**A Coach Athlete Relationship**

Lasira Nicholson

Department of Psychology: University of Mount Olive

PSY 310: Sports Psychology

Professor Mark Deaton

February 4th, 2024

 In this paper I will discuss my relationship with my high school track coach his name was coach graham, and I will refer to him as such throughout this essay. So, I started running track in 8th grade of middle school. Through the five years of running track, I went through so many obstacles, and my coach never gave up on me or stopped caring. As a kid I always was known as fast because I used to race my cousins that were boys and I always used to either win or stick with them throughout the race, so I decided to run track. Ever since then my goal was to try to run track in college. Coach graham was always the one to help me keep that dream alive. Before I dive into more about coach, I am going to talking about my track career and the obstacles I faced.

 I started running track in eighth grade and I was a decent runner I have always been able to run a 12 second 100-meter race. And in high school that’s pretty decent time to get colleges to look at you. So, I kept running when I got to high school my freshman and sophomore years were ok but the two years that matter, I didn’t get to run so I had not room to improve. My junior year I ran 2 meets and then covid happened and senior year I tore my ACL during volleyball season and was out for track season. Going through these things really made me discouraged of the shot of running track in high school but I was ready to give up, but my coach did not give up on me. I was the fastest short sprints girl on our team and my coach looked out for me and reached out to multiple schools on my behalf. I ended up with two offers from his doing and 2 other offers from other schools by me reaching out myself.

 I appreciate coach graham every day because if it wasn’t for him, I probably wouldn’t have had the opportunities I have today. He opened doors for me and to get more into detail about our coach athlete relationship side he has always been the one teacher/coach that I could go to about issues I’m having at school, he kept me out of trouble numerous times throughout high school. Coach graham always kept me on the right track in life and as a athlete. He would never allow me to get sidetracked or give up on myself just because things got tough. And although it may seem as if I’m just talking about sports, I’m not him keeping my head on straight and believing in me helped me grow in a more mature person and helped me understand how to deal with situations in the real world.

 Expanding on this topic, a positive relationship with a coach is not only beneficial for an athlete's performance but also for their overall well-being and enjoyment of the sport. When athletes feel supported, respected, and valued by their coaches, they are more likely to thrive both on and off the field. Conversely, negative experiences with coaches can have a profound impact on an athlete's motivation, confidence, and mental health. It creates a barrier to success, hindering their ability to reach their full potential and diminishing the joy they once found in their sport. This issue extends beyond individual athletes; it affects the integrity and fairness of sports, depriving deserving athletes of opportunities and perpetuating a cycle of inequality. By having positive coach-athlete relationships is essential not only for the growth and development of athletes but also for the integrity and spirit of sportsmanship.

 In reflecting on my journey through track and field, it becomes evident that the figure shaping my experience was none other than Coach Graham. His unwavering support, guidance, and belief in my potential transcended the boundaries of athletics, permeating into every aspect of my life. Despite facing setbacks and obstacles, Coach Graham stood as a beacon of encouragement, propelling me forward even when I doubted myself. His dedication to my growth as both an athlete and an individual fostered a bond that transcended the track, evolving into a mentorship that I will forever cherish. Beyond the realm of sports, Coach Graham instilled in me invaluable lessons of resilience, determination, and self-belief, shaping me into the person I am today. As I embark on the next chapter of my journey, I carry with me not only the memories of victories on the track but also the profound impact of Coach Graham's guidance, a testament to the transformative power of positive coach-athlete relationships.