

**icSEP 2019**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Sport, Education &  
Psychology**

**COACH-SPORTSPERSON PARTNERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL  
ETHICS**

Ioana Lepadatu (a)\*  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Spiru Haret University, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Brasov, Romania,  
[ioanalepadatu@yahoo.com](mailto:ioanalepadatu@yahoo.com)

*Abstract*

The purpose of the present study was to eliminate the malpractice from the sportspeople's training in team sports and to establish the meanings of the relationships between sportspeople-trainer and sportspeople – coach. Sometimes, the goals set by the trainer can lead to unfavorable consequences in the sportspeople's becoming. Under what conditions do these consequences occur and with what effects? From the perspective of professional relationships, are there differences between the sportspeople-trainer and the sportspeople-coach relationships? If so, what are they? Through observation, interview and evaluation of the products of the activity, the thesis is supported by a presentation of cases that, without falling into the malpractice of the sportspeople's training, illustrate the neglect of some complex aspects which sometimes may lead to favorable results on short term, but, on long term, they have unfavorable consequences on the sportspeople's becoming. A sportsperson's training to become a leader has minimized the contribution of the entire team. The respective trainer has achieved the goal of creating a leader, but the team's performance has been low. The trainer-sportspeople relationships are subordinate, while the coach-sportspeople relationship is of equality, a partnership in which confidentiality falls within the requirement of professional ethics.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy [www.FutureAcademy.org.UK](http://www.FutureAcademy.org.UK)

**Keywords:** Malpractice of sportspeople's training, trainer- sportspeople relationship, coach-sportspeople relationship.



## 1. Introduction

The complexity of the human personality to which it is added the complexity of the sport activities carried out, the complexity of the kinesthesia required by these activities, the physical and social environment in which they take place, and the "unexpected" indications of the situations and demands that may occur along the way, should be handled by a group of specialists and specializations, contributing to the formation of the sportspeople, the maintenance and the increase of their working tonus and their evolution. This explains why we will reveal the requirements of the various categories of professionals who can intervene in achieving these goals. And how else can we support our thesis than by a presentation of cases that, without falling into the malpractice of the sportspeople's training, hopefully illustrate this truth in which the neglect of the complex aspects mentioned above can sometimes lead to favorable results from the perspective of small goals, set by the trainer, with unfavorable consequences on long term or on the sportspeople's becoming.

We have chosen a field of individual sports, rhythmic gymnastics, which I know from a multiple perspective, as a sportswoman, a trainer and a referee, and also a team sport, basketball with less traditions and results in Romania, but with great attractiveness to young people.

Because we mentioned the need of multiple interventions, we would like to point out from the very beginning that a working team is needed, a team in which the trainer's competences and actions are to be joined by those of the sports doctors, nutritionists, the psychologist or the coach, other than the trainer, who is the trainer in the sports field, unlike the coach or the psychologist who trains the psychological potential, dosing it, capitalizing on it in situations specific to the field, avoiding both the psychological breakdown, a result of individual or group failures, and the arrogance that leads to the under-appreciation of the competitors which may alter not only the results of a competition, but also the sportsperson's formation as a human being. In order not to confuse the trainer with the coach-psychologist, we will use the term trainer for the former and the term coach for the latter.

In *Coaching for Performance* Whitmore (2008) states that "a coach focuses on future possibilities and not on past mistakes, stimulating the person's potential and making it more effective" (p. 17), helping the sportspeople become what they can become by capitalizing on their own potential, the sportspeople being considered something valuable, self-worth, people whose dignity is required to be respected.

"Professional ethics is a system of moral principles, rules and behavioral rules of a specialist, taking into account the characteristics of his professional activities and the specific situation" (Fahrutdinova, 2017, p. 158).

In the sports field, performances are validated in competitions, ranking and confirming the values, regardless of the results obtained during the training period. Our research explains why a basketball team in which the individual evolution of each sportsperson is remarkable fails to grow in the rankings.

Our study is based on the research of more specialists: the psychologist Alexei Nikolaevich Leontiev who is the founder of the theory of activity, Dedyulina (2009) and Fahrutdinova, Bikmullina, Sokolova, & Bikmukhametov (2017) in the field of professional ethics.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Sometimes, small goals, set by the trainer, can lead to favorable results on short term, but, on long term, they have unfavorable consequences on the sportspeople's becoming.

## **3. Research Questions**

From the perspective of professional relationships, are there differences between the sportspeople-trainer and the sportspeople-coach relationships? If so, what are they?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Eliminating the malpractice from the sportspeople's training in team sports.

Establishing the meanings of the relationships between sportspeople-trainer and sportspeople – coach in which there is a formative-modeling intervention.

## **5. Research Methods**

With the help of observation, interview and evaluation of the products of the activity, the thesis is supported by a presentation of high performance rhythmic gymnastics and basketball which, without falling into the malpractice of the sportspeople's training, illustrates the neglect of some complex aspects that can sometimes lead to favorable results, but with long-term adverse effects or unfavorable consequences for the sportspeople's becoming. At the basis of the performance are the sportsperson's qualities that are both hereditary and environmental and educational.

## **6. Findings**

The qualitative research unfolded discreetly, without anyone knowing that it took place over a period of three years to capture exactly how things went. We followed the training and basketball matches of a club with tradition in Romanian and in Brasov, with 12 subjects of a basketball team, girls aged between 14 and 15 at the start of the research, and their trainer.

A discussion that was part of the scheduled discussions between the coach and the sportspeople of the basketball team started from the analysis that took place at the end of an important match when the sportswomen were asked how they felt after the race. With very rare exceptions, the vast majority said they felt unhappy and they did not give as much as they could because they were not left to play on the field. Hence, to try to maintain their self-esteem and trust in their potential, we have made the following calculation:

The working hypothesis:

- Player 1 enters the field for 1 minute, has a chance to throw, the throw result is positive / success is 100%

- Player 2 enters the field 25 minutes, has the chance to 30 throws, 15 throw results are positive / success is 50%

- A basketball game takes place in 4 rounds of 10 minutes each

(For the sake of simplicity, the analysis is done for the two players ignoring the rest of the team)

The method of reducing to absurd

- Assume that player 1 plays the entire game

1 point / 1 minute X 40 minutes = 40 points

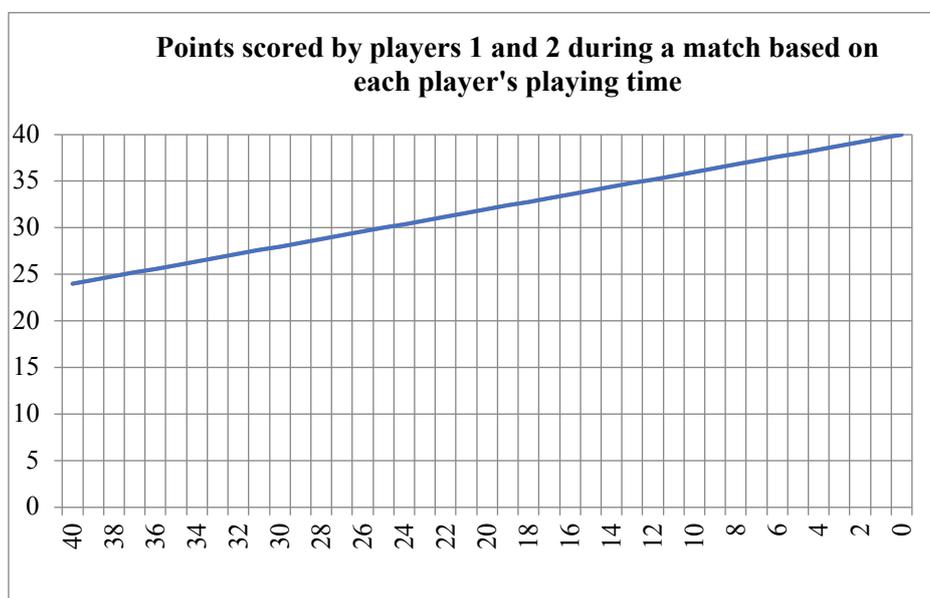
- Assume that player 2 plays the entire game

15 points / 25 minutes X 40 minutes = 24 points

Conclusions:

- If player 1 plays the entire game to the detriment of player 2, there will be 16 extra points.
- Diagram of distribution of possibilities (the graphic method)

Considering that the two players substitute each other during the entire match, the distribution of the points scored by the two players is shown in the figure 1 below.



**Figure 01.** Points scored by players 1 and 2 during a match based on each player's playing time

On the "X" axis with values from 40 to 0 there are the minutes in which player 2 is on the field and on the "Y" axis with values from 0 to 40, the minutes in which player 1 is on the field 1.

Conclusions:

- the graph shows that the scored points are directly proportional to the minutes spent in the field by player 1.

The analytical method:

The table 1 below shows a series of combinations of the times spent by each of the two players on the field and the points scored by them according to the working hypothesis.

**Table 01.** Combinations of the times spent by each of the two players on the field and the points scored by them according to the working hypothesis

	Time, expressed in minutes, spent on the field by each of the two players								
Player 1	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Player 2	40	35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0
Marked points	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40

Conclusions:

- as it can be seen in the above table, for every 5 minutes when player 1 is on the field and player 2 is reserve, 2 marked points are won.

Continuing the discussion (interview), the sportswomen were asked why they did not ask the trainer to let them play more during the match. They required this, but the trainer said that they could ask him anything, but the entry and removal was a decision that belonged to him exclusively and he would not ask them their opinion. This answer supports our argument that there should be two specialists: a trainer and a coach. Most of the time, the reply of the management was that the trainer did the coaching. I believe that this is an error that should be overcome because the sportsperson-trainer relationships are subordinated on the professional line, while the coach-sportsperson ratio is equal, a partnership where confidentiality falls within the requirement of professional ethics.

One of the trainer's justifications for the extremely low periods when a sportsperson was valued, compared to another who played extremely much was that the latter was preparing to be a leader. In this case, beyond the minimization of some with self-downturning effects, preparing a leader in a team sport is to make her think of the whole team's contribution, of the result and not just of the leader. Preparing a sportsperson to lead has minimized the contribution of the entire team. The respective trainer has achieved the goal of creating a leader, but the team's performance has been low. In this case, we face a real malpractice.

The presentation of the case is based on a behavior followed by a negative consequence: the basketball team, although having the best physically trained sportswomen, lost the important matches. In the same case, four sportswomen frustrated of the short duration of the game on the field took a private trainer, specialised in athlethism, with whom they practiced the required physical elements necessary for basketball: speed, snap, resistance. During the additional training they achieved the best results. However, the sportswomen told us, 'It was useless because I played again just for a minute'. When two sportswomen who were usually allowed only 1-3 minutes on the field were left a much longer time (10-20 min), the team won – and this sustains our idea.

The sportswomen, full of qualities that they could not value and could not be known and recognized, had low self-esteem, which led to their subsequent transfers to a state club, where they performed as expected, i.e. very well. Asked by the atmosphere they faced with the new team leaders, they said that only on the field and they are compared based on the results.

The second case discusses the role of coaching in rhythmic gymnastics, seen as both an individual sport, because of the individual exercises with imposed or at choice objects, and as a team sport due to the exercise done in group. Perhaps not by accident, at the moment I practiced this sport, Brasov was recognized for its performances, and in the national team three of the participants were from the city of Brasov. At that time the team benefited from a coach-psychologist. The trainer -coach-physician optimal relational model

was a basis for the relational influence of the gymnastic teammates. This was later appreciated by gymnasts, trainers, or referees.

Rhythmic gymnastics, practiced at the level of performance at a much younger age than basketball, cannot empower the girls to practice it if the work atmosphere is not attractive, and the inter-human relationships, i.e. the gymnast-trainer relationships, the gymnast-gymnast relationships, are not tonic, stimulating and cooperative. The components and the work items specific to each object, the music, and the beginning and end 'photos' are chosen together by the gymnasts and the leadership team, while respecting the psycho-individual particularities of the gymnasts.

From the coach, the gymnasts learned that talking to the others helps, talking to you helps, but talking with your objects makes it easier for you to launch, catch, roll, and take out. So we began to identify a string of words that the gymnasts could say in their minds in order to mark the length of time from launch to catch. Example: 'I'm throwing you and catching you now!' or 'Fly forward and up; I roll and catch you' (Lepadatu, 2008, p. 140-143). The words in that exact order and the duration of the speech were an 'internal' timer that regulated the actions on the external plan. In addition, the string of words was a means by which the gymnasts' attention during the evolution on the floor was maintained focused only on 'myself and the object' by removing the elements of the background of the room, or the black thoughts, the presence of the jury or of the rival teams.

As rhythmic gymnastics is sport and art, great emphasis is placed on the concerted expressiveness of the tune and movement, gesture, mimic, positioning, starting with an enlargement-opening start-up that favors the growth of testosterone, the power and competitiveness hormone, and continuing with the diagonal executions, accompanied by the same type of movement.

Of the 4 gymnasts, one qualified in the final for all objects, one for 3 objects, one for 2 and one did not qualify. The trainer discussed with the first and proposed to give the one who did not qualify one of the objects for the final. The gymnast agreed and gave the ball object to the unqualified one. Being really the leader of the team, with a very good opinion about her, easy to approach, cheerful, with a strong and secure personality, the leadership status was not threatened by the passing of an object to a teammate. This thing also contributed to both the growth of the unqualified gymnast's self-esteem and the prestige of the team as a whole.

Sport psychology should essentially be circumscribed to humanistic psychology, as its purpose lies in helping the human personality manifest itself, capitalizing on the human's qualities. Predispositions, however powerful and diversified, do not automatically generate performance. Performance is the result of a long workout in which the process of learning, improvement and consolidation plays an important role. That is why the trainer and the coach's task is not limited to identifying and selecting girls, boys who have the potential for rhythmic gymnastics or basketball, but it also involves training them on the basis of appropriate programs and strategies. Within this training the psychological component should be considered as important and indispensable as the physical one. As a central axis of the correlation between the two forms of training, the physical and the psychological one, it is rightly to consider the psychosomatic circular relationship. Mental training thus becomes the most important way of psychological training in performance sports in general and in rhythmic gymnastics and basketball in particular.

Our investigation proposes a plea for the goals set not only for each individual, but also for the team, and for the psychological and coaching training of the trainer in physical education. The content, forms, moments of intervention, causal relationships, are significant conditions for interpersonal relationships of the trainer-sportsperson type or of any other relationship in which there is a formative-modeling intervention.

The latest research in the field of learning has recognized that the most significant aspects of learning take place on the basis of the operant conditioning theory. Thus, behavior is taught according to its consequences. If behavior is followed by a positive consequence, it is likely to occur more frequently in the future. The motivational analysis of behavior shows that getting positive consequences becomes the reason why that behavior is repeated. What we know we do well, we do with more pleasure, and so the activity becomes intrinsically motivated, the body repeating responses that brought us satisfaction in the past.

The following example is based on a behavior followed by a negative consequence: I am accustomed to asking first year students the reason why they chose the academic program of psychology. One student's answer was that she was always second at school and her parents failed to count the 28 colleagues behind her. They always reproached that she could not be the first. The student, full of qualities she could not see, had low self-esteem.

## 7. Conclusion

The trainer-sportsperson relationship is subordinate, while the coach-sportsperson relationship is of equality, a partnership in which confidentiality falls within the requirements of professional ethics. Since both the trainer and the coach have the same final goals related to the increase of the individual's and the team's performance, an optimal collaboration is more than necessary between these two partners, which is why their collaboration should exceed the limits of one's supremacy in favour of the convergence of their contributions. Both the trainer and the coach should concentrate on future opportunities, stimulating the sportspeople's potential and making it more effective, helping them to become what they can become by capitalizing on their own potential, the sportspeople being considered a self-worth value, people whose dignity is required to be respected.

It should not be forgotten that the results of a match or a contest are not negligible short-term goals, but capitalizing on the real potential of each competitor will ensure the long-term value of the team.

## References

- Dedyulina, M.A., & Papchenko, E.V. (2009). *Social ethics – Taganrog*, TTI SFedU Publishing House.
- Fahrutdinova, G. Z., Bikmullina, A.R., Sokolova, I.I., & Bikmukhametov, R.K. (2017). Self-Evaluation of Professional Ethics Formation Level In "Physical Culture and Sport". *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 29, 157-167. <http://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2017.08.02.20>
- Lepădatu, I. (2008). *Ideomotricity and learning patterns*. Sibiu: Psihomedica Publishing House.
- Whitmore, J. (2008). *Coaching for Performance*. București: Public Publishing House.