

Costa, Guilherme

Queen's University

Mia KurtzFavero, Alex Murata, Tiffany Tse, Niël Strydom, & Jean Côté

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Exploring the Implementation and Practices of Parent-Coach Dual-Role Strategies

Interpersonal relationships with parents and coaches are crucial for young athletes' continued participation and development through sport. Despite this, positive parenting and coaching is not a straightforward task as it requires a range of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Within youth sports, parents are commonly required to volunteer to sustain sport programs. In fact, it has been reported that approximately 80% to 90% of youth sport coaches in the United States were also parents of a child on their team (Holt & Knight, 2014). As such, the current study aimed to: (a) explore parent-coaches' perceptions of the barriers they faced as a result of their dual-role in being an effective youth sport coach and (b) highlight any strategies parent-coaches might use to navigate their unique position. Fourteen parent-coaches were recruited for semi-structured interviews regarding their experiences. Through reflexive thematic analysis, ten themes were constructed and organized based on Côté and Gilbert's (2009) three pillars of coaching effectiveness (i.e., sport-specific, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge). Overall, parents faced a variety of challenges in attempting to provide their children with positive experiences while also giving equal attention to all the other athletes on the team. Furthermore, parents suggested that the implementation of parent-coach specific training could be helpful in aiding them to remain effective as a coach despite their dual-role as parents. Overall, parent-coaches seem ill-prepared to effectively navigate their unique position within the youth sport landscape. As such, youth sport organizations and coach developers should consider these issues in the creation of future resources and programming to better youth sport experiences for all stakeholders involved.