AN ANALYSIS OF COACHING DIMENSIONS AND THEIR IMPACT
ON ATHLETE MOTIVATION AND AFFECTIVE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT


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This study examined the relationship between coaching behaviors and traits and their impact on athlete motivation and affective learning in a collegiate coactive team setting. By conducting in-depth interviews with NCAA Division I men’s tennis players at a Midwestern, mid-sized University it was discovered that Coach Craig Keller’s credibility and caring behaviors had the most salient impact on athlete intrinsic motivation, his use of mild verbal aggression and his career record had the most salient impact on athlete extrinsic motivation, and his extreme verbal aggression and lack of feedback/praise significantly decreased their levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Moreover, the athletes noted that Coach’s credibility and caring behaviors increased their levels of affective learning, his will to win and desire to be professional increased affective learning through trait modeling, and his inability to follow through with claims decreased their affective learning. The most significant finding was that Coach’s dynamic leadership had the most positive impact on player intrinsic motivation while his mild verbal aggression had the most positive impact on player extrinsic
motivation. However, it was discovered that this type of leadership ceased being motivational when the sentiment of the messages became negative and singled out individual players.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

An athlete’s psyche has recently been an interest of athletic researchers. For example, research in sports psychology has examined player perceptions (Kish & Woodard, 2005; Matheson, Mathes, & Murray, 1997; Raedeke, Lunney, & Venables, 2002; Sinclair & Vealey, 1989; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005), thought processes (Price & Weiss, 2000), and attitudes (Burke, Peterson & Nix, 1995; Cervello, Rosa, Calvo, Jimenez & Iglesias, 2007; Mallett, & Hanrahan, 2004; Stuntz & Spearance, 2007; Summers, 1991) in relation to a number of elements of the athletic experience. Researchers in the sports arena have also examined the impact of a coach’s relationship with their athletes. For instance, athletic leadership researchers have studied the effect a coach’s attributes, coaching styles, and behaviors can have on athletes’ motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Stuntz & Spearance, 2007), affect for learning (which is their intrinsic desire to enjoy learning) (Martin, Rocca, Cayanus, & Weber, 2009; Reynolds & Allen, 2003) and satisfaction with their sport and coach (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002; Price & Weiss, 2000; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986; Zhang & Jensen, 1997).

Similarly, researchers in instructional communication have concentrated on the influence of a coach’s attributes and behaviors. The areas studied include the impact of a coach’s nonverbal and verbal immediacy (Turman, 2008), socio-
communicative style (Kassing & Infante, 1999), memorable message use (Kassing & Pappas, 2007), coaching techniques (Turman, 2003a), leadership styles (Turman, 2003b) and power use (Turman, 2006).

This body of literature has demonstrated that these communicative concepts affect a number of player outcomes, including player satisfaction (Kassing & Infante, 1997; Turman, 2006; Turman, 2008), team cohesion (Turman, 2003a), player affect for learning (Turman & Schrodt, 2004), and player motivation (Kassing & Pappas, 2007; Turman & Schrodt, 2004). This research has also shown that studying the way coaches communicate can enhance our understanding of coaches in general, and the long term impact coaches have on their athletes (Turman, 2008). Yet, despite previous studies of coaching communication, no comparative analysis of the relationship between salient instructional actions (e.g., memorable messages and interpersonal relationships with players) or attributes (e.g., credibility) and their affects on athletic based results (player motivation and affect for learning) has been conducted.

Examining an athletic coach through a focus in instructional communication, will increase our understanding of educators in athletic settings and the affect they have on athletes. Many researchers have compared the athletic coach to a class room instructor (Burke et al., 1995; Chelladurai & Kuga, 1996; Kish & Woodard, 2005; Liukkonen, Laakso, & Telama, 1996; Martin et al., 2009; Reynolds & Allen, 2003; Turman & Schrodt, 2004). As Kish and Woodard (2005) noted, a college coach and teacher have some comparative duties. For example, both professionals work with their pupils to achieve collective
objectives (e.g., having the team win or having the class learn the material). At the same time, coaches and teachers must guide their pupils through the completion of their own projects (e.g., the player’s tennis match or the student’s term paper). Moreover, the successful execution of these duties is largely influenced by the coach or instructor’s ability to increase pupil affective learning and motivation.

Given this parallel, analysis of a college coach from an instructional communication perspective will highlight communicative factors that may lead to affective learning and motivation for a diverse group of athletes (in terms of scholarship money received, skill level, nationality, and motivation levels), taking part in individual and group tasks.

Beyond sport-based outcomes, an examination of “coaches” outside of the classroom will lead to a better understanding of the student athlete’s comprehensive learning experience. As Turman and Schrodt (2004) noted, “coaches often encourage their athletes to model the skills and behaviors learned through sport participation” (p. 133). Turman and Schrodt (2004) further maintained that if an athlete accepts a coach’s teachings, it is likely they will have an “internal desire to take what they have learned through sport participation and apply it to other areas of life” (p. 133). The collegiate sports culture offers many experiences that help athletes learn and adapt skills or behaviors. For example, many coaches make their teams practice all school year long (dedication), six days a week (hard work), on school days (time management), and for two to three hours a day (concentration). Thus, while most college athletes are associated with
their sport and their coach for only four years, the experience can have lasting effects on an athlete’s life (Turman & Schrodt, 2004).

The present study is therefore concerned with a college coach’s influence on both athletic outcomes (motivation and affective learning) and player life perspectives. In order to uncover this issue, chapter two of this thesis will explore the three influential dimensions of a coach, provide an explanation of the causes and effects of athletic outcomes (i.e., motivation and affective learning), illustrate the relationship between coach actions, athletic outcomes, and players’ life perspectives, and explain how this study will extend the research on coaching communication, athlete motivation, and athlete affective learning to provide practical strategies for scholars and practitioners. Following this, I will detail the methodology of the study in chapter three and the results of the study in chapter four. Finally, in chapter five I will discuss the major findings, contributions, and limitations of the study as well the directions for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Recurrent and related themes and concepts in the literature review were grouped together to establish three dimensions of a coach. These dimensions are a coach’s (1) *interpersonal relationship with players* (2) *use of memorable messages*, and (3) *credibility*. These dimensions encompass the various attributes and behaviors that explain a coach and his or her relationships with players. Specifically, the coach’s *interpersonal relationship with players* dimension is comprised of a coach’s nonverbal immediacy, perceived caring, verbal immediacy, and affinity seeking strategies. The *use of memorable messages* dimension is made up of a coach’s use of behavior-altering techniques (BATs), verbal aggression, and athletic memorable messages. Finally, *credibility*, which is comprised of a coach’s competence and character, is the third element affecting athletes and athletic outcomes. The following discussion will detail these dimensions and demonstrate the effects they can have on players and player perceptions of their coach and their sport.

**Interpersonal Relationship with Players**

The review of the literature revealed four recurrent concepts that make up the coach- player interpersonal relationship. They are a coach’s *nonverbal immediacy, perceived caring, verbal immediacy*, and *affinity seeking strategies*. 
This section presents the instructional and athletic research highlighting these concepts to illustrate the various ways a coach affects their athletes interpersonally, as well as to demonstrate the relationship between a coach’s interpersonal behaviors and various athletic outcomes.

**Nonverbal immediacy.** Mehrabian (1967) asserted that immediacy behaviors are those behaviors that increase closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another. Research has demonstrated that behaviors such as vocal expressiveness, eye contact, gestures, touch, approachability, relaxed body position, smiling, movement, and proximity are all behaviors that can increase immediacy (Anderson, 1979; Christophel, 1990; Kearney, Plax, Smith & Sorensen, 1988).

Mehrabian (1967, 1981) and Anderson (1979) began to uncover the effects of nonverbal immediacy. Since their work, scholars in the instructional communication field have focused on how student perceptions of teacher immediacy influence a number of student learning outcomes. For instance, research has shown that teachers who display immediacy behaviors enhance student cognitive learning (Richmond, Gorham & McCroskey, 1987), affect for learning (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Frymier, 1994; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006; Whit & Wheeless, 2001), motivation to learn (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel, 1990) and willingness to attend class (Rocca, 2004). Besides affecting the student’s knowledge and perceptions about course topics, nonverbal immediacy is a variable that mediates student perceptions of their instructors.
When teachers express expected and preferred amounts of nonverbal immediacy they are perceived as more caring, trustworthy, and competent (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). As a result, they are more likely to persuade, influence, and motivate (Glasscock & Ruggiero, 2006; Schrodt & Witt, 2006; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). In contrast, Rocca and McCroskey (1999) discovered that instructors whose behaviors were non-immediate were viewed as less interpersonally attractive and effective. Moreover, Lannutti, Laliliker, and Hale (2001) noted that too much immediacy can lower student perceptions of their instructor’s expertise and character. Further, Houser (2005) found that non-traditional students desire less non-verbal immediacy than traditional students. Thus, factors such as individual expectancies and perceptions influence what is perceived to be appropriate instructor immediacy.

Athletic-based research demonstrates the impact of coaches’ immediacy in the sporting world. For example, Webster (2009) discovered that pupils saw their professional golf instructors as credible and felt comfortable and confident when they were immediate. In another study, male Division I coaches and their players noted that a coach’s expressions of nonverbal immediacy demonstrated communication competence (Haselwood et al., 2005). Another analysis revealed that coach immediacy and player perceptions of coach responsiveness (an aspect of caring) are positively related (Rocca, Toale, & Martin, 1998). In spite of this, the same researchers argued that there was no evidence demonstrating that nonverbal immediacy affected athletic outcomes (Rocca et al., 1998). Further, Turman (2008) noticed that coach immediacy did not significantly increase
athlete satisfaction with their sport. In contrast to classroom-based immediacy research, Turman (2008) asserted that nonverbal immediacy has less affect on athletes because they are volunteers participating in a sport that they enjoy. Therefore, they don’t need coach immediacy to increase their motivation or make their experience more enjoyable.

From this research, it could be argued that immediacy has different potencies depending on context. Nevertheless, as much of the instructional and coaching communication research concluded, there is a relationship between a person’s expression of immediacy and their perceived credibility. Specifically, as Thweatt & McCroskey (1998) noted, immediacy behaviors often resemble behaviors associated with perceived caring (an aspect of credibility according to Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Examination of the caring construct will demonstrate how these behaviors are related to one another. Further, discussion of perceived caring will also help to distinguish caring from the aforementioned credibility dimension.

**Perceived caring.** Perceived caring (McCroskey, 1992) is a facet of credibility that is based upon Aristotle’s (1952) conception of “goodwill” as well as Hovland, Janis and Kelley’s (1953) idea that a person’s perceived intention towards a receiver affects their credibility. Expounding on Aristotle (1952) and Hovland et al.’s (1953) research, McCroskey and Teven (1999) and others (Teven & Hanson, 2004; Myers & Bryant, 2004) have argued that caring is one of the three dimensions of a person’s credibility along with character and competence (Berlo, Lemmert, & Mertz, 1969).
Specifically, McCroskey and Teven (1999) asserted that caring (made up of understanding, empathy, and responsiveness), is an attribute of a person that dictates how others perceive their credibility. Understanding relates to whether or not a person can comprehend or recognize another person’s feelings, concerns, needs and ideas. Empathy refers to a person’s ability to see a situation from another’s point of view, attempt to feel how they feel about it, and appreciate that point of view, even if they don’t agree with it (Teven & McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey & Teven, 1999). Finally, responsiveness refers to how quickly a person reacts to the needs or problems of others or the degree to which one person listens to another (Teven & McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey & Teven, 1999). Ultimately, these caring traits, just like a person’s competence and character, are indicators of a person’s credibility (Myers & Bryant, 2004; Teven, 2007).

Numerous classroom-based studies have demonstrated the importance of perceived caring. Research has shown that students who perceive their instructors as caring are more likely to attend class and have a positive attitude toward their instructor, course, and course subjects (Teven and McCroskey, 1997; Teven, 2007). McCroskey, McCroskey and Richmond (2006) noted that a caring relationship increased a student’s interpersonal attraction to their instructors, while Frymier and Houser (2000) found that instructors are likely to increase student motivation when they acknowledge and support their student’s egos. In contrast, Banfield, Richmond and McCroskey (2006) found that offensive instructors who demonstrate little caring towards the students are seen as less credible. Meanwhile, Myers and Bryant (2004) found that instructors who convey
caring to their students are perceived as more credible. As these studies show, one dimension of an instructor’s credibility is conveyed through their ability to understand, empathize with, and respond to others. This relationship brings up a central issue in this project: should perceived caring be seen as a facet of credibility in coaching?

The categorization of perceived caring as an attribute of credibility has long been debated. Some researchers argue that goodwill or intent towards the receiver can’t be measured (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Thus, competence and character were the longstanding dimensions of credibility. However, McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) work has shown that perceived caring is an influential facet of credibility that can be empirically supported. For this reason, coach caring will be analyzed in this study. However, given the similarity between caring, immediacy, and affinity seeking behaviors it seems logical to exclude perceived caring from the credibility construct and include it in the interpersonal relationship with player’s dimension. Other researchers have affirmed this line of thinking.

Interestingly, much of the sports communication research also examines coach caring as a variable that impacts the player-coach interpersonal relationship. For example, there is a positive relationship between coach caring and athlete intrinsic motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Specifically, coaches have been shown to increase athlete motivation and commitment to their sport when they acknowledge the feelings and perspectives of athletes (Stuntz & Spearance, 2007) and support their athlete’s autonomy (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Moreover, coach caring is likely to increase a player’s positive feelings...
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(affect) for their coach and their coach’s teachings (Turman & Schrodt, 2004). Further, Westre and Weiss (1991) noted that coach social support increased athlete perceptions of team cohesiveness.

**Verbal immediacy.** Verbal immediacy has many stylistic forms that express approach/avoidance, like/dislike, or connection/disconnection between sender and receiver (Gorham, 1988; Mehrabian, 1981). As Gorham (1988) notes, verbal immediacy can be expressed through *variations in verb tense* (present vs. past), *inclusivity* (we vs. I), *mutuality* (Mary and I do this vs. I do this with Mary), *probability* (will vs. may), *conditionality* (I would like to see her again vs. I want to see her again) and *responsibility* (from what she said it’s true vs. I know it’s true).

Subsequently, Gorham (1988) uncovered verbal immediacy behaviors that college instructors use to express a close bond with their students. Results demonstrated that teachers who use humor, praise students, use self disclosure, and ask to be called by their first name are perceived as verbally immediate. As well, instructors who solicit student’s view points, initiate conversations not regarding course topics, refer to the class as “ours” not “mine,” provide feedback on individuals’ work, ask students how they feel about assignments, and invite students to communicate outside of class if they need help are also viewed as verbally immediate.

Conversely, instructors who criticize students, ask questions with specific or correct answers, call on students to talk even when they have not indicated they wish to, and refer to the class as “theirs” not “ours” are perceived as non-
immediate (Gorham, 1988). Indeed, the study indicated that instructors who want to be seen as superior tend to decrease affect for learning and course content. On the other hand, instructors who were more student centered and personable in their relationships were seen as contributors to student learning and affect (Gorham, 1988).

In addition to Gorham’s work, there have been other classroom-based studies demonstrating the impact of instructor verbal immediacy. As the data show, traditional college students (between the ages of 18-25) expect (Houser, 2006) and prefer (Houser, 2005; Jensen, 1999) verbally immediate behaviors from their instructors. Such behaviors have been known to increase students’ cognitive learning (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel, 1990), state motivation (Frymier, 1993) and affect for learning (Witt & Wheeless, 2001). Moreover, verbal immediacy has been known to enhance positive teacher evaluations (Moore, Masterson, Christophel & Shea, 1996) and decrease student communication apprehension (Ellis, 1995).

Verbal immediacy also has an impact in athletics. For instance, Black and Weiss (1992) found that the quantity and quality of feedback directly influenced athlete motivation and self perceptions. Others have found that verbal instruction, support and praise can curb athlete burn out (Price & Weiss, 2000; Raedeke et al., 2002) and enhance group and task cohesion (Westre & Weiss, 1991). Turman (2008) found that a coach’s verbal immediacy was a significant predictor of athlete satisfaction and perceptions of team cohesion. Finally, Burke et al. (1995)
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noted that coaches who use humor are more likely to be liked and seen as an effective leader.

Just as verbal messages can create positive outcomes, non-immediate messages can also have negative outcomes. Coaches who use non-immediate messages have been shown to decrease athlete satisfaction and hinder perceptions of good sportsmanship (Kassing & Infante, 1999), minimize player identification with their coach (Reynolds & Allen, 2003), decrease intrinsic player satisfaction to perform (Reynolds & Allen, 2003), and weaken team cohesion (Turman, 2003). Indeed, such behaviors have the potential of exhibiting an interpersonal dis-connect between athlete and coach. Therefore, to enhance perceptions of closeness and collaborative learning experiences, the existing athletic literature elucidates the importance of appearing “human,” supplying constructive feedback, and implementing other immediate behaviors (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Vallerand & Reid, 1984).

**Affinity seeking strategies.** Research has shown that people who like each other communicate more effectively in interpersonal relationships (Gorham, Kelley, & McCroskey, 1989). One way a person can get others to like, admire, respect, and/or feel positively towards them is through the use of affinity seeking strategies (Bell & Daly, 1984; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Gorham et al., 1989).

Bell and Daly (1984) originally found 25 affinity seeking strategies teachers used to get their students to like them. More recently, other studies (Gorham et al., 1989; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986; Richmond, 1990) have outlined recurrent affinity seeking strategies that instructors have claimed to
implement in their classrooms. These include: *facilitate enjoyment* (being entertaining and making time together enjoyable); *physical attractiveness* (trying to look good); *sensitivity* (showing empathy); *elicit other's disclosures* (encouraging other to talk); *trustworthiness* (being dependable, consistent, sincere); *nonverbal immediacy* (using nonverbal approach behaviors); *conversational rule-keeping* (following cultural rules for socialization and conversation); *assume equality* (presenting self as equal to other person); *listening* (listening actively); *assume control* (presenting self as a leader); and *self-concept confirmation* (making another feel good about self, like a very important person).

In general, the use of these strategies can lead to positive outcomes such as instructor interpersonal influence and reduction of conflict between student and instructor (Gorham et al., 1989; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986). More specifically, Frymier and Thompson (1992) found that *self concept confirmation*, *assuming control*, and *assuming equality* were all strategies that increased student perceptions of instructor character. Frymier and Thompson (1992) also found that teacher use of affinity strategies showed the students that they were liked, respected and worthy of attention. This further enhanced perceptions of teacher caring, credibility and ultimately increased student motivation to learn. Richmond (1990) found that certain strategies (*assuming equality, facilitating enjoyment, self-concept confirmation*) increased student motivation as well as affective and cognitive learning. Moreover, Gorham et al., (1989) asserted that affinity seeking strategies lead to students paying attention in class and following their teacher’s recommended behaviors. In the end, it seems that the appropriate and skillful use
of these strategies can have positive results, while a lack of affinity-seeking strategies could lead to negative outcomes in learning environments.

Intriguingly, the concept of affinity-seeking strategies *per se* has not been studied as closely in the sporting world. The most likely reason is that many affinity-seeking behaviors express caring, trustworthiness, and immediacy. Thus, while the previous athletic studies highlighted the importance of affinity-seeking behaviors, they did not explicitly define them as such. Ultimately, these terms are relevant to communication scholars because they help *define* the intentional or unintentional attempts people make “for the purpose of achieving liking in another” (Bell & Daly, 1984, p. 96). Due to this, my study has the opportunity to extend the corpus of coaching communication strategies. The coach will most likely use affinity seeking strategies that influence athlete motivation and affective learning. Investigating the coach will therefore allow us to *recognize strategies* that are effective in a college sports setting.

This literature thus far has illustrated the importance of verbal and nonverbal immediacy, caring, and affinity seeking strategies, in the coach-athlete relationship. These elements are crucial in establishing and maintaining a constructive interpersonal relationship. These behaviors also increase the likelihood of athletes liking their coaches, listening to them, and being inspired by them. The present study extends previous research by examining this interpersonal relationship and comparing it to other facets of a coach. Moreover, this study examines interpersonal relationships in a collegiate and small group coactive sports setting. Such a situation pushes a coach to interact with a diverse
group of players interpersonally on a consistent basis. Ultimately, uncovering constructive coaching behaviors that increase a college athlete’s motivation and affective learning will be possible through examination of this interpersonal relationship.

**Memorable Messages**

In addition to trying to establish interpersonal relationships with their players, coaches have long searched for ways they can encourage, instruct, inspire, and arouse their players. As evidenced in the literature, one prominent means by which this is accomplished is through the use of memorable messages, which are brief oral commands that prescribe rules of conduct and socialize members into organizations (Knapp, Stohl, & Reardon, 1981).

One way to understand the effects of memorable messages is to reference concepts from Burgoon’s (1978) Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT). While the theory was originally developed to help scholars understand nonverbal behaviors, utilizing *concepts* from EVT allows the researcher to explain both the impact and acceptability of verbal messages (Houser, 2005). Through an examination of EVT, athletic, instructional, and coaching communication research, the next section discusses three forms of memorable messages often used by coaches. They are: *behavior-altering techniques (BATs)*, *verbal aggression* and *athletic memorable messages*. The research will demonstrate that a coach can be defined and viewed by athletes according to the manner in which they vocalize memorable messages. Additionally, an exploration of these messages will elucidate specific verbal tactics that have an effect on various athletic outcomes.
**Expectancy violation.** Along with the teaching behaviors and personality characteristics of an instructor, student expectations of instructor behavior affect many classroom-based outcomes. According to EVT, people enter interactions with *predictive* and *prescriptive* expectations (Burgoon, 1978, 1995). These two expectations are contingent on both the context and the previous experiences of the communicators. Predictive expectations are the behaviors we anticipate others to have based on cultural stereotypes (i.e., we expect these behaviors because they are most typical) (Burgoon, 1978). In contrast, prescriptive expectations are standards of conduct that are desired (Burgoon, 1995). Subsequently, all communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, positively violates, negatively violates, or conforms to our expectations.

According to EVT, positive violations produce more favorable results than either negative violations or conformity behaviors (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). While conformity behaviors serve to maintain normalcy in everyday interactions, much of existent research focuses on the impact of positive or negative violations. Along with predictive and prescriptive expectancies, two other factors relevant to the sporting context, communicator reward valence and arousal-violation valence, dictate how violations are perceived (Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Mottet, Parker-Raley, Beebe & Cunningham, 2007).

The communicator reward factor (CRV) of the violator is the first factor that affects how a violation is interpreted (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). A person has high CRV if they arouse pleasure in interactions. Social style, socioeconomic standing, personality, expertise, physical attractiveness, reputation, possession of
tangible rewards and perceived similarity are all factors that influence a person’s CRV (Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Mottet et al., 2007). If a person has high CRV, it is more likely that others will view their violations more positively. For example, we could view a person’s violation as a pleasant surprise such as a credible and respected teacher, who rarely provides compliments, offering praise to a student. However, if the violation is negative, we could justify the behavior because we like the person. For instance, if our normally respectful best friend curses at us we may excuse this as the person having a “bad day.” In contrast, if we view a person to have low CRV, we are less likely to excuse violations. Thus, if a person we don’t like yells at us when we don’t expect it, we will remember this and resist their future attempts at communication and persuasion (Mottet et al., 2007).

Ultimately, CRV is important in order to understand how a coach attempts to influence and motivate their athletes. A coach with a high CRV will likely be granted more flexibility in terms of misbehavior than a coach viewed as having low CRV. In addition, they will also have the opportunity to motivate athletes through positive violations of expectancies. Conversely, a coach with low CRV may find this factor could harm their attempt at interpersonal influence.

The other factor influencing the interpretations of violations is arousal. According to LePoire and Burgoon (1996), arousal triggers a reaction whereby the person violated shifts their focus from the conversational topic to the violator so as to evaluate, and interpret, the unexpected behavior. By doing so, more attention is given to the relationship with the violator during arousal. Arousal is, therefore, integral in violation interpretations because it causes one to consider
what is, or is not, acceptable in a certain relationship. For example, if our coach shouts or curses at us, our first reaction would be to evaluate the source of the message (the coach) and question, “is this suitable behavior from such a person?” If this behavior conformed to our expectations, which it very well may in an athletic setting, it would then be viewed as more acceptable. In contrast, if a teacher yelled or cursed in a classroom many students would be aroused and see the behavior as a negative violation due to the context.

Upon closer examination of the instructor-student dyad, it is evident that student expectations of instructor conduct impact various facets of the educational experience. Lannutti et al. (2001) found that excessive nonverbal immediacy (i.e., in terms of proximity and haptics) negatively violated student expectations while Burgoon and Hale (1988) found that students had different expectations for teachers with low and high reward power (or valence). Understandably, an instructor with this reward power is more likely to violate (student did not expect teacher to be immediate) or reaffirm (did expect) an expectancy in a positive manner. Ultimately, the intensity with which expectancies are violated can be a deciding factor in how favorably a student views their instructor. Overall, reward valence and arousal are factors that dictate the acceptability and impact of memorable messages. In the next three sections, I will further examine the relationship between CRV, arousal, and memorable messages in order to understand the possible impact of BATs, verbal aggression, and athletic memorable messages.
Behavior-altering techniques. A common means through which an instructor persuades students is through the use of behavior altering techniques (BATs). In a classic classroom study, Plax, Kearney, McCroskey and Richmond (1986) identified 22 behavior altering techniques used by teachers in the classroom. Four of the BATs were positively associated with affect for learning: immediate reward from behavior (enjoy it, it will make you happy, you will find it rewarding), deferred reward from behavior (it will help you later in life, it will prepare you for getting a job), teacher feedback (I need to know how well you understand this because I need to know how well I taught you, it will help me understand your problem areas), and self-esteem (you always do such a good job, you will feel good about yourself if you do it). Conversely, the following four were negatively associated with affective learning: punishment from teacher (I will punish you or give you homework if you don’t do it), legitimate teacher authority (because I told you so, I’m in charge not you), debt (you owe me one, you promised you’d do it), and peer modeling (your friends do it, class mates you respect do it). The results of this study indicated that pro-social BATs create a more positive learning atmosphere for students while, in contrast, anti-social BATs border on coercion, leading students to be more extrinsically motivated and having less affect for learning (Plax et al., 1986).

Verbal aggression. Similar to the anti-social BAT, verbally aggressive messages are sent in order to damage, destroy, or defeat another person’s self concept or stance on communicative topics (Infante, 1987; Infante & Wigley, 1986). A verbally aggressive message takes many forms, including physical
appearance attacks, character attacks, competence attacks, teasing, ridicule, threats, and swearing (Infante, 1989). The targets of such messages usually feel anger, embarrassment, annoyance, desperation, inadequacy, hopelessness, humiliation, or depression (Infante, 1987; Kinney, 1994). As a result, a strong possibility exists for negative and lasting relational outcomes of aggressive messages (Infante, 1989). Despite the negative results, the source of such messages often feels their aggression is permissible. Verbally aggressive people report that they act this way when they are defending themselves, teasing others, and when they are angry (Martin, Anderson & Horvath, 1996). In the classroom setting, people justify their use of verbal aggression when they are reprimanding, or trying to gain the compliance of another (Martin et al., 1996). As such, people use verbal aggression as a means to influence and affect the behavior of others.

Some verbal aggression research has examined the impact such messages have on both students’ motivation and affective learning. According to Infante (1989), instructor verbal aggression can lead to students having their feelings hurt and their self concepts damaged. Similarly, Myers and Rocca (2000) found that students are likely to become defensive and feel inadequate when instructors challenge them verbally. Moreover, instructor verbal aggression lowers student affect towards the instructor, the course content, and the recommended and preferred classroom behaviors (Myers & Knox, 1999). Finally, verbal aggression has been shown to lower student levels of state motivation (Myers & Rocca, 2001), their willingness to attend class (Rocca, 2004) and their class participation (Rocca, 2004). Ultimately, verbal aggression appears to not only hurt the target of
the messages, but also the sender since those people who are perceived to be verbally aggressive are viewed as less responsive (Teven, 2001), less trustworthy (Phillips & Kassinove, 1987), less empathetic (Teven, 2001), less competent and more inappropriate (Myers, 2001), and less immediate (Rocca & McCroskey, 1999). By sending verbally aggressive messages, the source negatively influences how others perceive them along the dimensions of communication competence, caring, and communicative effectiveness.

In most contexts, the use of verbal aggression has negative results. One setting where the use of such messages is perhaps more acceptable and common is athletics (Reynolds & Allen, 2003). Indeed, Kassing and Infante (1999) identified five forms of verbal aggression in the athletic setting: cursing, shouting at players, telling players off, insulting players’ ability and effort, and attacking player’s character. While the use of positive verbal messages are preferred by athletes, verbally aggressive messages such as the above are still acceptable in many instances in the athletic setting (Kish & Woodard, 2005).

If positive messages are preferred by athletes, then why are negative messages used? The most important factor affecting the acceptability of negative verbal messages is the relationship between the source and receiver (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). If the receiver strongly identifies with the source or organization that the source represents, they are much more likely to accept an aggressive message (Sass & Canary, 1991; Scott & Fontenot, 1999). Positive interpretation of such behaviors is also more likely if the receiver believes the communicator is meeting performance expectations (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). It is no coincidence,
therefore, that behaviors such as yelling and cursing are expected from many coaches (Martin et al., 2009). As such, athletes may not only accept these behaviors, they may also perceive the coach’s behavior as justified in order for them to maintain both discipline and high performance (Reynolds & Allen, 2003). Further, verbal aggression can be effective in that it enhances athlete extrinsic motivation (an athlete’s desire to avoid punishment or get a tangible reward) and enhances disabuse (which happens when a coach quells an athlete’s selfish, irrational, and self-indulgent behaviors and thoughts) (Reynolds & Allen, 2003).

In spite of the possible positive outcomes of verbal aggression, an overwhelming amount of studies have shown the negative effects that verbal aggression and anti-social BATs have on athletes. The result of such messages is that athletes become dissatisfied with their coaches and perceive their coaches to have less character and competence (Kassing & Infante, 1999). In addition, coaches who employ anti-social BATs and verbal aggression have been shown to lower athlete intrinsic motivation and affect for learning (Martin, et al., 2009). Moreover, criticism and comments that pertain to athlete’s egos have the capability to lower intrinsic motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Finally, while acknowledging some benefits, Reynolds and Allen (2003) even found that an athlete’s affect for their sport, identification with their coach, and intrinsic motivation to perform were all hampered by verbal aggression.

Overall the use of anti-social BATs and verbal aggressive messages appear to produce negative outcomes in the athletic setting. Moreover, it appears that coaches who use anti-social BATs are usually seen as verbally aggressive
(Martin et. al., 2009). Nonetheless, due to the ubiquity of these messages, it is clear they play a prominent role in the athletic setting. For better or worse, these messages influence athlete motivation and affect for learning.

**Athletic memorable messages.** In addition to aggressive communication, coaches may use memorable messages to both influence athletes and prescribe rules in a less threatening manner. Kassing and Pappas (2007) discovered seven common messages that coaches used to motivate and create affect for learning with their athletes. Four of the messages (instruction, responsibility, regret/reflection, and physical toughness) were mainly relevant to the athletic setting. *Instruction* messages related strictly to the sporting experience. Directions such as follow through or move your feet are used by coaches to ensure optimal technical execution from their athletes. *Responsibility* messages such as “don’t dwell on a mistake, fix it;” demonstrate that a coach wants a player to be directly culpable for correcting their errors, while messages like “mistakes of few influence the well being of the many,” show that a player must closely regulate themselves so they don’t hurt their team. *Regret/reflection* messages, such as “will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror and honestly say you left it all on the field” were used to evoke the feeling of possible or actual regret should players not meet their potential during performance. Finally, *physical toughness* comments such as, “pain is temporary, pride is forever,” were used to motivate players through physical pain. These comments could have also impacted affective learning if the athletes internalized toughness as a desirable trait to have in athletics and life.
Three of the messages (challenge/motivation, life lessons, and work ethic/sacrifice) were cross contextual because they applied to sports and life in general. Coaches most commonly used challenge/motivation messages in order to reframe potential challenges and inspire internal character assessment. A statement such as “the only person who can stop you is yourself” would serve to reframe a challenge and motivate athletes to believe in themselves. Life lessons messages “illustrated how coaches used memorable messages to demonstrate that sport can have implications for how athletes conduct themselves outside the sporting context, in life in general” (Kassing & Pappas, 2007, pp. 541). The implication of such messages is that life has winners and losers, and an athlete has to pick themselves up after a loss and keep trying. Closely related to life lessons were messages of work ethic and sacrifice which call for commitment and perseverance from athletes. These messages stressed the need for work ethic and commitment in practice (e.g. practice makes permanent), in the off-season (e.g., champions are built in the off season), and in general (e.g., to be the best, you have to outwork the best). Ultimately, these three messages influence an athlete’s state motivation, affect for their sport, affect for their coach and the coach’s teachings. Moreover, when players no longer play under their coach, their recollections make evident that the memorable messages had a lasting affect.

In conclusion, a coach’s use of memorable messages can negatively or positively affect their athletes. Specifically, verbal aggression and anti-social BATs can harm players as well as the coach’s communicative effectiveness. In contrast, pro-social BATs and athletic memorable messages can have a positive
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impact on the athletic experience. In any case, there is no denying the influence positive or negative memorable messages have on athletic outcomes, specifically, athlete motivation and affective learning.

**Credibility**

A coach’s use of memorable messages as well as their relationship with their players greatly impacts the athletic experience. Yet research has shown that a coach’s credibility also impacts athlete motivation and affective learning. While various scholars have identified multiple attributes that make up a person’s credibility, in this study the key components of credibility are *competence*, which refers to someone’s subject relevant expertise (Pogue & Ahyun, 2006), organization (Myers, 2004), qualifications (Berlo et al., 1969), and communication competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984), and *character*, which refers to the dynamism (Berlo et al., 1969), goodness, wisdom and trustworthiness of a person (Frymier & Thompson, 1992). Also, pertaining to both character and competence is a person’s perceived fairness in enacting justice in everyday activities (Chory, 2007). The following analysis examines research on source credibility to illuminate the third and final communicative aspect of a coach and the subsequent effects on athletic outcomes.

**Source credibility.** In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle noted that a person with strong “ethos” or credibility would be more likely to persuade others. More recently, scholars have noted that credibility is a multi-faceted characteristic (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968). While there are multiple traits and dimensions that comprise a person’s credibility, the essence of
Source Credibility Theory is: the more credible attributes a person demonstrates, the more likely they will be to motivate, influence or persuade (Pogue & Ahyun, 2006; McCroskey & Teven, 1999).

Since the 1950’s and 60’s, research has demonstrated the link between a college instructor’s communicative effectiveness and their credibility. Scholars have established that the essential goals of an instructor include motivating their students, helping them understand class material, and getting them to have a positive affect towards the material and instructor regardless of external rewards (Goodboy & Myers, 2008; Kearney, Plax, & Wendt-Wasco, 1985; Mottet et al., 2007; Frymier, 1993; Brophy, 1987). Research has also found that high credibility can increase an instructor’s chance of attaining these desired goals (Banfield et al., 2006; Chory, 2007; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006). In examining the relationship between instructor credibility and effectiveness, it seems evident that an athletic coach’s credibility would have a similar influence.

For example, various studies have demonstrated that an instructor’s expertise or competence are related to positive student evaluations (Banfield et al., 2006; Glasscock & Ruggiero, 2006), motivation and affect for learning (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Kerssen-Griep, 2001; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006) and perceived teacher effectiveness (Rubin & Feezel, 1986). Similarly, a coach’s competence (in terms of communication, expertise, or coaching record) can influence athlete satisfaction (Kassing & Infante, 1999; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986), motivation (Turman, 2003a), and assessments of their coach’s character (Kassing & Infante, 1999). Additionally, character has been linked to favorable
evaluations of an instructor (Martinez-Egger & Power, 2007). Understandably, the wisdom, personality and trustworthiness of a coach will likely also have an effect on players (Kassing & Infante, 1999).

In addition to instructional and athletic research, research on social cognition has highlighted the possible influence credibility could have in a college program. For example, social cognition scholars have found that source credibility influences the valence of issue–relevant thinking (i.e., source credibility affects the way and degree to which we think about an issue) (Tormala, Brinol, & Petty, 2007) and is a significant factor when people make decisions that involve high-thought elaboration (i.e., we are more or less confident about an important issue due to the source) (Heesacker, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1983; Petty, Capiocco, & Goldman, 1981). Accordingly, the thoughtful decisions that student athletes make regarding such things as which school they will attend, whether or not they accept coaching and instruction, or whether or not they stay on the team, are undoubtedly influenced by the credibility of their coach.

Credibility, therefore, is a fundamental dimension of a coach. With credibility, a coach has the opportunity to influence their athletes in many ways. Without credibility, a coach is viewed as a less effective communicator. Therefore, uncovering the coaching behaviors or traits that impact perceptions of credibility in a collegiate coactive team setting is imperative. Furthermore, analyzing the relationship between a coach’s credibility and athletic outcomes is of equal importance.
Athletic Outcomes

As previously discussed, coaching behaviors are related to important athletic outcomes such as team cohesion (Westre & Weiss, 1991), athlete satisfaction (Turman, 2008), perceptions of sportsmanship (Kassing & Infante, 1999), commitment to sport (Stuntz & Spearance, 2007), burnout (Price & Weiss, 2000), and identification with coach (Reynolds & Allen, 2003). Yet as research has demonstrated, motivation and affective learning have significant effects on a person’s athletic experience and life mind set. These two athletic outcomes, and their contribution to an athlete’s comprehensive experience, are examined next.

Motivation. Motivation is the student propensity to find academic activities important and worthwhile and to try to obtain the intended academic benefits from them (Brophy, 1987; Frymier & Thompson, 1992). According to Christophel (1990), motivated people experience many feelings such as interest, inspiration, involvement, stimulation, being challenged, invigoration, enthusiasm, and arousal. In addition, motivation can be characterized as either a state or a trait. State motivation is less stable than trait motivation and is determined by situational influences (Frymier, 1993). In a classroom setting, perhaps the foremost situational influence is the teacher (Frymier, 1993; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006). Trait motivation, on the other hand, is the student’s stable disposition towards learning (Frymier, 1993; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006). Trait motivation is usually the result of self determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and is resistant to contextual influences (Frymier, 1993). Indeed, trait motivation is likely to occur regardless of the presence or influence of others (Richmond, 1990).
Undeniably, trait motivation affects a student’s learning experience (Christophel, 1990). For example, traditional and non-traditional students have different levels of trait motivation due to their life situations and expectations of college (Houser, 2006). Nevertheless, trait motivation is usually unaltered by contextual situations (such as teacher behaviors). As a result, most researchers have studied the behaviors that influence student state motivation. These behaviors include verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Richmond, 1990), affinity seeking behaviors (Richmond, 1990), confirmatory behaviors (Goodboy & Myers, 2008), BATs (Plax et al., 1986), aggressive communication (Myers & Rocca, 2001), instructor clarity (Houser, 2006), and humor (Houser, Cowan, & West, 2007). Moreover, an instructor’s supportive interpersonal relationship with students (Frymier & Houser, 2000), along with their competence (Pogue & Ahyun, 2006) their caring (Comadena, Hunt, & Simonds, 2007), and their character (Kerssen-Griep, 2001) all have an impact on motivation.

Beyond the classroom, athletic and coaching communication scholars have found that motivation plays an integral role in the sporting experience. Similar to trait and state motivation, sports research scholars have outlined two types of athlete motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Medic, Mack, Wilson & Starks, 2007). Intrinsic motivation involves doing an activity for pleasure and inherent enjoyment rather than a specific (and separate) outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Conversely, extrinsic motivation involves completing a task in order to achieve a goal from the activity, such as avoiding punishment or
receiving a tangible reward (Medic et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to self-determination theory, motivation processes also operate along a continuum that ranges from highly extrinsic to highly intrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The four sources of extrinsic motivation are *external regulation* (a person being motivated strictly by outside sources); *introjected regulation*, where internal pressures such as fear and guilt coerce people into action and behaviors); and *identified regulation* and *integrated regulation* (when a person acts autonomously because the outcomes related to the behavior are important or because they reinforce perceptions of a person’s self image) (Deci & Ryan, 2002). A person is motivated, therefore, because they must meet a requirement, they want a reward, or because completing a task helps them to maintain a particular self concept.

There are also three forms of intrinsic motivation on the continuum, all of which signify a self determined person. The first is intrinsic motivation to *know*, which compels a person to take part in an activity for the pleasure they receive from learning. The second is intrinsic motivation to *accomplish*, which pushes people to strive for a task or goal simply because it brings them pleasure. The third is intrinsic motivation to *experience*, which happens when a person takes part in an activity because of the satisfying feelings the act produces (Vallerand & Rousseau, 2001). Combining the research in athletics and communication studies, it appears that most student athletes are motivated by internal factors but also external factors. In any case, an athlete’s motivation is something that can be influenced but can also affect the quality of their overall experience. As such, studying the factors that contribute to motivation is germane.
Throughout the years it has been established that team win-loss percentage (Turman, 2008), individual failure (Kish & Woodard, 2005); athlete playing time (Turman, 2008); scholarship money received (Medic et al., 2007), group acceptance and team cohesion (Stuntz & Spearance, 2007); and tangible rewards (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) have an effect on athlete levels of motivation. But of equal or, perhaps, greater importance, is the impact a coach has on an athlete’s levels of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Sports communication and coaching communication scholars have found coach verbal aggressiveness (Turman, 2003a), coaches’ uses of negative behavior-altering techniques (Martin, et al., 2007), coach appeals to player ego (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and coach issuance of tangible rewards (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003) can all have negative impacts on athlete motivation. These behaviors often result in lower levels of intrinsic motivation and higher levels of extrinsic motivation.

In contrast, coach verbal immediacy (Kish & Woodard, 2005; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Medic et al., 2007); coaching instruction and feedback (Black & Weiss, 2002); perceived coach caring (Kish & Woodard, 2005; Stuntz & Spearance, 2007) and coach credibility (Kassing & Infante, 1999; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986) appear to have positive effects on athlete motivation. These behaviors are desired because they often not only enhance self determined extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, but in turn increase levels of satisfaction (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). As such, these coaching behaviors reinforce the concept of a constructive and positive coach. As Kish and Woodward (2005)
state: “Coaches are the major adult role models for student athletes because of the significant amount of time they spend together. Coaches should help athletes set realistic goals, discuss roles and expectations, and challenge athletes to reach their goals and potential” (p. 9). Thus, while there is no denying the motivational influence of negative or anti-social communication, much of the research promotes positive and specific feedback, verbal immediacy, and an open-and caring relationships in order for a coach to increase athlete levels of motivation (Maggeau & Vallerand, 2003; Reynolds & Allen, 2003).

**Affective learning.** Affective learning is related to the internalization of positive attitudes, beliefs, and values towards a topic, concept or person (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). In the school setting, affective learning is the internalization of positive attitudes towards the course content, instructor, subject matter, or anticipated classroom behaviors (Kearney et al., 1985; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Waldeck, 2007). According to Thweatt and McCroskey (1998), affective learning exists along a continuum and begins when a person becomes aware of a concept or idea (i.e., hard work in practice). The person then progresses along the continuum by being willing to work hard in practice, working hard in practice and liking it, making an effort to work extra hours after practice, and lastly, adopting a mindset that hard work and practice are the only way to accomplish things in life (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).

An important result of affective learning is a person’s growing comprehension of a topic or concept (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). In internalizing the value of specific content, students become more positively
predisposed to learn (Richmond & Gorham, 1992), use content relevant
information (Mottet et al., 2008) or adopt behaviors suggested by their instructor
(Kearney et al., 1985). Thus, inspiring student affect for learning is a goal that
instructors should have.

Many factors increase the likelihood of student affective learning. These
include various aspects such as instructor caring (Teven, 2007), competence
(Pogue & Ahyun, 2006) and character (Teven, 2007), all of which contribute to
student affective learning. In addition, instructor verbal immediacy (Gorham,
1988), nonverbal immediacy (Mottet et al., 2007; Pogue & Ahyun, 2006),
affinity-seeking behaviors (Richmond, 1990), BATs (Plax et. al, 1986), humor
(Wanzer & Frymier, 1999), clarity (Chesebro, 2003), use of technology (Witt &
Schrodt, 2006), supportive relationships with students (Frymier & Houser, 2000),
and aggressive communication (Myers, 2002) all influence student affect.

Affect for learning is also integral in the athlete-coach relationship.
Research has indicated that a coach’s use of verbal aggressiveness (Martin et al.,
2009; Reynolds & Allen, 2003), social and anti-social BATs (Martin et al., 2007),
verbal immediacy (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and training and instruction
messages (Turman & Schrodt, 2004) influence athlete affect toward their coach
and sport. Further, a coach’s caring relationship with players (Stuntz &
Spearance, 2007, credibility (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986), and leadership styles
(Turman & Schrodt, 2004) can increase athlete affective learning. As seen above,
an athlete’s affect for both learning and their coach is often the result of a coach’s
actions. Yet, affective learning is also the cause of an athlete’s behaviors and mindsets beyond the sporting world (Turman & Schrodt, 2004).

It is evident, therefore, that increased levels of motivation and affective learning can boost a college athlete’s desire and dedication to their sport as well as to the skills and values their coach teaches. In the present study, I am concerned with the recognition and definition of behaviors that affect these areas. As stated, three dimensions of a coach have been examined: interpersonal relationship with players, use of memorable messages, and credibility. Through this study, I will examine the relationship between the proposed three dimensions and athlete motivation and affective learning. Moreover, I will seek to uncover any other factors of coach communication that impact player motivation and affective learning. With this objective, the following research questions will guide my study:

R1: What coach behaviors or attributes impact athlete motivation?

R2: What coach behaviors or attributes impact athlete affective learning?

Discovering the salient behaviors or attributes of a college coach holds practical and scholarly relevance. College coaches have the unique opportunity to positively shape the minds and the behaviors of their athletes, in and beyond sports. Given the potential impact of a coach and athletics, it is important to understand the factors (i.e., coaching behaviors) that contribute to a person’s comprehensive learning experience. Accordingly, through answering the research questions, my study will determine constructive behaviors that can be taught and used to assist scholars, instructors, coaches, and athletic directors who hire
coaches. For example, if we see that athletes in a coactive setting are motivated by a strong interpersonal relationship with their coach, we can relay these findings to scholars, athletic directors and coaches. In the end, this practical information will allow college athletic directors and coaches to make the best decisions possible as they strive for their ultimate goal of nurturing individual and team success.
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Setting

I have been affiliated with the men’s tennis team at the research site, in an unofficial capacity, as an unpaid volunteer since the fall of 2008. I have held no position of power over the players but I was afforded the opportunity to be involved in coaches’ meetings, practice sessions, road trips, matches, and other social situations. During this time I have become a friend and colleague to the coaches and players. In addition to ties with Ball State University, I have 15 years of experience playing (four of which were at the collegiate level) and coaching tennis. Subsequently, my familiarity with the program and the sport gave me insight and access that few communication scholars have had before.

It is worth mentioning that some studies have examined similar populations: coactive teams (Matheson, et al., 1997), college athletes (Medic et al., 2007), tennis players (Cervello et al., 2007), tennis coaches (Wolfenden & Holt, 2005) and college coaches (Haselwood et al., 2005). However, many of the college-based studies referenced both males and females, females only, athletes from different schools, or athletes who played various sports. Consequently, the results from previous studies cannot be directly attributed to male players participating in the same sport on the same team. Further, many scholars looking
at similar populations or concepts used quantitative methods, such as surveys, to study their participants; the researchers in those studies did not interview participants. Moreover, the researchers who examined similar concepts, such as athletic outcomes, usually surveyed high school and youth coaches and athletes who participated in collaborative team sports or with no team at all. This distinction is important since my analysis concentrated on a Division I college coach and college athletes on a coactive team. Thus, because college athletes on coactive teams have different experiences than youth athletes on collaborative teams, and collegiate coaches primarily are more credentialed and experienced in working with college athletes than are high school coaches, my analysis highlighted communication elements unique to the Division I college setting. Finally, for the studies that did employ qualitative methods, the researcher(s) did not study the same context (coactive men’s college tennis team), nor did they have the same familiarity or tenure at their locations of study.

Ultimately, because of my experience with the sport, tenure with the team, and the fact that I was not a player or a coach with any power over the players, I was in an ideal position as a qualitative researcher. My comfortable and familiar relationship with participants helped to ensure the authenticity of comments during the interview process. Further, my knowledge of college tennis, coaching, and the existent literature increased the chances that the findings and results of the study were accurate depictions of communication in the coactive team setting.
Participants

The participants were members of the Springfield University Men’s tennis program. The men’s team competes at the NCAA Division I level which is the highest echelon of competitive college tennis in the United States. Under Head Coach Craig Keller, the program has had a long history of success both in winning NLL League titles and on the national level (i.e. qualifying for the national team tournament). The current program consists of 12 players including seven Caucasian Americans, one Hispanic Mexican, one African Frenchman, one Hispanic Puerto Rican, one Caucasian South African, and one African Bermudan; and three coaches including Head Coach Keller, a Caucasian American, Assistant Coach Jerry Newman, a Caucasian American, and Assistant Coach Eric Hightower, a Caucasian South African. As the study aimed to understand player perspectives, only players were considered for participation in the interviewing process. Further, because the study was focused on the influence of a head coach, players were only prompted to speak about Coach Keller.

To achieve a broad understanding of the coactive team experience, I included players of different grade levels, nationalities, and ranks on the team. Thus, all twelve players were asked for an interview with the goal of meeting the following criteria: (1) multiple grade level representation, (2) multiple nationality representation, and (3) multiple skill representation. Based upon these objectives, nine players participated in this study (the other three players consented to the study but could not be interviewed due to scheduling issues and time constraints). Subsequently, with the contribution of multiple perspectives, I was able to gain a
wide-ranging understanding of player perceptions regarding their coach’s behaviors and attributes.

To protect their identity, all participants, any person mentioned and the research site institution by the participants were assigned fictitious names. Moreover, all participants were assured that their responses were to be kept confidential and their interview tapes were to be erased a year after the project was completed. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 21 years old. The participants represented four different countries, three different ethnicities, three different grade levels, and three levels of skill (i.e., top, middle, bottom line-up players). All participants maintained membership with the Springfield tennis team throughout the duration of the study to be included in this final paper. All three of the coaches granted me permission to conduct the study and none have taken away this permission. Further, none of the players (those who were and were not interviewed) on the team declined my request to participate and none have discontinued their participation during the course of the study.

**Procedures**

The sole method of data collection for the study was qualitative interviews. In all, there were nine interviews that ranged from 27 minutes to 53 minutes long. During these interviews, I asked open ended questions that allowed the participants to explain their feelings, thoughts, and experiences with as much depth as they desired. When creating these questions I consulted various instruments. To uncover player perceptions regarding affective learning, I used content from Gorham (1988) and McCroskey, Richmond, Plax and Kearney’s
(1985) affective learning scales, tailoring questions to get at player attitudes
towards their program, their attitudes towards the behaviors recommended by
their coach, and their attitudes towards their coach.

To gauge intensity of player motivation I used content from Christophel’s
(1990) motivation scale. I created open ended questions from this scale to allow
the player free reign to describe anything that inspired, motivated, or excited them
in tennis. Additionally, I designed some questions to direct the players to
comment on coaching behaviors and attributes that elicited or hindered their own
motivation. These affective learning and motivation instruments allowed me to
tailor interview questions that helped players identify various behaviors and traits
as well as their affects on the athletic outcomes.

I also referenced other research to construct questions as well as
understand player commentaries during the analysis of the transcripts. Some of
the data included Myers and Bryant’s (2004) study that defined high character and
competent instructor behaviors; Gorham’s (1988) table of verbal and nonverbal
immediacy behaviors; Bell and Daly’s (1984) list of affinity-seeking behaviors;
Martin et al.’s (2009) adaption of Plax et al.’s (1986) BATs table; Kassing and
Infante’s (1999) list of the types of verbal aggressive influence tactics used by
coaches; and Kassing and Pappas’s (2007) collection of athletic memorable
messages. Further, I consulted McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) “goodwill” scale
as well as Stuntz and Spearance (2007) and Mageau and Vallerand’s (2003)
research regarding coach caring (see attachment C for interview transcript).
Beyond adding data to the study, the interviews benefited the participants. In a masculine culture such as men’s athletics there are few opportunities for players to talk openly with someone who understands their experiences. Thus, the interviews presented the athletes with a comfortable outlet where they could express their feelings freely. Moreover, because I gave a final report to the coaches, the players might have also benefited in that they were able to say covertly things to coaches they normally would not say.

**Data Analysis**

The audio-taped interviews with the participants were transcribed verbatim by the researcher for in-depth analysis. The 107 pages of interview transcripts were then repeatedly examined in order to understand the relationship between Coach Keller’s behaviors and traits and athlete motivation and affective learning. This process began with an open coding analysis of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which involves identifying phrases or events that appear to be similar and grouping them into conceptual categories. After this initial framework was established, I utilized a thematic analysis technique (Owen, 1984) using Owen’s three analytic criteria of 1) recurrence, 2) repetition, and 3) forcefulness. In sum, these three criteria helped me to illustrate thematically how participants made sense of their relations with Coach Keller.

The procedure began with an initial review of the interview transcripts. I listened to each interview once and read each transcript once so as to become better acquainted with the overall data. Following this examination of the data, I started the open coding process where I began to find that there were different
levels or categories of motivation and affective learning. After that, I started the thematic analysis where I first examined the data for recurring behaviors or traits affecting these possible categories. For example, I noticed recurrence if more than two players stated that Coach’s passion increased their intrinsic motivation. Following recognition of the recurring ideas, I searched for repetition of these ideas. Recurrence and repetition are similar in that they both account for frequency (Owen, 1984). However, recurrence happened when ideas or themes came to the foreground throughout the data (i.e., influence of passion) whereas repetition pointed out significant phrases (i.e., “I like it when he’s really into my match”) or explicit reiteration of the same wording (i.e., really into) in the data (Owen, 1984). Referencing the final theme, forcefulness, I analyzed the importance given to words or phrases. For example, when a player paused, “when he’s…” and emphasized the word “really into it,” in an interview, I recognized this as a unique and important saying in relation to other discourse (Owen, 1984).

In the third review, I used Owen’s (1984) framework to identify Coach’s most salient behaviors or traits. Some behaviors or traits were deemed as not salient because they were mentioned only once or they had little lasting impact on the athletes. Conversely, I would recognize a behavior or trait as salient when it was consistently mentioned throughout the transcripts or when it had significant and lasting impact on more than one player and their levels of motivation and affective learning. After outlining the impactful behaviors and traits, I referenced the relevant sports and instructional communication literature to better understand how these behaviors and traits were related and how they could be categorized.
As a result, I established six overall categories relating to motivation and affective learning (intrinsic motivation, increased extrinsic motivation, coaching behaviors that decrease motivation, increased affective learning, increased affective learning through trait modeling, and decreased affective learning) as well as eleven sub-categories of behaviors and traits that existed within the six overall categories. The results will be discussed in the coming chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to discover the coaching behaviors and traits that impact athlete motivation and affective learning in a coactive team setting. I have analyzed two athletic outcomes, motivation and affective learning, in order to illustrate how both constructive and destructive coaching behaviors may contribute to these outcomes. Moreover, I have examined a variety of coaching behaviors and traits established in the literature, including - credibility, BATs, verbal aggression, memorable sports messages, caring, immediacy, and affinity seeking strategies. Such examination has provided me with additional insight into players’ perceptions of their coach and the impact this has on their motivation and affective learning.

Within the two categories of motivation and affective learning, I discovered six sub-categories and eleven salient factors affecting those outcomes. Under the category of motivation, I found that a variety of Coach Keller’s behaviors and traits: (a) increased intrinsic athlete motivation, (b) increased extrinsic athlete motivation, and (c) decreased athlete motivation. Specifically, Coach’s credibility and caring had the most significant influence on intrinsic athlete motivation. Meanwhile, Coach’s verbal aggression and the players desire to prove something to Coach or live up to his past results had the most significant
affect on extrinsic athlete motivation. Finally, Coach’s verbal aggression and a lack of specific feedback decreased athlete motivation altogether.

Under the category of affective learning, I discovered that: (a) two of Coach’s traits or behaviors increased athlete affective learning, (b) Coach increased athlete affective learning through the process of trait modeling and (c) one of Coach’s behaviors decreased affective learning. In particular, Coach’s credibility and caring increased athlete affective learning. Further, players admired and wanted to model Coach’s will to win as well as his desire to be professional. Lastly, interviews demonstrated that when Coach did not follow through with claims, it lowered athlete affective learning.

The following sections will detail Coach’s behaviors and traits that impacted motivation and affective learning. Within each segment, I will discuss the most salient factors that increased intrinsic athlete motivation, increased extrinsic athlete motivation, decreased athlete motivation, increased athlete affective learning, and decreased athlete affective learning.

**Motivation**

**Increased intrinsic motivation.** Ryan and Deci (2000) noted that intrinsic motivation involves doing an activity for pleasure and inherent enjoyment rather than a specific and separate outcome. As intrinsic motivation relates to athlete satisfaction, one of the chief goals of this study is to outline the coaching behaviors and traits that increase the three types of intrinsic motivation: 1) motivation to know, 2) motivation to accomplish, and 3) motivation to experience (Vallerand & Rosseau, 2001). Of Coach’s many behaviors and traits, the
respondents discussed two particular behaviors, Coach’s credibility and his
caring. Specifically, the interviews revealed that these factors positively
influenced the athlete’s motivation to accomplish as well as their motivation to
experience (Vallerand & Rosseau, 2001). However, the respondents provided no
support that demonstrated how these behaviors and traits impact the athletes’
motivation to know.

_Credibility._ When it came to increasing athlete motivation to accomplish
and experience no other behavior or trait was as salient as Coach’s credibility,
which was comprised of his competence and character. In terms of competence,
Coach’s expertise and qualifications positively impacted player intrinsic
motivation to attend Springfield University and play tennis while at Springfield.
Within the dimension of character, Coach’s dynamism had a significant impact on
player levels of intrinsic motivation. The following excerpts demonstrate the way
in which Coach’s competence and dynamism gave players the drive to participate
in and enjoy tennis.

_Competence:_ Perhaps the most important time for a coach to motivate
their players is during the recruitment phase, before the player ever dons their
school’s uniform. The process of recruitment is so important because it allows
players to envision the way they will be successful and satisfied student athletes.
As player responses revealed, Coach’s competence was something that sparked
their desire to experience tennis at Springfield University before they ever hit a
tennis ball on campus. When asked about Coach’s credibility, Ryan stated: “I
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think his credibility is really good. I mean that’s something that really drew me here.”

When facing his decision between Springfield University and another Midwestern university, Kerry also was motivated by Coach’s competence:

I really ended up liking the teams just about equally, maybe a little more favoring Springfield, and the just vast experience that Coach had, really helped me decide becuz you know he’s been around the scene for many years and he’s coached the junior Davis Cup teams and he just really has a vast experience with juniors in general and, that really made me wanna come here.

As these excerpts demonstrated, Coach’s credibility helped attract and motivate prospective players. Once enrolled at Springfield, Coach’s competence added to the players’ original opinion by inspiring them to achieve success and reach goals while at Springfield. When asked what the single most motivating aspect of Coach is, Ryan stated:

I saw the success he’s had and I wanted to be a part of that. And that’s kinda what motivates me. . . . [Because w]hen he’s seen thousands and thousands of college players…if he thinks that you have talent and you have the ability, and the skill to be something great, then I guess that really motivates me to do it becuz, he believes in me.

Kelly shared a similar perspective:

What motivates me is the fact that he’s won throughout the years and traveling with the best junior players, and that he really does everything he
can to bring out your best and, the desire he has to make this a nationally competitive program, that’s something that I really find is inspirational and something that makes me wanna do better and compete at a higher level.

As these statements illustrated, the players were strongly influenced by Coach’s expertise, credentials, and his knowledge of college tennis which they gleaned from other coaches, reading about previous teams, and alumni players. This in turn encouraged the players to attend Springfield University as well as feel motivated to play once at the school. In particular, for the players, it was clear that Coach’s competence made the process of competition intrinsically pleasurable because the players were inspired by his expertise to strive for goals and play tennis at a high level.

*Dynamism:* Coach’s competence had a great impact on the player’s desire to experience playing tennis under a revered coach as well as to play tennis at a high level. However, Coach’s dynamism had even more of an impact on the player’s intrinsic motivation, which according to Berlo, et al., (1969) relates to how emphatic, bold, energetic and active he is as a leader. It should be noted that dynamism can be related to verbal aggression as a dynamic person can also be aggressive and frank (Berlo et al., 1969). Further, dynamism can be related to BATs and sports memorable messages because these messages could be used by a leader during a lively speech. However, when players mentioned Coach’s verbal aggression, BATs, or memorable messages, they normally talked about how the content of the message affected them. Conversely, the influence of dynamism was
salient when the content of the message was not important to the player. In these cases, the energy, passion and desire conveyed through clapping, gesturing, posture, facial expressions, or vocal delivery was what motivated the players to accomplish their competitive goals. For example, when asked what motivated him most, Paul, although at a loss to state specific behaviors revealed:

I just feel whenever Coach is into it, it really motivates me, whenever I feel he’s into it as I am, that’s when I get really motivated… [I]t’s just the passion when he’s saying things, you can feel whenever …he really is givin’ an inspirational speech, for us to win ya know, a recent example, I can say Friday night, he gave us a really good speech. He said all this stuff but he really said it with a passion and he got into the speech, and it was really motivating.

Ryan felt the same as Paul, but was especially affected by Coach’s non-verbal communication:

When you can see him, like…there’s a few times last year…I would be in an intense match and you can just see the intensity in his eyes, and that he really wanted you to win and really wanted ta, like, he just believed in you kinda thing…I guess it really…it really motivated me.

Kelly’s comments further demonstrated that Coach’s lively and sometimes bold demeanor is infectious and can compel a player to strive for excellence and enjoy it along the way:

[Coach’s] fiery personality is something that you want to play for, I want to play for someone who has that passion for the game. It’s seeing that
passion and that fiery attitude, whether it’s displayed non-verbally or verbally, or how much he wants you to improve through drills, it’s that attitude, it’s the desire to go out there, give it yer all, go compete and have no regrets basically.

Beyond being inspired to compete and succeed, the players also claimed that Coach’s dynamism made them feel like he was invested in their individual success as well as the team’s success. This often led to the players feeling satisfaction that what they were doing was worthwhile and enjoyable. For example, Kelly asserted that:

[W]hen it really gets you personally is when Coach gives you that same fiery attitude, that same desire to see you perform at a high level individually, without being ostentatious, that’s what really drives it home and says, he really wants me to do better, for the team.

Kyle echoed Kelly’s sentiment by stating: “It gets me goin…when he gets up in yer face, cuz it lets you know he actually cares about his job, and like how yer doing.” Similarly Paul stated that: “…whenever he’s pushing us and whenever he’s into practice is what, really motivates me more than anything else.” Ryan also found affirmation from Coach’s energetic leadership, commenting on how Coach’s specific non-verbal behaviors had a positive affect on his desire to do his personal best. “[W]hen he gets passionate about like practice and matches …like ya know pumping his fist, clapping… I mean to me it’s just his passion…what motivates me the most is ta see his passion.”
As these statements demonstrate, Coach’s energy and emphatic delivery of non-verbal or verbal messages had a positive impact on athlete intrinsic motivation. Seeing Coach take an energetic and active role in practice and matches inspired the players to find satisfaction in their efforts towards success. In essence, the players believed that if their coach was devoted to what he was doing, they too, wanted to model that passion and strive for excellence. Moreover, Coach’s dynamism was also influential because it showed the players that their leader believed in them and the team’s overall mission. This ultimately allowed the players to feel pleasure from the overall experience of tennis at Springfield University.

**Caring.** As some of the previous excerpts illustrated, players wanted a coach who is invested in the team’s overall success, but also in their personal success. However, this desire extended beyond Coach’s passion and energy. In addition to dynamic leadership, players were also motivated by his caring nature. Indeed, a majority of the players’ comments demonstrated that Coach’s ability to understand the various experiences and responsibilities of student athletes and his responsiveness in helping others made playing tennis for him a pleasurable experience. When asked what positively motivated him most, Kevin offered a statement explaining Coach’s ability to understand his athletes’ social lives:

[Coach] tries to be in touch with us. He knows how, college life is, it’s not like, we have practice on Sunday so we cannot go out during the weekend. So, he understand[s] us too, that’s pretty good. And after weekend practices he says “yea guys, be safe, if yer gunna drink, be sure where
you’re gunna be, don’t get that drunk.” It’s not hey like don’t drink, or do this, I mean he’s very open.

Kevin later discussed the way coach also understands the priorities of a student athlete:

[Coach is] a fabulous person, he wants the best for us...he’s always saying you are here to finish your degree, and then it’s tennis. It’s not like coach is thinkin you are here to play tennis and then it’s the school. No, he knows we are here first of all to study and then to play tennis. And he knows how college is, he lived the same that we are living now, so he… understands his players.

From his initial response and subsequent elaboration, we can see that Kevin greatly appreciates and is motivated by Coach’s ability to see his players as more than just athletes.

The respondents were also influenced positively by Coach’s proclivity to respond to others when he’s asked for help. Collin recalled a story where one of his friends was job searching and Coach made a recommendation call for him on the very day his friend made the request: “[I]t’s a cool thing that like he’ll drop everything, like, whatever he’s doing at the time to help somebody out. And that really, that made an indent on like, why I chose to go to Springfield.” Collin added that:

I think that for his players [Coach] would do pretty much anything, and that shows me a lot, I really like that about him, he will do anything in his
Bryan felt the same way, recalling a story when Coach went out of his way to show compassion through some tribulations:

Two weeks into the semester, we found out that I was ineligible to play for the entire year. And I couldn’t just not play, I wasn’t allowed to practice, I couldn’t lift weights with the team so I was really here for tennis, but I wasn’t playing tennis. And I know a lot of people who have been in that sorta situation and the coach is just, been like “Okay, I’ll see you next year.” But Coach tried to incorporate me into different things that the team were doing, he tried to make sure I kept playing, so it wasn’t like he was just abandoning me out in the cold. He knew he had gotten me here and he wanted to see me progress and that really made me want to, ya know, get betta too.

As this passage makes clear, Coach went above and beyond his duties to make sure a prospective player felt appreciated and valued. In turn for Bryan, this motivated him to work towards improvement but also made his potentially lonely and off-putting experience, positive and inspirational.

As the previous examples illustrate, Coach’s caring communication impacted athlete levels of intrinsic motivation. In particular, his proclivity to understand his athletes and empathize with their social and academic lives motivated the players to enjoy playing tennis for their coach. At the same time, Coach’s desire to improve the success of others satisfied the players while it also
motivated them to strive for achievement under the guidance of such a caring person.

**Increased extrinsic motivation.** While Coach exhibited traits and behaviors that increased players’ intrinsic motivation, player comments made it evident that there were also behaviors that increased extrinsic motivation, which involves an athlete completing a task in order to achieve a goal from the activity, such as avoiding punishment or receiving a tangible reward (Medic et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Of the four types of extrinsic motivation discussed in the literature review, three-external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation were apparent through the interviews. Increasing these levels of extrinsic motivation were verbal aggression/BATs and the players desire to prove something to their coach or live up to his expectations of past positive player performances.

**Verbal aggression/negative BATs.** Respondents revealed that although Coach sometimes employed verbal aggression and BATs as motivational tools, they usually understood that he used these tactics because he was angry and he was trying to get them to perform better. And more often than not, the players’ feelings of extrinsic motivation were affected. The following excerpts elucidate how mild verbal aggression (yelling and screaming) and BATs (reminders of responsibility to others and guilt) impacted the player’s extrinsic motivation. The first group of statements shows how Coach’s vituperation alone can be a source of external motivation for a player. As Kelly recalled:
[I]n terms of increasing my motivation, really kinda when [Coach has] lost it, either in practice or in matches, just going off on the team…trying to will them to do better, ta really try ta get into them and push them so they will raise their level of game.

In the same vein, Collin said:

[T]here’s some days that like, I come out there, that I need like, a good, yelling to get motivated, there’s days that you just don’t wanna do stuff, but if you would get yelled at like that, I think it would wake you and be like okay ya, I really do need to get going.

In both of these quotations, we see that there are times when the players need external regulation to get motivated. Indeed, through the doldrums of a long season, a player may not have any motivation at practice until they get yelled at by Coach.

The next type of motivation, introjected regulation\(^{\text{x}}\), was the most common type discussed by the respondents. In these cases, Coach’s verbal aggression sparked feelings of embarrassment and fear which in turn motivated the athletes in the future to act in certain ways so as to deter the use of verbal aggression. Ray mentioned that although he himself had never received a verbal spattering, the knowledge of Coach’s aggressive communication tactics compelled him to act in certain ways:

[T]o be honest, probably the thing that drives me the most is, I had always seen [Coach], ya know throw his temper tantrums and, coming into this program it scared me to death that he would just go off on me and so I
figured ya know, if I try my hardest if I do everything I possibly can, He can’t ask for more, so he can’t really go off on me.

Paul on the other hand had received a verbal diatribe from coach. Paul’s comments show how verbal aggression can be upsetting, possibly annoying, but still motivational.

Oh well yea, whenever [Coach] gets mad… you obviously don’t want him to get mad at you, but it motivates you to start playing better. That’s prolly it, you don’t like anybody to yell at you or tell you all this stuff, but it really, it motivates, I think it motivates a lot of the guys too to start playing, but nobody likes it obviously to get yelled at.

Kyle shared a similar sentiment which shows how he was impacted by and made sense of Coach’s yelling outbursts:

I think it’s always been a coaching, like tool, some people just shrug it off and some people use it to get themselves pumped up. And other people just crumble and are shut down by it…and, I feel like that I’m right in the middle, that’s kinda like shrug it off and like the, use it in positive thing, because, you don’t wanna get yelled at again so that makes you wanna work harder at it.

Yet not everyone felt the same as Kyle. In fact, Kevin remembered an instance where Coach’s yelling instilled fear that affected his game play:

It was one day before we played not a very good team…and Ryan was playing Ray and they were playing really bad and Coach started yelling at them…So it was not specific to me but it was to my team mates and I feel
bad for them and myself too because, sometimes we feel a lot of pressure.

It’s kinda like I feel I don’t want to let him down.

Kevin’s comments are a marked indicator of someone who is extrinsically motivated. In this case, an aggressive outside source sparked feelings of fear that pushed Kevin to play in a way so as not to get yelled at himself. Consequently, it also compelled him to play nervous in anticipation that a miss-step could result in him facing Coach’s verbal aggression.

However, not all of Coach’s aggression resulted in players feeling fear. Indeed, with the last form of extrinsic motivation, identified regulation\textsuperscript{xi}, the use of verbal aggression by Coach showed Bryan that he needs to work hard for himself and others so he can truly be a team player:

\textit{[J]ust the fact that [Coach] went as far as to curse and say all that stuff, it let me realize that, this is something that I should be taking seriously. Because…it’s not just about me anymore, it’s about the team, the coach and myself.}

Coach’s use of negative BATs such as responsibility to others and guilt (Plax et al., 1986) further compelled Bryan to play harder in order to maintain the identity that he was a devoted team player:

\textit{[Coach]’s speeches where he doesn’t cuss are good especially when he incorporates the idea that as much as tennis is an individual sport, you’re no longer playin just for yerself… You have other people to play for… It makes you realize that, it’s bigger than just you. Yer doin this for the other ten, eleven guys on team.}
As these excerpts illustrate, mild verbal aggression (or the prospect of mild verbal aggression) and BATs were a common reason players felt extrinsically motivated to play tennis. More often than not, this motivation was either introjected or identified regulation. And whether it was introjected or identified, the comments above reveal that players were not acting solely on the fact that they were satisfied or gaining pleasure from what they were doing. Instead, they were behaving in ways to avoid punishment or to maintain a particular self image.

**Proving oneself/living up to program history.** Players’ desire to prove their value to Coach and their desire to live up to his program history show us that Coach could be both intentionally and un-intentionally motivational. The first excerpt from Ryan illustrates how he wants to prove to Coach that he can be a team contributor, more so than some of his other team mates:

[Coach] thinks that I can play in the line-up if I would just be in like, better physical shape and then he’s told me I’m outta shape. So I guess that motivates me ta, every practice to go as hard as I can, or push myself so I can try’n get in better physical shape... And then what motivates me is ta beat someone that is in shape or someone that he says technically is in shape just to prove him wrong.

This comment exemplifies how Ryan is motivated through introjected regulation in that his pride has pushed him to gain the reward of better physical shape, to be better than others, and to prove his coach wrong. A statement from Collin elucidates his feelings of introjected regulation. In direct response to a question
about how Coach increases his intrinsic motivation to play, Collin reveals his desire to prove his work ethic and worth to Coach:

> When I go out there, I jus try’n show Coach that I’m working hard and make sure that he notices that I am getting better and trying, and to appreciate the fact that I’m in the line-up.

Thus, even in answering a question designed to get at intrinsic motivation, Collin appeared to be most influenced by his desire to be reaffirmed by his coach. The likely reason Collin wanted to prove his worth to his coach became apparent from the following players’ statements. Specifically, interviews showed that Coach’s credentials and the history of his program were motivational in that they pushed the athletes to live up to that history and not let down a coach who is accustomed to success. Ray’s statement displays this phenomenon:

> I mean, we see what kind of program [Coach has] had and we haven’t done as well in the last couple of years…and you can kinda see it wear on him a little ya know, he’s tired of losing, ya know he says that. So I think that’s one of the big motivators is just getting this program back to where it was. It’s our turn, we have only so many years we can do that, and if we don’t do it while we’re here, well then we’ll never get another chance.

Ray’s comments are a trademark of an extrinsically motivated person. He is introjectedly motivated through feelings of fear and potential regret that he won’t live up to Coach’s program history. A comment from Ryan adds to Ray’s but also highlights his feelings of external and indentified regulation motivation. When asked what was most motivating about Coach, Ryan responded:
Yea I feel like, with the team… we’re able ta reach the goal of another league championship and I know [Coach] thinks every year is a failure if, we don’t win a league championship, and, I don’t wanna have my four years here and, have that failure I guess. And I know the rest of the team doesn’t wanna be part of a four year Springfield program that hasn’t won a league championship. And that’s something I just don’t wanna do cuz I mean pretty much anyone who’s been on his team the last 25-30 years, they’ve won a league championship at least once.

Ryan therefore wanted to not only gain a tangible reward (i.e., become a league champion) but he also wanted to complete a task to prove to himself that he belonged as part of an esteemed tradition, and wanted to be an important part of upholding the team’s “winning tradition.”

In addition to Coach unintentionally motivating, Kerry’s remarks show that Coach at times purposefully mentioned his program’s history which in turn led to athlete extrinsic motivation:

It’s kind of sometimes bad hearing [from Coach] about…how great the team used to be, in the past. And that motivates me to wanna be, ya know, just as good as they were, ya know, win league championships. But I feel like sometimes it’s not appropriate to say that kinda thing cuz college tennis has, evolved, into something totally different than what it was.

Thus, although Kerry sees the tradition as a factor that motivates him through external (i.e., win championships) and introjected (i.e., pride) regulation, his
comment also shows that he is not always happy with the motivational tactic used by Coach.

Viewed as a whole, these player remarks demonstrate that Coach’s credibility can be somewhat of a double-edged sword. A majority of players were intrinsically and extrinsically motivated by his credibility. However, in terms of extrinsic motivation, the players appeared to be motivated at times by the perceived pressure that came with playing under a prestigious coach. Thus, because of Coach’s credentialed history, the players were pushed through external, introjected, and identified regulation to prove their worth to their coach and to live up to the accredited tradition they believe he has established.

**Coaching behaviors that decrease motivation.** This section will reveal that some of Coach’s behaviors and traits completely undermine athlete motivation. Specifically, verbal aggression that targets individuals and lack of coach feedback were factors that led athletes to lose their intrinsic and, in some cases, even extrinsic motivation to play tennis. The forthcoming player comments will illustrate the destructive and counterproductive nature of such behaviors.

**Verbal aggression.** In the earlier analysis, we saw that verbal aggression can be a source of extrinsic motivation for the respondents. However, there were also times when Coach’s verbal aggression ceased being motivational in anyway. In particular, when his comments were delivered in a boisterous manner, when they were insulting, and when they were directed at a specific individual, the players felt no enjoyment and were not even motivated through external,
introjected or identified regulation. Kelly explains the deleterious impact verbal aggression has on an individual who receives it:

When [Coach is] talking to the whole team, it’s very easy to understand and to take that in and really believe in, but when he’s going after players in front of everyone else, to where everyone else can see and it’s almost a distraction, it really, detracts from my motivation and when it’s happened to me…my attitude just completely shut down and went from trying to be positive to just shutting down because it wasn’t a situation that I felt like he shouldn’t have been going off the way that he was.

Kevin’s comment also shows how attacking a player in public about his performance has adverse affects on an athlete’s drive: “Yea I mean, that brings me down, eh, to say like, to…yell at me in front of other people, say my mistakes in front of everybody, because that that’s my problem and that’s what I need him to help me and that’s not other’s problems.”

Kerry recalled a time when Coach used verbal aggression instead of feeling motivated out of anger or fear, he felt disrespected and hurt:

There are sometimes when [Coach] can really lay into you and just make you not feel like you belong on the team sometimes. For example, I played with another player, at the Springfield invite, and we were playing two kids that were pretty good…but coach came out and pretty much told us we were playing like shit, and that we need ta step it up or we wouldn’t have a spot on the team or something like that. And, like after that, I was really more de-motivated than motivated. Like I still had that thought in
back of my mind for the rest of the match, I didn’t really perform as well as I thought I was before that. It just didn’t really help me at all.

Ryan’s descriptive recanting of a story further illustrates the destructive and lasting impact of Coach’s verbal insults when they are directed at players in front of their team mates.

[I]t was the day before we played Maryland Tech…I wasn’t havin a good practice. Like I got my serve in and then the first ball, I missed four in a row. And, I don’t cry that much, but I almost cried right there, that’s, I guess I felt like embarrassed and it jus, un-motivates me, like I just don’t wanna do anything then…[Coach’s yelling] was a bad verbal, like, I’ve never been yelled at like that, even by my mom…[Coach was] just like “this is un-fucking-believable, do you wanna play tomorrow, I don’t hafta play yer ass, I could just sit you. If you don’t play well tomorrow you’ll never see the court in your four years here, I’m not kidding!”… I mean, if someone wants to yell at me I’d rather someone do it in private, cuz to me it’s just embarrassing to get bitched at, in front of like nine other guys.

Taken together, the previous testimonies highlight the manner in which verbal aggression can decrease athlete intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Coach often used verbal aggression to reprimand or motivate players. Consequently though, as we see, the players rarely see the aggression as justifiable when it is directed at them, especially in front of their team mates. In the end, this leads the players to find no pleasure in their experience and it also undermines any feelings of motivation through external or introjected regulation.
This brings up the challenging aspect of dynamism and verbal aggression. The players all claimed they were motivated by passionate and dynamic speeches. Also, while it was extrinsic, some players were motivated by seeing Coach yell and scream at the team or themselves. However, at some point, the passion and aggression reaches an intense point where it is no longer inspirational. It is at that point, when the player gets yelled at loudly, gets insulted, or gets singled out that they no longer find motivation from their coach’s speeches.

**Lack of feedback/praise.** If over the top or insulting “feedback” lowers motivation, interviews demonstrated that a paucity of feedback and praise has a similar effect. The following section will show how a lack of feedback leaves players feeling apathetic, aimless, and sometimes uneasily unsure as to what their coach is thinking. When asked if a lack of feedback or praise ever affected his motivation Ray claimed:

Yea… I mean that kinda goes back to my confidence. Sometimes I feel like whenever I’m playing well [Coach is] not watching, ha, ya know, he’s watching somebody else and then when he does watch me, I play like crap. So I mean, fur sure it-it affects me and bums me out sometimes when he doesn’t do it just because I don’t know if he sees me play well.

As Ray wanted more affirmation regarding his level of play, Kelly wanted affirmation for his participation in general:

I don’t think Coach gives enough praise and, after not seeing or not hearing it, it almost, takes away from the motivation that you’ve had, it’s kinda like…in essence, kind of feeding the ego not to an over extent, but if
yer giving yer all *every single day* and not hearing him say, hey nice job in practice today, or great effort in the match, it’s like okay…What am I doing this for?

Clearly a lack of praise and feedback can lead to players feeling disappointed and apathetic. Other players found the lack of feedback disheartening because it left them unsure as to what they needed to improve upon or how they could accomplish that goal. Ryan’s conversation with me elucidated this experience.

I wish there was more positive and more negative, I mean, you don’t really get much fer like, like nice shot er like, do this kinda thing, and I would like that more, it’s nice to hear that if you make a good shot, but then it’s also good to hear, for me, I’d like to hear what I did wrong, like I’d rather hear that than nothing at all personally.

Ryan also explained that even when Coach provided feedback, it was often too vague to be useful. As he related:

[S]ometimes [Coach] says “you played well enough to win but you just didn’t win.” I wanna know what exactly I coulda done ta actually win that match. And that’s what like un-motivates me ta like not get better cuz, or like do stuff becuze, he’s not gunna actually tell me what I need ta do, I mean that’s happened a number of times, and it’s jus, it just frustrates me.

In addition to desiring more praise and specific performance feedback during games, players also wanted Coach to give more positive and negative feedback
before and during matches and practices. Kelly mentioned that he becomes upset when Coach appears to be withholding feedback during practice:

I do not enjoy the fact that there are times where I think that [Coach] doesn’t say anything about our games or effort where he should say something I think he’s purposely not saying anything but I think it’s, the wrong decision.

Additionally, Bryan wished Coach would offer more feedback and praise for individual performance even after a sour team loss, as he believes this would be better for the morale of the team and the individual players:

I wish [Coach] could be more expressive because, the team mighta lost, but two of the guys might have played really good matches. But, the fact that the team lost sorta over rides that and he doesn’t really give any praise for someone playing a good match. So it seems like, by bottling that up, it sorta neglects to give that person some positive praise. And I think it kinda bums guys out a bit who may have won and I know me personally, I’d wanna hear something nice after a win ya know.

As we have seen, this lack of praise can leave a player apathetic and uninspired. This lack of feedback, which is often caused by a loss or bad practice, can also be a harbinger to Coach’s potential post-match outburst. As Bryan related:

I know from experience, it’s not good to bottle things up. But more often than not, [Coach’ll] bottle it up for the ride home and he’ll just say I’ll see you guys on the next practice day, and yer really waiting for it, but he
prolongs that, and the next practice, you know it’s gunna be hell, so yer not really lookin forward to going to practice.

Thus, the lack of feedback can not only leave players listless, but it can also decrease their motivation to go to practice the next day because they are afraid of what is coming.

In the end, the players perceive feedback or praise as an important factor that fosters confidence, reaffirms their worth, and gives them direction and guidance. Consequently, when they do not hear feedback or praise, they are left feeling apathetic, frustrated, unconfident, aimless, and sometimes nervously uncertain as to what their coach is thinking. And regardless of the specific emotion, the result is a decreased sense of motivation for the player.

At the end of the day it is counterintuitive to think that Coach would purposefully try to diminish a player’s motivation. Nevertheless, it is apparent that his verbal aggression sometimes decreases players’ motivation. Specifically, being verbally aggressive to individual players in front of their team mates left them feeling embarrassed, flustered, and un-motivated. Additionally, Coach’s lack of feedback (whether intentional or unintentional) can diminish the chance that the players will work to maintain positive self perceptions (Black and Weiss, 1992), will enjoy their experience without encountering burnout (Price & Weiss, 2000), and will work towards team goals (Westre & Weiss, 1991), all of which relate to intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Indeed, their satisfaction to perform will be undermined (Reynolds & Allen, 2003).
Affective Learning

Closely related to motivation is athlete affect for learning, which is a person’s positive feelings towards a topic, concept, or person (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). As the classroom-based and athletic studies have shown, through internalizing the value of specific concepts or content, people become more positively predisposed to learn (Richmond & Gorham, 1992), use (Mottet et al., 2008) or adopt behaviors suggested by their instructor or coach (Kearney et al., 1985; Turman & Schrodt, 2004). With this research in mind, I noticed that Coach induced affective learning when one of his behaviors or traits led an athlete to appreciate, learn, use, and/or adopt certain lessons, concepts, or traits that he taught or exhibited. Specifically, the respondents’ comments suggested that Coach Keller’s credibility and caring increased their willingness to accept and adopt the concepts he taught; Coach’s will to win and his desire to be professional increased athlete affective learning through the trait modeling, while Coach not following through with claims lowered their affective learning. The following player comments highlight these findings.

**Increased affective learning.** Thweatt and McCroskey’s (1998) work suggests that increased affective learning ultimately results in pupils adopting and enjoying particular behaviors suggested by their coach. To achieve this end though, pupils often need their instructors or coaches to exhibit certain behaviors and traits. Understandably, the interviews revealed some of Coach’s behaviors and traits that increased athlete affective learning. In particular, his credibility and
caring had profound impacts on the players’ desire to learn from their coach and enact his teachings in and beyond tennis.

**Credibility.** Coach’s credibility, which was demonstrated through his competence and character, was the biggest reason why player’s bought into and applied his teachings. As the first group of comments show, Coach’s winning record and his ability to improve players in the past (i.e., his competence) had a great influence on the players. A dialogue with Collin displays this sentiment:

Yea, well I mean [Coach is] obviously had good results in the past so, when he says stuff, like I’ve listened, and I know that he knows what he’s talking about…And again, I buy in because I know that he does know what he’s doing and he has been around really good players and he knows what it takes to be good. And, those facts alone make it so I buy into it.

Another dialogue with Paul illustrates his respect for Coach’s competence and how he has integrated consciously Coach’s lessons into his own tennis game:

Most of all I think [Coach] has helped me more of how to prepare for a match, how to handle each situation differently and how to jus come and play tha match ya know, don’t put any extra pressure, don’t do anything that you don’t usually do, jus go out, play the match. Prolly the best thing he has taught me, the best lesson I’ve learned here…[I’ve taken his advice] because I obviously know he knows what he’s doing, he obviously knows about tennis, he obviously knows a lot, he’s been here so many years, that he knows a lot so, that’s prolly why.
Ray had a similar statement, but his comment demonstrated how Coach’s expertise helped him buy into and use Coach’s teachings especially after a tough loss:

[Coach’s] credibility’s prolly the most after…tough matches that we lose, cuz then…You know that he’s been there. He’s been in that situation before and he’s telling you things that we have to do in order to overcome these kinds of situations and you have to trust him because you know he’s been there before and he’s won so he knows how to do it.

In addition to appreciating Coach’s expertise, Kevin also noticed that Coach exercised communication competence when showcasing his knowledge:

You believe [Coach] because of how many years he has been in this sport, because he played tennis and was a really good player. And coach just knows how to, teach, like if you miss a forehand he knows exactly in that moment how to say how you can improve that forehand, or yer serve, like…it’s kind of all his technique… it’s very effective.

As a result of his expertise, experience or credentials, players subsequently found Coach to be sagacious and trustworthy from all of his years coaching at Springfield. Kevin’s statement demonstrates how the wisdom and trustworthiness persuaded him to listen to and implement Coach’s teachings: “I mean [Coach’s] love for this program, I like that. When he says something, you believe him because he stayed here, he had other offers, so if he’s here, it’s because he wants to, not because he’s trying…to get to a better coaching job.”
In the same vein, Ryan talked about how Coach’s trusted and long lasting reputation inspired him to come and learn the game of tennis at Springfield:

[A]ny college coach I talked to or anyone else I talked to, had nothing but good things about, ta say about [Coach]. So…it really just made me wanna come here and, learn from him cuz I mean, he’s one of the longest like, coaches in Division I history.

By the end of the interviews, it was apparent that Coach’s competence and character positively influenced player affective learning. Specifically, because Coach had exemplary credentials, possessed expertise in the field of tennis, and exercised communication competence, the players were more apt to listen to and implement his teachings. Further, because he had built a trusted and long standing reputation, players felt that Coach was a reliable source to learn from. This is consistent with Source Credibility Theory (Berlo et al., 1969, Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) which holds that a credible source’s messages will be more acceptable and a credible person will be more persuasive.

*Caring.* Just as players were positively influenced by Coach’s competence and character, they were also persuaded to accept and adopt his teachings because of his efforts to try to improve their tennis games individually and his ability and desire to recognize them as more than tennis players. As statements from Bryan show, Coach’s efforts to help him improve as an individual tennis player and person were a sign of Coach’s caring nature:

[Coach is] definitely a caring person, for you as an individual overall, not just as a tennis player. One thing that I appreciate that he often says is,
you’re here first for school and tennis is second, and he also has an ability to make you feel like you’re a part of something rather than just being a number. It’s not just yer here just to get me another ring. I’m actually gunna take you in and try to make you a better individual player as well as trying to get us to become a better team.

In this instance, Bryan noticed Coach’s efforts to improve him as individual on and off the court. In turn, we saw that Bryan had positive feelings towards Coach which later in the transcript prompted Bryan to note that “even if yer not playing for yerself, one thing [Coach] always gets at is, you have other people to play for. So even if you are losing, make it look like yer winning, stay positive about yerself.” As such, Coach’s teachings of being positive for one’s own sake and to also help the team was an idea that Bryan adopted and enacted.

Though Coach’s efforts to improve individuals’ performances on the court were influential, a majority of player comments elucidated Coach’s ability to care for athletes outside of tennis. A conversation with Ray highlights how Coach’s ability to recognize him as more than a tennis player increases his affect for learning:

I: What about coach makes you wanna listen to what he teaches and use that?

R: Probably the fact that he does care outside of tennis. He wants to know how yer grades are, he wants to know how yer social life is, he wants to know… how yer life is, not just tennis, ya know. I’m sure he’s concerned about how yer playing but…And I’m sure in his job description that’s all
he has to be concerned about but he does want to know about us and how we’re doing.

It is clear that Ray appreciates the fact that Coach recognizes that his athletes have lives beyond tennis. Paul had similar feelings:

I think [Coach] does that a lot… whenever you have a personal problem he really listens to you and really helps you and I think that that’s really good, you know it really motivates you to, whatever he’s saying, you listen and yer gunna do it right.

Here we see Paul recognize Coach’s ability to respond to any issues he may face. At the same time, we see Paul’s positive affect towards Coach which subsequently left him more predisposed to learn from Coach (Richmond & Gorham, 1992) and enact Coach’s teachings (Kearney et al., 1985 and Mottet et al., 2007), an occurrence that is consistent with research on affective learning in the classroom.

In addition to Ray and Paul’s more general commentary, Kyle’s account of a personal experience displays how Coach’s ability to empathize with and understand others can increase player affective learning:

Last summer, I was having stomach issues and I called [Coach] and told him about it and then he’d e-mail me or call me, or something like that, at least once a week during the summer, and like right after I had a colonoscopy he called me the next day and called me the day before, just to make sure things were going okay, cuza I’m sure he’s had a colonoscopy before and knows that they’re not very fun, so…that
definitely shows what kinda person he is, he goes out of his way ta, make sure that, yer okay. Ya know, to show genuine care for somebody even though they only might be…know you for only 4 years or less, so… when he cares about you, it’s gunna make you wanna do what he says, and have more respect for him…just the same way that you would ya know if it was yer grandma or grandpa or somebody in yer family.

Kyle’s description demonstrates that players do notice Coach’s ability to respond to, understand and empathize with their own life occurrences. And for Kyle, Coach’s behaviors sparked in him the kind of respect he would have for a close family member.

As these passages demonstrate, Coach’s caring behaviors resulted in players having a positive affect towards him and what he teaches. Most notably, Coach’s efforts to improve individuals on the court, and his ability and desire to recognize athletes as more than just tennis players led to players liking their coach and listening to his teachings. Consequently, the players had a positive affect towards Coach and his teachings which resulted in them accepting and employing his advice.

**Affective learning through trait modeling.** In addition to Coach’s behaviors leaving the players more inclined to accept and use his teachings, some of his credible behaviors and traits led to players modeling those traits, both in tennis and in life. The two most recurring behaviors or traits that the players already had adopted or had planned to adopt were Coach’s will to win and his desire to be professional.
Will to win. Many of the respondents mentioned that one of their favorite traits of Coach’s was his will to win or his fight. In these conversations, many of the players also claimed that they respected this trait so much that they have tried to or already have adopted that same “will to win” mentality, both in tennis and in life. For example, Paul’s response to my inquiry about Coach’s positive behaviors prompted a comment about how Coach’s will to win has impacted him:

He loves to win…so it influences me to want to win, ya know, it impresses upon me that want to win a lot. And ya know it jus, if he wants it, if he’s teaching us that…we’re obviously gunna learn it. So, we just want to win more, we’re gunna put more into it.

Clearly, Paul recognized Coach’s will to win and has adopted this trait as something that he adheres to in tennis. Statements from Bryan illustrate his perceptions of Coach’s will to win:

I know that [Coach] hates to lose. And that impresses on upon me that at no cost should I want to lose. You can, be, three match points down, and six-love, five-love down, but you should always be trying to win that next point to try to extend that match. And he seems like the individual to sort of, not throw in the towel at any point…Cuz you never know what’s gunna happen.

Additionally, Bryan explained how this will to win has impacted his own behaviors and mindset:

Right from young, I hated to lose. And being here has reincarnated that thought process in my head like, no matter what at any cost, try your best
not to lose, cuz it’s just not a good feeling….And that’s sorta something that I picked up being around [Coach] too.

Similar to Paul and Bryan, Kevin was greatly influenced by Coach’s will. However, Kevin discussed how he could utilize this trait in life outside of tennis:

[Coach is] a fighter…that’s what I have learned from him like fight all the time, no matter what, no matter if you are losing, you are winning, fight the whole time…be competitive…[Because] the thing is now, it’s probly stupid but it’s really hard to find a job, you can’t quit, you have to do the opposite, you have to fight, you have to do whatever you can to get a job, or to getta good family, to get your kids a good education, just, whatever you can do… just do it… don’t make the mistake just to quit.

Collin’s narrative also shows how Coach’s will to win is something he respects and will use to be successful in life:

[T]he biggest things that I’ve learned [from Coach] is just having that confidence and just like, never giving up and just keep fighting for everything, I think that, that’s a pretty good life lesson in itself…Cuz I mean things aren’t always gunna go right, in yer job I mean there’s a lot of times where yer gunna hate it but if you keep fighting through it and you know that good things are gunna happen, good things will happen.

From these passages, it was clear to see the continuum of affective learning (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998) taking place. The players first recognized their coach’s will to win, they then fostered positive feelings towards this will to win and they finally adopted this mindset both inside and outside of tennis.
Desire to be professional. Just as the players noticed and adopted Coach’s unbending will to win, they also recognized and wanted to replicate Coach’s professionalism. Specifically, the players asserted that they respected his organizational skills, his forthrightness and the pride he takes in his work. A passage from Bryan’s interview elucidates how he learned the importance and utility of organizational skills through watching Coach:

[ Coach] is a very prepared person, that’s one thing I love about him…he’s very meticulous in his organization skills on a daily basis. It’s not, “we get to practice and you guys goof off.” [H]e always has something set for what to do next. And I mean that’s a big thing with me… and by looking towards him, and seeing a lot of the things he does, and really getting an understanding of how hard it is to put together a team and a schedule and everything that goes in between, is really something in [and] of itself. And that’s something that anyone can take, especially me, for the rest of my life. It really gives me inspiration to keep things on that right track. Because, the second that you stop being organized, or something falls apart, and you leave it by the wayside, that could be your one opportunity for something big to happen positively…so you should always be trying to put yer best foot forward…[For example] I’m a hundred percent it will help me to keep and maintain a job. Because no employer wants an employee that’s gunna be slaking off. They want somebody that’s there to do what they’re supposed to be there to do. And, by being organized and prepared to do what I have to do, that’ll allow me to maintain that job, and
in my personal life, it’ll help in keeping my wife happy, makin sure I’m around and playin a major part in my children’s lives.

As Bryan argued, modeling Coach’s organizational skills will help him be prepared and effective in his future endeavors. Similarly, Ray modeled Coach’s behaviors, but rather than modeling organizational responsibility, he discussed modeling Coach’s forthrightness:

I think [Coach’s] bluntness is, uh, a great thing just because you know, he’ll tell you how it is and that carries over to what he’s trying to teach us about how we should live our lives, ya know, cut the crap… I like that… I’d like to be a person who’s, you know, upfront about things and don’t, beat around the bush - just tell it how it is and… that can go for things you do in life too, habits you have - just cut the crap and do what you have to do. And that’s an area in tennis where I feel I’ve learned from him. Like as far as being up front about things and just doing what you have to do to become the best you can be.

Similar to Ray, Paul wished to model Coach’s work ethic. However, just like Coach, Paul believed it was especially important that others notice and respect his professionalism:

Ya, I have a thing, also my dad taught me this too, it’s wanting to be the best at everything I do. And Coach taught me that too. So whenever I’m working, I wanna be the best I can be, whatever I do in life, you gotta do it right and… you gotta also want people to respect you, and, I think coach, I think that’s a lot of what he does… it’s for people to respect him and he
really puts a lot of emphasis on that, so I also really want people to respect me [for putting forth] effort and, uh, respect [me] as a professional.

As we can see, Paul believes Coach wants people to respect his effort and professional conduct. Subsequently, Paul’s affect for this trait has influenced him to use this approach as a guiding force in his future endeavors.

These passages demonstrate that Coach increased affective learning among athletes through his own behaviors and traits which were deemed by the players to be professional. In turn, the athletes were more inclined to have a positive affect towards Coach which led some athletes to adopt these traits in sports and beyond. This occurrence was indeed consistent with Source Credibility Theory (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) that holds that a credible source will be more socially influential.

**Decreased affective learning.** Although many of Coach’s behaviors and traits increased athlete affective learning, some of his actions resulted in players not having positive feelings towards him, his teachings, and/or implementing his teachings. The following section will show how Coach decreased athlete affective learning by not following through with his claims about expectations and protocol.

**Not following through with claims.** Athletic coaches often make claims to keep athletes motivated and working hard. However, if a coach reneges on their claims, players may wonder why they listened to such advice and whether they should believe their coach in the future. Understandably, Coach not following
through with his claims about expectations and protocol was a behavior that led some players to only halfheartedly buy his admonitions that they work diligently.

For example, Ray recalled how Coach told the players their fitness would be considerably tested once they returned from winter break. Yet, when no such conditioning test took place Ray wondered if he wasted his efforts and he also wondered how this would affect the way he would take in Coach’s future teachings:

I don’t like that sometimes [Coach] says…things will be harder than they are…For example, we come back from Christmas break and we’re supposed to run two sets of five this week and we didn’t do that, just because. I mean sure we didn’t have lot of time but, a lot of the guys were preparing for that, and then you come back and you don’t even do it… So, I’m not complaining because we didn’t do it…it just seems like now we wasted our time because we didn’t do it…It’s like, you set a goal and then when you get there, it was taken away. It just kinda psyches us out, he’s like saying, it’s gunna be so hard, we’re gunna do this, this, this… and then nothing ever happens. So it’s kinda like a mind game. And sometimes we don’t know whether to believe him or not.

Similar to Ray, Kevin noticed that Coach doesn’t always follow through with claims:

And sometimes [Coach] says something, and he does it the other way.

Like he says ya were gunna travel like 10 people, and then he, brings 12 people… or something like that. I mean that’s, if you’re gunna say
something do it, if not, don’t say it., that, eh, so you like you are shocked because you were expecting something, then he does something else, so that makes you wonder if you should listen to him and wonder if everyone actually has to work hard to be able to travel.

Paul also recalled this instance and the impact this had on his receptiveness to Coach’s claims:

What I don’t like about [Coach], one thing I don’t like it’s, whenever he says something and he doesn’t do it. Ya know, then you don’t trust him, what he’s saying. Whenever he says… I’m gunna travel 8 guys and we’re traveling 10-11 guys, ya know things like that, I don’t like the message that sends to the guys and then that affects me. That affects me after that, that something that he says, I’m not gunna believe him.

As Paul and Kevin’s commentary revealed, they did not appreciate how their coach reneged on a claim regarding performance expectations and team protocol. Further dialogue with Kevin and Paul demonstrated that they disapproved of Coach’s behavior because it sent the message that despite one’s effort or capability (or lack thereof), one will be rewarded. They viewed this as a tremendous disincentive for athletes, as well as a diminishment of Coach’s credibility.

Taken as a whole, these players’ observations illustrate the deleterious effects of Coach not following through with claims. When claims, especially those that are meant to motivate, do not come to fruition, players feel misled and tend view Coach as being less credible. Consequently, the next time Coach makes
claims, these players may be less likely to listen to coaching and to employ the suggested behaviors thus undermining opportunities for affective learning in those moments and in the future.

Overall, the data reveal a number of factors impacting athletes’ motivation and affective learning. Specifically, interview accounts revealed that Coach’s credibility, exemplified by competence and dynamism as well as Coach’s caring, which was shown through his understanding of his athletes and his capacity to respond to the needs of others, increased intrinsic player motivation. Interview accounts also demonstrated that Coach’s use of verbal aggression (i.e., yelling and screaming), anti-social BATs (i.e., reminders of responsibility to others and guilt), and as his credentials/program history increased player extrinsic motivation. Finally, interview accounts suggested that when the level of Coach’s verbal aggression increased to include insults (especially those directed at individual players), it decreased athlete motivation, as did Coach’s lack of specific feedback.

Additionally, data reveal that Coach’s credibility, as demonstrated by his competence and character, and his caring, which was exhibited through his efforts to try to improve the players’ individual games and his ability to recognize them as more than athletes increased the players’ levels of affective learning. Further, Coach’s will to win and his desire to be professional emerged as two traits that the players admired and modeled in tennis and in their lives. Conversely, Coach’s inability to follow through with claims regarding protocol and expectations resulted in decreased levels of player affective learning. Chapter five includes a more detailed discussion of the findings.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Discussion

In this study I analyzed the coaching behaviors and traits that impacted athlete motivation and affective learning among tennis players on a university team. In all, I found that (a) Coach’s credibility and caring had a profound impact on players’ intrinsic motivation, (b) Coach’s use of verbal aggression/BATs and the players’ desire to prove something to their coach or live up to his past results significantly increased players’ extrinsic motivation and (c) Coach’s use of verbal aggression and lack of specific feedback decreased athlete motivation. The analysis also demonstrated that (a) Coach’s credibility and caring increased athlete affective learning, (b) Coach’s will to win and his desire to be professional increased athlete affective learning through the trait modeling, and (c) Coach’s inability to follow through on claims regarding protocol and expectations decreased athletes’ affective learning. In this chapter I will provide detailed interpretations of my findings through referencing Source Credibility Theory (SCT) (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968), Interaction Adaption Theory (IAT) (Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995), and Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977). I will next discuss the contributions and the limitations of the study. Finally, I will suggest directions for future research.
Motivation

The interviews revealed that athlete motivation is a multi-faceted athletic outcome, especially in the context of a coactive team setting. As we saw, players’ levels of motivation varied from highly internally motivated to highly un-motivated. Affecting these levels of player motivation positively were a number of factors, including Coach’s credibility, his caring, his use of verbal aggression-BATs that did not single players out and his credentials. Affecting these levels of player motivation negatively were Coach’s lack of feedback and his verbal aggression when it was perceived as excessive and directed at individuals. Ultimately, through examining these behaviors and the relevant literature, it appears as though most of the factors that impacted players’ motivation were related to Coach’s credibility and verbal aggression. This impact can be understood by referencing SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) and IAT (Burgoon et al., 1995) in the analysis of the three types of motivation.

**Increased intrinsic motivation.** In this section I will examine the way Coach’s credibility and caring impacted athlete intrinsic motivation. In particular, after analyzing credibility and caring as separate up to this point, I will argue that based on the results, caring deserves to be analyzed as a dimension of credibility. Informing this discussion of credibility will be SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) which helps to explain the relationship between Coach’s caring, dynamism, and competence and the athletes’ desire to accomplish and experience tennis while at Springfield.
Caring. In the literature review, I argued that caring was a behavior less indicative of a person’s credibility and instead more indicative of their shared relationships with others (i.e., I mostly judge a person’s caring based on my relationship with them). As the findings in chapter four demonstrated, caring was still a part of Coach’s relationship with his players (i.e., players felt Coach cared about them as individuals). Indeed, it is impossible to state that the players did not view Coach’s caring behavior as a factor in their interpersonal relationship.

Having said this, when the players explained how Coach’s caring impacted their feelings of intrinsic motivation, their commentary suggested that the caring was also an indicator of Coach’s credibility (i.e., just as McCroskey & Teven, 1999 argued). One reason for this was that the players did not always mention specific examples of how Coach had cared for them as an individual. Instead their commentaries demonstrated that they witnessed or heard about Coach’s caring behaviors in his relationship with others. “It’s a cool thing that...he’ll drop everything he’s doing…to help somebody out” was a statement that demonstrated how the caring behaviors were reflections of Coach’s caring nature in general, more so than reflections of a relationship with a particular player (the idea that he would do good things for me, but also anyone). Another reason was that Coach’s caring acts alone were not the influential factor according to the respondents. For instance, when players stated: “he wants to know how our day is” we saw that Coach’s caring act (the question) was not necessarily motivating. Instead, the motivational impact came when the players assessed what
the caring behaviors said about Coach as a person (i.e., he’s genuinely interested in his athlete’s lives).

Thus, Coach’s caring did improve his interpersonal relationship with players, but based on the player comments it appears that the increased motivation mostly occurred because the caring nature made Coach a more credible person (McCroskey & Teven, 1999; Teven & Hanson, 2004), and by result, a more effective leader (Berlo et al., 1969). Indeed, because players saw the understanding and selfless side of Coach, they internalized playing for such a good-willed person as a pleasurable experience. Additionally, after seeing the caring efforts of Coach, the players were inspired to match that effort by reaching for positive goals (such as self improvement). In the end, it is difficult to claim a direct link between coach caring behaviors and player motivation. However, there was an indirect link in that Coach’s caring behaviors did garner social influence which helped him to impact athlete intrinsic motivation.

**Dynamism.** Whereas caring seemed to have an indirect impact on intrinsic motivation, dynamism appeared to have a more immediate influence on this outcome. As commentaries illustrated, Coach’s dynamic delivery of verbal and non-verbal messages made his words and behaviors more influential and meaningful to the players. For example, seeing Coach take an energetic and active role in practice and matches inspired the players to find similar passion and satisfaction in their efforts towards success. Coach’s dynamism was also influential because it showed the players that their leader believed in them and the team’s overall mission thus making the long season more enjoyable. In the end,
this is a finding that could benefit any coach. When a coach exhibits energy and alertness (through clapping, cheering, or lively speeches to the team) in practice and matches, s/he demonstrates that s/he is fully invested in the players and the program. In turn, their dynamism acts as a magnet in that it attracts players to feel the same passion and drive (Berlo et al., 1969).

**Competence.** As Coach’s dynamism seemed to be an emotional motivator, his career record, credentials, and overall knowledge of tennis emerged as factors that motivated the athletes through thoughts and emotions. We noticed that the athletes had a great appreciation for Coach’s esteemed history and knowledge of the sport. As a result, many of the athletes were motivated to come to Springfield instead of other competing schools. This finding was consistent with the work of Heesacker et al. (1983) that demonstrated that credibility is a significant factor when people make decisions that involve high thought elaboration such as which school to attend. Once at Springfield, the athletes were further influenced by Coach’s competence to strive for excellence and compete at a high level - something Coach had done in the past. Finally, Coach’s credentialed past also made playing for him a pleasurable experience. We saw that the players were honored to be associated with a highly regarded coach and in turn, they were motivated to play out of enjoyment. As we will see later, this credentialed past is a unique dimension in that it can also result in extrinsic motivation.

Nonetheless, in these cases, part of the reason competence resulted in intrinsic motivation, rather than extrinsic motivation was the way it was communicated to the players. When describing intrinsic motivation, players did
not mention specific comments Coach made regarding his esteemed past. Instead, Coach’s competence was gleaned by the players through non-verbal communication and the communication of others (i.e., other coaches & alumni) over a period of time. The players talked about seeing banners at the tennis facility of former championships, reading about previous teams, and hearing stories from alumni before and since being at Springfield. This likely allowed the players to appreciate the positive aspects of Coach’s competence, deriving joy and pleasure from being a part of that prestige by their own association.

**Increased extrinsic motivation.** The previous segment demonstrated that dynamism and competence can have positive impacts on athletes’ intrinsic motivation. Intriguingly, the two factors that increased extrinsic motivation were closely related but also dissimilar to those two dimensions of credibility. Specifically, while the use of verbal aggression/BATs was similar to dynamic leadership, it also differed because the mode of communication Coach used to signal dynamic leadership changed and the sentiment of the messages became more negative. Further, as the following analysis will reveal, Coach’s competence was again influential, but it became extrinsically motivating when it made the players feel like they had to prove something to their coach or live up to his past results.

**Verbal aggression/BATs.** Sports research has shown that verbal aggression and the use of BATs tends to be accepted and somewhat effective in athletics (Kish & Woodard, 2005; Martin et al., 2009). Concurrent with that research, my study demonstrated that the players not only accepted and were
motivated by mild verbal aggression/BATs, they also perceived these tactics as somewhat necessary in order for the team to maintain discipline and high performance levels (Reynolds & Allen, 2003).

One reason this may have happened can be explained by Burgoon et al.’s (1995) Interaction Adaption Theory. IAT details how people’s interactional requirements (what is necessary at a given point in an interaction), interactional expectations (what is anticipated due to social norms and the relationship between interactional partners) and interactional desires (one’s goals and preferences in interactions) affect non-verbal and verbal interactional outcomes (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). The theory also demonstrates that these three variables combine to form an interaction position (IP), which is the total assessment of what is anticipated, desired or needed in an interaction. This IP is subsequently compared to the actual (A) behavior enacted by a person’s conversational partner (Burgoon et al., 1995). Then, the adaptive response (either reciprocation of or rejection of behaviors) of the interactional partner is dictated by the degree of difference between the IP and A, as well as the valence between each (i.e., was it a positive violation or a negative violation?) (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). The study results certainly exhibited the central tenets of this theory.

For example, Collin’s testimonial illustrated that he needed Coach to yell sometimes to “get him going.” Thus, when Coach would yell or scream (i.e., pick it up!) in cases where Collin was uninspired, Coach’s actual behavior matched Collin’s interaction position which led to his reciprocation (i.e., working harder). Conversely, Bryan stated that he did not anticipate Coach becoming verbally
aggressive when they first met. Consequently, when Coach became verbally aggressive in practices, Bryan’s IP was violated, but in a positive way. For Bryan, this demonstrated that Coach really cared, and therefore Bryan should match that fervor in his efforts. Meanwhile, for Ray, Kevin, Kyle, and Paul, those who viewed the verbal aggression as negative reinforcement, the process was different. For these four, their interaction position was that they did not want to see any verbal aggression from Coach. This desire (interaction position) was so strong, it led the players to do whatever possible in practice or match situations to avoid having this violated. Taken together, we saw that the positive reinforcement of interaction positions (IPs), the positive violation of IPs, and the player’s desire to not have their IPs violated were reasons that verbal aggression or the prospect of it, was extrinsically motivating.

**Prove something/live up to Coach’s credentials.** While verbal aggression was a negative intensification of dynamism, Coach’s credentials also turned out to be a negative consequence of credibility in some instances. And although some of players revealed that they wanted to prove something to their coach in general, most of the players were motivated to live up to their coach’s career credentials. This is interesting given that in our earlier discussion, Coach’s competence was a source that increased intrinsic motivation.

The likely reason for this discrepancy is the manner in which the players receive messages regarding Coach’s history. For example, Ray and Kerry’s narratives demonstrated that they heard Coach verbally mention that he is unhappy sometimes because he isn’t winning like in the past. Consequently, this
motivated both players, and others like Paul and Ryan not to strive for a goal (league championships) out of the joy of achievement, but to match their predecessors because doing so meant not being a failure and feeling regret (i.e., identified or introjected regulation [Vallerand & Rousseau, 2001]. Therefore, in line with self determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), the intrinsic motivation of the players was undermined because the desired outcome was not an indicator of personal competency or autonomous action - it was a sign that the players were not letting their coach down.

**Coaching behaviors that decrease motivation.** As the previous section illustrated, for the players there is often a minute difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Following along these lines, verbal aggression, one of the behaviors that increased extrinsic motivation, also decreased motivation altogether when the messages were delivered in a hostile manner, included swearing, and were directed at individuals in front of their team mates. At the same time, the results section revealed that lack of specific feedback and praise, a factor unrelated to those mentioned so far, also significantly undermined athlete motivation. By employing SCT and IAT in the coming analysis, I will examine the reasons why these certain behaviors were counterproductive for Coach.

**Verbal aggression.** At some point along the motivation spectrum, the influence of verbal aggression ceased being motivating and instead became de-motivational. As players told me, the verbal aggression in these cases seemed like personal attacks or “call-outs” which left them feeling embarrassed and
dissatisfied. The point at which verbal aggression became completely detrimental can be understood by applying SCT and IAT to the analysis.

First, this study supports the work of Kassing and Infante (1999) which demonstrated that verbally aggressive coaches were perceived as less credible. For example, the players who recalled harsh verbal episodes often thought that Coach should not have been as ostentatious or aired his grievances about particular individuals in front of other players. Indeed, the players believed that Coach did not possess the desire, skill, or motivation to enact competent communication in these situations (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). As a result of being perceived as less competent, Coach lost some of his influence which led to the players rejecting his attempts to reprimand or motivate them.

Coach’s more extreme verbal aggression also undermined player motivation because it violated the players’ interaction positions (Burgoon et al., 1995). Whereas Coach’s less offensive verbal aggression or the prospect of his less offensive verbal aggression led to the players adapting to the situations and becoming extrinsically motivated, his more hostile and face-threatening aggression led to players resisting his verbal influence attempts, shutting down, and becoming uninspired. As we saw, the players had their interactional desires and expectations compromised so much by Coach’s extreme verbal aggression that it became far less likely that they would respond positively to Coach’s attempts to motivate them (Burgoon et al., 1995).

At the end of the day, whether Coach’s more extreme verbal aggression damaged his credibility or it deterred the players from reciprocating to his verbal
influence tactics (i.e., playing harder when implored to “pick it up!”), the results revealed there was a threshold at which verbal aggression was no longer tolerable or motivational to them.

**Lack of specific feedback/praise.** While too much “feedback” regarding player performance (i.e., verbal aggression) undermined motivation, a lack of specific feedback and praise regarding their performance left the players feeling unenthused, unconfident, frustrated and/or unsure as to what Coach was thinking. Some players perceived this lack of reinforcement as unintentional while others saw it as intentional.

During the times in which Coach’s lack of feedback/praise was deemed unintentional (i.e., Ray, Kelly) the players were more forgiving. This can likely be explained by the sheer pragmatics of coaching college tennis. With twelve players on a team, it is nearly impossible for one person to see every good shot a player hits. Thus, it is unreasonable to expect Coach to give feedback/praise to every player while the team is in action.

On the other hand, the players were not as forgiving when they perceived Coach to be intentionally with-holding specific feedback or praise regarding their tennis games. In these cases, players such as Bryan, Kelly, and Ryan, viewed this behavior as a sign of Coach’s communication incompetence. Most notably, they felt that he lacked the skill, desire, or motivation to let the players know how he was feeling about them as individuals, their performance, or the team’s performance.
Although Coach’s intentionality is impossible to assign, it is understandable why the lack of these behaviors resulted in decreased motivation among the players. Much of the work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has revealed that there usually is an outside factor that strengthens internal or incites external motivation (Medic et al., 2007). With the paucity of feedback/praise, Coach failed to exhibit behaviors that have been known to decrease feelings of burnout (Raedke et al., 2002), increase intrinsic motivation (Black & Weiss, 1992), increase athlete satisfaction (Westre & Weiss, 1991) and increase athlete performance levels (Price & Weiss, 2000). Viewed through this literature, it is understandable why players felt frustration, apathy, and uncertainty as to how they were performing - all of which are signs of a decreased motivation.

**Affective Learning**

The analysis demonstrated that a coach can influence athlete affective learning in a variety of manners. In this study, Coach’s credibility and caring increased the likelihood of the players accepting and utilizing his teachings. Meanwhile, the data also demonstrated that Coach’s will to win and his desire to be professional inspired the players to have a positive affect towards him as well as an affect towards implementing those very traits. However, when Coach reneged on his claims regarding his expectations for players and adherence to team protocol, players were less likely to listen to and follow Coach’s teachings. The following discussion will reference SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968), IAT (Burgoon et al., 1995), as well as Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977) in order to better understand these occurrences.
**Increased affective learning.** The ability to increase affective learning is important for a coach. Stimulating an athlete’s desire to learn increases the likelihood that they will listen to explanations about a concept, enact that concept and finally, adopt a mindset that following this concept is the only way to achieve success in life (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Intriguingly, the data revealed that the content of Coach’s teaching messages were not what increased athlete affect for learning. Instead, it was Coach’s credibility (i.e., competence, character, caring) that raised athletes’ esteem for him, thus influencing them to accept and put into practice his teachings and suggestions. The implications of this phenomenon will be discussed further in the coming analysis.

**Competence and character.** The results demonstrated that Coach’s overall competence - exhibited by his winning career record and tennis knowledge, expertise in the field of tennis, and communication competence; and his character-which was perceived by players as a result of his trustworthy and an honorable reputation, greatly increased athlete affective learning. As the commentaries revealed, these two dimensions were separate, but related.

For example, Collin and Ray mostly bought into and implemented Coach’s teachings because of his career record and tennis knowledge (i.e., competence). Meanwhile, Ryan and Kevin believed in Coach and had positive feelings towards his teachings because he was a reputable and trustworthy leader (i.e., character). Finally, both competence and character influenced Paul in that Coach’s long standing position was a sign that he was competent but it was also a sign that he should be trusted.
This importance placed on Coach’s credibility sheds light on an interesting outcome of the study. In the interviews, players rarely talked about the content of the messages they received. For example, when mentioning what compelled them to listen to and enact Coach’s teachings, the players would not usually say things like: “because he tells me the correct way.” Instead, they would make mention that they accepted the message solely because of the credibility of the source, Coach. This influence of credibility is further evidence that the acceptability of a message (i.e., Coach teaching a certain ideal) and the valence of issue relevant thinking (i.e., I’m going to play this way because he told me to) is most influenced by the credibility of the source (Heesacker et al., 1983).

**Caring.** Similar to competence and character, Coach’s caring, which was demonstrated by his efforts to improve individuals on the court and his ability and desire to recognize athletes as more than just tennis players led respondents to accept and adopt their coach’s teachings (as previously shown by Stuntz & Spearance, 2007; Turman & Schrodt, 2004).

Yet, as a fellow dimension of credibility, Coach’s caring affected the players in a slightly different way than the other facets. Competence and character let the players know that the advice they were getting was reliable and accurate, this is a more logical route to persuasion (Petty & Capiocco, 1986). In contrast, Coach’s good intentions and ability to understand others signified to the players their coach’s paternal nature. This gave the players a feeling of comfort and confidence about their coach’s motives and nature. For example, Ray, Paul, and Kyle’s testimonies illustrated that they viewed Coach’s behaviors as those of
someone who has their best interests at heart. And although it was not included in the results, one of the international players even stated that Coach was like their father away from home. Hence, much like we listen to our guardians’ teachings because of their intentions, the players were influenced by Coach partly because of his goodwill (McCroskey & Teven, 1999).

In the end, caring, like competence and character increased athlete affective learning. But as competence and character had more of an impact through logical appeals, caring affected the athletes on a more emotional level. Either way, Coach’s credibility made him a reliable and good-intentioned person in the eyes of the athletes. As a result, the players listened to Coach’s teachings, accepted his teachings and adopted those teachings as guiding principles in their lives.

Affective learning through trait modeling. The above discussion illustrated the way Coach’s credibility made him more persuasive, socially influential, and thus more likely to have his coaching and life advice followed by the athletes. This section is similar in that it demonstrates the potency of Coach’s credibility which was exhibited through his will to win (i.e., his passion, boldness) and his desire to be professional (i.e., organization, forthrightness). However, through referencing SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) and SLT (Bandura, 1977) in this section, we will also notice that Coach’s credibility alone was a source that increased athlete affective learning through the process of social learning.
**Will to win.** Through examining Coach’s behaviors, the players recognized the importance of fighting hard for everything in sports, school, and in life. This was most likely because Coach’s “will to win” was evidence of his dynamism, an important reason for his previous success, and therefore, a factor that inspired the athletes to accept and model this behavior.

For instance, the results revealed that the players had a great respect for Coach’s fight and unbending will. This made him credible in that he was a dynamic leader. Additionally, because we know that the players respected Coach’s credentials, it stands to reason that they would also attribute his success in some respects to his will to win. This is the quintessence of SLT which holds that we internalize the usefulness of others’ behaviors by seeing the consequence of those behaviors (Bandura, 1977). This positive reinforcement is likely what compelled the players to accept Coach’s will to win as a guiding principle. Subsequently, after they accepted this will to win, the next step towards achieving affective learning involved players projecting a will to win and integrating it into their own mindset. Hence, due to social learning, player affect towards adopting a will to win attitude was increased.

**Desire to be professional.** In concert with the previous paragraph, Coach’s desire to be professional, which was personified by his organizational skills, his level of forthrightness and the pride he takes in his work, compelled the players to respect and enact these behaviors. The coming discussion will show that Coach’s desire to be professional was a sign of credibility while it was also seen as an applicable trait that had positive outcomes for the players.
With Ray, Paul, and Bryan we saw players profess a liking for Coach’s forthrightness, his organizational skills, and his desire to be respected for his efforts. As the commentaries displayed, these behaviors made Coach seem like a more effective leader but they also were a sign of his credibility (i.e., competence). This positive reinforcement (i.e., these behaviors make you an effective leader) was likely the reason players saw the desire to be professional as a trait they should emulate (Bandura, 1977). Subsequently, after they learned this behavior, the next step of affective learning involved the players talking about the applicability of this trait in their lives. Ray and Bryan illustrated this process when they projected how these professional behaviors would create positive outcomes in their own lives. Thus, we again see players wanting to enact behaviors in hopes that just like Coach they too will be seen as competent.

All in all, this discussion illustrated the various ways in which Coach incited athlete affective learning. We learned that his credibility gave his messages more persuasive power and influence. As a result, because Coach was a source with high credibility, the athletes not only listened to his various teachings, but they internalized and ultimately enacted these concepts or ideas (i.e., I’m hitting my forehand this way because Coach told me to). Simultaneously, affective learning occurred due to Coach’s credibility and social modeling. In these cases, players saw Coach’s will to win and professionalism as signs of his credibility, but also as guiding principles to their own success. As such, the players observed a trait (i.e., organization), they internalized the trait as a
something positive, and ultimately they adopted the mindset that being organized is the only way to becoming and staying successful.

**Decreased affective learning.** The final aspect of this discussion will examine how Coach’s *inability to follow through on claims* of team protocol and performance expectations resulted in decreased athlete affective learning. To this point, we know that affective learning exists along a spectrum where a person accepts a concept and adopts that concept as a guiding principle (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). It was no surprise then that decreased affective learning was seen when the players rejected or were skeptical towards a concept and enacting behaviors associated with that concept. The coming section will delve deeper into this occurrence by utilizing SCT (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) and IAT (Burgoon et al., 1995). In particular, this discussion will demonstrate how Coach’s inability to follow through on claims negatively violated player interaction positions (Burgoon et al., 1995) to the point that they questioned if they should trust and follow similar protocol statements in the future.

Throughout this analysis it has been evident that the players found their coach to be a very credible and influential leader and teacher. However, there were times when his inability to make good on claims of team protocol and performance expectations damaged his credibility. For example, from Paul and Kevin’s statements, it was clear that they were put off by Coach taking more players on road trips than he said he would. This led them to question Coach’s trustworthiness, but it also led them to question if he was a strong enough leader
to tell the undeserving players they were not allowed to travel. Thus, in the future, some players’ affective learning may be undermined because they may be less trusting of similar claims (your spot is not guaranteed) and less likely to enact the behavior (so work hard) associated with those claims.

Another way to understand a decrease in affective learning is through referencing IAT (Burgoon et al., 1995). Some players recalled an instance where Coach stated that there would be a stringent physical fitness test following winter break. This led the players to work hard with the expectation that such a test would take place. Subsequently, after winter break, the players’ interaction positions (i.e., expecting the test) were negatively violated when Coach did not reciprocate and administer the test. This upset the players and decreased the chance they would take similar statements seriously (i.e., work hard for your test) or enact behaviors associated with those statements in the future.

In sum, both instances demonstrated that not following through with claims harmed Coach’s trustworthiness and negatively violated the players’ interaction positions. This upset the athletes and raised their levels of skepticism towards Coach’s teachings. In turn, the players were less likely to accept and follow Coach’s teachings in the future.

Overall, through analysis of the data, I discovered the coaching behaviors that impacted athlete motivation and affective learning in a coactive team setting. Specifically, I found that Coach’s credibility (i.e., competence, character, caring) increased athlete intrinsic motivation, his mild verbal aggression and credentials increased athlete extrinsic motivation, and his intense verbal aggression and lack
of specific feedback/praise decreased athlete motivation. I also discovered that Coach’s credibility resulted in increased athlete affective learning, his will to win and desire to be professional were behaviors that athletes positively internalized and modeled, and his inability to follow through on claims of protocol and expectations decreased athletes’ affective learning.

Within this overall frame, the prevalent impact of Coach’s credibility and verbal aggression persisted. Through the interviews, we saw that credibility was the most outstanding coaching behavior/trait that helped to increase intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, credibility (i.e., credentials) had a notable influence on athletes’ levels of extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, in the analysis of affective learning, we saw that Coach’s credibility made his teachings more acceptable and applicable. At the same time, the players accepted and modeled the very traits (i.e., his will to win and desire to be professional) that made him credible. Finally, Coach’s lack of credibility in certain cases had a negative impact on athlete affect for learning. Together, these results lend further credence to SCT’s (Berlo et al., 1969; Hovland et al., 1953; McCroskey, 1968) essential tenet that credibility dictates the acceptability and reliability of a source and the messages they communicate.

In regards to verbal aggression, we noticed that Coach sometimes crossed the line between being motivational and being destructive. When Coach’s verbal aggression was mild and it consisted of yelling or screaming, but not necessarily cussing at individuals, it was a source of motivation, though extrinsic. However, when the aggression included expletives, it was delivered more belligerently and
at an individual, it became a counterproductive behavior because it violated the interactional positions of the athletes. These findings show us that players expect yelling and screaming and see it as somewhat normal in athletics (especially in coactive sports where a coach is needed to motivate athletes who are competing as individuals). At the same time though, players have an expectation and desire not to be intensely verbally abused. When they are, their interaction position is compromised and they do not comply with Coach by playing harder, they do the opposite and shut down. Thus, this study supports the fundamentals of IAT (Burgoon et al., 1995) because the athletes were motivated to reciprocate their coach’s influence attempts but only if Coach’s behaviors matched or positively violated their interaction position.

**Contributions, Limitations, and Future Directions**

My study has made significant contributions to the research on motivation and affective learning by illustrating the similarities and differences between salient traits and behaviors in athletics and classrooms. For instance, similar to classroom-based studies, I found that a person’s credibility gives them more power to incite affective learning through their teachings. As well, this study supported the research that highlighted how much of an impact feedback and praise have on pupil motivation and satisfaction. On the other hand, unlike the research on classroom teachers, my study demonstrated that the traits and behaviors of a coach alone inspire athlete affective learning through the process of modeling. This brings up a difference between college instructors and college coaches. Because instructors have so little time (i.e., roughly 3 hours a week) with
their students, they must construct creative lesson plans or inspire affective learning with their teaching style. Conversely, as this study demonstrated, the practice regimens and Coach’s coaching style often had little affect on athlete affective learning. Instead, because he was with his players so much (i.e., 20 to 40 hours a week), Coach increased athlete affective learning because the players really got to know him as a person on and off the court.

Also, by utilizing Source Credibility Theory and Interaction Adaption Theory in a coactive team setting, my study adds to our understanding of these theories. Previous sports research has highlighted the influence of coach credibility on affective learning and motivation. My study supported this research but also added to the corpus of SCT research in athletics by demonstrating that high credibility does not always have a positive influence on athlete intrinsic motivation. Instead, athletes can become extrinsically motivated when high credibility makes them feel like they would be a failure if they did not live up to their coach’s past records. Moreover, my study supplemented the previous IAT research by illuminating the wide-ranging utility of the theory. Namely, unlike other studies that have used IAT to examine violations in friendship interactions, this research showed that IAT can help to explain the impact of verbal aggression in team athletics. Subsequently, this study was able to contribute to the work on IAT (and verbal aggression) by demonstrating that dynamism and mild verbal aggression are usually expected, accepted and positively related to athlete motivation whereas intense verbal aggression is undesirable, unacceptable, and negatively related to player motivation.
In addition to contributing to theory, this study extended the body of coaching communication research by highlighting the considerable impact credibility (i.e., dynamism) has on motivation in the coactive team setting. One of the main reasons for this impact is the nature of coactive sports in general. As the interviews displayed, the players were not usually motivated or influenced by their team mates or team held goals like we might see in collaborative sports. Instead, because the players were mostly competing by themselves, the main outside source for player motivation were Coach’s traits or behaviors. For example, in order for many players to feel intrinsically motivated, we noticed that they needed Coach to show his passion for their games and the teams’ overall mission. Therefore, through dynamic leadership, Coach was the person creating an environment where athletes could enjoy tennis and strive for success.

Besides motivation, my work demonstrated that credibility was a multi-faceted trait that spanned across the entire team to provoke affective learning. Because tennis consists of 6-12 individuals playing at a time, it is unlikely that all the players will get the same lessons and instructions (i.e., like a football team gets a same play call). Yet, in spite of the individuality of tennis, one or more of Coach’s credible attributes (i.e., caring, dynamism, organization, trustworthiness, and competence) influenced every athlete interviewed and provoked affective learning. The implications then for coactive sports is that a coach does not necessarily have to cater to all the differences of the players when teaching, they just need to exhibit consistent behaviors because there is a good possibility one of those behaviors will have a positive impact on an athlete.
Despite the contributions, there were some limitations to the current study. Even though the player interviews offered an in-depth analysis of athlete motivation and affective learning, all three of the coaches were not interviewed and there were no field observations. Consequently, instead of understanding player perspectives, coach perspectives, and seeing their actual interactions, this study was dependent on the opinions and views of the players. This is not a significant downfall as the study was primarily focused on player perspectives; however, it was a limitation in that the data collected did not fully represent the actors, setting, and scene of Springfield Tennis.

Another limitation of this study is that I was the only investigator and there were great time constraints. Hence, I was only able to conduct one interview at one point in the season. If I could have interviewed the players one more time during the season or a few years later in their careers, I might have noticed if their feelings were static, or just a result of a phase they were going through. Further, after the interviews were conducted, I was also the only person to see and analyze the transcripts. Though this allowed the players to feel secure, this method of analysis lacked inter-coder reliability in terms of transcript analysis.

My study does offer some directions for future research. As tennis is not the only coactive sport in college athletics, another researcher could examine the behaviors and traits that impact motivation and affective learning in other sports such as wrestling, track, and golf. Such data might further bolster the results of my study, or it might demonstrate that other coactive sports require different behaviors and traits to spark motivation and affective learning. Additionally, an
analysis of a women’s tennis team might bring forth salient coaching behaviors and traits that are specific to women’s athletics. Moreover, an examination of sports such as basketball or football might demonstrate the difference between teaching and motivating athletes in collaborative and coactive settings. Overall, whether future studies model the current one or they seek to examine the differences between settings, the end goal should be to elucidate applicable behaviors that can improve the overall experience of the coaches and athletes.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to identify the coaching behaviors and traits that impacted athlete motivation and affective learning in a coactive team setting. Through analysis of the transcripts, I outlined salient coaching behaviors and traits that had constructive and destructive effects on the athletic outcomes. Specifically, I found that Coach’s credibility was a recurrent factor that influenced intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and affective learning whereas verbal aggression and inconsistent follow-through about team protocol and performance expectations had a profound impact on extrinsic motivation and feelings of decreased motivation.
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END NOTES

i All names have been changed to protect identities.

ii For example, in their study of student motivation and affect for learning, Pogue and Ahyun (2006) separated caring (or goodwill) from credibility because caring behaviors resembled immediate behaviors too closely. Consequently, Pogue and Ahyun (2006) noted that credibility sans caring was a separate variable from nonverbal immediacy. Thweatt and McCroskey (1998) also noted the close similarity between immediate behaviors and caring. However, Teven (2001) found that the two constructs only have a moderate correlation. Further, Teven and Hanson (2004) argued that immediate behaviors were only one way to communicate caring. Instructors could also demonstrate caring through clarity in their teaching (Chesebro, 2003), through use of technology such as e-mails, web resources and power point (Schrodt & Turman, 2005; Teven & McCroskey, 1997) or by establishing constructive interpersonal relationships with students (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979). Overall, this research demonstrates that perceived caring is not merely a facet of the instructor like other aspects of credibility (e.g., their experience or their credentials). Instead, perceived caring is separate but closely related to behaviors that influence student perceptions of their interactive relationship with their instructors.

iii Coactive sports such as wrestling, gymnastics, and golf are those where athletes are part of the same team, but they compete as individuals or pairs apart from the rest of their team (Matheson, Mathes, & Murray, 1997).

iv As mentioned before, perceived caring, an acknowledged attribute of credibility, will be examined in the ‘interpersonal relationship with players’ section. This is worth mentioning because just like caring, player perceptions of a coach’s character and competence are caused by ongoing interactions. However, while related, behaviors that signify a coach’s character and competence have been shown to be dissimilar to immediacy behaviors, caring, and affinity seeking behaviors (Pogue & Ahyun, 2006). As well, some facets of character (i.e., having a reputation as being honest and wise) and competence (i.e., career win-loss record) are usually reflections of a coach’s actions. Therefore, while credibility affects interpersonal relationships with players (i.e., a competent communicator saves others’ face goals in interactions), memorable message use (i.e., a high character person is not verbally aggressive) and vice versa, this concept is best segregated so that we can fully understand the impact of a coach’s competence and character.

v Many of these studies referenced both males and females (Reynolds & Allen, 2003; female athletes only (Haselwood et al., 2005; Matheson et al., 1997; Sinclair & Vealey, 1989), athletes from different schools, (Haselwood et al., 2005; Medic et al., 2007; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986), or athletes who played various sports (Burke et al., 1995, Haselwood et al., 2005; Matheson et al., 1997; Reynolds & Allen, 2003).

vi Twenty-two studies utilized quantitative methods (Black & Weiss, 1992; Burke et al., 1995, Cervello, et al., 2007; Haselwood et al., 2005; Kassing & Infante,

vii The qualitative studies referenced college football teams (Turman, 2003a), high school football coaches (Turman, 2005), junior tennis players and coaches not on teams (Gould et al., 1999; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005), Olympic track and field athletes (Mallett & Harrahan, 2004), and elite level junior swim coaches (Raedeke et al., 2002).

 ix School name has been changed to protect identity.

 x Who from here on out will be referred to as “Coach.”

 xi Introjected regulation takes place when internal pressures such as fear and guilt coerce people into action and behaviors

 xii Identified regulation occurs when a person acts autonomously because the outcomes related to the behavior are important or because they reinforce perceptions of a person’s self image

 xiii Again, these will be combined as they were in the motivation section.
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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT FORM FOR HEAD COACH

Title: An Analysis of Coaching Dimensions and Their Impact on Athlete Motivation and Affective Learning.

Purpose of the study: This study seeks to examine the relationship between coach behaviors and attributes and athlete motivation and affective learning within a small group, coactive-athletic setting.

Coach, as you know, I am a masters student in addition to helping out with the team. This semester I am writing my thesis to understand your behaviors and the affects they have the team. For you, this study will not involve any activity outside of your daily tennis routines. I will not need to interview you but I would like to conduct one-one hour long interview with some of the players. In this study I am basically combining my school research with tennis experiences so I can educate and assist other coaches. To protect the players I have insured them you will not see the final paper. I will however give you a general review of the study if you would like to see it after the season is over. This will include general analysis of what increases and decreases your players’ motivation and affective learning. I think this could be a valuable opportunity for you to gain some feedback from the players.

- No surveys at all
- There is no need to participate if you don’t want to
- You can call off the study at any time if you’d like
- I will be the ONLY person to see or hear any materials or recordings involving the players.
- Your name and our school’s name will never appear in my final paper.
- I also have a consent form for you so you can make sure this is something you are OK with.

Thanks for everything! If you think it sounds simple, that’s because it is! Let me know if we can proceed and I can give you the consent form.
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FORM FOR PLAYERS

**Title:** An Analysis of Coaching Dimensions and Their Impact on Athlete Motivation and Affective Learning.

**Purpose of the study:** This study seeks to examine the relationship between coach behaviors and attributes and athlete motivation and affective learning within a small group, coactive-athletic setting.

As you know, I am a master’s student in addition to helping out with the team. This semester I am writing my thesis to understand Coach’s behaviors and the affects they have the team. For most of you, this study will not involve any activity outside of your daily tennis routines. For those who are willing, I would like to conduct one- one hour long interview with you. In this study I am basically combining my school research with our tennis experiences so I can inform others of what we go through.

- No surveys at all
- There is no need to participate if you don’t want to
- You can quit any time if you do get involved
- No one will know if you accept or decline to participate in the interview process.
- I will be the ONLY person to see or hear any materials or recordings that you are involved in.
- The coaches could see a general report of my findings after the season is over, but they will NEVER see any specific comments you make or the final paper.
- Whether you participate or not, don’t worry, your name and the school’s name will never appear in my final paper.
- I also have a consent form for you so you can make sure this is something you are OK with.

Thanks guys! If you think it sounds simple, that’s because it is! Let me know if you are interested so I can give you a consent form.
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Hey glad you could be here today, thanks again for helping me out… I really appreciate it. Let me know your favorite place to eat and we can go there after this or sometime this week. Anyways, so as you know I’m conducting a study in order to figure out how Coach influences you guys. Specifically, I want to know how he impacts your feelings of motivation as well as your desire to listen to him and follow his coaching and advice. Before we begin, are there any questions you have for me or is there anything you are unsure about thus far?

Respond accordingly and then transition into interview schedule.

Interviewer: Remember, you can stop the interview at any time and you can say anything you want. Ok, well let’s get started, my first question is….

1. What motivates you to play tennis? Explain and provide examples
   Probe: Why did you choose to play at Ball State? Explain and provide examples

2. Tell me what it is about coach that increases your motivation, enjoyment, desire, interest, or inspires you to play tennis?
   Probe: Can you think of any specific examples?

3. Tell me what it is about coach that decreases your enjoyment, desire, or interest to play tennis?
   Probe: Can you think of any specific examples?
   Probe: Tell me what is it about coach that motivate you, but not necessarily in a positive way? Like, they motivate you but not out of your own enjoyment. Explain and provide examples if possible.

4. What are some suggestions you have for coach that will help improve his motivational abilities?

   Respond to previous statements and then transition to discussion on affective learning.

Interviewer: Ok, so closely related to motivation is something called affective learning. Essentially, affect for something pertains to your positive or negative feelings towards topics, concepts or people. If you like something it’s positive, if you dislike something it’s negative affect.

1. What are some of coach’s behaviors or traits that you have positive feelings towards?
   Probe: What about negative feelings?
Probe: Either positive or negative, how do these behaviors or traits influence your perceptions of coach and coach’s teachings?

2. Give examples of lessons you’ve been taught by coach that you’ve applied in tennis?
   Probe: Why did you choose to take his advice?

3. What is the likelihood you will take some of the lessons you’ve been taught by coach and apply in life today, tomorrow, and in the future?
   Probe: Why is this?
   Probe: Explain and give examples of how you see yourself using his teachings in the future.

4. Among all the things you have discussed, what is the most motivating attribute, action, or behavior in your view? Why?

5. Among all the things you have discussed, what attribute, action, or behavior of coach’s is the most effective in getting you to have positive feelings towards him and his teachings. Why?

Thank them for previous response and transition again to different prompts.
Interviewer: Ok so in the previous questions we talked about your motivation and affective learning in general and relating to coach. With my next questions I wanted to see how you felt about some of coach’s behaviors and traits.

For instance, some people think credibility is important in athletics because it relates to a coach’s trustworthiness, career record, and subject expertise.

1. What are your perceptions of coach’s credibility and why?
   Probe: Can you recall any instances where his credibility impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: Explain to me how coach’s credibility impacts your level of motivation and/or affective learning, if at all.

Interviewer: Another important role of a coach as we know is to try to get us to play harder. By this I am not talking about cussing and yelling. I’m referring to what is said in meetings, team huddles, or practices where coaches talk about physical toughness, self sacrifice, life lesson messages (if your down and out, you still got to keep fighting), and regret messages (don’t leave anything on the court).

2. What are your perceptions of coach’s use of these types of messages?
   Probe: Why? Can you recall any instances where these messages impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: Explain to me how these messages affect your motivation and/or affective learning if at all.
Interviewer: One step further, some coaches often curse, shout at players, tell players off, insult a player’s ability and effort, and attack their character.

3. What are your perceptions of coach’s use of these kinds of verbal influence tactics?
   Probe: Why? Can you recall any instances where these messages impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: How do these messages impact your motivation and/or affective learning if at all?
Comment on their statements and then transition… Interviewer: Now taking a completely opposite turn.

4. What are your perceptions of coach’s use of feedback and praise?
   Probe: Why? Can you recall any instances where these behaviors or lack of these behaviors impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: How do they affect your levels of motivation and/or affective learning if at all?
Interviewer: Yea and personally, another positive thing I liked about my coaches was how they treated me as an individual and cared about me as a person.

5. What are your perceptions of coach’s use of these kinds of behaviors?
   Probe: Why? Can you recall any instances where these behaviors or lack of these behaviors impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: How do they affect your motivation and/or affective learning if at all?
Comment on their statement and transition…

Interviewer: Ok, very good. And one last question. Coaches often enact various behaviors to get their players to like them more.

6. What are your perceptions of coach’s use of these kinds of behaviors?
   Probe: Why? Can you recall any instances where these behaviors or lack of these behaviors impacted your level of motivation and/or affective learning?
   Probe: How do they influence your levels of motivation and/or affective learning if at all?
Following the interview session, players will be debriefed, thanked, and told they can still withdraw their comments at any time. They will also be told they can see the final product if they wish.