

Coaches and Athletes' Assessment of Leadership Behaviors in High School Female Volleyball Players

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Leadership has been identified as an important component in achieving organizational success. In the sport literature, the focus when studying leadership has been primarily on the roles and behaviors of the formal leader, i.e., the coach (e.g., Balaguer, Crespo, & Duda, 1996; Chelladurai, 1984, 1990; Chelladurai & Carron, 1977; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Smoll & Smith, 1989; Trail, 2004). There is limited research addressing player leadership behavior, and even less research that attempts to identify personal characteristics associated with player leadership behavior and roles (Horn, 1992). This is especially true when studying the emergence of leadership within a team and/or the distribution of leadership roles that do not carry a designated title (e.g., captain) that are considered "informal". While many questions can be asked concerning the emergence and distribution of both formal and informal player leadership roles and behaviors, it was the purpose of this study to investigate the role of one's achievement motivation in exhibiting selected task and social leadership behaviors within the

sport team structure. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the functionality of a player's motivational goal orientation, perceived competence, and affiliation to the exhibited players' behavior identified as task and social behaviors associated with leadership of high school female varsity volleyball players.

Player Leadership Research

In the leadership research literature there are numerous theories offering different leadership definitions and conceptual approaches. Trait-center approaches have emphasized personality traits as being important in particular leadership styles, behaviors, and situations. Traits associated with sensitivity to the needs of the group as related to the situation, and with people who have a more varied repertoire of responses, have been found to be reflected in successful leaders (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983). A meta-analysis by Lord, DeVader, and Alligar (1986) found that perceived leadership accounted for by traits could be as high as 59%. Follow-

ing a somewhat different line of thinking in the study of leadership, training-center, transactional, and contingency approaches have been used, all of which typically emphasize the importance of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). The KSAs include structuring and organizing, communicating effectively, developing abilities of others, etc. In summary, of great importance seems to be the individual's ability to provide appropriate structure and social behaviors to meet group needs as dictated by the situation.

Early sport studies investigating player leadership roles and behaviors focused on player position and visibility within the structure of the game. For example, player leadership roles as viewed by Centrality Theory were based on the spatial location (i.e., position) of the athlete that provided greater opportunity for player interaction (e.g., Grusky, 1963; Loy & Sage, 1970). Chelladurai and Carron (1977) based their leadership study on propinquity and task dependence. Here the leadership role was due to observability and visibility of an athlete by teammates, and the importance of the interaction to success of the task. Based on the above research, Cox (1994) concludes "...we can predict that leadership opportunities in football, baseball, and volleyball would fall primarily to quarterbacks, point guards, and setters, respectively." (p. 345).

In examining other potential variables influencing player leadership, Yukelson, Weinberg, Richardson, and Jackson (1983) report player leader status being associated with player skill level, being

upperclassmen, and locus of control. Studying high school girl soccer teams, Glenn and Horn (1993) report sport competence, global self-esteem, perceptions of control, and psychological androgyny as predicting factors of leadership when assessed by peers. Coaches were reported using skill level as the primary predictor of leadership; thus it appears from this research that coaches and players may use different criteria in the selection of player leaders. This incongruence between player and coach assessments received further support in research by Engelman and Pease (1991) studying youth soccer teams, and by Kozub and Pease (1991) with varsity boys and girls basketball teams. Pease and Kozub (1991) report that with boy basketball teams, the team captains were often selected because of seniority or personal popularity, and sometimes viewed as not having a major leadership influence by teammates.

Further review examining such psychological factors as locus of control and self-esteem (Yukelson et al., 1983; Glenn & Horn, 1993) found emerging leadership or informal leadership behaviors to be associated with the more general concept of achievement motivation (Helmreich, Spence, Beane, Lucker, & Mathews, 1980). Achievement motivation is a multidimensional concept that includes factors such as skill mastery, a strong work ethic and competitiveness components, all of which have been related to leadership development. Helmreich's et al. research found skill mastery and work ethic were positive factors in leadership development. Competi-

tiveness, when focused at other members of the group, was negatively associated with leadership development. Sorrentino and Field (1986) report that while high achievement motivation by itself may be detrimental to leadership emergence, it may become a positive factor when combined with a high level of affiliation motivation. They suggest that only when a person is concerned about friendship relations (i.e., social relations) with group members do they have an opportunity to emerge as a strong leader. This would seem to suggest that a high need-achievement person must direct the competitiveness component away from their teammates, and work to establish positive personal relationships with team members if a player designated leadership role is desired.

Achievement Motivation

Recent achievement motivation research has focus on goal perspectives as proposed by Nicholls (1989), and as related to the physical activity and sport setting by Duda and associates (e.g., 1989, 1992, 1996). While the initial work of Nicholls and others was focused on academic educational settings, Duda (e.g., 1992, 1996) has consistently presented research evidence that task and ego orientations are important factors in understanding sport participant behavior. Ego oriented people are concerned with demonstrating normatively referenced high ability whereby they must surpass the others by demonstrating high ability. Task oriented people are

focused on personal improvement, effortful involvement and increased insight. Task-oriented athletes have been found to endorsed prosocial purposes of sport, while ego-oriented athletes endorsed achieving status through sport (Roberts, Hall, Jackson, Kimiecik, & Tonymon, 1995). These different orientations raise questions concerning why and how one would seek a team leadership role, and how they would be perceived, and accepted by others due to one's goal orientation. For example, would an athlete with a high ego orientation, and maybe low task orientation (i.e., always competing with others) be accepted as a leader by peers?

While there are numerous goal-oriented studies to draw from, the two that seemly had the most relevance to this leadership behavior study will be presented. Duda (1989) investigated the relation of goal orientations and the perceived purposes of sport among high school students. Athletes high in task orientation tended to believe that sport should increase the desire for personal mastery and enhance cooperative skills. Athletes high in ego orientation reported that sport should increase career mobility, increase one's popularity, and build a competitive spirit. Negative relations were found for task orientation athletes concerning the view that sport should enhance social status, with ego orientation athletes viewing sport as fostering good citizenship. Lochbaum and Roberts (1993) examined the relation of the two implicit goal orientations to achievement behaviors: beliefs concerning determinants of success, practice and

