Acting Accordingly or Authentically: Exploring How Discipline Impacts Athletes' Holistic Development

LYDIA SOKOL
University of Alberta

The purpose of this study was to investigate how holistic sport psychology consultants can begin to think with concepts from sport sociology to enhance the provision of their services to athletes. More specifically, this study explored the ways in which various dominant practices within sport can affect holistic sport psychologists' efforts to help athletes act authentically. Empirical material included observations of athletes and coaches, who were all part of the Gold Medal Soccer Academy, along with a series of interviews with four athletes. The results indicated the importance of holistic sport psychology consultants taking into consideration a variety of social influences that can limit and restrict athletes' opportunities to develop their authentic selves through their sport participation.

Keywords: sport psychology, Foucault, coaching

Motivated by Thorpe, Ryba, and Denison's (2014) call to action, my entry point into this study was a desire to connect sport psychology and sport sociology in a way that supports athletes' growth and development. In particular, I wanted to examine how various 'normal' or taken-for-granted practices may undermine holistic sport psychologists' pursuit to help athletes better understand themselves both as people and as sports people. Importantly, this entailed considering how various relations of power present and active within sport have positioned coaches as superior to their athletes in nearly every aspect of their relationship and interactions. As a result, athletes often become docile as they are seldom given a chance to learn how to assert their own autonomy in the face of their coaches' dominance. Such a position can of course come with productive effects, as docile athletes can still be winners, but my concern is whether such an arrangement can also be problematic. Thus, for this study I drew on the work of Michel Foucault (1995) and his analysis of disciplinary power to

consider how discipline's various techniques and instruments might impact sport psychologists' efforts to facilitate opportunities for athletes to explore their authentic selves.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Holistic sport psychology emerged initially as an athlete-centered philosophy aiming to minimize barriers associated with sport participation (Bond, 2002; Miller & Kerr, 2002). Practicing holistic sport psychology consultants believed that an athlete's improvement in a sporting context is facilitated by their personal growth (Andersen, Van Raalte, & Brewer, 2001; Friesen & Orlick, 2010; Miller & Kerr, 2002; Ravizza, 2002), and that such growth occurs when athletes are given the opportunity to improve personally as well as athletically. Thus, holistic sport psychology is centered around understanding and recognizing that an athlete is a functioning person in addition to being a sportsperson (Bond, 2002).

To assist athletes in their personal growth and development, holistic sport psychology consultants utilize six techniques and methods (Friesen & Orlick, 2011). These methods include emotional preparation and recovery awareness, foundational questioning, reflection, acting authentically, social support, and balance. After encouraging athletes to explore their identity through foundational questioning and reflecting on their decisions, the technique known as acting authentically involves helping athletes to act in alignment with their identity and values (Friesen & Orlick, 2011). Importantly, in order to determine how to act authentically in line with one's identity, athletes must have the ability to think reflectively and critically about themselves. Once this self-awareness and understanding has been established, holistic sport psychology consultants then carry out the acting authentically technique by conversing with athletes to identify what might be preventing them from acting in ways that are consistent with their beliefs and values.

While this conversation around barriers to authenticity can be important, it does not appear to consider how athletes may be impacted by sociological forces such as power. In a sport setting, a coach's use of power can affect athletes by restricting their development or leaving them more susceptible to burnout, early sport retirement, and injury (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Denison & Mills, 2014; Denison, Mills, Cassidy, & Hessian, 2015b; Pringle, 2007). Furthermore, these consequences of power can go unnoticed or unquestioned as they are often a result of dominant practices that are seen as normal and natural.

As one particular type of power, disciplinary power concerns "how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (Foucault, 1995, p. 138). Notably, many researchers have documented how sport can easily become a context with a strong legacy of disciplinary power. For example, Shogan (1999) explained how "the discipline of high-performance sport produces a set of knowledge about 'the athlete', who is then controlled and shaped by these knowledges in a constant pressure to conform to a standard of high performance" (p. 10). In these instances, discipline is used to shift the balance of power towards those in charge, such as a coach, as they are able to gain access to the bodies, attitudes, and actions of individuals (Foucault, 1980). As many Foucauldian sport scholars have shown, power within a sporting context operates through coaching practices that often work (sometimes unintentionally) to maintain an imbalanced coach-athlete relationship (e.g., Denison, et.al., 2015b).

The presence of discipline within a sporting environment most often includes instances of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement, and examination. Hierarchical observation refers to a key mechanism of discipline that "coerces by means of observation" (Foucault, 1995, p. 170), whereby athletes are made visible and thus knowable. Williams and Manley (2016), who conducted a study on how surveillance technologies impacted rugby players, found that with an increased use of video analysis, athletes felt "judged as disposable products" (p. 834) as they inverted their coach's gaze internally. Normalizing judgement refers to the correction (or punishment) utilized by coaches which leads to athletes being judged, instilling in them a constant pressure to conform to a coach's expectations (Denison, Mills, & Jones, 2013). As athletes are held to a normalized standard, they are taught to work towards this ideal, and as such athletes become homogenized. Examination is a combination of observing hierarchy and normalizing judgement – "it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish" (Foucault, 1995, p. 184). Examination is often found within sport, particularly through ritualized fitness tests and sporting competitions (Markula & Pringle, 2006), as well as during training when coaches measure each athlete's physical and mental aptitude (Gearity & Mills, 2012). Coaches are then able to assess how close their team or athlete is to achieving the desired performance, justifying interventions to control and manipulate the athletes furthest away from the normalized standard (Shogan, 1999).

When an athlete is reduced to operating as their coach wishes through these practices, they are typically placed in a docile position of being well-disciplined, submissive, obedient, and thus easily taught (e.g., Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010;

Denison, 2007; Gearity & Mills, 2012; Mills & Denison, 2013). Barker-Ruchti and Tinning (2010) explored how dominant coaching practices in gymnastics, while creating productive effects in regards to skill improvement, also left athletes "subject to authority and surveillance" (p. 240). As such, the authors found that the athletes were left problematically "actively passive" (p. 244). That is, they were active in their physical movements but passive in their ability to influence their sport participation through decision-making or creating their own routines. Pronger (2002) further explained that "when the body is coerced into presence primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of its utility, it is rendered docile" (p. 117). Without the capacity to choose their own actions and influence how they are treated, individuals subjected to disciplinary power may only operate at the mercy of authority figures. Effectively, as their ability to be actively engaged in their environment is compromised, these individuals become 'cogs in the system'. Within a disciplinary environment**,** athletes can be homogenized to think and act in a controlled and reproducible manner.

The process of reducing people to cogs within a system works to then reinforce the disciplinary power that placed them in such a position, as individuals are taught that the system and their position within it is normal. When such power relations become dominant and normalized in this way, the structure this creates carries on unquestioned, and as a result its problematic effects often remain unnoticed. Practices that at first appear effective in transforming athletes into winning competitors can at the same time limit athletes' abilities to think and act for themselves (McMahon, Penney, & Dinan-Thompson, 2012). So, while disciplined athletes have won medals, my concern is with the unintended consequences of coaches' disciplinary practices, particularly as they can clash with a key premise of holistic sport psychology: the idea that athletes have the autonomy to act authentically. With this concern in mind, I set out to study the possible impact that various disciplinary practices present and active in sport can have on athletes' opportunities to develop holistically by being afforded, or not, the possibility to act authentically.

RESEARCH METHODS

To frame my study, I initiated a project as part of my master's thesis with the Gold Medal Soccer Academy over an eight-week period in the spring of 2019. The Gold Medal Soccer Academy provided me with a unique opportunity to consider the impact of coaches' practices on athletes' opportunities to act authentically. Unlike many youth sport academy settings where athletes can elect to attend on their own, the Gold Medal Soccer

Academy recruits teams to register and attend as a group. The teams are then distributed and rotated amongst multiple Academy coaches during a single training session. Athletes in this Academy are thus exposed to a variety of coaching styles and practices.

Over the course of eight weeks, I observed coaches and athletes within the Gold Medal Soccer Academy at their evening practices to see how different coaching styles, through their use of discipline, might impact the athletes' development. I recorded my observations by taking detailed field notes. I then conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Galletta, 2013) with four female players all under the age of 15, concerning their experiences with the coaching styles and practices used at the Academy so as to understand what this could mean for their holistic development. Specifically, I conducted three interviews with each participant. The first interview took place during week two of the Academy, the second interview occurred approximately midway (week four), and the final interview took place near the end of the Academy (week eight). Conducting multiple interviews with the same four participants allowed me to explore any moments of growth or change as they occurred for the players. This provided me with richer data as I was seeking to understand how disciplinary coaching practices impact athletes' abilities to develop holistically.

I analyzed my empirical material (observations and interviews) through a Foucauldian theoretical lens, following a general pattern for analysis outlined by Markula and Silk (2011). This process began with an identification of themes relevant to Foucault's (1995) broad discussion of disciplinary power based on my field notes and interview transcripts. Through this process, I was looking for connections between the presence and activity of discipline and the opportunities this afforded, or not, for the players to act authentically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As I observed the Gold Medal Soccer Academy training sessions and interviewed athletes, I noticed several ways that disciplinary power seemed to impact my participants' opportunities to act authentically. One prominent concept that tied all four participants' experiences together was the push and pull they felt while at training between acting authentically and acting accordingly. On the one hand, most of my participants expressed a strong connection to their sense of self while they participated in soccer. However, I found the athletes also made some contradictory comments about their ability to act authentically to their values and their sense of self. While overall my participants felt that soccer provided them with the best opportunity to behave and feel

like themselves, they expressed concerns over how they were expected to act while at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy. Due to the varying disciplinary practices within the Gold Medal Soccer Academy, the athletes in my study found themselves in a position where they had to navigate this complex and often contradictory environment. More specifically, the athletes had to balance between acting authentically to themselves and acting accordingly to a fixed, docile, and homogenized position within an imbalanced coach-athlete power relation. In what follows, I will first elaborate on how the athletes were expected to act accordingly and then discuss how they were able to act authentically. Lastly, I will summarize how the athletes experienced holistic growth during their participation in the Gold Medal Soccer Academy based on their interactions with some of the coaches.

Acting Accordingly

Coaches are often placed in a position of power where they are expected to make all of the decisions and control every aspect of training due to the imbalanced coach-athlete power relation that is dominant in sport settings (Pringle, 2007). My participants were aware of how this power relation operated within their training setting, as they made comments supporting the coaches' authority. One participant, Nessa, explained, "we know that the coaches, they're our superiors, they're our betters, they know more than us". Another participant, Scarlett, justified the coaches' position of power by calling on the expertise she believed her coaches held, stating, "the science or technology behind it of why they say it is true in my opinion". Scarlett's trust in the coaches' scientific knowledge demonstrates the historical development of such knowledge into a position of unquestioned power. As Foucault (1980) explained, when certain knowledge is widely accepted as true, it becomes powerful and thus taken-for-granted. For example, because of this normalized understanding of the coach as the expert, my participants often believed it was proper that the coaches were in control of the drills and athletes' behaviour at training. When asked if she would like to provide more input at training, one participant, Karly, explained, "being [with] your coach is 'I listen to you, you tell me what to do', and I guess I like that personally". These comments during my interviews showcase how the athletes justified the imbalanced coach-athlete power relation that is prevalent in typical sport settings (e.g., Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010; Denison et al., 2013; Gearity & Mills, 2012).

However, while the coaches' position of power was often justified by the athletes, their own position within the imbalanced coach-athlete power relation was not always supported. My participants expressed concerns over how they were expected to act while at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy. During interviews, the athletes commented that

they understood that the coaches expected them to be the type of player who never faltered in being committed, focused, and serious. Nessa, reflecting on a teammate who represented this preferred behaviour, explained that her teammate was "very dedicated, she takes it all very seriously. When we're on the field she doesn't laugh, doesn't joke". She went on to say, "I think that's the example, and I just don't know if I can do that".

Nessa was left feeling that if she didn't conform to these expectations, that she would be "bad at soccer". This comment stood out to me as it represents my participants' normalized understanding that they must act according to the coaches' expectations in order to develop as successful athletes. Karly expressed a comparable belief when she explained that at training she had to "act accordingly so [the coaches] can do what they want to and so we can learn". In a similar fashion, when another participant, Theresa, described how she typically acts at practice, she commented, "my team usually chit chats and everything, but in the past coaches have gotten mad, so I refrain from doing that as much as possible and just focus on what we're doing, so I can excel". Later in the interview when asked what may be preventing her from acting more like herself, Theresa stated, "if I act completely like myself and unfocused then I won't be able to improve, cuz I've been taught that you need to be able to focus 100% or else you won't improve". Like Nessa, Theresa altered her behaviour so she was acting in a more 'coachable' manner.

As outlined in previous literature, coaching practices can unintentionally homogenize athletes towards what is historically considered an ideal attitude in sports through disciplinary practices (Denison et al., 2013; Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2015a). Athletes with such an attitude are seen as 'coachable' and are then favoured by coaches while athletes who act differently are considered 'problem' athletes, which perpetuates the 'right way' to participate in sport. Specifically, the disciplinary practices of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement can be used to reinforce a quiet, obedient, and hard-working attitude amongst athletes. In this way, I noticed that some coaching practices at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy promoted a homogenized and fixed athlete self. For example, the coaches expressed their expectations for the athletes' behaviour by making comments that I recorded in my field notes, such as: "don't be lazy", "no side talk unless it's about the activity", "I need you to really sprint and not dance so much", and "it's practice, take it seriously, it's not a playground, you can leave anytime if you don't want to be here". These comments set a standard of how successful athletes must behave and which behaviour was judged as expected and acceptable. Said behaviour then becomes a norm that is reinforced through traditional coaching practices, while any differing behaviour is categorized as deviant and thus punishable.

The athletes' behaviour was also influenced by the coaches' constant observation. Scarlett pointed out, "I don't really see them not watching, whenever I look at them, they're always watching". When the athletes explained that they were aware of being watched at all times regardless of whether such observations were occurring or not, I noticed a connection to the Foucauldian concept of surveillance. Previous Foucauldian coaching scholars have explained how surveillance can be particularly effective in reinforcing desired behaviours, as in anticipation of being watched, athletes begin a process of self-surveillance (e.g., Johns & Johns, 2000; Williams & Manley, 2016). This self-surveillance can then work to further encourage athletes to modify their behaviour in an effort to follow the dominant narrative that defines a successful athlete as perfectly obedient, serious, and focused. Theresa recognized how a decrease in coach observation would allow the athletes to act differently, stating, "some people only focus when the coach is watching, so it [reduced observation] might make it worse, but at the same time, some people also focus better when no one's watching cuz they feel like there's less pressure on them".

Furthermore, an imbalanced coach-athlete power relation can be problematic as athletes are discouraged from thinking for themselves and are instead expected to conform to their coaches' expectations in a docile manner. Like other studies have shown, through such conformity athletes can become restricted from engaging in decision-making, reflecting, and critical thinking, despite their bodies moving physically (Barker-Ruchti & Tinning, 2010). Scarlett demonstrated this concern, as initially when I asked what she thought of having the coaches pick all the drills, she stated, "I don't ever think once I wanna be doing something different. I like all of the drills they pick". However, I then asked her how she would change her practices if she were given the opportunity, to which she gave multiple suggestions for different drills that she felt would benefit her own team. In this case, Scarlett's initial reaction was to support any decisions the coaches made, and only when she was prompted to think for herself did she find she had an opinion about the drill selection at practice. This is not unexpected as highly disciplined athletes are "likely to accept these forms of control in an uncritical manner" (Pringle, 2007, p. 391). Additionally, Karly showed signs that she was capable of thinking critically when she questioned the reason behind a specific coach instruction, yet any deeper reflection was not able to flourish within the imbalanced power relation as she explained, "I'm not sure if it's [coach's instruction] exactly the best idea, but I'm just following what they say". Even when she had reservations towards the coach's instructions, Karly did as she was told and fell into place within the power relation as a docile and 'coachable' athlete.

In this way, the athletes altered their behaviour based on the coaches' use of surveillance, normalizing judgement, and their position within the coach-athlete power relation, which seriously calls into question the idea of authentic athlete behaviour and how that can be facilitated within such a strict system of control. My participants' comments suggest that these barriers reproduce the understanding that in order to improve in sport, athletes should act according to their coaches' expectations, regardless of whether that aligns with their authentic self. This understanding is not unique to my participants, however, as it is an idea that has become common sense in sport and thus it has become normalized and unquestioningly integrated into dominant coaching practices. It is therefore important for practicing sport psychology consultants to consider how disciplinary practices may be unintentionally promoting docile, fixed, and homogenized athlete selves, as this interferes with their efforts to encourage athletes to act in ways that are true to their own values.

Acting Authentically

Interestingly, even with the barriers outlined in the previous theme, my participants expressed a strong connection to their sense of self while they participated in soccer. For example, Karly commented, "I'm myself at practice, I'm more myself than anywhere else". I noticed several moments in my observations and during the interviews where it appeared that the athletes were able to express themselves in a more authentic manner.

One way that the Gold Medal Soccer Academy coaches appeared to help the athletes act more authentically was by disrupting the homogenization that is often a prominent consequence of disciplinary practices. In this regard, my participants found it meaningful when their coaches recognized that they are full, dynamic people rather than promoting an identical progression for each player. Karly explained that she felt respected as a person when the coaches inquired about how she was feeling when she appeared 'off her game', stating, "I think it's helpful just cuz then they realize that 'hey something's going on'. I think that's kind of nice that they're actually paying attention and realizing that we're not just players, we're people". Theresa also suggested that her coaches were able to recognize that each player was unique, stating "if you're a coach, you know which players can do what, so you have different expectations for each player". Such an understanding of individual differences reduces the homogenization that can occur from disciplinary practices such as normalizing judgement, as athletes are not forced into the same mold.

The athletes further supported that their coaches could promote a unique sense of self instead of a homogenized, fixed self by accepting and even encouraging mistakes

in training. When asked how her coaches could better support athletes to feel like full people, Nessa reflected,

> to make you feel more human… getting that you can mess up? Cuz you're not always gonna be the first to the ball, you're not always gonna win tackles. Just being okay when they make mistakes, I think that would be a good thing… I mean I like corrections and all. And I get pushing players. I mean honestly, I think that's the best way to coach: correcting people. But I guess you have to just sort of draw a line where it's like, you know they're actually people too. You can't always be perfect.

As explained previously, the dominant narrative of a successful athlete doesn't include making errors, and as such coaches are often expected to hold their athletes to a high standard of performance both in training and in competition. However, Pringle (2007) outlined how athletes within a disciplinary setting are susceptible to "losing their humanness in the obsessive pursuit of sporting victory" (p. 391). Therefore, supporting athletes as they falter both disrupts the dominant narrative of success and allows athletes to learn and develop as full people.

Encouraging mistakes was possible at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy as the use of certain disciplinary practices, including examination and normalizing judgement were minimal. At the Academy, the coaches rarely evaluated the athletes, and thus there was less pressure for athletes to perform perfectly. Furthermore, the practice of normalizing judgement was not used as predominantly with this team as has been shown in other sport environments. For example, other studies have found athletes are often "judged according to a fixed set of truths" (Denison et al., 2013, p. 395), which acts to pressure athletes towards a particular standard of performance. Surprisingly, while the Academy coaches did judge athletes' behaviour and attitudes as explained previously, this judgement was not used to normalize perfection as I was anticipating. With some exceptions, the coaches at the Academy created a less disciplinary environment by regularly encouraging the athletes to take chances while trying new tactics and to make mistakes while learning difficult skills. As athletes were encouraged to make errors and take their time during a drill, they were not forced to perform with a "machine-like efficiency" often expected within a disciplinary environment (Pringle, 2007, p. 390).

However, disciplinary practices were still used at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy, and thus it is also important to explore the ways that my participants resisted these practices when they expressed themselves authentically. Primarily, the athletes showcased their desire to challenge the coaches' position of power as well as their own

docile position within the imbalanced coach-athlete power relation. Nessa, for example, commented that while the coaches' control at training resulted in a "lack of decisions, lack of choices in your own training", she stated, "I kinda wish that we could coach ourselves". As the athletes pushed against their own docile position, they learned how to think for themselves and choose their own actions. Theresa was the most vocal in this regard, stating, "if the coach is telling you exactly what to do, I feel like that's too much, cuz the players should be able to have their own mind and choose their own actions". Theresa routinely commented during interviews that she felt it was important for the athletes to be given the chance to make decisions and think for themselves at training rather than learning to do exactly as they are told. She believed that there were important benefits to challenging the dominant docile athlete position, explaining that,

> If the coach tells you what to do, it's like, 'okay I get it' but if you personally have to think, like put your mind to something, you're able to grasp it easier… because if you think for yourself, then I feel like you'd be able to retain that information better, so during a game you'll be able to remember what to do.

The athletes' comments reinforce the idea that being engaged in their own training will help with their learning and give them a better understanding of their training (Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009). In addition to being able to provide their own input on sessions, the athletes also appreciated understanding the reason or purpose behind the drills and tasks they undertook at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy. Encouraging the athletes to contemplate the purpose of a drill was helpful in allowing them to think for themselves and begin to reflect on their training. Indeed, Gearity and Mills (2012) explained that docile athletes are taught to unthinkingly and promptly follow commands, and as such they do not develop self-awareness or learn to ask questions. Reducing disciplinary practices to intentionally disrupt homogenization and encourage athletes to think for themselves may thus be a way for holistic sport psychology consultants to help create a supportive environment where athletes have opportunities to act authentically.

Holistic Growth

Despite the complex environment and the push and pull felt by the athletes to act either accordingly or authentically, I did find that my participants experienced moments of holistic growth during their time at the Gold Medal Soccer Academy. Notably, this growth was made possible through the less disciplinary practices of particular coaches. In the final interview, when the athletes were asked to reflect on

which coach(es) helped them develop the most as a person over the Academy season, coach Sean was described as the most impactful by all four participants. He was also the coach that most intrigued me during my observations, as in one field note I wrote that,

> He is complicated for me because he has this extremely disciplinary way of coaching (he always wants them to be more serious, talk less, listen more, etc.) but at the same time he is the most athlete-centered in that he seems to genuinely ask for their input, their ideas, and helps them work through the 'why' of many drills. He also encourages them the most to be creative, to try new things, use both feet, etc. So he is the most disciplinary but also the one who seems to help them develop the most. It's an interesting balance.

So, on the one hand, coach Sean had the strongest use of discipline to pressure athletes into acting accordingly, but on the other hand he encouraged the most deviance in that he pushed athletes to be different, creative, and think for themselves. Based on both my observations and athlete comments, coach Sean was the most supportive of athlete mistakes and structured his drills and feedback to provide opportunities for athlete decision-making. In this way, despite his constant homogenizing expectations of the athletes' attitudes, coach Sean seemed to create the most opportunities for the athletes to act authentically as full, dynamic people with their own thoughts and abilities. Considering the opportunities afforded by his coaching practices, it is not surprising that my participants felt he was important for their holistic development.

The other coach that was mentioned by the athletes during my final interviews was coach Jason. Unlike coach Sean, coach Jason regularly encouraged athletes to act more like themselves rather than expecting them to act accordingly. Scarlett explained that "he's really accepting if you're being goofy and stuff". Nessa agreed that coach Jason's supportive approach to their behaviour and attitude helped her feel comfortable, stating that "[Jason]'s just so fun, honestly, and it's like you can talk to him, you know, he's approachable in a way that some of the other coaches aren't". Again, the coach that provided an opportunity for athletes to act authentically was valued as assisting the most in their holistic development.

Additionally, the athletes developed holistically over the Academy season primarily when disciplinary power was less prominent, and their growth was reflected in a desire to move out of their restricting position within the coach-athlete power relation. Theresa explained, "before the training started, I was more reserved and kinda just like 'kay this is what I have to do because I'm being told what to do'. But with the addition of having that freedom and making your own decisions, it made me less reserved and

more outgoing". The opportunity to make her own decisions and challenge the notion of a fixed, homogenized, docile self was afforded to Theresa within a less disciplinary environment. Karly made comments that demonstrate how holistic development can challenge a restricted development of the self, when she stated,

> I have become a little more confident, because, especially when my coach is trying to tell me to do certain things in a game setting, like there are times when he'll just stay quiet. There are times when I feel like I wanna make my own decisions and that shows that I'm a little more confident in what I'm doing, and that's really new cuz normally I look to him and I'm like, 'yo am I in the right spot?"

As she developed as a person, Karly found herself less willing to follow instructions unthinkingly and instead desired opportunities to make her own decisions. Overall, my participants' holistic growth occurred mostly due to coach Sean and coach Jason's less disciplinary practices and resulted in my participants taking steps towards disrupting dominant power relations and the impact that can have on the formation of their selves.

CONCLUSION

The holistic sport psychology literature suggests that athletes can excel by acting authentically within their sporting context (Friesen & Orlick, 2011). One consultant in Friesen and Orlick's (2011) study explained that in an effort to help his clients perform authentically, he looks to find "what is interfering with their ability to just simply act consistent with what they believe and the things they value" (p. 34). This study outlined several ways that disciplinary power may restrict athletes from acting authentically. Further to this point, my participants' experiences raise a concern for holistic sport psychology consultants, as disciplinary practices are affecting athletes in ways not previously considered in the holistic sport psychology literature. Practicing consultants must be aware of how the pursuit of authentic behaviour is not simply a matter of choice and hard work, but rather athletes must navigate around coaching practices outside of their control which can restrict their ability to act as they desire. By recognizing the role of such social and contextual factors in influencing athletes' actions and sense of self, sport psychology consultants can look to alter the problematic coach-athlete power relation to reduce its limitation on athletes.

Practicing sport psychology consultants should first reflect on their techniques to consider how they may be missing an awareness of how various social and contextual

factors such as dominant coaching practices affect athletes. It is important that consultants be cautious in their practice and ensure they do not use techniques unquestioningly, lest they risk merely paying lip-service to their intentions. As Denison et al. (2015a) reflected,

> behavioural or motivational interventions intended to foster and develop thinking, responsible, resilient, self-compassionate or self-regulating athletes will largely be ineffective if they are not accompanied by practices that disrupt sports' disciplinary legacy and the many unseen effects that disciplinary power has on athletes' bodies. (p. 6)

To begin disrupting disciplinary power within the sporting environment, sport psychology consultants would benefit from creating environment-focused techniques that consider how people are positioned by various histories, power relations, and discourses to act in particular ways, to supplement the existing athlete-focused techniques. Some strands of sport psychology research have begun to consider social factors, and thus offer an opportunity to augment how current holistic sport psychology consultants are designing their techniques. For example, practicing consultants could look to the positive youth development literature which suggests better coaching strategies (e.g., Camiré, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard, 2011), or to the cultural sport psychology literature around cultural praxis (e.g., Ryba, 2013) for ideas on how to create new environment-focused practices, though they do not directly consider disciplinary power's effects on athlete experiences.

Excitingly, research on how to work alongside a coach to assist them in problematizing and changing their dominant practices has already commenced and as such may also be a valuable resource for practicing consultants (e.g., Kindrachuk, 2018; Watson, 2018). By creating environment-focused techniques to address which knowledge guides coaches' practices and subsequently how coaches interact with athletes, sport psychology consultants can begin to create a sport environment that is less disciplinary and more supportive of athletes' holistic development. In this way, consultants can avoid the ironic practice of treating the symptoms of athletes' issues without working to identify the deeper cause, by instead acknowledging how "sometimes, the problem at its fundamental level is not the athlete alone, but the interactions of the athletes with coaches, parents, and the sport itself" (Corlett, 1996, p. 90).

It is important to note that as other holistic sport psychology techniques outlined in Friesen & Orlick (2011) were not included in my study, further research should be conducted to explore how they are affected by discipline. Additionally, as my study

included the experience of younger, or more developmental athletes, further research is needed to explore how older or more high-performance athletes' experiences may differ. In any circumstance, sport psychology practices should depend on the disciplinary context and the needs of the athletes if they are to be effective in promoting holistic development. Ultimately, we need to have an awareness of athletes as active social entities operating within a discursively formed environment should we desire to meaningfully impact their holistic development through holistic sport psychology techniques. Otherwise, how can we claim to "understand, assist, and support the development of the whole person" (Friesen & Orlick, 2010, p. 228) without considering every force that impacts said person – said differently, how can we claim to help athletes develop holistically if we do not consider their holistic experiences?

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