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# College Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Behaviors and How Perceptions Influence Individual Performance and Team Satisfaction

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COLLEGE ATHLETES' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE COACHING BEHAVIORS  
AND HOW PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCE INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AND  
TEAM SATISFACTION

by

David Brent Holstein

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Ethical Leadership


May 2010

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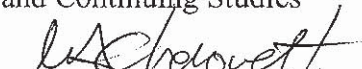
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## DEDICATION

To my father, Rev. James Holstein, and my mother, Lois Holstein, I would like to dedicate this defining moment in my life. Although both of you have passed and are face to face with the Lord, I completely understand it is you who set the foundation for a spiritually-based son and I am proud to say I have completed a dream that both of you had for me.

## ABSTRACT

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This study collected data both quantitatively and qualitatively on athletes' perceptions of their current coaches and whether these perceptions influenced individual performance and team satisfaction as perceived by the athlete. Athletes at two community colleges participated (n=145) in the quantitative portion, the *Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire* (APECT-Q), along with five being interviewed. Overall, on the APECT-Q it was found that athletes at the two schools felt their coach's behaviors/traits did moderately to strongly influence their performance and team satisfaction. Conclusions and implications from both a theoretical and empirical perspective were discussed in an effort to continue to enhance and understand the coach/player interpersonal dynamic.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As one looks at some of the great sports dynasties within the last 50 years, the Green Bay Packers and Boston Celtics of the 1960s, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Bruins 1970s, the Los Angeles Lakers of the 1980s, and the Chicago Bulls of the 1990s, one sees that they all possessed visionary leaders in their coaches. Each of these dynasties had two things in common; they won at least five national titles and they had Hall of Fame coaches. Coaches are held accountable in the field of sport as the leader. How the team succeeds in most instances from a win/loss perspective will many times dictate that coach's future. To further understand the interpersonal dynamic between the leader and the producer (player) on the field of competition, it is important to understand the perceptions of the players with respect to effective coaching behaviors and characteristics.

The echo of the bouncing basketballs had long ago dissipated into the musty gymnasium air. Practice had completed almost two hours earlier on this frigid February evening at the small Midwestern community college. The players had long before left the facility for their campus housing and night activities. As the young second-year head coach sat in the stands watching the janitor pace up and down with his dust mop cleaning the hardwood floor, his thoughts were flooded with questions concerning the remainder of the season. As an assistant coach for 16 years in this nationally recognized junior college program, sitting one seat to the right of that position and being the major

decision-maker and leader was a totally different experience. The coach had thought many times during the first year and a half that one could view and evaluate the decisions of any head coach but until one has walked in those shoes, one would never understand the responsibility and accountability that is faced each and every day.

One day earlier, the coach had made a decision that the relationship with his two-year starter and leader in scoring, assists, steals, field goals and free throw percentage must be dissolved. Therefore, after much discussion with his staff, this player was eliminated from the team for the remainder of the season. To complicate the situation, the team was not doing very well from a competitive standpoint, morale was low, and it appeared there would be very little chance of winning another regional championship which would signify the coach's team as one of the top 24 junior college basketball programs in the country. This particular accomplishment had happened seven of the previous eight years.

The coach remembered his playing days and the bonding and camaraderie that occurs on a team striving for a goal. In those days the coach was viewed as the authority not only in the power of the position he held but also the knowledge base and teaching expertise which was automatically afforded him through his experience. The players' perceptions were those of respect for and trust in the authority figure. The times had changed, and as the years flowed by it appeared perceptions of effective coaching behaviors had changed from a player viewpoint. There seemed to be more questioning, and players were more concerned about individual accomplishments rather than working together and achieving a collective goal. The coach had become more of a manager of personalities rather than simply someone who automatically knew what was best for the

team. The holistic approach of what was best for the entire group did not seem to fit in a day when instant gratification and individual needs were of utmost importance.

The challenge within the next six weeks would be to take a proactive stance and adjust to the perceptions of his players on the action he had taken. Would the perception of the coach change in the players' view and, if so, would that affect their individual performance and satisfaction within the team dynamic? A deeper issue would be what were the players' perceptions of the coach as their leader with this decision? Would this strengthen his position within the group or would they *shut it down* for the remainder of the season? Would the players view this decision as one that would better the team in the long run? Did the coach's action provide an effective technique to motivate the others to overachieve or did the coach's decision have any effect at all?

Six weeks later his team did capture another region championship. It all worked out for the benefit of the team; however, these questions were still very prevalent in the coach's mind as he accepted the championship trophy on that mid-March night.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate, analyze, and interpret how athletes perceive their head coaches' behavior personality traits and if these perceptions influence overall individual performance and team satisfaction. In addition, it was the intent of the researcher to investigate specific traits and how athletes perceived certain coaching traits as determinants to their individual performance and team satisfaction both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Leadership has been defined in several ways. Leadership is the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals (Barrow, 1977). This definition

implies that the setting of goals is a shared process between the leader and follower. The Collins English Dictionary defines leadership in many ways, focusing on the position, tenure, and ability of leaders which misses key points such as purpose and hallmarks. Leadership, as stated by the Collins English Dictionary, is the position or function of a leader, the period during which a person occupies the position of a leader, the ability to lead, or the leaders as a group or party. Peter Drucker, in the forward to the Druckers Foundation's *The Leader of the Future*, sums up leadership as someone who has followers (Hessellbein, Goldsmith, & Beckard, 1996). This definition would have one assume that to have followers the leader needs some sort of influence. John Maxwell, in *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, sums up leadership in this way: "leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell, 2007, p. 11). This definition considers both the followers and those outside the circle of influence indirectly, and begins to suggest that leadership has to do with character traits such as trustworthiness and integrity. Warren Bennis (1989) described leadership as merely a function of one knowing himself. This definition specifically intertwines with the intrapersonal nature of self-regulation as a means to outwardly influence those who follow.

Human behavior is determined by an individual's perception (Wang & Callahan, 1999). As an example of this, consider legendary coach John Wooden, who coached high school and college men's basketball for over 40 years. His teams won more than 80% of their games. Wooden is one of only two people to be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach. He coached the UCLA Bruins from 1948-1975, won 10 national championships (seven in a row) and set a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) record of 88 consecutive wins. Wooden created the *Pyramid of*



*Success* as a means to intrapersonal leadership and self-regulation in which the principles transcend and cross over to the daily functions of an individual's life. The *Pyramid* is a series of building blocks or attitudinal qualities that one needs to possess to not only be a successful team player, but if metabolized and applied, will also assist one in his or her daily life improvement. In a capsule of Wooden & Carty's book, *The Pyramid of Success* (2005) are many perceptual quotes by former and current associates. Les Steckel, President and Chief Executive Officer for Fellowship of Christian Athletes, stated, "Coach exemplifies core values of integrity, serving, teamwork and excellence" (Wooden & Carty, p. 3). University of North Carolina men's basketball coach Roy Williams said, "Coach Wooden is an inspiration to everyone, not just to coaches. His *Pyramid of Success* is very thought provoking and could be easily used by anyone in any business in a very positive way" (Wooden & Carty, p. 4). Bill Walton, a former Hall of Fame basketball player now commentating for ESPN, said,

Coach Wooden taught us everything from how to put on our shoes and socks before a game to how to build a foundation for life based on human values and personal characteristics. He showed us how to win championships, but all along he was teaching us the underlying themes of his core human being, his *Pyramid of Success*. (Wooden & Carty, p. 3)

Doug McIntosh, a Doctor of Theology who played for Wooden 39 years ago, stated,

Coach insisted that we concentrate on our own behavior (which we could control) and not focus on what the other team might do. The importance of holding oneself accountable is a lesson I haven't forgotten. This goes to the core of what all of us

should strive for as human beings, self regulation and accountability. (Wooden & Carty, p. 151)

These quotes indicate a respect and admiration for a leader who not only produced championship teams but also people who became successful and productive later in life. Interestingly, these quotes were about a coach who led teams in the decades of the 1950s - 1970s to many championships, indicating the perception of the follower to respect the values that were being taught. Does this respect pervade the thinking of today's athlete with regard to how effective coaches are viewed in today's sports world?

Denny Lehnus has been leading boys' and men's basketball teams for over 40 years. He was inducted into the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame (NJCAA) as a coach in 2002, the Illinois Basketball Coaches (IBCA) Hall of Fame in 1993, and the NJCAA Region 4 (Northern Illinois) Hall of Fame in 1994. Lehnus has accumulated over 900 wins at the junior high, high school, junior college, and four-year university level. Lehnus stated,

In my opinion today's athlete's perception of a good coach is one who allows them to 'do their own thing' and allows them to show their individual talents and has a lot of 'Dr. feel good' in them. In the past I feel athletes were not so I-oriented and were more willing to take critical comments about their effort, play, etc. (D. Lehnus, personal communication, September 23, 2008)

Dennis Clark, who was inducted into the NJCAA Region 4 Hall of Fame in 2007, is one of the top five active coaches in softball wins at the community college level. His teams have been to 10 straight national tournaments, and they have finished as high as the

national runner-up. He has head-coached at the community college level for over 25 years. D. Clark feels:

Athletes question more today than 25 years ago, they are more apt to put in their 'two cents'. Some athletes care more about themselves than they do the team and this could be an outgrowth of the way parents push their children to have individual success. The hunger for knowledge has left the athlete as they have been continuously involved in summer programs, club teams etc., year round so they have a perception that they know more than the coach. The more team success I have had the more I feel it has validated me as a coach in the eyes of the player. (D. Clark, personal communication, September 29, 2008)

This constant exposure today's athlete has to summer camps, personal trainers, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) programs, and club teams has afforded him or her more information to process at a younger age. The lack of maturity which the younger child has and the extreme information flow causes a sense of distortion in the metabolizing of this information. Therefore, the athlete may have a sense that he knows more than the coach.

Olivet Nazarene University Athletic Director, Jeff Schimmelpfenning, stated in a recent local newspaper article,

The nature of sport has changed...it's going in the wrong direction, I think the concept of teamwork and giving one's self up for the team, commitment, respect level for the coaches...young kids don't have the people of influence that are reaching them anymore. It's all about me, playing time, my stats, questioning the

coaches. I'm really frustrated by that. I'm tired of trying to change it. (Benoit, 2008)

Although this is only one view from an athletic director at a four-year university, it may have a domino effect relative to today's athletes and their view of effective coaching. If this view is an accurate assessment of many coaches in leadership, how does one change that view to provide an atmosphere conducive to team success?

Jerry Angelo, General Manager of the Chicago Bears, on the recent release of star running back Cedric Benson, said, "Everyone in this organization is held accountable for their actions. When individual priorities overshadow team goals, we suffer the consequences as a team. Those who fail to understand the importance of 'team' will not play for the Chicago Bears" (Mariotti, 2008b, p. 67). Bill Parcells, the new general manager of the Miami Dolphins National Football League (NFL) franchise, has turned around two of four teams he has coached from a losing record to a winning record in one season. He has done this through discipline and motivation of his players, and he is currently trying to instill that in his current NFL franchise. "Bill Parcells has turned losers into winners through intimidation and discipline. The Dolphins hope he'll do the same for them" (Thompson, 2008, p. 3c).

The above quotes indicate an emerging theme concerning individualization and a self-serving attitude. The perception of the leader in these statements indicates that many of our athletes today are concerned more about themselves rather than the more global view of what is best for the team. More disturbing and a deeper issue is if one's perception of the coach is that the coach needs to place a priority on satisfying one's individual needs then the concept of teamwork and connectedness is fractured by this

self-serving attitude. Expansion of that thought brings one to consider how effective an athlete will be who must have his or her individual needs met in an environment that depends on collaborating, cooperating, and envisioning goals for the good of the whole.

Although there is a definite value placed upon leadership, Reimer and Chelladurai (1995) noted leadership research in sport has been sparse and sporadic, and the majority of leadership research has focused on the coach. It has been found that coaches influence athletes' performance, ability, motivation, self-confidence, and their perceptions of confidence (Kassing & Infante, 1999). Kassing and Infante found that coaches' perceptions do not necessarily align with those of players in competence, establishment and maintaining of mutual goals, and goal-setting strategies that are more important to the coaches than the athletes. Competitive coaches set unreasonable standards for their athletes (Huddleston, 1996). Kassing and Infante's and Huddleston's research imply that coaches' motivational techniques to assist athletes in high levels of performance and satisfaction should be consistent with favorable perceptions of the coach.

The interpersonal dynamic between player and coach is complex (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998). In dissecting that dynamic it is important to understand, first of all, whether there is congruency in attainment of goals. The case could be made that the coach could have a totally different mindset as to what he or she wants out of the individual player than the player does. This interpersonal dilemma could provide friction when attempted to collaborate and cooperate (Anshel, 2003).

The coach and player have a co-orientation factor that is reciprocal in nature (Jowett, Paull, Pensgaard, Hoegmo, & Riise, 2005). This co-orientation of perceptions of each other needs further investigation (Crust & Lawrence, 2006). The reciprocity issue

can be best explained by the view of the athlete and what he or she expects in a good coach. The fact that the coach will share things such as knowledge, wisdom, fundamental training, assertiveness, decisiveness, sensitivity, passion, and flexibility creates an environment for sustainability and success. In return the coach would expect the producer (player) to give effort, be enthusiastic, have positive volition, and be team and authority-oriented, thus creating that reciprocal feeling that successful teams' experience (Jowett, et al.).

The two major priorities in college athletic programs are to provide the athlete with a positive experience in sports and to achieve success in competition. Further investigation of the coach-player relationship suggests a gap between coaches' actual behaviors and athletes' preferred behaviors of their coaches (Wang, Chen, & Ji, 2004). This research indicates a gap between how athletes perceive their coaches and how coaches perceive themselves. These perceptions athletes have of their leaders (coaches) may influence their individual performance and satisfaction within the team dynamic, thus creating an environment that is not conducive to success.

### Background

Coaches' expectations have the potential to play an important role in how athletes cognitively process their athletic achievement. Part of that processing may involve examining the perceived causes of behavior or reflecting on what has caused performance outcomes (Wilson & Stephens, 2005). This transference by the athlete in the perception of causal effects onto the coach may indicate that there is a belief that the coach may have an effect on a stronger physical and cognitive performance from the athlete.

Sport is an instructional arena, and as a result, organized team sports have become an important informal learning context in which athletes are taught, motivated, and guided by their coaches. The challenge to scholars is to further the coach-athlete interaction as an extension of teacher-student communication. Does an athlete's playing status influence perceptions of his or her coaches' power use categorized as coercive, referent, legitimate, expert and/or reward? How, if at all, does an athlete's playing status influence athletes' perceptions of their coaches' use of power? Most of the coaching literature today utilizes instruments intended to address styles rather than specific communication behaviors (Turman, 2006). Turman found that starters perceive higher levels of reward power from their coaches as compared to non-starters. He also recommended that additional qualitative research needs to be addressed from both winning and losing programs, focusing on a smaller number of teams.

Will the perception of the coach (leader) be viewed more favorably with someone who has gone through adversity? Findings in a study of 800 top-level executives found that 400 of those leaders were more successful if they had gone through some sort of adversity and persevered (Mackey, 2007). Does this adversity provide the coach with crisis experience to draw from, thus enhancing the interpersonal relationship that the coach has with the player?

The leader possesses an ability to influence people toward the attainment of goals while power allows the leader the ability to influence behavior of others (Laios, Theodorikas, & Gargalianos, 2003, p.1). Laios et al. addressed what coaches believe are the power and leadership traits to receive better individual performance from their

players. The challenge arises when the leader (coach) views effectiveness by a certain set of traits, but the perceiver follower (player) does not align with those views of leadership.

Homogeneous treatment (treating all athletes equally by the coach) and heterogeneous treatment (differential treatment to individual athletes) have been studied to evaluate the interpersonal relationship between coach and player (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000). Sherman et al. found that coaches, to assist their athletes to become more proficient in their sport, tend to adopt either the homogenous or heterogeneous style of coaching. This study addressed the athletes' preferred coaching behaviors, focusing on sex differences and the significance to the Multidimensional Model of Leadership in the quantitative method Leadership for Sport Scale (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Athletic preference leadership behavior was the primary focus. It was found that Australian athletes' preferences leaned to a more democratic style of coaching rather than autocratic. The athlete viewed the authoritarian approach as not conducive to assisting athletic performance.

### Research Questions

The researcher attempted to answer the following questions in the pursuit of data relative to athletes' perceptions of their head coaches' behavior and whether this behavior is viewed as effective. The collection of data in answer to the following questions was performed in a quantitative manner through the interview process.

1. What are the perceptions athletes have of their head coaches' behavior and characteristics? The purpose of this question is to collect data on what today's athletes are viewing from their mental lens and what most coaches are bringing to their teams in terms of behavior and characteristics not only on the field of



competition but also in the athletes' everyday encounters. It is also important to understand if these perceptions are a viable indicator of what coaching traits, behaviors, and/or characteristics are important to have in order to reach and motivate today's athlete. These perceptions will be viewed from the theoretically based *Pyramid of Success* created by the legendary coach John Wooden. Do athletes today view this paradigm as an effective way to be a successful coach, and what, if any, characteristics are more important than others?

2. What influences do perceptions of coaches' behaviors have on performance as perceived by the athlete? This question attempted to identify any emerging themes that surfaced relative to the motivation and motivational techniques that athletes are looking for. If the perception of the coach was a favorable one, did perception increase production level in the day-to-day practices and translate into more success as defined by the athlete during game situations?
3. What effects do perceptions of coaches' behaviors have on the athletes' satisfaction within their sports program? Finally, is a happy or satisfied producer (player) within the group a more effective individual performer and does the perception of the coach have any emerging trends that will give us further insight to a more productive player?

#### Description of Terms

*Leader.* The coach.

*Participants.* Community college athletes.

*Perception.* The cognitive processes involved in obtaining and storing knowledge.

*Performance.* The manner in which something or someone functions, behaves, or operates.

*Producer.* The player.

*Region.* Defines an athletic area of the country within NJCAA jurisdiction.

*Satisfaction.* Anything that brings gratification or contentment.

*Starters.* One who begins the game on the field of competition.

### Significance of the Study

As has been noted, much of the athletic leadership literature has focused on coaching effectiveness, identifying personality traits of the leader, behavioral attributes of the coach, and situational determinants. Much of the research has been in the quantitative style with very little being done qualitatively. The story needs to be told by the producers (players) of what their specific perceptions are of their coaches and if these perceptions would affect, in any way, their individual performance and team dynamic satisfaction. Human behavior is determined by an individual's perception (Wang & Callahan, 1999). It has been found (Anshel, 2003) that in many cases what athletes have to say is not taken into account by coaches. From research there appears to be many missing links in a variety of areas related to coaching. Wang et al. studied athletes' perceptions of competition and coaches' behaviors based on sex, status of the player, and athletic experience. The researchers found that college athletes would like to practice as hard as they can regardless of playing status. Socialization among teammates was purely based on their friendship rather than playing status, and playing time was a critical issue for both sexes (although slightly more important to females) to enhance the college athletic experience.

The above studies build the case for researching athlete perceptions to assist in creating an environment for improving coach-player interpersonal relations, understanding the difference in perceptions, and determining what motivates players (starters and non-starters) to improve performance. The research in this study attempted to address the issues of effective coaching traits, athletes' perceptions, and how these factors influence performance and the athletes' satisfaction within the team framework.

### Procedure to Accomplish

#### *Participants*

Participants for this study were from two community college athletic programs (one from the Midwestern United States and another from the Southeast) in the sports of men's and women's basketball, women's softball, men's baseball, and women's volleyball. These two different community college athletic programs assisted the researcher in the triangulation of the results. This methodology also allowed for the sex base to be of similar size because of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) regulations on maximum roster size. Demographics of the population sample used were age, sex, years of participation in organized sport, race, and starter or nonstarter status on a particular team. The NJCAA has limitations on roster sizes which ensured that the number of male and female athletes was highly similar.

#### *Methodology*

The instrument used was a survey with a series of questions developed by the researcher related to athletes' perceptions of coaching behaviors and characteristic traits of the coach as perceived by the athlete relative to the John Wooden *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005). The model for the survey was aided by the Athlete Satisfaction

Questionnaire developed by Riemer and Chelladurai (1998) with variations focusing solely on perceptual issues of individual performance and team satisfaction relative to the head coaches' characteristics and behavioral traits. The actual survey was entitled Athletes Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire (APECT-Q). Part I of the APECT-Q related to core values or traits the athletes perceived as important in relation to Wooden & Carty's theoretically based *Pyramid of Success*. The athletes were to rate each identified trait from the Pyramid as not agreeing at all to strongly agreeing that it was a trait a good coach should have. In Part II of the questionnaire the athletes were to identify whether their current coach exhibited these particular traits or characteristics and if these traits or characteristics influenced their individual performance and team satisfaction as perceived by the athlete. A dissertation research team was hired to collect the quantitative data, excluding the primary researcher from any contact with athletes that he may have had in day-to-day activities. This process helped to ensure the integrity, reliability, and validity of the results gathered. Each research question was addressed in the form of a questionnaire given by the dissertation research team who was hired to assist in the handout, receiving, and coagulation of the results. Face-to-face interviews of randomly selected team members were conducted by the researcher with a series of specific open-ended questions for more of a free-flow thought pattern to further evaluate the story of athlete perceptions of their coaches' behaviors and characteristic traits.

### *Design*

Internal Review Board (IRB) permission at each institution, one from the NJCAA Region 4 and the other from Region 8, was granted in January of 2009, along with the

permission of the coaches of each team that were being surveyed. An electronic communication to the NJCAA Region 8 and Region 4 was initiated on October 2, 2008, as a professional courtesy, considering the fact that the subjects were community college athletes. These organizations were directly or indirectly involved with the study and will ensure the integrity of the process. Responses were received from the Executive Director and Associate Executive Director of the NJCAA and the NJCAA Region 8 Director commending the study and offering assistance in any way.

Certainly, the most important part of the research was the student athletes themselves. All student athletes signed a letter of consent and gave permission to allow them to be surveyed. The letter of consent and permission was verbally read aloud to all participants at the beginning of the survey meeting with the assurance that all responses would be held in the strictest confidence. It was also stressed that if anyone felt uncomfortable with the research and data gathering at any point in time, he or she would be allowed to withdraw from the study without malice. The surveys were conducted in an open-spaced classroom atmosphere that provided comfortable seating and a temperature-controlled climate. The survey questions were read aloud by researchers to ensure that anyone taking the survey was not embarrassed by a possible lack of ability in reading. There were two survey sessions, one at each institution, and after each session the student athletes were treated to a pizza party. The interview sessions were conducted in a more intimate, informal atmosphere that was transcribed. Questions were read by the interviewer and the interviewees responded. The interviewees also had each question in front of them so they could visually see it. Once the interview was completed the interviewer then transcribed each response to validate emerging themes that appeared in

the survey responses. Light snacks were provided at the individual interview sessions after the questioning period.

### *Data Collection*

After each survey session, the data were collected immediately upon the student athlete finishing the survey. The surveys were conducted in the spring of 2009, to ensure that the student athletes participating in each one of the sports had enough interaction time with their individual head coaches to form an opinion of the qualities and characteristics possessed by their coaches and whether these qualities were conducive to maximizing their own performance and improving team satisfaction. The number of individuals who took the APECT-Q at each institution was 145, with 77 at the Midwest community college and 68 at the Southeast school. The data collection, from the beginning of the survey session where the primary researcher introduced himself and his assistants with a brief overview of the research project, to completion of gathering all of the surveys, took approximately one hour at each institution. The interview sessions of the participants took about 45 minutes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

“By the grace of God, I am who I am” (I Corinthians 15:10). The great apostle Paul said this to reflect his view on what he had become after accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior from an early life of sin and immorality. Divine viewpoint can only be obtained by the Christian believer getting to know Jesus Christ through the written word of the Bible. Divine viewpoint is what every believer is mandated to strive for as evidenced by the verse “Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

We are coaches. Acceptance and respect are among the most fundamental needs we have (Marcum & Smith, 2007). It is important to note here that in the critique of that study by Marcum and Smith (2007) that the majority of leadership research that has taken place in the world of sport has focused on the coach (Chelladurai & Reimer, 1998). Certainly, another aspect of that interpersonal dynamic is the athlete and the athlete’s role within the team as a leader (Loughead, Hardy & Eyes, 2006).

Community college athletes are unique in their very nature because of their brief stay at the institution (1 or 2 years). As a result, their encounter with their head coach is fleeting to say the least. At no other level of sport (high school or four-year university) do we observe this brief encounter phenomenon. However, community college athletes do

have perceptions, as all human beings do, of the people that they encounter on a daily basis, and it is these perceptions that this research will focus on to bring a better understanding of the player-coach relationship.

Does the King make the people or do the people make the King (Halpern, 2007)? That was the debate in the reign of Louis XIV from 1643-1715. If the people make the King, there is no divine right. Therefore the King is but a political appointee whose role and responsibility is to and for the people. However, if the King makes the people then nothing the King does is wrong and he has no accountability (Halpern).

Although this statement is an over exaggeration of the relationship between the coach and the player, we can simplify and examine the relationship in the above terms. Leadership, motivation, commitment, and satisfaction are integral parts of effective vs. non-effective leaders, and specific traits of both types of leaders need to be studied (Andrew, 2004). Certainly the authority perception of the coach in relationship to his or her players has in its roots the classical paradigm of leadership. There are several different sources of authoritative power that coaches possess (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984).

These positions of power are divided into two main categories: position power which allows for legitimacy, reward, and coercion; and personal power which encompasses expert and referent power. Power has been defined as an individual's capacity to influence another to do something that he or she would not have done had he or she not been influenced (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984). In the athletic context it is important to understand the working definitions of these different forms of power. Coercive power brings the expectation that the student will be punished if they fail to



follow the rules (Richmond & McCroskey, 1992). This source of power utilized in a coaching situation could mean additional physical activity, verbal abuse, and/or removal from the team (Turman, 2006). Another type of power is the one that is based upon rewards and may be the most critical because of its value that athletes place upon it (Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996). These rewards may be in the form of increased playing time, starter status, individual recognition, and the like. The role and function of the coach which allow him or her to make various demands and requests are referred to as legitimate power. As an example, athletes are likely to follow rules and decisions coaches make due to the nature of the coaching position (Turman). Finally, referent power is described as the capacity of the teacher or coach to connect on an interpersonal level with the student or athlete (McCroskey & Richmond, 1984). Referent power is a direct result of the follower (athlete) identifying in an interpersonal way with the coach and thus wanting to satisfy that person. The perception of coaches is that along with these power bases there are certain traits such as ingenuity, personality, and abilities that coaches possess to increase their aptitude for effective leadership (Laios, Theodorikas, & Garalianos, 2003).

Leadership is the most studied yet least understood topic in the social sciences (Avery, 2005). The classical model of leadership portrays the coach as one with ruling authority who makes decisions without input from his or her subjects, the players. This paradigm conveys the idea that the coach as the one with the wisdom. This classical theory has its very roots in the Bible with the verse, “Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to those that have lived many years” (Job 12:12). If this biblical truth does not stand the test of time the relationship between coach and player then becomes

problematic in its dynamic. The players as followers begin questioning the wisdom of the coach and thus perceive they have a better method to accomplish the goal which may, in reality, be totally different than what the coach would want for the group.

In a recent scenario with a current NBA franchise, the head coach was fired in midseason because the players were not responding to his authority and coaching methods. In the previous three years, this same team with the same players and same coach had made the playoffs and had been more of a threat each year, winning more regular season games. As the climate and environment deteriorated, players came to practices late, argued with the coach, and sometimes did not come to practice at all. The coach was then fired in midseason and replaced by his assistant (Mariotti, 2008a). Is this a result of the players changing their perception of the coach, or did their perceptions of themselves change which in effect influenced their perception of the coach?

As one examines and researches the perception of college athletes, it is important to lay the foundation for the examination and how the perceptions have changed through the years with the people who are leading today's athlete on the field of competition. The leadership models seemed to have changed over the years, progressing from the classical (authoritative) state to the more organic (self-leading) method. The players who are actually the producers of the taught skill would undoubtedly need to feel they are valued in some way. This is where the perceptions of followers become important from the perspective of the leader (Avery, 2005), or in this instance, the coach.

Human behavior is determined by an individual's perception (Wang & Callahan, 1999). Through the journey of the interpersonal dynamic between coach and player, each has a perception of the other, whether bad, good, or indifferent. From the player's point

of view, does the perception I have of my coach influence my productivity and satisfaction within the team structure as perceived by me? If perception does determine individual performance and team satisfaction as perceived by the athlete, then the treatment of athletes needs to be examined. Treating all athletes the same (homogeneous) and treating all athletes differently (heterogeneous) has been a topic of study (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000). Sherman et al. found that athletes' preferred coaching behaviors are not necessarily in alignment or congruent with the comfort zone of coach preferred traits. Athletes' preferences leaned to a more democratic style of coaching rather than autocratic. The athlete views the authoritarian approach as not conducive to assisting athletic performance in many cases.

The mere idea of performance anxiety because of the perception the athlete has of his or her coach can be examined by the Hope Theory. The Hope Theory postures as a protective factor against perceptions of threat cues (Gaynor, 2004). The entire premise of the Hope Theory is based upon the method of goal-setting, the pathway that leads to the achieved goal, and the agency (in this case, the coach) that propels one toward the goals. Hope Theory is based upon goals which are anything that the individual desires to get, do, be, experience, or create. Secondly, the pathways to achieve those goals are a person's perceived capacity to produce cognitive routes to desired goals. And finally the agency cognitions are the thoughts people have regarding their ability to begin and continue movement on selected pathways towards those goals (Snyder, 2004). The Hope Theory protects the athlete against perceptions of threat cues, fear of negative evaluation by the coach, and feelings of uncontrollability. In other words, this mechanism allows the athlete to perceive he or she is still performing at the maximum level without the damage

that may be occurring because of a coach that is viewed as something less than effective (Snyder).

### Wooden's Pyramid

As one examines the coach-player dynamic, it is important to begin with a theoretical base that is well known among coaches as an accepted philosophy of how one self-regulates in the coaching field. An example of self-regulation is the legendary John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005). Wooden coached high school and college men's basketball for over 40 years and his teams won more than 80% of their games. Wooden is one of only two people to be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach. He coached the UCLA Bruins from 1948-1975, won 10 national championships (seven in a row), and set an NCAA record of 88 consecutive wins. Through his experiences Wooden developed a philosophy which enhanced the interpersonal relationships with many of his players; he created the *Pyramid of Success* as a way of leading oneself by creating pyramid, building principles that transcend not only into coaching, but also into daily living building blocks.

It is important to understand Wooden's background to better appreciate his thought process and development of the *Pyramid of Success*. Wooden grew up in an authority-oriented family structure where the power of the position was taught to be automatically respected. Therefore, people in position of authority were viewed in a very classical paradigm of leadership. The classical paradigm suggests that the leader receive very little or no input at all from the follower. Leaders who operate under the classical model view themselves as having not only automatic authority but the overall wisdom without feedback to examine and make judgment on what is best for the group. Leaders

who function with this frame of reference are followed because they have achieved status, and the automatic respect of that status allows the leader to create visions, goals, and methods (Wooden & Carty, 2005). Would the theoretical base of the *Pyramid of Success* stand up to the scrutiny of today's athlete?

Wooden & Carty's (2005) pyramid is a self-leadership model that provides, what he believes, are the building blocks to not only being a successful coach but, if applied, will make for a better overall life. If this is a recognized theoretical base for effective coaching then let us examine it by first looking at Coach Wooden's definition of success. John Wooden stated "success is a peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 17). This definition not only has an intrapersonal meaning (self-leadership), but it also transcends to all different organizational climates. Wooden never spoke to his teams about winning and losing in his coaching and teaching philosophy; he always stressed striving to be the best you can be.

Another trait that Wooden displayed throughout his coaching career is that he never allowed any outside distractions to interfere with the strict-disciplined, classroom atmosphere of his practices (Bisheff, 2004). Wooden's philosophy supported the theory that sport is an instructional arena and as a result, organized team sports have become an important learning context in which athletes are taught, motivated, and guided by their coaches (Turman, 2006). All of these aspects are part of the training process of the athlete. However, training won't necessarily solve communication or performance gaps. Training is an event, but learning is a process (Eikenberry, 2007).

Athletes are influenced by a number of forces that help determine outcomes. These forces in turn impact how the athlete perceives and interprets their athletic experience. Coaches serve an influential role for the athlete in their methods of structuring how athletes understand, perform in, and reflect upon the broader community of sport (Turman, 2008).

Wooden stressed three important aspects to his players concerning being successful on the field of competition: fundamentals, conditioning, and teamwork. He never stressed winning or losing or how the other team was going to play and their style. Wooden's philosophy was to always control what you can control and the scoreboard will take care of itself (Thieme, 2008).

Success through the *Pyramid* is based upon an individual's capacity to work through the blocks and lead him or herself to the point of striving to be the best that he or she can be. Wooden's hope was that each player would utilize the *Pyramid* to not only enhance their drive to succeed on the basketball floor but also in the academic arena and their interpersonal relationships (Wooden & Carty, 2005). The utilization of Wooden and Carty's (2005) definition of success along with the *Pyramid of Success* blocks and mortars allow one to adopt and metabolize this paradigm for personal growth. The *Pyramid of Success* consists of 15 blocks of characteristics and 10 mortar traits. At the base of the *Pyramid* are the five foundation blocks: industriousness (success travels in the company of very hard work), friendship (comrades in arms), loyalty (be true to yourself and those you lead), cooperation (concern for what is right rather than who's right), and enthusiasm (energy, enjoyment, dedication). Two of the five foundational blocks are

intrapersonal (industriousness and enthusiasm) while the other three emphasize interpersonal behaviors (friendship, loyalty, and cooperation) (Wooden & Carty, 2005).

The second tier of the paradigm stresses self-control (be disciplined), alertness (awareness and observation), initiative (decision-making), and intentness (relentless perseverance), held together by ambition (for noble goals) and sincerity. In the athletes' perceptions of their coaches it is an important trait of the leader to be authentic and transparent thus enabling the follower to have a foundational base for his or her perception (Wooden & Carty, 2005).

The third level of the *Pyramid* focuses on skill (what a leader learns after the follower learns it), condition (mental, moral, and physical conditioning keep one at the top) and team spirit (we supersedes me), bordered by adaptability and honesty. The concept of team, which is an organic state of leadership, relies on what the perceptions are of the leader and how the lower two tiers of the *Pyramid* have been developed (Wooden & Carty, 2005). It has been emphasized the most critical factor in the organic model of leadership is knowledge and a well educated group (Avery, 2005). As the individual is moving through the tiers knowledge and education are taking place. The follower becomes more organic in perception. This organic perception enables the follower to make decisions which not only empower each one, but also provides the entire group with a leadership mentality. The followers develop what is referred to as a oneness in purpose (Avery, 2005).

The fourth tier of the model posed by Wooden & Carty (2005) is secured by poise (don't be thrown off by events good or bad) and confidence (earned not given), with resourcefulness and reliability as the mortar. This tier is prevalent in teams that have

become accustomed to success on the field of competition. They have an air about them that exudes confidence and poise with each relying on one another and their ability to utilize the combined resources of the group to achieve. There is an aura when the players take to the field of competition that whatever challenges each faces individually during the contest, collectively the unit will find a way to achieve through their reliability, resourcefulness, and accountability to one another (Wooden & Carty, 2005).

The top of the *Pyramid's* (Wooden & Carty, 2005) tier is competitive greatness (performing at one's best). This behavior is glued together by fight (determined effort), integrity (purity of intention), faith (through prayer), and patience (good things take time). Competitive greatness is a process. Wooden provided his pupils the tools that would allow one to become highly effective in a positive volitional state.

How did Wooden's former players feel about their coach's style of leadership? On Wooden, Les Steckel, the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, stated, "Coach exemplifies core values of integrity, serving, teamwork and excellence" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 3). University of North Carolina men's basketball coach, Roy Williams, said, "Coach Wooden is an inspiration to everyone, not just coaches. His Pyramid of Success is very thought provoking and could be easily used by anyone in any business in a very positive way" (Wooden & Carty, p. 4). Bill Walton, a former player and Hall of Fame basketball player now commentating for ESPN, summed it up this way:

Coach Wooden taught us everything from how to put on our shoes and socks before a game to how to build a foundation for life based on human values and personal characteristics. He showed us how to win championships, but all along



he was teaching us the underlying themes of his core as a human being, his *Pyramid of Success*. (Wooden & Carty, p. 4)

Another NBA Hall of Famer and arguably the most famous UCLA athletic alum, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who was a member of the famous 88-game winning streak and three national championship teams, stated this:

His approach was very dispassionate. He taught that big emotions were an extra burden that we didn't need to contend with. Coach Wooden felt that if you needed all kinds of emotion to do your job, then you were vulnerable. There was never any you gotta go out and kill these guys talk from Coach Wooden to get us keyed up. He'd say, I want you to go out there and do your best the way we practiced it. There was never any speech telling us to go out and win this game to get us charged up, no (emotional) juice he tried to put in the mix. We understood that if we played up to the standard he had set in practice, we'd probably win. If not, if we lost, he took the blame and tried to fix it the next practice. He was very focused, very intense. He always, always had his emotions under control. (Wooden & Jamison, 2007, p. 28)

Doug McIntosh, a Doctor of Theology who played for Wooden 39 years ago, stated, "Coach insisted that we concentrate on our own behavior (which we could control) and not focus on what the other team might do, the importance of holding oneself accountable is a lesson I haven't forgotten" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 151).

Finally, Jamaal Wilkes, who won two championships with Wooden, was an academic All-American, and became one of the top forwards in the NBA, said:

You read about him as a patriarch, and I don't know what that conjures up in your mind, but to me, it is a very enduring term. To Coach, his players are all part of his extended family. I think that's why, for me and many of the players, our love for him continues to grow. We realize he gave us the essence of himself. And a lot of his philosophy applies to your daily life. (Bisheff, 2004, p. 166)

The above quotes indicate a respect and admiration from the follower to their leader. It should be noted at this point that these statements were from very successful individuals who were part of a very successful program which had gathered momentum and sustainability for a long period of time. Wooden was a leader who produced not only championship teams but also individuals succeeding in their chosen career field. These quotes were about a leader who thrived in the era of the 1950s-1970s. Personal characteristics like being self-effacing, quiet, reserved, and even shy, along with personal humility and professional will are traits of level 5 leaders as discussed in *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001). The level 5 leader builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will, always trying to become qualified for the job. Humility swallows excessive ego and channels ambition into the *we* instead of *me*. Humility doesn't replace the *me* and it doesn't require we think less of ourselves, but to think of ourselves less often (Marcum & Smith, 2007).

Wooden epitomizes the theory of self-regulation by his own lifestyle. Through his daily living routine we find what Michael Slaughter discussed in his DRIVE plan (Slaughter, 2005). This plan outlines a process of daily devotions, readiness for lifelong learning, investing in key relationships, visioning the future, and exercise and eating right that all fall into the daily routine of the *Wizard of Westwood*, as Wooden is most

affectionately called. In a final thought on John Wooden, he always preached the importance of balance in one's life (Wooden & Carty, 2003). This philosophy challenges the individual to explore and enhance the five basic components of a human being: the spiritual, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical.

#### Arnold "Red" Auerbach

While Wooden was putting together a dynasty at the collegiate level, another legendary coach had already established himself at the professional level with the Boston Celtics of the National Basketball Association (NBA). Arnold "Red" Auerbach won eight straight titles from 1959-1967, and nine out of ten NBA championships before he retired to become general manager of the Celtics in 1968.

Auerbach was a proponent of trust between a player and a coach. He felt that the best way to get your job done was to not intimidate but to earn trust. Coach Auerbach felt if you were going to say something, whether it be good or bad, make sure that it happened (Auerbach & Feinstein, 2004). This philosophy brings to clarity the point of being honest, transparent, and authentic in your leadership skills with your players.

Auerbach also believed in spreading the credit around when it was due. He recognized and was very cognizant of the resources that enabled him to build a dynasty and a lasting environment for sustainability. Auerbach said:

I couldn't have done what I did without a lot of people. I had a great owner Walter Brown. I had great players. I got help from guys in the media, especially in the fifties before we hit it big. When I was still coaching after we'd have won a game, I would only talk for a few minutes with the writers. When we lost I talked for as long as they wanted me to. I just believed it was the right thing to do. I still

believe that is the way you should do things as a coach. Spread the credit when you win; take the blame when you lose. (Auerbach & Feinstein, 2004, p. 322)

Dean Smith, the all-time leader in coaching victories at the NCAA Division I level until recently passed by Bob Knight, said this about Auerbach's relationship with NBA Hall of Famer, Bob Cousy:

The thing I was struck by was his relationship with Cousy. There was such a clear camaraderie, a mutual respect, but there was no question about who was in charge. I always remembered that fact later when I became a coach that there was a way to have a friendship with your players while still maintaining their respect. (Auerbach & Feinstein, 2001, pp. 86-87)

This quote from Dean Smith concerning the relationship between Auerbach and Cousy says a lot about the clarity that Cousy perceived concerning the wisdom of his head coach. It has a definite flavor of authority and respect for the leader even though at that point the Boston Celtics had not won any world championships. Do the above perceptions and thinking pervade the athlete's thought processes with respect to his or her coach today in the volatile world of sport?

#### Other Coaching Leaders

Lute Olson, Hall of Fame basketball coach who recently retired from the University of Arizona, had this to say about the game of basketball and the players who play it at the collegiate level:

For a simple game in which you just put the ball in the basket, basketball has changed in just about every possible way since I began coaching. It has become a truly international game; the players are bigger and stronger and faster; the

addition of the three point shot and the incredible ball handling and shooting skills of the players have fundamentally changed strategy; the evolving relationship between the colleges and the NBA in which colleges serve as a kind of minor league for the pros has resulted in changes in recruiting and retaining players; the equipment from headband to sneakers has been redesigned and stylized; technology, ranging from videotape to training equipment has become very sophisticated. Ironically, probably the thing that has changed the least are the kids themselves; what has changed fundamentally are the pressures they have to deal with. (Olson & Fisher, 2006, pp. 180-181)

Denny Lehnus has been leading boys' and men's basketball teams for over 40 years. He was inducted into the National Junior College Athletic Hall of Fame (NJCAA) in 1992, the Illinois Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame in 1993, and the NJCAA Region 4 Hall of Fame in 1994. Lehnus has accumulated over 900 wins at the junior high, high school, junior college, and four-year university level. His men's basketball teams at the community college level won nine Region 4 championships (seven in a row), competed five times in the national tournament, and played for the national championship twice. D. Lehnus revealed in a recent interview that he never viewed what he did as leadership. According to Collins (2001), the highest level of leadership is level five, with the underpinning characteristic of humility. Lehnus continued to point out that he did not consciously have a set plan, nor did he think much about leadership traits and characteristics.

I don't remember a specific plan of leadership. I dealt with each situation as it came and made decisions based upon the information as I knew it. I felt a level of

responsibility and accountability. A good leader is never a phony; they lead themselves well. Whatever style of leader you are, you must be true to yourself. I made some mistakes. (D. Lehnus, personal communication, October 4, 2007)

The above quote by Lehnus would indicate an individual who is proactive, begins with the end in mind, and puts first things first (Covey, 2001). This is an intrapersonal theme of leading oneself well which is the basis of Covey's paradigm for leadership success. Covey's model takes an individual from intrapersonal (self) leadership to interpersonal (leading others) leadership by a series of progressive measures to elevate the individual from dependence to independence to interdependence. This process begins with what Covey refers to as private victory, with the individual being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, and putting first things first. Once the individual has achieved private victory which is independence and self-leadership, this progression can move him to what Covey refers to as public victory. Public victory requires the leader to think win-win, seek first to understand then to be understood, and finally to synergize (creative cooperation).

Lehnus also appears to be highly situational in his leadership approach, as he pointed out he viewed each situation on its own merit and would process and digest what he knew before making a decision (D. Lehnus, personal communication, October 4, 2007). Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory that is discussed in Avery's *Understanding Leadership* (2005) proposes that effective managers deal individually with their followers with differing amounts of support, encouragement, direction, and guidance on the performance of tasks and achievement of identified goals. This

individual guidance depends on each person's developmental level in the areas of competence and commitment (Avery, 2005).

In addition, leadership traits discussed by coach Lehnus (personal communication, October 4, 2007) were behaviors such as discipline, organization, work ethic, tunnel vision, good support help, and self-confidence. Lehnus did emphasize the he has changed his views somewhat on leadership. The home and the nature of society in which he grew up as a young man recognized the authority figure in the classical sense. The position of authority was not questioned, and most children in team-oriented settings were authority-oriented. Lehnus now believes that he has become more openly compassionate with his players, and if he were ever to become an Athletic Director again would be more empathetic with his staff. This shift in thinking represents the emotion and spiritual aspect of the leader (Avery, 2005). This theme prevails in leaders who believe there is an interconnectedness, meaning, and value in life. Tony Dungy, the recently retired head coach of the 2005 NFL world champion Indianapolis Colts recently wrote in his book that he believes he has become a more effective leader because of his personal belief and faith in the Lord. He goes on to point out that his Christian faith provides him with the basis to carry himself in a more controlled, positive, and peaceful manner (Dungy & Whitaker, 2007). Surprisingly, some leaders do actually feel that people are occupational hazards rather than colleagues assisting the organization in reaching its goals and objectives (Bowling, 2000).

Lehnus went on to state:

In my opinion, today's athlete perceives a good coach as one who allows them to do their own thing and allows them to show their individual talents and has a lot

of Dr. Feelgood in them. In the past I feel athletes were not so 'I' oriented and were more willing to take critical comments about their effort, play, etc. (D. Lehnus, personal communication, September 23, 2008)

Dennis Clark, who was inducted into the NJCAA Region 4 Hall of Fame in 2007, is one of the top five active coaches in community college softball wins in the country. His teams have been to 11 straight community college Division II national tournaments and they have finished as high as the national runner-up. Clark has head-coached at the community college level for over 25 years. Clark stated:

Athletes question more today than 25 years ago, they are more apt to put in their '2 cents'. Some athletes care more about themselves than they do the team and this could be an outgrowth of the way parents push their children to have individual success. The hunger for knowledge has left the athlete as they have been continuously involved in summer programs, club teams etc. year round so they have a perception that they know more than the coach. The more team success I have had, the more I feel it has validated me as a coach in the eyes of the player. (D. Clark, personal communication, September 29, 2008)

These statements indicate a perception that one coach has concerning today's athlete. The inference that the athlete is more willing to give information back to the coach in some way suggests that the player may not feel smarter but may have more of willingness to share and is more in tune to the game that he or she plays. The constant availability of summer exposure camps, all-star games, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) programs, and club teams has afforded the athlete more exposure to different lines of thinking and ways of training. This information overload coupled with the lack of



maturity both mentally and physically causes a sense of distortion. The athlete is trying to metabolize and sift through all the different information with which he or she is being inundated. Therefore, the athlete (follower) may develop a sense that he or she knows more than the coach (D. Clark, personal communication, September 29, 2008).

Wayne King has been coaching community college baseball for 23 years at Joliet Junior College in Joliet, Illinois. He has won 762 games during that time, and his teams have won 30 or more games for 19 straight years. King, who is a member of the NJCAA Region 4 Hall of Fame and also serves as the college's athletic director, had this to say about his view on athlete changes that have occurred since he began:

In 1986 when I started, going to someone else for lessons was not a big deal as it is now. Now, every player I get, someone has given them lessons. I told them back then that I was the only one coaching them; nowadays, it does not bother me. My job is to polish them up. If it is an overhaul this player needs, I recruited the wrong player. Still, we need to be a good coach or have good coaches, because you cannot BS these players. They are smarter. Good players made us good coaches. (W. King, personal communication, February 24, 2009)

In evaluating King's opinion, it is worth noting that with the additional hands-on attention that young athletes receive today, King feels this may provide better awareness and skill level. If the athlete is becoming smarter it would make sense to begin to evaluate his or her perceptions on effective coaching characteristics that may improve his or her performance and satisfaction within the team. In addition, surrounding one with good players and coaches supports the organic framework of leadership in that everyone in some way leads in successful organizations, therefore everyone becomes accountable.

Another community college baseball coach from the Midwest, Todd Post, who has head-coached for nine seasons and has posted an average of 40 wins per season for the past five years, had the following to say about the athlete of today:

I feel athletes are more dependent on coaches to help them with everyday situations in their lives. As a head coach I spend much of my time meeting with athletes as a mentor, counselor, disciplinarian, and time management organizer as I do actually coaching the athletes. I feel the athletes expect you as the college coach to be there for them in these situations. The athletes do feel the preparation and the Xs and Os of coaching are still important, but they look to you for the other areas more now than before. (T. Post, personal communication, March 16, 2009)

This college coach's view raises questions about the athlete being equipped with the necessary life skills to effectively survive at the next level and the importance of the community college coach in these endeavors. The coach then becomes what can be referred to, for lack of a better term, as an all-purpose person. The time and energy it takes to assist the athlete in skills that are outside of the field of competition become of utmost importance to their development as a human being. Therefore, the deeper issue then becomes should today's coach be better equipped themselves to address the needs of the athlete in the spiritual, cognitive, physical, emotional and social areas in an attempt to achieve contentment, peace, and respect from his or her athlete which, in turn, will provide a more effective producer?

Another coach in men's basketball, Maurice "Tony" Sheals, who has extensive experience at the NCAA Division I and community college level, had this perspective:

The perception of an effective coach has changed for today's athlete in various forms. Not all kids want to be disciplined or the so-called 'you calling me out' attitude. Without the parental guidance nowadays kids don't want to accept discipline. They are always questioning right or wrong. With the unlimited AAU events throughout the year and the time limits placed on high school coaches the players are not being taught the fundamentals of the game. Players don't want to put in the time to become students of the game. Players today don't want responsibility and accountability. Kids today don't seem to have the spirit, desire and mental toughness to win. Today's athlete seems to want coaches that are friends and not mentors. (M. Sheals, personal communication, May 26, 2009)

Gene Bess has the most wins of any basketball coach at any level. He has been the head basketball coach and athletic director at Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff, Missouri for 39 years, and he has accumulated 1056 victories. He has led his teams to 15 Sweet 16 National Tournaments at the Division I junior college level, 8 Final Four tournaments, and 2 national championships. Bess is a member of the NJCAA Hall of Fame. Coach Bess stated:

Players themselves are oftentimes labeled and usually it has negative connotations. At the same time I have found that they take to coaching quite well. There are a lot more diversions now that before, i.e., cell phones, video games, etc. But, players in general haven't changed a whole lot. Players physically are bigger and stronger and usually more skilled. We get players from time to time that feel this is a put-down for them to be at a junior college, but after two years they don't want to leave. (G. Bess, personal communication, February 26, 2009).

The uniqueness of the community college athlete and his or her relationship with the coach can be observed in this quote from the Hall of Fame coach. His observation is that with a two-year stay there begins a bonding process, and the athlete does not want to leave because he or she will be moving forward to another strange environment so quickly which involves a readjustment period. In that readjustment period, the athlete will have to get used to a whole new set of teammates and a new coach who, more than likely, looks through a different mental lens in his or her coaching style.

Another community college women's basketball coach from the Southeast who has been a veteran of the coaching ranks at the NCAA Division III and community college level had the following to say:

I think the athlete perceives an effective coach as someone who wins. That is the bulk of it and to some degree that is unfortunate. As coaches we wear many different hats but today's athlete sees Ws and Ls and a 'What can you do for me?' mentality. I do feel perception has changed immensely. When I started in this profession as a head coach (as someone who has worked at institutions where athletic scholarships are offered and at the NCAA Division III level where no athletic aid is available) over 14 years ago, ANYTHING you did for a SA (student athlete), the parents/guardian, the high school, and/or AAU coach was appreciated. Now it seems that these gestures are expected by all and worse, they seem to think they are entitled. (K. Ruffo, personal communication, May 13, 2009)

From a volleyball perspective, a coach from the southern United States viewed the athlete's perception of an effective coach in this way:

Athletes have expectations that they may not always express when viewing a coach as effective or not. It is easy to assess ones that are verbally expressed or, what I call common expectations, but most coaches fail due to the silent killers. Common perceptions are: does the coach know their stuff, are they committed, will they take care of them. Some athletes need that personal connection based upon maturity level. Another effective parameter is will the coach move them on to a four year university, will we have a good team, will we win, and will I get playing time. I have personally found the most important factor is to understand each athlete as the individual that they are and then incorporate it into team concepts so you are always coaching the individual in their eyes but dealing with the team at the same time. My perception hasn't changed but I continuously tried to improve this concept. The years I have done a better job at this we have always had stronger teams resulting in better individuals. (S. Skelton, personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Olivet Nazarene University's former athletic director, Jeff Schimmelpfenning, feels:

The nature of the sport has changed. It's going in the wrong direction. I think the concept of teamwork and giving one's self up for the team, commitment, respect level for the coaches....young kids don't have the people of influence that are reaching them anymore. It's all about me, playing time, my stats, questioning the coaches. I'm really frustrated by that. I'm tired of trying to change it (Benoit, 2008, section D, p. 1).

In a recent commentary (Telander, 2008) it was observed that a professional franchise that had lost its sustainability and was not currently successful was

experiencing athletes talking back to the coaches, missing practices, and falling asleep during film sessions. This eroding of respect for a coach or athletic director goes to the heart of what motivates athletes. If the athlete's perception of effective coaching has deteriorated a gap between coaches' expectancies and the athletes expectations will then create a fracturing of the interpersonal connection between coach and player.

Jerry Angelo, general manager of the Chicago Bears, stated the following on the release of running back Cedric Benson. "Everyone in the organization is held accountable for their actions. When individual priorities overshadow team goals, we suffer the consequences as a team. Those who fail to understand the importance of 'team' will not play for the Chicago Bears" (Mariotti, 2008, p. 67).

NFL coaching legend, Bill Parcells, the new general manger of the Miami Dolphins of the NFL, has had success in turning around two of the four teams he has coached from a losing record to a winning record in one season. Parcells has accomplished this through discipline and motivation of his players, and he is currently trying to instill that in his current NFL franchise. "Bill Parcells has turned losers into winners through intimidation and discipline. The Dolphins hope he'll do the same for them" (Thompson, 2008, p. 3c).

Parcells did turn the Dolphin franchise around in the 2008 season; the Dolphins had an 11-5 record, won their division, and made it to the playoffs which signified they were one of the top 12 teams in football. With Parcells the question of teaching mental toughness in athletes becomes an area for discussion and debate. Will the perception of the coach improve mentally how tough the athlete is? Mental toughness is described as the psychological edge which enables the athlete to cope better than the opponent, to

remain determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure (Creasy, Stratton, Maina, Rearick, & Reincke, 2008). Creasy et al. define mental toughness as follows:

- Having an unshakable self-belief of qualities and abilities that make one better
- Strength: good mental and physical conditioning
- Having an unshakable self-belief in your ability to achieve competition goals
- Conviction or stubbornness
- Regaining psychological control following unexpected, uncontrollable events
- Having a strong will to succeed
- Remain fully focused on the task at hand in the face of competition-specific distractions.
- Be consistent: Recognize and adjust to change so that you are always able to make a contribution to your team.
- Not being adversely affected by others' good or bad performances
- Be competitive: Internalize and take pride in what you do.
- Switching a sport focus on and off as required
- Personal management: Don't duck potential problems.
- Thriving on the pressure of competition
- Take the right approach: Always be ready to play.
- Accepting that competition anxiety is inevitable and knowing that you can cope with it
- Having passion for what you do
- Having an insatiable and internalized motive to succeed

- Bouncing back from performance setbacks as a result of increased determination
- Remaining fully focused in the face of personal life distractions
- Pushing back the boundaries of physical and emotional pain

In a survey taken by 22 NCAA coaches, all but three of the mental toughness components (having conviction, having an insatiable desire and remaining fully focused) were considered trainable Creasy et al. (2008).

The above quotes and analyses indicate that there are many different opinions among the leaders of sport. There are some emerging themes (at least from the perception some coaches, athletic directors, and general managers) that individualism, self-serving attitudes, and perceptions of being smarter have invaded the thinking of today's athlete at every level (Benoit, 2008, D. Clark, personal communication, September 29, 2008; D. Lehnus, personal communication, September 23, 2008; p. D1, Mariotti, 2008, p. 67, & M. Sheals, personal communication, May 26, 2009). The leader's perception seems to be that athletes today are more concerned about themselves rather than the more global view of what is best for the team. Terms related to today's athlete such as being I-oriented, do your own thing, not being willing to take critical comments, being more apt to put in their two cents, a perception they know more than the coach, they care more about themselves than the team, it's all about me, my playing time, my stats, questioning, accountability, individual priorities, and overshadowing team goals all would indicate behavior that is a destructive element in the team dynamic concept (Benoit, Clark, Lehnus, Mariotti, Sheals). If these above elements are truly the nature of today's athlete, the coach then has the conflicting issue of trying to satisfy individual needs while focusing on creating a



team connectedness among all members. However, what if the leader perceives something that in actuality is not there?

There are some coaches who feel the games have changed immensely in technology, media and international awareness, the physical nature and training methods of sports. The athletes who play these games have not changed just the distractions and pressures have elevated (G. Bess, personal communication, February 26, 2009; D. Clark, personal communication, September 29, 2008; & W. King, personal communication, February 24, 2009).

What are the perceptions athletes have of their head coaches' traits and characteristics? To address our first research question one must accept the universal view of the coach as the primary leadership figure. That being said, the leader then assumes the role of leadership, which is the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals (Barrow, 1977). This definition implies that there are some logical steps that one follows to decide on what those goals should be. In the purest most biblical sense, Jesus and his ministry on the earth influenced many diverse people but did so by the provision of their own free will. This fact leads us to believe that in establishing himself or herself as a leader, the coach must influence to the point that players engage in the team's goals and objectives by the premise of their volition.

This above premise of engagement of the players with the coach points to the element of cohesion amongst the group. Carron and Chelladurai (1981) indeed found that cohesion was based upon the coach – player relationship.

Along with the title of coach comes an automatic designation of someone with a certain level of power. Whether that power has been earned through player perception

and respect or designated by a higher authority (hiring personnel) it is a reality of the player-coach relationship. Power can be viewed in several different contexts between the player and coach (coercive, referent, legitimate, expert, and reward). Researchers have found that athletes who are starters have received higher levels of reward power from their coaches as compared to non-starters (Turman, 2006).

One of the important roles a coach has in competitive sports is to assist athletes to become more proficient in their performance. In a study of Australian football, basketball, and netball players, athletes' did not prefer autocratic behavior as a coaching style (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000). According to Sherman et al., athletes prefer a more democratic style of coaching, and female and male athletes are more alike than different in relation to coaching preferences.

Team captains provide three basic primary roles as the on-the-field leaders of their teams: to act as a leader during team activities; to act as a liaison between coaching staff and players; and to act as a representative in extracurricular sport-related activities such as meetings, receptions, and press conferences. Research indicates that team captains tend to have grown up playing their sport and have obtained their skill level through organized involvement in the sport. Their leadership skills tend to have been learned through watching others and being influenced by coaches and captains. In addition, team captains have verbal interactions with coaches and teammates to improve the communicative process (Loughead, 2006).

Knowing that human behavior is determined by an individual's perception (Wang & Callahan (1999), research shows that in many cases what athletes have to say is not taken into account by coaches (Anshel, 2003). This finding leads one to think that many

coaches have a tendency to lean toward the classical style of leadership, which is more of an authoritarian approach. The authoritarian or classical approach to leadership is characterized by the leader's tendency to enforce his or her will upon the followers without perceived input (Avery, 2005).

In addressing perceptions it is important to look at the perception I have of myself. Does my perception of myself influence how I, as an athlete, view my coach? Research indicates that better self-perception, specifically from an African American male point of view, results in a higher level of athletic ability and academic confidence, thus resulting in better academic grades (Brown, 2004). This carryover into the academic field may be a result of the athlete gaining confidence in one area of his life which enables him to achieve to a greater extent in another area.

Researchers have found that athletic competence and social acceptance are more important to males than females, whereas females are higher than males in the category of self-worth. Mental image dilemma may affect perceptions one has of another and the construction of one's self - finding out who we are and how we fit in - may shape our perceptions of leadership (Todd & Kent, 2003). In addition, communication (verbal) of the coach can be viewed as a behavior. The coach is the perceived leader and the player (perceiver) needs to feel effective understood communication is being disseminated from their coach. Female athletes' perceptions of head coaches' competence in their coach's communication technique was found to not be based on their sex or the sex of the coach but on the perceived communicative competence of the coach (Haselwood, Joyner, Burke, Geyerman, Czech, Munkasy, & Zwald, 2003) Haselwood et al. found that coaches view themselves most competent in the immediate reaction to an athlete's behavior,

social relaxation, empathy, and expressiveness. Coaches view their messages as clear and easy to understand, with a good command of the language whereas the athletes do not necessarily perceive coaches as strong in these areas.

What effects do perceptions of coaches' behaviors have on the athlete's level of performance as perceived by the athlete? Research indicates that coaches influence athletes' performance, ability, and motivation (Black & Weiss, 1992). Kassing and Infante (1999) studied how the coach's efforts to solicit better performance related to the athlete's perceived communication from the coach and how the athlete reported performance and satisfaction. Their research showed that when male athletes perceived that their coaches were using more aggressive tactics; the athletes viewed the aggressive communication by the coach unfavorably. The athletes also reported when this aggressive communication was utilized by their coach they had less satisfaction with their coach, less team success in terms of winning and losing and less sportsmanship. The Kassing and Infante research was a quantitative study and focused specifically on aggressive communication in male athletes. The result is significant for the study on athlete's perceptions of effective coaching behaviors that is being addressed in this current research because it addresses factors that influence the performance of an individual.

Recognizing that there are many athletes who struggle with confidence, it is important for the coach to incorporate interventions to assist in the intrapersonal development of the player, thus improving the interpersonal relationship between the player and coach. The coach-athlete relationship can be regarded as a practice in imparting fundamental technical skills and mentoring by the coach for the athlete (Schinke & Tabakman, 2001).

Though coaches and athletes might not consider relational difficulties in the heat of the teaching and learning moment there are reasons why their relationship is so complex and, in some instances, trying (Schinke & Tabakman, 2001).

The expectations coaches have on performance level play an important role in how athletes cognitively process their athletic achievement. Part of that process may involve examining the perceived causes of behavior (Wilson & Stephens, 2005). In other words, if the athlete is performing well is it a reflection of how he or she perceives the coaching behaviors of his or her leader? This transference in the perception of cause may have an effect on performance in both a mental and physical way. Looking at this phenomenon from another perspective, does this transference by the follower to his or her leader relieve the follower of accountability and responsibility? This transference of responsibility onto the coach states in a very simple term that I am performing below level because of your behavior. Thus, the relationship becomes strained and fractured to the point of possibly not being able to be repaired (Wilson & Stephens). Research indicates that athletes who perceive they have been successful cite the causes of the outcome to internal factors, perceive that the situation is stable, believe they have personal control over the outcome, and perceive there is a certain amount of external control present. The coach's formed expectations have limited impact on the athletes' perceived causes of performance (Wilson & Stephens).

In the process of becoming a conscious interventionist several areas must be addressed. First, it is important that the coach understands images that the athlete is seeing. The images that the athlete sees influence his or her confidence as informational sources because he or she confirms self-perceptions in a facilitating or detracting way.

Second, understanding body language during practice and games allows the athlete and coach to evaluate and comprehend what seems to be happening, which in turn will allow coach and player to address a well-suited compensatory strategy to regain physiological control. However, without a collaborative discussion on how the athlete's body is responding, the coach or athlete or both might select an inappropriate coping strategy. Third, it is important to focus on the athlete's emotions and feelings because the athlete is the producer on the field of competition. An affect-based perception exchange between the coach and player allows the coach and player to understand the reasoning behind a specific reaction or to create an opportunity for further exploration. In the fourth phase of intervention it is important for the coach to acknowledge performance with some type of reward system that allows the player to achieve individual success and feel valued, thus promoting team inclusion. Certainly technical suggestions are a part of the coach and intervention strategy. A suggestion should not be construed as an order but should be phrased in such a way as to decrease the likelihood that correction is associated with criticism (Schinke & Tabakman, 2001).

The necessity of a coach and the players coming together and agreeing on goals is a factor to consider in the performance of the athlete. If the understanding and agreement of team goals are perceived congruently between the coach and players, it may provide an environment for continued success (Bloom, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998).

What effects do perceptions of coaches' behaviors have on the athletes' satisfaction within their sports program? Competitive coaches have a tendency to set unreasonable standards for their athletes and underestimate athlete competitiveness (Huddleston, Arabi-Fard, & Gavin, 1995). In analyzing this finding the stress and

pressure of being successful is often an internal conflict that coaches battle on a daily basis. Coaches are put into a situation, particularly at the high school and levels beyond, where their careers depend on wins and losses. At the high school and college levels this means that as a coach I am putting my career on the line with people who are anywhere from 16 to 22 years of age, and I'm trusting those individuals to produce in a way that is seen as positive to my upper-level administration. As a result there is a tendency for the coach to set unrealistic goals for the group that cannot be achieved. Therefore, it becomes more and more evident that the perception of effectiveness from the follower be heard and interpreted (Huddleston, Arabi, & Gavin, 1995).

In addition, there is a reciprocity factor between player and coach that is an expected co-orientation behavior (Jowett, et al., 2005). In highlighting the importance of the coach-athlete relationship Jowett et al. referred to this reciprocity with what they define as the three C's: closeness, commitment, and complementarity. Closeness refers to feelings and perceptions that appear to be a function of interpersonal factors such as admiration, trust, and respect. Commitment reflects oneness of thought between the coach and athlete, and is defined as an intention to maintain and optimize relations. Finally, complementarity reflects a positive working environment where coach and athlete work together to attempt to improve performance (Jowett et al.). This type of relational atmosphere creates an organic state of leadership to which Avery (2005) referred.

Andy Hill, a seldom-used substitute on three of John Wooden's national championship teams, alluded to this reciprocity factor in his analysis of Wooden. Hill was a substitute in the Bill Walton era. Walton was a member of the Wooden teams that

won 88 consecutive games and 2 national titles and later become one of the top 50 players in NBA history as voted by his peers. Hill rarely played but was amazed at the attention to detail and a fundamental transference of trust that occurred between the coach and team when the game began. Hill was fascinated at what he saw transpire on the court.

There was an unspoken transfer of power at game time. Very few coaches or managers ever do this. It involves the T-word, trust. It was never said, but there was a clear transfer of trust from Wooden and his assistants to the players once the game started. No one ever called the players to the bench. It was not about smoke and mirrors once the game started. It was about execution. (Bisheff, 2004, p. 126)

This reciprocal relationship can also be found in the way leaders (coaches and players) have received training. Peer leaders (players) and coaches who exhibit moderate to high levels of training and instruction, positive feedback, and social support have been correlated to athletes' perceptions of positive team climate, team cohesion, collective efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and perceived performance (Glenn, 2003). In other words, there is a sense of inclusion and value that is experienced by the producer. Just as is the case in any other discipline, sports have leaders who are on the sidelines and leaders actually on the field of competition, performing and working together in an attempt to achieve an established goal. This sense of inclusion not only makes sense but also seems to be a necessity for promoting the oneness of purpose that great teams experience (Glenn, 2003).



An athlete's satisfaction with the team would undoubtedly serve the overall group in a better way. There are some variables that cannot be altered in team sports, specifically the notion of playing time and skill level. Skill level is certainly a big determinant in playing time; however, there are many other variables that can enter into the amount of minutes one plays or the decision whether they start or not. Certainly the reciprocity issue between player and coach should be an exchange with a particular emphasis on what the athlete perceives as being a good coach. The fact is that coaches, who are viewed as the knowledge source of the relationship, may have the power to create an environment for sustainability. The coach creates this environment by sharing wisdom, knowledge, fundamental training, assertiveness, decisiveness, sensitivity, passion, and flexibility. In return the coach expects the player (producer) to give effort and be enthusiastic. Additionally, research indicates that coaches' immediate verbal reaction with players is a significant predictor of team satisfaction and cohesion. Findings indicate that perceived immediate verbal reaction behaviors are a significant predictor for social attraction to a group and for social group integration (Turman, 2008). These results are meaningful given that coaches do attempt to foster satisfaction and cohesion. Team satisfaction and cohesion are further enhanced when coaches talk with athletes about issues beyond the sport and interact with them before and after practices and games (Turman, 2008).

### Conclusions

In summary, team sports and the people who participate in those sports all have perceptions of what they feel are good traits and characteristics of a leader. Research

shows that with the many responsibilities the coach has, he or she has the opportunity to have a major impact on the people (players) they train and teach.

The review of literature revealed the common belief of coaches, athletic directors, and general managers that there is a certain way effective coaches should be conducting themselves in character and behavior. This belief is such an important thread that assists in the knitting of the entire fabric created by coach and player.

The researcher examined the John Wooden paradigm and the importance of self-regulation and teaching self-regulation to players. The review also expanded on perceptions of legendary coaches at the professional level with the likes of Arnold “Red” Auerbach (Boston Celtics), Bill Parcells (Miami Dolphins), and Tony Dungy (Indianapolis Colts), along with legendary NJCAA coaches Denny Lehnus (men’s basketball), Dennis Clark (softball), Gene Bess (men’s basketball), Wayne King (baseball), and others.

Research has also proven there appears to be a gap between perceptions of player and coach concerning not only the characteristics and traits of effective leadership but also in coaches’ behaviors and the administration of each program. It has also been shown that a lack of intervention techniques employed by the coach may cause a lack of performance by the player. Imagery, body language, the athlete’s feelings and emotions, and acknowledgement of those feelings and emotions may all be factors that can improve the players’ perceived lack of individual performance and satisfaction within the team dynamic.

The literature review has brought to clarity the fact that that the interpersonal dynamic between player and coach is an integral part of the success of not only the

individual relationship but also the overall effectiveness of the group. The process by which we perceive someone may be viewed favorably or non-favorably by that person's inner core and his or her personal characteristics.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

“But now there are many members but only one body” (I Corinthians 12:20). These words were written by the apostle Paul to the Corinthians speaking of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and how the interconnectedness culminates into an entire body working together for the good and glory of God. This simple yet very profound scriptural quote transcends into a human interpretation of team sports. The members of the unit create a functioning body working for the defined goals of the group thus all activities become a shared and organic experience for the good of the team.

Human behavior is determined by an individual’s perception (Wang et al., 2004). In the world of athletics it would seem that this previous finding allows the examination of group study and dynamics in the behavioral sense. The perception of the athletes in terms of their relationship with the coach may be one of the determining variables in individual performance and team satisfaction as perceived by the athlete. As the athlete matures and crosses over into young adulthood these perceptions of coaches become more defined through the process of cognitive development.

Although there is a definite value placed upon leadership (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1995), noted leadership research in sports has been sparse and sporadic with the majority of leadership research focusing on the coach (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). With this in mind and the understanding that all human interaction has a complexity to it, the

importance of finding out what part the producer and applicator of the skills taught in the field of athletics is important to examine. This producer and applicator would be the player in any sport. Once the preparation and the foundation have been taught it is the job of the players to digest, metabolize, and apply to their particular sport. Does the perception the player has of the coach play a determining factor in their individual performance and team satisfaction?

It was the intent of this study to examine the interpersonal relationship between the player and the coach as perceived by the player. The intent of the methodology was to identify emerging themes provided by the athletes themselves in a collective manner of survey data collection, an open-ended question to from which to respond, and a few individual interviews. The study also collected data on what athletes view as specific strength traits of an effective coach, and compared them to coach John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005), an intrapersonal leadership paradigm.

Along with the above introduction, this chapter also focused on the research design, the sample chosen, data collection, analytical methods, and limitations of the study. The research design primarily focused on the overview of the methods and procedures used to address each specific research question. In addition, there are references cited to support the chosen method of the research design and why authorities say this is reliable. Finally, the researcher provided rationale why this particular design was used.

This chapter also provides the selected sample used for the research. This includes the participants who were chosen, and when and where the actual data collection took place which includes the type of environment, room temperature, and seating

arrangement, how many took the survey and were interviewed. Survey results, including additional characteristics and demographics, are also included. Also, the population portion of chapter three addresses how the identity and confidentiality of the institutions and sample were addressed.

The specific data collection process is also addressed in this chapter. A detailed step-by-step analysis of what was done to retrieve the data is discussed. Included are the method of triangulating the results and the rationale for the selection and development of the test instrument used. The analytical methods are defined and discussed, which include the statistical and qualitative methods used, explanation for the choice of those procedures, and how those procedures contributed to answering the research questions.

Finally, the limitations are discussed thoroughly in relationship to time, resources, information, sample size, and other limitations the researcher sees as relevant in the study of the interpersonal dynamic between the coach and the player. Explanations are included on how the design and limitations may influence the results of this study.

The research and data collection in this study attempted to identify emerging themes from the following research questions of athletes' perceptions of their head coaches. The following questions were addressed in the collection of the data:

1. What are the perceptions athletes have of their head coaches' behaviors and characteristics? The purpose of this question was to collect data on what today's athletes are viewing from their mental lenses of what their coaches are providing in terms of behavior and character traits to their teams, not only on the field of competition but also in other influencing areas. It is important to understand any emerging themes and whether these themes are viable indicators of what is important from a leadership

perspective in order to motivate athletes who are the producers of the fundamental skills and concepts of teamwork taught. These athlete perceptions were viewed from the theoretical based *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005) created by legendary coach John Wooden. The intent was to find out if athletes view this paradigm as an effective way to be a successful coach and what, if any, traits are more important than others.

2. What influences do perceptions of coaches' behaviors or characteristics have on individual performance as perceived by the athlete? This question attempted to identify any emerging themes that surfaced relative to the motivation and motivational techniques athletes are looking for. If the perception of the coach was a favorable one, did that perception increase production level in the day-to-day practices and translate into more success as defined by the athlete during game situations?

3. What effects do perceptions of coaches' behaviors and characteristics have on the athletes' satisfaction within their sports programs? Finally, is a happy or satisfied producer (player) within the group a more effective individual performer, and does the perception of the coach have any emerging trends that will give us further insight to a more productive player?

### Research Design

Investigation of the coach-player relationship suggests a gap between coaches' actual behaviors and athletes' preferred behaviors of their coaches (Wang & Callahan, 1999). Research indicates that coaches influence athletes' performance, ability, motivation, self-confidence, and their perceptions of confidence (Kassing & Infante, 1999). Research and qualitative data need to be addressed from both winning and losing

programs, focusing on a smaller number of teams. It is with the above data-based results that the current study was designed.

In the initial phase for the preparation of the data collection it was important to develop a questionnaire that investigated the athletes' perceptions on what traits they felt were important in the effectiveness of a coach, if their current coaches were exhibiting some of these characteristics, and if the athletes' perceptions at all influenced their individual performances and team satisfaction. The model was used for the basis of the research was the *Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire* (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998), which concentrated on responses to certain aspects of the athletes' satisfaction such as individual performance, team performance, ability utilization, strategy, personal treatment, training and instruction, team task contribution, team social contribution, ethics, team integration, personal dedication, budget, medical personal, academic support services, and external agents. The researcher was specifically interested in individual performance and team satisfaction relative to the athlete's relationship with the coach. The *Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire* was developed on a seven-point Likert scale system which was used by the researcher in the development of his own questionnaire.

The questionnaire developed by the researcher was called the *Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire* (APECT-Q) (see Appendix A), and was developed utilizing John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* model for intrapersonal leadership (see Appendix B). The first section of the questionnaire focused primarily on the traits expounded upon in the *Pyramid* and how important these traits were based on the seven-point scale (1, 2 Do not agree; 3,4,5 Moderately agree; 6, 7 Strongly agree). The second section of the APECT-Q targeted the athletes' views of whether their coach



at all influenced their individual performances and team satisfaction. Finally there was an open-ended question at the end (qualitative part) of the APECT-Q for the athletes to comment, if they so desired, on what suggestions they might have on improvement of the relationship between the coach and the player. With the finalization of the *Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire*, an informed consent form was developed to ensure the participants that their answers would be used to identify emerging themes in a collective way and that no individual would be singled out and also that this would be a confidential survey.

Finally, to protect the integrity of the data collection process, the researcher hired a data collection team which had very little to do with the direct day-to-day contact with the participants involved with the study. Four individuals were hired to administer the questionnaire. The executive director of the data collection team held a master's degree in curriculum development, taught outside of the institutions being surveyed, and had no knowledge of who the participants were. The other three people hired for data collection included one teacher's assistant and two administrative assistants. The primary researcher did participate in the introductions and the reading of the informed consent form. The researcher also decided to be present both sites with the data collection team in order to capture as much of the athletic population at each institution, ensuring reliability and validity.

### Population

To secure the sample for the study, IRB approval had to be received from the colleges where the student athletes were enrolled. IRB approval was granted from both institutions in January of 2009. In addition, both athletic directors and the coaching staff

at each of the colleges were informed of the data collection process and all gave their verbal blessing. Finally as a professional courtesy, an electronic communication was sent in October 2008 to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) national office and the NJCAA Region 4 and Region 8 directors, giving them a short abstract of the research to be done. These are the organizations that were indirectly affected by the study. Electronic blessings were given from the Director and Assistant Executive Director of the NJCAA and the Director of Region 8 and Region 4 commending the study and offering assistance in any way.

In viewing and analyzing the results through both the quantitative and qualitative data it is important to identify the demographics of the group as a whole and to discuss what the researcher was investigating. Participants for the study were used from two community college athletic programs, one from the Midwestern part of the United States and the other from the Southeastern part of the United States. The two participating institutions had similar athletic programs and it was decided to survey volleyball, men's and women's basketball, baseball, and softball at each site. The sports chosen represented 76.7% (23/30) of what the Region 4 community colleges have in common. In other words, 23 of the 30 community colleges in Region 4 support at least the five sports programs surveyed. In Region 8 the commonality of community colleges offering all five of the sports surveyed dropped to 47.8% (11/23). The participants at the two colleges provided the appropriate triangulation of results with regard to data and methodology. The data triangulation involved the time, space, and people involved in the survey. Two different sites were chosen, and the survey was given in different environments with a different group of participants at each site. The method utilized involved the quantitative

results of the APECT-Q (responding to the questions asked on the seven-point Likert scale) and the qualitative portion of the APECT-Q, which allowed for response in writing to the open-ended question #52 and some interviews. The sample choice also allowed the sex base to be of similar size because of the NJCAA rules on maximum roster size. The sample ( $n = 145$ ) was drawn from two community college institutions and their students who participated in five identified sports programs: women's volleyball, women's softball, women's and men's basketball, and baseball. Of the total population, 162 on all of the rosters, 145 (89.5%) took the APECT-Q with 68 from the Southeast community college and 77 from the Midwest. The average age of the participants in the study was 19.44. Athletes who indicated they were starters constituted 57.9% of the population (84), and 42.1% (61) were non-starters. Ethnically, 69.0% (100) were Caucasian, 23.4% (34) were African American, 5.5% (8) were Hispanic, 1.4% (2) were International, and .7% (1) reported him or herself as Other. Of the sample who participated in the APECT-Q, 52.4 % (76) were male and 47.6% (69) were female. The average number of years playing an organized team sport for participants in the study was a self-reported 11.31. This datum would indicate that on an average the participants had been participating in team sports since they were approximately eight years old.

The quantitative results have been analyzed from the perspective of seven categorical groups: the entire sample ( $n = 145$ ), starters ( $n = 84$ ), non-starters ( $n = 61$ ), Midwest ( $n = 77$ ), Southeast ( $n = 68$ ), male ( $n = 76$ ), and female ( $n = 69$ ) in their responses to the 51 questions they were asked on the APECT-Q.

Each school had a vastly different winning percentage both overall, the accumulation of all sports' win/loss record, and comparing individual sports against each

other. The Midwestern community college had a 172-48 (.782) win/loss record, and the Southeast community college had an 85-82 (.509) win/loss record.

There were also wide discrepancies when comparing each sport side-by-side to their counter school. The Midwestern community college had win/loss records in baseball of 42-12 (.778), softball 43-9 (.827), men's basketball 25-7 (.781), women's basketball 28-7 (.800), and volleyball 34-13 (.723), while the community college in the Southeast had win/loss records in baseball 31-18 (.663), softball 14-23 (.378), men's basketball 12-18 (.400), women's basketball 10-14 (.417), and volleyball 18-9 (.667).

Obviously, the most important part of the research was the student athletes themselves and the protection of their confidentiality concerning the questionnaire and interviews. All participants signed a letter of informed consent, which promised confidentiality of their answers. The informed consent form also gave assurances that at if participants felt uncomfortable with the research and the data collection process at any point, they would be allowed to withdraw from the study without malice.

#### Data Collection

With the development of the questionnaire and the hiring of the data collection team it was important to begin the organization and implementation of collecting the information that would be critical to the study. With the foresight to protect the integrity of the study and the confidentiality of the participants the following methods were used to collect the necessary information.

A data collection team meeting was held before the event at each site to coordinate how the process would flow. It was decided at this meeting that the project would include a color coding system to simplify any data analysis that would occur. The

major color code for the Midwest community college was white which simply meant that any white questionnaire came from the Midwest community college. The major color code for the Southeast community college was yellow. To separate the questionnaires further by sport, each sport was assigned a color which was indicated in the right-hand corner of each questionnaire. As an example, if the data collection team saw a white questionnaire with a green mark in the upper right-hand corner, it indicated the questionnaire came from the Midwest community college in the sport of women's basketball. This color coding process simplified also the collection of data and separation of sport. The primary researcher decided to introduce himself and the data collection team to the student athletes personally, and would then have the data collection team hand out the informed consent form with the questionnaire attached. The researcher would then read aloud the informed consent form to provide all the student-athletes opportunity to not only read the consent form but also hear it being read aloud. After that was completed there was an opportunity for questions in case there was any confusion on the part of the participants. Upon completion the informed consent forms the researcher left the room. All participants who entered the room signed the informed consent form and participated in the study. The data collection team director handled the reading of each survey question to ensure the integrity of the process. In this way no participant was purposely embarrassed because of possible issues with reading and/or comprehension skills. Upon completion of the survey the data collection team collected each one. Participants were allowed to leave the room upon completion of the APECT-Q. The entire data collection process from the introductions to the gathering of the data took approximately 45 minutes.

Upon approval of the IRB from each participating institution, the athletic directors were informed by the researcher to alert them of an onsite visit by the data collection team. The date was coordinated by the researcher with the athletic director and coaches as to what would be the most opportune time with the maximum number of participants. Upon approval of all parties (researcher, data collection team, athletic directors, and coaches) dates were set for onsite visits. In conjunction with the date approval, each institution's athletic administrative assistant set up the rooms for the APECT-Q to be administered.

Data collection took place at the Midwest community college in late March of 2009. The room was very spacious where the student-athletes could spread out; the tables were round. There were plenty of windows with a very state-of-the-art feeling, and from the researcher's view it was an environment very conducive to taking the questionnaire. There were two collection sessions held at the Midwest community college. Four of the sports programs' athletes participated in the first session and the remaining athletic program had its players take the questionnaire at a later time on the same day because of a time conflict.

Data collection at the Southeastern community college was held in early April of 2009. The classroom was much older and did not have the spaciousness of the classroom in the Midwest. There were no windows, and students were seated in older individual chairs with a writing surface on the portion of the chairs' arm. Students were very closely packed together resulting in some perceived classroom management issues as noted by the data collection team.

At both institutions, the coaching staff was fantastic at getting the athletes to the site of the data collection. The coaches were then asked to leave to try and relieve any trepidation by the participants to answer questions in a certain way. Both rooms where the questionnaire was administered maintained a very comfortable temperature ensuring the participants of getting neither overheated nor too cold.

Upon completion of the administration and collection of data all of the athletes and their coaches at both sites were treated to pizza and beverages (if they wanted to come back to the site), and were thanked by the researcher and data collection team for their participation. This on-site technique guaranteed a visual and verbal response to all who participated and the importance of their engagement with the project.

In addition, interviews were conducted in the fall semester of 2009 to compliment the APECT-Q and strengthen the foundational views of the athletes. This process was called the APECT-Q Interview Follow-up (see Appendix C). During these sessions the researcher physically handed questions on paper to the interviewees in separate sessions. The interview process consisted of four questions (see appendix C) and five athletes were interviewed. The researcher read each question aloud to each athlete and asked if he or she understood what was being asked. The athletes then responded in writing to each individual question. Upon completion the answers were reviewed by the researcher with each athlete present to make sure the written answers were exactly the words intended by the athlete. This process ensured a cleaner effect with little subjectivity.

#### Analytical Methods

To address the research questions the APECT-Q was designed to: identify what the perceptions of athletes are in isolating the strong traits of an effective coach as

identified in John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* intrapersonal leadership model (Wooden & Carty, 2005). The questionnaire was patterned after the *Athlete Satisfaction Questionnaire* developed by Dr. Harold Reimer (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998) with a seven-point Likert scale responding to 51 quantitative questions. These questions were based on the premise of identifying emerging themes from the athlete's point of view as to what traits or characteristics were strongest in identifying an effective coach. Secondly, the data collected were designed to identify whether the coach was exhibiting these effective coaching traits and whether the athlete's perception of his or her coach influenced his or her individual performance and team satisfaction. Individual performance and team satisfaction (how happy the athletes perceived themselves to be) were evaluated and analyzed from answers the athletes themselves responded to in part B of the APECT-Q. Finally, it was the intent of the questionnaire in item #52 to receive written dialogue from the athletes on their views concerning improvement of the player-coach relationship. These athlete statements and written paragraphs were designed to identify what the athlete perceived as areas to explore which would lead to better interpersonal communication and bonding between player and coach. This qualitative approach to the project may lead to areas that need further exploration, and may provide information for other studies and research.

#### Limitations

As with most any project, research, or study, there are limitations that need to be noted by the researcher and data collection team. This study is no different; the following are items discussed and identified in a post-evaluation of the data collection process and procedures utilized. It should also be noted that overall the process was very well-



organized, and the collection of the information desired was completed in a very efficient and timely manner. With that being said the following are areas that the researcher found to be possible limitations of the study.

In the case of the data collection at the Southeast community college, the size of the room and the forced physical closeness of the participants may be perceived as a limitation. This scenario could have created a causal effect for some of the classroom management issues the data collection team indicated it had with this group. Being in such close proximity to each other may also have caused some of the participants to rush through the questionnaire just to get out of the room. In addition, participants may have chosen to look at other participants' answers from time to time in the hopes of going along with the group in their responses. Even though the survey had no right or wrong answers there may have been a tendency to want to fit the norm, thus creating an opportunity to look at someone else's answers to do so. The researcher explained how important this questionnaire was because the athlete's voice was being heard.

The research team originally thought that onsite visits were the best way to conduct projects of this nature; however, even though your audience is captive and willing, in an onsite visit an electronic survey may be more beneficial. In many cases, a returned electronic questionnaire is a more accurate indicator that participants were not only willing but also actually wanted their voices heard. Also, the onsite visit is in many cases a financial burden. In this study both the researcher and data collection team incurred travel expenses.

Special care was put into the presentation to ensure the participants there were no right or wrong answers; just their own points of view were wanted. That being said, in

dealing with human beings the subjectivity of the answers may be viewed as a limitation. Coaches were specifically asked to leave the data collection sites to ensure there was not a perception of coercion or that the participants were answering questions the way their coaches would want them to answer. Careful consideration was placed on trying to create an environment for honesty and integrity along with communicating how the participants were valued.

In the administration of the data collection those leaving when they were finished may have caused distractions to others who were still working could be viewed as a limitation. Keeping everyone in the room until all were finished or taking each sport group separately may have been a better way to collect the data.

The sample itself may be viewed as a limitation. This study was conducted at two community colleges, one from the Midwestern part of the United States and the other from the Southeastern part of the country. Therefore the conclusions drawn from this study are specific to those two schools. As a result this study's findings may not be generalized to all junior or community colleges.

Finally, because the APECT-Q was an original development by the researcher, it may be viewed as a limitation. Patterned after the seven-point Likert scale Athlete's Satisfaction Questionnaire, developed by Dr. Harold Reimer and nationally accepted, the APECT-Q was specifically patterned to reflect questions that would induce responses to Wooden and Carty's *Pyramid of Success*, and whether the athlete viewed certain characteristics of that paradigm as attributes of a successful coach. The validity and reliability of the APECT-Q from a quantitative point of view may be perceived as limiting.

CHAPTER IV  
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

....and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1). Our perceptions, the way that one views another, in many cases will influence how one interacts and responds to that individual in a leadership position. In the context of athletics and in particular team sports, the perception the athlete has of his or her head coach may influence to an extent the individual performance and team satisfaction the athlete perceives him or herself as exhibiting.

As is evidenced by the existing research, the relationship between the player and the coach is a complex dynamic (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Martens, 1990) that is behavior-driven by an individual's perception (Wang & Callahan, 1999). It can be argued therefore that this perception may influence the way one performs as perceived by the performer and if that person derives group satisfaction from his/her perception of the leader. It has also been noted that timing is a potential variable affecting athletes' perceptions of their coach's uses of autocratic, democratic, social support, positive feedback and training and instruction leadership strategies (Turman, 2000). Starters and non-starters have also been a subject of research by Cardinal (1998), who found that perceptions of non-starters were viewed differently than that of their starter counterparts relative to the coach's behavior.

The previous chapters of this study developed the case for the research through the avenues of articles, previous dissertations, and direct quotations from leaders in the field of coaching as to some of their thoughts on the current state of the athlete and their perceptions of what the traits of a good coach are. Through several coach interviews there seemed to be a prevailing theme concerning individualism and a self-serving attitude that coaches sometimes feel in their day-to-day interaction with athletes.

Through this investigation, it has also been found that noted leadership research in sports has focused primarily on the coach (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). With this in mind and the fact that there is a co-orientation factor between player and coach that needs further investigation (Crust & Lawrence, 2006), the current study was developed and analyzed for any perceived themes that may exist from the athlete's point of view.

The reader can expect to crystallize from this chapter several areas that the study investigated. The chapter focuses on the actual data and facts that were collated from the APECT-Q directly related to the athlete's responses from the two institutions that participated. In addition, actual quotes and dialogue from the students themselves in the open-ended question #52 on the APECT-Q and interviews clarified at least from certain individuals what their factual perceptions were.

The chapter also discusses the factual results as they relate to the questions addressed in the research. In addition, the reader can expect the end of the chapter to formalize the conclusions made from the factual data along with the implications of the study what might be looked into for further research possibilities in this area of the player-coach behavioral dynamic, and the implications that this research may have on the field of coaching team sports.

To examine the athlete's point of view, the current study used both a quantitative and qualitative method in its approach. To collect quantitative data the researcher used a tool referred to as the APECT-Q (*Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire*), which was a series of questions formulated by the researcher based on traits related to Wooden and Carty's (2005) *Pyramid of Success*, a theoretically based leadership model developed by the legendary coach John Wooden. Student athletes at two different institutions responded to a questionnaire that contained a seven-point Likert scale ranging from do not agree (DNA) to strongly agree (SA). In addition, at the end of the APECT-Q an open-ended question was asked for students to respond to if they so desired to get a qualitative feel for what they perceived could improve or enhance the relationships between players and coaches. The APECT-Q had two sections. The first part of the APECT-Q focused on responses from the athletes to provide information on what the athletes perceived as more desirable coaching traits as identified by Wooden and Carty's *Pyramid of Success*. These responses by the athletes on effective coaching traits provided a foundation for the research questions being addressed. The second section of the APECT-Q concentrated on collecting data to analyze behaviors and traits of the 10 head coaches the student athletes were playing for and whether these coaches' behaviors and traits were influencing individual performance and team satisfaction.

It was the intent of this research was to investigate the interpersonal dynamic between the athlete and coach from the athlete's perspective in both a quantitative and qualitative fashion. The study focused primarily on three questions.

1. What are the perceptions athletes have of their head coaches' behaviors and characteristics? The purpose of this question was to collect data on what today's athletes

are viewing from their mental lenses, in relation to what their coaches are providing in terms of behavior and character traits to their teams not only on the field of competition but in other influencing areas. The researcher identified any emerging themes and the viability of these themes as indicators of the importance, from a leadership perspective, in motivating athletes who are the producers of the fundamental skills and concepts of teamwork that are taught.

2. What influences do perceptions of coaches' behaviors or characteristics have on individual performance as perceived by the athlete? This answers to this question identified any emerging themes relative to the motivation and motivational techniques that athletes are looking for. If the perception of the coach is a favorable one, will that perception increase production level in the day to day practices and translate into more success as defined by the athlete during game situations?

3. What effects do perceptions of coaches' behaviors and characteristics have on athletes' satisfaction within their sports programs? Finally, this question collected data on team satisfaction, identifying whether a more satisfied individual is more effective as an individual performer and does the perception of the coach provide any emerging trends that will give us further insight to a more productive player?

### Findings

The APECT-Q evaluation categorically segmented the first 18 questions as "traits of a good coach" taken from information received from John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005). In addition, the athletes responded to a series of questions asking them to rate their personal views on "my current coach's traits, and

“how my views of my coach’s traits influence my individual performance and team satisfaction.”

*Research Question 1*

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach were as follows. The student athletes at the two institutions strongly agreed that hard work, loyalty, good decision-making, confidence, and energy and enthusiasm ranked as the top five in that order. They also agreed strongly that a *we not me* philosophy, discipline, awareness, consistency, and *what’s right* not *who’s right* were traits that should be part of a good coach’s make up. The athletes moderately agreed that team-bonding activities, patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, being in good physical condition, having humility, and being a Christian were traits of a good coach (see Table 1).

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach by the starters at the two institutions were as follows. The student athletes at the two institutions strongly agreed that hard work, good decision making, loyalty, energy and enthusiasm, confidence, awareness, discipline, a *we not me* philosophy, consistency, doing what’s right, and team-bonding activities should be part of a good coach’s make up. The starters moderately agreed that patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, being in good physical condition, having humility, and being of a Christian faith were traits of a good coach (see Table 2).

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach from the non-starters at the two institutions were as follows. These athletes strongly agreed that loyalty, hard work, confidence, good decision-making, a *we not me*

philosophy, energy, discipline, awareness, consistency, and doing what's right should be part of a good coach's make up. The starters moderately agreed that team-bonding activities, patience, good morals, performing the skill, intensity, being in good physical condition, having humility, and being of a Christian faith were traits of a good coach (see Table 3).



Table 1

*All Athletes: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rating	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2	Hard Worker	1	6.67	0.59
4	Loyalty	2	6.63	0.59
9	Decision-Maker	3	6.57	0.72
15	Confidence	4	6.53	0.72
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	6.49	0.08
13	We Not Me Philosophy	6	6.37	0.94
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.33	0.85
8	Awareness	8	6.32	0.89
14	Consistency	9	6.24	1.01
5	What's Right	10	6.10	1.10
3	Bonding Activities	11	5.99	1.13
17	Patience	12	5.79	1.19
18	Good Morals	13	5.65	1.35
10	Intensity	14	5.11	1.37
12	Performance Skill	15	5.02	1.63
11	Physical Condition	16	4.49	1.58
1	Humility	17	4.20	1.90
16	Christian	18	3.47	2.12

Table 2

*Starters: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2	Hard Worker	1	6.70	0.51
9	Decision-Maker	2	6.62	0.71
4	Loyalty	3	6.56	0.72
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	4	6.53	0.80
15	Confidence	5	6.49	0.75
8	Awareness	6	6.34	0.81
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.33	0.87
13	We Not Me Philosophy	8	6.32	0.98
14	Consistency	9	6.21	1.03
5	What's Right	10	6.04	1.17
3	Bonding Activities	11	6.03	1.05
17	Patience	12	5.74	1.23
18	Good Morals	13	5.65	1.19
10	Intensity	14	5.42	1.32
12	Performance Skill	15	5.05	1.57
11	Physical Condition	16	4.50	1.58
1	Humility	17	4.33	1.88
16	Christian	18	3.42	2.06

Table 3

*Non- Starters: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4	Loyalty	1	6.74	0.57
2	Hard Worker	2	6.62	0.69
15	Confidence	3	6.59	0.67
9	Decision-Maker	4	6.54	0.76
13	We Not Me Philosophy	5	6.44	0.88
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	6	6.43	0.80
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.31	0.92
8	Awareness	7	6.31	0.90
14	Consistency	9	6.28	1.00
5	What's Right	10	6.20	1.00
3	Bonding Activities	11	5.93	1.26
17	Patience	12	5.84	1.12
18	Good Morals	13	5.64	1.55
12	Performance Skill	14	4.98	1.72
10	Intensity	15	4.92	1.39
11	Physical Condition	16	4.47	1.59
1	Humility	17	4.38	1.94
16	Christian	18	3.54	2.22

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach by the student athletes at the Midwest school were as follows. The student athletes strongly agreed that hard work, loyalty, good decision-making, a *we not me* philosophy, energy and enthusiasm, confidence, discipline, awareness, consistency, doing what's right, and team-bonding activities were traits that should be part of a good coach's make up. The athletes moderately agreed that having patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, being in good physical condition, and having humility were traits of a good coach. However, the Midwestern school did not agree that being one of Christian faith was necessarily a trait a good coach should have (see Table 4).

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach by the student athletes at the Southeast school were as follows. The student athletes strongly agreed that loyalty, confidence, hard work, good decision-making, energy and enthusiasm, awareness, discipline, a *we not me* philosophy, consistency, and doing what's right were traits that should be part of a good coach's make-up. The athletes moderately agreed that team-bonding activities patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, being in good physical condition, having humility, and being one of a Christian faith were traits of a good coach (see Table 5).

Table 4

*Midwest: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2	Hard Worker	1	6.65	0.62
4	Loyalty	2	6.52	0.74
9	Decision-Maker	3	6.51	0.74
13	We Not Me Philosophy	4	6.45	0.80
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	6.44	0.88
15	Confidence	6	6.38	0.81
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.30	0.90
8	Awareness	8	6.27	0.90
14	Consistent	9	6.21	0.94
5	What's Right	10	6.17	1.06
3	Bonding Activities	11	6.09	1.05
17	Patience	12	5.77	1.10
18	Good Morals	13	5.52	1.46
10	Intensity	14	5.08	1.51
12	Performance Skill	15	4.74	1.68
1	Humility	16	4.53	1.76
11	Physical Condition	17	4.18	1.54
16	Christian	18	2.90	1.85

Table 5

*Southeast: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4	Loyalty	1	6.76	0.55
15	Confidence	2	6.70	0.55
2	Hard Worker	3	6.69	0.55
9	Decision-Maker	4	6.68	0.72
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	5.54	0.70
8	Awareness	6	6.40	0.79
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.35	0.88
13	We Not Me Philosophy	8	6.28	1.08
14	Consistency	8	6.28	1.10
5	What's Right	10	6.02	1.15
3	Bonding Activities	11	5.88	1.22
17	Patience	12	5.80	1.29
18	Good Morals	13	5.79	1.19
10	Intensity	14	5.35	1.18
12	Performance Skill	15	5.34	1.52
11	Physical Condition	16	4.91	1.52
1	Humility	17	4.15	2.03
16	Christian	18	4.11	2.24

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach from the male perspective were as follows. The males strongly agreed that hard work, loyalty, good decision-making, confidence, awareness, energy, a *we not me* philosophy, discipline, doing what's right, and consistency were traits that should be part of a good coach's make-up. The athletes moderately agreed that team-bonding activities, patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, having humility, being in good physical condition, and being of a Christian faith were traits of a good coach (see Table 6).

The results of the 18 questions directly related to assessing the qualities of a good coach from the female perspective were as follows. The females strongly agreed that hard work, loyalty, energy, good decision-making, confidence, a *we not me* philosophy, discipline, consistency, awareness, team-bonding activities, and doing what's right were traits that should be part of a good coach's make-up. The females moderately agreed that patience, good morals, intensity, ability to perform the skill taught, being in good physical condition, having humility, and being of a Christian faith were traits of a good coach (see Table 7).

Questions 19 and 20 on the APECT-Q simply asked for a general overview of whether athletes felt their perceptions of their coaches influenced individual performance and team satisfaction. In each case, athletes moderately agreed that perceptions did influence performance ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ).

The starters at the two institutions moderately agreed that perceptions did influence performance ( $M = 5.24$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.19$ ). The non-starters at

the two institutions moderately agreed that perceptions did influence performance ( $M = 5.64$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.18$ ).

Table 6

*Males: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	$M$	$SD$
2	Hard Worker	1	6.64	0.63
4	Loyalty	2	6.60	0.73
9	Decision-Maker	3	6.59	0.80
15	Confidence	4	6.49	0.75
8	Awareness	5	6.43	0.80
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	6	6.35	0.86
13	We Not Me Philosophy	7	6.29	0.95
7	Being Disciplined	8	6.22	0.92
5	What's Right	9	6.14	1.04
14	Consistent	10	6.09	1.07
3	Bonding Activities	11	5.84	1.19
17	Patience	12	5.58	1.36
18	Morals	12	5.58	1.35
10	Intensity	14	5.01	1.41
12	Performance Skill	15	4.92	1.62
1	Humility	16	4.47	1.78
11	Physical Condition	17	4.31	1.70
16	Christian	18	3.76	2.22



Table 7

*Females: Traits of a Good Coach*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2	Hard Worker	1	6.70	0.55
4	Loyalty	2	6.67	0.58
6	Energy/Enthusiasm	3	6.64	0.70
9	Decision-Maker	4	6.58	0.65
15	Confidence	4	6.58	0.67
13	We Not Me Philosophy	6	6.46	0.93
7	Being Disciplined	7	6.43	0.85
14	Consistent	8	6.40	.93
8	Awareness	9	6.22	.89
3	Bonding Activities	10	6.16	1.06
5	What's Right	11	6.06	1.17
17	Patience	12	5.72	.87
18	Good Morals	12	5.72	1.34
10	Intense	14	5.42	1.30
12	Performance Skill	15	5.13	1.64
11	Physical Condition	16	4.68	1.42
1	Humility	17	4.23	2.02
16	Christian	18	3.14	1.98

The Midwest athletes at the institution being surveyed moderately agreed that perceptions did influence performance ( $M = 5.62$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.45$ ). It can be noted by viewing the results on those two questions that performance contained the higher mean. The student athletes surveyed at the Southeast community college moderately agreed that the view they had of their coaches influenced their performance ( $M = 5.79$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ).

The males surveyed at both institutions moderately agreed that the view they had of their coach influenced their performance ( $m = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ) and team satisfaction ( $m = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). The female athletes surveyed at both institutions moderately agreed that the view they had of their coaches influenced their performance ( $M = 5.59$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) and team satisfaction ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ).

The research question concerning the athletes' perceptions of the coach for whom they were currently playing was addressed in the responses on questions 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45, 46, and 48. It was found that the athletes at the two schools rated a *we not me* philosophy as a trait they strongly agreed their current coach possessed. All other characteristics were categorized in the moderately agree category (see Table 8). The non-starters at both schools rated all traits into the moderately agree category with the *we not me* philosophy having the highest mean ( $M = 5.93$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ) (see Table 9).

It was found that the Midwest school students strongly agreed their coaches possessed the *we not me* philosophy ( $M = 6.45$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). All other traits they moderately agreed upon (see Table 10). It was found that the Southeast school students moderately agreed on all traits that their coaches possessed good morals ( $M = 5.92$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ) being at the strongest mean (see Table 11).

Table 8

*All Athletes: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rating	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
45	We Not Me Philosophy	1	6.125	1.43
46	Good Morals	2	5.74	1.315
33	Being Disciplined	2	5.74	1.38
24	Hard Worker	4	5.73	1.30
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	5.61	1.39
42	Intensity	6	5.24	1.73
36	Awareness	6	5.24	1.79
48	Confidence	8	5.18	1.97
39	Decision-Maker	9	5.03	1.65
21	Humility	10	4.41	1.70
27	Bonding Activities	11	3.70	1.84

Table 9

*Non-Starters: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
45	We Not Me Philosophy	1	5.93	1.48
33	Being Disciplined	2	5.77	1.28
24	Hard Worker	3	5.63	1.34
46	Good Morals	4	5.48	1.43
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	5.46	1.53
42	Intensity	6	5.18	1.77
36	Awareness	7	5.15	1.80
39	Decision-Maker	8	4.74	1.63
48	Confidence	9	4.37	2.08
21	Has Humility	10	4.13	1.84

Table 10

*Midwest: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
45	We Not Me Philosophy	1	6.45	1.03
24	Hard Worker	2	5.92	1.09
33	Being Disciplined	3	5.74	1.46
42	Intensity	4	5.70	1.65
46	Good Morals	5	5.58	1.26
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	6	5.56	1.45
36	Awareness	7	5.26	1.90
48	Confidence	8	4.95	1.89
39	Decision-Maker	9	4.87	1.62
21	Humility	10	4.30	1.60
27	Bonding Activities	11	3.93	1.72

Table 11

*Southeast: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
46	Good Morals	1	5.92	1.36
45	We Not Me Philosophy	2	5.75	1.71
33	Being Disciplined	2	5.75	1.28
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	4	5.67	1.33
24	Hard Worker	5	5.52	1.49
48	Confidence	6	5.45	2.03
39	Decision-Maker	7	5.21	1.67
36	Awareness	7	5.21	1.66
42	Intensity	9	4.72	1.67
21	Humility	10	4.54	1.82
27	Bonding Activities	11	3.64	1.97

It was found that the male athletes surveyed at both institutions strongly agreed their coaches displayed a *we not me* philosophy, they were disciplined, were hard workers, were energetic, and were aware. All other trait categories were moderately agreed upon by the males (see Table 12). The female athletes surveyed at both institutions moderately agreed on all traits of their coaches with the *we not me* philosophy ( $m = 5.97$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ) receiving the highest mean (see Table 13).

Table 12

*Males: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
45	We Not Me Philosophy	1	6.27	1.04
33	Being Disciplined	2	6.20	.93
24	Hard-Worker	3	6.15	1.05
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	4	6.09	1.13
36	Awareness	5	6.07	1.19
42	Intensity	6	5.87	1.35
46	Good Morals	7	5.81	1.30
39	Decision-Maker	8	5.69	1.21
48	Confidence	9	5.44	1.72
21	Humility	10	4.53	1.60
27	Bonding Activities	11	3.89	1.77

Table 13

*Females: My Coach's Traits*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
45	We Not Me Philosophy	1	5.97	1.75
46	Good Morals	2	5.67	1.33
24	Hard-Worker	3	5.29	1.40
33	Being Disciplined	4	5.25	1.97
30	Energy/Enthusiasm	5	5.08	1.47
48	Confidence	6	4.90	2.18
42	Intensity	7	4.56	1.84
36	Awareness	8	4.33	1.90
39	Decision-Maker	9	4.30	1.77
21	Humility	10	4.29	1.85
27	Bonding Activities	11	3.69	1.93

*Research Question 2*

To address the influence of the coach on the athletes' individual performance as perceived by the athlete, the research team utilized questions numbered 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 43, 47, and 49. It was found that the answer with the highest mean was confidence in me ( $M = 5.79$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ). Although ranked as the highest mean, the athletes at the two schools moderately agreed that a coach's confidence in them as players influenced their performance along with energy, work ethic, being disciplined,



good decision-making, intensity, awareness, morals, humility, and team-bonding activities, in that order (see Table 14).

Table 14

*All Athletes: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.79	1.61
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.51	1.43
25	Work Ethic	3	5.26	1.57
34	Being Disciplined	4	5.22	1.61
40	Decision-Maker	5	5.125	1.60
43	Intensity	6	5.04	1.70
37	Awareness	7	4.97	1.74
47	Morals	8	4.41	1.87
22	Humility	9	4.28	1.63
28	Bonding Activities	10	4.16	1.75

The starters at the two institutions strongly agreed that their coach's confidence in them influenced their individual performance ( $M = 6.06$ ). The other nine characteristics, energy/enthusiasm ( $M = 5.71$ ), work ethic ( $M = 5.50$ ), being disciplined ( $M = 5.38$ ), intensity ( $M = 5.35$ ), decision-making ( $M = 5.34$ ), awareness ( $M = 5.13$ ), good morals ( $M = 4.49$ ), humility ( $M = 4.47$ ), and team-bonding activities ( $M = 4.01$ ) were in the moderately agree range for all starters at the two institutions (see Table 15). The non-starters at the two institutions moderately agreed in all trait categories and ranked their

coach's confidence in them with the strongest mean ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ) (see Table 16).

Table 15

*Starters: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	$M$	$SD$
49	Confidence	1	6.06	1.37
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.71	1.39
25	Work Ethic	3	5.50	1.43
34	Being Disciplined	4	5.38	1.54
43	Intensity	5	5.35	1.58
40	Decision-Maker	6	5.34	1.50
37	Awareness	7	5.13	1.80
47	Morals	8	4.49	1.92
22	Humility	9	4.47	1.64
28	Bonding Activities	10	4.01	1.73

Table 16

*Non-Starters: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.43	1.83
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.24	1.46
34	Being Disciplined	3	5.00	1.67
25	Work Ethic	4	4.92	1.71
40	Decision-Maker	5	4.84	1.69
37	Awareness	6	4.75	1.66
43	Intensity	7	4.60	1.78
28	Bonding Activities	8	4.37	1.76
47	Morals	9	4.29	1.81
22	Humility	10	4.02	1.60

The Midwest institution's athletes moderately agreed in all trait categories (and that their coaches' traits/behaviors influenced their individual performance with confidence in me ranking with the highest mean) ( $M = 5.86$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ) (see Table 17). The Southeast institution's athletes moderately also agreed in all trait categories. They all agreed that their coaches' traits/behaviors influenced their individual performance with confidence in me also ranking as the highest mean ( $M = 5.72$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ) (see Table 18).

Table 17

*Midwest: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.86	1.59
31	Energy	2	5.41	1.50
25	Work Ethic	3	5.38	1.39
43	Intensity	4	5.26	1.65
34	Being Disciplined	5	5.10	1.63
40	Decision-Maker	6	5.06	1.62
37	Awareness	7	4.88	1.74
22	Humility	8	4.36	1.53
28	Bonding Activities	9	4.28	1.70
47	Morals	10	4.04	1.80

Table 18

*Southeast: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.72	1.64
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.63	1.36
34	Being Disciplined	3	5.36	1.58
40	Decision-Maker	4	5.19	1.59
25	Work Ethic	5	5.12	1.74
37	Awareness	6	5.07	1.76
47	Good Morals	7	4.84	1.88
43	Intensity	8	4.80	1.73
22	Humility	9	4.18	1.62
28	Bonding Activities	10	4.01	1.81

The male athletes surveyed at each institution moderately agreed in all trait categories that their coaches' traits/behaviors influenced their individual performance. They all ranked confidence in me with the highest mean ( $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ) (see Table 19). The female athletes surveyed at each institution moderately agreed in all trait categories that their coaches traits/behaviors influence their individual performance. All females ranked confidence in me with the highest mean ( $M = 5.96$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ) (see Table 20).

Table 19

*Males: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.64	1.67
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.61	1.31
37	Awareness	3	5.53	1.60
25	Work Ethic	4	5.51	1.41
40	Decision-Maker	5	5.32	1.53
34	Being Disciplined	6	5.19	1.68
43	Intensity	7	4.92	1.77
22	Humility	8	4.30	1.48
47	Good Morals	9	4.29	1.84
28	Bonding Activities	10	4.25	1.62

Table 20

*Females: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Performance?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
49	Confidence	1	5.96	1.53
31	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.40	1.56
43	Intensity	3	5.19	1.61
25	Work Ethic	4	4.98	1.70
34	Being Disciplined	5	4.96	1.53
40	Decision-Maker	6	4.91	1.65
47	Morals	7	4.53	1.91
37	Awareness	8	4.36	1.70
22	Humility	9	4.26	1.80
28	Bonding Activities	10	4.06	1.89

To answer the question of the coach's influence on the athlete's team satisfaction, the answers on numbers 23, 26, 29, 32, 35, 38, 41, 44, and 50 were used to formulate a quantitative perspective. It was found that confidence in me had the highest mean (although only moderately agreed) and energy, being disciplined, good decision-maker, hard worker, intensity, awareness, humility, and team-bonding activities were also moderately agreed upon (see Table 21). Both starters and non-starters indicated that the nine characteristics surveyed for influencing team satisfaction were moderately agreed upon (see Tables 22 & 23). Non-starters ranked being a good decision-maker with the highest mean.

Table 21

*All Athletes: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50	Confidence	1	5.27	1.66
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.17	1.50
35	Being Disciplined	3	5.08	1.44
41	Decision-Maker	4	5.07	1.51
26	Work Ethic	5	4.99	1.53
44	Intensity	6	4.895	1.64
38	Awareness	7	4.84	1.55
23	Humility	8	4.625	1.545
29	Bonding Activities	9	4.55	1.67



Table 22

*Starters: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50	Confidence	1	5.55	1.51
44	Intensity	2	5.37	1.38
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.37	1.47
35	Being Disciplined	4	5.31	1.36
26	Work Ethic	5	5.26	1.41
41	Decision-Maker	6	5.13	1.62
38	Awareness	7	5.02	1.55
23	Humility	8	4.84	1.38
29	Bonding Activities	9	4.45	1.67

Table 23

*Non-Starters: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
41	Decision-Maker	1	5.05	1.36
50	Confidence	2	4.95	1.77
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	3	5.37	1.51
35	Being Disciplined	4	4.75	1.49
29	Bonding Activities	5	4.69	1.68
26	Work Ethic	6	4.61	1.61
38	Awareness	7	4.58	1.53
23	Humility	8	4.32	1.71
44	Intensity	9	4.28	1.74

The Midwest athletes indicated that the nine characteristics surveyed for influencing team satisfaction were moderately agreed upon by all. These athletes ranked being a good decision-maker with the highest mean ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ) (see Table 24). The athletes at the Southeast school indicated that all nine characteristics surveyed for influencing team satisfaction were moderately agreed. These athletes ranked confidence in me as having the highest mean ( $M = 5.55$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) (see Table 25). All male athletes surveyed at both institutions indicated that the nine characteristics surveyed for influencing team satisfaction were moderately agreed upon. They ranked confidence in me with the highest mean ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ) (see Table 26). Similarly, all female athletes surveyed at both institutions indicated they moderately agreed with all nine

characteristics surveyed for influencing team satisfaction. They also ranked confidence in me as the highest mean ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ) (see Table 27).

Table 24

*Midwest: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	$M$	$SD$
41	Decision-Maker	1	5.17	1.40
35	Being Disciplined	2	5.10	1.30
44	Intensity	3	5.06	1.53
32	Energy	4	5.04	1.52
50	Confidence	5	5.02	1.67
26	Work Ethic	6	4.97	1.55
29	Bonding Activities	7	4.80	1.63
38	Awareness	7	4.80	1.57
23	Humility	9	4.71	1.48

Table 25

*Southeast: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50	Confidence	1	5.55	1.61
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.33	1.48
35	Being Disciplined	3	5.04	1.59
26	Work Ethic	4	5.01	1.51
41	Decision-Maker	5	4.95	1.64
38	Awareness	6	4.88	1.55
44	Intensity	7	4.70	1.74
23	Humility	8	4.52	1.62
29	Bonding Activities	9	4.26	1.68

Table 26

*Males: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50	Confidence	1	5.35	1.55
38	Awareness	2	5.22	1.37
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	3	5.22	1.48
35	Being Disciplined	4	5.19	1.42
26	Work Ethic	5	5.17	1.38
41	Decision-Maker	6	5.15	1.38
44	Intensity	7	4.83	1.65
29	Bonding Activities	8	4.70	1.67
23	Humility	9	4.53	1.46

Table 27

*Females: Do My Coach's Traits Influence My Team Satisfaction?*

Question	Trait	Rank	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50	Confidence	1	5.19	1.78
32	Energy/Enthusiasm	2	5.11	1.53
41	Decision-Maker	3	4.98	1.66
44	Intensity	4	4.97	1.63
35	Being Disciplined	5	4.96	1.46
26	Work Ethic	6	4.80	1.66
23	Humility	7	4.72	1.63
29	Bonding Activities	8	4.39	1.67
38	Awareness	9	4.33	1.65

Finally, on the question of team awards being more important than individual awards, the athletes at both institutions did not agree ( $M = 2.17$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ). Both starters ( $M = 2.29$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) and non-starters ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ) did not agree that individual awards were more important than team awards. Both the Midwest students ( $M = 1.86$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and the Southwest students ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 1.98$ ) did not agree that individual awards were more important than team awards. Likewise, both males ( $M = 2.28$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ) and females ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) did not agree that individual awards were more important than team awards.

*Research Question #1: What are the perceptions athletes have of their head coaches behaviors and characteristics?*

In an effort to provide additional information in the hopes of strengthening the story concerning the athletes' perceptions of their coaches' traits, and the coaches' influence on the athletes' performance and team satisfaction, K. D. (initials), a sophomore women's basketball player, put it this way:

One of the greatest strengths my coach has is the ability to make all her players feel comfortable. She lets you know that at anytime you need to talk to her she will be there to listen and give you an honest opinion. This is very important to be able to communicate with your coach so they can resolve problems and see where everyone stands. My coach also does a good job on building character and chemistry on the team. She lets her players know that we are here to play basketball but also to learn important life skills not just to get wins. The best coach I ever played for was successful because she went out of her way to make relationships with each of the players off the court. She was interested in the lives of her players and their families. When her players saw how much love she had for all the team she got lots of respect. She also let her thoughts be known. She wouldn't keep secrets from the team; she would tell the truth. There was never any favoritism because she loved each player as if they were her own child. The characteristics of being a great coach are made off the playing field/court.

In my opinion the behaviors and characteristics of the coach make the difference in the whole team. If the coach has a very positive attitude then it will translate to the whole team. So basically, it all starts with the coach. Individually, I feel the

coach needs to let each player know that they are important to the team no matter what role they play on the team. If a coach treats every player on the team equally and there is not favoritism then everyone on the team will be happy. I believe that a coach should meet with players individually on various occasions during the season to discuss the skills that each player needs to work on to be a better player because each person is different.

A. F., a men's basketball player, stated this:

My current coach is an extremely hard worker. He is a diehard basketball junkie and goes beyond expectations as a coach to be more prepared for games. His hard work earns him a lot of respect from the players. He is also a good motivator and can light a fire under our team. He's very clear about how he feels and makes sure things are done his way, which is great. Also, he is a great individual trainer. You know when he puts you through a workout you will go hard and improve individual skills. He'll make sure of that.

A. F. went on to say:

One of his weaknesses may be patience. As a coach it can be hard to be patient when performance isn't there. This season my team has had many injuries to key players. We had 13 players to start and are down to seven now. Three starters were out at the same time. So we have had to play several players who rarely played. Obviously, we didn't have great results. I think coach should be a little more understanding and patient considering the situation. The best coach I have ever played for was very enthusiastic and passionate. You could feel his love for the game and joy of his job. He didn't consider coaching a job, but doing what he



loved most. He didn't put up with any nonsense and was also very intense. Every practice and workout you had to be ready to go harder than before. He was constantly pushing you to improve and push your limits. He didn't play mind games or try to get into your head; he just told you how it was and how he felt. Of course there were times players didn't like him but he always had their respect. He was smaller than every player but nobody would talk back or test him because he had their respect. All of these qualities were what made this coach effective and the best I have played for.

In responding about his current coach and what he sees in terms of the coach's strengths and weaknesses, D. F. had this to say:

(A major strength of my coach is) knowledge of the game and also knowledge of our opponents. We always have the preparation (and) upper hand even if we are outmatched (physically). (Another strength is my coach is) humor which gives the team life. (He) gets what he can out of what he has. (He) makes simple plays for (those that need) simple plays and uses timeouts and defenses wisely when we are low on players. (His weakness is) he cares too much about players and the game. (He) wants to help every player be their best, but when players don't return the effort it wastes time and his energy. His energy is also drained by bad losses. We are also one dimensional, running only our offense or defense (at our practices).

The reflection that D. F. had on the best coach he ever played for again brought out the theme of personable traits and community togetherness when he stated:

I felt like part of a real family, but we were one. He (the coach) always believed in us and even better teams knew they would not have an easy game against us

because we worked hard. He was just a step ahead of the other coaches at his level and we listened and we were successful. He found the perfect balance between fear and comfort. He also had a father mentality. You could go to him about anything, but it was clear he was not your friend even though you could always talk and laugh.

B. J.'s reflections on her current coach and the best coach she ever played for were stated in the following dialogue:

I think my coach is awesome. She has all the qualities I want in a coach. She knows what we need to work on and how to do it. The only thing I think she could work on a little is being more disciplined. The best coach I ever played for taught me how to slap (hit). She kept working with me till I got it and she never gave up on me. Her knowledge of the game was amazing. She had all the characteristics of what I wanted in a coach and more.

About her current coach and the best coach she has ever played for V. P. had the following to say:

My coach has good practices and tries to bring the team together. Also, she is good at trying to teach discipline, but some of the players still do not learn. I like how she coaches. She is very understanding and helps us in understand things (she is trying to get across). Things I feel need to improve is her attitude sometimes. Sometimes she will be happy and other times you don't want to speak to her because she is really upset.

V. P. went on to say:

The best coach I feel that I have played for was my high school coach. She wasn't really all that great within coaching and plays but what she was great at was letting the team play. She never got involved in the team's problems and as a team we became really close and enjoyed being together with one another. There wasn't (any) talking about each other. On the court and off the court we were like family. In practice the drills and activities that were done were very fun and the team connected. The year that we bonded that most was our most successful team and we won the districts. My coach's personality helped create that environment.

*Research Question #2: What influences do perceptions have on individual performance?*

In K. D's assessment of the effects that perceptions have on the level of performance and team satisfaction she feels the characteristics of the coach have everything to do with individual performance and team satisfaction. K. D used words and phrases such as "positive attitude", "chemistry", "each team member feeling important", "equality", "talking", and "respect". This idea of respect is one that was heard quite a few times in the open-ended question (#52 of the APECT-Q) and its reciprocity theme that although players should respect their coaches it needs to be a two-way street where the player is feeling that same respect back.

In his assessment of a coach's characteristics improving individual performance, A. F., a men's basketball player, felt that some of the responsibility should be upon the athlete as well as the coach in order to improve individual performance. A. F. felt it was a shared responsibility and stated it this way:

Motivation, in my view, is the key to improvement. You need to have the desire and passion to go above and beyond the norm to improve individually. If a coach is able to light a fire and instill motivation into his players to work harder, improvement and performance will undoubtedly follow. More specifically, a coach should incorporate daily individual drills into practice. If, as a player, you are only doing team drills or running over plays and scouting reports, your individual skills will not improve. So the daily ball handling, shooting, or other individual skill, improvement exercises should be a daily part of a coach's practice.

D. F., a sophomore men's basketball player, felt that a coach's traits may influence individual performance improvement by confidence and reinforcement. D. F. stated the following:

For me it is confidence and reinforcement. People think they are good and not great. When the coach, the guy running the show, tells you that you are capable of doing anything it helps, especially if the coach knows how to develop the player. The repetition of success physically and mentally is essential and productive.

B. J. was a sophomore softball player, and when asked about what traits a coach should have to influence individual performance she had this to say:

I think the kind of behaviors and characteristics a coach can bring to influence my performance would be to keep pushing me to my full potential. Also, (it is important) for a coach to have a sense of humor but also be disciplined at the same time.

When V. P. was asked what traits a coach needs to improve individual performance she had this to say:

(A coach can bring a sense of) encouragement, being able to bring me up when I'm down. The coach with his/her personality can provide an atmosphere to influence performance by having a good attitude and sense of humor. The coach can also exhibit the trait of patience so I can understand what's being taught.

*Research Question #3: What influences do perceptions have on team satisfaction?*

When asked what kinds of characteristics or behaviors a coach can bring that will influence satisfaction within the team, K. D. went on to say:

There has to be chemistry between the coaches and players on and off the court so this requires time spent together other than in practice. Coaches need to talk to players like they are equals; the coach can't treat them like they are lesser individuals. Players need to respect the coach, but at the same time the players need to know they have the respect and are cared about by the coach.

A. F. had this to say:

The ultimate and best way to have satisfaction on a team is, of course, to win. Winning generally makes everybody happy. When that is not happening, there are other ways a coach can influence satisfaction. One way is to increase team bonding and chemistry. This can be accomplished off the court. Have the team over for dinner or go to a movie with them. It doesn't have to be a big deal but from my experiences when a coach does things like that it clearly increases bonding within the team which in turn can lead to better performance on the court.

A. F. went on to say:

Another way a coach can increase satisfaction is by communication. A coach should be clear with each of his players about their roles, expectations, team rules, and what they need to do to get better. Some people may not always like a coach or what he's saying but it is better to be clear and honest than to play mind games. Players hate mind games. So communication is the key to team satisfaction as well.

A.F. made it clear that it is important for the coach to be honest and forthcoming. Players are too intelligent these days and can recognize when a coach is playing mind games with them. It is better to be authentic (you are who you say you are) and transparent in dealing with today's athlete. A. F.'s views of his current coach's traits are stated in this dialogue:

In his response to what a coach can bring that will influence team satisfaction, D. F. said this:

(One thing a coach can bring is) organization. An unorganized program is extremely frustrating. Have a plan and for the most part stick to it. I'd say for the most part one must adapt to different situations because of the nature of sports.

(Another thing a coach can bring to team satisfaction is) to demand respect. When you are doing what you are supposed to and others go against the grain unpunished it causes turmoil. Not out in the open turmoil because nobody wants to be a 'snitch' but they do resent the inequality.

In B. J.'s assessment of coach's traits that can influence team satisfaction, she had the following to say:

I think that the kind of behaviors a coach can bring would be to push the team to our greatest potential and know how to have a good time and enjoy doing it. Also (I believe) making things competitive so we as a team can push ourselves. I think a coach should be able to motivate his or her players and also be disciplined.

V. P. said in regards to traits that are effective in producing an environment for team satisfaction:

I would like a coach who teaches discipline amongst the team and any bad actions by an individual penalizes the whole team. This can teach the team to understand right from wrong and focus on doing the right thing. To bring chemistry among the team members the coach should do team activities together and any negativity about one another should be confronted and dealt with.

The K. D interview indicated that this particular athlete currently views her coach as having two specific traits or characteristics that are effective from her point of view. It is evident that K. D.'s coach has the capability to develop a comfort level between the players and coach through the avenue of communication and availability. In addition, K. D. believed her coach is a teacher because of her enforcement of the importance that the sport she is teaching can translate into life skills empowerment.

As can be noted, A. F. focused more on the individual physical skills of the player that he felt the coach is responsible for in the individual improvement of performance. In the assessment and reflections, A. F. said in his interview it is important to pull out such words used as "hard worker", "passionate", and "enthusiastic", and note that these were some of the traits that athletes strongly agreed an effective coach should have as indicated by the results of the APECT-Q. A.F.'s responses such as the team-bonding and activities

together continued to support the theme of togetherness and a more personal relationship with the coach.

In some of the responses from D. F., the ability of the coach to inspire and provide a positive reinforcement to the player is stressed. It also hints of player development and visualizing success both mentally and physically. A. F. addressed the elements of consistency in team rules, expectations, and the ability to follow through with consequences that have been set. Athletes want equality in treatment much the same as anyone in his or her own sphere of influence. The athlete doesn't necessarily like discipline but will embrace the rules and policies if they are equally enforced. B. J.'s comments address traits such as discipline, endurance, and knowledge that, from her perception, are characteristics an effective coach can display to improve individual performance and team satisfaction.

Appendix D lists all responses to question #52, which was included on the APECT-Q to solicit any written responses the athletes had to help in collecting additional information on the interpersonal relationship between the coach and the player from the players' perspectives. In all, there were 34 athletes who chose to respond to this question: 11 from the Southeast school and 23 from the Midwest school. The research team was encouraged by this response as it gave them an opportunity to view some additional qualitative data which continue to embellish the human behavior dynamic of the coach-player relationship.

In reviewing the comments and analyzing them for emerging themes, it must be noted that in the qualitative process of this particular research both the direct written word and interviews of the student athletes themselves provide foundation for further



studies to be conducted by opening the avenue to explore emerging themes. In this case, it is also good to note the researcher has had his entire professional career immersed in community college athletics specifically working on a day-to-day basis with community college athletes.

There are several different themes, at least from specific views of the student athletes who responded to question #52. Themes such as team satisfaction, intimacy, and closeness are prevalent in the comments received. As examples of these themes one may look to excerpts from a baseball player in the southeast as he stated that, “being considered a friend and enjoyable coach makes the team more enjoyable.” Another baseball player from the southeast said, “I think a coach that is more personable is an effective coach.” A baseball player from the Midwest put it this way, “being able to connect with the players and have a good time is very important. However, they (coaches) need to be able to control the players as well when it is time to work.” Additionally a women’s basketball player stated, “There should be more team bonding and show that she cares about her players.” These comments suggest that there is a recognition by the athlete that not only should there be some kind of intimacy and closeness, but it is also important to note there is a fine line that should be recognized by the coach and he or she should find a way to establish that closeness with the players but also know how to get them to concentrate and work when needed. It is critical for everyone involved in sports to realize there is a time to work and a time to play. Another comment from a baseball player from the Midwest provided us with this: “Coaches should be personal with players off the field. He should have some level of understanding of what is going on in the lives of each individual player.” A Southeast men’s basketball

player put it like this: “Every coach needs to find out about players activity off the field.” And yet another baseball player from the Midwest stated this: “Make the players know that the coach cares for them.” All of these comments give one the picture that players expect more from a coach than just what is defined as coaching, simply going out and conducting practice or coaching games. There are much deeper themes of being close and getting to know the player on a more personal level thus providing an environment more conducive to team satisfaction. This level of thinking also promotes the thought process of head baseball coach Todd Post (see Chapter II) and his belief that today’s athlete expects a more comprehensive coach who provides support in the athlete’s life and corroborates the idea of the coach wearing many different hats.

Another women’s basketball player touched not only on the closeness and intimacy theme but also commented on the participatory engagement of evaluating and hiring a coach by saying this:

When choosing a coach just because they meet all the criteria with education, there should be a trial run for coaching. Not all coaches have what it takes and fairness is the key. All coaches should make sure all of the players get to school. There should be more activities for the coaches and players to build bonding. Athletic directors should ask players personally how their coach is.

Another theme brought to light was the fact that coaches need to exhibit a degree of awareness and good decision-making techniques. Comments such as “the coach should have some level of understanding of what is going on in the lives of each individual player”, and, “the coach needs to pick his battles instead of complain about most everything when he yells at everything we learn to tune him out. Then when it is

important we just ignore him.” These quotes bring up a very interesting discussion concerning the awareness and flexibility of an effective leader. In today’s athletic world where in many cases the coach is seen as the methodology expert, he or she must be aware that with human behavior there are different ways to accomplish the goal of productivity. A coach should understand that each individual is different and can be motivated in different ways. That is not to say one should sacrifice core values because then the coach sacrifices who he or she is and what he or she stands for.

Another theme brought out through the analysis of question #52 is one of flexibility. A Midwestern baseball player really made the flexibility theme a viable one by the following statement:

It’s tough to say whether a friendly coach or a stern coach is more effective. Both work well but in different situations. A friendly coach can help you and the team have fun while playing but might not teach you as well or help you out in the long run. A stern coach probably would put more emphasis on winning rather than fun but he might teach you better (and winning in the end is fun anyway).

Another quote from a baseball player put it this way:

A coach has certain guidelines that should be followed but the coach needs to ascertain ways for different players to get the best out of them. Some need to be encouraged; other players need to be pushed and so on. A good coach can deal with adversity and be able to change.

Interestingly in the first quote we approach a mindset that sternness and fun cannot coexist in the mind of this athlete. In addition, the idea of winning as being the ultimate goal because it is fun brings us to another level of the world of competitive athletics.

Winning in many cases is the ultimate goal and the process that took a team to that winning level is somehow lost. And to complicate the issue of winning even further, does the fact that we teach athletes to be able to compete within the boundaries of the sport, teaching them never to give up or give in and teaching them how not to accept defeat but learn from the teaching values of a loss, further them in the cause of being a successful human being? The second response brings out the ability of the effective leader to be cognizant of the fact that there are different ways to motivate and encourage individuals in the journey to maximize their abilities. It also points to adversity as a teaching tool and the ability to withstand and “weather the storm” to come out on the other side.

A coach’s confidence in the athlete is a theme that was mentioned in several responses. A baseball player from the Midwest stated this:

It is important for the coach to have confidence in the players. There are quite a few players that do not really care about their sport. They do not realize that at any time coaches will always help you if the athlete makes the effort.

Another baseball player put it this way: “The coach should have confidence in everyone and not just certain players. Don’t have favorites.” In addition another baseball player stated “a couple of the biggest questions that stood out for me was the need for team-bonding activities, and for myself, confidence in any individual is one of the biggest factors.” A softball player brings up several different points in her response to question #52:

Our coach is a good recruiter but not the best coach I have played for. I have noticed a lot of differences in how I play and my attitude for the game over the past two years. My high school coach was constantly going to division 1 softball

camps and schools bringing new things back to make us better but here we have done the exact same things everyday at practice for 2 years. My coach can be very disrespectful....respect should be mutual and players should look up to their coaches.

Another baseball player stated this: "I think communication should be talked about because communication is the key in any sport. Also, coaches should give as much respect as they get from their players." A comment from a baseball player from the Midwest concerning respect put it this way: "I think it is important for coaches to earn the respect of the players not just expect it, not just think they deserve it because of their position."

Several variable themes run through these comments. The idea of the reciprocity of respect was continuously mentioned. Respect is a two-way street, and the athletes in this study certainly had a feel that coaches should recognize this fact in their coaching methodology. In addition, the response concerning the repetition of the same drills over and over brings in two lines of thought, one from the coach's perspective and one from the athlete's. In this particular case the softball player mentioned that her attitude has changed over the last two years because the same drills were done over and over again. This brings out the point that in today's world we are used to the fact that we are inundated with information. This overload of information has created a generation of young people that receives its stimulation in a variety of ways and expects those who teach to provide a learning environment that promotes variety. From the coaches' points of view, any fundamental skill should become muscle memory because in game action the athlete only has a split second to react. By doing the same drills over and over again

the coach hopes that the application process during a game will translate from what has been done in practice. The question then becomes can we as coaches provide variety in our fundamental skills applications by searching for different kinds of drills that address that same fundamental? Certainly, if coaches are listening to what the athlete is saying about continuing to be a life-long learner, they should expose themselves to as many different approaches to effective coaching traits and decide on a comfort zone that matches who they are.

### Conclusions

In reviewing the quantitative results of the APECT-Q, qualitative data from question #52, and the interviews, it is important to note the athletes at the two schools validated that many of the behaviors or traits they feel good coaches should have are in alignment with some of the foundational blocks in John Wooden's *Pyramid of Success* (Wooden & Carty, 2005). It is also important to note that the factual information received from the APECT-Q, from athletes who provided interviews, and from those who embellished the research with written responses directly gave the research team information on these two institutions' athletes' views of their current coaches' traits. This information was helpful in identifying the influencing power a coach's traits and characteristics have on individual performance and team satisfaction, which directly addresses the research questions.

One of the base foundational blocks of the *Pyramid of Success* as described by Wooden and Carty (2005) is the trait of industriousness. Wooden believes that success travels with those that work hard and that there is no easy way or easy trick to becoming

successful. The athletes at the two institutions studied rated this trait of an effective coach as the most important.

Another foundational block in the *Pyramid* is the characteristic of loyalty. Wooden and Carty (2005) described this as being not only true to yourself but true to the ones you are leading. Loyalty is an outgrowth of a shared experience among teams and the athletes at the two schools felt strongly that coaches should exhibit the trait of loyalty. The loyalty question data indicate there is a strong sense of understanding the importance of the valuing of people within a team and being loyal to that group with which one works. If one projects this further to the world of work where teamwork and collaboration are often a necessity, loyalty has a profound impact particularly from the viewpoint of young people growing up in the society in which they will soon be working as leaders and followers.

The trait with the third highest mean the athletes strongly considered as one of a good coach was the trait of being a good decision-maker. This characteristic is found on the second level of Wooden and Carty's (2005) *Pyramid*, and they define it as initiative. The premise behind this trait is the encouragement for the coach to make good decisions and the reminder that failure to act is often the biggest failure of all.

Confidence is one of the last three blocks of the *Pyramid*, which Wooden and Carty (2005) defined as well-founded self-belief earned by competence and performance with success. This trait also has a definition for the follower, the athlete in this case, that there is a security in a coach that has confidence and self-belief. The athlete can feel secure that whatever the decision being made, the coach is in control, and he or she can focus on just going out and performing his or her best.

Enthusiasm, one of the foundational blocks of the *Pyramid* (Wooden & Carty, 2005), ranked fifth highest in mean score among the athletes at the two institutions, which implies that perceived enjoyment, dedication, and drive may have a stimulating effect on those whom the coach is leading. The athletes strongly agreed that the *we not me* philosophy is a trait of a good coach. This philosophy appears in the third tier of the *Pyramid's* foundational blocks. Wooden and Carty refer to this trait as team spirit. The star of the team is the team itself, and *we* supersedes *me*. It is interesting to note in a society that appears to be all about individualism the young people at the two different institutions studied felt a strong sense of the team rather than their own personal achievement. Generalizing this behavior and attitude to the workplace, the trait and characteristic of team orientation provides leaders the validation that the outgrowth of team success provides inclusiveness for all.

Wooden and Carty (2005) described discipline as a self-control issue which is found on the second tier of the *Pyramid*. The athletes at the two schools ranked this trait with the seventh highest mean indicated by the APECT-Q. Discipline trait has an intrapersonal theme to it in that Wooden and Carty feel control of your organization begins with control of yourself. How one carries himself, if he is authentic and transparent, goes a long way in providing a trustworthy atmosphere for those who are followers. This atmosphere helps everyone to produce effectively and feel a sense of meaning.

The two schools' athletes also strongly agreed that awareness, consistency, and what's right rather than who's right were traits that a good coach should have. In the blocks of the *Pyramid* (Wooden & Carty, 2005), alertness is found in the second tier and



is described as being constantly aware and observant in the ways of trying to improve yourself and the team. This would point to the fact it is important for a coach to continue to go to workshops and training sessions looking for ways not only to teach a fundamental skill better but also to look for ways to improve every facet of the communication and motivation process.

The athletes at the two schools strongly agreed that consistency is another trait a good coach possesses. The stability of knowing what to expect has a security in itself and provides a comfort area for the follower to understand the expectations and realize there will be consistency within the approach of the leader.

Finally, it is important to know the athletes felt strongly that working toward the goal of what's right rather than who's right is a trait a good coach should have to be successful. This is at the base of one of the *Pyramid's* (Wooden & Carty, 2005) blocks and embodies the spirit of cooperation. This behavior lends to the more organic style of leadership in that everyone is a participator and the better teams have the attitude of having the utmost concern for searching out what is right rather than who is right. This cooperation then lends itself to more collaboration on the part of the players and the coach.

Looking at the results of all the categories (starters, non-starters, Midwest athletes, Southeast athletes, males, and females) at the two schools, it is important to note that hard work, loyalty, good decision-making, confidence, energy, *we not me* philosophy, discipline, awareness, consistency, and striving for what's right were strongly agreed upon by all as good traits of an effective coach. Although this should not be regarded as a general statement of how all athletes feel at all colleges and all levels, it

is worth recognizing that there is some consistency in traits at these two schools. In three of the population subcultures (females, Midwest athletes, and starters), team-bonding activities were also strongly agreed upon as a behavior of an effective coach.

It should be noted that in viewing their own coaches' traits, which addresses the research question of athletes perceptions of their head coaches' behaviors and characteristics, the subculture segment of starters strongly agreed that their coaches had the *we not me* philosophy ( $M = 6.25, SD = 1.39$ ) and their coaches had confidence in them ( $M = 6.06, SD = 1.37$ ). The subculture of the Midwest strongly agreed that their coaches had the *we not me* philosophy ( $M = 6.45, SD = 1.03$ ), and males strongly agreed that their own coaches possessed a good work ethic ( $M = 6.27, SD = 1.04$ ), discipline ( $M = 6.20, SD = .93$ ), energy ( $M = 6.09, SD = 1.13$ ), and awareness ( $M = 6.07, SD = 1.19$ ), and was a hard-worker ( $M = 6.15, SD = 1.05$ ). All other individual traits that the sample in each category responded to were moderately agreed upon.

Both quantitative and qualitative data helped answer the research questions regarding the traits a coach should have to influence individual performance and team satisfaction. The starters were the only subculture that strongly agreed the coach's confidence influenced performance ( $M=6.06, SD= 1.61$ ). In all other subcultures (non-starters, Midwest, Southeast, females, and males), along with the entire sample, the coach's confidence had the strongest mean and all moderately agreed that trait is a quality that can influence performance. In all other categorical traits tested by the APECT-Q the entire sample and the subcultures moderately agreed those traits influence performance.

Team satisfaction data from the APECT-Q showed the following: All of the categorical traits were moderately agreed upon by the entire sample and all six

subcultures. Confidence, the trait with the strongest mean, was found in the entire sample ( $M=5.27$ ,  $SD=1.66$ ), starters ( $M=5.27$ ,  $SD=1.51$ ), Southeast ( $M=5.55$ ,  $SD=1.61$ ), males ( $M=5.35$ ,  $SD=1.55$ ), and females ( $M=5.19$ ,  $SD=1.78$ ), while the trait of being a good decision-maker had the strongest mean in the subcultures of non-starters ( $M=5.05$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ) and Midwest athletes ( $M=5.17$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ).

In addition, looking at the qualitative data through the interviews and responses to question #52 on the APECT-Q, individual comments indicated that emerging trait themes such as positive attitude, fair treatment, being personable, communication, being passionate, being enthusiastic, flexibility, awareness, organization, chemistry through team-bonding activities, and reciprocity of respect are discussed and elaborated upon in the written responses and interviews. These written responses and interviews should only be viewed on an individual case-by-case basis; however, there were trends that emerged in the responses.

#### Implications and Recommendations

An implication that these conclusions provided for future studies is the need to compare similarities and differences of the APECT-Q with student athletes at community colleges after their first year with their head coaches and seniors at four-year universities who spent all four years with their coaches. Specific attention should be focused specifically in the areas of these athletes' views of whether they feel the coach influenced their performance and team satisfaction. The researcher should look to see if there are statistically significant differences which this study did not address.

Another recommendation is to take college athletes as a whole in the sports that are more of an individual nature (e.g., track, tennis, cross-country, gymnastics, etc.) and

compare to data from team sport athletes. In pursuance of the player-coach relationship dynamic, studies focusing on the relationship between assistant coaches and players and what effect that dynamic has on performance and satisfaction within the group should be explored.

The findings show that the study of human behavior and what motivates and satisfies individuals must be looked at on a case-by-case basis. As the athletes have pointed out, this may be done by getting to know them on a more personal level; finding out where they come from, what activities they enjoy, what is important to them; and so on. The perception that the coach has a sincere care for them has an influence on athletes' individual performance and the team's satisfaction, at least regarding the athletes' responses to the APECT-Q and qualitative analysis.

In addition, the data that have been collected allow coaches to take a closer look at their own coaching methodology and evaluate specifically how they conduct themselves in the day-to-day contact with athletes. Many times the coaching field becomes on-the-job training. Coaches attend seminars and workshops on the latest offensive and/or defensive schemes that seem to be effective or trendy at the time to try and improve their success rate, and they tend to forget that no matter how sophisticated or knowledgeable they are about the game they coach, at the end of the day it is the players who will be the producers when game time comes. With this philosophy, coaches should take a closer look at the data provided by players and motivate them in the hope of not only maximizing their individual performance but also providing an environment that is conducive for a satisfied group. These data allow coaches to view concrete evidence of any changes that may be needed in their own coaching styles.

This approach of anyone in a leadership role can be generalized to professional leadership in any company's department or even to a CEO of a large corporation. In the process of any success, whether it is in team sports, a family, a big business, or education, it takes the collaboration and cohesiveness of a group of people who are motivated and well-satisfied to provide the momentum to achieve success no matter what the definition of success is.

This study provides an avenue for continued international research with college-age athletes regarding their thoughts on traits of an effective coach and what specifically motivates them to perform, which would provide data regarding any possible cultural differences in perceptions. A study such as this would allow a more in-depth understanding of the international athlete because, in many cases, schools are now recruiting from across the globe.

Another implication from this study is that this data may, in many cases, validate what coaches' views may be of themselves and are congruent with what the athletes want. The data gathered indicate that athletes, at least athletes from these two schools, strongly agree that behaviors and traits such as hard work, discipline, the *we not me* philosophy, loyalty, good decision-making, confidence, and awareness are indicative of a good coach. Interestingly, most athletes did not rate their current coaches with as strong a mean score in actually having these traits. This finding points to another area that may be worth researching which is to take college senior athletes who have been in a successful program and provide this survey along with the interview process to see what their views and perceptions are in relation to traits of an effective coach and whether their current coach possesses these traits with a stronger mean score. One might conclude that because

there is a natural maturation process and the athlete has been with that coach for a longer period of time, the actual means on the athletes' current coaches' traits would be higher. In addition, replications of this study with a larger population sample that compare data specifically regarding starters vs. non-starters and males vs. females to identify any statistically significant differences would provide additional information to coaches.

Finally, the qualitative information learned from this study provides several general themes such as the athletes' desires for their coaches to be personable, accessible, hard-working, disciplined, organized, honest and forthcoming, enthusiastic, effective communicators, and able to create a family atmosphere. It is important to note that this population, community college athletes, historically does not get the life skills support that a four-year university athlete would receive because of lack of resources and budget constraints.

As the world continues to change and people are exposed to various distractions and different ways of life, it is important for coaches to understand that the flow of information should be a reciprocal endeavor. Coaches should strive to motivate athletes and to provide an environment for success. The data included in this study allow coaches to continue the search for an optimum interpersonal relationship with each player in the hopes of promoting an environment conducive to success.

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Appendix A

*Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire (APECT – Q)*

## Athletes' Perceptions of Effective Coaching Traits Questionnaire

Perception is a thinking process of how we view something or someone else. We all have perceptions of others. As athletes we have perceptions of our coaches that we practice and play for each day. A characteristic/trait is a prominent attribute of something or someone (ex. Generosity is one of his/her greatest characteristics/traits). The following is a confidential questionnaire for a study that is being conducted to determine from the athlete's point of view what characteristics/traits you believe are important in the makeup of a good coach and if your current coach is exhibiting some of these traits.

This study will help us in the pursuit of researching the relationship between coach and player. The results of this study will be used in a collective (all) way to identify emerging themes that we are hearing from our athletes. Individual responses will be used to identify those emerging themes and will not be singled out in any way.

Please respond to the following questions by putting a circle around the corresponding number 1 through 7. As an example: Question: From your perception, do pro athletes get paid too much money for what they do?

Do not agree <b>(DNA)</b>	Moderately Agree <b>(MA)</b>	Strongly Agree <b>(SA)</b>
1      2	3      4      5	6      7

Demographic Information:

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Starter: \_\_\_\_\_ Non- Starter: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: AA (African America) \_\_\_\_\_, C (Caucasian) \_\_\_\_\_, H (Hispanic) \_\_\_\_\_

I (International student) \_\_\_\_\_, O (other) \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

# of years playing organized team sports: \_\_\_\_\_

Part A: Please respond truthfully to the following questions concerning traits or characteristics of head coaches. Understand there are no right or wrong answers, just your view.

	DNA	MA	SA
1. Is humility a trait of a good coach?	1    2	3    4	5    6    7
2. Is hard work a trait of a good coach?	1    2	3    4	5    6    7
3. Are team-bonding activities part of being a good coach?	1    2	3    4	5    6    7

4. Is loyalty a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Is what's right for the team more important than who's right?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Are energy and enthusiasm traits of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Is being disciplined a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Is being constantly aware of situations a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Is being a decision maker a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Is being intense a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Is being in good physical condition a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Is being able to perform the skill being taught a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Is the "we" philosophy more important than the "me" philosophy in good coaching behavior?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Is being consistent with rules a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Is confidence a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Is a Christian faith a trait of a good coach?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Is patience a trait of a good coach?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. Are good moral views a trait of a good coach?                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19. Does the way you view your coach influence your individual performance?       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20. Does the way you view your coach influence your satisfaction within the team? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Part B: Please respond truthfully about your perception of the head coach you currently play for.

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. Does your coach have humility?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 22. Does your perception of your coach's humility influence your performance?                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23. Does your perception of your coach's humility influence how happy you are within the team?       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24. Does your coach have a good work ethic?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 25. Does this perception of your coach's work ethic influence your performance?                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26. Does this perception of your coach's work ethic influence how satisfied you are within the team? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27. Does your coach provide team activities off the field of competition to enhance bonding?         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 28. Do team activities off the field of competition influence your                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

performance?

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29. Do team activities off the field of competition influence how satisfied you are within the team? | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |   |
| 30. Does your coach show enthusiasm and energy?  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |   |
| 31. Does enthusiasm and energy by your coach influence your performance?                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |   |
| 32. Does enthusiasm and energy by your coach influence how satisfied you are within the team?        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |   |
| 33. Is your coach disciplined?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 34. Does your coach's discipline influence your individual performance?                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 35. Does your coach's discipline influence how satisfied you are within the team?                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 36. Is your coach constantly aware of situations?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 37. Does your coach's awareness influence your individual performance?                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 38. Does your coach's awareness influence how satisfied you are within the team?                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 39. Is your coach a good decision-maker?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 40. Does your coach's decision-making influence your individual performance?                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 41. Does your coach's decision-making influence how satisfied you are within the team?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 42. Is your coach intense?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 43. Does your coach's intensity or lack of, influence your individual performance?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 44. Does your coach's intensity or lack of, influence how satisfied you are within the team?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 45. Does your coach have the "we" philosophy?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 46. Does your coach have good moral character?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 47. Does your coach's morals influence your individual performance?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 48. Does your coach have confidence in you?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 49. Does your coach's confidence influence your individual performance?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 50. Does your coach's confidence influence how satisfied you are within the team?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 51. Are individual awards more important to you than team success?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 52. Are there any additional comments that you would like to add to assist us in our research on improving the coach/player relationship ( <b>optional, please print</b> ). |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
- 
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## Appendix B

### Wooden and Carty's (2005) Pyramid of Success

# WOODEN ON LEADERSHIP™

*"Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."*

John Wooden, Head Coach

*Success is not a destination, it is a journey.*

**THE ART OF SUCCESS**

**ACHIEVEMENT**

True success comes only to an individual by self-satisfaction in knowing that you gave everything to become the very best that you are capable of.

**PATH**

**PATIENCE**

**COMPETITIVE GREATNESS**  
"Perform at your best when your best is required. Your best is required each day."

**POISE**  
"Be yourself. Don't be thrown off by events whether good or bad."

**CONFIDENCE**  
"The strongest steel is well-founded self-belief. It is earned, not given."

**CONDITION**  
"Ability may get you to the top, but character keeps you there - mental, moral, and physical."

**SKILL**  
"What a leader learns after you've learned it all counts most of all."

**TEAM SPIRIT**  
"The star of the team is the team. 'We' supercedes 'me.'"

**SELF-CONTROL**  
"Control of your organization begins with control of yourself. Be disciplined."

**ALERTNESS**  
"Constantly be aware and observing. Always seek to improve yourself and the team."

**INITIATIVE**  
"Make a decision! Failure to act is often the biggest failure of all."

**INTENTNESS**  
"Stay the course. When thwarted try again; harder, smarter. Persevere relentlessly."

**INDUSTRIOUSNESS**  
"Success travels in the company of very hard work. There is no trick, no easy way."

**FRIENDSHIP**  
"Strive to build a team filled with camaraderie and respect; comrades-in-arms."

**LOYALTY**  
"Be true to yourself. Be true to those you lead."

**COOPERATION**  
"Have utmost concern for what's right rather than who's right."

**ENTHUSIASM**  
"Your energy and enjoyment, drive and dedication will stimulate and greatly inspire others."

**12 LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP**

1. Good Values Attract Good People
2. Love Is The Most Powerful Four-Letter Word
3. Call Yourself A Teacher
4. Emotion Is Your Enemy
5. It Takes 10 Hands To Make A Basket
6. Little Things Make Big Things Happen
7. Make Each Day Your Masterpiece
8. The Carrot Is Mightier Than A Stick
9. Make Greatness Attainable By All
10. Seek Significant Change
11. Don't Look At The Scoreboard
12. Adversity Is Your Asset

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## Appendix C

### APECT – Q Interview Follow-up Questions

### APECT-Q INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

**First Initial/Last Initial** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sport** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. From your view, what kind of behaviors or characteristics can a coach bring that will influence improvement in your individual performance?**
- 2. From your view, what kinds of characteristics or behaviors can a coach bring that will influence your satisfaction within the team?**
- 3. As a coach it is important to understand what our weaknesses and strengths are in terms of the relationships we have with players. What are your perceptions of the current coach that you play for in terms of his/her strengths (what are they good at) and things that they may want to improve upon.**
- 4. Reflect upon the best coach that you feel you have ever played for. Explain the traits and characteristics of that coach that made them an effective coach in your mind.**

Appendix D  
Responses to Question #52



Responses to Question #52

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DATA COLLECTION RESPONSES  
(QUESTION # 52)

Are there any additional comments that you would like to add to assist us in our research on improving the coach/player relationship? (Optional)

**KEYS:**

*bb* = baseball

*sb* = softball

*vb* = volleyball

*mbb* = men's basketball

*wbb* = women's basketball

*se* = southeast

*mw* = midwest

**Community College in Southeast**

*(bb, se)* "Being considered a friend and enjoyable coach makes the team more enjoyable"

*(bb, se)* "This place is a great place to play baseball."

*(bb, se)* "I think a coach that is personable is an effective coach."

*(sb, se)* "More necessary changes in the lineup."

*(sb, se)* "in what the coach is doing and we are constantly losing, I think she should switch what she is doing and try something different."

*(sb, se)* "If team is not improving in games or in practice the coach should change something to possibly make them win."

*(mbb, se)* "Every coach needs to find out more about the players activity off the field."

*(wbb, se)* "Should have more team bonding and show that she cares about her players."

*(wbb, se)* "The coach should give everybody a chance to play and not just the starting 5 the whole game. Everybody works hard just like the starting 5."

*(wbb, se)* "Coaches should not have favoritism out of decision, instead should look at work ethic."

*(wbb, se)* "When choosing a coach just because they meet all the criteria with education, there should be a trial run for coaching. Not all coaches have what it takes and fairness is the key. All coaches should make sure all of the players get to school. There should be

*more activities for coaches and players to build bonding. Athletic Directors should ask players personally how their coach is.”*

### **Community College in Midwest**

*(bb, mw) “Being able to connect with the players and have a good time is very important. However, they (the coach) need to be able to control the players as well when it is time to work. Keep concentration.”*

*(bb, mw) “It’s tough to say whether a friendly coach or a stern coach is more effective. Both work well but in different situations. A friendly coach can help you and the team to have fun while playing but might not teach you as well or help you out in the long run. A stern coach probably would put more emphasis on winning rather than fun but he might teach you better (and winning in the end is fun anyway).”*

*(bb, mw) “I think visual studies on this topic would be very beneficial as well as these questions.”*

*(bb, mw) “A definition for coach cannot be defined. A coach has certain guidelines that should be followed but the coach needs to ascertain ways for different players to get the best out of them. Some need to be encouraged; other players need to be pushed and so on. A good coach can deal with adversity and must be able to change.”*

*(bb, mw) “Coaches should be personal with the players off the field. He should have some level of understanding of what is going on in the lives of each individual player.”*

*(bb, mw) “The coach should have confidence in everyone and not just certain players. Don’t have favorites.”*

*(bb, mw) “The coach needs to relax and pick his battles instead of complain about most everything when he yells at everything we learn to tune him out. Then when it is important we just ignore him.*

*(bb, mw) “It’s important for the coach to have confidence in the players. There are quite a few players that do not really care about their sport. They do not realize that at any time coaches will always help you if the athlete makes the effort.”*

*(bb, mw) “I think communication should be talked about because communication is the key in any sport. Also, coaches should give as much respect as they get from their players.”*

*(bb, mw) "A couple of the biggest questions that stood out for me was the need for team bonding activities, and for myself, confidence in any individual is one of the biggest factors."*

*(bb, mw) "I think it is important for coaches to earn the respect of the players not just expect it, not just think they deserve it because of their position."*

*(bb, mw) "Make the players know the coach cares for them."*

*(sb, mw) "Coaches should try to avoid favoring certain players on the team more than others."*

*(sb, mw) "A coach that shows more interest to his/her team rather than one's self looks like the progress is better."*

*(sb, mw) "Work with each other to make each individual better as an athlete and for the team."*

*(sb, mw) "Our coach is a good recruiter but not the best coach I have played for. I have noticed a lot of differences in how I play and my attitude for the game over the past two years. My high school coach was constantly going to division 1 camps and schools and bringing new things back to make us better but here we have done the exact same things everyday at practice for 2 years. He mopes, tells us we are stupid, and can be very disrespectful. He does not treat us like adults but expects us to act like them. When someone pops up or doesn't get a bunt down he will kick dirt and do other childish actions. I fell as though he is more concerned about his winning record than anything else. Respect should be mutual and players should look up to their coaches."*

*(sb,mw) "When a coach is too focused on just getting his wins it makes a major influence on the team dynamic. Of course every player wants to win a championship but when a coach focuses on getting his individual players their time and awards it affects the team in a negative way."*

*(wbb, mw) "I think that players play better when a coach is aggressive rather than "the nice coach". I'd say this because I believe people respond better under pressure."*

*(wbb, mw) "Although athletes are the producers, coaches play as big a role as the athlete just in a different aspect."*

*(vb, mw) "If your coach is a man and you are playing women sports, I strongly feel that you're coach should understand that women are more emotional than men."*

*(vb, mw) “Coaches need to be excited and tell the players good comments when the team or players do good things.”*

*(vb, mw) “Improve volleyball coaching.”*

*(vb, mw) “Every coach is different and I think you need to have a love for the game itself and being on a team and working with others. Not all coaches I’ve had have had those qualities but being able to teach myself has made me a stronger player.”*