

## Coach's actions significant for powerlifter in the "coach-athlete" system

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** Coaching (instructing) activity in sports attracts the attention of researchers since the emergence of sports in general and sports competitions in particular. Of course, the conditions that ensure the growth of sports achievements arouse interest. Nevertheless, some young types of sports such as powerlifting, for example, remain understudied. In this study, the researchers focus their attention on the role of the coach in the sports activities of the powerlifters. **Materials and Methods:** The study involved a questionnaire survey conducted with the participation of 60 Russian powerlifters. The structure of the author's questionnaire includes 13 actions of a coach, which the athletes have considered from the following point of view: "What would you like your coach to apply in relation to you". In the course of the study, five priority actions of a coach, expected from him by the athletes, were analyzed. **Results:** The first place is occupied by the action "availability of a unique method of training athletes" (9.75), 2 - "assistance at the competitions" (9.74), 3 - "consideration of the athlete's individual characteristics" (9.38), 4 - "explanation of the technique of doing the exercises" (9.34), and 5 - "working out of the training plan" (9.3). **Conclusion:** The presented information will be useful for coaches in terms of improving the training process of powerlifters. Knowing the preferences and understanding the features of the athlete, the trainer will be able to implement an individual approach in his coaching activities within the "coach-athlete" system to improve the athletic performance of the athletes.

**KEY WORDS:** Athlete, Coach, "Coach-athlete" system, Powerlifting

### INTRODUCTION

A sufficient number of scientific and scientific-methodological studies devoted to powerlifting are directed to the development and improvement of special physical skills and motor activity among the professional powerlifters.<sup>[1-6]</sup> Powerlifting, like any sport, has its individual set of methods and techniques for training athletes. Until recently, a conventional opinion was based on the fact that the technique of training powerlifters is based on the technique of weightlifters. Moreover, the question of the psychological training of powerlifters did not become the individual of scientific research. The fact that weightlifting is a speed and power discipline, and powerlifting is a strengths type of sport, largely determines the different ways of building programs for training professional powerlifters.

Improvement of the training process is undoubtedly necessary for productive and successful sports activity of the athlete. In our previous studies, some aspects of the psychological training of powerlifters were considered. In particular, the confounding factors or stress factors that interfere with the effective sports career of the professional powerlifter were determined in the training and competitive activities.<sup>[7]</sup> In scientific works, studying the ways to overcome confounding factors in both training<sup>[8]</sup> and competitive<sup>[9]</sup> activity of athletes engaging in powerlifting, the leading position belongs to such a method as "trainer's assistance." The results of the previous studies have determined the relevance of studying the interaction between the coach and the athlete. It should be also noted that "The past 15 years have witnessed a significant growth in coaching research."<sup>[10]</sup>

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

To conduct this study, we developed a questionnaire to determine the significance of the coach's actions in the sports activities of the powerlifter. The structure of the questionnaire included 13 actions of the coach,

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determining the desired participation of the coach in the activity of the professional powerlifter. The novelty of this questionnaire is that it groups the actions that demonstrate the expected role of the coach in the training and competitive activities of powerlifters.

The questionnaire survey was conducted among 60 powerlifters (30 men, 30 women) aged 16-34 years with experience of 2-14 years. The sample included powerlifters with sports qualifications: Candidates for Master of Sports, Master of Sports of Russia, and the Master of Sports of Russia of International Class.

Before the study, the questions of the questionnaire passed a pilot survey among the powerlifters ( $n = 45$ ), training in the sports club "Medved" on the basis of Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. As a result of this survey, the experts in the field of professional activities in powerlifting (Kosarev S.M., Honored Coach of the Russian Federation, associate professor of Moscow Aviation Institute, Moscow) and sports psychology (Fukin A.I., Doctor of Psychology, Professor of V.G. Timiryasov Kazan Innovation University [Kazan]) have validated the questionnaire.

The empirical research questionnaires were filled during two competitions. At the Russian Classical Powerlifting Championship (December 24-27, 2015, Arzamas) and the Russian Powerlifting Championship (March 15-20, 2016, Tyumen), the respondents filled in the questionnaires in their spare time and in comfortable place. Before the survey, the athletes were informed of the planned psychological test and the information confidentiality. Powerlifters ranked the desired actions of the coach in terms of the significance of the influence on them, assessing each criterion of the coach's participation in training and competitive activities on the 10-point scale. The athletes defined the importance of the coach from the standpoint of "What would you like your coach to use in relation to you," that is, the desired actions of the coach. This provision is relevant for identifying possible prospective techniques for a coach to improve the quality of the coach-athlete relationship.

The significance of the coach's actions for the professional powerlifters was calculated on the basis of the arithmetic mean; further, the ranking of the criteria was performed. The factor ranked as No.1 has the greatest value for an athlete, and the factor under No.13 has the least value.

During our research, we used the following methods: Analysis of scientific literature on the research problem, observation, conversation, and questionnaire survey.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study (Table 1) present the analyzed materials from the point of view the desired trainer's actions in relation to the athlete.

We shall consider in detail the first five of the coach's desired actions as the most significant for him/her.

The first place among the actions the athletes would like their coach to use in their relation belongs to the availability of his/her own technique of training athletes (9.75). Our powerlifter respondents want their coach to have not only personal charisma, own achievements in this sport and experience in coaching, but, above all, to give them (the athletes) a maximum of knowledge and create conditions for achieving personal results. Athletes of any level engaging in powerlifting train under high physical and neuroemotional stress. A coach, interested in new methods of organizing sports activities and mastering new techniques of working with athletes, will be appreciated by his/her sportsmen.

The action of providing assistance at competitions (9.74) ranks second. Any competition is a significant event for athletes. In our previous studies,<sup>[11]</sup> the questions associated with competitive activity of powerlifters were repeatedly considered. It is important for the professional powerlifters that the coach not only helps in the warm-up stage, provides assistance before going to the platform, but is also proactive, independent, able to make important decisions in stressful situations, flexible, able to control him-/herself in solving competition-related tactical tasks, and organize and monitor the activities of athletes.

The third desired action, according to the athletes, is consideration of their individual characteristics (9.38). An athlete is not a mechanical machine, but a person who has a complex physiological, psychological, mental, and spiritual organization. Sports are just part of their life. The state of health, difficulties, and problems in life can have a destabilizing effect on the athlete. The coach must treat the changes in the athlete's state and life with understanding, patiently and attentively, trying to be objective, and seeking to provide support and help in solving problems. Such attitude of the coach will help the athlete to reaim him-/her-self and find motives for continuing his/her sports activity. Of course, it is easier for a coach to come into contact with sociable athletes than with closed ones, who limit the circle of their communication only to close people. However, this is the skill of the coach as a teacher. In addition, any athlete wishes not to be imposed unreasonable requirements but treated from the position of individual abilities.

The fourth place is occupied by the action associated with the explanation of the methodology for performing

**Table 1: The desired actions of the coach in relation to powerlifters**

№	Coach's actions	Rank	Mean value
1.	Works out the training plan	V	9.3
2.	Is present in training classes	VI	9.25
3.	Explains the technique of doing exercises	IV	9.34
4.	Is present at the competitions	IX	8.72
5.	Has a unique method of training athletes	I	9.75
6.	Participates in your life (personal, educational, professional)	XII	8.15
7.	Assists at the competitions (warm-up, exit to the platform)	II	9.74
8.	Provides psychological support in training and competitions	VII	9.02
9.	Demonstrates the performance of exercises	X	8.26
10.	Is good-humored	XI	8.17
11.	Demonstrates exactingness (observance of regime during training and at competitions, in nutrition diet, etc.)	XIII	8
12.	Evaluates my success/failure	VIII	8.87
13.	Takes into account my individual characteristics (state of health, mood, difficulties in life, etc.)	III	9.38

exercises (9.34). This is indeed an important indicator. Powerlifting cannot do without loads; therefore, if the exercises are performed incorrectly if there is not enough rest for the muscles, or in case of insufficient preliminary physical training, this sport can cause injuries. The technique of performing the exercise in each discipline of powerlifting has its own peculiarities. When doing squats, the athlete has to put a bar on his/her back, place his/her feet correctly; when doing bench press, it is necessary to make a barbell grip and a correct curve of the spine; at deadlift you need to take the bar correctly, place your feet correctly; even the ability to properly hold the head: Turning, tilting the head, and looking direction affect the curve of the back. Mastering the exercise technique will avoid unwanted injuries and achieve the desired results as soon as possible.

Working out the training plan by the coach ranks fifth (9.3). This indicator, in our opinion, is related to the action, which takes the fourth position. This action is especially important for beginners taking up this sport. Only the coach can correctly schedule the day, control the process of training in the gym (calculate the weight, determine the number of sets with the bar, rest time, etc.). Doing such actions, the coach not only controls the training of athletes with the utmost precision but also applies an individual approach.

Undoubtedly, the dominant positions of the coach's actions in relation to the powerlifter are fundamental in the "coach-athlete" system. However, the coach's actions that occupy positions from VI to XIII are also, in our opinion, serious and predetermine both the effectiveness of interaction between the coach and the athlete and the success of the sports career of the powerlifter:

VI – "Is present in training classes;"

VII – "Provides psychological support in training and competitions;"

VIII – "Evaluates my success/failure;"

IX – "Is present at the competitions;"

X – "Demonstrates the performance of exercises;"

XI – "Is good-humored;"

XII – "Participates in your life (personal, educational, professional);"

XIII – "Demonstrates exactingness (observance of regime during training and at competitions, in nutrition diet, etc.)."

All average values of the respondents' choice in respect to the trainer's desired actions vary slightly. This gives us the opportunity to assume that all the trainer's actions proposed for the evaluation have a significant character for the athletes. It should be noted that the sports tandem of a coach and an athlete is an integral part of any type of sport. However, unlike group sports, where support can come from team members, in individual sports (as powerlifting), a more experienced friend, often the coach, is of great importance in supporting the athlete. Coaches who underestimate the importance of the coach-athlete relationship may risk not developing their athletes to their full potential.<sup>[12]</sup> This is especially true for power sports, associated with significant physical and moral-psychological stress, where the need for emotional release is high enough.

## SUMMARY

In this paper, we analyzed the significant actions of the coach in the sports activities of the powerlifter. All this allows us to conclude that success in coaching depends on the own knowledge of the trainer, on the way he/she builds his/her relationships with athletes and presents his/her knowledge to them. The data obtained indicate that the most desired actions of the coach are concentrated in positions: The availability of own technique of training athletes (9.75), assistance in the competitions (9.74), consideration of the individual characteristics of the powerlifter (9.38), explaining the technique of doing exercises (9.34), and working out individual training programs (9.3).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of our research, the role of a coach in sports activity of a powerlifter was defined. The materials of the questionnaire survey of 60 Russian powerlifters made it possible to identify five priority actions of the coach. The presented analysis of the coach's desired actions allows us to consider the issue of the "coach-athlete" relationship much more fully and thoroughly in a specific kind of sport such as powerlifting.

The results of the research can serve as a basis for the subsequent study of the coach's actions in relation to the male and female powerlifters; the coach's actions aimed at overcoming crisis situations by athletes in the sport, and determining the effectiveness of sports achievements and other aspects of training athletes.

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