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COACHING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Opening doors to coach education in Masters sport: Imagining a different approach

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Adults are probably the biggest group of people who participate in sport and they do not get talked of enough... You need to pay attention because they've got lots of money and they want to participate in sport. You should think about adult sport.

(Sport Organization Director - Evan)



Development models in sport

- Models typically focus on children and youth – learning fundamentals towards training with more intensity and instruction into performance pathways focused on excellence.
- Can become *Active for Life* but the focus in document is towards building an athlete to a performance trajectory and then retirement.
- The *Active for Life* stage is generic, without guidance about how to support active or competitive adult engagement (Baker et al., 2023; Callary et al., in press)
- Baker and colleagues (2023) call for multidimensional developmental models of sport participation to better understand the complexities of lifelong sport involvement

Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity:

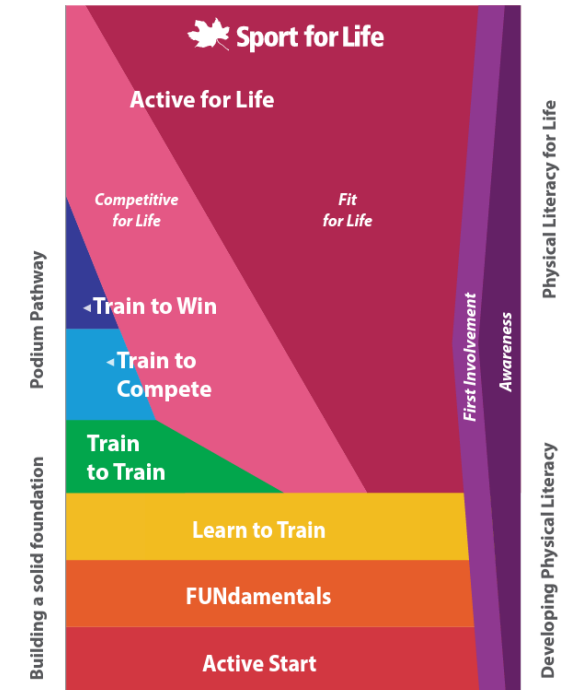
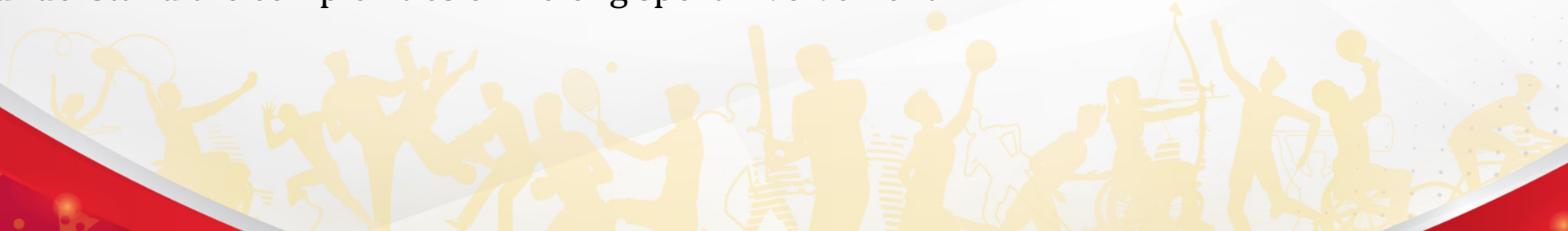


Figure 3: Sport for Life Rectangle



Changing the sport structure

Headlines announcing issues of declining sport participation rates:

- “Toxic” sport cultures, many pressures of competitive involvement, burnout (Krug, 2023)
- Youth sport commercialized into a \$19-billion industry in the US, largely due to the professionalization of athletes who are not professionals (Bjork & Hoynes, 2021; Newberry, 2021)

Many are asking to change course.

Efforts in social justice create equitable processes for the allocation of resources (Vera & Speight, 2003).





Quality masters sport participation

Masters sport: adults who are past the age of peak performance (typically over 35 years of age).

- under-resourced, under-serviced, and marginalized (Higgs et al., 2019)

The **Adult-Oriented Sport Coaching Survey (AOSCS;** Rathwell et al., 2020):

- a reflective professional development tool for coaches (Callary et al., 2021)

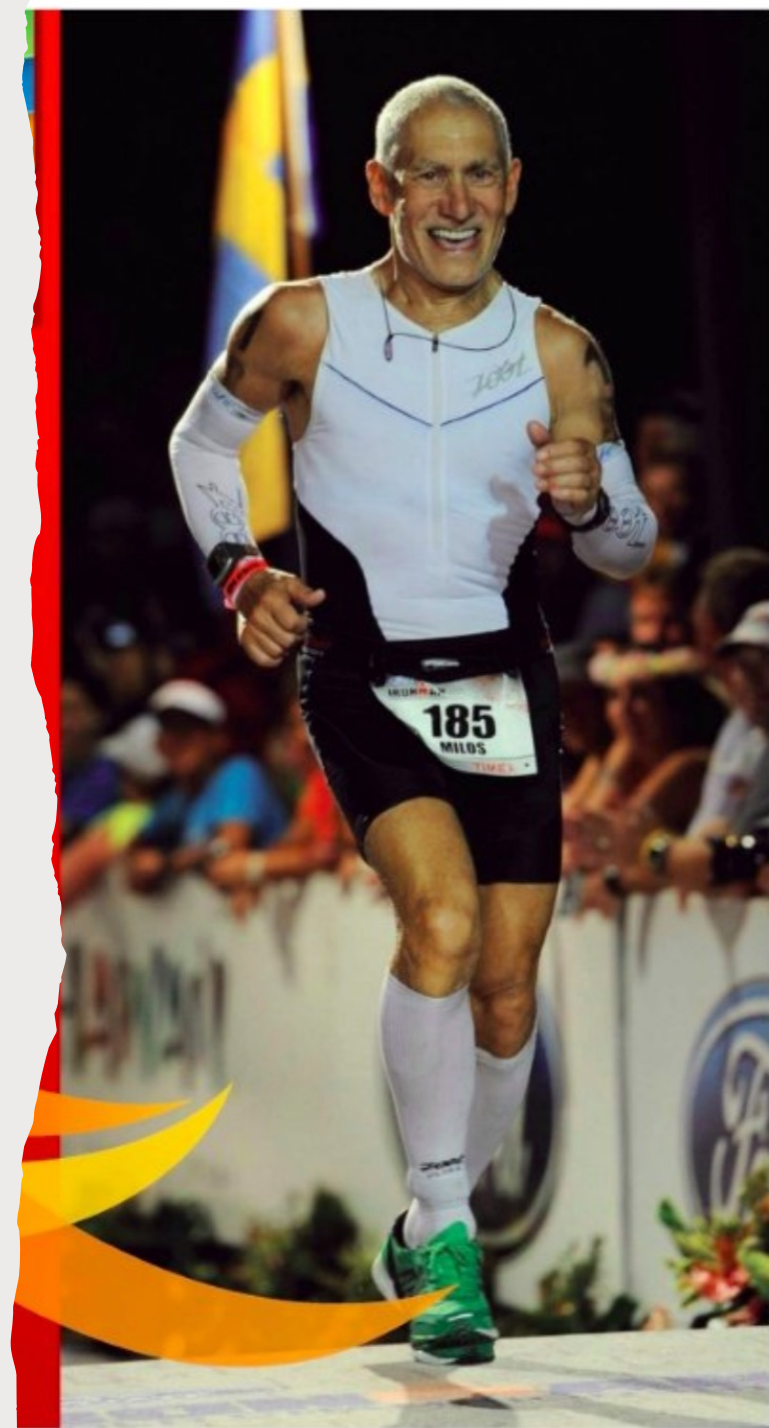
Coaches found the AOSCS **useful and relevant:**

- registered for a one-hour webinar organized by sport organization
- sent a link and completed the AOSCS; went to webinar
- received scores and debriefed with a coach developer

(Callary et al. 2023)

COACHING
MASTERS ATHLETES
ADVANCING RESEARCH AND
PRACTICE IN ADULT SPORTS

Edited by
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AND SCOTT RATHWELL





COACHING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Purpose

To explore sport directors' perspectives of a nonformal coach education webinar for Masters sport that used the AOSCS tool.

BUT findings were broader than expected: philosophies and challenges that sport organizations face regarding lifelong sport participation and coach education





Methods

Collective case study grounded in social inquiry (Stake, 2005)

Participants: Five (4 male, 1 female) sport organization administrators who requested the webinar

- responsible for coach education initiatives within their sport organization.
- sport specific (swimming, speed skating, rowing, and lawn bowling) and multi-sport governance.
- two national sport organizations, three provincial/state organizations.
- three countries: Canada, USA, and Australia.

Semi-structured online individual interviews conducted within two weeks after the webinar (64 to 92 minutes)

Braun and Clarke's (2019) six step process for reflexive thematic analysis



Differences coaching adults versus youth

Directors were responsible for developing effective coaches, and convinced of need for coaches to develop different skills depending on the context (youth or adult)

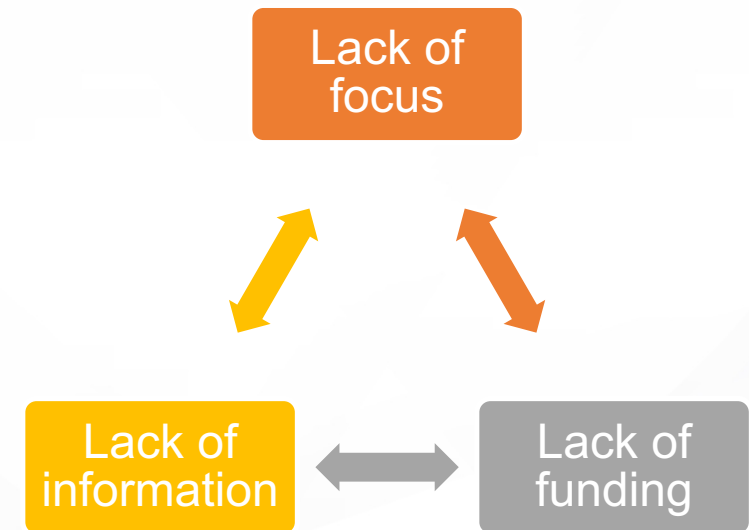
Cory: “I think there is that broad conversation of ‘coaching is coaching is coaching’ but there also [needs to be a conversation about] when it’s different, how is it different? And what are things that we have to be aware of?” He expanded, “managing the needs of the Masters athlete is very different to the youth athlete”.



Lacking information and focus

Evan: “Adult sport is always something that comes up [for PD interests]..., and the answer back to them, well honestly...nothing, there is no answer back to them... **there is nothing there to support them.** Our website has resources and programming for coaching girls, boys, Indigenous athletes. But **we forget about the adults...** Adults are more likely to stay, they’re more invested, and they have the money to do it. I don’t think people see that yet”.

“Right now as an organization, as a budgetary line item for Masters specifically, it is probably zero.”



A philosophy of lifelong sport participation

Not just have a LTD model, but also have values and actions / strategies

Erin: “there needs to be something more specific to [Masters sport]... And we want to keep them in the clubs because they are also our volunteers and they also show the ‘sport for life’ model.

Evan: “there are kids who are participating in sport [who do not want to pursue high performance sport], so how do we take them into the active for life stage?”



A pathway for lifelong sport participation

**Don't see
them? Don't
have them:**

- James: “there aren't many coaches to begin with in our sport who actually take it seriously”
- Sam: “For a younger or newer coach, they don't want to coach Masters”
- Cory: “the high turnover of Masters coaches is directly because of the [lack of] familiarity of this kind of work. They aren't getting prepared, there is no preparation.”

**BUT coach
development
could be an
important
means to
providing a
pathway in
Masters sport**

- Evan: “[teach them that] it's not a scary place to coach and work with adults. This is how you work with adults, right, these are some quick tips and resources”.

The adult-oriented webinar

Unique and effective coach education using the survey for reflecting on working with adult athletes

- James: “my personal opinion is that a lot of our coaches aren’t great with self-awareness. I think that is the most useful aspect of this webinar”.

Need for a New Paradigm

Need for a credible online platform where Masters coaches can gain empirical information on the psycho-social aspects of coaching



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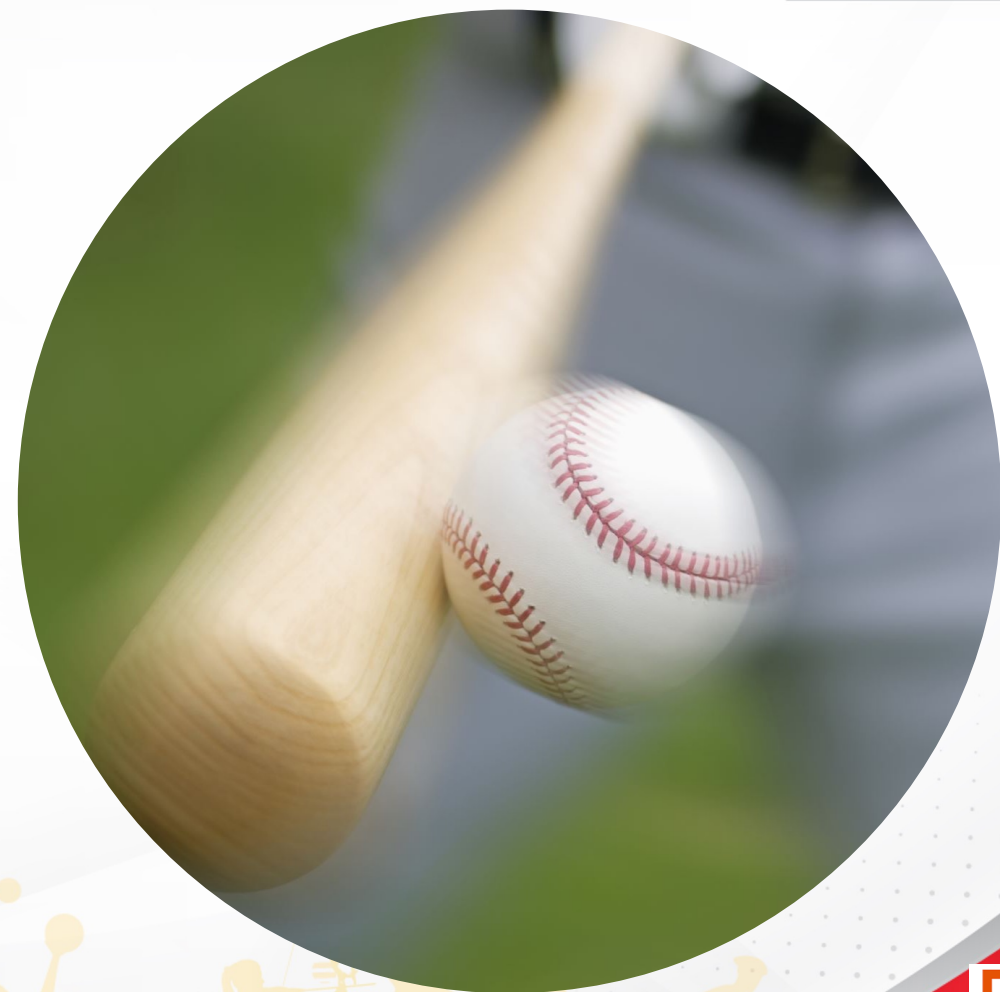
But more?...

Discussion

- Masters sport is not funded, not given attention --> Coaches do not value the pathway of lifelong sport participation
- Masters sport receives poor training times, facilities, equipment, coaching support (Callary et al., 2023): social change is needed.
- New programs, lifelong sport participation (Masters sport) compete with older established programs and philosophical orientations such as elite and professional sport models and pathways (current youth sport models) for limited funding (Santos & Callary, 2022)

Imagine a shift in the philosophical orientation of the long term development narrative for sport systems

- Coaching Association of Canada: module on coaching MAs would show acknowledgement of the importance of this cohort





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