

Washington State University College of Education

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will defend the thesis on

Date: January 19, 2018

Time: 8:15 am

Location: Pullman - Cleveland 160A

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

WHAT DO THEY WANT? COACHING PREFERENCES OF PARENTS IN ELITE YOUTH BASEBALL USING A RELATIONSHIP APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

Chair: Scott Jedlicka

Currently, most youth baseball programs have no leadership training for their coaches and the existing leadership training for coaches often is not mandatory. Additionally, most youth sport coaches are volunteers. The existing inconsistency between expected competency and the typical youth sport coach profile has long been a challenge for youth sport programs. Parents expect a competent coach, but often end up with a volunteer coach with minimal experience and training. This study examines the coaching leadership style preferences of parents in elite youth baseball using an adapted version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Specifically, this survey collects demographic information, an assessment of leadership characteristic preferences, as well as preferable leadership styles among transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant. Additionally, how the leadership preferences of parents influence their actions as stakeholders is investigated through open-ended survey questions. This is significant because identifying how parents as stakeholders in elite youth sport exercise their power, legitimacy, and urgency should be considered by all youth sport organizations. Youth sport organizations need to be cognizant of their stakeholder's preferences with regards to their coaching staff in order to satisfy parents and in turn foster continued financial support through their child's participation. The survey was administered to 96 parents at the Palouse Summer Series including the 16U and 14U tournaments. This research aims to better inform youth baseball organizations, so they may in turn better formulate leadership-centered coaches' trainings to combat these problematic discrepancies between parental expectations and reality in youth sport coaching. In addition, a gap in the literature has been filled regarding the preferred coaching leadership style of parents specifically in elite youth sport through the use of elite youth baseball.