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**When Coaches Burnout: Understanding the Phenomenon from the Perspective of High Performance
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WHEN COACHES BURNOUT: UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHES

by

ANDREA D. READ

B.Sc., Hon HK, University of Ottawa, 2007

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Coaching is a challenging and complex profession, and those who assume the role of a coach take on numerous responsibilities. The profession consists of “endless dilemmas and decision-making, requiring constant planning, observation, evaluation, and reaction” (Bowes & Jones, 2006, p. 235). Burnout in coaching has been studied from a number of different perspectives, including interpersonal and situational predictors of burnout, gender differences and burnout, stress and burnout, and coach commitment and burnout, but to date, “there have been no entirely qualitative studies” (Goodger, Gorely, Lavallee, & Harwood, 2007, p. 142). The purpose of the present study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches’ perspectives, using a qualitative approach. Twelve coaches at the varsity and national level were interviewed. Research findings indicate that issues such as the performance demands of coaching, difficulties with athletes, athletic directors, or members of board of directors, and lack of financial and human resources, contributed to feelings of exhaustion, frustration, and a loss of passion for coaching, which led to burnout and inevitably, leaving the world of coaching.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

A number of different fields of research have been exploring the phenomenon of burnout since the mid 1970's (Freudenberger, 1974; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1981a; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003). What has emerged from much of the research to date is that burnout is multidimensional, and characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001; Price & Weiss, 2000; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992). Maslach et al. (2001) have stated that burnout arises as a result of "the relationship that people have with their work, and the difficulties that can arise when that relationship has gone awry" (p. 398). Burnout has been observed in human service occupations where vast amounts of time are spent interacting with and assisting individuals (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The experience of burnout may lead individuals to experience a "decline in the quality of work and both physical and psychological health can be very costly – not just for the individual worker, but for everyone affected by that person" (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998, p. 63).

The phenomenon of burnout has also been experienced by both athletes and coaches in the world of sport. Burnout, which has become a new "buzzword" according to some authors, warrants attention from researchers due to its negative implications for athletes and coaches (Price & Weiss, 2000; Raedeke, 2004; Raedeke, Granzyk, & Warren, 2000). Research on burnout in sport has focused primarily on athlete burnout from sociological, physiological, and psychological perspectives (Coakley, 1992; Creswell & Eklund, 2004, 2005; Gould, 1996; Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Raedeke, 1997; Raedeke & Smith, 2001; Schmidt & Stein, 1991; Smith, 1986). However, coach burnout has also emerged as a topic requiring more attention (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Dale & Weinberg, 1989; Kelley, 1994;

Kelley, Eklund, & Ritter-Taylor, 1999; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Price & Weiss; Raedeke et al.; Raedeke, 2004; Vealey et al.; Vealey, Armstrong, Comar, & Greenleaf, 1998).

Coaching, by nature, is challenging and complex, and is known as a capricious profession (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Werthner & Trudel, 2006). The profession consists of “endless dilemmas and decision-making, requiring constant planning, observation, evaluation, and reaction” (Bowes & Jones, 2006, p. 235). It also entails coaches taking on roles of being “performers, educators, administrators, leaders, planners, motivators, negotiators, managers, and listeners” (Giges, Petitpas, & Vernacchia, 2004, p. 431). Coaches spend long hours planning and executing practices, developing budgets, and traveling to various venues and destinations for practices, games, and tournaments (Kelley, 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993). They are given the tasks of producing a winning athletic program and/or athlete, effectively handling defeat, interacting with athletes, parents, colleagues, and the media on a consistent basis, and sometimes acting as a psychologist, disciplinarian, and mother/father figure (Caccese & Mayerberg; Kelley et al., 1999). Coaches must also come to understand their athletes, learn how to best motivate them, and are often expected to provide both “personal and academic experiences for their athletes” (Kelley et al., p. 113). The environment in which coaches operate is often one that expects them to “perform under high levels of pressure, operate under intense public scrutiny” and holds them to extremely high standards (Giges et al., p. 441). The nature of coaching, which encompasses continuous and copious demands and requirements, may ultimately lead coaches to “neglect their own needs and those of their families” (Giges et al., p. 434). Simply put, coaches are working in an environment where they “should be solving problems rather than succumbing to them” (Frey, 2007, p. 38).

Since limited research in the field of coach burnout has been conducted (Hjälml, Kenttä, Hassménan, & Gustafsson, 2007), “there is a clear need for continued research into the cause of coaching stress and burnout” (Kelley et al., 1999, p. 128). What is known about the world of coaching, “where going to work early and coming home late are valued” (Giges et al., 2004, p. 435), is the passion these individuals possess for coaching. However, this fervor may result in coaches being blinded by “the paradox of passion: that the endeavor that excites them the most could also exhaust them the most” (Giges et al., p. 434). The result of such irony is that coaches may remain in their coaching position but be ineffective in executing their responsibilities, if they become burned out. They may also choose to pursue alternative coaching positions, or may permanently leave their coaching position (Kelley, 1994). The purpose of the present study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches’ perspectives. It utilized a qualitative approach to create an in-depth picture of the burnout experience and possible contributing factors.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

Burnout, as defined by Harris (1984), is “a state when individuals become fed up with whatever they are doing, and throw in the towel” (p. 170). The exact definition of burnout has been hard to pinpoint, as from its inception to the present, the definition of burnout has been a “very slippery concept – there was no standard definition of it, although there was a wide variety of opinions about what it was and what could be done about it” (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998, p. 64). Nevertheless, this multidimensional phenomenon affects individuals in various professions ranging from “nursing, social work, police work, psychiatry, psychology, teaching, law, mental health work” (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984, p. 280), and coaching, often due to an imbalance in the situational demands and the available resources (Maslach, 1982; Smith, 1986). For the purpose of this review of literature, burnout will be explored from two different perspectives. The first section of the literature review will examine burnout from its pioneering phase, providing a detailed background on the phenomenon. The second section will focus specifically on literature related to burnout and coaches.

The Phenomenon of Burnout

The origin of burnout

Similar to many sport terms, the word *burnout* was conceived outside the sport domain, as it “emerged as a social problem, not as a scholarly construct” (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993, p. 2). Burnout was first associated within the context of the health care setting, as Freudenberger (1974), who is commonly known as the pioneer of burnout research, investigated the effects of stress on volunteer health care staff. As a psychoanalyst, he constructed a definition of burnout based on the observations he made of the symptoms experienced by health care staff. He

constructed “direct accounts of the process by which he and others experienced emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment, and he labeled it with a term being used colloquially to refer to the effects of chronic drug abuse” (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 399). Burnout was later defined by Freudenberger and his colleague Richelson (1980) as the experience of “someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” (p. 13). Freudenberger and his colleague wrote that “deep inside, friction is building up, the inevitable result of which will be a depletion of the individual’s resources, an attrition of his vitality, energy, and ability to function” (p. 13). They also noted that “burnout is a chronic condition, something a person has been working toward over a period of weeks, months, even years” (p. 13).

In their study of burnout, Freudenberger and Richelson indicated that “a person who is burning out is not, on the surface, a very sympathetic person” (p. 11). They followed this statement by suggesting that “he or she may be cranky, critical, angry, rigid, resistant to suggestions, and given to behavior patterns that turn people off” (p. 11). Freudenberger and his colleague feel that individuals who “fall prey” to burnout have good intentions and strive to reach their goals (p. 12). They identify this type of individual as one whose “schedules are busy, and whatever the project or job, they can be counted on to do more than their share” (p. 12). Furthermore, the individual is “burning out because they’ve pushed themselves too hard for too long” and “started out with great expectations and refused to compromise along the way” (p. 12).

The conception and significance of the Maslach Burnout Inventory

Around the same time as Freudenberger’s research on burnout, Christina Maslach, a social psychology researcher, began her study of burnout. She focused on human service specialists, studying the emotional stress related to the specialists’ occupation, by engaging in

extensive interviews with these workers (Maslach, 2003). Maslach found that coping strategies had a significant and positive impact on the specialists' vocation. In a study she conducted on lawyers assisting indigent clients, Maslach described the three dimensions of burnout as "an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (Maslach, 2003, p. 190). Maslach and her colleague Leiter (2005) note that the significance of the three constructs of burnout (also referred to as a three-dimensional model) is that it "places the individual stress experience within a social context and involves the person's conception of both self and others" (p. 155). Maslach and her colleagues also contributed to the knowledge base of burnout by developing the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory is the "only measure that assesses all three of the core dimensions" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 402) of burnout, and "is the most widely accepted and widely used instrument in the study of burnout of helping professionals" (Kelley & Gill, 1993, p. 96). This measure, or tool, was "originally designed for use with people working in the human services and health care" (Maslach, 2003, p. 190) as burnout seemed to be common in these occupations. Since the inception of the MBI, researchers have revised the measure to be tailored to other occupations, such as teaching (Maslach, 2003).

The MBI is used to quantify emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, which are measures of burnout. Of the three characteristics of burnout, emotional exhaustion was the "central quality of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome" and "most widely reported and the most thoroughly analyzed" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 403). Often when an individual makes the statement that he or she is "burned out," he or she is referring to the feelings of being exhausted (Maslach et al.). Depersonalization,

or cynicism, is the interpersonal component of burnout, and “refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspects of the job” (p. 399). The third component of burnout is decreased personal accomplishment, which is also known as reduced efficacy. This is the self-evaluative element of burnout, and encompasses “feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work” (p. 399). Maslach (2003) summarizes below the three dimensions of burnout:

Exhaustion and cynicism tend to emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict, whereas a sense of inefficacy arises more clearly from a lack of resources to get the job done (e.g., lack of critical information, lack of necessary tools, or insufficient time). (p. 190)

The items on the MBI were “written in the form of statements about personal feelings or attitudes” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981b, p. 100). According to Maslach and Jackson (1981b), “higher mean scores correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout” (p. 101) on the emotional exhaustion subscale and depersonalization subscale. For the personal accomplishment subscale (reduced personal accomplishment), a lower score indicates a higher level of experienced burnout. Maslach (2003) reveals that there is “a strong relationship between exhaustion and cynicism is found consistently, across a wide range of organizational and occupational settings” (p. 190), while there is a more complex relationship between feelings of inefficacy in comparison to exhaustion and cynicism.

Burnout in the workplace

The research conducted by Freudenberger in the 1970’s and Maslach and her colleagues in the 1980’s, has led to the understanding that burnout “has its roots in people-oriented, helping professions” (Maslach & Jackson, 1984, p. 139). It has been recognized that the vast majority of

occupations involve, to varying degrees, interpersonal contact and therefore, various levels of interpersonal tension (Maslach & Jackson). This being said, occupations that have a “high potential for emotional strain” are “jobs in which the worker deals continuously with other people and their problems” (Maslach & Jackson, p. 139). Research by Maslach and Leiter (1997) identified six domains of organizational risk factors for burnout that were present in many occupations, as opposed to there being only one root cause of this phenomenon. The six domains include work overload (i.e. “job demands exceeding human limits”), control (i.e. “perceived capacity to influence decisions that affect their work, to exercise professional autonomy, and to gain access to the resources necessary to do an effective job”), rewards (i.e. “the extent to which rewards – monetary, social, and intrinsic – are consistent with expectations”), community (i.e. “overall quality of social interaction at work, including issues of conflict, mutual support, closeness, and the capacity to work as a team”), fairness (i.e. “decisions at work are perceived as being fair and equitable”) and conflict (i.e. “ideals and motivations that originally attracted people to their jobs, and thus they are the motivating connection between the worker and the workplace”) (Maslach & Leiter, 2005, p. 162-165).

Definitions of burnout

While the literature has indicated that there is not a single definition of burnout in the human service professions, there are also challenges in creating an applicable definition for other professions, including the sporting domain (Dale & Weinberg, 1990). As noted by Dale and Weinberg (1989), “no uniform definition of burnout has been reached because of its complexity and the inability to accurately describe the syndrome” (p. 2). Despite the failure to create one specific and unified definition, a variety of definitions related to burnout have been presented that illustrate the different facets of this phenomenon. For example, Smith’s (1986) definition of

burnout highlights that burnout includes “physical, mental, and behavioral components, and its development represents complex interactions between environmental and personal characteristics” (p. 37). He concluded by saying:

People suffering from burnout experience low energy, chronic fatigue, and an increased susceptibility to illness. They may feel exhausted during the day, yet sleep poorly at night. At an emotional level, feelings of depression, helplessness, and anger are frequently reported. Tension and irritability occur even though the person may feel emotionally depleted in either respects, and increasing negative attitudes toward the activity may generalize to other areas of life as well ... At a behavioral level, decreased efficiency and inconsistent performance occurs... (p. 39)

Another definition of burnout, that encompasses the three constructs, highlights burnout as:

A psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion was labeled as feelings of being overwhelmed, emotionally depleted, and lacking energy. Depersonalization was described as the development of dehumanized responses or withdrawn behaviors toward clients. Feelings of low self-esteem and beliefs of inadequacy characterize reduced personal accomplishment. (Price & Weiss, 2000, p. 392)

The research literature has indicated that burnout is associated with an array of symptoms (Freudenberger, 1974; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003). In Freudenberger’s study of health care staff, he found that several of the physical symptoms experienced during burnout included the “feeling of exhaustion and fatigue, being unable to shake a lingering cold, suffering from frequent

headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances, sleeplessness and shortness of breath” (p. 160). In an extensive review of literature on burnout, Schaufeli and Buunk (2003) found that there were five primary categories of symptoms experienced when an individual began to burnout. These categories are affective, cognitive, physical, behavioral, and motivational symptoms. Affective symptoms included being in a depressed mood or being hostile. Cognitive symptoms included feelings of helplessness, impaired memory, and cynicism. Illness and fatigue were examples of two symptoms experienced in the physical domain. Behavioural indicators associated with burnout consisted of a decline in performance and an increase in absenteeism. Symptoms associated with motivation incorporated a lack of interest and pessimism. Furthermore, Dale and Weinberg (1990) noted that “exhaustion is present and often takes multiple forms such as physical, mental, and emotional”, and include symptoms such as “loss of concern, energy, interest, and trust” (p. 69). From exhaustion, a negative change in response to other individuals occurs such that cynicism and loss of idealism towards jobs and activities, that were once enjoyable, turn into “drudgery and hassles” (p. 69). Individuals also experience a shift in their attitude towards what they want to accomplish. These individuals would experience a low personal sense of accomplishment which results in feelings of lowered self-esteem, feelings of failure and depression, and low job productivity. Dale and Weinberg also found that burnout is a consequence of chronic everyday stress, and noted that “burnout occurs on the individual level and is unique to each person, which makes it difficult to identify because it differs for each person” (p. 70). Furthermore, five common elements of burnout have been identified that are similar across definitions and have been experienced by individuals in various occupations:

- (i) dysphoric symptoms, and most notably emotional exhaustion, are predominant;
- (ii) the accent is on mental and behavioural symptoms, although atypical physical

symptoms are sometimes mentioned as well; (iii) burnout is generally considered to be work-related; (iv) symptoms are observed in “normal” individuals; and (v) decreased effectiveness and poor work performance occur because of negative attitudes and behaviours. (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003, p. 387)

In summary, the literature on burnout tells us that individuals working in the helping professions are most susceptible to experiencing burnout. While researchers have struggled to develop a clear and encompassing definition of burnout, one researcher, Christina Maslach, developed the *Maslach Burnout Inventory*, which has been used extensively by researchers to quantitatively report the levels of burnout based on the three constructs of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Burnout and Coaches

Coach burnout is an area of increasing interest for researchers. Burnout results in decreased coach longevity, reduced effectiveness and productivity, and may result in a coach leaving his or her sport prematurely (Kelley & Gill, 1993; Raedeke et al., 2000; Vealey et al., 1992). Researchers in the sports domain have supported the notion that burnout in the sports world can manifest itself in many forms. Most notably, and as previously stated, it is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment (Capel, Sisley, & Desertrain, 1987; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Kelley, 1994; Raedeke et al., 2000; Vealey et al., 1992). The research literature on coach burnout has led to a number of studies highlighting a myriad of factors contributing to becoming burned out. Areas of research have examined coach-athlete relationships, coaches’ perspectives on athlete burnout, gender differences, the experience of stress, interpersonal and situational predictors, and burnout and its

relationship to leadership style (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Dale & Weinberg, 1989; Kelley & Gill, 1993; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Pastore & Judd, 1993; Price & Weiss, 2000; Raedeke, Lunney, & Venables, 2002; Smith, 1986; Vealey et al., 1992; Vealey et al., 1998).

Interpersonal and Situational Predictors of Coach Burnout

A study conducted by Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, and Soliday (1992) examined the frequency of coach burnout and determined that levels of coach burnout “could be distinguished based on dispositional, cognitive, and situational factors” (p. 44). A total of 848 participants were involved in the study, which consisted of 381 high school and 467 college coaches, who coached 10 different sports, including tennis, basketball, track and field, football, wrestling, and soccer. Participants completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a), a Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), and a Demographic/Cognitive Appraisal Questionnaire. The results indicated that for male and female coaches, “trait anxiety was the best predictor of burnout, indicating that coaches who approach their work feeling nervous and worried tend to be more burned out” (p. 52). Results showed that male coaches were perceived to have higher levels of burnout when associated with “perceived overload of demands, a lack of perceived attainment of meaningful accomplishments, a lack of perceived autonomy or control, a lack of perceived professional support, and a lack of perceived success as a coach” (pp. 52-53). Higher levels of burnout for female coaches were related to “perceived overload of demands and a lack of perceived autonomy or control” (p. 53). The results revealed that there was a “greater percentage of females in the high and moderate ranges of burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment as compared to males” whereas “a greater percentage of males scored in the high range of burnout in terms of intensity of depersonalization” (p. 54). The findings of this study showed that “high- and low-burnout

coaches in this study could be differentiated by dispositional and cognitive factors, but not by experience or actual time spent in work and leisure” (p. 55).

A study by Vealey, Armstrong, Comar, and Greenleaf (1998) focused on coach burnout and athlete burnout. The objectives within the portion of the study relating to coaches were to “examine how coaches’ levels of burnout are related to perceived coaching behavior” (p. 301) by athletes and how coach behaviors and burnout can impact athletes. Vealey et al. hypothesized that coach burnout was “negatively related to providing empathy to athletes, communicating effectively with athletes, and engaging in a democratic coaching style” (p. 301). The participants in this study included seven basketball and five softball coaches from National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA) Divisions I through III. Coaches completed two inventories, the Interpersonal Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1971) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). The results indicated that “coaches’ feelings of personal accomplishment was most highly related to perceptions of coaching behavior by athletes, followed by depersonalization and emotional exhaustion” (p. 311). Furthermore, “emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in coaches was positively related to use of dispraise and an autocratic coaching style and negatively related to use of praise, empathy, and effective communication by coaches” (p. 311). Results also indicated that coaches who experienced high levels of burnout were “perceived by their athletes as more autocratic, more oriented toward winning, less empathic, and less communicative” (p. 314).

In Dale and Weinberg’s (1989) study on the various leadership styles of coaches and the relationship of those styles to the prevalence of burnout, the authors explored the relationship between a coach’s perceived level of burnout and selected demographic variables such as a coach’s gender, marital status, and years of coaching. The subjects in this study were 302 high

school and Division 1 college male and female coaches. Participants completed surveys including the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a), the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (Stogdill & Coons, 1957), and demographic questions. The results indicated that coaches from this sample were not overly burned out, especially on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions. In terms of leadership style, coaches who possessed a consideration style, which is “characteristic of an individual who is democratic and oriented toward interpersonal relations” (p. 3), scored higher in frequency and intensity on the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales than initiating structure coaches, which is “characteristic of an individual who is authoritative and task oriented” (p. 3). These differences indicated that “the consideration coaches perceived themselves to be significantly more burned out than the initiating-structure coaches on all subscales” (p. 7). Findings also showed that “male coaches scored significantly higher than female coaches on both the frequency and intensity of the depersonalization subscale” (p. 8). Furthermore, the results denoted a “significant effect for marital status, with married coaches scoring significantly higher (meaning less burned out) than single coaches on the personal accomplishment subscale frequency dimension” (p. 7).

A study by Karabatsos, Malousaris, and Apostolidis (2006) evaluated the degree of professional burnout experienced by basketball, volleyball and track and field coaches and attempted to determine “possible differences in all three burnout dimensions between coaches of three sports” (p. 80). The sample consisted of 452 basketball, volleyball, and track and field coaches who completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The results indicated that coaches in all three sports experienced low to moderate levels of burnout. One finding from the study revealed that “the team sports coaches reported stronger feelings of exhaustion and depletion than the

individual sport coaches, while the basketball coaches reported the strongest burnout feelings” (p. 82).

In a recent study by Hjälrm, Kenttä, Hassménan, and Gustafsson (2007), the purpose was to determine the “prevalence of burnout in a well-defined group of elite coaches” (p. 418) and to “compare incidence rates and burnout scores in coaches responsible for either female or male teams” (p. 418). The participants in this study were 53 Swedish head coaches of elite soccer teams (52 male participants and 1 female), and of the 52 participants, 13 were coaching in the men’s Premier league, 14 were coaching in the women’s Premier league, and 20 were coaching in the Second league for men. Participants completed the Swedish version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI – ES) (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The results from this study indicated that a considerable number of coaches from all three levels of coaching experienced moderate to high levels of burnout. With respect to a difference in burnout levels in male and female coaches, the coaches in the men’s Premier league experienced lower levels of burnout in comparison to their coaching counterparts in the Second league for men. Also, those coaching in the women’s Premier league “reported high levels of Emotional Exhaustion ... and 29% experience high levels of problems (low scores) related to Personal Accomplishment” (p. 420-421).

Coach Gender Differences and Burnout

Caccese and Mayerberg’s (1984) research addressed issues surrounding gender differences and levels of burnout in college coaches. The study’s sample included 231 National Collegiate Athlete Association and AIAW (Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women) Division I coaches, who completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a) and demographic questions. The results revealed that females scored higher in levels of burnout

when compared to their male counterparts “when burnout is defined by the Maslach Burnout Inventory” (p. 286). Females also scored higher on emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment subscales, and “the only subscale on which they did not differ was depersonalization” (p. 286). It was suggested that a reason for the discrepancies in scores between females and males was that the female coaches were younger and did not have as many years coaching experience. Furthermore, with significantly less coaching experience, these females may not have had the opportunity to learn how to cope with the stress of coaching and may have demanded too much of themselves or set too high of standards. Caccese and Mayerberg noted that there was a difference in the reported levels of burnout between females and males, although both males and females in this study were not excessively burned out. Rather, they were “toward the low end of the burnout continuum” (p. 283).

A study by Pastore and Judd (1993) investigated the disparity in the level of burnout in male and female coaches of female college teams in 2-year colleges. The researchers explored “the relationship between the coaches’ levels of burnout with age and years of coaching experience” (p. 206). Two hundred and thirty-one basketball, cross-country, tennis, and volleyball coaches participated in the study, with 65% of the sample represented by male coaches (150 male and 81 female participants). Data was obtained by having coaches complete the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) at four different times during the year: preseason, midseason, postseason, and out of season. The findings from this study indicated that the female coaches experienced “significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion than male coaches” (p. 208). However, the results did not “help clarify the reasons for gender differences in burnout among coaches” (p. 208). The results from this study “indicated that coaches’ emotional exhaustion levels seemed to decrease with age and years of

coaching experience, whereas their personal accomplishment levels increased slightly” (p. 209). In terms of depersonalization, results showed that scores were “highest among coaches who were in the 32-43 years age category with 16 or more years of coaching experience” (p. 209).

Coach Perceived Stress and Burnout

Most of the literature on coach burnout has focused on the relationship between stress and burnout (Kelley & Gill, 1993; Kelley, 1994; Kelley et al., 1999; Smith, 1986). In 1986, Smith created a model of stress in an attempt “to incorporate the phenomena of stress and burnout within a common conceptual framework that emphasizes relationships among situational, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral components and to specify the parallel interactions among these four sets of factors” (p. 39). The model included information that was known to “contribute to and reduce burnout” (p. 39).

Kelley and Gill (1993), who described Smith’s model as a useful framework, used the model to further advance the research literature on stress and burnout in coaching. An objective of this study was to examine the severity of burnout in individuals who assume the role of teacher-coach. The research sample consisted of 214 (99 male and 115 female) National Collegiate Athlete Association Division III (NCAA) and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) teacher-head coaches of basketball teams who completed a variety of surveys including the Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed. (modified by Schwab (1986) from original *MBI* (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a) for use in the field of education), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983), Coaching Issues Survey (from the Degree of Stress instrument by Hunt (1984)), Coaching Problems Survey (Locke & Massengale, 1978), and the Social Support Questionnaire (Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, & Pierce, 1987). The results supported the hypothesis that “social support, gender, and years of experience would be predictive of stress

appraisal” (p. 100). Findings from this study also revealed that “higher satisfaction with social support and more experience predicted a lower overall stress appraisal” (p. 100). In other words, greater coaching experience was associated with lower perceived stress in terms of coaching issues and role conflicts. Results confirmed that stress appraisal was predictive of levels of burnout when assessed through the three dimensions of burnout on the Maslach Burnout Inventory. It was also found that “females reported slightly higher stress and burnout levels than their male counterparts” (p. 100). The study supported Smith’s stress model indicating that cognitive stress appraisal and the behavioral consequences of burnout were related. When the teacher-coaches in this study appraised stress, related to either the role of coach or teacher-coach, their appraisal predicted “a greater sense of emotional exhaustion, the need to depersonalize students and athletes, and a reduced sense of meaning for the participants in this study” (p. 101). The findings from this study revealed that for the teacher-coach, “stress from a wide variety of coaching issues (e.g., budget considerations, coach-athlete relationships, personal coaching expectations) contributed to higher levels of burnout” (p. 101). The results illustrated that burnout in U.S. collegiate coaches was a significant issue, and that the majority of teacher-coaches were suffering from moderate to high levels of burnout, as “46% of the teacher-basketball coaches in this study scored high in emotional exhaustion, 45% were high in depersonalization, and 34% had a reduced sense of personal accomplishment” (p. 101).

Another study by Kelley (1994) investigated whether personal and situational variables predicted stress appraisal, which would indirectly predict burnout. The author also examined the relationship between perceived stress and the three dimensions of burnout and whether these dimensions were directly influenced by a coaches’ perceived level of stress. The sample consisted of 249 (131 male and 118 female) National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA)

and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) head baseball and softball coaches.

Participants from this study “should be considered ‘multiple role’ head coaches in that the majority (83%) held professional responsibilities beyond their coaching assignments (e.g. teachers, athletic directors, administrators in student affairs, resident directors)” (p. 49).

Participants completed several surveys, which included the Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed. (Schawb, 1986), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), Coaching Issues Survey (from the Degree of Stress instrument by Hunt (1984)), Social Support Questionnaire (Sarason et al., 1987), Hardiness Test (Kobasa, 1988), and demographic questions. The results indicated that there were differences based on gender on the dimensions of coaching issues, perceived stress, and emotional exhaustion. However, higher levels of one’s appraisal of stress, such as “feelings of being emotionally depleted, frustrated, fatigued, and at the end of one’s rope- was associated with female more than male coaches” (p. 55). An “examination of the time differences from the beginning to the end of the competitive season revealed an increase in the level of coaching issues and the burnout dimension of depersonalization” (p. 55). This may support the notion that burnout is cyclical and builds over the course of the competitive sport season. The findings from the study also indicated that stress appraisal was predictive of burnout for both male and female coaches. The coaching issues associated with higher levels of perceived stress included issues such as “pressures surrounding winning and losing, not having enough time for coaching and other responsibilities, inadequate and shrinking budgets for program needs, and being a role model for their athletes” (p. 55). The results pertaining to severity of burnout revealed that coaches varied in their levels of burnout at the start and end of the season. The results also indicated that “the highest degree of burnout was evident with emotional exhaustion in which male and female coaches fell within moderate (36 and 33%) to high (31 and 34%) norm

classifications,” respectively, at the start and end of the season (p. 56). However, findings that were inconsistent with previous research (Kelley & Gill, 1993) indicated that most of the male and female coaches in this study were “classified as suffering from low burnout for depersonalization (70 and 63%) and personal accomplishment (54 and 55%) at the start and the end of the season” (p. 56). The classifications are based on the norms established by Maslach and Jackson (1986).

In an effort to expand the knowledge base on the seriousness of burnout in collegiate tennis coaches, Kelley, Eklund, and Ritter-Taylor’s (1999) studied the severity of burnout. In this study, the sample consisted of 265 (166 male and 99 female) tennis coaches from various National Collegiate Athlete Association (NCAA) divisions (II and III) and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) levels. The participants in this study, as a whole, “could be best characterized as multiple-role coaches because most (71%) had additional responsibilities beyond coaching (e.g., teaching, student affairs, academic recruiting, athletic training)” (p. 117). Furthermore, of the remaining 29% of coaches, “many served as head coach for both the men’s and women’s teams at their institutions or served as the head tennis coach with additional responsibilities as an assistant coach in another sport” (p. 117-118). The measures used included the Modified Maslach Burnout Inventory Form Ed. (Maslach & Jackson, 1986), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), Coaching Issues Survey, Hardiness Scale (component of Nowack’s (1991) stress assessment profile), Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (Stogdill & Coons, 1957), and SCAT-Coach Survey (modified from Martens’ (1977) *Sport Competition Anxiety Test*). The results indicated that these coaches were suffering from burnout such that “substantial percentages of both the male and the female coaches reported normatively moderate

to high levels of emotional exhaustion (men 56%, women 59%), depersonalization (74% and 71%), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (69% and 74%)” (p. 126).

Studies on stress and coaching have also focused on performance and organizational stressors coaches face when working with elite athletes. A study by Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, and Hutchings (2008) was designed to identify such stressors and to determine if coaches should be considered “performers”. Eleven coaches who worked with elite athletes and who coached a variety of team (soccer, cricket, rugby union, and field hockey) and individual sports (golf, gymnastics, athletics, and sailing) were interviewed. The results revealed that the coaches faced many performance and organizational stressors. The performance stressors included items related to the athlete’s performance, such as coachability, competition performance, and injury, and items related to their own coaching performance such as not enough time to plan, communication during play, debriefing following a poor performance, and dropping a player. Organizational stressors, such as those related to the sporting organization, consisted of lack of finances, selection of athletes, travel (scouting/recruiting athletes, away games), and administrative duties (paperwork, writing reports). As well, the study found that stressors were also manifested by the organization’s lack of leadership, and changes to the board of directors. Based on the results, Thelwell and colleagues stated that “there is clear evidence to further the argument that coaches should be classified as ‘performers’ in their own right” (p. 918).

Coach Commitment and Burnout

The research by Raedeke, Granzky, and Warren (2000) focused on coach burnout from a commitment perspective. They were looking to determine if different profiles for “entrapment, attraction, and low commitment characteristics could be identified based on the theoretical

determinants of commitment (i.e., benefits, costs, satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and social constraints) and, if so, whether coaches in each profile differed on burnout and commitment” (p. 89). In the coaching context, entrapment may result if coaches are not attracted to their coaching role but continue to assume their role as coach because they “feel they have to maintain their involvement” (p. 101) for an assortment of reasons. The following is an example of coaches who are more likely to experience entrapment, and therefore have a higher chance of burning out.

Coaches might feel highly invested if they have worked many years with one organization and have dedicated a great amount of energy and effort toward the development of that specific program. If, because of that time invested, they have turned down alternative career opportunities and have not explored alternative career opportunities, they may perceive few attractive alternatives to their current position. At the same time, if coaches’ relationships with their athletes are deteriorating or the athletes have become difficult to work with, rewards may be decreasing. Finally, if coaches spend less time with their families due to a heavy travel schedule or are experiencing difficulty with parents and administrators, the costs of their job may be rising. (p. 88)

Coaches who fall under the “attraction” profile are those who “are satisfied with their position, who experience many benefits and few costs associated with coaching, who have high investments in their positions, and who do not perceive attractive alternative options” (p. 87). A coach who exhibits low commitment experiences high costs and low levels of satisfaction and benefits, and may be considering alternative job opportunities.

The participants in the study by Raedeke et al. (2000), consisted of 295 current USA swimming coaches who were randomly selected from the USA swimming membership database (127 female, 170 male, and 3 unspecified participants). The coaches completed a survey that was based on the methods of previous studies (Rusbult 1980, 1983; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983) for measuring benefits, costs, satisfaction, attractiveness of alternatives, investments, and commitment related to coaching. Burnout was measured by using nine questions about emotional exhaustion from the coaching burnout inventory developed by Vealey et al. (1992).

The findings revealed that the coaches were experiencing low levels of burnout, yet continued to hold a “fairly favorable outlook on coaching” (p. 100). The results also indicated that there were three distinct profiles of coaches related to the phenomenon of burnout. These profiles consisted of the characteristics of attraction-based commitment, low commitment, and entrapment. The attraction-based coaches showed high levels of commitment and low exhaustion scores and experienced high levels of satisfaction and benefits, and lower costs and social constraints. This group “also found coaching more attractive compared to alternative options” (p. 101). The coaches with lower levels of commitment were found to be within the norm for emotional exhaustion, and had lower than average scores on all the determinants of commitment. The coaches who were categorized as entrapped showed higher levels of emotional exhaustion and commitment in comparison to attraction-based and low-commitment profiles and were reported as not being “highly attracted to coaching,” showed “slightly below-average satisfaction and benefits coupled with higher than average costs”, and had the “highest investments and social constraints compared with all other coaches” (p. 101).

Finally, in a follow-up study, Raedeke’s (2004) focus was to study “commitment and burnout one year later and examine changes in the theoretical determinants of commitment, commitment

level, and burnout” (p. 336). One-hundred and forty-one American age-group swim coaches (80 male and 61 female participants) completed questionnaires that assessed coaching benefits, costs, satisfaction, alternatives, investments, and social constraints. Participants completed the same questionnaires on two occasions, approximately one year apart. Commitment and emotional exhaustion were also evaluated. The results indicated that “nearly two-thirds of the coaches were classified in the same profile at both time periods” (p. 344). The findings suggested that the coaches who were classified as attraction-based continued to have high levels of commitment over the one year time period, whereas the coaches who were labeled as low commitment became less committed to their coaching position as time progressed. Coaches in the entrapped profile experienced an “increase in exhaustion levels from Time 1 to Time 2 and the highest exhaustion scores at Time 2” (p. 345).

In summary, the research literature on coach burnout has focused on a variety of topics, such as interpersonal and situational predictors of coach burnout, gender differences and burnout, perceived stress and burnout, and commitment and burnout, and researchers have emphasized the necessity to continue research in the coach burnout domain (Vealey et al., 1992). The results from a number of these studies have produced rather vague and inconsistent results (Goodger et al.; Vealey et al.) and the majority of the research has been grounded in quantitative methods, often using the Maslach Burnout Inventory as a tool to measure burnout. As noted by Goodger and colleagues (2007), to date “there have been no entirely qualitative studies” (p. 142) on coaching and burnout. Furthermore, the studies on coach burnout have revealed that a “range of competitive levels and types of sports have been examined, but there is a notable absence of elite coaches” (Goodger et al., p. 132). What has emerged from the research on coach burnout are quantitative trends, which fail to illustrate the individual nature of burnout for coaches.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

Constructivism

Constructivism is the perspective through which “most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered” (Stake, 1995, p. 100). When put into practice, constructivism describes the process individuals undertake to make meaning (Crotty, 2003). It also acknowledges the uniqueness of these constructed experiences and suggests “that each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other ...” (Crotty, p. 58). From the research literature on coach burnout, it is believed that coaches’ experiences with burnout are potentially multifaceted and distinct due to the multitude of situational and personal factors. A constructivist approach will allow these potential variations in the way coaches may experience burnout to surface and hopefully be better understood.

Research Design

Case study

A multiple case study approach, which involves the study of a single issue by exploring more than one case, was employed in this research (Creswell, 2007b). By examining multiple cases, the “uniqueness and commonality” (Stake, 1995, p. 1) of each case can be illustrated and reveal the different viewpoints of each case (Creswell). This approach was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexities (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 2000, 2005, 2006) surrounding coach burnout and coaches’ experiences with burnout, as well as learning how burnout may manifest itself in a variety of contexts. Within the multiple case study design, each

coach who experienced burnout became a subject of an individual case study. These unique case studies drew on quotations from the participants and their unique perspectives to illustrate and bring to life the intricacies of the coach burnout phenomenon.

Methods

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches' perspectives. It utilized a qualitative approach to create an in-depth picture of the burnout experience and possible contributing factors.

Participants

The participants in this study were nine male and three female Canadian high performance coaches who had experienced burnout within five to seven years of being interviewed for this study. For the purpose of this study, a high performance coach was defined as an individual who had coached athletes or a team at the varsity, provincial, national, or Olympic level.

Criterion-Base Sampling

The researcher recruited "information-rich" cases through purposeful sampling which would yield greater "insight and understanding" (Patton, 2002, p. 230) of the burnout phenomenon. The "information-rich" cases in this study were defined as coaches who had experienced burnout. To recruit coaches who had burned out, criterion-based sampling was used. The purpose of criterion-based sampling is to "review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" as outlined by the researcher (Patton, p. 238). The

criteria by which participants for this study were selected were twofold; first, coaches were identified as being a high performance coach. The second criterion was coaches had experienced or were experiencing (at the time of the interview) burnout, and as a result left coaching for a period of time.

Recruitment and Consent

National Sport Organizations (NSO) were contacted for their assistance in the recruitment phase. The NSOs were asked to send a recruitment text via electronic mail to all coaches who are on their mailing list, or to coaches who had left sport, either for a brief period of time or permanently, within the previous five to seven years. The contents of the recruitment text included the nature, benefits, risks, and requirements of the study. Coaches who were interested in being a participant and met the criteria were requested to contact the researcher via electronic mail or telephone.

Upon indicating their willingness to participate in the study, participants were sent by mail two copies of the consent form, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope (see Appendix A). Participants were requested to read and sign both consent forms, return one copy to the researcher by mail, and to keep a copy for their personal records. Due to the potentially emotional nature of the topic, included with the consent form, and as outlined in the recruitment text, was a document that detailed the phone number and address of the National Coaching Institutes. If any coach experienced negative emotions or concerns, they were able to contact any of the National Coaching Institutes, which would provide a list of counsellors and psychologists who are affiliated with each of the centers.

Interviews were arranged at the participants' convenience once the signed consent form was received. Prior to the interview, each participant was informed again of the nature and

rationale of the study and was advised that his or her information would be kept in strict confidence and anonymity would be ensured at all times.

Data Collection

Data was collected by conducting one individual semi-structured interview with each participant. The individual interviews created dialogue between the participant and the researcher, which allowed the participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about their experience with burnout.

One face-to-face semi-structured interview of one hour to one and a half hours in length, discussing coach demographics and personal history, coaching experience, and the topic of burnout, was conducted and audio recorded with each participant. A follow-up interview of 15-20 minutes was conducted with 11 of the 12 coaches by landline telephone to clarify comments.

The researcher used a standard interview guide for all interviews (see Appendix B). The research question that guided the present study was: “How are coaches at the high performance level in Canada experiencing burnout?” The main question that guided each interview was: “Tell me about your experience with burnout.” The questions were open-ended in nature to encourage each coach to answer each question in his or her own words, including his or her opinions, thoughts, and insights without feeling constrained (Patton, 2002). The interview guide was designed to “ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (Patton, 2002, p. 343). The researcher used sub-questions and probes, when necessary, to encourage further comments and detail (Patton; Stake, 2006). The sub-questions included: (a) “How did it feel when burning out?” and (b) “How did you know you were burned out?”

Data Analysis

Participant interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, yielding transcripts of approximately 8 - 15 single spaced pages in length for each participant. All of the participants were asked if they wanted to review their interview transcript, and all 12 participants indicated that they did not want to do so. The researcher did contact 11 participants by telephone to conduct a brief follow-up interview, in order to clarify a number of comments or ambiguities.

The analysis process undertaken in this study was that of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis is comprised of six-phases, which include becoming familiar with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and finally, producing the report. The first phase involved transcribing the each interview verbatim, followed by reading and re-reading each transcript to become immersed in the data and familiar with the content, and lastly, making note of any ideas that emerged from reading the transcripts. The generation of initial codes, which was the second phase, involved coding as many potential patterns as possible and to “code extracts of data inclusively – i.e., keep a little of the surrounding data if relevant” (p. 89). The third phase entailed searching for themes once all of the data had been coded, followed by gathering and separating the codes into possible themes. This allowed for the researcher to “start thinking about the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes (i.e., main overarching themes and sub-themes within them)” (p. 89–90). Reviewing the themes was the next phase of analysis, which involved evaluating each theme to determine if themes could be broken down to form a new theme and to ensure that each “theme” was actually a theme. Through this process, four themes were developed: the multiple demands of the coaching

role, lack of support, emotions and burnout, and navigating burnout. This step in the analysis process provided in-depth insight into how the coaches in the present study experienced burnout. The fifth phase involved defining and naming themes, and further refining the themes generated by the researcher. Involved with the refinement process, the researcher had to identify potential sub-themes and under what theme each sub-theme would fit. The final phase of thematic analysis required the researcher to illustrate the findings in a manner that “convinces the reader of the merit and validity” of the analysis (p. 93), providing a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account” (p. 93) of the data within each theme by using quotations from each participant.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a study is increased through member checking by participants. Lincoln (1985) considers this to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility (p. 314). Stake (1995) has argued that this is an opportunity for the participants to actually play a role in the case study research. By employing member checking, coaches in this study had the opportunity to review their transcribed interview transcripts for authentication (Creswell, 2007a; Lincoln, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interestingly, all 12 participants in this study declined the opportunity to review their transcripts.

CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

The purpose of the present study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches' perspectives. It utilized a qualitative approach to create an in-depth picture of the burnout experience and possible contributing factors. By conducting in-depth interviews with coaches who have experienced this phenomenon, it was anticipated that we would be able to build on our understanding of the burnout experience.

The demographic information of the 12 high performance Canadian coaches who participated in this study, which includes the coach's age, gender, education, marital status, and number of children, is illustrated in Table 1. Information on the coaching background of each participant is presented in Table 2 and consists of the sport coached at the time of burnout, if the coach was coaching at the time of being interviewed, the number of years coaching, gender of athletes coached, levels coached, and if the coach had a job outside of coaching when he/she burned out.

The results are divided into four sections. The first three sections discuss the main themes that developed from the thematic analysis of the interviews, including numerous sub-themes under each of the main themes. The three main themes were the multiple demands of the coaching role, lack of support, and the emotional components of burnout (see Tables 3, 4, and 5). The fourth section, navigating burnout, illustrates the researcher's dialogue with the coaches about their personal definitions of burnout, their suggestions for preventing burnout, and the importance of having a support system to survive burnout and in some cases, to help in returning to coaching. The use of quotes from coach participant interviews will be integrated to illustrate each theme. At the end of each quote in the following sections, the coach who provided the quote will be represented by 'C1', 'C2', etc. This allows the reader to refer to and review the

demographic information and coaching background of the coach in Tables 1 and 2 respectively, to help develop an understanding of the burnout experience for that coach.

Table 1: Overview of coach demographics

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C 11	C 12
Age	38	35	31	60	40	56	50	46	54	46	52	41
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male
Education	University	College	University	University	University	University	University	University	University	University	University	University
Marital Status	Partner	Single	Partner	Married	Married	Partner	Married	Single	Married	Married	Single	Married
Children	None	1 son	None	2 sons & 1 daughter	3 daughters	Son & daughter	2 daughters	None	3 sons	None	None	None

Table 1: Overview of coaching background

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C 11	C 12
Sports Played	Soccer & basketball	Soccer	Judo & kayaking	Archery, baseball, & hockey	Swimming & Sailing	Swimming	Rugby	Soccer	Basketball, hockey, & lacrosse	Soccer, skiing, & ski racing	Hockey, softball, track, & basketball	Hockey, basketball, & golf
Sport coached	Basketball	Soccer	Canoe / Kayak	Hockey	Swimming	Swimming	Swimming	Soccer	Basketball	Alpine Ski	Softball	Cross country & track
Currently Coaching	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Years coaching	11	15	5	40	20	24	20	30	30	20	21	19
Gender coached	Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Female	Female	Male & Female	Male & Female	Male & Female
Levels coached	University, provincial, & national	College	Provincial & national	University & Olympic	University & provincial	University, provincial, national, masters & international	University	College in United States	University & provincial	Provincial & national	Canada Games, national, Olympic	University & national
Job when burned out	Teaching at university part-time & coaching full-time	Coaching part-time & full-time job	Coaching part-time & full-time job	Teaching at university & coaching	Coaching full-time	Coaching full-time	Coaching full-time	Coaching full-time teaching part-time	Teaching at university & coaching	Teaching at university, operating private business, & coaching	Coaching & full-time job	Operates 2 private businesses & coaching

Multiple Demands of the Coaching Role

The following section focuses on the complexity of coaching as a profession and how that complexity contributed to burnout. Coaches were asked to share their coaching experiences and to discuss in detail their experience with burnout. The coaches in this study spoke of being responsible for not only their daily job of organizing and running practices and coaching at games and competitions, but also for fundraising, administration, recruitment of athletes, and disciplining of athletes. In order to accomplish all these tasks and to avoid crumbling under the pressure, they faced long days and countless hours of work. As seen in Table 3, the sub-themes under the multiple demands of coaching included *coaching responsibilities, time demands, performance demands, issues with athletes, and family issues*.

Coaching Responsibilities

All of the coaches in the study identified a plethora of duties within their respective coaching roles. One of the coaches, a varsity women's basketball coach said:

There is a lot of administrative work, making sure all of the students' forms are filled out, making sure the athlete's academic stuff is in order and they are registered in all of the proper classes. I need to also make sure they are going to classes and doing the right things. I also acted as the sport psychologist, dealt with the media, and ran clinics. (C1)

Another varsity basketball coach outlined his responsibilities as, "recruiting, administrative work, practice planning, basketball camps ... everything. Anything related to the basketball program, development, I had responsibility for" (C9). A softball coach, who was a head coach

of a Canada Games team, an under 23 club team, and assistant coach of the National team, provided examples of some of her responsibilities.

Table 3: *Demands of the coaching profession*

Sub-Theme	Code	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C 11	C 12
Coaching Responsibilities	Administrative Duties	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Dealing with the media	x			x				x	x			
	Acting as a sport psychologist	x											
	Acting as a surrogate parent	x											
	Recruiting athletes	x		x	x				x	x		x	x
	Running practices	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Planning for practices	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Disciplining athletes	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			
	Fundraising			x	x	x			x		x	x	
	Marketing the program			x		x	x		x				
	Promoting program to the community			x		x	x		x				
	Running camps/clinics	x				x				x			
	Developing a new program								x				
	Dealing with parents	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
	Dealing with difficult assistant coach	x											
Time Demands	Little or no time off				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Game travel				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
	Commuting to coach	x											
	No time for self		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Performance Demands	Trying to turn team around	x							x				
	Pressure to perform	x		x	x	x	x		x	x			x
Issues with Athletes	Dealing with rookies	x											
	Dealing with athlete personal issues	x			x				x				
	Lack of commitment									x			x
	Lack of accountability									x			
	Dealing with difficult athletes				x				x	x			
	Motivating/instilling confidence								x				
Family Issues	No separation between work and family					x		x					
	Spend more time at home with family					x	x						x

For the under 23 team I was the head coach so I had complete responsibility for all of the administration work such as putting together the budget, creating a yearly plan, and selecting my own coaches. Also, I selected the athletes and figured out how we are going to fundraise. I looked after renting buses and vans, and getting flights and accommodations. (C11)

Another coach provided an in-depth account of the numerous responsibilities he had as the head coach of a university women's hockey program and as an assistant coach with the men's program. He noted that the only difference in responsibilities between the two programs was he was not responsible for developing practice plans or reviewing game footage for the men's team.

I was responsible for sharpening all of the skates for practices and games. We practiced everyday from 6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m., and it took me about two hours to put a practice together. I was responsible for getting equipment, doing the laundry (socks and long underwear and such), booking hotels and transportation for away games, and getting the meals organized. I also had to supervise the student's marks and ensure they were attending class and I helped with developing class schedules, admissions, and finding housing for the athletes. I was responsible for the media releases and I met with the media on a pretty regular basis. I had to deal with kids that were homesick too. I had to oversee the other coaches, and supervise student athletic trainers that were assigned to our teams. I developed and ran the off-ice training program, which included spinning and aqua aerobics. I had to do the fundraising and develop the budget for both programs. I was responsible for the renovations made to the dressing rooms. I was also a mentor for coaches in the

community. There was non-stop paperwork; it was an ocean of paperwork actually.

(C4)

Recruitment of athletes is a crucial component to any athletic program, and the coaches talked about the long and tedious process of recruiting athletes and the type of commitment they made to make the team and program stronger. One coach stated, “I don’t think universities recognize the amount of time needed to recruit” (C9). Another coach revealed that he had racked up “60,000 km on a brand new vehicle driving to different areas of the province to watch games every night of the week” (C4). A female varsity basketball coach commented:

Recruiting is a huge thing, the most important part of the university program. It takes up a lot of time, and anytime you do get off, you have to go and watch crappy high school basketball, in these crappy little gyms in the middle of nowhere. (C1)

The coach of an American college soccer team stated she was responsible for developing a new soccer program and that “the biggest challenge is recruiting people to play” (C8). This coach continued by saying:

Recruiting is a huge part of the job, since you spend a minimum of half of your time recruiting all year round. When I first started coaching, recruiting wasn’t that competitive, but by the time I left, recruiting female soccer players was just like recruiting for basketball or football. Towards the end of my coaching position at the college, I couldn’t help but feel that I was a used car salesman recruiting 16 year old kids. (C8)

As this coach was responsible for the development of a female soccer program at two separate colleges in the United States, she was asked to describe what it was like to create a new program.

Starting a new program is difficult on a lot of different levels. I had the administrative challenges and the team challenges of having a couple of bad seasons. I needed to keep the team motivated and help them to play better and to improve since there was always the pressure to get results. At both schools where I coached they had never had soccer programs before, not even a men's soccer program. In both cases, the programs were started for gender equity, and they were both Division I AA. The colleges had no soccer knowledge so I had to create a facility, bring in all of the equipment, find people in the community who were willing to support the soccer program, find boosters, and do the fundraising and get sponsorship. At the second college where I coached, my budget was \$125,000, and that included scholarships and coaching salaries. One of the biggest challenges when bringing on a new sport is that the colleges don't bring on any additional support, other than the coach. (C8)

Time Demands

The coaches in this study spoke about the time required to fulfill their coaching duties.

When asked to describe a typical work day, a swim coach replied:

Swim coaching is four or five mornings a week at 5 a.m. and evenings 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. There is a tremendous time commitment required, unusual in terms of the time of day, and the travel and the lack of breaks during the season. (C5)

A cross country/track coach shared that as a coach:

The inbox was never empty, the 'to do' list was never complete. It was not a job where you could walk around at the end of the day, for example 5 p.m. and say

'hey, I'm done!' Rather, its 11 p.m. and I am trying to figure out the things I have to do the next day, and I still have to get some sleep. (C12)

A university basketball coach, in discussing the hours he dedicated to coaching, noted that coaching was not something he could leave at the office.

When I am coaching during the season, I probably go on about six hours sleep. My normal routine would be that we had two morning practices a week at 6 a.m., so I was at the office by 5 a.m. I would come home after practice, then back for afternoon practice and I would normally get home at about 8 p.m. and have a bite to eat, try to relax a bit, then get on the phone and make recruitment calls, look at game tapes, and then finally go to bed. I would get up at 3 a.m. to watch tapes and prepare plans and such ... it was like that for 30 years. (C9)

When talking about the time dedicated to coaching, a college soccer coach shared what a typical week consisted of:

The season is from the beginning of August to mid November and we would play Friday nights and Sunday afternoons. By NCAA rules, you must have one day off a week and you could train for up to four hours a day. Monday the players would have off from training, but we would watch game film and clips we wanted to show the players. We had a press conference every Monday to discuss the past weekend games. Tuesday we would do a Pilates session at 6 a.m. and we would train on the pitch in the afternoon from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Wednesday we had training in the afternoon and Thursday we may have training, we may be traveling or having a team meeting. We play on Friday, we train Saturday for an hour and then we have a two hour meeting to discuss what happened the game before and what we are

going to do for the upcoming game, and then we play on Sunday. In season, we would also host recruits, who can stay for a maximum of 48 hours and it is usually around a game. So we are busy setting up appointments for them with academic advisors, professors, taking them on tours, and meeting the athletes. (C8)

Several coaches felt they had little time away from coaching and their coaching responsibilities. As a softball coach stated, “all I did was sleep, softball, work, sleep, softball, work. There was no time for me” (C11).

Performance Demands

Several coaches spoke about the demands they faced trying to produce a successful team and program. A varsity basketball coach, who stepped into a coaching situation where she was expected to turn a team around shared: “This program had a long tradition of losing and that is a really hard thing to try and overcome” (C1). This coach felt that, given her own motivation and the expectations placed on her to produce a winning program, she tried to rebuild the program too quickly: “As a result of trying to restructure the team and turn it around, I took some kids that maybe I shouldn’t have, they didn’t gel well together, and all hell broke loose. Everyone on the team had a terrible experience” (C1). She went on to explain: “When you lose games, you may say that it is the players and yes, they may not perform, but it is your responsibility to get them to perform” (C1).

A soccer coach who developed two new soccer programs in two separate institutions revealed that in her last season before leaving coaching, the team she was coaching was in a rebuilding phase and losing games. She was feeling that the demands were becoming too great and she had nothing left to give.

The first game of our 5th season was one that we should have won, but we lost. I knew I would have to talk to the players and figure out why we didn't play like we should have. However, I didn't want to talk to the players. I didn't want to tell them that they didn't play well. My thinking shifted ... the players will figure it out and fix it next time. I couldn't give it 110%, and that affected how the team performed and how I coached. (C8)

A varsity basketball coach revealed that the pressure he experienced to perform was not about the game itself, it was about the preparation for the game.

Trying to win for sure is a stress, recruiting is a stress, and game day is a stress. People would ask if I am stressed before a game ... the answer was always 'no!' I get stressed out during the week with the preparation because I want to make sure everything is covered and that kids are following the game plan. (C9)

This coach also shared:

At the university level, you work all week to get a team ready: you strategize, you watch tapes, and you prepare. You get instant satisfaction or no satisfaction at all. How we perform as a team, and how I perform as a coach is an easy thing to measure because all you have to do is look at the win/loss column. (C9)

Issues with Athletes

A few coaches spoke about dealing with difficult athletes as one of the many aspects of their coaching job. A university basketball coach noted:

I have to deal with the rookies that are fooling around and aren't going to class, that are drinking too much, who are out there trying to do it all. That is what we are there for, to say you can't do basketball, school, and partying, you can only do

basketball and school and you can't go out anymore because you can't handle it all.

(C1)

This coach also said that there were often athletes on her team who had personal issues that she had to deal with: "I can handle one or two problem kids but not half the team with issues" (C1).

Another coach went through a difficult time with two athletes on her team. She described, in some detail, what this experience was like.

I went through a very rough patch with two players, twin sisters actually, who fed off each other, and we didn't mesh. I had to deal with an incident and they did not agree with how I dealt with the situation and then seemed to make it their mission to make my life miserable. We ended up with half the team supporting me and half the team supporting these two players. It was a nightmare year in terms of what was happening off the field, as I tried to keep the team together with some sort of stability and deal with the stuff that was coming back at me, which took a toll on me emotionally. The sisters and their friends on the team went to my boss and complained about me. I had to deal with the complaints and I had to document everything. I realized that it was all of this stuff that was eating at me, not what was happening on the field or the training. (C8)

A few coaches talked about how their motives to succeed were different from the athletes. One of these coaches revealed, "I felt that the kids didn't care, I felt that myself, my coaches and my staff cared more about it than the kids, and that winning the game was more important to us than them" (C9).

Family Issues

A few coaches mentioned that their family life was affected by their coaching. A swim coach, who had two young daughters, explained:

My wife and I made arrangements for the girls to be at the pool with us and had someone watching them, or the girls were with someone after school. We knew that was not what we wanted but at the same time we had to manage the situation we were in. At competitions, we would plop the girls down with some colouring books and a couple of parents would help. So, there wasn't a real separation for us and that I think that was what caught up with us eventually. We didn't have the opportunity to stop work and do family things and have family time together. (C5)

A varsity cross country coach said that he started to feel burned out when he felt he needed to "spend more time at home". He felt this was a definite breaking point for him in his coaching career, and it was at that time that he decided he needed and wanted a change from coaching.

The weekend we went to CIS, my best friend's dad was buried and I wasn't able to get back to be there. I had been down that road too many times in the past four years, and I realized that some things are more important to me. It was also time for me to be at home and be a husband. For 14 years I had been on the road with competitions on weekends and haven't really been there for my wife. (C12)

Lack of Support

The second major theme was the lack of support, primarily from an organizational standpoint, and the sub themes were *organizational issues*, *negative work environment*, and *salary issues* (see Table 4).

Organizational Issues

Several coaches talked about the organizational issues they faced as coaches, both in the university and club setting. A club canoe/kayak coach encountered many problems with the board of directors of his club.

Table 4: *Issues related to lack of support*

Sub-Theme	Code	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C 11	C 12
Organization Issues	Limited experience of Board of Director Members			x									
	Limited experience of Athletic Director				x					x			
	Lack of leadership by Board of Directors/athletic director		x	x	x	x				x			x
	Lack of staff/trainer, sport psychologist	x										x	
Negative Work Environment	Continual negative discussion among staff coaches				x					x			
	“Poisonous” environment with the board			x									
	Conflict between coach & board of directors			x				x					
	Conflict between coach & athletic director				x	x				x			x
	Lack of respect from Board of Directors			x				x					
	Lack of respect from Athletic Director				x					x			
Salary Issues	Could not make a living with coaching salary			x		x					x		x
	Contractual issues/Not getting paid		x										

The board of directors had almost zero coaching experience, zero paddling experience, and the only experience they had was through watching their children.

The club was operated by volunteers who didn't know what they are doing. They just wanted to be on the board because their kids were involved and they made decisions based on what they felt was the best for their own kids. (C3)

A basketball coach shared his experience working with an athletic director who had limited experience in his position. He explained:

It was like having a plumber doing heart surgery, as an analogy, as the athletic director had no concept of what he was doing. The athletic director had never played sports, didn't know anything about coaching or running a team, or what we were doing and why for that matter. (C4)

Several coaches discussed the lack of leadership from their superiors within their organizations that led to increased stress for the coaches. A university basketball coach revealed that there was a lack of leadership from the athletic director:

Part of my burnout was definitely from the lack of leadership. Dealing with the athletic director would be the first one, as he was a walking ass-hole. There was no support from the athletic director, he had no concept of what we were doing, and if we had discipline problems within our team, he would side with the athletes every time and not stand behind his coaches. This added a lot of unnecessary stress. I felt that there was no respect for what we did. My values and the athletic director's values were obviously not on the same page. It was like having a boss that wasn't in the rink at all but would yell at you every day. Would you want to go? (C4)

Several university coaches said that their athletic departments did not share the same level of competitiveness as they did. A swim coach shared that he "wanted to be

more competitive than the athletic department” (C5). This coach followed up this statement by revealing:

The university situation was such that we had to basically raise 90% of the budget every year through fundraising. I don't feel that university aged student athletes should be out selling cookies and doing raffles. We were out representing the school, and we had a very successful swim program, which was a big benefit for the school. We should not have to raise a majority of the money. (C5)

Interestingly, another coach was frustrated by the high admission standards of the university where he coached.

We were handcuffed by the admission standards, for example, as much as I would like to get player X into our school, if the student athlete doesn't have an 80% average, then it's not happening. You might be the best runner in the province but you are going to go to another school because they will accept you with the 75% average. The problem is the university is only looking at marks and that was frustrating because they are using one criterion to determine if you are good enough to come to this school.

One coach spoke about the lack of personnel at the institution where she coached. This coach shared that many “teams have the opportunity to have a team trainer or sport psychologist. At the university, I couldn't find anyone to do it so I had to do everything” (C1). A varsity soccer coach in the United States revealed that as a result of being responsible for developing new programs and having limited financial resources: “One of the biggest challenges I faced when starting a new program was that the athletic department didn't bring on any additional support such as athletic therapists and media relations, other than the coach” (C8).

Negative Work Environment

A few coaches talked about the work environment and how organizational issues were a factor in the coaches' outlook on work. One coach talked about the work environment he encountered:

The environment has an impact on what you do every single day and it got to the point where I didn't want to go there because of the environment that had been created in the athletic department. Having an athletic director with limited experience in his position and as a coach was frustrating and it makes the environment unbalanced and off-kilter as a result. Some days I would show up to the rink with a knot in my face, and the players would notice and picked up that I was in a bad mood. That could happen at my office at the university and it followed me to the rink. When working in a governed or restricted environment, it can definitely take the fun out of coaching. (C4)

This coach also revealed that as a result of the incompetence of the athletic director, "there was continual discussion amongst the coaches about this guy that made it even worse because now everyone was complaining" (C4). A club canoe/kayak coach, who was in a similar situation, shared that "when you go into a work atmosphere and it is pretty much like going to war everyday with the parents and board members, it doesn't make you feel good" (C3). This coach shared some of the issues he faced with the board of directors, explaining that:

Within the canoe club, the board of directors changes every one or two years. And new board members are most of the time people who haven't ever paddled before. This year, our board had all new people and a lot of them didn't know their jobs so I ended up doing a lot more work than what I should have. (C3)

Salary Issues

Several coaches also spoke of financial issues they encountered with regards to being under paid for the position and responsibilities they undertook. A club coach revealed: “I was only being paid a small amount to run a big canoe club. I made about \$29,000 a year. I had no pension, benefits, or job stability” (C3). A university swim coach (C5) indicated that he was paid \$20,000 a year for the full-time coaching position, which was not sufficient to raise his young family. As a result, he and his wife started up a swim consulting business to provide an additional income. An alpine ski coach who worked with disabled athletes took on a teaching job and operated his own business to supplement his income: “I wasn’t at a point where I could afford to just coach as my only job based on the salary we would get on the disabled side since the salaries were not equivalent to that of able-bodied coaches” (C10). A university cross-country running coach shared: “I never felt that I was going to be a career coach. I made \$6,000 or \$7,000 coaching in any given year, but I treated it like it was a full-time job with recruiting and my coaching responsibilities” (C12).

Emotions

This section focuses on the emotions the coaches felt as they burned out, with subthemes of *loss of enjoyment*, *fatigue*, *frustration*, *self-expectation*, *pressure of self-expectation*, and *stepping out of coaching* (see Table 5).

Loss of enjoyment

Many of the coaches spoke about their loss of enjoyment with coaching as they burned out. A basketball coach revealed: “I wasn’t happy the last two years, like actually happy. If we

won, that was good but I wasn't happy" (C9). A softball coach expressed: "I couldn't enjoy what I was doing day to day" (C11).

Table 5: *Emotions experienced by coaches who burned out*

Sub-Theme	Code	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10	C 11	C 12
Loss of Enjoyment	Not getting same enjoyment				x	x	x			x	x		x
	Not looking forward to practice		x						x	x			
	Couldn't enjoy what I was doing day to day	x		x					x			x	
	Loss of desire							x	x	x			
	I wasn't happy			x						x			
	Loss of passion	x	x		x				x			x	x
Fatigue	Tired	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Mentally worn out	x							x	x	x		
	Not making good decisions	x										x	
	Lack of energy	x			x			x	x			x	x
	Too tired to be creative										x		
	Avoiding people	x			x				x				
Frustration	Trying to get paid		x										
	Everything was a challenge		x	x								x	
	Self-doubt	x		x						x			
	Short-tempered with my team				x				x				
	Not as tolerant with my team				x				x	x			x
	Limited patience				x							x	x
	Tired of dealing with whining athletes	x							x				
Always bringing coaching home		x		x	x				x	x			
Self-Expectations	I couldn't do what I wanted to do			x	x			x					x
	Feeling like I was letting others down			x		x							
	Trying to meet my expectations and others	x		x			x		x		x	x	
Pressure of self-expectation	Wanted to always out work other coaches									x			
	Taking things personally	x								x			
	Over-analyzing	x		x						x			

A female soccer coach who had the task of developing college programs in the United States revealed that while she really loved coaching she “was really starting to struggle with enjoying coaching” (C8). This was an emotion she had never experienced before in coaching. It was combined with the feeling that she didn’t have the energy to be the coach that she wanted to be for her athletes:

In our fourth year, we had the best season in terms of our win/loss record, but I just wasn’t getting the same enjoyment out of it, I was tired. For the first time ever, I was not looking forward to stepping on the bus and spending the weekend with the team. I was actually dreading spending four days away with the team. (C9)

This coach also shared that she didn’t know if coaching was “worth it anymore”. When asked to elaborate on her statement, she said she questioned if it was “worth it” because she felt: “I was giving, giving, giving and not really receiving what I thought I could receive out of coaching in terms of personal growth or the satisfaction of helping kids or other coaches” (C9).

Another soccer coach expressed similar feelings:

The joy of coaching and teaching was starting to fade very quickly because I would arrive at a field, knowing I just put in two hours of preparation time to run two hours of field work, and know that I am probably not going to get paid for my time.

At the end of the day, I simply no longer enjoyed the game. I no longer enjoyed the challenges. I no longer enjoyed watching the game for what it was, just a game.

(C2)

A varsity basketball coach explained: “I wasn’t looking forward to going to practices as much as I once was. I don’t think I was working any less but I certainly wasn’t enjoying it as much”

(C9). Another coach shared “some days I did enjoy working with the athletes and other days I didn’t” (C11).

Several coaches described this loss of enjoyment as a sense of losing the passion to coach. A softball coach explained: “I lost the passion because I had taken on so much” (C11), while a basketball coach revealed: “I lost the passion needed to go into the gym every day and deliver a quality program. I didn’t have the drive to recruit or give extra time to the players” (C1). A cross country running coach conveyed: “I would disappear from the team for a month, more or less because I needed to get away. I just didn’t want to be around anyone involved with the sport” (C12). He also revealed: “I felt that coaching was something now that I had to do instead of wanting to do it. I didn’t want to feel like anymore” (C12).

Fatigue

Fatigue was another emotion experienced by the coaches. A basketball coach felt: “I was done, I was fried, I was emotionally spent and I didn’t have enough energy to give to the team” (C1), while a cross country running coach said: “I was definitely tired but I didn’t recognize it” (C12). A softball coach talked about how the fatigue she experienced from coaching was translated to her work outside of the coaching profession: “When I had to go to work, I had no energy, nothing. I wasn’t as sharp with decision-making, everything was a challenge, in terms of timelines” (C11). A basketball coach revealed that he was tired, but failed to recognize what he was feeling: “I didn’t realize what I was doing because I was on automatic ... it was like being on a treadmill and I kept on going even though I didn’t realize it” (C9). An alpine ski coach felt that as a result of feeling tired and lacking energy, he felt: “I was going on fumes to try and keep up with what I did well already” (C10).

Closely related to the feeling of fatigue was sense of not having energy to complete required coaching tasks. A softball coach stated: “I was not as alert as I normally was, I lacked energy, sometimes I didn’t make the best quality decisions that I should have been making when coaching” (C11).

An alpine ski coach, who spoke of his passion for developing and implementing new ideas, said his creativity started to diminish as he became mentally tired:

The fun for me in coaching is having a cool idea and trying it out on the guys and being able to communicate it. The communication and creativity, that is the fun part of coaching, and I think being limited in not being as creative results in starting to lose my athletes. I know I was exhausted and the athletes could see that mentally I was not 100%. Mentally I was just worn out and I think that was what led to not coming up with fresh ideas any more. I felt empty, I ran out of initiative, I started doing things by default. The creativity was gone. (C10)

A few coaches discussed how they started to lose the energy to deal with issues surrounding coaching. A college soccer coach shared:

I still enjoyed stepping onto the field and doing the training and running the practices, but then how do you deal with the athletes problems that are just petty? I just didn’t have the energy or motivation to deal at the level that I needed to. I knew that this was not the type of coach that I wanted to be. (C8)

Another coach expressed that, as a result of the circumstances with the athletes on the team, she “was tired of dealing with the whining and always having one or two kids that were not happy for whatever reason” (C1).

Frustration

Many of the coaches experienced some form of frustration as their coaching situation started to deteriorate. The frustration stemmed from a variety of sources such as dealing with organizations and clubs, interactions with athletes, and the issues around bringing coaching home.

One coach described the source of her frustration as “dealing with the politics of my sport” (C11), a soccer and canoe/kayak coach felt “frustrated with the way things were going with the club” (C2) they were working with. Of these two coaches, the soccer coach elaborated on his source of frustration with the club: “it was so frustrating to deal with people who were hiding and didn’t want to pay me. I just got really frustrated with the people who ran the organization” (C2).

Several coaches talked about how their frustration became directed towards their athletes. A hockey coach explained: “I got short-tempered with my team and I was not as tolerant as I once was with some of the girls. It was really out of character for me” (C4). A swim coach felt, “there was a growing frustration that got translated to the athletes, which was me sorting out if this was what I wanted to keep doing or whether I wanted to do something else” (C5). A cross country coach explained: “I felt that I didn’t have the same patience for them now, maybe my empathy towards the athletes was gone” (C12). A basketball coach talked about how her feelings of frustration were translated to a group of undergraduate students during a presentation:

A professor at the university asked me to come and speak to her coaching class about the profession of coaching. I remember that it was in the middle of that hellish season and I was so negative, and all I could talk about were the negative aspects of coaching and I didn’t have one positive comment to share. (C1)

An alpine ski coach expressed how his frustration was a result of being tired, which affected his coaching and personal life:

You know you're not operating at 100%, you're not being as effective as you could be, and I think that is very frustrating and you start taking your frustrations out on everybody. Your wife doesn't want to talk to you about it anymore because she knows that the minute you bring up sport it just turns into a frustrating conversation. When you're talking to your athletes it is frustrating, when you're talking to your peers, everybody knows you're uptight and tense because you're tired. (C10)

A few coaches talked about how "coaching is something that is very hard to leave at the office" (C5). A college soccer coach stated: "You are never completely away from it. You just live and breathe it all the time" (C8). Another soccer coach revealed: "a lot of baggage came home and I had a lot of very frustrating and sleepless nights" (C2). He also explained: "My frustration built up, not to the point where I exploded, but to the point where I had to do something to make a change" (C2). A swim coach revealed: "Coaching is a hard thing not to bring home; you do your morning practice, you have a time during the day to plan and administrate, and then you're back at it" (C5). An alpine ski coach discussed his feeling on the subject:

I think you carry it 24 hours a day and that was part of the problem, there was no relief, because the minute you leave one scenario, you are busy planning for the next scenario and then you are trying to deal with other projects from your other work. (C10)

Self-Expectations

Ten of the twelve coaches briefly talked about self-imposed expectations, as they felt they were unable to meet their own expectations as they started to burnout. A cross country running coach described: “It was an internal expectation and that’s what burned me out, the fact that I couldn’t do what I wanted to do with the time I had allotted and the resources that I had” (C12). An experienced swim coach talked about the expectations he tried to accomplish and how it felt for him to realize that he wasn’t doing what he believed in:

I knew the expectations that I had set for myself early in my career, and the things that I wanted to do as a coach and the things I tried to translate to my assistant coaches. When you are not living up to those, I think that eats at you a bit. That for me was a real sign that something needed to change because I didn’t want to stay in that state for a long time. (C5)

Some coaches also experienced a variety of emotions as a result of the pressures placed on them. A veteran basketball coach felt that the pressure he experienced was a result of trying to outwork other coaches:

I wanted to outwork every coach possible and I got paranoid that I was missing something. For example, if we lost a game ... we have this rule for the athletes that at midnight you could stop worrying about the game because we have to get ready for the next game. However, I never followed my own rule. I would come home after a game and watch the game tape to verify what I was doing or to find out why we lost. As my wife could tell you, all I thought about was basketball. I was consumed with basketball and trying to outwork other coaches 24/7 and I couldn’t step away from it for five or six hours a day. I remember my wife telling me that I

would come home from basketball, have a bite to eat and then get on the phone to recruit and she would ask if I could step away from it for a while. I couldn't step back because I was obsessed with the fact that someone else could be calling that recruit. At the end of the day, I was burning out but I couldn't see the bigger picture because I was so consumed with the game. (C9)

Another basketball coach talked about being too sensitive and taking things too personally. This coach explained: "every loss, I took it personally ... I took too much of it to heart" (C1). When asked to elaborate on taking every loss personally, she said that after a game the team had lost: "you couldn't talk to me for hours. I didn't want to see or talk to anyone" (C1). She followed up by sharing: "One of my quotes is that 'you need thick skin to coach' and my skin was wearing a little thin" (C1).

Navigating Burnout

Coach personal definitions of 'burnout'

Given that the research literature on job burnout and burnout in sport has failed to develop a uniform definition of the term *burnout*, each of the coaches, at the end of their interview, was asked how they might define burnout. The definitions provided by the coaches in this study were based on individual experiences with burnout and revealed that coaches perceived burnout as an accumulation of a variety of issues that resulted in a loss of passion and enjoyment, often combined with feelings of fatigue and frustration.

One coach felt that burnout was related to a loss of passion: "burnout is losing the passion and confidence required to be a coach" (C1). A soccer coach divulged that she characterized burnout as a "loss of enjoyment and lack of desire to continue to coach because of the emotional and mental exhaustion which results from an intense commitment to a sport and or a team" (C8).

One of the swim coaches felt that burnout was a result of several things: “There is a level of tiredness ... your body starts to feel the wear and tear and you simply feel worn down from everything. Also, you start to realize that the passion and whatever was driving you as a coach is lacking” (C5). Another coach said:

Burnout is a loss of passion, because you had to have had passion to get to where you were. There is a loss of passion for what you were doing because passion can keep you involved and in the game when you are working the 16 or 18 hour days, passion will keep you going. When you lose the passion, you look back and think ‘what the hell am I doing?’ and ‘why am I doing this?’ and ‘do I want to give up all of my life to do this?’ (C12)

Another swim coach believed that burnout could be compared to a plus and minus list:

Burnout is when the thrill of coaching is gone. When the minuses on your plus minus list outweigh your pluses ... that is burnout. As long as your pluses outweigh your minuses, you’re not burned out, you might be tired, but you are not burned out. When there is futility and you’re looking down the barrel of a gun thinking that this is not going to change, this picture is always going to be this way and I’m going to have to get up at 4:30 every morning and at the end of the day I’m going to realize that I am not that happy because there are always more negatives than positives. (C7)

Another coach felt that burnout is “going to practice or a game and it is an ordeal, when you are 24/7 not happy with everything, and you become obsessed thinking of the game, thinking of the sport” (C9). A canoe/kayak coach felt that burnout was related to trying to reach expectations: “burnout is when you are pushed so hard, when you have

high expectations and when you don't think you have reached them and you've gotten to the point where you don't want to do it anymore" (C3).

Coach suggestions on how to prevent burnout

There appears to be a growing awareness in the sporting community about burnout and its increasing prevalence in coaching. In asking the coaches in this study what they felt could prevent burnout, they overwhelmingly suggested a better understanding of the difficulties and overwhelming complexity of the profession of coaching, whether that was at the international, varsity or club level. As one of the swim coaches said: "one of the things that could be better in the coaching profession is more of an understanding of what goes into coaching, our lifestyle, and the struggles we face" (C5).

A veteran basketball coach of 30 years explained:

The problem is getting coaches to recognize the bench markers of burnout. The other issue in coaching is the problems you have to deal with on and off the court. It often feels like you are the only one who is dealing with that problem or situation. Then you talk to another coach who may have or had the same problems, and it is nice to find out that you are not the only one. Also, there needs to be education session or information made easily accessible through the NCCP about coach burnout - there could be seminars to talk about burnout with coaches. (C9)

This coach also said that "coaches need to take personal time completely away from the job" and went on to say:

You truly have to have the ability to be able to step away from the game at certain times of the day and not think about it. I think you have to be able to come home

and leave the game at the gym. I really believe that if coaches have something else they can do that can take them away from the sport, it will help them to stay in the game longer. (C9)

Several coaches spoke about the need to have a support system within the community of their respective sports. One coach revealed:

I really feel as though there is not much of a support system because sport is so competitive. I didn't really have another basketball coach that I shared things with. So, a support system would help. It is especially difficult for female coaches because we tend to have less confidence to begin with (in general). We also tend to be a little less supportive of each other. I think that goes back to the competitive thing. (C1)

Another coach felt that “more colleague support is needed, since each coach gets so involved in their own team they do not take the time for themselves and share experiences with colleagues who have been there and understand” (C8).

One coach, who is now in an administrative position for a sport organization, spoke of some innovative practices being put into place to allow coaches time off. “We have started to look at having ‘black out’ windows where there can’t be competitions held. So there are windows during the year when the coaches know they are going to be at home” (C 5).

The importance of a support system to survive burnout

Even though the coaches in this study experienced burnout, 10 of the 12 coaches felt they had a support system in place that helped them get through their burnout. Support came from various sources, including colleagues (i.e. other coaches), a spouse or partner, and close friends.

The coaches felt that having someone to talk to about their frustrations and concerns helped. For example, a hockey coach, who faced issues, on a regular basis, with his athletic director, sought the support of his colleagues who coached at the same university.

The support from the other coaches was awesome because they were experiencing exactly the same thing. I lived with three other coaches when this was going on, and we had a box in the house that if you said one bad thing about the athletic director, we had to put \$5 in it. At the end of the year, we bought \$2200 in Lotto 649 tickets! That's how much we couldn't stand the athletic director. Some days we would come home and throw a \$20 in the box and yell and scream and say whatever we wanted about him. Being surrounded by other coaches who were going through the same experience, and had the same values as me was helpful.

(C4)

Many of the male coaches said that the support of their wives was crucial. A basketball coach said that his wife "was there from the beginning when I first started coaching so she had an excellent understanding of the game, what my job entailed, and what girls are like at that age" (C9). An alpine ski coach said: "I couldn't have survived without my wife - just knowing someone else was there to talk to really helped" (C10). A cross country running coach shared that his support also came from his wife of 15 years: "My wife has financially supported me because coaching is not financially a booming industry, and she has supported me with unconditional love" (C12). One of the women coaches said she did not have a support system since she didn't feel she could trust many people in sport, and as a result, she "internalized her feelings and emotions" (C11). She did note that this was a problem.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches' perspectives. It utilized a qualitative approach to create an in-depth picture of the burnout experience and possible contributing factors. The question that guided the research was: "How are coaches at the high performance level in Canada experiencing burnout?" As noted by Dale and Weinberg (1990), "burnout occurs on the individual level and is unique to each person, which makes it difficult to identify because it differs for each person" (p. 70) and indeed, the results from the 12 coaches in the present study support this finding.

The four themes that resulted from the analysis of the data revealed that the multiple demands of the coaching role played a significant part in each coach's burnout, as well as the lack of organizational support coaches received, and the powerful emotions that surrounded the experience of burning out. In addition, the coaches "navigated" burnout by offering their own definitions of burnout, thoughts on how to prevent burnout, and how a support system helped many of them cope with their burnout. By taking a qualitative approach, the present study allowed each of the 12 coaches to express their experiences with burnout in detail, which aided in bringing the intricacies of this phenomenon to light.

The findings of this study highlight the uniqueness of the burnout experience for 12 high performance coaches. Just as there are idiosyncrasies with how coaches learn how to coach (Werthner & Trudel, 2009), there are idiosyncrasies with how each of these coaches experienced burnout. The nature of these idiosyncrasies will be explored in this discussion.

The emotions the coaches in this study experienced as they burned out ranged from a loss of enjoyment of coaching, to fatigue and feelings of being worn out, to trying too hard to meet one's own and other's expectations. As defined Price and Weiss (2000), emotional exhaustion in

relation to burnout includes “feelings of being overwhelmed, emotionally depleted, and lacking energy” (p. 392), and this definition ‘fits’ for the coaches in this study. Many of the coaches spoke of their passion for coaching, and how that passion had disappeared as a result of many factors, some of which included dealing with difficult athletes and not having adequate organizational support. For example, three coaches talked about how they lost the desire to continue coaching and several coaches spoke about feeling mentally worn out and how this negatively affected their ability to coach. One coach in particular revealed he felt he was too tired to be creative, which was an aspect of coaching that was important to him. It was quite discouraging for these coaches to feel that loss of passion and loss of enjoyment for a profession that they had all spent years dedicated to and loved. These findings are certainly consistent with previous research on the emotional aspects of burnout (Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980; Kelley, 1994; Maslach & Jackson, 1981b; Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

Depersonalization, the interpersonal component of burnout, is the second dimension of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The depersonalization experienced by the coaches in this study stemmed from various frustrations surrounding their coaching responsibilities. For example, as a result of issues with a couple of athletes, one coach came to a point where she felt she wanted to stay away from her team and didn’t look forward to going on road trips with them. Two other coaches revealed they became short-tempered and much less tolerant with their team. Several other coaches spoke of their frustration with needing to constantly deal with petty problems and whining athletes. This resulted in them putting more distance between themselves and their athletes, which, it could be argued, is not effective coaching.

Decreased personal accomplishment, “feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399), is the third dimension of

burnout. The majority of coaches in this study revealed they felt they were not meeting their own expectations or expectations that had been outlined for them by the administration. For instance, two of the coaches felt that, by not achieving their own expectations, they were letting down those around them. Another coach felt that as a result of not having adequate funds, he was not able to meet his own expectations and achieve his goals with his athletes. In addition, many of the coaches in this study spoke about the lack of support they experienced from their athletic director or board of directors. For these coaches, this absence of a support system and acknowledgment of the hard work accomplished on a daily basis may have led to a sense of futility and feelings of ineffectiveness.

Nine of the 12 coaches in this study coached part-time and held full-time jobs outside of coaching. Many of these coaches indicated that they would have loved to coach full-time but it was not possible financially. This is often the very nature of coaching in Canada, where it is either volunteer or on a contract basis (Reade, Rodgers, Holt, Dunn, Hall, Stolp et al., 2009). As a result, it is not particularly surprising that burnout occurred, as these nine coaches were essentially doing two jobs, with each requiring time and attention.

A 1997 study by Maslach and Leiter classified six areas of organizational risk factors that contribute to burnout. One of these domains includes work overload. One of the many things known about the profession of coaching is that coaches may “find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to satisfy various, and possible conflicting, requests of other people in addition to fulfilling their coaching duties” (Frey, 2007, p. 39). The in-depth interviews with the 12 high performance coaches in the current study revealed that coaching is indeed very complex and demanding. The coaches spoke of the hours dedicated to executing a variety of duties directly related to coaching, such as running practices and attending games,

fulfilling administrative duties, putting together a coaching and support staff, and recruiting. However, they also spoke of countless additional hours for the behind the scenes work of organizing, managing, and keeping a close eye on their athletes. Many of these responsibilities became a source of stress for each of the 12 coaches, which support the findings of Frey (2007). Kallus and Kellman (2000) have noted that “the work environment of coaches involves long hours, demands much mental and emotional energy, and exerts considerable subjective pressure due to standards set by the coaches themselves or by fans and athletes” (p. 214-215), and the findings of the present study support that comment.

Another domain identified by Maslach and Leiter is the community and the social interactions and conflicts that arise. This domain can be translated, for coaches, to the community of assistant and peer coaches, the athletes, and the social interactions that transpire on a daily basis in that community. In this study, it can also be seen as the conflicts with athletes, and athletic directors or board of directors. Many of the coaches in this study talked about issues they faced with their athletes. They spoke of dealing with various conflicts between athletes, athletes with serious personal problems, as well as athletes who did not commit to the team or refused to be accountable for their actions. Often these problems resulted in a need for constant communication with an athletic director, which added stress to the coaches’ regular daily activities, which, in turn, contributed to burnout. As we know from the early work in burnout from Freudenberg (1974) and Maslach and Jackson (1984), burnout is common in those professions that work closely with people and we would suggest that coaching can be portrayed as a ‘helping’ profession.

To expand on the community aspect of the coaching profession and its relationship to the phenomenon of burnout, ten of the 12 coaches felt they lacked support from the organization

they worked for. This lack of support came in the shape of a negative work environment, difficulties with athletic directors or boards of directors who lacked experience and leadership skills, and for one coach, not getting paid on time. Another coach revealed he felt as though he was going to war on a daily basis with the board of directors, as the direction he wanted to take the club did not parallel that of the board of directors. Two other coaches, who worked under the same athletic director, revealed that there were many unnecessary conflicts in the work environment that stemmed from the athletic director's lack of experience and his lack of support for his coaches. Several other coaches said that as a result of limited financial resources, they were unable to hire assistant coaches, athletic trainers, or sport psychologists, or have sufficient financial resources for proper equipment and travel to competitions. One coach became a "bionic" coach as she took on the majority of administrative duties for her team, including setting up all the travel plans, taking on the role of sport psychologist, dealing with the media, and becoming a surrogate parent to many of her athletes. Similar findings were reported by Thelwell and colleagues (2008) in their study of stressors identified by coaches of elite athletes in Great Britain.

A variety of other stressors, such as the pressure to perform and the pressure to meet their own and other's high expectations, often combined with a lack of funding, also contributed to the burnout of the coaches in this study. This finding supports earlier research by Kelley (1994) that found that coaches "not having enough time for coaching and other responsibilities, inadequate and shrinking budgets for program needs, and being a role model for their athletes" (p. 55) were more inclined to have higher levels of stress, therefore increasing the likelihood of burnout.

When asked to talk about strategies that helped them cope with burnout, many of the coaches in the study identified having a support system that helped them through their burnout

experience. The coaches found support from a variety of individuals, including spouses, partners, and fellow coaches. For some coaches, the support system acted as a means by which they could share their feelings and frustrations with someone outside of their workplace, or with other coaches who were going through a similar situation. This support provided the coaches with an opportunity to talk about their difficult time, to talk about something outside of coaching which helped get their mind off coaching and all the issues they faced, and sometimes assisted with the transition from coaching to a career outside of coaching. For three of the 12 coaches, this support helped them in stepping back from coaching as a result of burnout, and then in their return to coaching.

The 12 coaches in this study certainly shared many common issues and concerns which lead to burnout, and there were many shared emotions as well. These commonalities are expressed in the first three major themes. At the same time, within the themes, we can see that while several sub-themes were common to all, other sub-themes were unique to one or two individuals. For example, while all 12 coaches spoke of feeling tired, only one spoke of his burnout encompassing a lack of creativity, and only two spoke of losing the ability to make good decisions. It is this uniqueness within the larger picture that makes it difficult, as the earlier literature has noted, to narrow down this phenomenon to a universal definition of burnout (Dale & Weinberg, 1990; Goodger et al. 2007; Gould, 1996; Raedeke et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the coaches in this study were asked if they could provide a definition of burnout based on their own experiences. They responded by saying that they saw burnout as a loss of passion, as emotional and mental fatigue, and as a sense of collapsing under the pressure. This is not unlike the definition provided by Freudenberger and Richelson (1980), which stated that a burned out individual is “someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause,

way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward” and that “friction is building up, the inevitable result of which will be a depletion of the individual’s resources, an attrition of his vitality, energy, and ability to function” (p. 13). The compilation of burnout definitions provided by the 12 coaches has been combined to provide a definition that encompasses the essential components identified by these coaches: “Burnout is when you push past your limits; you can’t reach the expectations you strive to achieve, and the result is the thrill and passion that drives you, as a coach, to continue this intense commitment to a sport and or a team is gone.”

The coaches in this study were also asked to provide insight into how burnout might be prevented within their profession. Just as previous researchers have suggested (Goodger et al., 2007; Price & Weiss, 2000), several coaches in this study recommended that education on the warnings signs of burnout would help. Several others suggested that building in breaks from coaching, on a regular basis, could help avoid burnout.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of the present study was to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches’ perspectives. Specifically, the main research question that guided this study was: “Tell me about your experience with burnout.” The results identified two key factors, the multiple demands of the profession of coaching and the lack of organizational support (personnel, financial), that contributed to powerful emotions that inevitably led to the burnout of the 12 coaches in this study. Each coach had their own unique story to tell of the frustrations and fatigue that built until it became a tale of burnout and there were a number of common issues faced by all of the coaches in this study. Each of the 12 coaches felt considerable pressure to perform and execute the responsibilities of their coaching jobs. It is an apt comment by Goodger

et al. (2007) that “much of what appears to contribute to coach burnout is contained within the coaching environment, and reflects the time-demanding nature of the role and the intense pressure that coaches find themselves under to produce results” (p. 554). However, in addition to the pressures of coaching, nine of the 12 coaches were coaching part-time and working full-time and had to meet and fulfill copious duties and demands of their two jobs. Many had little support, financially and from a human resources perspective, and several had the difficult task of trying to balance their time between coaching and a family. Therefore, to paint a picture of a coach who may be experiencing burnout, we would see that they have multiple roles because of the nature of the coaching profession, they take on too much because of the passion that drives them to succeed and meet their own and other’s expectations, and a support system that is severely lacking from an organizational standpoint. On top of all of this, coaches and the results of their work are in the public’s eye every day. It should come as no surprise that each of these coaches eventually experienced burnout.

Limitations

One limitation associated with this qualitative study of the burnout experiences of high performance coaches was that it was extremely difficult to recruit coaches who had burned out. Since burnout is not a topic openly discussed among coaches, and there is no readily accessible method by which burned out coaches could be identified, such as a database, it resulted in a small sample size for the present study. Therefore the results should be interpreted carefully, and caution should be exercised in generalizing to a wider population of coaches.

A second limitation has to do with one of the criterion for the study. Coaches who had experienced burnout within the last five to seven years were interviewed, and it is important to acknowledge that those who had experienced burnout a number of years prior to being

interviewed might not have accurately recalled all of the emotions and issues that contributed to those emotions as clearly as those who experienced burnout in more recent years.

Future Research

The findings from this study demonstrate that there are many directions future studies on coach burnout could pursue. There is a need for more qualitative research on burnout in coaches, specifically focusing on capturing first hand experiences from coaches who have recently burned out or who are in the process of burning out.

First, a longitudinal study focusing on a specific sport at one level of competition (i.e. varsity) could be conducted to determine if there is a trend within a particular sport regarding factors that might contribute to burnout. The level or degree of burnout could be evaluated at different times during the season. This type of study could identify if burnout is cyclical, and investigate burnout as it happens, including the causes, symptoms and the individual consequences of burnout for each coach (personal, social, and occupational).

As many of the coaches in this study identified that a support system was important for them as they experienced burnout, it is recommended that research focus on the impact of the support system, from an organizational standpoint (i.e. support received from other coaches, athletic director, etc.) or from a spouse, partner or friends. Such a study could look at the types of support received, how often the coach sought the support of the individual(s), and how this support helped the coach through the burnout experience.

Finally, a study focusing primarily on the causes or precursors of burnout would be beneficial, specifically focusing on personal and organizational factors. When studying personal factors, the researcher could focus specifically on the coach's personality or coaching style. This might help develop a model or theory of what type of coach is more susceptible to burnout, or if

all coaches are equally as vulnerable. When studying an organization, such as a university or a sport organization, it would be imperative to study the demands and expectations placed on the coach and review the administrative structure to determine, for example, if more support should be provided by the administration (i.e. reduce administrative load on coaches) and if additional support staff should be employed (i.e. sport psychologist, athletic trainer).

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

When Coaches Burnout: Understanding the Phenomenon from the Perspective of High Performance Coaches

Researcher: Andrea Read
Institution: University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health Sciences
School of Human Kinetics.

Supervisor: Dr. Penny Werthner
University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health Sciences
School of Human Kinetics

I, _____, have been invited to participate in the Master's research project conducted by Andrea Read under the supervision of Dr. Penny Werthner, from the School of Human Kinetics of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa.

The purpose of the research is to explore the phenomenon of burnout from coaches' perspectives. This research will utilize a qualitative approach to study the experiences of elite coaches in an effort to create an in-depth picture of the burnout experience and its contributing factors.

My participation will consist of two semi-structured interviews, with the possibility of a third, follow-up telephone interview. All interviews will be conducted in English. The first interview will take approximately one hour in length, and will be a telephone conversation. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for me, and will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The first interview will consist of open-ended questions about myself, my past coaching experiences, and will briefly explore my experience with burnout. The second interview will involve a one hour to one and a half hour face-to-face interview and will be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient for me. The purpose of the second interview is to discuss, in-depth, my experiences with burnout. This interview will be also audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. I will be sent a copy of my interview transcript to review and to identify any additions, modifications, or omissions that need to be addressed. At this time, one follow-up interview over land line telephone may be required. This interview will be conducted approximately one month after the initial interview, and will take approximately 10 minutes. The follow-up interview will include clarifying any comments, questions, or ambiguities, and making any necessary changes to the transcribed interview document. This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

I understand that there are numerous benefits to conducting research on coach burnout. My participation in this study will assist in identifying the factors that contribute to coach burnout and to gain an in-depth description and understanding of what is experienced when coaches burn out. I understand that the long term goal of the researcher is to use the information from several national and provincial level coaches to increase awareness and understanding about coach burnout.

I understand that this research deals with personal information about my coaching experiences and that the risks involved of sharing personal information are minimal, and include no form of physical distress, legal or social repercussions, or economic inconveniences. However, should I experience any negative emotions or concerns, I am free to contact any of the National Coaching Institutes, which will provide a list of counsellors and psychologists who are affiliated with each of the centers. A list of the phone numbers and addresses of the National Coaching Institutes is attached to this consent form. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured and respected, participants will be reminded that their participation in this study is voluntary, transcripts of their interview will be identified by a pseudonym, and audio tapes and transcripts will be destroyed after 5 years (in accordance with the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board). I am offered the opportunity to review the transcript of my interview for authentication purposes. This will allow for additions, omissions, and/or modifications of any information that I do not feel accurately reflects my experiences to be addressed. Should I regret disclosing something, the information I shared will be excluded from the database and I will be informed that the information will not be reported in any form of communication.

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents of my interview will be used only for the purposes of this research and that my confidentiality will be respected. My anonymity will be assured by having a pseudonym assigned to me that will identify me on transcripts and research documents. This ensures that my name will not appear on any documents or publication. I have been reassured that my name and information provided during the interview will not be shared with any member of the Coaching Association of Canada, nor any member of a national or provincial sport organizations.

I have been informed that the audio tapes, interview transcripts, and data will be stored in the research supervisor's office to which only the supervisor and researcher have access. As well, the list identifying me will be kept in a separate, locked filing cabinet in the supervisor's office so that no association between a pseudonym and my identity will be possible. The results of this study will be presented in sport and/or coaching journals and at conferences. The data from this study will be conserved for a period of 5 years, after which time, all audio tapes will be cut up and written transcripts and data will be destroyed by shredding.

I am under no obligation to participate in this study. If I choose to participate, I am aware that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, before or during an interview, refuse to participate and refuse to answer questions without prejudice. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be cut up (audio tapes) and shredded (transcripts).

If I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact the researcher or supervisor.

Any information requests about my rights as a research participant may be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1N 6N5, 613-562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

Enclosed are two copies of the consent form, one of which I will sign and return to the researcher and the other I may keep.

I want to review the transcript of my interview. Yes _____ No _____

I wish to receive a summary of the findings of this research, which will be available in April 2009. Yes _____ No _____

Please mail a summary of the results to:

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Coach Burnout Interview Guide

How are coaches at the high performance level in Canada experiencing burnout?

Demographics/Subject Information

#1. Tell me about yourself

- Gender, age, languages spoken?
- Education?
- Full-time or part-time coaching; if part time, what other job?
- Status (single, married, divorced, widowed)?
- Children?

Coaching Information

#2. Tell me about your background in coaching

- Years coaching, sport
- Coaching certification/qualification

3. Tell me about your past coaching experiences

- Position
- Full-time/Part-time coaching position
- Responsibilities
- Level of competition (i.e. varsity, provincial, national)
- Hours per week coaching (Approximate)
- Number teams coaching at a time

#4. Tell me about your current coaching experiences, if applicable

- Position
- Full-time/Part-time coaching position
- Responsibilities
- Level of competition (i.e. varsity, provincial, national)
- Hours per week coaching (Approximate)

Coach/Burnout Information

#5. Tell me about your experience with burnout

- Symptoms/warning signs
- How did it feel, how did you experience burnout?
- How did you know you were burning out, or had burned out?

- Tell me how burnout affected your ability to coach, how if affected the athletes you coached
- How long was it between when you started experiencing the symptoms till you burned out or acknowledged you were burned out?
- How did you cope with your burn out - counseling, medication, time...
- Factors that might have contributed to your burnout? (divorce, death in the family, new position with increased responsibilities, demoted).
- In hindsight, were there any factors that you could have controlled?
- Have you fully “recovered” from burnout? → If yes, have you returned to coaching? If so, see questions regarding current/past coaching information (can compare past before burnout and after burnout).
- Tell me about any support you received (family, team, community, sports association).
- Did you miss coaching/did you go back to coaching?
- Looking back, what might you have done differently to avoid burning out (e.g. what skills/techniques/strategies would you employ) → recommendations. What you learned?

#6. How would you define burnout?

#7. What do you suggest can be done to prevent coach burnout?

#8. Did you have a support system within or outside of coaching? If yes, describe your support system and how it helped you through your burnout.

APPENDIX C**Ethics Approval**

Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

June 19, 2008

Penny Werthner
School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

Andrea Diane Read

RE: When Coaches Burnout: Understanding the Phenomenon from the Perspective of High Performance Coaches (H 03-08-09)

Dear Doctor Werthner and Ms. Read,

You will find enclosed the Health Sciences and Science REB ethical clearance for the abovementioned study.

During the course of the study, any modifications to the protocol or forms may not be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. You must also promptly notify the REB of any adverse events that may occur.

This certificate of ethical clearance is valid until June 19, 2009. Please submit an annual status report to the Protocol Officer in June 2009 to either close the file or request a renewal of ethics approval. This document can be found at:

<http://www1.ottawa.ca/sci/epg/epg04/ethics/ethics.html#faq>

A copy of this approval will be sent to research services, if necessary.

If you have any questions, you may contact the undersigned at the number (613) 562-5387.

Sincerely yours,

German Zongo
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Dr. Daniel Lagarec, Chair of the Health Sciences and Science REB



Université d'Ottawa University of Ottawa

HEALTH SCIENCES AND SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This is to certify that the University of Ottawa Health Sciences and Science Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical approval of the research project entitled **When Coaches Burnout: Understanding the Phenomenon from the Perspective of High Performance Coaches (H 03-08-09)** submitted by Doctor Penny Werthner of the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa and her master's student Ms. Andrea Diane Read.

The Board found that this research project met appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement and in the Procedures of the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Boards, and accordingly gave it a Category 1a (approval). This certification is valid one year from the date indicated below.

Germain Zongo
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Dr. Daniel Lagarec, Chair of the
Health Sciences and Science REB

June 19, 2008

Date