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*Towards the development of an online athlete leadership training program: The testing of a shared athlete leadership inventory*

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The importance of leadership is recognized by Canadian sport-governing bodies such as U Sports who state that their vision is to “inspire Canada’s next generation of leaders through excellence in sport and academics (U Sports, 2013, p. 10). While we agree with these sport governing bodies, athletes (Gould & Voelker, 2010) and coaches (Gould et al., 2006) have identified lack of leadership as a frequently cited problem among athletes. One of the issues is the lack of inventories measuring the leadership behaviours learned during these training programs. Athlete leadership researchers have assessed the leadership behaviours of athletes with inventories that were originally developed from other fields of research (e.g., military leadership). The approach typically adopted was to assess athlete leadership by rating the behaviours of a few selected athlete leaders (e.g., captains). The problem with this approach is that athlete leadership is a shared phenomenon consisting of numerous athletes (Loughead, 2017). In fact, within the definition of athlete leadership is the notion that the leadership behaviours exhibited by athletes are shared amongst numerous teammates (Loughead et al., 2021). Yet, the inventories used to assess athlete leadership do not fully capture the shared essence of this construct. Grille and Kauffeld’s (2015) Shared Professional Leadership Inventory for Teams (SPLIT) fills this need of a shared leadership measurement tool. However, this inventory was originally developed for the business setting and not for the sport athlete domain. Thus, the purpose of this study was to modify the items of the SPLIT and test its validity using an athlete population. First, the items of the SPLIT had to be transformed to fit an athlete leadership context using a think-aloud protocol with athletes. Second, an expert panel was utilized to evaluate and provide suitability of the items for an athlete population. Third, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on intercollegiate athletes to assess the SPLIT’s factorial validity. The results of the CFA offer an alternative inventory for assessing the leadership behaviours of athletes.