

Sample Answer

(a) Explain how research by Smith et al (1979) could be used to improve the relationship skills of youth sports coaches. (10 marks)

The quality of a child's experience in sport largely depends on the environment created by the coach. Smith and Smoll designed the Coach Effectiveness Training (CET) programme to instruct youth sports coaches on the finer points of team building, esteem-nurturing, and example-setting. Based on cognitive-behavioural therapy techniques, CET teaches coaches to be aware of their behaviours, to understand how their behaviours are perceived by their young athletes, and to foresee the impacts of their behaviours. CET also instils in coaches a commitment to improving children's skills and rewarding their efforts, replacing the "winning is everything" philosophy, which is all too common in youth sport. According to Smith et al (1979) the goals of coaching are reinforcement, encouragement and technical instruction; to increase positive interactions between coach and players as well as between teammates and to reduce fear of failure among players. The coaches were encouraged to show self-awareness. More specifically, Smith et al (1979) identify precisely how coach-player relationships in youth training can be improved, as follows: Reactions to players' behaviours in various scenarios. In the research by Smith et al (1979), they found that training programmes exert a significant and positive influence on overt coaching behaviours. In addition, they exert a significant and positive influence on player-perceived behaviours. This tells us that having trained and experienced coaches running sports teams and events has a positive outcome on the performance of those playing and competing. Moreover, the findings from their research with Little League Baseball coaches, shows that better coaches help build the self-esteem of their players. They concluded that children who play for trained coaches develop positive self-esteem more than children who play for untrained coaches. This can be used to inform coaching professionals in that training and expertise helps build confidence and relationships with their players. This will inevitably be more beneficial for the whole team.

