As coaches evaluate player behaviors, the coach determines whether the displayed behaviors are within acceptable limits. When player behaviors fall into unacceptable territory, the coach moves through a series of steps to determine whether a deviation to the planned instructional method is needed. Participants were asked to think aloud to develop a 30-minute instructional plan to teach the give and go play in basketball, which was recorded by the research team. Immediately following the think aloud exercise, coaches were asked to respond to a one question Likert-scale style question ranking their anxiety level regarding their planned activity. Next, coaches were immediately escorted to the practice site where four middle-school physical education students with limited basketball experience were present. Researchers facilitated introductions and the coach was signaled to begin instruction. Each coach received a different set of students to instruct and all instructions and feedback were recorded with portable microphones and video. After 30-minutes of instructional time, coaches were signaled to stop. After the practice session, coaches underwent a debriefing protocol where five, two-minute video segments from the session were played back. Coaches were asked a series of 10 questions about what they were noticing, thinking, and considering about how the practice was going and whether changes were needed and why. Transcripts were analyzed using the interactive teaching decisions pathway, which revealed expert coaches and inexperienced

40

coaches reported similar numbers of decisions (80 and 70 respectively). Each of these

decisions were coded based upon pathway fit. A Mann-Whitney U test was used to

determine differences between experienced and inexperienced coaches' pathway fit and

effect sizes were calculated to determine magnitude of differences. These analyses

revealed that one pathway (Decision Path 2, where it is determined if a new routine is

necessary) was the only pathway where experienced coaches and inexperienced coaches

varied significantly although the effect size of this difference was small ($r = .04$). This

indicates that experienced coaches considered changes to their original plan more

frequently than inexperienced coaches; however, this does not reflect the decision to

make a change, rather, experienced coaches were more likely to evaluate whether a

change was necessary. Unfortunately, elaboration into why the decision was made and

how their experience (or lack thereof) contributed to the decision remains unknown.

Furthermore, this study removed the coaches from the context in which they normally

practice which allowed the researchers to control for any biases or confounds that may

have been present had the coaches used members of their own teams. This allowed for a

better comparison between the coaches, but, in so doing, the context the coach normally

practices within was eliminated. Given that context is an important factor in the coaching

practice (Coté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion et al., 2006; ICCE et al., 2013), this limits the

conclusions that can be drawn.

In an effort to understand differences between expert and novice coaches'

decision-making, researchers conducted a secondary analysis on a mixed-methods data

set (Vergeer & Lyle, 2009). Sixty-four coaches (female, $n = 49$; male, $n = 15$) of female

gymnasts completed a questionnaire on 16 hypothetical scenarios regarding an injured

gymnast and were asked to make a return to play decision. The questionnaire also featured coach demographic characteristics questions including age, years of experience, coach certifications, competitive involvement, and education in injury care and management. For the purposes of the secondary analysis, coaches were divided into three groups based upon years of coaching experience. Coaches who had 1-5 years of coaching experience were classified as least experienced ($n = 19$), coaches with 6-10 years of coaching experience were classified as intermediate level ($n = 23$), and those coaches with more than 10 years of coaching experience were classified as most experienced ($n = 22$). The researchers noted that the breakdown of the coaches was partially based upon the calculated tertiles as well as the relation of the years of experience to development of expertise. The hypothetical scenarios included information on four factors with two levels within each factor: competition importance (invitational tournament versus qualifying meet), athlete age (8-year-old gymnast versus 15-year-old gymnast), athlete ability (average ability versus best on the team), and injury severity (moderate ankle sprain that occurred one week before the competition versus severe ankle sprain that occurred three weeks before the competition). This resulted in 16 unique scenarios, each of which was provided to the participants. Coaches were asked to respond to each of the scenarios using a 10-point, Likert style scale where 0 indicated "highly unlikely" to return to play and 10 indicated "highly likely" to return to play. In addition to the scaled response, coaches provided comments and rationale used in making the decision.

Analysis of the Likert-style scale responses was done using a conjoint analysis procedure which examined the effect of each factor level and the combination of factors on the decision outcome. An ANOVA was conducted using years of coaching experience

as the independent variable to determine if there were any differences based upon experience. Average frequencies of codes from the verbal data were used to calculate relative frequencies in an effort to determine if any group differences existed for rationale and comments. The researchers also attempted to create "individual decision policies" for each coach by calculating regression weights for the overall likelihood of competing for each of the individual levels of each factor as well as for each of the interactions between factors. These decision policies were then aggregated for each of the experience level groups. MANOVAs were calculated to examine differences between coaches based on years of experience. A Pearson's correlation between years of experience and decision weights found an inverse relationship between years of experience and likelihood to participate ($r = -.36$, p = .003). None of the correlations with main effects or interactions were significant.

Results of these analyses revealed differences between decision outcomes (i.e., likelihood to participate) based on years of coaching experience where more experienced coaches were less likely to return the injured athlete to competition. In looking at differences in the verbal responses based upon years of experience, less experienced coaches focused their arguments and strategies on a different set of information (e.g., athlete pain, medical advice, or psychological experience of athlete should she compete). Whereas coaches in the intermediate group were more sensitive to the athlete's ability to successfully compete (e.g., ambition, pain tolerance, competitive level, timing of the injury, relative importance of the meet, and injury's impact on ability to execute full routines). The most experienced coaches however tended to the "managerial aspects" of the decision. These coaches were more focused on finding alternatives to competing,

sharing the decision with the athlete and/or the athlete's parents, setting realistic

expectations for consequences of the decision, getting medical advice, and taking that

medical advice into account whether or not the advice is followed. Additionally, the most

experienced coaches set rules for making the decision (e.g., deadline for decision and not

letting the 8-year-old compete) where their less experienced counterparts did not. The

results highlight that as coaches progress in their coaching practice, the relevant

information that is used in decision-making as well as who is involved in the decision-

making process can change. These differences suggest a more nuanced consideration of

long-term development (e.g., setting realistic expectations for outcome of participation)

compared to their less experienced counterparts. The authors believe this is due to an

"increasing cognitive complexity" (p. 445). These results support the notion that

expertise (or lack thereof) influences coach decision-making in sport, however, additional

research is needed to more fully understand how expertise influences coaches in other

sports. Additionally, it should be noted that this study used number of years of experience

as a proxy for expertise. Given there are additional elements that reflect expertise, future

researchers should incorporate these elements for a deeper understanding of how

expertise influences decision-making.

 Another approach to exploring decision-making and its relation to experience was

utilized by Giske and colleagues (2013). The authors assessed the decision-making style

of coaches to determine if experience was linked to prevalence of a particular style.

Norwegian soccer coaches ($n = 99$) completed a questionnaire that included items related

to demographic characteristics, coaching experience, sport education, coaching level, and

items related to the coaches' personal playing experience. Coaches also completed the

General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) scale which determines "how individuals go about making *important decisions*" (emphasis in original text; Giske et al., 2013, p. 694). The researchers instructed the coaches to reflect on their level of agreement with each item as it relates to their decisions as a soccer coach. In the analysis phase, coaches' coaching experience and playing experience was dichotomized into elite and non-elite levels. However, as elite and non-elite levels were not operationally defined, it is unclear what classified someone as coaching or playing at the elite level.

Independent sample t-tests indicate that coaches without elite level coaching experience were less likely to use a rational decision-making style or intuitive decision-making style compared to their elite level counterparts. When analyzing elite level playing experience, the researchers revealed coaches who did not play at the elite level were less likely to report rational decision-making style or intuitive decision-making style compared to those with elite level playing experience. The GDMS assesses three additional styles of decision-making (i.e., dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous) however t-test results were non-significant for each of these styles. Due to an error in the printing of the assessments, one of the five items in the dependent decision style subscale was missing which impacted the results. When assessing reliability of the subscales, the dependent subscale did not reflect an acceptable Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .65$). Because of this, conclusions cannot accurately be drawn regarding coaches' use of dependent style decision-making. Although this study did not examine the influence of experience on the process of decision-making, the results suggest there is a link between experience and a coach's sport decision-making. One major limitation of this study is that what classified

as elite and non-elite coaching and playing experience was missing from this study. As such, how this experience is linked to expertise is unknown.

Values. Another personal factor that could influence decision-making is the personal values and beliefs of the decision maker. Values are those "cognitions that may define a situation (e.g., as one in which honesty is involved), elicit goals (e.g., benevolence), and guide action (e.g., tell one's spouse that one made a mistake)" (Verplanken & Holland, 2002, p. 435). Though values can influence a person's behavior, they are not the goal to be reached (Lewin, 1951). Rather, the personal values of a decision maker will frame how information related to the problem is interpreted and the attractiveness of available solutions (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). These researchers further posit that although some values that can be shared by large portions of the population, only a small number of values have the ability to influence our decision-making. That influence is reserved for only the most salient or important values.

Existing Research in Coaching – Values

The link between a person's values and their decision-making is an element commonly explored in ethics. Within coaching and coach education, researchers have noted that exploring a coach's personal values is the first step in the developing a values-based coaching philosophy (Thompson, 2020). As each coach has their own unique set of values or ideals that can act as a driving force in their lives, facilitating an understanding of what those values are and recognition of how those values can be included in their coaching practice is recommended (Thompson, 2020). A result of this exploration is a coaching philosophy that reflects the coach's values and beliefs about their role. This

philosophy can then "become one of the most powerful tools available for decision-making" (Thompson, 2020, p. 33).

A literature search of the SPORTDiscus, ERIC, Academic Search Premier, and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection databases using the search terms "decision making or decision-making" AND "coach or coaching or coaches" AND "values or beliefs or opinions or attitudes or priorities or morals" resulted no studies examining the direct link between a coach's values and their decision-making. However, one study examined the relation between a coach's philosophy and his coaching methods (Jenny & Hushman, 2014). One collegiate NCAA Division I cross-country coach and five runners on his team participated in a qualitative study designed to establish the extent to which the coach's philosophy and methods reflect a humanistic coaching philosophy. Data collection consisted of the coach completing two semi-structured interviews, each athlete completing one semi-structured interview, the first author observing the coach over a period of two weeks, and the collection of relevant artifacts (e.g., team handbook and training session planning schedules). Interviews, field notes from observations, and artifacts were coded for themes and triangulated to establish trustworthiness of the data. Data analysis reflected one prominent re-occurring theme – coach/athlete decision-making. Researchers concluded that the coach 'appeared' to adopt a humanistic approach which was reflected in some of his decision-making in many areas of his coaching practice although not entirely. These results were framed as relating to the intended purpose of the study by expanding upon the fact that within a humanistic philosophy, shared decision-making is a common practice.

The limitations present in this study hinder the interpretations taken from the project. Primarily, the link between the intended purpose of examining the congruence of the coach's philosophy and behaviors with a humanistic orientation and the resulting theme of coach-athlete decision-making was not fully explicated. It is unclear whether the conclusions were a result of the researchers trying to find any evidence of a humanistic approach within any aspect of the coach's philosophy and practice; or, if the coach believed he adopted a humanistic philosophy and researchers sought to establish congruence. In discussing the methodology used for data collection, the authors reported "interview questions focused on the coach's philosophy, ambitions, decision-making processes, and coach/athlete interactions." But there was a lack information on the interview itself, including whether the coach and the athletes were asked the same questions, as well as how the coaching philosophy was explored with the coach. The conclusions that can be drawn regarding congruence between the coach's philosophy and a humanistic philosophy as well as how that congruence manifests in training decisions hinges on who identified the coach as a humanist. Ultimately, the link between the intended purpose of this study and the findings presented are unclear.

Stress. Where some decisions are made while under stress, other decisions can be the cause of stress such as financial decisions, health-related decisions, or decisions related to major life changes (Starcke & Brand, 2012). Regardless of whether stress is a product of making a decision or is a condition of the decision-maker, at both the behavioral and the neural level, stress and decision-making are interconnected (Starcke & Brand, 2012). This does not mean that making a decision under stress will result in a bad decision. Rather, depending upon the specific decision to be made, stress will either be

advantageous or deleterious to the decision maker (Starcke & Brand, 2012). Therefore, the experience and process of making a decision can be influenced by the decision maker's existing stress or the stress caused by the decision being made.

<center>*Existing Research in Coaching – Stress*</center>

Researchers found that coaches at a variety of competitive levels experience frequent stressors in their profession (see Norris, et al., 2017 for review). These stressors may come from organizational conflict, pressure and expectations, athlete concerns, managing and preparing for competition, isolation, or sport status (Olusoga et al, 2009) or environmental, personal concerns, or leadership responsibilities including "having to make decisions" (Thelwell et al, 2008). Frey (2007) also found coaches reported "being the primary decision maker" was a source of stress in a sample of collegiate coaches. A recent review examining stressors in coaching revealed coaches face stress related to the organizational, contextual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors present in the field (Norris et al., 2017). Given the established link between stress and decision-making and the prevalence of stress in coaching, an understanding of how coaches under stress make decisions is needed.

In a search of the SPORTDiscus, Academic Search Premier, ERIC, and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection databases using the search terms "decision making or decision-making" AND "coach or coaching or coaches" AND "stress", one study was identified that examined the relation between stress and decision-making in sport coaching. In this quantitative study, basketball coaches ($n = 205$) rated fourteen stressors on level of perceived pressure (intense, moderate, or low) on in-game decision making in an instrument designed specifically for the purposes of the project

<center>49</center>

(McCluney et al., 2018). After undergoing pilot testing with a collegiate basketball staff, collegiate coaches ($n = 80$), high school coaches ($n = 124$), and a club coach ($n = 1$) completed the survey to determine which stressors create the most strain on coaches' in situ decision-making. A Likert-style response scale assessed the perceived pressure coaches experience during the course of competitions related to 14 stressors. After calculating descriptive statistics, results of this study indicated that "expectations of self," "importance of eventual outcome," and "quality of preparation" created the most pressure on the coach's decision-making in competitions. Additional descriptives were calculated after breaking down the sample based on demographic factors (e.g., coach biological sex, biological sex of the athletes coached, coach education level, number of years of coaching experience, and coach status- head or assistant coach). Differences emerged in stressors causing the most strain on in-game decision-making between high school collegiate coaches. While both groups of reported "expectations of self" and "quality of preparation" as stressors putting pressure on their in-situ decision-making, high school coaches reported "amount of preparation" as a factor where collegiate coaches experienced more pressure related to the "importance of eventual outcome." When analyzing the responses of the collegiate coaches based on the divisional level (i.e., Division I, Division II, Division III), stressors were largely similar with slight variations. Coaches at all three divisional levels reported "expectations of self" and "quality of preparation" as causing pressure on game decisions. The third stressor differed with Division I and Division III coaches indicating that "importance of eventual outcome" weighed on their in-game decisions where Division II coaches reported "amount of preparation" as a stressor. Additionally, Division III coaches reported "time to make a

decision" as equally stressful. Furthermore, when comparing the differences in stressors based upon the level of education of the coach, coaches with graduate degrees found the "amount of preparation" as being a greater stressor where coaches with undergraduate degrees found the "importance of eventual outcome" as causing more strain.

The results of this study give a glimpse into areas that may be explored further in future projects. However, there are limitations to the conclusions that were drawn. While the authors requested information related to stressors on the coaches' decision-making in situ, how those stressors influenced decision-making was not explored. Furthermore, as data analysis was limited to descriptives, a more nuanced understanding would have resulted from a more robust statistical analysis, which is missing. While examining group means gives some information, additional analyses are needed to determine if the differences between the means is statistically significant. Additionally, this project included both head coaches and assistant coaches. Where Frey's (2007) study indicated head coaches report stress related to being the "primary decision maker," it is unknown what in situ decisions the assistant coaches in this study were responsible for making or whether they were reporting their perceptions of what caused the head coach the most stress. As such, additional exploration is required if coaching educators and researchers are to understand the influence of stress on decision making as well as how to prepare coaches for the stress inherent in their practice.

Emotion. A person's emotions have the potential to influence their decisions in a variety of ways. A recent review exploring the relation between emotion and decision-making showed that integral emotions, or those emotions that are the result of the decision being made (e.g., anxiety over benching the star player during a big game), can

influence the decision maker who may attempt to avoid negative feelings or increase

positive feelings (Lerner et al., 2015). Avoidance of the negative emotions resulting from

one decision or embracing the positive emotions that stems from another shapes the

options available to the decision maker. Additionally, incidental emotions, or those

emotions that "carry over" from a previous experience or situation (e.g., anger or

frustration from a badly played game being carried over to the next day's practice) and

are not "normatively relevant for deciding", have also previously been shown to

influence the decision maker (Lerner et al., 2015, p. 803). This research further suggests

that emotion may change the content of thought, depth of information processed, and/or

content of goal activation (Lerner et al., 2015). This manifests in how the individual

interprets the environment as a result of the elicited emotion (Lerner et al., 2015).

Perceptions of the world and the environment can be shaped by the decision maker's

general emotional disposition (e.g., tendency toward anger, fear, or pride, etc.) or specific

emotion produced as a result of the decision incident. Ultimately, where it can occur in a

variety of ways, "emotions powerfully, predictably, and pervasively influence decision-

making" (Lerner et al., 2015, p. 802).

<div align="center">*Existing Research in Sport – Emotion*</div>

Outside of coaching, Neil and colleagues (2013) explored the link between

emotion and decision-making in a small sample of officials ($n = 4$). In this qualitative

study, researchers examined the stressors experienced by English football officials in

addition to how those stressors were appraised by the officials, the emotional reaction to

those stressors, and what coping strategies officials used in response to those emotions.

Researchers found differences between how amateur ($n = 2$) and professional ($n = 2$)

<div align="center">52</div>

officials reported their experiences of and coping with stress and emotion. Excerpts from the interviews provided explicitly show that officials emotional reactions to incidents during competition directly influenced the decision made. One participant even noted that the decision made at the time was the wrong one to make and the call should have gone in the opposite direction. This study highlights the importance of examining the link between emotion and decision-making in coaching as coaches are responsible for a broader range of decisions (e.g., in situ decisions, out-of-action decisions) and those responsibilities extend beyond the competition setting. This is important as an understanding of how emotions influence decision-making will shape how coaching educators assist coaches on honing their own coping strategies used when they enter into or continue in the coaching career.

Coaching scholars have noted that, despite much of the research focusing on the technical and cognitive aspects of the practice, coaching occurs within a social environment that necessarily involves emotions (Potrac et al., 2013). However, despite the awareness that coaches experience a range of strong emotions, researchers have "failed to pay any concerted attention to the emotional nature of coaching" (Potrac et al., 2013, p. 236). These authors suggest that emotion in coaching is a necessary component of decision-making as emotions allow the decision maker to interpret and frame their available choices (Potrac et al., 2013). While Potrac and colleagues (2013) provide the philosophical argument for exploring the emotional nature of coaching practice, empirical evidence on emotion is needed related to coach decision-making.

Since Potrac and colleagues (2013) established the need to explore emotion in coaching, a special issue of the *International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*

was dedicated to emotion and decision-making in sport (International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 2013). However, no studies within this issue focused on the coach as the decision-maker (Laborde et al., 2013). More recently, a special issue of *Sports Coaching Review* explored emotions in sport coaching (Sport Coaching Review, 2017). Unfortunately, no studies within this issue explored emotion and decision-making in coaching despite the introductory essay highlighting researchers have yet to examine the relation between the two (Potrac et al., 2017).

Decision-Making Team

Surrounding the personal and task environment factors found at the center of the human factors decision framework (Mosier & Fischer, 2010) is the team or group of individuals who participate in the decision-making process. Organizational decisions are rarely made alone or without the input or assistance of others. This may be a result of individuals having differing levels or areas of expertise related to the problem situation (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). In fact, teams within the organization may be created based upon the competency areas that are needed to make a decision and the individuals who possess these competencies (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). The process of making decisions in a team-based setting requires "several individuals [to] gather, interpret, communicate, and integrate information in support of a mutually accepted decision" (Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 221). It has been suggested that due to the varying perspectives and the greater number of ideas generated, teams are better able to make complex decisions than individuals (Eisenberg et al., 2014). Additionally, participating in a decision-making team provides members with an opportunity to become more aware of the important issues within the organization (Eisenberg et al., 2014).

Existing Research in Coaching – Decision-Making Team. Sport is rife with examples where individuals are selected for teams, staffs, and groups based upon their area of specialization. Coaches have their own sport-, and potentially position-, specific expertise that can shape their perspectives when faced with sport decisions. As such, coaches are frequently working with other stakeholders who are able to contribute to the ongoing development of athletes and operations of the sport program (Coté & Salmela, 1996; Jones & Wallace, 2005) or decision-making (Lyle, 2002). Depending on the decision to be made, this decision-making team may include the "physiotherapist, assistant coach, doctor, masseur, team manager, trainer, sport psychologist, video analyst, notational analyst, performance director, team captain" (Lyle, 2002, p. 67) and administrators or players (Jones & Wallace, 2005). Unfortunately, each member brings their own perspective which can complicate the decision-making process (Lyle, 2002). For some sport decisions, such as return-to-play decisions, decision makers (e.g., sport clinicians) often expect the views of not only the athlete and the athlete's family, but also the coaches, team administration, and other medical personnel (e.g., athletic trainers, physical therapists, etc.; Shrier et al., 2010). Yet despite the prevalence of coaching staffs and support personnel in coaching environments (e.g., team physicians, athletic trainers, sport psychologist, etc.), attention has not been paid to how the group decision-making process influences the decisions made by the coach.

A series of relevant literature searches in the SPORTDiscus, Academic Search Premier, ERIC, and Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Collections databases were run using the search terms "group decision making or group decision-making" AND "sport" AND "coach or coaching or coaches"; as well as a search using the terms

"decision making or decision-making" AND "sport" AND "group"; and, "decision

making or decision-making" AND "coach or coaches or coaching" AND "group." Upon

screening, no studies were found that explored the effects or influences of relevant

stakeholders on coach decision-making processes. However, a study was identified that

explored German semi-professional sports coaches' perceptions of stakeholders when

considering whether to return an injured player to participation (Niederer et al., 2018). In

this study, coaches indicated the level of relevance of specific stakeholder groups on their

return-to-play (RTP) decisions for six specific injuries. Responses were provided using a

five-point, Likert-style scale which ranged from non-relevant to relevant. Percentages of

responses on the Likert-style scale based upon injury type and relevant stakeholder were

calculated. Coaches indicated that for ACL ruptures and meniscus lesions, the

perspectives of the treating physician and physiotherapist were the most relevant in their

RTP decision. The opinion of the athlete was considered to be relevant, however, not the

most important. For return-to-play following a concussion and bone fractures, the treating

physician's stance was considered to be the most important. However, for ankle sprains

and muscle injuries, the coaches reported valuing the physiotherapists' guidance more

than the other relevant stakeholders. Although this study did not examine how or to what

extent the coach used the perspectives of these individuals in their decision-making

processes, it does show that other individuals can have a voice in return-to-play

decisions.

In the field of talent identification in sport, a recent study examined the

knowledge and skills needed by recruiters in the Australian Football League (AFL)

(MacMahon et al., 2019). Researchers were interested in the decision-making style of

these individuals (i.e., preference for deliberative or intuitive decision-making) and the influential factors in the decision-making process. In this study, 12 AFL recruiters, 11 of whom were classified as full-time recruiters, were identified with the help of the AFL. The participants' years of recruitment experience ranged from 2- to 30-years. Interestingly, the researchers also noted that for these participants, coaching experience ranged from none to 12-years. It is unclear whether coaching experience is a common feature of AFL recruiters. A mixed methods approach was adopted for data collection. The Preference for Intuition and Deliberation (PID) scale was used; additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted in an effort to gain an understanding of the approach used to guide recruitment decision in the AFL and the influential factors on that process. An interpretive phenomenological analysis approach was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Researchers found four factors influencing the recruiters' decisions: recruiter background, recruiter attributes, recruiter understanding of team needs, and the recruiter-coach relationship. Researchers found that recruiters used both deliberative and intuitive decision-making at various points in the recruitment process. Additionally, recruiters described three different types of relationships with coaches: high level of engagement, low level of engagement, and conflict. However, the authors noted that due to the small sample size these three relationship levels may not be an accurate representation of what is occurring in the larger population. Within the high level of engagement group, the recruiter-coach relationship was characterized by greater level of communication. This increased communication led to a sense of being understood and supported, a higher sense of assuredness, and a perception that the relationship can result in better

connections and outcomes for the recruits. For the low level of engagement group, a lack

of communication between the recruiter and the coach was found which resulted in the

recruiter being nearly autonomous in their decision-making process. The authors posited

that this may result in recruiters justifying their decisions by using a more deliberative

process. Two participants reported relationships that were more conflict based. Given

how few recruiters described this style, researchers were unable to draw larger

conclusions from this group. The researchers suggest that the additional perspective of

the coach on the decision-making process of recruiters can lead to positive outcomes.

Additional research is needed to have a better understanding of how relevant stakeholders

influence the decision-making process of the coach. Because the influence can be

positive, coach educators would benefit from a thorough understanding of ways coaches

can approach relationships with sport stakeholders that are involved in the decision-

making process.

Technology

The next ring in the Mosier & Fischer (2010) framework of influences on

decision-making highlights the influential role that technology can play in decision-

making. Technological advances have resulted in an exponential increase in the amount

of available data that existing globally. In a variety of settings, this technology can inform

decision-making by "making information available, analyzing data, [or] providing alerts"

(Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 227). In fields such as the military and aviation with

sophisticated technology, automation and technical support systems are specifically

designed to erase some of the ambiguities inherent in these dynamic environments in an

effort to facilitate rapid decision-making (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Because of the

available information and design of the technology, decision-making can either be supported by, or in the case of automation, under the control of the technological systems (Mosier & Fischer, 2010).

Wearable Technologies. Technological advancements have now made it possible for people, athletes and non-athletes alike, to wear equipment that will monitor and report a variety of physiological and kinematic measures (Luczak et al., 2018). This technology can be worn or sewn into the athletic apparel (see Camomilla et al., 2018 for a review). As such, sport practitioners and athletes have access to real-time data that has the potential to inform decisions that will shape practice, training, and competition settings. However, calibration and consistency issues present challenges to ongoing and sustained use (Luczak et al., 2018). Some argue these technologies amount to a surveillance system which has the potential to impact the learning process and coaches should be cautioned to not become over reliant on technology in their practice (Williams & Manley, 2014). Recently, Windt and colleagues (2020) proposed a framework for decision-making for coaches and/or organizations which suggests that the use, reliability, and implementation of technology should be considered when making the decision on whether to adopt technology. Although limited, research in coaching has looked at how these technologies have been used in sport.

Existing Research in Coaching – Wearable Technologies

Luczak and colleagues (2020) reported that along with customer service and support issues, strength and conditioning coaches and athletic trainers in a performance sport setting had issues understanding what the data collected even meant and whether the data could be trusted. In this study, 113 individuals who held decision-making

59

influence within university athletic departments and professional sport organizations (i.e., front office personnel), strength and conditioning coaches, and athletic trainers were interviewed to understand their perceptions of wearable technologies' use and influence on competitive sport. The research team elected to use an unstructured interview format due to the differences in responsibilities between front office personnel, strength and conditioning coaches, and athletic trainers. Interviews were conducted in either an individual or group format. In the small group setting, the research team attempted to elicit feedback from all participants for each question. It is unclear how successful the research team was in getting information from all participants in the group settings. Transcripts and notes taken during the interview sessions were coded for themes.

Results indicated that nearly 73% of the participants were currently using wearable technologies within their facilities. Interestingly, all participants who were currently using wearables within their organizations reported frustrations with inaccurate data, a lack of meaningful recommendations, and challenges with the functionality of the technology (i.e., technology not working properly). Additionally, nearly 48% of those using the technology reported uncertainties regarding how the information reported by the technology related to athlete performance. This lack of clarity led some organizations to hire sport scientists to "search for meaning in the data" (Luczak et al., 2020, p. 31). Those unable to hire sport scientists to interpret the data reported ceasing to use the technology altogether. Participants familiar with the technology/data provided ($n =$ 48/113; 42.4%) noted that longitudinal data for the athletes was used when making decisions as opposed to data from individual time points. However, approximately 21% of the participants noted that coaches have a tendency to over-trust the data. This was

primarily reported by NCAA Division I football and basketball personnel. Participants further reported that the athletes who do/would use this wearable technology expressed concerns over how the information collected would be used in coach's playing time decisions. Further elaboration on how this data influenced the decision-making was not provided.

The practitioners interviewed noted an 'ecosystem' of stakeholders surrounding the athletes. This ecosystem included family and friends, strength and conditioning coaches, athletic trainers, sport specific coaches, medical professionals, sport administrators, sport organizations (e.g., NCAA, professional leagues, players associations), agents, and insurance company representatives. The decisions made by and opinions of these groups ultimately influenced whether wearable technologies were used at all as well as how broadly the data from the technology is shared. Furthermore, the decision to use the technology was reported as either being the responsibility of one individual or a group who would come to consensus.

This study clearly highlights a variety of decisions surrounding the implementation and use of wearable technologies within the sport environment that warrants future research consideration. This would include efforts to expand upon the selected participants into other levels of sport as well as examining the perceptions of other coaches (e.g., head coaches, position specific coaches). As technology continues to expand at monumental rates, high school and recreational coaches also have access to information provided by smart watches and phones. Examining how coaches use the data to inform their decisions is needed.

Sport Analytics. With the amount of data that wearable technologies and other

sport technologies (e.g., statistical tracking software) provide, data analytics has the

potential to enhance the knowledge and competitive strategies adopted in sport (Passfield

& Hopker, 2017). Currently this includes "advanced statistics, data management, and

data visualization" although advancements in this area are ongoing (Alamar, 2013). The

purpose of sport analytics is to provide information that will facilitate better decision-

making and increase an organization's competitive advantage which can be adopted by

coaches as well as other sport personnel (Alamar, 2013). By adopting a Bayesian

statistical approach, complex problems can be modeled and probabilistic estimates and

predictions can provide the opportunity to account for uncertainties (see Santos-

Fernandez et al., 2019 for a review). However, because of the training and knowledge

base that is required in order to analyze vast amounts of data, dedicated data

professionals are often required to implement sport analytics programs (Ward et al.,

2019). These sport scientists can assist coaches and other sport personnel with decision-

making for both regular process decisions and strategic decisions (Ward et al., 2019)

which may include decisions to alter training regimens or rest the athlete altogether

(Robertson et al., 2017). Analytics has also been used to examine effectiveness of

possessions in the final minutes of NBA games (Christmann et al., 2018), pitching

performance of starting MLB pitchers over the course of a game (Whiteside et al., 2016),

predictive modeling of 4th down conversions in NCAA Power 5 Conferences football

(Blinkoff et al., 2020), impact of substitution players compared to starters in rugby

(Michael et al., 2019), and success of women's basketball coaches compared to their

predecessors (Pierce et al., 2017). However, each of these contributions highlights what

data *can* be used for instead of empirical evidence showing how it *has* been used. As analytics has only recently emerged in sport, most analytics studies are theoretical in nature and focus on the opportunities an analytics program can provide with a few exceptions.

Existing Research in Coaching – Sport Analytics

In one study, the use of the GameChanger app in a Little League Baseball context was examined (Sanderson & Baerg, 2020). Along with being the approved scorekeeping app of Little League Baseball, GameChanger has also been adopted at the high school level by softball and baseball coaches. The app not only features a scorekeeping function but also a wide variety of advanced batting statistics and fielding metrics. In this study, the authors sought to examine the relation between youth sports analytics and decision-making accounting for risk of failure. To do this, the first author of this paper reported his own use of the GameChanger app while coaching a Little League All-Star Baseball team. Using the GameChanger app, baseball data was collected throughout exhibition games and was later analyzed for use in the All-Star tournament. This data informed hitting lineup decisions "in ways that maximized productivity" as well as selecting a closing pitcher based upon their likelihood of retiring the first two batters faced (Sanderson & Baerg, 2020, p. 79). The researchers also provided ways the app could be used to inform decisions made in practice settings (e.g., identifying where players are struggling to hit the ball and addressing this in practice). Furthermore, it was suggested that using this data would allow coaches to put players in situations where success is more likely than failure, however, evidence to support this claim was not provided. Additionally, it was argued that this app provided coaches an opportunity to "mitigate threats and hazards that come

from lineup changes" (Sanderson & Baerg, 2020, p. 80). Additionally, players and

parents are able to use the GameChanger app for statistics and data on specific players as

the app does not give access to the data for the whole team or other team's players.

Access to this data provided players and parents with opportunity to take charge of their

own performance, although evidence supporting this claim was not provided. Although

there is little to no support for some of the assertions, this article does offer some insights

into ways coaches can or may want to use data to inform their decisions. As this is the

perspective of one recreational coach and is limited to one app, research is needed

exploring additional sports, contexts, and applications.

An additional study was identified using the search terms: "analytics" AND

"decision making or decision-making" AND "sport" AND "coach*" of the

SPORTDiscus, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Complete, Computer Source,

Computers & Applied Sciences Complete, and ERIC databases. In this study, the

research team reported the development of an app, *MatchPad*, which was developed over

the course of a Rugby season (Legg et al., 2012). With help from Welsh Rugby Union

performance analysts, the researchers were able to provide a visualization tool using a

glyph-based design. This was in response to what one team representative referred to as

"information overload" due to the output of their current notation system providing

information in the form of a spreadsheet. Data analysis required thorough examination of

spreadsheets which made in-game information use impossible. The *MatchPad* app was

designed so that images and glyphs could be assigned to key events during the match

which would therefore provide more readily consumable information for coaches. Ease of

use was a necessary feature and taken into consideration during the design process. Upon

describing design specifics, the researchers offered information on a case study where the app was used by a team during a Rugby World Cup campaign. Post tournament, feedback on the app was provided. Quotations provided in text showed that for the team analysts, the layout and information provided as well as the portability of the equipment needed (e.g., iPad) allowed them to give the coaches feedback "immediately" (p. 1262). Information was available for use during the course of the match, during half-time discussions with athletes, as well as post-game analyses. Although this study is related to the development of software utilized, the inclusion of the case study, despite its brevity, highlights how coaches can use data and software that impacts their coaching practice. An understanding of how coaches use this data in the course of their decision-making would be beneficial for coach educators as well as the companies and individuals who design such products.

Social Media. Social media allows for ongoing communication between coaches and other relevant stakeholders within the sport environment which may be used in player recruitment, communication with stakeholders (e.g., players, parents, or fans), or as a source of information gathering. Reports from mainstream media coverage will frequently feature reference to comments or posts made on social media platforms and how those comments fit within or prompt ongoing issues. Social media also provides the opportunity for sport insiders to "clandestinely disseminate" information usually withheld from the public at large (Onwumechili, 2018). Therefore, information that would normally be restricted to certain personnel within sport organizations is made available to decision makers within other, possibly competing, sport organizations. To mitigate some of these issues, some sport organizations may attempt to monitor or restrict social media

use by their employees and athletes, the legality of which has been called into question (Han & Dodds, 2013). Given the pervasiveness of social media use, research into how social media influences coach decision-making is also needed. However, to date, no studies have examined how social media influences a coach's sport specific decision-making.

Organizational Influences

The final layer of the Mosier & Fischer (2010) framework highlights the potential influence that the organization can have on decision-making. These organizational influences range from rather subtle to explicit (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). This may occur through the established cultural norms of the organization, goals the organization sets for its members, criteria for performance reviews and rewards, as well as the training the organization provides (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Additionally, ongoing interactions with the organization can establish "frames for decision making" that encourage certain types of behaviors while discouraging others (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). Ultimately, the culture developed by the organization reinforces the decision priorities of the organization such as "safety, profit, quality, excellence, [or] expedience" (Mosier & Fischer, 2010) or other attributes that have been identified as being part of the organizational mission or vision.

Incongruence, however, can exist between the espoused norms and values of the organization and those norms and values that are enacted. The established reward and review system as well as how the organization elects to address noncompliant behaviors can encourage decisions and behaviors within the organizational environment (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). "Through its practice and priorities, the organization contributes latent circumstances that will influence the way individuals at all levels will form judgments

and make choices" (Mosier & Fischer, 2010, p. 234). Moreover, how decision makers within organizational environments perceive the congruence, or lack thereof, between espoused and enacted organizational values has an impact on their decision making. Additionally, an organization's decision-making structure not only governs behaviors within the organization, but also frames whose interests matter and establishes methodologies and protocols on how things should be done (Kikulis et al., 1995).

As previously noted, the coaching practice features elements that are social and political in nature. The interpersonal relationships that occur between the coach and the assistant coaches, parents, administrators, athletes, other stakeholders, educational community, and local community (Coté & Gilbert, 2009) are aspects of the organizational environment within which coaches operate. These constantly dynamic intra- and inter-group relationships occur not only within the organization but also between the coach and the organization (Cushion et al., 2006). This is necessitated by the coach's responsibility for the athlete and program which includes the "personnel at the club, school, federation, and other levels" (ICCE et al., 2013, p. 16). Furthermore, the history of the organization as well as the culture and political issues within these organizations can serve as underlying factors upon which coaches base their decisions and strategies (d'Arippe-Longueville et al., 1998). For more competitive levels of sport (e.g., collegiate teams, professional teams, and national teams) the organizational layer of the framework can also reflect the organizational involvement in the governing body (e.g., NCAA, Power 5 Conferences, NBA, NFL, NHL, MLB, USA Teams, etc.).

Recent reviews on stressors within coaching found that organizational stressors are one of the more prominent stressors coaches face (see Norris et al., 2017; Fletcher &

Scott, 2010). Furthermore, additional research has found that the organizational stress coaches experience is equal to or slightly greater than their stress related to the various performance related stressors inherent in the field (Levy et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008). It has been suggested that an inability to manage stress impedes the coach's decision-making (Fletcher & Scott, 2010). While each of these papers focus on the stress experienced by the coach instead of how the stressors influence decision-making, it stands to reason that areas that are a source of stress on the key decision makers in an environment will invariably have an effect on how decisions are made.

Existing Research in Sport – Organizational Influences. When faced with a crisis or serious problem, organizations will frequently conduct investigations into how the issue manifested. Case in point, following the arrest of a member of the football team for trafficking banned substances, the University of Waterloo in conjunction with the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport tested the entirety of the Waterloo football team for banned substances (Gravill & Thompson, 2010). Additionally, university administrators decided to suspend the football program for a period of one year and suspend the head coach and assistant coach pending the results of an internal investigation. Although not peer-reviewed, the published report shows that the primary aims of the investigation were to: "assess how the climate, culture and leadership of interuniversity athletics on campus may have contributed to this situation;" "review UW's Athletics procedures, practices and policies as they related to banned substances and assess their suitability;" and "determine how widespread was the knowledge that banned substances were being used and over what period of time" (p. 1). These aims highlight that within athletic organizations there are a variety of mechanisms that have the potential to contribute to

68

issues. Additionally, findings further draw attention to the perceptions of organizational members (i.e., players) regarding what is required to be successful within the sport itself. These mechanisms provide the context where decisions are made and may create an environment that encourages problematic behaviors. As such, scholarly research is needed to understand how the organization influences coaches' decision-making within sport. Unfortunately, this area is severely understudied as no studies have been identified that explicitly examine the organization's influence on coach decision-making. However, a small number of studies have been identified that are tangentially related.

Outside of coaching or athletic administration, a recent qualitative study investigated the pressures experienced by athletic trainers regarding patient care and return-to-play decisions in NCAA Division I sports (Pike Lacy et al., 2020). Using purposeful and snowball sampling, nine athletic trainers assigned to a variety of individual and team sports participated in this study. A semi-structured interview adopting a phenomenological approach was conducted with each of the participants in an effort to explore their experiences of providing care within this competitive sporting context. The interview guide was developed by building upon previous work on organizational culture and conflict. After pilot testing, changes were made to address issues related the flow of the interview. Data was coded using an interpretative phenomenological approach.

Results of this study indicate that athletic trainers experienced pressure from coaches to make specific decisions. Interestingly, the athletic trainers expected this pressure and therefore had specific strategies to manage the pressure or prevent it altogether. Specifically, pressure could be mitigated by maintaining effective

69

communication, providing rationale or explanations for their decisions, and developing a positive relationship with the coach. Additionally, the participants reported experiencing pressure from the student-athletes and athletic administrators especially when the athletic trainers were responsible for providing medical care to revenue-generating sports (e.g., football). Individual quotations provided highlighted that at least one athletic trainer felt as if "his job depended on pleasing coaches" (Pike Lacy et al., 2020, p. 412). This was attributed to the need to win and its relationship to the overall success and revenue of the athletic department and the ongoing job security of the coaches. Although unsurprising, the athletic trainers viewed this pressure as being "an inherent aspect of the culture and environment of the NCAA Division I FBS setting" (Pike Lacy et al., 2020, p. 412). This supports the idea that as coaches practice within organizations, the organization plays a role in how they approach specific decisions, in this case return-to-play. However, further exploration is needed to determine how the organization influences the coach's decision-making.

In the field of sport management, researchers examined environmental forces that influence decision-making related to organizational change within sport organizations (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011). Using institutional and stakeholder theories as a theoretical framework, this qualitative case study investigated forces that drove change within an NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision athletic department as well as the responses of stakeholders to that change (e.g., employees and student-athletes). Changes within the organization had taken place over the four preceding years including the hiring of a new athletic director 15-months prior, moving to a new athletic conference, "a new organizational culture and core philosophy," changes to the

organizational structure of the department, revisions to policies and procedures, and other personnel changes (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011, p. 206). One philosophical change instituted by the newly hired athletic director centered on the student-athletes "where every decision the department made was to be filtered through the lens of what was in the best interest of the student-athlete" (p. 206). Changes to the organization's values were also implemented (i.e., focus on relationships, trust, respect, and accountability).

Data collection lasted five months and consisted of semi-structured interviews with athletic department personnel and student athletes ($n = 25$), observations of staff meetings and competitions ($n = 10$ and 10 respectively), analysis of artifacts (e.g., media guides, game programs, office spaces, competition venues and memorabilia; $n = 47$), review of departmental archival records published between 1925 and 2006 ($n = 52$), and journal entries of participants which were submitted between the first and the second interview. Stakeholder groups interviewed included assistant coaches ($n = 2$), directors ($n = 4$), head coaches ($n = 4$), senior staff ($n = 3$), student-athletes ($n = 4$), student-workers ($n = 2$), and support staff ($n = 6$). Data were coded for themes using NVivo software with some codes created a priori to reflect the theoretical framework. Results indicated four environmental factors which drove the organizational change and change agent decision-making: competitive pressures from the affiliation with the new conference, economic conditions, alumni and donor pressures, and requests for change from the fans and parents (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011, p. 208).

Upon determining the factors that compelled the change, data were coded on the response to that change by the various stakeholders involved. Organizational history and tradition, institutional support and politics, and concerns for legitimacy emerged as

themes although these themes were not broken down by group membership. Generally, stakeholders' responses reflected a belief in the mediocrity of the athletic department primarily due to the lack of success experienced by the football program. Furthermore, the researchers found a resistance or ambivalence to change by the majority of the longer-tenured staff which was attributed to the tradition and history of the department. Within the theme of institutional support and politics the researchers noted, "[The newly hired athletic director] was keenly aware of the institutional constraints that he was bound within when making decisions, and of how athletics was positioned within the broader scope of the university" (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011, p. 212). This sentiment was echoed by the longer-tenured staff who highlighted the "political maneuvering which affected athletics" (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011, p. 212). It was noted that elimination of the football program was being considered within the athletic department; however, the decision to keep the football program was made at the university level which "[raised] questions among staff as to the political nature of this decision" (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2011, p. 213). Although this case study considered the whole of the athletic department and decisions made primarily at the athletic department level, results indicate a number of mechanisms (i.e., culture, politics, and organizational history) and sources of influence (i.e., conference affiliation, fans, parents, alumni, and organizational personnel) on sport decision makers. How these factors influenced the coaches specifically was not explored. But these conclusions support the decision to explore the organization's influence on coaches' decision-making.

Summary

The coaching practice is incredibly complex and attempts to explore this practice should include dedicated efforts to include these complexities (Coté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion et al., 2006; Jones & Wallace, 2005). This stems from the fact that coaching is not only pedagogical in nature but features social and political elements as well (ICCE et al., 2013; Abraham & Collins, 2011). These elements are not reserved for the in-situ decisions but also those aspects and responsibilities of coaches that occur out-of-action. To date, no empirical evidence has been collected that examines or explores any out-of-action decision-making by coaches. Focusing attention solely on the on-the-field actions of coaching and decisions surrounding these in-situ actions severely limits our understanding of what coaching is. If we are to fully understand coach decision-making, and by extension coaching itself, the context of the coaching practice should include not just the practice and competition environments but out-of-action contexts where complex coach decisions are made.

To address this gap, consideration must be given to the various influences that can affect how individuals make decisions. Using the Mosier and Fischer (2010) framework, it has been established that the task environment, personal factors of the decision maker (i.e., expertise, values, stress, and emotions), team or group decision-making dynamics, technology, and organizational environment have the potential to influence decisions that are made. However, one study cannot address the gaps in each of these areas. As the organization can provide a significant amount of stress on the coach (Frey, 2007; Norris et al., 2017; Olusoga et al., 2009; Thelwell et al., 2008), calls have been made for inclusion of the organizational culture into coaching research (Cushion et al., 2006). It

73

seems logical to start with research that examines the intersection of organizational influence and the coach. As such, this exploratory project will seek to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What elements of the organizational environment influence the out-of-action decisions made by coaches?

Research Question 2: How were organizational elements influential in the course of making a difficult out-of-action decision?

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

Research on the coaching practice has lacked directed attention to the "dynamic, complex, [and] messy reality" leading to gaps in our understanding of the coaching process (Cushion et al., 2006, p. 84). When addressing these gaps, efforts should be taken to consider the social and political aspects of the coaching practice as well as the contextual elements that influence coaching (Coté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion et al., 2006). By adopting a qualitative methodology, we are able to explore and understand contextual, social, and political forces that may influence coach decision-making.

Qualitative Research

Critiques of quantitative methodologies highlight that contextual elements are controlled for and 'stripped' from consideration, allowing results to be generalized and theoretical rigor enhanced (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Although quantitative methodologies allow researchers to randomize, predict, and control, it inhibits the researcher's ability to understand the nuances of complex phenomena, such as human behavior, which can be influenced by the environment as well as the meanings of these environmental elements for individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Merriam and Grenier (2019) define qualitative research as learning the meaning of a phenomenon and how people's experiences shape and influence that meaning. Researchers who seek to understand complex phenomena, such as influences on coach decision-making, which cannot be divorced from the context in which the decisions are made (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013), cannot solely rely on quantitative methodologies which "isolate simple factors and trace their effects through statistical analysis" (Josselson, 1995, p. 29). Rather, by adopting qualitative methodologies researchers are able to

explore how "people interpret their experiences, construct their world views, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). In order to learn about others, we must understand them in the environment they exist within and observe how this context shapes their understanding of themselves (Josselson, 1995).

In adopting a qualitative approach, the researcher does not attempt to control or manipulate variables; rather they seek to observe and understand the reality of the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When the focus of scientific inquiry relates to human affairs, as opposed to physical mechanisms, researchers expect "things will work differently in different situations" especially those situations that rely on professional knowledge (Stake, 2010, p. 13). This professional knowledge 'relies heavily' on the experiences of the individual which often occurs within an organizational setting where "the complexity and substance of their reasoning is shared among professional colleagues and not shared widely with many others" (Stake, 2010, p. 14). Therefore, as the purpose of this research is to explore implicit and explicit organizational influences on coaches' out-of-action decision-making, qualitative methodologies will be used to examine coaches' experiences and perceptions of making these out-of-action decisions within an organizational setting.

Research Paradigm

Before selecting a qualitative methodological approach, researchers must first adopt a paradigm which is the "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in the choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). Paradigms reflect the researcher's beliefs on the nature of reality (i.e., ontology), how we come to know and understand that

reality (i.e., epistemology), how knowledge is accumulated, as well as what methods are available to undertake scientific inquiry given their perspective (Lincoln et al., 2011). The beliefs we hold may influence the way we interpret information, which may impact our ontology and epistemology (Crotty, 2003). Not only will the researcher's beliefs and experiences shape the way they approach scientific inquiry (Lincoln et al., 2011), but coaches' beliefs and experiences will shape their perceptions of and approaches to coaching. Therefore, to understand how coaches make decisions within their coaching practice, researchers must explore their experiences and how they understand and incorporate their experiences into their practice. Researchers have various paradigms to choose from when positioning themselves within qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These paradigms are not in contention with one another yet, they may overlap in some areas. However, each paradigm contains three fundamental components: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Constructivist paradigm. The most common type of qualitative research is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In constructivist inquiries, this social construction occurs when the researcher and participant interact and data collection takes place in the natural environment (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Rather than operating under the assumption that one, observable reality exists, constructivism is conducted under the premise that there are multiple interpretations, and therefore realities, which can exist (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, researchers seek to construct knowledge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) by understanding and interpreting the perceptions of their participants (Lincoln et al., 2011). This is based on the philosophical belief that as we interact with our surroundings, we

77

construct our own understanding of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach requires the researcher to interact with and co-construct the experiences of the participant in an effort to come to know the participant's reality (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Within a constructivist paradigm, multiple realities are assumed to exist through "multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature...and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding their construction" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110-111). This ontological relativistic approach assumes that an individual's construction of their reality is "not more or less 'true' in any absolute sense" but rather "more or less informed and/or sophisticated" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110-111). This belief is reflected in the decision to include the perspectives of numerous coaches from numerous interscholastic organizations as each coach will bring a unique perspective informed by their own construction of their coaching reality. This is central to constructivists who "gain understanding by interpreting subject perceptions" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 102). Epistemologically, constructivists believe that the interactive link between the researcher and the participant results in findings being "literally created" as the investigation or project is carried out which allows the researcher to know the reality of the participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). Therefore, when selecting a methodology, constructivists believe that their participant's "individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through the interaction between and among [the] investigator and respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). This requires a direct interaction between the researcher and coach participants.

Participants

Fourteen interscholastic head coaches who were the primary decision maker for their respective teams and employed by school systems from seven states in the southeastern United States (U.S.) participated in this study. Eleven of the coaches were men and three coaches were women. Coach participants had an average of 23 years coaching experience (range 6 - 42 years) and 16 years head coaching experience (range 5 - 29 years). At the time of their participation in this study all coaches reported coaching one of the following team sports: basketball, football, baseball, soccer, and volleyball. Coaches additionally reported previous coaching experience from a variety of sports including: track and field, wrestling, cross country, tennis, swimming, and softball. As this project seeks to explore the organizational influences on coach decision-making, any pursuit at understanding how coaches are influenced should consider the coach's beliefs on what influences their decisions. If it is found that a coach is not the primary decision maker for their team, the coach will be excluded from the study.

Procedures – Participants. In order to facilitate the identification and recruitment of participants for this study the following procedures were adopted.

Participant Criteria

In order for coaches to be included in this study, the head coach must be the primary decision maker for their team, employed at the same school they coach at, have a minimum of five years of total head coaching experience, and speak English. Due to the multitude of challenges faced by coaches during the coronavirus pandemic, which could potentially bias the conclusions drawn from this research, decisions related to coronavirus issues will be excluded from this project. As exploring the organizational influences on

79

the decision maker is the aim of this project, it is necessary to have as many organizations represented as coaches in order to explore organizational influences more generally as opposed to influences within a single organization (Barriball & While, 1994). Therefore, only one coach from any given organization will be included in the study.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

A complete list of the inclusion and exclusion criteria can be shown in Table 1. An extensive internet search was done to gather the number of high school athletic associations that exist across the United States. From there, the primary researcher identified school name, city, and websites for every high school in the U.S with the exception of two states that have numerous athletic associations within the state. After gathering that information, the primary researcher narrowed the search further and identified all schools in the southeast region of the U.S. The southeast region was defined a priori as states geographically located south of the Mason-Dixon Line and east of the eastern most borders of Texas and Oklahoma.

Using public records on state high school athletic association websites, schools that had a minimum average daily enrollment range of 700-2,500 students were identified in an effort to establish a homogeneity in the size of the organizations. Identified schools were assigned a unique identification number for randomization purposes. A random number generator was used to select schools to be contacted for recruitment purposes. This approach was adopted as a systematic way of identifying coaches at member schools without requiring communication to hundreds of schools and potentially thousands of coaches since the sample size is so small. Using an internet search engine, contact information for each of the randomly selected schools was gathered. If the school's head

80

coaches' contact information (i.e., email addresses) was available via the athletic

department and/or school website, recruitment emails were sent directly to the head

coaches. If the head coaches' email addresses could not be identified, athletic director

contact information was identified and recruitment emails were sent to the athletic

director with a request to forward to head coaches within his/her school. It is important to

note the different recruitment emails were used for each respective party (see Appendix

A and B). If email addresses could not be identified for coaches or athletic directors,

phone numbers listed on school websites were used as the first point of contact in the

recruitment process. If a participant or gatekeeper (i.e., athletic director) was not

successfully recruited after two business days, follow up emails were sent (see Appendix

C and D). In the event a participant could not be identified at the selected school after

seven days, a replacement school was randomly selected from the list of competing

schools within that state until representatives from three schools within the state

participated in this research.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of Participants

Inclusion Criteria:
- Interscholastic public high school head coach of a team sport   - Primary decision maker for the team   - Minimum of five years of coaching experience   - Coaches will be employed at the same school in which they coach   - Interscholastic high school employing coach must be a co-ed institution   - English speaker   - Willingness to participate in the study
Exclusion Criteria:
- Representative/member of same organization (school) as previous participant   - Coach serving in multiple sport decision-making capacities (e.g., head coach AND athletic director, athletic administrator)

Participant Identity Protection

In an effort to protect participant identities, pseudonyms were chosen for each participant. Should coaches reference the school/organization they represent, schools were assigned a random letter and any reference in transcripts or discussion used the following format "School X". States from which the samples were taken were not identified by name. Rather, if the state itself was referenced by the coaches, the state was given a number between one and five. Upon anonymization of the transcripts and data,

transcripts were kept on a password protected external hard drive in a locked office assigned to the principal investigator. Copies of documents provided to the research team for triangulation were kept in a locked file drawer in a locked office assigned to individual members of the research team. After project completion transcripts were shredded.

Procedures – Data Collection. This study adopted the following procedures to facilitate data collection.

<div align="center">*Interview Guide*</div>

When selecting a methodology aligning with the paradigmatic perspective of the researcher, it is necessary to select an approach that aligns with the research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 2010). Additionally, methods of data collection can influence the quality, trustworthiness, and results of a study; therefore, a systematic approach to the development of the semi-structured interview guide is required (Kallio et al., 2016). Researchers who completed a systematic methodological review of recommendations for the creation of an interview guide have identified the following steps in interview guide development: identification of prerequisites, retrieval and use of previous knowledge, formulation of preliminary semi-structured interview guide, pilot testing, and presentation of complete semi-structured interview guide (Kallio et al., 2016).

Within the identification of prerequisites phase, the researcher evaluates the appropriateness of an interview as a means to collect data relevant to the research question (Kallio et al., 2016). Based upon this researcher's paradigmatic choice, interviews are appropriate in an effort to co-construct the reality of the coaches (Guba &

Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2011). An extensive literature review was conducted prior

to the start of this project and areas of influence within organizations were identified

which formed the foundation of the interview guide creation (Barriball & While, 1994;

Kallio et al., 2016; see Appendix E). Following identification of relevant literature, the

preliminary version of the interview guide was created using the main themes identified

as well as potential follow up questions (Kallio et al., 2016). Upon approval of the

interview guide by the research committee, the interview was pilot tested with a coach in

the principal investigator's coaching network (Barriball & While, 1994; Kallio et al.,

2016). Following this pilot interview, areas of confusion or concern were addressed by

reformulating the questions or changing the interview guide question order (Kallio et al.,

2016). The final phase of the interview guide creation process is presentation of the final

interview guide (Kallio et al., 2016). This phase will occur following completion and

defense of the dissertation project when the final manuscript is published.

Although semi-structuredness requires the researcher to ask every participant the

same questions, this approach allows participants response flexibility and the researcher a

unique opportunity to probe to further understand their experiences (Treece & Treece,

1986). Probes cannot be generated beforehand but rather occur as a result of the ongoing

interview in order to gain clarity, request additional details, or invite participants to

provide an example (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using this approach allows the

researcher, who is the "primary instrument of the data collection" (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016, p. 122) to explore and determine how people interpret the world around them and

how this guides or influences their behaviors and perceptions. The interview process

must rely on the researcher's expertise and knowledge of the topic to shape the interview

which will allow the topic to be explored in depth by the researcher and the respondent who may discover new aspects of him/herself (Krauss et al., 2009). This is beneficial when researchers want to learn about participants' attitudes and beliefs (Barriball & While, 1994).

Main Study Interviews

High school head coaches tend to have great demands on their time. Therefore, the principal investigator selected phone conversations and video chats (e.g., Zoom, Google Voice) as the interview methods for this research. Furthermore, remote data collection is beneficial given the number of states and locations within the states from which the coaches were recruited. Coaches were given a choice as to which option they would prefer. Of the fourteen coaches, thirteen elected to participate via phone and one coach elected to participate via Zoom. Although the method of recording data collection differed (i.e., phone and Zoom) there was no difference in the information shared (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Phone conversations and/or video chats were recorded using features available within the communication application itself and recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Validity and Credibility in Qualitative Research

Traditional approaches to control for threats to the validity of quantitative studies are not available to qualitative researchers who often seek to explore nuances in context (Cho & Trent, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Rather, validity in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the researcher's claims accurately reflect the reality or perceived reality of the participant (Cho & Trent, 2006). One approach to addressing the validity of the researcher's claims is the transactional approach which is an interactive

process "aimed at achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy and consensus by means of revisiting facts, feelings, experiences, and values or beliefs collected and interpreted (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 321). This approach relies on the adoption of specific techniques and methods throughout the research process to ensure reality is accurately reflected (Cho & Trent, 2006). In establishing the trustworthiness of the data, qualitative researchers attend to the project's validity and credibility via bracketing, member checking, and triangulation measures (Cho & Trent, 2006).

Bracketing Interview. The bracketing interview is one component of the transactional approach to qualitative research which is adopted in an effort to address questions of validity (Cho & Trent, 2006). Before engaging in semi-structured interviews, the principal investigator participated in an audio-taped bracketing interview with a faculty member on the dissertation committee experienced in qualitative research. This bracketing interview ensures the researcher understands any biases, assumptions, and beliefs that could influence the data collection process and analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Identification of biases reduces the potential for probing questions that could influence participants' responses (Patton, 2002, 2015). Researchers come to understand their own perspective, and therefore bias, prior to undertaking the interviews with the research participants by going through the interview guide with an experienced qualitative researcher (Hutchinson & Skodol Wilson, 1992). A thorough understanding of the primary researcher's biases and beliefs relative to the topic of inquiry provided the context for checking these biases to prevent them from bleeding into the interviews and/or analyses (Hutchinson & Skodol Wilson, 1992).

The bracketing interview was conducted to better understand the principal investigator's biases, beliefs, and assumptions as it relates to the research question. Generally, the principal investigator learned that the decision-making processes she experienced as a former head coach influenced her assumptions as to what decisions would be discussed, how she would have responded to the challenge, and what organizational influences would impede those decisions. Having this understanding of the rationale and approaches previously undertaken while making out-of-action decisions was incredibly important in order to prevent that bias from bleeding over into the data collection and/or analysis.

Member-Checking. Member checking is an additional component of the transactional approach which serves to address questions of validity (Cho & Trent, 2006). All interviews were transcribed verbatim and returned to participants for member checking. This critical step represents "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" where the "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions" are reviewed by the individuals who provided the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). The goal was to allow coaches to check the interpretations for "perceived accuracy and reactions" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 322). Upon transcription of the interviews, transcripts were sent to the participant for verification (see Appendix F). During this process, coaches were invited to review and update the transcript should they wish to add or clarify any answers provided during the interview. A deadline for returning the reviewed transcripts to the primary investigator was not specified. Five coaches reviewed and approved their transcripts. No coach changed or clarified information from their

87

interview transcript. Those coaches who did not return their transcript, their transcript was left as is.

     Triangulation. The final component of the transactional approach to address validity concerns is triangulation (Cho & Trent, 2006). Triangulation efforts can be directed to one of four areas: data, method, researcher, and theory (Cho & Trent, 2006). Where member checking addresses questions of credibility of the constructions, data triangulation verifies the facts by collecting data from multiple sources (Cho & Trent, 2006). To establish data triangulation, multiple coaches from a variety of schools were interviewed (Carter et al., 2014). Themes found in the data analysis phase were identified and verified across numerous participants as opposed to a single coach.

     To achieve triangulation, two researchers participated in the analysis of this data to confirm or challenge observations and conclusions (Carter et al., 2014). By including multiple researchers, the risk of data interpretations being the result of the primary investigator's 'blinders' is diminished (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One mechanism for triangulation of the investigators was accomplished by obtaining the perspective of a 'critical friend' who critically viewed the raw data itself (i.e., interview transcripts) as well as the emerging themes and interpretations derived from the raw data (Stake, 2010). The critical friend followed the analysis protocol independent of the primary investigator. Following these independent analyses, the primary investigator and critical friend met during a series of analysis meetings to compare, combine, and refine the identified themes and subthemes. Additionally, a peer debriefer was used as an additional measure of researcher triangulation to establish trustworthiness of the data (Lietz et al., 2006). This peer debriefer had the necessary familiarity with the content of the project (i.e.,

understanding of coaching research) as well as familiarity with the data collection and analyses methodology (i.e., experienced in qualitative research; Lietz et al, 2006). The primary investigator provided the peer debriefer with the audio recordings of the interviews, complete interview transcripts, and thematic structure identified by the primary investigator and critical friend. The peer debriefer reviewed the information and suggested the renaming of some subthemes in an effort to be more clear and/or concise. These recommendations were followed. Incorporating additional perspectives allows researchers to be more confident that their interpretations are 'right' (Stake, 2010, p. 124).

In an effort to support method triangulation, relevant documents discussed by coaches were requested. Additionally, a research journal was kept by the primary investigator where detailed reflections on each interview were recorded. As field notes, observations, document examination, and interviews are typical means for method triangulation (Cho & Trent, 2006), the research journal was a necessary component as these reflections served as the field notes for this project. The convergence of information gathered through the data collection process as well as the data analysis phase addressed concerns regarding the validity and credibility of the conclusions drawn (Carter et al., 2014).

Data Analysis

Upon transcription of the interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted performed. Thematic analysis provides the opportunity for a "nuanced, complex, interpretative analysis" where patterns and themes in a dataset can be described and interpreted for meaning and importance (Braun et al., 2016, p. 191). This approach offers

researchers flexibility to engage with the data through active choices made by the research team (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). The first choice to be made in this analysis involves the level at which the researcher engages with the data; more specifically, when analyzing the data, researchers must decide whether ideas, concepts, meanings, and experiences must be explicitly stated (i.e., semantic focus) or if the underlying, implicit ideas that 'underpin' the explicitly stated idea will also be considered (i.e., latent focus; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2016). The second choice of the analysis centers on whether codes will be developed using a bottom-up, inductive approach, or deductive approach where a priori theoretical concepts will be pulled from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2016). However, it should be noted that while researchers can land on one option or the other, thematic analyses will frequently include both semantic and latent and inductive and deductive elements (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2016). During this analysis, both semantic and latent meanings were coded and developed using an inductive approach as sufficient theoretical concepts explaining the organizational influences on coach decision-making which would be necessary for a deductive approach have yet to be established.

Braun and Clarke (2006) developed six phases to a thematic analysis: (1) familiarization, (2) coding, (3) theme development, (4) refinement, (5) naming, and (6) writing up. During this process, the researcher draws upon their "theoretical assumptions, disciplinary knowledge, research skills and experience, and content of the data" to produce the themes and patterns within the data (Braun et al., 2016, p. 196). Next, each phase will be thoroughly discussed.

1. Familiarization – During this phase, the researcher immersed herself in the data in an effort to become 'intimately familiar' with the content (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). This involved the reading and re-reading of the entire dataset while making notes about the key elements in the responses that addressed the overarching research question (Braun et al., 2016). Ideally, the researcher reads through the data at least once before beginning the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012).

2. Coding – The coding process is where the analysis became "systematic and thorough" (Braun et al., 2016, p. 196). Codes provided a label for something of interest within the dataset that directly spoke to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). This process necessarily involved additional re-reading of the dataset and modification of the codes as the analysis progressed. It is critical for the researcher to give full and equal attention to each piece of data in an effort to identify repeating patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step was completed once the created codes "richly and thoroughly [capture]" those aspects of the dataset that were relevant to the research question (Braun et al., 2016, p. 198). Three coding mechanisms were adopted during the coding phase. The first coding mechanism adopted was initial or open coding where the data was assigned individual units of meaning (Saldaña, 2016). The second coding mechanism used was structural coding where the structure of each passage was assigned codes based upon the initial codes included in the passage in order to group together similar initial coding elements identified during the first phase (Saldaña, 2016). The third and final coding mechanism adopted was pattern

coding where codes from the first two phases collapsed and condensed into broader units of meaning or themes (Saldaña, 2016).

3. Theme Development – Upon completion of the initial coding, the 'core analytic' work of thematic analysis occurred, starting with theme development (Braun et al., 2016, p. 198). In this stage, the codes were examined for patterns in an effort to identify higher-order concepts which represented more generalized themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). Here, codes were sorted by similar concepts to develop the higher-order themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Within this stage, the goal is to move beyond summarization of the responses toward a commentary on the implications and importance of the ideas and concepts in the data (Braun et al., 2016).

4. Refinement – The refinement process involved juxtaposing the codes and themes against the original dataset to establish whether the codes and themes represented the data well and in a coherent way addressed the research question (Braun et al., 2016). This step centered on matching the purpose of the analysis with the aim of the project (Braun et al., 2016) and essentially served as a mechanism of quality checking (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Exploring the central unifying concept of the higher-order themes for distinct patterns and relationships ensured these themes represented individual concepts (Braun et al., 2016). It is not uncommon for multiple themes to collapse or merge into one theme or drop out completely due to lack of support (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Clustered themes representing broad, overarching themes can also be established. However, it is noted that there should be no more than three theme levels: overarching themes, themes, and subthemes

(Braun & Clarke, 2013). Conclusion of this phase resulted in an understanding of the themes presented in the data set, how these themes connected, and the overall story presented by the data corpus (i.e., entire data set; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5. Naming – Upon conclusion of the code refinement, themes were defined, clarified, and refined in an effort to establish the depth and detail of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). This step involved not only the descriptions of the themes but more importantly the "interpretative commentary" that will be presented to the reader (Braun et al., 2016). Paraphrasing the data was not sufficient; rather, researchers should identify not only what themes were present but why these themes were of interest when considering the research question/s (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, excerpts from the data corpus served as examples of the themes and were collected in an effort to ground the reader's understanding of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

6. Writing up – Writing occurs throughout the entire process of thematic analysis not just in the last phase (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2016). The last step "involves compiling, developing, and editing *existing* (emphasis in original text) analytic writing, and situating it within an overall report" (Braun et al., 2016, pp. 200-201). This written report provided a concise, logical, and interesting account within and across the themes created throughout the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

By investing significant time and attention to engaging with the data, thematic analysis afforded researchers an opportunity to "capture the messy, contradictory, and complex nature of psychological and social meanings" (Braun et al., 2016, p. 203). The

conclusions drawn using thematic analysis from the constructionist paradigmatic perspective "seek to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). This approach is warranted and necessary given the nature of the research question and context under examination.

.

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

As a result of thematic analysis procedures, four major themes and fifteen subthemes were identified (see Appendix G). The elements of the organizational environment that have the potential to shape or influence coach decision making, each serving as a major theme, include: the school environment, the decision-making team, the administrator, and parents of athletes. The ways in which these elements influence the coach as they make decisions are reflected in the fifteen subthemes.

Types of Out-of-Action Decisions

Each coach who participated in this project was able to identify a problem or scenario from their coaching practice that required them to make an out-of-action decision. These decisions primarily focused on the development of the program culture or the holistic development of the athlete (i.e., decisions related to disciplinary issues or consequences for infractions, decisions related to program ideals, etc.), and extended-cycle decisions. Extended-cycle decisions are those decisions where coaches have previously made and implemented decisions related to playing time, team membership, consequences for infractions, etc., and subsequently received pushback or feedback regarding the decision. In these situations, the feedback re-opened the previously closed decision cycle resulting in coaches needing to make additional decisions for a situation where decisions had previously been made and implemented. In each of the cases where coaches reported extended-cycle decision-making processes, organizational stakeholders (i.e., parents or administrators) were the source of the feedback that re-opened the decision cycle.

95

Theme #1: School Environment

Results suggest that aspects of the school environment where coaches are employed have the ability to shape and influence the decision-making processes associated with their head coaching responsibilities. For the purposes of this study, the school environment refers to the institutional elements of the schools that have the potential to shape the coaches' decisions including the four subthemes: (a) the goals and norms of the school, (b) the support network provided to the coaches by colleagues within the school, (c) the school environment as a source of information for the coach, and (d) accessibility to student-athletes.

Goals and Norms. Coaches in the present study described the impact of the school and athletic department's goals and norms on their decision-making. These norms and goals derived from the policies, procedures, and expectations the school officials and/or athletic department leaders set that influenced specific coach decisions (i.e., uniform behavioral expectations and mandated athletic consequences for student-athletes who break school rules or fail to meet a specific standard). Additionally, the coaches shared that the organizational priorities may frame or limit the decisions made regarding team or program goals (i.e., expectation of pursuit of school goals may supersede coach's priorities for program or team).

One study participant who reported organizational norms as shaping his decision making was Coach Phillip who believes he "lost several athletes that were gonna play…because they had failed some classes" which would have consequences that "[the student-athletes] didn't want anything to do with." This issue was precipitated by the organizational culture of School D where "multiple other sports at the school" did not

96

have the same expectations on student-athletes to maintain their eligibility once it was initially established. Coach Phillip explained that by his estimation, the opinion of other sport coaches on campus was that "as long as [the student-athlete gets] eligible…who cares what [they do] in school for the rest of the time." This approach was problematic for Coach Phillip who stated that eligibility "was something that was very important" and that he "wanted to stay by [his] particular standards." However, enforcement of his expectations and standards in an organization that does not have a similar set of expectations and standards for all sport participants became complex as players who would have faced consequences for their grades/behaviors on Coach Phillip's team elected to play a different sport at the school whose coach did not enforce similar standards. Fortunately, Coach Phillip did note "over the past few years… [there is] more of a standard throughout the school" where the district is attempting to "[maintain] a certain GPA" standard for student-athletes. This resulted in Coach Phillip not "[having] to worry about enforcing it as much anymore" because all student-athletes are subject to the same expectations regardless of the sport they play. Uniform standards allowed Coach Phillip to make decisions regarding the enforcement of team, and now school, policies and expectations without concern that players would elect to leave his team for a different team within the school where similar standards were not held.

Coach Sean also reported that his school has similarly held and enforced behavioral standards for all student-athletes within the school. For example, Coach Sean's school requires that any in-season student-athlete who faces disciplinary consequences for significant infractions to school rules (i.e., fighting, cursing a teacher, etc.) to be suspended for the next game. He commented that because "we're [the coaches

at the school] all on the same page, you're not turning around saying, 'Well, the football program does this or the soccer program does this.'" His perception is that this continuity of expectations "really helps our decision because…the whole athletic program does the same thing" and the student-athletes "all understand that…we treat them fairly and equally." Although Coach Sean did not discuss any incidents or problems that came about prior to the establishment of athletic department wide standards, it is clear from his commentary that his decision-making is aided by systemic goals and expectations that are similarly held and enforced across the athletic department and school.

Coach Jeffrey referred to a different aspect of the school's norms which have shaped his decision making. He noted that over the past decade his school has "had a high volume of turnover" of administrators, coaches, and teachers at the school. Because of this high turnover Coach Jeffrey explained that "it's been kind of hard to get everybody together and on the same page." More specifically, this has resulted in new administration having a lack of awareness of who he is as a coach, person, and his sport program's history. In an effort to combat this lack of awareness, Coach Jeffrey explained that he is now intentionally more open about the various events, activities, and awards of program participants. He explained that now, "when we [Coach Jeffrey's team] do big events, I'm starting to send emails out and they'll [the school] actually post it up there for everybody to see." Previously this was not an approach Coach Jeffrey took because he characterizes himself a someone who does not go out "to show everybody everything [he's] ever accomplished." Instead, this approach of publicizing the team's activities is undertaken in an effort to be more open to administrators and colleagues who very well may be new to the school.

Support Network. Another way the organizational environment can influence coaches as they are making decisions for their teams and programs is found through the support network with colleagues at their school. Coach Sophia describes the culture of School C as "rich…in support." She attributes this 'rich' culture to the number of "alumni [who have] returned" to School C for their teaching and coaching careers. As a result, Sophia believes the organizational members "truly genuinely [care] about each other and truly genuinely [support] each other." Therefore, she noted, when she is faced with decisions "there is no weight, per se, on [her] shoulders in terms of pressure when walking around campus." This results in an organizational environment she characterizes as more akin to a "sense of community" where Coach Sophia clearly feels supported by organizational members as she makes decisions in an effort to pursue her coaching goals.

Coach Ryan also highlighted the support that he receives from other colleague coaches within the school. In fact, on the day of our interview Coach Ryan had reached out to the head coach from another sport on campus to discuss a potentially contentious situation he believed would manifest the following season. Coach Ryan noted he "was just trying to get his [colleague's] thoughts on it to prepare" for the situation he anticipated could arise after tryouts the following season. Coach Ryan actively sought this coach's perspective in the hopes that he had faced a similar problem in the past and would be able to offer a solution for Ryan's anticipated issue. While his colleague had not faced a similar problem in the past, he validated Coach Ryan's thoughts and acknowledged the difficulty of the situation. By confirming his thoughts and acknowledging the situation was "one that they don't want to be in," Ryan was able to get support while engaged in a difficult decision-making process.

Another participant discussed the support she receives from colleagues within her school. Coach Rose noted that "sometimes it's not the answer" a colleague gives that helps her make decisions. Rather "just the person wanting to be involved with you that cares enough about what you do. You know, that acknowledges you as a person." Coach Rose went on to say that sometimes these colleagues encourage her to "slowdown. Stop. You know, you need to think through this better." These comments by Coach Rose highlight the important role that support within a school environment can play for coaches who may be struggling with a decision.

Source of Information. As coaches discussed their decision-making processes, they frequently referred to one barrier they encountered – lack of information or understanding regarding the issue requiring a decision. Most coaches described the need to address student-athlete behavioral issues and concerns as one of the primary out-of-action decisions they regularly face. Coaches often face problem scenarios that require some level of action, and therefore decision, on their part; but, because athletes may not be fully transparent, many coaches commented that they are often left confused or obviously missing details of the issue. Consequently, coaches find themselves needing additional information so they can, not only understand the full scope of the problem, but also make a decision to address it. The school environment serves as a source of information for coaches as they seek to make sense of issues or problems. This information may come through school documents and resources (i.e., lists of students serving ISS/OSS, access to the school's learning management system, access to student records, etc.), school stakeholders (i.e., teachers, staff, administrators, etc.), or situations the coach witnesses (i.e., understanding of the social network around an athlete by seeing

the athlete interact with individuals on campus). Information accumulated through on-campus sources provides context to problems or notification of issues that require coach decisions.

Coach Phillip reported the organizational environment as being a source of information for players on his team. He expounded for instance that in addition to monitoring the student athletes' eligibility he must also monitor the athletes' adherence to on-campus rules and off-campus expectations. Coach Phillip explained:

Our school has all that information available so I can just go in and see who's in ISS [in-school suspension], who's in OSS [out-of-school suspension]. I can look in…all my players' records and things like that. And another thing that I do at the very beginning of the season is I'll send out an email to every single one of the teachers, listing all the expectations that I have. And then if they have any issues with any of my players to send me an email. And so therefore, if a player has been tardy a couple of times and maybe the teacher doesn't really want to write them up, well, then they'll send me an email and say 'hey, this young man has been tardy a couple of times, will you help me out?' And then we'll go from there.

Additionally, he seeks out information in an effort to ensure "their grades are right," "they're attending class," and "making sure that they are doing all the right things they are supposed to once they are inside the class." He noted that this "takes away from a lot of the time" he has available throughout the day to tend to other issues which he described as a "challenging task every single day in itself." However, by seeking out information available through school documents and systems and soliciting information from organizational stakeholders, Coach Phillip is able to make frequent decisions on a

"consistent basis" that support program expectations and standards. Coach Phillip was clear that even when the school provides a consequence for an athlete's behavioral infractions, he likes to provide an additional consequence so that the athletes know that he is "staying on top" of them. However, while Coach Phillip does make efforts to seek out organizational information using available channels, he does not make the same efforts to monitor the off-campus behaviors of athletes. He specified that he does not follow the arrest records in the area in an effort to make sure his athletes are not getting arrested. Instead, the organization provides a mechanism for him to become aware of student-athlete arrests through on-campus school resource officers (henceforth SRO's) who are police officers or sheriff deputies assigned to school campuses. When students (athletes or non-athletes alike) are involved in off-campus infractions that lead to their arrest, SRO's are responsible for reporting this information directly to the school. Because of his employment on campus, Coach Phillip therefore has a potential pipeline for information should one of the athletes on his team get arrested off-campus. The final way that Coach Phillip reported the organizational environment as being a source of information was through the students. He elaborated that "it's amazing how quick I'll hear from just students at the school about things" that may have occurred. This information most often results in Coach Phillip learning of an off-campus issue involving a team member which requires his attention and decision-making efforts to address.

Coach Rose explained that she receives reports and information from her colleagues which is useful as she makes decisions in an effort to hold student-athletes to the rules and expectations for her school and program. She stated that her beliefs around student-athletes adherence to school rules centers on her team serving as an "example"

rather than an "exception." Therefore, the communication she receives from colleagues who report an athlete's infractions or issues can trigger standard enforcement decisions. For instance, Coach Rose explained:

> So I get different things from different people in the building. I get a great deal of support in this building. You, I think it's because [the] way I've run my program since I've been here [and] academics first and things like that. And they're not afraid to, you know, they can call me and they say, you know, 'busted your kid, they had their phone out [in] class today.' I said, 'Okay, keep the phone, I'll get it for practice, and they'll have to do something at the beginning of practice.'

Additionally, should a student athlete fail to meet the work standards placed on them by their classroom teachers, Coach Rose will get a report that "so and so hasn't been doing their work" which provides an opportunity for her to address the issue and "get [her] point across" to the athlete in question. Ultimately, Coach Rose was clear that information she receives and "those type of sharing things" facilitates her decision making on consequences and strategies to "just build something different." And, "then your kids learn to carry themselves differently in school" which is of great importance to Coach Rose.

In addition to Coach Rose, other participants noted that the schools can provide useful information as coaches make decisions to support the holistic development of the student athletes. Coach George recounted examples where organizational members provided information that was influential to his decision making when he noted that teachers will "email you or contact you if the kid's misbehaving in class or not doing well academically" which is a result of "open communication" between the faculty and the

coaches. However, his thoughts on the information received varied in one significant way to that of what Coach Rose reported. In Coach George's estimation, sometimes faculty members report student-athletes to coaches with the intention of getting the student-athlete into trouble. He indicated that sometimes the communication is centered around the negative behaviors of the athlete instead of reporting anything positive when he noted:

> Unfortunately, a lot of teachers will, they'll only email you about grades or their behavior. Well my question is, can you email me about something good? ...They'll only email you, 'Hey, so and so fell asleep in class.' Well they're emailing you to, for us to get on to them.

This information can influence the timeliness of Coach George's response when student-athletes have not met specific standards. For instance, when a teacher reported that one of the athletes on George's team was failing his history class, Coach George was then able to plan with the player's mother for a consequence following that week's game. He recounted the conversation he had with the student-athlete following that week's game:

> The kid did not go to Applebee's with the rest of his other friends. He got in my car and I took him home. I said you're not going to Applebee's. And he was all 'What? What? You can't…'. I said, 'I've already cleared it with your mom. Your mom said to take you straight home. You're not going to Applebee's. You got a 47 in your class.

In this case, the information on the failing grade was received during the course of the school term and not at the conclusion of the term via the student-athlete's report card.

Because the coaches report receiving information frequently, it allows them, in some cases, to make decisions that prevent larger issues.

Accessibility to Student-Athletes. The final mechanism of the school environment identified as a potential influence on coach decision-making comes through the accessibility coaches have throughout the day to the athletes on their teams. Coach Ryan described the effect that accessibility to student athletes has when he recounted a conversation he has had with "people at my school and to the powers that be at other schools." He explained,

> I think they are better off hiring a B coach who teaches there than an A plus coach who's an off-campus person. Because somebody who teaches there understands what those kids are going through on a daily basis. They get to know the kids better. I know who they're dating, who they're hanging around with, what their grades are like in class, whether they've been in detention or not, I know all these things. And I don't have to ask anybody…I know it. So sometimes I can intervene [and] solve a problem before it becomes a problem.

Additionally, should a student-athlete receive disciplinary consequences and be assigned to the alternative learning center, which is housed on school grounds, Coach Ryan is able to have what he described as a "daddy moment" where he counsels student-athletes who he believes "need to straighten up." He continued to explain that because he is on campus already he "can do that face-to-face very easy" because he is "not having to leave some other job to go do this." To put it plainly, Coach Ryan says "that is part of my job." He then tied this accessibility directly to a decision-making process he frequently undertakes. He explained that when faced with a tough roster cut decision "on the rare occasions

105

where [the student athlete has] an attitude issue it makes it easier because I've seen it not only with me but in other situations" which "helps with the cuts." This highlights Coach Ryan's perception that accessibility to student-athletes throughout the day provides an abundance of information that can be useful as he makes immediate and future decisions.

Coach George also reported a way that the organizational environment can assist with decision-making processes by providing coaches with accessibility to student-athletes. In his case, the school (henceforth School E) in which he works is set up on a block schedule system. Additionally, School E has physical education classes that are restricted to student-athletes and designed to offer time for strength and conditioning work, support for classroom enrichment, or in some cases extended practice time. Coach George explained that because the school attempts to have coaches free (i.e., planning periods) while athletes from their program are scheduled for athletic physical education, coaches are "going to see our athletes throughout the day at least one block." The benefit according to Coach George is,

> That helps us with trying to figure out what the heck's going on [in] their real life because if they show up to that block and things are going on, you could probably find out a lot quicker than if you didn't see him through the whole day and then come out to practice at 3:30.

The information gleaned from accessibility throughout the day can then be used for pre-practice check-ins with student-athletes who may be struggling or can use additional support. The usefulness of this approach can be understood by considering what Coach George believes is the alternative should he not have an understanding of the student-athlete's day or mood:

Something might have gone on during the day [that] could have been

personal…They come out and their day's gone wrong and you don't know. So

you come out there and they have a horrible practice. The beginning of their

practices are horrible. You're getting on them, you're trying to fix their on-field

performance…what they're doing technique wise but they don't really care

because they've had such a rotten day. They don't want to be there. And if a kid

doesn't want to be there, how do you figure it out? And by the time you figured it

out…practice is over or you've been so hard on them during practice that it was a

waste of a day. You didn't get anything out of em.

Instead of a wasted day, Coach George is able to change the tactics or approach he has

with a student-athlete who may be struggling. In the end, because of this accessibility to

student athletes, Coach George believes he is able to "develop a different relationship."

When asked a follow up to expand upon the relationships and their influence on his

decision making, Coach George put it plainly that in his view, "that's [the] only way you

can make a decision."

Analysis determined the school environment may influence the coach through one

of the four following subthemes: (a) the goals and norms of the school, (b) the support

network found within the school, (c) the school as a source of information, and (d)

accessibility to student-athletes.

Theme #2: Decision-Making Team

Many coaches who participated in this study had assistant coaches on staff who

were involved in decision-making processes for the sport program. Participants that had

an assistant coach or assistant coaching staff described them as active members of the

decision-making team. The decision-making team theme included two subthemes: (a) assistant coach active involvement and (b) the head coach as the final authority for making the decision.

Assistant Coach Active Involvement. While some participants did not have assistant coaches on staff at the time of the interview, the majority of the coaches had assistant coaches who were actively involved in the decision-making process for team decisions. Participants reported that conversations between members of the coaching staff frequently include elements of information processing where the coaches try to make sense of the issue, offer additional information to help clarify the situation, and/or brainstorm potential solutions for the problem. By offering their perspective and thoughts, assistant coaches actively participate in the decision-making process and potentially influence the decision made by the head coach.

For some coaches, like Coach Jacob, assistant coaches "are involved in everything." While this may refer to their involvement in decisions surrounding "who goes in the game…or, what's the best course of action for a certain situation," Coach Jacob is clear that he "[wants] information" in an effort to "make the best decision possible." This method was similarly reported by Coach Lawrence who also indicated that "because they're another set of eyes and ears" he will "include [his] assistant coaches [in] as many things we can think of." Coach Lawrence was clear that he "absolutely…[involves] them" in decisions related to "releasing players," "disciplining players," and "player grades." This highlights the active role assistant coaches on Coach Lawrence's staff play in a variety of out-of-action decision-making processes.

Assistant coach involvement was also discussed by other coaches. During the course of his interview, Coach Sean described a situation involving a student-athlete who was penalized during the course of a match for inappropriate comments made to an opponent. As Coach Sean described the decision-making process that led to the dismissal of the athlete the following season after the team try-out, he revealed that although he had serious concerns with the player's ongoing participation on the team beginning with the initial incident, he "hadn't decided" what to do until he "talked with the other assistants about everything that had gone on." He then went on to indicate that when it comes to the efforts "to create an environment" of growth, "*we*" [emphasis added] are responsible. Therefore, when it comes to making decisions for the team, Coach Sean's perception is that regardless of whether the decision is related to "something simple like tactics" or "those other decisions" required for a complex problem, "it's important to have…a sounding board who's in the situation." This suggests assistant coaches are actively involved in the processes required to make team decisions.

Where Coach Jacob and Coach Sean spoke to the active involvement of their assistant coaches in ongoing decision making, Coach Harry was clear that he includes assistant coaches "if it's an extremely tricky decision" but that for "strategy [it is] less likely." This suggests that for some coaches, active involvement of assistant coaches in the decision-making process may be reserved for a specific set of decisions. It should be noted that at the time of his participation in this study as well as during the season when Coach Harry reported a particularly challenging problem, he did not have an assistant coach on staff. Because of this, Coach Harry described how he would have approached the challenging situation and decision-making process should his "favorite" former

109

assistant coach been on staff. In this situation he indicated that Assistant Coach Aaliyah "would have been an integral part of both [team membership and subsequent dismissal] decisions." Although "[he's] not sure what Aaliyah would have said, because again that's a hypothetical," he was clear that "[he] would definitely have spoken with her both coming [when deciding whether to add the player to the team] and going [when deciding on her dismissal from the team]." Despite the differences in the ways these coaches discussed inclusion of assistant coaches in their decision-making, the evidence suggests assistant coaches on staff can be actively involved in decision-making processes.

Head Coach as Final Decision Authority. While coaches frequently described including assistant coaches in a variety of decision-making processes for their teams, they were also clear that making the final decision is their responsibility as the head coach. One of the only nearly unanimous comments, coaches expressed this belief that they held the seat of decision-making power for their teams. Coaches were clear that at the conclusion of the decision-making process the "final" decision was theirs to make.

Coach Reggie described the group of assistant coaches he has on staff as "very close knit" with "strong relationships." The importance of these relationships comes into play, as he explained, "in [his] times of need and stress and despair" when "leaning on the people closest to you" is desired. When asked to describe the influence this has on his decision making, Coach Reggie stated:

> I think it's pretty productive because of the fact that I always try to operate with everybody's input has always been my philosophy. Since I got my first head coaching job, I tried to surround myself with people that I trusted, people that were experienced, [and had] experience in many different things but particularly

110

what we were doing, coaching young people. So you know, everything that I do, I mean I pretty much wholeheartedly lean on them and their input. It doesn't mean that I'm going to agree with them. We have a ton of heated conversations and arguments throughout the course of a week in the season…that lends to the closeness we have. So, you know, my decision making ultimately is on me, and they all understand it, [whatever] decision is made I'm ultimately responsible for...they're good advisors in all cases and they know that I'm going to ask for them. They also know that I'm not always going to agree with them.

Here it is clear that while the assistant coaches play an active role in the process, Coach Reggie is the final authority for the decision to be made. Later Coach Reggie described a discussion he had with his assistant coaches regarding a student-athlete who had several unexcused absences from practice. Here Coach Reggie described the process he went through in an effort to address the problem and noted, "so now we're bouncing ideas around the office" in an effort to figure out "what's going on?" Here, Reggie shows that the assistant coaches were involved early on in the situation when the exact nature of the problem with the student-athlete in question was unknown. As the situation played itself out, Coach Reggie attempted to "get [the athlete] headed back in the right direction" by allowing him to return to the team "despite a couple of [assistant] coaches going, 'are you kidding me?'". Later, he went on to note that in some cases such as this one, he has received "pushback from some of my coaches from time to time when I kept a kid or [didn't] run a kid off or gave a kid a second chance or third chance." This suggests that although the assistant coaches on staff are actively involved and have a voice in numerous phases of the decision-making process (i.e., information collecting phase prior

to the decision-making, weighing of solution options, feedback after the decision has been made), Reggie makes the final decision on what happens with the team and program even when the assistant coaching staff disagrees with his approach.

Other coaches also described this idea of the head coach making the final decision after receiving input from their assistant coaching staff. For instance, Coach Jeffrey described a conversation with his staff where they "talked as coaches" about "whether [they] were going to allow" an athlete who had been an issue during the previous season to join the team the following season. He noted that once a decision is made, the assistant coaches "[back] whatever decision [he made]." Coach Jeffrey explained that he wants the assistants on staff "to be able to voice their opinion and express themselves." But ultimately, "as the head coach you realize that at the end of the day you're the one that has to make that decision."

Similar to Coach Reggie, Coach Kenneth mentioned incorporating the assistant coaches into early phases of the decision-making process. He indicated that he instructs the assistant coaches "all the time, as [they] evaluate, [to] gather as much information. So, when we discuss it…we're gonna make an informed decision." Here, he is clear that not only are the assistant coaches involved when the decisions are being made they are also involved in the early stage where information is being assembled. Yet Coach Kenneth also went on to specify, "I make the final decision but I do take their input and I do take their feedback after making the decision." Even after noting that the responsibility for making the decision falls on him, Coach Kenneth explained that he has "to present the decisions *we've* made to the players." [emphasis added]. This suggests

112

that Coach Kenneth may see the decision-making process as a joint effort of the entire coaching staff but that the final authority for the decision is his.

Time and again, the coaches who participated in this study discussed not only making the 'final decision' but also the input the assistant coaches have during the decision-making process. For Coach George he described the assistant coach's ability to "[look] at that gray area" in different ways because of differences in backgrounds and experience. Ultimately though, "[he's] the one that's going to make the decision." Likewise, Coach Sophia noted that she "usually [includes her] assistant coaches in decision making" and will make her "final decision from…all those discussions combined." Coach Rose described her decision authority in the following way,

> Obviously, I have to make the final decision in some things. But it's not without input and great input from them. And sometimes their input actually changes my mind on what I thought I should do. I'm ultimately responsible and I will always be ultimately responsible, no matter where the decision came from, or the idea for the decision came from because [it was my] prerogative to take their advice.

These results suggest that for some coaches, like the ones included here, decision making for their teams can be a group process at times, but the head coach is the final authority for team and program decision making in the end.

Theme #3: Administrator Influence on Decision Making

One major source of influence on coach decision making comes from the school administrators. Unlike the school environment which is characterized by the school's norms and goals and accessibility to information and support, administrator influence is characterized by the actions of the individuals in administrative positions within the

school who have the potential to influence coach decision-making processes. According to the coach participants, influential administrators within the organizational environment were typically the school principals and athletic directors. However, some coaches did refer to assistant principals and school district personnel on occasion. The administrator influence featured five subthemes: (a) the level of involvement, (b) situational influence, (c) mixed understanding of context/culture, (d) hearing and responding to parental issues, and (e) the level of support. Importantly, no coach who participated in this study reported undergoing a performance evaluation in their capacity as a coach.

Level of Involvement. One way that organizational administrators (i.e., principals, assistant principals, and athletic directors) influence the decision-making processes of coaches is through their level of involvement in the ongoing operations of the sport program and team. Results from this project suggest that administrators fall on an involvement continuum ranging from little to no involvement to heavily involved. Coaches suggested that, in most situations, school administrators are not actively involved in the day-to-day management, operations, or decision-making for sport programs. Alternatively, there were a few coaches who reported working with administrators who actively seek out a heavier involvement in the management and operations of the team. In these cases, administrators were involved in or informed of the daily operations and management for the programs which provided a context for the administrators to influence decisions made for the team.

Coach Jacob for instance reported administrators at his school "kind of [let] us manage ourselves" and "trust us to make the good decisions." He continued by explaining that "the athletic department…gives us the freedom to kind of run the program

114

[the way] we want to" outside of general "guidelines" such as "making sure the kids act responsible." This comment is consistent with Coach Reggie who reported working in a situation where he has "normal guidelines" such as "making sure [the student-athletes] have physicals." However, outside of these guidelines and policies, Coach Reggie noted that "everybody's program is their own, unique to them" and that administration allows him "to try to do what [he wants] to do." Like Coach Jacob and Coach Reggie, Coach Phillip also described his administration as having minimal daily involvement in the operations of his program and team. He noted:

 I've been very fortunate to work at most the schools where my principal and my athletic director have allowed me to do basically whatever I want. So if I have an idea, then I can try, just follow through with that idea and make it happen.

 The accounts of these three coaches suggest that some school administrators take a hands-off approach to the management of sport programs leaving the head coaches free to make the decisions they believe are best without administrative involvement or approval.

Alternatively, school administrators can be actively involved in the operations of the team and program. For example, Coach Kenneth noted that his athletic director is "very, very, very much involved in all daily workings of our athletic programs." He went on to explain that the athletic director "only asks to know things as they come" and "the one thing that [would] very, very, very much upset her is if she got bombarded with something she didn't know about." Coach Kenneth went on to provide context to this statement and offered:

If I have any sort of incident, if we left trash on the bus and the bus driver tells

me, I tell her the next morning. So, when the transportation department calls her,

because they're going to call her first, she wants to know that we handled it or we

didn't handle it or you know, something got away.

Additionally, Coach Kenneth's athletic director created an athletic department policy

manual that provides "[expectations]…from a daily basis all the way to the state

championship game." This manual, which was created with the input of the head coaches

at the time, delineates the "things that need to be taken care of" as well as "who you

contact" which provides Coach Kenneth with an awareness of "what [the athletic director

expects]." Coach Kenneth noted that it is helpful that "everything's documented" because

"it's not word of mouth, it is on paper and it is there for you to see and so you know what

to do, when to do it, how to do it." In Coach Kenneth's situation, the athletic director's

guidance through the policy manual and her expectations of inclusion into team

operations influences both his decisions and decision-making processes.

Coach Rose was clear that "an administrator can have a huge impact" on her

thinking and decision making for her program. When asked how this occurs, Coach Rose

offered, "well whether it be an intimidation factor, or the need to control everything in

your building…the administrators can have an impact…let's face it, they can impact

[your] sport simply by how they manage the money." She went on to explain that "some

administrators put so much pressure on you to win and that's all that matters."

Interestingly, when asked how she personally navigates an environment where

administrators have this ability to make an "impact," Coach Rose explained that her

athletic director serves as a go-between for her and the school's principal. She explained

that she "[deals] with [her] athletic director as much as [she] can because he has a better feel for [her] principal." To further explain this, Coach Rose noted that the athletic director has the ability to "[ask] questions that lead [her] in the direction [instead] of giving [her] the answers." Coach Rose's perspective suggests that administration can influence coach decision-making directly, such as the case with the athletic director who helps guide her thinking, or indirectly, through the financial resources available. Collectively, these results suggest that the level of administrative involvement in the operations, management, and decision-making of/for sport programs can vary from organization to organization and administrator to administrator.

 Situational Influence. Where some coaches who participated in this study offered perspectives that suggest individual administrators may fall on one end of the involvement spectrum or the other, other coaches who participated in this study suggested administrators' involvement may be situational. As it has been previously established, some administrators are not involved in the day-to-day operations and management of the sport programs on campus. However, even in the interviews where coaches reported a hands-off approach by their administrators, there is evidence of situations arising where administrators want to be included whereby providing the mechanism for influencing the decision or outcome. Most frequently, the situational influence resulted in the opening of a previously closed decision cycle. This indicates that while some administrators are not actively influencing the daily decision-making processes of the coaches, administrators may involve themselves in select situations which can ultimately change the decision-making process and possibly the decision itself.

For instance, Coach Lawrence reported a school policy whereby the athletic director is included in all matters where a parent requests a meeting with the coach. Here, the father of one of the players who did not play in the game "approached [Coach Lawrence] in the parking lot and asked 'Did we want to have this conversation now or do we want to have it tomorrow?'" Coach Lawrence indicated that his response was the following day because "all conversations have to be with the athletic director" because of the policy requiring the athletic director's presence for conversations between the coach and parents. However, Coach Lawrence also noted that the principal at his school is rather hands off in their approach to the coaches and sport programs. He offered, "with the current principal, even with the principal we had a couple of years ago…they just left it up [to] the athletic director." Coach Lawrence went on to say that he "began to not worry about the principal being involved…because the principal wasn't going to be." Coach Lawrence's account demonstrates not only that some administrators may want to be involved where others are not but also that some administrators want to be involved in specific situations but not involved in others.

Coach Vincent also had a situation in which administration exerted their influence in a specific situation. In this case, Coach Vincent was a first-year head coach at the school and was "brought into the room" and told, "these senior parents built this program. [They] fought for four or five years to get the funding to build that field. We expect those seniors to play." Coach Vincent clarified, "you don't want me to make decisions based on performance or based on my evaluation?" Administration confirmed, "No. We don't care whether you win or lose, they need to play. And then you can do what you want the next year." This is an explicit example of an administrator directly influencing the decision-

making process of a coach in a specific situation. Coach Vincent went on to explain that he has "never forgotten that conversation." This comment suggests that not only did administration influence the playing time decision in the moment during that season but in so doing, there may have also been a lasting influence on the way Coach Vincent makes decisions for his program.

Coach Sean described two situations in which administration stepped in to exert influence. In one case, Coach Sean wanted to discipline an athlete who had used a racial slur in a soccer match; however, administration told him that he "can't punish" the athlete because Coach Sean did not hear the comment directly. Rather, he learned of the incident when the student-athlete was cited for the offense during the match. Coach Sean reported that administration restricted the decision that could be made because "we don't have any evidence" to prove the inappropriate comment was made. In another situation, administration approached Coach Sean to report that one of his players was under suspicion for the distribution and sale of illegal narcotics. Upon hearing this Coach Sean immediately said he was going to "[kick] them [the student-athlete] off the team." The administrator pushed back and told him that he could not do so because they did not want to let the athlete know of their suspicions so they could catch him in the act. These two examples highlight incidents that Coach Sean reported were unlike other situations in his coaching experience at this school. This is reflected in Coach Sean's perception that "for the most part [administration] is really supportive" and he saw these specific instances of influence as "an anomaly." Coach Sean believes "those are the types of events that happen where, you know, you want to make sure that [the] program is moving in the right direction" but administration's influence limited his ability to make decisions to that end.

119

Mixed Understanding of Context/Culture. One-way organizational administrators may influence coach decision making is due to the administrator's mixed understanding of the context and culture of the sport program. On one end of the spectrum are administrators who have little to no understanding of sport, coaching, and/or the program. For instance, Coach Vincent reported being in his 20th year of teaching and coaching at his school; and that during his first twelve years at the school there were eight different principals. When describing how this affected his decision making, Coach Vincent explained:

> If every single year, every other year, you have a brand new boss who has a brand new vision and a brand new expectation, and, he doesn't have a relationship with you and he doesn't know what your standards are and what you're doing or what you've accomplished or what you haven't accomplished or what issues you may have had or what parent issues might happen in a year or with sports teams or whatever. You're starting that conversation and that process over all the time.

Coach Vincent was not the only coach who reported frequent administrative turnover in the school and a subsequent lack of understanding of the coach and program. Coach Jeffrey echoed these sentiments and also reported that "not only from an administrative standpoint but also from an athletic standpoint, we've had a high volume of turnover in the last…six to eight years." Coach Jeffrey went on to describe a situation in which a principal was unaware of the coach and the program's history. He noted, "one time when I was showing [the principal] all the girls that signed the basketball scholarships" that the principal's response was "oh, he didn't know." To combat this perceived lack of understanding of the program's culture and context Coach Jeffrey noted that he now

publicizes more of the program's activities and accomplishments within the school itself using the television monitors mounted in various important locations.

Where Coaches Vincent and Ryan described situations in which their administrators had a limited understanding of the program's history, Coach Sean reported a different scenario. When asked about how administration can influence his decision making, Coach Sean explained that his administration's lack of understanding of his game scheduling philosophy was previously an issue. In an effort to create a schedule with enough difficulty and rigor to prepare his team for post-season play, Coach Sean reported that he may need to schedule games that are several hours away. Should this travel require student-athletes to leave campus prior to the end of the school day, administration would have to approve the travel. When this approval was withheld, Coach Sean reported going to administration to explain "this is for us to receive the proper challenge so that we're prepared for our conference. We need to play these games." Upon this conversation where Coach Sean explains the "logic behind" his scheduling approach and the efforts he made to prevent as much loss of class time as possible, "[administration] are more than willing to support what we do because we want to make sure that…athletically for the program…they're prepared." This suggests that in some cases an administrator's lack of understanding may result in challenges to decisions the coach makes in an effort to pursue program goals.

Where these three coaches reported administration's lack of understanding of the sport context and culture, Coach Reggie reported the opposite. Coach Reggie reported that his current school principal was a long-time football coach who Coach Reggie previously coached with. Additionally, his school district superintendent "played college

121

football and was a football coach who also coached with at the beginning of [Coach Reggie's] career." Furthermore, he noted that the "assistant superintendent was the head coach that [he] originally began [his] career with." In a follow-up question to explore what his self-described "ladder of coaches" does for him when making decisions, he noted that he feels comfortable not only in approaching his administration but that "because of their experience and background" the perspective they offer is "invaluable" to him. Whereas the previous coaches commented that there was little understanding of the program's culture and history, Coach Reggie reported feeling that for "important decisions and stuff like that" he and the administrators above him are "all cut…from the similar cloth" which allows Reggie to make decisions without concern over pushback stemming from a lack of understanding.

     Hearing and Responding to Parental Issues. Administrators have the ability to influence coach decision making comes from their response when hearing and responding to parental issues. Many coaches described situations where administrators were contacted by parents who wished to register a complaint or concern dealing with their child's sport participation. Most frequently the issues involved playing time, team membership decisions, and the consequences that result from the enforcement of team policies and/or standards. The method administrators take to hearing and responding to parental concerns can vary from administrator to administrator; however, the method the administration takes to hearing or resolving parent concerns can influence and shape how coaches approach the decisions or in some cases alter the decision that would otherwise be made.

Coach Jeffrey described an incident where two parents "called themselves having a meeting with [the administrator]" to complain about Coach Jeffrey following the suspension of three players for fighting. Following this meeting, Jeffrey's administrator, who "was [in] his first year" at the school expressed to Coach Jeffrey that even though the parents complained, "[Jeffrey's] job's secure." In a similar situation, Coach Jacob described an issue during his first year as head coach where he changed one player's on-field position because the player's left-handedness limited his ability to be a successful catcher. Following this move, the player's parents "wanted a meeting with the principal and…athletic director." While describing the meeting, Coach Jacob wanted to "commend [administration]" because "they did a good job" of facilitating the conversation between Coach Jacob and the athlete's parents. Here the administrators' response was to serve as mediators during the meeting. Similarly, Coach Ryan noted that administration at his school are "really good about" making sure parent issues are handled via an appropriate chain of command where the coach has an opportunity to discuss issues with the parents prior to administration stepping in. Coach Ryan believes "everything goes better that way" when parents are not able to jump up the chain of command when they are upset if they have not first spoken to the coach. It is apparent that the perception of these coaches is that their administrators actively support them in situations where parents have requested meetings; however, not all coaches reported this.

Coach Lawrence recounted working for an administrator who would hear parental concerns over playing time despite established policies that administration will not discuss playing time with parents. This leads Coach Lawrence to question,

if we're not discussing playing time and there's absolutely no give on that, why

are we discussing playing time? And of course that influences your decisions

because then you're sitting there and going, am I gonna get dragged into the

[athletic director's] office because this kid doesn't play enough?...So in my mind,

I'm trying to balance and do the best I can.

Coach Lawrence continued to explain how this affects his decision making when he

noted, "if I don't play this person, is their parent going to go [to administration]" which

could result in Coach Lawrence getting "kind of fussed out." Ultimately, he concluded

this discussion by stating, "those kinds of things…you have it sitting in the back of your

head. Whether you admit it consciously or not, it's there. So yeah, it does affect you."

This statement suggests that Coach Lawrence's weighing of the administrative response

to his playing time decisions becomes part of his thinking either during or following his

decision-making processes which can influence the way future decisions are made.

Coach Vincent spoke at length about his decision-making process when deciding

on not only how to enforce established athletic department and team policies but whether

to enforce them at all. He explained that when making decisions related to a "clear

violation" of school or team policies, the process features him asking himself "how much

arguing am I going to have to do in a room with the principal?" Additionally, he

considers, "am I going to get supported by my bosses when I make this decision?" He

went on to explain that "that tends to be the most heavily weighted thing to move the

needle." When asked to clarify "what's more heavily weighted" when making these

decisions, Coach Vincent was immediately clear "the administration support" he

anticipates receiving should a parent complain. When an issue presents itself, Coach

Vincent reported the following process,

> You know, now, first thought is well this is a clear violation. These are our rules.
>
> This is what we're going to do. But am I going to get supported? Because if I'm
>
> not going to get supported, you know, there's a lot of yeah, we'll support you.
>
> And then when the time comes how much hashing out do I want to do behind
>
> closed doors? How much pressure is going to be on me to change my decision
>
> because it makes a parent happy?

Coach Vincent described considering "how is my principal really going to feel about this

situation?" and concluded by stating that not only is it that he "[doesn't] want to be in

that room" but overall, he "[doesn't] want to fight that battle anymore." While most

coaches who participated in this study indicated feeling supported by their administration,

evidence also suggests that when faced with parental issues some administrators may not

support the coach. The coaches who experienced this lack of support commented that

their thinking and decision-making processes can ultimately change as a result of the

support coaches expect to receive from administrators should a parent complain.

> *Level of Support.* Much like the varying levels of involvement can influence

coach decision making, the level at which school administration supports the coach has

the potential to influence the coach's decision-making processes as well. The support, or

lack thereof, that coaches most frequently discussed came in response to parental

pushback following decisions that had already been made. In some situations, coaches

reported administration backing their decisions where other coaches recounted situations

where they felt administration challenged the decisions or requested different decisions

be made. In those cases where coaches reported feeling supported, their decision-making priorities were most often focused on the development of the holistic athlete and program goals. However, in those cases where the coaches reported a perceived lack of support, their decision-making priorities and/or processes changed. Instead of focusing their decisions on holistic athlete development, in situations where they expect to receive little support, coaches reported considering stakeholders' reactions to the decision as they weighed what decision should be made. It should be noted that the perceived level of support did not correlate to the perceived level of involvement. For instance, some coaches reported feeling a high-level of support from administrators who were not actively involved in the daily operations, management, and decision-making of the program. And alternatively, some coaches reported feeling unsupported by administrators who were involved. The key feature of this subtheme is the frequency of and context in which administrators offer or withhold their support for coach decisions or decision-making processes.

For instance, Coach Ryan spoke at length about a situation involving a student-athlete with a substance abuse issue who he caught on campus with an illegal substance. Coach Ryan noted that, while he was the one who turned the student-athlete in to administration for violating a campus policy, he did not immediately remove him from the team because he hoped the athletic participation could be this athlete's "excuse" to quit drugs. When describing his decision-making process, he noted the situation "was bothering [him]" and he "needed to talk to somebody." However, because of his concerns over involving other people in such a delicate matter, Coach Ryan believed his options of people who could potentially support him were limited. He then described seeking out a

126

meeting with the assistant principal in charge of discipline who was handling the school's

disciplinary response to the student-athlete's infraction. Coach Ryan explained that the

assistant principal was someone "who [he gets] along great with" and "can talk freely

with him because [the assistant principal] already knows about the situation." In this

conversation, he was able to "howl at the moon" and vent his frustrations in an effort to

"get it out of [his] system." Coach Ryan was explicit that the assistant principal did not

expect Coach Ryan to involve him in the process. He noted "it's not like he was calling

me down there. It's not like he was expecting me to." Rather Coach Ryan sought him out

because he needed support and believed that the assistant principal could provide it.

Interestingly, the assistant principal challenged Coach Ryan on why he kept the student-

athlete involved which provided Coach Ryan with the opportunity to fully explore his

rationale for his decision. Coach Ryan explained that his decision to ultimately release

the athlete from the team took a significant amount of time to make and only occurred

after other avenues had been exhausted. This suggests that by offering a supportive

environment where he could 'vent,' 'howl at the moon,' and explore his thoughts on

keeping the student-athlete involved Ryan's administrator actively supported him as he

was in the midst of the decision-making process.

Other coaches indicated receiving support from their administrators in more

general terms. Coach Jacob noted that "this principal that's currently here now, [he's]

great. He's been supportive of everything." Likewise, Coach Kenneth stated that not only

is his athletic director the "nicest person in the world" but "she supports everything that

we do" as long as the coaches are operating within the confines of the athletic department

mandates. Similarly, Coach Sophia commented that she feels "fully supported" by her

athletic director. When asked a follow up about what this does for her, she noted, "it really just allows me to make decisions I believe in." This suggests some coaches coach in environments where they expect to receive support from administration. However, other coaches expressed something different.

Coach Lawrence described his athletic director as being someone whom he "loved" but at times Coach Lawrence felt as if his athletic director did not support him. He described two scenarios where he felt he "was between a rock and a hard place" because of decisions made by the athletic director. In one scenario the athletic director hired an assistant coach for the team without including Coach Lawrence in the selection process. Issues between the assistant coach and the assistant coach's daughter, who was a member of the team, became contentious yet Coach Lawrence felt his only options were to either accept the athletic director's decision or quit. Coach Lawrence stated he "wanted the job more than walking away" so he stayed. In another scenario, Coach Lawrence wanted school administration to step in to address a situation involving the former head coach whom Coach Lawrence had just replaced. Coach Lawrence's perception was that the former head coach who was still on campus was inserting himself into the program through daily conversations with numerous players, including team captains, which Coach Lawrence believed was "breaking up the unity" he was attempting to establish. Unfortunately, Coach Lawrence "felt like [he] was left out to dry" because administration refused to intervene. As a result, Coach Lawrence noted that he felt he was "being undermined and [he didn't] have anybody to stop the undermining." Consequently, the decisions he made to establish the program's culture were often unsuccessful and repeated decision-making efforts to address team cohesion were needed. He believes "it

took three years for [him] to mold that team and then eventually weed all that out."
Throughout those three years efforts to establish the program's culture could have
benefitted, in Coach Lawrence's estimation, from administrative support which was
withheld.

Theme #4: Parents of Athletes

The final influential element are the parents of the athletes and included four
subthemes which shaped and/or influenced coach decision making: (a) mixed
understanding of context, (b) parental agenda, (c) conflict with parents, and (d) escalating
to administration. While most coaches were explicit that most of their sport parents are
supportive, some sport parents can attempt to and, in some cases, influence the decision
making for the program.

Mixed Understanding of Context. The first way that parents influenced the coach
as they made decisions for their teams stemmed from some sport parents mixed
understanding of the sporting context. Coach Ryan reported that many parents have
limited understanding about the differences between recreational sport and high school
sport. Because of this limited understanding, he noted that throughout his summer
workouts he invites parents to ask any questions they may have that "you probably don't
want during the season." He recounted a situation one summer where several parents of
incoming freshmen approached him with questions on how he determines what position
an athlete will play in high school. More specifically, the parents wondered "what if
they've been playing this position in club but you see him somewhere else?" To answer
the parents' question, he highlighted the play of one particularly talented incoming
freshman whose position would change during his first season on the high school team.

In describing this conversation Coach Ryan shared that numerous parents "[started] to argue with [him]." This prompted Coach Ryan to explain that one of the major differences between recreational sport and high school sport is that where recreational sport teams are frequently comprised of athletes who are all the same age and have similar levels of maturity, high school sport will frequently feature "full-blooded men" playing on the same field as younger players. To protect the health and safety of the younger players, Coach Ryan places them in a position on the field where they are better suited given the physical and maturational differences. This explanation satisfied the parents, but Coach Ryan noted that this limited understanding is not uncommon and must be dealt with appropriately.

Coach Jacob described a similar incident involving a parent's limited understanding of position needs in the baseball. Upon taking over as head coach Jacob had a left-handed young man on the roster who played catcher. Left-handed catchers are not common in baseball because of the difficulties lefties face when attempting to throw out a base runner who is attempting to steal second. Following summer baseball where the catcher frequently was unable to successfully throw out runners stealing second base, Coach Jacob moved the young man to a different position on the field where he believed the athlete could be more successful. Very soon thereafter Coach Jacob had to defend this decision to the parents, athletic director, and principal in a meeting. The crux of the issue from Coach Jacob's perspective was that the "parent needed to be awakened…to the game of baseball" and that position selection was approached from the standpoint of how to "set up" the athlete to be successful. He believed "this parent didn't know that" and took the opportunity in the meeting to educate the parent using statistics and information

from collegiate and professional baseball. Ultimately, his approach was successful, and the parents left the meeting with a better understanding of why their son's position was moved.

In addition to mixed understanding about the specifics of the games themselves, coaches reported that parents may struggle to understand or accept that coping with disappointment is frequently necessary in sport. For instance, Coach Vincent spoke at length about how enforcing team policies for practice attendance will frequently result in pushback from parents when their child is set to experience consequences for an infraction. Pursuant to team policies, student athletes are ineligible to play the game following an unexcused practice absence. Coach Vincent noted that where many parents "allow their child to deal with those issues as part of growing up…others want to be involved and out in front of their child dealing with them." This has changed the way that Coach Vincent handles potential unexcused absences. Now, should an athlete express an intention to miss practice for a non-approved reason, Coach Vincent inquires as to whether the player *and* their parents understand the consequences that will be faced should the athlete skip practice. This approach is taken to mitigate any potential parental pushback following the decision to enforce the standard.

Parental Agenda. Several coaches who participated in this study perceive a sport parent's pursuit of personal goals or agenda for their child has the potential to influence coaches as they make decisions for their team. For instance, Coach Dorothy reported that during one particularly challenging season "the parents [were] anxious because of the kids [had not] signed yet." This situation "became so intense because everybody wanted their child to have a college scholarship" which left numerous parents demanding "[their]

child needs to play more minutes." Here it is clear that the parents' desire for their child

to sign a collegiate athletic scholarship resulted in direct pressure on Coach Dorothy to

make decisions in an effort to pursue parental goals (i.e., athletes who had yet to sign

letters of intent would get the most playing time and opportunities). Eventually, "it got

intense as to how many minutes these parents wanted their children to play in order to be

seen to get a college scholarship." So much so that parents requested meetings with

administration. In these meetings Coach Dorothy described,

> The principal and the athletic director are all involved in meetings, we're in
>
> meetings over statistics. Over statistics! That's what it is. Cause I want my child
>
> to have more. More time. More statistics so that my child can get a scholarship, a
>
> better scholarship.

It is evident here that the parental desire for their child to receive a scholarship and what

they believed was needed for their child to get a scholarship became the primary focus

for many parents while Coach Dorothy's focus was on what was best for the team.

Ultimately, as a result of this focus on statistics, Coach Dorothy changed her approach for

the reporting of game statistics following games and the way she recognized players who

had achieved something noteworthy during the game.

In addition to the parental agenda for collegiate athletic scholarships, coaches

reported that a parent's own competitiveness may cause an issue for the coach. Coach

Ryan reported a situation where an athlete's parents consistently had issues with their

son's team placement. Specifically, the parents were unhappy when their son made the

junior varsity team as a freshman. Coach Ryan explained that following the student

athlete's placement on the junior varsity squad both the mother and father reached out to

challenge his decision and cited the play of another freshman student-athlete who made

the varsity team. Coach Ryan was adamant that he does not discuss non-child players

with parents despite parental attempts to do so. Following the tryout the next season, the

student-athlete again made the junior varsity team. And again, the father reached out to

challenge the coach's decision again citing the non-child student-athlete who had again

made varsity. In his third tryout for the team, the athlete finally made the varsity team,

however, Coach Ryan reported that he "barely [got] on the field." This ongoing issue

with the parents and their son's placement on the team becomes noteworthy because of

the timing of Coach Ryan's interview for this study. On the day of his interview, Coach

Ryan reported that he had already had three separate conversations regarding the

following season's tryouts which was not scheduled for another several months.

However, Coach Ryan anticipated that because of the talent and skill progression of

younger athletes who were ready to join varsity and a small senior class that would leave

only a few open spots on the varsity team the following season, the student-athlete whose

parents have a history of issues would potentially be cut in his senior year following his

selection to the varsity team his junior season. The anticipation of parental issues several

months out was already influencing the way Coach Ryan approached team membership

decisions. Coach Ryan sought out other coach's points of view on how to approach a

situation where he may have to cut an athlete whose parents have previously challenged

decisions that did not meet with their desires or goals. This input would not have been

sought out had the parents not had a history of issues with Coach Ryan's decisions.

Where Coach Dorothy and Coach Ryan both reported on situations involving

parental agendas in specific situations, other coaches also spoke about this idea in more

general terms. Following his description of an incident where two parents challenged his decision on moving their son's playing position, Coach Jacob detailed that when evaluating issues involving parents his first step is to "figure out what is the real issue." He went on to elaborate that in this evaluation he asks himself,

> is it about the kid? Or is it about the parent wanting it to be about the kid? Like, I feel like that's different, you know. It was like, because there's some cases, you know, where we have cut a kid that was glad to be cut but then the parent had a bigger issue with it than the kid did.

Here Coach Jacob's explanation shows that in some cases coaches perceive athletes accept the decisions where their parents do not which can serve as a catalyst for issues. Similarly, Coach Phillip noted that "every parent still has an agenda" which for him most frequently manifested in parents with issues surrounding their son's playing time or the position he plays on the court. The parental agenda was noted by Coach George when he remarked that he builds relationships with both the players and their parents because "you don't know what the parents' alternative motive is." Coach Rose affirmed this idea when she noted that "[parents are] not big picture people…their picture is one person," however, her goal is to "make the best decision for everyone" as opposed to singularly focused on one athlete. Collectively these comments suggest that some coaches are making decisions in a context where parents have their own agenda or goals for their child's sport participation. Ultimately, when coaches make decisions that may be counter to the wishes a parent has for their child, coaches may perceive this agenda as the cause for parental problems which may result in parental conflict or escalation to administration.

Conflict with Parents. One way that parents directly influence the decision-making processes of coaches is through their actions and behaviors. Throughout this study coaches commented on the aggressive actions, behaviors, and attitudes that players' parents may at times exhibit. Of the 14 coaches who participated in this study, 12 referred to conflicts they have had with parents of team members. [It should be noted that while most coaches did describe conflict with parents, these same coaches also frequently noted that most parents they have worked with have been good and/or supportive.] Because of this conflict, coach decision making was subject to change. In some cases, the conflict/aggressive actions of the parent led the coach to make an entirely different decision in an effort to stop the parent from continuing their aggressive behaviors. In other situations, coaches described making decisions in an attempt to prevent the conflict with a parent from arising altogether. These preventative measures frequently occurred as a result of lessons learned from a previous parental conflict. In such cases, coaches reported that following an incident with a parent or set of parents they learned to adopt different strategies to prevent the problem scenario's recurrence. Finally, coaches described parental encounters that required them to extend the decision cycle. Here coaches may choose to stay the course with the decision that was previously made or make a new decision in an effort to satisfy the parents. This new decision could mean the coach changes his/her mind altogether or adopts the previous decision with changes to the way the decision is carried out. Essentially, by engaging in an aggressive or negative discourse parents may extend the decision-making cycle the coach had previously concluded.

135

Coach Jeffrey recounted a series of issues he had with the mother of one of the players on his team. Over the course of one season this parent "ran to" and ultimately boarded the bus before the team left for a playoff game in order to give the coach some "choice words." Additionally, at the conclusion of one practice Coach Jeffrey reported that she "[came] storming" into the gym using profane language and refused to speak to Jeffrey out of earshot of the team. In this situation "as [he] was attempting to speak in private…she wanted to…make her presence known." This parent was also involved in a conflict with another parent in a group text message that included the coaching staff, other team parents, and players. Ultimately Coach Jeffrey concluded that she was just "one of those parents." Following the season with these significant disruptions to the sport environment, Coach Jeffrey and his coaching staff weighed the previous conflict with the mother as they were making team membership decisions. While at first Coach Jeffrey and staff decided they would not punish the child for the mother's behavior, it eventually "reached a point where [Coach Jeffrey] said, 'nah, I can't deal with this. It's been nice and I hope you have a good life, a good career.'" Here Coach Jeffrey elected to remove the athlete from the team rather than continue to deal with her mother's disruptive behavior.

Coach Ryan reported a similar situation where a parent made a public showing of their displeasure. In his situation the parent of one of his players was also a teacher at the school where he was employed. Following a decision to pull the player from the game the night before this mother "came in [his class] like a wrecking ball" where she came "barreling up to [Coach Ryan's] desk" all while "chewing [him] out." Coach Ryan waited until the mother "got to a stopping point" and asked whether she had spoken with her son

regarding her concerns. When she indicated that she had not spoken with her son prior to approaching the coach, Coach Ryan requested she speak with her child so she can understand the context of his removal from the game as well as his current state of mind about being pulled. She took his advice and subsequently "[pulled her son] out of class" where he reported that he understood he "messed up" and "knew what was gonna happen" when he made the mistake that resulted in his removal from the game. Ultimately the player reported that he was fine and went back to class. Following the conversation with her son the parent again approached Coach Ryan who was "in the middle of class" and "lecturing" where she again "came barreling in" this time in order to apologize. Where this conflict was resolved without further issue, Coach Ryan explicitly stated that "if she became a big enough pain" he would have "just cut [her son]." When asked to clarify, he again noted that where "that's happened maybe twice" he has "cut a kid because of their parents."

Throughout their interviews, coaches returned to parental conflict as influential in their coaching practice and decision making. Coach Kenneth described "succumbing to [parental] pressure" for a group of parents who he described as "nothing short of disgusting." When discussing how the conflict with parents influenced his decision making, he described the following,

Prior to that I made decisions based if a parent complained about their kid's playing time, I started em the next game. And then I'd say to myself, 'What are you doing? That' just not, stop doing this. And you know, it's those sorts of things. You know, 'hey, my son needs to go, my son needs to miss practice to go get measured for a tuxedo for prom.' 'Okay, that's fine.' That's not fine but I'll let

137

them do it. And so, I don't do that anymore. And that's, I think the communication piece is the biggest thing…But this idea of doing things just because parents complain, I'm not doing that anymore.

Coach Lawrence's commentary highlights how parental conflict influenced his decision making despite his own unhappiness with the decision he made.

Likewise, Coach Harry described his decision to address a parental conflict situation and changes to his subsequent decisions following a set of parents and their child being let into his classroom after school hours. In this incident, when Harry returned to his classroom the father "immediately…launched into a tirade about who did [Coach Harry] think he was" for not putting his daughter on the soccer team. To address this parental aggression in the moment Coach Harry decided to step out to request a neighbor teacher come into the room to serve as a witness. Importantly, this experience shaped how Coach Harry interacted with parents in the future. Following the parental conflict in his classroom and his decision to include a witness in that situation, Coach Harry established a policy that any parental conversation regarding playing time or team membership would always occur in the presence of a witness. Yet unlike Kenneth who reverted back to the original way of announcing the lineup once the 'disgusting' parents were no longer part of the program, Coach Harry's mandatory inclusion of witnesses for potentially contentious conversations was a permanent change in his approach.

When Coach Sean took his head coaching position he was warned of previous parental conflicts when the school administration expressed that "these parents are crazy" and have created "problems" for previous coaches. Because of these issues Coach Sean decided to institute a holistic athlete development goal where the coaches encouraged the

players to "cut the cord." Here, the players were encouraged to be more self-sufficient and less reliant on their parents in an effort to keep the parents from being overly involved. According to Coach Sean, this holistic development goal has been directly and clearly communicated to the parents each year in an effort to prevent conflicts with parents from arising. The accounts by these coaches suggest that conflict with parents can change the approach for numerous aspects of a coach's decision making (i.e., how they implement team decisions, how they approach conversations with parent stakeholders, and the traits they seek to develop for holistic athlete development).

Conflict with parents can become a serious disruption for some coaches. In fact, conflict with parents was at the forefront of a decision to resign a coaching position for one of the coaches who participated in this study. Coach Vincent described a family threatening a lawsuit following their son's decision to quit the team. This threat of lawsuit became so tenuous for the coaching staff and school administration that Coach Vincent and his assistant coach in the end resigned their positions to appease the parents. In this situation a young man on the team who did not meet one of the behavioral standards elected to quit the team instead of facing consequences for his infraction. However, his parents were so upset, that in the following months they requested numerous meetings with the coaching staff, requested a formal investigation into the team, and threatened a lawsuit until ultimately Coach Vincent decided he and his assistant coach would resign. Time and again, in a variety of circumstances, coaches returned to discussions surrounding the disruptions and conflicts they have had with the parents of the players on their team and the ways these conflicts affect the coaches and

their decisions. Interestingly, parental conflict is so common that two coaches made the same joke - that the "best team to coach is a team full of orphans."

Escalating to Administration. In addition to direct conflict with the coach, one way that sport parents influence the decision making of a coach is through escalation of the issue to the coach's administrator/s following a coach decision. In these situations, parents escalate their concerns or issues to a coach's administrator (e.g. athletic director, school principal, etc.) to report their displeasure regarding specific decisions coaches have made in an effort to, as Coach Lawrence refers to it, "get satisfaction." By escalating the problem to include administrators who may not otherwise be actively involved in ongoing sport operations, the sport parent/s actions may re-open or extend a decision cycle which may have previously concluded (e.g. decision to change a player's position, team membership decision, disciplinary decisions following infraction to code of conduct, etc.). This manifests as the coach decides whether to continue with the previously made decision without modification, continue with the previously made decision with modification, or change the previously made decision entirely. Additionally, evidence suggests that in situations where parents have previously escalated issues to administration, coaches may come to have concerns over the parental reaction while they are in the process of making a decision. This may represent a marked change in a coach's decision-making process.

For instance, Coach Dorothy described a season where parents frequently escalated issues to administration to complain about her playing time decisions despite the on-the-court success her team was experiencing. While she did not elaborate on the administration's response it is clear that the parents expected Coach Dorothy to make

different playing time decisions and included administration in an effort to make this happen. While she did not report making the changes the parents requested, Coach Dorothy did note that she had to make changes to the way she managed and supervised the team. In the end, Coach Dorothy cited making decisions to manage issues such as this as "the hardest part in this day and time" for coaches.

Upon taking over the team as a first-year head coach, Coach Jacob faced a similar situation where a player's parents immediately went to administration to escalate their concerns after their son's playing position was changed. Coach Jacob indicated that this particular player's left-handedness left him ill-suited for catcher - the position he had previously played - and would all but eliminate his prospects of playing at the next level. Upon moving the player to a different position on the field the player's parents requested a meeting with the coach, the athletic director, and the principal where they "kept going back and forth" about the decision that had been made. In an effort to assuage the parental concerns, Coach Jacob elected to provide the parents and administration with statistics regarding the handedness of college and professional catchers. In so doing, he convinced the parents that if they are "going to set this kid up for success" it is best to move him to a different position on the field. Ultimately this approach of continuing the previously made decision with modifications did "put the parents to rest" according to Coach Jacob. Here, when faced with parental pushback and the escalation to administration, Jacob decided to stick to the previous decision to move the player's position; however, his implementation of the decision changed when he decided to provide the parents with statistics, explanation, and his rationale. Coach Jacob sought to get the parental buy-in for the decision rather than change his mind to appease the

parents. This conversation that resulted in buy-in happened as a direct result of the parents' escalation to administration.

Coach Lawrence described his dealings with parents as "a different animal because when something doesn't go their way, they try to hop the chain of command [and] go to the athletic director" or "go to the principal." In his interview he was clear that in many instances where the parents escalate their frustrations or concerns to administration the situation "really could have been take care of if [they] just would have come to [him]" instead of going to administration first. Coach Lawrence personally termed this as "hopping the chain of command." When asked how these situations factor in to his thinking he noted the "thoughts [that] go through your head" include "well, if I don't play this person is their parent going to go [to administration] and I'm going to get…kind of fussed out." Additionally, Coach Lawrence expressed a concern over "am I going to do something, make a decision in this game" and are "the parents gonna say something." This became a concern because of his athletic director's response which often featured comments such as "there were a lot of parents talking [about] if it was a different coach" the situation would have been different. Coach Lawrence indicated that this "shakes [his] confidence" and changed his decision-making process. He noted that as he is "trying to coach [he is] trying to tiptoe around things so that [he doesn't] get in trouble. And that affects the coaching."

Coach Vincent also described facing administrative meetings after parents escalated their concerns. In one example that was offered, following a player's citation for drug possession, Coach Vincent had numerous athletes self-admit to violating team rules on consumption of alcohol and drugs. Pursuant to these team rules, the athlete who

was cited for drug possession was released from the team. The four other athletes who self-admitted to underage drinking, including one student-athlete who admitted to frequently drinking on school grounds, were each suspended pursuant to the team's policies which were previously signed by both the players and their parents. Some of the parents of the athletes involved in these violations were understanding of their child's suspension/termination from the team and did not use the meetings to push back against Coach Vincent's decision. Other parents however believed that Coach Vincent was wrong to punish their child for alcohol consumption, despite it being against team and district athletic department rules and escalated their concerns by calling a meeting with Coach Vincent, the principal, and the athletic director to get Coach Vincent to reinstate their child. He noted that part of the parent's argument was that if a parent allows their child to consume alcohol while under the legal age, a coach cannot enforce a school and/or team policy prohibiting underage drinking. While Vincent at the time decided to implement his previously made decision without modification, now, as part of his decision-making process, should a student-athlete commit an infraction to a team, school, or athletic department policy that requires consequences Coach Vincent weighs "what are the parents gonna think? How much arguing am I going to have to do in a room with the principal?" This is a distinct change to how he made these types of decisions early in his career. He explained that unlike "20 years ago, 10 years ago, 5 years ago" when he would enforce standards and policies without concern for pushback, "now, first thought is well this is a clear violation, these are our rules, this is what we're going to do...But am I going to get supported [when the parents escalate to administration]...How much pressure is going to be on me to change my decision because it makes a parent happy?" This

evidence supports both the extension of the previously concluded decision cycle (i.e. questioning whether he has the authority to enforce a team and school district policy that the parents do not endorse) and changes to subsequent decision-making processes (i.e. weighing parental reaction while in the process of making a decision). [While this is but one example of the kind of decision and situation that Vincent shared, he noted that this type of escalation can occur any time a student-athlete is faced with a consequence following an infraction.]

CHAPTER V – MANUSCRIPT

Introduction and Review of Literature

Sport coaching occurs in an ambiguous, complex, and dynamic environment bounded by rules, structures, and traditions unique to the context in which it occurs (ICCE et al., 2013; Jones & Wallace, 2005; Nash & Collins, 2006). Yet regardless of the specific sport context in which they work, coaches are responsible for all aspects of the sport environment including the culture, relationships, and broader direction of the program and its participants. As such coaches are responsible for all on-field and off-the-field matters (ICCE et al., 2013) and their coaching actions, behaviors, and activities therefore occur both in situ and out-of-action. Yet even with the awareness and understanding of the complex nature of the coaching practice, there is a lack of research on these complexities which has resulted in significant gaps in our understanding of the coaching practice. This sentiment has been echoed by researchers who have noted that focusing entirely on improving and managing sport performance is insufficient and results in overly generalized definitions of coaching that excludes a range of processes and behaviors (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013). At the heart of the coaching practice though is a constant process of decision-making (Abraham et al., 2006; Lyle & Vergeer, 2013; Vergeer & Lyle, 2009) which has been identified as one of the most important characteristics of quality coaching (Lyle, 1999).

A framework has been proposed for the exploration of real-world decisions that outlines various mechanisms that have the potential to influence the decision maker within the naturalistic, real-world environment (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). This model proposes that decisions are the result of the interaction between the personal

145

characteristics of the decision maker, task environment, decision-making team, technology available to support/aid the decisions, and the organization (Mosier & Fischer, 2010). It has been previously established that sporting culture and politics within sport and/or specific organization influence how coaches approach their roles (Côté & Salmela, 1996; d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 1998). In order to develop a better understanding of how coaches approach making out-of-action decisions and the influences on those decisions this project sought to answer the following questions: what elements of the organizational environment influence the out-of-action decisions made by coaches; and, how were these elements influential in the course of making an out-of-action decision? Research into the influences on out-of-action decision-making processes is needed to address the gaps so that a more complete conceptualization of coaching is possible.

Method

Researchers who seek to understand complex phenomena, such as influences on coach decision-making which cannot be divorced from the context in which the decisions are made (Lyle & Vergeer, 2013), may adopt qualitative methodologies that allow for the exploration of how "people interpret their experiences, construct their world views, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). A constructivist paradigm was therefore adopted which provided the context for the researcher and participant to interact in an effort to co-construct (ontology) the experiences of each participant in an effort to come to know the participant's reality based on their lived experiences (epistemology; Lincoln et al., 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the purpose of this study was to explore the organizational influences on coach

decision making, an interpretive interview design was selected as it aligned with the

paradigm that underpinned this research and allowed the researchers to examine coaches'

experiences and perceptions when making out-of-action decisions within an

organizational setting (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

Sampling

A sampling frame of high schools within the southeastern United States[1] was

created for this project using publicly accessible information found on each state's high

school athletic association's website (Ruel et al., 2016). As organizational elements were

a primary area of exploration in this study, inclusion criteria specified the schools in

which coaches worked must be a public, co-ed institution with a minimum average daily

enrollment of 700-2,500 students to establish organizational homogeneity. Each school

meeting inclusion criteria was added to the sampling frame, numbered, and a simple

random sample was chosen using a random number generator application found online

(Ruel et al., 2016). Contact information for the head coaches at each of the randomly

selected schools were identified using school, school district, or state athletic association

websites. Invitations to participate were sent to each of the head coaches from the

randomly selected schools.

Participants

Fourteen team sport head coaches from the seven states within the southeastern

United States participated in this study. Participants included both male (n = 11) and

female (n = 3) coaches. Inclusion criteria specified that each head coach must be the

---

[1] The southeastern United States was defined a priori as states geographically located south of the
Mason-Dixon Line and east of the eastern most borders of Texas and Oklahoma.

primary decision maker for their team, employed at the same high school in which they coach, have a minimum of five years of head coaching experience, and speak English. Any head coach serving in multiple sport decision-making capacities (i.e. head coach AND athletic director/athletic administrator) or working at the same school as a previous participant were excluded. Coaches had on average 23 years of coaching experience (range 6-42 years) with 16 years of head coaching experience (range 5-29 years). Each participant was employed as the head coach of a team sport (i.e., soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, and baseball). Coaches additionally reported coaching a variety of additional sports throughout their careers (i.e., track and field, softball, wrestling, cross country, tennis, and swimming). Data collection continued until saturation was reached (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2018).

Ethical Considerations

This study received Institutional Review Board approval from the University of Southern Mississippi (IRB-21-44). Study participants underwent informed consent procedures including signing and returning informed consent documents. In an effort to protect participant identities, pseudonyms were chosen for each participant and any reference to their respective schools were anonymized in the results. Transcripts and data were kept on password protected computer equipment in a locked office assigned to the principal investigator. Copies of documents provided to the research team for triangulation measures were kept in a locked filed drawer and/or password protected computer equipment in locked offices assigned to individual members of the research team.

Data Collection

This project utilized a semi-structured interview which aligned with the paradigmatic perspective of the primary researcher and the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake 2010). As methods of data collection can influence the quality, trustworthiness, and study results, a systematic approach to the development of the semi-structured interview guide was adopted including: identification of prerequisites, retrieval and use of previous knowledge, formulation of preliminary semi-structured interview guide, pilot testing of the interview guide with a randomly selected participant, and presentation of complete semi-structured interview guide used (Kallio et al, 2016). Within the identification of the prerequisites phase the appropriateness of an interview as a means to collect data relevant to research question was considered (Kallio et al, 2016) and ultimately found to be an appropriate technique given the primary researcher's paradigmatic choices (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Lincoln et al, 2011). To fulfill the requirements of retrieval and use of previous knowledge an extensive literature review was conducted prior to the start of this project and potential areas of organizational influence were identified and used as the foundation of the interview guide creation including areas of exploration and potential follow up questions (Barriball & While, 1994; Kallio et al, 2016). Prior to the start of official data collection for this study, a preliminary version of the interview guide was pilot tested using the principal investigator's coaching network (Barriball & While, 1994; Kallio et al 2016). Following pilot testing any areas of confusion or concern were addressed by revising question wording or order questions appeared in the interview guide (Kallio et al, 2016). Main study interviews were conducted by phone (n = 13) or Zoom (n = 1) and were recorded

using features available within the communication application itself. While differences did exist in the method of collecting and recording the data (i.e., phone call and video call) no differences in content of the interviews were found (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Upon conclusion of data collection and transcription of the interviews thematic analysis procedures were utilized as it provides an opportunity for a "nuanced, complex, interpretative analysis" where patterns and themes in the dataset could be described and interpreted for meaning and importance (Braun et al, 2016, p. 191). Thematic analysis procedures were conducted using the following six phases: familiarization, coding, theme development, refinement, naming, and writing up (Braun & Clark, 2006). During the second phase of thematic analysis three coding mechanisms were used: first, initial or open coding where the data was assigned individual units of meaning; second, structural coding where the structure of each passage was assigned codes grouping together similar initial coding elements identified during the first phase; and third, pattern coding where codes from the first two phases collapsed and condensed into broader units of meaning or themes (Saldaña, 2016). Both semantic and latent meanings were coded and developed using an inductive approach as sufficient theoretical concepts explaining the organizational influences on coach decision making which would be necessary for a deductive approach have yet to be established (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al, 2016).

Validity and Credibility in Qualitative Research

Traditional approaches to control for threats to the validity of quantitative studies are not available to qualitative researchers who often seek to explore nuances in context

(Cho & Trent, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Rather, validity in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the researchers' claims accurately reflect the reality or perceived reality of the participant (Cho & Trent, 2006). To address validity and credibility concerns, this project adopted the recommendations of the transactional approach which relies on the adoption of specific techniques and methods throughout the research process to ensure reality of head coach participants was accurately reflected (Cho & Trent, 2006). To establish the trustworthiness of the data, researchers adopted bracketing, member checking, and triangulation measures (Cho & Trent, 2006).

<div align="center">Results</div>

Four elements of the organizational environment have the potential to influence coach out-of-action decision making. The first sources of organizational influence came through the school environment itself. Additionally, three themes emerged as sources of organizational stakeholder influence: the decision-making team, administrators (i.e. school principals, assistant principals, and athletic directors/administrators), and parents of athletes.

Theme #1: School Environment

Elements of the school environment where coaches are employed as both a coach and a teacher have the ability to shape and influence head coach decision-making processes. One mechanism by which this occurs is through the *goals and norms* of the school and/or athletic department within the school. These *goals and norms* can manifest through organizational policies, procedures, and expectations school officials set which dictate specific coach decisions such as school mandated consequences for student-athletes who break school rules or fail to meet a specific behavioral standard. For

<div align="center">151</div>

instance, Coach Sean noted that continuity in expectations "really helps our decision because…the whole athletic program does the same thing." Additionally, organizational priorities may frame or limit the decisions coaches make regarding team or program goals. In these situations, pursuit of school goals may supersede the goals and priorities a coach has for their team (i.e. schools with rigorous academic standards may prioritize academic achievement over sport achievement). One final way in which the *goals and norms* of the organization can influence coach decision making stems from the rate of employee turnover an organization faces. Coach Jeffrey was one such coach who noted that "a high volume of turnover" of administrators at the school resulted in administration having a lack of awareness of who he is as a coach, who he is as a person, and the history of his sport program. In order to combat this lack of awareness, Coach Jeffrey noted that now when the program has "big events" that he will "send out emails" so that the school may "post it up there [television monitors in the hallways] for everybody to see."

Most coaches described the need to address student-athlete behavioral issues and concerns as one of the primary out-of-action decisions they regularly face. As they discussed their decision-making processes, coach participants frequently referred to one barrier they encountered – lack of information or understanding regarding the issue requiring a decision. Consequently, coaches reported needing additional information so they may not only come to understand the full scope of the problem; but also, additional information is necessary if they are to make a decision to best address the issue. The school environment therefore serves as a major *source of information* for coaches as they seek to make sense of issues or problems and/or go about the process of making a decision to address it. This information may come through school documents and

resources (e.g. lists of students serving in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension, access to the school's learning management system, access to student records, etc.). This element was described by Coach Phillip when he noted,

> Our school has all that information available so I can just go in and see who's in ISS [in-school suspension], who's in OSS [out-of-school suspension]. I can look in…all my players' records and things like that. And another thing that I do at the very beginning of the season is I'll send out an email to every single one of the teachers, listing all the expectations that I have. And then if they have any issues with any of my players to send me an email. And so therefore, if a player has been tardy a couple of times and maybe the teacher doesn't really want to write them up, well, then they'll send me an email and say 'hey, this young man has been tardy a couple of times, will you help me out?' And then we'll go from there.

Additionally, school stakeholders (i.e. teachers, staff, administrators, etc.) can be a *source of information* for the coach. Coach Rose explained:

> So I get different things from different people in the building. I get a great deal of support in this building. You, I think it's because [the] way I've run my program since I've been here [and] academics first and things like that. And they're not afraid to, you know, they can call me and they say, you know, 'busted your kid, they had their phone out [in] class today.' I said, 'Okay, keep the phone, I'll get it for practice, and they'll have to do something at the beginning of practice.'

Having access to these *sources of information* is incredibly important for coaches who are making multiple daily decisions for their programs and participants.

153

The school environment also provides head coaches with ongoing *accessibility to student-athletes* throughout the day. Coach Ryan was clear on why this *accessibility to student-athletes* is critical when he noted:

> I think they are better off hiring a B coach who teaches there than an A plus coach who's an off-campus person. Because somebody who teaches there understands what those kids are going through on a daily basis. They get to know the kids better. I know who they're dating, who they're hanging around with, what their grades are like in class, whether they've been in detention or not, I know all these things. And I don't have to ask anybody…I know it. So sometimes I can intervene [and] solve a problem before it becomes a problem.

Coach George also reported the *accessibility to student-athletes* he is afforded by School A which is on the block teaching schedule[2] and has dedicated physical education classes for athletes. Additionally, the school schedules the coach of that team to their sport's athletic physical education class or arranges for the coach to be free (i.e. planning period) so they may interact with and monitor their players while receiving dedicated strength and conditioning or sport specific work. The *accessibility* Coach George has to the athletes on his team is important because, as he explained, it allows him to "develop a different relationship" with the players which in his estimation is the "only way you can make a decision.'

---

[2] Schools adopting a block teaching schedule have longer class times, usually somewhere around 90 minutes, which results in students attending four classes during the day. By comparison, schools adopting a seven period schedule have shorter class times, usually somewhere around 50 minutes, which results in students attending seven classes throughout the day.

An additional way in which the school environment influences coach out-of-action decisions is through the *support network* available through non-stakeholder members of the organization. Coaches noted that members of the school environment provide regular support as they make decisions for their programs. Coach Sophia described her school as "rich" in support and noted that when she is faced with a difficult decision for her program "there is no weight, per se, on [her] shoulders in terms of pressure when walking around campus."

Theme #2: Decision-Making Team

Many coaches who participated in this study had assistant coaches on staff who were actively involved in the decision-making processes for the sport program. This *assistant coach active involvement* was evident throughout the interviews as coaches frequently discussed conversations with assistant coaches as they attempted to make sense of a problem or issue that required a decision. Coach Jacob commented that the assistant coaches on staff "are involved in everything." Coach Lawrence echoed this sentiment when he stated that "because they're another set of eyes and ears" he will "include [his] assistant coaches [in] as many things as we can think of" and "absolutely" includes assistants in decisions related to "releasing players," "disciplining players," and "player grades." This commentary highlights the *active involvement* in the decision-making process including information collecting and/or sensemaking.

Interestingly, while head coaches with assistant coaches on staff described the role they play in the process of making a decision, head coach participants were nearly unanimous in their assertions that the "final" decision making responsibility and power was the head coach's alone. This *final decision authority* is reflected by Coach Reggie's

155

remark that "my decision making is ultimately on me, and they [the assistant coaches] all understand it, [whatever] decision is made I'm ultimately responsible for." This was similarly reflected by Coach Kenneth when he stated, "I make the final decision but I do take their input and I do take their feedback after making the decision." This evidence suggests that the assistant coach members of the decision-making team are *actively involved* in aspects of the decision-making process; however, head coaches have *final decision authority* reflected by their belief as the sole decision maker for the sport program and team.

Theme # 3: Administrators

A major source of influence on coach decision making came through the organizational administrators (i.e. school principals, assistant principals, or athletic directors/administrators). This influence is characterized by the actions, behaviors, and approaches of the individuals in administrative positions within the school. One way this influence manifested was through the administrator's *level of involvement* in the ongoing operations of the sport program and team. Results suggest that administrators fall on an *involvement* continuum ranging from no to little involvement to heavily involved. Coaches suggested that in most situations school administrators are not actively involved in the day-to-day management, operations, or decision-making for sport programs. Coach Jacob for instance reported that school administration allows coaches to "manage ourselves" and "trusts us to make the good decisions." He later noted that this "gives us the freedom" to develop the program and team as they see fit. Alternatively, some administrators seek out heavier *involvement* in the running of the sport programs. Coach Kenneth noted that his athletic director is "very, very, very much involved in all daily

156

workings of our athletic programs" and has created a policy manual that provides the expectations "from a daily basis all the way to the state championship game" which regularly directs Kenneth's decision making. Coach Rose noted "an administrator can have a huge impact" on her decision making "whether it be an intimidation factor or the need to control everything" in the school. Additionally, "how they [the principal] manage the money" can shape and influence the decisions that she makes for her program and team.

While most coaches reported working with administrators who are generally not involved in the ongoing operations and decision making for sport programs on campus, results from this project suggest that these administrators may seek out *situational influence.* Even in interviews where coaches reported a hands-off approach by their administrators, there is evidence of situations arising where administrators want to be included whereby providing the mechanism for influencing the decision or outcome. Coach Sean described two specific situations where administration directed the disciplinary decisions to be made [i.e. instructed to retain two student-athletes who were the subject of team dismissal decisions] yet went on to characterize this influence as "an anomaly" when compared to the other situations in his coaching experience at the school. Coach Vincent recounted a situation during his first year as a head coach where the administration "brought [him] into the room and told "these senior parents built this program" and as a result Coach Vincent was told "we expect those seniors to play." Even when he clarified, "you don't want me to make decisions based on performance or based on my evaluation?" administration confirmed they "don't care whether you [Coach Vincent] win or lose, they need to play. And then you can do what you want the next

year." This example typifies the administrator's *situational influence* [i.e. playing time decisions for one season only].

An additional way in which administrators may influence coach decision making stems from the *mixed understanding of context/culture* that administrators may possess. Coaches Vincent and Jeffrey both described a high level of organizational turnover at the administrative level which ultimately played a role in their decision making. Coach Vincent stated the following:

> If every single year, every other year, you have a brand new boss who has a brand new vision and a brand new expectation, and he doesn't have a relationship with you and he doesn't know what your standards are and what you're doing or what you've accomplished or what you haven't accomplished or what issues you may have had or what parent issues might happen in a year or with sports teams or whatever. You're starting that conversation and that process over all the time.

Comparatively, some coaches reported their administrators as having a solid *understanding of context/culture* of the sport, such as Coach Reggie whose school principal, school assistant principal, school district assistant superintendent, and school district superintendent all previously coached with Coach Reggie. He described the perspectives offered by "ladder of coaches" above him as "invaluable" because of he believes for "important decisions and stuff like that" they are "all cut…from the same cloth."

An important way that administrators have the ability to influence coach decision making comes from the administration's response when *hearing and responding to parental issues.* Many coaches described situations where administrators were contacted

by parents who wished to register a complaint or concern regarding their child's sport participation. Most frequently, coaches reported this element of *administration hearing and responding to parental issues* following a coach's decisions involving playing time, team membership (i.e. who joins/does not join the team, player dismissals, and assigning players to varsity or developmental teams), and consequences for behavioral infractions.

The final way in which organizational administrators may influence coach decision making is through the *level of support* administrators offer to coaches should an issue arise. The support, or lack thereof, that coaches most frequently discussed was the *level of support* they received following decisions they had already made. Some coaches reported administration backing their decision when a parent escalated their concerns to the administration. Other coaches recounted situations where they felt administration challenged the decisions or requested different decisions be made altogether to satisfy the parent/s. In those cases where coaches reported feeling supported by administrators, coach decision priorities were most often focused on the holistic development of athletes or program goals. However, in those cases where coaches reported a perceived lack of support, their decision-making processes changed. Here instead of focusing their decisions on holistic athlete development and program goals these coaches reported consideration of the administrator's reaction should the decision result in a parental issue.

Theme #4: Parents of Athletes

The final piece of the organizational environment that has the potential to influence coach decision making are the parents of the athletes on the coach's team. One way coaches described this influence was a result of the *mixed understanding of sport context* whereby parents have a limited understanding of the sport itself. Coach Jacob

159

explained a situation following his decision to move an athlete's playing position in which the "parent needed to be awakened…to the game of baseball." Some parents may also have a *mixed understanding of sport* relative to the differences between recreational sport and the varsity sport context. Coach Ryan described an incident where a group of parents began to "argue" with him about where he planned to play a talented freshman. He then chose to explain that one of the major differences between recreational sport and high school sport is that where recreational sport teams are frequently comprised of athletes who are the same age and have similar levels of maturity, high school sport will frequently feature "full-blooded men" playing on the same field as younger players. Both of these coaches elected to address the parental pushback by explaining their rational for the decisions.

Another way in which parents can potentially influence coach decision making is a result of the *parental agenda*. Numerous coaches, such as Coach Dorothy, spoke about sport parents' desire for their child to get a collegiate athletic scholarship. Dorothy described meetings with parents and administrators (i.e. principal and athletic director) "over statistics" because the parents wanted "more statistics so that my child can get a scholarship, a better scholarship." Additionally, some parents may pushback against a coach's decision for their child's team placement. On the day of his participation in this project Coach Ryan described a situation he was faced with at the time. He was in the midst of a decision process on how to handle potentially having to cut a senior from the varsity squad when this athlete's parents complained about their son being put on junior varsity as a freshman and sophomore. Faced with the prospect of making a decision that would not be in line with the *parental agenda* changed the way he approached the

160

decision (i.e. seeking out input from numerous colleagues). Where these coaches described two scenarios where the parents had a specific agenda, other coaches discussed this in more general terms. Coach George remarked that he builds relationships with both the players and their parents because "you don't know what the parents' alternative motive is." Coach Rose affirmed this idea when she noted that parents are not "big picture people…their picture is one person." And while the parents may be singularly focused on one athlete her goal is to "make the best decision for everyone."

Frequently, parental influence on coach decision making came about as a result of *conflict with parents*. Throughout this study coaches commented on the aggressive actions, behaviors, and attitudes that players' parents may at times exhibit. In fact, of the 14 coaches who participated in this study 12 referred to conflicts they have had with parents of team members. It should be noted though that while the majority of coaches describe *conflict with parents* as being influential for their out-of-action decision making, these very same coaches were absolutely clear that the majority of the parents affiliated with their programs are supportive, good, or in some cases absent. Coach Jeffrey recounted a parent who presented ongoing challenges over the course of her daughter's time with the team. This parent boarded a bus as it attempted to leave for a game so that she could offer some "choice words," on a different day "came storming" into the gym using profane language and refused to speak out of earshot of the team, and had an incident in the locker room with a non-child player and then got into a conflict with that child's parent in the team group message. Coach Harry recounted an incident where a set of parents entered his classroom after hours and waited for his return whereby the father "immediately…launched into a tirade about who did [Coach Harry] think he was" for not

putting his daughter on the soccer team. Coach Kenneth noted that at one point in his career when he had a group of parents he described as "nothing short of disgusting" he "made decisions based if a parent complained about their kid's playing time."

In addition to direct conflict with the coach, one way that sport parents influence coach decision making is through escalation of the issue to the coach's administrator/s following a coach decision. In these situations where they *escalate to administration*, parents request meetings with the principal and/or athletic director to report their displeasure regarding the decision the coach has made. This serves to re-open or extend the decision cycle because the coach must decide whether they will stick to the previous decision and implementation, stick to the previous decision but alter the implementation, or change the decision made altogether. In these situations, the parent's actions (i.e. seeking out administrator involvement) are directly responsible for bringing the administrators into the process. Coach Lawrence described these efforts as parents trying to "get satisfaction." Coach Vincent noted that weighing the potential for *escalation to administration* is now a standard part of his decision-making process. Unlike "20 years ago, 10 years ago, 5 years ago" when he would enforce standards and policies without concern for pushback, "now, first thought is well this is a clear violation, these are our rules, this is what we're going to do…But am I going to get supported [when the parents escalate to administration]…How much pressure is going to be on me to change my decision because it makes a parent happy?" Coach Vincent ultimately noted that he does not "want to be in that room" and does not "want to fight that battle anymore."

Discussion

Findings from this project provide critical information about how coaches navigate the complexities of sport coaching. A critical finding and unique contribution to the literature is the importance of a decision-making team when there are high stakes and consequential decisions. Results from this study highlight the integral nature of the *active involvement* of the decision-making team to the decision-making process. The Mosier and Fischer (2010) model positions the decision-making team as the most influential factor on decision-making outside of the individual within the task environment. Participants reported the *active involvement of assistant coaches* in terms that suggest this model accurately reflects the interscholastic coaching context especially in those instances where the situation requires an out-of-action decision that addresses an issue that is ambiguous or complex in nature. While the head coaches did report retention of the *final decision authority*, it was clear that the *active involvement of assistant coaches* was crucial to the decision-making process as assistant coaches helped in the sensemaking activities surrounding issues that were "ambiguous, confusing, or in some other way violate expectations" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 57). This *active involvement* in the sensemaking process ultimately guided the decision of what steps or actions would take place to address the out-of-action problem (Eisenberg et al., 2014; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Additionally, the *final decision authority* and subsequent accountability elements may account for a portion of the isolation previously found in research on high-performance coaches (Mallett et al., 2016; Rynne et al., 2010). Results from this study suggest that open lines of communication between members of a coaching staff are integral to head coaches when making difficult out-of-action decisions.

Another essential finding was the impact of parents on the decision-making process. This should come as no surprise as the impact of parents has been connected to many other areas of sport including sport participation (Côté & Hay, 2002; Hellstedt, 1995; Monsaas, 1985), sport specialization (Monsaas, 1985; Padaki et al., 2017), and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005). Additionally, previous researchers established that sport parents can serve as source of stress and anxiety in athletes (Gould et al., 1991; Hellstedt, 1995; Scanlan et al., 1991). The results from this project extend the current research on parental influences in sport to influences on the coach decision-making processes. Some participants in this study attributed the parental influence to the *parental agenda* of their child's continued participation in sport and athletics at the collegiate level. This finding is supported by Padaki et al. (2017) who linked the parental agenda for continued participation to the sport specialization decision of the athlete. Additionally, coaches in this study described *conflict with parents* that were influential in their decision-making process. Previous researchers revealed conflict in the coach-athlete-parent relationship (Hellstedt, 1987) and parental anger directed toward coaches (Omli & Lavoi, 2012). The results of this project extend the findings of sport parent conflict as having an influence on the decision-making processes of head coaches. Most coaches who participated in this study noted that the majority of sport parent interactions are positive and have only a limited influence on their decisions; yet, in those cases where *conflict with parents* arises, the parental influence complicates the coach's decision-making processes as the goals of numerous parties are simultaneously being weighed. This dynamic environment with multiple players who may have competing goals is more representative of features of the naturalistic task environment

164

(Orasanu & Connolly, 1993) which is more influential to the decision maker. It should also be noted that because of high school athletic governing bodies rules barring student transfers solely for athletic reasons, the options available to parents and athletes who experience conflict in the coach-athlete-parent relationship differ from contexts where coaching changes/changing teams is allowed. These results extend the wealth of information on the parental influence in the sport environment to the decision-making processes of the coach. Interestingly, the current National Federation of State High Schools Associations Coaches Code of Ethics requires coaches to maintain the "highest ethical and moral conduct" when interacting with "students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, state high school athletic association, the media, and the public" (NFHS, 2014). Results from this project suggest revisiting and updating coach expectations to include ethical behavior when dealing with parents.

Participants also described the influence of administrators on their decision-making processes. Although coaches in this study most frequently reported that administrators (i.e., school principals and athletic directors) were not involved in the ongoing decision-making for their sport programs, they did describe situations in which the sport parent/s requested the involvement of the administrators in specific situations, especially those in which there was a *mixed understanding of the context and culture of sport*. This result is supported by a study by Johnson and colleagues (2019) who surveyed interscholastic athletic directors across the United States found that educating parents, keeping athletics in perspective, and treatment of coaches were the three most pressing issues facing interscholastic athletic directors. Additionally, this study found that parent confusion over what is important and parental attempts to get coaches fired were also

issues for interscholastic athletic directors (Johnson et al., 2019). Further, in an examination of high school principals' perceptions of the characteristics and qualities they expect in athletic directors, 96.1% of respondents reported "successfully working with parents" as essential or very important (Stier & Schneider, 2001). Given the power struggles that can occur and influences varying power dynamics can have on coaches (Hellstedt, 1987; Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005), it is unsurprising that athletic administrators and principals report parental issues and the ability to handle such issues as particularly salient in interscholastic sport. The results of the present study support these findings and extends the current understanding we have of those problems as influential to the coach decision-making process.

Finally, the school environment emerged as an important source of information and guidance for coach decisions. As previously noted, inclusion criteria for participation in this study specified that the head coaches must also be employed at the school in which they coach. Each head coach who participated in this study was simultaneously employed as a classroom teacher. Because of their employment with the schools, these head coaches had ongoing access to the student records of the student-athletes on their teams including disciplinary records, attendance records, and grades. These *sources of information* were reported as paramount to the coach's process of ongoing supervision of the holistic athlete development and prompted decisions when a student-athlete did not meet the coach's expectations for behavior, attendance, and/or academic success. This use of school information in decision-making has been extensively explored in K-12 education's efforts to support positive behavior interventions and supports where school-based data has guided decisions (Kennedy et al., 2009; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

166

Furthermore, the school environment's *goals and norms* as evidenced by the policies, procedures, and expectations provided some level of guidance for coach decision-making efforts. Organizational policies and procedures have previously been noted to provide parameters that encourage some behaviors while discouraging or barring others (Orasanu & Connolly, 1993). The policies and procedures set by the school, the athletic department within the school, or more broadly at the school board athletic offices were reported by some coaches as providing parameters to some out-of-action decisions. However, because of the variability in the amount of guidance offered in these policies and procedures, the influence of the *goals and norms* through the policies and procedures was dependent upon the organization for which the coach worked.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to the present study. First, the sample was restricted to interscholastic sport coaches of team sports. Additional research is needed in other sport contexts to determine how different organizational cultures and environments influence the decision-making processes of coaches who work within those contexts. Additionally, the small sample size (n = 14) and focus on one geographical region of the United States (i.e., southeastern United States) limit the generalizability of the findings. Additional research in areas outside of the southeastern United States is needed. Lastly, average daily enrollment for schools was limited to establish organizational homogeneity. Additional research in the interscholastic sport context is needed.

Although outside of the scope of the research questions asked here, analysis did determine that in the context of making out-of-action decisions, coaches experience a range of emotional reactions, stress responses, and values conflicts that are instrumental

167

in the decision-making process. The holistic development of athletes and the ongoing development of the team members and program can clearly be challenging for coaches. Additionally, descriptions offered by many coaches suggest that a single interscholastic sport team can include athletes who approach the sport context from a performance mindset as well as athletes who are there for more of a participation sport experience. This may contribute to the goal conflicts that some coaches described.

There are a number of areas of future research that have emerged based upon the results of this project. First, results from this project found that while most parents remain supportive of the coach in the interscholastic sport environment some parents expect to be included in decisions they may disagree with. Whether this is a result of their involvement (Hellstedt), expectations (Eccles), or some other factor is grounds for future investigation. Another avenue for future research is additional exploration into how a coach's personal characteristics influences their out-of-action decision-making processes is warranted especially in the areas of emotion, stress, values, and expertise which are shown to be influential in decision making. Additionally, more inquiry is needed into the holistic athlete development out-of-action decisions coaches make as these decisions are paramount to the development of the athlete and program. Finally, additional research is needed into how an environment such as the interscholastic sport environment, which simultaneously features athletes and their parents who are performance-focused as well as athletes and their parents who are participation-focused, influences the experiences and outcomes of the coaches as well as other stakeholders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes a number of critical findings to the literature of decision-making in coaching. Specifically, it provides additional information as the first study to examine out-of-action decisions in coaching and to specifically target interscholastic coaches. This study only focused on the organizational influences on coach decision making and therefore future exploration of the personal characteristics of the coach, the influence of the task environment, the use of data and technology on coach decisions, and the decision-making team is needed.

APPENDIX A – Participant Contact Script

Dear Coach _____:

As a head coach of a high school team sport program you are in a position to make a variety of decisions for your sport team and program. Some of these decisions are made in the course of coaching in a game or match while others are made off-the-field or off-the-court. As a former high school head coach, I recognize and understand that making decisions is one of the primary elements of a coach's job.

My name is Arien Faucett and I am a fourth year PhD student in Kinesiology at The University of Southern Mississippi. Currently, I am working on my dissertation that is exploring how high school head coaches make off-the-field/off-the-court decisions and influences on those decisions. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information will be held in the strict confidence. In other words, no references to the state in which you coach, the school you coach, or your name will ever be referenced in written or oral reports that could link your participation to this study.

I would greatly appreciate your participation. If you are willing to participate in an interview by phone or video call, please respond to this email and we will organize a time that is convenient for you. I anticipate this conversation lasting roughly 60-90 minutes. Should your availability be limited, we can adjust the time or divide the interview into two sections.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you and learning about your experiences making off-the-field/off-the-court decisions for your team. Your perspective will be a valuable addition to my dissertation project.

Best,

Arien E. Faucett, M.S.S.

APPENDIX B – Gatekeeper Contact Script

Dear Coach _____:

      High school head coaches are in a position to make a variety of decisions for their sport team and program. Some of these decisions are made in the course of coaching in a game or match while others are made off-the-field or off-the-court. As a former high school head coach, I recognize and understand that making decisions is one of the primary elements of a coach's job.

      My name is Arien Faucett and I am a fourth year PhD student in Kinesiology at The University of Southern Mississippi. Currently, I am working on my dissertation that is exploring how high school head coaches make off-the-field/off-the-court decisions and influences on those decisions. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information will be held in the strictest of confidence. In other words, no references to the state in which coaches coach, the school they coach, or the coach's name will ever be referenced in written or oral reports that could link their participation to this study.

      I would greatly appreciate the participation of a coach from your school's athletic department. If you are willing to help facilitate this participation, please respond to this email with email addresses for the team sport head coaches within your department or, if more convenient, forward this email directly to your school's coaches. Participation in this project will consist of a phone or video call interview which will be organized at a time that is convenient for the coach. I anticipate this conversation lasting roughly 60-90 minutes. Should the coach's availability be limited, we can adjust the time or divide the interview into two sections.

      Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from a representative from your school. Their perspective will be a valuable addition to my dissertation project.

Best,

Arien E. Faucett, M.S.S.

APPENDIX C – Participant Follow-Up Recruitment Contact Script

Dear Coach _____:

I hope this email finds you well!

Recently, I sent you an invitation to participate in an interview regarding your experiences making off-the-court/off-the-field decisions for your sport team and program. I hope you have had an opportunity to consider participating in this project. Should you choose to participate, I am happy to schedule an interview time that best fits with your schedule. If you believe participation at this time is not convenient but would like to be contacted for future projects, please let me know and I will add you to my coach database. If you have chosen not to be interviewed, I appreciate you taking the time to consider participation.

Thanks again for your time and consideration!

Best,

Arien Faucett, M.S.S.

APPENDIX D – Gatekeeper Follow-Up Recruitment Contact Script

Dear Coach _____:

I hope this email finds you well!

Recently, I sent your athletic department an invitation to participate in a project exploring coaches' experiences making off-the-court/off-the-field decisions for their sport team and program. I hope you had an opportunity to consider facilitating participation for this project. If you have already forwarded my previous email to the team sport coaches in your department, I appreciate your help. I would like to reach out to these coaches directly to extend an invitation to participate. If you could send me the email addresses of the team sport head coaches within your department, I would greatly appreciate it. Thanks again for your time and consideration!

Best,

Arien Faucett, M.S.S.

APPENDIX E – Interview Guide

1. Coaches are frequently faced with issues that require their attention. Some of these issues can be addressed relatively quickly. Others are more difficult to resolve and require more thought and effort. Can you tell me about a time when you were faced with a particularly challenging problem?
2. Can you talk to me about the decision/s you were faced with to address this problem?
3. While you were considering what to do, what was weighing on you or made these decisions difficult?
4. Can you talk to me about any pressure you experienced when you were trying to decide on a course of action?
5. Talk to me more about the process you used to make the decision…were other people involved or trying to be involved?
6. Were there any common practices within the school or athletic department that played a role in your thinking about what course of action to take? If yes, can you talk to me more about that?
7. Why did you choose to make this particular decision?
8. Looking back, what, if anything, would you have done differently in making that decision?
9. Demographic questions (coaching experience, coaching education background, playing experience, number of sports coached)

Probe stems:

Can you talk to me more about that?

Can you talk to me more about how that complicated the situation?

How did that play a role in your thinking?

APPENDIX F – Member Checking Email Script

Dear Coach _____:

I hope this email finds you happy and healthy!

I finished transcribing our conversation which I have attached to this email. I invite you to read your transcript to ensure that everything transcribed aligns with your story. Please let me know if there are any spots in the interview that need more clarification or do not fit with what you recall providing me. Please note that I have already anonymized your transcript so any specific names you may have mentioned for people, places, or schools have all been given pseudonyms. This procedure is to ensure that we are upholding the integrity of your story as a high school head coach and the ways you approach making off-the-field/off-the-court decisions for your sport team and program.

Again, thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this project and your openness in discussing how you make decisions.

Best,

Arien Faucett, M.S.S.

APPENDIX G – Themes and Subthemes

Theme #1: School Environment

- Goals and Norms

- Support Network

- Source of Information

- Accessibility to Student-Athletes

Theme #2: Decision-Making Team

- Assistant Coach Active Involvement

- Head Coach as Final Decision Authority

Theme #3: Administrators

- Level of Involvement

- Level of Support

- Situational Influence

- Mixed Understanding of Context and Culture

- Hearing and Responding to Parental Issues

Theme #4: Parents of Athletes

- Mixed Understanding of Context

- Parental Agenda

- Conflict with Parents

- Escalating to Administration

Arien Faucett

From:	HFES <info@hfes.org>
Sent:	Monday, January 18, 2021 3:02 PM
To:	Arien Faucett
Subject:	Use of Figure in your Dissertation

Dear Arien,

You may use the figure in your dissertation. You must provide a full citation to the original source of the material wherever such material appears in your publication.

Dissertation/Thesis Reuse

You may reuse up to three (3) figures/tables or a total of up to 400 words from a SAGE journal in your dissertation/thesis, provided the work will not be hosted on a commercial platform (such as ProQuest). If your re-use exceeds this allowance, or if you will be posting your work on a commercial platform, you will need to request permission for the reuse.

Regards,

Steve Kemp

Steven Kemp, CAE
Executive Director
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
2001 K Street NW | 3rd Floor N.
Washington, DC 20006
Tel. + 1 (202) 367-1114
skemp@hfes.org

HFES

From: info@hfes.org <info@hfes.org>
Sent: Monday, January 18, 2021 1:38 PM
To: HFES <info@hfes.org>
Subject: New Contact Us Form Submission

Contact Us Form	
First Name	Arien
Last Name	Faucett

1

Email	arien.faucett@usm.edu
Question/Comment	Good afternoon,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi in the School of Kinesiology and Nutrition. I am currently working on my dissertation examining the organizational influences on head coach decision-making in interscholastic sport. As part of this project, I would like to use a graphic from one of your publications. Who do I need to speak to to get permission to use the Human Factors Decision Framework which was Figure 6.2 from the citation included below?

Mosier, K. L., & Fischer, U. M. (2010). Judgment and decision making by individuals and teams: Issues, models, and applications. Reviews of Human Factors and Ergonomics, 6(1), 198-256.

Many thanks,
Arien Faucett

2

Arien Faucett

From:	Livingstone, Karen <K.Livingstone@leedsbeckett.ac.uk>
Sent:	Monday, January 18, 2021 9:32 AM
To:	Arien Faucett; Lara-Bercial, Sergio; l.petrovic@icce.ws; jbales@rogers.com
Subject:	Re: Permission to Use Functional Coaching Competence and Coaching Knowledge Graphic

Dear Arien,

Thank you for your email.

We at the ICCE are happy to grant you permission to use figure 6.1 from the ISCF. We have also asked the publisher (Human Kinetics) who have confirmed this is agreed if you use proper reference and permission notations.

Thanks,
Karen

From: Arien Faucett <Arien.Faucett@usm.edu>
Sent: 15 January 2021 19:01
To: k.livingstone@icce.ws <k.livingstone@icce.ws>; Lara-Bercial, Sergio <S.Lara-Bercial@leedsbeckett.ac.uk>; l.petrovic@icce.ws <l.petrovic@icce.ws>; jbales@rogers.com <jbales@rogers.com>
Subject: Permission to Use Functional Coaching Competence and Coaching Knowledge Graphic

Caution External Mail: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know that the content is safe.
Good afternoon,

I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation which explores coach decision-making in interscholastic sports in the United States. As part of my review of literature, I would like to use the Functional Coaching Competence and Coaching Knowledge graphic (Figure 6.1 from the ISCF, 2013). Could one of you grant me that permission? Or, if I need to ask someone else, would you mind pointing me in the right direction?

Happy New Year, hoping you all are happy and healthy!

Thanks,
Arien

Arien Faucett
Doctoral Candidate
School of Kinesiology & Nutrition
The University of Southern Mississippi

To view the terms under which this email is distributed, please go to:-
http://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/disclaimer/email/

1

Date: 3-10-2021

IRB #: IRB-21-44
Title: An examination of organizational influences on coach decision-making
Creation Date: 2-8-2021
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Arien Faucett
Review Board: Sacco (Exempt/Expedited Board)
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Melissa Thompson	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	m.thompson@usm.edu
Member	Arien Faucett	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	arien.faucett@usm.edu
Member	Arien Faucett	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	arien.faucett@usm.edu

REFERENCES

Abraham, A., & Collins, D. (2011). Taking the next step: Ways forward for coaching science. *Quest*, *63*(4), 366–384.

Abraham, A., & Collins, D. (2015). Professional judgement and decision-making in sport coaching: To jump or not to jump. *International Conference on Naturalistic Decision Making*. MacLean, VA.

Abraham, A., Collins, D., & Martindale, R. (2006). The coaching schematic: Validation through expert coach consensus. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *24*(6), 549–564. https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410500189173

Alamar, B. C. (2013). *Sports analytics: A guide for coaches, managers, and other decision makers*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Barriball, K. L., & While, A. (1994). Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: A discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 19*(2), 328-335.

Beach, L. R., & Lipshitz, R. (1993). Why classical decision theory is an inappropriate standard for evaluating and aid in most human decision making. In G. Klein, J. Orasanu, R. Calderwood, & C. E. Zsambok (Eds.), *Decision Making in Action: Models and Methods* (pp. 3–20). Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Blinkoff, J., Voeller, M., Graham, S., & Wilson, J. (2020). Predictive modeling of 4th down conversion in Power 5 Conferences: Football data analytics. *Sport Journal*. Retrieved from http://lynx.lib.usm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=s3h&AN=145237153&site=ehost-live

Bowes, I., & Jones, R. L. (2006). Working at the edge of chaos: Understanding coaching

    as a complex, interpersonal system. *The Sport Psychologist*, *20*(2), 235–245.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper (Ed.), *APA handbook of*

    research methods in psychology: Research designs (Vol. 2, pp. 57–71).

    https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise

    research. In B. Smith & A. C. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative*

    research in sport and exercise (pp. 191–205). Routledge.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

    Research in Psychology, *3*(2), 77–101.

    https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for*

    beginners. Sage Publications, Inc.

Burke, L. A., & Miller, M. K. (1999). Taking the mystery out of intuitive decision

    making. *Academy of Management Executive*, *13*(4), 91–99.

Camomilla, V., Bergamini, E., Fantozzi, S., & Vannozzi, G. (2018). Trends supporting

    the in-field use of wearable inertial sensors for sport performance evaluation: A

    systematic review. *Sensors (Switzerland)*, *18*(3), 873.

    https://doi.org/10.3390/s18030873

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., Dicenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use

    of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, *41*(5), pp. 545–

    547. https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative Research*, *6*(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106065006

Christmann, J., Akamphuber, M., Müllenbach, A. L., & Güllich, A. (2018). Crunch time in the NBA – The effectiveness of different play types in the endgame of close matches in professional basketball. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, *13*(6), 1090–1099. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954118772485

Collins, D., Carson, H. J., & Cruickshank, A. (2015). Blaming Bill Gates AGAIN! Misuse, overuse and misunderstanding of performance data in sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, *20*(8), 1088–1099. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2015.1053803

Collins, D., Collins, L., & Carson, H. J. (2016). "If it feels right, do it ": Intuitive decision making in a sample of high-level sport coaches. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *7*, 504. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00504

Collins, L., & Collins, D. (2013). Decision making and risk management in adventure sports coaching. *Quest*, *65*, 72–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2012.727373

Côté, J., & Gilbert, W. (2009). An integrative definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *4*(3), 307–323.

Côté, J., & Salmela, J. H. (1996). The Organizational Tasks of High-Performance Gymnastic Coaches. *The Sport Psychologist*, *10*(3), 247–260.

Cratty, B. J. (1970). Coaching Decisions and Research in Sport Psychology. *Quest*, *13*(1), 46–53.

Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage Publications Inc.

Cushion, C. (2007). Modelling the Complexity of the Coaching Process. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *2*(4), 395–401.

Cushion, C. J., Armour, K. M., & Jones, R. L. (2006). Locating the coaching process in practice: Models 'for' and 'of' coaching. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*, *11*(1), 83–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408980500466995

d'Arripe-Longueville, F., Fournier, J. F., & Dubois, A. (1998). The perceived effectiveness of interactions between expert French judo coaches and elite female athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, *12*(3), 317–332.

Debanne, T., & Laffaye, G. (2015). Motivational cues predict the defensive system in team handball: A model based on regulatory focus theory. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, *25*(4), 558–567. https://doi.org/10.1111/sms.12328

Debanne, Thierry, Angel, V., & Fontayne, P. (2014). Decision-making during games by professional handball coaches using regulatory focus theory. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *26*(1), 111–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2013.801370

Eisenberg, E. M., Goodall, J. . H. L., & Tretheway, A. (2014). Teams and networks: Communication and collaborative work. In *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint* (7th ed., pp. 225–265). Bedford/St. Martin's.

Elliott, R., & Timulak, L. (2005). Descriptive and interpretive approaches to qualitative research. In J. Miles & P. Gilbert (Eds.), *A handbook of research methods for clinical and health psychology* (pp. 147-160). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/med:psych/9780198527565.003.0011

Fletcher, D., & Scott, M. (2010). Psychological stress in sports coaches: A review of concepts, research, and practice. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *28*(2), 127–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410903406208

Frey, M. (2007). College coaches' experiences with stress - "Problem solvers" have problems, too. *Sport Psychologist, 21*(1), 38-57. https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.21.1.38

Gano-Overway, L., Thompson, M., & Van Mullem, P. (2021). *National standards for sport coaches: Quality coaches, quality sports* (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Giske, R., Benestad, B., Haraldstad, K., & Høigaard, R. (2013). Decision-making styles among Norwegian soccer coaches: An analysis of decision-making style in relation to elite and non-elite coaching and level of playing history. In *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *8*(4), 689-701. .

Gravill, L., & Thompson, M. (2010). *Review of the University of Waterloo Football Program in Relation to the Use of Banned Substances*. Retrieved from https://uwaterloo.ca/provost/sites/ca.provost/files/uploads/files/UW-Football-Program-in-Relation-to-the-Use-of-Banned-Substances-Report-August-2010.pdf

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.

　　K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–

　　117). Sage Publications, Inc.

Han, P., & Dodds, M. A. (2013). Can a Sport Organization Monitor Its Employees' and

　　Athletes' Use of Social Media? *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and*

　　Dance, 84(3), 9-12.

Harvey, S., Lyle, J. W. B., & Muir, B. (2015). Naturalistic decision making in high

　　performance team sport coaching. *International Sport Coaching Journal*, *2*(2),

　　152–168. https://doi.org/10.1123/iscj.2014-0118

Hughes, R., & Coakley, J. (1991). Positive deviance among athletes: The implications of

　　overconformity to the sport ethic. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *8*(4), 307–325.

　　https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.8.4.307

Hutchinson, S., & Skodol Wilson, H. (1992). Validity threats in scheduled semistructured

　　research interviews. *Nursing Research*, *41*(2), 117–119.

International Council for Coaching Excellence, Association of Summer Olympic

　　International Federations, & Leeds Metropolitan University. (2013). *International*

　　Sport Coaching Framework (Version 1.2). Human Kinetics.

International Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology Special Issue "Emotions and

　　decision making in sports." (2013). *International Journal of Sport & Exercise*

　　Psychology, *11*(2).

Jenny, S. E., & Hushman, G. F. (2014). A case study of a successful men's NCAA

    Division I distance running coach. To what extent is decision-making humanistic?

    Sport Journal, *1*. Retrieved from

    http://lynx.lib.usm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=tr

    ue&db=s3h&AN=101867272&site=ehost-live

Jones, D. F., Housner, L. D., & Kornspan, A. S. (1997). Interactive decision making and

    behavior of experienced and inexperienced basketball coaches during practice.

    Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, *16*(4), 454–468.

Jones, R. L., & Wallace, M. (2005). Another bad day at the training ground: Coping with

    ambiguity in the coaching context. *Sport, Education and Society*, *10*(1), 119–134.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332052000308792

Josselson, R. (1995). Imagining the real: Empathy, narrative, and the dialogic self. In R.

    Josselson & A. Lieblich (Eds.), *Interpreting experience: The narrative study of*

    lives (Vol. 3, pp. 27–44). Sage Publications Inc.

Jowett, S., & Ntoumanis, N. (2004). The Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire

    (CART-Q): Development and initial validation. *Scandinavian Journal of*

    Medicine & Science in Sports, *14*(4), 245–257. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1600-

    0838.2003.00338.x

Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic

    methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured

    interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *72*(12), 2954–2965.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031

Kikulis, L. M., Slack, T., & Hinings, B. (1995). Does decision making make a

   difference? Patterns of change within Canadian National Sport Organizations.

   Journal of Sport Management, *9*(3), 273–299. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.9.3.273

Klein, G. (1993). A recognition-primed decision (RPD) model of rapid decision making.

   In G. Klein, J. Orasanu, R. Calderwood, & C. E. Zsambok (Eds.), *Decision*

   Making in Action: Models and Methods (pp. 138–147). Praeger.

Klein, G. (2008). Naturalistic decision making. *Human Factors*, *50*(3), 456–460.

   https://doi.org/10.1518/001872008X288385

Krauss, S. E., Hamzah, A., Omar, Z., Suandi, T., Ismail, I. A., Zahari, M. Z., & Nor, Z.

   M. (2009). Preliminary investigation and interview guide development for

   studying how Malaysian farmers form their mental models of farming. *The*

   Qualitative Report, *14*(2), 245–260. Retrieved from

   http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR14-2/krauss.pdf

Laborde, S., Dosseville, F., & Raab, M. (2013). Introduction, comprehensive approach,

   and vision for the future. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*,

   11(2), 143–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2013.773686

Legg, P. A., Chung, D. H. S., Parry, M. L., Jones, M. W., Long, R., Griffiths, I. W., &

   Chen, M. (2012). MatchPad: Interactive glyph-based visualization for real-time

   sports performance analysis. *Computer Graphics Forum*, *31*(3, 1255–1264.

   https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8659.2012.03118.x

Lerner, J. S., Li, Y., Valdesolo, P., & Kassam, K. S. (2015). Emotion and decision making. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *66*, 799–823. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115043

Levy, A., Nicholls, A., Marchant, D., & Polman, R. (2009). Organisational stressors, coping, and coping effectiveness: A longitudinal study with an elite coach. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *4*(1), 31–45. https://doi.org/10.1260/1747-9541.4.1.31

Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science: Selected theoretical papers* (1st ed.). Harper.

Lietz, C. A., Langer, C. L., & Furman, R. (2006). Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, *5*(4), 441–458. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325006070288

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 163–188). Sage Publications Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 97–128). Sage Publications Inc.

Luczak, T., Burch, R., Lewis, E., Chander, H., & Ball, J. (2020). State-of-the-art review

    of athletic wearable technology: What 113 strength and conditioning coaches and

    athletic trainers from the USA said about technology in sports. *International*

    Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, *15*(1), 26–40.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954119885244

Luczak, T., Saucier, D., Burch, R. F. V., Ball, J. E., Chander, H., Knight, A., … Iftekhar,

    T. (2018). Closing the wearable gap: Mobile systems for kinematic signal

    monitoring of the foot and ankle. *Electronics (Switzerland)*, *7*(7).

    https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics7070117

Lyle, J. (1999). Coaches' decision making. In N. Cross & J. Lyle (Eds.), *The coaching*

    process: Principles and practice for sport (pp. 210–232). Butterworth

    Heinemann.

Lyle, J. (1996). A conceptual appreciation of the sports coaching process. *Scottish Centre*

    Research Papers in Sport, Leisure and Society, *1*(1), 15–37.

Lyle, J. (2002). *Sports coaching concepts: A framework for coaches' behaviour*.

    Routledge.

Lyle, J., & Vergeer, I. (2013). Recommendations on the methods used to investigate

    coaches' decision making. In P. Potrac, W. Gilbert, & J. Denison (Eds.),

    Routledge handbook of sports coaching (pp. 121–132). Routledge.

MacMahon, C., Bailey, A., Croser, M., & Weissensteiner, J. (2019). Exploring the skill

    of recruiting in the Australian Football League. *International Journal of Sports*

    Science and Coaching, *14*(1), 72–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954118809775

McCluney, E. N., McCullick, B. A., & Schempp, P. G. (2018). Factors triggering

    pressure on basketball coaches' in-game decision-making. *The Sport Journal*.

    Retrieved from http:// thesportjournal.org/article/factors-triggering-pressure-on-

    basketball-coaches-in-game-decision-making/

Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Qualitative research in practice:*

    Examples for discussion and analysis. Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). What is qualitative research? In *Qualitative*

    research (4th ed., pp. 3–21). Jossey-Bass.

Michael, I., Serpell, B. G., Colomer, C. M., & Mara, J. K. (2019). Analysing the short-

    term impact of substitutes vs. starters in international rugby. *International Journal*

    of Sports Science and Coaching, *14*(5), 667–674.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954119874163

Mosier, K. L., & Fischer, U. M. (2010). Judgment and decision making by individuals

    and teams: Issues, models, and applications. *Reviews of Human Factors and*

    Ergonomics, *6*(1), 198–256. https://doi.org/10.1518/155723410x12849346788822

Nash, C., & Collins, D. (2006). Tacit knowledge in expert coaching: Science or art?

    Quest, 58(4), 465-477. https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2006.10491894

National Federation of State High School Associations. (2014, March 24). *Coaches code*

    of ethics. https://www.nfhs.org/nfhs-for-you/coaches/coaches-code-of-ethics/

Neil, R., Bayston, P., Hanton, S., & Wilson, K. (2013). The influence of stress and

    emotions on association football referees decision-making. *Sport & Exercsie*

    Psychology Review, *9*(2), 22–41.

Niederer, D., Wilke, J., Vogt, L., & Banzer, W. (2018). Return to play after injuries: A survey on the helpfulness of various forms of assistance in the shared decision-making process in semiprofessional athletes in Germany. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *99*(4), 690–698. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2017.10.019

Norris, L. A., Didymus, F. F., & Kaiseler, M. (2017). Stressors, coping, and well-being among sports coaches: A systematic review. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *33*, 93–112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.08.005

Olusoga, P., Butt, J., Hays, K., & Maynard, I. (2009). Stress in elite sports coaching: Identifying stressors. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *21*(4), 442–459. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200903222921

Olympiou, A., Jowett, S., & Duda, J. L. (2008). The psychological interface between the coach-created motivational climate and the coach-athlete relationship in team sports. *The Sport Psychologist*, *22*(4), 423–438.

Onwumechili, C. (2018). Nigerian football: a case of social media and sport insider information. *Soccer and Society*, *19*(7), 1038–1057. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2016.1267622

Orasanu, J., & Connolly, T. (1993). The reinvention of decision making. In G. Klein, J. Orasanu, R. Calderwood, & C. E. Zsambok (Eds.), *Decision Making in Action: Models and Methods* (pp. 3–20). Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Passfield, L., & Hopker, J. G. (2017). A mine of information: Can sports analytics

provide wisdom from your data? *International Journal of Sports Physiology and*

Performance, *12*(7), 851–855. https://doi.org/10.1123/ijspp.2016-0644

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage

Publications Inc.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage

Publications Inc.

Pensgaard, A. M., & Roberts, G. C. (2002). Elite athletes' experiences of the

motivational climate: The coach matters. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and*

Science in Sports, 12(1), 54-59. https://doi.org/10.1034/j.1600-

0838.2002.120110.x

Pierce, D. A., Johnson, J. E., Krohn, B. D., & Judge, L. W. (2017). Who should we hire?:

Examining coaching succession in NCAA Division I women's basketball.

International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching, *12*(2), 151–161.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954117694732

Pike Lacy, A. M., Singe, S. M., & Bowman, T. G. (2020). Collegiate athletic trainers'

experiences with external pressures faced during decision making. *Journal of*

Athletic Training, *55*(4), 409–415. https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-165-19

Pope, C. C., Penney, D., & Smith, T. B. (2018). Overtraining and the complexities of

coaches' decision-making: Managing elite athletes on the training cusp. *Reflective*

Practice, *19*(2), 145–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2017.1361923

Potrac, P., Jones, R. L., Purdy, L., Nelson, L., & Marshall, P. (2013). Towards an emotional understanding of coaching: A suggested research agenda. In P. Potrac, W. Gilbert, & J. Denison (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Sports Coaching* (pp. 235–246). Routledge.

Potrac, P., Smith, A., & Nelson, L. (2017). Emotions in sport coaching: An introductory essay. *Sports Coaching Review*, *6*(2), 129–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/21640629.2017.1375187

Robertson, S., Bartlett, J. D., & Gastin, P. B. (2017). Red, amber, or green? Athlete monitoring in team sport: the need for decision-support systems. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, *12*(s2), s72–s79.

Salas, E., Rosen, M. A., & DiazGranados, D. (2010). Expertise-based intuition and decision making in organizations. *Journal of Management*, *36*(4), 941–973. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309350084

Sanderson, J., & Baerg, A. (2020). Youth baseball and data analytics: Quantifying risk management and producing neoliberal responsible citizenship through the GameChanger App. *Communication and Sport*, *8*(1), 72–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479518818185

Santos-Fernandez, E., Wu, P., & Mengersen, K. L. (2019). Bayesian statistics meets sports: A comprehensive review. *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports, 15*(4), 289-312. https://doi.org/10.1515/jqas-2018-0106

Saury, J., & Durand, M. (1998). Practical knowledge in expert coaches: On-site study of

    coaching in sailing. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *69*(3), 254–266.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.1998.10607692

Shields, D. L. L., & Bredemeier, B. J. L. (1995). *Character development and physical*

    activity. Human Kinetics.

Shrier, I., Charland, L., Mohtadi, N. G. H., Meeuwisse, W. H., & Matheson, G. O.

    (2010). The sociology of return-to-play decision making: A clinical perspective.

    Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine, 20(5), 333-335.

Snow, R. E. (1972). *A model teacher training system: An overview*. Stanford, CA.

Sports Coaching Review: Emotions Special Issue. (2017). *Sports Coaching Review*, *6*(2).

Stake, R. E. (2010). Qualitative research: How things work. In *Qualitative research:*

    Studying how things work (pp. 11–35). The Guilford Press.

Starcke, K., & Brand, M. (2012). Decision making under stress: A selective review.

    Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, *36*(4), 1228–1248.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2012.02.003

Thelwell, R. C., Weston, N. J. V., Greenlees, I. A., & Hutchings, N. V. (2008). Stressors

    in elite sport: A coach perspective. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *26*(9), 905–918.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410801885933

Thompson, M. (2020). Ethical and philosophical grounding of coaches. In K.

    Dieffenbach & M. Thompson (Eds.), *Coach Education Essentials* (pp. 17-34).

    Human Kinetics.

Treece, E. W., & Treece, J. W. (1986). *Elements of research in nursing* (4th ed.). C. V. Mosby.

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, *11*(1), 80–96.

Vergeer, I., & Lyle, J. (2009). Coaching experience: Examining its role in coaches' decision making. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *7*(4), 431–449.

Verplanken, B., & Holland, R. W. (2002). Motivated decision making: Effects of activation and self-centrality of values on choices and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(3), 434–447. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.3.434

Ward, P., Windt, J., & Kempton, T. (2019). Business intelligence: How sport scientists can support organization decision making in professional sport. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, *14*(4), 544–546. https://doi.org/10.1123/ijspp.2018-0903

Welty Peachey, J., & Bruening, J. (2011). An examination of environmental forces driving change and stakeholder responses in a Football Championship Subdivision athletic department. *Sport Management Review*, *14*(2), 202–219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2010.09.002

Whiteside, D., Martini, D. N., Zernicke, R. F., & Goulet, G. C. (2016). Changes in a

    starting pitcher's performance characteristics across the duration of a Major

    League Baseball game. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and*

    Performance, *11*(2), 247–254. https://doi.org/10.1123/ijspp.2015-0121

Williams, S., & Manley, A. (2014). Elite coaching and the technocratic engineer:

    Thanking the boys at Microsoft! *Sport, Education and Society*, *21*(6), 828–850.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.958816

Windt, J., MacDonald, K., Taylor, D., Zumbo, B. D., Sporer, B. C., & Martin, D. T.

    (2020). "To tech or not to tech?" A critical decision-making framework for

    implementing technology in sport. *Journal of Athletic Training*, *55*(9), 902–910.

    https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0540.19