University sport: An inhibitor or facilitator of doping prevention?

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‘a very different system for the sport [Track and Field] operates in the US, which will impact your studying and sporting experiences. Whilst many athletes thoroughly enjoy their experience, it is not suitable for all’.
 Give student-athletes a voice.
 Explore the university environment surrounding US and UK student-athletes.
 Consider how specific factors shape student-athletes’ beliefs in regards to PED use.
Participants

14 student-athletes

Male = 5
Female = 9
(mean age = 20.64, SD = 1.08)

Division I: N = 9 (M: 1, F: 8)
Division II: N = 5 (M: 4, F: 1)

14 student-athletes

Male = 8
Female = 6
(mean age = 21.07, SD = 2.06)

Elite: N = 10 (M: 6, F: 4)
Competitive: N = 4 (M: 2, F: 2)
Procedures

• Ethical approval granted by host institution
• In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out face-to-face
Data Analysis

Study 1
Inductive Analysis

Study 2
Deductive Analysis
morality

“It’s wrong”

“It’s cheating”
“My high school coach I was extremely close with...he was a major figure in my life...this male figure that I could trust...reinforced all these positive things in me...made me feel worth something...he just taught me lessons through the sport...outside of it even...having him as just a good role model and someone to respect was great...I really needed it at that point”.

“I’m really close with my high school coach...I talk to him a lot...I talk to him about anything...he’s more of just a friend than a coach now”.

“to this day I would not feel bad calling them [high school coaches] up like I know they’re going to be the people that...attend the milestones in my life like my wedding and whatnot”.

High School Coach-Athlete Relationship
“I’m so happy that [my coaches] gave me the confidence I had because now at [university]…when he says stuff to me about my weight or whatever at least I now have…to take it with a grain of salt you know? I mean not that it doesn’t affect me but [laughs]…there’s a level where I can put it in perspective and just be like ‘you know it’s pretty sad when a grown man has to resort to talking to a girl like that’…”

“During season last year as I started to get my own ideas he actually started to resort to like emotional abuse to deal with that and to defend his training philosophies and it came to a point where I was just crying about it; no one was listening to me about it. I would say stuff like ‘this is how I feel about my coach…’ so it just came to a point where I just had to stop talking to him so I didn’t talk to him over the summer, I talked to him twice last quarter…whenever he wants to say anything to me during practice it’s like…quick quips and you know…I always make sure not to make eye contact with him…”

“I just feel bad because there’s girls that went to high school that didn’t have that influence and that are still barely 18 and he talks like that and it’s just I mean…I can’t believe it’s still tolerated type thing”.

University Coach-Athlete Relationship
“you’re a student-athlete. You are a leader of the school...you shouldn’t go to parties. You shouldn’t drink or misrepresent things because then you’re representing the whole school”.

“People hold you to a higher standard. Even to where...you’re in public I mean some people can get away with doing...something rude...but...if you wear a [university] Track and Field jacket out, you do something that’s inappropriate or you know, someone doesn’t like it...that could go to your coach right away...there’s definitely a lot of pressure with that...someone’s always watching and news can always get back to the school”. 

Expectations...for behavior.
Expectations...for performance.

“if you don’t perform very well like especially two times in a row, you can be pretty much sure your season’s over so it’s kind of stressful for sure”.

“you show up every day...there’s not a lot of room to jerk around...it’s black and white like if you’re good...there’s always numbers...they can’t lie about numbers...they...can treat you like a person but at the end of the day they want you to perform”.

“I felt like I’m here to like help this team be better and if I can’t even do that, why am I like a person but at the end of the day here?”
“My freshman year, there was a kid on the track team and...there was this...testosterone booster or something and it sounded kind of funky to me...he was going to take it um because he was redshirting and he was like ‘oh I don’t have anything to worry about’...it sounded weird...he didn’t try and pressure me, but...he was trying to like encourage me like ‘oh you’d be better for it’ and...I was like ‘no’ and I thought it was stupid you know...I couldn’t tell you what the drug was but I bet you it was illegal’.

“I’ve seen people first-hand use them, never been offered though”.
So what?

The role of the university as an inhibitor and/or facilitator of doping prevention is population-specific. THEREFORE!

Anti-doping education and interventions need to be tailor-made for specific athlete populations.
Thanks for listening!

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