

**BALTIC COACH/PARENT/YOUTH EDUCATION
DEVELOPMENT COURSE FOR WELLBEING IN FOOTBALL**

Nordplus Adult project

“Skip post-Soviet, approach Nordic”

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Positive thinking as a tool of success and wellbeing

Well-being in youth sport is a growing topic , nevertheless practises never asserts it. Practicing sports at a youth level is recognized as an important opportunity for growth and development but also an experience that conversely can prove to be tiring and cause discomfort. Sometimes expectations and pressures make it a risky experience. This is emphasized even more when looking at very popular and spectacular sports, such as football in some European Countries particularly Baltic states ; practicing football often solicits the hope of becoming champions one day and thus being able living thanks to the beloved sport. Football coaching in Baltic states still is based on harsh principles — "objective" results are favoured over individual development, kids experience a lot of pressure, only the strongest survive. How do young football practitioners feel? What role do relationships with significant others belonging to the world of sport and extra-sport play on the well-being of young athletes? On which specific aspects of psychological well-being are these relationships based? Are there any differences between elite and amateurs levels coaching? These are the questions upon which this paper focuses, considering a sample of young football practitioners. Analysis reveals a strong and positive influence of some dimensions of the relationships with significant others on psychological well-being , specifically team effort, coach closeness, and parental learning climate. Moreover, elite players perceive significantly better relationships than sub-elite and amateurs and have significantly higher levels of psychological well-being . Those results provide a first evidence for the importance of good relationships within and outside sport for an effective development of youth football players since they positively influence players' psychological well-being , which is higher in elite players. It emerges the necessity to further investigate different aspects of psychological well-being and to deepen

the knowledge about the meaning of relationship in developmental athletes according to a psychosocial approach.

Practicing a sport, especially at a young age, can involve meetings and formative experiences or vice versa turn out to be a tiring experience and can sometimes also be a cause of deep discomfort if not managed well. Relationships of trust versus feelings of loneliness, aggregation versus exclusion, a sense of improvement versus de-motivation and a sense of self-doubt. Furthermore, the more the level of competition increases, the more sports commitments increase and the conciliation with studies becomes more complicated. Usually the expectations of the young person and of the context increase.

The increasing demands from the sport setting during the developmental years of athletes challenge them with always increasing pressures, like more and more hours of training and competitions, along with the necessity to leave the family home at a very young age and to lead an “adult life” during a period of life which is particularly delicate for both their growth (physical, social, and psychological) and their athletic development can be hard to face without adequate relational support; such pressures could negatively impact on the development of athletes, in particular on their well-being.

For this reason, deepening the theme maintaining a focus on the well-being of young athletes seems relevant in coherence with a holistic perspective, and specifically with the psychosocial approach, which emphasizes how the well-being or malaise of each person is influenced by his life context and in particular by the quality of relationships with people significant to him/her.

The importance of relationships in the developmental path of young athletes is currently an increasingly important issue. Better relationships are linked to an easier recovery from injuries, positive sport participation, increased self-confidence, and better performance outcomes, and as a consequence, lower

levels of burn-out, players who perceive their environment to be supportive and have a focus on long-term development are less likely to suffer from stress and experience greater well-being. From the questionnaires, it is clear that positive relationships with significant others (e.g., coaches, teammates, parents, or siblings) have been identified as one of the most important resources for young athletes' development. For example, increases in perceived autonomy support from the coach over two competitive seasons have been related to increases in youth elite football players' well-being and decreases in their ill being. In addition, the coach- and peer-created motivational climate has been related to youth athletes' moral attitudes and well-being, with positive associations shown with a task oriented climate and negative associations shown with a performance-oriented climate.

The proposed project course aims to make a contribution to the understanding of the well-being of young players within the Scandinavian context with the particular focus not so much on the influence of a specific relationship (with the coach, with parents), but on the intertwining, the set of different relationships. In our project course, we tested the influence of relationships with significant others on the youth football players, comparing players of different competitive level (i.e., professional, semi-professional, and amateur), to identify possible differences.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The sample is made up of 415 male young soccer players from two professional (League A and B, N = 127), two semi-professional (League C, N = 162) and four amateur (N = 128) Scandinavian youth soccer academies, aged between 14 and 20 years (M_{age} = 16.2, SD = 1.51), mainly situated in Norway. The clubs involved in the research were selected by convenience, using personal

project participant contacts. The majority of them were born in Scandinavia (91%), while a minority were foreign (8.4%) or had dual nationality (2.4%). Most players lived with their parents (87.6%), a minority in a specific residential structure provided by the club (6.7%) or with one parent (4.3%).

Measures

Socio-Demographic Information

Participants were asked to give details about their age, month of birth, nationality (also for their parents), siblings, parental educational level, and some details related to sport, like sports practiced in the family, other sports practiced in the past, sports practiced by siblings, and current injuries.

Relationship with the coach

The coach–athlete relationship questionnaire had been used to measure the link between athlete and the coach. The coach–athlete relationship questionnaire consisted of 11 items that measure three dimensions: commitment (e.g., “I am committed to my coach”), closeness (e.g., “I like my coach”), and complementarity (e.g., “When I am coached by my coach, I am responsive to his/her efforts”).

Youth football players’ wellbeing and relationship

Four-point scale has been used, ranging from (1) “completely disagree” to (4) “completely agree.” It measures six dimensions, namely: self-acceptance (e.g., “In general, I feel confident and positive about myself”), positive relations with others (e.g., “I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns”),; autonomy (e.g., “It’s difficult for me to voice my opinions on controversial matters”), environmental mastery (e.g., “I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to get done”), purpose in life (e.g., “I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for

myself ”), personal growth (e.g., “I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world”).

Relationship with parents

Project partners have used the parent-initiated motivational climate questionnaire . It is made of 28 items divided for father (14) and mother (14), which measure three dimensions: learning/enjoyment climate (e.g., “I feel that my mother/father. . . encourages me to enjoy learning new skills”); worry conductive climate (e.g., “I feel that my mother/father. . . makes me worried about performing skills that I am not good at; success without effort climate (e.g., “I feel that my mother/father. . . believe that it is important for me to win without trying hard”),. For all 28 items, players answer twice to the introductory segment “I feel that my mother/father. . .,” and items were scored on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) “no at all” to (5) “very much.”

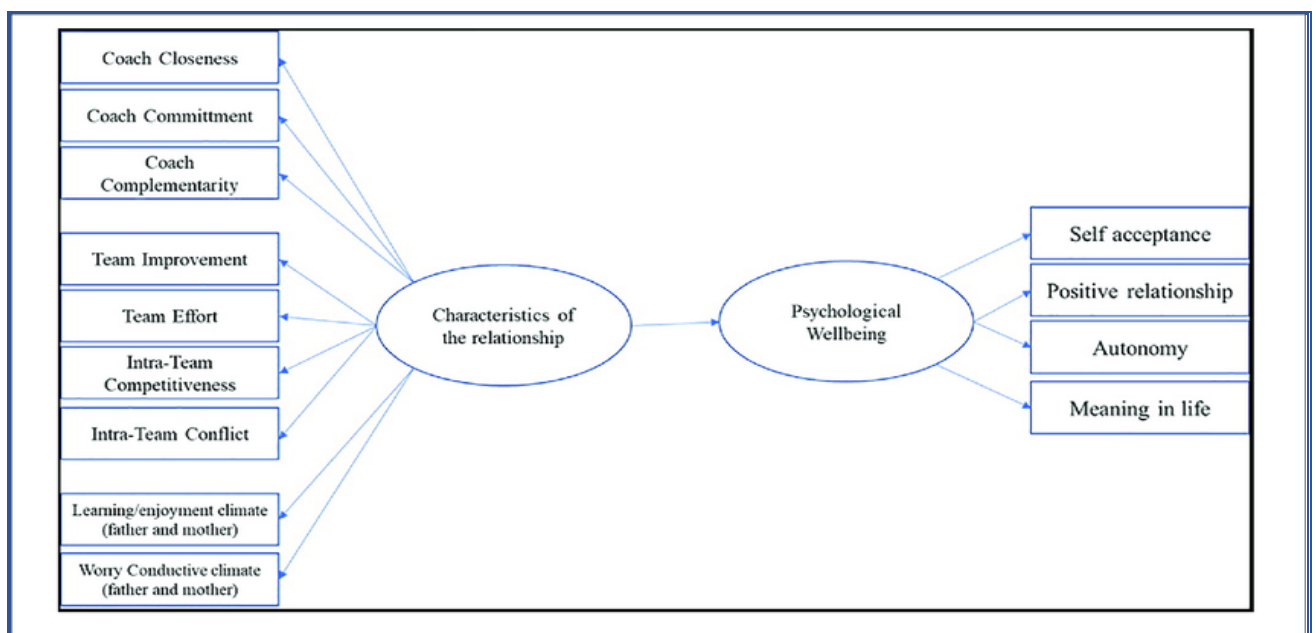


Figure 1 Impact of relationships on the psychological wellbeing of players

Analyses of the mean for each dimension considered in our analysis show that positive relationships with others has the highest score among the positive well-being dimensions. Parental learning climate has the highest score among

the two dimensions considered, closeness with the coach has the highest score among the three dimensions of the scale and finally team effort has the highest score among all the other dimensions considered.

In this project course, we wanted to examine how the relationships with significant others influenced the psychological well-being of young football players. We analyzed for the first time the combined influence of three main significant others, namely, the coach, team, and parents.

Results of our analysis confirmed our hypothesis about the combined influence of relationships with significant others on the psychological well-being of young athletes, in particular on their self-acceptance and their sense of having a purpose in life.

Our analysis showed that perceiving effort and a focus on improvement within the team, having a close relationship with the coach and the promotion of a learning attitude by parents strongly influence players' psychological well-being, specifically to enhance their self-acceptance and sense of purpose in life. Moreover, our analysis also revealed that this influence was particularly strong in those players who were enrolled in professional and semi-professional clubs: this can be a possible sign of a very high degree of sensitivity toward the importance of relationships in those contexts.

Let us now explore the meaning that these specific characteristics of relationships can have in relation to the promotion of psychological well-being in a young player. First, young players emphasize the importance of teammates' motivational climate in their developmental path, more than the current research seems to have investigated.

Our analysis showed that young players consider effort and focus on improvement within their team as the most effective relational elements for their psychological well-being, being even more important than their coach or

parents. A task-oriented motivational climate leads athletes to appreciate improvements, increase efforts, and consider errors as a part of the learning process and growth, leading everyone to be more satisfied with their sporting outcomes and remain engaged in sport for longer.

This result seems to be particularly important in a team sport like football, as the improvement of one player could lead to the improvement of the overall team, thus supporting also the development of leadership and social skills. Moreover, the ability to stay focused on improvement and showing effort are also important when facing difficulties or important changes in life, like career transitions from junior to senior, specifically as a resource within sport context and as part of coping skills in relying on social support. Such findings support the importance of deepening the role of the peer motivational climate in the development of young athletes, especially in team sports. Second, results highlighted the role of the coach–athlete relationship in promoting psychological well-being. In particular, the relevance of the emotional closeness among other dimensions shows that feeling close to the coach can positively influence not only the performance, but also the psychological well-being of youths. This could be more effective for their athletic career since such orientation allows sport engagement and continuation for a time, better and more effective goal setting, and higher levels of satisfaction from sport participation. Nevertheless, the quality of coach–athlete relationship has been found to be more effective within a long-term time frame: thus, the longer the relationship, the better the results are. In the clubs where data were collected—and in general in Scandinavian clubs—coaches usually change the team they train every year; thus both players and coaches need the ability to create a positive relationship within a very short time frame. If such an ability could be easier for adults, this would not be the same for adolescents who need to be supported in such aspects of development, especially in early adolescence.

Third, the parental motivational climate that promotes learning is considered as the most supportive for psychological well-being. Specifically, elite players perceive their parents as more supportive for that climate than other groups do. In general, both parents emphasize a learning climate, as suggested by the results of previous studies. Those studies consider the motivational climate promoted by parents as a precursor of self-determined motivation toward sport, engagement, and higher levels of satisfaction with sport. Moreover, parent-initiated motivational climate was found to be a significant predictor of late-season self-esteem, trait anxiety, and autonomous regulation, even higher than the coach-initiated motivational climate. Interestingly, we found a difference in the weight of father and mother promotion of motivational climate, and this appears to be a curious merging issue regarding the different parental approaches to sport. The results of our analysis allowed us to do another more general reflection. Adolescence is the period of life when new models are looked for to exit from the parental idealization phase and find new adults to trust and aspire to as role models. Coaches are the main landmark for youth in their sporting career: they are responsible for selecting players, organizing training to develop the best, deciding players for matches, and many other aspects that can help players to progress in their career, even more than parents. Our results show that coaches, next to teammates, assume a key role within the developmental path of young athletes as the relationship with them has been considered necessary for their psychological well-being and sense of growth. Therefore, both coaches and parents need to be aware of such issues since they can be supported in developing a set of new relational skills to deal with athletes in this delicate phase-of-life transition. Results of the comparison of the three competitive-level groups confirm that elite players have higher levels of psychological well-being. Although the life of elite young footballers is busy and demanding, the value and achievement for them is high, they are in the place where they would like to be (generally top club academies), doing what they love

more. Specifically in our study elite athletes perceive higher levels of meaning in life, have higher levels of closeness with their coach, and also perceive that their parents promote learning climate in sport more. Such results underline that not only relationships impact the psychological well-being of players but also that elite ones have higher levels of psychological well-being and better kinds of relationships with significant others. We consider this as evidence of our initial hypothesis—having better relationships within and outside sport can be considered as some of the psychosocial factors that support players to develop more effectively, as they promote the psychological well-being, which in turn supports them in staying involved in sport and facing transitions and difficulties better.

The Mental Health Effects Of Deselection Within Youth Footballers

A Guide For Parents & Guardians

The aim of this resource is to outline the mental health effects academy deselection can have on youth football players and identify ways in which parents can best support child through this challenging period.

During the work on the project, partners found out that 55% of recently deselected academy players were suffering from clinical levels of psychological distress within 21 days of being released.

Some of the levels of psychological distress experienced by youth players as a result of deselection have been so severe that it has been deemed clinical, requiring urgent action from mental health professionals.

Reasons why youth players are deselected:

Ability – The player may just not have the required skill set;

Competition – The club only has limited number of contracts to keep players;

Injuries – Players with frequent injury issues are less likely to be kept on;

Attitude – Players with poor attitudes towards training, players and coaches;

Physical Development – The players age and stage of development plays a major role in many deselections;

Coaches Opinion – The coaches at one club may think that player isn't right for them but coaches at other clubs may think otherwise;

Academies Finances – The club may not have the finances to keep the player on even if they really want to.

The mental health effects of academy deselection on a child

Below are some of the potential mental health conditions and feelings a child may experience as a result of academy deselection:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – flashbacks to the deselection
- Low levels of self esteem
- Loss of identity
Loss of confidence
- Feeling distressed
- Feeling worried
- Feeling dissociated
- Lower Levels of Socialengagement

- Feeling humiliated/embarrassed

Ways in which parents can support child's mental welfare

- Consoling your child in the immediate aftermath of being deselected is a key way as parents/guardians can support child with this heart-breaking news. As being there to listen and communicate with child at this time is paramount.
- After deselection players often experience feelings of loss, rejection and confusion therefore by having loved ones around them to provide them with warmth, support and a shoulder to lean on is extremely beneficial in supporting your child.
- If your child is struggling mentally with coming to terms with being deselected, encouraging and arranging for your child to see a councillor has shown to be extremely beneficial for helping the individual come to terms with this life changing news.
- Many deselected players have used this support mechanism as councillors can provide the player with professional support in dealing with any mental health issues they are suffering from by showing an understanding of the individual's personal world.
- Past deselected players have also highlighted that they greatly benefit from the warmth, respect and unconditional positive regard that counsellors can provide them with.
- Encourage your child to continue playing. Encourage your child to NOT GIVE UP!!!
- Just because one club doesn't think your child is good enough it doesn't mean all other

clubs think the same.

- Encourage and support your child to keep playing and improving while seeking out trials with other academies to enhance the chances of them being offered another professional contract with another club.
- Remind your child of current players who have been deselected from academies in the past who have made it all the way to the top .

From Post-Soviet to Nordic coach training method

Success key aspects of Scandinavian football

The study sought to investigate the organizing of player development in Scandinavian youth football has been carried out during the project. In this chapter, the study findings and their application are discussed in relation to relevant theoretical and empirical research. The study show that the structural changes leads to a new direction for player development . The age for players to enter the academy was raised, new leaders and coaches changed the organizational structure of the teams, and a research and development group was created. The cultural position of the in survey enclosed club in their local environment has increased the attention from media and other sport clubs. The club has made an explicit statement about how they want to develop players based on a nonlinear pedagogical approach.

The first main finding relates to how the club concern for children's health and wellbeing is expressed through

(a) the recent changes in the academy structure (e.g. late entry, possibilities for diverse sport experiences during childhood and parallel pathways), and

(b) the explicit focus on values and life-skills (through e.g. communication with parents, coaches and the wider public, the appointment of a "value worker" within the organization, and through promoting the development of life-skills in the everyday practice activities. For example, the changes to the academy structure have made the club's explicit values explicitly in line with the ethos of the Norwegian sports movement Children's rights in sport emphasize a sport-for-all perspective whereas the child's psychosocial development, health, well-being and enjoyment should be the focal point of sports participation. All of the Scandinavian countries have adopted a sport-for-all perspective as the main focus of their sport policy. This policy has shown to be both successful, resilient and competitive, as the Scandinavian countries have high participation in organized sport and international success compared to most other countries, including Baltic states. Scandinavian sports is that sport should promote democracy, voluntary involvement, and good health, among other factors.

However, even though the clubs has raised the selection age and entry to the academy, it does not mean that challenges related to the structure and nature of a football academy evaporate. In the Scandinavian sports model, the general attitude is against early selection and player development in the form of disciplined and specialized training. The attempt to encompass other objectives than elite development are becoming

more and more rare in professional football. For example one of Swedish football clubs presented a planned elite effort based on structured talented identification from the age of nine. The kids who were “identified” would be provided with extra practices by professional coaches, receive media practice, mental counseling, and specialized nutrition. The president of the Swedish Sports Federation commented that the initiative was not in line with the values that should characterize youth sports. The criticism reflects how the professionalization of youth sport is a controversial theme. While such initiatives are far from unique, there is a general idea that they are not representative of the ethos of the Swedish sports movement. While it is clear that children’s health and wellbeing are an expressed concern, the second main finding relates to how the club attempts to facilitate and develop. The project findings show that the values and basic assumptions embedded in the organizational culture clearly influence the organizational structure of academy football. The coaches and academy officials conscious use of language illustrate how the club downplay athletic talent and place a stronger focus on development. In the youth academy, the word talent is rarely used. There is a focus on creating a practice environment where children and adolescents are encouraged to play and experience. Moreover, players are expected to help each other both on and off the field, facilitated by how coaches emphasis the development of psychosocial skills and good conduct. By raising the age of entry for the academy to age 13 years the club promote early diversification pathways. This is very different to most football academies where increased professionalization has resulted in earlier selection and specialisation. It also challenges the historical, social and cultural beliefs prevalent in Scandinavian football culture. Thus, the coaches this study emphasized how it is challenging to do things differently when it is different to the culturally resilient beliefs about player development in football. Parents and

players who feel the need for earlier specialization and professionalization can move to a different club or pay for commercial player development programs. Challenging the view of early specialization in football is difficult when the sport has increasingly become more competitive. To prevent this, the clubs try to be transparent and collaborate with all the involved stakeholders in order to facilitate a shared understanding of how the principles that underpin organization and practice. For all players not selected to the academy, the club offers all players the opportunity to continue to play football on teams organized within the club but outside of the academy. The club organizes their pathways in a way that provides players with the opportunity to participate in several sports. However, players selected to the academy have to specialize around the age of 13. However, the clubs strive to be flexible and allow players to take part in other sports also after entry to the academy. Early sampling has been shown not to hinder elite-sport participation in sports where peak performance is reached after maturation, for example, in team sports such as ice hockey, basketball and baseball. Research has suggested that children are likely to learn emotional, cognitive, and motor skills through more diverse sport experiences, skills that can prove valuable to their later investment in sport. Therefore, missing practices in the academy because of attending other sports will not have negative implications for the player, such as reduced playing time in games. The Norwegian youth football coaches have found that players who played more games reported lower levels of stress related to performance compared to players with less playing time, showing how playing time is important for their psychosocial development.

Furthermore, when players are used to having the same amount of playing time, this could potentially lead to players not developing the skills necessary to cope and grow in the face of adversity because of lacking experience in dealing with such situations. Examples of such adversity include coping with being benched,

put off the team, or deselected from a player development camp. Focusing on the psychological skills that facilitate successful talent development, is essential that the athlete is provided social support, which ensures that adversities are interpreted and managed as positive growth experiences. Through this approach, youth athletes can develop the necessary psycho-behavioral coping skills. From the age of 13 years, the academy players are a part of a selection process throughout adolescence where the players experience an increased pressure to develop and perform because this enables entry to the next level. Coaches and staff believe that an effective environment for player development should facilitate that individuals learn and grow from criticism.

During practice in the academies, the coaches focus on how they use feedback and how players interact with each other. The use of feedback can help players adopt a growth mindset, which is beneficial for player development. A growth mindset is fostered through a type of feedback that focus on factors that the student or athlete are in control over such as their work effort or stamina .The feedback that contributes to a growth mindset is characterized by having direction, and by encouraging the intention behind an action. In Scandinavia, the focus is on feedback that supports individual decision-making, and there is a consensus among coaches and staff that solutions and creative behavior on the field are related to how players interpret information. For example, the use of feedback builds upon how players can exploit space, move on the field, dictate the tempo of the play, and position themselves in a way that provides better opportunities for effective individual decision making, these examples illustrate the pedagogical approach of the club. Talent development environments can be designed to maximize the benefits of challenges in the environment, while showing support, coaches also need the ability to take a step back and let players solve the problems themselves. The

input from the coaches is not directed to telling players what to do and how to solve a technical task. Rather, coaches ask questions and give instructions on how the club wants to play and by holding players accountable to the club's values. While this study does not investigate the motivational climate, it is reasonable to believe that the coaching behavior and use of feedback may contribute to autonomy-supportive coaching behaviors. Autonomy-supportive coaching behavior has been demonstrated to be beneficial for psychosocial development and continued participation in sports. The third main finding relate to how the specific theoretical understanding of skill acquisition and pedagogical approach underpin all practice activities. Here, the player development model as a whole and the micro-structure of practice is facilitated through principles from nonlinear pedagogy principles from the nonlinear pedagogy-based approach are used to guide how the coaches utilize instructions and feedback, evaluate development and performance, and structure practices. The basis for practice design is based on the club values and the type of players they wish to develop (creative, imaginative players who work hard). This basis influences analysis of performance, the instructions given during practice and guides coaching behavior. Players are developed through game-centered training that does not separate the perception and action in skill execution. Here, perception and action in refers to the ability of the performer to use the information available in the practice environment to support their decision-making and movement. In comparison to a nonlinear approach, traditional training methodology usually divides sport-specific training into either technical or tactical training where skills are practiced in isolation from the game contexts where they occur. Many studies have focused on how coaches can manipulate specific constraints in order to influence the development of specific technical and tactical skill. A similar approach to practice design is often used in Scandinavian clubs. The

assumption is that small-sided and modified games with numerical superiority or inferiority in the attack makes it more likely to enable players' to transfer their skills to the specific performance context. A strong emphasis is placed by Scandinavians on the importance that the ideas and concepts from their game-based approach were implemented in a manner that made the coaches effectively utilize the fundamental principles. aim to develop players. The Scandinavian clubs have a clear philosophy for values, player development, and practice design that coaches are meant to follow. The project partners provided an examination of what motivates sports coaches in Scandinavia. Interviewing 13 coaches in different sports and levels of competition the study found that coaches' motivations were dependent on their connection with the sport, coach and athlete development, external influences, and internal influences. Related to external motives, the high performances coaches in the study expressed a feeling of pressure to achieve success according to predefined performance in the environment, such as institutional goals. While Scandinavians aim to focus on development there is still an omnipresent pressure on the coaches to develop players that can meet the standard of performance that is required in the first team. Because of the strong policy and implementation, a challenge in Scandinavia is to provide coaches with the fulfillment of autonomy. For example, importance of also fulfilling coaches' psychological needs is sustaining their motivation and learning. If Scandinavians does not provide coaches with enough autonomy and creative freedom concerning practice design, use of feedback, and choices related to player development this may inhibit the fulfillment of autonomy and be detrimental to coaches' motivation.

Scandinavians have suggested that coaches realize their ambitions only through the success of the athletes for whom they are responsible. As coaches can

never gain absolute control of how their players develop, the policy objectives in Scandinavia might provide coaches with an unrealistic, and to a degree, unattainable goal for player development. In the case of the academy, there may be a challenge for coaches to develop players who collaborate instead of competing because the nature of academy football is to get selected to the next level, sometimes at expense of their teammates.

During the research, project partners have discussed ethical practice for positive coaching in athlete development, arguing that effective coaching needs to think critically about problem-setting and problem-solving in sport. The culture in Scandinavia works to enable regular discussion and mutual assistance both on and off the field to further enhance the development of coaches and players. As Scandinavians have chosen a clear policy of how they aim to develop players, it seems important that the norms and taken-for-granted ways to act are continuously scrutinized in order to further promote organizational development.

Concluding thoughts

The organizational structure of the Scandinavian youth football academies has recently gone through structural changes that have had a major impact on how they organize player development, their pedagogical approach and training content. The main findings of this study show how Scandinavian clubs attempt to align all activities related to practice and competition with the explicit values of the clubs applying a clear pedagogical approach based on a game-centered

skill acquisition model and utilizing the principles of nonlinear pedagogy in practice. The organizing of player development in Scandinavia is an attempt to avoid the “one-size-fits-all” approach that traditional models of athlete development, skill acquisition and coaching are based on. The new Scandinavian player development model challenges common norms, ideas and beliefs about athlete development in football, present in and around Scandinavia and the international world of football. Reflecting on and questioning the common norms, ideas and beliefs of athlete development in football are necessary for the long-term development of players. The present study was also conducted in a club which is still going through structural changes. By undertaking a follow-up study would provide additional information about the consequences and implementation of change to the youth academy, as would a longer period of participant observation. In order to develop a better theoretical understanding of athlete development, one needs to go beyond the mere descriptive nature of the environment success factors model. However, studies should always provide rich descriptions of the context-specific conditions that facilitate and constrain successful player development and long-term sport participation in football.

Parent – Children relationships

Despite large amounts of child sport participation, research suggests that this activity is not always associated with positive outcomes for youth. Therefore project partners have carried out the study examining factors that might contribute to discrepant findings associated with youth sports participation. Specifically, parental pressure and support in competitive soccer families and its relation to their children’s general emotion regulation were examined. Participants were 91 parent-child dyads (49 males, 42 female, 67 moms, 23 dads) with children between the ages of 8-12

years . Children completed several self-report measures on their parent's pressure and support behaviours in general and in football, as well as on their own regulation of anger, sadness, and worry. More parental pressure in football was marginally related to more sadness dysregulation in children, although this relationship was no longer significant after accounting for general parenting pressure. Results indicated that more support in football was related to more dysregulation of worry. However, this relationship only emerged after including general support in the model. Additionally, more pressure in football was marginally related to less coping with worry after controlling for general parenting behaviors. A significant interaction indicated that more pressure was related to less coping with worry at low levels of support, whereas more pressure was associated with more coping with worry at high levels of support. However, these results should be interpreted with caution due to nonsignificant simple slopes. Implications for parenting in sports and the socialization of emotions within specific domains are discussed. Due to its achievement-based focus, youth sports can serve as a context for excessive stress due to various factors, such as failure, peer rejection, inappropriate adult behavior, anxiety, and conflict. Contextual factors, such as parenting behaviors, may influence the child's perception of sports-related stressors and the child's affective experience within the sport and may have a moderating influence on child outcomes associated with sports participation. Some specific parenting behaviors that may be influencing children's experiences and perceptions are parental pressure and support. Due to the high rate of negative experiences and stress that children may be faced with when competing in sports, parents may exert an influence on their child by either helping them ameliorate the stress by providing unconditional support, or they can become an additional stressor by intentionally or unintentionally placing pressure on their child to succeed . Children may also look to parents' behaviors to determine appropriate and inappropriate ways to handle stressful

situations. These support and pressure behaviors may be impacting the stressful experiences that children are encountering within sports, which in turn could be contributing to the prevalence of both positive and negative sports-related outcomes.

Pressure/Support

Parents serve multiple roles in their child's sport participation and experience. They provide opportunities, influence the child's interpretation of their sports experiences through their own reactions and attitudes, and serve as a role model as to how one should behave within a sports context. Within a high stress, competitive sports environment, parents may frequently be put in situations where they have the opportunity to provide their child with emotional support and serve as an "interpreter" of the situation which can influence the child's perception of the experience. If a parent has an emotional reaction to an event, this in turn can influence the child's reaction, feelings, and beliefs about the incident. Youth are motivated to be competent, and positive feelings are experienced when efforts to be competent are successful, whereas a lack of success leads to more negative emotional states. Children's goals that they set for themselves have been shown to be significantly related to their perceptions of their parents' expectations

Parental support in sports that is not contingent on success may lead to more feelings of competence and more positive emotional states. Supportive adults may be crucial for positive development in activities and parental support in sports and satisfaction with their child's participation has been associated with more

activity and higher levels of self-esteem. However, not all parents may take these opportunities to serve as a supportive role for their child. One third of youth (questionnerred in Baltic states) reported their parents as a source of moderate or forceful pressure, and over one quarter of youth reported that their parents “forced” them to compete, many of which indicated that they were not happy with that pressure and felt apprehensive of their parents’ reactions after performing poorly . This parental pressure may be due to a variety of factors. For example, some parents may believe that expressing disappointment for poor performance will result in motivation for better performance in the future. There is also a concept of “achievement by proxy,” which, when applied to a sport setting, suggests that parents may pursue prospects for their own financial or social benefit, such as professional or scholarship opportunities, social status, or braIn addition to the initial effects of parental pressure, these parenting behaviors may be more problematic when prolonged. Although stress in sports can come from a variety of situations, such as poor coaching, negative team dynamics and peer interactions, goal achievement, and amount of time and effort required, most children have the option of removing themselves from these stressful situations by joining a new team or switching to a new sport. However, parenting practices within sports settings will likely

follow the child across teams and different sport choices, leading parent-related stress to remain. In addition, parents' views of their support and pressure behaviors towards their kids in sports have been shown to significantly differ from the amount of support or pressure that their child perceives regarding rights.

By investigating these parental influences within this specific context, we can find ways to minimize the negative impact of stressful situations that children may encounter in their sports participation and promote positive emotional development.

Ninety-one parent-child dyads were recruited from youth soccer teams in the project partner state areas- Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Finland. There were roughly an equal number of boys and girls (42 females, 49 males), and there were more mothers than fathers (67 mothers, 23 fathers, 1 missing) that completed the study. There were 31 mother-daughter dyads, 36 mother-son dyads, 13 father-son dyads, and 10 father-daughter dyads. Children were between the ages of 8-12.

Parents completed several demographic questions on their relationship to the child, information about children's age, race, sex, and family, as well as information on SES (assessed by a single item, "On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for you to pay your monthly bills?").

Football involvement

Parents were asked to answer several items related to their family's involvement in soccer, such as their time and financial involvement, and the

importance of the sport to their child. Children were also asked to complete similar items on their family's football involvement. The demographic and football involvement questions can be found in Questionnaire No1 and No 2.

Demographics and Football Involvement – Parent

Today's Date: _____

Time you are filling this form out: _____ AM PM (circle one)

What team is your child playing with in this tournament?

What age group? _U- _____

Where do you live?

City: _____ State: _____

Is this city urban, suburban, or rural? (Please circle one)

What is your relationship to the child participating in the study?

- a. Biological mother
- b. Biological father
- c. Stepmother
- d. Stepfather
- e. Other _____

Are there any other people that play a parenting role in this child's life?
(Examples: spouse, ex-spouse, stepmom, stepdad, live-in significant other)?

Is this person or are these people currently living with the child?

If yes, is this person or are these people living with the child part-time or full-time?

Is this person or are these people also involved in the child's sport participation?

What is your child's birth date (MM/DD/YYYY)? _____

What is your child's sex? _____

Does your child have any siblings? (Please circle)

Yes No

If yes, please list the age and gender for each. _____



Do any of these siblings play sports? (Please indicate which sibling/s and which sports)

Are any of these siblings also participating in the study? (If yes, please include the ID number listed on

the study packet given to the sibling) _____

How long has your child been involved in sports? _____ years

How long has your child been involved in football? _____ years

Does your child currently play any other sports? If yes, please list each one(s).

If the child does play other sports, which sport are they most involved in?

(Please circle one)

Football Other: _____

On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for you to pay

your monthly bills? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Please answer the following questions about the child participating in the study with you.

How much money do you currently spend on your child's football each year?

On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for you to

afford your child's football? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On average, how much time do you spend each week on your child's football(driving, at practices, games, meetings, etc.)? _____ hours

On a scale from 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for you to

find the time for your child's football? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale of 1-7, from 1 being the best and 7 being the worst, how would you rate your child's playing

ability compared to the other players on this team? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale of 1-7, from 1 being very important and 7 being not important at all, how important would you say that football is for your child? (Please circle one)
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7



Demographics and Football Involvement – Child

Today's Date: _____

Time you are filling this form out: _____ AM PM (circle one)

On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for your parents

to pay for your football? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale from 1-7, with 1 being very difficult and 7 being not difficult at all, how hard is it for your

parents to find the time for your football? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale of 1-7, from 1 being the best and 7 being the worst, how would you rate your playing ability

compared to the other players on the team? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale of 1-7, from 1 being very important and 7 being not important at all, how important would

you say that football is for you? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

On a scale of 1-7, from 1 being very enjoyable and 7 being not enjoyable at all, how enjoyable would you

say that football is for you? (Please circle one)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7



Results

Two families' data were removed entirely, resulting in the final 91 participants. One dyad was removed because both the parent and the child circled the same responses for every item in every scale. One dyad was removed because the child circled all of the responses down the center, and the parent routinely circled multiple answers. Data were also screened for participants that indicated that they did not understand any of the questions or for children who indicated that their parent helped them with some of the items. When participants indicated that this occurred, the problematic item or items were removed from those specific participants' responses and were treated as a missing variable to ensure the accuracy of responses used in the analyses. One dyad's child responses were removed because the child indicated that they did not understand any of the questions. For one participant, both the general parent pressure and soccer-related parent pressure scales were removed because the parent and child both indicated that they did not understand the questions. Several of the child participants (5) indicated that one specific item was difficult to understand or that their parent helped them with a particular item. There were no apparent patterns in the items that participants had difficulty with.

This study found that parenting behaviors in this specific context were related to children's general emotion regulation, the process by which this occurs is unknown. Potentially, sports participation may provide opportunities to learn positive regulation skills, and parents may provide examples for children on how to handle negative emotions in these scenarios through their own emotional displays and levels of emotional expressivity.

Although associations between football-specific parenting behavior and anger and sadness regulation were not significant in this study, these results suggest that parenting behaviors within sports has an impact on children's regulation with worry. Specifically, child-report of parent pressure in soccer was related to

a lower ability to cope with worry; however, this effect was attenuated when children were also reporting high levels of parental support in football, which suggests that support could serve as a protective factor. Additionally, higher reports of parent's support in football were associated with more dysregulation of worry for children when they perceived lower levels of support in general. Results indicated that more parental pressure in soccer was marginally associated with children's lessened ability to cope with worry. A significant interaction emerged between parental pressure in soccer was related to less coping with worry, and this relationship was stronger for those who were also reporting low levels of support. However, for those reporting high levels of support, more pressure was actually associated with more coping with worry. Despite the significant interaction, neither of the slopes were independent predictors of coping with worry when considered separately, perhaps due to insufficient power. Because of the nonsignificant simple slopes analyses, the interpretation of this interaction is extremely speculative and these results and their explanations should be considered with caution. pressure and support in soccer when predicting coping with worry. No gender effects were found in this sample. These gender differences were examined by comparing the variables of interest based on child gender, parent gender, and the dyadic relationship (mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son, father-daughter). This lack of effect by gender was surprising, especially because literature highlights differences in emotion regulation in boys and girls, and different emotion socialization processes by mothers and fathers. The families that were sampled in the study were able to provide adequate financial support and invest the time needed to be involved in a competitive sport, and therefore they might have a higher baseline level of economic functioning than the average family, which tends to be associated with better child outcomes. One unexpected finding that emerged was the significant association between lower income parents and children's reports of parent pressure in soccer. Specifically, parents who reported that they

had a more difficult time paying their monthly bills had children who reported that their parents pressured them more in football. There are quite a few possible explanations for this relationship. It is possible that parents who are experiencing more financial distress might place more emphasis on success if it may lead to college scholarship opportunities in the future. This is consistent with the idea that parents might look at their children's success as something that may allow them to benefit as parents in some way as well. Parents who might have a difficult time paying for their child's college in the future might be more likely to focus on this opportunity. It is also possible that parents who have a harder time paying their bills have to sacrifice more financially in order to afford their children's soccer, and may therefore place more emphasis on how the child performs. If a parent is investing a lot of resources into this activity, it might be more of an issue to that parent if they feel that the child is not putting forth enough effort or playing to the best of their ability. It may also be the case that the pressure that children in lower income families are perceiving might be more indirect. Perhaps children who know that their parents are investing more financially in their football might inadvertently feel like they need to perform at a high level to justify the amount of money that their parents are spending on them. Future research should continue to examine this relationship and could further explore how parents' feelings towards their children's success might vary based on their investment in their sport, or how children's view of their own success might vary based on their perceived family investment.

Although this study found that parenting behaviors in this specific context were related to children's general emotion regulation, the process by which this occurs is unknown. Potentially, sports participation may provide opportunities

to learn positive regulation skills, and parents may provide examples for children on how to handle negative emotions in these scenarios through their own emotional displays and levels of emotional expressivity

Development of personality - key of success

Parent-education programs in Scandinavia

Parent-education programs in youth sport appear to provide an appropriate avenue to facilitate healthy parental involvement, enhance positive parental support, and help to relieve stressors placed on parents, coaches, and youth athletes. However, little is known about the efficacy, design, and evaluation methods utilized in parent-education programs in the youth sport context. The aims of the present systematic review were to examine: (1) the outcomes of parent-education programs which target psychosocial parental support; (2) the theoretical underpinnings of parent-education programs; and (3) measures utilized to evaluate parent-education programs in youth sport.

The social support system in youth sport is made up of multiple stakeholders, such as coaches, parents, siblings, teammates, and sport officials . Parents are considered one of the more significant and influential members within this network as they are a fundamental component of the youth sport system . Youth sport participation is predominately facilitated by parents, as they initiate children's involvement in sport and provide them with the resources and support .Parents also play a critical role in interpreting values and communicating life and sport skills to athletes . By taking on such an all-

encompassing role, parents are equipped with infinite opportunities to either positively or negatively influence their youth athlete's sporting experience.

The wide array of support provided by parents, such as informational support (e.g. provision of information regarding competitions and training), practical support (e.g. logistical and financial assistance), and emotional support (e.g. demonstrating understanding and unconditional love) plays a critical role in the development of youth athletes and has been linked to enhanced enjoyment, self-confidence, and perceived competence in youth athletes. Similarly, autonomy-supportive parenting styles, such as promoting personal autonomy, supporting decision making, and providing appropriate structure allows for more positive outcomes among athletes, such as increased motivation and satisfaction .

Despite most parents providing appropriate support and having a positive influence on their children's sporting experience, there remains a minority of parents who exhibit parental pressure and inappropriate behaviors. Project partners examined coaches' perceptions of parental behaviors- examination reported that while 59% of parents were seen to have a positive influence on their youth athlete's sporting development, 36% of parents were perceived as having a negative influence. Negative parent behaviors included over-emphasizing winning, having unrealistic expectations, and criticizing the athlete . Observational research conducted by the project partners provides further support, whereby they reported negative and derogatory comments accounting for approximately 15% of the comments directed at athletes. Such pressure often results in reduced enjoyment, increased levels of amotivation, and heightened anxiety. However, parenting in sport is a much more complex process than knowing how and when to provide support, despite best intentions, parents are sometimes unaware of how to optimally support their youth-athletes.

In Scandinavia in the area of parental involvement in youth sport have seen the introduction of parent-education programs and interventions, which appear to provide an appropriate avenue to both reduce inappropriate parental involvement and improve athlete outcomes by alleviating some of the stressors experienced by parents, coaches, and youth athletes. The aims of such programs were to promote and enhance positive parental involvement in youth sport to facilitate a positive youth sport environment , including topics such as youth sport participation, athlete development, communication strategies, working with coaches, and positive sport parenting. However, despite the apparent positive impact of such programs in several sporting contexts, there has been no systematic review conducted which utilizes a rigorous research methodology to evaluate and appraise the impact of parent-education programs within youth sport. This is surprising given that parent-education programs are the primary tool to promote positive parental support.

Outcomes of programs

The impact and outcomes of the included parent-education programs were examined, reporting a significant increase in parents' sportspersonship behaviors from pre- to post-test, also reported a significant decrease in negative parental comments for the experimental group , however no significant changes were reported for positive and neutral parental comments from pre- to post-program. Further, analyses indicated significant differences in prosocial behaviors toward teammates between athletes in leagues which had implemented the parent-program at different time points. Post-hoc results indicated that athletes in leagues which had implemented the program for a longer period of time showed improvements in prosocial behaviors toward teammates, however these differences were only marginally significant. Further, qualitative findings reported that all participants felt the support they received from their parents played an important role in their improvements and reported

that the importance they placed on personal performance and winning had changed for the better. Additionally, all parents noted positive changes in their relationship with their child, for example one parent noted being able to talk more openly to their child-athletes. Results indicated that 100% of parents found the program very useful, while 75% of parents indicated that they would use the strategies provided. The program improved parents' knowledge of the benefits of task orientation, helped parents to see issues from their child's perspective, and raised parents' awareness of the impact of inappropriate reactions. The educational component of the intervention allowed parents to develop new skills and understanding such as communication and social skills. The program also allowed parents to gain new knowledge such as positive sport parenting strategies and perceptions of positive and negative youth sport parenting. Also the coaches noted improvements in parents' knowledge, as parents reported an improved understanding of football, the youth sport environment, and children's psychosocial needs. The program also enabled change in parents' attitudes, beliefs, and values in relation to their own reasons for involvement, the goal of junior football, and causes of stress among junior football players. Lastly, the program was effective in improving parents' behaviors, such as communication skills. Following the delivery of a narrative pedagogy parent-education program, parents were able to identify unacceptable coaching practices in youth sport.

The results from the present review highlight that sports such as football in Scandinavia samples, also dominate the parent-education literature. A move beyond this sample in future parent-education programs may help enhance parental involvement and athlete outcomes in under investigated populations, and further our understanding of the complex phenomenon that is the parent-athlete relationship. The Baltic states has still a long way to go, must admit that Parent-education programs which delivers one educational session experience

greater parent participation and appears to be a more time and cost-efficient means of delivering parent-education such programs are often short and instructive in nature, which fail to promote parent interaction with both researchers and fellow parents.

Baltic states should develop and implement such educational programs, with multiple sessions and forums to promote extended parental involvement and interaction, in addition to long-term follow-up support. In doing this, parent educators should also consider the various demands sport parents experience (e.g. time constraints, childcare) in the planning stage of the intervention and implement strategies to promote greater participation. One strategy which may be appropriate is flexible engagement methods (e.g. an option of in person face-to-face or virtual recorded sessions) and family friendly delivery environments. However, even implementing such strategies it is possible that such longitudinal programs will still experience lesser participation, but we must take into consideration the long-lasting impact and behavior change associated with such programs, in contrast to short, one-off education sessions.

Additionally, future program adopters could also consider adopting randomized controlled trials and evaluating athlete outcomes. Many of the parent-education programs included in this review examined changes in parents' knowledge and behaviors. Given that the aim of such programs is to improve parent's knowledge and attitudes, examining parents experiences of such interventions is appropriate. Future research should consider the impact of parent-education programs on athlete outcomes, post-intervention and at follow-up. Examining the impact of such programs on athlete's experiences and outcomes would advance study designs in this area, and also allow researchers and practitioners to unpack the impact of such programs on athletes too. Further, many of the existing Scandinavian parent-education programs reported

changes in parent's knowledge as a result of participation. However, previous research has documented that parent's develop both technical and context-specific sport knowledge as a result of their children's sport participation. Implementing randomized control trials when developing future parent-education programs will allow researchers to identify changes and improvements that are occurring as a result of the implementation of any interventions, in contrast to changes occurring as a result of parent's time spent in the youth sport environment.

Drafted advices for parents

In this section project partners provide some key information regarding the different ways in which parents can support children's involvement in sport to help them to achieve their potential and enjoy their experience.

Parents, guardians, and carers play an extremely important role in the sporting lives of children and adolescents. Without parent support and encourage it is unlikely that many children would be able to participate in sport. As such, we believe it is very important that parents are involved in their child's sporting lives and have access to information to optimise their involvement.

Unfortunately, it is not always easy as a parent to know what you should do in different situations or how you can best help your child to have a positive and enjoyable sporting experience. The challenge of supporting child's sporting experience is made even more complicated with the vast amount of information available and the constant listing of "good" and "bad" behaviours. Sport parenting is a complex, individual experience that goes far beyond lists of behaviours you should and shouldn't display.

Optimal parental involvement in sport will look different for different parents because children have different needs, parents arrive with different experiences, and parents and children will encounter different situations throughout a child's sporting journey. The first step to optimal involvement in sport is tailoring your behaviours to these different needs and experiences. To do this, regular communication with your child is key .

Tips to maximise parents involvement in child's sport:

Select appropriate opportunities for your child and provide necessary support.

Evidence consistently indicates that children benefit from sampling a range of sports when they are young before specialising in one or two sports when they move into mid- adolescence. As a parent you will face lots of conflicting information but encouraging your child to participate in a range of sports will be helpful.

Understand and apply an authoritative or autonomy-supportive parenting style

People parent in lots of different ways and we need more research about the pros and cons of different approaches in sport. So far, it appears that if you adopt an autonomy-supportive approach, whereby you provide your child with choice, allow them some flexibility over demands, and provide guidance rather than strict instruction, it can be helpful.

Manage the emotional demands of competition and role model this for your child

With all the emotion associated with competitions it is easy to find yourself acting in ways

you wouldn't normally! Taking time to understand what impacts on your behaviours at competitions and developing strategies to manage these demands is really important.

Foster and maintain healthy relationships with others in the sport environment

Children's sporting experiences are influenced by lots of people, particularly their coach(es) and other parents, so as a parent developing effective and friendly relationships with these individuals is important. If you have good relationships with others in the sport environment you can share lifts and information and ensure you know what has been happening in training and competitions and match your comments and guidance to that of the coach.

Manage the organisational and developmental demands placed on you

Unfortunately youth sport can be very demanding for parents. To be able to best support your child, it is really important that you are able to manage these demands and have some strategies in place to reduce the impact they can have on you and on your child's relationship. Some suggestions to manage these demands are provided in the parents' experiences section of the sportparent.eu website.

Adapt your involvement to the different stages of your child's sporting journey

What children need from their parents changes as they progress in sport and encounter different challenges. As a parent, being aware of when your child's needs change is really important. Engaging in constant communication with your child about the

support they need from you is the best way to do this.

The child-parent-coach triad can be very powerful; each person will contribute to helping a child grow as a person, become a better athlete, and overcome challenges. But, it is not always easy to maintain positive relationships. By understanding each others' priorities a lot of frustrations can be avoided and everyone can have a better experience.

Things parents do that may frustrate coaches:	Things coaches do that may frustrate parents:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing a lack of knowledge about the rules and etiquette of the sport • Demanding too much of the coach's time • Hold excessive expectations about a child's sport • Putting pressure on a child at competitions • Not respecting the coach's role by giving tactical or technical directions during training or competition that contradict the coach's instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not giving equal or fair play time, displaying favouritism • When children are not having fun or learning in training sessions • Not understanding child development • A lack of preparation or attention for training • Poor organisational skills • Poor or limited communication • A lack of respect or understanding for your role as a parent

Answers on questions about the role of parents in sport

How to strengthen the relationship you have with your child's coach?

- Understand and anticipate the behaviours that may frustrate the coach (and vice versa). Try and avoid such behaviours or talk to each other about why they may be present.
- Get to know each other: Talk after training, go to parent meetings, volunteer at the club
- Learn about the coach's philosophy and how they will approach your child's training and competitions. Support this philosophy or, if it is not right for your child, consider alternatives.
- Respect the coach's private time and the time she/he needs for training. Try to talk at an agreed moment
- Talk about your problems and frustrations early and try to understand the coach's perspective.
- Learn about your child's sport and the rules of the club/organisation
- Show respect for, and trust, your child's coach.

As a parent, what influence am I likely to have on my child's sporting journey?

Your child will learn a lot from watching you. If they see you participating in sport, enjoying learning new skills, and responding positively to challenges or loses, they are likely to replicate these behaviours. Similarly, if they see you maintaining control on the sidelines, being respectful of the referee and other parents, cheering on both teams, and promoting positive sportspersonship, they are also more likely to demonstrate these behaviours. Through your comments and responses to

your child, you help them make sense of their sporting experiences. For instance, when you talk to your child about winning and losing you are emphasising the outcome of a performance and a child is likely to judge their success based on whether they won or lost. In contrast, if you focus on the different skills that can be gained from sport and emphasise enjoyment and making friends, children will be more. The most obvious way in which you will impact on your child's sporting experience is through your provision of opportunities, information, and support. Specifically, as a parent, you are responsible for providing:

- **Tangible support** – paying for equipment, coaching, competitions, and travel, committing time to taking children to training and events, ensuring children are fed, clothed, and ready to go!
- **Emotional support** – being there to pick up the pieces when it goes wrong, supporting your child whether they are winning or losing, and helping your child to navigate the bumps in the road they will inevitably face.
- **Informational support** – giving your child important information about their training and competition schedules, helping them communicate with their coach, and keeping them informed about their sport. Through this support you are enabling your child to engage in sport. Without your support, their sport wouldn't be

possible!re likely to judge their experience in this way.

How can I ensure I am involved in my child's sport in the best possible way?

Every child is an individual and it is really important that you understand that the best way to be involved in your child's sport will be unique. No two children will want exactly the same thing from their parent, so it is really important that you talk to your child to find out what behaviours they like. However, there is some evidence to indicate that certain types of involvement are likely to be more beneficial than others; these are described below. Ensure you and your child have the same goals for sport and communicate about these goals frequently. If you and your child have different ideas about why your child is involved in sport or what they want to achieve it is likely to cause conflict and difficulty down the line. Ensuring that the two of you are starting on the same page, and remain on the same page over time, will help to ensure your support matches your child's needs. Strive to understand and enhance your child's individual sporting journey. As a parent it is important that you recognise that your child's sport is a journey, that could take a number of years. Over this time, the demands and

requirements on you and your child will change considerably. Ensuring that you are always engaged in a way that demonstrates an understanding of this journey and that is aiming to improve your child's experience is key. Ensure you and your child have the same goals for sport and communicate about these goals frequently. If you and your child have different ideas about why your child is involved in sport or what they want to achieve it is likely to cause conflict and difficulty down the line. Ensuring that the two of you are starting on the same page, and remain on the same page over time, will help to ensure your support matches your child's needs. Engage in enhancing parenting practices at competitions. What you say and do at competitions can have a large impact on your child. As such, identifying and then attending to your child's competition needs will be really helpful. Also, helping your child to develop strategies to cope with the various challenges associated with competition is useful. However, perhaps most importantly, ensuring that you develop strategies to manage your own competition emotions is vital to optimise involvement.

How can I help my child manage set backs and challenges?

As a parent it can be really hard to see your child facing challenges and set backs. Unfortunately they are an inevitable part of the youth sport experience and as a parent you can play an important part in helping your child cope with this. However, before you can help your child you first need to make sure that your own emotions are not impacting on the situation.

Supporting the Development of Coping Strategies

For athletes to develop coping strategies it is important for parents to:

1. Develop a supportive relationship with your child. They need to know that you are there for them when things don't go well. Take time to ensure you show your child that you understand what they are experiencing but also allow them to develop their independence, so that they have confidence in their ability to manage.

2. Help your child to reflect on the experience they are having. Ask them questions about the situation, help them to put the experience in perspective, share your experiences with them, and where possible provide opportunities for children to practice coping skills.

Athletes Learning to Cope

It is important to realise that encountering challenges is not always a bad thing. As athletes encounter different challenges, they will also learn new coping strategies. For example, athletes are likely to try a number of different strategies in different situations, some of these will work and others won't. As a parent you can encourage them to reflect

on their experiences and what they have learned from them. Encourage your child to talk to you about their experiences and what they have learned from them. Encourage your child to talk to you about their experiences and what they have learned from them.

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on their coping attempts to identify what they might try the next time they encounter a challenge. Through this process of trial and error, athletes will gain a whole range of coping skills which will help them as they progress in sport. The importance of supporting the development of active coping strategies Research has shown that those parents who help children to engage in active coping strategies, that is strategies that aim to address issues and challenges are seen as more supportive than parents who encourage children to ignore or downplay challenges. By actively helping your child to manage challenges, you are demonstrating that you understand the situation and you support your child's development and growth.