

# Perspectives of Paralympic Coaches on Building Team Cohesion

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# Outline

- Literature Review
  - Paralympic Sport
  - Cohesion
  - Coaching
- Purpose of the Study
- Data Analysis
- Preliminary Results
- Conclusions



Coach Eriv Den Eynde discusses with his athlete Jaye Milley



Sarah White

# Literature Review

## ■ Paralympic Sport

- The Paralympic Games are the second largest sporting event in the world and the largest for athletes with a disability (Nadarajar, 2002).
- The Beijing Paralympic Games (2008) had almost 4000 athletes representing 146 countries (IPC, 2011).
- Canada is an international leader in Paralympic sport and is ranked among the top countries in the Paralympic medal count (CPC, 2009).

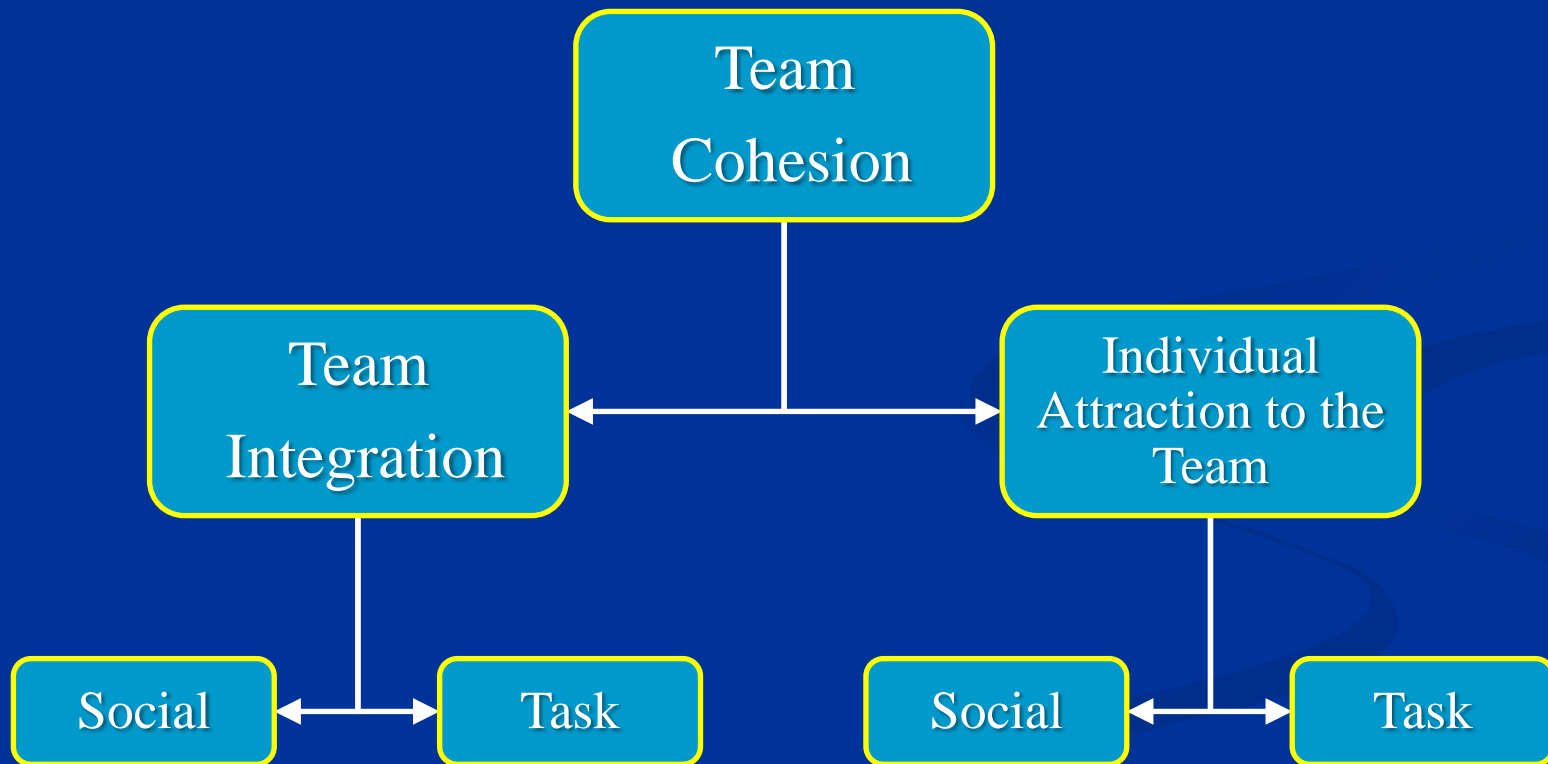
# Literature Review

## ■ Cohesion

- “A dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p. 213).
- Four characteristics (Carron & Hausenblas, 1998):
  - Dynamic
  - Multidimensional
  - Instrumental
  - Affective

# Literature Review

- Conceptual Model of Team Cohesion



Adapted from: Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley (1985)

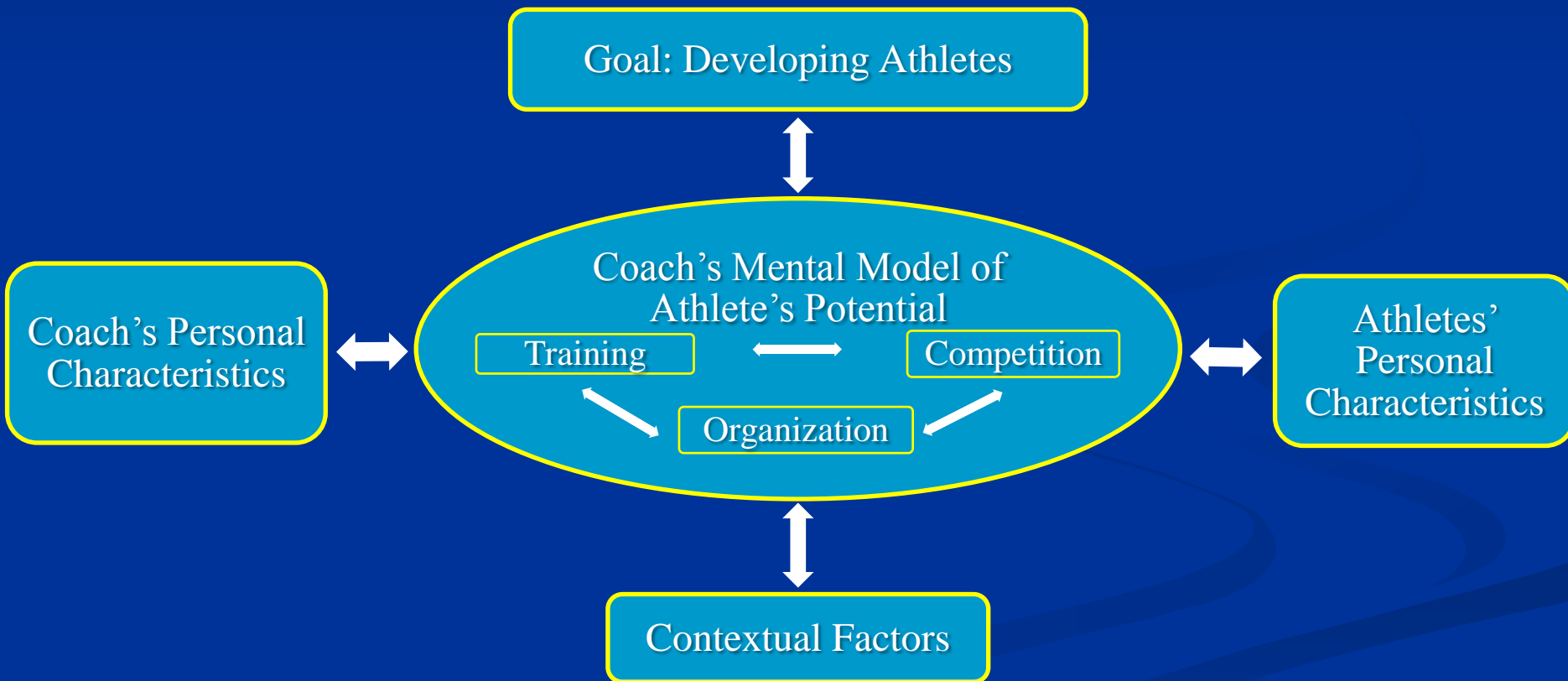
# Literature Review

## ■ Coaching

- The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).
- Three components
  - **Coaches' knowledge:** professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.
  - **Athletes' outcomes:** competence, confidence, connection, character/caring.
  - **Coaching contexts:** youth, high school, varsity, elite, Olympic, Paralympic.

# Literature Review

## ■ Coaching Model



Adapted from: Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell (1995)

# Literature Review

- Coach's Role in Building Team Cohesion
  - Coaching behaviours influence the development of cohesion which affect the way teams develop and perform (Carron & Chelladurai, 1981; Westre & Weiss, 1991).
  - The coach can impact the development of cohesion according to how he/she structures the season and by giving opportunities for athletes to relate socially, psychologically, and physically (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003).



# Literature Review

- Coaching Athletes with Disabilities
  - Same skills as coaching able-bodied athletes (DePauw & Gavron, 2005).
  - Cregan, Bloom, and Reid (2007)
    - Coaches learned about their athletes disabilities and how to communicate with their athletes' caregivers.
    - Coaches considered disability-specific issues such as accessibility (e.g., facilities, transportation, and lodging).
  - Foster an elite athlete atmosphere, set personal and sport-related goals, encourage independence and decision-making skills, and focus on a holistic development that promotes personal and athletic development of individuals (Tawse, Bloom, Sabiston, & Reid, in press).

# Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of coaches on building cohesion within their Paralympic teams.

# Participants

- Paralympic coaches from 6 different sports

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
Age	55	46		36	53	
Level of education	University	University	University	University	University	University
Certification		Level 4	Level 4	Level 3		Level 2
Able bodied coaching experience	Soccer Track and field	Hockey	Basketball Cycling	Skiing	Hockey Lacrosse Football Tennis	Basketball Soccer
Time coaching current Paralympic team		6 years	3 years	5 years		3 years

# Data Analysis

- Data was collected using semi-structured interviews that followed an interview guide.
- Procedures
  - Followed guidelines described by Côté and colleagues (1993).
  - 75 pages of single-space verbatim transcriptions were analyzed.

# Preliminary Results

- Preliminary Results

- Importance of Cohesion in Paralympic Sport.

“Cohesion is even more important in Paralympic teams. This comes from the athletes having significant challenges outside of the rink. Coming to the rink is an escape in some ways and they are looking for a cohesive experience.” (C5)

“I think cohesion is more important in a Paralympic setting than in able-bodied sports. I think some disability groups are more affected by stress and anxiety than others. That being said, the cohesion is important for these athletes to feel supported by their teammates.” (C2)

# Preliminary Results

- Preliminary Results

- Role of the Coach in Building team cohesion.

“As a coach I need to act and demonstrate the leadership skills I expect others to follow, which is part of my role in building team cohesion.” (C6)

“I think I’m a partner in developing the cohesion. I need to make time to make it happen, find activities, and be open to them.” (C4)

# Preliminary Results

- Preliminary Results

- Team building activities in Paralympic Sports.

“We designed a personalized bib for all the athletes with our new logo, their names and the 4 core values of the team (teamwork, passion, perseverance, and price).” (C4)

“I make the English speaking athletes learn French and vice versa...they have to introduce their friend from Quebec in French and give a little speech...it is quite hilarious sometimes.” (C6)

# Conclusions

- Paralympic coaches think teammate support is important.
- The role of the Paralympic coach in building team cohesion is similar to the coach of able-bodied athletes.
- Team building activities are led by coaching staff or sport psychology consultant and address social and task aspects.



# Thank you

## Questions / Comments

