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The Myth of the Team Captain as Principal Leader: Extending the Athlete Leadership

Classification Within Sport Teams

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27 *Keywords:* peer leaders, informal leadership, shared leadership, team performance, sport
28 psychology

29

Abstract

30 Although coaches and players recognize the importance of leaders within the team, research
31 on athlete leadership is sparse. The present study expands knowledge of athlete leadership by
32 extending the current leadership classification and exploring the importance of the team
33 captain as formal leader of the team. An on-line survey was completed by 4,451 participants
34 (31% females and 69% males) within nine different team sports in Flanders (Belgium).
35 Players ($N = 3,193$) and coaches ($N = 1,258$) participated on all different levels in their sports.
36 Results revealed that the proposed additional role of motivational leader was perceived as
37 clearly distinct from the already established roles (task, social and external leader).
38 Furthermore, almost half of the participants (44%) did not perceive their captain as the
39 principal leader on any of the four roles. These findings underline the fact that the leadership
40 qualities attributed to the captain as the team's formal leader are overrated. It can be
41 concluded that leadership is spread throughout the team; informal leaders rather than the
42 captain take the lead, both on and off the field.

68 importance assigned to athlete leadership and the efforts made to understand it (Loughead et
69 al., 2006). Therefore, in the present study our goals were to extend our knowledge of athlete
70 leadership by refining the current athlete leadership classification (first aim) and by exploring
71 the importance of the team captain as formal leader of the team (second aim).

72 **Classification of Athlete Leadership**

73 Using role differentiation theory (Bales, 1950) athlete leaders can be classified based
74 on their function. Leaders with an instrumental function are focused on the accomplishments
75 of group tasks, whereas leaders with an expressive function are concerned with interpersonal
76 relationships. These two functions are not mutually exclusive; athlete leaders can
77 simultaneously engage in both task and social behaviours (Rees & Segal, 1984; Todd & Kent,
78 2004; Voelker, Gould, & Crawford, 2011). A third, and more recent identified function of
79 athlete leaders is an external function by which leaders represent the group at meetings and
80 media gatherings (Eys, Loughead, & Hardy, 2007; Loughead et al., 2006).

81 Although this threefold leadership classification (i.e. task leader, social leader and
82 external leader) already specifies various functions of athlete leaders, it may still not be
83 comprehensive enough. More specifically, Loughead and colleagues (2006, p. 148)
84 characterised a social leader by qualities such as ‘this leader ensures teammates are involved
85 and included in team events’ and ‘this leader offers support and is trusted by teammates.’
86 These characteristics relate to the expressive function in the role differentiation theory, but
87 mainly refer to the concern with interpersonal relationships off the field, not on the field. We
88 therefore propose that the current classification lacks a leadership role that embodies the
89 interpersonal interactions that are directly linked to the on-field performance. This proposition
90 is supported by numerous coaches and players who emphasise the importance of motivating
91 and cheering during the game. In accordance with these on-field experiences, several studies
92 indicated that motivating and encouraging behaviours are crucial for effective athlete

93 leadership (Cotterill, 2013; Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughead, 2006; Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna,
94 2010). Apitzsch (2009) even stated that the absence of a socio-emotional leader (i.e. a leader
95 who creates a positive atmosphere on the field) can lead to a collective collapse.

96 Despite these preliminary indications, the on-field motivating function has not yet
97 been empirically established and has, therefore, not yet been incorporated into current athlete
98 leadership classifications. Consequently, the first aim of our study was to explore the validity
99 and relevance of a more comprehensive classification of athlete leadership by including a
100 fourth role, namely the motivational leader on the field. We hypothesise that the four
101 leadership roles (task, motivational, social and external leader) will emerge as clearly distinct
102 roles. In addition, we examine the importance of these four leadership roles for the optimal
103 functioning of a sport team.

104 **Formal Versus Informal Leaders**

105 Another way to classify athlete leaders is based on the formal or informal character of
106 their leadership function. A formal leader is a player who has been prescribed that function
107 formally by the coach or by the team, e.g. the team captain who has been formally appointed
108 to be captain of the team. An informal leader, on the other hand, has no formal leadership
109 position but becomes a team leader as a result of the interactions occurring within the team.
110 Previous studies acknowledge the existence of both formal and informal athlete leaders within
111 sport teams (Holmes et al., 2010; Loughead et al., 2006).

112 So far, most studies focused on the team captain (Dupuis et al., 2006; Grandzol, Perlis,
113 & Draina, 2010; Voelker et al., 2011). The captain is often considered as “the” leader of the
114 team; he/she is expected (a) to act as a liaison between the coaching staff and the players, (b)
115 to act as a leader during all team activities and (c) to represent the team at receptions,
116 meetings and press conferences (Mosher, 1979). Furthermore, the captain engages in both
117 task and social behaviours, such as coaching his/her teammates or providing social support

143 federations. In total, 8,509 players and 7,977 coaches were invited to participate during the
144 last months of the season (i.e. March – May, 2012). APA ethical standards were followed in
145 the conduct of the study and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Coaches
146 and players who did not respond, received a reminder two weeks later. No rewards were given
147 and full confidentiality was guaranteed.

148 **Participants**

149 In total, 4,451 participants (3,193 players and 1,258 coaches) completed our
150 questionnaire, resulting in an estimated total response rate of 27% (i.e. 37.5% for players and
151 15.8% for coaches). This response rate is somewhat lower than the average response rate of
152 web-based questionnaires (Shih & Fan, 2008). However, there are reasons to believe that 27%
153 is the lower limit of the actual response rate. First, the database that we used was not very
154 accurate, in that a considerable number of e-mail addresses were no longer in use or referred
155 to coaches who were not active anymore. Second, the database of the Flemish Trainer School
156 revealed some overlap with the databases of the sport federations. As a result some players or
157 coaches were contacted twice. Third, only participants above 15 years of age were included,
158 because a pilot study ($N = 30$) had revealed that younger players encountered too many
159 difficulties to complete the questionnaire. This restriction further decreased the actual
160 response.

161 More detailed information on the participants can be found in Table 1. The
162 participants played or coached in 2,366 different teams. The sample included players and
163 coaches from nine different team sports in Flanders; basketball ($n = 1,959$; 44%), handball (n
164 $= 116$; 3%), hockey ($n = 127$; 3%), ice hockey ($n = 72$; 2%), korfbal ($n = 118$; 3%), rugby (n
165 $= 84$; 2%), soccer ($n = 589$; 13%), volleyball ($n = 1,287$; 29%) and water polo ($n = 99$; 2%).
166 Players and coaches from various competitive levels participated, ranging from elite level (i.e.
167 corresponding to the highest level), over national, provincial and regional level (i.e. three

168 competition levels decreasing in importance), to recreational level (i.e. lowest level of
169 competitive sport; sometimes only competition games without any training sessions) and
170 youth level (i.e. only players below 21 years old).

171 **Measures**

172 **Athlete leadership.** To determine the athlete leaders within a team, we extended the
173 existent classification (Loughead et al., 2006) by including an additional leadership role,
174 namely the role of motivational leader on the field. The definition of the motivational leader
175 was constructed based on motivational leadership behaviours outlined in literature (Dupuis et
176 al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2010; Mosher, 1979) and was subsequently tested by a focus group
177 including three research experts in the area of sports psychology, an applied sport
178 psychologist and an expert coach on elite level. The motivational leader was characterised by
179 the encouragement of teammates to go the extra mile. This leader steers all the emotions on
180 the field in the right direction in order to perform optimally as a team. The descriptions of the
181 four leadership roles were presented to all participants (see Table 2). The role of both task and
182 motivational leader are fulfilled mainly on the field; during practice and during the game.
183 Tactical or motivational behaviours that occur off the field, but with a strong link to the on-
184 field performance (e.g. tactical advice and encouragement before the game or during half-
185 time), are also included in these on-field leadership roles. The roles of social and external
186 leaders are fulfilled off the field.

187 After presenting the description of each leadership role, participants had to indicate
188 which player in their team corresponded best with the description of each of the four
189 leadership roles. Only one player could be ascribed to each of the leadership roles but one and
190 the same player could occupy several leadership roles. Participants could also indicate that a
191 specific leadership role was not present in their team. In addition, they were asked whether
192 these perceived leaders corresponded with the team captain and/or with the players ascribed to

193 other leadership roles. With this type of assessment it can be established whether one or more
194 leadership roles are concentrated in one single player or that different players occupy the
195 different roles.

196 **Optimal team functioning.** As indicators of the team functioning, we assessed
197 players' and coaches' collective efficacy, their identification with the team and the team's
198 place in the ranking. The 20-item Collective Efficacy Questionnaire for Sports (Short,
199 Sullivan, & Feltz, 2005) was used to assess participants' collective efficacy. The internal
200 consistency of this collective efficacy scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$) was excellent. Team
201 identification was measured using five items based on previous research (Doosje, Ellemers, &
202 Spears, 1995). The internal consistency of this identification scale proved to be excellent
203 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). The place of the team in the ranking was assessed on a 7-point scale
204 including 1 (*first place*), 2 (*place 2 of 3*), 3 (*little above the middle*), 4 (*half way*), 5 (*little*
205 *below the middle*), 6 (*second or third last place*), 7 (*last place*).

206 **Results**

207 **Occurrence and Overlap of Leadership Roles in a Sport Team**

208 Frequency analyses revealed that most participants perceived that the roles of task
209 leader, motivational leader and social leader were present in their teams; respectively 77.5%,
210 77.4% and 71.3% of the participants identified a task, a motivational and a social leader in
211 their team. Almost half of the participants (47.9%) indicated that no player fulfilled the role of
212 external leader in their team. Frequency analyses with regard to the age of players and
213 coaches revealed only small differences between the different age groups, and no fixed trend
214 could be detected.

215 As noted earlier, a single player can occupy multiple leadership roles within a team.
216 Table 3 gives an overview of the overlap between the different leadership roles. The number
217 of players who occupy a single leadership role is provided in italics on the diagonal. For

218 example, half of the players (49.9%) who performed the role of task leader were not
219 considered the most prominent individual for championing the other leadership roles
220 (motivational, social or external). The percentage of task leaders, who were also perceived as
221 best motivational, best social or best external leaders, was 18.8%, 10.2% and 9.8%,
222 respectively. In 22.5% of the participants' teams no task leader was perceived to be present.
223 Because one player can occupy three or four leadership roles, it is understandable that these
224 percentages do not add up to 100%.

225 Furthermore, our results revealed that in only 2% of the teams, the same player
226 fulfilled all four leadership roles. The overlap between the leadership roles was relatively
227 limited; not more than 19% of the athlete leaders fulfilled two leadership roles in the same
228 team. These findings indicate that the four leadership roles emerged as clearly distinct roles
229 and that leadership is spread throughout the team so that different players within the team
230 occupy the various leadership roles.

231 The number of athlete leaders who are perceived to occupy only one leadership role
232 (see Table 3; in parentheses on the diagonal) was relatively high in each of the nine team
233 sports; the number of unique task leaders varied between 45.9% and 59.6%, for motivational
234 leaders this number varied between 40.9% and 55.9%, for social leaders between 46.3% and
235 55.9% and for external leader between 26.0% and 48.8%. Given the high percentage of
236 unique motivational leaders, this newly proposed leadership role appeared to be clearly
237 distinct from the other leadership roles; the overlap with each of the other leadership roles did
238 not exceed 18.8% on average. Within the nine different sports, the highest overlap was found
239 in ice hockey where 26.4% of the motivational leaders also performed the role of task leader.
240 Linear regression analyses revealed that the overlap between the different leadership roles
241 within a team was not significantly predicted by the examined background characteristics ($\beta >$

242 .05); players and coaches of male and female teams, regardless of the level, perceived a
243 similar overlap between the different leadership roles in their team.

244 **The Most Important Leader**

245 After assigning the leadership roles to players within their team, participants indicated
246 which of these players they perceived as the most important leader. If this leader had multiple
247 leadership roles, participants had to indicate his/her most important role. Table 4 presents
248 which leader participants indicated as most important.

249 The results indicate that most participants perceived the task leader as the most
250 important leader, followed by the motivational leader. The social leader and the external
251 leader were perceived as less important. The nine different team sports all revealed the same
252 order of perceived importance of the different leaders by both players and coaches; the task
253 leader was always perceived as the most important leader (39.7% - 51.1%), followed by the
254 motivational leader (22.6% - 35.8%). The number of coaches and players who perceived the
255 social or the external leader as the most important leader did not exceed 20%, with exception
256 of handball where 25% of the players and coaches listed the social leader as the most
257 important leader. As a result, leadership roles on the field were clearly perceived as more
258 important than leadership roles off the field, regardless of the sport or the level on which
259 participants played or coached.

260 **The Importance of Athlete Leaders for an Optimal Team Functioning**

261 The correlations in Table 5 indicate that the presence of more leadership roles in the
262 team made players and coaches more confident in the abilities of their team (i.e. higher
263 collective efficacy beliefs) and enhanced their connectedness with their team (i.e. higher team
264 identification). In addition, the results suggested that for an optimal team functioning, it is
265 better to have different athlete leaders in the team than one leader who is perceived as best
266 leader on all different areas.

267 **The Team Captain**

268 The results in Table 6 show that only 1% of the participants perceived their captain as
269 the best leader on all four leadership roles. In addition, almost half of the participants (43.6%)
270 reported that the team captain is not the best leader on one of the four domains, neither on the
271 field, nor off the field. On average, over the four leadership roles thereby excluding the cases
272 in which a specific leadership role was not fulfilled, 29.5% of the participants indicated the
273 captain as the best leader on a specific leadership role, whereas 70.5% of the participants
274 indicated an informal leader. These findings were consistent for both coaches and players of
275 the male and female teams, ranging from the recreational to the elite level and within each of
276 the nine sports.

277 If the captain is perceived as being a primary leader, participants indicated most
278 frequently that the captain was a task leader (31.7%) or a motivational leader (24.6%). Only
279 15.5% and 10.1% of the participants indicated that the team captain primarily fulfilled the role
280 of social and external leader. In general, the team captain was more often perceived to
281 perform a primary leadership role on the field than off the field, a finding that held for the
282 nine different sports.

283 **Discussion**

284 The present investigation extends current knowledge on athlete leadership in two
285 respects. First, a more comprehensive classification with four different athlete leadership roles
286 was established and its relevance for optimal team functioning was demonstrated. Second, we
287 compared the perceived importance of the formal leader (i.e. the team captain) with the
288 informal leaders of the team.

289 **Classification of Athlete Leadership**

290 With regard to the classification of athlete leadership, the newly added motivational
291 leadership role appears to be equally prominent as the already established task and social

292 leadership roles. Our results corroborate earlier studies, which also found that the external
293 leadership role is less prominent (Eys et al., 2007; Loughhead et al., 2006).

294 Although a player can perform several leadership roles at the same time, maximum
295 18.8% of our athlete leaders combined two specific leadership roles. In other words, the four
296 leadership roles emerged as clearly distinct roles. Leadership appears to be spread throughout
297 the team; different players within the team are perceived as being the primary leader with
298 respect to the four roles.

299 Regarding the importance assigned to these different leadership roles, both task and
300 motivational leader are perceived as more important than the social and external leadership
301 roles. In contrast to previous research that assigned an equal importance to leaders' on- and
302 off-field characteristics (Bucci, Bloom, Loughhead, & Caron, 2012), our findings reveal that
303 both players and coaches perceive the on-field leadership roles as more important than the
304 off-field leadership roles, regardless of the sport or level they play or coach. The fact that half
305 of the participants indicated no external leader on their team corresponds with the perception
306 of the external leader as the least important leader on the team. A possible alternative
307 explanation is that this external function is not fulfilled by players but by the coach or club
308 management.

309 The new role of motivational leader is perceived as the second most important
310 leadership role. This confirms our hypothesis that the proposed new leadership classification,
311 including the motivational leader, is more comprehensive than previous classifications. Given
312 the key role of motivating and encouraging behaviours for effective athlete leadership
313 (Apitzsch, 2009; Cotterill, 2013; Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2010), the new leadership
314 classification improves the relevance of this new leadership classification for coaching
315 practice on the field.

316 **The Team Captain**

317 In order to better understand the function of team captain, we analysed which
318 leadership roles the team captain performs. Our findings revealed that in only 1% of the
319 teams, the captain is perceived as being the primary leader in all four roles. Even more
320 remarkable is that almost half of the participants did not perceive their captain as the most
321 important leader, neither on, nor off the field. These results clearly contradict the general
322 conception of players and coaches that the team captain is “the” leader of the team, both on
323 and off the field.

324 Previous research already suggested that not only team captains but also other players
325 can function as athlete leaders (Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Loughead et al., 2006). Our
326 findings add that it is common (i.e. 70.5% of the time) that informal athlete leaders rather than
327 the formal leader, take the principal lead, both on and off the field. This pattern is obtained in
328 all teams, regardless of team gender, sport or level, and thus underlines the general overrating
329 of the leadership qualities of the team captain. Although many studies on athlete leadership
330 only focus on the role of the team captain (Dupuis et al., 2006; Grandzol et al., 2010; Voelker
331 et al., 2011), our findings infer that informal athlete leadership, exhibited by other players
332 besides the team captain, is indeed important and should be acknowledged.

333 These findings are consistent with the new paradigm of shared leadership in the
334 organisational literature (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Although most existing research on
335 organisational team leadership has focused narrowly on the behaviour of an individual leader,
336 the latest research trends acknowledge the importance of leadership provided by team
337 members. Because it is unlikely that a single leader can successfully perform all necessary
338 leadership functions, Carson and colleagues (2007) argued for ‘shared leadership’ in teams
339 (also called collective or distributed leadership), which they define as “an emergent team
340 property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team
341 members.” Based on our findings, we propose a slightly expanded view of shared leadership,

342 similar to the one of Pearce and Conger (2003, p. 286). They suggested that shared leadership
343 involves informal influence as part of a dynamic, interactive influence process among players
344 in teams, both lateral and vertical, but with the key attribute being more than just downward
345 influence on the players by an appointed or an elected leader (such as the coach or team
346 captain). We extended the model of ‘shared leadership’ by not only providing evidence that
347 there are different athlete leaders in the team, but also by demonstrating that these leaders
348 occupy different leadership roles.

349 Previous findings within the organisational setting showed that the emergence of
350 informal leaders was positively related with higher individual and team performance (Zhang,
351 Waldman, & Wang, 2012). Furthermore, co-leadership in sports has already been associated
352 with positive outcomes for both team members and leaders (Cotterill, 2013). These findings
353 are in line with our results that shared leadership within the team was positively linked with
354 higher collective efficacy beliefs, stronger team identification and a better place in the
355 ranking.

356 **Strengths, Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

357 The strengths of our study include the broad variety of players and coaches in our
358 sample; men and women, of all ages and experience levels, active at all levels of nine
359 different team sports in Flanders. The consistency of our findings, regardless of level, sport or
360 team gender, testifies to the reliability of our findings.

361 In addressing the limitations of the present study, several opportunities for future
362 research emerge. First, in our study we only asked which player and which leadership role
363 constituted the best match. It is possible that the team captain is not perceived as the best
364 leader on and off the field, but instead as second best. Therefore, we cannot conclude that the
365 captain does not perform the given leadership roles at all. Future research could assess the
366 leadership capacities of every player in the team with respect to the different leadership roles.

367 This would provide a deeper insight in the leadership function of the captain compared to the
368 other players. It remains true, however, that other players in the team are perceived as more
369 important leaders than the captain.

370 Second, the team captain was only evaluated with regard to his/her leadership
371 capacities. It is possible then that the team captain has other qualities than those we studied.
372 As such, the captain's function might be focused on other issues than leadership, e.g. on being
373 the confidant of the coach. Future research can clarify the exact function of the team captain
374 by interviewing coaches and players about their definition of the captain's function and about
375 the selection criteria used to assign this function.

376 Third, regarding the design of the present study, individual players and coaches, rather
377 than complete teams, completed the online questionnaire, which resulted in 4,451 participants
378 active in 2,366 different teams. This makes it impossible to conduct analyses at team level.
379 From a research perspective, it is clear that further investigation on team level is warranted to
380 determine to which extent players and coaches of the same team indicate the same player as
381 task, motivational, social and external leader.

382 Fourth, the present study utilised a cross-sectional design, as did most other studies on
383 leadership (Moran & Weiss, 2006; Price & Weiss, 2011). Previous longitudinal research
384 revealed that the percentage of task, social and external leaders within a team remained
385 relatively stable from the beginning to the end of a season (Eys et al., 2007; Loughhead et al.,
386 2006). We examined athlete leadership only at the end of the season to give all players
387 adequate time to develop team relationships and to gain insight in the athlete leadership
388 within their team. However, a longitudinal design would allow researchers to verify whether
389 informal leaders are perceived as the most important leaders during the whole season or
390 whether the influence of formal leaders shifts towards informal leaders during the season.
391 Furthermore, such a design would enable researchers to gain an understanding of the stability

392 of informal leadership over the course of a season (e.g. whether the same players are
393 occupying the different leadership roles during the whole season).

394 **Implications for Theoretical Knowledge and Coaching Practice**

395 The findings of the present study contribute both to theoretical knowledge and to
396 coaching practice. First, the results provide clear insight into the nature of athlete leadership
397 within sport teams. Besides investigating formal and informal leadership, and the extent to
398 which leadership is shared within a team, we also examined the different leadership roles that
399 athletes can occupy. Future research can translate these findings to other settings, such as the
400 organisational or educational setting. In this regard, researchers should look more closely into
401 the concept of ‘shared leadership’ by determining whether the different leaders occupy
402 different leadership roles. Based on our findings, we assume that the already established
403 positive impact of shared leadership on team performance (Carson et al., 2007) would become
404 even stronger when the different leaders in the team take on different leadership roles.

405 Second, coaches can use these findings to elect their team captain in a well-considered
406 way according to the needs of their particular team, thereby focusing on his/her leadership
407 qualities in the different areas. Furthermore, coaches should realize that not only the team
408 captain but also other team members can and should take up leadership roles. Therefore,
409 coaches should allocate time and effort to the identification and development of leadership
410 (Bucci et al., 2012; Price & Weiss, 2011). Identification of the informal leaders within the
411 team can help coaches to guide these leaders and further develop their leadership capabilities.
412 This strengthened athlete leadership has the potential to create a more optimal team
413 functioning, which, in turn, may result in an improved team performance.

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495 Table 1
496 *Sample characteristics*

Function	M _{age} (years)	M _{experience} (years)	Team gender	Level
3,193 Players (72%)	23.92	14.21	1,876 ♂ (59%)	177 E (6%)
			1,232 ♀ (39%)	836 N (26%)
			85 ♂+♀ (3%) ^a	1,733 P (54%)
				209 RG (7%)
				122 RC (4%)
				116 Y (4%)
1,258 Coaches (28%)	41.94	13.97	880 ♂ (70%)	90 E (7%)
			345 ♀ (27%)	268 N (21%)
			33 ♂+♀ (3%) ^a	613 P (49%)
				102 RG (8%)
				22 RC (2%)
				163 Y (13%)

497 ^aKorfball is a mixed-gender team sport.

498 *Note:* M_{age}, mean age; M_{experience}, mean years of experience; ♂, male; ♀, female; E, elite level;
499 N, national level; P, provincial level; RG, regional level; RC, recreational level; Y, youth.

500 Table 2

501 *The definition of the four leadership roles, as presented to the participants.*

Leadership role	Definition
Task leader	A task leader is in charge on the field; this person helps the team to focus on our goals and helps in tactical decision-making. Furthermore the task leader gives his/her teammates tactical advice during the game and adjusts them if necessary.
Motivational leader	The motivational leader is the biggest motivator on the field; this person can encourage his/her teammates to go to any extreme; this leader also puts fresh heart into players who are discouraged. In short, this leader steers all the emotions on the field in the right direction in order to perform optimally as a team.
Social leader	The social leader has a leading role besides the field; this person promotes good relations within the team and cares for a good team atmosphere, e.g. in the dressing room, in the cafeteria or on social team activities. Furthermore, this leader helps to deal with conflicts between teammates besides the field. He/she is a good listener and is trusted by his/her teammates.
External leader	The external leader is the link between our team and the people outside; this leader is the representative of our team towards the club management. If communication is needed with media or sponsors, this person will take the lead. This leader will also communicate the guidelines of the club management to the team regarding club activities for sponsoring.

502

503 Table 3

504 *Overlap between the different leadership roles performed by one player. The number of*
505 *players who occupy only a single leadership role is provided in italics on the diagonal.*

	Task leader	Motivational leader	Social leader	External leader
Task leader	<i>2,220 (49.9%)</i>			
Motivational leader	838 (18.8%)	<i>2,214 (49.7%)</i>		
Social leader	454 (10.2%)	512 (11.5%)	<i>2,127 (47.8%)</i>	
External leader	434 (9.8%)	283 (6.4%)	451 (10.1%)	<i>1,482 (33.3%)</i>
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No leader present	1,003 (22.5%)	1,008 (22.6%)	1,276 (28.7%)	2,132 (47.9%)

506

507 Table 4

508 *The most important leader*

The most important leader	N	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Task leader	1,668	37.5	42.1
Motivational leader	1,263	28.4	31.9
Social leader	703	15.8	17.8
External leader	325	7.3	8.2

Total	3,959	88.9	100.0

Missing values	492	11.1	

509

510 Table 5

511 Correlations indicating the importance of athlete leaders for an optimal team functioning

	Collective efficacy	Team identification	Place in ranking
Number of occupied leadership roles	.13*	.16*	-.06*
Number of different athlete leaders	.10*	.12*	-.06*

512 * $p < .01$

513 Table 6

514 *Participants' perceptions of the leadership roles performed by the team captain*

Number of leadership roles occupied by the captain	<i>N</i>	Percentage
0	1,940	43.6%
1	1,635	36.7%
2	659	14.8%
3	171	3.8%
4	46	1.0%

515