

Original Research

Coaching for Development: Generating Social Impact through Improved Emotional Wellbeing

Ross Walker

Faculty of Health, Sport and Society, University of Stirling, Scotland, UK

*Corresponding author email: ross.walker1@stir.ac***ABSTRACT**

Coaches are key influencers and enablers helping determine the experiences and extent of participants' development from sport. Yet, limited information exists which documents nuanced, relational, and embodied coaching processes occurring in day-to-day situations that can lead to transformative change in localized sport settings. Through focusing on Blaze Basketball Club and the team's coaching practices, this article outlines and discusses how the organization intentionally coaches for developmental outcomes, particularly improved emotional wellbeing. Overall, the article calls for a paradigm shift from sport's traditional sport-for-sports-sake model to sport-for-development coaching methods serving the developmental needs and desires of people and communities. The findings highlight the importance of organizations and teams establishing clear purposes, coaching methodologies and coaching strategies which align with participants' needs and learning mechanisms. In support, the research provides guidelines comprising ten-steps and a series of real-life examples and personal reflections to help direct practitioners towards coaching for more intentional social impact. More purposeful social impact is achieved through tailored coaching sessions considering broader circumstances influencing participants within and out with the sporting ecosystem before focusing on establishing connections and relationships between participants and coaches. It is lastly rendered through employing middle-ground developmental approaches such as the Rule of Three.

INTRODUCTION

Within sport-for-development (SFD), "sport coaches" (Schulenkorf, 2017) or "boundary spanners" (Jeanes et al., 2019), "educators" (Spaaij et al., 2016), "instructors" (Lyras & Peachey, 2011), "peer leaders" (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012) and "practitioners" (Debognies et al., 2019), determine the

extent participants' grow. Given SFD relies on coaches, coaches' characteristics and competences must be properly developed (Lyle, 2010). Yet, within SFD coach education, training content is sparingly understood, embraced and implemented, often overlooked in SFD programs (Wright et al., 2018). Furthermore, contemporary practitioners experience difficulties applying SFD's complex, theoretically driven frameworks to real-life scenarios without sufficient examples or explanations to replicate (Peachey et al., 2019a; Van der Veken et al., 2022; Zipp et al., 2019). Issues emanate from SFD literature documenting programs overall or SFD generally (Svensson & Woods, 2017; Whitley et al., 2019). While some investigations focus on initiatives' purpose or outcomes and practitioner's actions, study's fail to record processes applied in-between, connecting program's social purpose to outcomes (Means & Nauright, 2008; Peachey et al., 2018). Thus, limited research outlines real-world SFD coaching applications whilst minimal literature on SFD coaching exists (van Putten, 2025). Resultantly, sizable gaps remain between scholarship-SFD (Cornelissen, 2011; Peachey et al., 2019b), necessitating research with practical capabilities SFD practitioners can understand, adopt and adapt to generate social impact (sportanddev.org, 2025).

Given SFD's limited funding and constrained resources, more simplified, cost-effective and proven, transferable strategies advancing SFD are required (Lindsey, 2017; sportanddev.org, 2025). Practical-based research must explore nuanced, relational, and embodied coaching processes occurring in day-to-day situations that expedite transformative local change (Seal & Sherry, 2018). The ensuing study answers Svensson et al. (2023) call to advance SFD through exploring individual models for building inclusive practices and organisational resilience by outlining innovative SFD approaches, delivery models and organisational structures, modernizing how social impact is rendered. Furthermore, it responds to Svensson et al. (2025)

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who discuss SFD's failures to date, particularly how SFD accounts lack transparency around organizational practices. Svensson et al. (2025) subsequently requested more critically grounded studies considering challenging circumstances SFD programs face alongside complex social issues individual entities address. With SFD underperforming (sportanddev.org, 2025; Svensson et al., 2025), SFD requires direct development frameworks to advance (Coalter, 2013) with capability approach (CA) proposed as one theory (Dao & Smith, 2019; Svensson & Levine, 2017). Given the current gaps in literature and practice alongside the need for research documenting SFD coaching practices, this study's intent and scope entails a honed, qualitative account of one Scottish community sport club's coaching strategies.

Focusing on Blaze Basketball Club, this article documents the process of how staff intentionally coach for development whilst outlining the approaches rationale and providing real-life, transferable examples evidencing strategies practical application. For Blaze, developmental outcomes entail improved participant emotional wellbeing (hereafter labelled wellbeing) with mental health identified by the government and club as the local community's main social issue (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021). While evidence highlighting short-term participant wellbeing improvements are incorporated, this is a presupposition, requiring Blaze to substantiate how participant's life qualities benefit long-term beyond sport. The aim and contribution alike outlines Blaze's industry applied coaching strategies key principles. This is important because UK and other countries' sport coaching requires certification and licensing, yet traditional coach education does not train practitioners on coaching SFD. Thus, practices discussed were developed by Blaze. Furthermore, findings outline themes underpinning how staff adapt, develop and deliver coaching strategies generating non-sporting outcomes. While results provide insights for developing SFD coaching mechanisms tailored to participant's wellbeing needs, the tenets are transferrable to other social issues for community and professional coaches to create personalized frameworks for respective organizations and participants. The research subsequently helps entities with limited budgets optimize initiatives' efficiency and maximize non-sporting outcomes through heightened social impact via outlining cost-effective coaching mechanisms. If supported, the coaching mechanisms could provide foundations for a model transforming SFD programming, subsequently manifesting Coalter (2013) through generating practical guidelines embodying a sport-plus model; intentional approaches specifically addressing social issues.

This qualitative analysis bridges theory with practice

through merging practical examples from Blaze's basketball programming with Sen's (1999) CA and SFD literature (Coalter, 2013; van Putten, 2025) to inform the SFD coaching processes. Sen's (1999) CA was chosen because it is defined as a framework specifically evaluating human development and wellbeing. CA has underpinned the United Nation's Human Development Reports since the 1990s and been effectively applied to Scotland (Brunner & Watson, 2015; Walker, 2025) alongside SFD (Dao & Darnell, 2021; Dao & Smith, 2019; Darnell & Dao, 2017; Zipp et al., 2019). In covering CA, development and wellbeing, the study adopts the World Health Organization's (2005) term for wellbeing: 'a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (p. 2). This aligns with Blaze's wellbeing definition, reflecting participant's emotional state and the club's role in helping people navigate personal issues (Wright, 2021a). Sen's (1999) CA supplements these terms, defining wellbeing based on freedoms and opportunities people have available to achieve improved life qualities and understands them through someone's present and future capabilities. Thus, in this research, development involves processes expanding human capabilities and freedoms (Sen, 1999).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Capability, Coaching and Sport-for-Development

An argument for CA's role in SFD and coaching is that sport builds capabilities and CA helps practitioners understand the development process (Walker, 2025). CA argues that wellbeing should be measured and addressed through individual's capabilities and overall development (Sen, 1999). People's capability are alternative combinations of freedoms necessary to reach desired lifestyles (Sen, 1999). Capability sets comprise multiple functioning vectors (individual capabilities) people select when needed (Sen, 1999). These beliefs, characteristics, lessons, skills and traits can be derived from sport with coaches expediting people's development (Van der Veken et al., 2022) through coaching practices purposefully developing non-sporting outcomes (Walker, 2023). Functionings are components people value being or doing, including active community participation or being healthy (Sen, 1999) and are connected to sport such as owning a bike and being able to ride it (Svensson & Levine, 2017). CA's evaluative focus is realised functionings (what people can do) or the capability (people's real opportunities) (Sen, 1999). This necessitates in-depth knowledge of local sporting contexts at micro, meso, and macro-levels

(Svensson & Levine, 2017) with people developed from the ground-level up within their socio-political-economic settings (Brunner & Watson, 2015). Doing so determines the extent capabilities can be enacted and tailored approaches created to heighten social impact (Coalter, 2013; Sen, 1999). Thus, individual success alongside wellbeing's evaluation reflects people's respective environments and available opportunities (Sen, 1999).

Sen (1999) connects CA, SFD and coaching by advocating that development is heightened through learning by doing. Subsequently, SFD embodies CA through its motivations likewise seeking to improve people and community's life qualities (Kidd, 2008). SFD, a community interventionist strategy employed to achieve non-sporting goals within life's cultural, educational, health-related, psychological, and social aspects (Schulenkorf et al., 2016a) thus manifests CA. SFD's aim: connect with change agents such as coaches; embed participatory approaches in program foundations and evaluations; extend intervention engagement; integrate sporting activities into development proceedings; establish safe spaces; and empower local communities to continue programs after initial completion (Schulenkorf et al., 2016b). Basketball is used depending on targeted groups interest, catalyzing conversations and implementing solutions to achieve positive social impact through addressing localized problems (Banda & Gultresa, 2015). Social impact stems from effective coach-participant relationships rendering attitude and behavioural alterations (Volskis et al., 2020). Within SFD, coaches operate as mentors, teachers and critical supporters (Gould & Voelker, 2010), generating non-sporting outcomes through building capabilities which emanate from effective coaching (Van der Veken et al., 2022). Therefore, SFD is a model, and coaches the key instigators for practically applying CA (Walker, 2025).

Given CA's normative nature and potential to improve SFD programming, CA is currently utilized as a theoretical framework explaining, exploring and promoting positive development, ideologies and SFD practices (Dao & Darnell, 2021; Dao & Smith, 2019; Darnell & Dao, 2017; Jarvie & Ahrens, 2019; Zipp et al., 2019). Human and community building through sport is a live agenda with social impact its greatest humanitarian contribution, especially for people and areas requiring social change (Brunner & Watson, 2015). CA helps broaden SFD into people-centric and context specific processes, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches hindering SFD programs impact (Svensson & Levine, 2017). Identical to SFD, CA advocates holistic, societally and culturally sensitive development methodologies based on local norms and needs identified by individuals and communities (Robeyns, 2005; Walker,

2025). CA also highlights how practitioners must develop comprehensive and contextualized understanding assessing wellbeing in sport (Svensson & Levine, 2017). Additionally, more research bridging CA with practice to increase its application in real world contexts is required (Suzuki, 2017; Svensson & Levine, 2017).

For SFD, integrating CA within programs ethically guides coaches to better empower and understand participants (Silva & Howe, 2012). Similarly, to SFD pleas for future research (Seal & Sherry, 2018; Svensson et al., 2023; Svensson et al., 2025), CA encourages coaches to consider nuances and influences directly and indirectly impacting people alongside sporting practices employed before determining whether plans meet participants' needs and expand capabilities (Rossi & Jeanes, 2018). With CA criticized for relative vagueness and difficulty for practitioners to identify and prioritize individual capabilities to develop (Alkire, 2005; Gasper, 2007), new research must outline existing practices focusing on individual social issues (Svensson & Levine, 2017). This study fulfils this theoretical-practical gap by focusing on wellbeing. However, the research acknowledges sport's detrimental nature with 75% of British children experiencing emotionally harmful behaviour ranging from bullying, disrespect and humiliation, mainly by male participants and coaches (Stafford et al., 2013). Such findings reflect requirements for improved SFD coaching systems sensitive to people's wellbeing (Walker, 2023).

With CA-SFD seeking developmental outcomes in complex ecosystems, SFD requires knowledgeable coaches who can deliver effective, development intended coaching sessions (Coalter, 2013; Van der Veken et al., 2022). This need reflects SFD's longstanding failure whereby coaches do not coach for intentional outcomes, resultantly limiting participant's development and program sustainability (Wright et al., 2016). While some coach education programs help practitioners prepare and motivate coaches to coach for social impact, the issue remains the extent coaches change their coaching style from sport-for-sport-sake to SFD (Wright et al., 2018). The extent coaching practices shift depends on the program's respective culture alongside the individual coach's personal backgrounds (LeCrom & Dwyer, 2013). Additionally, it stems from insufficient coach education properly directing, supporting and teaching coaches about SFD practices (van Putten, 2025). To enable coaches and enhance social impact, more elaborate research around ideal SFD coaching strategies are required (Van der Veken et al., 2022; Wegner et al., 2022).

BACKGROUND

Boroughmuir Blaze Basketball Club

Formed in 1961 in Edinburgh as Boroughmuir, Blaze competes in domestic, national and international tournaments and were previously British-Scottish champions (Walker, 2023). In 2011, Blaze's focus from sport-for-sports-sake to SFD changed through partnering with basketballscotland (Scottish basketball's national federation) and Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association to acquire a £1-per-year twenty-five-year lease from Edinburgh Council for The Craggs Community Centre (Reid, 2016). The objective: centralizing its resident's and community's development (Sutherland, 2012). To formalise the new ethos and establish the organization's social-cultural parameters, Blaze merged with The Craggs Community Centre, transitioning into 'We Play Together' in 2021. Since merging, WPT became an open-access wellbeing hub, defining success through positive impacting people's lives (Places for People Scotland, 2019; WPT, 2022). Today, Blaze delivers basketball to over 1,150 people from twenty-seven registered ethnic backgrounds across 4,296 hours annually (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021). Among competitive, recreational and social avenues, Blaze provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and physical capabilities from school camps to wheelchair sessions (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021).

Overseeing club operations, Blaze has ten voluntary trustees, five full-time, salaried employees and numerous volunteers which annually fluctuate (Actify, 2020c). Helping create the club's wellbeing culture and train staff, alongside coaches undertaking coaching qualification courses, Blaze conduct coach education practices including: coaching catchups (coaches discuss how to improve practices based on individual-group needs); coach review sessions (coaches observe other coaches training sessions, taking notes and providing constructive feedback); coach mentorship (senior coaches nurture less experienced coaches within Blaze's system); working groups to discuss approaches supporting coach development; and mental health first aid training (understanding wellbeing needs to help develop wellbeing coaching strategies) (Actify, 2020a; Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019a; Poacher, 2021). Blaze was selected because the club's coaching practices are currently advancing Scotland's national sport agency, SportScotland's (2019), *Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity* policy. Both entities and their strategies were developed to improve people and community's life qualities through sport with Blaze leading a step-change for Scottish community-based sport programming (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021). Additionally, with Wright et al. (2018) stating that few coaches currently employ SFD

mechanisms, this provided limited samples to glean insights; hence, focusing on one club.

METHODS

Positionality

The author formerly coached and played basketball but is no longer active. While involved in Scottish basketball, the researcher was unconnected to Blaze. Given the author's background, the researcher followed Elias' (2007) involvement-detachment theory to remove oneself and re-evaluate Blaze open-mindedly, devoid of internalized consciousness, allowing data to emerge freely. To generate objective insights, sensitizing methodological mechanisms, specifically interpretivism and triangulation were selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Methods developed by alternative people and organizations such as audio-visuals and documents were prioritized when relaying results, reducing the researcher's involvement in data collection processes and minimizing their influence on results. With most materials utilized were publicly available, no formal agreement was established with Blaze for conducting the research. Excessive involvement from Blaze risked obfuscating or swaying outcomes in favourable directions when an impartial investigation was sought.

Design

The research adopts interpretivist-qualitative methodology. Interpretivism enables social realities and subjective meanings experienced by researchers to be understood and developed organically with the investigator's role to interpret findings as data emerges (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Whereas qualitative research generates multi-faceted and multi-layered knowledge of issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). When paired with qualitative methodology, interpretivism generates in-depth investigations of individuals and communities anchored in real-life contexts whilst drawing on social-related phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) such as basketball and community organizations. Together, interpretivist-qualitative research adds to interpretations rigor (Gratton & Jones, 2014) through enabling focused explanations alongside diverging data analysis and collection opportunities (Mason et al., 2005). The subsequent article was constructed to make results more conducive with different stakeholders' needs, thereby having greater susceptibility for enactment, through bridging theory with practice and answering the following research questions:

1. How do Blaze Basketball Club coach to improve people's emotional wellbeing?

2. What are Blaze Basketball Club's emotional wellbeing coaching strategies main principles?

Data Collection

Data collection aligns with, was informed by and supplements Rowe et al. (2019) research utilizing document analysis, albeit recommending all available materials recording clubs. Results provide insights from personnel aged 14–87 with 1–75 years' experience of administering, coaching, observing, participating and volunteering in community, international and professional basketball and sport in Scotland alongside other countries including America, England and Egypt. Given Blaze's community nature, many people assume multiple roles. For example, some trustees also coach whilst administrators, coaches and employed staff are former participants and now parents. To protect members' identities while upholding ethical agreements with some desiring anonymity, where opinions are offered, labels reflecting their role such as Coach Developer are provided. The rationale for not sharing personal details stemmed from the small, community ecosystem and participant's identifiability alongside Blaze's confidentiality agreements protecting members personal information due mental health's sensitivity. The study was constructed over two-years (June 2021–2023) to ensure sufficient depth in and saturation of data through consulting all existing materials. Due to the contemporary coronavirus pandemic and government restrictions alongside Blaze's community-grassroots focus, working with vulnerable groups including people with disabilities and children, research was conducted online. To collect data, sequentially ordered methods were utilised (Levitt et al., 2018).

The first approach obtained information from documents analysis (Frey, 2018). Document analysis gathered preliminary data contextualizing the overall study and enriching the organizational context whilst informing other methods such as semi-structured interview questions whilst helping understand topics discussed in each method. Documents were publicly available online via Blaze's website and search engines such as google. Materials comprised organizational reports and annual reviews, located through searching "basketball" and "Scotland" paired with one of the following keywords: "Boroughmuir", "Blaze", "Edinburgh" and "We Play Together". With searches returning 146 records, selection processes involved consulting every relevant source to Blaze before including or discarding. To avoid only including materials published by Blaze, entailing overly positive representations about the club, the process also screened for personal bias. Documents produced by external personnel or organizations were prioritized to mitigate any superficial results. The inclusion criteria were defined by the source's relevancy to

Blaze's coaching strategies. Through this process, two internal organizational reviews (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021; WPT, 2022) were integrated in the results and one newspaper (Sutherland, 2012) article provided background context. Fewer materials documenting Blaze represents the team's community nature with WTP lacking media attention more popular and professional sport franchises receive. However, sources utilized add value through providing details about Blaze's programming from sessions offered to participant and staff experiences; albeit all positive.

The second method gleaned insights from forty-four audio-visuals (online interviews/podcasts); (Billups, 2019). This study follows CA-SFD studies embedding this approach, and which proved successful, especially when investigating community organizations in smaller sporting contexts (Walker, 2025). Similarly, to document analysis, audio-visuals were publicly available, evaluated through identical search criteria and accessed through external online platforms, mainly Actify, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and YouTube. Having listened to the audio-visual to determine its relevance and inclusion, Microsoft 365's automatic transcription software transcribed its content. While searches discovered forty-four audio-visuals, data was incorporated from twenty-seven as not all materials were relevant. Overall, five coaches, twenty-two participants and one staff member at Blaze alongside three external partners and four parents informed the findings. Insights from the remaining sixteen audio-visuals contextualized Blaze's broader club ecosystem, wellbeing support and participant experiences. Whereas those incorporated (see reference list), predominantly comprised sport coaching podcasts such as The Coaching Culture Podcast. These podcasters, often sport coaches, interviewed Blaze's coaches due to their expertise and innovative ideas while other audio-visuals involved broader staff members such as Blaze's Wellbeing Manager. Conversations covered Blaze's coaching strategies, experiences and rationale. Similarly, public webinars through Actify involved practitioners across different sports and organizations; albeit discussions led by Blaze to educate other practitioners on club strategies. While beneficially providing broad ranging perspectives from diverse people involved with Blaze, challenges entailed mitigating internal club bias with concerns audio-visuals were promotional. To minimize this susceptibility, audio-visuals developed by external individuals and organizations were prioritized over internally constructed organizational sources. This method provided rich, in-depth information because podcasts were not constructed for research purposes, meaning Blaze's interviewees provided more transparent accounts.

The third approach collected data from six semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). While a small sample size, the number aligns with other community sport investigations conducting four (McMahon & Skytt-Larsen, 2021), eight (Wright et al., 2016) and nine interviews (Millar & Doherty, 2018). Interviewees were selected with purposive sampling (Neuman, 2014), involving people, past and present, who assumed multiple club roles (administrators/chair/coaches/participants/trustees), to provide holistic insights. Interviewees included one chair, three coaches/trustees and two external partners from basketballscotland who support Blaze's programming. No eligibility criteria were required because while interviewing influential staff offered knowledgeable insights, the study needed to ascertain whether coaching strategies were understood by everyone regardless of experience. In community settings, all staff directly impact participant's wellbeing and deliver sessions embedding club approaches. Interviewees were recruited through emailing Blaze to gauge interest. Staff interested replied by outlining their availability. Further interviews were not undertaken because the interviewees entailed only those who volunteered with people already donating significant time, but also because community clubs have less staff. Before interviews commenced, participants were informed the research was confidential, participation voluntary, and they could withdraw any time (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Oral and written consent was obtained prior to the interview. Interviews were undertaken via Microsoft Teams, lasting between 50-90 minutes on average and were transcribed afterwards. Collating data before conducting interviews helped devise an interview guide compiling thirty-eight open-ended questions entailing: "What approach(s) do Blaze Basketball Club take towards the delivery of basketball sessions?" and "Does everyone associated with Blaze Basketball Club support the approach(s)?" Questions focused on the broader organizational-team environment, coaching strategies, participant experiences, and the system's strengths and weaknesses. The open-ended approach ensured parity across all methods, allowing for data extraction based on personal opinions. Interviews consolidated information gleaned from audio-visuals and documents.

Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis synthesized data (Braun & Clarke, 2021), complimenting interpretivist-qualitative research by enabling insights to emerge from data and the researcher to thematically categorize results. The analysis followed Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-step process: familiarization; coding; generating themes; reviewing themes; defining; and naming themes; and writing up

research. This framework identified explicit and implicit trends from data while comparing sources through utilizing ciphers which improved patterns, established themes and provided contextual meaning (Terry et al., 2017). In applying reflexive thematic analysis, one round of open coding was completed and established themes. Open coding was undertaken through labelling recurring themes and highlighting the main points within themes which were found consistently across the three methods. Examples of specific themes entailed connections and relationships.

Employing Braun & Clarke's (2006) six steps enabled diverse insights into Blaze and developed the study's final themes. It connected the data to Sen's (1999) CA alongside SFD literature through grouping coded information and Sen's (1999) tenets (agency/breadth, conversion, collective capability and pragmatism, individualism, multi-dimensionalism and pathways, opportunity and choice, and rights) under eight headings which formed the final four thematic areas. Data analysis revealed links between Sen's (1999) theoretical framework, SFD literature (Coalter, 2013; Seal & Sherry, 2018) and Blaze's practical coaching strategies, mainly the need for constructing clear, intentional strategies for development processes. One example found Blaze's coaching approach was reinforced by Coalter (2013) and Sen's (1999) priority of basing development strategies on individual-community needs, building towards broader social outcomes whilst including participants in program construction.

To ensure information's credibility, transferability and address data collections limitations, the study followed Smith & McGannon's (2017) guidance for developing rigor in qualitative research. With concerns existing around materials potential bias, two quality assurance measures were undertaken. Triangulation involved comparing primary and secondary data across the research methods (Flick, 2018). Whereas member checking was undertaken with participants through returning transcripts and sections of results to verify the findings and ensure interpretations reflected participant experiences (McKim, 2023). Member checking also involved cross validating all materials by contrasting different people's opinions, ensuring data shared were congruous and the findings not skewed by one single method, participant perspective or researcher. For example, table 2 and 3 incorporate data extracted from all methods, and echo similar outcomes. Any uncertainties which arose led to information's removal. While each method was considered equally, more information was drawn from audio-visuals due to the greater quantity and quality existing, albeit interviewees overall barely discussed negativities about club approaches due to the team's small ecosystem. Subsequently, discrepant data discussing

negatives was included because all coaching experiences are different whilst negative insights helped address concerns around superficial results.

RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes and defines the research's eight overarching themes:

Table 1.

Results Summary

Key Themes	Meaning
Intentionality	Deliberate and purposefully designed activities, approaches, practices and sessions which work towards achieving desired and improved emotional wellbeing outcomes.
Person-Centred	Programs must be delivered by people who unilaterally support the clear aims of the organization and designed based on the individual and collective needs and desires of participants.
Holism	Practices developed based on insights drawn from considerations of the broader internal (participant relationships) and external factors (family-home circumstances) influencing people and communities emotional wellbeing)
Multi-Dimensionalism	Practices and strategies involving different layers and multiple dimensions (an activity/activities or drill/drills which require and work on different skills simultaneously and subsequently generates a diverse range of non-sporting outcomes).
Individualism	Practices tailored to an individual or groups' development stage in life (children, adolescents, adults, etc).
Collectivism	Facilitating non-sporting outcomes across groups and even entire club or program ecosystems through prioritizing the development of connections and relationships between participants, and staff-participants.
Agency	Providing opportunities to allow each individual and group to bring about change in their own life according to their own objectives and desires, but also through their own means and actions.
Pragmatism	The use of approaches and strategies based on the proven effectiveness of their practical application.

Note. Table 1 entails a summary of the eight overarching principles highlighted in the results: Intentionality; Person-Centred; Holism; Multi-Dimensionalism; Individualism; Collectivism; Agency; and Pragmatism.

Intentional, Person-Centred Approach

Data analysis across all methods highlights how social impact at Blaze is rendered through intentional programming targeting non-sporting outcomes. For example, one coach in an interview discussed how coaches share practice ideas and review each other's sessions plans collaboratively through a coach WhatsApp group. One coaches' podcast discussion outlined Blaze's fundamental coaching principle: "We can be really intentional...within our coaching...in a way that creates the kinds of behaviours which lead to social cohesion, but we have to be deliberate about it." (Wright, 2021b)

Based on data from all methods, Blaze's coaching strategies embed three components: recognizing wellbeing is influenced by multiple factors; realizing wellbeing's viable outcomes are often overestimated within refined time frames (Blaze's average members attend one-two times weekly); and coaches acknowledging when they cause wellbeing problems. One coach on a podcast reported how wellbeing issues arise when coaches prioritize performance results, creating unhealthy environments with people forced to survive sporting systems or drop-out (Wright, 2021b). Yet, data drawn from across all methods recognized that equilibrium between basketball and social elements must co-exist. For example, one interviewee discussed how Blaze selects specific role models to reinforce positive destinations and mindsets to participants. Rather than choosing renown players, Blaze advocates all-round athletes like Lebron James who places himself at social justice's forefront because as one coach explained during a podcast, these individuals are more relatable to members facing similar issues (Wright, 2021b). This strategy prompts participants to think about the person rather than the athlete. This example reflects Blaze's coaching approach which was explained on multiple public webinars for other practitioners to replicate whereby through flipping sport's traditional components, Blaze advocates a person-needs-centred, community driven approach: non-sporting outcomes come first with performance results sitting secondary; connection first, activity-level second, and skills third; alongside prioritizing coaching's who and why factors over sport's common how and what approach (Actify, 2020a; Actify, 2020e; Actify, 2020f; Blaze Basketball Club, 2021). Blaze's Coach Developer explained the approach on a podcast:

Every time I walk into a gym... I go in there with the mindset that I'm not the expert in that room...The experts are the people in front of me because I now have to shape that environment. I have to run that practice based on what they're capable to do, not what I want them to do...because

there can be a massive gap in disparity between those two things which often leads to confusion, frustration and ultimately a lack of progress. (Norbury, 2021)

As Blaze staff reported in interviews and one discussed during a podcast, understanding people’s needs and learning mechanisms helps shift participants’ dependencies from coaches to individual’s independence (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019a). Based on their experience, Blaze’s Coach Developer stated on a podcast that failure to align coaching with people’s current capabilities can stunt growth and spark wellbeing declinations (Gromer, 2022a). An online interview conducted by basketballscotland (2020c) with one coach stated this altruistic onus “is what keeps me going”. At sessions, audio-visual and interviews highlighted how among various attributes, coaches intentionally develop: confidence; emotional intelligence (self-aware/self-managing/socially aware/socially managing); effective communicators; capable decisionmakers; good listeners; motivation; initiative; perseverance; resilience; robustness; and self-sufficiency (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019a; O’Sullivan, 2018; Pilz, 2020; Wright, 2021a). Through participants developing soft skills supporting wellbeing improvements leading to emotional stability, one coach on a podcast discussed how they found members become better equipped to respond to negative wellbeing stimuli such as failure due to increased resiliency (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019a). One senior coach on a podcast explained this approach's value, discussing how non-sporting traits occur before and after sporting skills because to score a basket, pass the ball or dribble, people must decide when to do so and manage emotions afterwards (Toure, 2020). Whereas staff in interviews and podcasts highlighted how inability to handle emotions negatively affect others alongside organisational culture leading to member’s increased dropouts (Latif, 2020).

Holism and Multi-Dimensionalism

Data across all methods revealed that generating social impact involves considering participant’s broader circumstances. Holism helps develop baseline knowledge informing practice selection and directing practice adaptations towards specific non-sporting outcomes. Reflecting on their coaching experiences on a podcast, one coach stated:

In my experiences with coaches, we don’t go far enough with understanding who I coach. So, going beyond the physical and the skill attributes, thinking about the context those participants come from, what are they facing in their daily lives...going back to after our training sessions and what human needs does that generate. Not athlete

needs...For example, do they have a strong need for connection? (Wright, 2021b)

Blaze coaches believe holistic, proactive and multi-dimensional practice planning is essential for achieving non-sporting outcomes (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2020a). Coaches discussed on a webinar how before basketball sessions commence, Blaze pursue participants’ problems and identify group needs through observing attendee’s behaviour or body language before taking notes and communicating observations with necessary personnel (Actify, 2020b). Problems comprise external circumstances (educational/occupation/personal) and/or internal factors (injuries/loss of confidence). By noting issues on training session plans, coaches pinpoint people to connect with, messages to convey and questions to ask surrounding straight-forward wellbeing inquiries:

Table 2.

Blaze Basketball Club’s Coach-Participant Communication Mechanisms for Improving Participant’s Emotional Wellbeing

Step	Conversational Stage	Conversation Style	Blaze Basketball Club’s Communication Mechanisms and Topics (Coaches Voices)	Rationale	Participant/Parent Feedback on Blaze Basketball Club’s Approach to Supporting Emotional Wellbeing
1	Introductory (Establishing foundations for preliminary connections and relationship building)	Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How are you doing?” • “What’s up with you?” • “Hey, what’s going on with you?” 	All conversations are undertaken with a view to resolving internal and external issues. The underlying point involves asking participants to explain their feelings to allow coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We laugh a lot and it’s incredibly supportive” • “I really enjoy playing for Blaze. I think it’s a really good community feel.”
2	Inter-personal (Once a connection and relationship has been established between participant-coach)	Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hey, university semester is about to start soon, what are you studying this year?” 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s fun and everyone is nice here.” • “My daughter ... wouldn’t miss coming to The Crags for anything...When

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What are your plans for the future?” 	to understand the participant and allow coaches to help address and/or resolve participant’s problems.	[she] came home from her one-to-one or group meetings she was always happy and full of life, she became more confident in herself.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You offer an absolutely positive environment for the kids.” • “The support that each of the players and the coaches and the volunteers have for each other is more than I can describe.”
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Note. Table 2 outlines Blaze Basketball Club’s coach-participant communication mechanisms for improving participant’s emotional wellbeing, denoting two conversational stages, one conversational style (informal), examples of questions, the rationale and feedback from participants and parents about the club’s approach. (Adapted from Interviews; basketballscotland, 2020a; basketballscotland, 2022; Blaze, 2021; SportScotland, 2020; WPT, 2022; Wright, 2021b).

As one coach outlined during a podcast, participant engagement does not require expertise, rather informal conversational styles alongside messages and actions of positive reinforcement such as fist bumps (Wright, 2021b). When delivering sessions, addressing broader influences early helps participants continue reaping sports’ developmental outcomes. Through assuaging external issues, people partake without fearing failure through improved wellbeing stemming from increased confidence and satisfaction with themselves and the surrounding ecosystem (Gromer, 2022a). One coach’s podcast statement reflected the approaches outcome:

A player with good mental wellbeing is likely to become more confident, more committed, a better decision-maker...If you treat people properly...and if people are happy and comfortable, then they will stay and continue their development further rather than dropping out. (Wright, 2021b)

Insights from all methods highlight how this approach

stems from coaches recognizing people cannot fully concentrate, apply themselves or maximize outcomes until external issues are discussed or addressed. If not quickly supported, coaches during interviews expressed how issues negatively impact broader training environments alongside other attendees. As Blaze’s Coach Developer outlined on a podcast, traditional coaching forces people to ignore wider issues, harming participant’s wellbeing when sport and wellbeing can co-exist (Gromer, 2022a). Explaining this point further, Blaze’s Coach Developer stated this is because participants are persons with different life circumstances, necessitating increased coach awareness and understanding (Gromer, 2022a). Yet, coaches need not undertake further training, but understand participants and coaches are people first. During an interview, one coach provided an example around a negative wellbeing issue coaches supported through person-first approaches: “I once had a discussion with a player who used to come to the women’s pick-up session and was thinking about going into the senior women’s team...but she was a bit anxious about how they would treat her.”

Following conversations with the Senior Women Team’s Coach, the coach adapted sessions, creating an inclusive environment focusing on drills generating participant-participant connections, helping her overcome her anxiety and join the team. Building environments putting people first, coaches found they nurture elements facilitating better and faster development as opposed to putting winning or performance first because sport involves significant mistakes (Gromer, 2022a). With one coach on a podcast admitting they previously avoided wellbeing conversations over personal fears, staff realized that deliberately and proactively planning connections earlier saves everyone unnecessary negative emotions, making positive differences (Wright, 2021b).

Individualism and Collectivism

To incorporate individualism and collectivism whilst balancing coach support, coaches on a public webinar discussed the weekly in-person and online mindfulness sessions:

We’ve been starting with a mindfulness practice at the beginning of every one of our team calls. The guys are talking you through a minute’s meditation or exercise. It’s just amazing!...We’ve got groups of coaches meditating for three minutes at the beginning of zoom calls. They’re talking about having this mindful minute at the beginning and/or the end of their sessions. (Actify, 2020a)

In an online interview, Blaze’s Wellbeing Manager explained Blaze use mindfulness to help people improve wellbeing through momentarily forgetting life’s issues with practices flexible and adaptable to different contexts and live sessions (Blaze, 2019). During sessions, staff educate participants on important wellbeing topics. From Blaze’s (2021) *Impact Report*, one example involved learning to savour moments with discussions entailing differences between formal and informal practices alongside labelling. Another saw participants’ silently warm-up, focusing on bodily feelings (Actify, 2020e). During a webinar, staff mentioned how taking notice and self-awareness made members, particularly youth, more comfortable discussing growth mindsets (Actify, 2020a). This openness for personal growth underpins Blaze’s tailored coaching practices:

Table 3.

Blaze Basketball Club’s Training Mechanisms for Improving Participant’s Emotional Wellbeing

Demographic	Blaze Basketball Club’s Training Mechanisms (Coaches Voices)	Blaze Basketball Club’s Coach Reflections on Training Mechanisms
Children	“Instead of playing a warmup game where players would usually tap their teammates to signal it’s their turn to play, they might be encouraged to talk rather than tap which helps improve communication and build relationships. Where kids used to rate being fast and tall as the most important attributes for a good basketball player, they now rate values such as friendship, kindness, and mindfulness as being more important in making a champion player.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It’s a programme and a style of delivering basketball which really focuses on...better wellbeing. So, we want to break down each of those concepts and deliver them to...have a positive impact on their [participant’s] wellbeing whilst using basketball as the mechanism.”
Adolescents	“Any warm-up activity that involves the players being in contact with each other they seem to really enjoy, particularly young men because they’re scared of that. This masculine culture where you can’t hug your...closest friend but not just the guy you see a couple times a week. We do warm-up activities with contact just fun stuff like you have to stand on one foot opposite another person and you’re allowed to push each other with one finger.	

	You’re trying to push the other person off balance with one finger and there’s contact and the players are literally falling over themselves laughing and meanwhile they’re working...balance.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I’m really enjoying this way of coaching because I think it helps our guys off the court as much as it does on the court, and I think also...the skillset we’re giving them of effective communication, how to build relationships, how to interact...and be intentional in every moment. Teaching them those skills I think carry into the classroom and hopefully carry into their professional lives.”
Adults	“We finish every practice with “Our Usual Walk” [and] by saying: “right guys, grab somebody, off you go”. Maybe we give a topic, maybe we leave it loose sometimes. We literally just walk up and down the court for three minutes or so, baseline to baseline, just having a chat about anything we want...Last night this young man told me all about the pressures of university and how...he’s really stressed. The week before one player decided that we should talk about our goals in life, and I had a wonderful conversation with this young man where he told me about his plans for him and his partner and what they want with their futures. It’s literally thirty seconds after an intense, two hours, full on, competitive practice...I’m learning how powerful this is at creating a culture of ‘we care about people’. There’s a practical example about how to put people first and create connections cause we’re not talking about basketball...It’s wonderful. You pick a different person after every practice...Our Usual Walk is one of the most enjoyable parts of the	
	practice for me because I’m engaging with people. People are letting me into their lives and they’re making me feel special because they make me feel valued, needed, wanted, respected because they listen to what I asked them to do, but that’s a two-way process...It might sound a bit cliché, but I genuinely mean that it’s down to the relationships that I get to build.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We want everyone to feel included, to feel valued because they are.” The coaching is everything to We Play Together and it’s not only related to basketball, but also to real-life problems... it’s more about trying to build this family.”

Note. Table 3 documents examples of Blaze Basketball Club’s training mechanisms for improving participant’s emotional wellbeing based on the people’s developmental stages in life (children, adolescents and adults) alongside coaches’ reflections on the overall practices and club approach. (Adapted from Interviews, Actify (2020d), basketballscotland, (2020b), Gromer, (2022b), Latif, (2020); Places for People Scotland (2019).)

Data from all methods outlined how tailored practices cater to individual's needs based on people's current life position. Commenting on the Blaze's coaching strategies during a webinar, SportScotland's Lead Manager stated: "For me, that was really powerful! You're proactively and intentionally deciding to substitute a physical skill for a social skill." (Actify, 2020e)

From a webinar discussion, individualization occurs through intentionally substituting sporting skills for non-sporting skills relevant to individuals before considering types of interactions and personalized conversations (Actify, 2020e). One coaching podcast explained sessions key focus:

Every session involves some form of connection and really explicitly working on people becoming better friends and then working on those soft skills that can lift people's wellbeing, positive touches, high fives, first bumps, working closely with other people, and then controlling that so it's really fun and active sessions. (Wright, 2021b)

Rather than silently developing sporting skills, coaches on a webinar discussed how Blaze's method means people develop physically, mentally and socially simultaneously whilst generating sporting and non-sporting outcomes (Actify, 2020e). Within sessions, participants and coaches learn personal information to help understand each other (Wright, 2021b). Interviews and audio-visuals involving staff reported intentional relationship-building enables improved wellbeing through social capital transfers (knowledge/life skills/ networks/opportunities), generated through connecting people from different age groups, ethnicities and social classes who otherwise would not communicate beyond sport (Actify, 2020b; Actify, 2020d; Nerbun & Sanderson, 2020b). Staff observations outlined in interviews and coaches reported in podcasts that as relationships deepen, development outcomes heighten through increased communication and socialisation between different demographics (Actify, 2020f; Krikorian & Carney, 2022). With development requiring participant's regular attendance, as coaches discussed on a webinar, these positive experiences increase involvement through generating "loyalty" (Actify, 2020e). This loyalty is reflected in one Trustee's comment in an interview: "Some of our trustees, their kids are not playing...for We Play Together anymore, but...they're still involved...that's the sense of community and belonging we're talking about."

As one coach explained on a podcast, anecdotal participant feedback gathered by coaches before, during and after sessions through conversations reported that activities focusing on connection generate positive feelgood factors,

cementing cultures of connectivity and unilateral senses of belonging (Gromer, 2022b). Coaches also reported during interviews how these methods help properly coach participants through establishing people's reality before managing realizations via advancing relationships based on authenticity, transparency, and trust. During an interview with one coach, they mentioned how this vulnerability through sharing personal information allowed greater growth capacities because people develop more interpersonally and meaningfully. Furthermore, coaches reported improved coach-participant relationships in interviews, allowing coaches to provide heightened support through better understanding participants. From ongoing supportive experiences, member accounts show greater susceptibilities to fully buying into programming and pursuing progressive pathways to improved wellbeing (Blaze Basketball Club, 2021). For example, one participant in an interview with SportScotland (2020) stated: "no matter how tired I am...it just gives me that buzz...a lift".

Agency and Pragmatism

Coaches utilise the Rule of Three to determine when participants require support. Blaze's Coach Developer explained the three steps on a podcast:

Step one is can players self-review, self-reflect, problem solve and live by themselves in the moment...[ask yourself] "Am I happy with that?", Yes, then continue to do it...No, what will I change differently next time? Now we should see them change something...Level two is when [other] players are aware of this process... and help them with that...Do they correct because of their teammates' impact or communication? If it's a no, then the player is still struggling to find a solution...Now we get to level three which is the coach stepping in. (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019b)

This strategy reflects Blaze's middle-ground developmental coaching approach. Expanding on the process during a podcast, staff discussed how the 'Rule of Three' encourages participants to contemplate themselves and associates through conversations whereas coaches, via open communication, patience, effective practice planning and scanning during sessions, allow people to stop, reset and adjust (Latif, 2020). Coaches view basketball as a problem-solving activity whereby coaches create situations and tasks requiring resolutions, encouraging participants to support one another by collectively working towards individual and group success criteria established by the individuals and groups (Latif, 2020; Nerbun & Sanderson, 2020a). As discussed in interviews, coaches support participants via positive reinforcement, matching high challenges with high

support through constant feedback counteracting perceived setbacks. Reinforced by another coach's podcast conversation, coaches use "positive touches" such as high-fives to establish positive connections, leaving participants not feeling criticized with feedback emphasising positivity (Nerbun & Sanderson, 2019a). Whereas based on staff's personal experience, discussed on a podcast, found low support produced arbitrary outcomes, meaning participants become increasingly susceptible to negativity, causing decreasing satisfaction and increasing dropouts due to challenging landscapes alongside inadequate support (O'Sullivan, 2018; Wright, 2021b).

Alongside coaches, Blaze found members help facilitate middle-ground approaches (Latif, 2020). Interviews with coaches discussed how members coach alternative groups, such as women for girls' teams to increase inclusivity, psychological safety and provide female role models. Drawing on an example from an interview with a coach of an adolescent member coaching adults:

There were 18 ladies there and she managed to run the session... and they were actually happy ...She managed to make a plan, gather us at the white board and explained to us what she wants us to do...It's like she's confident when she's speaking about basketball and...this helps them...to grow, to be more confident.

Expanding on this example, the coach explained how coaching and playing serves double developmental benefit through learning from being coached and coaching others. Furthermore, connecting participants-coaches with closer ages found participants engaged more due to the 'big brother/sister' effect. Whereas sessions where youth coached older adults added new layers to participant's development through intergenerational learning.

Data across all methods revealed Blaze's approaches weaknesses. An interview with the Chairman mentioned how shifting from coaching sport-for-sport-sake to prioritizing non-sporting outcomes involved removing coaches as "You can't go on with someone who...doesn't really conform to everything everybody is trying to do". Despite changing, these coaches continued coaching in ways harming people's wellbeing. For example, one senior club official stated in an interview that one coach "was awful sometimes to female referees" and thus modelled negative behaviours to members. From all methods, Blaze's approach proved sub-optimal through each person having understanding club strategies differently. Interviews revealed that less experienced coaches were not fully au fait with the coaching strategies. Thus, participants experience different levels of wellbeing development depending on

who coaches what sessions, meaning everyone receives varying support.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Contribution

The study supplements research around SFD coaching through documenting daily actions coaches undertake (Seal & Sherry, 2018; sportanddev.org, 2025; Svensson et al., 2023; Svensson et al., 2025; Van der Veken et al., 2022; van Putten, 2025; Wright et al., 2018), and CA's application within SFD as a framework for understanding practical components within sport programming (Jarvie & Ahrens, 2019; Rossi & Jeanes, 2018; Suzuki, 2017; Svensson & Levine, 2017; Zipp et al., 2019). It compliments literature bridging theory with practice whilst addressing research gaps through generating foundations for a CA-SFD coaching framework incorporating practical mechanisms for organizations to learn from and build upon (Dao & Smith, 2019; Lyras & Peachey, 2011; Peachey et al., 2019a). Resultantly, the research manifests Coalter's (2013) program theory through developing sport-plus programming mechanisms targeting wellbeing improvements from sport. By intentionally targeting wellbeing, Blaze proactively helps participants bypass major constraints impeding people and communities' development (Sen, 1999) such as not benefitting from team sport environments, social capital, and mobility opportunities (Walker, 2023). This stems from middle-ground development approaches where participants reflect, learn, and growth occurs (Britton, 2019; Sen, 1999), evidenced by the Rule of Three.

The results expand CA-SFD literature using CA to conceptualize SFD (Dao & Darnell, 2021; Darnell & Dao, 2017; Silva, & Howe, 2012) by reinforcing the need for people-first sport ecosystems (Coalter, 2013; Sen, 1999). This focus requires greater inter-personality levels, developed through improved participant-staff connections and relationships (Nussbaum & Dixon, 2012; Debognies et al., 2019). Additionally, people must be seen holistically with broadenings additional and inclusive rather than alternative to present perspectives (Brunner & Watson, 2015). Such findings represent Jeanes et al. (2019) and Van der Veken et al. (2022) boundary spanning coach profile because coaches establish emotional connectivity with participants whilst working in trans-professional manners, occupying professional hybridity by adapting continuously to people's circumstances. Blaze's strategic holism reflects and enacts Sen's (1999) consideration of broader influences impacting development, undertaken through monitoring participants and groups' respective differences in relational

distributions and perspectives within families, environmental diversities, personal heterogeneities alongside other social climates. Furthermore, through showing development occurs via acknowledging members' participatory barriers before adapting club functionalities to focus on alleviating problems by accommodating people's requirements (Coalter, 2013).

Findings supplement CA and SFD literature (Coalter, 2013; Sen, 1999) about social impact through Blaze's emphasis on instilling growth mindsets among participants, making people more open to developing. The research supports studies (Dweck, 2012; Mardon et al., 2016) highlighting how growth mindsets help generate non-sporting outcomes transferable to people's personal lives. It subsequently encourages SFD organizations to embed practices intentionally developing growth mindsets early in programs. Growth mindsets help prevent people suffering from poor wellbeing from being "imprisoned in that little box" (their own minds) which prevents development (Sen, 1999: 289). In reinforcing Walker (2023), this is achieved through coaches helping develop people who believe an improved lifestyle is possible through sport. As the research substantiates, coaches are key enablers (Jeanes et al., 2019; Van der Veken et al., 2022), helping put and keep people on positive pathways to improved lifestyles (Walker, 2023). While growth mindsets encourage positive wellbeing, they can reach inflection points causing harmful wellbeing outcomes such as panic attacks under negative conditions (Schindler et al., 2019; Van Gordon et al., 2017) such as win-first systems.

Blaze epitomizes Sen's (1999: 26) 'market mechanism'; basic arrangements where people interact and undertake mutually advantageous activities bound by unilateral values and trust. Such notions alongside the results represent Mwaanga & Adeosun's (2020) Ubuntu philosophy (humanity towards others), expressing connection and relationships with communitarianism liberating individuals and success stemming from all members supporting each other. Building on Walker's (2025) work, Blaze supports people's needs over wants via case-by-case bases. This support underpins CA and SFD research emphasizing safe and secure freedom-orientated approaches and ecosystems (Coalter, 2013; Schulenkorf et al., 2016b; Sen, 1999). However, Blaze's drawbacks mirror Sen's (1999) CA alongside sport programs' failures (Hartmann & Kwak, 2011; Hartmann, 2016): inadequate preparedness, implicit prejudice, unconstrained informational concealment, or unregulated activities. Yet, as the findings evidence, market mechanisms attain efficiency where centralized systems cannot (Sen, 1999), due to compatibility incentives circulating common needs, and people supporting one

overarching objective (van Putten, 2025).

Practical Implications

Table 4.

Practical Guidelines for Identifying, Developing, and Delivering Coaching Strategies Seeking Social Impact

Step	Action	Summary	Methods
1.	Identify Participant and/or Community-based Social Issue	Select a social issue either personal to individual's and/or which is prevalent in the local community to become the organization's social purpose and direct coaching strategies.	Engage participants and broader stakeholders of individuals such as family, guardians, friends or teachers through conversations or surveys. Consult local community entities and leaders such as educational institutions, healthcare providers or social services.
2.	Establish Theory of Change	Clearly defined guidelines mapping the process between the identification of the social purpose to the desired outcome of coaching.	Work with participants and groups to establish individual needs and collective desires before holding club meetings to develop step-by-step processes and guides for staff to follow and refer to.
3.	Engage all Stakeholders	Involve all stakeholders (participants, parents, etc) associated to programs to co-create	Deliver organizational open sessions both in-person and/or online inviting all stakeholders to attend and contribute to the

		and offer ideas for holistic programming integrating external and internal broader participant influences.	finalization of club matters through Q&A's, surveys or roundtables mixing stakeholders and staff. This helps establish one unified set of organizational beliefs and club values.
4.	Undertake Training Related to Social Issue/Purpose	To understand the specific social issue, clubs and organizations must consider educating and training staff in and around the broader factors which cause, influence and address it.	For example, mental-health first aid training led by either national sporting or non-sporting organizations. Contact national federations for potential funding or support with training.
5.	Conduct Internal Coach Education Practices	Host internal club coach education sessions based on the steps outlined in the Theory of Change to ensure all staff have the knowledge and understanding to deliver practical sessions.	Weekend immersive retreats or full-day sessions at the beginning of programs or sporting seasons. Alternatively, evening in-person or online seminars and workshops. Record sessions to allow absentees or coaches to refer to when required and to minimize future time-constraints of repeating sessions. Coach education practices focus on specific aspects

			of coaching processes such as discussing the specific social issue away from sport before another entailing the development and adaptation of coaching strategies towards specific non-sporting outcomes or issues.
6.	Distribute finalized Theory of Change	Distribute the program's Theory of Change to inform all stakeholders of finalized decisions, processes and rationale to promote community-participant-staff buy-in.	Staff hand out paper copies at sessions to participants and/or email all stakeholders. Coaches can also conduct short, simplified introductions at the beginning of programs to participants to explain the content within the Theory of Change and highlighting its relevance, rationale and value.
7.	Deliver Practical, Social Impact-driven Sessions	Coaches intentionally coach to address the specific social issue based on participant's developmental stage in life through enacting the Theory of Change.	Coaches deliver sessions involving multi-dimensional activities purposefully working towards the organization's social purpose. Within, participants should be provided opportunities to generate change in accordance with their own personal objectives through their own actions and means.

			Where possible, practices must be based on activity’s proven effectiveness and employ middle-ground approaches to development such as employing the Rule of Three.
8.	Implement Ongoing Coach Development and Support Opportunities	Coaches conduct ongoing reviews and provide objective feedback and support to one another as means of expanding knowledge and understanding about coaching but also coach personal and professional development.	<p>Coaching catchups (coaches discuss how to improve practices before and after sessions either online or in-person)</p> <p>Coach review sessions (coaches observe other coaches training sessions, taking notes and providing constructive feedback)</p> <p>Coach mentorship (Senior coaches nurture less experienced coaches through conducting internal coach education)</p> <p>Coach Group Chats (Where coaches operate in isolation, coaches must connect with other coaches to share ideas and review each other’s approaches, drills and session plans through email, WhatsApp or via phone calls)</p>

9.	Ongoingly Adapt Practices	Practices are regularly adapted before, during, after and between sessions to more aptly tailor sessions to observations and updates around individual or groups’ short and long-term needs such as those in the live session or across an entire program.	Coaches regularly speak with and observe participants’ emotions and behaviors before, during and after sessions to gather anecdotal feedback specific to each person or group (see table 2 for examples of conversations). If working towards emotional wellbeing improvements, sessions can be adapted through altering activities where, for example, rather than operating in silence on a physical skill (balance, jumping, etc), staff intentionally replace it with a social skill (communication, socialization, etc, through providing topics of conversations or questions to get conversations started) building towards connections and relationships (see table 3 for examples of adapted activities). With the knowledge that amasses with each session about individuals and groups, coaches when developing session
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			plans for individual sessions can undertake scenario planning through developing different activities to cater to different scenarios to reduce the need to develop new ideas during sessions.
10.	Mid and End of Program Reviews	Clubs and organizations internally review practices to determine how they are progressing towards achieving their social purpose or have an external expert undertake a review or both. All information gleaned should be used to improve future iterations of the program.	Staff create hand distribute either online or in-person surveys at different points throughout the program to gather formal, anonymous insights. Based on the review, clubs and organizations may consider adapting or implementing more coach support activities during and after such as further training or coach education seminars and workshops.

Note. Table 4 provides a ten-step set of practical guidelines for identifying, developing, and delivering coaching strategies seeking social impact, providing a summary of each step alongside some examples of methods which can be applied in real-life contexts.

As table 4 outlines, development processes begin by focusing on one social issue which informs organizational coaching methodologies and clearly defined processes (theories of change) targeting problems (Peachy et al., 2019; van Putten, 2025). Coaches then design pathways guiding practitioners through each stage (Walker, 2023), providing tailored practices intentionally working towards desired outcomes (Wegner et al., 2022). Within, the approach requires holistic, person-centred reflections of active factors influencing people’s development before engaging participants accordingly (Sen, 1999). To inform strategies, coaches must understand and prioritize stakeholders’ needs beyond basketball before utilizing organizational resources assisting development (Rossi & Jeanes, 2018; Walker, 2025). Coaches should also consider participant’s preferred learning styles, using this information to purposefully select corresponding drills maximizing developmental outcomes. Lastly, coaches must integrate ongoing reflective assessments from participants and coaches throughout programming to evaluate themselves (van Putten, 2025). Undertaking these steps encourages coaches’ personal development through proactive measures providing greater purpose to coaching. Furthermore, identifying people and issues beforehand helps pinpoint practices targeting social impact and saves time.

Within coaching sessions, participant individualization

support people’s needs (Walker, 2023). For example, if coaches observe new participants’ struggling to integrate, coaches might adapt succeeding activities to foster connections and build relationships whilst still working towards session’s overall objective, starting in pairs and then smaller groups before involving entire cohorts. Tailoring practices to people’s needs does not entail selecting general drills and hoping they produce non-sporting outcomes as participatory byproducts (Walker, 2025). Rather, coaches select drills enabling non-sporting outcomes and adapt them to intentionally create improved opportunities for social impact. Although simplistic, current SFD coaches are not trained in creating needs-focused sessions or adapting practices (Wright et al., 2018).

Development requires coaches to embrace innovative mindsets through adopting pre-existing practices before redesigning them to address specific social issues. Whether adding new layers to activities or swapping physical for social aspects, innovation is a cost-effective strategy for overcoming resource, facility and funding problems (Joachim et al., 2020). With SFD not a one-size-fits-all ecosystem, resultant products help coaches optimize sport’s delivery and engage participants through directing coaches to tailored session plans reflecting individual’s developmental stage in life and capabilities (Wegner et al., 2022). Activities need not always be sport-based but support people’s development such as mindfulness to help instil growth mindsets (Mardon et al., 2016) and enable later coaching drills’ seeking social impact. For example, when targeting wellbeing, coaches must prioritize developing connections and relationships between coach-participant and participant-participant through informal conversations and positive encouragement (Debognies et al., 2019).

Despite Blaze’s approach offers practical guidance, the club’s focus on individual effort and learning from failure chimes with neoliberal thinking, ignoring how widening societal inequality and politics causes local problems and demands structural changes for wider social impact (Reid, 2016). Although the foundational coaching principles are time-efficient long-term, Blaze’s coaching style increases short-term commitments, pressure and responsibility for coaches to self-educate (Wright et al., 2018). Yet, once knowledge is established, long-term results indicate more purposeful coaching. However, national federation support is needed to promote CA-SFD’s incorporation by encouraging community buy-in because SFD programming contradicts traditional sport coaching approaches focusing on participation (Coalter, 2013; Walker, 2025). Thus, success requires entire communities to support organizational goals, necessitating constant revisitations of shared comprehensions alongside in-depth explanations and evidence proving SFD’s value (van Putten, 2025). Otherwise, public contestation is expected with some

			plans for individual sessions can undertake scenario planning through developing different activities to cater to different scenarios to reduce the need to develop new ideas during sessions.
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Note. Table 4 provides a ten-step set of practical guidelines for identifying, developing, and delivering coaching strategies seeking social impact, providing a summary of each step alongside some examples of methods which can be applied in real-life contexts.

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Within coaching sessions, participant individualization occurs through coaches taking notes before, during and after sessions, documenting participant’s emotions and behaviours before engagement or adapting sessions to support people’s needs (Walker, 2023). For example, if coaches observe new participants’ struggling to integrate, coaches might adapt succeeding activities to foster connections and build relationships whilst still working towards session’s overall objective, starting in pairs and then smaller groups before involving entire cohorts. Tailoring practices to people’s needs does not entail selecting general drills and hoping they produce non-sporting outcomes as participatory byproducts (Walker, 2025). Rather, coaches select drills enabling non-sporting outcomes and adapt them to intentionally create improved opportunities for social impact. Although simplistic, current SFD coaches are not trained in creating needs-focused sessions or adapting practices (Wright et al., 2018).

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contradicts traditional sport coaching approaches focusing on participation (Coalter, 2013; Walker, 2025). Thus, success requires entire communities to support organizational goals, necessitating constant revisitations of shared comprehensions alongside in-depth explanations and evidence proving SFD's value (van Putten, 2025). Otherwise, public contestation is expected with some coaches reluctant to change, subsequently damaging club cultures and hindering social impact (Walker, 2023).

Limitations and Recommendations

The study's main limitation entails how perspectives stem from one community club. Therefore, this article calls for further investigations documenting SFD coaching approaches undertaken in different local, national and international sporting environments with diverging social purposes. Within, scholars should consider different capability thinkers such as Nussbaum (2011) or new theoretical frameworks such as Bourdieu's (1977) habitus. Research must bridge theory with practice simplistically with theoretical discussions explaining the rationale and broader facets coaches must consider before program implementation (Seal & Sherry, 2018). This is because practitioners require holistic information devoid of complex frameworks (Zipp et al., 2019) to help determine optimal coaching strategies based on participant's interests and needs (Rossi & Jeanes, 2018). Doing so helps gather buy-in from all stakeholders through unilateral understanding around the program's aims, processes and outcomes (Walker, 2025).

Another limitation reflects the research's honed insights into Blaze's principles for developing coaching strategies. Given coaching's complex nature, the tenets identified and those employed in other environments require further exploration through research providing step-by-step guides breaking down coaching sessions into detailed, and structured plans, explaining precisely how non-sporting outcomes can be achieved. Through these theoretical and practical suggestions, they can help advance the study and application of SFD coaching. Overall, these recommendations enhance the potential for increased social impact through helping SFD ecosystems transition from generating non-sporting outcomes from participatory by-products to intentional SFD programming (Walker, 2023). It also helps SFD evidence its value to global organizations such as the United Nations around broader development objectives (sportanddev.org, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The findings advocate a shift from coaching sport-for-

sports-sake to coaching serving people and community's needs (Coalter, 2013). Crucially, it necessitates coach education, licensing and training evolves by including guidance around coaching for social impact because not all organizations currently coach for participation or performance outcomes in which these entities can inform their systems through more socially conscious approaches. To help this shift, the study identifies underlying coaching principles progressing SFD coaching towards improved social impact. Within, it provides guidance entailing a working CA-SFD model which can be built upon, adapted to fit different ecosystems and help direct practitioners. While Blaze's approach is not full proof due to wellbeing's sliding scale nature throughout people's lives, organizations should make conscious efforts to support people within their capacity and capability. Entities operating under altruistic onus must prioritise more development-based training mechanisms over sport-for-sports sake approaches (Walker, 2025). This is undertaken through purposeful and tailored initiatives swapping programs' emphasis from prioritizing sports themselves to centralizing participants before selecting activities based on people's needs or community issues and drills helping participants develop relevant non-sporting outcomes that reflect their needs and address issues.

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