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Human Kinetics
ORIGINAL RESEARCH

An Individualized Coach Development Program for Older Adult Player-Coaches in a Masters Football League in Colombia

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Coaches contribute toward helping older adults achieve quality sport experiences, but there are few resources grounded in adult-oriented psychosocial approaches from which they can learn. The purpose of this Participatory Action Research study was to facilitate a personalized professional development program for a Colombian football (soccer) league of older adult men using an evidence-based self-assessment tool for Masters coaches. Data were collected from 23 coaches, who were also players in the league, via interviews, workshops, and observations. Data were analyzed via reflective thematic analysis that aimed to understand coaches' perceptions of how they learned through the workshops and how they implemented what they learned into their coaching. Findings indicate that personalized professional development enabled better structured leadership in the league, creating Quality Masters Sport Experiences.

Keywords: older adult football, Masters sport, Adult-Oriented Sport Coaching Survey, developing country, participatory action

Masters Athletes (MAs) are adult sport participants training and registered in sport, typically aged 35 years and older (Young, 2011). These sport participants have been identified as one of the fastest growing sport cohorts worldwide (Baker, Horton, & Weir, 2010; Dionigi, 2016; Weir et al., 2010; Young, 2011). Creating Quality Masters Sport Experiences (QMSE) has been identified as key to recruiting and retaining MAs (Young et al., 2021). The Hallmarks for a QMSE include meaningful competition, testing oneself, sport mastery, quality relationships, fun and fitness, intellectual stimulation, and feelings of validation and empowerment. Research recognizes the potential of coaches to foster QMSE (e.g., Callary et al., 2015a, 2015b; Weir et al., 2010; Young et al., 2014; 2021), but research is needed to understand how coaches learn to coach MAs in a way in which they can create and nurture QMSE. This study explores how workshops for coaches in the context of football can have an influence on their leadership of that physical activity in terms of their psychological and social approaches to coaching older adults in football.

Turning to the research on Masters coaches, Callary, Rathwell, and Young (2017) linked effective Masters coaching approaches to andragogical principles, stemming from adult learning (Knowles et al., 2012). Understanding andragogical principles (e.g., the need for the learner to know why they are learning, having intrinsic motivation to learn, assessing their prior knowledge as part of the learning process, being a self-directed learner, and taking into account the learner's orientation and readiness to learn) empowers and transfers responsibility to the learner for their development, while taking into account their goals, and purpose for learning (Knowles et al., 2012). Advancing that work, MacLellan et al. (2019) further established the Andragogy in Sport model, which advocates for coaches to think through how they cater their approaches to take into consideration adults' individuality in terms of their prior experiences, self-directedness, bidirectional communication, and varied motives (MacLellan et al., 2019). Callary, Young, and Rathwell (2017) developed the Adult Coaching Catalogue of best practices based on their qualitative studies with MAs and coaches, grounded in the Andragogy in Sport model (MacLellan et al., 2019).

From these key studies, Rathwell et al. (2020) validated the psychometric properties of the Adult-Oriented Sport Coaching Survey (AOSCS), a self-assessment tool derived from the Adult Coaching Catalogue. The AOSCS helps coaches assess how they are currently coaching and what is their orientation toward the MAs that they coach. The 22-item, five-factor structure of the AOSCS (Rathwell et al., 2020) includes the frequency with which a coach feels that they (a) consider the individuality of their athletes, as measured by their approach toward organizing, planning, and giving practices based on MAs' motives and experience; (b) frame learning situations using self-discovery, modeling, problem-based scenarios, or assessment; (c) impart coaching knowledge by sharing relevant experience from their own athletic background, coaching knowledge, and development; (d) respect preferences for effort, accountability, and feedback in adapting to their MAs; and (e) create personalized programming by taking into consideration MAs' needs at practices, competitions, season programming, and support at competitions. The tool has been associated with a QMSE, which means that when coaches use adult-oriented practices identified in the AOSCS, they also have strong coach–athlete relationships and create enhanced Masters sport experiences (Motz et al., 2021). The AOSCS has never before been used in coaches' professional development workshops; however, preliminary use of the Adult Coaching Catalogue (Callary, Young, & Rathwell, 2017) helped coaches to identify their strengths and areas for improvement in online and in-person workshops (Callary & Gearity, 2021). Coach development specifically aimed at developing interpersonal and psychosocial adult-oriented approaches is scarce (Belalcazar & Callary, 2018), and yet it is important for coaches and MAs that they have the knowledge and ability to coach effectively in Masters sport (Callary et al., 2018).

A unique feature of Masters sport is that the coach may also be a MA themself, either on the same team or competing against the MAs that they simultaneously coach. Callary et al. (2015b) found

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that MAs generally liked it when their coaches were also athletes because it lent credibility to their coaching. However, coaches from Callary, Rathwell, and Young's (2017) study had mixed perspectives: while some saw benefits to being a MA and competing in the same competitions as their athletes, others said this impeded their ability to coach. This "player-coach" phenomenon is underresearched, but may be more common in adult sport than currently acknowledged. Rationally, those who coach Masters teams need to consider how to create relationships with and support their MAs' psychological and social needs through adult-oriented coaching practices (Callary et al., 2021). For player-coaches in particular, this consideration may be especially important due to their dual role within the team. Little attention is given to the development of player-coaches in coach education research, but for some Masters sport leagues, the player-coach could have a big influence on the team's QMSE.

In Colombia, a developing country with a lower gross domestic product (World Bank, 2021), MAs may not fit the typical profile from the research: affluent, educated, with time for competitive sport, and money to pay for coaches (Breuer et al., 2010; Dionigi & Litchfield, 2018; Sequeira et al., 2012; Stempel, 2005). Thus, in contexts where Masters sport is not well funded or affordable, volunteer player-coaches may be prevalent. Belalcazar and Callary (2021) explored the player-coach phenomenon in Colombia, introducing the term Masters Player-Coach (MPC) that participating coaches felt was indicative of their roles. Belalcazar and Callary (2021) described an MPC as a player that engages in peer coaching, preparing, and judiciously directing their team on-and-off the field, taking input from everyone to implement informed decision making, working alongside teammates to improve sport performance, engaging in administrative responsibilities, leading and delegating, building relationships, and supporting team members' personal development. In sum, the MPCs wanted and needed information about coaching in the Masters context to adequately provide a QMSE for their teams, as separate from traditional coaching approaches that they saw in youth and high-performance contexts.

Thus, the purpose of this Participatory Action Research (PAR) study was to facilitate a personalized professional development program based on what older adult football player-coaches aged 60–70+ in Colombia wanted to learn. We used the items of the AOSCS as a framework to guide discussions and ask coaches to reflect on each item in the context of their own coaching. This allowed coaches to express how they learned adult-oriented coaching approaches and report how they implemented what they learned into their coaching.

Methods

This PAR takes a social constructionist epistemology with a relativist ontology in which knowledge is assumed to be coconstructed through the exchange of information and interactions between the participants and the researchers (Crotty, 1998). Specifically, knowledge pertains to coaches' perceptions of how they learned and how they reported implementing what they learned into their coaching, which was developed through the negotiation and transaction of information between us, as the researchers, and the coaches taking part in this study, all within a social context (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Value is placed on participants' perspectives, and the coconstruction of knowledge with the researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Sparkes & Smith, 2014); therefore, behavior changes discussed as a result of the PAR are based on the participants' perceptions of their changes.

The Masters Context of ASOFAMTOL

The sociocultural environment where Masters sport exists is shaped by the sport environment and the different people (like family, other MAs, and coaches) that impact MAs' involvement, sport continuation, and ability to overcome obstacles (Dionigi et al., 2012; Lim et al., 2011). A contextual understanding of the Asociación de Futbolistas Adultos Mayores del Tolima (ASOFAMTOL; in English: Masters Athletes' Football Association of Tolima) was formed from current and past records, text, and digital archives. ASOFAMTOL is a competitive, high-intensity, self-reliant, stand-alone male adult football league in Ibagué, Colombia, that aims to keep older adults active and improve their well-being through participation in weekly Saturday games over the course of two 6-month seasons each year. In 2020, the ASOFAMTOL had 24 teams made up of 490+ members in three age categories: 60–64, 65–69, and 70+, who play at two different field locations in the city. ASOFAMTOL members pride themselves in the association's values of positive personal, team, and community development and a collaborative drive for the empowerment of older adults participating in lifelong sport, outlined in detail in the Statutes Book (ASOFAMTOL, 2015). Despite its large membership, the league receives no funding support for coach development (ASOFAMTOL President, personal communication, January 19, 2019). There are also no formal, paid coaching positions; however, over time, MPCs emerged (Belalcazar & Callary, 2021). Thus, the ASOFAMTOL was interested in a collaborative research project with us that would help identify coaching needs and provide professional development opportunities for the MPCs.

Participatory Action Research

A PAR methodology was employed because PAR focuses on relationships between social and educational theory and practice (Schinke & Blodgett, 2016). PAR supports researchers' understanding of issues, together with individuals and communities, for communities to thrive, and thus is commensurate with the purpose of this research study. Using this methodology, researchers consider intersubjective points of view, and the findings are cocreated from experiential, propositional, and practical knowing (Baldwin, 2012; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Community-based PAR is a democratic endeavor that is continuously formed through the facilitation of research practices transformed to support practical issues, thus developing a systematic and contextualized approach to learning and to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In the long term, this community-based PAR bridges research to practice to successfully implement a personalized coach education program through participant interviews, observations of games, and coach education scaffolding workshops.

As a PAR, it is important to also describe the researchers' participation. Below, we refer to ourselves in the third person when needing to facilitate an understanding of the differences in each of our roles. The primary investigator (PI) is a native of Ibagué, Colombia that immigrated to Canada at 11 years old. She is fluent in Spanish and English which facilitated her data collection and, as a student, had knowledge of coach education. However, this was her first-time facilitating coach education programming. She had some insider status because she was born in Colombia, but her insight into the Masters sport context in Ibagué was limited. The second author is a player in ASOFAMTOL who facilitated the PAR through his connections between the researchers and the leagues' administrators, and played a part as an active participant in the workshops. The third author and coach developer is Canadian

and had a working ability to speak, read, and understand Spanish. She has a research program in coach development and Masters sport, and has been facilitating coach development for 16 years. She mentored the first author through this PAR, cofacilitated one workshop, and observed a full Saturday game day. She was involved in all aspects of data analysis and write-up.

The partnership with ASOFAMTOL began informally when the PI started discussions with the second author, including attending games, and connecting with the sport community. At this time, the PI was also involved in supporting the creation of a documentary about the league (Belalcazar, 2018). More formally, from January to September 2019, the PI developed a contextual understanding of the ASOFAMTOL from current and past records, text, and digital archives. She then held conversations with the national and regional association leaders to get information on the development of the association and the MPCs' development in this league. The interview guide for the PAR was subsequently pilot tested with these administrators prior to conducting participant interviews.

Participants

After partnering with the ASOFAMTOL, participants were recruited by using convenience sampling from the 24 teams. We recruited in-person by being invited to attend a preseason ASOFAMTOL board meeting, followed by attending the first Saturday games of the year to speak with coaches and team leaders, and lastly, at coach/player socials. The primary criteria for inclusion in the study were for participants to be ASOFAMTOL members, and be team leaders in some capacity (e.g., MPC, team captain, coach). We sought MPCs from across all three age categories within the ASOFAMTOL. The 23 participants in this study were composed of 18 MPCs, three team leaders, and two coaches who were all members of ASOFAMTOL. The team leaders included a team owner and two assistant coaches/captains of teams. The two coaches were women, and while they did not play in the league, they were members in ASOFAMTOL who had important coaching roles. Participation captured an overall involvement from 75% of the leagues' teams (see Table 1).

Table 1 Participant Distribution and Research Participation

			Workshop			
Pseudonym	Type	Interview	1	2	3	4
Lucas	Team leader	✓	—	—	—	—
Andres	Team leader	✓	—	—	—	—
Teddy	Team leader	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monica	Coach	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Sandra	Coach	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Juan	Player-coach	✓	—	—	—	—
Fabian	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alejandro	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jose	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diego	Player-coach	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dario	Player-coach	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sergio	Player-coach	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carlos	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Francisco	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Manuel	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
David	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Daniel	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marco	Player-coach	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edison	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Santiago	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pablo	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sebastian	Player-coach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ericson	Player-coach	—	✓	✓	✓	✓

Data Collection

Data were collected via three methods: (a) interviews with participants to determine their contexts, current knowledge of coaching and leading adults in sport, and their learning needs; (b) in-field observations for eight Saturdays, comprising 31 games and practices; and (c) four two-and-a-half hour workshops, including written or audio-recorded reflections from the participants during and after each workshop (see Figure 1). Participants chose how much they wanted to engage with the research: 15 participants agreed to be interviewed. Twenty participants took part in the workshops. All participants agreed to be observed. Ethics approval was obtained from both the researchers' institution and ASOFAMTOL. Prior to starting the study, written consent was received to photograph, audio, and video record all aspects of the study, and pseudonyms were provided for all participants.

Interviews

We interviewed 15 participants to capture MPCs' learning profiles, needs, and wants, and to gain an understanding of how to shape the subsequent workshops as part of the month-long personalized coach education program. The interview guide was composed of open-ended questions in relation to the MPC's biography, knowledge, and values regarding coaching adults in football, and their professional development activities. Each interview took between 60 and 120 min. In addition, participants were encouraged to share photos, images, certificates, newspaper articles, awards, and memorabilia of their lifelong sport experience and ASOFAMTOL sport involvement to stimulate discussion and deepen the conversations. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and were audio and video recorded. They were transcribed verbatim in Spanish, then translated into English and subsequently analyzed.

Observations

When using constructionist epistemological understandings in observational data collection methods, the use of unstructured observation allows researchers to observe the emphasis people place on their actions, and record observations and thoughts that may come up while observing (Grey, 2014; Jorgensen, 1989). Every Saturday for 8 weeks, the PI attended and observed games and the surrounding environment beginning 1 week prior to the first workshop. The second author played every Saturday, and the third author attended and observed one full Saturday. Saturday games were held at two different locations across the city; the main location included two fields, each with five 2-hr time slots, and the other location had one field with two 2-hr time slots. This meant that every Saturday, 24 teams played throughout the day, which included a 60-min practice/warm-up (on side fields, not counted

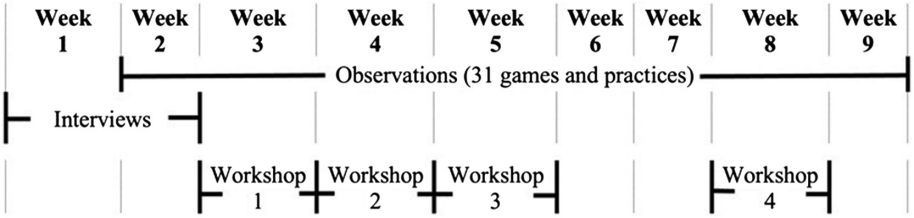

Figure 1 — Data collection timeline.

within the 2-hr game time), and 90-min game (two periods), followed by a "third period" social time (on the sidelines) in which the MPC could take time to debrief with his/her team and speak one-on-one with the players. Thirty-one practices and games were observed over 2 months where field notes, photos, and video evidence of the dynamics of the teams, players, MPCs, and games were recorded. Between workshops, written field notes focused on whether participants were using the information learned in the previous workshop, and, if so, how. The observations were done before, during, and after practices and games.

Workshops

Based on the information provided from the interviews and observations, we conducted four workshops over the course of 1 month. Each workshop was two-and-a-half hours long. The first three workshops were run once per week in a classroom, while the last workshop was at a football field, 2 weeks after the third workshop. Workshops were held on Monday afternoons. The workshop dates permitted time for participants to reflect and implement the on-field homework at the Saturday game, and to debrief at the following Monday's workshop. Written or audio reflections were submitted privately via email, handwritten, or in-person.

Workshop One (W1). The W1 was held after the league's second Saturday games to allow time for the MPCs to develop team cohesion before starting the program. The workshop began by introducing the coach developer (PI) and the action research study, including background information such as the andragogy in sport model. The participants then engaged in discussions to further develop an understanding of what MPCs knew, and what they wanted to know more about regarding coaching MAs. This provided information for planning subsequent workshops to provide participants with their preferred learning strategies (e.g., discussion rather than lecture/writing) and content (what they wanted to learn). This enabled a custom experience for upcoming workshops, ensuring learning experiences were tailored to align with participants' interests (Duarte et al., 2020).

Workshop Two (W2). The W2 was cofacilitated by the third author and PI. Prior to the workshop, the Spanish translation of the AOSCS (Rathwell et al., 2020) was crafted based on the third author and PI's in-depth understanding of the items and the meaning of words in the Spanish language. These were reexamined with the second author and consequently reviewed by an independent translator and any changes made were then rereviewed by the research team before feeling confident that the meaning of the items was fully captured through the translation. For W2, after an introduction, learning points from W1 were reviewed, and research on coaching MAs was presented. The participants then completed the Spanish translation of the AOSCS (Rathwell et al., 2020). Once completed individually, the participants discussed the items, including how they did or did not use the items. For homework, they were asked to reflect on what items they used and to apply two to three items of their choice before, during, or after their games. Homework was to be submitted by the following Monday. Their AOSCS responses were collected. Between workshops, the researchers collated the participants' AOSCS results for the five themes. They were provided their personal AOSCS results before the next workshop.

Workshop Three (W3). The participants were asked to bring their AOSCS results (if they forgot, the PI provided their results again). The previous workshop was reviewed, and participants discussed their results and what they meant to them. The participants were asked to form groups of two or three, while ensuring that no one from their group was from the same age category or team. In groups, they chose an item from the AOSCS that they wanted to collectively work on, and they planned a microsession (20 min) using the item that they could present at the next workshop.

Workshop Four (W4). The W4 was held 2 weeks after W3, allowing time for collaboration and for MPCs to implement strategies with their teams. This was an in-field workshop held at one of the football fields ASOFAMTOL usually rents on Saturdays. The workshop was designed to be led by the participants as a microcoaching facilitation (Walters et al., 2020), starting with the agenda for the day or "pre-game talk" as they titled it. They changed into their sportswear and one MPC conducted a group warm-up. Each group then presented their microcoaching facilitation, in turn. These sessions included activities and strategies that could be used in future games and practices.

Data Analysis

To have a comprehensive review of the data, interviews were transcribed verbatim in Spanish, then translated into English and entered into the qualitative data software package, ATLAS.tiv8 (Atlas.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, 2020). Field notes from observations, and participant reflections of workshops were also translated into English and followed the same coding as the interviews. We also used video recordings from games, photos from workshops, and any additional documentation (i.e., participants' AOSCS results) to stimulate discussions regarding themes, and to recall further details about past discussions and information shared by participants.

We began the data analysis after the interviews and W1 to analyze what the MPCs wanted to learn. In total, we coded 16 topics that the MPCs were interested in learning. We utilized reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2020), including six-steps for data engagement, coding, topic, and theme creation (Braun et al., 2016). The 16 topics were arranged into five themes

Table 2 MPCs Interest in and Acquired Knowledge: What They Wanted to Learn

What MPCs wanted to learn	
Theme	**Subthemes**
Andragogical strategies	• Recognizing how to individualize instruction
	• Bidirectional communication
	• Holding MAs' accountable to and strengthening sport values
	• Managing conflict
Psychological strategies	• Understanding how their players process information
	• Understanding the feelings of MAs
	• Motivating MAs to be encouraged in play, stay engaged, and positive

Note. MAs = Masters Athlete; MPCs = Masters Player-Coach.

that included instructional strategies of how to coach adults, psychology, interpersonal knowledge, soccer technique and tactics, physiology, and administration. The themes were then reviewed to determine the researchers' abilities to facilitate these topics in the subsequent workshops, and if so, how to best proceed. The second author acted as a critical friend (Smith & McGanon, 2018) to help combine themes and group them according to possible thematic topics in the workshops based on MPCs' interests and the researchers' expertise. Thus, through back-and-forth reflexive dialogue, we reduced the themes to two high-order themes with seven subthemes in which we could deliver content from established research and provide the opportunity for the MPCs to learn from one another (see Table 2). These themes encompassed andragogical strategies and psychological strategies. After W2–W4, the data from the workshops and observations were then deductively analyzed in relation to the two themes outlined above. In particular, quotes were coded and imported into Atlas.Tiv8 that enabled us to critically appraise (a) how the MPCs said they learned the content throughout the PAR from each theme identified above, and then (b) how the MPCs reported implementing this information into their coaching approaches.

Results

For each theme, we firstly describe *what* the MPCs indicated they wanted to learn as noted in their interviews and in W1. We then explain *how* the MPCs perceived that topic was learned through the workshops. Finally, through observations and MPCs' reflections, we indicate how their learning was perceived to be implemented into their coaching.

Andragogical Strategies

Participants indicated they wanted to know more about instructional strategies geared toward coaching other adults. The subthemes that modeled the andragogical strategies include: (a) recognizing how to individualize instruction, (b) bidirectional communication, (c) holding MAs' accountable to and strengthening sport values, and (d) managing conflict.

Recognizing How to Individualize Instruction

During interviews, many MPCs said their players should "check individuality at the door," because during the game they should play as a collective. Not recognizing that individualized instruction could benefit their MAs' performance, MPCs encouraged team unity over a focus on individual improvement. This could be seen in early observations of the games when one coach would shout at the defense generally what to do without giving individual feedback or instruction. After we shared a brief review of andragogy as it may be applied to Masters sport during W1, including the importance of recognizing individual's previous experiences in helping them to learn, the participants' submitted W1 reflections asking for guidance and information on how and why MPCs should be individualizing instruction.

In W2, the AOSCS was discussed, including the theme *Considering the Individuality of Athletes* by tailoring programming on an individual basis, considering MAs' needs and making adjustments that support those needs. One coach said, "I realized that sharing with my players how I modified the schedule to their needs contributes to team integration and hearing them individually. That builds more unity than just telling them to play as a team" (Daniel).

In the last two workshops, MPCs identified strategies to better individualize instructions. In W4, Carlos pointed out:

> On game days, I gather everyone together earlier now, adapting the schedule for those who need it. We also changed our warm-up to include modified exercises for those with health needs that require a longer, slower warm-up to gradually increase intensity for the game.

Ericson wrote in his reflection, "Rather than everyone doing the same thing all the time, I am aware about giving direct, effective tactics to improve individual performance. They practice it during warm-up, we reevaluate individually, and put it into play on the field."

Bidirectional Communication

The MPCs described their communication abilities ranging from feeling comfortable, but unsure if effective, to feeling they were not doing a good job. The MPCs confessed that, at times they did not bother to provide information because they felt it would be too directive, which they thought was inappropriate toward adults who were their peers and friends. "When I want to direct or suggest something to my players, I often back-out to avoid being perceived as a bossy, know-it-all" shared Fabian in a group discussion during W1. Nonetheless, the MPCs recognized that, as the leaders, they needed to figure out a way to transmit information to their players in a respectful way in which they were heard, understood, and followed. MPCs also noted, and we observed, that they received many comments from teammates, other MPCs, audience members, and even the opposing team. They found the input overwhelming. "It's hard to keep up with what everyone says I should do and what

I think I need to do. There are times it gets confusing, frustrating and I may make a wrong decision that then causes negative reactions" (Francisco, W1).

In W2 and W3, participants worked on *Framing Learning Situations* and *Respecting Preferences for Effort, Accountability, and Feedback*. These themes gave MPCs new perspectives in communication. They learned that it was normal for adult players to offer their personal preferences and experience outside of sport for in-sport activities. Thus, they learned how to receive player input to guide their decision making:

> My game strategy tended to be based on my personal experience. Now I am conscious to also listen to my players, taking their comments and coming to a consensus. Then during the game, according to how it is going, we review the errors or failures and make changes in the strategy. (Diego, W3)

Santiago also noted: "I realized that we are not stubborn, we just want to hear information in a different tone or have the opportunity to discover the reason for something on our own."

For W4, MPCs recognized the importance of reassuring autonomy and engaging in bidirectional communication. They showed this in their W4 activity: Alejandro, Edison, and Sergio paired MPCs together that played in the same positions, and then asked the MPC pairs to share what they each wanted to improve. Doing so emphasized the importance of giving individuals control, and the participants could adapt this within their teams to follow up on what players identified. Sergio explained that he found his MAs more open to hearing feedback this way.

Based on game observations toward the end of the workshops, it was apparent that the MPCs showed new confidence; before, most sat on the bench, taking in the chaos of the players' chatter, and exposed to the audience's opinions. After workshop participation, the MPCs moved to the sidelines, communicating with their players on the field, hearing their comments, and making decisions in a more focused way. Manuel wrote:

> In a game, there can be ten people telling me what to do, but ultimately, because I now know more about my players, I can make better choices. I have developed better judgement of situations and I can make more fitting decisions for them and the game.

The MPCs also appeared confident of their choices with reduced negative outcomes and disapproving feedback from the bench and audience.

Holding MAs' Accountable to and Strengthening Sport Values

The MPCs acknowledged the importance of sharing common team values; however, they also noted that sometimes players did not arrive on time, seemed to lack care about team cohesiveness, and some showed disrespectful behaviors. In W1, the participants discussed the importance of behaving according to positive values. Sergio pointed out that, "There are players that only care about winning. If they do not win, they get angry, treat people badly, make their teammates' surroundings unbearable. Sometimes they even leave midgame angry, swearing." The MPCs wanted to learn about how to strengthen values of commitment, solidarity, respect, discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and integrity. They knew that they were coaching adults with varied life experiences and motives and wanted to know how to strengthen and hold their MAs' accountable to positive sport values.

In W3, the participants referred to the Statutes Book which outlined values that the association held. They discussed valuing players as "good persons," a characteristic deemed more important than being skilled at football. Pablo said, "We are all good people; we need our players to be responsible, have integrity, solidarity, strong commitment, and be cooperative."

In W4, a group of MPCs shared a tactic on instilling values that worked for them with their own teams. The MPCs asked their players to create a verbal agreement highlighting the positive behavior each would contribute, then the group identified negative behaviors they wanted to change and contributed suggestions on how to make that change. Sebastian explained,

> People won't always do what you expect, but we now know that if we ask, our players feel included, and they gain a sense of autonomy, and belonging. This agreement is a strategy to help inform our players about our expectations and theirs, so they make better decisions for their own benefit and the team.

The MPCs noted that each team might place different worth on the sport values; however, what was key was that MPCs could identify these values and their importance to the group and could then proceed to incorporate them during team activities.

Managing Conflict

The MPCs explained that sometimes conflict arose that included heated communication between them and players. MPCs wanted to better understand how to both preemptively manage and reduce tensions, as well as how they may better react in the heat of the moment. Linked to andragogy, they wanted to know how to orient task-solving activities in ways that were personally relevant to MAs.

During W1 and W2, the MPCs learned about the heterogeneity of Masters sport participants. Furthermore, within the AOSCS, one theme refers to *Considering the Individuality of Athletes*. Discussions ensued regarding how, when, and to whom to provide feedback, based on MPCs' ability to recognize players' individuality, which meant being informed of how to preemptively manage or reduce tensions. For example, Ericson reflected, "Understanding the persons that make up the team allows me to know how to address each one to solve problems, and even go as far as being able to prevent conflicts." MPCs learned that they can tailor their communication by understanding their MAs' needs, knowing how to individualize information, and identifying when MAs are ready to receive criticism in a positive way.

Observations and MPCs' reflections conveyed how MPCs implemented what they learned for conflict management, and in turn how this improved their relationship with their players. Manuel reflected on a player that got red carded (thrown out of the game) often and had a tendency to confront the referee, "Prior to taking part in the workshops I used to raise my voice to get him to stop." This created tensions and conflict between the MPC and player. After W3, in an observation of the Saturday game, this player once again was red carded. However, Manuel did not yell, but rather calmly called the player over, gave him water, put his arm over his shoulder, and walked him back to the bench. Manuel described, "After learning about the differences in my players and the ways I should be malleable toward their identities, I decided to pick a time after the game to chat with him." He explained that together, they came up with a way to calmly support the player when he got red carded and found a communication strategy during the games that continued to foster a more supportive and positive relationship, and that could help prevent future red cards, "I offered for us to use key words while he is on the field if I see he is getting close to red card behavior."

Psychology

The MPCs wanted to learn about the following subthemes that were based in the psychology of coaching: (a) understanding how their players process information; (b) understanding the feelings of MAs; and (c) motivating their players to be encouraged in play, stay engaged, and positive.

Understanding How Their Players Process Information

The MPCs wanted to understand their players' thought processes to know when they had received the intended message. W1 discussions gave MPCs the opportunity to share their frustrations. Marco said, "I don't get it. We have a pregame talk, layout what we will do, and some players get on the field and it's as if they didn't hear anything we said!" To some MPCs, it was "unbelievable" how their players did not listen, "Maybe they don't listen and instead of asking, they do what they want" (Sebastian). The idea that players may perceive information differently was received with uncertainty. The MPCs wanted to know more about this idea.

In W2, using the AOSCS, the MPCs discussed the themes, and learned to ask for, and listen to their MAs' thoughts to gage how to improve information delivery. For example, MPCs realized that they needed to ask MAs whether they had properly understood information shared about short- and long-term scheduling or adaptations in games. MPCs learned about how motives and life experiences of adults influence how adults hear, absorb, and respond to the information they are given. Completing the AOSCS gave the MPCs an opportunity to identify the differences in their MAs' ways of thinking, and also how to *Impart Coaching Knowledge* in such a way as to encourage MAs to want to hear and follow their lead. In W3, they worked on developing strategies to check for understanding and look at how their players process information.

After a 2-week period of implementing strategies with their teams, Dario shared, "At first, I didn't see how some of these items would be transferable, but I'm getting better. I understand the importance and how to put them in action." During games, we observed how Dario changed the way he did his pregame talk: Spreading out the player ID cards on the ground, he mapped out positions and movements. As the team crowded around him, he gave his suggestions and reasons for the tactics he was giving, and then the players gave their perspectives. Finally, Dario had his players move their own ID cards on the ground to simulate where they would move for the discussed plays, formations, and substitutions to check for understanding. Marco agreed with changes on the pregame talk, "By being more aware of what my teammates were perceiving, I was able to identify that not all of them understood what I was directing them to do." From this, he asked them questions about what he could do to support their understanding, which would translate to improved performance in the long run. Marco elaborated,

> I am starting to observe my teammates more to learn what are the best ways to get through to each one, I ask what would help them to hear, understand, learn, and apply the concepts on the field and now even feel more comfortable sharing experiences from my professional football career.

Understanding the Feelings of MAs

In interview conversations, MPCs wondered why their peers react emotionally in certain situations and wanted to understand them better. "I have teammates that get wrapped up in their egos, changing the way they react to things that happen on the field versus outside, I don't understand why" (Alejandro). Diego discussed, "Although [my players] tell it like it is, they also tend to just act on their feelings. During games sometimes I forget to check-in to see if their actions are related to them feeling a certain way." The MPCs wanted to learn how to be more effective in understanding their players' feelings.

Each workshop built upon the last, providing information and allowing time for the MPCs to discuss and work on understanding their MAs' feelings. W2 focused on defining psychosocial concepts that impact MAs' emotions such as respectfully communicating between adults; setting positive and encouraging goals; incorporating and *Creating Personalized Programming*; and *Respecting Preferences for Effort, Accountability, and Feedback.* Between W2 and W3, AOSCS responses were collated and MPCs received their AOSCS results for the five themes, which helped them to reflect on strategies they used and did not use to better understand their players' feelings. W3 provided facilitated dialogue around how to implement AOSCS items that helped the MPCs to have open conversations around feelings. W4 gave the MPCs the chance to try these items.

In comparison to observations prior to the start of the personalized coach development program, the changes we perceived in the MPCs' development during and after the workshops were notable. For instance, after W4, Manuel calmly called a player over to give him time to express discontent privately after a referee call, instead of yelling to resolve the altercation as he was observed to do in previous instances. After a brief conversation that gave the player a different perspective by connecting the situation to a life example, the player expressed why he felt and acted that way (i.e., he was not comfortable in the position he was playing). Now understanding the discontent, Manuel made a switch in playing position for the player to feel more comfortable and to work on the identified challenge in a different way. Thus, we noted that the MPC appeared to demonstrate the application of what he had learned.

Motivating MAs to Be Encouraged to Play, Stay Engaged, and Positive

The MPCs explained how social norms tend to cast them as being "too old," diminishing their sense of worth and convincing some that, at their age, they should not be playing. "Criticism on our age come from friends, families, outsiders and even the way some peers speak to one another." Alejandro continued, "We need to have our own backs, somehow we need to keep driven and keep players motivated." The MPCs wanted to learn how to motivate their teams.

In W1–W3, the participants cultivated their understanding of how to consider their players' motives for participation and player preferences in holding them accountable to the sport and to their team. These concepts are rooted in the AOSCS themes *Respecting Preferences for Effort, Accountability, and Feedback* and *Imparting Coaching Knowledge*. Furthermore, MPCs learned how to constructively push and challenge players to grow by *Framing Learning Situations* in motivating ways. In workshop reflections, the MPCs noted that this helped them to bond with their players and gave MPCs the opportunity to take a stronger leadership role for the team. Manuel shared, "I think learning about their preferences will add more to our responsibilities, but I see that strategy as giving us the confidence of being able to give more appropriate support to the team."

In W4, Francisco and Sebastian suggested that to motivate, they need to know how each player prefers to be motivated. They shared what they called their rule of three:

First, we ask each player, in a comfortable setting about their motivation preferences. Then we take time to observe how players react to their chosen approach for motivation and make changes if needed. Lastly, we follow through. That is, we actually use their preferred motivational tactic, even if we find it weird at first. Follow-through is important, it builds rapport with peers, and contributes to a more connected team.

The MPCs described these three actions as contributing to building "trust" and "healthy support" for their athletes. The MPCs practiced sharing their coaching knowledge acknowledging differences and providing constructive feedback, encouragement, and motivation to foster more positive engagements from their athletes.

Discussion

This work contributes to a growing understanding of the value of Masters sport coaching and the education of Masters coaches. The personalized professional development program was facilitated for ASOFAMTOL based on what MPCs said they wanted to learn, to understand how they perceived that they learned, and how they perceived to implement that knowledge with their Masters football teams. Findings indicated MPCs' eagerness to learn and fill knowledge gaps for how to effectively coach their peers. Given that MPCs' roles included leading their teams, taking input to implement informed decision making, working with teammates to improve sport performance, and building relationships (Belalcazar & Callary, 2021). MPCs perceived that they related to the material via self-evaluation and reflection, giving participants time to adapt learning outcomes in order that they could create practical and tangible tools to use during practices and games. This discussion will firstly focus on *what* the MPCs said they learned and how it relates to a QMSE, before looking at *how* the MPCs reported they learned, according to coach education best practices.

What MPCs Said They Learned and How This Relates to QMSE

Young et al. (2021) suggested seven Hallmarks of a QMSE: quality relationships, meaningful competition, testing oneself, sport mastery, feelings of validation and empowerment, fun and fitness, and intellectual stimulation. These will be discussed in relation to what the coaches said they learned and implemented.

The workshops encouraged relational approaches in coaching MAs (Callary et al., 2020; Ferrari et al., 2016), particularly highlighting the importance of *quality relationships* and interpersonal skills that MPCs hold, develop, and share with their athletes. Jowett (2007) explained that interdependence in the coach–athlete relationship is shaped by closeness, commitment, and complementarity, resulting in coorientation (3 + 1 Cs). Furthermore, Currie (2019) found similar cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mutuality in Masters Coach–Athlete and team relationships. In this study, participants were guided to learn how interdependence in the coach–athlete/team relationships shaped their perceptions of their athletes' needs, thoughts, and motivation. The MPCs perceived that they learned more about their athletes' preferences through the workshops and in the time between workshops when they were asked to implement what they were learning. As Jowett and Ntoumanis' (2004) explained, there are mutual benefits of a sound coach–athlete relationship, including enhanced well-being and development for both the coach and athlete.

By fostering a learner-centered approach and enhanced coach–athlete, coach–team relationship, MPCs were empowered to learn Masters sport-specific strategies that could be adapted to better suit their MAs' preferences for direction, self-direction, and coach adaptability. In this way, MPCs could promote QMSE by developing an understanding of how to support their athletes in *meaningful competition,* in *testing themselves,* and in *sport mastery*. These performance-based factors link to Cholerton et al.'s (2021) findings in which a coach's competency and positive influence on the coach–player social bond were identified in combination with participants' passion for the sport, skill improvement, and enjoyment of competition as important influences to older adults' continuation in walking football. In past research, Horton et al. (2008) identified that continued practice, adaptability, and sport abilities facilitate MAs' continuation of their physical activity. Baker and Schorer (2010) also noted that skilled performance is acquired by experience and/or training. In W4, the MPCs chose to work on enhancing individual skilled performance, using the items of the AOSCS that ask them to tailor their support to athletes, engage in bidirectional communication, hold players accountable, and respecting players' experiences outside of sport. This support of individual athletic performance by remaining adaptable and receiving feedback, has also been outlined as effective Masters coaching strategies in Callary et al.'s (2015b) study. Indeed, the MPCs' perceived understanding of individual player needs in terms of communication, motivation, conflict resolution, game style, and integrated sport tactics meant that they could be flexible and willing to change as they observed, asked, listened, and evaluated what they said they implemented, which is also a way for coaches to *validate and empower* athletes in a QMSE (Young et al., 2021).

Baker, Fraser-Thomas et al. (2010) noted how critical it is to explore older adults' involvement in Masters sport, to understand the psychosocial benefits of these activities, because research shows older adults' regular sport activity improves quality of life and successful aging (Baker, Horton, & Weir, 2010; Dionigi et al., 2013; Lifton et al., 2012; Weir et al., 2010). The MPCs' abilities to discuss the ways in which they addressed their athletes' varied motives, including the aforementioned performance and competitive motives, indicated that they were aware of the QMSE: *fun and fitness* (Young et al., 2021). Their perceived flexibility toward their MAs' preferences may enabled commitment and informed decision making. As a result, the MPCs reported that they felt their MAs were more engaged.

The last Hallmark of a QMSE is *intellectual stimulation* (Young et al., 2021). From engaging in the coach education program, the MPCs displayed a sense of confidence and openness to learning, which are valuable characteristics for coaches to facilitate their own and their athletes' intellectual stimulation, improvement, and sport enjoyment. The MPCs also felt that they strengthened sport values with their teams, as they noted that they cocreated verbal agreements with the intent of promoting positive behaviors and resilience. These characteristics were also identified by Dionigi (2016) as psychosocial benefits brought on by older adults' involvement in Masters sport due to the physical and physiological health benefits, social networks, enjoyment, and competition. All these benefits are preventative measures in helping communities flourish and helping older adults continue to be active citizens in society and lifelong sport.

Using the AOSCS, the MPCs perceived the connection between adult-oriented coaching approaches and creating a QMSE, thereby further advocating Motz et al.'s (2021) criterion validity for the AOSCS as associated with markers of a QMSE.

What is interesting is that these adult-oriented coaching approaches from the AOSCS appeared to apply to the MPCs' needs as player-coaches in a different cultural context (in Colombia). Adult learning principles espoused in the Andragogy in Practice model (Knowles et al., 2012) and in the Andragogy in Sport model (MacLellan et al., 2019) may be criticized for lacking cultural application or for assuming universality of adult learning, but these models also position these principles within individual and situational differences as well as different goals and purposes for learning. Further research is needed to better understand whether this is upheld in different contexts or what challenges may exist, which we did not encounter within this PAR.

How MPCs Reported They Learned

The personalized coach development workshops were informed by MPCs' learning interests. Importantly, this included their perceptions of the content and the way in which they learned. The following instructional strategies are discussed in relation to this coach education program: (a) learner-centered, (b) competency-based, (c) reflective practice, and (d) andragogical. A discussion of these strategies helps the reader to develop an understanding of why the content of the workshops was reportedly implemented by the MPCs.

Learner Centered

In asking the MPCs about their learning needs and coaching strategies in their interviews and in W1, we aimed to develop a learner-centered approach. As suggested by Paquette and Trudel (2018), simplistic top-down coach education programs allow for rapid coach certification to a large number of coaches, but these instruction-centered and largely didactic programs have little impact on learning, and subsequent coach leadership. Instead, they advocated for impactful learner-centered coach education that focuses on the learner and on using effective teaching practices to support learning. Moving through the workshops, we recognized MPCs sport involvement and experience as lifelong and employed a holistic learning approach that helped MPCs acknowledge that their MAs' learning, as well as their own, was an on-going process, not just a one-off facilitated program. Thus, we viewed the MPCs as facilitators in practice and game settings, adapting coaching to be individualized and needs focused.

Similar to a learner-centered coach education initiative created and implemented by Rodrigue and Trudel (2020), MPCs perceived that they became stronger leaders by taking the information that they learned in the workshops and applying it to the ways in which they coached their teams between workshops. By using a learner-centered approach, and in line with Paquette and Trudel (2018) findings, we aimed to increase MPCs' autonomy by having MPCs identify and choose the areas they wanted to improve upon, empowering MPCs to self-evaluate and prepare coaching experiences to be meaningful for MAs.

Competency Based

Walters et al. (2020) referred to competency-based coach education as learning that works on helping coaches feel competent in their actions. These authors suggested that coaches use a competency-based approach when they learn through facilitating microcoaching sessions where they practice their newly acquired knowledge as part of the coach education program with their teams. The scaffolding of the workshops involved the coach developer regulating and directing the MPCs' learning in W1, to a coregulated approach wherein the MPCs asked questions and reflected on their own relevant coaching approaches in W2 and W3, to self-regulated learning in W4 microcoaching sessions. Bain (2019) showed how coaches could scaffold athletes' learning in this step-wise approach, and it appeared to be successful for the PI, as the coach developer, to also use such an approach with coaches.

More specifically, the microcoaching in W4 gave MPCs the opportunity to practice, experiment, and reflect on their coaching experiences. To us, it appeared that MPCs were becoming more inquisitive about the coaching surroundings, and recognized their skills and strength. In W4, the coaches had the opportunity to build practices, which could improve their knowledge, and they reported that they learned to adapt what they had learned throughout the workshops, and overall, they felt that they furthered their competencies, skills, and knowledge. This approach allowed the MPCs to actively develop an awareness of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Walters et al., 2020).

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice means that coaches learn to reflect and engage in the reflective process around what they have learned and how they implement that learning (Callary et al., 2018, 2021; Kuklick & Kasales, 2020). Rodrigue and Trudel (2020) explain how they used reflective practice to help coaches develop their learning journeys. Likewise, reflections completed during and after W1 revealed MPCs' learning journeys including their needs and challenges. These reflections set the direction for W2. In W2, when MPCs identified what they considered to be weak AOSCS practices for their coaching, they were using reflective practice. Upon reflection of their results and perspectives, they were able to create strategies to improve the identified areas. Thus, alternative coaching strategies were tried and evaluated, and then MPCs deliberated if these could be useful in the long run (Walters et al., 2020). W4 was a culmination of all self-evaluation and reflections. It was an opportunity for MPCs to put in place their learned skills, and the session ended with a final personal, and group reflection of the applicability of what they perceived that they learned and encouragement from the group to make adaptations in a collaborative manner in the long run.

Andragogical Strategies

Rathwell et al. (2020) validated the AOSCS, which is grounded in the Andragogy in Sport model (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2017; Callary et al., 2021; MacLellan et al., 2019). This study advances the possible use of the AOSCS as a self-assessment tool for coaches during workshops and impresses the value of coaches using andragogical approaches. In particular, by recognizing how to individualize instruction and programming, and by changing their understanding of communication from a directional transmission-input approach to a bidirectional collaborative approach, MPCs felt they could better understand specific needs and adaptations required for their adult players as learners in sport.

Once MPCs identified their learning needs in W1, the tailored coach development aimed to provide ideas for coaches to be able to follow MacLellan et al.'s (2019) andragogy in sport model to (a) explain to their athletes why they are learning something like a skill or activity; (b) understand MAs have their own adult concepts and self-direct their learning; (c) take into account MAs' prior experience and knowledge; (d) be adaptable to each MA's readiness to learn and train; (e) give problem-oriented approaches with

real-life orientation; and (f) facilitate an intrinsic motivational environment. The MPCs noted that they identified meaning in adult cues, which we suggest helped them cater coaching to their athletes' interests and preferences. In alignment with Callary, Rathwell, and Young (2017), coaches highlighted the importance of individualized instruction for older adults, as seen during W4 in MPCs' coaching adjustments to coincide with their athlete's preferences.

Conclusion

The MAs involvement in ASOFAMTOL's competitive, high-intensity Masters football is a testament to the growth in active sport involvement at 60+ years of age, in Colombia. Callary and Gearity (2021) express the need for coach education that is specific to the context of Masters sport to support and inform coaches, to positively impact Masters sport experience. Thus, the individualized coach development program conducted with ASOFAMTOL aimed to address the MPCs' learning needs and provide the opportunity to implement their knowledge between workshops. The adult-oriented coaching approaches that the coaches perceived they developed via workshops also appeared to enhanced QMSE because MPCs learned to tailor their practices and games for adult sportspersons while recognizing players' heterogeneity and the sport context of ASOFAMTOL.

This PAR was the first time that the AOSCS was used as part of a larger coach education series of workshops, and also was perceived as a positive learning experience for the participants. Future research should flush out interventions for Masters coaches using the AOSCS and quantitatively develop the practical validity of the tool, as well as formally validating the Spanish translation of the AOSCS. This research supports coach development that enhances older adults' performance, engagement, quality experience, and drive, which in the long run affects the way adult athletes value and perceive their sport involvement.

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