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APPLIED RESEARCH

A Case Study of Excellence in Elite Sport: Motivational Climate in a World Champion Team

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This case study focused on the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team during the period from 2004 to 2011, when Graham Henry (head coach) and Wayne Smith (assistant coach) coached and managed the team. More specifically, this case study examined the motivational climate created by this coaching group that culminated in winning the Rugby World Cup in 2011. In-depth interviews were completed with Henry and Smith in March 2012. A collaborative thematic content analysis revealed eight themes, regarding motivational issues and the motivational climate for the 2004–2011 All Blacks team: (i) critical turning point, (ii) flexible and evolving, (iii) dual-management model, (iv) "Better People Make Better All Blacks," (v) responsibility, (vi) leadership, (vii) expectation of excellence, and (viii) team cohesion. These findings are discussed in light of autonomy-supportive coaching, emotionally intelligent coaching, and transformational leadership. Finally, practical recommendations are offered for coaches of elite sports teams.

Keywords: autonomy-supportive coaching climate, mastery climate, emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, All Blacks rugby team

> "Winning the World Cup is a bit like shearing sheep, no other bastard is going to do it for you!"
>
> —Andy Earl (All Black, 1986–1991; World Cup winner in 1987; farmer) (Hodge & McKenzie, 1999, p. 54)

The New Zealand (NZ) All Blacks rugby team has been one of the most successful teams in world sport for more than 100 years (Miller, 2012; Paul, 2009). The All Blacks' winning percentage, starting with their first test match in 1903 (a "test" is a game/match versus international teams such as South Africa, Australia, France, Wales, and England) through until the end of 2011, was a remarkable 75% (Miller, 2012). This case study focused on the All Blacks team during the period from 2004 to 2011, when the coaching trio of Graham Henry (head coach), Wayne Smith (assistant coach), and Steve Hansen (assistant coach) coached the team and achieved a winning percentage of 85%. More specifically, this case study examined motivational issues and the motivational climate created by this coaching group that contributed to their winning record of excellence.

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Motivational Climate in Elite Sport

In sport, the coach is typically regarded as the most influential significant other in the athlete's sport experience (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2010; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). The contextual environment or climate the coach creates via her/his interpersonal style is especially influential with respect to athlete motivation and subsequent behavior (Gagné, Ryan, & Bargmann, 2003). The coaches' interpersonal style pertains to the values emphasized by the coach and coaching behaviors designed to influence their athletes' motivation and behavior (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Considerable motivational climate research has been completed from an achievement goal theory perspective (e.g., Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002) and recently from a self-determination theory perspective (e.g., Gillet, Vallerand, Amoura, & Baldes, 2010). However, only minimal research has examined motivational climates with *elite* athletes/teams (Balaguer, Duda, Atienza, & Mayo, 2002; Heuzé, Sarrazin, Masiero, Raimbault, & Thomas, 2006; Høigaard, Jones, & Peters, 2008;

Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). The key findings regarding the role of motivational climate in elite teams were: (i) elite Olympic athletes emphasized the importance of the coach as the creator of the motivational climate, as well as their preference for a supportive mastery climate (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002); (ii) elite soccer players preferred positive feedback and democratic coaching behaviors (Høigaard et al., 2008); (iii) high perceptions of a mastery climate and low perceptions of a performance climate were associated with higher perceptions of task cohesion and collective efficacy over time in elite female athletes (Heuzé et al., 2006), (iv) strong mastery climates were associated with players reporting greater performance improvements and satisfaction with performance (Balaguer et al., 2002), and (v) to reduce player perceptions of distress, coaches should focus on creating a mastery climate for elite athletes (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). While useful, each of these five studies employed a quantitative, nomothetic research design which did not allow for an idiographic, in-depth exposition of the dynamic role of motivational climate within elite sports teams or factors contributing to the motivational climate.

Case Studies of Excellence

A case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular person, project, policy, program or system in a real-life context (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Thomas, 2011). A case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied—in this case the successful 2004–2011 All Blacks rugby team. As Simonton (1999) observed, psychologists occasionally study eminent individuals such as Nobel laureates, political leaders, successful business people, and Olympic champions—such investigations are referred to as the study of "significant samples." Simonton (1999) defined significant samples as individuals "who have, to some measureable degree, 'made a name for themselves.' In the extreme case, the person may have actually 'made history' for some distinctive achievement" (p. 425). Significant samples are used not because they are the same, but because they are different. This last point relates directly to the burgeoning science of positive psychology that concentrates on optimal human functioning (e.g., Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003). A positive psychology approach focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses and consequently takes particular interest in those individuals who "occupy the upper end of the distribution of various positive traits, such as creativity, charisma, talent, ... or wisdom" (Simonton, 1999, p. 442). Significant samples can also be characterized as "critical cases" (Flyvbjerg, 2006)—a critical cases approach can be used to "collect information that permits logical deductions of the type of case" (p. 230), which can then be used to extrapolate to other individuals in similar situations (e.g., elite team sport coaches, Elberse & Dye, 2012; Mallett, 2005).

Context and Background for the Case Study

Rugby. Rugby is an interactive, continuous, contact/collision, team sport. The continuous nature of rugby is characterized by players having to switch between attack and defense many times during a game, as well as having to concentrate on the role(s) required by their playing position and the team game plan; these structural aspects place demands on player psychological skills, team cohesion, and team motivation (Hodge, Lonsdale, & McKenzie, 2005). In addition, rugby has no time-outs and a short half-time period (15 min). Coaching from the sidelines is prohibited. Consequently players are required to be self-reliant and make tactical decisions on the move during the game without direct support from coaches. The importance of self-reliance and decision-making thus becomes paramount (Hodge et al., 2005).

All Blacks Rugby Team

The All Blacks are New Zealand's (NZ) national rugby team; the nickname was derived from their "all black" playing uniform. While the All Blacks are a professional team, they are not a franchise with a fixed playing roster; rather they are a national select-side, which is reselected every year (reselection can occur during the All Blacks' season as well). The players are selected from teams that compete in the Super 15 league (February to June) for the All Blacks' season of international matches (June to November). Rugby is the national sport in NZ (Laidlaw, 2010; Paul, 2009), and the All Blacks have a long history of success (a 75% winning percentage from 1903 to 2011), including winning the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987 (Miller, 2012). They have been ranked first in the world by the International Rugby Board for 341 weeks since the world rankings were introduced in 2003 (Miller, 2012). During the time period of the case study described in this article the All Blacks failed to win the World Cup in 2007 despite being the favorites to do so, but went on to win the World Cup in 2011.

Purpose and Research Question

This case study examined the motivational climate created by the All Blacks coaching group that contributed to the All Blacks' 85% winning percentage from 2004 to 2011, and culminated in winning the Rugby World Cup in 2011. How was this motivational climate created and then modified over time?

Method

Case Study Design

Given that the focus of this study was on the motivational climate of a single elite team who were coached by the same coaching group for the 2004–2011 time period a

case study research design was selected as being best suited to a thorough examination of the research questions. Within the case study design (Thomas, 2011) a narrative methodology (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashlach, & Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 2008), grounded in an interpretive paradigm (Carless & Douglas, 2012; Smith & Sparkes, 2012), was employed to focus the case study, select the participants, gather data (from multiple sources), and direct the data analysis. In contrast to the positivist/post-positivist paradigm, where the aims are typically explanation and control, the interpretive paradigm is interested in *understanding* and *illuminating* human experience (Carless & Douglas, 2012; Smith & Sparkes, 2012). Moreover, a narrative approach allows the reader to engage with the biographical, historical, and cultural context experienced by the participants (Sparkes & Partington, 2003). The goal of this narrative case study was to offer insights into the All Blacks' motivational climate and how it was developed over time (2004–2011) by this group of coaches. Rather than providing a snapshot of the All Blacks environment at a fixed moment in time, the narrative method allowed the authors to consider how the All Blacks' environment and the coaching methods evolved over time (Lieblich et al., 1998). In addition, the narrative approach included multiple data sources, which allowed an examination of psychological processes within their sociocultural context (e.g., substantial public scrutiny and expectation for the All Blacks to win every game) (Paul, 2009).

Case Study Participants

This case study focused on the 2011 World Champion All Blacks rugby team and two of the three coaches from the 2004–2011 period—head coach Graham Henry, and assistant coach Wayne Smith (both of whom retired at the end of 2011). In a form of purposeful sampling, these two coaches were chosen as being information-rich participants who could provide an in-depth narrative about the motivational climate generated in the All Black team over the time period in question. The other assistant coach from 2004 to 2011 (Steve Hansen) was not approached as he was appointed to the head coach role for the All Blacks in 2012. Since these two coaches (Henry and Smith) worked together throughout the time period in question, they were regarded as one case study unit (Thomas, 2011). The first author approached both coaches, and their employer (the NZ Rugby Union) in late 2011 to gauge their interest in this case study project. Both the coaches and the NZ Rugby Union were given assurances that the case study would be an equal collaboration and that both parties (i.e., coaches and NZ Rugby Union) would have the final say over what data were reported in the published case study; it was important in terms of establishing rapport and trust that the commitment was made to both parties that they had final approval and control of their data. Both coaches signed informed consent forms that specified their final say in what data were to be used, or not used, in the case study. They also gave consent for their names and identity to be made public in the case study. Ethical approval was also received from the first author's university ethics committee.

Graham Henry. After a coaching career spanning 30 years in both amateur and professional rugby, Graham Henry was appointed head coach of the All Blacks in 2004 (Howitt & Henry, 2012). Before coaching at international level, Henry coached the Blues Super Rugby team (NZ) from 1996 to 1998, winning the Super Rugby title in 1996–1997. He then coached the Wales (UK) national team from 1998 to 2002 and the British and Irish Lions in 2001, before returning to NZ in 2003 and being appointed head coach of the All Blacks in 2004.

Wayne Smith. Assistant All Blacks coach from 2004 to 2011, Smith is a former All Blacks player (1980–1985), and a former head coach of the All Blacks (2000–2001). He was offered one of the two assistant All Blacks coach roles by Graham Henry when Henry was appointed head coach in 2004. Before coaching at international level Smith coached the Crusaders Super Rugby team (NZ) from 1997 to 1999, winning the Super Rugby title in 1998–1999. He also coached the Northampton Saints (England) from 2001 to 2004.

Data Collection/Collaboration

Multiple Data Sources. In line with examples provided in previous narrative research (e.g., Holt & Sparkes, 2001; B. Smith, 2010), multiple data sources were employed to generate a comprehensive picture of the motivational climate created in the 2004–2011 All Blacks team. These multiple data sources consisted of (i) in-depth interviews with Graham Henry and Wayne Smith (March 2012); (ii) books by All Blacks coaches and players (Howitt & Henry, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012), (iii) books by rugby journalists (Laidlaw, 2010; Paul, 2009), (iv) newspaper, magazine, and website articles about the All Blacks team during 2004–2011 (e.g., Donaldson, 2005; Harding, 2004, 2005; Mirams, 2004; Mortimer, 2011), and (v) videos from rugby websites (Henry, 2011) and the *Weight of a Nation* documentary on NZ television (SkyTV, 2012). These multiple sources helped illuminate the ways that the lives of these two coaches (and the All Blacks team) were shaped by stories that circulated around them in NZ culture (e.g., Long, 2005; Paul, 2009).

Interview Guide. An interview guide was developed from a review of literature on the interrelated topics of coaching practices, coaching style, leadership, motivation, and motivational climate (copies are available from the first author). Interview guides were developed separately for Henry and Smith; while both guides shared the same question areas and covered the same issues, they were personalized by including a number of media statements by that coach (e.g., Henry), which served as question prompts (textual elicitation) about specific issues relevant to that coach. The interview guides were designed to facilitate an open-ended conversation that was flexible and sensitive to emergent issues by allowing the

coaches to talk freely, tell stories (B. Smith, 2010), and change topics as and when they thought it appropriate (Sparkes & Partington, 2003). The first author conducted both interviews and used a conversational approach (i.e., an active listener) within the broad parameters of the interview guide; each interview began with the general, open-ended question/request: "Please tell me about your coaching style at the elite level of sport."

Pilot Interview. A pilot/bracketing interview was conducted with a former elite rugby coach (provincial and Super Rugby level) to test the interview guide, question prompts, question probes, and examples used as starting points. A debriefing session with this coach after the pilot interview led to some minor adjustments in the wording for a small number of question prompts and probes.

In-Depth Interviews With Graham Henry and Wayne Smith. These face-to-face interviews were conducted separately in March 2012 (i.e., five months after the 2011 World Cup victory). Smith was interviewed first and Henry was interviewed three weeks later; the Henry interview guide was not modified as a consequence of the Smith interview. The interview guides for both interviews were developed before data collection and each interview guide was tailored to the individual coach; including selected media quotes by that coach as textual elicitation prompts. The Henry and Smith interviews lasted 75 min and 84 min, respectively, and generated 1,359 lines of single-spaced verbatim transcript data.

Researcher as Instrument

Within the interpretive paradigm knowledge is accepted as being socially constructed, consequently the researcher is recognized as a reflexive instrument whose biography influences all aspects of the study (Carless & Douglas, 2012). The biography of the first author (the interviewer) was relevant as he was a former rugby player (provincial level), former rugby coach (age group provincial level), and a current rugby administrator (Super Rugby franchise board member). In addition he had been engaged in sport psychology research for 30 years, including a number of studies employing qualitative research designs. He had also worked for 28 years as a sport psychology consultant with a number of sports, including rugby, and had a number of applied sport psychology publications that focused on the sport of rugby (e.g., Hodge & McKenzie, 1999; Hodge et al., 2005). He became interested in the coaching strategies employed by the All Blacks coaching team in 2005 when their "Better People Make Better All Blacks" model was made public (Donaldson, 2005; Long, 2005).

Credibility and Goodness Criteria

Member Checking. Two forms of collaborative member checking (respondent verification) were employed to actively engage with the two coaches as collaborators in the data analysis process and the writing of the case study (Holt & Sparkes, 2001; Sparkes & Smith, 2009). First, both coaches received verbatim transcripts of their audio-recorded interviews for verification that the content was an authentic, accurate, and fair representation of their story regarding the development of the motivational climate in the All Blacks team from 2004 to 2011. Both coaches verified the accuracy of their transcripts and Smith took the opportunity to expand on some of his answers by including additional information and detail to his transcript. Second, both coaches received a preliminary case study narrative and they were encouraged to actively engage in revising the narrative content to ensure that the narrative was authentic, fair, plausible, and right and true (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). Both coaches were reminded that the case study was their data and that they had full control over the tone and content of the case study narrative.

Critical Friend(s) and Audit Trail. At the design stage of this project the first author consulted two academic colleagues who were internationally renowned experts in qualitative research. These qualitative research experts were asked to act as "critical friends" (Sparkes & Partington, 2003) and to offer advice regarding a suitable qualitative research design for an interview study focused on "the coaches of a successful elite professional sports team" (the names of the coaches and the team were not disclosed in these initial communications). The key outcomes from this consultation process were the decisions to employ a narrative methodology grounded in an interpretive paradigm (cf. Sparkes & Partington, 2003), and to use direct quotes from media interviews as question prompts (textual elicitation) in the face-to-face interviews. An audit trail was also conducted by a sport psychology research colleague who had knowledge of both qualitative methods and rugby coaching, but had no connection to the case study project. The first author was required to make a defendable case that the available data supported his categorization of themes. Only minimal discrepancies were identified in the audit trail of the thematic content analysis and these discrepancies were debated until a mutual consensus was reached between the first author and the auditor.

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, the first author adopted the qualitative stance of "indwelling" (Holt & Sparkes, 2001) by listening to the audio files several times, and reading the verbatim transcripts numerous times, in an effort to immerse himself in the data; during that process he jotted down initial impressions about key issues raised in the interviews. Next, the transcripts were subjected to a thematic content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 2008) in which raw themes/categories were identified, and separate quotes from the text were extracted and classified into preliminary categories. During this process, analytical memos were also written as preliminary connections were made to theoretical concepts related to themes emerging from the coaches' stories. The

analytical memos along with the thematic coding shaped the preliminary case study narrative that was (i) sent to the coaches for collaborative member checking, and (ii) used in the audit trail process.

Results and Discussion

In the following narrative case study, the names of players and other team personnel mentioned in the interviews were deleted to protect the privacy of those individuals. Player, coach, or personnel names were only used from sources in the public domain (e.g., books, newspaper, magazine, website articles). The primary findings presented in the case study were from the in-depth interviews with Henry and Smith and the subsequent data analysis collaboration among the first author and these two coaches. Secondary data from other sources such as books and media interviews (print and TV) are presented in a number of vignette boxes titled Off the Bench—these secondary findings were included to offer other voices that supported (and to some extent verified) the primary findings from the interviews.

Eight main themes emerged from the data analysis: (i) critical turning point, (ii) flexible and evolving, (iii) dual-management model, (iv) "Better People Make Better All Blacks," (v) responsibility, (vi) leadership, (vii) expectation of excellence, and (viii) team cohesion. In the sections that follow, each of these themes are discussed alongside quotes from the interviews with Henry and Smith. These findings are also accompanied by theoretical reflections and comparisons with previous research where appropriate. While both participants discussed these eight themes, their experiences of these themes were subtly different. Henry focused more on process, while Smith emphasized the emotional side of creating an effective motivational climate. Collectively, these two variations on the same themes provided a nuanced, complex, and rich exposition of each theme and of the All Blacks' motivation climate overall.

Critical Turning Point

Both coaches identified an incident on tour in South Africa in 2004 as a critical turning point in their coaching style and the motivational climate of the All Blacks team. After a lost match, the players organized a social event where binge drinking and other antisocial behavior occurred. Both coaches were appalled by the incident and regarded it as being symptomatic of a deeper lack of maturity within the team at the time (also see Burnes, 2012; Howitt & Henry, 2012). Graham Henry expressed his shock about this incident:

> There was a social occasion that I was appalled to be part of… I just think it [binge drinking] was accepted as a norm. So when we got back to NZ [we met with senior players to discuss the issue]; it was… the captain and vice-captain, [the team and campaign managers] and the three coaches… We locked ourselves away and said, "Look, we've gotta solve this bloody thing; this is just a totally unacceptable situation"... That's when we got really serious about the leadership in the team and so forth... That was the most important meeting, I think, that we ever had in the eight years [we coached the team]… That was the start of changing the environment, changing the culture, developing… the leadership group, and them expressing themselves.

Wayne Smith described this event as their "coaching epiphany," which eventually crystallized into the dual-management model (see later theme) and the "Better People Make Better All Blacks" motto (Howitt & Henry, 2012; Long, 2005) (also see later themes Responsibility, Leadership). As Smith stated, this incident was: "the epiphany of our coaching careers… There was still a big drinking culture [in the team], an outdated leadership model [where the captain ran everything], players were jaded, and there didn't seem to be a real spark on the field… We changed the paradigm, creating a leadership group, creating more accountability, giving more ownership, and dual-management of the team." These changes reflected the coaches' desire to deliberately foster autonomy (although they did not use this specific psychological term) (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagné et al., 2003).

'Turning Point #2'. A second turning point occurred after the failed 2007 World Cup campaign. The team lost in the quarter-finals and a subsequent evaluation report made strong recommendations about strengthening the leadership group and on-field player decision-making. As Smith observed, those recommendations led to a more streamlined leadership structure (see later theme Leadership): "The [independent] report, compiled after the 2007 tournament, played a part in our planning for the next RWC [Rugby World Cup]. We had to show we were improving in certain areas; particularly in the leadership and decision-making areas. And so that shaped a lot of what we were doing." Smith also commented that the coaches were keen to learn from past World Cup campaigns:

> We also decided—this hadn't been done before from our knowledge—to talk to a lot of people who'd been involved in other World Cups. We decided to learn from them and discuss… [previous World Cups], rather than follow the tendency to say "Ah, we won't talk about that, 'cause we weren't there, this is a new campaign, and we'll be fine." We were determined this time to look at why previous players and coaches felt campaigns had failed in the past. And, to do that, we had to look at our own campaign in 2007, which was pretty tough.

> The coach's strategy included consulting with previous coaching groups: "We … looked at their campaigns, and came up with what we thought were the reasons why they'd failed. We then planned strategically to put things in place to try and combat past errors."

Flexible and Evolving

As outlined above, the team motivational climate was dynamic and viewed as an evolving work in progress. The coaches regarded their own coaching style(s) as also being dynamic and evolving. Henry explained in some detail his metamorphosis from a directive, authoritarian coach to a collaborative, consensus coach (also see Henry, 2011; Howitt & Henry, 2012):

> I've been coaching for 37 years… [When I started] I was very directive as a coach… pretty authoritarian. But now it's… a group of people trying to do something together, rather than a group of coaches and a group of players... I think that's evolved naturally… Now it's much more consensus; there's a consensus home environment, there's a consensus educational environment… If you didn't change [as a coach], you were history.

Smith reinforced how Henry changed from being an authoritarian coach to being a more democratic coach; and also to leading a democratic three person coaching team (see later theme Horizontal Coaching Team):

Graham went from being [an] instructional [coach] to asking questions. He went from making all the decisions, to a dual decision-making process, finally ending up with a player-led decision-making emphasis. [Graham] went from always being the head of the hierarchy and having people just do what he wanted, to having two other highly opinionated coaches, who would debate everything. I take my hat off to him 'cause it's not everyone's cup of tea—having your decisions questioned and debated.

Smith also explained how his own coaching style was flexible, depending on the situation and the needs of the team:

> It would depend on the needs [of the team you're coaching]… Sometimes I'm tough and directive, putting them under pressure and trying to create stressful situations; and sometimes I'm empowering, reinforcing, and encouraging. I think it depends on the needs of the players, your group awareness, the time in the [training] week, the state of play in terms of how you're travelling [i.e., performing as a team]… Generally, people would say I'm an empowering coach, who asks questions and creates self-awareness; but at other times… on a different day, they may see me bark at players and put them under pressure… I'd say flexible, tending towards giving ownership to the players.

Another instance of being flexible, and also being emotionally intelligent as a coach, was underscored in an example Henry related about a question posed to him in 2005 by the then captain, Tana Umaga, regarding the effectiveness of Henry's pre-game team talks: "[Tana was] dead right, it was their time. They needed to focus on what they needed to do. They didn't need some other bugger yelling in their ear… I had been team-talking for 30 years, and I thought it was bloody important, and he thought it was a bloody waste of time… He was dead right, and thank God he told me. I could still be doing it!" (also see Howitt & Henry, 2012). The flexible aspect of this theme supported Chan and Mallett's (2011) claim that high-performance coaches require qualities beyond technical and tactical skills, such as leadership and the ability to facilitate a functional leader-follower relationship; and that the key to a functional coach-athlete relationship was the coach's emotional intelligence. Consequently, Chan and Mallett (2011) championed emotional intelligence as a key coaching skill that elite coaches need to master.

Dual-Management Model

Both coaches talked at length about the dual-management model that grew out of the critical turning point in 2004 and overlapped with the "Better People Make Better All Blacks" motto and the leadership group (see later themes). As Henry related: "It was the philosophy to give the players ownership… and to dual-manage the All Blacks with a group of players, and a group of oldies [coaches]." However, as Henry also stated: "Some of them found it difficult… We had 11 leaders [initially]… we had formal meetings, and we kept minutes… Now everything's about the rugby. And all of that [other] stuff is done quite informally… There was an on-field leadership group and an off-field leadership group, [but] they all led on the field" (also see Long, 2005). The dual-management model evolved over time as the coaches and the leadership group adapted to changing circumstances (see Howitt & Henry, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012; Paul, 2012). For example, as Henry observed the model was streamlined and operated relatively informally by 2009–2010: "The on-field leaders [met] on Sunday… to organise the week, what we're gonna do in each of those [training] slots. And, then we'd meet at Tuesday lunchtime… and just make sure we were on the same page… [We would also talk about] the intensity of the training, how physical it was going to be, what were the major things that we had to cover in those training runs." Another key aspect of the dual-management model involved the players taking a stronger role in preparing the game plan for each game, which was achieved, in part, by "also getting them to present some of the stuff [to the team]… If we're playing Australia on Saturday, [one of the leaders] might be up in front of the group–this is all part of the self-reliance, ownership stuff–he might be presenting some of the attack game-plan" (Henry). Furthermore, as Smith explained; "We went away from making any unilateral decisions as [the] coaching and management team, and [instead we] involved the leadership group in everything… [in] all areas of our campaigns."

Off the Bench – player

"Sometimes… everyone looks to everyone else for responsibility. And then it all comes back to the captain who carries a lot of the load. So what the [All Blacks'] coaches are trying to do is spread the load a little bit; if you have a core group of players who have worked a few things out in terms of how the team are going to run."

Richie McCaw (All Black)

(Harding, 2004, p. 15)

The dual-management model, combined with the development of the leadership group and the "Better People Make Better All Blacks" emphasis, represented a substantial shift from the coaching/leadership style previously employed in the All Blacks team (Howitt & Henry, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012). Moreover, the principles underlying the dual-management model appeared to be strongly reminiscent of autonomy-supportive coaching (Lyons, Rynne, & Mallett, 2012; Mallett, 2005), mastery climate coaching (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002), emotionally intelligent coaching (Chan & Mallett, 2011), and transformational leadership (Callow, Smith, Hardy, Arthur, & Hardy, 2009).

"Better People Make Better All Blacks"

This theme represented a key emphasis that emanated from the critical turning point and then laid the basis for the dual-management model. As an outcome of the discussions after the critical turning point player development in its broadest sense was identified as a key issue in their efforts to improve the team's motivational climate (also see Cleaver, 2007; Donaldson, 2005; McCaw & McGee, 2012; Paul, 2009, 2012). As Henry stated: "Better People Make Better All Blacks, came from that meeting after that Tri-nations tour in 2004… It's evolved, and it's pretty good now. But … you're always gonna get better." Smith described the genesis of this team emphasis: "[Our campaign manager] coined a saying that 'Better People Make Better All Blacks' …It stood all the way through every campaign and was hugely influential in how we selected the team. …We also talked about [a catchphrase that] 'What you do shouts so loudly that I can't hear what you're saying.' Players behaved themselves into and out of the team under our watch." Smith went further to suggest:

We believe it contributes to performance… A lot of your performance, I think, depends on the connections you have with people around you… connections with the game, but also connection with the fans of the game, connection with your family, and with each other [teammates]. And generally those connections are stronger if you're a good bugger, and you do things the right way. That's where a lot of your resilience comes from, I reckon; is that you're playing for other people, as well as yourself."

He was also of the opinion that selecting on behavior (as well as rugby ability) helped identify smart players who were good decision-makers on the field: "It is a general statement, but guys who behave themselves and have high standards, are generally pretty intelligent. You know, you've gotta be sharp [intelligent], you've gotta have good self-awareness, and good game understanding, otherwise you just can't cut it at this level." Similarly Henry regarded this emphasis as being crucial for self-reliance and personal development: "We had a continuum of… self-reliance; and where players… would sit on that continuum. And we very much thought that the more self-reliant players we had, the better we'd play… They grew as people… and that helped them grow as athletes." A number of other elite coaches such as Mike Krzyzewski (Olympic Champion, NCAA basketball) (Krzyzewski & Spatola, 2010) and John Wooden (NCAA basketball) (Wooden & Yaeger, 2009) have also emphasized better people development as a central aspect of their coaching philosophy.

The "Better People Make Better All Blacks" emphasis appeared to share some key characteristics with the construct of emotional intelligence (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007), with respect to the development of both interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies (i.e., perceiving emotions in self and others; managing own emotions). In addition, it would appear that the All Blacks coaches were focused to some extent on the "character-building" aspect of coaching efficacy as outlined by Feltz, Chase, Moritz, and Sullivan (1999).

Off the Bench – player

"The best thing about the All Blacks at the moment is that players can contribute so much. Beforehand I think it was dictated to us what our days consisted of. [Being able] to contribute… makes your work a lot easier than if you are being treated like a schoolkid being dictated to".

Byron Kelleher (All Black)

(Johnstone, 2007, p. 38)

Responsibility

Both coaches emphasized the importance of transferring responsibility to the players, empowering them, expecting more ownership, and expecting accountability from them for the team's success, both on and off the field (see Cleaver, 2007; Harding, 2004, 2005; McCaw & McGee, 2012; Mortimer, 2011; Paul, 2012; SkyTV, 2012). As Henry stated:

> Peer-ownership, peer-responsibility, them running the culture, and the environment of the team was hugely important to the success of the side. Because at the end of the day they knew they were totally responsible when they got on that field… They'd been given the responsibility. …We thought that was

> the best way of developing a rugby side… The more confidence you can give them in leading the team, in making decisions on the field, the better they're gonna play. Also it makes them feel good, it's good for their self-esteem.

This focus on transferring responsibility supported findings from elite soccer teams where the players reported a desire to take on more responsibility, as well as a preference for positive feedback and democratic coaching behaviors (Høigaard et al., 2008).

Empowerment. Smith emphasized empowerment as an important aspect of responsibility that emanated from the turning point in 2004: "There wasn't enough [player] empowerment, enough ownership of the campaign, and enough accountability for the performance of the team from within the team." In addition, "there was very much an old model in place, where the captain… did everything… So a simple way to live that day-by-day is to not spoon-feed players [as a coach]. And that might be [something simple like] not handing out a daily plan every day." Nevertheless, the issue of empowerment did not just apply to the players—the coaching group also sought to empower each coach. As Smith observed: "It's like if you're in business, and your employees feel like they own the company, then they're gonna put a hell of a lot of work in. …Graham ended up essentially in a strategy role, ensuring we had… alignment with the players. To manage that role he had to give a lot of the on-field coaching responsibility to Steve and I" (see Horizontal Coaching Team theme).

Off the Bench – player

"At the beginning of the week, it's 80/20 the coaches driving things at practice; but as we get closer to the game, the ratio reverses because we're the ones who have to drive it during the game… By Friday, captain's run, the coaches don't have any say at all, it's all me and… the senior guys."

Richie McCaw (All Black captain)

(McCaw & McGee, 2012; p. 192-193)

Ownership and Accountability. Smith outlined how the coaching group "wanted players to be more accountable… rather than sitting back and letting everyone else do it" (see following theme; Leadership). Another example offered by Smith focused specifically on problem-solving:

> We wanted players who could problem-solve because the players have to make decisions out on the field... So if you believe that [problem-solving is important] then you've gotta create that off the field. [For example,] doing analysis on the opposition. So, rather than just sitting there and having it fed into them, [we were] making sure that they were doing the homework. They were learning how to present [key findings from their analysis] to their peers. They were able to establish coaching priorities for the [training] week."

Smith concluded that: "Whilst you're using that to set up your coaching week… you're also… developing another side of the athlete, which is being self-reliant, being self-aware. And being accountable for making his own decisions."

Henry described in detail the individual player profile/planning (IPP) procedure that every player in the team was required to develop for themselves:

> They had an objective… [about] where they were at on… seven pillars. Whether it be skills, ability to tackle, catch and pass, jump in the line-out… A statement of where they were at that moment… And from that statement, they work out what they needed to do to keep on progressing as an individual rugby player... So they had a map for every four months of what they needed to do… But they had to drive that, and that dovetailed into self-reliance.

Henry stated that the coaching group decided to: "Pass the responsibility from us to them, so that they had ownership… every week. So, the coaches would have quite a bit to say early [in the training] week, and nothing to say, virtually, at the end of the week. So there was a transfer of that responsibility. Transfer because they had to play. We didn't have to play." However, Henry related an experience where they learned some hard coaching lessons about the need to be consistent with such philosophies and behaviors:

> I remember one year, it was a shocker! It was the worst year I had in the All Blacks as a coach. A number of guys [were unavailable] … [Player's name] was the captain [for the first time]… We got beaten… [The three coaches] tried to captain the side; we didn't transfer the ownership because we were uptight about [senior players being unavailable]… So we tried to run the team... We learnt from that. And it's an easy thing to fall into, when you lose your leaders, that you have more to say and are more directive… It finished up a bloody shambles!

Leadership

As previously mentioned, leadership was a key area of development after the turning points in 2004 and 2007. Henry emphasized the evolving nature of the leadership group they initially created in 2004: "We had a chance to evolve and get it better, and make it work. It was always the philosophy… to dual-manage the All Blacks… But how we did that changed. When we first did it they all had portfolios of responsibility. They had all these cabinet ministers running around… and we'd meet a couple of times a week, and they'd feedback on their [responsibilities]. It was a step in the right direction, but it wasn't the

ideal." The deliberate strategies to develop player leadership (along with the unique combination of the dual-management model and the "Better People Make Better All Blacks" motto) appeared to reflect the key principles of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006); that is, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, fostering acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, and appropriate role modeling.

Leadership Group. Both coaches reported that the leadership group procedures became more streamlined over time. Henry explained that: "[Eventually the leadership group] didn't have formal meetings, they would meet for lunch… and have a chat. If [the captain] had something he wanted to get off his chest or something that he thought was important, he might call a meeting" (also see Howitt & Henry, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012).

On-Field Leadership. Both coaches emphasized the integrated relationship among the off-field work of the leadership group, player ownership and accountability, self-reliant player decision-making, and how that transferred to on-field leadership. While the team had one captain there were a number of on-field leaders, each of whom knew his role within the team structure (also see Harding, 2005; Henry, 2011; Howitt & Henry, 2012; SkyTV, 2012).

Season/Campaign Planning. The leadership group was also encouraged to take a key role planning each campaign, as well as being directly involved in devising game plan strategy and then the organization of the training week. Henry offered an in-depth explanation of the dual-management model approach to season planning:

> During the Super 15, I used to spend time with [captain and vice-captain]. I'd go to [their Super 15 team] and spend a night there… and just look at one section of the game… Then come back another time and look at other sections of the game... making sure that we were all planned for the first campaign. We used to chunk it, so we'd have three test matches to start off with and we'd just set the objectives for those three games and what we wanted to achieve… we thought the periodization was bloody important... and they [players] were involved in working out what was important in each period.

Expectation of Excellence

Both coaches highlighted the expectation of excellence within the team, the expectation generated by the All Blacks' winning legacy, and the types of motivation relevant for different players. Personal meaning, being the best, and honoring the All Blacks' history and legacy were key issues (also see McCaw & McGee, 2012; Paul, 2009; SkyTV, 2012). The focus on personal meaning echoed the satisfaction of psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002), as well as core aspects of transformational leadership such as inspirational motivation and high performance expectations (Callow et al., 2009).

Off the Bench – player

"This jersey will show up the frauds, the impostors. It'll squeeze those who look for short cuts. You won't last in this jersey if you're not prepared to do the things you need to do to fill it."

Richie McCaw (All Black captain)

(McCaw & McGee, 2012; p. 159)

Challenge and Personal Meaning. Both coaches identified the All Blacks' legacy and the black jersey (playing shirt) as holding special meaning for player motivation. As Smith stated: "We're driven by personal meaning, and a huge part of that personal meaning is to do with expectations and the scrutiny that surrounds the [All Black] jersey… Coaches and players in the All Blacks see it very much as a stewardship. When you've got the jersey, where you've got the position for a short time, there's a huge source of pride there to try and hand on your role or hand on your jersey in a better state or at least as good a state as what you received it in." Nevertheless, Smith also emphasized the individual nature of player motivation:

> I'd give the same piece of advice to everyone at any level and that is, people will rise to a challenge if it's their challenge. They won't necessarily rise to your challenge… let the athletes be accountable for what the challenges are, and for achieving them. Through experience I've seen that if players are driven by their own intrinsic desires then they're gonna push a lot harder to achieve them. Collectively, if they establish what the goals and the challenges are and are aligned in what they're gonna do to achieve them, then they're more likely to be successful (also see Arthur, Hardy, & Woodman, 2012).

"Best in the World Every Day." Smith related a story where: "Jock Hobbs [former All Black captain]… said the great thing about being an All Black is that you get up every day and try to be the best in the world. Every day; get up and be the best in the world. That's what we're trying to do; you're getting up every morning to be the best in the world." As the following quote from Smith indicates, there was a clear focus on player and team strengths, and an emphasis on improving strengths, as opposed to an emphasis on reducing weaknesses—such an approach is reflective of positive psychology principles (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Gordon & Gucciardi, 2011), as well as a task-mastery approach (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002) and inspirational motivation (transformational leadership; Callow et al., 2009):

> Once we started taking real pride in being the best in the world, and… the standards that would drive our performance… then we started putting together performances that were absolutely outstanding… That was a big driver; taking our eyes away from the scoreboard and actually looking at being accountable for continuing to be the best… We worked on their strengths, rather than just their weaknesses… We also wanted to boost their self-esteem, make them proud of who they were and what abilities they had. If you want to be the best in the world, you have to get better at what you are already good at.

Off the Bench – player

"We're always talking about how good the bloody opposition are. What about us? I reckon it's about time we started talking about how good we are. We're big, we're strong, we're skilled, we're fast. Let's talk about that."

Brad Thorn (All Black) speaking up at a leadership group meeting

(McCaw & McGee, 2012; p. 158)

Legacy/History. Honoring the past (previous All Black teams), but also celebrating the present team ("it's our time") was a major focus for the team's expectation of excellence (SkyTV, 2012). Smith revealed one tangible strategy employed to honor the legacy, but also respect the present: "We had our own honors boards made up in fake mahogany... We honored every player who was in our World Cup squad with what years he played for the All Blacks, how many [test match] caps he had etc. ...We took our [honors board]… everywhere with us… We had photos of our trophies. They went up under the honors board as you'd have in your own clubrooms." This focus on linking team performance expectations with team legacy/history appeared to share some similarities with the Chan and Mallett (2011) concept of the emotionally intelligent coach leveraging emotional contagion within a team by publically acknowledging individuals who had achieved personal goals, thereby transferring productive emotions that generated emotional uplifts and facilitated general positivity within the team.

Team Cohesion: Coaches and Players

Horizontal Coaching Team. Both coaches outlined the nonhierarchical structure of the coaching group. As Henry stated: "We're all on the same level. Although I was called head coach, and they were called assistant coaches… we're all on the same level, and I always conducted it that way. ...Because the more ownership you can give these guys… the better they're gonna feel… and that's why they're gonna coach well." Similarly, Smith observed that it was Henry who proposed a horizontal structure for the coaching group: "We have a really unique coaching team… Steve and I always felt like head coaches within Graham's team. We always felt we had the accountabilities, the responsibilities, of head coaches. What he did was smart... He knew we would drive the team better with him, if we felt we owned it." The nonhierarchical structure of the coaching group also reflected key principles of transformational leadership such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and role modeling (Hardy, Arthur, Jones, Shariff, Munnoch, Isaacs, & Allsopp, 2010).

Alignment and Clarity. This theme referred to clear communication and agreement on key issues among the coaches, among the players, and between the coaches and the players. As Henry stated: "Part of that alignment is the coach fielding the responsibility to transfer the ownership [to the players]. And that's about player development, players getting better, leaders getting better… Part of that is alignment, but part of it is the personal development of those people." This focus also reflected findings from elite sport regarding the positive link between motivational climate and team cohesion (Heuzé et al., 2006; Mallett, 2005).

'Keep It Fresh'. Smith in particular described the deliberate strategies employed by the coaches to keep the team environment fresh; for both the players and the coaches (also see Burnes, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012). Smith outlined this innovative strategy in detail:

> About every seven weeks we would try and freshen the way we were doing things. So that might mean we would review the game differently. Or we'd change the training week… At one point the coaches all changed [roles]… At the end of 2009, I became defence and counterattack coach... Graham became line-out coach. And Steve became the attack coach… Then, in 2010 we changed again... We felt that we'd stopped improving. …It was seen as pretty radical… [one journalist] said it was like shuffling the deck-chairs on the Titanic. But we had a feeling it would be good for us.

Enjoyment and Fun. This theme may seem at odds with the serious, sometimes ruthless, nature of elite sport, but both coaches emphasized enjoyment and they developed deliberate strategies to create opportunities for enjoyment (also see Burnes, 2012; Donaldson, 2005; Howitt & Henry, 2012; McCaw & McGee, 2012). Other elite coaches such as Pete Carroll (NFL and NCAA, American football) (Voight & Carroll, 2006) have also highlighted "fun" as a key issue in elite sport. As Smith stated:

> We also focused on increasing the enjoyment… We created a 'rugby club' within the [team] environment so that our team room was a rugby club. We wear our [amateur] club jerseys at club night on Tuesday... We sell raffle tickets and we have spot prizes. We do everything that you do at a [typical] rugby club… We needed to laugh and enjoy what we were doing and take real pride in it. Plus recognising our

> roots and rugby traditions seemed like a good idea as well… We had fun together… [which] provided opportunities to laugh, relax and enjoy the company of your brothers.

Love. This may seem an even odder theme to emanate from the macho world of a male, collision sport like rugby, but "love" was a key word used deliberately in the service of team harmony and team cohesion. Smith was adamant that "love of the game is a fundamental reason for playing it… it's still a game, even though we're paid for it. We had a real belief that it was an edge for us in the world of rugby–the way we love the game, why we play it and how we play it." The use of language such as "love of the game" was reminiscent of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002); moreover, the following quote regarding love of teammates was a clear example of satisfying the psychological need for relatedness (i.e., caring about and being cared for by others) (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The following example from Smith focused on teammate relationships and love:

> [I was reading about the ancient] Spartans. They were hugely courageous warriors and they were always looking for what the opposite of fear was so that they could develop that in their warriors. They found it wasn't courage, and it wasn't bravery, it was *love*. That's about connections. So we selected the right people and worked really hard on developing… [better people] who had strong connections, played for themselves, but also played for each other, and people they loved. And they loved each other clearly, within the All Blacks. I think… [that was] a real source of performance.

General Discussion

"*We believed that a person who had their act together off the field would play better on the field."*

—Graham Henry; All Blacks' Head Coach, 2004–2011

"We worked on their strengths, rather than just their weaknesses. We wanted them to understand that they were there because of what they were good at."

— Wayne Smith; All Blacks' Assistant Coach, 2004–2011

This case study revealed key findings regarding the dynamic nature of the motivational climate in an elite sports team. The use of narrative methodology offered many strengths such as revealing the temporal and emotional quality of relationships within the 2004–2011 All Blacks team, and honoring the complexities of life within this elite sports team, where the coaches were viewed as unique individuals with agency, but who were also socially situated and culturally fashioned (B. Smith, 2010).

Off the Bench – coach

"[The players] …need to enjoy each other's company; so there's quite a lot of social activity… It gets them closer and the camaraderie is important."

Graham Henry (Donaldson, 2005, B4)

Autonomy-Supportive Motivational Climate

The major themes of the dual-management model, the leadership group, responsibility, and the "Better People Make Better All Blacks" emphasis appeared to reflect aspects of both autonomy-supportive coaching (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and to a lesser extent, mastery climate coaching (Balaguer et al., 2002; Heuzé et al., 2006; Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). Previous research has demonstrated the positive, adaptive implications of a mastery climate in elite sport; with respect to both performance improvements and positive views of the coach (Balaguer et al., 2002). In the present study, the dual-management model appeared to embody motivational principles emphasized in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), such as an autonomy-supportive motivational climate, and fostering the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Considerable research evidence has demonstrated the effectiveness of autonomy-supportive coaching in sport (e.g., Gagné et al., 2003; Gillet et al., 2010; Lyons et al., 2012; Mallett, 2005). From a self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) perspective, a coach can structure a motivational climate to be either autonomy-supportive or controlling. An autonomy-supportive climate is created when the athlete is provided with choice and a rationale for tasks, their feelings are acknowledged, opportunities to show initiative and independent work are provided, athletes are given noncontrolling competence feedback, and the use of guilt-inducing criticism and overt control is avoided (Gagné et al., 2003; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Mallett, 2005). On the other hand, a controlling environment is created when a coach behaves in a coercive, pressuring, and authoritarian way, and employs strategies such as manipulation, obedience, guilt induction, controlling competence feedback, and conditional regard to impose a specific and preconceived way of thinking and behaving upon their athletes (Bartholomew et al., 2010).

Key elements of the All Blacks' motivational climate reflected an autonomy-supportive coaching approach: (i) offering choice (e.g., ownership and accountability for decision-making), (ii) encouraging athletes to take initiative (e.g., leadership group, responsibility), and (iii) using empowering performance feedback (e.g., feedback on improving strengths, not just reducing weaknesses). Some of these coaching practices also overlapped with a mastery climate (Balaguer et al., 2002), in particular Pensgaard and Roberts (2002) emphasized the links between these two representations of effective motivational climates in sport. The crux of the dual-management

model incorporated the coaches' desire to collaborate with the players to collectively lead the team and for the players to have substantial responsibility for leading the team both on and off the field. They wanted the players to feel comfortable being leaders. The focus on responsibility also appeared to share considerable overlap with the principles of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). There is evidence in business for a link between psychological needs satisfaction and transformational leadership (Hetland, Hetland, Andreassen, Pallesen, & Notelaers, 2011) and in sport for a link between intrinsic (autonomous) motivation and transformational leadership (Charbonneau, Barling, & Kelloway, 2001).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership involves coaches building relationships with players based on personal, emotional, and inspirational exchanges, with the goal of developing players to their fullest potential (Arthur et al., 2012; Callow et al., 2009). There is considerable evidence from the business and military domains (e.g., Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hardy et al., 2010), and growing evidence in the sport setting regarding the effectiveness of a transformational leadership approach to coaching (e.g., Charbonneau et al., 2001) and captaincy/player leadership (e.g., Smith, Arthur, Hardy, Callow, & Williams, 2013). Arthur et al. (2012) theoretically delineated "the inspirational effects of coaches in sport" (p. 399); and outlined a transformational leadership model specific to elite sport. Their model emphasized the coaching roles of (i) creating an inspirational *vision* for the future (i.e., inspirational leadership, personal meaning), (ii) *support* to achieve the vision (i.e., motivational climate), and (iii) providing the *challenge* to achieve the vision (i.e., high performance expectations). Furthermore, Lim and Ployhart (2004) reported evidence that transformational leadership was more strongly related to performance in maximum/exceptional contexts (e.g., military combat training, elite level sport) than typical contexts.

The dual-management model, leadership group, responsibility, and expectation of excellence themes in our findings all appeared to address elements of transformational leadership: (i) individual consideration (e.g., empowerment, ownership, IPP plans), (ii) inspirational motivation (e.g., challenge and personal meaning, "Better People"), (iii) intellectual stimulation (e.g., "Keep it Fresh," enjoyment and fun), (iv) fostering acceptance of group goals (e.g., ownership and accountability, campaign planning), (v) high performance expectations (e.g., "Best in the World Every Day," legacy/history, own challenge), and (vi) appropriate role modeling (e.g., alignment and clarity, horizontal coaching team, coaches changing roles). The focus on player empowerment also reflected research on the mediating role of empowerment regarding transformational leadership in the business domain (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000). Key hallmarks of transformational leadership also reflected major elements of emotionally intelligent coaching (Chan & Mallett, 2011); and there is compelling evidence in nonsport domains that connects emotional intelligence (e.g., Barbuto & Burbach, 2006), as well as empowerment (Liden et al., 2000), to transformational leadership.

Emotional Intelligence and Character-Building

The "Better People Make Better All Blacks" emphasis appeared to overlap with the concept of emotional intelligence (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007), regarding the development of both interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies (i.e., perceiving emotions in self and others; managing own emotions). Recent research has revealed that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with both team cohesion (e.g., Smith et al., 2013) and performance in sport (e.g., Crombie, Lombard, & Noakes, 2009; Perlini & Halverson, 2006; Zizzi, Deaner, & Hirschhorn, 2003). Furthermore, there is evidence that emotional intelligence has a meaningful relationship with coaching efficacy (e.g., Thelwell, Lane, Weston, & Greenlees, 2008), and that emotionally intelligent coaching is a legitimate area of coach development (Chan & Mallett, 2011). Finally, it would appear that these emotionally intelligent coaches were focused to some extent on the character-building aspect of coaching efficacy with their better people focus (Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009; Feltz et al., 1999; Thelwell et al., 2008). Character-building efficacy refers to the confidence coaches have in their ability to influence the personal development of their athletes (Feltz et al., 1999). Recent research has also outlined potential links among the character-building aspect of coaching, autonomy-supportive motivational climates, and satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2012).

Limitations and Future Research

These findings only apply to elite male coaches involved in interactive, interdependent sports at the professional level and consequently may not generalize to other competitive levels and to female coaches/teams. Future research should examine similar issues in other sports, levels of sport, and with female coaches and athletes. A potential limitation was the primary data being based on single, one-off interviews with each coach; however, this limitation was counter-balanced by the strengths of (i) the collaborative thematic analysis with coaches (two member checks and "coconstruction" of the narrative) (B. Smith, 2010), and (ii) the use of multiple secondary sources and archival data from across the eight-year period of this coaching group that served to verify and authenticate the interview findings.

Practical Recommendations

While it would not be appropriate to offer definitive recommendations based on one case study of one professional team, these findings do offer a number of

practical suggestions that may be useful for coaches of elite sports teams to contemplate. The following recommendations are offered for consideration by team sport coaches: (i) involve athletes in meaningful leadership roles via a version of the dual-management model, (ii) adopt a mindset for transformational leadership via a focus on individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, fostering acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, and appropriate role modeling (see Arthur et al., 2012; Hardy et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2013, for practical examples), (iii) learn how to be an emotionally intelligent coach by developing intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies of perceiving emotions in self and others (see Chan & Mallett, 2011, for practical examples), and (iv) implement autonomy-supportive coaching strategies (see Lyons et al., 2012; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Mallett, 2005, for practical examples).

The practicality of these motivational climate recommendations will likely vary depending on the competitive level of the team. It is important to keep in mind that the motivational climate strategies used by the All Blacks coaches were tailored to fit a professional team of athletes training full-time; clearly time constraints and limited resources for amateur teams will influence the practicality of implementing all of these recommendations.

"That was a big driver -- taking our eyes away from the scoreboard and actually looking at being accountable for continuing to be the best, no matter what the situation was. That was massive."

Wayne Smith (All Blacks' Assistant coach, 2004-2011)

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