

# **The Acquisition of Coaching Knowledge of Elite Team Sport Coaches**

**Adam D. Carter & Gordon A. Bloom**

**Department of Kinesiology &  
Physical Education  
McGill University**

# Presentation Outline

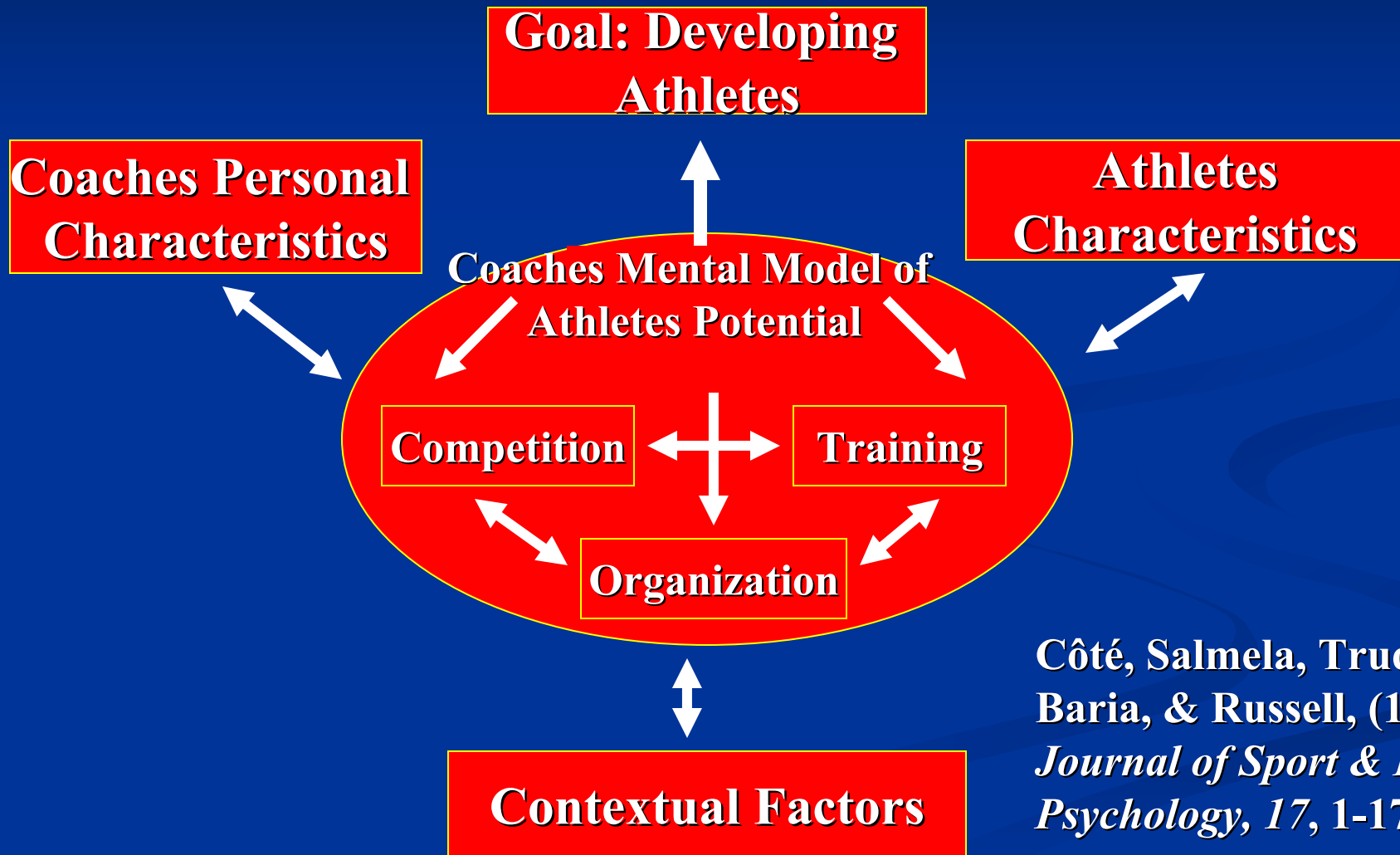
- Literature Review
- Purpose of the Study
- Method
  - Participants
  - Interview Technique
- Results
  - Career Path
  - Personal Factors
  - Coaching Knowledge
- Discussion & Future Directions



Duncan Fletcher

# Literature Review

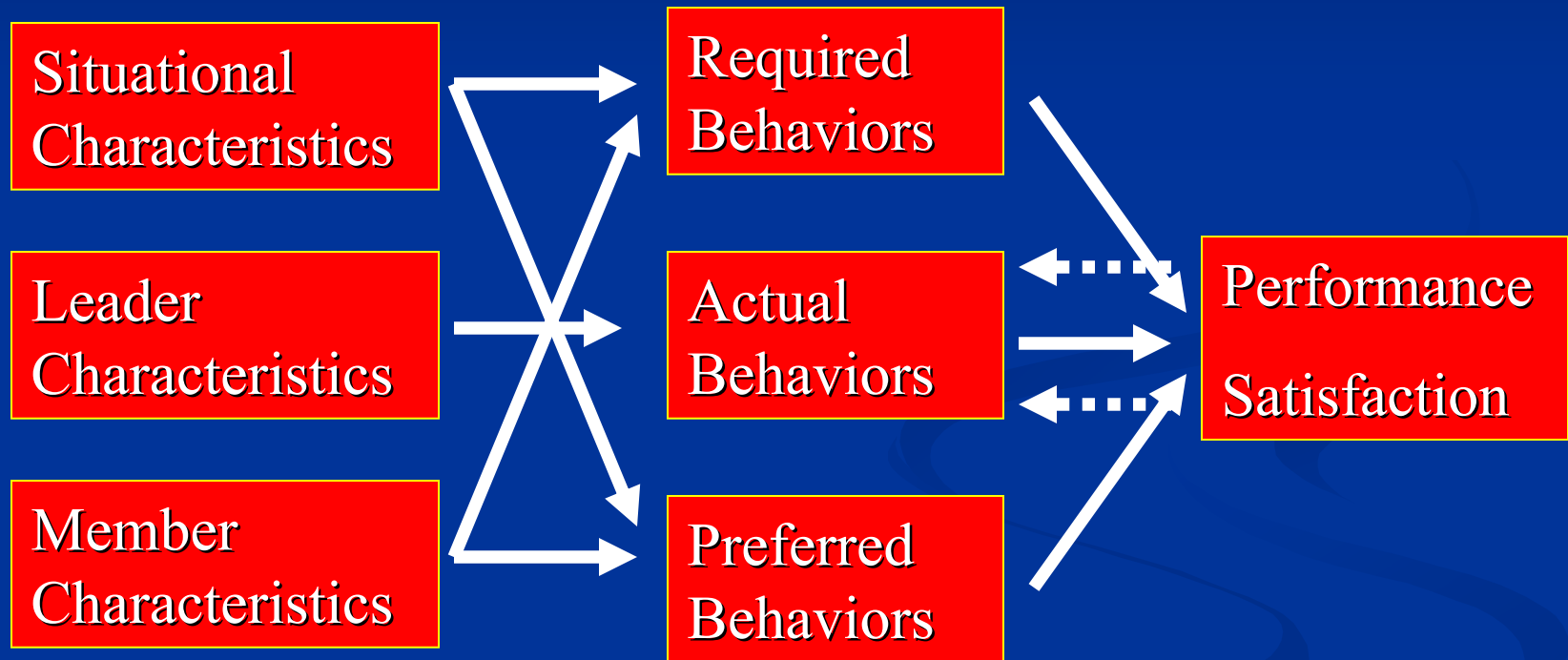
## Coaching Model



Côté, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, (1995).  
*Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 17, 1-17.

# Literature Review

## Multidimensional Model of Leadership



Chelladurai (1993). Leadership. In Singer, Murphey, & Tennant (Eds.), *Handbook of research on sport psychology* (pp. 647-671). New York: Macmillan.

# Literature Review

## Development of Expertise

### Coach Development

- **Salmela (1994)**
  - Developmental relationship between athletic participation and coaching knowledge
- **Schinke, Bloom, & Salmela (1995)** examined the career stages of elite Canadian Basketball coaches and found 7 stages of coach development
  - Relationship between athletic experience and coaching knowledge
  - Mentoring from significant others enhances the development of coaching knowledge

# Literature Review

## Development of Expertise

- **Previously participants had all achieved comparable success as athletes**
- **Little or no empirical research has investigated the development of coaches who have surpassed their achievements as athletes**



Rafa Benitez

# Purpose of the Study

- **To identify how expert coaches who have surpassed their achievements as athletes developed and acquired their coaching knowledge**

# **Method**

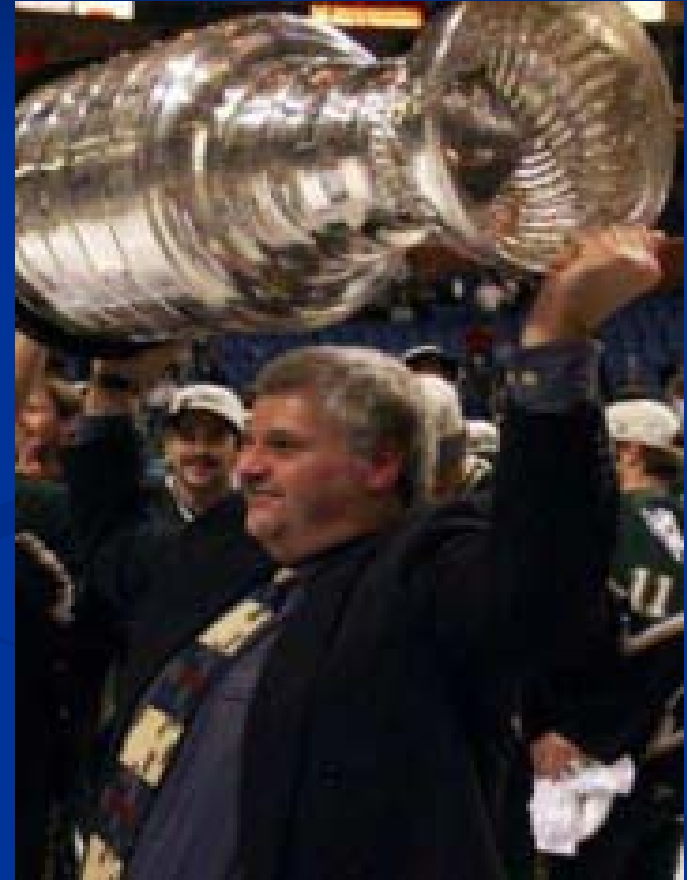
## **Participants**

- **Six expert male coaches from basketball, volleyball, and hockey**
  - **Coaching at higher level (CIS) than they competed as an athlete**
  - **Coaching at the university level between 7 and 14 years**
  - **Coaching demographics**
    - **Had a winning % greater than 500**
    - **23 conference championships**
    - **18 Provincial coach of the year awards, 1 CIS coach of the year award**
    - **31 appearances at Nationals**

# Method

## Interview Technique

- **Semi-structured, open-ended interviews**
- **Interview Guide**
- **Data Analysis (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russell, 1993)**



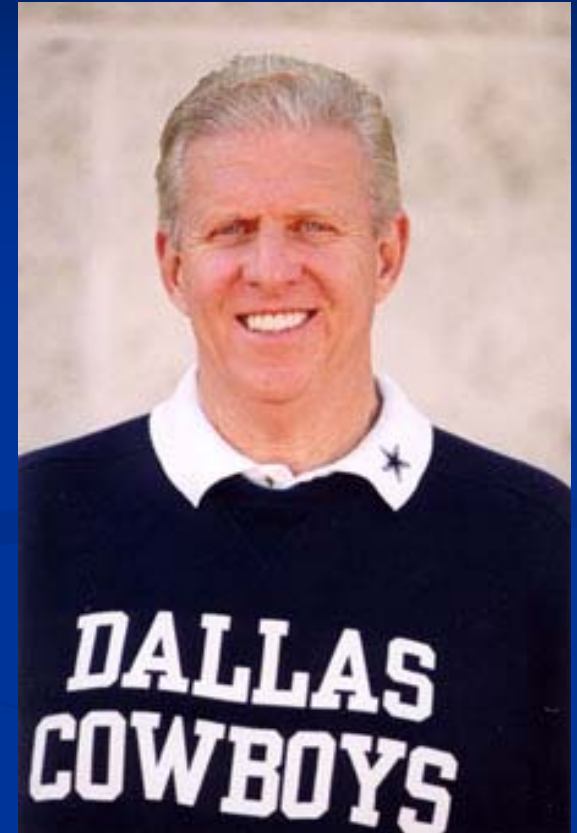
Ken Hitchcock

# Results

- **552 meaning units were generated from the data and placed under 53 tags, which were subsequently placed into 8 properties**
- **From these properties, 3 higher order categories emerged**
  - **Career Path**
  - **Personal Factors**
  - **Coaching Knowledge**

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Career Path*
  - The coaches journey of knowledge acquisition from their earliest sporting participation to their current coaching position
    - Early participation enthused interest in sport
    - 4 studied Kin & Phys. Ed with view to being a coach
    - Initial coaching was at high school or assistant coaching at University



Bill Parcels

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Career Path (cont'd)*
  - 3 sources of knowledge acquisition cited by all 6 coaches
    - Other Coaches
    - Coaching Experiences
    - Observation
  - 5 out of 6 coaches mentioned
    - Books
    - Clinics
    - Videos
  - Coaches who studied Kin & Phys. Ed attributed part of their knowledge acquisition to their University education

# Results (Cont'd)

- “If you want to be successful you’ve got to steal from good people [coaches]. I went to see a coach two weeks ago who’d won 4 national championships, and he said some really good things. He doesn’t let the kids in practice get away from anything and every drill they do is competitive. We don’t do every drill competitive, so again there’s a situation where I’m stealing something” (C2)
- “Where one University coach’s strengths were knowing the game and recruiting, the coach at another University would teach the game, so I got a chance to learn both” (C4)

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Personal Factors*

- **The coaches personal characteristics and how these impacted their thoughts and interactions with their athletes as well as their dedication to coaching**
  - **Coaches seemed to share similar characteristics including effective communication, adaptability, and open-mindedness**
  - **Coaches felt these characteristics helped them overcome barriers**

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Personal Factors (Cont'd)*
  - Obstacle of not playing
  - These coaches felt they needed to work harder to either fill or overcome this knowledge gap



Jose Mourinho

# Results (Cont'd)

- “I certainly think there are some valuable experiences and insights that you would have as a university athlete that perhaps you could bring to coaching. I think that’s very important. That would be something on my weakness side that would be one of my weaknesses because I’ve never done that” (C6)
- “I started playing more when I started coaching at the University level because I wanted to test what I was teaching them, both in terms of skill execution and decision making” (C3)

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Coaching Knowledge*
  - Overall beliefs and philosophies, as well as their approach to training, goal-setting, and competition
  - Many common themes
    - Belief that athletes were students first, and that sport was means and not the end
    - Each coach had similar routine for competition
    - Need for tactical, technical, physical, and mental training

# Results (Cont'd)

- **“So every student here is a student athlete and I kind of look at them as volunteers because that’s kind of what they are. They are not hired guns, I don’t have any ownership on them; they’re volunteers. You’ve got to key onto the fact that they are passionate about getting better and being here. At the same time you’ve got to constantly respect that fact that they are volunteers. I am absolutely terrified of manipulating all their time. I am very conscientious about it” (C4)**

# Results (Cont'd)

- *Coaching Knowledge (Cont'd)*
  - Assistant coaches hired because they had instinctive understanding of coaching tasks having been athletes
  - “I hire some assistant coaches on purpose, to make sure I have coaches who have been University athletes, doing what it is that I’m asking my athletes to do. And they will have a unique perspective on some things I can never offer” (C5)

# Discussion & Future Directions

- *Career Path* highlighted the journey, which was influenced by *Personal Factors*, and resulted in *Coaching Knowledge*
- While each coach's own individual journey was unique, common trends emerged
  - Ways in which knowledge was acquired
  - Some key characteristics
  - Level of knowledge acquired
- Sources of knowledge acquisition accessible to aspiring coaches to acquire necessary coaching knowledge, regardless of athletic background

# Future Directions

- “I know that on many occasions, not having the experience as a player was tough, I mean for me, I just can’t judge for anybody else. But overall you know, I hope I am a living proof that you can succeed” (C1)



Arsene Wenger

# **The Acquisition of Coaching Knowledge of Elite Team Sport Coaches**

**Adam D. Carter & Gordon A. Bloom**

**Department of Kinesiology &  
Physical Education  
McGill University**