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Coaches sought to participate in study utilizing strategies to help competitive athletes conquer anxiety

Anxiety and nervousness before competition is normal for most athletes, from minor sport to the professional game. But what can a coach do when that anxiety starts limiting their athletes' ability to perform? University of Lethbridge master's student Courtney Stevens has been researching strategies to mitigate these issues before they become problematic and is now inviting coaches to take part in a study to see how effective these approaches are in practice.



Stevens, a graduate of the University of British Columbia Okanagan and former competitive soccer player, says there is a lot of sport psychology information available, but it is spread throughout the internet, is often too academic for a general audience and does not instruct coaches on how to apply the principles studied.

"In the preliminary research we did, we found some coaches have access to sports psychology information in general, some find information on websites, tidbits here and there, but the majority don't know where to go for it and even if they do find some information, they don't know how to apply it to their athletes," says Dr. Paige Pope, ULethbridge kinesiology professor and Stevens's master's thesis advisor.

"Courtney did a fantastic job of compiling this information, crafting summaries of why it's important, and creating infographics, worksheets and activities that are easily digestible and ready to put into practice."

What Stevens needs now are coaches willing to take her work and put it into play.

“We set 156 coaches as the goal, which is very ambitious, but we’re trying to acquire as much data as possible,” says Stevens, who came to ULEthbridge to work specifically with Pope and the [Sport Psychology for Coaches website](#) she is now utilizing.

“We’re not asking too much of the coaches. They’ll be asked to do a 15- to 20-minute survey at three different times throughout the duration of the study and if they’re really keen, they can be involved in an interview about their experiences with the website and the resources.”

Stevens is looking for any coach over the age of 18 who is currently coaching an athlete or athletes at any competitive level. From the preliminary work they’ve done, she is confident coaches are looking for these resources to assist their athletes.

“The website had touched a bit on anxiety regulation and the resources I’ve developed go into much greater depth and focus on tackling anxiety with strategies to prevent it, as opposed to treating athletes who are already feeling these things,” she says. “This is about giving athletes skills to call upon when they recognize anxiety creeping in — so a facilitative approach before it becomes debilitating.”

Coaches can sign up for the study at any time by contacting Stevens at courtney.stevens@uleth.ca.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/coaches-sought-participate-study-utilizing-strategies-help-competitive-athletes-conquer>

-- 30 --

Contact:

Trevor Kenney, News & Information Manager
403-329-2710
403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca
@ULEthbridge

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