

1 **Team Culture as a Function of Team Success**

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3 *Sport has gained significant importance globally, acting as a refuge for*
4 *individuals to express themselves freely. A strong "sporting culture" within*
5 *teams is crucial for their success, as it defines their identity and promotes*
6 *teamwork towards common goals. The primary aim of this study was to*
7 *explore the best sport coaching styles and establish a desired team culture by*
8 *synthesizing existing literature to gather and synthesize the existing body of*
9 *knowledge related to coaching styles and team culture in sports. The review*
10 *focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and other academic sources*
11 *published in the last two decades to ensure the inclusion of contemporary*
12 *research findings. The following data were systematically extracted: (1)*
13 *coaching styles: specific coaching approaches or behaviors discussed (e.g.,*
14 *autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, etc.); (2) team*
15 *culture: key themes related to team dynamics, shared values, communication*
16 *patterns, and group cohesion; (3) outcomes measured: metrics used to assess*
17 *the effectiveness of the coaching style (e.g., athlete performance, team*
18 *cohesion, psychological outcomes, satisfaction); (4) findings: summary of*
19 *results and recommendations for coaching and team culture development.*
20 *This article concludes by synthesizing themes from the literature into*
21 *recommendations and suggestions for team coaches and team leaders to*
22 *establish and maintain a positive team culture to enhance the likelihood of*
23 *team success.*

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25 **Keywords:** *Sport success; coaching; leadership; sport performance; sport*
26 *psychology*

27 28 29 **Introduction**

30
31 Sport, over the past decades, has become increasingly influential for people
32 around the world. As the popularity of sports grows, interest in them becomes
33 more detailed. Fans have come to be concerned about not only what is seen
34 superficially but also what is happening behind the games, such as personal
35 interests, coaches, stories about players, game styles, and strategies (Kang-Won,
36 2021). A ‘sporting culture’ is considered one of the most prominent contributors
37 to the success of an organization (Cole & Martin, 2018). A team or organization
38 will not be as effective without a strong culture as it could be with one.

39 A positive sporting culture refers to an environment within sports that
40 promotes respect, inclusivity, integrity, teamwork, fair play, and enjoyment,
41 while discouraging negative behaviors such as cheating, violence, and
42 discrimination (Australian Sports Commission, n.d.). This type of culture
43 focuses on the well-being of athletes, encourages personal and collective growth,
44 and fosters a sense of community and mutual respect among participants,
45 coaches, and fans. In a positive sporting culture, success is defined not only by
46 victories but by the development of character and relationships.

47 Key aspects of a positive sporting culture include (see Australian Sports
48 Commission, n.d.) (a) respect for others - encouraging mutual respect among

1 teammates, opponents, coaches, and fans, creating an environment of
2 understanding and tolerance; (b) fair play - prioritizing honest competition,
3 where winning is not achieved by breaking rules or manipulating outcomes; (c)
4 inclusivity - ensuring that sports are accessible to people of all backgrounds,
5 abilities, and genders, promoting diversity and equal opportunities; (d) health
6 and well-being - focusing on the mental and physical well-being of athletes,
7 encouraging balanced lifestyles and stress management, and discouraging
8 overtraining or harmful practices; (e) leadership and mentorship - coaches and
9 senior players are expected to lead by example, guiding younger or less
10 experienced athletes, and fostering a growth mindset. The ultimate purpose and
11 outcome goal of a positive sporting culture is to foster consistent winning and
12 peak athlete performance from the positive sporting culture ingredients.

13 A team's culture is about the conduct and behavior of everyone involved in
14 the organization, it is working together towards shared objectives and, as such,
15 is an immediately identifiable part of the group's identity (Hughes, 2018). A team
16 culture will also need influential personnel that will step up and become
17 architectural leaders for the rest of the team members as well as the coaches and
18 fans to recognize as someone fully embodying the team's culture throughout
19 their everyday life.

20 Reflecting the team culture the most are team captains. Captains are trusted,
21 respected, encourage teamwork, suitable role models, have a high sense of
22 belonging to the team, competitive, unyielding, and courageous (Gökdoğan et
23 al., 2023). For the culture and the players to function and be successful, a good,
24 strong-minded coach respected by all is important. Players and staff alike would
25 probably not perform up to their full potential if they do not trust their coaches
26 and teammates. Trust is the basis of all human relationships and can be said to
27 be the most fundamental power to continue the relationship. In addition, trust is
28 accepted as an attitude toward the formation and maintenance of human
29 relationships (Lee et al., 2023).

30 Bearing in mind the importance of team culture on athlete and team success,
31 the purpose of this paper is to inform athletes along with current and prospective
32 coaches on what an effective team culture is, how to build an effective and long-
33 lasting team culture, the type of personnel required in order to carry out the team
34 culture, and how to enforce the team culture into action in order to achieve
35 success on the field as well as off it.

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38 **Method**

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40 The primary aim of this study was to explore the best sport coaching styles
41 and establish a desired team culture by synthesizing existing literature. This
42 section outlines the research design, data collection strategy, data analysis
43 approach, and steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

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1 **Research Design**

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3 This study utilized a systematic literature review design to gather and
4 synthesize the existing body of knowledge related to coaching styles and team
5 culture in sports. A systematic literature review was chosen due to its ability to
6 provide a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous approach to examining
7 previous research. This design is particularly effective in identifying trends,
8 gaps, and consensus on best practices and the theoretical foundations
9 underpinning sport coaching and team culture. The review focused on peer-
10 reviewed journal articles, books, and other academic sources published in the
11 last two decades to ensure the inclusion of contemporary research findings.

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14 **Search Strategy**

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16 To identify relevant studies, a broad search strategy was implemented across
17 multiple academic databases including PsycINFO, SPORTDiscus, ERIC
18 (Education Resources Information Center), Scopus, and Google Scholar. The
19 search was conducted using specific keywords and phrases such as "sport
20 coaching styles," "effective coaching in sports," "team culture in sports," "coach-
21 athlete relationships," "leadership in sports," and "team dynamics." Additionally,
22 reference lists of key articles were manually searched to identify relevant works
23 that may not have been captured in the database searches.

24 Inclusion criteria for selecting studies involved: (1) empirical research
25 focused on coaching styles and team culture in any team sport; (2) studies
26 published between 2013 and 2023 to ensure relevance and contemporary
27 findings; (3) studies written in English; (4) peer-reviewed journal articles,
28 dissertations, and books; (5) research that provided insight into the relationship
29 between coaching style, team culture, and team performance. Exclusion criteria
30 included: (1) studies that did not focus on team-based sports or coaching; (2)
31 studies that were not peer-reviewed (e.g., conference papers, opinion pieces); (3)
32 articles focused primarily on individual sports or non-coaching aspects of sports
33 performance. Ultimately, 104 articles were reviewed and thematically analyzed
34 in this study.

35 For each article included in the review, the following data were
36 systematically extracted: (1) coaching styles: specific coaching approaches or
37 behaviors discussed (e.g., autocratic, democratic, transformational,
38 transactional, etc.); (2) team culture: key themes related to team dynamics,
39 shared values, communication patterns, and group cohesion; (3) outcomes
40 measured: metrics used to assess the effectiveness of the coaching style (e.g.,
41 athlete performance, team cohesion, psychological outcomes, satisfaction); (4)
42 findings: summary of results and recommendations for coaching and team
43 culture development.

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1 **Data Analysis, Thematic Analysis**

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3 A thematic analysis approach was employed to identify and analyze patterns
4 across the studies. This analysis was conducted in several stages: (1)
5 Familiarization with the Data: All selected articles were carefully read and reread
6 to gain a comprehensive understanding of their findings; (2) Coding: The
7 extracted data were coded based on recurring themes related to coaching styles
8 and team culture. Each study was analyzed for specific references to coaching
9 behaviors, their perceived effectiveness, and their connection to positive team
10 culture outcomes; (3) Theme Development: Codes were grouped into broader
11 themes, which were then organized under two main categories: (a) Effective
12 Coaching Styles and (b) Team Culture Development. Each category contained
13 sub-themes related to specific styles of coaching and cultural practices that were
14 identified as effective; (4) Integration of Findings: The final step involved
15 synthesizing the themes from the included studies to provide an overarching
16 understanding of the best practices for sport coaching styles and the
17 establishment of a desired team culture. This synthesis aimed to highlight areas
18 of consensus, as well as any notable discrepancies or gaps in the literature.

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21 **Ethical Considerations**

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23 As this study is a literature review and does not involve primary data
24 collection from human subjects, ethical concerns related to participant consent
25 and data privacy were not applicable. However, all included studies adhered to
26 ethical guidelines in the original research, and proper citation was given to all
27 sources used in the review process.

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30 **Thematic Analysis**

31 **Culture**

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33 Culture is a very important quality that all sports teams should incorporate
34 into their philosophies (Pennington, 2017, 2019). A culture requires strong
35 values that the majority of the team agree on and are capable of carrying out
36 every day; if this fails, then the culture will not work as efficiently and successes
37 that may be desired will be much harder to achieve (Godbout, 2023). Success
38 often has absolutely nothing to do with good luck but typically has much to do
39 with a good culture (Hughes, 2018). A conscious understanding of culture can
40 better ensure that its influence is strong and positive (Cole & Martin, 2018).
41 Knowing that a good culture will be strong and positive, being able to identify a
42 team's culture and who shows it and embraces it the most is important
43 (Pennington et al., 2018; Strand & Slater, 2023). Identification and culture are
44 thought to be valuable notions that can reveal the behavior of individuals in the
45 sports organizations or clubs to which they belong, along with their sense of

1 belonging, their feelings, their commitment and whether they feel valued (Çevik
2 & Onag, 2023).

3 Identified by Campbell (2021), there are three main pillars that can identify
4 what a winning culture is founded upon. The first pillar is *personal growth*.
5 Using techniques like individual development planning, each team member is
6 able to look at their existing career and map out where they want to go and how
7 they may want to get there (Campbell, 2021). The second pillar is *diversity and*
8 *inclusion*. A team that focuses on diversity and inclusion will not only provide
9 alternative perspectives and ideas but will also provide opportunities that might
10 not otherwise be available (Campbell, 2021). The third pillar is *connect,*
11 *collaborate, and having fun*. This pillar emphasizes activities that ensure
12 everybody is well informed, in good contact, and can openly share in a safe
13 environment (Campbell, 2021).

14 When a person part of a team feels they are trusted and backed by the entire
15 team, they will perform much better and closer to their full potential. This applies
16 to the coaches as well, knowing they have their full support from their players
17 will give them more confidence when coaching and mentoring the players,
18 allowing for better understanding between players and coaches. Communicating
19 what the end goal is and making sure everybody is on board and pulling in the
20 same direction is the foundation of a winning culture (Campbell, 2021).

21 22 23 **Styles of Culture**

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25 There are many different styles of cultures a team may pursue, but the
26 decision may depend on many factors. It may depend on the type of players on
27 the team and how they behave amongst themselves, how the head coach wants
28 to run the program themselves, or the number of resources the team has to be
29 successful. Once the ability to establish culture is achieved, it is important to
30 understand what values should comprise that culture (Cole & Martin, 2018).
31 Recent research has identified numerous styles of cultures, however, there are
32 five main cultural styles that have been found in numerous business settings that
33 have been translated for many amateur and professional sports teams that have
34 been implemented as their day-to-day philosophies. These cultural models are
35 listed and described in the following sections.

36 37 38 **The Star Model**

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40 A star model is when a team gets the best player in the league and wishes it
41 will create success on its own. It has been observed that executives have hired
42 from elite universities or other successful companies and gave employees huge
43 amounts of autonomy (Hughes, 2018). This translates to sports as occasionally
44 some teams will simply “invest” in the best players and coaches that are available
45 by offering contracts that their competitors just simply might not be able to. Not
46 only do they attempt to get the best personnel, but they will also acquire and

1 maintain the best facilities possible using economic resources far beyond their
2 competition. This model can have been seen to achieve success very well by big
3 sports clubs, for example, like Real Madrid Football Club and the New England
4 Patriots American Football Team, but this model has been shown how it can
5 equally bring tremendous failure. If one piece falls out of place or does not work
6 as well as it once did, the whole team can come crashing down. This was seen
7 when Cristiano Ronaldo won four Union of European Football Associations
8 (UEFA) Champions League titles and then left Real Madrid in 2018. This was
9 also observed when Tom Brady won six Super Bowls and then left the New
10 England Patriots in 2020. Both of these teams have endured very rough hardships
11 and now have had to spend years trying to rebuild the success they once had in
12 the aftermath of radical change.

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15 **Autocracy and Bureaucracy Models**

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17 The autocracy and bureaucracy models are fairly similar in structure and
18 how they are run; the only difference between them is who is running it at the
19 very top of the chain of command. In the bureaucratic model, cultures emerged
20 through thick ranks of middle managers (Hughes, 2018). There will be a small
21 group of equal people at the top that form a common ground on decisions that
22 they will make together that will impact the club. This model has most famously
23 been used by Liverpool Football Club, who uses a six-man committee to
24 influence who the team can transfer in and out of the club and decides their next
25 coaches to take over the team. An autocratic structure is similar, except that all
26 the rules, job descriptions and organizational charts ultimately point to desires
27 and goals of one person (Hughes, 2018).

28 An autocratic culture suggests one influential person at the top has an impact
29 on everything around them. An autocracy has shown previously success is very
30 possible, but it can become dangerous when it becomes about just one person.
31 Sir Alex Ferguson was a Scottish manager who was the manager for Manchester
32 United Football Club for 26 years and saw the most success by any manager in
33 the history of soccer, winning 38 major trophies and most notably winning 13
34 Premier League Titles. However, when Sir Alex retired in 2013, Manchester
35 United did not know the next steps to move forward out of Sir Alex Ferguson's
36 shadow, having been nowhere near the level they were at when he was in charge
37 (Hughes, 2018).

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40 **The Engineering Model**

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42 An engineering model describes how a team or organization who have
43 similar personnel who are somewhat average programs that over a period of
44 time, gradually build themselves up over time, and becomes better through very
45 technical expertise in specific areas (Hughes, 2018). When everyone comes from
46 a similar background and mindset, one can rely on social norms to keep everyone

1 on the same path (Hughes, 2018). Success in this culture may take longer than
2 others, but signs of success can be seen at times throughout the process. This has
3 been the case for teams like Arsenal Football Club when they hired Mikel Arteta
4 in 2019. When Arteta came in, Arsenal was in a bad spot with very average
5 players. Arteta used his technical expertise to build up the players and the club
6 over a span of almost three mediocre seasons to a team that is now a consistent
7 title contender. A unique scenario contains Athletic Bilbao, a soccer team in
8 Spain, is similar to what an engineering model represents. Bilbao's transfer
9 policy for bringing in players is that they will only sign a player if they are from
10 one specific region in Spain. Simply put, the club only signs players who were
11 born or raised in the Basque Country, a region of Spain that has a distinct
12 language and culture (Grant, 2023).

13 This approach means that every single player that has played at the club
14 since the 1930s has some connection to the club and its heritage. The policy is
15 not just a marketing gimmick or a temporary strategy – it is a deeply ingrained
16 philosophy that has shaped the identity of the club for 80 years (Grant, 2023).
17 While this approach does have obvious downsides to it [such as...?], seeing how
18 the club will not be interested in signing any other player around the world unless
19 they are from that region, it has shown very good success. The talent pool in the
20 Basque Country is relatively small compared to other parts of Spain, which
21 means that Athletic Bilbao cannot compete with the likes of Barcelona or Real
22 Madrid in terms of star power or transfer fees, however, apart from giants like
23 Real Madrid and Barcelona, Athletic are the only team that can boast the feat of
24 never being relegated from La Liga, the number one league in Spain (Grant,
25 2023).

26 27 **The Commitment Model**

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29 The commitment culture in sports leadership refers to the creation and
30 maintenance of an environment within a sports team or organization where
31 individuals (athletes, coaches, and staff) are deeply engaged and dedicated to the
32 collective goals, values, and success of the team. In this culture, the commitment
33 goes beyond mere participation or compliance; it is characterized by a strong
34 sense of personal responsibility, passion, and unwavering support for the team's
35 objectives and vision. An example of a commitment culture in sports leadership
36 can be found in teams like the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team. The
37 leadership within the team emphasizes "sacrifice" and "selflessness" for the good
38 of the group. This culture encourages players to put in their best efforts
39 consistently, even when faced with personal challenges or setbacks. The leaders
40 within the team ensure that each player understands their role and the importance
41 of their commitment to the team's legacy and success.

42 The commitment culture has been known to be the most difficult type of
43 culture to establish, but it has been found that once it has been established with
44 the right personnel carrying it out, the success that follows it is tremendous
45 (Hughes, 2018). Hands down, a commitment culture outperformed every other
46 type of management style in almost every meaningful way (Hughes, 2018). In a

1 business setting, it was found that the companies that installed a commitment
2 culture were 22% more profitable and employees found that a pay raise of 33%
3 was not required in order for them to stay as they found the business to be so
4 good for them that they did not need it (Hughes, 2018). One of the main reasons
5 why commitment cultures were successful, it seemed, was because of the sense
6 of trust that emerged among workers, managers, and customers, which enticed
7 everyone to work harder and stick together through the setbacks inevitable in
8 any industry (Hughes, 2018).

9 Commitment cultures are driven by a clear sense of purpose and behaviors
10 that become the rules of the membership to become a part of that organization
11 by putting equal people at the organization's center. The most notable usage of a
12 commitment culture is Football Club Barcelona. After performing in a very
13 below average manner, the club decided change was necessary, and brought in
14 Pep Guardiola. Guardiola and Barcelona immediately installed a system that
15 required 100% determination, effort and hard work from every player for the
16 good of the team, not individually. This culture also does not just go through the
17 team, it must go through the entire club in order for it to work. Breadth occurs
18 when the culture is present in all of an organization's functional areas from top
19 to bottom (Cole & Martin, 2018). The success Barcelona Football Club achieved
20 after the installment of the commitment culture and the hiring of Pep Guardiola
21 was staggering. Barcelona won eight out of the next 10 La Liga's, three UEFA
22 Champions Leagues, and Barcelona's success cycle was 2.5x longer than the
23 average success cycle in the world of football, lasting roughly 10 years (Hughes,
24 2018).

25 A potential limitation or weakness of the commitment culture in sports
26 leadership is the risk of burnout and overtraining among athletes. In a
27 commitment-driven environment, where there is a strong emphasis on
28 dedication, discipline, and sacrifice for the team's success, athletes may feel
29 pressured to consistently push beyond their limits. This can lead to a number of
30 negative outcomes, including burnout and unrealistic expectations. While the
31 commitment culture can foster high performance and cohesion, coaches and
32 team leaders need to recognize these potential downsides. It is important for
33 leadership to balance commitment with adequate support systems, opportunities
34 for rest and recovery, and attention to the holistic well-being of athletes to
35 prevent these negative outcomes.

36 37 38 **Formal and Informal Leaders**

39 Athlete leadership has been defined as "an athlete, occupying a formal or
40 informal role within a team, who influences a group of team members to achieve
41 a common goal" (Newman et al., p. 2, 2019). Formal leaders are typically
42 coaches or captains who have official authority granted by the team structure or
43 organization. They make strategic decisions, give instructions, and enforce rules.
44 Whereas informal leaders do not have an official title but hold influence over
45

1 their teammates due to their experience, personality, or relationships. Their
2 authority is derived from trust, respect, or social dynamics within the team.

3 As formal leaders, team captains are asked to fulfill predefined tasks, while
4 informal leaders are expected to take on external responsibilities such as the
5 social environment, which is formed as a result of human relations and
6 interactions (Gökdoğan et al., 2023). A team captain is someone that can be
7 chosen by the team, the coach, or both to represent the team as a strong and
8 influential person. A team captain is considered to be a transactional leader.
9 Transactional leadership has been described as an exchange of requests or needs
10 to be satisfied between the leader and the followers (Kang-Won, 2021). This kind
11 of leader works to clarify the roles and task requirements of followers,
12 recognizes the needs and desires of subordinates and make it clear that if they
13 work to fulfil their job requirements, then those needs and desires will be met
14 (Kang-Won, 2021). Team captains act as a source of peer leadership within the
15 team, often displaying social support, positive feedback, and democratic
16 decision-making behaviors (Newman et al., 2019). By effectively developing
17 team captains as formal leaders, they are equipped to provide leadership in sport
18 and are more likely to transfer leadership skills to other domains of their lives
19 (Newman et al., 2019).

20 Even though studies have found that both forms of shared leaderships are
21 very beneficial for group and team dynamics, a formal leader position can
22 become a good platform for athletes to develop even more, as well as continue
23 to practice their leadership skills and behaviors (Newman et al., 2019). An
24 informal athlete leader is one who emerges as a leader within the group as a
25 result of their behavior and interactions with team members but does not
26 necessarily assume a position such as team captain (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2020).
27 People that could qualify as informal leaders would be asked to fulfill duties as
28 task and social leaders. Task leaders solve problems, make decisions, and also
29 make referrals for team goals, while social leaders build trust by providing
30 psychosocial support to the team (Gökdoğan et al., 2023). A leader on a team
31 does not necessarily have to be a team captain, they can just be someone that the
32 whole team can trust and respect and who will hold one another accountable.
33 However, some leaders, whether they be formal or informal, may not be born
34 natural leaders. They may need someone, like a coach or mentor, to help develop
35 them into good leaders.

36 Formal and informal leaders may sometimes experience conflict due to
37 differences in their roles, influence, and approaches to leadership. Conflicts
38 between formal and informal leaders in sports teams typically arise from
39 differences in authority, leadership style, decision-making, and the role each
40 leader plays within the team's dynamics. Formal leaders may feel undermined if
41 informal leaders influence the team without following official directives. On the
42 other hand, informal leaders might resist formal leaders' authority if they believe
43 their influence and contributions are not acknowledged or respected. This
44 conflict could manifest in disagreements about team strategy, training methods,
45 or player roles.

1 An additional potential conflict could arise if a formal leader's directive
2 approach may clash with the informal leader's more democratic or player-
3 focused style. Further, if/when team loyalty is split between formal and informal
4 leaders harming overall team unity, thus team trust, communication, and
5 chemistry. It is crucial for formal leaders to recognize and value the influence of
6 informal leaders, while informal leaders must respect the formal leadership
7 structure. Communication, mutual respect, and alignment of goals can help
8 resolve potential conflicts and ensure that both types of leadership complement
9 each other for the benefit of the team.

10 11 12 **Coaching Leadership**

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14 A head coach and coaching staff will always have a huge impact on players'
15 performance on the field and off. It is vital for coaches to express their wishes
16 across to their team, so it is crystal clear on what they expect and hold as the
17 standards. The learning process, success, motivation and achievements in sports
18 influences leadership style, because a positive relationship with the coach
19 provides motivation and desire for success (Capric et al., 2023). While the
20 players are the ones actually playing in the games, it is up to the coaches to set
21 up the team as best as possible by creating good tactics and selecting the right
22 players to carry out those tactics to give the team the best chance to succeed.
23 Coaching staffs experience significant pressure in their roles due to the
24 multifactorial nature of team's performances including match outcomes and
25 competition ranking during the season (Gómez et al., 2021). Coaches and owners
26 are people in a sports club that can be considered transformational leaders.
27 Transformational leaders communicate a clear vision of the potential and priority
28 of an organization. The vision helps followers see what an organization can
29 accomplish, helps followers understand their purpose in the organization, and
30 helps guide followers' actions and decisions (Kang-Won, 2021).

31 32 33 **Player-Coach Relationship**

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35 The overall quality of coach-athlete relationships has been shown to
36 positively associate with the coach's leadership effectiveness on athletes'
37 outcomes (Zhao & Jowett, 2023). Trust between coaches and players is the basis
38 of all interactions, and performance varies depending on the level of trust in
39 coaches (Harmon et al, 2019). The influence a coach has on the athletes they
40 train is synonymous with the direction in which the athlete's life in the sports
41 world will evolve, stagnate, or disappear (Nicolae et al., 2023). A strong
42 relationship with good communication between a player and their coaches
43 drastically improves both the athlete and the coach's development, skills, and
44 chances of success with each other. The degree of relationship with the coach
45 perceived by the athlete directly or indirectly affects the individual's motivation,
46 emotion, and behavior as well as the exercise-related perception (Lee et al.,

1 2023). A coach should be capable of motivating their players for action, in which
2 case, it will get the players energized and ready, giving a better chance of success.
3 Besides motivation, all the mental processes and psyche of the athlete are
4 involved in the sports activity, and the coach has the role of supporting and
5 potentiating their qualities, as well as diminishing and inhibiting the defects as
6 much as possible (Nicolae et al., 2023).

9 **Coaching Changes**

11 At the elite level, the assessment of a coach's ability in sport is mainly based
12 on win-loss records within national and international competitions with poor
13 success leading to a coaching change at any stage of the season (Gómez et al.,
14 2021). A coaching change in sport is an extreme, but frequently occurring
15 phenomenon (Gómez et al., 2021). The process of changing coaches has many
16 steps that have to be met in order to bring someone new in and depending on the
17 severity of the situation at a club, the process of finding a new man for the job
18 can either take a few days, weeks, or even months. Many sports teams will not
19 even wait until the end of the season to make a coaching change. If a team is
20 normally very good and they start to have a bad season, the club might decide to
21 part ways with that coach in order to bring someone in to prevent the situation
22 from getting worse during the season. A 'manager boost' is when a team will
23 bring in a new coach and that coach will immediately start to produce positive
24 results for the team. At the end of the season, these results produced during that
25 manager boost may be the difference between either relegation from a league or
26 a much-needed financial boost for the club.

27 An example of this manager boost method was seen recently with the 2022
28 Philadelphia Phillies Major League Baseball team. In the midst of the 2022
29 season, the Phillies fired their manager, Joe Girardi, standing at an
30 underwhelming 22-29 record to start the season. The Phillies then, on the same
31 day of firing Girardi, hired Rob Thomson as interim manager (Skiver, 2022). An
32 essential part of Thomson's managerial style was giving players opportunities to
33 overcome slumps and mistakes (Skiver, 2022). With this management and trust
34 in his players, Thomson led the Phillies to an improved 87-75 record, securing
35 the last playoff wildcard spot and making it all the way to the World Series in
36 the process (Skiver, 2022).

37 There have been several theories proposed that could substantiate the effects
38 of a possible coaching change. The common-sense theory proposed that a
39 coaching change would disrupt the current negative trend with improvements in
40 subsequent performances via invigorated players and fan base (Gómez et al.,
41 2021). The vicious-circle theory proposed that a coaching change would affect
42 the internal club/team relationships and improve subsequent declining
43 performance (Gómez et al., 2021). The ritual scapegoat theory proposed that
44 firing a coach would decrease stakeholders' frustration with the team's poor
45 performance and subsequent performances perceived to be better (Gómez et al.,
46 2021).

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3 Discussion

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5 It has been suggested the true qualities for a sports team of any level of
6 competitiveness if success is desired within that program. A team must require a
7 strong and fully supported culture style that the whole team can agree on and be
8 willing to express every day in their lives both on and off the field of play. Also,
9 developing leaders and captains massively increases the chances of team success
10 as captains command respect, accountability, and hard work from their
11 teammates and coaches, and represent these qualities to lead by example. Finally,
12 a successful coach is someone who is respected by their players and surrounding
13 staff members. They are people that are able to establish and maintain a good
14 player-coach relationship and become someone that people can go to with any
15 concerns about the team or possibly something in their personal life that they
16 may need advice for.

17 The authors call for athletes and coaches to use the aforementioned
18 suggestions to build new and productive cultures that hold strong values and
19 standards for everyone in the program to be successful on and off the field. They
20 should build players to become team leaders and captains that are strong,
21 respected, and hold everyone - including themselves - accountable, without
22 being self-absorbed. Coaches should have communication skills and effectively
23 use those skills with their players and be capable of acting in bad situations and
24 resolving them in a manner that is mature and respectful. These topics warrant
25 further study and discussion. Of particular interest would be an exploration of
26 individual and team sport differences regarding coaching styles and
27 philosophies. Further, a comparison between men and women's sports, with a
28 coach of the opposite gender would yield value to the coaching community.

29 The following sections outline recommendations on methods and
30 techniques on how to select the right team culture, to develop as a coach, and
31 also how to develop team leaders.

32

33

34 Creating the Right Culture

35

36 Some may regard the coaching staff as purely responsible for the type of
37 culture needed to influence their team and for the team to execute, but that is not
38 always the case (Cole & Martin, 2018). A player-driven program gives the
39 athletes on the team the opportunity to run the culture and have the coach just be
40 able to hold the players accountable to what they want to have as the team
41 standards. For sports teams at the professional, amateur, and collegiate levels, a
42 strong and clear vision of a culture might be a better advantage when attempting
43 to attract new recruits and staff. It is recommended for the team and the players
44 to get together and to identify and develop a team 'why' statement, trademark
45 behaviors, and keystone habits that will represent the values of the culture. Have
46 the team ask themselves one question for each of the aspects, to which they can

1 contribute multiple answers. First, ask, “why do I play this sport?” This question
2 is for the why statement. Next, ask, “who are you/what describes you when you
3 are at your best?” This question will be for the trademark behaviors. Finally, ask,
4 “what do you do when you are at your best?” This question will be for the
5 keystone habits. Once these questions have been answered by the entirety of the
6 team, have each member of the team select off of the list of answers for each
7 question which ones they may agree to the most. This will dwindle the number
8 of responses until each question has few answers on which everybody agrees are
9 the most important and become the standards of what the team now holds. This
10 will allow everyone to be a leader for this new culture since it is something that
11 they can all agree on for the most part. Cultural norms define how an
12 organization will define leadership and leaders create and manage culture (Kang-
13 Won, 2021).

14
15

16 **Developing Team Leaders**

17

18 The proper development of team leaders will not happen overnight; it will
19 take time. Therefore, it is recommended that players and coaches’ study some of
20 the great team captains in sports history - current and retired - and understand
21 what they do for the team and why they do it (Newman et al., 2019). In addition,
22 coaches should ask the players who they believe are the most qualified to hold
23 the team accountable to the coach’s standards. This will allow the coaches and
24 prospective team leaders to gain trust and confidence in their abilities. Then,
25 influential players begin to gain the respect and attention of teammates, making
26 them a team leader.

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28

29 **Developing Coaching Skills**

30

31 Leadership coaching is promising for leadership development and its
32 practice and has become a widely used intervention for leadership development
33 (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Therefore, it is recommended prospective coaches
34 undergo leadership training and professional development (Ladegard & Gjerde,
35 2014). Some teams may have many individuals from similar places and
36 backgrounds, but some may not, and coaches must be prepared for those times.
37 It is important to understand that a diverse and inclusive team means a coaches’
38 staff may not share in those same motivations or be driven by the same things;
39 and that is actually a good thing (Campbell, 2021). In this case, prospective
40 coaches should use their resources and enquire other coaches about how they
41 have dealt with complicated situations in the past and be able to build on those
42 situations into their own practices.

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44

1 **Collective Responsibility in Team Leadership and Team Culture**

2
3 While not every player on a sports team needs to be a formal leader, having
4 leadership qualities within the team and demonstrating the concept of *collective*
5 *responsibility* can benefit the overall dynamic and performance of the team.
6 Whether every player should be a leader depends on the context, but ideally,
7 every player can contribute to the team’s leadership in some way.

8 Among the benefits of leadership qualities in every player are (a) Shared
9 Responsibility: When leadership is not solely concentrated in a few individuals,
10 it spreads across the team. This can help with decision-making, accountability,
11 and collective responsibility, ensuring the team functions cohesively even when
12 the formal leader is not around; (b) Team Cohesion: When players exhibit
13 leadership qualities (such as being proactive, motivating others, holding
14 themselves accountable, or offering constructive feedback), it can strengthen
15 relationships among teammates. It fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose,
16 where every individual feels valued and responsible for the team’s success; (c)
17 Empowerment and Confidence: Encouraging leadership in every player helps to
18 empower athletes. Players may feel more confident in their roles, which can lead
19 to increased self-belief and motivation. This is especially important in situations
20 when team members are faced with challenges and need to take initiative; (d)
21 Leadership Development: Not all players may initially see themselves as leaders,
22 but encouraging leadership in all players helps them develop these skills,
23 whether it’s on or off the field. Over time, this prepares players to step up and
24 lead in different situations, whether it’s guiding younger teammates or stepping
25 into leadership roles as the team evolves; (e) Diverse Leadership Styles: Every
26 player brings a unique perspective and personality to the team, and leadership
27 can take various forms—whether it’s vocal leadership, lead by example, or
28 providing emotional support. Having diverse types of leadership within the team
29 can cater to different needs and situations.

30 However, there are potential drawbacks and associated challenges with each
31 player expecting leadership responsibilities. For instance: (a) Overlapping Roles
32 and Confusion: Leadership roles may blur if too many players try to take charge,
33 leading to confusion or mixed messages. A team needs a clear structure where
34 players know who is officially responsible for decision-making (typically the
35 coach and team captain). When too many players try to assume leadership roles,
36 it can create unnecessary competition or conflicts over direction; (b) Not
37 Everyone Is Comfortable Leading: Some players naturally excel in leadership
38 positions, while others may feel more comfortable as supporters or followers.
39 Forcing players who aren’t inclined to take on leadership roles could lead to
40 discomfort or resentment. Leadership should be about fostering natural strengths
41 and qualities, not forcing everyone to fit the same mold; (c) Balance Between
42 Leadership and Team Roles: Each player has a specific role within the team (e.g.,
43 defense, offense, strategy, etc.). If everyone is too focused on leading, they may
44 neglect their primary responsibilities, which can affect overall performance.
45 Leadership should enhance a player’s role rather than detract from it; (d)
46 Potential for Conflict: When too many individuals assume leadership

1 responsibilities, it can lead to power struggles or tension within the group. This
 2 may reduce cohesion and impact the team’s ability to function as a unified whole.
 3 A balance must be struck between encouraging leadership and maintaining
 4 harmony within the team.

5 Every player on a team does not need to be a formal leader, but it can be
 6 beneficial for all players to embody certain leadership qualities, such as
 7 accountability, responsibility, and support for teammates. Leadership should be
 8 cultivated in a way that complements each player’s strengths, helping to create
 9 a positive and collaborative team culture. However, there should also be clear
 10 role distinctions, and a balance must be maintained so that leadership does not
 11 become fragmented or lead to conflict. A good approach is to allow leadership
 12 to emerge naturally, with clear structures and guidance from formal leaders
 13 (coaches, captains) to ensure the team functions smoothly.

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