

Shadows of Victory

**Understanding and managing player-coach
conflicts**

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Intro & What We Studied

We looked at 10 peer-reviewed studies on communication, power, trust, and resolution

In competitive sports, conflict is inevitable between players and coaches.

These conflicts can range from small misunderstandings to major disputes that change careers and affect team success.

Our project focuses on:

- Understanding why these conflicts happen
- How they impact athletes, teams, and coaches alike
- Methods for managing and resolving disputes



Why These Conflicts Happen

- **High Expectations:** Both sides feel intense pressure to succeed.
- **Personality Differences:** Different communication styles, values, or leadership preferences.
- **Misaligned Goals:** Players may prioritize personal success; coaches prioritize team outcomes.
- **External Pressure:** Media scrutiny, scholarship demands, fan expectations.

Our Reach/Audience

- Coaches, athletes, sports enthusiasts
- Focus: Competitive settings (high school, college, and professional sports)
- We're targeting coaches and athletes in competitive sports, from high school to pro levels, plus fans curious about sports psychology. Whether you're a swim coach or a college runner, our posts aim to help you navigate and prevent conflict

What You Should Know

- Conflict is inevitable but manageable. Open communication and empathy turn disputes into stronger coach-athlete bonds
- **Conflict doesn't have to derail sports**
 - Research shows that with open dialogue and empathy, coaches and athletes can transform tension into growth, boosting both performance and mental health.

How We Built Our Page

- Reviewed 10 articles, synthesized themes (communication, trust, etc.)
- Crafted 10 Instagram posts/captions for @ShadowsOfVictory on Canva
- Designed graphics, posted twice weekly

How We Shared Our Posts

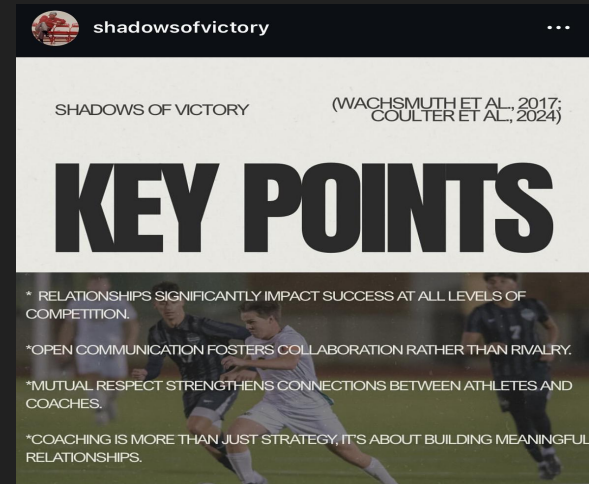
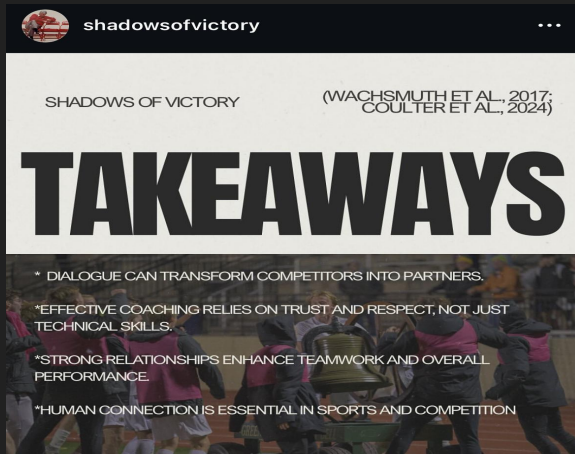
10 posts grouped into 3 themes:

1. **Causes:** Why Conflicts Start
2. **Impacts:** How Conflicts Hurt
3. **Solutions:** How to Fix Conflicts



How The IG Posts Work

- On top of the cover page of the post, we also posted a few more slides within each individual post
- Takeaways and Main Points
 - These consisted of the research we did of all the peer-reviewed articles and summarized into 3-4 bullets to help make sense of each source



Causes: Communication and Power

- What Sparks Conflict?
 - Communication breaks down when expectations don't align.
 - Authoritarian coaching styles leave athletes feeling crushed, leading to burnout and quitting



(Coulter et al., 2024), (Davis et al., 2024; Kavoura et al., 2024)

Impacts: Youth & Performance

- Harsh coaching in youth athletics causes stress and burnout, robbing athletes of passion and motivation
- Misaligned goals tanks motivation even more and performance declines when disputes fester



(Silva et al., 2023), (Davis et al., 2024; Zhang & Rhim, 2024)

Causes: Trust & Empathy

- Bad communication shatters trust and dims overall confidence
- Lack of empathy fuels frustration heavily



(Cranmer & Buckner, 2017; Szabó et al., 2020), (Wachsmuth & Jowett, 2024)

Impacts: The Dark Side

- 60% of athletes say their performance plummets during disputes with coaches
- This isn't just feelings, it's a cycle that sinks results if left unbothered



(Davis et al., 2024)

Solutions: Dialogue & Listening

- Structured talks fix rifts caused from differing coaching styles, turning conflict into growth
- Using active listening and joint goals lead to de-escalating tensions, proving small shifts make big differences



(Rhind et al.,
2019), (Kavoura
et al., 2024)

Solutions: Building Partnerships

- From pros to amateurs, open dialogue and mutual respect turn rivals into partners
- Decades of research confirm that connecting, not just coaching, is the key to lasting success



(Wachsmuth et al., 2017; Coulter et al., 2024)

So What?

- Conflicts stem from communication and power issues
- They hurt performance and well-being but are very fixable
- Dialogue and empathy build stronger, deeper bonds
- Conflict is not the end, being able to do all of these things and be open with one another help both athletes and coaches thrive
- We wanted to make this instagram page based on a topic that we can all relate to and to create a page for athletes and coaches to understand conflict and use it positively rather than just negatively