

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** EXPLORING POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTION FOR COACHES

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**DATE:** MAY 2022

**PAGES:** 98

In the broad world of athletics, those who pursue a professional career in coaching may encounter varying experiences. Despite differences shaped by sport, population, and level of competition, researchers agree that coaching is a stressful job and coaches are often ill-equipped to handle the stress caused by their profession (Giges et al., 2004). Mindfulness training has been shown to reduce stress and levels of perceived burnout, as well as increase emotional regulation, among other benefits (Baer, 2003). The Mindfulness Training for Coaches (MTC; Longshore & Sachs, 2015) program has displayed potential as an intervention tailored to the coaching population capable of increasing well-being and reducing stress among coaches (Longshore & Sachs, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of an online mindfulness-based intervention on perceptions of stress, emotion regulation, and burnout among full-time coaches. Sixteen full-time coaches ( $n_{\text{female}} = 9$ ,  $n_{\text{male}} = 7$ ) from the sport of swimming completed a six-week online mindfulness-based intervention program, an adaptation of the Mindfulness Training for Coaches (MTC; Longshore & Sachs, 2015) program. Participants completed online questionnaires gauging mindfulness (MIS; Thienot et. al, 2014), emotion regulation (DERS;

Gratz & Roemer, 2004), burnout levels (PFI; Trockel et. al, 2018), and stress (PSS; Cohen & Williamson, 1988) prior to the intervention, during weeks 3 and 5 of the program, and after the intervention. The baseline data indicated that full-time coaches report low levels of mindfulness, elevated difficulties in emotion regulation, high stress, and high burnout levels. Results revealed that, after the program, coaches experienced (a) a strong decrease in difficulties regulating emotions ( $p = .02$ ) and stress ( $p < .001$ ), (b) a trend towards an increase in mindfulness scores ( $p = .08$ ), and (c) a trend towards a decrease in burnout ( $p = .08$ ). Findings illustrate the relevance of participation in mindfulness for increased well-being in full-time coaches.