

Effects of Autonomy Supportive Behaviors and Season Outcome on Athletes' Perceptions of Coaches

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Abstract

Self-determination theory suggests that coaching style (e.g., controlling, autonomy supportive) contributes to athletes' motivation. Limited attention has been paid to how season outcome (winning and losing seasons) affects athletes' perceptions of controlling, neutral coaches, and autonomy supportive coaches. In this study, 149 NCAA Division II and III swimmers read vignettes of controlling, neutral, or autonomy supportive coaches who had either a winning season or a losing season. Coaches with a controlling coaching style were perceived less favorably than neutral and autonomy supportive coaches. Coaches who had successful seasons were perceived more favorably and as being more autonomy supportive than coaches who had unsuccessful seasons. The results suggest that season outcome is a factor that contributes to athletes' perceptions of coaches and coaching style, regardless of actual coaching behaviors. The findings have implications for coaching research, education, and training.

Keywords: self-determination theory, controlling coaching, winning, losing, swimming

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