

**Influence of Coaches and Settings on Athlete Performance and Talent Development**

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**Background:** Three studies were recently completed as part of an ongoing international line of applied research aimed to discover common principles and strategies related to quality coaching and athlete talent development. In study one the potential role of positive touch as a form of tactile communication was explored with members of a successful college women's basketball team in the United States. Study two was used to examine how NCAA championship ice hockey coaches use natural competition breaks (intermissions) to prepare athletes for optimal performance. The third study was conducted in New Zealand and focused on understanding how the environment influences coaching and athlete talent development, something referred to in the literature as the 'small town effect'.

**Results:** Collectively the results of these three interrelated studies show how successful coaches, and the setting in which they coach, influence athlete performance and development.