

Kolloquium „*Berner Gespräche zur Sportwissenschaft*“

Montag, 18.04.2016, von 16.15 Uhr bis 17.45 Uhr

Hörsaal C001 (Universität Bern, ZSSW Gebäude C, Bremgartenstrasse 145, 3012 Bern)

Leading from within: Athlete leaders as key figures for team effectiveness

Dr. Katrien Fransen completed her PhD in the field of athlete leadership at KU Leuven (Belgium). While most previous research solely focused on the coach of the team, Dr. Fransen's research established a broad foundation for the leadership of athletes within the team. She continues this research line by designing an athlete leadership development program and identifying the moderators underlying the effectiveness of shared leadership. Besides her academic track record, she has also built up significant coaching experience. As former assistant-coach of the national youth teams and head coach of the university team, a strong motivation drives her to keep her research closely connected to the needs of the field.



Leadership is a fundamental aspect of sports performance, particularly within team sport environments. Over the past 25 years, there has been significant research exploring the role of the coach/manager in this regard. However, this only represents one aspect of leadership within the sporting domain. Equally important, although far less examined, is the concept of athlete leadership.

My work over the past years has established a broad foundation for athlete leadership in sport teams. While previous research solely focused on the team captain, I adopted social network analysis to provide more insight in the informal leadership structure within sports teams. In this regard, I identified the different leadership roles athletes can occupy as well as the characteristic attributes of athlete leaders. Furthermore, I have conducted several experimental studies that highlighted the impact of athlete leaders on important outcome variables such as intrinsic motivation, team confidence, and team performance. Finally, we went beyond mere description and sought to explain the mechanisms through which the athlete leaders impact their team members. We can conclude that by sharing their leadership with athletes within the team, coaches can foster an optimal team environment.