INTRODUCTION:

Coach-athlete relationships are the fundamental fabric that binds a team together, impacts performance and athlete behavior in order to succeed in the competitive environment. Numerous authors suggest that an effective coach-athlete relationship is necessary for a successful outcome (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallierand, & Carbonneau, 2011; Shields, Gardner, Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997) and it is conceivable that the key to a successful coach-athlete relationship is the development of human relationships by the coaches (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Philippe et al., 2011). Therefore “the most important encounter (in sport) may be the one between the athlete and their coach” (Ayer, 2015, p. 28). This relationship is dynamically unique and complex, it can vary in both depth and quality, and is one that simultaneously influences and is influenced by a number of variables and contexts (Ayer, 2015; Allen & Eby, 2012; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). Broadly the coach-athlete relationship is defined as a situation in which two individual’s (coach and athlete) feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are mutually and causally interdependent (Jowett & Meek, 2000). Research has shown that the athletes’ perceptions of their coaches’ behaviors have an impact on academics, performance, actions, leadership, morals, and beliefs (Horn, Bloom, Berglund, & Packard, 2011; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003); plausibly, athletes can be manipulated by the coach-athlete relationship (Felton & Jowett, 2013; Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, & Jowett, 2011).

Despite the importance of establishing mutual respect and rapport amongst athletes and coaches, a sense of ambiguity still exists in relation to the most suitable type of interpersonal relationships in team sport settings. If a coach does not interact positively with the team, the effectiveness of instruction and athlete application to training may be undermined (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012, p. 63). The more that athletes held positive and favorable perceptions of their relationships with coaches, the greater was their satisfaction in terms of basic psychological needs being met (i.e., competence, autonomy, and relatedness) (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda 2008). Reimer and Chelladurai (1998) suggested that the coach-athlete relationship is very important because an athlete that is satisfied is a noteworthy criterion for athletes to perform at the highest level; a major influence behind this is desirable interdependent coach-athlete behaviors. For example, adopting practices that focus on training and development, sharing of information, and encouraging teamwork (Rezania & Gurney, 2014).

The current research project was prompted by a previous study (see chapter 3), the binding force: a practical model for building and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship in Canadian intercollegiate team sport. A simple model that demonstrates the reciprocal relationships between the themes and dimensions of the coach-athlete relationship was discovered through a phenomenological process (Reciprocating Coach-athlete Relationship Model). Phenomenology is designed to discover phenomena and unearth previously unnoticed or overlooked issues, describing what all participants have in common, rather than making inferences as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). The reciprocating coach-athlete relationship model (R-CARM) depicted an overall represen-
tation establishing, developing, and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship Figure 1. It is within this study the aim is to further validate the tool and evaluate its overall fundamentals and effectiveness in a real world context. We wanted to continue our investigation towards increased trustworthiness via coach application and implementation of the R-CARM alongside student-athlete feedback regarding their respective relationship with coach. This strategy would act as a practical guide within his/her relationship development/maintenance strategies among athletes, and conceivably demonstrate improvement within the coach-athlete dyad. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide a coach with a user-friendly educational model and thematic summary of what was discovered within the previous phenomenological study. The coach would then incorporate the R-CARM within his/her personal coaching schedule and implement.

Similar to the dyad, coach-athlete relationship research is complex (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). The breadth of the relationship is continually being documented as a far-reaching and highly valued component to successful athlete’s and teams; the majority of significant research has occurred since the new millennium. “This unique two-person relationship has been viewed as an important medium (Jowett, 2005) for performance accomplishments (Gould, Diefenbach, & Moffett, 2002) and psychological well-being (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003)” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 830). Several associations of the coach-athlete relationship is reflected within such areas of team cohesion and coach leadership (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), passion for sport (Lafraniere, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011), coach-created motivational climate (Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008), conflict and support (Jowett, 2009), empathic accuracy (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), attachment styles (Davis & Jowett, 2010), achievement motivation (Adie & Jowett, 2010), sport satisfaction (Jowett & Nezlek, 2011; Lorimer & Jowett, 2009), relationship satisfaction (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), physical self-concept (Jowett, 2008), and collective efficacy (Jowett, Shamurnagam, & Caccoulis, 2012). “These studies supply evidence of the network of social psychological constructs that link to the coach-athlete relationship. However, more research that extends conceptual, operational, and measurement issues would add to the evidence-base and further support the central role coach-athlete relationships play within the sport-coaching context” (Yang & Jowett, 2013, p. 831). To date the majority of research conducted on coaching behaviors has focused on documenting and analyzing perceived and observable coaching behaviors (what they do), such as factors affecting athlete needs satisfaction and psychological well-being (Felton & Jowett, 2013). Much less attention has been given to the reasoning behind (the why) of effective coach behaviors (Cushion, 2010), and its attention on the effects of the coach-athlete relationship independently and together with coach behaviors (Felton & Jowett, 2013). “The behaviors associated with being a good mentor are not specifically defined. If coaches are to be successful, it is imperative that they acquire knowledge as to what types of coach behavior are most effective for motivating and connecting with their athletes” (Olson, 2014, p. 8). Lack of scholarly research has reinforced the need for further research into the influence and developmental processes coaches have with their athletes. The present qualitative study will help foster investigating the reasons for and the how-to behaviors surrounding the coach-athlete relationship.

2 GENERAL RESEARCH DESIGN AND PURPOSE:
Due to the limit research on the understanding the development, maintenance and repair involved within the coach-athlete relationship it was determined that a qualitative design was needed. In accordance with Creswell (2009), qualitative research enables researchers to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups attach to social phenomena. This is important due to the athletic relationship reflecting both the coaches and athletes’ affective, cognitive, and behavioral interdependence (Jowett, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2002; Jowett & Meek, 2000). This qualitative study employed a case study approach to facilitate exploration of the coach-athlete dyad using multiple data sources. This ensured that the coach-athlete relationship was not explored through a single lens, but rather a variety of lenses (student-athletes and coaches), which allowed multiple facets of the relationship to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The central focus of research within this case study was to provide a potential avenue of trustworthiness and further insight to the R-CARM. As Yin (2003) stated, “you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”. Three evaluations applying the coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) (Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett, Paull, & Pensgaard, 2005) and additional questions were provided to student-athletes at the beginning of the season, mid-point, and end of the season. The CART-Q is a model that combines coaches’ and athletes’ interpersonal feelings, thoughts and behaviors (Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006). The model’s influence and definition of interpersonal relationships was prompted from the work of Kelley, Berscheid, Christensen, Harvey, Huston, Levinger, McClintock, Peplau, and Peterson (1983). These were situations in which people’s feelings, thoughts and behaviors are jointly connected. Correspondingly, coaches’ and athletes’ interconnected feelings, thoughts and behaviors have been operationalized through the popular relationship constructs of closeness (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989), commitment (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993) and complementarity (Kiesler, 1997). Each of these constructs has been widely used by researchers, albeit independently, to examine two-person relationships (e.g. romantic and marital), yielding a body of research that supports their usefulness in understanding the internal dynamics of various types of dyadic relationships. Following the player feedback, a total of three
interactions and interviews with coach using the R-CARM and reflecting back to the CART-Q results was the critical path of action during the full competitive year.

Social psychology of sport literature suggests that athletes concern themselves as feeling positively connected with their coaches as an important requisite for their competitive success (Gould, Damarjian, & Medbery, 1999; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). For many athletes, their identity and sense of self is seen through their involvement within sport (Lally, 2007). Therefore, coaches must be attentive in their coach-athlete relationships and respect the effect they can have on the personal development of players. It has materialized that for coaches to be successful, they must be able to connect with their players as people on and off the competitive field of play, and not simply as athletes.

Coaching in sport has received much attention in both empirical research and in the sports literature. However, coaching in sport still remains an ill-defined and under-theorized field that needs to be explored further in order to develop valid and reliable knowledge (Moen & Frederici, 2013, p. 240).

It is fair to say that research in the area of social psychology in sport remains to be youthful in its development when examining the importance of interpersonal relationships within team sport. Ideally, a well-rounded theory can help outline, solidify, and grow the relationship between the coach and athlete; refine our understanding and that understanding can help guide coach action within the relationship. Considered as very important to the success of both the coach and athlete, scant research has investigated how coaches attempt to develop, maintain, and repair their relationships with athletes. It is widely believed that although coaches and athletes are involved in many different sporting relationships, none of them are as mutually interdependent as the coach-athlete partnership (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Peregoy, 2002); for example, athlete-athlete (Jackson, Dimmock, Gucciardi, & Grove, 2011); athlete-parent (Shepherd, Lee, & Kerr 2006); youth peer relationships (Smith, Jowett, & Lavallee, 2007).

Earlier literature demonstrates that the methodology used to study the coach-athlete relationships have primarily omitted affective components within coach-athlete relationships. Historically coach-athlete relationships have taken a variety of approaches, assessment of coaching behavior has been wide with the dominant method being systematic observation or questionnaire administration with a recent increase in the application of multi-method studies and qualitative methods.

Behavior and leadership style of coaches include questionnaires to examine coaches’ leadership behaviors, such as the coaching behavior assessment system (CBAS) (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977). CBAS directly observes and codes coaches’ actions during practices and games. Entailing two major classes of behaviors; reactive (elicited) behaviors, which are responses to, immediately preceding athlete or team behaviors; and spontaneous (emitted), featuring behaviors initiated by the coach and are not a response to a visible preceding event. Still in circulation today, identifying leadership styles and relationship satisfaction, Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the leadership scale for sport (LSS). There was eventually three different versions of the questionnaire developed to assess athletes’ preferred behaviors, athletes’ perceptions of their coach’s behaviors and coach’s perceptions of their own behaviors in terms of instruction, autocratic, democratic, social support and positive feedback. Systematic observation (Douge & Hastie, 1993), to examine coaches’ instructional behaviors stated that effective coaches must provide feedback frequently, and show high levels of ‘coaching up’ athletes by both correction and instruction. Within systematic observation, implementing high levels of questioning, clarification, engagement in instruction, and managing the training environment is key. Not as common in earlier research, qualitative methodology to investigate the knowledge and development of coaches through in-depth interviews transpired (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995); interviews in sport psychology qualitative research consisting of highly structured questioning (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001). It is not until more recently (early 2000’s), we have seen the research focus to a broader social context, such as familial and romantic/marital relationships, organization (e.g., supervisor subordinate; Zhou & Schriesheim, 2009), clinical context (i.e., doctor—patient; Girolomoni & Gisondi, 2009), school (i.e., teacher-student; Woolf, 2011), and competitive sports (i.e., coach-athlete, athlete-athlete; Jowett, 2005; Smith, 1999).

Within the atmosphere of sport, coaches and athletes are entangled in an interpersonal relationship. The way the athlete interacts with those significant others (coach-athlete; athlete-athlete) may potentially influence their performance as well as their psychological well-being (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007). “In the sporting environment, coaches are instrumental in creating a social environment that has the capacity to influence the physical growth and development as well as the psychological and subjective wellbeing of their athletes” (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 130) Therefore, researchers have noted that sport is a mature social environment in which to explore the nature of interpersonal relationships, because it involves frequent and varied opportunities for social interactions, especially between the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2007). To date, the current existing literatures in this domain have investigated athlete-athlete relationships (i.e., Smith, 2003, 2007), parent-athlete relationships (i.e., Chan, Lonsdale, & Fung, 2012; Harwood & Knight, 2009; Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005), and the coach-athlete relationship (Becker, 2009; Jowett, 2007).

3 PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM:

Epistemology refers to the philosophical beliefs about what can be known and how knowledge may be acquired (Hatch, 2002). Social constructionism best describes the overall epistemological position that guided this research study. It takes
the epistemological view that social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus (Young & Colin, 2004) and “generally put, social constructionism contends that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together. It is less interested, or not at all interested, in the cognitive processes that accompany knowledge” (Young & Colin, 2004, p. 376). Within this study, a social constructionism approach engaged student-athletes and coaches in connecting their experiences on and off the court, in a relational setting to their real and sporting lives to enhance and provide feedback of their overall coach-athlete relationship. In complete contrast, a positivism (objectivist) view is unacceptable when approaching a social science phenomenon like the coach-athlete relationship involving human beings and real-life experiences. Treating the coach and/or athlete(s) as independent, non-reflective objects “ignores their ability to reflect on problem situations, and act on these” in an interdependent way (Robson, 1993, p. 60).

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2003) outlined what they referred to as ‘the research onion’. Intended to demonstrate research methodologies are best used in a harmonizing way, “linking the philosophy of positivism with different approaches” (Knox, 2004, p. 122). “If researchers focus on one approach, all of the time, there is a possibility of losing sight of the bigger picture” (Knox, 2004, p. 123). Research within this study is that of deductive, entailing data collection and theoretical development as a result of the data analysis (Knox, 2004). The research onion (Saunders et al., 2003), bounded by 5 layers, represents data collection methods as the first layer; methods included sampling, interviews, and questionnaires. The third layer consisted of research strategies, again, comprising a mixture of approaches within this layer (i.e., case study, and grounded theory). The fifth layer revealed practitioner research philosophy, depicting social degree to which coaches agreed or disagreed, and detailed descriptions of coaches’ position are provided. Additionally, when reviewing and reporting the data it was made sure that both coaches as much as possible were well represented, and the results were not determined and reported through only a single coach interviewed.

5 CLARIFICATION OF BIAS:

From a social constructionist researcher’s point of view, its important to note the interviews represented a semi-structured conversation with open-ended questioning (Jennings, 2005). As a participant in this process, and recognizing that as a possibility, inadvertently influencing the coaches’ perceptions and opinions or somehow inhibiting them from speaking openly and freely was conceivable. Acknowledging these possibilities, it is understood the account of the coaches’ perceptions and experiences reflect a truthful, real, and candid disclosure of the distinctive thoughts and ideas shared at the time of the interviews. A neutral stance was vital in collecting data; importantly to note, no specific agenda upon the start of the study existed and support that the findings are an authentic rendering of the data. Neutrality refers to the degree to which the findings are determined by the subjects and not the biases, motivations, or interests of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Understandings as a coach and researcher from previous studies led to the understanding of unique roles, experiences, and perspectives of the coaches interviewed. Having professional knowledge in this area, while admittedly bringing hypothetical biases to the study due to the subjective process, possibly increased the credibility of the study. It was important to try not to allow previous comprehension and understanding to create bias among data coding, this was significant in seeking out specific themes and dimensions from the coach transcriptions, thoroughly checking the interpretation and analysis to avoid unnecessary study limitations (Kolb, 2012). It’s maintained that the coding, and ultimately the findings of theme’s and dimensions, emerged from the data, accurately reflect the feelings of the coaches interviewed. Being reflexive is an essential requirement for good qualitative research, and can help minimize the effects of researcher bias. “ Reflexivity in researched content refers to the process of critically reflecting on the knowledge we produce, and our role in producing that knowledge” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 37). This is viewed as part of quality control in qualitative research, being reflexive in this study meant incorporating continuous awareness of review, exploring, and thoroughly examining the coach interview transcriptions through all stages of the research process. Important to note, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested that, “in the same way objectivity is valued in a quantitative paradigm, subjectivity is positively valued in the qualitative paradigm” (p. 36). As subjective qualitative researchers our histories, values, assumptions, and perspectives are brought into research, therefore, it is not possible to check it all at the door (Braun & Clarke, 2013). “The topics we find
interesting to research, and ways we ask questions about them, the aspects of our data that excite us...reflect who we are, our subjectivity” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 36). Any knowledge produced is going to reflect that, even if only in some minor way. “In qualitative research, our humanness, our subjectivity, can be used as a research tool” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 36).

Although quantitative research would be concerned with aspects of validity, reliability of data collection, and analysis, these terms are not typically used in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). The validity procedures within this present study are “distinct from typical quantitative approaches, such as concern for trustworthiness (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability), and authenticity (i.e., fairness, enlarges personal constructions, leads to improved understanding of constructions of others, stimulates action, and empowers action)” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be established in many ways, including triangulation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement in the field, researcher reflexivity, audit trail, rich description, and member checks (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation refers to a researcher’s crosschecking information from multiple perspectives (capturing different dimensions of the same phenomenon). This can entail using different investigators, different methods (i.e., observations and interviews), or even different data sources (Shenton, 2004). Within this study triangulation meant using more than one method to collect data on the same topic (the coach-athlete relationship). This is a way of ensuring the trustworthiness of research through the use of data collection (Shenton, 2004) from an athlete questionnaire, written comments, and coach interviews (a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic).

6 METHODS:
Methodological Framework:
This study obtained ethical consent from the University of Victoria human ethics research board (HREB). Collecting rich data from various perspectives (coaches and athletes) assisted in promoting greater insight into the coach-athlete dyad and R-CARM tool. The following study’s research design was qualitative investigation; a case-study approach adopting grounded theory was adopted emphasizing the exploration of realities from the participating post-secondary coaches and student-athletes. Research duration was over the full post-secondary athletic year, September 2014–March 2015; which included pre-season, competitive season, exam break, and playoff season. The qualitative methods used in data collection were vast, complicated, and consisted of a combination of various interviews, in-person modification and feedback, online and in-person individual survey/evaluation, coach intervention, questionnaire distribution, text coding, and interview transcriptions. Encouraging individuals to provide in-depth information that on a personal level would capture subjective meaning in related coach-athlete situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interviewing has long been a fundamental method for data collection. In 1954, Hyman, Cobb, Feldman, Hart, and Stember published ‘Interviewing in Social Research’, noting that “interviewing, as a method of inquiry is universal in the social sciences” (p.1). Interviewing has evolved and taken on a variety of forms and characteristics. However, regardless of the type of interview employed, by their nature, “interviews are social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective (and prospective) accounts or versions of their past (or future) actions, experiences, feelings, and thoughts” (Scale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2004, p.16).

Rubin and Rubin (2005) define qualitative interviews as “conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (p.4). While interview methods vary, they are primarily classified along a structured versus unstructured continuum, however, interviews can have both structured and unstructured elements (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). Structured interviews have pre-existing topics and questions while unstructured interviews are more open-ended, allowing the subject to determine more of the content and direction (Bogden & Bilken, 1998). No interview can truly be considered unstructured; however, some are relatively unstructured and are more or less equivalent to guided conversations (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Qualitative interviews are based on a topic or conversational guide, which is a list of areas the researcher wants to cover with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Topic guides vary in length and form, being as simple as a checklist or a detailed outline with main questions and pre-existing probing questions. Nevertheless, in qualitative interviews researchers have autonomy over the order of questions, how they are phrased, and are free to expand beyond initial questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The type of qualitative interview employed in this study was semi-structured; interviewing forms the cornerstone of qualitative data collection in sport and exercise psychology (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001). Semi-structured interviews are a widely used data source for qualitative research. Interviews are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events, in our case, the team practice setting. “They are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee(s)” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315).

The use of open-ended questions within this study allows participants to express their feelings, experiences, and perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The process of research for the constructivist is largely inductive, with theory and meaning being generated after data is gathered (Creswell, 2009). Consistent with the view of social constructivism, the coach-athlete relationship, would suggest that coaches and athletes do not discover knowledge. Rather, for example, a coach would construct knowledge (as being engaged in the filed) by using concepts and schemes, which are continually worked on, revised and repeated (Murphy, Mahoney,
Chen, Mendoza-Diaz, & Yang, 2005). Additionally, these concepts are socially constructed in shared social contexts rather than individually developed (Murphy, Mahoney, Chen, Mendoza-Diaz, & Yang, 2005). A purpose of constructivism is to expose and combine how others perceive truth, in our case, perceived reality of the coaches, rather than attempting to determine an objective truth (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Therefore, viewing these practices from a constructivist perspective allows for a better understanding of how the coach-athlete relationship occurs and social psychology educators can further enhance critical thinking through appropriate learning methodologies. Guided by a social constructivist perspective in grounded theory, this study was broken down into a three part process, which further explains how coaches and student-athletes are developing and experiencing the coach-athlete relationship in elite post-secondary sport, addressing “potential valuable variables and categories of interest” (Creswell, 2012, p. 88): 1) Initial modification process of the R-CARM, 2) Initiating the R-CARM through a multiple qualitative case study, 3) Data analysis of case studies and further amendment of the R-CARM.

Participants and data collection phase I. Prior to its distribution for the participating case study coaches, the R-CARM and its properties were evaluated by a cohort of 13 coaches enrolled in the Masters of Education in coaching program at the University of Victoria. These coaches ranged from various levels of sport (middle school, high school and post-secondary), differing levels of experience (elite, amateur, beginner), age groups (24-40 years), genders, and sports (rugby, basketball, baseball, volleyball etc.). The focus of the Masters cohort was to provide an increased understanding of the statements and findings from the R-CARM elite (post-secondary) coach study. Intentions were to refine and build the R-CARM statements more clearly and concisely. This was necessary to ensure the next step of further (online) refinement by numerous post-secondary coaches reaching across the country (Canada). This was accomplished by providing a more broad-based appeal, and further refinement of the meaningful units pertaining to each theme and dimension prior to advancing further with online evaluation (see Table 1 Appendix A).

Data generation. Systematically, the cohort advanced through each dimension and theme outlined from the R-CARM phenomenological study. Refinement, exclusions, and supplementation were results of the evaluative process. Each student was provided with the R-CARM phenomenological study . Refinement, exclusions, and supplementation were results of the evaluative process.

This phase was important to further refine the themes in preparation for the next step of creating an online survey to enhance trustworthiness to the R-CARM. Figure 1 outlines 11 meaningful units, far too many for an online survey when other themes and dimensions are present. A basic rule-of-thumb outlined by (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006), the longer the questionnaire, the more burdensome the task, the lower the response rate will be. Within the themes we wanted to tailor the meaningful units within the Masters cohort in preparation for distribution of an online survey questionnaire, therefore minimizing or all together, avoiding poor questionnaire design and the employment of adaptive questions to reduce the number and complexity of questions presented to users (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Understanding the value in a coaches time and availability, attitudes, perceptions, needs, lifestyle, and demographics, all had implications for how the online survey was prepared (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). The online survey was particularly attractive due to the targeted coaching population being spread across a large Canadian region (Mann & Stewart, 2000); and reach being a critical component to touching on various post-secondary team sport coaches of both genders. Reach referring to the ease by which potential respondents can be approached (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Other advantages as to why we wanted to conduct an online survey was to create an absence of interviewer bias, speed of delivery (point-and-click responses), removal of the need for manual data entry and create the ease of data analysis/transfer, targeted audience, provision of structured responses, the convenience for the respondents due to many coaches being technologically savvy, flexible time constraints for respondents, and anonymity (Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Sills & Song, 2002).

Participation in this online survey was solicited by sending an email to various college and university team sport coaches across the country providing explanation and objective behind the study. Coaches were requested to validate the information concerning discovered themes from the binding force: a practical model for building and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship in Canadian intercollegiate team sport. It was revealed to the coaches that this is a potential tool for coaches to use and implement in the development and maintenance of the ‘coach-athlete relationship’ as whole. Ravizza (2002) advocated that its important to deal with an athlete as a whole person in terms of his or her identity, since sport often encompasses many areas of an athlete’s life.

It was identified that this is an important step in furthering the development and delivery of the coaching curriculum, specifically at the university and college levels. Within the email, a link to the Web based questionnaire was included. The software offered transformation of the URL into a direct link to the Website, hence reducing additional actions on behalf of the respondents (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). The survey was simple in design with intentions of better coach response rate, completeness, and completion time (Dillman, Tortora, Conradt, & Bowker, 1998). Each coach was encouraged to participate in the survey, as each would be contributing greatly to the growth of our coaching education and profession.

Following the Masters cohort validation procedure, an online survey (approx. 20 min completion time) was emailed to
110 post-secondary coaches in Canada, resulting in a combination of 40 male and female coaches responding and completing the survey. The directive here was to provide further validation towards the R-CARM concerning the previous discovered themes and dimensions, building upon the cohort’s corroboration and responses. Before the coach could begin the survey, each was requested to provide consent; first page of the online survey was a click through consent form. It was outlined to the coaches that completing and submitting the survey online, their free and informed consent is implied and therefore indicates that they understand the conditions of participation in this study. A statement “I understand the above conditions of participation in this study and hereby give my free and informed consent” was provided. They were instructed to click yes or no. By clicking on ‘YES’, each coach understands the aforementioned conditions of participation in this study and hereby give their free and informed consent.

The participating coaches that were contacted comparably matched the criteria of the phenomenological study encompassing team sport coaches of secondary institutions, both male and female teams from the Canadian College Athletic Association (CCAA) and Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). Similar to the Masters students they were provided with the R-CARM in its entirety. In order to make this online survey seamless, stimulating, and aware of time constraints, with each question the coaches were provided a dimension or theme and asked simply a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response to the statement. For example, under the Dimension of “Caring”, Theme 1: “Up close and personal” (making it personal) Relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people, coaches were asked yes or no, which meant do they agree or disagree with the statement they just read. Awareness of time constraints, only following each section was comment boxes provided. Various comments and remarks were considered and further refinement to the model ensued. An example of a comment that was adapted took place within the Culture dimension under theme 4 “Hamlet Effect” (method to madness): A coach needs to get the players to believe that what the team is doing and where it wants to go, is also what each individual wants to do personally. A comment that was omitted along with its respected theme was theme 5: “We’re talking about practice” (practice setting): On court in practice I tell myself to emotionally engage the positive experience, but intellectually engage the negative experience. If the theme was tabulated above an 85% response rating from the coaches it remained unaffected. If it dipped below an 85% rating and a comment(s) was provided to support the theme in an effective manner then it was amended and included. Less than an 80% the theme and/or comment was removed in its entirety. See Table 2 (Appendix B) for illustrating this process.

To date, the field of social psychology in sport is incomplete, specifically the area of coach-athlete relationships. For example, literature has not been developed to assess the impact that the coach-athlete relationship has upon athletic performance, nor does it provide any educated guidance on the everyday development and repair of the connection. Due to the remaining gaps in research dedicated to the coach-athlete relationship dyad, it was deemed necessary that a qualitative approach would more effectively elucidate the experiences and perceptions of both athletes and coaches participating/coaching men’s and women’s post-secondary teams. Researchers in sport and exercise psychology have maintained that qualitative inquiry is a credible technique to gain valid information (Munroe-Chandler, 2005). For example, Partington and Orlick (1991) reported qualitative inquiry as being an effective consulting experience, suggesting that a central qualitative template within sport and exercise psychology is a combined protocol of semi-structured interview(s) and content analysis (Cote, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993). This interwoven procedure still remains an efficient framework and forms the cornerstone of qualitative data collection in sport and exercise psychology (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001).

Participants and data collection phase II. Succeeding the modification process to the R-CARM (phase I), the Masters cohort and online coaches feedback, a daily coach tool was producedTable 3 (see Appendix C). This tool incorporated the R-CARM, dimensions, themes, and meaningful units included on a single laminated reference page. Two post-secondary sports teams were selected along with their respective head coaches provided the landscape for the next component of research. Women’s basketball and men’s volleyball were selected as the post-secondary teams. Fittingly, both team sports reflected a very similar length and timing of schedule, each have a comparable number of team members, competitions, practices, and both representing dual genders not only in the sport but the head coaches too, made for an ideal scope of study.

Data generation. In the final phase, a multiple qualitative case study was the pragmatic method selected to further research and facilitate exploration of the coach-athlete phenomenon. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time. Specific techniques could be detailed in-depth data collection, organizing, analyzing data involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reporting a case description and/or case-based themes (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Two post-secondary teams were used, making it a multiple-case study to help illustrate the issue while exhibiting diverse perspectives (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The issue of focus was to further refine the R-CARM and comprehend whether the feedback provided through the student-athlete CART-Q interviews would be useful in conjunction with the R-CARM and coach interventions.

All athlete interviews occurred just before or just after training sessions three times during the competitive season (beginning, middle, end), each lasting approx. 15 minutes. Student-athletes were provided the 11-item CART-Q (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), which outlined three interpersonal constructs seeking evaluative information underpinning each athlete’s relationship with coach: closeness
(four items, e.g., “My coach trusts me”), commitment (three items, e.g., “My coach is close to me”), and complementarity (four items, e.g., “My coach adopts a friendly stance”). All items were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly Agree”), based on the 3+1C’s validation process and conceptual model of the coach–athlete relationship (Jowett, 2009) (see Appendix F). The questionnaire is restricted by the questions asked and does not allow the freedom to probe beyond them to gain a richer description of both experiences and perceptions. However, additional investigative questions were implemented to confirm or provide specific examples from their individual contexts following the CART-Q. Aiming to go beyond the conceptual themes that framed the questionnaire in order to gain more insight into the each player’s coach-athlete relationship.

Semi-structured coach interviews were recorded, played back, and transcribed verbatim, resulting in 65 single space pages of text-based data for the analysis. Consent forms were delivered at the time of the interview and participants read and signed the forms prior to starting the interview (see Appendix I). Semi-structured interviews offered a sound balance of structure and flexibility (Walker, 2011). Interviews occurred within a few days of transcription and student-athlete CART-Q data collection/feedback, beginning of, middle, and end of the season. The semi-structured format contained specific questions and follow-up questions to the CART-Q student-athlete response, while providing the freedom to ask unique questions and expand beyond the queries and content areas established in the interview guide. By having the coaches speak freely about their coach-athlete relationships within their respective teams, this supported the notion of incorporating context, which according to Creswell (2009) is a critical component of qualitative approaches. Incorporating context within this study yielded a deeper understanding of what the coach-athlete relationship is like for this unique interconnected dyad. For example, one of the coaches commented on specific/precise thoughts and/or areas of behaviors that they wanted to focus on coming into the season. “One of the main areas for me is being more attentive to players off the court. If they need to talk about school, having an open door policy to talk about basketball/personal stuff, more scheduled meetings with players, and making them aware of that. We are meeting with our younger players more often, we are doing more of that.

Data analysis

Within the two case studies, the constant comparative method (CCM) (Cote, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993) was used to generate qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach from the perceptions of post-secondary team sport coaches and/or including their athletes. Constant comparative method (CCM) together with theoretical sampling constitute the core of qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967; Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Constant comparison is the investigative process involving the identification of key text segments or meaning units, which contain ideas relevant to a research topic, and what data will be gathered next (Cote et al., 1993). By comparing, the researcher is able to do what is necessary to develop a concept seeking to supply strong evidence, new emergent themes is analyzed, in the form of tagging and coding, data matrices, diagrams, differentiating categories, and comparing them for similarities and differences to prevailing themes (Boeije, 2002). Transcripts were independently coded and text based meaningful words units and/or phrases were captured within the data. The codes were then compared with those already existing from a previous study; the binding force: a practical model for building and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship in Canadian intercollegiate team sport.

For example, in the following meaningful unit, extracted from one of the student-athlete’s comment section: “It revolves around open and honest communication in which both of us agreed to speak candidly and transparently. We share mutual respect for each others efforts and accomplishments”. From here, a coding process begins; again, coding involves “systematically labeling concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so that you can readily retrieve and examine all of the data units that refer to the same subject across all your interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207). Open, honest, communication, speak candidly, transparently, and mutual respect provided the tags for this statement from a single student-athlete. Once the codes were isolated, they are then placed in appropriate themes to later be re-evaluated (Cote et al., 1993). The major dimensions within the R-CARM; recruitment, caring, culture, communication and trust were reflected upon throughout the year amongst the coaches providing pertinent feedback within each dimension.

“Constant comparison goes hand in hand with theoretical sampling. This principle implies that the researcher decides what data will be gathered next and where to find them on the basis of provisional theoretical ideas” (Boeije, 2002, p. 393). Theoretical sampling (guided by emerging theory) occurs when “the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (Glaser & Strauss, 2009 p. 45). Initial sampling decisions are based on a general sociological perspective and a general problem, but once data are collected and coding begins, the researcher is led in various directions, which seem relevant and work towards generating theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). This process was replicated for each line of comments from each and every student-athlete in all interview sessions (three times during the season). Extraction, organizing, and evolving codes can be challenging, therefore keeping the purpose of the research in mind as the codes were obtained had to be logical and consistent with how to organize the data.

Ensuing each student-athlete session, coach interviews/interventions occurred. These were recorded sessions concerning their respective student-athlete feedback and evaluation (comments and CART-Q), the continuing implementation of the R-CARM, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended coach-athlete relationship discussion. The
interviews from each coach were transcribed and reread to check for links or disparity of relevant meaning units, they were then refined and given tags and/or coded (Cote et al., 1993). The following was a meaning unit(s) identified: “I think we have to have a professional relationship…” “It really isn’t surprising when players would say it’s a sports specific relationship. It is, but except for the fact that each year, there are probably three or four players that I have a much deeper relationship with…” From these meaningful units, “professional”, “sport specific relationship”, and “deeper relationships” were coded. In the analysis process, “professional” became one of the themes, this creation of this theme allowed for similarities or differences between the tags to be collated (Cote et al., 1993). This procedure was replicated for each individual coach interview, and again as part of the cross-case analysis between the two participating coaches.

Prior to coding the data, the interviews were reviewed again and an initial code list was developed that followed the organization of the open-ended questions, taking into account information provided by the summary sheets. For example, coaches discussed their experience building a relationship and mentioned characteristics associated with having a strong coach–athlete relationship. After reviewing the interviews several times an understanding of essential having a strong coach–athlete relationship and mentioned characteristics associated with having a strong coach–athlete relationship, the development of a final theme was made possible. A successful coach–athlete relationship was replicated. This procedure was replicated for each individual coach interview, and again as part of the cross-case analysis between the two participating coaches. The process of defining codes was helpful as it further clarified and distinguished how to pull apart the data. Definitions and findings needed to be clear and consistent, aligned with the purpose of research, and able to be applied across all interviews.

Succeeding data generation and analysis of athlete remarks and CART-Q response, coach interviews and interventions ensued. Interventions were straightforward in nature and only focused on ‘weaknesses’ outlined by the CART-Q results. Weaknesses were categorized as an overall score of within the statement revealing a minimum of 35%. Responses on the 7-point scale that were considered as weaknesses were sorted as, agree somewhat, undecided, somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For example, Table 5 (see Appendix E) depicts results from the item of commitment, defined as the athletes and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship and therefore maximize its outcomes (Jowett, 2009). Athletes specified the results and ‘my coach is close to me’ was tagged as an area that needed to be examined with the coach during the interview/intervention phase; 85% of the team’s scale responses were between agree somewhat and strongly disagree.

The intervention’s purpose was to take a closer look into the coach weakness(s) (areas of lower scores). For example, within the item of commitment and the statement ‘my coach is close to me’; the coach tool (R-CARM; see Appendix A) was made reference to by employing the applicable dimensions and themes. An athlete whom responds poorly to ‘my coach is close to me’ prompted a closer look into the dimensions of caring, communication, and trust within the coach tool (R-CARM). Intimate discussion with the coach ensued encouraging an increase in attentiveness to the above-mentioned dimensions and themes prior to the next evaluation. The term ‘mindfulness’ was often used within the interventions and can be defined as “an open-hearted, moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 24). “Mindfulness may increase well-being and quality of life, potentially through facilitating engagement in meaningful activities or relationships, and helping individuals to be aware of and maintain contact with positive emotions” (Erisman & Roemer, 2011, p. 30). The themes that were outlined in this example and employing mindfulness towards were; making it personal (caring), being real (caring), up close and personal (caring), trust (trust), harmonious coaching (communication), and mano-a-mano (communication).

7 RESULTS:

The results indicate that the coach-athlete relationship is multifaceted and places significance on various elements behind the growth, upkeep, and fixing of the connection. Analyses of the player feedback, comments, and coach interview transcripts revealed valid information pertaining to the coach-athlete relationship. As research continues to be accumulated surrounding coach-athlete interactions, it has become clear that coaches can have either a positive or negative impact on the athlete’s competitive performance and life outside sport, at all levels of competition (Smoll & Smith 2006). A positive coach-athlete relationship can enhance athlete’s psychological and social vigor; foster the development of self-efficacy, and positive values and coping skills. In contrast, negative coach-athlete relationships create distress, foster the development of dysfunctional attitudes toward achievement and competition, create needless interpersonal stress, and contribute to sport competition attrition (Smith & Smoll, 2002, Smoll & Smith 2006). Given the influential role that coaches play in athletes’ psychosocial development and well-being, sport psychologists can have a notable positive impact by researching the consequences of particular coaching styles and behaviors on athletes who play for them (Smoll & Smith 2006).

Within the coach interview transcripts, 262 meaningful units were revealed; they were further grouped into sub-themes and general themes guiding this study towards four conclusions. Furthering support of the R-CARM and its dimensions and themes, suggested new findings within the coach-athlete relationship, the development of a final thematic structure of the R-CARM tool, and a critique of the CART-Q model (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett, 2007).
8 CULTURE:

Team culture refers to the psychosocial factors that influence team chemistry and group synergy, such as internal leadership within the team, team motives, team identity, team spirit, and collective efficacy (Martens, 1987). On both an individual and joint collective basis, players buy into the traditions, culture, and core values that govern the program and are willing to sacrifice self-interests for the betterment of the team (Yukelson & Rose, 2014). It has been noted that when team culture is not adequately developed; or is incompatible with the direction the team is heading, the team will most likely function below its performance capabilities (Martens, 1987). As such, the coach needs to be aware of the prevailing attitudes and feelings that exist within the team at all times (Yukelson, 1984). Moreover, every team member should be made to feel valued, appreciated, and empowered.

Coaches spoke freely about the culture of their respective programs. Culture was described as encompassing a large field within the sporting environment, to the extent of the overall operation within the academic institution:

“I mean the overall program. I’m responsible for the team because our team exists in a larger program that has other pieces to it, (such as) girls’ volleyball, basketball, golf etc. I’m trying to manage my team within the framework of the college... I have to look at the team as a whole before I look at the team as individuals, and make sure that the team as a whole is functioning well...I was impelled to do some strategic planning within the program, covering different areas, one of them was team culture. To me that referred directly back to relationships with the team.

Within the R-CARM the culture dimension encompassed such themes as climate, credibility, natural respect, method to madness, and player fit. The semi-structured interviews with the coaches provided further support for the aforementioned themes.

The climate the coach creates via his/her relational methods can be influential with respect to athlete motivation and consequent behavior (Gagné, 2003). The coaches’ interpersonal style pertains to the values emphasized by the coach and coaching behaviors designed to influence their athletes’ motivation and behavior (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Having veterans from the previous year(s), currently on the team permits a pathway to creating and continuing a consistent and existing climate. “If I do have the guy who will stay four or five years, they become a student of the game, and they know exactly what I’m talking about, and they can then impart that to the younger kids (teammates).”

The climate that is built within the culture is a feeling of support and inclusion for one another; a family team atmosphere that continues on, even after playing careers have expired.

Players come back all the time. I like to think it’s because the culture that we created as a family…one for all and all for one, and supporting each other. It’s supporting each other both on and off the court. I’m trying to establish relationships with these guys.

Being attentive that the sporting climate can change as the season progresses, but having an understanding that if the overall culture is solid and trustworthy it can retain the shape and identity of the program:

In my experience there can be a culture or environment that exists prior to real competition that maybe isn’t or won’t sustain itself…I think my relationships definitely can be mood based at times... and that’s why having a strong culture base is so important because you can quickly be brought back to it.

Team culture, specifically the climate, is an important entity for establishing a good atmosphere amongst the players, coaches and staff:

For the team, they’ll look back and they’ll keep those friendships forever. It’s not because we won that one point or that one match, it’s because they went through that struggle for a year and that to me, is way more valuable than beating one team. It’s rewarding and satisfying. That’s important to me because it’s about the journey. It isn’t about the destination.

John Wooden, hall of basketball coach and arguably the most successful of all time was quoted in saying; “be more concerned with your character than your reputation because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are” (Wooden, n.d.). Your credibility as a coach and leader begins with you, perhaps as simple as asking yourself how you want to be remembered by the athletes you coach:

We’ve talked about my behavior and my consistent behavior in practice or in the office with players. But now lets start to talk about how that looks in games; because I’ve been known to freak out a little bit in a game.

Gaining and maintaining respect with your athletes is vital to ultimate success. Great coaches are great because they see the importance of respect. They know how fragile it can be, and therefore working hard to maintain it is fundamental (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007):

Respect is really important in the dynamic of your team. It goes for example, our culture is founded on respect. It’s not founded on trust; it’s founded on respect. That is, there’s no difference on our team between a first year and a fifth year guy.

Within team sport, it is possible a group culture can significantly shape member cognition, behavior, development, well-being, and performance (Andersen, 2011). “We don’t have to demand that. Respect exists as a part of the culture of our program, because of what you see around you”… “If I want to be respected I have to give them respect.”

When you have success players tend to assume there is a method to the madness a little bit more with things that you do in preparation. Mike Krzyzewski of Duke University suggests that a quality coach portrays to his or her athlete’s the importance of understanding the method to the madness within a team dynamic. “A leader may be the most knowledgeable person in the world, but if the players on his team cannot translate that knowledge into action, it means nothing”… “A good coach helps his players prepare for what’s coming and guides them throughout the game”,

it’s important to allow the game to unfold (Kaufman, 2013). Former president of the United States Dwight Eisenhower once said, “in preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless; but planning is indispensable” (n.d.). Professional football’s New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick suggested that in relation to Eisenhower’s quote “no matter how much preparation you do, it’s still going to be different in the game, preparation is everything until the battle starts and then it doesn’t mean anything” (Perry, 2015). Suggesting the game becomes the game, and as a coach you have to deal with that. The coach preparation can only be done to a point, the nature of team sport is dynamic, and therefore the plan is going to change to some degree. In essence it’s important to embrace the method to madness in carrying out and executing a game plan, but being prepared enough to make adjustments along the way.

As a coach and leader of a team, you have a plan, you need to execute that plan and get the players to believe in that plan and this plan is essentially what they want to do:

The players have to want to do this in order for it to be meaningful, that it’s their plan. Otherwise, it’s just a ‘checking the box’ exercise. The guys that want to embrace that will, and the guys that don’t, will not.

Suitable player fit is important when looking for guys that fall into a certain niche within the team and the respective coach profile; and that the coach is going to build his/her team around:

It’s not the best players who will play, It’s the players who play best together that will play; because the strength of our team is only as good as the strength of the team that plays together, not the individuals.

Being a great teammate is representative of a positive attitude. Committing yourself to a team-first approach demonstrates to your teammates and coaches that you deserve their respect and commitment. “Some guys might be good players, but they are poor teammates, so we’ve tried to provide them with a bit more insight as to what that means”.

Selflessness is a great quality a teammate can have. Success in sports is measured by how your team finishes, not by individual efforts. When a team plays well, each and every player will receive notice and recognition. “The statistics only tell you part of the story. What I look for is, what is the story that the statistics are telling me, so I can tell you that story.”

9 CARING:

Dating back to the early 1900’s, Theodore Roosevelt once said, “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” (Atkins, 2012). Today, this simple quote is still used within coaching circles. Overall, the ‘social relationship’ developed between the coach–athlete relationship in which a sense of a strong affective bond can be compared to what Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998, and Jowett and Cockerill (2003) have called the ‘human relationship’. This part of the coach–athlete relationship may reflect the more personal and humanistic side of coaching in which coaches care about their athletes welfare, interests, preferences, and needs (Jowett, 2005). The results suggest that the social relationship or human relationship is an important facet because it promotes the professional relationship (i.e., the part of the relationship that is most concerned with performance enhancement). This is a dimension where empowerment, personal interest/development, and authentication are important components. In order to empower both females and males athletes through sport, it is important they feel significant, valued as a whole, and they are a center of focus in hopes all their needs are being taken care of (Kidman, Thorpe, & Hadfield 2005). Coaches facilitate the empowerment of athletes by working with them and encouraging them. Empowerment enables the athlete to become more independent and self-sufficient in competition as they grow as athletes and as individuals (Miller & Kerr, 2002):

Providing them with some playing time gives me a better chance to identify what there needs are, and it will also give him some satisfaction of being on the floor seeing what that’s like (in actual competition). What this has kind of done is to help me try to figure out how I can help them to work hard and feel good about themselves? I think in my life, not just as a coach the empowerment piece is another, I think as coaches we are often control freaks. So giving back some of that control is a big one… Because in a game you lose a bit of control and sometimes you can’t just stop the game, your players have to be able to perform, so giving some of that control back to your players.

Coaches can and should focus on building player confidence within each of their student-athletes, spending more time with them, and placing more effort on communicating, timely interventions, tactical and technical related tasks, as well as how to taking responsibility for failures:

Trying to pump confidence into every guy on the team... Will we continue to work on the relationship? Absolutely. (This time of year) it will be about pumping up your tires, making you feel like you can run through that wall.

A coaching environment perceived to empower athletes with choices and decision making (i.e., autonomy support), which conveys trust in their abilities whilst utilizing non-controlling feedback (i.e., competence support), and that takes and respects their perspective (i.e., relatedness support) would correspond to satisfaction of each of the three needs” (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012, p. 57):

One of the ways is I want to address that in games and let things go, letting them play more (as I’m trying to do in practice). Not stopping and screaming as much, obviously still coaching but letting them problem solve. That is part of our job as well, empower our leaders to lead. I felt good about that. Caring, I can be hard to play for at times. One thing I need to improve on is letting go of control.

Within the caring dimension, becoming personally invested in an athlete’s success is important. 1-on-1 meetings with student-athlete’s in order to get a better understanding of what players personal goals are and to ensure as a coach you are doing everything to help the student-athlete move...
in that direction is key. Being flexible and accommodating at times may be required from a coach when dealing with the numerous everyday lives of busy young student-athletes:

Being more mindful of (getting personal) modifying my behavior a little more. For example, sticking around a little longer after practice, asking questions like, “how is school, how are you, how are your courses, how are your folks doing, how do you like this experience, what can we change, what should we change? Doing that thinking of ways in which I can be able to closer to them. Maybe, get a little more personal as opposed to its another year, another group, and you’re just going through the process”. I have been doing kind of more of that, I little more personal than the coach.

In today’s coaching environment with student-athletes its becoming more of a common practice for coaches to made available to their athletes an hour before practice and remain behind an hour following practice: I try and make an effort to be more attentive and not being run off the court and out of the building as soon as practice has ended... As a staff we have definitely continued to make that a big focus, to find time to have real interactions with all the players as much as possible.

Part of developing the athlete holistically entails developing the core of who they are as human beings aside from just athletes. Life gets way too complicated and if we as coaches have personas that apply in different contexts, that’s can be a dangerous place to live. It’s important to accept your own frailties as a human being, be real, be authentic with your player’s and at times show your athletes that you have it all figured out. It all ties back to knowing yourself because one of the biggest things in this work is you have to stay within your personality. It’s important to show who you are, and be interested in who they are (Friesen & Orlick, 2010).

Hill (2001) provided a variety of philosophical perspectives related to basic components of a humanistic (person-centered) model to include: establishing a client-practitioner relationship, genuineness, nonjudgmental, caring, empathy, and particular attention to the human experience. Jowett and Cockerill (2003) suggested that coach-athlete relationships should be genuine and facilitating in going beyond teaching and instruction skills:

I have one-on-one, sometimes it’s two-on-one, three-on-one, and sometimes we’re sitting together at dinner. Sometimes I tell them stories about my own shenanigans when I was younger. I will tell them from a volleyball perspective, but again, you have certain affinities for certain guys that share characteristics that you can identify with more than say, other guys on the team.

I try to show them what I’m like. Some of them find that intimidating, because I’m a competitive person. Am I responsive? Totally I’m interested in them as people too, and I’m interested in how they’re going to turn it out.

As a leader you’ve got to stay within your personality, leaders are urged to be authentic, real, and true to themselves in order to be a good leader that delivers results (Nygberg & Sveningsson, 2014).

I spent some time with the national team and coach. You try to emulate some things but some of that stuff is just not your personality, that’s their personality, not yours...I’m not like all of a sudden going to be super chilled out in practice I guess, but just maintaining and be consistent in my behavior, not being high or too low.

10 COMMUNICATION:

Athletes who feel more compatible also feel more supported by their coach and evaluate his/her communication ability more favorably (Kenow & Williams, 1999). If the athletes’ goals, personality, and beliefs are consistent with those of their coach, the interaction of the individuals will likely be satisfactory to both parties producing a positive interpersonal atmosphere (Kenow & Williams, 1999). Communication between coaches and athletes has great potential for sport to be an important socializing strength (Turman, 2006). A coach’s communication style can have an affective influence and can mold the experience and success or failure of the team and/or athlete(s) (Turman; Turman & Schrodt, 2004). The communication that develops between coach and athlete influences characteristics of the sport experience; from athlete preparation, to how well they perform, to how they make sense of their successes and failures (Kassing & Anderson, 2014). If feelings towards communication are felt inadequate within the athlete towards the coach, this could affect unity of purpose, role acceptance, athlete’s perception of coach, and ongoing communication about the efficiency of team functioning (Yukelson & Rose, 2014).

Effective coaches are known to develop an open, caring, honest, and respectful relationships within the dyad of their respective athletes (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012); encompassing a common practice of being blunt and straight up with his/her athlete(s), and at the same time truly caring for the athlete (Wertner, 2009):

I am going to be honest and open with them... I made a promise to myself that my players would know where they stand with me and I wouldn’t play any head games with them. I wouldn’t tell them stuff that wasn’t true just to get them to come or to keep them happy”... Just because he’s a really good guy, I won’t be telling the kid, I’m sure you’re going to get lots of court time, when I know that’s not going to happen anytime soon.

Successful coaches develop open, honest and respectful relationships with athletes, without honesty and trust; constructive relationships with athletes can’t exist (Bennie & O’Connor, 2012):

I’ve been pretty straight with a couple of guys this year because I really felt that they needed to hear the truth. I thought they were hiding behind some excuses relative to their play...I said to one, you’ve got to stop riding that horse, you got to step up and do what you can do, what you are capable of, and stop hiding behind excuses about why you didn’t perform well.

I try to listen, sometimes I do find myself inside thinking, man, enough already, let me give it to you straight. So I give it to them straight... Then, asking them, can you live with
this? Are you going to be happy with this? Is this going to work for you? As opposed to just doing it in my mind, but not necessarily telling every guy. This year, I did it with every guy. It made a difference. It made a difference when this season went on.

I think sometimes that I can be my own worst enemy with enabling players and try to make every meeting a feel good meeting, because that only lasts until the next practice and the next game. So I’ve tried to be zoned in on being more honest, truth over harmony, try to say the hard truth because that’s better in the long run.

As a coach, don’t underestimate the importance of consistency, its not easy being consistent (don’t start behavior patterns that you can’t maintain), and doing something on an everyday basis, when results can’t always be seen immediate isn’t something that appeals to everyone, but successful coaches get it:

(The relationship) has got to be continuous... Trying to be more balanced in that area is one thing that I’ve certainly at least tried to pay some attention to with varying degrees of success obviously because we’re different people. I have tried to know the athletes a little more... Expanding that time with your bottom group who you may not spend as much time with in comparison to your top group.

I’m not like all of a sudden I’m going to be super chilled out at practice, but just maintaining and being consistent in my behavior, not being too high or too low. Trying to be more balanced and consistent is one thing that I’ve certainly at least tried to pay some attention to with varying degrees of success obviously because we’re different people. I have tried to know the athletes a little more to help this.

As a younger, one of the first lessons learned when joining a team sport is the importance of teamwork and being a good teammate. The understood thought is no one is bigger than the team, no matter how good or bad you are you must respect this unwritten foundational code. Playing together, committing, and dedicating oneself in pursuit of a common goal over the course of a season is known to develop various relationships amongst players (Gaffney, 2015).

Every single player on this team has an equal voice and part of it is the relationship with each other... Guys fit together, they like each other... They train together, they compete against each other, they support each other... Not all the time, but they hang out with each other.

That whole experience of being together, to me is what this is all about. The winning part is the icing on the cake. If the process is not good, then I don’t think even if you win, it’s not as rewarding. It’s not as satisfying... Definitely the interpersonal relationship side of this off the court has been a big one.

But for guys, they’ll look back and they’ll keep those friendships forever. It’s not because we won that one point or that one match, it’s because they went through that struggle for a year and that to me, is way more valuable than beating one team. Is it rewarding and satisfying? Totally. It’s great.

Generally speaking, at a particular level of sport, coaches have a comparable level of expertise. What sets great coaches apart is their emotional intelligence (EQ). In his book, Goleman (1996) cited emotional intelligence as “being able to rein in emotional impulse; to read another’s innermost feelings; to handle relationships smoothly (p. xiii).” Using Aristotle’s quote, “to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way.” Goleman understood the importance of developing an awareness and ability to control our emotions in developing and maintaining positive relationships. Having an extensive understanding of the various nuances of a particular sport is critical, but it is important that one is able to regulate his/her own emotions (and subsequent behavior), as well as the athlete’s themselves. It is commonly accepted that playing sport can produce strong emotional responses, for a coach and his/her athlete’s; establishing productive, empathetic, and positive relationships with athletes is an essential element to sporting success (Wood, 2014). “I try to be pretty transparent with guys. As they get to know me and am challenging them, they’re going to sour a little bit because it’s like anything. You have got to get worse to get better.”

I don’t feel threatened because an athlete says, hey, why are we doing this? What about doing that? Then, we have a discussion. If they can make a compelling argument, then I change. If I don’t think the argument is compelling because of the set of guys, I’ll tell them but I also tell them why... I encourage my guys that if they’ve got a problem, come see me, or come with a solution. Don’t just come with a problem. Come with a suggestion.

Emotion can be understood as a feeling of state, categorized by our evaluation of a stimulus, by changes in bodily sensations, and by displays of expressive gestures (Parkinson, Fischer, & Manstead, 2005). Its normal when a person’s relationship with another person changes, so do their emotions toward that person (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). “The one thing that’s helped, was developing a relationship faster with guys that felt valued and felt they had something to offer to the team and to me and weren’t afraid to have that discussion.”

What I’ve tried to change in my communication with the players is to not make it emotional. And to try to make it more about, OK lets watch video, these are the stats, to make it more like analytics and there’s real evidence harvested.

I think all of our moods can affect each other’s moods, they can also negatively or positively affect your relationships. I try to be stable as the leader of the program which I’m not to be after now, but that takes effort.

With student-athletes participating on post-secondary teams for the duration of a season, conflict is inevitable, and will arise at some point within the team environment. One of several key models in literature can serve as a lens towards a useful analytic tool for understanding and resolving conflict. One particular framework that can help analyze and address conflicts is the circle of conflict, which classifies disputes into six categories: interests, structure, data; values, relationships, and externals or moods (Furlong, 2005).

How a coach can handle conflict could be the difference between running a successful team and getting run down
by bad blood. The most successful methods for resolving conflict are discussion and open communication; avoidance will not resolve the conflict, at best; it will only delay conflict (Verma, 1998):

Sometimes I get a player that says why are we doing this? What about doing that? Then, we have a discussion. If they can make a compelling argument, then I change. If I don’t think the argument is compelling because of the set of guys, I’ll tell them but I also tell them why… Everybody’s an individual in how I deal with them and sometimes I need to find a better way to communicate.

I would get on her about talking back, it would just be this constant back and forth. We were both having these outbursts but everything is now on the table… I was becoming increasingly frustrated and then it just amps up and nothing comes of it. We agreed that we need to talk more regularly and not let it get to that point. I keep those lines up and agree to disagree sometimes, but understand what my role is, understand what her role is, and just trying to get towards an achieved goal… She agreed to try to be more open and come talk to us more, and I agreed to do the same and try to be more understanding.

“A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are” (Coaching Inspiration, n.d.).” One of the consequences of the demands of high-level competition such as post-secondary team sport can be the over-identification with the athlete role and/or lack of role consideration (Miller & Kerr, 2002). Athletic identity has been defined as “the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role” (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993, p. 237). Strong identification with the athlete role can have functional benefits because it is related to commitment in training and focus on sport goals (Horton & Mack, 2000):

The one thing that I do, is that there is no, rookie do this, rookie do that (on this team)… It’s a really good chemistry and it’s a really good group of guys. I think that share a similar bond, I think they know what their role is on the team, how they contribute.

Early in the season, the athlete’s roles have not truly been defined. They haven’t been tested, we haven’t been tested as a team, and people may change. May not be playing as much as they think they should be, that kind of thinking.

I have the philosophy that it’s important to have the separation and not be too close to the players, because you have to make hard decisions about them every day. Now what I’ve tried to change in my communication with the players is to not make it emotional. And to try to make it more objective, lets watch video, these are the stats, to make it more like analytics and there’s real evidence harvesting… I remember when I was playing, as a captain, I would try and make the players at the end of the bench feel included. As a coach, I don’t think I am doing a good job of that as a coach right now. Perhaps its because I am prioritizing and I have other tings on my plate. I could do a better job of making those players feel like they are more of a part of the process. I have to make them feel included; I don’t think I did that.

It’s important that coaches encompass within their profession, specific psychological attributes and skills, such as the ability to listen and communicate with his/her athletes (Weissensteiner, 2015). “It is critical that the development and refinement of a coach’s interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and ability to effectively interpret, understand and respond to the athlete’s perspective is prioritized in the professional development of all coaches at all levels of the athlete pathway” (Weissensteiner, 2015, p. 1):

We have social activities that are sort of more structured, where we can have fun and a good time. I do have conversations with player… Do I listen? I try to listen when I think what they’re saying makes sense.

I have one-on-one, sometimes it’s two-on-one, three-on-one, and sometimes we’re sitting together at dinner. Sometimes I tell them stories about my own shenanigans when I was younger I try to be pretty transparent with guys.

With everybody I am now trying to not be critical in front of the whole group in kinda of a show me kind of way. Such behaviors like pulling people aside, not being as demonstrative to players on a stage like setting.

11 RECRUITMENT:

The recruiting process begins with a two-way exchange between coaches and prospective student-athletes; from there it can filter between other staff members, administrations, current players, family and friends. The key is recruiting student-athlete’s who have the desire and mindset of wanting to be good, as opposed to choosing an institution because the reputation of the program is good, or individually, they have been socialized and reinforced to believe they are the best without having to work at developing their game (Yukelson & Rose, 2014). It starts with recruiting talented athletes that are not always recruiting the best athletes or players available; rather looking for ‘coachable’ and reliable people first, with great athletic potential coming second (Vallee & Bloom, 2005). “They need to be passionate about their pursuit of excellence and committed to the core values and operating procedures that govern the team. From a team perspective, there needs to be strong effective leadership from within, role understanding and synergistic team functioning, individual and collective accountability, and positive team energy” (Yukelson & Rose, 2014, p. 55).

Once groundwork is developed, whether it be a solid foundation of staff and/or coach members, program reputation, or simply a winning record, coaches can recruit and enroll student-athletes that are the best fit for their sport program (Huffman, 2011). Coaches “recruit student-athletes via a relationship-oriented environment to continue to build the desired brand and add to the value of the sport program. For example, coaches can emphasize best fit when pitching a strategic combination of the academic, athletic, and/or personal attributes that are deemed as important extensions to the program, athletic department, and university brands. To be effective, collegiate administrators and coaches must
be aware of the college-choice factors of student-athletes and build relationships with recruits in order to achieve a win-win-win scenario involving the university, coach, and student-athlete" (Huffman, 2011, p. 15).

You know, I got a lot of emails right after the conference finals. Most of them, I will ignore. I’ve always thought there’s two ways to recruit. One way is that you just recruit the best guys and then you figure it out. The second way is to have a vision for your team and you go get guys that you seek who can play those roles to make that vision a reality.

I’ve always recruited based on the second one. I recruit based on the vision I have for the style we want to play. I have a picture of how I want our team to function with on and off the court. When I go after guys, or if they send me an email, I talk to them. I talk to their coaches, I talk to their teachers, I watch their video, I try to get a sense of what kind of person they are, see if they are smart and have grades, and are they going to fit within our style. Then, I’ll make a decision on those guys. Will I pass on some guys? Absolutely

Even when we bring our recruits in, like my expectations that they’ll be treated with respect. If they’re just trying out for the team at the start of the season or attending training sessions, and I’m not really sure about them. They will still be made to feel as part of the family...with recruitment, I think it’s important for your current players to understand the recruitment piece as well. With regards to athlete-athlete when a new person comes to the program for a visit etc.

Perhaps the greatest college sport recruiter in the history of amateur sport, John Calipari of Kentucky basketball, preaches that it’s all about the players. As a coach, it can’t be about you. The players, “they got to know we’re about them”... “You have to move from self-serving to serving”; you have to be on the athlete’s side right from the initial recruitment phase, understanding that kids are wanting honesty, wanting to get pushed, wanting to be developed. Calipari expresses to the athletes during the recruit phase, that it’s going to be the hardest place they’re going to come because of them learning how to sacrifice as an individual (Peter, 2015):

As a head coach, I think that I have to be responsible for the program, because if the program doesn’t function correctly, players won’t come. If the program isn’t perceived as being a quality program that you’re going to come to and feel supported in and that you’ll learn, players won’t come. My relationship with the players is an interesting one because this is my first group of kids I have recruited. So I feel different about that. I feel I have more ownership, and you know, these days when you recruit kids, you have lots of conversations on the phone, in person, with their families etc. I feel more responsibility that they enjoy their experience, and we are living up to our side of things.

So it’s interesting because overall I feel I have a pretty good relationship with the returning players, but I didn’t recruit them. But what I’ve made an effort to do and that I don’t know if I have been successful is perhaps mending some relationships with players where there was maybe no relationship or not a very good relationship.

12 TRUST:

Trust in some sense of the word, is implicated in most of our sporting relationships, such as competitors, team, coaches, captains, leaders, referees etc. (Jones, 2001). Trust is an integral part of teamwork because team tasks require a high level of interdependence between its members and arises from repeated exchanges between different parties (Mach, Dolan, & Tzafir, 2010). This mutual dependence may generate synergy in the form of cooperation and interaction among team members (Fiore, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Team environments that encourage clarity, reliability, concern for others, and openness, and in which there is a relatively high degree of harmony and cohesion among the players and coaches, have the potential to improve their performance. In contrast, environments in which players do not trust each other, the coach, or top management will likely have poorer results (Mach, Dolan, & Tzafir, 2010).

Trust is freeing. It allows the athlete to focus on performing at his/her best and not on the possible reaction of the coach, allowing the athlete to focus on his/her performance and able to compete fearlessly. Lack of trust leads to hesitation, which leads to poor performance (Brown, 1998):

“It’s that balance between do I trust that athlete enough to go into this situation (on the court)? Previously I might have said, no, he’s not ready. This year I’ve said, you know what? I’m going to do it and if it’s not successful, I’ll bring him out (of the game). We’ll work on things from there.

I’m learning to trust them more in terms of their play...We use trust as an on-court thing... This year I’m like, let’s see where you are (in development). Whereas I would say in the past, you’re working hard, keep it going, I wouldn’t put them in. Thinking I will put them in maybe after Christmas, maybe next year. I think that (on-court) trust piece has been really big for us... Showing my trust in them, by subbing them in, in game situations.

Athletes develop trust in their coach(s) by the level of technical knowledge, the ability of that coach to teach and pass on that knowledge, and the coach’s philosophy and coaching style. Coaches that are honest, fair, came prepared everyday and could really teach it in a way that could make us get better. When players see their coach demonstrate good temperament, judgment, preparedness, motivating qualities, a positive coaching style, honest and fair, athletes tend to respond. Treatment of athletes by being fair is important, it’s not about treating everyone equally (Perdew, n.d.). When a coach’s style promotes respect, the athlete(s) is generally willing to trust them (Brown, 1998). (Perdew, M. n.d.):

I recognized that if I have 16 guys, I’m going to have 16 different relationships. Some are going to be really tight. Others are going to be not so tight. What I tried to do in this last semester is just infuse a bit more trust in there, by demonstrating that I trust them..."

“From my research and what I know, what it shown is that you can never breach that trust with the athlete. If you breach that trust, then you end up losing a respectable athlete.” Verbal communication is thought to produce and

sustain relationships (Duck, 1994). Communication between the coach and the athlete encourages shared experiences and consequently a co-oriented view develops. Co-orientation is operationalized through the means of communication and communication is thought to be the building block of all relationships (Jowett, 2003).

It goes back to the trust thing, and your players start thinking you have more trust in them. Or if you’re on them lots, they don’t feel that way. That’s a big part of that communication piece. You know, if you develop trust, then you can probably be harder on them and challenge them a little more.

Within this study, rooted in qualitative research, from an epistemology constructivist worldview, focused on interviews, feedback, and behavior from both coach and athlete(s). The qualitative process occurred alongside coach application and intervention, as well as student-athlete feedback and evaluation regarding their respective relationship with the coach. Creswell (2009) explains that when using qualitative research “the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of the participant” (p. 16).

Our aim is to enrich validity and provide further insight and underpinning into the reciprocating coach-athlete relationship model (R-CARM). Derived from earlier research, the binding force: a practical model for building and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship in Canadian intercollegiate team sport. Simply, this was a model that demonstrated the reciprocating content within the development, maintenance, and repair of the coach-athlete relationship. The original discovered themes, dimensions, and outcomes of the coach-athlete relationship were done via a phenomenological process. The purpose of this study is to continue to further a more complete understanding and build and provide a coach with a model to further enhance and educate his/her social-psychological relationship.

Overall, the model has been received in a positive light by the coaches, “I think the tool has helped and enabled me to just be more mindful of this (relationship)”. “I think there’s been an evolution of my relationship with each guy on the team. Its interesting because I have been attentive of this project, which probably has caused me to focus a little more time on some guys.”

What the tool has kind of done is help me try to figure out how I can help the players to work hard and feel good about themselves. Feel good about the process of working hard and then to reward them with the opportunity to compete on the floor.

The modern coach of today is an expert at production, organizing, and getting the best out of the individual players and/or team. He or she teaches the physical, technical, tactical components of the sport; and of course, developing and maintaining coach-athlete relationships (Beswick, 2010). One of the most important roles of a coach is to use sport as a microcosm of what happens in the real world to help young people differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, learn harmonious behavior for resolving conflicts, while thriving to achieve personal and team goals. By paying more attention to the relationship aspect of sport, coaches will boost an athlete’s aptitude, confidence, connection, and character (Cote & Gilbert, 2009). “To me, this whole experience is preparing the athletes for the next stage of their life, the next phase.”

In accordance with Beswick (2010), coaches begin their career fully focused on production and the end result of winning. It is true however, that most coaches end their careers absorbed in the power of relationships and attitude, both being essential to peak performance.

Part of it is the relationship with each other. Part of it is as you win, the more you win, the more confidence you get, and more you want to win. I think that because I’ve been trying to focus a little bit more on that relationship side of things, some guys have a little more confidence in themselves.

Beswick (2010) suggests that it is important that coaches build positive relationships within their respective teams. Suggesting, where the relationships act as the bond that locks the players into the cause and fortifies them together as a tight group. A positive relationship creates meaning for the individual, as well, an environment where players feel their feelings are being attended to. A coach adept in generating an atmosphere of resonance is positive, caring, approachable, a good listener, tuned into emotions, shows genuine interest, optimistic, humorous, and secure in himself or herself.

I’ve been more cognizant of modifying my behavior a little more, as in sticking around a little longer after practice, checking in, conversing, asking questions, like how is school? How are you? How are your courses? How are your folks doing? ...I hadn’t really done that that as much before. To me, practice is an hour before and an hour after practice; I have been doing kind of more of that, I little more personal, I think it makes it more enjoyable for the athletes.

The mind-set of the players is largely determined by the personalities and actions of the coach and the actual coaching environment (Beswick, 2010). “It is still very much a peer relationship within the team, but I’m seen as the head of the clan if you will, so I want to have a relationship with the guys.” By being an emotionally intelligent coach, and being in tune with yourself and with the players, can assist in creating a positive emotional climate, that can potentially draw out the best the players can offer (Beswick, 2010).

Focusing on the relationship is not something different, but without a doubt it has increased. I am interested in them as people, and I’m interested in how they’re going to turn it out. What I would like, is for them to look back on this as they get older and say, you know what, that was awesome as an experience.

My job is to get them to learn how to build that (confidence), how to feel that when it’s coming and how to help a guy who’s lagging a little bit. Bring him on. This process, I think, in the coach-athlete relationship is helpful because it makes you more aware of what things you can do that will pay dividends in February (playoffs).

Coaches need to be aware that communicating sympathetically, engaging players, and knowing that when team
through liking, respecting, trusting, and appreciating one ship members' affective closeness as these are manifested as follows. Interpersonal feelings are reflected in relation-feelings, thoughts, and behaviors have been operationalized as commitment, and behaviors in terms of complementarity; the +1 is termed co-orientation. These four interpersonal constructs linked in between both the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2009).

The constructs (3+1C's) that comprise the CART–Q are closeness, commitment, complementarity; the +1 is termed co-orientation. These four interpersonal constructs linked in an interrelated way provide reasonable descriptions relative to the research setting. The 11-item coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CAR T-Q) was considered an extension of the existing leadership models in that it offers a comprehensive analysis of what goes on between the coach and the athlete” (Jowett, 2009, p. 164). As well, regarded as the 3+1C's conceptual model, “the model has been viewed as an extension of the nature of the coach–athlete relationship, measuring affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of the dyad (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). This framework has received consistent research over the past decade (i.e., Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008). “The coach–athlete relationship is currently defined as a situation shaped by coaches’ and athletes’ interconnected feelings, thoughts, and behaviors” (Jowett, 2009, p. 164). As well, regarded as the 3+1C's conceptual model, “the model has been viewed as an extension of the existing leadership models surrounding the coach, in that it offers an inclusive breakdown of what goes on between both the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2009). The constructs (3+1C's) that comprise the CART–Q are closeness, commitment, complementarity; the +1 is termed co-orientation. These four interpersonal constructs linked in an interrelated way provide reasonable descriptions relative to the research setting. The 11-item coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (figure 5; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) has been considered an extension of the existing leadership models surrounding the coach, in that it offers an inclusive breakdown of what goes on between both the coach and the athlete (Jowett, 2009).
Maybe if there was a box under each statement so they can expand. For example, I don’t really understand how a kid can be undecided (on a statement), and what they interpret as being committed etc. Responses would be different if it was my 5th year captain or a 3rd year that sits on the bench. It could probably use a little more clarity and is most likely is affected by mood etc. The question isn’t like, how’s your jump shot?

Those relationships with sixteen guys are a complicated thing. Some guys I’m never going to be close to. They’re going to be gone the next year. They might be in my bandwidth, so I’m not going to do some heavy relationship building with a player who are in my bandwidth. I’m going to focus on those guys that are outside my bandwidth. Try to bring them into the bandwidth.

My coach trusts me in a personal sense but on the court I am still undecided if this is true.

I’m learning to trust them more in terms of their play...We use trust as an on-court thing... This year I’m like, let’s see where you are (with development). Whereas I would say in the past, you’re working real hard, keep it going, and wouldn’t put them in. Thinking I will put them in maybe after Christmas, maybe next year. I think that (on-court) trust piece has been really big for us”... Showing my trust in them, by subbing them in, in game situations.

It’s been a fun season. It’s because of the coach/athlete relationship. Is the tool valuable? Totally. Can you score it? I don’t know. Can you quantify it? I don’t think so. It does (measure) to a degree, its difficult to a sense of a relationship between a player and coach through scales.

The off-court relationship is extremely important, but may not be alluded to in this scale. Our coach is great at this skill and this is a huge reason for our success... I think the scale does not measure his/her efforts in trying to keep up to date with the player’s life outside of the basketball and sees how we are on an emotional standpoint.

Parts of the survey, I am guessing, is not clear to them, the merits of the survey, it’s just a word that they may interpret differently. For the responsive question, if you are NOT doing well, he will be responsive. If he is pleased with you then he probably won’t say much. There is not a question that focuses directly on communication.

Of note, it would interesting to view whether or not all statements within the CART-Q have equal weight amongst athletes or equal weight amongst each other within the direct perspective statements. Potentially this could change from team to team, time of year, practice-to-practice, and athlete to athlete. For example, is it really an issue within the coach-athlete relationship that the coach is at ease during certain times of the season, days of the week etc.? Is it to be expected? Is it acceptable during certain in-season or out of season instances?

Does such a statement ‘my coach is close to me’ was confusing for some players because many have differing views on what closeness between an athlete and coach should be. A couple players had history with the coach and viewed their relationship as close, and others only had known coach for a few months but still viewed their relationship as close. Is closeness off the court more important than on? Arguably, this finding could add further credibility to the proposition that personality trait is a crucial antecedent of interpersonal relationships, as suggested by Yang and Jowett (2010). It may be required to describe explanations on what each statement encompasses in a closer coach-athlete relationship or at least provide a comment section as one coach suggested.

“I think there should be an opportunity to make a comment under each of the phrases. I think this is subject to interpretation with some of these statements.” “Maybe have an option to add a comment (to the 3+1C’s statement).”

Perhaps (the CART-Q) is not captured in its entirety throughout this study, where the athlete’s interpersonal perspective was the only assessment considered through the 3C’s evaluate tool. This direct perspective refers to the athlete’s self-perceptions about how they act, think, and feel in regards to their relationship with coach (Jowett, 2009). While the individual perspectives are important in themselves, the combination of the different perspectives of both athlete and coach would allow the examination of the 3C’s to increase the level of understanding and similarity between the athlete and coach (co-orientation) (Jowett & Felton, 2014).

Several researchers have worked towards conceptualizing the coach-athlete relationship, such as, Jowett, 2005; LaVoi, 2007; Poczwarski, Barott, Henschen, 2002. Although Jowett and colleagues (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Felton, 2014) are clearly leaders embodying the coach-athlete relationship within sporting literature in recent memory; a researcher would be hard pressed to reveal evidence of the questionnaire being recognized, accepted, implemented, or disseminated in amateur or professional team sports, coaches, and competition environments.

14 MOOD:

It’s evident that coaches assume a role of leadership within team sport; the diversity of leadership is extensive and remains a very well researched and discussed topic in organizational science (George, 2000). “While existing studies detail what leaders are like, what they do, and how they make decisions, the effects of leaders’ feelings or their moods and emotions and, more generally, the role of emotions in the leadership process, are often not explicitly considered in the leadership literature” (George, 2000, p. 1028). Arguably this could be the position from a student-athlete’s perspective as well, where mood during that particular moment in time during the evaluation process affects some of the responses and evaluation.

“Mood differs from emotion in that emotions are made in response to an event or situation that is appraised to be
personally significant. Mood is less intense and more pro-
longed than emotions and relate to the individual and not the event. Personality traits such as confidence and self-
estem are also not classified as mood but can affect it” (Pitts, 2013, para. 1). One coach suggested, “athletes mood of the week could be a factor in the evaluation, maybe the guy had a bad match, maybe he had a bad week of training.”

You could have had a bad week with the kid personally, and then all of the sudden you hit him with this (evaluation). But, you have a great relationship overall. There are some things that this (CART-Q) doesn’t measure.”

I am sure a 5th year’s mood wouldn’t show up as affected as much in comparison to a 1st year’s. There would be more substance to the vet’s relationship. A 5th year who is there for a while would know that there will be some ups and downs but knowing we are still pretty solid. But with 1st years it’s taking more time to build.

Our relationship is going to be fundamentally different because the level of which we can communicate, is different. It’s still rooted in respect. What you’re going to have if you’re trying to score relationships, you’re probably going to have a halo effect with a first-year kid who’s come to the program because of me, but doesn’t really know me, but thinks I’m fantastic.

“Mood is relevant to sport because it may be possible to use mood as a predictor for athletic performance. If mood can be found to predict performance it may be possible to manipulate an athlete’s mood to improve performance” (Pitts, 2013, para. 2).

I think mood exists from a coaching perspective. As a coach I hope that my mood isn’t wavering. But when you lose badly on Friday night for example, and then lose again on following night, it’s can get stormy, really gloomy in my attitude; moments where my mood has even been altered towards the players.

15 RESPECT:
Research has generally shown that effective communication requires the development of trust and respect between coach and athlete (Yukelson, 1997). Philippe and Seiler (2006) suggest that essential coach-athlete requirements refer to feelings that have bearing on the development and effectiveness of the dyad and become prominent when two people work together for a period of time; respect is viewed as being an essential requirement in forming a good relationship (Philippe & Seiler, 2006).

If the feeling of respect is under distress, within the relationship there is typically a sense of distance and animosity between the coach and the athlete, and typically, a lack of overall respect is at the heart of any problem (Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005).

Sometimes, individuals do not feel valued, appreciated, accepted, and/or respected. This can subsequently lead to problems in performance and feelings of withdrawal or resentment (Yukelson, 1997):

Respect is really important in the dynamic of your team. That is at the core of everything we do on this team. It’s not founded on trust; it’s founded on respect... I do think that the respect between each other is really important for your team to be a functional property... That is, there’s no difference on our team between a first year and a fifth year... I believe I still have really good relationships with every single I have on the team. It’s a relationship that’s built on respect and I try to respect them.

Within team sport, partnership and teamwork are the absolute standard, with work conducted in an atmosphere of trust and respect (Yukelson, 1997):

I show them respect right from the get go, with what I’ve accomplished and the teams and players that have come before them that have gone onto bigger and better things including the national team...If I want to be respected I have to give them respect...I think there is a natural respect that comes with that.

I believe, I still have really good relationships with every single guy I have on the team. It’s a relationship that’s built on respect and I try to respect them... Our whole program is founded on respect...that to me is a really core value. That’s respect for myself, the coaches, and respect for each other whether you are the best player on the team or the worst player on the team. Without you (the player), we aren’t as strong. We need to respect each other.

Regular team meetings, individual player contact to share information and discuss what is going on lends depth to the relationship, and builds support, mutual respect, and mutual understanding (Yukelson, 1997):

That is what respect is. That’s what I’m talking about when I say respect. The relationship you have with the athlete and with the team and to be mindful of that, means that I would take Bob aside and I would have the discussion with Bob one-on-one, not in front of his peers.

I would say, Bob that was a really poor match. Here’s what we need to work on next week. Here’s the stuff that I felt you were not up to par on this week. I wouldn’t do it in front of a group of people that are his friends and his peers. Why? Because I have too much respect for that kid...that’s part of the respect piece, even more than the trust piece. Athletes that feel comfortable in talking to their coach, or challenging their coach, in a respectful way, they’re going to be way more productive, in my mind.

16 HISTORY:
The second dimension disclosed and considered during post interview analysis was history and previous depth of the coach-athlete relationship. When considering the coach and the athlete, previous contact time and/or perhaps knowing one another can occur at an earlier moment or over a period of time. This is common within amateur sport, due to coaches coaching at various levels, running camps/clinics, club teams, and having family and friend connections to players etc. If this is the case, then potentially the coach-athlete relationship can be affected due to historical contact. This is important to consider when there are historical factors that underpin the relationship of the coaches and/or
athletes alike. Literature outlines various relationship stage models, and “there is not one stage model that best accounts for all relationships” (de Torres Eby & Allen, 2012, p. 11). Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) outline an example of a five-stage model; relationship model exhibited evolution and termination, consisted of (1) awareness, (2) exploration, (3) expansion, (4) commitment, and (5) dissolution. Dwyer et al. note that each phase represents a major transition in how the dyads view and interact with one another. Relationships reflect the sum of experiences and episodes that in the collective are used to evaluate the relationship in its entirety. Relationships are built upon the nature of individual episodes (de Torres Eby & Allen, 2012) and this is where the history of a relationship can matter, whereas repetitive episodes and sum of experiences can build the relationship.

Coaches and players supported the addition of a ‘history’ dimension the coach-athlete relationship. This was viewed as an important component to the existing model due to the significance of knowing the coach or athlete for a period of time.

With the older players, our relationship has been good, we have grown. I personally (as a coach) have changed a lot, from my first year till now. I have adopted more of a process rather than an outcome mindset. I believe the players that have observed this, recognize the change and that has helped our relationship.

Thus, it’s when evaluating the dyad it is significant to recognize the current and historical aspects underlying the communication exchange between coach and athlete. In so doing, it is maintained that the coach and athlete can foster improved interpersonal dynamics and the increased likelihood for personal and athletic growth (Schinke & Tabakman, 2001).

With some guys, it’s partially based on years with me (the relationship), but also partially based on chemistry, some guys are just more closed off...I still have more intimate relationships with some guys than others. My relationship with a fifth-year player is going to be way different than my relationship with a kid that I just recruited and I’ve only known since September...With these first year’s here, and these fourth year’s here, my relationship and my dialogue are completely different...The relationship is considerably different, and what I can talk to them about and how I can talk to them, is different.

My relationships aren’t going to be super close. It might be with a few kids that are fourth and fifth years because they’ve been around for so long, and we’ve had a beer and stuff. I know what they like, but if it’s a first-year kid just coming in, I’m not going to know who they are. I barely know them. I have five rookies this year who are right out of high school. Some of them I know because I coached them on the provincial team. This scale doesn’t measure that.

The statement, my coach is close to me. I think it’s probably fair to say you’re going to have a group that’s said yes (we’re close) and a group that says, I’m kind of (close). Then you have your third, fourth, and fifth year guys probably saying, yes (we’re close). You probably have second year guys saying, it’s getting there. The first-year guys are probably saying, no (we’re not close), with the exception of one or two who I might know (previously).

I’m talking about, if you’re scoring something, like if you’re going to score a relationship, then if you’re doing this, because you scored based on this, you’re getting opinion. You’re trying to numerically quantify the relationship. It’s very difficult to numerically quantify in an equal way a relationship that has the benefit of four years, as opposed to a relationship, which has three months. It’s like one’s an apple, one’s an orange but they’re both fruit. One is morphing from the orange into the apple, eventually.

Is it (the relationship) founded in communication, respect and all those things? Absolutely. Does the model (R-CARM) make me more mindful of that athlete and how I would treat that athlete and so on and so forth? Absolutely. But I don’t believe that the numerical score (CART-Q) will be that of over 16 players. It will be different.

When you look back at some of the comments by the players, perhaps the dimensions mean different things to a 5th year player. For example, a 5th year player would understand the culture piece better than a first-year guy. I think with the model, you may need to take it to varying levels of depth when taking into consideration a fifth year for example.

Importantly, the analysis of the qualitative information gathered, led to a design amendment to the R-CARM, incorporating a bandwidth component that places emphasis towards a behavioral model approach Figure 1 (see Appendix G). Coaches must continually expand and work towards mastering their craft. To continually enhance the coach-athlete relationship need to further develop their role as the leader and/or person in charge of the team. The concept of bandwidth feedback has been existent within the discipline of motor performance and skill acquisition. “Fundamental to the acquisition, improvement, and mastery of any skill (or ability) is feedback” (Chambers & Vickers, 2006, p. 185). Bandwidth feedback is related to athlete performance and is a method a coach can provide to his/her athletes when motor performance leaks outside of respectable skill standards as determined by the coach (Chambers & Vickers, 2006). If leakage occurs, within the dimensions of the coach-athlete relationship, the coach can employ the concept of bandwidth feedback-behavior. As supported in a coach interview:

Those relationships I have with 16 guys are a complicated thing. Some guys I’m never going to be close to. They could be gone the next year. They might almost be in my bandwidth, so I’m not going to do some heavy coaching, with a player who is in my bandwidth. I’m going to coach and spend time with those guys that are outside my bandwidth. Try to bring them into the bandwidth. That bandwidth can be a relationship bandwidth.

Bandwidth feedback when concerned with the social-psychology element of coaching could foster the maintenance, development, and repair of the coach-athlete relationship. Similar to bandwidth feedback in motor skill(s), this is a critical component towards utilizing methods that encourage long or short-term development within the
relationship. In accordance with Chambers and Vickers (2006), “bandwidth feedback and questioning methods may have the power to affect positive advances in performance, athlete-coach relationships, and overall development of athletes of all levels” (p. 194).

17 DISCUSSION:
Improving the Coach-Athlete Relationship:

The evidence that currently exists not only from this present piece of research, but previous coach-athlete literature, reveals that it’s transparently obvious the relationship between an athlete and their coach is often in need of improvement and continual growth and attention (Lorimer & Jowett, 2009). Rarely are we done working on relationships, it is an ongoing task for a coach to grow and or maintain coach-athlete relationships. This is critical due to the influence of the coach and survival of the athlete within an atmosphere that embraces enjoyment, involvement, development, performance, motivation, and attraction. Continuous steps need to be taken to consistently make this relationship as strong as possible. If researchers are able to find ways to improve this relationship between coaches and athletes, it is reasonable to assume that athletes will not only play longer, but enjoy them more and play them at a higher level (Blom, Watson II, & Spado, 2010).

One potential method to improve the coach-athlete relationship is through coaching education. Conroy, & Coatsworth (2006) stressed the importance of formal education and certification for coaches to increase the opportunity for children to experience positive outcomes in youth sports. Providing educational curriculum for sports coaches (various levels and ages) has shown to result in increases in positive behavioral outcomes such as increased confidence, self-esteem and social skills (Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Coatsworth & Conroy 2009). As suggested by Bennie and O’Connor (2012) the need for additional personal development of the coach, (requiring greater attention personal skills and people management) as opposed to the mere technical, tactical and physical training of their athletes is becoming more obvious within the profession. Since 1974, the national coaching certification program (NCCP) in Canada launched and has been delivering coach education in partnership with the government of Canada, provincial/ territorial governments, and national, provincial, territorial sport organizations, providing coaches at all levels to flourish and improve their craft. Coaching education programs are continually developing and refining themselves to continually make advancements within the profession; recently (April, 2014) the coaching association of Canada (CAC) and coaches of Canada (CoC) merged as one organization dedicating to supporting coaching excellence and meeting the needs of the Canadian coaching community.

There are various paths and education courses that are available tailoring to the needs of the coach. Basically, three types of coaches exist; community, competition, and instructor coach. The NCCP offers various levels of certification based on the individual’s coach goals and his/her levels of achievement. The advanced coaching diploma (ACD) is the apex of coaches’ education within the NCCP. The diploma consists of four core themes, coaching leadership, coaching effectiveness, performance planning, and training and competition readiness. Each theme requires coaches to complete a series of modules; coaches enrolled in the diploma program will work with a designated master and/or mentor coach who will support them in their completion of program requirements (Coaching Association of Canada, n.d.).

Interestingly, the coach-athlete relationship and its components of development, maintenance and repair, are for the majority, deficient in coach education. Possibly the most important component to develop as a coach (the relationship), this social-psychology piece is seriously lacking. Much of the education literature excludes teaching coaches about the socio-emotional (i.e., feelings of caring, support, and respect) and interpersonal aspects of the coach-athlete dyad. In understanding how to be effective in a dynamic environment, coaches need to know how to analyze and interpret individual player needs. Perhaps a more effective method for improving coach-athlete relationships would be to teach coaches how to identify and then address the relationship-oriented needs of their specific athletes (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). “The greatest merit in having a tool like this, is that identifying some big things and having it in front of coaches, so they are consistently mindful of the human side of coaching, it’s development of caring, respect and trust.”

One of the interviewed coaches said that “its really good to know these things. Obviously when they have to put their name on it they don’t feel that can be completely anonymous. I think this process (study) is good because the players are allowed to be anonymous, and therefore can be honest. It’s taken throughout the year, which is good. Its a catch-22 here...how do you do it in the season (on your own)? How can you get honesty (from the athletes) without making it anonymous? Even so, you could probably figure out who said what when dealing with a smaller sample”.

“Overall (R-CARM), it’s a tool that could be really helpful, but it’s only helpful if you read it and you understand what it’s trying to do and you make the time to really get into it.”

Prior to this year, I was prompted by somebody else to do some strategic planning within the program and it was supposed to cover different areas, one of them was team culture. To me that referred directly back to relationships with the team. There are so many balloons in the air with the relationship, and when you feel like what the heck is happening? To have something you can reflect back on is good, it has been useful to organize how I can make relationships with players work.

Paul Barron, a goalkeeper coach at for the professional football club, Newcastle United, is an advocate of relationship coaching and once described his philosophy as relationship coaching being about coaches connecting with their players. It’s about getting to the real pulse of the team and
releasing a powerful collective emotional energy. This very often is the edge that allows teams to survive the bad times and go on to remarkable achievements. “They forget what you say to them. They forget what you do with them. But they never forget how you made them feel” (Beswick, 2010, p. 197). Having the model present can be a great reminder for coaches as the season progresses. “It’s useful for me to look at just a few categories and focus on them. Like any tool you have to know how to use it. Probably more of a reminder at times, I do think it helps. It’s something that I think I would like more visible, not just in my desk. I think it helps to focus you and the program”… “Having something like this in front of you, to remind you of what the big things are in the coach-athlete relationship, is valuable.”

Amendments to Reciprocating Coach-Athlete Relationship Model (R-CARM):

Through the process of qualitative inquiry and following the procedures of collecting rich data from three separate coach interviews, player evaluations, and perspectives throughout a full season of play; greater insight into the coach-athlete dyad within a post-secondary team sport environment was provided. Analysis revealed, the coaches, without being prompted or enticed, conversed on the R-CARM content and themes, from there, relationships were determined between the developing themes of data. All dimensions of the original R-CARM remained to be supported, unchanged, and emerged from the data. These were the six higher-order dimensions, harmonious with previous findings in the aforementioned study; the binding force: a practical model for building and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship in Canadian intercollegiate team sport: (a) caring; (b) communication; (c) culture (d) recruitment; (e) trust. The results of the study were reported by reviewing each dimension in detail noting the degree of support from the coaches and providing additional text that revealed themes that were enclosed within each dimension. Table 4 (see Appendix D) provides a brief framework that illustrates the degree of support of the themes and dimensions amongst the coaches. One can only gain a deeper understanding of the findings by reviewing the text associated with each higher-order dimension and respected theme(s).

Progression of analysis, without being prompted or enticed, revealed the coaches conversed on the R-CARM’s content/themes: relationships were determined between the developing themes of data. However, upon the post interview qualitative analysis process, two additional emerging dimensions were exposed. Already present within the culture dimension, but existing as a supportive theme within the R-CARM; was organic (natural) respect. This finding has prompted further inspection into the addition of respect as a dimension in itself, and not just representing a theme within the R-CARM, but rather a more prominent presence as a dimension.

I do think the tool needs to have it (respect) as a core value…to me, respect is at the core of everything we do…I think it’s more than a component. It’s an integral piece similar to recruitment, caring, culture, and communication. Respect has to be in there.

Implication for Practice:

With respect to the coach and athlete, this study highlighted the importance of attention, time, elements, and work the coach-athlete relationship requires being functional. The literature embodying the coach-athlete relationships has made reference in which gaps between research and its actual impact upon coaches and athletes is still evident (Pozwardowski, 1997). Teaching technical skills and providing tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach’s duties, however maintaining the multifaceted and interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is central to the coaching profession (Lyle, 2002). Implications for coach practical use were a focal point within the present study; aimed to conduct research that has significant implications for both the coach and athlete(s). The findings of this study can be transferred into a real interpersonal sport setting (practice and competition) to help coaches and athletes develop, maintain, and potentially mend relationships in order to improve athletic performance. Featured, are several aspects that could theoretically be used by team sport coaches in an attempt to benefit both the coach and athlete while establishing and maintaining an effective relationship. In addition, within social psychology literature of sport, there is vacancy for a practical universal tool for coaches to make reference to, implement, and make use of while building affectively strong coach-athlete relationships.

Within a team dynamic the relationships can range in complexity and detail due to the number of athletes on the team. The model outlined within this study is intended to assist and act as a vehicle in the growth of the coach-athlete relationship, while providing a framework for the post-secondary coach to implement and reference within his/her student-athletes. One thing that is clear, each coach-athlete relationship is unique, and therefore, all dyads will require to be treated as its own separate entity. For coaches to develop an understanding of the dimensions and respective themes comprising the coach-athlete relationship, aiding the growth, maintenance, and repair of the relationship potentially is a promising end product.

Implication to Theory:

The findings of this study contribute to the body of evidence-based research that exist to examine and build upon the coach-athlete relationship. The conceptual framework outlined (R-CARM) exhibits enough promise to merit further investigation into coach’s development, maintenance, and continuation of the interpersonal coach-athlete relationship. The findings within this study support and provide tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach-athlete relationship requires being functional. The literature embodying the coach-athlete relationships has made reference in which gaps between research and its actual impact upon coaches and athletes is still evident (Pozwardowski, 1997). Teaching technical skills and providing tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach’s duties, however maintaining the multifaceted and interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is central to the coaching profession (Lyle, 2002). Implications for coach practical use were a focal point within the present study; aimed to conduct research that has significant implications for both the coach and athlete(s). The findings of this study can be transferred into a real interpersonal sport setting (practice and competition) to help coaches and athletes develop, maintain, and potentially mend relationships in order to improve athletic performance. Featured, are several aspects that could theoretically be used by team sport coaches in an attempt to benefit both the coach and athlete while establishing and maintaining an effective relationship. In addition, within social psychology literature of sport, there is vacancy for a practical universal tool for coaches to make reference to, implement, and make use of while building affectively strong coach-athlete relationships.

Within a team dynamic the relationships can range in complexity and detail due to the number of athletes on the team. The model outlined within this study is intended to assist and act as a vehicle in the growth of the coach-athlete relationship, while providing a framework for the post-secondary coach to implement and reference within his/her student-athletes. One thing that is clear, each coach-athlete relationship is unique, and therefore, all dyads will require to be treated as its own separate entity. For coaches to develop an understanding of the dimensions and respective themes comprising the coach-athlete relationship, aiding the growth, maintenance, and repair of the relationship potentially is a promising end product.

Implication for Practice:

With respect to the coach and athlete, this study highlighted the importance of attention, time, elements, and work the coach-athlete relationship requires being functional. The literature embodying the coach-athlete relationships has made reference in which gaps between research and its actual impact upon coaches and athletes is still evident (Pozwardowski, 1997). Teaching technical skills and providing tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach’s duties, however maintaining the multifaceted and interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is central to the coaching profession (Lyle, 2002). Implications for coach practical use were a focal point within the present study; aimed to conduct research that has significant implications for both the coach and athlete(s). The findings of this study can be transferred into a real interpersonal sport setting (practice and competition) to help coaches and athletes develop, maintain, and potentially mend relationships in order to improve athletic performance. Featured, are several aspects that could theoretically be used by team sport coaches in an attempt to benefit both the coach and athlete while establishing and maintaining an effective relationship. In addition, within social psychology literature of sport, there is vacancy for a practical universal tool for coaches to make reference to, implement, and make use of while building affectively strong coach-athlete relationships.

Within a team dynamic the relationships can range in complexity and detail due to the number of athletes on the team. The model outlined within this study is intended to assist and act as a vehicle in the growth of the coach-athlete relationship, while providing a framework for the post-secondary coach to implement and reference within his/her student-athletes. One thing that is clear, each coach-athlete relationship is unique, and therefore, all dyads will require to be treated as its own separate entity. For coaches to develop an understanding of the dimensions and respective themes comprising the coach-athlete relationship, aiding the growth, maintenance, and repair of the relationship potentially is a promising end product.

Implication to Theory:

The findings of this study contribute to the body of evidence-based research that exist to examine and build upon the coach-athlete relationship. The conceptual framework outlined (R-CARM) exhibits enough promise to merit further investigation into coach’s development, maintenance, and continuation of the interpersonal coach-athlete relationship. The findings within this study support and provide tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach-athlete relationship requires being functional. The literature embodying the coach-athlete relationships has made reference in which gaps between research and its actual impact upon coaches and athletes is still evident (Pozwardowski, 1997). Teaching technical skills and providing tactical knowledge remain an integral part of the coach’s duties, however maintaining the multifaceted and interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is central to the coaching profession (Lyle, 2002). Implications for coach practical use were a focal point within the present study; aimed to conduct research that has significant implications for both the coach and athlete(s). The findings of this study can be transferred into a real interpersonal sport setting (practice and competition) to help coaches and athletes develop, maintain, and potentially mend relationships in order to improve athletic performance. Featured, are several aspects that could theoretically be used by team sport coaches in an attempt to benefit both the coach and athlete while establishing and maintaining an effective relationship. In addition, within social psychology literature of sport, there is vacancy for a practical universal tool for coaches to make reference to, implement, and make use of while building affectively strong coach-athlete relationships.

Within a team dynamic the relationships can range in complexity and detail due to the number of athletes on the team. The model outlined within this study is intended to assist and act as a vehicle in the growth of the coach-athlete relationship, while providing a framework for the post-secondary coach to implement and reference within his/her student-athletes. One thing that is clear, each coach-athlete relationship is unique, and therefore, all dyads will require to be treated as its own separate entity. For coaches to develop an understanding of the dimensions and respective themes comprising the coach-athlete relationship, aiding the growth, maintenance, and repair of the relationship potentially is a promising end product.
Interestingly, Ayer (2015) noted, most of the existing literature that embodies the coach-athlete relationship originates from countries outside of Canada and North America. The most referenced, current, and perhaps influential is from the United Kingdom, the work of Jowett (Lorimer & Jowett, 2011; Jowett, 2005; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Chaundy; Rhind & Jowett, 2011). Amusingly, “the North American studies tend to focus on using previous perspectives (i.e., Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory, Social Exchange Theory) to explain the relationship, while the British studies (mainly Jowett) focus on developing new conceptual models (i.e., 3+1C’s)” (Ayer, 2015, p. 34).

Given the comprehensive range of empirical research on the coach-athlete relationship we will limit our implications of theory and literature to the most recent contemporary models involving the coach-athlete relationship. These models maintain the importance of focusing on the whole substance of the interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete.

Since the new millennium, research has emphasized and embraced an interpersonal approach towards the social relationships between coach and athlete (Jowett, 2007; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002). This current influx has brought meaningful influence and contribution upon the development of theory and methodology in furthering our understanding of coach-athlete relationships.

The innovation behind the R-CARM is that it provides us not only with concern for the behavioral perspective of the interpersonal dynamics, but also other aspects of the relationship. Poczwardowski and colleagues (Poczwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002; Poczwardowski, Barott, & Perego, 2002) identified three dimensions of coach-athlete interactions, interpersonal activity, interpersonal interactions, and the caring aspect of the relationship. The R-CARM provides support for this model by postulating affective and cognitive aspects of coach-athlete relationships from a practical dyadic tool perspective. By implementing the R-CARM on a regular basis a coach for example is able to concern him/herself about coach-athlete communication in terms of instructional or technical aspects, and social-psychological or affective aspects. For example, one of the R-CARM themes via the dimension of communication is ‘frankly speaking’ (honesty). Being mindful and providing honesty amongst athlete’s each and everyday can be a great advocate towards the further development of emotions, goal achievement, psychological needs satisfaction, and performance-related tasks.

Mageau and Valleraud’s (2003) motivational model outlines coach-athlete relationships from a motivational aspect in terms of how coaches’ behaviors may influence athletes’ motivation; within this model coach behavior is directed towards an autonomy-support style. Individuals “in a position of authority (i.e., the coach) takes the other’s (i.e., the athlete) perspective, acknowledges the other’s feelings, and provides the other with pertinent information and opportunities for choice, while minimizing the use of pressures and demands” (Black & Deci, 2000, p.742). The R-CARM supports this model within the dimensions of trust, caring, and communication. For example, the dimension of caring depicts the theme ‘release the beast’ (empowerment). Part of autonomy-supportive behavior provided by the coach is developing the athlete. Getting that athlete to feel powerful; they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause of the team; empower your players; providing the athletes with ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hand. Coaches should provide opportunity for the athlete’s getting to know him/her in order to assist them in feeling more comfortable within their own skin. “A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game” (Souza & Oslin, 2008, p. 24).

LaVoi (2004) proposed a conceptual model suggesting the coach-athlete relationship is developed psychologically by each person’s authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and ability to deal with conflict (ability). LaVoi’s conceptualization was based on the idea that interdependence, connection, and feeling close to, nurtures a more genuine caring relationship. Authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and the ability to deal with conflict are the foundation of each relationship. Authenticity refers to how genuinely true the athlete and coach express themselves in the relationship (LaVoi, 2004). Engagement within the coach-athlete relationship is measured by how committed and responsive the coach and the athlete are towards their dynamic relationship. Within the coach-athlete relationship, empowerment could ensue if both the coach and athlete inspire each other and have equal input within the dyad (LaVoi, 2004). Ability refers to the coach and the athlete’s capacity to deal with any conflict that might occur along the way with the relationship (LaVoi, 2007). Support for this conceptual model is exhibited within the R-CARM dimensions of trust, caring, and communication. One example is the theme ‘be real’ (authenticity), from the dimension of caring. It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” A coach should show his/her athlete’s sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing; demonstrate to his/her athletes that they are there to help them. “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.”

The conceptualization of the 3+1C’s model over the past decade entails the design of several psychometric scales (Jowett, 2009; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2003; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Rhind & Jowett, 2010) that empirically measures the validity and reliability of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation within coach-athlete relationships (i.e., 11-item coach-athlete; 29-item long version; 13-item Greek version; cross-cultural validity of CART-Q’s). Aforementioned, the 11-item CART-Q was used to evaluate the coach-athlete relationship to help guide the coach interviews and interventions of this study. When weaknesses or areas of improvement were identified from the
athlete CART-Q evaluation, dimensions and themes were applied from the R-CARM (previously mentioned). The R-CARM supported and provided a useful tool that could be functional to CART-Q results in order to aid in coach behavioral improvement surrounding the dyadic relationship (see CART-Q section).

18 FUTURE RESEARCH:
In order to continue advancement and gain more apprehension in effective detail how R-CARM development, maintenance, and mending the coach-athlete dyad more research is required. Drawing upon contributions made by a variety of coaching contexts; such as varying competitive levels of play, similar and assorted sport focus, gender, sport types, and a combination of formal and informal coach-athlete settings would be beneficial in understanding the coach-athlete relationship as a whole.

Curriculum development and educating emerging coaches about the coach-athlete relationship are vital to the impact it may have on performance. Effective coach-athlete relationships and understanding factors that make important contributions to success in both performance and personal development is fundamental for the management of athletes at various levels of sport (Rezania, & Gurney, 2014). To date, there is a non-existent all-encompassing disseminated framework that provides coaching reference to the development of the relationship dyad; a niche expressing how coaches develop the necessary methods to manage coach-athlete relationships is absent.

Generally, coach-athlete research indicates that relationship building and advancement in interpersonal sporting interaction is done through gaining knowledge via practical experience, a learn-as-you-go or do-it-yourself approach. The lack of dissemination and awareness of conceptual models from social psychology sporting literature is deplorable. An inexperienced (or experienced) uneducated coach lacking tools such as relationship components is neither recommended nor an intelligent approach to building a successful athletic program and/or team.

Within this study, frameworks and models are discussed for evaluative purposes and feedback embodying the coach-athlete relationship, but what remains limited is scientifically supported educational guidance developing coach-athlete relationships. This is not the case for many or most professions; for example, when a graduate within a school sets a goal to continue on with his/her education, a potential route could be chartered accountant. A chartered accountant needs to be qualified (graduate) and acquire a solid grounding in all aspects of business and financial management to be considered a chartered accountant. In order to do this, training and course work follows suit. Once completed, they possess knowledge and background in their profession that they can continually reflect upon and look back to as they continue on in their respective profession (they are trained and prepared), generating knowledge, and education before their career and/or job.

Supported in coach-athlete relationship literature we are at a fashionable time of measuring and analysing interpersonal dynamics predominantly guided by coach leadership models (Riemer, 2007; Smith & Smoll, 2007) and affective, cognitive, behavioral aspects of the dyad through contemporary frameworks (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008; Jowett & Nezlek, 2011); with no educational background on how to develop and further maintain the coach-athlete relationship. The models and frameworks provide trustworthy merit for evaluative purposes (in which serves their purpose and intent) however, much less attention has been given to the reasoning behind, or the ‘why’, ‘what-can-be-done-from-here’, and ‘how’ of effective coach comprehension (Cushion, 2010).

Future research is required to implement the R-CARM among coaches at various levels of sport, types of sport, and sport genders in order to provide the coach with informative tools to further the coach-athlete relationship, while continually building upon the evaluation process. Coaches can potentially gain value from a poor evaluation such as ‘my coach is responsive to my efforts’, a statement from the CART-Q, potentially make reference to the R-CARM dimensions, themes, and implement a course of action. If questionnaires and observations are the main technique in measuring coach behaviors and the impact on athlete’s performance, further research building guidance behind coach-relationship management would be a proactive measure. Postulating coach reasoning and understanding effective relationship management that leads coaches to exhibit certain behavioral patterns could prove effective towards the improvement and growth of the relationship.

In order to examine how coaches’ decisions inform observable coaching behaviors, researchers must investigate coaches in their natural environments, and go beyond labeling behaviors and connecting these behaviors with athlete outcomes (Buckham, 2013). This would be beneficial to both the athlete and coach, therefore potentially each acquiring an understanding of effective relationship management.

Masters coach cohort tool validation procedure.
Table 1. An evaluative snapshot for theme 2: Be real (authenticity) from the dimension of caring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaningful Units</th>
<th>1st Amendment</th>
<th>2nd Amendment</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Players need to see somebody who has passion and somebody who cares</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The athlete and coach relationship has to seem valuable to both</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole notion is that we are all trying to take care of one another</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dad was a salesman, and I always resented his ability to pretend to like people, and pretend to observe people, when I knew in fact he didn’t</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach shouldn’t pretend to care about their athletes</td>
<td>Omitted in 2nd Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m really pretty anti ‘rah rah rah, pat him on the back, how are you? Great to see you, you’re the best guy I’ve ever seen today’ kinda mentality!</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that when you show people sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing, and where they are trying to go and that you show that you are there to help them, and that you are a good listener, and that you listen far more than you talk.</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach shows is/her athletes that they are there to help them. Rated a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td>Rated a 4 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m pretty straightforward with the guys Regardless of where they are at, you accept them and that you care for them regardless</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the kids can see insincere. And they can see phony. And they can see…They can feel it. So I don’t think that that works.</td>
<td>Refined to: A coach should show his/her athletes sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing. Rated a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td>Rated a 5 by the cohort (top 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A coach should listen far more than he/she talks</td>
<td>Moved to a different theme (1 on 1 Listening)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes I think figure it out pretty quickly, whether generally – right, this coach is competent and whether this coach has character</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>Omitted in 1st Masters cohort Amendment</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Masters cohort validation procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100%</th>
<th>90%+</th>
<th>~85%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3: &quot;Organic esteem&quot; (natural respect)- Players have to believe in what you are doing as a coach</td>
<td>Theme 1: The &quot;Perfect storm&quot; (climate) - Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a &quot;good atmosphere&quot; amongst the players, coaches and staff - Build what you do in your team room</td>
<td>Theme 1: The &quot;Perfect storm&quot; (climate) - The team needs to visualize a process, something each athlete wants to be a part of and that they recognize as being valuable (82%) (ADAPTED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 6: If the shoe fits (player fit) - Teams need strong team players to perform well. Often defined in trait terms; solid team players are described as dependable, flexible, or cooperative (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, &amp; O’Shia, 2005). Player Fit is in reference to the obvious elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism and skill level. A student-athlete must be strong in at least one of these areas - We look for players with a strong work ethic and great attitude</td>
<td>Theme 2: &quot;Believe it&quot; (credibility) - Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernandez-Broome &amp; Hughes, 2004) - I rely on my coach-athlete relationships to assist with my credibility as a coach</td>
<td>Theme 2: &quot;Believe it&quot; (credibility) - Coaches need to have as accurate an idea as they can of what their athletes think of them (OMITTED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 6: If the shoe fits (player fit) - We look for players that want and are willing to get better</td>
<td>Theme 4: &quot;Hamlet effect&quot; (method to madness) - A coach needs to get the players to believe that what the team is doing and where it wants to go, also what each individual wants to do personally (82%) (ADAPTED)</td>
<td>Theme 4: &quot;Hamlet effect&quot; (method to madness) - Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 5: &quot;We’re talking about practice&quot; (practice setting) - Practice is a vital component in an athlete’s life.</td>
<td>Theme 4: &quot;Hamlet effect&quot; (method to madness) - A coach needs to get the players to believe that what the team is doing and where it wants to go, also what each individual wants to do personally (82%) (ADAPTED)</td>
<td>&quot;It is the time when the athlete learns the necessary skills for the sport, and must rehearse these physical skills in order to improve performance in competition&quot; (Frey, Lagana &amp; Ravizza, 2003, p. 112); I make certain that I go around in practice and say hello to everybody each day (OMITTED)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3. Daily coach tool (outlining the R-CARM)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION I - CULTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> &quot;Perfect storm&quot; (climate) - The tradition of the program is important. Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a ‘good atmosphere’ amongst the players, coaches and staff. Coaches should try and build what they do in their team room. Your team culture must be conducive to achieving the mission your team has set out for themselves. It is a critical component within a program of excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> &quot;Believe it&quot; (credibility) - Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do and sustain it (Hernández-Gromö &amp; Hughes, 2004). A coach can rely on their respective coach-athlete relationships to assist with their own credibility as a coach. The day-to-day routine will also assist, maintain and or keep credibility as a coach leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> &quot;Organic esteem&quot; (natural respect) - The majority of coaches would likely suggest that a coach &quot;needs to be respected&quot;. If a coach does not have the respect from the team, you might as well pack your bags. Respect can develop through many avenues within a team; the more respect you have from each component within the team, the more successful the team will be in the end. A coach gains respect by hard work, players have to believe in what you are doing as a coach. A coach should be treating every athlete fairly, not necessarily equal, but fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4:</strong> &quot;Hamlet effect&quot; (method to madness) - There needs to be a ‘method to the madness’ so to speak when striving for respect and credibility within coach-athlete relationships. Even though it may appear to be crazy, there must be an effective plan in place. If you have success, athletes tend to accept there is a method to the madness a little bit more within your approach. The coach must sell the players an idea, sell a concept, and the players have to believe in that concept. It is important that the players understand how their personal goal fit into the bigger picture of the team goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION II - CARING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> &quot;Up close and personal&quot; (making it personal) - Within the dimension of Caring, coaches expressed that each relationship you have with the player is diverse. It is important that student-athletes and/or team members feel valued and cared for as individuals, and the need for coaches to always have their athletes’ best interests at heart. Coaches should ask questions about their athletes and their lives; coaches need to find out what their athletes needs are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> &quot;Be real&quot; (authenticity) - It was suggested that there is a &quot;direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated just as how they perform on the court.&quot; &quot;My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.&quot; A coach should show their athletes sincere interest in what they are about and what they are doing, demonstrate to his her athletes that they are there to help them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> &quot;Release the Beast&quot; (empowerment) - Athletes want to feel powerful, they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause, as well, athletes want to achieve and succeed both individually and as a supporting team member. A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach, emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game (Souza &amp; Olin, 2005, p. 24). Empower your players, providing the athletes with ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hand. Coaches should provide opportunity for the athlete’s getting to know himher in order to assist them in feeling more comfortable within their own skin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION III - COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> &quot;Frankly Speaking&quot; (honesty) - Integrity in relationships advocates that the coach’s relationships with others are to be honest and sincere. The values of integrity are upheld when coaches possess a high degree of self-awareness and are able to reflect critically on how their behaviors and perspectives influence the interactions with their athletes in particular (Headley-Cooper, 2010). Within the coach-athlete relationship communication is crucial. As a coach, you’ve got to be honest everyday with your athletes, treat my players and recruits with total honesty - at times it is not what they want to hear but eventually it builds a strong relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> &quot;Harmonious Coaching&quot; (consistency) - Positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust. Your athletes must know that they can depend on you to be fair and positive, even in intense competition. Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance. A coach should criticize behaviors or decision-making, and leave personality out of it. Improvement will be diminished if athletes are made to feel inferior about themselves (Steenblik, 2002). Relationships are built by day-to-day interactions with people, a coach must consistently keep working at the coach-athlete relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> &quot;Working together is success&quot; (player-player) - A storied American industrialist by the name of Henry Ford, once quoted, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success” (Henry Ford, 2013). It’s important to encourage our player’s to communicate between each other; it is also important to work hard to enhance our player’s ability to understand each other. As a coach, you want to see players helping players.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Theme 4: "Embrace the chaos" (emotional state)** - Cowie and Cornelius (2003) suggested that, “the word emotion refers to an aspect of most (or all) mental states, rather than to a special kind of state” (p. 7). Thoughts can shift from one to another when you move from one state of feeling into another; it is important to be in the right emotional state in order to communicate and act in the right way. Emotional state is a reflection of an actual state of performance. On the court, it’s important to get your players to an emotional state; especially early on in the season so they’re willing to be honest with you. When conversing, sometimes you need your athletes to be emotional with you. Coaches shouldn’t mind student-athletes getting upset as long as it’s for good reason. However, a conversation and one on one discussion are important as an immediate follow up, so both parties can come to terms.

**Theme 5: "Even a piece of paper has two sides" (conflict resolution)** - Sport can play a key function in building social networks via providing a shared experience (Lea-Howard, 2006), and within these networks, Kriesberg suggests that conflict is not preventable (2007). In some cases (i.e. emotional state), it is encouraged. When dealing with human conflict, it’s important to remember that there are two sides to every story.

**Theme 6: "Know your role" (coach-athlete role)** - As a coach you must know and understand the fundamentals of your sport: Offense, defense, motivation, tactics, and vocabulary are all important aspects needed to coach within a respective team sport. In order to teach in any environment, you need communication skills. Every athlete a coach comes in contact with is different. Therefore, it is important for a coach to evaluate whom they are coaching and try to connect with him/her on a level that is affective. A coach should appreciate each athlete’s for who they are. A coach has to be prepared to spend time on their coach-athlete relationships and become a student of people.

**Theme 7: "Mano-a-mano" (on 1 listening)** - How you communicate with your athletes directly affects how they perceive you and how they feel about themselves. Communication can also be nonverbal. Your gestures, body language, facial expressions, and actions are more important than what you say. “Open channels of communication allow athletes a chance to respond to demands placed on them, so they can subsequently carry out responsibilities to the best of their capabilities” (Vukelich, 1997, p. 78). As a coach it’s listening and then talking to them based on what the players are saying.

**DIMENSION IV: RECRUITMENT**

**Theme 1: "Army strong" (enlistment)** - Relationships begin “right from the recruiting process.” The building of relationships between post-secondary coaches and high school players and their coaches can range between days, months and even years, prior to the actual player being an official part of the program and/or team. Enlistment phase, essentially a recruit period, is the foundation of shaping the team into a tight interwoven family. Trying to find players that fit into the university environment (as student-athletes). Coaches need to treat each recruit as a separate entity in itself.

**Theme 2: "Quality is never an accident" (quality identification)** - This theme intertwines both talent identification and quality players. Typically, talent immediately draws a coach, however, that talent can be quickly overlooked if the player’s principles are not harmonious with that of the prospective team’s. Longer term, this can be detrimental to overall trust and team culture. I try and find the best people and I think they can evolve into great players as they grow through our program. I recruit athletes who I think are good players and who seem like decent people. The process needs adaptability for each recruit with a reminder of building a team within it. One year you may need to recruit a personality and the next, a talent. Be careful you don’t fall in love with strictly talent; you may be allowing certain aspects of team culture etc. to slide and your rationalizing it.

**DIMENSION V: TRUST**

**Trust**: It’s important to continue to develop and maintain the trust between you and your athletes; it’s simple, coach within your personality. It’s important to continue to develop and maintain the trust between you and your athletes.
## Table 4. Initial stages of data coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach &amp; Stage</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Coach Comment</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach A</td>
<td>Generally speak about your relationship with your players from the first time. Your thoughts till now, just doing the whole first time till now. Your thoughts, the general perspective, you can pull a couple of examples. Whatever you wish just real wipe what your CAR is like so far first time.</td>
<td>There has been an evolution of my relationship with each guy on the team. It's interesting because I have been mindful of this project. Been pretty straight with the couple of guys because I really felt that they needed to hear the truth. Hiding behind some excuses relative to their play, there has been an amazing transformation in our team. Part of it is the relationship with each other.</td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I've been trying to focus a little bit on that relationship side. Like maybe some guys have a little more confidence, our last kind of self-doubting.</td>
<td>Thank they know what their role is on the team, how they contribute.</td>
<td>CAR - Confidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It's that balance between do I trust that athlete enough to go in that situation and previously, I might have said, &quot;No, he's not ready.&quot; This year I've said, &quot;You know what? I'm going to do it and if it's not successful, I'll bring them out. We'll work on it.&quot;</td>
<td>Communication - know your role.</td>
<td>Communication - working together is success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give me a better chance to identify what his needs are and it will give him some satisfaction of being able to actually get it.</td>
<td>Communication - know your role.</td>
<td>Communication - working together is success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Still have more intimate relationships with some guys than others.</td>
<td>Communication - know your role.</td>
<td>Communication - working together is success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partially, based on years with me, but partially based on chemistry. Some guys are still... They're just more closed off.</td>
<td>Communication - know your role.</td>
<td>Communication - working together is success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe, I still have really good relationships with every single person in the team, it's a relationship that's built on respect and I try to respect them. I'm learning to trust them more in terms of their play.</td>
<td>Communication - know your role.</td>
<td>Communication - working together is success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 5. CART-Q results for coach intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Perspective version (through the athlete eyes)</th>
<th>7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment and coach's intention to maintain the athletic relationship &amp; therefore maximize its outcomes</td>
<td>My coach is committed to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My coach is close to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My coach believes that his/her sport career is promising with me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Direct-perspective version of the CART–Q measuring three relational constructs (adapted from Jowett, 2009).

Direct Perspective (through the athlete eyes)
7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Closeness** - refers to the affective meanings that the athlete and coach describe to their relationship (e.g., trust, liking, respect), can be represented by positive feelings that bond the relationship members | 1. My coach likes me  
2. My coach trusts me  
3. My coach respects me  
4. My coach appreciates the sacrifices I have experienced to improve performance |
| **Commitment** - defined as the athletes and coach’s intention to maintain the athletic relationship and therefore maximize its outcomes. | 5. My coach is committed to me  
6. My coach is close to me  
7. My coach believes that his/her sport career is promising with me |
| **Complementarity** - represents the athletes’ and coaches’ corresponding behaviors of affiliation (e.g., athlete’s friendly and responsive attitude is likely to elicit the coach’s friendly and responsive attitude), and reciprocal behaviors of dominance and submission (e.g., coach instructs and athlete executes) | 8. My coach is at ease  
9. My coach is responsive to my efforts  
10. My coach is ready to do his/her best  
11. My coach adopts a friendly stance |

Masters coach cohort tool validation procedure
Reciprocating Coach-athlete Relationship Model (R-CARM)
Tool Validation:
Using the Likert Scale for each statement below, indicate the level of agreement you have in accordance within its respective theme:

- (5) Strongly Agree
- (4) Agree
- (3) Undecided
- (2) Disagree
- (1) Strongly Disagree

Dimension I: Culture - Culture creates an environment in which team members, think alike, talk alike, and act alike so they can support and reinforce the best in one another.

Theme 1: The perfect storm (climate) - Within team culture, the climate is an important entity for establishing a “good atmosphere” amongst the players, coaches and staff.

It’s important that the athlete-athlete relationship is there first. If that’s there first and they’re enjoying it and they’re having a good time, they’re meshing with their teammates, and the cohesion is there, environment will be pretty good

Build what you do in your team room; there are lots of antidotes lots of pictures up and different things, articles, in our dressing room because I think the tradition is important

They have to see a process, that they want to be a part of and that they recognize as valuable

Theme 2: Believe it (credibility) - Credibility is very important to strong leadership, and the loss of credibility is a major factor when coaches lose the ability to lead. Leadership is key as a coach; consistently the coach credibility should be evaluated and from there, establish what you need to do to build and sustain it (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004)

Essentially you are relying on these relationships to assist with your credibility

I think the day-to-day routine, will maintain or keep that credibility and build a relationship. I think relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people

Know your audience, have as good an idea as you can on what they think of you and if you’re going to air, air on the side of they think you’re an idiot as oppose to the side of they think you’re great
Theme 3: *Organic esteem (natural respect)* - The majority of coaches would likely suggest that a coach “needs to be respected”; “if a coach does not have the respect from the team, you might as well pack your bags.” Respect can develop through many avenues within a team; the more respect you have from each component of within the team, the more successful the painting is going to be at the end.”

You get respect by hard work and being consistent; treating every athlete fairly (not necessarily equal); consistent in the messaging

I think when there is a respect and athletes believe they are being treated fairly and openly, then their willingness to follow that leader and that leaders’ decisions and path are in place

The bottom line is players have to play for you – they have to play for you and they have to believe in what you are doing so – you know I can roll out a tactical plan and it might be crazy but if they respect me and they believe in me, they buy into it.

Theme 4: *Hamlet effect (method to madness)* - There needs to be a ‘method to the madness’ so to speak when striving for respect and credibility within coach-athlete relationships. Even though it may appear to be crazy, there is an effective plan in place.

With 19 year old kids, certainly if you don’t have success, they tend to question more, if you have success they tend to assume there is a method to the madness a little bit more

---

*Figure 1. Revised reciprocating coach-athlete relationship model (CAR-BM) copyright 2015 Behan*
Within the dimension of Caring, coaches expressed a high level of importance in foster psychological well-being (p. 295). This is seen as an important component of an effective coach and athlete relationship that allows the relationship to thrive and lead to long-term commitment among the athlete and coach (Fry and Gano-Overway, 2010).

Player Fit is in reference to the obvious elite student-athlete tangible qualities of athleticism and skill level. This program is not for everyone, if you have a great work ethic and you have a great attitude and you want to get better and you’re willing to do that type of stuff than this is a great program for you.

Regardless of where they are at, you accept them and that you care for them regardless (Souza & Oslin, 2008, p. 115).

Empower them and give him/her some control; talking to the athlete about some of the plans that we were making, I don’t recruit guys who I think will be leaders. I recruit guys who I think are good players who seem like decent people (Dr. Craig M. Behan et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Be real (authenticity) – It was suggested that there is a “direct link between athletes feeling successful and that they are being treated not just as how they perform on the courts.” “My biggest strength is that I care about them overall.”

Be real (authenticity) – “Reflects the degree to which the coach and the athlete feel emotionally attached” (Jowett, 2003, p. 115).

Theme 6: Release the Beast (empowerment) - Athletes want to feel powerful, they want to be helped in their development as well as feel that they are helping with the cause; as well, athletes want to achieve and succeed both individually and as a supporting team member. A player-centered approach to coaching and teaching sport in contrast to a coach-centered approach, emphasizes the need to give players autonomy to make their own choices both within the game and outside of the game” (Souza & Oslin, 2008, p. 24).

Empower them and give him/her some control; talking to the athlete about some of the plans that we were making, you know asking him/her what their opinion is in certain situations; ownership, putting a little bit of control into their hands.
Dimension III: Communication - “communication is the building block of all relationships” (p. 445). Talk, self-disclosure, and dialogue, are considered components of communication and provide coaches and athletes with an opportunity to share one another’s experiences, thought’s etc. (Duck, 1994).

Theme 1: Frankly Speaking (honesty) - Integrity in relationships advocates that the coach’s relationships with others are to be honest and sincere. The values of integrity are upheld when coaches possess a high degree of self-awareness and are able to reflect critically on how their behaviors and perspectives influence the interactions with their athletes in particular (Headley-Cooper, 2010).

The relationship has to be open; communication is crucial.

1 2 3 4 5

You’ve got to stay within your personality and you’ve got to be honest everyday, and sometimes honesty isn’t what they want to hear.

1 2 3 4 5

We inform the kid; if you want to change, this is what you’ve got to change. If you’re not going to change that, this is going to continue to happen.

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 2: Harmonious Coaching (consistency) - Positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust. Your athletes must know that they can depend on you to be fair and positive, even in intense competition. Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance. A coach should criticize behaviors or decision-making, and leave personality out of it. Improvement will be diminished if they are made to feel inferior about themselves (Steuerwald, 2002).

I think the day to day-to-day routine, will maintain or keep that credibility and build a relationship. I think relationships are only built by day-to-day interactions with people.

1 2 3 4 5

You have to keep repeating, and keep working at it and working at it, you know, you need that base level and then you have to build off there.

1 2 3 4 5

You have to be consistent; just have to be an everyday thing. And if you can’t keep it an everyday thing then you’re going to lose trust.

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 3: Working together is success (player-player) - A storied American industrialist by the name of Henry Ford, once quoted, “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success” (“Henry Ford,” 2013).

Ability to communicate between each other and to be able to understand each other.

1 2 3 4 5

It’s players helping players and we talk about the word leadership a lot.

1 2 3 4 5

I get mature leaders to mentor first year players

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 4: Embrace the chaos (emotional state) - Cowie and Cornelius (2003) suggested that, “the word emotion refers to an aspect of most (or all) mental states, rather than to a special kind of state” (p. 7). Thoughts can shift from one to another when you move from one state of feeling into another; it is important to be in the right emotional state in order to communicate and act in the right way.

You have to get them to an emotional state at some point early on where they’re willing to be honest with you.

1 2 3 4 5

My guys every one of them has snapped on me at least once in the first two years. Because once you get to that point then you can get somewhere. I calm him down and then we talk; that is where a lot of honesty and trust comes from.

1 2 3 4 5

Sometimes you need people to be emotional; if they are not emotional they’re not honest. Not when there is a definite, sort of hierarchy.

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 5: Even a piece of paper has two sides (conflict resolution) - Sport can play a key function in building social networks via providing a shared experience (Leahowarth, 2006); and within these networks, Kriesberg suggests that conflict is not preventable (2007); in some cases (i.e. Emotional State), it is encouraged.

Try and find out get all of the information possible; responding to him said she said could be very dangerous. Two sides to every story, there are always those things you hear about so I think it’s really important for me to take the opportunity to communicate.

1 2 3 4 5

I think that the number one thing I’ve learned is that you don’t want to inflame a situation with someone who is a bit hot; a player who is disappointed, or maybe challenged something. Probably the best way to diffuse it I, and I’ve used it in the past, is just say, I can tell this is really bothering you and me need to talk about it, and I make an appointment with them.

1 2 3 4 5

Now I just sort of let them vent and then I say hey you have some good points here there let’s talk about it: Sometimes they just need to vent and there’s nothing wrong with that.

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 6: Know your role (coach-player role) - As a coach you must know and understand the fundamentals of your sport; offense, defense, motivation, tactics, and vocabulary are all important aspects needed to coach within a respective team sport. In order to teach in any environment, you need communication skills. Every athlete a coach comes in contact with is different. Therefore, it is important for a coach to evaluate, whom they are coaching and try to connect with him/her on a level that is affective.

1 2 3 4 5
You cannot be too concerned about being liked; you don’t have to like them, but you’ve got to love them; appreciating them for who they are

1 2 3 4 5

You have to be prepared to spend time on your relationships; there are no short cuts you have to be abreast of what the players now are thinking

1 2 3 4 5

It’s a yearlong process and every year is a different year. It’s a challenge; you’ve got to be a student of people

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 7: Mano-a-mano (1 on 1 – listening) - How you communicate with your athletes directly affects how they perceive you and how they feel about themselves. Communication can also be nonverbal. Your gestures, body positions, facial expressions, and actions are more important than what you say. “Open channels of communication allow athletes a chance to respond to demands placed on them, so they can subsequently carry out responsibilities to the best of their capabilities” (Yukelson, 1997, p. 78).

Really just listening and then talking based on what they say; 12 months a year

1 2 3 4 5

I’ll just message a kid and just start a conversation and generally you can get a feel for their mood on things and then you can direct a conversation. You just try and listen.

1 2 3 4 5

You have to evaluate the relationship to the negative; you have to assume they see me as an old guy who has no idea what’s going on in 2012; so you have to prolong the conversation to make them understand that you kind of do get it. Talk with your athletes

1 2 3 4 5

Dimension VI: Recruitment - In accordance to Klenosky, Temple, and Troutman (2001), the recruiting dimension of the student-athlete to choose a college over other institutions is “a major life decision” (p. 95). Recruitment of a student-athlete can entail numerous schools, coaches, and athletic programs, depending on the talent level of the athlete; “the competition to recruit talented student-athletes is often fierce between universities” (Klenosky et al., 2001, p. 15). This emphasizes the importance of the student-athlete’s relationship that he/she has with his/her coach(s) during the recruitment phase.

Theme 1: Army strong (enlistment) - Relationships begin “right from the recruiting process.” The building of relationships between post-secondary coaches and high school players and their coaches can range between days, months and even years; prior to the actual player being an official part of the program and/or team. Enlistment phase, essentially a recruit period, is the foundation of shaping the team into a tight interwoven family.

Trying to find ones that fit into the university environment

1 2 3 4 5

Early contact by coaches means a whole lot; each recruit is a separate entity in itself

1 2 3 4 5

With recruiting, I take a very personal approach, these are the things I – we have to offer I think you’d be a good fit for these reasons and I try and be as open as possible

1 2 3 4 5

Theme 2: Quality is never an accident (quality identification) - This theme intertwines both talent identification and quality players. Typically, talent immediately draws a coach; however, that talent can be quickly overlooked if the player’s principles are not harmonious with that of the prospective team’s. Longer term, this can be detrimental to overall trust and team culture.

I try to visit or get to know every player. If I can, I hope to visit and meet their parents. Get a feel of how they’ve been brought up and what kind of character and what kind of attitude they have

1 2 3 4 5

I try and find the best people and I think they can evolve into great players as they go through our program

1 2 3 4 5

In order to be successful you need the horses, so the first part of the relationship I think is talent identification

1 2 3 4 5

Dimension V: Trust - The coach interviews acknowledged through the dimensions that trust is important for the functioning of the coach-athlete relationship. Within sport teams, the quality of the coach-athlete relationship includes mutual trust and respect, commitment, and cooperation (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Trust involves simultaneously individual processes, group dynamics and organizational contingencies (Rousseau, Stikin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998).

In order for you to trust them you need to be a little bit more lenient because they are at the university level, they are still kids

1 2 3 4 5

It’s a different relationship like they have to trust you and in order for them to trust you; you can’t do things that would jeopardize that trust ever

1 2 3 4 5

To me it’s simple as coach within your personality because everything is about trust. But also be realistic enough that if you’re yelling and screaming you better have great relationships with your athletes.

1 2 3 4 5
References:


doi:10#1016/j#psychsport#2010#11#005
73. Jowett, S. (2007). Expanding the interpersonal dimension: Closeness in the


