Job satisfaction of accomplished male university basketball coaches: The Canadian context

MATTHEW J. DAVIES*, GORDON A. BLOOM*, and JOHN H. SALMELA**

*McGill University, Canada
**Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The purpose of the present study was to examine job satisfaction of accomplished male basketball coaches working within the Canadian university context. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with six successful coaches. An inductive qualitative data analysis was conducted and three principal categories emerged: personal histories and characteristics as athletes and coaches, coaching intentions, and dimension related to job satisfaction. All coaches were very passionate about their jobs and set outcome goals, yet they always remained deeply concerned about the personal development of their athletes. Some factors caused them job dissatisfaction, such as financial resources and administrative duties, but these were more than compensated by their positive attitudes and love of coaching. These results are discussed within the contextual nature of Canadian university sport.

KEY WORDS: Canada, Coaching, Job Satisfaction

Demands and rewards for coaches are culturally specific. For example, the loss of two or three consecutive soccer games in Brazil can result in their firing, while the monetary benefits can be astronomical (Salmela & Moraes, 2003). This is, in part, due to the contextual demands of coaching within a culture, where sport is directly linked to cultural or economic conditions of a particular society (Gruneau, 1999). For example, this involves ice hockey in Canada, weight lifting in Bulgaria, and long distance running in Kenya. Sports with lower level profiles within each cultural context, especially when international bragging rights are not in question, possibly result in lower job stress and satisfaction for these particular coaches.

Address for correspondence: Dr. Gordon Bloom, Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, H2W 1S4 Canada (e-mail: gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca).
More specifically, the Canadian university sport context is fundamentally different from that of our neighbouring United States, especially in men’s basketball. Canada has paltry university athletic scholarships, little television revenue from university sports, and thus lower salaries for coaches (Grueneau, 1999). Comparisons with high profile and salaried basketball coaches in the United States in terms of job satisfaction will undoubtedly turn to other non-remunerative issues that are associated with the Canadian university sport context. Despite the uniqueness of the Canadian university sport context, there is a lack of empirical research, particularly in regards to job satisfaction (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). However, perceptions of coaches in different sports in various cultures regarding their enjoyment on the job seems as important as only scrutinizing the best ones.

Job satisfaction has been shown to positively affect job performance within a variety of work environments (Katzell, Thompson, & Guzzo, 1992). Defined as the positive emotional state resulting from the attainment of goals within a work environment, job satisfaction research in sport has examined a variety of employment positions, most notably with respect to athletic department administrators (Zhang, DeMichele, & Connaughton, 2004). Gilbert and Trudel (2004) recently reported a bibliographical analysis of coaching science research and found that only 5.6% of the coaching literature examined job satisfaction. They highlighted two major elements with research on coaches’ job satisfaction: it usually employed only quantitative methodologies and was focused mainly on women, high school, international, or Olympic coaches.

The examination of job satisfaction in the general business sector has found that employees who were satisfied with their job were more likely to strive towards difficult performance goals and perform at a higher level, were more committed to the organization, accepted more responsibilities, and took on significant leadership roles (Ansari, Baumgartel, & Sullivan, 1982; Joyce & Slocum, 1982; Katzell et al., 1992). In contrast, dissatisfied employees felt more frustrated, made lesser efforts towards job tasks, and typically changed jobs more frequently (Joyce & Slocum, 1982). Generally, Canadian university team sport coaches reported their careers as inherently satisfying, even with the presence of their multiple job demands (Salmela, 1996; Vallée & Bloom, 2005).

Job satisfaction research has expanded to the interrelationships between coaches and athletic directors. In North America, an Athletic Director is responsible for running all facets of the university sport program, including the

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1Funding opportunities for Canadian university athletes have improved since these interviews were conducted.
hiring of head coaches. It has been reported that among mid-level athletic directors, job satisfaction within both organizational and individual work environments generated other positive outcomes (Zhang et al., 2004). Coaches at the high school and university levels exhibited high job satisfaction when they formed positive relations with their athletes, and worked within a fun, challenging, and collegial work environment (Stevens & Weiss, 1991). Stevens and Weiss demonstrated that job dissatisfaction of women coaches was due to the great time commitment and scant administrative program support. Kenow and Williams (1999) reported that close coach-athlete relationships had positive implications for job satisfaction of a mixed sample of women and men coaches. They concluded that job satisfaction was higher when the goals, personality, and beliefs of the coaches were consistent with that of their athletes. In addition, not only did this relationship influence job satisfaction, but it was also shown that positive interpersonal relationships between the coach and the athletic director were crucial to this process (Yosif, 1998).

High job satisfaction has also been linked to personal goal attainment in sport by both coaches and athletes (Stevens & Weiss, 1991). Goal setting has been found to be a vital element within the mental model of coaches in the individual sport of gymnastics regarding their operational tasks, and specifically for athlete development both inside and outside of the sport (Côté, Salmena, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995). In team sport research, Gilbert and Trudel (2000) reported that beyond the development of process goals, the pursuit of team accomplishments, such as making the playoffs, was critical in the coaching process. Weinberg, Butt, Knight, and Perritt (2001) also found that through goal setting, coaches were able to focus on both team success and individual improvement. This process enabled them to focus on their love of the game and relationships with their athletes, as opposed to only upon wins and losses. Another perspective demonstrated by d'Arrips-Longueville, Fournier, and Dubois (1998) vividly outlined how training with Olympic champion judo coaches was singularly directed towards performance outcomes with little respect for personal feedback or personal concerns for their athletes.

Since job dissatisfaction has been linked to employment changes, the understanding of the coaching context could be enhanced by exploring the link between job satisfaction and burnout. Coaches with lower levels of burnout reported satisfaction in interactions with athletes, a focus on their development, rather than only considering performance outcomes (Quigley, Slack, & Smith, 1987). Kelley and Gill (1993) also noted that job satisfaction and social support greatly reduced burnout.

Thus, personal orientations towards sport, goal setting, and burnout in relation to coach job satisfaction appear to be similar to factors found in the
workplace (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). However, when dealing with such complex phenomena, it seems important to organize their inter relationships. One effective heuristic regarding these interactions is the Coaching Model (CM) suggested by Côté, Salmela, Trudel, and colleagues (1995). This framework outlines the concepts and knowledge that successful coaches use to develop the potential of their athlete/team and determine future courses of action. The CM is influenced by three peripheral components, labelled coach and athlete characteristics, and contextual factors. The coaches integrate these three components into their operational strategies to define which of the three primary components (i.e., organization, training, and competition) must be used to maximize the development of athletes and the team. The primary components are driven by the three peripheral components applied towards the goal of athlete development (Côté, 1998). Côté cited a need for future studies using the CM, which should focus on validating factors, such as job satisfaction, that could affect coaching effectiveness. Moreover, the contextual component of the CM is of particular interest when taking such a broad perspective on any coaching issue. Salmela and Moraes (2003) showed that coaching processes within the Brazilian sport context were significantly different from those studied with Canadian coaches. Thus, the CM is suggested as a conceptual framework when exploring job satisfaction, specifically within the context of Canadian university sport. The purpose of this study is to explore what aspects contribute to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and how job satisfaction is subjectively experienced and/or defined by accomplished Canadian male university basketball coaches.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

Six accomplished Canadian male university basketball coaches participated in this study. Each coach was a current head coach of a men's varsity basketball team in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) organization. This university sport governing body oversees approximately 40 men's basketball teams across Canada, within four main conferences. Coaches within the CIS are certified through the Coaching Association of Canada who trains and certifies them in over 60 sports, with over 875,000 individuals having gone through various levels of the certification program. This program has five levels, with levels four and five representing the top level of professional training for coaches. Of all certified coaches, 701 have level four, with only 75 coaches certified at level five. Typically, universities require that coaches have at least their level three. Two coaches in this study had acquired their level three certification, while four had their level four.

Besides acquiring at least the third level of certification, coaches also had to meet three criteria. First, they must have accumulated sufficient years of experience as a head coach
within the CIS on a men’s varsity basketball team, as well as at other levels. Coaches in the current study averaged 14.7 years of experience at the CIS level, with a range of 3 to 28 years. The coaches averaged 23.3 years of overall coaching experience, with a range of 10 to 35 years. This criterion approached previous research on elite/expert coaches, which set the criteria to be at least 10 years of coaching experience at the elite level (Bloom & Salmela, 2000). The rationale for this difference was that the number of male CIS basketball head coaches with at least 10 years of experience at the top level was limited, but certainly included the elite Canadian sample of coaches. Second, coaches must have had a successful overall record as a head coach in the CIS, as evidenced by at least a regular season winning average of 50%. Finally, coaches must have received at least one conference or national Coach of the Year Award. Table I provides a summary of the six coaches’ individual histories and accomplishments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaching Details</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>BB1</th>
<th>BB2</th>
<th>BB3</th>
<th>BB4</th>
<th>BB5</th>
<th>BB6</th>
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<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.558</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.564</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Titles</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Coaching Awards</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Coaching Awards</td>
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**INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE**

All six coaches were contacted by mail or electronically, provided a brief synopsis of the purpose and nature of the study, and were invited to participate. Each coach was individually interviewed for a period ranging from one to two hours. The interviews were commonly held in the coach’s office at their respective university.

A four part interview guide was developed specifically for this study (see Appendix A), consisting of a series of open-ended questions. This interview approach has been used in other coaching research (e.g., Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Côté, Salmela, Trudel, et al., 1995) since this allowed topics to be suggested and freely discussed, without restrictions or pre-conceived responses (Patton, 2002). This format also allowed coaches to emphasize areas they felt were most important, without being influenced by the researcher’s notion of relevancy. The first part consisted of preliminary questions to obtain background information on their experience in sport, and to set a storytelling mood. The second part consisted of three key questions that examined factors affecting their job satisfaction. These questions addressed actual job satisfaction, goal setting, and measures of success. These areas were chosen to provide a complete understanding of factors that influenced job satisfaction. For example, understanding how coaches set goals for their athletes provides insight on their
priorities and their ability to achieve their goals; failure to do so, could cause job dissatisfaction. The third part was made up of a summary question aimed to provide their global impressions of what embodied a successful and satisfying career, including an examination of burnout. The final section invited the coaches to provide additional information believed relevant.

At the onset of the interviews, the coaches were notified that the interview would be tape recorded, transcribed verbatim, and returned to them for approval and editing, or member checking. The coaches read and completed a consent form and demographic questionnaire. The interview process utilized the use of probes and conversational repairs. Probes helped increase the richness and depth of the responses, and prompted further elaboration on areas considered relevant. Conversational repairs were in the form of the researcher confirming comprehension of the coach’s response by rephrasing the response if it was felt that the coach failed to comprehend the purpose of the query (Patton, 2002).

DATA ANALYSIS

Côté, Salmela, and Russell’s (1995) methods to analyze the data were followed. The analysis consisted of coding the transcribed interviews into meaning units (MUs), tags, properties, and categories. The researcher identified quotes as MUs through a line-by-line analysis of all six interviews. These MUs comprised text segments that expressed a coherent perception of a given episode. This collection of MUs was then named or tagged based upon their content. MUs with similar topics received the same tag. Once tagged, these MUs were then examined for similarities and grouped into similar collective divisions, labelled properties. Finally, each property was, in turn, identified with a new tag that reflected common features, examined for further similarities and grouped into similar, but larger collective divisions, labelled categories. This step was similar to that of creating properties; however, it required a higher level of abstract analysis (Côté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995). The development of MUs, tags, properties, and categories created an understanding and organization of the qualitative data that resembled a pyramid, with categories being the peak and the tags as the base. The coaches’ names, personal references, and affiliations were kept confidential throughout the data analysis. This was attained by replacing them with neutral titles, and by coding the names of each coach with an anonymous identifier (i.e., BB1-BB6).

ISSUES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

Several methods suggested by qualitative researchers were used to improve the interpretation and handling of the data (Côté, Salmela, & Russell, 1995; Patton, 2002; Sparkes, 1998). Peer review was employed with a neutral party who assessed the data analysis to ensure its credibility. The peer reviewer was presented with a random sample of 25% of the MUs and asked to identify the appropriate tag for each passage. They were also accompanied by a research assistant who also participated in a similar procedure for the established properties and categories. Agreement ratings of 86% were reached for the analysis of the tags, 96% for the properties, and 100% for the categories. All discrepancies encountered
between the research assistant and researcher were discussed and clarified. The process of peer review helped ensure that researcher bias was minimized, and that the data analysis resulted in a clear and accurate depiction of the coaches’ knowledge and experience.

In addition, member checks were completed to ensure that the researchers’ understanding of the data was accurate (Patton, 2002). Coaches were presented copies of their transcribed interview prior to data analysis. Following the analysis, the coaches were sent a summary of the results, conclusions, and a visual schema. They were asked if they had questions, concerns, or comments in relation to each of these elements. In reference to the transcribed interviews, four coaches cited that no changes were needed, one coach requested that a passage be rephrased and/or added to, and one coach did not reply. The coaches were not asked about their perceptions of the data interpretation. Finally, training of the interviewer was first carried out by reading scholarly sources on effective interviewing, and then by participation in mock interviews in two pilot attempts, under the supervision and evaluation of an experienced qualitative interviewer.

Results

A total of 376 MUs emerged from the six interviews conducted in this study. Three higher order categories emerged from this data, labelled personal histories and characteristics, coaching intentions, and job satisfaction. Each category will be explained in the following sections, including characteristic citations from the coaches.

PERSONAL HISTORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Aspects of their athletic and coaching experiences emerged in this category and influenced their individual coaching perspectives. As athletes, and later as coaches, they developed a love for the game and its competitive nature, which carried over to their job. Specifically, they developed an empowering family environment and instilled their personal love of the game to their athletes. The coaches described their athletic history and accomplishments, citing a vast number of positive experiences. All coaches discussed how their own high school basketball experiences became a main priority:

I stayed on and played basketball. That became my ticket, so to speak, even though I still played hockey, golf, and baseball. One by one they all dropped by the wayside. I got into basketball, which became my focus. [BB3]

As coaches reflected on their transitions from high school to university basketball, they cited varying degrees of athletic success. Interestingly, five out of the six coaches played on their university teams who qualified for the national championship. It appears that at least half of these coaches were key players on
their university teams, as evidenced in the following citation: “I blossomed at university, got a chance to play, won a National Championship, and was the MVP. I had a very rewarding athletic career at university, mainly because of the coach.” [BB5] Another coach cited that he did not experience success as a university athlete, but nonetheless enjoyed participating and competing in sport:

I was always one of those in-between athletes; good enough to play, but not good enough to receive accolades. Although my teams did well at both the high school and the intramural level, that was basically it for me. No major accolades, aside from personal satisfaction. [BB1]

Interestingly, despite their success, only one of these coaches played on the national team, and none of the coaches played or were successful in professional leagues, either in the United States or Europe. However, two of our coaches were not from Canada and one had a career-ending injury. It is possible that they could have played on our national team if the circumstances were different.

As well as their athletic accomplishments, they discussed their own personal development and coaching history. This included a multitude of their head coaching, as well as assistant coaching experiences. All emphasized the value of individual mentors throughout their coaching careers. These mentors varied in national status; in fact, one coach had the opportunity to work with a renowned basketball coaching figure:

Working with such a prominent coaching figure in Canada and becoming his friend, confidant, assistant coach, had a big impact on my life. Other than my parents, there has been nobody who has had such an impact on my life, both from a coaching and from a life point perspective. [BB5]

Information also emerged with respect to their individual coaching styles, specifically, fulfilling the role of a teacher. In addition, the majority of coaches thought it was vital to develop an ego-free approach to coaching that was flexible and evolving. Along the same line, the coaches discussed the importance of forming a relationship with their athletes while maintaining an appropriate separation. This allowed them to build trust while still being able to make important coaching decisions, such as amounts of playing time. All mentioned their preference to include athletes in these processes, accomplished through athlete empowerment:

Today it is a different society. The athletes of today dictate that you have to make a conscious effort of giving them ownership of the team, of the goals,
giving input into practices, giving input into travel arrangements, giving input into rules to a certain extent; I mean of course you're the head coach regardless. [BB5]

As coaches, they claimed that a great deal of their strategies involved being a teacher, while handling administrative duties. There were mixed appreciations for these roles, and many felt positively about the teaching role. "You have to be confident that you are a teacher, an educator, and a basketball coach. Your job is multifaceted; it is not just about winning the championship." [BB5]. In contrast, others did not enjoy this role as much: "As coaches, we do not coach nearly as much as we should. We spend time with administrative details, paper shuffling. You do what you have to and you are thankful that you actually get to coach." [BB4]

They reported that it was important to develop and evolve a coaching style and philosophy that reflected their individuality:

If you change your personality to something you are not, you are not being a successful person and hence, a coach. I think you become a successful coach by being who you are and doing it honestly, and when you do that, good things happen. Enjoy the damn thing; you do not enjoy it if you are someone else. [BB1]

Love of the sport was reflected in their attraction and passion for basketball, including their love of competition, both as a coach and an athlete. As an athlete, these coaches cited strong inclinations towards competition, and this achievement orientation carried over into their approach to coaching. One coach explained:

"To me there is competition for everything. There is competition to get a shoe contract, to get sponsors for your uniforms, and to get ready for games. To me I enjoy the competition." [BB2]

However, the coaches' love of the game was also more than just the competition and included how the game created various emotions in their athletes:

You know if I can look back at when we won the first Canada Games, I sat back and watched these people run onto the floor, waving their towels, hugging each other, crying. You know, it was so much fun. I was sitting with my assistant coach, and we were just like old fogies; we had been around and we
had seen so many games. We shook each other’s hands and we watched them and said, “Fun isn’t it?” [BB1]

Generally, the coaches reported passionate and sometimes successful experiences in basketball as players that continued into their entry into coaching. They reported positive influences from their coaches including a holistic approach to the games both as athletes and as university students.

COACHING INTENTIONS

While the previous category highlighted how coaches developed their own evolving individual perspectives, the present one considered facets of their work that were directly within their control. In relation to their athletes, they focused on process goals, the achieving, not the achieved, with respect to athletic, academic, and personal development. In relation to their own personal goals, they took pride and gained job satisfaction from exceeding other’s expectations, preparing and executing a plan, and being resilient and persevering.

They described what they wanted to accomplish when interacting with their student-athletes, in the academic, athletic, and personal development domains. These goals included their emphasis on the athletes’ personal and career development, the development of life skills and values, emphasis on work ethic, eagerness to leave a mark, prioritization of university studies, and ability to improve the athletes’ overall skills. More specifically, all the coaches stressed the academic aspect of coaching student-athletes:

In one way, that does create a situation where you can have a closer relationship with the players, because you also have to be an academic advisor. If you do that, you can create situations where you spend more academic time with the athletes, and not just on the basketball court. During those academic meetings, we discuss each course, what assignments are coming up, if they are having problems, do they need tutors. Should they drop the course at Christmas, or pick up another course, and which directions are they taking? That sort of thing helps the athlete know that you are in it for the right reasons — you are not just there for shooting jump shots. This is at the core of the coach-athlete relationship. [BB5]

As well as prioritizing academics, they cited normal concerns about improving basketball skills of student-athletes. In addition to setting several
game-related goals, their major focus seemed to be to help their athletes reach their potential both on and off the court:

I teach my players to be the best they can be every single day in whatever they do, and that includes academics, socially, how they interact with their parents, and being on a basketball court. Teaching them to strive to be the best that they can be everyday, and to play fair, and to represent themselves, the school, and the team to the best of their ability; then they have learned something. That usually results in a high level of performance at whatever you do. [BB5]

In the end, the coaches explained that one of their most important goals, and often their measure of coaching success, was whether they left a lasting impression on their athletes:

It is nice when you get people that you have coached are all over the world, and you get phone calls or emails and photos of their kids and invitations to their weddings. You know, things like that. When you see players you have coached that are highly successful in business or some of them are successful as teachers or coaches, you really feel a reward from that situation. [BB4]

Sources of coaching pride evolved from their goals by examining elements that enhanced their sense of achievement and satisfaction, including exceeding others’ expectations by being resilient and persevering. The coaches cited they loved to execute a plan of action and pushed through obstacles that were encountered. One noted, “Overcome the obstacles and the challenges, stick with it, achieve things, and make things happen. I guess that is what it comes down to. The result is you have to come in and put the icing on the cake.” [BB6]

These coaches directed their attention to interpersonal relations with their athletes while still pursuing their athletic dreams. Within the basketball context, winning was not always the sole goal, but qualifying for the championships and developing skills for later life were accentuated.

**JOB SATISFACTION**

While the previous category on coach intentions identified set goals and how they were related to job satisfaction, the present one included explicit
factors in the work environment not directly in their control, but which influenced their job satisfaction. These included relationships with the athletic director, recruiting, publicity, and salaries. To reduce dissatisfaction and possible burnout, coaches attempted to lead a balanced lifestyle that prioritized family, friends, and faith. In addition, they felt that by devaluing winning, this maximized their ability to experience long-term job satisfaction and achieve their goals.

Considerations related to the coach-athletic director relationships, salary, and program development, as well as perspectives pertaining to publicity, recruiting, and the university environment also emerged during the interviews. This property outlined the concerns of working within the Canadian university basketball environment. Coaching basketball typically rivaled ice hockey and football for top draw and helped create a positive coaching situation. However, coaching this university sport also had various drawbacks, as evidenced by the coach-athletic director relationships:

There was no pressure to win. The athletic director and president do not care about being on top. What they want is to do well; they want to be competitive. They want you to stay out of trouble, work hard, make sure the uniforms are clean, that kind of thing. They want you to do it within the rules. [BB3]

I think the most discouraging thing is when you bring the information to the attention of your athletic director and you feel you’re being devalued when you’re not being compensated compared to your peers and other people on campus. It seems to fall on deaf ears. That is a little bit discouraging. [BB4]

Viewpoints on salaries varied as some coaches reported their salaries were an issue, while others did not, as the two citations indicate:

I will tell you what else grew - my paycheck. We had a union who said you could not be doing that to people. They put in a few things about where coaches had to be in regards to money. Now I have been here so many years that I make so much money, and it is ridiculous. I do not need money, yet that sets a sense of pride. [BB3]

It is a huge drawback. When you find out you’re the second lowest paid coach in the country, you get a little annoyed when eight guys are hired after you and you know even on the campus in the community you’re perceived to be a person with high salary. You know your income is half of theirs. [BB4]

It should be noted that the coaching environment for BB3 and BB4 differed significantly, since BB3 coached in an environment where he was a tenured
professor for roughly 30 years and paid by a union scale. BB4 coached in a university environment for four years and also taught skills courses, and was paid accordingly. Apart from these two extremes, the overall impression from the six interviews was that coaching salaries were still a concern. However, regardless of salary and relationships with the athletic director, the coaches generally cited pride in developing their programs:

The obvious thing is the intrinsic satisfaction of seeing things that you have put in place start to work. It can be little things like the fact that you have a locker room now and that we started this and that tradition. The program, you see as it builds, whether it is the mental training side of it, the physical side of it, the traditions that we have, things we do on the road trips, they are part of me. They are part of what we would call this university's men's basketball program. [BB3]

Issues also emerged with respect to the coaches' de-emphasis on winning and qualifying for the CIS championship tournament. Interestingly, only half of the coaches emphasized winning over losing. Those who averaged 6.7 years of experience as a head coach in a university setting emphasized achievement, whereas the coaches who de-emphasized winning averaged 22.7 years of experience. One coach who emphasized winning cited, "We all want to win. Once you start keeping score, holy smokes, who doesn't want to win?" [BB1]. In contrast, a much more experienced CIS head coach noted:

I think if you are so worried about the result, that you will not put enough emphasis on the process. Let us worry about today's practice; let us worry about how we rebound or how we defend in a game situation. Let us not worry about the score so much. [BB5]

Regardless of their views on winning, all coaches claimed their major goal was related to the CIS championship tournament. Some hoped to qualify for the tournament,

"... I would like my players to get that experience, whether we actually win a national championship or not. I would like them to have that experience." [BB4]. Others focused more on winning the tournament, "We have a stepping-stone approach. Make the playoffs in a certain position and win." [BB3].
Coaches also discussed aspects of their profession that affected job satisfaction, including those regarding burnout and retirement, family support, and methods of stress control. Although some practiced personal methods of stress reduction, most cited the importance of leading a balanced life: "Create a balance in your life that allows you to have other interests and other priorities, and allows you to grow in more ways." [BB5] One coach credited his family for helping achieve this balance:

I am very fortunate to have a balance in my life, particularly with my family. My balance is my family. I can come home to a different world where it is important to keep things in priority, your own flesh and blood, your family. There has to be a plan; you have to plan to create that balance. [BB5]

Finally, the coaches also discussed their concerns regarding the possibility of burnout and retirement:

I never think about burnout. When do I think I will quit? Probably when I do not enjoy it anymore. I tell people I am the luckiest person in the world. I get up, and I love what I do. You know Confucius said, “If you love what you do you will never have to work a day in your life”. [BB2]

Overall, the coaches reported a remarkably positive perspective of the demands of their job with a variety of dissenting views regarding the low priority of university sport, conflicts with athletic directors, multiple administrative tasks, and low salaries. There was also little support for signs of coaching burnout in Canadian university coaching.

Discussion

The current study helped shed light on the perceptions of job satisfaction of accomplished men’s university basketball coaches, an under-represented area of study in this field (Gilbert & Trudel, 2004). The interview analyses revealed that three general categories emerged related to job satisfaction: elements that arose from their personal performance and coaching histories; coaching intentions in the Canadian university setting; and, current specific dimensions related to job satisfaction.

It is important to underline that these coaches are active within the Canadian university program, one that has previously been described as being quite different from other sport systems, in particular, the American
model. Within the CM (Côté, Salmela, Trudel, et al., 1995), this context has been shown to be a determining factor that shapes all coach perceptions and behaviors. Available resources, pressures, and general lifestyles determined and affected their views of this world. More specifically, the goals of coaches in the Canadian university system are directed towards the student-athlete, with a greater emphasis on the development of the total person, rather than only upon exceptional sport performance (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998; Miller, Salmela, & Kerr, 2002; Vallée & Bloom, 2005). Since the general campus interest is low and budgets devoted to university sport are miniscule compared to American cohorts, job pressures in Canada were more directed towards a balance between academic successes first, and sport excellence second. With fewer resources for recruitment and salaries, along with lower demands for winning, employment demands and sources of stress were of another nature, and perhaps at different levels. This environment was relatively stable, since within this context they were able to continue in the activities they loved, while being forced to deal with the particular complex of stressors that are part of the Canadian university context.

Stevens and Weiss (1991) reported the lack of social support and extensive time commitments that led to burnout of American women coaches. While this may be a gender issue to be further investigated, it appears the men coaches in the present study, while having lower university status and salaries, reported enormously enjoying their jobs, especially those elements related to coaching. These Canadian university coaches received emotional benefits from athlete development in basketball. They also mentored them in skills to serve them later in life, and reported pride in this holistic person-oriented mentoring process (Bloom et al., 1998; Miller et al., 2002; Vallée & Bloom, 2005).

More specifically, the current results revealed insights on sources of satisfaction, enjoyment, and success for coaches, as well as goals for themselves, their athletes, and their teams. In addition, the heuristic nature of the CM (cf. Côté, Salmela, Trudel, et al., 1995) highlighted the central effects of contextual factors regarding aspects of organization, training, and competition compared to other cultures. Coaches also emphasized the importance of their interpersonal relationships, where positive constructive relationships with athletes could be developed to empower decision-making. Thus, coaches felt more job satisfaction when they remained themselves and employed their personal philosophies for coaching responsibilities.

Different perspectives from Canadian coaches can be seen from studies on both European coaches and athletes. d'Arrippe-Longueville and col-
leagues (1998) reported that French judo coaches were not only authoritarian with their impressive number of World and Olympic champions, but they also used sarcasm, divisive training strategies to increase rivalry, and created hostility between players. In another European study, Chantal, Guay, Dobreva-Martinova, and Vallerand (1996) found that elite Bulgarian athletes, while being self-determined, were not motivated by needs of inner fulfillment and ownership, but from external rewards and medals. It appears the coaching context and societal mores are powerful determining factors in both the perceptions of coaches and athletes (Salmela & Moraes, 2003).

Some of the apparently lower levels of job satisfaction associated with Canadian intercollegiate sport include how coaches related to their athletic director, and their surprising views on winning and losing. Of particular interest regarding the Canadian university coaching context was the primary emphasis on qualifying for the CIS national championship tournament. Certainly the interactions reported by Yosif (1998) on American coaches and their administrators were more stressful regarding winning. Studies on the Canadian intercollegiate scene underline what Miller and colleagues (2002) found with Canadian university coaches where a greater emphasis was put on academic mentoring, rather than sport achievements. Of note are the reported beliefs that these athletes should set process goals (Weinberg et al., 2001) and take ownership of the training process. This allows them to be more intrinsically motivated. However, it should be noted that exceptional performance can still be achieved with outcome-based motivation as indicated by the surprising motivational views of exceptional Bulgarian athletes (Chantal et al., 1996).

In terms of dealing with coaching burnout, the coaches in this study referred to leading a balanced lifestyle, handling a variety of program concerns, and deemphasizing winning. This was important since within the Canadian coaching context salaries and budgets were smaller, job security was high, and there was less pressure to win; consequently, there was little reported reference to coaching burnout. Despite this, coaches did set outcome goals such as qualifying for the playoffs, but prioritized process goals such as developing their athletes and improving them within their athletic, academic, and social pursuits. This is certainly in contrast to the research reported in the American literature, especially with women coaches (Kenow & Williams, 1999; Quigley et al., 1987; Stevens & Weiss, 1991).

A variety of external stressors influenced the coaches’ ability to experience satisfaction with their job. These responses included such concerns as conflicts with athletic directors, lower salaries than other university colleagues, and fewer resources. If coaches were unable to lead a balanced lifestyle and cope with the sources of dissatisfaction, the perceived the risk of
burnout or retirement increased. However, in relation to burnout in coaching, the possibilities of this occurrence in the Canadian intercollegiate context appeared slim, since consequences were less daunting than in other international coaching contexts (Kenow & Williams, 1999; Quigley et al., 1987; Salmela & Moraes, 2003; Stevens & Weiss, 1991).

Coaches aimed to lead a satisfying career by remaining personable, implementing their personal approach to coaching, dealing with external stressors of being a career coach, and focusing on developing athletes rather than winning championships. Coach-athlete relationships emerged as having the greatest influence on job satisfaction. These findings are in line with other studies with athletes and coaches competing within the Canadian sport context (Bloom et al., 1998; Bloom & Salmela, 2000; Miller et al., 2002; Vallée & Bloom, 2005).

Upon examining the research template of Gilbert and Trudel (2004), it can be seen that in recent years there has been an increased interest in coaching psychology. This research has examined a variety of aspects, such as motivation, interpersonal relationships, techniques, and burnout. As coaching research evolves, it has become apparent that regardless of how well trained or experienced is the coach, dissatisfied coaches cannot perform effectively. Thus, it is necessary to understand what provides coaches with satisfaction in their job and how to maximize these dimensions.

In conclusion, it was found that all coaches were passionate about their involvement in basketball, both as athletes and coaches. In coaching, they set outcome goals but were deeply concerned about the personal development of their athletes. While there were some factors that caused job dissatisfaction, these were more than compensated by the strength of their passion for sport and caring for the athletes. These results are believed to be directly due to the contextual nature of Canadian intercollegiate sport with low levels of finance and general university interest, while still providing coaches with a stimulating teaching and learning environment.

REFERENCES


