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**A phenomenological approach into  
coaches' perspectives on positive youth  
development using the five Cs model**

by  
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**Trikala, June 2018**

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The author of this thesis had a remarkable amount of help from Professor Marios Goudas, Laur Nurkse, Antonis Hatzigeorgiadis, & Dimitrios Kokaridas, PhD

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None

We the undersigned, certify that this thesis has been approved and that is adequate in scope and methodology for the degree of European Masters in Sport and Exercise Psychology.

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## **Abstract**

Positive youth development (PYD) has been long examined and researchers are still developing ways to create opportunities for youth development through sport. Additionally, the 5Cs (competence, confidence, character, caring, & connection) have been associated with PYD and contributing to life skills development. Thus, the current study aimed to understand the phenomenological experience of coaches' strategies to enhance PYD in sport, and in particular rugby. Ten male rugby coaches who are members of a national youth rugby team participated in semi-structured interviews. Ages ranged between 29-52 years old and their coaching experience range from 2.5 to 25 years. A top-down analysis was performed within 7 themes (5Cs model, PYD, and the transferability of learned skills). This suggests that rugby coaches aim to enhance PYD by creating positive experience for athletes, establishing coach-athlete relationship, helping athletes to understand morality, encouraging athletes to experience empathy, encouraging youth to be part of their developmental process, and ensuring dedication. In summary, the findings suggest that the rugby coaches take notice of their influence on athletes' developmental process and their experience within sport and create a versatile learning environment.

**Keywords:** rugby, life skills, developmental process, positive learning experience, supportive influences

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## Introduction

Almost 54% of Canadian children, and up to 35 million children in the U.S., participate in community, school, or sport programs (Holt & Sehn, 2008). Positive youth development (PYD) has been studied for decades and researchers are still discovering ways to create opportunities for youth development through sport. Sport, with its various qualities, has been regarded as a positive influence in youth development (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). PYD is defined as a “strength-based conception of adolescence” (Lerner, 2005). It involves the efforts of other youth, adults, and communities, by providing opportunities to youth to enhance their interest's, skills, and abilities. Sport psychology has helped to kick start the movement of positive youth development and has been able to indicate social and environmental factors associated with youths' psychosocial and behavioral outcomes (Weiss, 2016). Positive youth development is grounded on the concept that all young people are capable to succeed when their individual strengths are enhanced in a supportive environment (Lerner, Erickson, Ettekal, & Agans, 2016). However, PYD has had a different focus and purpose in the past in contrast to more recent studies.

Since, there has been a progression over time of the main focus of PYD, researchers have tried to distinguish what actually qualifies as a PYD program. Benson and associates (2007) argue that there are six principles that make a program in line with youth development: 1) all youth are capable of positive growth and development; 2) PYD can occur when surrounding relationships (i.e. peers, parents, and communities) are supportive in the experience; 3) PYD is enhanced when there are multiple supportive surrounding relationships and environments; 4) support, empowerment, and engagement can result in PYD across all races, genders, and family incomes; however different approaches can be used to reach PYD; 5) community has a main contribution to PYD; 6) youth are accountable in their own development in fostering relationships and utilizing

their communities when enabling PYD (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007). Moreover, Holt and colleagues (2012), reported in their more recent overview that a program can only be considered PYD development if it includes at least one of the following guidelines: bonding, resilience, social competence, emotional competence, cognitive competence, behavioral competence, moral competence, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, positive identity, belief in the future, recognition for positive behavior, opportunities for prosocial development, and prosocial norms (Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton, & Ball, 2012). However, while taking these two approaches into consideration, it needs to be noted that, each adolescent learns and is motivated differently towards PYD. Furthermore, PYD can be influenced by various supporting factors such as, peers, parents, and communities.

Taking into consideration the environment of the youth experience, there are two main reasons for the need of this research. Currently, the majority of research focuses on the effects of PYD through an athletes' perspective. It is important to have coaches in each specific sport properly motivating the youth team to enhance youth development. There is a gap in the research in examining coaches' perspectives on PYD in sport, and in particular rugby, and the process coaches go through to address instances within their team. Moreover, according to Vella and associates (2011), studies have focused on the pedagogies of coaching while the actual beliefs and perspectives of the coaches has been overlooked (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011). Furthermore, interventions are being used to create awareness of PYD, but limited studies show ways that the intervention actually hinders or promotes PYD from a coaches' perspective. Additionally, coaches may be the main source of how an adolescent will endure a sport and it is important to understand their perspectives in order to contribute to future research.

## Literature Review

### Larson's Model

Many researchers have contributed to the development programs of PYD, along with respective frameworks. Larson (2006) examined the different domains of learning experiences in order to compare youths' developmental experiences over different contexts. While Larson (2006) wanted to explore learned experiences, Benson and colleagues (2006) chose to describe forty developmental assets as a basis for human development. Additionally, Lerner (2005) looked to examine associations of PYD through the 5Cs (competence, confidence, character, caring & connection) model. The mentioned frameworks are aimed to enhance PYD, however the approach of each model as an intervention varies. Dr. Reed Larson has contributed to PYD by explaining different domains of learning experiences in order to compare the youths' developmental experiences across different contexts. His view was that experiences needed to occur and be consistent daily. Mainly, Larson (2000) analyzed the development of initiative as part of a learning experience in positive youth development. Initiative is a core requirement for other components of positive youth development such as creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement (Larson, 2000). In order to produce and enhance and these skills, such as initiative, it must be developed from daily experiences. These daily experiences can include the types of resources that are available to the youngsters in their communities as well as the support from their peers, coaches, and parents/mentors. For instance, what type of opportunities are available to the youth in their communities? Do they have access to participating in extracurricular activities that allow for characteristics, such as initiative, to develop in these activities? Larson (2000) discusses guidelines that that can contribute to achieving these skills through daily experiences. Based off the given framework, Larson (2000) proposed effective evidence how an environment can effect PYD.

Exposing youth to an appropriate environment, their individual strengths can be enhanced, and in particular, initiative.

In relation to other aspects of PYD, research suggests that initiative is the most prominent. Based off the domains of learning experiences, there are three factors that can contribute to these involvements and opportunities to facilitate initiative in youth. First, is for youth to have intrinsic motivation (Larson, 2000). By this, adolescents need to be in a supportive environment that encourages them to excel rather than to be pushed into participating in activities (Larson, 2000). Second, intrinsic motivation be experienced along with a constructive environment (Larson, 2000). For instance, creating challenges and rules that will create a sense of “real-world” experiences. Adolescents will take the initiative of accepting challenges. Finally, intrinsic motivation must occur over a period of time (Larson, 2000). It is important for youth to stick to activities or tasks, regardless of the setbacks and challenges they may face in order to facilitate initiative. As Larson's theory focused more on the domains of learning experiences and regulation of intrinsic motivation that can contribute to PYD, this next theorist categorized PYD into forty developmental assets that take place to result in human development.

### **Benson's Model**

Although initiative has gained the most attention regarding Larson's domains of learning experiences, Benson et al. (2007) emphasized the importance of forty developmental assets as the building blocks for human development. These assets fall into two broad categories: internal and external. Internal assets reflect an individual's values and beliefs and include commitment to learning positive values, social competencies, and positive identities. For instance, when learning positive values, an adolescent accepts and takes responsibility. External assets include support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time (Scales, Benson, Leffert,

& Blyth, 2000). Moreover, support occurs when an adolescent and his or her parents communicate positively and are willing to seek advice and counsel from their parents. In addition to internal and external assets, this framework demonstrated five aspects of relationships linked to PYD. First, supportive relationships by extended family members and demographic regions have been shown to encourage developmental strengths. Second, youth having supportive relationships by nonparental adults can also help encourage developmental strengths towards PYD. Third, supportive relationships with a number of nurturing relationships can help enhance self-esteem, caring, and self-confidence in their future. Next, positive peer influence can help encourage PYD. This can be in school settings, during extracurricular activities, or in sport settings. Lastly, relationships that consist of quality, quantity and sustainability can have a developmental advantage (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007). Although developmental assets are the building blocks of human development and the importance of quality relationships also has an effect on the developmental process.

Relationships can be supported by peers, parents, and the community. Scales and colleagues (2000) examined 370 students in 7th-9th grades for three years through the 10th-12th grades and the relation of developmental assets to academic achievement overtime. The developmental assets focused on were positive relationships, opportunities, skills, values, and self-perceptions. The study used a 156-item survey that measured 10-risk-taking behavior betters, 8 thriving indicators, 5 developmental deficits, and standard demographic questions. Results showed that building developmental characteristics may help to contribute to academic success. Thus, participants self-perceptions and academics prospered when exposed to positive relationships and opportunities. In relation to creating quality relationships, these results show effective evidence of the importance of these relationships, as well as the assets that make up the development process.

Previous findings have shown that these developmental assets influence PYD and show an increase in GPA over a period of time in other academic settings. (Scales, Benson, & Blyth, 2000). Benson and associates (2007) identified that the developmental assets contributed to at least one of the following: reduction in risk behaviors; promotion of positive behaviors; and fostering of resilience, or succeeding developmentally. Research has shown that the environment that youth experience reflecting the features of the developmental framework, the more likely they are to acquire the social and personal assets linked to PYD and future well-being (Benson et. al, 2007). Although Benson signified the building blocks of human development, the influence that peers, adults, and communities need to also be taken into account. Sufficient evidence reflects the influences of the environment of youth in consideration with the 5Cs model.

### **Lerner's Model**

Larson (2000) and Benson (2007) described the learned experiences and the essential building blocks of overall human development. However, Lerner et al. (2005) developed a model referred to as the 5Cs (competence, confidence, character, caring & connection) model that is associated with the influences of supportive relationships as well as practicing life skills to enhance the individual strengths of youth. Lerner's 5C's approach was originally designed to conduct an evaluation study for the 4-H (head, heart, hands, and health) program (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). This program is designed for adolescents to complete hands-on projects in areas such as health, science, and agriculture, in a positive environment. They receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on leadership roles. The 4-H study was designed to test the based on the 5Cs theoretical model (Lerner et al., 2005). Similar to Larson (2000), this has helped research to explore domains, such as initiative, self-regulation, social skills, and teamwork.

To facilitate development within youth programs, there are three considerations to help foster the Five Cs, including opportunities to build supportive relationships with adults, engage in leadership, and practice life skills. Life skills is defined as the skills that are required to deal with the demands and challenges of every day (Gould & Carson, 2008). To go more in depth, life skills can be linked to the 5Cs with the different social, psychological and physical assets that can be transferred to non-sport settings (Weiss, 2016). Social aspects include acceptance, friendship quality, and moral development. Psychological concepts include positive and negative emotions and motivational orientation behaviors. Lastly, physical aspects include fundamental motor skills, sport-specific skills, physical fitness, physical activity and physical health (Weiss, 2016). This developmental theory stresses that PYD occurs when human development is aligned with developmental assets. These relationships are in line with Benson's developmental assets based on relationships. Lerner (2005), showed significance of leading a positive environment by involving a young person in positive relationships. To also tie the previous mentioned models together, positive development is not set in stone and can be influenced based on homes, schools, and communities. These assets can be transferred to non-sport settings and resulting in positive youth development and the transferability to life skills.

When defining development in a sports context, it used to emphasize personal growth, responsibility, and success (Coakley, 2016). Additionally, previous research has suggested that when a person utilizes the 5Cs, they will be capable of living a positive and have overall better well-being. The 5Cs emphasizes the strengths of youth and allows for full development. For instance, later in life, the youth has a higher chance of maintaining their well-being and remain active in themselves, family, and community (Lerner, 2005). In contrast, researchers have questioned if sport actually builds character. In other words, athletes participate in sport with their

character already intact. The present study will aim to show ways that coaches are able to mold their athletes character, among other characteristics, to fit their team standards. Lerner et al. (2005) created the 5Cs model as a framework for PYD. This is why this model will be used to understand coaches' perspectives and ensure a comprehensive understanding of creating a developmental environment. It will also help close the gap in research on general studies of rugby as well as examining PYD in sport.

Larson (2000), Benson (2007) and Lerner's (2005) models are interrelated and continually build upon PYD programs. Larson (2000) created a framework that explained different domains of learning experiences in order to compare the youths' developmental experiences across different contexts. However, Benson (2007) wanted to take a step back and examine the forty developmental assets they represent the building blocks of human development and the influence of supportive relationships within those daily experiences. In comparison with Larson (2000) and Benson and colleagues (2007), Lerner (2005) essentially combined the two frameworks. He chose to create a framework that examined the basis of these daily experiences and the influences of the given supportive environment in the 5 Cs model.

The previous frameworks have examined different ways to enhance PYD. Larson and Benson described the learned experiences and the essential building blocks of overall human development.; while Lerner and associates examined 5Cs and the influences of supportive relationships as well as practicing life skills to enhance the individual strengths of youth. As these theorists have contributed incredibly to the understanding of human development, the main model used for this study will focus on the 5Cs model. This model considers that each adolescent is different and is motivated differently and other environmental aspects can have an influence on overall youth development. To better understand the influences that can effect PYD, looking into

the environments that have the most influence on youth such as extracurricular activities and sport settings need to be considered.

### **Extracurricular participation and PYD**

PYD has been examined extensively by researchers and through different frameworks to try to understand the full picture of youth development. Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities has helped facilitate adolescent developmental changes such as establishing autonomy from parents, puberty development, identity exploration, and social changes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). Moreover, it has been found that sport participation leads to a number of positive outcomes including enhanced health and fitness, school achievement, and psychosocial and emotional attributes (Gould & Carson, 2008). Fredricks and Eccles (2010) examined the association between organized activity participation during early adolescence and adjustment in a large diverse sample (67% African American; 33% European). Findings showed that participation in organized activity was associated with higher grades, school value, self-esteem, resiliency, prosocial behavior, and lower than expected risky behavior. However, their findings also revealed that there was a significant effect on the socioeconomic status of the participants. Participation in school sports from lower socioeconomic status homes showered lower resiliency in European American youth and positive predictor of prosocial peers from female participants. Higher socioeconomic status participants had a decrease in depression. In summary, this study shows that organized sport participation in school settings have a significant influence on youth development.

Research has shown that youth involvement in extracurricular activities can lead to an increase in physical, social, and cognitive outcomes. In contrast, research also revealed ways that

sport involvement can hinder youth development. Fredricks and Eccles (2008) suggest that life skills must be intentionally taught and fostered throughout sport experience. For instance, character is “taught not caught through sport” (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). However, Danish (2002), insists that life skills are considered actual skills and can be taught through demonstration, modeling and practice. Furthermore, the context that youth are involved in also need to be taken into consideration. Previous studies tend to look at sport as one entity when in fact, each sport contributes different values and structure for each program. Researchers have explored contexts in which youth are able to grow and develop, additional programs have examined ways of enhancing youth development through sport and non-sport settings. In particular, life skills have been explored in findings ways to help youth grow through extracurricular programs. Developmental researcher, Larson (2000) suggested that extracurricular activities can foster various life skills improvements. Furthermore, extracurricular activities also encourage youth development in the form of leadership. Researchers stated the importance of creating a leadership program for youth in schools. These characteristics of a leader include inspirational, organized, intelligent, charismatic, assertive and confident (Hellison, Martinek, Walsh, & Holt, 2008). Extracurricular activities and private sport clubs offer the opportunity for youth to develop these leadership characteristics that school programs may not be able to provide thus creating a PYD environment. If adolescents are exposed to PYD and a supportive environment, this can result in meeting overall well-being and take on more leadership roles. Although, adolescents rarely have an opportunity to act as a leader in a school setting, it is important to create an environment that will allow kids to develop these characteristics (Hellison, et al., 2008).

Context needs to be taken into consideration of what and how it will benefit adolescents, influences that can affect youth development (peers and adult relationships), as well as the sport

or programs the youth is involved with. Previous studies have shown the effects of intervention programs in organized school and sport settings however, there have been issues associated with PYD regarding staff and resources available. Consequently, understanding youths' perspectives in their development needs to be taken into consideration not only in extracurricular activities, but sport settings as well.

Considering the given setting and prime developmental stage in an adolescent's life, extracurricular activities involving school and sport settings are crucial for youth development. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1977), the development of an individual is influenced by his or her immediate settings. Morrissey and Werner-Wilson (2005), explain that family values can be transferred to the youth and affect the way they think about responsibility, obligations and their role for helping others. In the United States, adolescents spend more than their waking hours participating in leisure activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Thus, it is important for organized activities to ensure students needs and abilities are being facilitate to help them later in life. Additionally, the role of the community provides opportunities for youth to learn how to act in the world around them through various contexts such as PYD programs (4-H, Boys and Girls Club) (Morrissey and Werner-Wilson, 2005).

### **Life skill programs in physical education**

PYD programs include Going for the Goal (GOAL), YES, SCORE, SUPER, and Play It Smart. Each program has an overall aim to help foster positive youth development and create a way for youth to transfer their sport skills to life skills. While various studies have explored the benefits of youth participation in extracurricular activities, it is important to understand how these contexts influences youths' developmental process.

Play It Smart—Play It Smart aimed to Play It Smart, aimed to focus on transferring skills from sport and learning how to use those skills in academic setting, developing and maintaining productive relationships and gaining confidence in their abilities to function effectively. This program also aimed to work collaboratively with involve parents, school staff, and community leaders to ensure each context available to youth was consistent with the Play It Smart guidelines. Results from this pilot study testing the program revealed participants (N=252) had an increase in grade point averages, increased graduation rate, and increased involvement in community service hours (Petitpas, Van Raalte, Cornellus, & Presbrey, 2004).

SUPER—Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation program was developed by Danish in (2002) to show the relationship how the skills in sport settings can be transferred to other settings like home and school life. The three main areas in the program are: learning physical skills related to one sport, learning the life skills related to sports in general and playing some sports. The program has been used in several sport and physical activity contexts (Danish, Forneris, & Wallace, 2005).

TPSR—Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility is another youth development program used in sports to facilitate students in physical activity and relational work experience. Developed by Hellison (2003), emphasizes three main areas strong instructor-participant relationships, personal empowerment, and self-reflection to encourage responsibility, provide motivation, and respect for others.

TET—Teacher Effectiveness Training is based on Gordon's (2003) guidelines to show teachers how to handle student discipline problems effectively and humanly. The program aims to show ways to create a cooperative and productive environment, where learning is dynamic and

versatile. The program has been implemented into physical education settings (Lintunen & Kuusela, 2007).

Project SCORE (Sport Connect and Respect): Project SCORE! is a series of 10 lessons to help head and assistant coaches integrate PYD into sport. It is an online tool for coaches to deliver concepts such as: team connection, building character—respect, building character—fair play, increasing confidence—your turn, increasing confidence—recognize!, building competence—training the mind, building competence—let's train!, building competence—sport for life, and parent connection.

There are additional programs such as, GOAL and YES, teach life skills through sports. GOAL is a curriculum that combines sport and life skills training to change the lives of young girls. For instance, one of the modules focuses on communication. YES is a program that provides youth the opportunity to learn life skills through sports.

## **Athletes and PYD**

**Quantitative research.** Participation in sports and physical activity have been viewed as a means for promoting healthy development as well as providing a structured environment for youth to grow and develop. Studies have been conducted in various areas of this topic, such as goal setting, leadership and teamwork, self-esteem, and time management skills. Furthermore, Fraser-Thomas and colleagues (2005) suggested that the benefits of participating in sport have been positively correlated with adult and career achievement. When youth are provided an opportunity to participate in a structured environment, researchers have found that participation was associated with higher life satisfaction (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). Athletes' experiences in sport in general, and in particular team sports, have an influence on the way youth

develop and potentially put them at risk of having a poor sport experience. As demonstrated in previous frameworks, Holt et al. (2008) suggested that youth can acquire a range of skills, attitudes and behaviors that influence their development. For instance, one skill in particular that has had the most influence on teams include effects of team building and cohesion.

According to Eys and colleagues (2009), cohesions represents “a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives for the satisfaction of member affective needs.” Therefore, team sports are able to offer unique experiences in finding ways to enhance the effectiveness of the team. Additionally, Rovio and associates (2012) found that team building can and should take on different forms. For instance, team building can be utilized by increasing cohesion, adopting a task-orientation approach, using goal setting, or through other technique of sharing methods. Using only one of these methods will not be beneficial to the team, however it will be if several methods are used in order to reach each of the athletes' needs. For example, 22 players part of an ice hockey team were part of a season-long team building program. Players revealed that performance profiling, individual and group goal setting, and role clarification process added additional team building value (Rovio, Arvinen-Barrow, Wegand, Eskola, & Lintunen, 2012).

Youth have reported both positive and negative experiences associated to participating in sports. Gould and Carson (2010) collected data from 1,259 high school students in a longitudinal survey examining at risk behaviors, academic achievement and family characteristics. Results showed that students who were involved in extracurricular activities resulted in lower rates of involvement in risky behaviors and higher academic achievement. More specifically, those who were involved in team sports resulted in positive educational trajectories, however, also showed high rates of involvement in the risky behavior and giving in to peer pressure. Unfortunately, there

is limited research examining how a team environment can actually shape and support social development within a sport context (Bruner et al., 2014). Gould and Carson (2010) used the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) to examine developmental characteristics such as leadership and responsibility in relation to three separate contexts: structured youth activities, math/English class, and hanging out with friends. Their findings showed that youth reported greater rates of learning experiences, social skills and interpersonal relationships in extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, students involved in sports felt negative peer interactions such as peer pressure as compared to the extracurricular activities. One aspect that can have a potential effect are the relationships between coach and athlete.

Many studies have focused on the youths' perspectives of what they feel has an influence on their development. Such influences can include the coaches' teaching techniques, available resources to participate in the sport, and the environment of the sport (i.e. relationships among peers, coaches and parents and supportive or not supportive.) For example, Fry & Gano-Overway (2010), examined relationships between young soccer athletes and attitudes towards coaches, teammates, and commitment to the sport. Results showed that athletes who perceived a more caring climate, reported higher enjoyment towards the sport, positive attitudes towards coaches and teammates, and greater commitment to soccer. Although studies have been in flux with positive and negative outcomes in youth development, researchers are still trying to develop an understanding as to why athletes feel this way. Studies have tried to focus if sport participation effects youth development, but the question is how does sport participation effect youth.

**Qualitative inquiries.** Previous research has long looked at ways to enhance youth development and create skills that can be transferred to their everyday life (Camire, Trudel, Forneris, 2009). Additionally, researchers have aimed to understand the perceptions that youth

experience of what actually creates a positive or negative outcome in sport participation. The purpose of youth joining sports can vary in reasons such as, interest, fun or to be with friends (Theokas et al., 2008; Streat & Bengoechea, 2001). For instance, one participant in a qualitative study explained, “through sports, you meet other girls that share your passion, it helps you create friendships; I think it allowed me to develop...to be less shy, to socialize more, and to open myself” (Holt et al., 2016). Sport can be looked at as a gateway towards development of skills including social interaction and other life skills that can also be applied to non-sport settings, however the context in which the developmental process is presented needs to be considered.

The context that athletes experience in sport participation can have an impact on overall perceptions of the sport, such as life skill development. Petitpas et al. (2005) developed a framework that describes experiences where youth are more likely to experience PYD: an appropriate environment, caring adults, and when they are provided opportunities to acquire life skills. Gould et al. (2006) conducted a study which showed that parents who provided support (social, emotional and financial support) can have a positive influence on their child's development. Overall, studies have shown the importance of parents supporting their children's involvement in sport and developmental process (Cote, 1999). Through this context, youth are capable to excel in an environment that allows them to develop skills through sport and transfer it to their everyday life.

Researchers have focused on understanding the way development occurs in youth activities. However, it is important to understand that individual youth activities differ from team sports with acquiring necessary skills and competencies (Theokas, Danish, Hodge, & Forneris, 2008) Additionally, previous studies examine experiences that are teaching youth new skills, new attitudes or new ways of interacting with others and finding ways to apply it to the youths' overall

well-being (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009). For instance, Miles and colleagues (2016) found that three different types of life skills (initiative, respect, and teamwork/leadership) were associated with participation in sport on a high school soccer team. Gould and Carson (2008) describe sport as a vehicle for the developmental process. Studies are still being conducted to fully understand ways youth perceive their sport experience. Unfortunately, previous research has also shown negative outcomes of sport participation.

Bailey (2008) describes sport as being capable of providing a focus for developing social behaviors as well as an opportunity to make friends. It is suggested that sport can be looked at as a social network for youth. In contrast, sports do not always provide positive outcomes for youth to participate. Fraser-Thomas and Cote (2009) aimed to understand adolescents' overall positive and negative developmental experiences of participating in sport. Twenty-two swimmers partook in a qualitative study which led researchers to find which experiences had positive and negative effects on athletes perceptions. It was reported that the athletes positive developmental experiences included feeling challenged, meaningful adult and peer relationships, and a sense of community. Unfortunately, negative experiences were related to poor coach relationships, negative peer influences, parent pressure, and the overall experience of a competitive environment (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009). Similar results have been found in quantitative methods and have suggested that team environments and coach-athlete relationships have an overall impact on how an athlete can perceive his or her climate.

## **Coaches and PYD**

Previous studies of coaches have been more centered around coaching behaviors and teaching techniques. Although there are many important aspects that contributes to “the perfect

coach”, the lack of methodology has created limited understanding to coaching philosophies (Vinson, Brady, Moreland, & Judge, 2016). Moreover, coaches have been examined to see the roles they play in providing a positive experience for youth sport participants. Collins and associates (2009) interviewed ten high school football coaches who emphasized the importance of player development. Results of their study revealed that these coaches' philosophies aimed to develop players socially, psychologically, physically and academically. Furthermore, themes that emerged during interviews were how coaches believed that sport participation develop people, coaches develop people, and how environmental factors influence the development of people (Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009). Although previous studies have shown that coaches aim to develop athletes in aspects both in and outside of sport (Santos et al., 2017; Forneris, Camier, & Trudel, 2012; Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005), the relationship between the athlete and the coach can also have an effect on youths' overall development.

One of the important effects of coaching and PYD are the relationships between coach and athlete. It is suggested that coach-athlete relationships are interdependent among feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Jowett, 2007). Similar to the 5Cs model, Jowett (2007) discusses interpersonal aspects of the 3+1Cs framework (closeness, commitment, complementarity, and co-orientation) to understand coach-athlete relationships and experiences. She found that when there are high levels of commitment in sport, can result in promoting behaviors that benefit the coach-athlete relationship over time. Collins and associates (2009) suggests that it is critical that coaches develop coach-player relationships to understand the context the athlete is experiencing and be able to adapt a pedagogy that is beneficial to each athlete. Coaches are responsible for creating a supportive environment for their athletes to encourage their individual strengths as well as

developing skills, such as life skills. It is important to ensure that youth are enjoying and participating in physical activity in an environment that can facilitate PYD properly.

Many studies have shown how coaches have this crucial impact on their athletes and the relationships that they share. Unfortunately, there is little to no training on how coaches should promote PYD. To become a coach, coaches must pass an examination, Coach Education Courses (CEC), which results in being a certified coach (Santos et al., 2017). However, these programs do not require nor teach coaches how to facilitate PYD (Santos et al., 2017). Vinson and associates (2016) investigated coaching behaviors and parental perceptions of coaching approaches within youth sport. Coaches explained they were never taught how to facilitate PYD, but have taken their own experiences and observations to improve PYD through life skills. Furthermore, each coach was aware of the value of having such formal training to properly enhance youth development. In contrast, Santos and colleagues (2017) examined coaches and organizations and if they believed there would be value in PYD programs. Results should that organizations utilize a PYD program for the reason that it can result in a change in coaching pedagogies of current coaches and organizational mottos (Santos et al., 2017). While not all sport organizations and coaches are willing to learn how to appropriately facilitate youth development, other research has shown that coaches understand the influence they have over their athletes and are willing to adapt and learn how to do it properly.

There are many factors to take into consideration when trying to create an effective youth development environment and program. As stated previously, peers, adults, and communities all have an effect in making these guidelines effective that allows youth to grow. Previous studies have typically looked at athletes' perspectives of their own environment and personal development (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005; Camire, Trudel & Forneris, 2009) and their perceptions of

their coaches' behavior (Camire, Trudel & Forneris, 2009; Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010) that may influence their development. Meanwhile, other studies have examined coaches perspectives on their roles and philosophies of teachings (Santos et al., 2017; Vinson, Brady, Moreland, & Judge, 2016) and effects of coach-athlete relationships (Jowett 2007; Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009) on PYD. In sum, previous research has shown how coaches have an influence on athletes development, whether positive or negative (Collins et al., 2009; Forneris, Camire, & Trudel, 2012), Santos et al. (2017) state that there are inconsistencies in the actual implementation of coaching pedagogies have been found and that further investigation needs to be considered.

A phenomenological approach for the present study was used in order to investigate and understand how coaches enhance PYD in a rugby setting. By examining the topic qualitatively, first-hand knowledge of the coaches' perspectives of how they find ways to increase individual strengths of their athletes and create an overall positive experience for their youth. This approach provides an opportunity to understand coaches' experiences of how they create a PYD environment without any formal training and based off their personal and previous experiences as an athlete and coach. Gathering information of their lived experiences will help establish a better understanding of how coaches can influence their athletes in a particular environment as well as their views of the transferability of these learned experiences. This research can help find ways to improve coaches' training and influences over youth development.

### **Method**

The purpose of the present study is to understand the phenomenological experience of coaches' strategies to enhance PYD in sport, and in particular rugby. Therefore, the main research question is: Do you think that sport in general and in particular rugby, can provide for positive youth development? Followed by sub-questions in relation to the 5Cs: 1) What is, in your opinion,

the best way to instill competence to youth through sport and in particular rugby? 2) What do you believe is best way to instill confidence to youth in rugby? 3) In your opinion, what is the best way to teach character to youth in rugby? 4) What do you feel is best way to instill compassion to your youth athletes in rugby? 5) In your opinion what is the best way to create a connection among their peers, coaches, and parents? Followed by a transferability question to view the overall experience of sport: Overall, do you think that skills and competencies that youth acquire in sport are useful for their life?

This study was conducted by using a qualitative approach in order to investigate and understand rugby coaches' experiences in PYD. For this research, a phenomenological approach will be used in order to understand the coaches' perspective on PYD. Interview contexts will be semi-structured and based around the Five Cs model and if they believe these skills can be transferred to athletes' everyday life. This is to help coaches understand all aspects of PYD and the rationale for each skill they teach. Phenomenology is described as a subjective experience by the participant and understanding what that experience means (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorenson, 2006). For instance, multiple outcomes are suggested in the participant's experiences. The purpose of choosing this approach is to understand the coaches' thoughts, feelings, and experiences of PYD. This approach is aimed to describe and interpret experiences of the participants by determining a common theme of the experiences.

## **Participants**

Participants for this study consisted of ten youth rugby coaches who have been members of a national youth rugby academy for at least two years. All were male participants between the ages of 28 and 52 years ( $M=45.7$  years) and worked from the same organization. Coaching experience in rugby ranges between 2.5 and 25 years ( $M=13.55$  years). Levels of teams range

between under 10's to under 17's. Additionally, some coaches coached at professional levels. Criteria for participation was established for the scope of the study. First, coaching for the rugby academy for at least 2 years. Second, coaches were required to have played rugby as athletes. The sample was chosen because of the elite level of coaching and because the organization emphasizes the importance of the development of the athletes. The organization was chosen because of the high level of commitment and involvement that is required of the coaches. Being that coaches are from one organization, the values and expectations of each individual was understood. This helps to examine the phenomenon of the experience of the coaches based on organizations emphasis on encouraging development and how they have utilized their experiences to enhance PYD. Based on the recruitment requirements, 15 coaches were contacted and ten agreed to take part in the study.

### **Trustworthiness**

To ensure trustworthiness, methods were used during the planning, conducting, and analyzing processes. Guba (1981) described four main strategies when establishing trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established by attending multiple practices and observing the coaches in order to create a rapport and to give them opportunities to discuss the topic of study. Additionally, peer review helped to design and establish the interview script. Moreover, transferability was created by ensuring a sense of purpose from the coaches experiences and to their athletes. Dependability and confirmability was established by peer review on findings by another researcher. Inclusively, the processes mentioned were taking into consideration to create trustworthiness of the present study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Research was collected via Skype through a semi-structured interview. The beginning of the interview consisted of the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and a definition of the overall topic of PYD. Next, a consent regarding recording and transcribing the interview was asked and approved by participants. The interview consisted of pre-planned questions followed by sub-questions and follow-up questions based on participant's answers. The end of the interview consisted of a closing statement thanking the participant for participating in the study and permission to member-checking was confirmed. The average duration of the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Top down analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyze and interpret the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest six steps when performing data analysis. First, becoming familiar with the data by transcribing the interview verbatim followed by reading and re-listening to the recording to ensure accuracy. Notes were made in the left and right margins during reading and re-reading to mark important areas of the interview. Secondly, the researcher used various colors for initial coding to identify important concepts within the data. This was repeated several times for each interview. Overall, second different colors were used for each concept. The identified quotes then received a code for future clarification. Subsequently, searching for potential themes and gathering data relevant to each potential theme. The fourth step involved reviewing themes in relation to the data extracted from the interview. Additional themes were created, sub-themes, to elaborate on the meaning of each main theme. Peer review of emerged themes and subthemes was also examined. Finally, analyzing the data and creating a thematic map that represented themes and sub-themes to further interpret the data.

## Results

A total of 260 nonrepetitive statements were identified and extracted from the transcripts. Transcripts ranged between 13 and 18 pages. Statements were arranged according to the initial seven main themes: competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, positive youth development, and transferability. Subsequently, statements were then transferred to subthemes that were developed during the course of analysis according to each main theme. The Five Cs was the overall framework of the study which resulted in several themes, subthemes, and associated quotes from participants. Positive youth development was the overall main theme as well as examining the transferability process of learned skills in sport to non-sport settings. Additional descriptions of each theme and subtheme are provided in the following paragraph.

### Competence

Competence was described as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently; not just sport related, but social and health competence were considered as well. Additionally, Lerner et al. (2005) describe competence as a positive view of one's actions in given situations. For this main theme, nine subthemes emerged from the data: positive learning experience, initiative, establishing foundational skills, self-reflection, the "why", whole-part-whole coaching process, repetition, physical competence/overall fitness, and technical/tactical skills as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Theme	Subtheme	Indicative Quote
Competence	Positive learning experience	"You know it's a different world we live in right now and kids aren't used to failing but I think if we allow them to fail then build them back up after they fail. And actually, ask them to self-

	reflect on how they failed or why they failed and how they can—you know allow them to answer the question first and then come back and you know guide them along the way.”
Initiative	“And the nice thing about rugby is there’s no timeouts and there’s not stuff where you can stop the flow of the game...so basically when they walk on the field, it’s the game. So, they’re going to have to make decisions on the fly which if we haven’t coached them in competence then they won’t have the competence to make decisions and vice versa and the whole structure falls apart.”
Establishing foundational skills	“So, everything at the base level is all about fundamental skills. So, breaking down the game, looking at what are the fundamentals of the game, what are they key areas that are going to drive success and joy in that game and then how do we teach it?”
Self-reflection	“When you take the certain approach, you’re asking them to shift their mindset and to be self-reflective and self-assessing and being self-aware, of building that self-awareness which will carry them through life”
The “why”	“You know it kinda goes with, if they're competent and they understand the ‘why’, it gives them the confidence to actually do what they are learning and do it at a high level.”
Whole-part-whole coaching process	“It can be a whole-piece-whole, it can be a piece-piece-whole, and so there is a few different models that different coaches like to use. Obviously, it’s

	based on the age grade that you have and kind of the characters that you have on your team and as more encounters with those guys happens the more likely you are to understand what they need to become competent.”
Repetition	“Let them give it—let them try first, see how it goes, let them trial or let them error. Correct them a little bit and let them try again, let them try again, correct them a little bit more until eventually they get it down. And then you...what I call it dial it in where you get a...you rep it out, repetition, repetition, repetition so they build it into muscle memory
physical competence/overall fitness	“But the other part that develops and influences competency are all the basic things such as fitness. You cannot play the game unless you're fit. Once you're fit, it assists all of the micro skills. So, all of that goes hand in hand and it's a constant development of those micro skills.”
Technical/tactical skills	“And really challenging you to find ways to be competitive and outsmarting the other team or outsmart the other individual that you are playing.”

**Positive learning experience.** The most common subtheme found in the data focused around coaches creating a positive learning experience. This can be described as coaches encouraging athletes to make mistakes, but to learn from those mistakes. Additionally, coaches pay particularly close attention when an athlete is having a difficult time grasping a task. With this,

they address the athletes' concerns, assist with the skill, and ensure that youth are still able to have an overall positive experience.

*“We understand as coaches that there are going to be mistakes so we can either go one of two ways.” ... “, as a group you go through the process and you explain to them, ‘Ok, this is the skill we are trying to achieve and look, as we start out on the new skills, you’re probably going to make some errors, which is fine. You are in the learning process right now. But the key is your concentration level and trying to understand the skill is very important. So, if you don’t understand, you have to ask questions, alright...so that we can explain it a different way if you don’t get it the first time.’”*

**Initiative.** Athletes are encouraged to make their own decisions to become competent. Moreover, coaches agree that mistakes are part of the learning process and still encourage their athletes to try to develop decision making processes. Furthermore, there are no time-outs during a game which means that athletes need to learn to take that initiative during training for it to translate to game time. One coach mentioned, *“When we were kids, no one ever taught us how to climb a tree, we just kind of did it. We just kind of figure it out on our own with a little bit of guidance.”*

**Establishing the foundation of skills.** Coaches assist athletes when creating a set of foundational skills in rugby. This helps the athletes to create a database that encourages athletes to become competent at a task in their own way as well as allowing that database to be used for problem-solving during a game.

*And so, taking some of these athletes that are new and building the different components that set up that skill, that’s where I enjoy doing that—so taking them from the very beginning—just basic body positions into little things like changing your hand placement to have a different outcome.*

**Self-reflection.** Self-reflection is a key subtheme to assisting athletes towards becoming competent. Coaches encourage athletes to reflect on previous mistakes made. Athletes self-reflect on mistakes made during training and games to understand if how they reacted was the right or wrong way. Coaches facilitate self-reflection by asking how athletes felt about the given situation to assist them on self-reflection, rather than blatantly telling them what they did right or wrong.

*You know it's a different world we live in right now and kids aren't used to failing, but I think if we allow them to fail then build them back up after they fail, and actually ask them to self-reflect on how they failed or why they failed and how they can—you know, allow them to answer the question first and then come back and you know, guide them along the way.*

**The “Why”.** Several coaches aim to explain to athletes “why” a specific task is being done. Rather than only telling athletes what to do, they explain the reasoning behind the chore. This helps athletes to fully understand the task they are expected to do and help them to feel their purpose for being part of the team.

*Allowing the kids to understand and what I would say is understanding ‘the why’ their doing something. So, for instance, if were running a drill for passing in regards to rugby or something pass catch...or why are we—or running up to the ball with pace you know and why are the kids doing that and what—what's their purpose.*

**Whole-part-whole coaching process.** Coaches mentioned this education process on several occasions. Coaches will either observe athletes to understand what they already know and address mistakes after the skill is performed on a step-by-step basis; or, coaches explain their expectations, followed by breaking down the task into parts, and showing the whole task again.

*The coaching philosophy on that, it's called the whole-part-whole...Let them try it, let them fail, let them try and figure it out on their own, and then break it down into the little parts. And explain the little parts. And as you explain each little part let them try the whole again, and eventually all the little parts will come together to make the whole.*

**Repetition.** Many coaches addressed repetition as a way of becoming competent at a craft. Coaches will have athletes perform a specific task multiple times to increase understanding and knowledge of the game. One coach states, *“Youth sport and in particular rugby—it's the practice of repetition—you know, becoming comfortable at doing a specific—in—in rugby a specific skill set.”*

Coaches cited many examples of competence which lead to the development of several subthemes. However, only two coaches brought up the importance of physical competence/overall fitness and developing tactical skills. Physical competence was described as being physically fit and capable of outmaneuvering opponents when necessary. Technical/tactical skills represented the micro skills associated with playing the sport. Similar Holt's

(2008) findings, they suggested that youth can acquire a range of skills, attitudes and behaviors that influence their development. Although coaches may work on specific skills with the athletes, it can be proposed that more emphasis is placed on the overall developmental process of the athletes. To conclude, during analysis of competency, nine subthemes were developed based on the data. Coaches placed a high emphasis on creating an overall positive learning environment for youth to make mistakes and encourage them to learn and develop from those mistakes.

## Confidence

Confidence was the second main theme addressed during data analysis. Lerner et al. (2005) described confidence as an internal sense of overall self-worth and positive self-regard. During analysis, confidence was portrayed as a more abstract theme. As will be shown in subsequent examples, coaches had many different beliefs as to where they believe confidence comes from. Statements of confidence were not explicitly specified as opposed to other main themes that had more concrete quotes and overall understanding of the theme. Evolving subthemes included: fear of failure, coach-athlete relationship, sense of purpose, positive reinforcement, miscellaneous as.

**Table 2**

Theme	Subtheme	Indicative Quotes
Confidence	Fear of failure	“I always say, “hey, right or wrong decision, we have to do it confidently as long as you know that you gave that decision your all, we at least kind of sit back and say, well, I may have been wrong, and I will put my hand up on that, but I went down working hard or backing myself. We try and teach and address those mistakes with our players.”
	Coach-athlete relationship	“And once he understood that position better he realized that he will have more space to run um his confidence has gone off the charts as far as running to the gaps and hitting the line at pace and you can just see the game is different than from the beginning of the season. It was all just about understanding his position better and why he’s at the position and why we feel he’s best at that position and once he saw it and figured out

	<p>why then he the kid is unstoppable right now. Its been fun to watch”</p>
Sense of purpose	<p>“Give them...um... some confidence there and sometimes that confidence just words or sometimes it's sourcing out what they mean like, well I don't put in big hits, I seem to miss tackles or you'll find out and developing a plan that addresses that. Sometimes you're—it's just their self-perception, their self-doubt. But once you put a plan in place to get rid of that self-doubt, confidence comes through.”</p>
Positive reinforcement	<p>“Positive encouragement from—I mean, not pandering but positive encouragement but be real with the athletes as well. But then—and just by the improvements that they make and pointing those out to them, possible milestones like a running breaking a certain time in whatever event that they're participating in.”</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>“But the confidence side, especially when somebody is younger can come from a hundred different ways. They can be cocky, and in their mind, they think they're confident. They could be confident because they have better skills than their other players around them. So, it really depends on the mindset of the individual as far as confidence goes.”</p>

**Fear of failure.** Conroy and Elliot (2004) explain that fear of failure is described as individuals tendencies to behave in particular ways to reduce the likelihood of failure. Athletes make mistakes during training and games and coaches encourage them to learn from their mistakes

and help build their confidence back up. Additionally, coaches encourage athletes that failure is should not be looked at as a discouragement, but rather as part of the learning process. For instance, one coach addressed failure as, *“If you chase failure in preparation you'll improve your outcomes in general. I think that's the key it's not that... It's getting it's ridding your fear and fear of failure and actually embracing failure in a way.”*

**Coach-athlete relationship.** At the youth level, athletes look to their coaches for ways of improvement as well as increasing confidence. If the coach shows belief in his athletes, the athletes in turn show belief in themselves. Furthermore, when athletes realize that the coaches have their best interest, they are more confident in approaching coaches with questions for other ways of self-improvement. Establishing a relationship where the coach understands what the athlete is capable of achieving, results in the athletes' understanding of their abilities and increases confidence.

*So, I think mainly it's to put them in positions to succeed or even when he's ...he had a few games after that where he was soft and spiraled down, I still put him on the team and made sure I was preaching the confidence like, 'Hey you're in this team for a reason... A couple of bad games isn't going to change that. I still see the player you were before that' and sometimes that instills that, 'The coach has got my back so that he trusts I'm going to work through this.'*

**Sense of purpose.** Several coaches addressed giving athletes a sense of purpose encouraged individual confidence. Encouraging that youth are a valuable asset to the team encourages youth development. One example shows, *“I think that is going to build their confidence knowing that they have somebody to support them but also through them learning them being competent what they're doing of why they're doing this.”*

**Positive reinforcement.** The final named subtheme of confidence emerged as positive reinforcement. Coaches have learned that communicating with athletes when they have achieved a specific skill helps to reinforce that behavior in the future. Moreover, coaches still give positive reinforcement when athletes have not mastered a skill, but to still encourage them that they are doing well. One coach experienced, *“But I also think that confidence is also... um...you know, guarded by reinforcement. When a player does something well you’re reinforcing that, that behavior and it grows their confidence that they did something well.”*

**Miscellaneous.** One final themed that emerged during data analysis was a more abstract category. Coaches displayed different views on ways confidence is developed and ways of increasing confidence. Overall, remaining positive with the athletes and ensuring they are positive with themselves was a common theme among the statements. As stated previously, confidence was a more abstract theme. Coaches understood the concept of confidence, but each has a different way of enhancing and assisting confidence in their athletes.

*But the confidence side, especially when somebody is younger can come from a hundred different ways. They can be cocky, and in their mind, they think they’re confident. They could be confident because they have better skills than their other players around them. So, it really depends on the mindset of the individual as far as confidence goes.*

Overall, four subthemes were identified in the case of confidence followed by a miscellaneous subtheme that had different coaches' perspectives. Coaches placed a high emphasis on reducing fear of failure and addressing ways to view failure as a learning process of sport participation. Gould and Carson (2010) found students who participated in organized activity found that students had higher self-esteem, resiliency, school value, higher grades, and prosocial behavior. This coincides with recent findings that participation in sport can have an increase in

self-perceptions as well as increased interest in school value. The subtheme miscellaneous revealed different perspectives of how confidence can be viewed. For instance, one coach addressed the concept as increased experience of the sport can result in higher confidence. As stated previously, confidence was not as explicitly defined based off extracted statements. However, coaches had a common theme of remaining positive with the athletes to avoid hindering confidence levels.

### Character

The third main theme examined was character. It can be defined as what an individual does right or wrong based off societal and cultural rules (Lerner et al., 2005). Within character, ten subthemes were analyzed: morality, culture of the game, sportsmanship, leading by example, self-reflection, accountability, integrity, adversity, leadership, and respectful as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

Theme	Subtheme	Indicative Quote
Character	Morality	“And in life you’re going to win some and lose some and you have to uh—have good character to be a good winner and be a good loser and understand the difference.”
	Culture of the game	“You've probably heard the quote about it being “hooligans sports played by gentlemen.” It really kind of is us older generation coaches really embody that we teach the kids, how we play a hard game and it's very physical and you can get very angry”
	Sportsmanship	“And he would score a try and he was like very animated like football or he'd make a big hit and

	I had to pull him aside say “hey, we don't do that...you know, one, when you make a big hit you do that animation the game still playing and, in your game... and two, we have a little bit more respect for our opponents yes scored on him but guess what they're going to score on us.”
Leading by example	“Well I think the first thing is to want to lead by example and have good character yourself to be able to teach good character.”
Self-reflection	“You always let them know what can happen, you always give them ways to fix it and you are always honest about what they need to fix and usually that shows the character of a person.”
Accountability	“The kid understands the expectations then the kids start policing themselves where you don't need an adult, or a monitor watching over them if you set the expectations to a parameter, they will hold themselves to that parameter.”
Integrity	“We had a captain last year, a young kid that will go to dinner as a team and he held the door open for every member of his team and the coaches. He did not even get in the food line until everybody had gone before him. That all comes down to integrity and character and that's something nobody told that kid to do”
Adversity	“In sport particularly in certain sports—rugby one in particular—you really can't hide who you are on a rugby field, you can't pretend—the mask comes off so to speak”

Leadership	“I have seen the growth as they come in as a shy kid, not speaking much then develop their own voice”
Respectful	Character means a lot of things. It means that, you know, you're not going to quit when things aren't going your way. You're not going to pass the ball on and blame someone else. You are going to say, “hey, that was on me” instead of trying to bring someone else into it.”

**Moral.** Morality was referred to as an overall understanding between right and wrong. Additional qualities such as putting the team first, and self-second was a recurring statement throughout this subtheme. One coach described morality as, *“Teaching that that nobody is bigger than the game or bigger than the team and that everybody needs to help out”*

**Culture of the game.** The second reoccurring subtheme was reinforcing the culture of values that rugby, as a sport, represents. Coaches explain that as being a rugby player, and at times representing your country, athletes need to have general good character, respect towards one another and everyone they come in contact with, such as referees, elders, staff if they are eating out at a restaurant.

*Respect, discipline, realizing that the game is bigger than you. Realizing that you're in a very tough game and it's easy to slip and display bad behavior because you don't like the way somebody hit you or what they did to you on the ground. Composure. That is what creates the culture.*

**Sportsmanship.** Having good sportsmanship was cited several times among the coaches. The culture of the sport displays high levels of respect for teammates and opponents. Although this has slight overlap with subthemes respect and culture of the game, sportsmanship also includes empathy towards opponents and all associated with the game. This also encourages athletes to remain humble after scoring a try as well as not discouraging other players when a mistake was made.

*So, guys can take off the head of each other during the game and then they sit down after and then I've gone to—to guys after a game 'Did you meet up with that guy?' 'Did you have a moment with them' and they say, 'Yes, I did I sat down with them and had a chat with them,' and then I find that to work better with how they treat other kids.*

**Coaches leading by example.** Especially at the youth level, coaches understood that athletes are observing them and how they react reflects how an athlete can act. If coaches set standards for how youth should act, it was understood that they too, needed to represent those standards as well.

*If I want kids to treat each other with respect, shake hands, look each other in the eye...if I don't do that with the players and show that I'm genuinely interested in them, I'm genuinely—I'm respectful towards them, then everything I saw after that point is just going to fall on deaf ears.*

**Self-reflection.** This subtheme was also analyzed during the previously mentioned competence. In contrast to competence, self-reflection during character building is more centered around one's own actions. Rather than identifying a task they could have done better, they reflect on their actions during a given situation and identify if that was the right or wrong way to react. A

coach viewed self-reflection as part of overall self-improvement, *“But, no matter what, if you’re looking for that self-improvement and you have a process of self-reflection, you’re going to look for, ‘Did I respond the right way to that.’ And that’s character building.”*

**Accountability.** Coaches viewed accountability as a main source of good character. This can be described as athletes owning up to transgressions or even volunteering in the community. Athletes are held accountable for their actions as well as expectations coaches have for the team.

*You look after your own, so you look after your brothers on the team, you respect your coaches otherwise you’re going to hear from an elder saying, ‘Hey, you need to pull your head in and start thinking about someone else except for yourself.’*

**Integrity.** Integrity reveals who the athlete is and staying true to oneself through adversity. One coaches perspective portrays integrity as, *“If you talk about the goals of the game. So, there’s certain types of ways that when you play rugby, you’re expected to play with passion. But you also are always expected to display high levels of integrity.”*

**Adversity.** Few coaches addressed adversity, however it was viewed as an important asset to developing character. Many athletes come from difficult personal situations, which help define their character. Coaches create an environment where they can mold their character and allow them to develop into a self-improved individual. For instance, *“Some people would say adversity creates, builds character and I don’t say that, I think adversity reveals character. So, when you see these people under all this pressure and adversity starts to hit, their character tends to come out.”*

**Leadership.** Leadership was revealed as a less occurring subtheme, however several coaches brought up the principle of the overall concept. In relation to initiative, coaches placed an

emphasis on stepping up and helping more novice players. Additionally, team captains were appointed leadership roles to initiate practice requirements such as warm-ups and clean up during training sessions.

*A couple of these kids are upper classman and it's just telling them that a lot of these younger classmen are looking up to you for guidance on things. And if they see you slacking then they'll think it's OK. So, I want to challenge you to help them out and work with them a little bit more so then you can change your attitude by helping others.*

**Respectful.** The final subtheme emerged was being coaches expectations of players being respectful towards each other, coaches, referees, and parents regardless of the situation at hand. Respect can be defined as attitudes towards individuals associated both on and off the field and displaying that attitude in a reverent way.

*Well, I think for us the best way to teach character is to teach respect. Character means a lot of things. It means that, you know, you're not going to quit when things aren't going your way. You're not going to pass the ball on and blame someone else. You are going to say, "hey, that was on me" instead of trying to bring someone else into it.*

In contrast to the previous mentioned statement, one statement revealed a difference of perspective:

*I think you can set a standard for character that your organization or you as a coach have expectations to reach, it doesn't have to—you don't have to start out there. It's what you aspire to be. I don't think you can teach it.*

Although he does not discourage that character can be built in sport, however it is mentioned that setting a clear expectation can develop character differently, rather than teaching

it. Additionally, setting clear standards of what is expected of the athletes can help mold character into ways that benefit the individual and team.

Character was a crucial theme during data analysis. There were nine subthemes that represented the expectations coaches have for their athletes and for themselves. Morality was the most reoccurring subtheme during analysis and represented what athletes do as right and wrong. In line with Weiss (2016), recent studies also found that social aspects can be linked to the 5Cs with various social aspects. The aspects can conclude acceptance, friendship, quality and moral development. Coaches place a strong emphasis on the attitudes of the players while understanding the background that their players come from. When athletes have never had their character questioned, coaches will address ways to improve and mold their character to further enhance the individual.

### **Caring and Compassion**

The fourth main theme examined during data analysis was identified as caring and compassion: Lerner et al. (2005) describe this theme as how an athlete is sympathetic and empathetic towards others. Subthemes emerged during analysis were: empathy, coaches interested in overall well-being, brotherhood, leading by example, and coaches are protective as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

Theme	Subtheme	Indicative Quote
Caring/Compassion	Empathy	“We’ve all gone through that moment if nobody really understands what I’m thinking or going through and feeling. It can be such a unifying

	moment when you realize—when you meet somebody who has that <u>shared experience</u> ”
Coaches interested in athletes' well-being	“You know my first thing is when I'm having a conversation with them is “is everything going ok at school at home” you know is personal life and everything alright. Cause you know that could be what is changing their attitude out in rugby is because they have something going on at school or home or something is just bothering them.”
Brotherhood	“So, it definitely brings communities together and builds compassion in that way or it builds friendship of brotherhoods which promotes them to care for each other.”
Leading by example	“Treat them with respect, be polite, enjoy their sense of humor and make sure that you bring the relationships together so that they are going to want to work or play”
Coaches are protective	“But you have also got to let them know that from the beginning that you are there for them if something is not going right.”

**Empathy.** Coaches placed the highest emphasis of compassion as feeling empathy towards teammates and opponents. It was encouraged to display an understanding that each player has specific position demands and that each player has played a tough game, including the opposition.

*Compassion for your teammate is a very big part of building a team. Knowing that you can trust the people around you, that when you're in a vulnerable position on the field that they*

*will protect you. You're fighting together, you're bleeding together, it's almost going to way and you have to trust everybody around you.*

**Coach interested in athletes overall well-being.** The second most important subtheme during analysis was coaches displaying compassion towards their athletes both on and off the field. Coaches would make a point to ask athletes if their personal lives were up to par and if they were understanding their school work. Additionally, if an athlete is injured, coaches make a point to ensure athletes are both physically and mentally recovering.

*Sometimes I'll see they hit a milestone at school, they did this, and they did that, I'll always make sure and jump in there and congratulate them and tell them what a great job they've done. And even if it's completely outside of rugby, and that builds trust and it lets them know what we really do care about them.*

**Brotherhood.** In line with connection. Athletes care about their teammates and other teams as if they were brothers. Rather than coaches displaying brotherhood as a connection, they portrayed it more as support for teammates and opponents both on and off the field.

*The number one emphasis is and will always be the team, the brotherhood. Getting guys to care about each other, getting guys to be accountable to each other. And when you get guys, when you get guys on a team who literally love each other and will do anything for each other, that's—you can't—that's where the compassion comes from.*

**Leading by example.** Coaches expect their athletes to care about their athletes, however show that they too need to display that they care for their athletes and other coaches. *“They can totally tell if you are there to just pick up a pay check or if you are there and you are 100% into making them be better or to helping them work through something.”*

**Coaches are protective.** Coaches care about athletes as more than just their players. Athletes may have personal issues at home or in school and they will always support and care about their athletes to keep them safe. *“And if we see something that’s not right, we are going to jump in and we are going to step in front of it and make sure that it’s not going to harm you in any way.”*

To conclude, the main theme emerged from examining caring was empathy. Coaches aimed to encourage empathy by showing athletes, as one coach mentioned, “that no one is bigger than the game.” Relating to previous studies, psychological aspects in sport participation included positive and negative emotions as well as motivational behaviors (Weiss, 2016). Furthermore, when coaches display feelings that they care about the athletes which in turn may transcend to younger levels. While coaches helped assist with this emotion regulation by displaying empathy, athletes have more of an understanding of what their peers and teammates may be experiencing.

### Connection

The final theme of the Five Cs model is connection. It can be defined as the positive bonds formed with other individuals (Lerner et al., 2005). These connections included coaches, teammates, and parents. Subthemes included were: coach-athlete relationship, social cohesion, comradery, culture of values in rugby, common goals as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Theme	Sub-theme	Indicative Quote
Connection	Coach-athlete relationship	“Justin always – came off as – try to portray himself as one of those real tough guys. Not in a bad way but just like, "I'm a tough guy." and the fact that I was able to break through that

	and connect with him on that level that he trusted me enough, that's when – I mean...I realized...I'm like, "Wow, I made that connection with this kid." and the way that I'm doing, just getting to know them, it's worth it for both of us, for me.
Social cohesion	“it’s just a different way of looking at it of how sports bring the world together and you get guys from foreign countries, like myself, coming to America and teaching sport and now you care about another set and a different type of people; Americans different race, you know, and a different nationality”
Comradery	“What happens in sport is you really get that interaction because in that microcosm, it becomes that shared experience—you shared that certain experience, that adversity, that success, that enjoyment, that fun, with people from different backgrounds, but you have something that unites you in a different way”
Culture of values (in rugby)	“I can go anywhere in the country and call up a rugby team and they say yeah come on out we’d love to have you out here um and just being part of a rugby fraternity—so to speak—is a connection that kids develop through sport and I think um whether that be with teammates, their coaches, referees... it’s all still one big connection that will last them you know all their life.”
Common goals	“I think that um with the team um having a common goal in the beginning of what the team

wants to achieve creates a connection to the players. Whether you want to win state championships or nationals or whatever... those are some of the things that we've talked about as a team and I think we've talked about it throughout the year. you all have that connection and that same common goal I think is a good thing.”

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**Coach-athlete relationship athletes.** As identified in the previous theme in confidence, coach-athlete relationship represents the bond created between coach and athlete. In contrast to the relationship in confidence, this relationship takes into consideration of both on and off field experiences. As previously mentioned, some athletes come from unstable homes which results in them confiding in the coach for advice. Additionally, athletes are often times away from home and coaches create a connection with their athletes by helping them with concerns related to sport as well as personal issues while away from home.

*I don't treat them as they play for me. I like to—I like to build a sense that were all here together, were playing with each other, we're not playing for you. They're not playing—like I'm not the boss, I'm just kind of out there giving them direction and trying to help them. And they really appreciate that.*

**Social Cohesion.** The second subtheme emerged from given statements involved social cohesion. It can be defined as the team working together as well as creating a sense of belongingness on the team, resulting forming a bond between other players.

*Going on tour—I'll pair kids that have different economic backgrounds, different social backgrounds, um...to make them interact. Because you're most comfortable in your own peer group, it's difficult to create a team when there are clichés inside of a team.*

**Comradery.** Different than the aforementioned social cohesion, comradery represents developing a trust through learned experiences through both positive and negative involvements over a long period of time.

*This year what they have done is they have got a buddy system group and 2,3, or 4 guys will go for a run and their doing their exercises that way...outside of training” ... “this whole side of being they are doing their own stuff you can just see how that comradery builds and become better with each other and it shows in the teams and on the weekends.*

**Culture of values in rugby.** The coaches emphasized the importance of creating a bond with teammates due to potential future experiences. Overall values of rugby create a connection not only within the team, but also throughout the world. Coaches have explained their personal experiences as well as athletes experiencing different cultures.

*So, I think that's very unique to rugby and as a result it builds a bond. Rugby is also one of those sports that no matter where you go in the world, you can walk into any rugby club and because the undercurrent of the rugby culture exists, there's always a code of welcoming others and hosting them.*

**Common goals.** Several coaches mentioned the importance of creating common goals within their team. Creating a connection by setting a common goal, whether it is to reach a championship game or achieving a skill helps bring the team together. A participant mentions.

*“When the kids challenge themselves and realize they can overcome challenges in competing and realize they can work together as a team and work toward a common goal.”*

To conclude, coaches placed a high emphasis on the meaning of competence, confidence, character, caring and connection between coaches and athletes. It was found that the reoccurring theme was to enhance athletes developmental processes to encourage them to be a part of their overall development. This created subthemes such as initiative and leadership skills among the athletes as well as coaches learning to adapt to athletes needs for them to achieve these assets. Based off these findings, athletes may be the ones who choose to accept the environment they experience and learn to grow, but coaches are able to create this environment that encourages athletes to learn and develop such skills.

### **Positive youth development**

Positive youth development (PYD) was in accordance with the other main themes in order to achieve overall youth development. PYD is aimed to focus on the actual promotion of youth development. By PYD, the efforts of other youth, adults, and communities were looked at as opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities. Additionally, during data analysis, twelve subthemes were discovered: developmental process, positive learning experience, supportive environment, father-like figure, coaches adapting to athletes learning experiences, positive reinforcement, consistent/structured environment, self-awareness, sense of purpose, challenging environment, expectations of athletes, and accountability as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

Theme	Sub-theme	Indicative Quote
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Positive youth development	Developmental process	“I actually deal with the players when I involve them in decision making you know like what the practice should be like...giving them feedback on or something similar then if the practice was good”
	Positive learning experience	“The rugby is just the vehicle through what you're doing—is trying to self-improve the person through sport, that you also enjoy and have an understanding for and passion for, but it really is about life”
	Supportive environment	“I think coaches have a tendency to—the good coaches don't take themselves too seriously. They understand that it's very, very important to sort of empower the players to become better.”
	Father-like figure	“We have a lot of kids who come in who don't have father figures and so basically as coaches we are kind of their go-to male mentor and so we have to really try and bring them in and not exclude them”
	Coaches adapting to athletes learning experiences	“What this backs up to is as a team and when you're developing a team, you know these kids come from all kinds of different places and if they don't communicate or establish some kind of rapport, they'll never succeed on the field.”
	Positive reinforcement	“And so, if they do something well, you have got to let them know, ‘Hey, great job. You are really getting this.’”

Consistent/structured environment	“Being on time, putting the extra work into the gym, wearing the proper—the proper uniform at practice, paying your dues on time, helping with the team equipment, helping set up the—helping setup the field on Saturdays. Getting your work done off the field, your homework, doing the community service stuff that we do. All of those things you have to—you have to make them part of it”
Sense of purpose	“I think people always want to be part of something bigger than themselves, so you have to create an environment—where those other things you come first, where it’s about the person.”
Challenging environment	“Take him out of his comfort zone where he was able to challenge himself and it is definitely paying off.”
Expectations of athletes	“Now if you don’t set the expectation, then you never get to those parameters because you never set the expectations. So, they’re going to take the path of least resistance which is the easiest way home.”
Accountability	“You just have to make sure you reinforce, and you hold them accountable to what the standards are or the characteristics that you expect from a player on your team or from the coach in your organization.”

**Developmental process.** First, the most frequent subtheme that occurred was establishing athletes' developmental process. This can be described as the youths' involvement in their overall developmental process. Rather than coaches telling athletes what to improve, they ask the athletes to self-reflect on how they feel they did followed by what athletes feel they can do better. Coaches also listen to athletes feedback in regards to coaching techniques. If the athletes felt that they were given too much information at one time, coaches will address the concern and take a different approach.

*They're all so different. What gets through to one kid may not get through to another, the way you communicate. Some kids like the discipline, other ones like more of a collaborative approach. Others you need to talk to them and say, 'Okay, what happened? What did you see?' because you're going to get a different reaction. Some kids will shut down, other kids will get motivated depending on how you talk to them. So, it's all on a case-by-case basis.*

**Positive learning experience.** Coaches are capable of creating an overall positive experience for youth athletes as well as assisting youth with personal concerns, self-doubt. Additionally, coaches aimed to engage athletes and encourage commitment to the sport. A participant mentioned, *"I don't think once I cared about winning a game. They can see that winning is not everything. It's basically in order to play the game, you play the best you can."*

**Supportive environment.** Coaches ensured a supportive environment by encouraging youth that mistakes are part of the learning process. This assists the athletes in creating opportunities to partake in a learning environment without detrimental consequences. One coach stated, *"More encouragement than discouragement is a big thing because, you know, nobody is out there wanting to make a mistake."*

**Father-like figure.** Several coaches viewed themselves as a role-model or father-life figure to assist with youths' developmental process within rugby and in their personal lives. Coaches mentioned that a lot of their athletes come from single-family homes and without a male influence in their lives. They happily take on the role by addressing athletes not only with sport concerns, but also athletes' overall well-being as well as school work.

*Sometimes I think that you have to communicate with them and sort of guide them down the wrong right path of what respect means and if they do something wrong, you have got to explain the different between, why is it wrong and you know, what is the way it should be done.*

**Coaches adapting to athletes learning experiences.** Another key subtheme that coaches mentioned was identifying athletes different learning needs. This was observed as a key factor in the developmental process of the athletes. Coaches understand that each athlete may be at a different point in their developmental process than another athlete. Additionally, they know that athletes all learn differently and communicate differently, so they adapt to what they feel will best motivate the athlete in the best way.

*In high school, there's kids that will develop mentally quicker at this age than they will in college...they'll develop more in college than they will now, and it just depends—each kid develops differently mentally to...um...really believe in their own confidence.*

**Positive reinforcement.** As previously mentioned during confidence, positive reinforcement aims to reinforcing good behavior by communicating to an athlete what they did well. In contrast to confidence, positive reinforcement is a key factor in overall youth development. Coaches mentioned that they wanted to encourage athletes when they achieved a task and did not want to hinder their overall experience in the sport when a task was done wrong.

*Tell them, 'You're doing a good job.' Communicate with them and not with loud voices, but sort of, 'Here what you're doing great and here's what we need to work on and here's a plan for us to achieve that.'*

**Consistent/Structured environment.** Coaches have mentioned the personal lives that some athletes develop from. Keeping a structured environment helps to create a consistent environment. Coaches addressed athletes with consistent standards and expectations to encourage the behavior they may not be receiving at home.

*A lot of them have their own personal issues in their own personal lives that get played out in our situation. There was a year we had, I think it was three or four kids that had parole officers that were disruptive at practice. But, I couldn't understand why they would keep coming to practice when we probably have more discipline than they've ever experienced in their lives, but they just kept coming back to practice.*

**Self-awareness.** Coaches mentioned that they encouraged athletes to be aware of their own character, feelings, and actions. This was applied during training, games, and non-sport settings. One coach identified the concept as *"Compared to rugby and actually in life too, you offer them guidance, but you also leave room for failure, which allows them to self-reflect on whether they're doing their job or not doing their job."*

**Sense of purpose.** This subtheme was also mentioned during discussion over the previous named theme, confidence. However, coaches mentioned sense of purpose in different contexts which represented the youths' overall experience. As mentioned by one participant, *"If they feel, for lack of a better word, wanted—like you see if they are—if they feel they belong to something, they definitely—they want to emulate that everywhere else in their life, I find."*

**Challenging environment.** Coaches mentioned that, in association with confidence, youth athletes need an environment where they can grow and develop into better athletes and young men. This subtheme in particular showed where coaches would step in and encourage the athlete that they are capable of achieving a specific task even when the athletes feel they are not capable.

*I believe sports, in general, whether it's individual sport or team sport, definitely helps toughen the individual taking part. It allows them to be challenged in different ways they may not have been challenged whether it comes on to teamwork or whether it's an individual sport really testing that self-mental strength there.*

**Expectations of the athletes.** Participants were adamant at setting a group of expectations of the athletes at the beginning of the season. Each athlete is expected to treat one another with respect and have good character both on and off the field. Based off their previous experiences, coaches mentioned that if expectations were not mentioned explicitly to the athletes, the season experienced questionable actions portrayed by athletes. Coaches also believed that if these expectations were not explicitly mentioned to athletes. Additionally, coaches understand that standards were applied to each athlete, but different pathways may be adhered: *“So, you set an expectation that's a standard for everyone on the team. Now how you motivate and get people to get to that standard could vary by person, but they all are accountable for the same standard.”*

**Accountability.** The final subtheme identified was accountability. As previously mentioned in character, accountability is encouraging athletes to take responsibility of their actions. In contrast to character, accountability represented the athletes overall sport experience as well as their teammates experience.

*If you make a mistake, own it, move on from it, don't lie about it. Don't lie to—don't lie to your teammates. If you are going to be late to—if you're going to be late to training,*

*call me, call one of the coaches, tell me you're going to be there. Don't lie to us. Don't just leave. Don't just not show up because now again you're affecting—you're affecting the team in a negative way.*

Positive youth development represents the athletes positive experience and developmental process in appropriate settings. In this case, the participants' statements revealed twelve subthemes, including slight overlap with subthemes previously mentioned in the 5Cs model. Agreeing with Scales and associates (2000), the previous and current study both found that athletes who were provided settings that allowed them to excel and experience positive relationships was associated with building developmental characteristics that potentially contribute to academic success. Coaches were available to athletes who needed additional assistance whether the topic was related to rugby or not. In conclusion, coaches mainly focused on athletes developmental processes and encouraged athletes to have a voice during their development which helped to create an overall positive learning experience for the athletes.

### **Transferability**

The final theme identified was the transferability to non-sport settings. This represented life skill concepts as the purpose of Lerner and colleagues (2005) 5Cs model. Lerner and associates (2005) recognized such competencies, values, and life skills the core factor in PYD. Life skills can be described the knowledge that youth gain that can be developed in sport and applied to non-sport settings. Several subthemes that emerged were: dedication, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, healthy competitiveness, coping, leadership skills, and coachability as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7**

Theme	Subtheme	Indicative Quote
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Transferability	Dedication	“Once they have that you know determination to succeed and the game they are more determined in life and cultures”
	Intrapersonal skills	“It goes back to your confidence, so if they can have confidence with kids they don’t even know and hang out and sing songs and being silly and you know really letting their guard down. That’s really going to help them when they go out in job interviews and all it really does is set them up to be able to fail and recoup after they fail.”
	Interpersonal skills	“It’s a natural human instinct that if someone is working hard for you, you want to work hard for them or if someone is nice to you, you want to be nice to them”
	Teamwork	“It’s a natural human instinct that if someone is working hard for you, you want to work hard for them or if someone is nice to you, you want to be nice to them”
	Healthy competitiveness	“Sports mimic life, sports is just a microcosm of real life. In real life, there’s competition, there’s people who want your position, there’s people who want you to be successful, people who want you to fail.”
	Coping	“So, well if you can get that out of them in a game, especially like a high intensity a lot of contact game where you got guys with each other up and telling each other just dust it off and let's go. That definitely translates in the

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	regular life, I mean how you handle yourself in—at work even.”
Leadership skills	“I think a lot of that does come through people who play sports and you see it over and over, there are people who play sports who become good leaders”

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**Dedication.** The most reoccurring theme during analysis was dedication. It was described as being committed to the sport and ways it can translate to being committing to a task or job in life situations. It was also suggested that a key aspect in dedication was developing a passion for the task at hand. One coach described, *“Most of the kids that come out of our academy, 97% of them go on to good colleges and that I think we’re getting—our percentages are really high for graduation.”*

**Intrapersonal skills.** Coaches identified that what their athletes experience, such as self-reflection, confidence, and cognitive thinking, can be enhanced through sport and be utilized to non-sport settings. *“I think you learn more from your experiences than people telling you what you are going to experience”*

**Interpersonal skills.** The third most reoccurring theme from the data was identified was interpersonal skills. Coaches portrayed this concept as communication between two people, such as teammates, opponents, and coaches. This concept also considers non-verbal and verbal communication.

*It’s that could be about other—you’re still interacting with people and learning how to do all the things we’re talking about, but sport is such a unique way of doing it. I think it’s the*

*idea of a healthy mind, healthy body, healthy person, healthy spirit, and the sport just does it in a very unique way.*

**Healthy Competitiveness.** A few coaches focused on healthy competitiveness as a concept of learning in sport and being transferred to non-sport settings. One coach gave an example of how he has learned how to compete via sport and he translate that to his job when competing for a position. Coaches learn from their personal experiences and transcend that to their youth athletes. This also can include motivation towards achieving a goal.

*So, that's driven from my sport and I believe that's where I learned that competitive drive or at least learned how to control it. I think that's definitely something people are born with that you can teach, or you can enhance the competitiveness of someone.*

**Coping.** Many coaches cited examples that emphasized the importance of coping. Gaudreau and Blondin (2002) identified coping as the behavioral and cognitive efforts that an individual attempt to manage in a stressful situation. Given that several of the athletes come from difficult backgrounds, coaches assist athletes during training of how to manage chaotic situations.

*When you lose, the only time that it's—that it's terrible is if you sit, mope, and cry about it, and don't do anything about it. But if you lose or something happens in life where you get knocked down, time to get back up, get back to work, and hopefully it doesn't happen again. But you know what, if it happens again, get back up and keep on going. And that's exactly what sports is.*

**Leadership skills.** Coaches portrayed a lesser emphasis on the concept of being a leader. As stated in this study's previous findings, coaches aimed for focus more on the overall developmental process. Leadership can be described as learning how to take control and delegate situations to move forward in life and job situations.

*If they are a very good leader in the field they are going to be a good manager in the office so whatever skill they go into they are going to be able to understand the team work aspect of certain positions and the leadership aspects. Or at least have a better grasp of it than perhaps someone that didn't play sport.*

**Teamwork.** Coaches centered their focus around connecting as a team which in turn resulted in teamwork. Therefore, coaches did not need place as much emphasis on the actual process of teamwork due to athletes already having that connection. In contrast, teamwork is a valuable asset to consider when transferring the concept to non-sport settings. Teamwork can be defined as learning how to work with others can be strongly developed by being part of a team sport. *“So, I mean different aspects to look at it and how it helps you, but it definitely provides you in sports even participating or watching sports provides you with the team work aspect for sure.”*

**Coachability.** There was one coach that mentioned the concept of coachability. He described it as being able to take directions, and respond to what needs to get done can be applied in sport and in life situations. This concept was identified as a subtheme due to the potential effect in can have the transferability. An athlete can is able to listen and take direction may be able to apply the same principles to non-sport settings.

*And another skill that I haven't really touched on that's super important in life is coachability, being able to take directions. And when...a lot of times when people or people in general getting to a new job, getting a new line of work, they're working for someone, well, that's your boss...you have to be able to take direction.*

Overall, the transferability that youth can learn in sport can be applied to non-sport settings. Concurring with results from a recent study revealed that coaches believed that sport participation can develop people, coaches develop people, and how environmental factors influence the

development of people (Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009). Coaches aimed to develop their athletes in sport and as citizens and took into consideration the environment the athlete was associated with to tailor to his needs. Coaches have stated that athletes will ask if they can actually apply certain concepts to their school work. Furthermore, coaches not only place emphasis on the importance of what developed skills can do for life situations, athletes also seek out ways to apply to given settings.

To conclude, results showed positive youth development was the overall goal of participating coaches. Coaches encouraged athletes to participate in their developmental process in accordance with the Five Cs model. This helped to facilitate overall positive youth development by enhancing the skills and competencies learned in sport. Furthermore, athletes learned how to apply learned skills to outside of rugby. In line with Larson (2000), results recognized how extracurricular activities and organized sport participation as an important aspect to improve various life skills. Additionally, during data analysis, it was revealed that there is slight overlap in subthemes between main themes. For instance, leadership skills that can be developed in sport and team settings can be transferred to life settings such as school and home life. Coaches aim to teach skills and competencies to their athletes with the intention they will be transferred.

Furthermore, the Five Cs demonstrated each effect of their own and the importance each coach for athletes to develop. For instance, the most reoccurring theme in competence was focused on coaches creating a positive learning environment. The aim was to create an environment where athletes could learn and develop skills in a positive environment without having detrimental repercussions. Moreover, when focusing on confidence, coaches perceived ridding fear of failure and embracing failure has helped them to build confidence in their youth athletes. Subsequently, the most important concept of character was morality. Coaches believed in enhancing the

differences between right and wrong. Once this was established athletes began self-policing each other to encourage the same positive behaviors. This reflects the meaning defined behind positive youth development of ridding of unwanted behaviors and promoting positive ones. The fourth theme, caring, had a central subtheme of empathy towards teammates and opponents. Rugby can be identified as a more aggressive sport, however, at the end of the game all the players sit down and have a meal together. Finally, the major subtheme during connection was the development of coach-athlete relationship. Coaches felt that connecting with the athletes promoted all other subthemes. For instance, once athletes felt comfortable approaching coaches, this helped grow confidence as well as that connection. Moreover, each main theme had slight overlap in regards to coaching philosophy. For example, in order to increase confidence, coaches assisted with increasing competence. As a result, each main theme had an overall connection and influence in order to be fully enhanced.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of the current study was to understand the phenomenological experience of coaches' strategies to enhance PYD in sport. Previous research has identified extracurricular activities and organized sport participation as an important aspect to improve various life skills (Larson, 2000). Inclusively, results found that coaches cared more about the overall development of the athletes and ensuring that they were having positive experiences while participating in the sport. Moreover, coaches cared about athletes overall well-being both on the field and off the field. Providing this structured environment helped athletes to excel within the sport and academically. These results coincide with Fredricks and Eccles (2008) where participation in an organized activity resulted in higher grades, school value, self-esteem, prosocial behavior, and lower than expected risky behavior. Moreover, Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin (2005) identified sport as a

possible influence for youth development and Coakley (2016) found sport resulting in good character and success in life.

The Five Cs model helped to examine perspectives of the coaches in ways they enhance PYD. Coaches aimed to enhance athletes' developmental processes in accordance with the 5Cs hoping that transferability to non-sport settings would occur. Weiss (2016) found that life skills can be linked to the 5Cs with the different social, psychological and physical assets that can be transferred to non-sport settings. Coaches in the present study found that if athletes had a positive learning environment in sport, they found athletes were transferring that to their home and work life. To conclude, the 5Cs can emphasize the strengths of youth and allow for full development resulting in a high chance of maintain their well-being and remain active in themselves, family, and community (Lerner, 2005). The present study helped to understand coaches perspectives of this phenomenon and find ways to enhance PYD and transferability of learned skills without any formal training. This resulted in athletes enjoying their overall experience within the sport and according to the coaches, finding ways to apply to school and home life.

As Vinson and colleagues (2016) stated, many important aspects contribute to “the perfect coach.” However, the lack of methodology has created limited understanding to coaching philosophies. Furthermore, in line with Collins and associates (2009), the present study also found ways that coaches enhance youths' abilities socially, academically, physically, and mentally. Coaches aimed to enhance athletes social skills by taking their phones away on tours, assist with non-sport concerns, and ensure a positive learning experience where youth can develop. Moreover, Jowett (2007) states that coach-athlete relationships are interdependent among feelings, thoughts and behaviors. The present study revealed that once a rapport between coach and athlete was established, athletes were more likely to ask questions and develop confidence within the sport.

Additionally, this translated into them excelling academically by getting into prestigious colleges. In line with previous studies (Collins et al., 2009; Forneris, Camire, & Trudel, 2012; Santos et al. 2017), coaches are capable of having an influence over their athletes' development, whether positive or negative. The present study showed coaches invested in the athletes' development to help them excel into better athletes and care about their overall well-being. In summary, results in the present study supported previous findings of coaching pedagogies and added a further insight into how they teach youth development.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Several limitations were identified during the present study. First, coaches had intentions of enhancing youths' PYD through sport with hopes that it would transfer to non-sport contexts. Coaches stated that athletes would approach them with questions of school work and home life which implies that athletes are attempting to apply the transferability of the skills. However, whether athletes are actually transferring their skills to school and home life was not investigated. Future research can examine coaches perspectives of youth development as well as interviewing athletes to compare experiences. Second, coaches were all members of a national youth rugby team. This could have influenced on potential values the coaches hold. A broader research, such as levels of coaching in rugby, should be investigated for further experiences.

Additionally, coaches stated that many athletes come from a difficult background, however, athletes full demographics and socioeconomic status were not investigated. This could have also had a potential influence on youth development. While Fredrick and Eccles (2008) found that participation in extracurricular activities and organized sport participation resulted in lower risky behavior, Gould and Carson (2010) found youth who participated in team sports experienced

higher risky behavior and peer pressure. Examining coaches perspectives can help conclude if they have an impact on the risky behaviors. Regarding PYD in youth sports, it's also important to consider all those who are involved with athletes' development. Additional research should consider influences of parents, coaches, and communities as well as the influence the athlete has on themselves.

### **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to add to the limited research regarding coaches perspectives of PYD in regards to the Five Cs as well as contributing to a better understanding of rugby as a sport. Due to lack of formal training when becoming a coach, this study can help the development of additional programs in teaching coaches about PYD. Each of the Five Cs helped facilitate the process of positive youth development. Once coach found ways to enhance competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection, youth were able to enjoy their overall experience of playing rugby and remained committed to the sport. Results found that coaches cared more about the overall development of the athletes and ensuring that they were having positive experiences while participating in the sport. Providing this structured environment helped athletes to excel within the sport and academically. The phenomenological approach helped to identify that the coaches impact had a role on athletes perceptions of the sport.

In summary, the current study can be applied to future research and creation of programs to help coaches become aware and knowledgeable of their influences on PYD. Results suggest that coaches are capable of creating an environment that encourage youth to learn from their mistakes and grow into better athletes and respectful young men. Furthermore, considering that some athletes came from a difficult background, coaches accepted the role of being the male-influencer to guide athletes down the right path. This helped athletes to gain respect and connect

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with their coaches due to the care of their overall well-being. Broadening future research can contribute to an overall understanding of both coaches, parents, communities, and athletes' perspectives in their overall developmental processes.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

Hello, my name is Madison Farnsworth and I am the researcher conducting this study. I appreciate your participation. With your consent, would it be alright if I record this call for my personal records and to help transcribe the interview to help analyze my findings from this interview?

The purpose of this interview is to understand your perspective as a rugby coach regarding positive youth development through sport and in particular through rugby. By positive youth development we mean the efforts of other youth, adults, and communities provided as opportunities for youth to enhance their interest's, skills, and abilities. Positive youth development focuses on ways to enhance preferred behaviors while preventing negative behaviors. It is also grounded on the concept that youngsters are capable to succeed when their individual strengths are enhanced in a supportive environment. Please feel free to ask any additional questions if you need any clarification. Do you have any questions before we get started?

PYD is aimed to focus on the actual promotion of youth development. This is done by enhancing their strengths, such as leadership and confidence, through physical activity. PYD programs finds ways to help youth achieve what they are capable of and promote positive behavior to keep them involved in physical activity in the future. PYD also considers the influence of teammates, parents, and coaches and the effects they have on youth's behaviors.

- Do you think that sport in general and in particular rugby, can provide for positive youth development?
  - In what ways?

- Can you tell me a bit more about...
- Can you provide an example of...

Researchers have broken down PYD in five components namely: competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection. I would like to ask you whether sport and in particular rugby can provide for each of the components of positive youth development. I will go over a brief definition of each before I ask you questions about each one.

- First, I would like to ask you about competence. Competence is defined as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently; not just sport related, but social and health competence.
  - What is, in your opinion, the best way to instill competence to youngsters through sport and in particular rugby?
    - Can you tell me a bit more about...
    - Can you provide an example of...
  - Do you think that competence developed in sport and in particular in rugby generalize to other areas of life?
- Second, I would like to ask you about confidence. This is defined as your athlete's belief in one-self and one's abilities.
  - What do you believe is the best way to instill confidence in youth in rugby?
    - Can you tell me more about...
    - Can you provide an example of...
  - Do you think that confidence is developed in sport, and in particular in rugby, generalize to other areas of life?

- Next, I would like to talk to you about character. Character is defined as what your athlete's do right or a group of qualities that make up your athlete.
  - In your opinion, what is the best way to teach character to youth in rugby?
    - Can you tell me a bit more about...
    - Can you provide an example of...
  - Do you think that character is developed in sport, and in particular in rugby, generalize to other areas of life?
- The fourth C is caring/compassion. This can be described as how athletes are sympathetic towards other athletes.
  - What do you feel is the best way to instill compassion to your youth athletes in rugby?
    - Can you tell me a bit more about..
    - Can you provide an example of....
  - Do you think that compassion is developed in sport, and in particular in rugby, generalize to other areas of life?
- Lastly, I would like to ask you about Connection. Connection is defined as working collaboratively with coaches, teammates, parents, etc.
  - In your opinion, what is the best way to create a connection with the athletes among their peers, coaches, parents?
    - Can you tell me a bit more about..
    - Can you provide an example of...
  - Do you think that connection is developed in sport, and in particular in rugby, generalize to other areas of life?

### Life skills:

- Overall, do you think that skills and competencies that youngsters acquire in sport are useful for their life?
  - In what way?
  - Can you tell me a bit more?
  - Can you give me an example?
- That is the conclusion of my interview questions. Thank you so much for your time. Is there anything else you would like to add?
- As stated previously, I recorded this call and I will be transcribing the interview for my personal records. Would you like me to send you the transcription of the interview so that you can review the accuracy of the interview?
- I appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any further questions or would like any additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to call/email me. Thank you for your time.