



UNDERSTANDING DESELECTION IN COMPETITIVE FEMALE YOUTH SPORT

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WHAT WE DID

- Deselection (or being “cut”) is the rejection of an athlete from a competitive sport team based on the coach’s decision.
- Many athletes in Canada are deselected but there is limited information on how coaches deal with the deselection process and how athletes and their parents cope with being cut.
- Through interviews with coaches, athletes, and parents, this research identified strategies used by coaches to carry-out the deselection process and ways that athletes and their parents coped with deselection.

WHAT WE FOUND

- **The deselection process:**
 - Coaches explain selection criteria and expectations at a pre-tryout meeting.
 - Coaches assess players and document decisions during the tryout.
 - Coaches inform players of decisions, provide feedback, and handle interactions with parents after the tryout.
 - Coaches review their procedures and consider the impact on athlete development.
- **Coping with deselection:**
 - Parents shield athletes from negative emotions and take responsibility for coping
 - Athletes and parents work together to rationalize and reframe the situation
 - Athletes and parents use personal strategies and athletes focus on their team and training, while parents seek broader social support
- **The long-term implications of deselection:**
 - Deselection is often remembered as a challenging experience that affects athletes' self-esteem and identity
 - Athletes experience personal growth through humility, renewed focus, social support, perspective, and optimism.
 - They develop compassion, motivation, perseverance, and coping skills for future challenges.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **To support athletes and parents during deselection, coaches can:**
 - Hold pre-tryout meetings with athletes and parents to explain how selections will be made and what is expected.
 - Involve other coaches in the evaluation process to help ensure fairness and support for deselection decisions.
 - Deliver deselection news in private, face-to-face meetings and provide feedback to the athletes.
- **To support athletes and coaches during selection processes, sport organizations can:**
 - Educate parents on how they can support their children through deselection.
 - Set up guidelines to protect coaches when interacting with parents after a deselection decision has been made.

