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## BURNOUT IN COACHES, DISCUSSION WITH COACH

Hello everyone, welcome to session 5 where we talk about Burnout in coaches. We will be having a very brief introduction into what is coach burnout, what are the factors leading and what coping methods or coping strategies coaches can use. And after this session we will be having a discussion with one of the basketball coaches about her perception about how it is to coach and what are all the issues and problems that are faced and what leads to coach burnout. When we talk about sports we are more focusing on the players and their performance and their well-being. The people behind the players who are obviously the coaches have not been much emphasized and we will be seeing that the load of responsibilities and the scope of work is so vast that it can definitely lead them to a certain amount of stress and also lead to coach burnout. So you have the introduction to coach burnout, the role of a coach, definition, correlates and later on a discussion.

If you look at the screen here, the role of a coach has actually been very under emphasized. If you look at all of the plethora of roles that they donned, you have the teacher role, you have the organizer role, you have the competitor role, the learner role, the friend and the mentor. Let us understand what these are before we go further. So the teacher role of course is the primary and the most elementary form, training the athletes both physically and also psychologically to egg them up and to keep them motivated.

Then you have the organizer role where the practice sessions, the practice schedules, the competitions that the players go for, being a visionary, seeing a future for your player and how

you can develop them and what can be done and of course the travel part, having to plan for the travel for yourself, for your player and group of players if you are a part of an academy. Then you have the competitor part, where you are involved in the tournament related work. If you are in a team game, then you have a lot of work in terms of coaching, in terms of other technical stuff that needs to be done, planning for their stay and also taking timeouts during the match and then working on each player. If there is an injury what is to be done and all these aspects, like I said it depends upon the sport that is played. If you are in an individual sport, you would have done much of your preparation before so during the tournament you can sit a little bit back.

Then you have the learner. Of course it does not, there is no rule saying that if you are a coach you know it all, you need to keep upgrading yourself because the coaching process is an art and a science so you are all the time evolving and developing yourself. New rules are being introduced, the game formats are being changed, it is becoming more spectacular. You need to be aware of that and also your training. The training schedules, the training modules, the types of training, are constantly changing not only for technical skills but also for physical skills, it keeps changing. What was in vogue maybe 3 years back is not in vogue now and new kinds of concepts keep coming in.

Most importantly being a friend and a mentor. So the coach-athlete relationship is a very sacred one where there is a lot of trust, there is interdependence. You are a role model for this young player or young athletes. You discuss issues, you discuss problems, you are giving support and also you counsel them in whatever way you can, so you are serving. You are looking at the holistic 360 degree assistance to the player, so you are also serving the role of a mentor because I know many times, even I am having 2 kids and they used to always tell me if I tell them that they need to do this, it is not so powerful but if it comes from their coach whom they share a very great relation, tells them to do something then it is much more meaningful. So definitely looking at all the roles that the coach plays there is a certain amount of stress that is emanating from this.

Some of the stressors that the coaches deal with, there are internal stressors which are related to the coach and external stressors which are outside of him or her. In the internal, I like to talk

about one aspect here that is sacrificing personal time. So this is a really great issue that coaches face because they spend most of their time in the training academy or in the coaching. If you are coaching a state team or even national team you need to spend huge amounts of time outside your home and thus sacrificing festivals or birthdays or even so much of your personal time. So this has a big toll on the coach.

You have the external aspects where you talk about the great responsibilities of evolving and developing an athlete. So everything is in your hand because all the coaching talent is exhibited here, when you want to bring out the best of the athlete. Your job insecurity depends upon the job you do, you have a part time job, you have a full time job and what are the demands placed by the organization or the entity that you are responsible for, what kind of pressures that you face. So when coaches are not able to handle these stressors, acute stress can be handled but when the stress becomes chronic and it is manifested over a period of time, it can lead to something called coach burnout and this is characterized by three symptoms.

You have the emotional exhaustion; where their work stress makes them so depleted in their reserves. Then you have the cynicism or the depersonalization; where you do not attach, there is a sense of detachment from other people and others, even with your players you don't have that connect with them because you're not interested in the sport to a very large extent because you are feeling burnt out and that in turn leads to reduce sense of personal accomplishment. Your practices are ineffective, you're not bothered or whether the team is doing well. So all these put together explain what coach burnout could also look like and research also says that there are certain aspects or certain factors that contribute to burnout and they play a great part in explaining this concept. Let us look at some of them.

One is the job experience. The longer a coach is in a job for more than 10 years he or she knows how to handle the stressors and how to come out of it, so younger people are more affected and age wise, female coaches are more prone to being emotionally exhausted compared to the male counterparts and looking at the coaching personality if you are a person as a coach looking more for perfectionism and looking more at being perfect at everything, then that also contributes to being burnt out. Your social support, what kind of support does a coach have? Can

you talk to others? Do you have somebody whom you can talk to? Is there somebody who can guide you? somebody who can counsel you? somebody who can make you, let you go through the issues and the problems that you have? That is another important aspect.

Form of employment, those who have part-time employment as a coach are more prone to stress and more prone to burnout because everything depends upon the performance of the team and the performance level here talks about the level at which your team is playing. If you are playing in a top league or your team is grouped along with a better player, better teams then that causes more stress and more burnout to you. If you're playing at lower levels, lower leagues you don't have that much stress but when you come to the top levels that's when coaches have faced burnout.

What can coaches do to cope with this and how can they work around easing themselves and weaving themselves out of the issues that they face? so one of them is time management. Having a good time management strategy will help you to manage all the issues and the various aspects that you need to work on having, a goal setting path and then having realistic expectations of yourself as well as the players. what kind of a team you're working with, what's the capacity of your players, so you set your standards based upon that and if you have a bunch of people, a bunch of young players who are budding and they need more time to be groomed then you can take it easy rather than directly taking them for tournaments and putting that unwanted pressure on yourself.

Most importantly taking time off, take a break, have a relaxing time. We know that work is important but when you are going through this kind of psychological issues where you're losing interest, you don't want to be attached to the sport and you don't want it to culminate into something that's like you moving away from the sport. So you can take some time off.

Finally, talking to seniors, talking to mentors, and talking to sports psychologists will help you overcome your difficulties; you know how to deal with it and you can have some constructive information about how and what you can do to deal with things rather than thinking that you can handle it by yourself. so this is a brief overview about what coach burnout is and how it affects.

Coach burnout is a serious issue in the sports fraternity. Coaches shoulder a huge responsibility right from scouting players, training, also equipping them with the skills of the game, being instrumental in producing players who participate at different levels from recreation right up to elite, coaches occupy a very vital and important role in a sports person's life and in their career. In order to understand what coaches face in their sports coaching career and how it affects them and also about how coaches experience burnout, we have Ms. Jayavanti, thank you Jayavanti for being here, thank you. She is a former Indian captain and part member of the Indian national team, so Jayavanti has served as a coach over more than two decades both at the Indian level, at the state level and also at the club level, so we are going to hear from Jayavanti about certain issues that coaches face and how they deal with it.

We have a lot of issues as a coach because sometimes, I believe I rely a lot on gut instinct, hard work and then when we train a player, we have that gut instinct because we've trained them for so many years and then we are all the time winning and then suddenly a match which we thought we'll win and then when we lose, it gets us very down because we say this was a match I wanted to win, there are some tournaments which matters for us because if we win, we get more players in the state team and then when they happen to lose that tournament and you would have worked so hard on the children and then they don't make it to the state camp also and so those are the things, they get us very down and then for me, it is like I think that maybe let me think of another way of understanding it, let me practice more? no. I don't think like that for me.

More of practice may not help, no. It may not because they also must be burning out the way I am burning out. what I do is I tell them always - consistency is the key, try to be consistent and try to maintain that and with me, I tell myself - let me take a no for an answer, let me take a loss also in my stride, and sometimes it gets very hard because there are one or two teams where they would have spoken about me saying she's not up to the mark as a coach, or my players are not up to the mark, those are the teams when I lose to I get very upset so you have a like a reputation to protect. Then what happens; the burning out happens, because I'm so stressed, I'm so worried You have your expectations, are not met right? and I have other commitments so what happens is when you're trying to as like for example my mom fell very sick, I had to take care of her and

I had to rush for the matches, so those are the small things where then I'm burnt out, I'll say okay let it go now for this year, let me take it next time.

For a coach you not only have your coaching and team problems or team issues, the coach also has personal problems, personal issues. Yes, which we have to deal with, everybody has and what happens in your four walls, what happens outside, we have to be the same. You can't let your personal problems or personal issues affect you when you are on the team. Definitely, children look up to us, so if we show anything they get affected on the court.

So what are the symptoms like one faces when you experience coach burnout? What are the symptoms? What you feel bodily and mentally, how do you feel? First of all I'll fall sick because you're over in the age group of 10 to 16. It's very tiring, it's very very tiring because you are explaining everything to them, you're teaching them everything, every step of the way. Then what happens, we get so tired mentally, we also don't feel like coaching, so then what I do is few days I take off, I tell them you just do your fitness, I'll meet you later and then one week- two weeks not too many days, because again if you let them off too many days, I let myself too many days I think I'll get into that holiday mode.

If a coach is affected and having a burnout issue or is affected due to the match, the outcome and everything, you can't allow that to affect the players, right? No, you definitely can't, definitely it shouldn't. So that's why we have to be normal, so some days I have a lot of issues but I come there normal as if nothing has happened, and I finish what I have to finish and then when I go back, I get back into my shell..but that yet again, that is how we come out of it and burning out is really not the issue unless, like I go for the Indian camp, three months I'm away from home, and I'm coaching coaching coaching and then we come back. There is no outlet when you are part of a team. you're in a close, you're in the international team, you live, breathe and you eat, talk, everything is basketball.

You're only talking about basketball and you're only seeing that, then suddenly it come to you- what am I doing with my life? let me just take that break. So when I come back home I take my time to get back to normalcy.

But when you have issues like you are upset and then you haven't had a winning streak, though your players are working hard etc. do you tell your players what you're going through? or you keep it away from them because there is a coach-athlete player relationship? you may be having some senior players also in your team, do you discuss with them? I do a lot, every match also I communicate with those girls. how about how you're feeling? My part of the feeling, I do tell the players sometimes I tell them, see I'm going through this and you have to understand, the reason why is because you're not doing what I'm expecting and then again I don't over-expect from them either because I don't want to pressurize them. But if I know they have the capacity, I would know the standard and the level. I talk to the players, there is my relationship, yes, I talk a lot. That's where it lets out my pent-up emotions of what I am going through too.

Can you give a typical example where you have felt burnt out, any particular season or something? Whenever I play the mini team or under 13 team, it's very very difficult because in that, the concept is 10 players have to play, so you have to get 10 players ready, not one or two, If you want to win. The pattern of the under 13 is different, is very different, every player has to be equally skilled almost all the time. They have to be skilled fundamental wise everything and then the older players you can always substitute but in the mini you can't. 10 players have to get ready, understand the psychic, understand everything, and then you're telling them several times and by the end of the tournament I get a fever, and it's been happening. So then I tell myself "no, I have to overcome it" but whatever I do it gets me stressed out. It's a challenge. it's a challenge, it's a big challenge. It's not easy because you're getting them ready from scratch. So it's a whole responsibility. it is, and there in the mini, nobody knows who's the senior, who's the junior. Yeah, everybody is the same. Sometimes the senior may not do what you expect.

When we talk about coach burnout, we do know that everybody experiences coach burnout but have other coaches in your batch etc have spoken anything about this to you, shared their perspective that they are having or they feel burnt out, they are tired of coaching etc.? Have they expressed it to you? Yeah, some of them, some of my colleagues, because I talk to a lot of the coaches. I have a rapport with quite a few coaches, I sometimes discuss, meaning I don't discuss

my players but we discuss the match, say you know it happened like this, happened like that. but those coaches have other issues, both are still practicing 365 days, and then still we beat them, and our children are all the time into academics, they rush from school, play with me, go back, there's so many things. So that coach, he says "I'm so tired, let me just get out of the system," because 365 days I'm coaching them they're losing to you when you're having a 20-day practice. So this is the time where I always say that the brains have to work with the talent. I mean it's very easy to get exhausted and mentally and emotionally tired. Yes, very easy. And get demotivated. Yeah, demotivation is the biggest thing.

So have you had any typical scenario where you felt like this? I did, because it breaks my heart when I know my top players dropped from the state team for no fault of ours. The state association or whoever they have their own thinking, they feel another player is more suited than this player, but we have our apple of our eye you know, we have our main player and we know how much hard work she's put, she's helped our team win and everything. So those small things we are helpless which is not in our hands that really gets too much for us, mentally.

In terms of coach burnout it is not only the emotional, physical exhaustion. Even what your players go through can also lead you to burn out, right? It's not only what you experience. Definitely because that's the reason why I say, burnout is more of that, than my own burnout. because you're mentally and thing. And you have to reassure them that it happened, what can you do?

Does a coach also experience burnout when they are winning or they experience only when they are losing? When does it happen?, when we are winning, because now I'm winning a lot. Yeah, you have had a winning streak right? Now you've been winning so many for the past one year! Yeah, so what happens is, when I'm winning so often, you get the withdrawal symptoms, you get that. If any tournament I happen to lose, it gets like "oh my god I lost off", but I am such a coach, which I would like to reveal, I'm very cool. winning yes, I'm winning, but it doesn't go to my head. you're very balanced. Yes, I'm very balanced, if I've lost I'll say there must be a reason and then they're a better team, they won, they played better that day. I mean it

doesn't go to my head and say, "oh I'm great", no. I only put it across when a child who's played well doesn't make it, otherwise I'm okay about it.

As a coach, we should also know that we should also deal with success and failure, the same way we tell our coaches to deal, right? you have to take it in your stride, we have you cannot get upset if you just lose, or anything like that right? Yes definitely, because whatever it is and they keep saying, "oh failure is the stepping stone to success", unless you lose you are not going to, but for me I try to say like I told you, consistency is the key, you have to maintain what you are unless it's injuries. Now again injuries come in, it's so traumatic for the coach and the child.

When we are talking about injuries I want to just ask you this, there are many times where you have your star player in the match being injured, having to come out and not being able to play. How does it make you feel? Very very upsetting, I can't explain because if I show my upset to the child, she's going to become hysterical. For example I had my two top players like I don't know, but it's your daughter, Karishma Rajan. She's a six-footer and she was the next Geetu Anna of India, and then when she got injured, it was heartbreaking for me because I had a lot of dreams for her and then it didn't happen, but how to explain right? the child went through a lot, parents went through a lot, parents are Indian players, and I can't explain to anybody what that child went through. You know these are the small things which matter.

This also contributes to your burnout. definitely. I mean when we look at the coach and we talk, we're thinking only in terms of practice or we are thinking in terms of winning and losing, but you know your players mental makeup, their injuries, their everything add to you, because you have such a coach-athlete relationship. Right, and then nobody's going to get it, sometimes you're not going to, you need that kind of physique, tall, everything right and when with that child, it happened. I mean I don't know, I took it badly, about her especially, in my club, she was I feel would have made it to another level and very hard working, she would have continued playing. Like small things, one or two people who have hit me badly are some of these.

so when coaches typically have burnout etc., just like how players need psychological help or some kind of mental counselling. Have you approached anybody even as a mentor, during this

burnout? yes yes for me it was my mother. So whenever anything happens, I used to talk to my mother, she's a very strong woman who knew what was going on. I mean I finish a match, she used to check up- have I won, have I lost? and she used to say and she used to do a lot of counseling to me and explain and then tell me to take it in your stride, next time do better. I'm sure. And then she's to be such, she's to help me - you don't worry about the food I'll send it to you, go finish your practice because I know you want to win the next tournament. so that's a great support system, you really need I mean you may think "no" and then when you have children and family to take care, I mean nobody will understand why am I so obsessed with the game. Unless you're obsessed you can't make it, passion basically.

Just like players, sometimes you can't discuss your issues with others due to personal reasons and also because there's so much competition. As a coach are you restricted to talking to other coaches about what you feel? No, definitely I can't talk at all, you can't talk unless it's my colleagues, my friends. I have a batch of friends who all played state in India with me, like you are one of them and many of them. We all talk to each other, they give me the confidence and the strength which makes a lot of difference. They egg me on, which is very important. Because some of the things are very personal and you can't discuss all these things to others. Definitely and they don't know the other side at all, they only know what I tell them right. so you are explaining your ups and downs and you're telling what is happening in the game since they have played the game they're able to tell me. So that's the difference.

One of my last questions is, as a coach what advice would you give to others or what would you want to tell other coaches? what should they do in situations where they feel let down or they're in a slump? What can they do? I know that you've gone through so much, but you still bounce back, come back to be a better coach yourself? Yes, right. So what advice would you give? So for me what I believe in is a coach has to be a passionate one, you can't be commercialized, there is a difference, either you're commercialized or you're passionate. When you're passionate you will get, because you're all the time on the court, four hours -five hours on the court and you don't care whether xyz is there or xyz is not there, you want the best out of them and then when you do that you will not think about other coaches. You will not think about anything, the person concerned has to be passionate enough to be broad-minded, should be

compassionate and at the same time, strong and resilient and bring their players up to that level. After that again it's left to luck, you are there at the right place at the right time and that makes a lot of difference. How you imbibe the chance you're given, some players will play for India under 18 under 16 and they use that certificate to go and get into medicine and all and stop playing, I don't believe in such players. I believe in players who have a continuity, who want to play and at the same time the coach also will know that player is there for her because you put in five years of training and they leave you and you're investing in the player. Exactly, so when the continuity is not there the coach is going to get very upset and that's where the coach comes in to say ; you should be able to identify who will continue, who will not continue and again you're coaching you got to know the situation . So you have the commercial coaches who will not worry whether they play India or state but you have this passionate ones who will get somebody ready where at the end of the day it'll happen. I believe in being passionate and that's the reason why I see a result.

Coach burnout is actually multi-dimensional in nature. There are various contributing factors; their personal factors, their organizational factors plus there are team performance and team factors and even the players factors. Yes, the team has to get along with each other, if you want that kind of thing and you have one bad egg in the team, they will spoil the whole team. Then you're seeing a lot of indifference, so all the girls and I'm not talking about all 12, each girl in the team will be different. It is the coach's duty to identify that and understand. Sometimes I get this question, “what ma'am! you let her play when she's not come for practice” but I say, “she didn't come for practice because I know she's a 95% student and she's coming for practice in spite of that. I'm putting her in the team thinking of that; she's topped in her class and then she's come here” and then they keep quiet, they think it over because I know she has the game in spite of that.

We had a great lot of information from Jayvanti about what it is to be a coach, how coaches experience burnout and what are all the symptoms and how coaches can handle their players and also handle themselves. So thank you so much Jayvanti, Thank you so much, I'm really privileged to be here. Thank you.