

## **32 Significance and strategy of building psychological contract of an athlete team at university**

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### **1 Introduction**

Stephen Robins (1994) believed that, a team referred to an official community composed of interoperated individuals to achieve a certain goals. This definition emphasizes the difference between a team and a community. All teams are communities, but only official community can be a team. Then, after making close study on differentiating a team and an ordinary community, he had the following four conclusions. First, a community emphasized information sharing, while a team focused on team achievements. Second, the function of a community is neutral (sometimes is negative even), but that of team's is usually positive. Third, a community needs individual responsibility, however, a team's responsibility is possibly individual's, or sometimes belongs to the whole team. Fourth, a community's skills are stochastic or different, but those of a team are mutually supplemented.

Social approval and society display are the two main factors that decide whether teamwork would succeed or not. Social approval means that people are used to thinking in the way of "others - we" idea pattern to view the world. People always prefer to define themselves to some kind of circle, distinguishing from "others" and being proud of them by making some real achievements to their circle. The above is the mechanism of society approval. On the other hand, society display refers that all team members share the same belief and criteria, and adjust each one's hobby and behavior to reach rationalization. Generally speaking, change from traditional hierarchical system structure to organizational structure based on teamwork, is a process from quantitative to qualitative.

As for a university ping - pong team, trust and promise should be paid highly attention. Nevertheless, what drives trust and promise? Why some teams' performance is always not very well and the players usually think lowly of themselves? That's because they seldom understand that trust is the link between coaches and athletes, worse more, they don't know that psychological contract underlying trust is a constraining power.

## **2 Intention and significance**

Based on administration related theory, this article analyzes the significance and function of team management from the view of psychological contract and brings forward some corresponding suggestions.

As a certain group, college ping – pong team has some special implications. First, the team needs to attract, keep and improve the relationship with its players. Second, the team should be built up, developed and maintained in a dynamic period. Third, the team works in a process from making to keeping and realizing a promise. Then, the importance of building up lasting relationship between coaches and players must be consolidated in those implications, which has changed and extended the single view used before.

Psychological contract is the harmonic psychological link between coaches and players, which plays an important role in the teamwork. Building up psychological contract is significant in inspiring the players, keeping group's potential, and realizing the final goal of the team.

Although there is little about psychological contract and its administrative function nowadays, it is a brand – new idea and a valuable try to apply the psychological contract theory to the sports team management and conduct deeper research into the essence of the relationship.

## **3 Significance and function of psychological contract in sport team**

Psychological contract is a concept proposed by Levinson in 1960's. It is kind of mutual expectation between the organization and its staff. According to different levels of a college sport team in a certain period of time, together with development requested by athlete psychology level, the psychological contract can be adjusted to develop this relationship, in order to avoid bad results arising from the imperfect system. Simultaneously, the psychological contract is a mutual expectation between a trainer and an athlete.

University student athletes own their specialties such as individuality, diversification, and innovation spirit. They have relatively high sport technical skills, professionalism, and a strong desire for achievement. They are willing to challenge themselves, pursue for realization of their self – value and a life-long sustainable development. So that's why they not only maintain a higher athletics technical level, but also pay greater attention to social acknowledgement and approval.

1. In order to manage student athletes, university sport teams formulate rules and regulations such as the team gauge, the attendance – checking system, and bonus. But due to great changes of environment and objective reality

situation, these systems can not cover all kinds of relations including athletes, trainers and the universities. However, the psychological contract is able to adjust and develop these relations, according to different levels of a university sport team during a certain period of time, avoid bad results created by the imperfect systems.

2. Psychological contract is a mutual expectation between a sport team's trainers and athletes. University student athletes unceasingly use psychological expectation to check whether their own words and actions are consistent with their team's development, to enhance their loyalty to the whole team. As for a trainer, building up psychological contract may reduce the management cost while increase the efficiency by effective interaction. Thus, this kind of invisible contract can arouse athletes' enthusiasm, develops their potential, and realize the sport team's innovation.

3. Psychological contracts may fill athletes with psychological expectation and actual goal. For example, if the trainer pledged to give athletes higher bonus, opportunity to enter graduate study and richer life, athletes would regard them as return of their hard work, which would stimulate their enthusiasm.

4. Psychological contracts may lead athletes to believe in team's development. The more psychological contracts between athletes and the team, athletes would have the higher degree of satisfaction, confidence and the enthusiasm.

Obviously, psychological contract is a harmonious psychological link between trainer and athletes, which contributes a lot to a team's success. Building up psychological contract have great significance in arousing athletes' enthusiasm, maintaining athletes' and the team's potential, and realizing the team's ultimate objective .

## **4 How to build psychological contract**

### **4.1 Set value target and keep coherent expectation**

As to athletes, there are two demands which must be in accordance with valuable aim. On one hand, it should suit their value. On the other hand, it should be challenging. Whether a team's goal is significant or not depends on the degree to which the goal fit to the common value of the team members. According to university student athletes' characteristics, it's hard to manage them by means of pushing or controlling. Experienced trainers understand that they must focus on the objective of team, and let athletes understand their contribution to the team.

### **4.2 Lay stress on policy and set the form of contract**

To set up the atmosphere of trust, care and support of each other, there are

four things must be dealt with: tolerating the personality, leading by caring effectively, forming the interior agreement to ensure them support to each other and making sure enough information – sharing. How the trainer trusts his athletes decides his management style. The best formation of dynamic team's is a trusty spirit which is made of the different values and different expectation.

#### **4.3 Improve self quality and perform pragmatically and honestly**

The coach is responsible for taking the dominant action in performing the contract in the administration of the sports team. He must direct work systematically to approach a certain goal, form a capable directing system, and make his creativeness realized and tasks fulfilled in the limited training time by the athletes.

Managing a university sport team, the trainer is in charge of various aspects such as athlete's training, competition, study, life. He should set his own plan and leadership as the team's guiding principle, and to lead athletes to be willing to fulfill responsibility, high efficiency.

### **5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, psychological contract is a brand – new topic in the field of physical education management. Thus, we need to conduct deeper research into the essence and working process of psychological contract, if we expect better performance of it.