

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## **The International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sport (IRNOVIS) Research Symposium**

### **Safe sport research today: Where are we at?**



Co-Hosted by Safe Sport International as part of the Global Safe Sport Conference 2023:

Hope, Healing and Transformation

Site host: Loughborough University London 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2023

Edited by: Dr Mary Woessner, Dr Aurélie Pankowiak, Dr Emma Kavanagh, Dr Tine Vertommen



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# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO IRNOVIS

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We welcome your attendance at the International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sport (IRNOVIS) and Safe Sport International (SSI) Research Symposium, being held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September at Loughborough University, London, UK. We would like to start by acknowledging and thanking SSI and Loughborough University for hosting this research symposium.

IRNOVIS aims to maximize the scientific impact of research on violence in sport (from prevention to response) in order to better inform sport policy development and implementation, including advising on ethical governance. Specifically, our network aims to develop and advance an international research agenda to study violence and integrity in sport, by bringing together leading researchers. The network is led by a host university, the University of Antwerp and includes several other universities partners: Ghent University (Belgium), KU Leuven (Belgium), CRIPCAS/Université Laval (Canada), McMaster University (Canada), Victoria University (Australia), Bournemouth University (The United Kingdom), Erasmus University Rotterdam and Utrecht University (The Netherlands)

The idea for the network was born from the recognition that violence in sport is a wicked problem, whose complexity necessitates a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach in order to fully understand how violence is perpetuated in sport and appropriately address and respond to it, both within individual countries and on the international level. At the time of the network creation, researchers addressing this topic had primarily been working in silos. The network was therefore a solution to address the fragmentation of the international research efforts in this space and facilitate collaboration and the development of an international agenda for research priorities.

IRNOVIS was made possible by a 5-year funding scheme from the Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium (FWO for the period 2020-2024). While COVID-19 created challenges to actualise the research collaborations, Zoom™ became our best friend and allowed us to establish and achieve diverse initiatives:

- Multiple peer-review publications
- An online symposium co-hosted with The Research Chair in Safety and Integrity in Sport (Laval University, Quebec)
- An ongoing Delphi study
- Guest lectures
- Development of new collaborations
- Mentoring of Early Career Researchers by established experts in the field

Since the establishment of the network, this research symposium will be the first time that we have had the opportunity to meet in person as a network. We are so grateful to be able to share this moment with the growing community of researchers committed to address violence in sport.

While we always envisioned hosting an international symposium, we never imagined hosting this day of research with over 30 presentations by delegates from 14 different countries. We are so grateful to have you here with us.

Above all else, we seek to ensure the symposium is day of scientific exploration, inspiration, community connection, critical and safe engagement. The talks have all been structured as

short format, encouraging presenters to provide snapshots of their work, necessitating further discussions and connections during the many networking breaks throughout the day and we hope, long after the symposium finishes.

We ask you as a delegate to consider both yours and your fellow delegates wellbeing throughout the day, as we acknowledge that the topics being discussed are of a sensitive nature. We come together as researchers, athletes, sport participants, survivors, allies and community members, and acknowledge that the content of the day could be challenging. We encourage you to take breaks from the presentations or activities as needed, and to speak to any of our conference team members should you need further support or assistance throughout the day.

We thank you for your support of this symposium, and we are so pleased to be a part of a collective academic network to advance this field.

Your Symposium Organising Committee,



International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sports

# THANKS AND RECOGNITION: DR TINE VERTOMMEN

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IRNOVIS is a network of international researchers who have come together to collectively advance the research agenda in relation to safeguarding in sport. Dr. Tine Vertommen has not only been the leader of our team, but has also functioned as the secretary, accountant, cheerleader, mentor and sponsor. Our team would not exist without her leadership. We remain constantly amazed at her tireless efforts to drive forward change in both research and advocacy.

So many of the team have reflected on her impact not only on the field of safeguarding in sport, but in their individual professional and personal lives. Indeed, while she leads the network in achieving keys aims and milestones across its 5-year initiative, she has simultaneously lifted so many researchers up alongside her.

It is safe to say many of us would not be where we are today without her guidance, support, and encouragement. While these words alone cannot do justice to her impact, as we celebrate the gathering of so many incredible researchers and practitioners focused on promoting safe sport, we offer this special note of thanks and appreciation to Dr. Tine Vertommen.



International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sports

## CO-HOST: SAFE SPORT INTERNATIONAL

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### **Safe Sport International Everyone, everywhere safe in sport**

Safe Sport International is a leading non-profit committed to ending all forms of interpersonal violence, abuse, and harassment in sports environments globally. We are a global network of safeguarding experts united by a desire to uphold human rights and put research and the voices of athletes at the heart of a vision of everyone, everywhere safe in sport.

Safe Sport International is a UK based charity and every donation of time, support or funding, no matter how small or big, can help us make a difference for all.

[www.safesportinternational.com](http://www.safesportinternational.com)



## EVENT SITE HOST: LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

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We are delighted to have the [Institute for Sport Business](#) at Loughborough University London to partner with IRNOVIS and SSI as our Event Host. @lborolondon @LboroSportBiz



# TAKING CARE & SUPPORT RESOURCES

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The topic of the conference can be challenging. Some people in the room/ reading this book of abstract have experienced violence in or outside of sport. Even if you have not experienced violence yourself you could be impacted by hearing/reading stories or challenging content. We encourage you to consider what you could do if feel discomfort or distress by what you hear or read.

Here are a few tips (we acknowledge Dr Kirsty Forsdike for this care package).

- Go to a quiet room away from the conference
- Go for a walk
- Get a glass of water
- Pick up a pen and some paper and start doodling (something you can hold and do to ground yourself)

**Local Mental Health services** (more at <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/helplines-listening-services/>)

- **Samaritans.** To talk about anything that is upsetting you, you can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call 116 123 (free from any phone), email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or visit some branches in person. You can also call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line on 0808 164 0123 (7pm–11pm every day).
- **SANEline.** If you're experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else, you can call SANEline on 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm–10.30pm every day).
- **National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK.** Offers a supportive listening service to anyone with thoughts of suicide. You can call the National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK on 0800 689 5652 (6pm to midnight every day).
- **Shout.** If you would prefer not to talk but want some mental health support, you could text SHOUT to 85258. Shout offers a confidential 24/7 text service providing support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.
- **Switchboard.** If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, you can call Switchboard on 0300 330 0630 (10am–10pm every day), email [chris@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:chris@switchboard.lgbt) or use their webchat service. Phone operators all identify as LGBT+.



# COMMITTEES

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## **Program and scientific committee**

Dr Tine Vertommen, Thomas More University Belgium

Dr Mary Woessner, Victoria University, Australia

Dr Emma Kavanagh, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom.

Dr Aurélie Pankowiak, Victoria University, Australia

## **Local organisational Committee**

Dr Emily Hayday, Loughborough University

Prof Andrea Geurin, Loughborough University

Dr Lauren Burch, Loughborough University

# SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

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## Welcome and IRNOVIS presentations

Time	Item	Presenter(s)
9:00-9:30	Arrival/ Morning Tea and Coffee	
9:30-9:40	Welcome/ Scene Setting	Tine Vertommen & Emma Kavanagh
9:40-9:50	"I never got out of that locker room", an autoethnography on multi-perpetrator, peer athlete, abuse in organized sports	Vidar Stevens
9:50-10:00	Telling adults about it: children's experience of disclosing interpersonal violence in community sport.	Mary Woessner & Aurelie Pankowiak
10:00-10:10	Acceptance and normalisation of interpersonal violence in sport by coaches and sport participants	Felien Laureys

## Session 1 (10:15am-10:40am)

Time	Item	Presenter(s)
10:15-10:20	Prevalence of interpersonal violence among elite athletes in Brazil	Joanna Maranhao
10:20-10:25	Sexual harassment and abuse among adolescent athletes in Norway	Nina Solvberg
10:25-10:30	The lived experiences of transgender footballers in the UK	Terri Harvey
10:30-10:35	Sexual harassment and abuse in sport: A Systematic Literature Review	Carole Gomez
10:35-10:40	The field of gymnastics as an inverted pyramid build on the struggle of minor athletes	Sophia Tassopoulou
10:40-10:50	Questions	

## Morning Tea: 10:50-11:20

## Session 2 (11:20-11:45am)

Time	Item	Presenter(s)
11:20-11:25	The Role of Former Athlete Gymnastics Coaches in Advancing Safe Sport: A Phenomenological Study	Mine Kızılgüneş
11:25-11:30	Safe Sport Allies: Stimulating positive bystander behaviors among coaches from grassroot sport clubs	Karolien Adriaens
11:30-11:35	Culturally Informed Safe Sport Coach Education: Youth coaches' attitudes, norms and beliefs about receiving safe sport education in Mediterranean countries.	Helena Verhelle
11:35-11:45	Questions	

**Session 3 (11:35-12:30)**

Time	Item	Presenter(s)
11:45-11:50	No Pain, No Gain? The Cost of Win-At-All-Cost Cultures in Elite Sport	Katrina Monton
11:50-11:55	Coercive control in sport organisations: a narrative review	Victoria Roberts
11:55-12:00	"Policies, Practice and Personnel - A Caribbean Perspective Towards a Compassionate Safeguarding Compliance Model"	Mark Mungal
12-12:10	Questions	
12:10-12:15	Legal table tennis - who is legally responsible for athletes' welfare?	Csilla Szomolai
12:15-12:20	The duty of Sport Governing Bodies to address allegations of Gender-based Violence against Athletes	Shubham Jain
12:20-12:25	An Exploration of Athlete and Support Staff Experiences of the UK Sport Culture Health Check Process	Amy Cowd
12:25-12:30	Building a System for Eliminating Corporal Punishment and Abuse from Leaders in Youth Sports in Japan	Katsumi Mori
12:30-12:40	Questions	

**Lunch/Posters (12:40-1:40pm)**

Time	Item	Presenter(s)
12:40-1:40pm	Meta-synthesis of women's experiences of gender-based interpersonal violence in sport	Kirsty Forsdike
	Safeguarding concepts in voluntary work: Development of an E-learning information and training platform	Clara Fabry
	#UsToo: Transforming safeguarding education through developing knowledge of coaches' engagement and perceptions	Julia Chan
	Safe at training with Save the Children Norway - evaluating visions and/or realities	Hanne Sogn
	A controlling coaching style as gateway to athlete harassment and abuse: a preliminary study in gymnastics.	Elisa Lefever
	Football Dreams or Nightmares: The Academy	Ellie Gennings
	Building European Safe Sports Together: a conceptual framework of harassment and abuse	Marleen Haandrikman
	Keeping sport safe when parents say 'yes': Exploring children's experiences of consent through a youth rugby case study	Ruth Barnes

### **Safe Sport Panel (1:40-2:20pm)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
1:40-2:20pm	Safe Sport Panel	Sylvie Parent, Margo Mountjoy, Tine Vertommen, Emma Kavanagh Chair: Mary Woessner

### **Session 4 (2:25-2:50pm)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
2:25-2:30	Addressing gender-based violence in and through rural and regional sports communities	Kirsty Forsdike
2:30-2:35	Do we know where we're going? Questions and concerns for coaching care and athlete welfare research and international policy	Ben Carr
2:35-2:40	Defining Care in Sport	Julia Chan
2:40-2:50	Questions?	

### **Afternoon tea (2:50-3:20pm)**

### **Session 5 (3:20-3:40pm)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
3:20-3:30	Safeguarding online spaces in sport: virtual maltreatment, abuse, and toxic social media practices experienced by Olympic athletes	Emily Hayday, Andrea Geurin, Lauren Burch
3:30-3:40	Challenging the beliefs driving a pressuring coaching style: what does the evidence reveal?	Leen Haerens

### **Closing (3:30-4:00pm)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
3:40-4:00	Award, Thank Yous and Closing Remarks	Tine Vertommen and Yetsa Tuakli- Wosornu

# IRNOVIS Presentations

## **“I never got out of that locker room”, an autoethnography on multi-perpetrator, peer athlete, abuse in organized sports**

Vidar Stevens

Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands

This autoethnography documents the development of the sexual abuse I experienced by multiple male peer athletes in a youth sports setting. Based on the notes and writings in my diary, a thick-description' is produced, to help facilitate understanding of the culture in which the abuse took place. The development of my abuse for the most part aligns with what I understand as the social-ordering proposition. This proposition assumes that sexual abuse in male team sport settings stems from 'masculine-validating processes' among team members, where individual members try to counter fears of emasculation and acquire a 'hero-image' in the team, by showing how well they are able to harm and hurt their peers. I use Lee Sinden's (2013, p.617) concept of hierarchical observation to explain how the masculine-validating processes were able to continue and persist. To elaborate, I will show how a certain kind of 'surveillance script' developed which the teammates followed. The script was rehearsed and reproduced every time we entered the locker room. Some of the teammates freely embraced their assigned roles in the 'script'. Other teammates were 'controlled' by the team captains or their assistants to the extent that they were told how to act; these teammates were expected to conform without questioning the routine of humiliating and hurting their fellow teammates, otherwise they could be the next victim.

The autoethnography teaches us that "bodies" and "spaces", like the locker room, are entangled with each other. My body and the bodies of my peer athletes were more than just biological entities; they were also social constructions that were shaped by the social norms that regulated our social context. Some of my team members and their bodies were deemed as having the right to belong on the team and in the space of the locker room, while others (like me) were marked as "space invaders", who were, in accordance with how both the space of the locker room and the 'bodies' within the locker room were imagined, circumscribed as being out of place. Hence, the perpetrators were not only able to hurt my "biological body", but on a social level, they also marginalized the presence of "my body" in the social processes that took place in the locker room.

## Telling adults about it: children's experience of disclosing interpersonal violence in community sport.

Mary Woessner<sup>1,2</sup>, Aurélie Pankowiak<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Emma Kavanagh<sup>4</sup>, Sylvie Parent<sup>5,2,6</sup>, Tine Vertommen<sup>7,2,8</sup>, Rochelle Eime<sup>1,3</sup>, Ramon Spaaij<sup>1,9</sup>, Jack Harvey<sup>3</sup>, Alexandra Parker<sup>1,10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute for Health and Sport, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. <sup>2</sup>Research Chair in Security and Integrity in Sport, Université Laval, Quebec, Canada. <sup>3</sup>Physical Activity and Sport Insights, Research and Innovation, Federation University, Ballarat, Australia. <sup>4</sup>Department of Sport and Event Management, Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, United Kingdom. <sup>5</sup>Department of Physical Education, Faculty of Education, Université Laval, Quebec, Canada. <sup>6</sup>Interdisciplinary Research Center on Intimate Relationship Problems and Sexual Abuse (CRIPCAS), Quebec, Canada. <sup>7</sup>People & Care, Prevention and Empowerment Research Unit, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Ghent, Belgium. <sup>8</sup>Social Epidemiology and Health Policy, Antwerp, Belgium. <sup>9</sup>School of Governance, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands. <sup>10</sup>Orygen and Centre for Youth Mental Health, Melbourne, Australia

Safeguarding children from interpersonal violence (IV) in sport is an international priority for government and sport organisations. A key challenge in safeguarding is the reliance on self-disclosures of experiences of IV and a limited understanding of the frequency, barriers to and process of disclosures of IV. Through a mixed-methods design, combining survey and interviews, we explored the frequencies of disclosures of experiences of IV (psychological, physical, and sexual) against children in sport as well as who children disclosed to and how the interaction unfolded. The frequency of disclosures IV was low (46%). Those who experienced peer violence disclosed at the highest frequency (35%), followed by coach (26.8%) or parent (13%) perpetrated IV. A parent/carer was most often the adult that the child disclosed their experience to, but there were gender differences in whether a coach or another adult was the second preferred adult actor. The interviews provided insights into how normalisation of violence (by the children, adults, and broader sport community) influenced all aspects of the disclosure and how elements of stress buffering (normalising, dismissing or rationalising) underpinned the disclosure interaction. Critically, normalisation and stress buffering were key facilitators of the cyclical pattern of disclosures. Collectively these findings highlight the need for policies and practices to explicitly identify and describe all forms of IV in sport as prohibited conduct, breaking down the culture of normalisation. Education and intervention initiatives should consider targeting parents as likely first responders to disclosures, emphasizing the need to avoid normalising, buffering and rationalising behaviours.

# Acceptance and normalisation of interpersonal violence in sport by coaches and sport participants

Felien Laureys<sup>1,2</sup>, Tine Vertommen<sup>2</sup>, Elisa Lefever<sup>1</sup>, Annick Willem<sup>1</sup>, Leen Haerens<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Movement and Sports Sciences, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium. <sup>2</sup>Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Antwerp, Belgium

It is widely known that athletes enjoy many health and social benefits when practicing organised sports, both at the recreational and competitive level. Nevertheless, there is also a dark side to the sport sector. Much as in any societal sector, interpersonal violence does occur and leaves a detrimental impact on the short- and long-term for sport participants. For sports to fulfil its full positive and productive societal role, interpersonal violence has to be reduced and prevented at every sports level.

Some behaviours or types of interpersonal violence are still considered to be acceptable or even necessary to stimulate athletic success. Especially psychological violence is often used as an excuse to maximise performance and achieve high end-results. Research among coaches, parents and athletes indeed highlights that psychological violence is often accepted, normalised, legitimatised and even encouraged when working with youth athletes. When athletes share interpersonal violence experiences, they are therefore often not acknowledged. Consensus on what constitute (un-)acceptable in sport at all levels is lacking, and the issue creates debate and polarization within the sports community. As long as no consensus is reached, effective prevention and intervention programmes are hindered.

Therefore, the main objective of the current project is to take a first step in reaching a consensus, and give a voice to coaches and sport participants on this topic. A large-scale study on the acceptance and normalisation of (un-)acceptable psychological behaviours will be launched in Flanders. With an online and anonymized questionnaire, coaches and sport participants (min. age 14), participating in an organised team or individual sport (i.e., basketball, volleyball, football, athletics, swimming or dance), will be asked to share their perceptions and attitudes on 20 scenarios. These scenarios will cover a situation between coach-athlete or athlete-athlete on the topics of toxic leadership, controlling coaching styles, bullying or psychological violence. Preliminary descriptive statistics and MANOVA's will be used to analyse similarities and discrepancies in coach and sport participants' perspectives and attitudes on the different scenarios. First qualitative analyses will be conducted to examine the bystander reactions. Next steps within this study will also be explained.

The high prevalence numbers on interpersonal violence in sports indicate the need for more athlete welfare policies and procedures at all levels. This project tries to contribute to that, and is part of the overarching aim of the SAFE-Sport consortium: to encourage and support and violence-free environment for sport participants in Flanders.

# SESSION 1

## Prevalence of Interpersonal Violence Among Elite Athletes in Brazil

Joanna Maranhão Melo

Sport and Rights Alliance, Switzerland

Studies conducted in several countries have shown that interpersonal violence (IV) is a current issue in organized sports. IV is understood as forms of maltreatment from psychological, physical and sexual nature that athletes might experience while engaged in sports. Nevertheless, to this date, no study of this nature have been conducted in Brazilian sport. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyse the extent of IV among elite national level athletes in Brazil. A total of 1043 national level athletes completed the Violence Towards Athletes Questionnaire about their experiences in sport before the age of 18. The sample comprised of 676 female, 360 male and 7 participants who did not wish to disclose their sex or declared as non-binary.

Overall, results showed that IV is a prevalent issue in the current sample, with 93% of athletes (n=911) reporting to have experienced at least one type of IV. Psychological violence was reported by 90% (n=880) of participants, followed by sexual violence with a 58% (n=508) and physical violence with an estimate rate of 49% (n=441). Being a woman, spending more than 15 weekly hours on training, and having a professional contract at early age appeared to be associated with higher exposure to psychological and sexual violence. Having a non-heterosexual orientation appeared as an associated factor for sexual and physical violence. The results of this research are discussed in light of the Brazilian (sport) context and compared with estimates from other countries.



# Sexual harassment and abuse among adolescent athletes in Norway

Nina Sølvsberg<sup>1</sup>, Monica Klungland Torstveit<sup>2</sup>, Margo Mountjoy<sup>3</sup>, Jorunn Sundgot-Borgen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway. <sup>2</sup>University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway. <sup>3</sup>McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

**Purpose:** To examine 1) the prevalence and scope of sexual harassment and abuse (SHA) victimization among adolescent elite athletes, recreational athletes, and reference students, 2) the prevalence of SHA revictimization and risk factors for SHA victimization, and 3) awareness about report- and support mechanisms in school and disclosure of SHA experiences.

**Methods:** The study was a prospective cohort study including adolescent elite athletes and recreational athletes attending sport high schools, and reference students attending non-sport high schools (n = 1247, 49.8% girls). The participants responded to an online questionnaire in 12th grade (T1, mean age: 17.1 years) and one year later in 13th grade (T2). Experiences of verbal, non-verbal, and physical SHA were measured by 13 items.

**Results:** 1) The total 12-months prevalence of reported SHA was 38.6% at T1 and 35.1% at T2. Girls reported more SHA than boys. The prevalence of SHA was lower among elite athletes compared with recreational athletes and reference students. Verbal- and non-verbal SH were more frequent than physical SHA, and SHA occurred more often in free time compared to sport and school settings. Peers were most frequently reported as perpetrators. 2) Half of the students with lifetime experience of SHA reported revictimization at T2 (60.9% girls, 32.2% boys). The combination of being a girl with high level of symptoms of eating disorders and other psychological health problems was associated with reporting subsequent SHA victimization. 3) One in ten adolescents were aware of the reporting system and one in three were aware of support mechanisms in their school. One out of five adolescents (25.4% girls, 12.1% boys) who reported lifetime experience of SHA had disclosed to someone. The rate of disclosure was lower among elite- and recreational athletes compared with reference students.

**Conclusions:** High prevalence of SHA victimization and revictimization among adolescent elite athletes, recreational athletes, and reference students, combined with low rates of disclosure, calls for well-targeted preventive measures. Attention should be directed towards handling symptoms of eating disorders and other psychological health problems in prevention of SHA for girls. Further examination of mental-health related factors for boys should be examined as possible risk factors for SHA victimization. Increased institutional effort is needed to increase information about available report- and support resources and lower barriers for help-seeking.

# The Lived Experiences of Transgender Footballers in the UK

Terri Harvey, Adi Adams, Emma Kavanagh

Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, United Kingdom

Transgender athletes have always been under extreme scrutiny when it comes to participating and competing in sport. Transgender policies in sport often exclude trans\* participants making it difficult for them to access sport. This is due to the notion that trans\* athletes, especially trans\* female athletes have a supposed athletic advantage over cisgender athletes, which is often not the case. Recent research regarding trans\* experiences in sport take place in either educational or leisure settings but less so on lower-level competitive sport that is governed by a national governing body. There is also no recorded literature of transgender footballers in the UK, leaving this gap unexplored. Therefore, the aim of this research is to capture the lived experiences of transgender individuals navigating through organised competitive football in the UK.

Drawing on qualitative narrative research methods, stories were gathered through in-depth interviews in order to capture the experiences of the participants. These were completed either face-to-face, via video call or via instant messaging. The participants of this study included 3 trans\* men and 1 trans\* woman between the ages of 24 and 37 years old (mean = 29 years), who currently or have previously competed in Football Association (FA) regulated competitions pre or post transition. One participant no longer plays football, one only plays recreational, non-FA affiliated 5-a-side, and two participants play for a non-FA affiliated LGBTQ+ team.

Through thematic analysis, three themes are presented; team experiences, media influence, FA policy accessibility. The findings suggest that accessibility to FA-affiliated football as a trans\* person is difficult. All participants struggled to access FA paperwork regarding their eligibility as well as experiencing frustration due to the lack of education around trans\* guidance in football. It was shown from the data gathered that all participants felt safer in a female football environment compared to a male football environment and two participants experienced transphobia within male "LGBTQ+ friendly" football teams. Participants also expressed concerns about the anti-trans rhetoric in the elite sports media and how this affects them participating in lower-level sport.

This study supports the need to further explore the experiences of trans\* people in low-level competitive sport and how football and other sports can make themselves more inclusive of trans\* participants through their policies. This research makes an important contribution to knowledge as the first piece of research to bring to light the personal experiences of trans\* people in football.

# Sexual harassment and abuse in sport: A Systematic Literature Review

Carole GOMEZ<sup>1</sup>, Lucie SCHOCH<sup>2</sup>

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Underscored by the Larry Nassar case and the #MeToo movement, the issue of gender-based violence (GBV), and in particular sexual harassment and abuse (SHA) in sport, has received growing attention for several decades. Numerous studies have demonstrated that such violence is a systemic issue in sport (Davies & True, 2015), a worldwide threat affecting all kind of sports and levels (Fasting et al., 2003; Fasting, 2015). Initially treated from the angle of sexual violence by coaches against children (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997), the areas of research have increasingly developed since.

This presentation seeks to present a global perspective on the current knowledge and understanding of SHA in sport and, in view of the development of research around this issue. It therefore proposes a systematic review of the literature thanks to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Liberati et al., 2009).

More specifically, the presentation aims to reach a threefold objective:

1. Highlight the themes addressed, the scientific discipline, the populations studied (e.g. children, students, elite, able or disable, LGBTQIA+ athletes etc.) and methodology used (e.g. surveys, interviews, or case studies). This will help to identify the range of research conducted on this issue and the diversity of approaches utilized.
2. Identify the countries / regions where these studies were carried out to map the knowledge and blind spots. This mapping will provide insights into the global distribution of research on gender-based violence in sport and will also highlight gaps or regions with limited research.
3. Compile good practices and recommendations: this systematic literature review will compile and summarize the policies, programs, or initiatives that have been successful in preventing or addressing gender-based violence in sport. By synthesizing this information, the review will provide a comprehensive compilation of effective approaches and serve as a valuable resource for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers working in the field. It will implicitly help us to identify the remaining gaps in the scientific literature.

# The field of gymnastics as an inverted pyramid built on the struggle of minor athletes

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In April 2021, former members of the Greek national artistic gymnastics team accused their coaches of physical and verbal violence, punishments and sexual harassment. In January 2022, an accusation of sexual abuse was added to the above. The case deeply injured the image of the sport in Greek society as it was the first time the issue of severe abuse of minor athletes by coaches appeared in Greece with such intensity. Training methods - grounded on authoritarian strictness and costly sacrifice - that had prevailed during the period the athletes competed, appear to have become the grounds on which these incidents arose. In this research, narratives of eight of these athletes were studied. The resulting conclusions highlight the apperception of the normalization of abusive behaviors by those who suffered it. The athletes characterized the use of violence by coaches as the orthodoxy. They referred to the legitimization of its use ("you don't become a champion if you don't get beaten"), to "Omerta" as an unwritten but inviolable rule ("what happens during training stays inside"), as well as to the dead end disclosure leads to, ensuring the perpetuation of the culture of silence. They discussed intensively about the construction of their dependence on the field and their exposure to a regime of domination, within which winning at all costs appeared as the only option. Based on their narratives, what appears to come first in the field of elite gymnastics is sports achievement (at any cost) and any benefit this brings to those involved in the mechanism that develops around the athlete (federation, clubs, coaches, etc.): the coach looks forward to professional recognition and financial rewards, the Federation and the sports administrators seek to acquire financial and social capital, Federal coaches, who coach the national team, operate with the motivation of the highest possible benefit for both themselves and the Federation and the sports clubs try to secure state grants. Even parents often seem to fear and avoid rupture with the sports environment, thus indirectly normalizing abusive practices.

The accommodation of all these aspirations is based on the competitive distinctions of minor athletes. Thus, the field of Gymnastics appears as an inverted pyramid, with the minor athlete placed at its base, bearing the responsibility not only to hold the weight but also to ensure the continuation and the balance among all the forces exerted towards one way, from top to bottom.

## SESSION 2

### **The Role of Former Athlete Gymnastics Coaches in Advancing Safe Sport: A Phenomenological Study**

Mine Kızılgüneş, Pınar Öztürk

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In the world of sports, coaches wield a significant amount of influence. With this approach, this study acknowledges that coaches play a crucial role in advancing a Safe Sport. To promote a Safe Sport, coaches should be guided by scientific studies in establishing their roles within the field. It is crucial to avoid any risk factors that could contribute to a culture of harassment and abuse within their coaching practices (Mountjoy & Bergeron, 2015; Mountjoy et al., 2016). In addition, it is also known that coaches who are former athletes are seen as more reliable and respected in the sports culture compared to their colleagues who do not have a sports background (Blacklett et al., 2019; Ewing, 2019; McMahon et al., 2020). Drawing upon Bourdieu's (1977) Symbolic Violence theory, this study illuminates how different roles such as being a former athlete and current coach within the same culture can shape a coach's overall experience when it comes to advancing Safe Sport. In this context, the purpose of this study is to uncover the perspective of former athlete coaches regarding Safe Sport and their contribution towards advancing Safe Sport within gymnastics in Turkey - a sport that has enjoyed enduring popularity and a rich history in the country. Established in 1957, the Turkish Gymnastics Federation employs a total of 13,573 coaches and a total of 10.333 athletes, according to 2021 data (KASFAD, 2021). The "How do former athlete gymnastics coaches experience Safe Sport?" question will be answered using a qualitative method and a phenomenological approach. The research question has three sub-problems: "What is the role of former athlete gymnastics coaches in advancing Safe Sport?", "What does Safe Sport mean for former athlete gymnastics coaches?" and "What are the experiences of former athlete gymnastics coaches on advancing a Safe Sport?". As a result, it aims to understand how the coach's Safe Sport experience is shaped by their different roles within the same culture. In addition, how the coaches, who have been exposed to the risk factors that produce Symbolic Violence since the athletic period, should build their roles around Safe Sport is planning to understand.

## **Safe Sport Allies: Stimulating positive bystander behaviors among coaches from grassroots sport clubs**

Karolien Adriaens<sup>1</sup>, Helena Verhelle<sup>1</sup>, Tine Vertommen<sup>1,2,3</sup>

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In way too many testimonies of athletes experiencing harassment and abuse in sport, the passive or negative role of bystanders is highlighted. Not intervening in situations of harassment and abuse can prolong the abuse, aggravate its impact, and make the victim feel alone and misunderstood. The EU-funded project Safe Sport Allies aimed to address harassment and abuse in sport by developing, implementing, and evaluating tailored bystander interventions for sport participants, coaches, and parents. This presentation will primarily focus on the intervention designed for coaches.

During the bystander workshop, coaches learned about the various forms of harassment and abuse, the importance of consent, how to assess situations, and where to report instances of harassment and abuse. To investigate the effectiveness and contribution of the bystander educational program, a longitudinal quasi-experimental design was employed. Questionnaires were administered prior to the workshop, immediately after the workshop, and in a follow-up (five weeks post intervention). In total, 19 workshops were conducted, with a sample of 142 coaches.

The initial findings indicate that the program effectively increased coaches' knowledge, positive attitudes, and intentions to exhibit positive bystander behaviors. Moreover, the effect remained consistent over time. The Safe Sport Allies program stands as a pioneering initiative in safe sport coach education, demonstrating that bystander intervention enhances positive bystander behaviors, earlier detection, and better responses to signs of harassment and abuse in grassroots youth sport clubs. This presentation will shed light on the efficacy of the program and transparently report on the barriers for wider adoption of such program.

## **Culturally Informed Safe Sport Coach Education: Youth coaches' attitudes, norms and beliefs about receiving safe sport education in Mediterranean countries.**

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Slowly, the sports world had woken up on the taboo issue of athlete harassment and abuse. Numerous sport governing bodies and authorities in Europe are now setting up safeguarding strategies, that include safe sport policies, response procedures and educational programs. A crucial element in a comprehensive safeguarding strategy is coach education, as coaches often serve as the athletes' initial point of contact and role model. Available safe sport coach education programs stem from Anglo-Saxon countries (e.g., US, Canada, UK) and Scandinavian countries (e.g., Norway). While the basics of safeguarding are universal, the available programs do not fully consider the significant cultural differences (e.g., more physical contact, other norms and values in relation to family, sexuality and communication) present in European Mediterranean countries. Therefore, a simple 'copy+paste' would not adequately address the unique cultural context. The objective of the European Collaboration Project CICEE-T program is to develop a culturally informed safe sport education tailored to the European Mediterranean context.

In order to understand and map Mediterranean coaches' attitudes, norms, and beliefs related to safe sport (education), a survey was conducted among 558 youth coaches from six countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, Portugal). A self-report questionnaire was used, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior framework. The results of study indicate that coaches were receptive to enrolling in an online safe sport education, especially female coaches. Additionally, the survey assessed coach perceptions of harmful behaviors, considering several variables. Being a female coach, have a coaching certification and coaching at higher levels were found to influence coaches' perceptions of harmful behaviors.

These findings provide valuable insights and serve as a starting point for the development of an effective online coach education program about safe sport in the Mediterranean context. The education program will highlight the cultural differences and incorporating key elements such as commitments, discipline, passion, and sacrifices.

## SESSION 3

### No Pain, No Gain? The Cost of Win-At-All-Cost Cultures in Elite Sport

Katrina Monton, Lawrence Lopez-Menzies, Lea Lynn Yen, Caryn Block

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In the past decade, high-profile cases of athlete maltreatment have become part of the popular discourse in mainstream media, revealing a problematic, win-at-all-costs culture within sport, which can have detrimental consequences for athlete safety and well-being. The theoretical framework Masculinity Contest Culture (MCC) describes highly competitive organizational climates, where individuals advance by endorsing four norms; show no weakness, strength and stamina, put work first and dog-eat-dog (Berdahl et al., 2018). MCC has been found to be most prevalent in hierarchical, historically male-dominated organizations, where individuals are often willing to sacrifice personal safety and well-being in exchange for status, which inevitably contributes to negative consequences at the individual and organizational levels (Ely & Kimmel, 2018; Rawski & Workman-Starck, 2018). The purpose of this study was to use the MCC framework to understand the culture within elite sport environments and how it relates to outcomes such as athlete health, safety and performance. Examining these relationships allows for the development of organizational-level interventions which could lead to safer sports environments.

This study utilized a mixed method approach consisting of a survey and interviews. Survey participants were Canadian national team athletes (n=114), accessed through a collaboration with the Canadian Olympic Committee. The sample is comprised of male and female athletes who competed at the 2021 and 2022 Olympic/Paralympic Games, spanning sixty-four sports. Interview participants (n=30) consisted of retired, female Canadian national team athletes, who competed in team sports.

Survey results indicated higher levels of MCC were predictive of lower levels of athlete well-being, psychological safety and higher levels of anxiety and depression among athletes. Additionally, we found that psychological safety acted as a mediator between MCC and subjective well-being. The interview data reinforces these findings, illustrating the presence and negative consequences of MCC norms on athlete health and safety. Emergent themes relate to coping, lasting impacts and insights for systemic culture change in sport.

Demonstrating the impact of the win-at-all-costs culture of sport through research, has the potential to challenge commonly held perspectives of athletes, sport stakeholders and society generally about what we currently deem as necessary for high-level performance. This study highlights the importance of considering athletes holistically, as human beings, beyond the scope of performance. Providing athletes with a psychologically safe sport environment is critical in order to improve athlete health and safety. As these results suggest, organizational culture plays an integral role of creating a safe and healthy experience within elite sport.



## Coercive control in sport organisations: a narrative review

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Coercive and controlling behaviours play a profound role in the experiences of interpersonal violence among athletes from the grassroots to the elite level in sport (Fortier, et al., 2020; Mountjoy et al., 2016). Therefore, it is surprising that sport science and sport management researchers have not yet explored the concept of coercive control (Stark, 2009; Stark & Hester, 2019) in a more meaningful and determined way. This may be because coercive control, which refers to the use of nonphysical tactics (e.g., isolation, manipulation, intimidation/instilling fear, micro-regulation) aimed at maintaining dominance over one's partner (Stark, 2009), is typically studied in domestic contexts. Similarly, engaging with this topic might be considered too sensitive given that coercive control is a criminal offence in some jurisdictions. Whatever the reason, the upshot is that we know relatively little about the conceptual potential of coercive control to account for the routine, composite and culturally prescribed nature of interpersonal violence against athletes in sport and its long-term psychological consequences (e.g., depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, intense fear, low self-esteem). Further, it remains unclear how broader social and organisational power structures and control processes influence athletes' experience of, or perpetrators use of coercive control. For example, we know relatively little about the contribution of hegemonic power and forms of ideological control (and the values and practices that underpin them) to men's use of coercive control or women and girls' risk to it. This narrative review is designed to highlight the conceptual potential of coercive control to help us understand interpersonal abuse in sport, and to provide concrete suggestions for taking research and violence prevention forward in sport. The review paper consists of three parts. First, we review the key literature on coercive control in criminology, sociology, and psychology, noting the conceptual benefits and issues raised by this body of research for the prevention and management of interpersonal violence in sport. Second, we evaluate the extent to which there is conceptual or empirical research on coercive control within the current sport literature. We also consider whether coercive control can be explained by theories of power (e.g., hegemonic power, organisational power) and processes of control (e.g., ideological control, organisational/cultural control) in and around sport organisations. In final section, we suggest promising ways of applying coercive control in sport science/management research and consider the practical implication for the prevention and management of interpersonal violence in sport.

# **"Policies, Practice and Personnel - A Caribbean Perspective Towards a Compassionate Safeguarding Compliance Model" By Mark Mungal, Ato Rockcliffe and Antonia Mungal**

Mark Mungal<sup>1,2</sup>, Ato Rockcliffe<sup>1,3</sup>, Antonia Mungal<sup>4</sup>

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The nations of the Caribbean Community have been an active part of the global safeguarding in sport agenda for the past two decades, with varying levels of commitment and progress across respective territories. The proposed model, arising out of this research, draws on the nuanced safeguarding journey of the Caribbean and its wider applicability to global contexts. Guided by a postcolonial lens, this research seeks to understand and contribute to the safeguarding compliance dialogue with a focus on personal and collective responsibility, local relevance and realities in conversation with global principles, and supportive and compassionate approaches that facilitate safe and positive experiences in sport at varying stakeholder levels and journeys. The study utilizes two methods of data collection both rooted in the interpretive paradigm: semi-structured interviews and document review, for which the data will be analysed using a consensus matrix and thematic analysis. We posit that applying a post-colonial lens to understanding and improving safeguarding infrastructure can both broaden and re-frame global conceptions and approaches towards policies, practices and personnel.

## Legal table tennis - who is legally responsible for athletes' welfare?

Csilla Szomolaiová

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This paper critically examines the legal responsibility of states for the abuse of sportspeople by sports organizations. The author argues that despite the seemingly commendable insertion of athlete safeguard provisions into the Lex Sportiva, numerous questions and controversies arise, demanding a closer examination.

The paper deals with the question, whether international human rights law can be applied in situations where sports organizations fail to uphold their legal obligations. In this connection the author argues that human rights law cannot impose direct legal obligations on sports governing bodies, since they have a status of non-governmental organisations. According to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), countries are responsible for safeguarding individuals from infringements committed by non-government entities within their borders.. However, it is uncertain whether sports governing bodies should be responsible for implementing rights stipulated in the ECHR, given that the ECHR lacks the power to impose legal obligations on non-state actors. Additionally, the autonomy enjoyed by sports governing bodies grants them significant discretion in creating regulations and rules to govern their activities.

The paper explores a normative framework of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which incorporates three core principles:

- the state duty to protect against human rights abuses,
- corporate responsibility to respect human rights,
- the need for effective access to remedies.

These principles, as interconnected components, contribute to achieving sustainable progress in human rights protection.

Furthermore, the paper identifies challenges hindering effective remedy mechanisms for abuse of athletes, such as the absence of accessible or human rights-compliant remedy mechanisms within sports bodies and their unwillingness or inability to utilize leverage over states for human rights fulfilment. It highlights the lack of human rights provisions and policies in most sports bodies, underscoring the importance of establishing agreed definitions and a common reference point for effective changes to the remedy framework.

The paper concludes by suggesting restorative justice as a potential approach that places affected individuals at the centre of attention in resolving violence against sportspeople. It emphasizes the necessity of strong regulations, access and access to effective remedies for those affected.

Overall, this paper sheds light on the complex dynamics between sports organizations, athletes, states, and human rights obligations, offering critical insights into the enforceability of human rights protections within the sports industry.

# The duty of Sport Governing Bodies to address allegations of Gender-based Violence against Athletes

Shubham Jain

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Socio-legal scholarship discusses Gender-based Violence (GBV) faced by athletes, trafficking of women during mega-sporting events, or intimate-partner violence linked to adverse sporting results. However, similar attention has not been accorded to GBV committed by athletes against female non-athletes. Prominent recent examples include Zverev and Kyrgios (tennis), Mendy, Greenwood, Ronaldo (football), and Canadian athletes (Ice Hockey). These cases are characterised by a lack of response from Sport Governing Bodies (SGBs) or delayed, non-transparent, and ineffective investigations. I am enquiring if SGBs have a duty to address such allegations and how should effective policies be designed in this regard. I study the literature on SGB resistance to intervene in such cases and ask if those arguments stand the scrutiny of current moral, political, and socio-legal debates. I also review recent literature on investigating abuse against athletes (WPA, 2022; Yates, 2022; Whyte, 2022; Craig, 2022) and find lessons on clear denunciation of rights and duties, processes, remedies, and sanctions.

Recent scholarship has argued that SGB regulatory autonomy must be tempered with notions of 'responsible sport', 'good governance', and 'human rights' (Rook et al, 2022; Study on the European Sport Model, 2022, pp. 36-45). GBV is a distinctive issue under human rights law owing to its systemic nature and genesis in structural power inequalities, often involving a violation of trust (Tadros, 2005). However, barring a few domestic sports leagues in the USA (Augelli & Kuennen, 2018), SGBs rarely investigate allegations against athletes citing: (1) absence of specific SGB policies as GBV is not a sporting issue; (2) their lack of competence; and (3) presence of ordinary legal remedies against GBV (Harvard Law Review, 1996).

I argue that these arguments are misplaced. Human rights law (CEDAW Gen Rec 35, 2007, paras 20,24,39; Istanbul Convention, 2011, arts. 5(2),14(2),17; Gender Dimensions of UNGPs, 2019; mHREDD legislations) imposes obligations on States and SGBs in relation to GBV (ISLJ Remedy Issue, 2022). States must compel SGBs to adopt policies to address, investigate and remedy GBV allegations against athletes. Organised sport enjoys significant public visibility. Events on the field influence what happens outside. Non-intervention by SGBs has a dual impact. First, it condones and normalises GBV. It furthers regressive societal attitudes toward women. Second, it impacts integrity of sports. Athletes, fans, and other stakeholders may not consider the sporting ecosystem as a safe space. Thus, there are moral, practical, reputational, financial, and legal reasons for intervention.

# An Exploration of Athlete and Support Staff Experiences of the UK Sport Culture Health Check Process

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**Purpose:** In 2017, a Duty of Care in Sport Review was published by the British Government that raised serious questions concerning the safety of elite sporting spaces and the threats they can pose to athlete welfare. UK Sport responded to these allegations with positive action through the introduction of various initiatives including the Culture Health Check. This research aimed to explore the experiences of some of those who participated in a Culture Health Check and provide insight that may help to inform future approaches to applied culture change policies and practice. **Methods:** Through narrative enquiry this study was able to delve into the stories and voices of people that had taken part in a UK Sport Culture Health Check. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted over Zoom and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis alongside a social constructivist approach. **Results:** The research is currently in data analysis stages, with a deadline of 31st August. The researcher would intend to present preliminary findings at the conference in the form of composite vignettes of athlete and system level experiences. Demonstrating the temporal nature of being part of a Culture Health Check, reflecting on life and realities of high-performance environments and the prospect of hope linked to a culture health check being conducted and the aftermath and reality linked to lack of meaningful change.

# Building a System for Eliminating Corporal Punishment and Abuse from Leaders in Youth Sports in Japan

Katsumi Mori

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The origin of the prohibition of corporal punishment in Japanese schools can be traced back to an 1879 law. In Article 47 of the Elementary School Ordinance enacted in 1890 (Meiji 33), a provision succeeded by the post war prohibition of corporal punishment in Article 11 of the School Education Law was introduced (Kawai, 2014). After World War II, the article stipulated that principals and teachers may not use corporal punishment. Sports activities for young people in Japan have been centred on junior high and high school athletic club activities rather than on local sports clubs. However, corporal punishment by advisory teachers is part of the coaching process in junior high and high school athletic club activities. In 2012, the basketball team captain at Osaka City Sakuranomiya High School committed suicide after experiencing repeated corporal punishment and verbal abuse by an advisory teacher. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) took this case seriously and investigated corporal punishment in schools in the entire country the following year; additionally, it provided a notice on the definition and prohibition of corporal punishment to the metropolis and districts boards of education.

Consequently, the number of corporal punishments decreased; however, corporal punishment in the school's club activities was not eliminated.

Thus, Miller and Nakazawa explain that corporal punishment, which is prohibited by law, has not been eradicated from school athletic club activities in Japan owing to real intentions (*honne*) and what one says in public (*tatemae*) in the Japanese society. That is, it is a *tatemae* that corporal punishment has no place in Japanese schools and sports, whereas *honne* is that corporal punishment is the best way to instruct youth. (Miller & Nakazawa, 2015). Although such explanations are valid with regard to corporal punishment, such explanations are invalid for doping which is one of issue of sports integrity as well as corporal punishment and harassment by instructors. Other possible reasons include the interpretation that minor physical infringements do not constitute corporal punishment, as observed in the notice issued by the MEXT to prefectural boards of education and in court precedents; additionally, students who achieve excellent results in sports competitions are recommended for admission to high schools and universities (Daniel & Mori, 2020).

Based on the above, this study proposes the types of policies needed in Japan to enable youths to enjoy playing sports without being subjected to corporal punishment and abuse.

# POSTERS

## Meta-synthesis of women's experiences of gender-based interpersonal violence in sport

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Violence against women and girls in sport is pervasive, across psychological, physical, and sexual violence as well as in composite. This is despite sport being championed as a site for women's empowerment and equality. Our meta-synthesis reviewed and synthesised qualitative studies that had explored women's experiences of gender-based interpersonal violence in sport.

We searched five databases across four categories of search terms: gender-based violence/abuse/harassment; sport/exercise; woman/female; qualitative. We followed a meta-ethnographic approach. We developed an interpretation of a selection of studies, using reflexive thematic analysis to create a new interpretation (third-order construct) beyond the individual studies reviewed. We applied a feminist socio-ecological lens to our analysis, remaining cognisant of gendered power as it runs through and between the socio-ecological levels.

We included 25 records representing 24 studies. Participants experienced many forms of gender-based violence: sexual, physical, psychological, economic, drug and technology facilitated, perpetrated by coaches, intimate partners (sometimes one and the same), peers and their own family. These often appeared as composite forms of abuse, intersecting and overlapping. We co-constructed five themes: the normalisation of abusive behaviours in the sports context; sport family violence; women's status in a patriarchal system; women's safety work; and organisational impotence and hostility.

Women described a variety of forms of abuse, often composite and over time, perpetrated by a broad range of abusers that included people from within and outside of sport. Across the studies, women's experiences of abuse could be mapped within and across the individual, relational, organisational, and cultural levels of the socio-ecological model, with (lack of) power being a central factor in women's experiences within each level as well as flowing between the levels. We also constructed a fifth level pertaining to the context of gender-based violence in sport – that of the sport family. This sits between the relational and organisational levels as the sport context provides both intense familial relationships as well as a patriarchal familial organisational structure that facilitates and silences the abuse. These foundational insights will be key to developing appropriate prevention and response initiatives to gender-based violence in sport.

# Safeguarding concepts in voluntary work: Development of an E-learning information and training platform

Clara Fabry<sup>1</sup>, Anna Maier<sup>2</sup>, Anja Krauss<sup>2</sup>, Janina Bittner<sup>2</sup>, Jeannine Ohlert<sup>1</sup>

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Violence can take place in all settings where children and adolescents are present. An important topic in the protection against (sexual) violence in all institutions and areas working with children and adolescents is therefore the development of safeguarding measures. An institutional safeguarding measure is a systematic compilation of various components in order to protect children and adolescents in institutions from assaults and to support those affected (Fegert et al., 2020). Still, many clubs and organisations, especially those who are led by volunteers, have not established a safeguarding measure. One important reason is that so far, support programs for the development of these concepts only exist for professional organisations. However, since many volunteers are involved in working with children and adolescents, it is necessary to expand this educational offer for the voluntary sector.

This project therefore aims to sensitize volunteers for (sexual) violence and risk factors in the volunteer context as well as to convey competencies to enable implementing safeguarding measures in the various settings. For this purpose, an online-based educational program in the field of German voluntary work such as sports, cultural education for children and adolescents as well as youth association work has been developed and evaluated.

The training program is based on three pillars in order to ensure an appropriate transmission for the respective target groups. First, an online course for volunteer coordinators, who are responsible for the development of safeguarding measures. Second, an online module for volunteers, who are sensitized to the necessity of dealing with (sexual) violence and risk factors in the volunteer context and third, an information platform accessible for all with important materials and further information.

As part of an accompanying research design, workshops and focus groups with volunteers participating in the program have been conducted gathering qualitative data on the participants satisfaction with the program in order to improve the learning platform and its learning contents. Furthermore, surveys (n=302) have been conducted to examine an increase in knowledge, perceived behavioural control and intention (Ajzen, 2002) in the participating volunteers. The majority of the participants indicated high satisfaction with the content (91 %; n=275) and high relevance for the voluntary work field (82 %; n=247). Participants also cited a desire for more interaction and networking with other volunteers as a future adaptation of the program. Therefore, our results show, that the developed program is a helpful component for volunteer-led organisations in their safeguarding process.



## **#UsToo: Transforming safeguarding education through developing knowledge of coaches' engagement and perceptions**

Julia Chan, Rhiannon Lord, David Lavallee

Abertay University, Dundee, United Kingdom

Following the conclusion of one of the largest abuse cases in gymnastics history and findings from gymnastics governing bodies around the world such as the Whyte Report (Whyte, 2022), creating and transforming a safe, functioning coaching workforce is imperative in the gymnastics community. To support coaches, mandatory safeguarding education is in place. However, despite a body of work highlighting abuse and poor practice in gymnastics (Kerr et al., 2020; Pinheiro et al., 2014) we know very little about gymnastics coaches' experiences of safeguarding education, nor do we know how coaches engage in safeguarding education. This presentation shares findings from a multi-method qualitative study of safeguarding education in Scotland. A triangulation approach of participant observations, interviews, and surveys was thematically analysed following a dual theoretical framework, drawing upon the work of Goffman (1959) and Foucault (1977). The research found storytelling offered an opportunity for coaches to authentically engage in complex safeguarding conversations. It also showed the importance of safeguarding educators as critical to the engagement of coaches within safeguarding education. Front-stage regions and panopticon-like environments presented barriers for coaches to authentically engage on courses, through technologies of surveillance (Foucault, 1977), coaches self-surveyed and disciplined their coaching body to avoid misinterpretations and false allegations. This research advanced knowledge about coaches' engagement and perceptions of safeguarding education. The findings offer scope in supporting wider safeguarding research in transforming safeguarding education for the better, with gymnastics coaches at the centre of the research.

## **Safe at training with Save the Children Norway - evaluating visions and/or realities**

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In this research project we follow “Safe at training”, a course developed by Save the children Norway in cooperation with The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) and a selection of sports federations organized within NIF. The course is designed in a way that allows anyone to teach the course, without needing any prior knowledge about the subject, with the goal to increase knowledge about violence, sexual abuse and safeguarding among coaches, and volunteers who has the responsibility to make sport “a safe space” for children. With the use of observation, focus group- and individual interviews our goal is to get more knowledge about 1) To what extent Safe at training has contributed to make coaches and volunteers more competent to report and uncover sexual abuse in sport?, and if so 2), which aspects of the course that have contributed to make coaches and volunteers more confident in dealing with children who are or may have been victims of violence and sexual abuse? Our findings show that the implementation process have been more challenging than anticipated in the first place. We are therefore also interested in understanding how a course as Safe at training is received in a sporting context, and why the implementation process has been challenging.

## **A controlling coaching style as gateway to athlete harassment and abuse: a preliminary study in gymnastics.**

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Previous prevalence studies showed that athlete harassment and abuse by the coach is omnipresent, and leads to many detrimental effects like athletes' anxiety and self-esteem. One way to look deeper into the development of AHA by the coach, is to look at the styles that coaches use when they interact with their athletes. One coaching style that is particularly relevant is a controlling coaching style, which is, according to the Self-Determination Theory, evident in the conditional use of rewards, and the presence of intimidation, excessive personal control, and negative conditional regard. A controlling style as defined within Self-Determination Theory shows great conceptual overlap with psychological athlete harassment and abuse by the coach (e.g., coaches trying to control athletes' spare time). Yet, both fields of research (i.e., literature on AHA and controlling coaching) exist largely separately from each other. That's why this study looked at the relation between controlling coaching and the three forms of athlete harassment and abuse (i.e., psychological, physical, and sexual), and the relation of both constructs to athletes' anxiety and self-esteem.

In total, 565 Belgian (former) gymnasts (91.2% female; 33.7% active; age = 21.70 ± 4.26) reported on their perceived coach's controlling style, coach's athlete harassment and abuse, their feelings of anxiety, and self-esteem using validated questionnaires. When athletes perceived their coach as more controlling they also reported to have experienced psychological AHA by the coach more frequently. Similar results were found for physical and sexual AHA. Moreover, regression analyses revealed that psychological AHA also related to the use of physical and sexual AHA. In terms of athletes' outcomes, controlling coaching and all forms of AHA related positively to athletes' anxiety and self-esteem. As a controlling style is often justified by sport coaches, while being strongly related to all forms of AHA and as well as anxiety and self-esteem by the coach, equipping coaches through evidence-based safeguarding education with suitable alternative coaching styles may help protect athletes from psychological harassment and abuse. Follow-up longitudinal studies are needed to examine whether a controlling coaching style may form a gate-way to athlete harassment and abuse.

# Football Dreams or Nightmares: The Academy

Alice Hunter, [Ellie Gennings](#)

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The rise of reality television has led to an increased interest in exploring various aspects of human life on the small screen. In August 2022, the British public broadcasting channel, Channel 4, released a documentary series titled “Football Dreams: The Academy” which follows the Crystal Palace football academy. Children's professional football academies are pathways for talented athletes, providing them with structured training, development, and opportunities to pursue a career in the sport (Raya-Castellano, & Uriondo, 2015; Ong, McGregor, & Daley, 2018). However, the involvement of these academies in television documentaries raises a series of ethical concerns. This study examines the Channel 4 documentary “Football Dreams: The Academy” through two key dimensions: the impact of academies on children's wellbeing and issues of informed consent for children's participation in such documentaries.

Research into the environment created within professional football academies has demonstrated issues in player wellbeing (e.g., Ong, McGregor, & Daley, 2018; Cooper, 2021). As such, the competitive nature of the academy, coupled with the added pressure of public exposure, could lead to elevated stress levels in an environment that is already suggested to be pressured and have negative impacts on children's lives. Participation in a televised documentary can further disrupt the normal development and upbringing of these young athletes as it may expose them to excessive media attention, affecting their social interactions, education, and emotional stability. Given the players ages and limited understanding of the consequences, it is essential to ensure that children and their legal guardians fully comprehend the nature and potential consequences of participating in a TV documentary.

The entire documentary series, “Football Dreams: The Academy”, will be watched and analysed (282 minutes). Box of Broadcasts, a television service that records and transcribes televised programs, will be used to gather the data for analysis. Documentary transcripts will be checked for accuracy by comparison to the televised documentary and then an independent analysed by the two researchers. Initially, researchers will engage in reflexivity through bracketing interviews. The purpose of this is to mitigate the potential for researcher assumptions to influence the analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Then, researchers will analyse the transcripts following Braun and Clarke's 6-phase framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Upon completion of the independent analyses, the two researchers will compare and discuss themes. This presentation will share the preliminary findings from the analysis with a focus on the narrative and experiences of children within the football academy.

# Building European Safe Sports Together: a conceptual framework of harassment and abuse

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The youth is daily participating in sports positively contributing to physical, mental and social aspects of health: 'the value of sports' (Bailey et al., 2009; McKay et al., 2019). While it is widely known that sports participation brings benefits, evidence also suggests youth experience harmful consequences as a result of their participation (e.g., Schipper-van Veldhoven et al., 2022; Vertommen et al., 2016). Consequently, unsafe sports (e.g., harassment and abuse) occur and severely impact the youth's personal development. To ensure safe sports, all stakeholders (in)directly involved in sports carry a shared responsibility in which a common understanding of harassment and abuse in sports is necessary. Given the lack of a universal definition (Kerr et al., 2020) and understanding (Mountjoy et al., 2020), the BESST project (Building European Safe Sports Together) aims to create a conceptual framework providing knowledge about harassment and abuse serving to establish clarity and consistency to be considered by the European sports community to obtain a shared vision on targeting safe sports.

The conceptual framework is based on sports ethics. Sports ethics existing in sports organizations set the tone for (developing) strategies to minimise the existence of harassment and abuse in sports. Along with obtaining insights into the dynamics of harassment and abuse, Foucault's philosophy (1991) emphasises to identify the distribution of power. Power is established through interaction, and therefore, not seen as a fixed entity: it constantly varies and redefines. In other words, power is seen as a relationship taking different roles and having different effects depending on social interactions (e.g., coach-athlete relationship). Herewith, power-based relationships are further defined as critical relationships: "exists when one individual has significant influence over (another) individual's sense of safety, trust and fulfilment of needs" (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007, p. 17).

The influence of power within critical relationships is foundational to understanding the distinction between harassment and abuse. Based on Stirling (2009), manifestations of psychological maltreatment resulting from the misuse of power in critical relationships within sports are proposed to refer to as abuse. Power-based manifestations of psychological maltreatment occurring in non-critical relationships are referred to as harassment. Both harassment and abuse exhibit several forms proposed in four (not mutually exclusive) categories: psychological, physical, sexual, and social.

Altogether, to ensure a universal agreement on defining harassment and abuse, we would like to discuss the so-far-developed framework with researchers and the public to further develop alongside creating a support base.

# Keeping sport safe when parents say 'yes': Exploring children's experiences of consent through a youth rugby case study

Ruth Barnes

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If a child is playing competitive sport, there is often a presumption a parent or carer has provided consent. Formal consent practices might include registration, photography permissions and waivers. Parents' ongoing engagement or support may suggest they continue to say 'yes'. But how do those involved, particularly children, experience this, and what are the consequences? Existing research has explored parental involvement and consent to children's sport in contexts of risk management and wellbeing. However, there is a gap in the consideration of how this is experienced by children and what impact this has on their own consent and wellbeing experiences in sport.

This presentation will share insights from a study exploring perceptions and constructions of children's and parental consent in competitive sport. Qualitative case study research was carried out with a youth section of a rugby club in England with parent-player-coach triads as embedded units of analysis. Research methods included: observation of six training sessions; group discussions with a total of 29 children aged 14-18; eight interviews with players aged 14-17, nine with their parents/carers, eleven with coaches and club officials; and review of over 40 documents. Data were analysed with reflexive thematic analysis.

The research found that while most participants understood parental consent to be expressed formally through yearly forms, ongoing consent was experienced through support, for example through attendance. Consent was negotiated between parents and players, with parents often prioritising a child's wishes to play, and giving increasing deference to these wishes based on age and expertise, while accepting risk as an inevitability. Children and their parents associated contact with positive wellbeing while recognising the risk of harm, but, importantly, children held clear constructions of when harm became unacceptable. Participants viewed 'keeping players safe' as a primary coaching responsibility, sharing mixed views of whether consent to participation means consent to 'anything that happens'.

The research findings suggest that parental consent and children's consent are co-created and negotiated, making it essential for all parties to have the right information to make ongoing consent decisions and clear opportunities to withdraw consent. Information to support children's shared constructions of boundary-setting is also essential. This is especially true for boundaries outside of rule-based guidance, for example relating to coaching or peer interactions. Consent is a fundamental, protective feature of sporting and safeguarding frameworks. This presentation will share evidence-based insights to ensure safe sport when parents say 'yes'.

## SESSION 4

### Addressing gender-based violence in and through rural and regional sports communities

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Gender-based violence in sport is pervasive. Prevalence rates of interpersonal violence experienced by women and girls in sport range from 26% to 74% across psychological, physical, and sexual violence. This is despite sport being championed as a site for women's empowerment and equality, and as a key setting for addressing the drivers of gender-based violence. Yet prevention and response initiatives are scarce. Those working in sport acknowledge that sport organisations have a role to play in early intervention, identifying individuals experiencing violence, protecting them from harm and preventing escalation of violence. But they perceive many challenges in responding, including poor understanding of gender-based violence, responding to disclosures, limited capacities to act, and sport culture. Responses in rural and regional communities are particularly fraught. Whilst sport is often perceived as the glue holding these communities together, the intimate networks are also unique challenges when victims and perpetrators are often deeply ingrained in recreation, health, and justice services in their working and social lives.

Our study examined community sport in rural and regional Victoria, Australia. Using mixed research methods, we assessed the readiness of sports communities to respond to gender-based violence and how the broader rural regional community can work together to develop effective and context-specific response initiatives through sport based on differing levels of readiness. We report our findings including data from a survey, a concept mapping exercise, and a World Café Forum that facilitated collaborative co-design of response initiatives. The data tells a compelling story of the existence of gender-based violence occurring in our regional sports, the recognised need for action, but also significant challenges in engagement in the issue, addressing ingrained attitudes and cultures, and effecting positive change. Following collaborative co-design, we propose a model for action in responding to gender-based violence in regional Victoria that supports our community sport through networked support from sport and local specialist services using tailored and context specific resources.

When developing interventions, the study shows the need to understand our rural and regional communities and their starting points in terms of understanding and readiness to respond to gender-based violence. Most importantly, tailored initiatives developed collaboratively support a whole of community approach to addressing gender-based violence in and through sport in regional communities.

# Do we know where we're going? Questions and concerns for coaching care and athlete welfare research and international policy

Ben Carr

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As international safeguarding policies move further into normative prescriptions, questions remain about their goals and global universality. Coaching practice is increasingly directed by ethics of care, developed primarily in the Western sociocultural milieus of the US and UK (Hawk, 2011). While this morality prioritizes interpersonal relationships, its application in coaching seemingly remains focused on autonomy and individual performance (Cronin & Armour, 2019). Researchers have begun reevaluating coaching behaviors originally identified as caring to recognize them as simply “gentler” forms of power and domination (Gearity et al., 2023). Even “fun” can be used in the arsenal of compelling docility and excluding individuals from sport participation (Avner et al., 2019). McCulloch and Safai (2020) identified that there are far more examples of abusive coaching than caring coaching, and argue against using shame as a caring coaching tactic since we do not know “whether the athlete has genuinely learned from the experience in positive, productive, and long-term ways or has internalized feelings of inadequacy and is merely performing in order to avoid being shamed again” (McCulloch & Safai, 2020, p. 49). With no explanation of what “positive, productive” ways of learning are, however, we are apparently left with an unresolved duality of chasing the carrot or running from the stick, whereby falling short of the carrot is a form of a stick, and avoiding the stick is itself a form of a carrot. What’s more, shame has been shown to have various experiential understandings and valuations in different cultural contexts (Fessler, 2010). The fundamental comprehension of care is also culturally variable and far from globally uniform (Miller, 1994). Even the notion of violence as exclusively amoral has been questioned given varying cultural contexts (Fiske & Rai, 2014). Any notion of care related to athlete welfare continues to take place in a larger system of traditional sport repeatedly shown to reinforce divisive social norms upon which it was founded, specifically around gender stereotypes (for example, Anderson, 2009; Connell, 2015; Messner, 1990). In *Caring*, the central work used to model care in coaching (Cronin & Armour, 2019; Jones, 2009), Noddings (2013) herself questions the validity of implementing gender equality and care in the traditional sports system. One is left wondering what end we are actually pursuing through research and policymaking. This interdisciplinary literature review and conceptual critique offers the sports community pressing questions towards the positioning of future safeguarding and research efforts.



## Defining Care in Sport

Julia Chan, Rhiannon Lord, David Lavallee

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For the first time in sporting literature, a definition of care in sport is presented (Chan, 2023). Sport-based policies and government reports highlight a need to prioritise athlete welfare and have an overall greater focus on embedding safeguarding among sporting culture (Grey-Thompson, 2017; Whyte, 2022). Research has previously focused on topics surrounding care such as abuse (Kerr, Willson and Stirling, 2020; McMahon and McGannon, 2021), coach-athlete relationships (Jowett, 2017; Kavanagh, Brown and Jones, 2017), and safeguarding (Hartill and Lang, 2014), however much of this is psychological, and care itself is rarely conceptualised or defined. This research used a sociological lens combining Foucault (1977) and Goffman's (1959) work to deconstruct and explore everyday interactions, discourses and disciplinary practices associated with care. The aim of this research was to advance knowledge about the practice of care within gymnastics. Multiple qualitative methods were used including focus groups, interviews, observations, qualitative surveys, and data was presented through creative nonfictions and realist tales. Based on the findings across the body of work, a novel definition of care in gymnastics is presented. Generating a new definition of care advances care-based knowledge and presents an opportunity in opening new lines of study about care phenomena in sports. In addition, Foucault and Goffman's combined sociological lens presented a new term to conceptualise care -interactionist care. Care in gymnastics should be conceptualised as an interaction, an embodied perspective developed knowledge on what care is by positioning the body as an entity to construct care.

## SESSION 5

### **Safeguarding Online Spaces in Sport: Virtual Maltreatment, Abuse, and Toxic Social Media Practices Experienced by Olympic Athletes**

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Due to the rise of online abuse towards athletes via social media (Kearns et al., 2023), the purpose of this research was to examine the types of abuse experienced by athletes via social media and to understand how stakeholders can better safeguard athletes in these situations. The following research aims guided this project: 1/ Identify the frequency and type(s) of online social media abuse directed towards elite athletes; 2/ Investigate current approaches used by athletes, organisations, and coaches to navigate social media abuse targeted towards athletes. Despite the growing prevalence, concern and impact of such online abuse, there is a scarcity of research which has examined this behaviour empirically within an elite sporting context (Kavanagh et al., 2016; Kearns et al., 2023; Mountjoy et al., 2016). This research was theoretically framed through Kilvington's (2021) virtual stages of hate, which examines how online new media platforms influence and modify human behaviour. Insistences of online hate can be exacerbated by trigger events (Kilvington, 2021). Within a sporting context a trigger event could be a missed penalty kick or poor performance, and online communication around such trigger events is driven by emotion, resulting in reactive social media posts (Suler, 2004). A total of seven trigger events that occurred during the Olympic Games between 2014 – 2022 and resulted in online abuse towards the athletes involved were selected for analysis in this study. This involved the examination of 8 athletes across different sports, Olympic editions, and types of trigger events. Quantitative content analyses of Twitter posts related to each trigger event were conducted to determine the sentiment (i.e., positive, negative, or neutral), presence of maltreatment, and if so, the type of abuse present. Following the analysis of social media responses to the trigger event, interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders (e.g., athletes, coaches, national governing body representatives) and were thematically analysed to understand the impact of social media abuse on the athlete. At the time of this submission one case (Gus Kenworthy) has been fully coded, resulting in a total of 21,504 tweets. In this case, 81.72% displayed positive sentiment (n = 17,574), 15.38% (n = 3,308) were neutral, and 2.88% (n = 621) were negative. Of the 2.54% (n = 547) of tweets that were deemed to be maltreatment, 60.87% (n = 333) displayed emotional maltreatment, 33.08% (n = 181) discriminatory maltreatment, and 5.85% (n = 32) sexual/physical maltreatment. Coding is currently underway for the remaining six cases. So far five interviews with sport safeguarding stakeholders have been conducted resulting in initial themes being identified (lack of regulation regarding online abuse, need for enhanced education around online safeguarding, limited consensus on who/what should be responsible for safeguarding athletes online). This research will be fully completed by late August, and we will be prepared to present the full findings and implications, if accepted.

## **Challenging the beliefs driving a pressuring coaching style: what does the evidence reveal?**

Leen Haerens

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Sports coaches are entrusted with the vital task of helping youngsters learn and grow in safe and nurturing environments. Yet, sometimes, they may resort to psychologically abusive style of coaching. This presentation starts from Self-Determination Theory, to present the latest research on the detrimental effects of controlling coaching (i.e., psychologically pressuring and autonomy-thwarting style of coaching) for young people's motivation and well-being, their growth and development, and even their performance. In doing so, it will challenge three pervasive laymen's beliefs.

The first belief is that certain controlling practices are needed for instilling discipline and promoting performance. SDT's distinction between a controlling and a structuring style is essential in this regard. Although both a controlling and structuring style entail a directive socialization approach, the extent to which these styles thwart versus nurture people's needs differs. Our most recent work on the circumplex approach to sport coaching reveals that respect and discipline typically follow need-supportive rather than controlling communication. The second belief is that that some people benefit from a controlling style: "Is a controlling approach justified or warranted when athletes are amotivated?" and "Are some youngsters more resilient or even immune for a controlling style?". Findings from experimental vignette-based studies as well as longitudinal repeated measures field studies can be presented to answer these questions. The third belief is that the periodic use of a controlling style is no longer detrimental if it is combined with a generally need-supportive style, or when it is embedded in a broader empowering climate. To address this belief, we rely on profile analyses to gain more refined insights into the impact of different combinations of styles, and multilevel cross-level analyses to explore the dynamic interaction between coaches' generic styles and situational or periodic instances of control.

The presentation concludes that it is essential to develop effective interventions to help coaches in adopting a more need-supportive style to create safer and more motivating learning environments that foster growth and development for youth around the world.

