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Taking Leadership Development Through Sport into High-Pressure Environments

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how participation in collegiate sport contributes to the development of leadership and disciplinary skills, and how these skills transfer into high-pressure professional careers. The research targets former collegiate student-athletes who have a leadership role in a high-pressure environment, such as the military, coaching, or management. The study aims to understand how experiences in sport, such as teamwork, communication, discipline, and performing under pressure, prepare individuals for leadership responsibilities beyond athletics. This study uses a qualitative research design and implements purposive sampling of former college student-athletes who are currently working in leadership roles in high-pressure professional environments. The interviews were held by phone and lasted approximately 20- 40 minutes. The responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, and then categorized by utilizing thematic analysis to identify common patterns. This was done to connect responses to leadership development, discipline, communication, and the ability to manage pressure. Overall, this study will contribute to a more developed understanding of the

relationship between sport participation, leadership development, and having a professional role in a high-pressure environment. This research stems from current leadership and sport psychology scholarship, whilst providing new qualitative data and may provide valuable insight for coaches, educators, and organizations who wish to develop leadership qualities in athletes that extend beyond the sporting world.

Keywords: collegiate sport, leadership, high-pressure environment