

THE COACH'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN COOPERATION WITH ATHLETES

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Abstract

The primary task of the academic operation of a team sport is to train talented athletes who get to know the sport even at other sports organizations to become selected athletes in the U15 and older age groups of the sports academy, within the framework of its education and training program. The defining aspect of the educational work is the coaches' own perception of their role. The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS), one online, self-completed standardized questionnaire research developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) and repeated several times in the following decades searches for the answer to what behaviour do the coaches consider to be followed during their work. In addition to its academic tasks, the "Rátgéber Basketball Academy" Foundation also operates as a methodological centre. It serves as a model for other academies and clubs in the field of the work of age group coaches and the coordination of interdependent age group training. Therefore, the questionnaire was filled out by age group coaches of the academy. The range of respondents is complete. The results point to which groups of questions do the Academy's coaches share the same position on and in which situations do they show differences due to individual style.

1 Introduction

The organizational system of Hungarian sports has developed greatly in recent years. The income of team sports has multiplied. [5] Several academies started operating in the same sports during this period. [7] Sports academies are places of education. The role of coaches in the education process is therefore given priority. [4] [8]

The "Rátgéber Basketball Academy" Foundation, through its own education program, has set the goal of educating talented youth players into age group national team, adult NB I and adult national team players. It is a serious professional challenge to form a team with a unified approach and knowledge from players with different skills in the constantly changing composition of U15-U23 age groups. Coaches' role interpretation can greatly influence the direction, quality, and long-term success of players' individual and team development.

The quality and complex processes of the educational work determine the possible success to such an extent that the research community has been dealing with coaching activities and the philosophy of cooperation with the players for more than three decades. The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) questionnaire which was developed by Chelladurai and Saleh and standardized by others, attempts to identify the factors of coaches' beliefs. The author intended to review and present

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the thinking of the coaches of the academy, relying on the questionnaire survey, in order to make visible the common and different points of opinion formed by the colorful coaching staff on education and the role of educators.

2 Material and methods

The questionnaire associated with Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) was repeated by the authors themselves (Chelladurai, 1984) and Smoll and Smith (1989) during the decade. [1] [2] [11] In the first half of the 2000s, many researchers went back to the roots, to the collection of data grouped into 5 topics, mapping the insights of coaches [3] [9] [10] The present case study (Kowalik and Tóth, 2013) seeks the answer to the question of how uniform the professional work of the academy coaches is. According to the hypothesis of the research, the coaches of the academy mostly represent uniform ideas not only in the professional field of basketball, but also in educational matters – even if the personality and work of the educator-coach cannot be without their own individual characters. [6]

The data was collected in May 2022 using an online self-filling questionnaire created on the Google Forms interface. The questionnaire was filled out by all Hungarian-speaking coaches of the "Rátgéber Basketball Academy" Foundation's youth teams (n=20). The results point to the respondents represent a uniform perception of roles and relate to the coaching role and behaviour with similar emphasis.

3 Results

The questions of the five-point scale could be answered with the choice of "always", "often", "sometimes", "rarely", and "never" for all the questions of each topic group. The No.1 bar chart shows the answers to the first 12 questions (Table No. 1). The columns marked in blue give the answer to the questions of the topic "always", and the columns marked in red give the answer "often". And the orange columns symbolize the answer option "sometimes". The column groups show the distribution of the coaches' answers to each question. In the case of questions No. 1-4 and No.6, the answers mainly represent the "always" coaching behaviour. In the case of questions No. 5 and No. 7-12. the "often" answers are also catching up, in some cases the permissive answer "sometimes" also occurs.

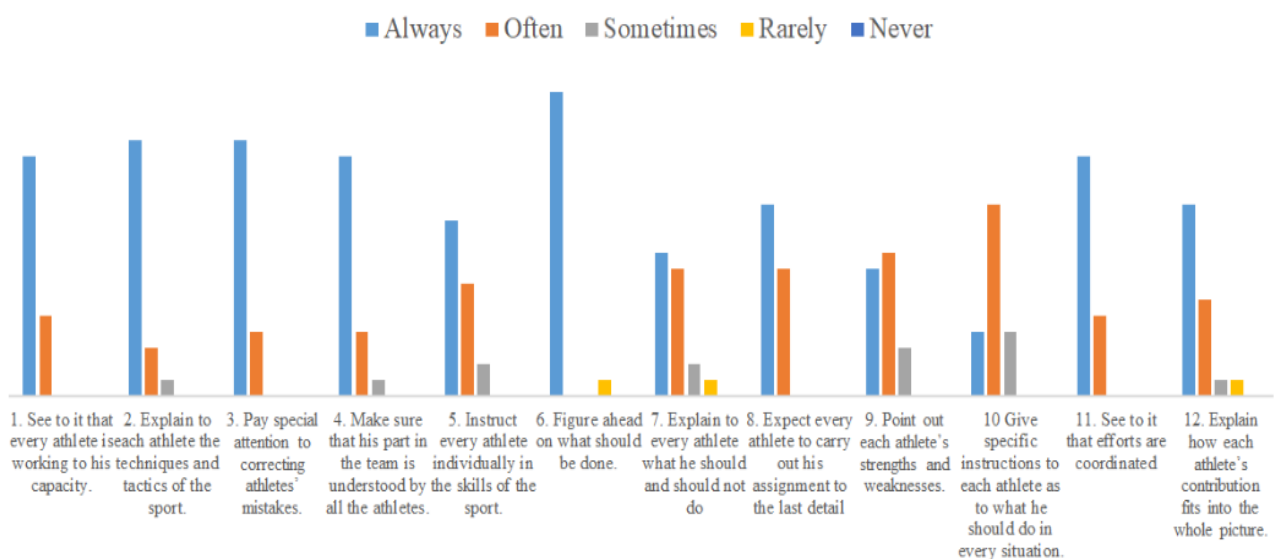


Figure 1: I think the coach is in an average team training session ...
Complete the sentences, mark your opinion. I think, coaches...

Table 1: Questionnaire questions (1-12)

1. See to it that every athlete is working to his capacity.
2. Explain to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport.
3. Pay special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes.
4. Make sure that his part in the team is understood by all the athletes.
5. Instruct every athlete individually in the skills of the sport.
6. Figure ahead on what should be done.
7. Explain to every athlete what he should and should not do
8. Expect every athlete to carry out his assignment to the last detail
9. Point out each athlete's strengths and weaknesses.
10 Give specific instructions to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation.
11. See to it that efforts are coordinated
12. Explain how each athlete's contribution fits into the whole picture.

The respondents' opinion about their coaching behaviour and professional relationship with the players shows a very different pattern depending on the question (Table 2) (Figure 2). While thinking together with the players and sharing ideas with them, even if "rarely", has a visible role, until then, there are many coaching positions on how much the players should be involved in forming opinions. The coach's insistence on his own position can best be described with the tactful answer "often". The picture regarding the formulation of the coach's opinion is even clearer when the coach "always" or "often" unquestioningly says his ideas, and instructs.

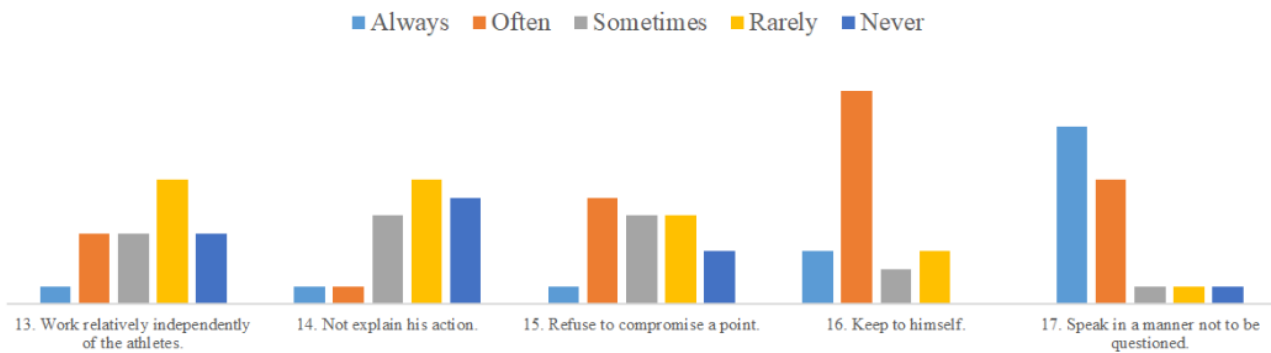


Figure 2: Statements that characterize coaching behaviour

How typical are the following statements about the behaviour of coaches? Complete the sentences and mark your opinion. I think, coaches...

Table 2: Questionnaire questions (13-17)

13. Work relatively independently of the athletes.
14. Not explain his action.
15. Refuse to compromise a point.
16. Keep to himself.
17. Speak in a manner not to be questioned.

As can be seen in the first column graph, the responding coaches typically rarely or never ask their players for their opinion on the strategy, and according to the second column graph, they do not ask for their agreement or only rarely (Figure 3 and Table 3). In the case of questions about other elements of cooperation, the answers show a very colourful pattern. The proportion of answers marked with orange ("sometimes"), green ("rarely") and purple ("never") reflects that they basically vote for the coach's leadership. They take a different position only in relation to the possibility of the players making mistakes, as they "often" (red) and, to a greater extent, "sometimes" (orange) allow the players to make mistakes and learn through mistakes (question 23, Figure 3, bar chart 6).

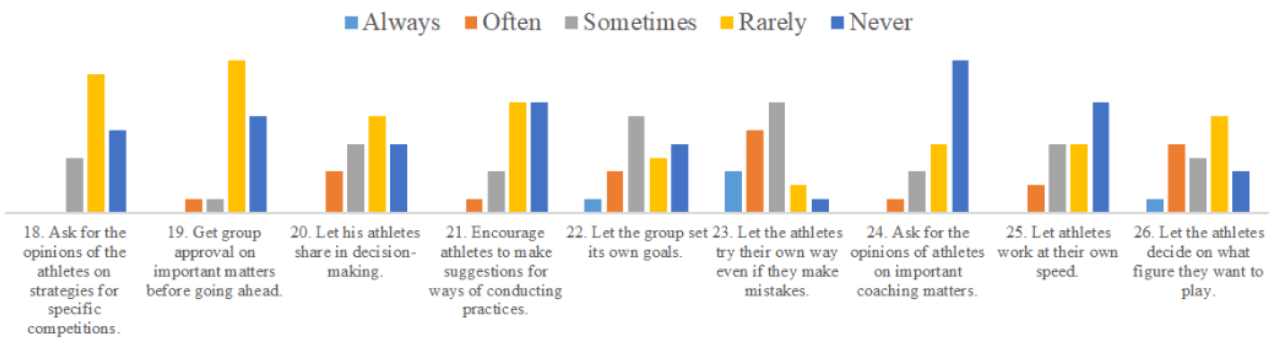


Figure 3: Coach's opinion on the attitude towards the players and the relationship with the players Complete the sentences and mark your opinion. I think, coaches...

Table 3: Questionnaire questions (18-26)

18. Ask for the opinions of the athletes on strategies for specific competitions.
19. Get group approval on important matters before going ahead.
20. Let his athletes share in decision-making.
21. Encourage athletes to make suggestions for ways of conducting practices.
22. Let the group set its own goals.
23. Let the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes.
24. Ask for the opinions of athletes on important coaching matters.
25. Let athletes work at their own speed.
26. Let the athletes decide on what figure they want to play.

The opinion of the responding coaches on the relationship with the players, the nature and content of their cooperation is also very colourful, both regarding the individual questions (table 4) and the distribution of the answers (figure 4). They take an active role only in resolving the conflicts of players within the team, which is represented by the unanimous answers "always" and "often" (Figure 4, column graph 2). Considering other issues, coaches represent a wide variety of philosophies during their work. In one group of questions, they follow the role perception of "always", "often" and "sometimes" (Questions 27, 29, 32, 33, Figure 4, columns 1, 3, 6 and 7), when they prefer to help the players to resolve their personal conflicts, pay attention to the personal well-being of the players, try to build personal trust, and encourage the personal informal relationships. Considering the frequency of the answers, in another group of questions (Questions 30, 34, Figure 4, columns 4 and 8), they have a more distant attitude regarding the personal favours given to the players. Regarding the personal sympathy felt towards the players (Question 31, Figure 4, column 5), the responses were very balanced in terms of the proportion of "often", "sometimes", "rarely", and "never" reactions.

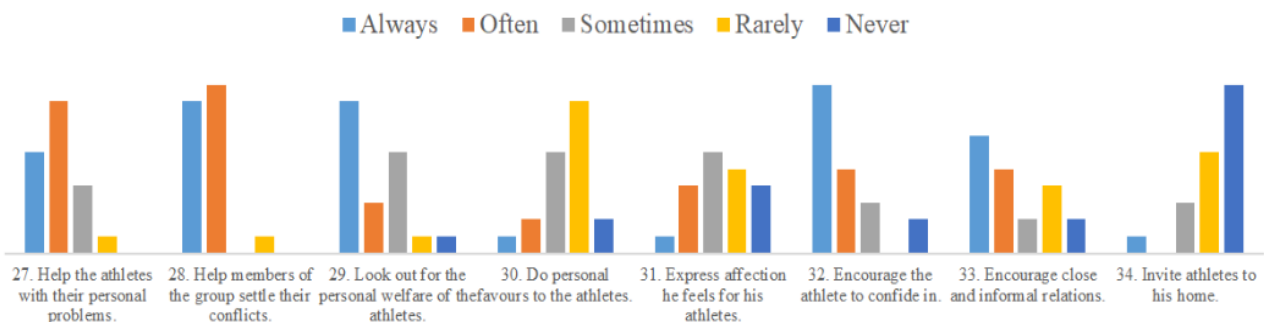


Figure 4: Coach's opinion on the attitude towards the players and the relationship with the players In the relationship between coach and his players, how typical are the following statements? Complete the sentences and mark your opinion. I think, coaches...

Table 4: Questionnaire questions (27-34)

27. Help the athletes with their personal problems.
28. Help members of the group settle their conflicts.
29. Look out for the personal welfare of the athletes.
30. Do personal favours to the athletes.
31. Express affection he feels for his athletes.
32. Encourage the athlete to confide in.
33. Encourage close and informal relations.
34. Invite athletes to his home.

An essential factor in both the educational process and the cooperation is the kind of feedback that the master, the experienced party, gives to the player who cooperates with him. Out of the 5 questions asked (Table 5), in three cases the respondents clearly express a positive opinion (Questions 36, 37, 38, Figure 5, column graphs 1, 2 and 3). A well-solved task, good performance, and recognition are "always" or "often" communicated to the player in a positive way. In the case of performance in front of others, "sometimes" answers appear (question 35, Figure 5, column graph 1), and in the vote of trust, the ratios between "always" and "often" are more balanced.

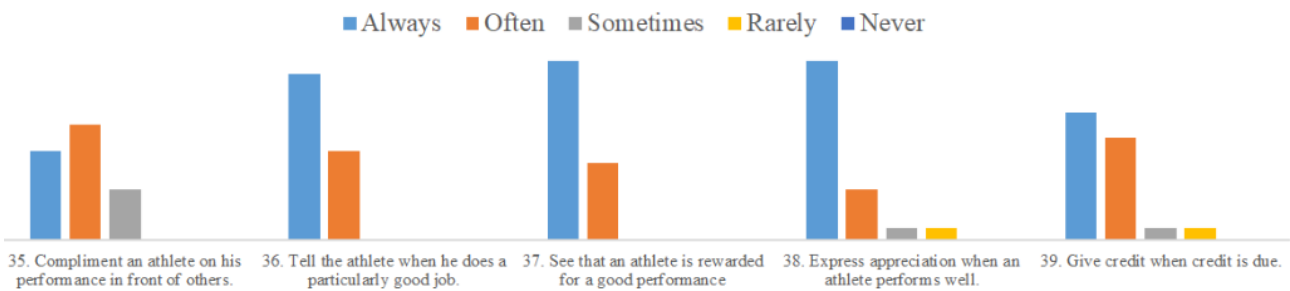


Figure 5: To what extent does the coach share his opinion with his player
What extent does the coach share his opinion about his player with the player? Complete the sentences and mark your opinion...

Table 5: Questionnaire questions (35-39)

35. Compliment an athlete on his performance in front of others.
36. Tell the athlete when he does a particularly good job.
37. See that an athlete is rewarded for a good performance
38. Express appreciation when an athlete performs well.
39. Give credit when credit is due.

4 Discussion

Regarding the professional tasks of youth coaches - the content and form of instructions during training, the question of management and/or cooperation - the respondents represent a uniform perception of roles and relate to the coaching role and behaviour with similar emphases. Educational tasks are made understandable and followable through direct, typically one-way guidelines, statements, and short commands. For youth players, new and/or practical information is basically communicated based on instructions. The training is based on clear and unambiguous communication, whether it is about introducing new elements, fixing errors, interpreting game

situations or tasks to be performed. Personal contact with players and problem solving - apart from solving problems affecting the team - are less typical and less common as a coach.

5 Summary

The coaches guide the 15-19-year-olds with instructions during their preparation for a higher level of competition, and correct mistakes in their task performance. In addition to practising the game elements, developing the ability to make decisions in a game situation is prioritized, and responsibility and cooperation are encouraged. At the same time, the case processing also pointed out that age group coaches do not represent a unified approach in their assessment of different situations and related coaching behaviour. In addition to the development of the academic training's own professional program and the operation of the training system based on age groups, it is also worth taking a similarly conscious position on the fact that the culture of a diverse coaching approach must be consciously supported and strengthened on the road to success. With his character, the coach can achieve training and education goals - and success in sports. A more uniform approach to education should be followed in some issues.

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