# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher's Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1 The Coach
1.1 Learning objectives | 1 |
1.2 Introduction to the context | 1 |
1.3 The coach–athlete relationship | 3 |
1.4 Interpersonal communication | 7 |
1.5 Relationship conflict | 10 |
1.6 Managing an effective and successful relationship | 12 |
1.7 Summary | 17 |
1.8 Case study | 17 |
1.9 Further study and recommended reading | 20 |

## 2 Teammates
2.1 Learning objectives | 21 |
2.2 Introduction to the context | 21 |
2.3 Peer-oriented motivational climate: an overview of theory and indicative research | 23 |
2.4 Team cohesion: a conceptual framework | 26 |
2.5 Intragroup conflict: definitions and conceptualisations | 33 |
2.6 Summary | 39 |
2.7 Case study | 39 |
2.8 Further study and recommended reading | 42 |

## 3 Competition
3.1 Learning objectives | 44 |
3.2 Introduction to the context | 44 |
3.3 How individuals judge their own success | 46 |
3.4 How we perceive opponents | 52 |
3.5 Intergroup conflict | 56 |
3.6 Dark side of competition | 59 |
3.7 Summary | 60 |
3.8 Case study | 61 |
3.9 Further study and recommended reading | 63 |

## 4 Audience and Spectators
4.1 Learning objectives | 64 |
4.2 Introduction to the context | 64 |
## Contents

4.3 The effects of the presence of others on personal effort: a review of early theoretical processes 65
4.4 Home advantage 68
4.5 Choking under pressure 75
4.6 Summary 80
4.7 Case study 80
4.8 Further study and recommended reading 83

4.3 The effects of the presence of others on personal effort: a review of early theoretical processes 65
4.4 Home advantage 68
4.5 Choking under pressure 75
4.6 Summary 80
4.7 Case study 80
4.8 Further study and recommended reading 83

5 The Family and Significant Others 84
5.1 Learning objectives 84
5.2 Introduction to the context 84
5.3 Promoting athletic involvement: the role of parents 86
5.4 The changing role of parental involvement in athletes' sport participation 93
5.5 Significance of siblings in shaping athletes' sporting experiences 96
5.6 Significance of romantic and marital partners 97
5.7 Optimising athletes' sporting experiences by cultivating their social relationships 98
5.8 Summary 100
5.9 Case study 100
5.10 Further study and recommended reading 104

5 The Family and Significant Others 84
5.1 Learning objectives 84
5.2 Introduction to the context 84
5.3 Promoting athletic involvement: the role of parents 86
5.4 The changing role of parental involvement in athletes' sport participation 93
5.5 Significance of siblings in shaping athletes' sporting experiences 96
5.6 Significance of romantic and marital partners 97
5.7 Optimising athletes' sporting experiences by cultivating their social relationships 98
5.8 Summary 100
5.9 Case study 100
5.10 Further study and recommended reading 104

6 Schools 105
6.1 Learning objectives 105
6.2 Introduction to the context 105
6.3 The role of PE teachers 107
6.4 The role of peers 113
6.5 The role of parents 119
6.6 Summary 121
6.7 Case study 122
6.8 Further study and recommended reading 124

6 Schools 105
6.1 Learning objectives 105
6.2 Introduction to the context 105
6.3 The role of PE teachers 107
6.4 The role of peers 113
6.5 The role of parents 119
6.6 Summary 121
6.7 Case study 122
6.8 Further study and recommended reading 124

7 Workplaces 126
7.1 Learning objectives 126
7.2 Introduction to the context 126
7.3 The role of the employer 129
7.4 The role of the employee 133
7.5 Effectiveness of workplace interventions on psychosocial factors and physical activity 136
7.6 Practical applications for workplace physical activity programmes 139
7.7 Summary 143
7.8 Case study 143
7.9 Further study and recommended reading 146

7 Workplaces 126
7.1 Learning objectives 126
7.2 Introduction to the context 126
7.3 The role of the employer 129
7.4 The role of the employee 133
7.5 Effectiveness of workplace interventions on psychosocial factors and physical activity 136
7.6 Practical applications for workplace physical activity programmes 139
7.7 Summary 143
7.8 Case study 143
7.9 Further study and recommended reading 146

8 Gyms and Leisure Centres 147
8.1 Learning objectives 147
8.2 Introduction to the context 147
8.3 The role of the exercise leader 149
8.4 Self-presentational issues in a gym setting 154
8.5 Group cohesion and social processes in an exercise class setting 160
8.6 Exercise leaders and group cohesion 163
8.7 Summary 165

8 Gyms and Leisure Centres 147
8.1 Learning objectives 147
8.2 Introduction to the context 147
8.3 The role of the exercise leader 149
8.4 Self-presentational issues in a gym setting 154
8.5 Group cohesion and social processes in an exercise class setting 160
8.6 Exercise leaders and group cohesion 163
8.7 Summary 165
8.8 Case study 165
8.9 Further study and recommended reading 167

9 Primary Health Care 169
9.1 Learning objectives 169
9.2 Introduction to the context 169
9.3 Role of health care professionals in physical activity behaviour change 172
9.4 Impact of the consultation style on physical activity behaviour change 174
9.5 Exercise referral schemes and physical activity behaviour change 181
9.6 Summary 187
9.7 Case study 188
9.8 Further study and recommended reading 190

10 The Outdoors 191
10.1 Learning objectives 191
10.2 Introduction to the context 191
10.3 Proposed mechanisms underlying the green space effect 193
10.4 Outdoor activities and psychosocial development 194
10.5 The green space effect of exercise on psychosocial well-being 196
10.6 The green space effect in action 204
10.7 Summary 206
10.8 Case study 206
10.9 Further study and recommended reading 208

References 209

Index 236
1 The Coach

1.1 Learning objectives

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the context of the training environment and the coach's role in the development of athletes. It focuses on the importance of coaches forming a supportive relationship with athletes in order to create a positive environment, increase retention, and provide competitive success. The key learning objectives are:

- to consider the nature of the relationship that is formed between the coach and the athlete by defining the quality of that relationship using the 3 + 1 Cs Model of Coach–Athlete Relationships;
- to examine interpersonal communication and the key role it can play in enhancing coach–athlete interaction;
- to investigate how conflict can be a constructive influence for coaches and athletes via the Competence-Based Model of Interpersonal Conflict;
- to discuss the potential strategies given by the COMPASS model for management of an optimal coach–athlete relationship in regard to the quality of the coach’s and athlete’s experiences and competitive success;
- to look at how relationship-maintenance strategies can be used by a coach, athlete, or psychologist to intervene in a poor quality training environment and repair an ineffective coach–athlete relationship.

1.2 Introduction to the context

For every moment of competition that athletes are involved in, they will have participated in multiple hours of training. Hence, athletes spend their time predominately involved in training for their sport and preparation for competition. Research has suggested that it can take over 10,000 hours of quality training for an athlete to compete effectively at an elite level, and these 10,000 hours are usually accumulated over a minimum of 10 years (Ericsson and Charness 1994). This means that elite athletes will typically spend an average of three hours per day over a 10-year period training for their sport. Much of this time will be spent under the guidance of a sports coach. That is, athletes spend a substantial amount of time with a coach on a daily basis; thus, the coach is potentially an important social influence in the athlete's life.
However, it is not only elite athletes who spend a large proportion of their time with their coach in the training environment. In the UK over 25% of adults involved in any form of sport report that they have worked with a coach in the previous 12 months. As frequency of participation increases, so does frequency of contact with a coach: 84% of surveyed adults in the UK who participated in sports in a given week had received coaching (MORI 2011).

Coaches play a central function in the management and direction of the training environment and hence the development of the performance and effectiveness of athletes. Coaches are responsible for directing their athletes’ development – physically, technically, and psychologically – through the application of their knowledge, experience, and expertise (Lyle 2007). This development primarily unfolds in training, during periods of practicing the requisite skills required by the athlete; the manner in which coaches and athletes interact can have a profound impact upon the effectiveness of these training sessions (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007). Coaches and athletes must work closely together in the training environment and have a high degree of interaction with each other. Coaches and athletes must therefore rely upon each other to fulfil their goals, and this is expressed in the athlete’s need to develop competence, the coach’s need to develop the athlete, and the need for them both to be able to translate their interactions into positive outcomes, such as performance success (Antonini Philippe and Seiler 2006).

The performance success of athletes is typically measured by an athlete’s achievements during competition. When successful, the athlete and the coach, in particular, are commended, and their roles acknowledged and praised. Equally, when an athlete is unsuccessful, it is often the coach that receives a large portion of the blame and responsibility. There is therefore an important emphasis placed during training sessions on enhancing performance. However, as a result of a mutual dependence and long hours spent together, it is not unusual for coaches and athletes to form strong associations and develop a close relationship over time (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007). Therefore, while the majority of coaches and athletes focus to some extent on performance enhancement, emphasis must also be placed on the personal and social development of athletes through involvement in training with their coach. Jowett (2005) has stated that the relationship between a coach and an athlete can be conceptualised by the element of success and effectiveness. While success is related to skill development and competition results, effectiveness focuses on personal satisfaction and the development of a rewarding relationship. The coach therefore has a fostering role to play, one that emphasises personal growth and development, that nurtures the trust, mutual care, and respect implicit in a personal relationship that potentially provides a key source of social support for athletes in both the training and competitive environments.
1.3 The coach–athlete relationship

A relationship is a form of social exchange. It has been suggested that individuals form relationships based on the benefits these partnerships can offer (Kelley et al. 1983). This means that individuals such as coaches and athletes form relationships based upon the mutual tangible and intangible rewards that association brings. As these relationships can both enhance and hinder the personal development of an individual, they develop as part of a cost-benefit analysis: the coach and the athlete are content with the relationship when the positive outcomes, such as satisfaction and performance or competitive success, outweigh such negative outcomes as conflict, distress, and lack of progression. However, a relationship is more than the pursuit of individual reward. Berscheid, Snyder, and Omoto (1989) have stated that many of the positive outcomes of a relationship are at least partially joint-generated. This means that the desired outcome can come about only through interaction of the two members of the relationship. For example, an athlete’s abilities will not improve unless the athlete puts in the required effort and is also instructed by the coach in the correct technique. Hence, a relationship describes both the interdependence of two individuals who interact to achieve common goals and the level of understanding between them. This means that the relationship between a coach and an athlete can serve as the social vehicle for the often long road to performance success, with positive relationships enhancing this experience and negative relationships prolonging or disrupting progression and personal development.

While relationships have been studied for as long as social psychology has been a recognised field, it is only since the start of the 21st century that sport psychology has seen the development of conceptual models to describe the nature and quality of the coach–athlete relationship. This relationship is broadly defined as the interdependence of a coach and athlete’s affect, behaviour, and cognitions, the aim being to develop effective personal growth and performance success in sport (Jowett 2005). This means that the nature and quality of the coach–athlete relationship are determined by how a coach’s and athlete’s emotions, actions, and thoughts interrelate and so are likely to change over time as part of a dynamic social environment. While several models have been proposed, the most prominent and widely applied is the $3 + 1$ Cs Model (see Figure 1.1), which provides an operational definition whereby the coach–athlete interdependence and the nature and quality of their relationship is described through four constructs: Closeness, Complementarity, Commitment, and Co-orientation (Jowett 2007). The first three encapsulate only those elements of affect, behaviour, and cognition that have been identified as having direct relevance to the coach–athlete relationship; the final construct, co-orientation, represents...
the degree of concurrence between coach’s and athlete’s views and interpersonal perspectives (Jowett and Cockerill 2003).

1.3.1 Closeness

The construct of closeness encapsulates the affective qualities of the coach-athlete relationship. It describes how the coach and athlete perceive the emotional elements of their partnership and daily interaction, including positive mutual feelings and emotional intimacy (Jowett 2005). The concept of closeness suggests the presence of interpersonal liking between two individuals as well as a level of mutual trust. Liking has been shown to be strongly associated with open, candid communication, and evidence suggests that high levels of trust between two individuals can foster sincere and open disclosure between them (Argyle 1994). In the training environment, upfront and forthright communication is essential to preventing secretive or dangerous behaviour, such as an athlete hiding an injury or being unwilling to attempt certain training drills. It also allows the coach and the athlete to voice reciprocal and corresponding needs and helps prevent interpersonal conflict. Another important facet of closeness is mutual respect, an acceptance or feeling that the other individual in the relationship has something to offer, such as knowledge or positive actions, and is worthy of acknowledgement because of this (Douge 1999). Mutual respect is essential in any relationship and particularly so in the context of the training environment. For example, respect facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skill between coach and athlete. If an athlete does not feel that the coach has anything to offer, the athlete will be unwilling to give much consideration to the coach’s advice or guidance and thereby limit his or her progress. Feelings of
closeness in a relationship can also bring higher levels of personal satisfaction with daily interactions (Yoshida 1972). The development of athletic performance is a long-term and ongoing process, either for development of increased performance or retention of individuals within a sport. The more that individuals are content with how they are treated, the more they are likely both to remain together and to remain within their sport.

1.3.2 Complementarity

The construct of complementarity is concerned with the behavioural qualities of the coach–athlete relationship. It describes how the coach and athlete perceive their cooperative interactions, such as mutual effort or responsiveness, during training and the type of interaction that the coach and the athlete perceive as cooperative and useful (Jowett 2005). The concept of complementarity suggests the ability of each individual in a relationship to feel comfortable with the other and accept the contribution of the partner in the relationship. Cooperative interactions are divided into two categories: corresponding and reciprocating (Kiesler 1997). A corresponding behaviour involves an action that draws the opposite but complementary action from the other person; for example, where the coach exhibits a dominant behaviour (such as directing the training session) and the athlete responds by exhibiting a submissive behaviour (such as taking direction). A reciprocal behaviour involves an action that draws the same action from the other person; for example, if the coach is friendly towards the athlete, this should also attract friendly behaviour from the athlete. Complementarity, then, is primarily concerned with individuals’ readiness to do their best and respond to the needs and behaviour of the other, which in turn encourages the other to respond in kind. If a coach–athlete relationship is to be complementary, the coach and athlete should display similar levels of readiness and responsiveness during training (Jowett 2002). This responsiveness facilitates the ease with which the coach and athlete can work together and coordinate their efforts in training. Partners who feel that their needs are not being listened or responded to are likely to become dissatisfied; this can create a negative training environment and may even lead to the dissolution of the coach–athlete relationship and the athlete discontinuing participation in the sport (Jowett and Meek 2000). Coaches who try to enforce particular styles of coaching or who don’t adapt to individual athletes often create conflict; an athlete who dislikes direct authority would need to be handled using increased levels of peer-to-peer discussion rather than simply being told what to do.

1.3.3 Commitment

The construct of commitment encapsulates the cognitive qualities of the coach–athlete relationship. It expresses how the coach and the athlete perceive the long-term direction of their relationship, their place within it, and
their dedication to it (Jowett and Ntoumanis 2004). The concept of commitment suggests an intention to maintain the coach–athlete relationship over time and a high level of positive expectations for that relationship and its related outcomes. As already noted, the progression of an athlete to high levels of performance is a long-term development (Ericsson and Charness 1994); as such, it requires time and perseverance from both the athlete and the coach. If an athlete is to progress within a sport, it is vital that the coach and athlete have similar views of the direction and goals of their relationship and an appropriate level of commitment to see these goals through to completion. Two potential conflicts exist within commitment. The first is incompatible views; for example, the coach may wish the athlete to progress to a higher level, while the athlete may see the sport as a hobby. The second is inappropriate levels of commitment relative to desired outcomes; for example, the coach and athlete may wish to progress to national level but train only once a week. In neither situation is the relationship likely to be effective or successful. Commitment is also strongly connected to complementarity and closeness. Rusbult (1983) proposed that commitment to a relationship is based upon a positive cost analysis (i.e., high rewards and low costs). In a relationship low in closeness, where coach and athlete lack trust, liking, and respect, there is likely to be a negative cost analysis and hence a lower level of investment. Additionally, it has been suggested that commitment is linked to a greater predisposition towards the use of accommodating behaviours, such as ability to compromise and negotiate, and hence is a fundamental factor in the success and effectiveness of a relationship (Rusbult et al. 1991).

1.3.4 Co-orientation

The construct of co-orientation encapsulates interchange and concurrence of closeness, commitment, and complementarity in the coach–athlete relationship. It describes how the coach and the athlete perceive themselves and each other (Jowett 2005). The concept of co-orientation suggests a degree of common ground between coach and athlete and an alignment of interpersonal perspectives. Duck (1994) postulates that relationship members are motivated to achieve and sustain a level of similarity; this similarity, either real or perceived, connects the two people, forming a foundation for their relationship by validating their views and opinions. Similarity in attitudes and the ability to understand and make accurate judgements are thought to increase individuals’ trust and appreciation for each other, to confirm their intention to continue a relationship, and to assist them in responding and reacting appropriately to each other’s behaviours. In sport it has been suggested that differences in viewpoints might indicate a potential conflict or power struggle within the coach–athlete relationship (Jowett 2003). Since individuals rarely have identical viewpoints and opinions, understanding
and accurately perceiving others’ viewpoints can help individuals identify and resolve these issues before they lead to negative conflict experiences (Acitelli, Kenny, and Weiner 2001). Hence, the quality and effectiveness of the interaction of coach and athlete may not simply be a factor of how much time or opportunity they have to interact but rather of the degree to which individuals understand each other and can therefore react appropriately.

Specifically, within the 3 + 1 Cs model, the construct of co-orientation refers to two interpersonal perspectives: direct perspective and metaperspective (Jowett 2009). Direct perspective refers to coach’s and athlete’s self-perceptions of closeness, complementarity, and commitment. For example, ‘I like and appreciate my coach.’ Metaperspective refers to coach’s and athlete’s perceptions of the partner’s self-view about closeness, complementarity, and commitment. For example, ‘I think my coach likes and appreciates me.’ Essentially it is an inference about another’s opinions and beliefs regarding the coach–athlete relationship. The two perspectives can be assessed for both coach and athlete; the combination provides three new constructs: similarity, assumed similarity, and empathy. Similarity is how well the coach’s and athlete’s direct perspectives match. For example, do they like each other, are they equally committed to the athlete’s development, do they both put forth the same effort in training sessions? Assumed similarity is the congruence of an individual’s direct perspective and metaperspective. For example, if an athlete trusts the coach, does the athlete also believe the coach reciprocates that trust? Finally, empathy is the congruence between either coach’s or athlete’s metaperspective and the other’s direct perspective. For example, if an athlete believes the coach trusts her, does the coach actually trust her, or is the athlete’s inference inaccurate? In combination these three constructs describe how co-oriented the coach and the athlete are in how they perceive and accurately understand each other; it is therefore an indicator of the quality of their relationship. Understanding how coach and athlete perceive their relationship is vital to understanding the relationship’s quality. Knowledge of co-orientation then is essential for coach and athlete in the management of their relationship, and it can provide valuable information to sport psychologists working with those individuals.

1.4 Interpersonal communication

A key factor related to the quality of the coach–athlete relationship and the promotion of mutual understanding is the concept of communication. Communication is both a complex and an inescapable part of any social environment. Typically defined as any exchange of information between individuals (Dainton and Zelley 2011), the term ‘communication’ can cover
both verbal (e.g., a coach giving instructions or advice) and non-verbal communication (e.g., body language of an athlete who is being given feedback). In the training environment, particularly between coach and athlete, ‘communication’ more specifically refers to a meaningful exchange between two or more individuals in which one intends to affect the response of another. An example would be a coach giving positive encouragement in order to elicit extra effort from the athlete. As such, communication is tied to the interdependence of coach and athlete and is the primary means by which each influences the other's emotions, thoughts, and actions.

Communication can be thought of as containing two distinct elements (DeVito 1986). The first is content. When individuals communicate they are often most focused on the information they are trying to convey – such as a coach giving teaching points or advice to an athlete. As the content element is the primary means by which a coach transmits technical and tactical skills to an athlete, it is essential in developing competence and improving performance (Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen 2002). This makes the content of any communication essential in creating a successful coach–athlete relationship. The second element is relation. Often overlooked or poorly managed, the relational element is the way in which individuals pass information between them. For example, the same teaching points can be communicated by a coach in a positive, friendly manner or in a negative, stern tone. How we communicate information is often more important than the information itself, and it can profoundly influence how others respond to that communication (Montgomery 1988). Thus, the relational element of communication is the primary means by which coach and athlete build rapport and develop mutual respect and appreciation. This makes the relational element of any communication essential to creating an effective coach–athlete relationship. Therefore, both coaches and athletes need to be aware of how they communicate as well as what they are trying to communicate.

The content element of communication is typically either verbal actions (e.g., giving instructions) or conscious non-verbal actions (e.g., physically demonstrating a skill). The relational element of communication is more frequently the transmission of information using unconscious non-verbal actions such as body language, eye contact, and facial expressions, though it may also include tone of voice. Individuals typically exert less conscious control over the relational element. This can be particularly problematic, as research suggests that nearly 70% of all perceived communication is non-verbal (Burke 2005). Coaches and athletes need to consider how they are communicating, how what they communicate may be interpreted by their partner, and what affect it may have on the success and effectiveness of their relationship. Sagar and Jowett (2012) have shown that an athlete’s emotions correspond to the perception of a coach’s feedback. This is particularly the case when a coach gives feedback on poor competitive results.
Where a coach is perceived as reacting negatively, an athlete demonstrates dissatisfaction with the relationship and shows a decline in motivation and performance. Where a coach is perceived as reacting more positively, an athlete instead demonstrates increased satisfaction and improved motivation and performance. It is therefore important for coaches to consciously promote a constructive training environment. To do this they first need to be aware of the influence their communication has on the athlete and ensure that their communication is, as much as possible, framed in a positive manner.

Effective communication between coach and athlete can be said to occur when the desired response results from an individual’s correct interpretation of shared information, with no unintentional consequences (DeVito 1994). An example of this would be a coach providing feedback with the intent of motivating the athlete to correct his technique. If the athlete misinterprets the communication – perhaps because the coach unintentionally shares information through uncontrolled negative body language (e.g., folded arms or an aggressive posture) – the communication has been ineffective. However, should the athlete take on board the constructive comments and continue to put effort into improving his technique, then the communication has been effective.

In order for coach and athlete to maximise the effectiveness of their communication, they must consider how they communicate and how this communication may be interpreted by their partner. When a coach and an athlete communicate, they encode the message in language (e.g., choice of words, metaphors, jargon); it is transmitted via a medium (most commonly speech but sometimes another channel, such as email or text) and is then decoded and interpreted by the partner. This is known as mediated communication (DeVito 1994). Coach and athlete must first consider what it is they want to communicate – the core idea or the response they wish to elicit. They must then take care to choose how they encode the message. This means carefully selecting words that the person being communicated with will understand. For example, when a coach wishes to motivate an athlete, the desired response is the same regardless of the athlete being communicated with. However, the way in which the coach words that communication will differ widely depending on the age and background of the athlete. When communicating with a child, a coach may use positive, encouraging, friendly language. With an older and more experienced athlete, the coach may focus on constructive feedback regarding technique. It is also important that coach and athlete take care to carefully decode any communication to avoid misinterpreting the message and jumping to conclusions. In a team meeting after training, an athlete may yawn or seem distracted when talking with the coach. The coach could interpret this to mean the athlete is uninterested or bored and is indicating a lack of respect or appreciation.
for the coach’s feedback. However, it could also simply indicate the training session has been long and tiring for the athlete (see Figure 1.2).

It has been suggested that communication is the glue that binds the coach–athlete relationship (Jowett and Poczwardowski 2007). The quantity of communication, the content of communication, and how that communication is framed can either bring coach and athlete together or push them apart. It is through communication that coach and athlete share goals and expectations and establish roles. Without communication coach and athlete could not interact or share inner worlds. Communication therefore is essential in maintaining the quality of a coach–athlete relationship and, through it, achieving desired outcomes, such as competitive success.

1.5 Relationship conflict

Conflict is an unavoidable consequence of social relationships. Relationship conflict occurs when two interdependent people disagree. Disagreements can focus on incompatible goals, personal values, and which course of action to take; they typically occur most frequently in high-pressure situations with highly valued outcomes, such as the coach–athlete relationship (Rahim 2002). An outdated view of conflict is that it is always destructive. It has been suggested that conflict can cause tension and antagonism between individuals and that in turn they have a negative impact on the individuals’ relationship, productivity and satisfaction (Rahim 2002). While this is one possible outcome, conflict can also be constructive, and individuals often learn the most from what are perceived as negative experiences. Conflict provides the opportunity for different views and perspectives to be voiced, and research has shown that individuals make better decisions when confronted with a variety of different options and opinions (see, e.g., Schwenk 1990). Additionally, in the absence of conflict individuals are more likely to continue on the same course of action unaware of any potential inefficiencies or potentially more productive alternatives (Schulz-Hardt, Jochims, and Frey 2002). Conflict can also stimulate personal growth and the effectiveness of a relationship. Individuals must learn to balance different views and understand each other’s perspectives, developing creativity and a readiness to respond in different ways (Rahim 2002).

To understand how conflict can have both positive and negative effects on coaches and athletes, it is important to refine how conflict is defined.
It has been suggested that conflict can be divided into multiple categories. While terminology varies, typically researchers divide conflict into two categories: task and personal (e.g., Jehn and Mannix 2001). ‘Task conflict’ refers to disagreements about a particular task and to differences in viewpoints and opinions about how to deal with it. ‘Personal conflict’ refers to individuals’ disagreements about each other and their relationships and so arises from interpersonal incompatibilities. Task conflict can be facilitative, as it encourages individuals to discuss different options and to consider a task in more detail, which in turn results in a greater understanding of the task. As such it can encourage coaches and athletes to develop new approaches and to optimise their training and preparation. However, in everyday tasks that already have a well-developed and effective approach, task conflict can still be destructive by interfering with these well-practised routines (Rahim 2002). In contrast, personal conflict is not thought to be facilitative under any circumstances. Instead personal conflict disrupts the training and competition environments by focusing the coach’s and athlete’s efforts on personal disagreements rather than on training and competing. Thus it can decrease trust, loyalty, and respect and reduce the desire to work effectively together, which in turn decrease satisfaction and performance (Rahim 2002).

1.5.1 Effective conflict

The potentially positive benefits of task conflict are thought to be based upon the careful control and management of that conflict. While task conflict can facilitate new ideas and directions, these benefits can quickly disappear when individuals perceive the conflict to become more intense, competitive or aggressive. The competence with which a conflict is handled, then, can directly influence the outcome of that disagreement. The competence-based model of interpersonal conflict (Canary, Stafford, and Semic 2002) provides a theoretical framework for how conflict can be potentially managed. Conflict episodes first stem from the perception of incompatible goals or direction. These conflicts can have both a positive and negative impact on intrapersonal outcomes (e.g., personal satisfaction or performance) and relational outcomes (e.g., relationship quality and interpersonal satisfaction). However, the impact of conflict episodes is mediated by episodic assessments and conflict management strategies. ‘Episodic assessments’ refer to individual evaluations of the competence of communication during that conflict and the individual’s satisfaction with that interpersonal communication. This means that during a conflict, coach and athlete make conscious and unconscious judgements about how the conflict is unfolding and how happy each is with the partner’s interaction. For example, a coach might be telling an athlete she is being dropped from a squad. If the athlete perceives that the coach is understanding, has good reason for acting, and explains how the athlete may regain her position, then she will be more likely to respond constructively. Conversely,
if the coach simply tells the athlete she is dropped and does not listen to her concerns, then the athlete is likely to respond negatively. Conflict management strategies include any actions individuals take to improve the outcome of episodic assessments. As will be discussed, management strategies can include increased discussion and openness and an increased effort to work together effectively. As the impact of conflict episodes on intrapersonal and relational outcomes are mediated by episodic assessments and conflict management strategies, it is difficult to predict a conflict’s outcome. It can vary greatly depending on how coaches and athletes perceive and judge each other and on their cognitive maturity and past experiences with each other and with other coaches and athletes. Thus, coaches and athletes should strive hard to improve the competency with which they communicate during conflicts and the positivity of their judgements of each other.

### 1.6 Managing an effective and successful relationship

It has been suggested that all individuals seek out relationships that are both stable and long lasting. This is particularly desirable in coach–athlete relationships, where long-term commitment is needed if athletes are to complete their journey from beginner to expert or if long-term retention of individuals in sport is to be encouraged. The 3 + 1 Cs conceptualisation of the coach–athlete relationship incorporates this concept in the construct of commitment, which expresses a coach’s and an athlete’s intention to remain together and their belief in the long-term direction of the relationship. However, research has shown that a large amount of time and effort must be invested in any relationship and that individuals must actively work at maintaining a relationship to prevent a decline in its quality, which would lead to a decrease in its effectiveness and success (Canary, Stafford, and Semic 2002).

‘Maintenance strategies’ are defined as an individual's approach to sustaining a relationship in a particular state (Dindia and Canary 1993). Additionally they indicate an active effort to improve, not just maintain, the relationship’s perceived quality. Individuals involved in sport can therefore use these maintenance strategies to (i) prevent any decline in the quality of their relationship, (ii) develop the relationship further, and/or (iii) repair the relationship if it has experienced a period of decline or interpersonal conflict (Rhind and Jowett 2011). The specific use of maintenance strategies in everyday relationships has been linked with improvement in levels of closeness (increased trust; Stafford, Dainton, and Hass 2000), complementarity (decreased power struggles; Canary and Stafford 1992), and commitment (Canary and Stafford 1992). However, the bulk of this research (and applied
guidelines resulting from it) has focused on relationships involving parents, friends, or romantic partners. Yet the coach–athlete relationship is distinctly different from these partnerships. As this sport-specific relationship between coach and athlete forms in a range of specific contexts (e.g., sport-type, sport-culture, competitive level) and under specific pressures (e.g., funding, performance expectations, performance outcomes), it is important that any set of maintenance strategies applied in this setting be specific to the coach–athlete relationship. Rhind and Jowett (2010) have suggested that all forms of relationship maintenance can be encompassed by seven broad categories, the names of which form the acronym COMPASS: conflict management, openness, motivation, positivity, advice, support, social networks. This framework provides the most widely accepted guidelines for both coaches and athletes—and for psychologists working in sport.

1.6.1 Conflict management

Conflict management can be subdivided into proactive management and reactive management and often includes elements of other relationship maintenance strategies. Proactive management incorporates actions that are designed to avoid conflict occurrence. These include any action that clarifies the expectations of coach and athlete and establishes the consequences for either party’s failing to meet these expectations. These strategies are particularly relevant to the coach–athlete relationship, which in general has a greater emphasis on specific outcomes and long-term planning (Gould et al. 2007). Examples of this type of strategy include preseason meetings and establishing of ground rules and mutual goal setting. Reactive management incorporates actions that are designed to ease conflict after it occurs. It covers actions that increase cooperation between coach and athlete during a conflict and facilitate its resolution (Canary and Zelley 2000). This type of strategy includes formalised discussion of an ongoing conflict, the setting of goals to resolve it, and the establishment of consequences should the goals not be met. For example, athletes who are continually late to training may agree to improve their timeliness, with the warning that they will be dropped from the squad if they do not improve.

1.6.2 Openness

Openness relates to how coach and athlete approach communication, primarily in how they choose to disclose their emotions and in the ability to recognise how the partner is feeling. It includes three sets of strategies for improving this aspect of the relationship: non-sport communication, approachability, and awareness. Non-sport communication strategies are about ensuring that time is set aside to discuss issues that are not directly related to training or competition. Topics outside the sporting environment—such as family life, work stresses, and personal issues—can help create a closer
bond between two individuals (Stafford and Canary 1991). Additionally, as these may provide a coach valuable insight about the athlete's behaviour, they may help prevent a conflict developing. For example, if an athlete is putting in less effort during training, it may be due to stress from family life; knowing this, the coach can moderate his or her reactions. Approachability strategies are about establishing an environment where coach and athlete feel comfortable talking about anything and so are closely related to non-sport communication. They include assurances about confidentiality and safe communication, so individuals do not feel they will be judged or evaluated (Stafford and Canary 1991). They may include setting aside time outside training where athletes can meet with the coach one on one or may form part of proactive management strategies that establish ground rules and boundaries. Finally, awareness is about making accurate inferences about another's thoughts and feelings. Such accuracy is dependent on a coach and athlete having the motivation to attempt to understand one another and sufficient information on which to base the inference (Funder 1995). Awareness thus is closely related to the other two openness strategies, each of which can act as a major source of information.

1.6.3 Motivation

Motivational strategies revolve around the willingness of coach and athlete to work with each other or the attempt of each to motivate the other to work in cooperation. Rhind and Jowett (2010) highlight an overlap between being motivated to work together to maintain the quality of the relationship and being motivated to enhance performance. However, given that both outcomes are likely to be associated with intrapersonal and interpersonal satisfaction, there seems little need to try and separate them. Motivational strategies can be broken into four categories: effort, demonstrating ability, motivation of others, and enjoyment. Effort reflects the striving during training to demonstrate willingness to work with each other; for example, turning up early or trying your best at all times. This is closely associated with the second category, demonstrating ability, where an individual attempts to show the capability of making the relationship successful. This could include putting in extra effort, demonstrating passion or enthusiasm, or working to improve the relationship through discussion. The third category, motivation of others, is about creating an environment where your partner wants to work with you by, for example, giving encouragement and praise, discussing what coach and athlete have to offer each other, and committing to long-term goals. The final category, enjoyment, is related to the creation of this positive environment. It is about attempting to make any interaction as enjoyable as possible. But it is important to ensure that in doing so a coach or athlete does not distract from the purpose of training (such a distraction would be allowing an athlete just to play games rather
than train). These strategies are about positive friendly interactions; they pace training so as to balance enjoyment and skill progression.

1.6.4 Positivity

Strategies based on positivity focus on individual’s behaviours, adapting them to suit the coach or the athlete’s preferences while at the same time treating individuals fairly according to their individual circumstances. Research on these strategies in other relationship types has focused on solely acting cheerfully and attempting to be encouraging around your partner (Stafford and Canary 1991). However, the coach–athlete relationship has a variety of goals, not just an effective relationship. Thus, positivity must be tempered by other factors (Rhind and Jowett 2010). These strategies have to be broken down into three categories: adaptability, consideration of external pressures, and fairness. Adaptability is about changing behaviours to suit the partner’s needs and preferences. For example, a coach might alter her coaching style by making it less autocratic and more democratic. In terms of relationship quality, it could also mean a coach being more lenient in specific circumstances or altering training routines when necessary. Adaptability is also linked to consideration of external pressures. This means that the coach or athlete is adapting to the other’s preferences due to knowledge of additional factors. An example would be a coach reducing training loads because a student athlete had exams in the near future. Finally, the category fairness is about balancing the considerations and needs of the athlete and not favouring any one individual. Overall, positivity is about dealing with events in an upbeat manner and customising one’s approach to the individual. Coaches and athletes need to ensure they are aware of events in each other’s lives and act in a way that ensures the events do not negatively affect their relationship.

1.6.5 Advice

Advice strategies are about giving opinions on sport-specific issues encountered by the coach or the athlete and about rewarding appropriate actions with positive feedback. Whereas previous relationship-maintenance strategies address specific interactions related to training and improvements in sport performance, the role of advice is central, indeed vital, to the coach-athlete relationship (Smith and Smoll 1990). That relationship’s effectiveness and success are intrinsically linked, and by enhancing an athlete’s success, the relationship quality between athlete and coach can also be maintained or improved. Advice strategies fall into three categories: sport communication, reward feedback, and constructive feedback. Sport communication is based upon frank discussion of issues or problems that directly impact training or competitive performance. This includes discussion of fitness, skills, and tactics and so encapsulates the normal day-to-day business of
the coaching process. Reward feedback is about recognising effort and successful behaviours and offering praise. It is not about simply being positive or rewarding all actions, only about rewarding actions that have been identified as desirable and at an appropriate level. Constructive feedback is about giving honest opinions and advice about training and performance and about framing this advice in such a way that it furthers the athlete's performance rather than focus on criticising it and so potentially hinder progression. For example, a coach might point out what an athlete has done wrong and give positive correction rather than simply say that the athlete performed poorly.

1.6.6 Support

Support strategies fall into three categories: assurance, sport-specific support, and personal support. All three concern the need of coach and athlete to demonstrate commitment to each other and to the relationship. Research into other relationship types has consistently demonstrated the need for individuals to demonstrate their support in order to maintain a relationship's quality (Stafford and Canary 1991). However, the coach–athlete relationship, with its focus on measurable outcomes as well as relationship quality, requires support of both sport-related and non-sport issues. Assurance strategies focus solely on demonstrating that a coach or an athlete is committed to the relationship. This means that they are strongly associated with the motivational strategies, effort, and demonstrative abilities discussed previously. Sport-specific support strategies focus on providing necessary care and support after poor performances; for example, providing reassurance, encouragement, or constructive feedback. Sport-specific support overlaps with other strategies, such as advice, but is specific in that it refers to how coach and athlete interact following a lack of competitive success. Personal support strategies focus on providing care and support regarding negative events outside the training and competition environment. This again means there is an overlap with other strategies, particularly openness, but with a focus on negative outcomes.

1.6.7 Social networks

Strategies regarding social networks are focused on the coach and the athlete spending time with each other, potentially along with other team members. The key to these strategies is that the time should be spent outside the sport context and is in addition to any time spent together training or competing. Divided into two dimensions, social networks include socialising and shared networks. Socialising is simply the coach and the athlete finding time to interact outside the sport environment. Spending time together has been shown to improve relationship quality (Stafford and Canary 1991), but more
importantly it may also provide a vehicle for other relationship-maintenance strategies. It can provide an environment in which coach and athlete are more open, demonstrate commitment to each other, and de-emphasise the competitive or success element of their relationship by instead focusing on enjoyable, effective personal interaction. The shared network dimension – which relates to the nature of the socialising and emphasises the need to spend time with mutual friends or acquaintances such as fellow team members – may include celebrating competition outcomes or team-building exercises. While shared social networks can de-emphasise the importance of the competitive or success element of relationships, they may also impact related factors, such as team cohesion (Jowett and Chaundy 2004).

1.7 Summary

Coaches play an important role in the social processes of the training environment of athletes. The coach is often the key socialising agent in the behavioural change of an athlete and as such is crucial in the athlete’s long-term development and retention in sport and in the athlete’s intrapersonal and interpersonal satisfaction, which can be a natural consequence of involvement in sport. The primary vehicle of these social processes is the coach-athlete relationship, the quality of which encompasses the affect, behaviours, and cognitions of coach and athlete, as well as how they perceive each other. As such relationships periodically experience episodes of conflict, they require careful application of relationship-maintenance strategies to repair and enhance them. The case study discusses specific strategies that a coach (or a psychologist working with the coach and the athlete) could use to create an optimal coaching environment for both training and competition.

1.8 Case study

1.8.1 Setting the scene

Gail is a 16-year-old gymnast who has recently secured a place on the national squad. Prior to this, she worked with a coach in her home town for 11 years. They formed a close bond of trust, and Gail won several major regional competitions. Since she has been appointed to the national squad, Gail has had to travel a sizable distance each week to train at the national performance centre with Jill, her new head coach. Jill is 52 years old and has over 30 years of coaching experience, including having coached several successful Olympic medalists. While the first few weeks of training went reasonably well, recently Gail and Jill have experienced conflict and other negative relational issues in their athletic relationship. Gail has said, ‘I’m dedicated, I put in the hours. I’ve been
doing this sport my entire life and I have a lot to offer!’ Jill, however, feels that ‘Gail, while a potentially talented gymnast, is wilful and expects all of my time to be focused on her; she isn’t the only girl on the squad.’ These conflicts are causing disruption at the national performance centre and impacting the training of both Gail and her fellow gymnasts. If the conflict is not resolved soon, Gail might lose her place on the national squad, and her international career could end before it even started.

**How can the coach and the athlete get their conflict under control before going on to repair and re-establish their relationship?**

1.8.2 Assessing the situation

The key socialising agent in this situation is likely to be the coach. While the athlete plays a central role, the coach, who is likely to be the older and more knowledgeable of the two, will have had more experience managing coach–athlete relationships. In this situation the coach needs to acknowledge her primary role in managing the coaching process. Jill must recognise that Gail is both a successful athlete and a young girl and that these two identities must be balanced. This conflict would primarily be managed through open and frank discussion between the two individuals. However, it seems that this conflict has progressed too far to be managed solely by the individuals involved. At higher levels of competition there is a greater chance that a sport psychologist will be involved to assist in providing a wider range of information and to facilitate reparations between coach and athlete. In this case the sport psychologist can draw upon two well-established instruments to help assess the situation.

The Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett and Ntoumanis 2004) is used to assess the quality of a coach–athlete relationship as conceptualised by the 3 + 1 Cs model. The CART-Q is unique in that it comes in four forms: two each for the coach and the athlete, one for their direct perspective, and one for their metaperspective. This allows them not only to assess how each perceives their relationship but also to assess the similarity and accuracy of their perceptions. The Coach–Athlete Relationship Maintenance Questionnaire (CARM-Q; Rhind and Jowett 2012) is used to assess how frequently a coach and an athlete are using the seven relationship-maintenance strategies conceptualised in the COMPASS model. In the case of Jill and Gail, it is likely that their problem arises from an inaccuracy in their perceptions of each other. Gail is committed to working with Jill and obviously feels that she is trying her best for the coach and the rest of the squad. However, as Jill perceives Gail to be acting in a non-complementary way, she questions Gail’s commitment. Their disagreements have probably resulted in decreased levels of trust, liking, and respect in both Gail and Jill. It seems unlikely that either Gail or Jill is using any relationship-management strategies; they have let their relationship deteriorate to a critical level.
1.8.3 Important role of key socialising agents in behaviour change

In this situation, the coach and the sport psychologist both have an important role in resolving the conflict. Potentially the main facilitator will be the sport psychologist, who will act as a mediator. She will first have to ensure that Jill and Gail agree to work with her and then establish a time separate from training when all three can sit down to discuss the problem. It is important for the sport psychologist to remain neutral and not take sides. Additionally, her main role is to ensure that the discussion remains focused on task resolution and does not deteriorate into a personal conflict. To do this, there will need to be ground rules for the discussion to ensure that Jill and Gail contribute equally to the conversation. While the sport psychologist will play an important role, Jill and Gail must learn to work together without the future intervention of a third party. In light of her critical position, the sport psychologist must establish an action plan and follow-up procedures for Jill and Gail to follow. Additionally, Jill and Gail will need to learn appropriate relationship-maintenance strategies to ensure the future effectiveness and success of their relationship. Given Gail’s youth, a greater proportion of the responsibility for this may fall upon Jill.

1.8.4 Specific strategies for key socialising agents

The following suggested strategies could be used by coaches and athletes to ensure effectiveness and successful experience in both training and competitions.

- Accept that disagreements will happen and that not everyone sees things the same way. Avoid ascribing blame; realise that conflict can be constructive as well as destructive.
- Develop an understanding of the seven main relationship-maintenance strategies and an awareness of how they can be successfully used. For example, conflict management and openness strategies are likely to be useful, but Jill and Gail are unlikely to be able to socialise or share similar social networks due to the substantial age difference and the fact that Gail lives a significant distance from where she trains.
- Understand and respect any gap in age, culture, or experience. Realise that both individuals will see things in different ways. It is important to appreciate that although opinions will differ, both individuals have potentially important contributions to make to the partnership.
- Discuss conflicts sooner rather than later. Issues left unresolved are likely to create a negative training experience; the longer they are left undiscussed, the more they will grow.
- Always take conflict seriously and give appropriate time and effort to each other’s concerns. Always act with empathy and genuine concern.
• Create a safe time and place for discussion that will not disrupt training for either you or other coaches and athletes.
• Mentally rehearse what you want to say prior to confronting the other individual about a problem. Try to ensure your point is made objectively and does not become a personal conflict.
• If unsure about an issue, ask questions to clarify the situation. Attempt to understand the situation as far as possible; do not leap to conclusions.
• Look for common ground and agreement where possible.

1.9 Further study and recommended reading

The following literature is recommended for further reading on key concepts addressed in this chapter.


Additionally, reading of the following relevant documents is recommended; they address areas that are essential in understanding the coaching environment.

Achievement Goal Theory, 23
active commuting, 121, 123–124
adherence, 147–150, 160–161, 184–185
anxiety
cognitive, 32, 78, 91
somatic anxiety, 78
athlete satisfaction, 34–35
attention restoration theory, 193
attentional cues, 79
attribution theory, 46–47
big-fish-little-pond effect, 114–116
biopsychosocial model of challenge and threat, 67–68
brief advice, 171–174, 180–181
choking, 65, 75–78
distraction based model, 76
processing efficiency model, 76
self-consciousness, 76
self-presentational model, 77
coach leadership, 29–30
coaching behaviours, 29, 37, 92
peel leadership, 30
coach-athlete relationship, 3, 30, 35, 84, 89, 95
closeness, 4
commitment, 6
complementarity, 5
co-orientation, 6–7
Jowett’s 3+1Cs Conceptual Model, 3–7
cognitive restructuring, 79–80
collective efficacy, 31
communication, 7–11, 37, 99
interpersonal, 7–9
mediated, 10–11
competence motivation theory, 116–118
competition, 44–46
hypercompetiveness, 60
compliance, 182–185
conflict
aggression, 58–59
group identity, 56–57
intergroup, 56
interpersonal (relationship), 10–12
intragroup, 22, 34, 36
management strategies, 12–16
developmental model of sport participation, 85, 93–94
eating-disorder symptoms, 35
ecological workplace model, 128
exercise consultations, 179–180
exercise leader, 149–154, 163–164
leadership styles and characteristics, 150–154
exercise referrals, 181–187
expectancy value theory, 85–86
family, 84–100, 199–121
fathers, 88, 90
mothers, 88, 90, 95
parent-athlete relationship, 35, 84, 89
parental involvement, 85–88, 90–93, 95, 96
siblings, 84, 93–97, 100
gender differences, 23–24, 31
goal setting, 37, 131, 136
ego orientation, 23
task orientation, 23
green space effect, 193–194, 196–197, 199–200, 202–204
group cohesion, 160–164, 166
attraction to the group, 160, 163
group integration, 160–161
social cohesion, 135–136, 163–164, 167
task cohesion, 135–136, 163–164, 167
hazing, 30
health care professionals, 172–174, 180–181
informational support, 129–131
jealousy, 28
learned helplessness, 50–51
lifespan model, 85, 94
mood, 32
motivational climate, 23, 100–112
  adult created, 23–24
  coach created, 24, 25, 26, 29
  parent created, 91
  peer created, 22, 23–26, 36
  task-oriented, 106, 121–122
motivational interviewing, 174–179
self-determination theory, 175–177
self-efficacy, 49–50, 108–110
  modelling, 108–110, 118–119, 123–124
  self-handicapping, 51–52
self-presentation, 154–160
  social anxiety, 151, 155–160, 183–185
  social physique anxiety, 155–159, 166–167
simulation training, 73–74, 79
social facilitation, 65–68
  crowd factors, 69–72
  home advantage, 65, 68–74
  home disadvantage, 74–75
social interaction, 183–184, 195–196, 199–202
social loafing, 32
social media, 139–140
social support, 133–134, 139–140, 179–180, 184–185
TARGET framework, 112–113, 124
  team cohesion, 22–36, 134–136
  antecedents, 28–30
  outcomes, 31–32
  social cohesion, 27–32, 34
  task cohesion, 27–32, 34
  team building, 36
  teammates, 21–35, 84
transtheoretical model, 130, 134, 140–141
workplace champions, 139–140
workplace interventions, 136–139