School sport beyond the score: communication, enjoyment and whose experience is heard

Selected studies illuminate school-sport communication, enjoyment and coach-team relationships. This synthesis examines whose experiences are heard, accurate explanation, voluntary publicity and direct resources, with limited applicability to the planned Coaches Need More publication.

Research by Education Angel Group.
Education Angel Group is developing Coaches Need More and has an interest in the proposed product. This review does not establish its effectiveness.

Current edition reviewed: 2026-10-12. Revision: public-v2.

Earlier editions

- Coaches Need More: team communication, recognition and school-owned follow-through

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Prepared by Education Angel Group (EAG). Research synthesis dated October 12, 2026. EAG is founded and run by Zachary Obasiolu and is developing Coaches Need More, so it has an interest in the publication's success. This focused synthesis examines school-sport experiences and how they can be explained and represented. It is not an independent evaluation of an EAG publication.

A score describes one result. It does not describe how information moved between a coach, athlete and parent, what participants enjoyed, or how a team relationship felt to different people. Those subjects deserve separate questions rather than one broad label of “team culture.”

This report asks: **What do selected studies reveal about communication, enjoyment and coach-team relationships, and what limits matter when explaining those experiences to a wider audience?** Three empirical sources supply situated accounts and participant-derived topics. Communication and journalism guidance help examine explanation and public use. Direct coaching resources offer practical alternatives.

Their different purposes should remain visible: a qualitative theme is not a prevalence estimate, a recommendation is not a measured effect, and a readable account is not evidence of changed team behavior.

1. Communication crosses roles, not just channels

Kerr and colleagues' 2023 study interviewed 57 people: 19 athletes aged 12-14, 20 parents and 18 staff, including coaches and nurses. Participants came from seven middle schools in two districts within one southeastern US county during the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years, before COVID-19. Their accounts described varied communication channels, difficulties reaching or attending to messages, coach turnover and differing views of competitiveness. Kerr et al., N1, Materials and methods; Sports culture; Communication; Tables 3-4

The value of those accounts lies partly in their differences. A coach's description of communicating with a team, a parent's experience of receiving information and an athlete's account of asking a question need not tell the same story. Treating communication as simply “send more messages” would miss the distinction between a channel existing and a person finding its information usable.

The study has important boundaries. It used convenience recruitment, consent required understanding English, and the parent project concerned concussion communication. Its questions and selection therefore shape the accounts. The evidence does not establish how common a communication problem is across schools or whether a particular channel improves team culture. Nor does it represent families excluded by the language condition. The published accounts are research participants' accounts, not new EAG interviews.

A useful explanatory question is where accounts diverge: who believes the information is available, who knows where to look, and who can ask for clarification? These are questions suggested by the source, not a tested communication intervention. The concussion-project context is not a basis for medical advice. Actual injury and safeguarding concerns belong with current school processes and qualified support.

Communication also has a local owner. Head coaches, assistants, volunteers and athletic directors do not have interchangeable authority. A general resource can explain a question without identifying the correct contact or authorizing a policy change in a particular school. No school-specific communication process was audited for this synthesis.

2. Enjoyment has more than one ingredient

Visek and colleagues' Fun Integration Theory work approaches youth sport through participant-derived ideas about fun. The concept-mapping study used purposive sampling of youth soccer stakeholders in a mid-Atlantic US metropolitan area. Its sorting/rating sample counts were 142 players, 57 parents and 37 coaches; not every person completed every task. The author manuscript appeared online in April 2014 and in a March 2015 journal issue. Methods describe fall and spring collection in the same year, but the collection year was not established in the inspected material. Visek et al., N2, Methods; Tables 1-2

The resulting enjoyment dimensions include teamwork, respect, clear communication and listening. These topics give substance to the idea that a season can be discussed beyond its results. They do not require abandoning competition or claiming that every participant values the same things. The source is useful for asking what people mean by enjoyment rather than assuming the meaning in advance.

The ratings aggregate stakeholder perspectives. They should not be presented as athlete-only preferences, and the task-varying counts are not one denominator for every result. A concept map organizes elicited ideas; it does not establish the frequency of each experience in school sport generally. The selected soccer setting also differs from a census of school teams, sports or age groups.

No reading intervention or magazine was tested, and the study does not demonstrate that an article about fun changes retention. Introductory national participation or dropout estimates are not this study's findings. The narrower contribution is a set of participant-derived topics that can be explained, questioned and compared with an actual local experience.

A future account might ask which moments participants describe as worthwhile and whether coaches, families and athletes emphasize different things. That would be a new reporting question, not an interview already supplied by the concept map. Its answers could complicate a tidy success story rather than confirm it.

3. A coach-team relationship can contain disagreement

Booth, Appleton and Duda's 2025 study examines coach-team relationships through situated interviews. Methods report 12 varsity coaches and 11 student-athletes aged 18-19, a total of 23 participants from seven teams at one independent US school. Data were collected from August 2021 to May 2022. The discussion reverses the coach and athlete counts; this report uses the methods counts while retaining the discrepancy explicitly. Booth, Appleton and Duda, N3, Participants; Procedure; Discussion

The researchers interpreted positive and negative collective relationship accounts, including divided support and withdrawal. A team relationship was therefore not represented only as a shared positive bond. That distinction matters when an account of “the team” risks treating agreement with an adult as the only acceptable perspective.

These are interpreted accounts, not incidence rates. The lead researcher held faculty and coaching roles at the school, and the interview prompts explicitly elicited the relationship concept. Those roles and questions matter to how the material was produced and interpreted. One independent school and athletes aged 18-19 do not establish what younger athletes or people in other institutions would say.

The study does not demonstrate a causal pathway from a relationship theme to cohesion or performance. Its stronger causal wording is not inherited here. A participant's explanation of why a relationship mattered is meaningful as an account, but it is not a controlled estimate of that relationship's effect.

A fuller account of a season can preserve disagreement without choosing a single spokesperson for everyone. It can distinguish a coach's intention, athletes' accounts and the researchers' interpretation. It should not manufacture a balancing quotation when a perspective is missing, or make withdrawal from an activity prove a particular motive that was never established.

4. Whose account becomes the account of the team?

The three studies provide different windows: mixed roles in middle-school communication, mixed soccer stakeholders describing fun, and coach-athlete relationship interviews at one independent school. Their populations, questions, periods and settings cannot be collapsed into one representative account of school sport. They are complementary sources of questions, not independent confirmations of one universal mechanism.

This synthesis draws an editorial implication from those differences: source selection affects what a reader can understand. An enthusiastic adult's account may be genuine while leaving quieter or dissatisfied participants unheard. A positive account and an uncomfortable account can both deserve attention without either establishing how prevalent an experience is.

The distinction between kinds of support is equally important. Listening is a participant-derived topic in Visek, a recommendation in Positive Coaching Alliance's checklist, and potentially a question in an authored discussion sheet. Calling all three “research-backed advice” would conceal what each actually supports. Attribution should tell the reader whether a statement is a study finding, a person's account, a recommendation or the author's judgment.

An actual interview would require an actual source: who spoke, their role, the date and circumstances, checked words and agreed use. Published research accounts do not become interviews conducted by another organization. Authored examples do not become team practices or observed outcomes. If a perspective is absent, the account should be narrowed or the coverage limit explained rather than filled with a fictional participant.

A season can be worth explaining when an adjustment did not fit, a disagreement remains unresolved or important work did not affect the score. That is a proposition about useful subject matter, not evidence that a publication already has these stories or that readers demand them. None of the retained sources supplies actual EAG reporting.

5. Readable explanation still needs accurate context

CDC's 2019 *Clear Communication Index* guide offers principles relevant to explaining unfamiliar material: identify the audience and main message, use understandable language, explain unfamiliar terms and organize information for the intended reader. Its scope is public-health communication, not an empirical sample of coaches or school-sport readers. CDC, N4, printed pp. 1-3 and 7-17; Appendix B p. 31

These principles can inform an explanation of a communication study or team account, but their transfer is an editorial judgment. The guide explicitly says the index does not replace formative research or pretesting; readability formulas alone are insufficient. Applying plain-language principles does not certify comprehension or create a validated school-sport publishing standard.

Context can be as important as wording. Explaining “qualitative interviews” means showing that participants described experiences under particular recruitment and interview conditions, not merely substituting a shorter term. A reader should be able to see why 57 interviewees in one county cannot establish national prevalence. Similarly, the Booth count discrepancy should remain understandable, not disappear because a cleaner sentence is easier to read.

A hypothetical communication example might distinguish a message being sent from it being received, understood and usable. It could identify the question still needing a local answer without supplying invented school details. This is an authored explanatory example, not a tested team practice. A polished explanation cannot supply missing authority, correct a misattributed finding or demonstrate changed behavior.

Useful reading and subsequent action remain separate. Understanding a feature, finding it relevant, using a resource, changing coaching behavior and experiencing a different season are distinct outcomes. Coach satisfaction, athlete comfort, cohesion, retention, performance and anxiety are not substitutes for reader understanding. No retained source establishes the later outcomes through reading.

6. Sharing a story is not blanket publicity permission

UNICEF's guidance for journalists reporting on children emphasizes dignity, accurate context, no staging, understandable intended use and uncoerced child and guardian permission. It also calls for considering harm even when identity is obscured. These are normative journalism principles, not measured effects or US legal clearance. UNICEF, N5, Six principles; Six guidelines for interviewing children; Seven guidelines for reporting on children

Talking, recording and publication are different choices. Name, photograph, quotation, audio, article, newsletter excerpt, social excerpt and promotional use may have different scopes. Agreement to one use should not silently authorize every later use. Nor does a coach's contact role establish authority over each student's image or the school's identity.

Age and institution matter. The 18-19-year-old interview sample in Booth does not remove the separate considerations involved in reporting on minors. Actual guardian, institutional and legal requirements depend on the situation; this synthesis is not a permission audit. A general account need not collect health, injury, discipline, family records or other private information to discuss a team topic.

Declining public visibility is not evidence of low commitment. Private acknowledgment, an interview and public exposure can be independent preferences. Nor should a person have to disclose why they declined before the choice is respected. This is a normative judgment about voluntary use, not a measured finding from the qualitative studies.

Accurate context must survive an excerpt. A quotation can mislead when separated from its qualification, even if its words were copied correctly. Errors and changed permissions require attention to controlled derivatives as well as the original. Third-party copies may not be fully retractable, so complete erasure everywhere cannot be promised.

7. Direct resources and local conversations remain useful alternatives

Positive Coaching Alliance's *Checklist for Positive Coaches* is a short direct resource. The first-party page covers listening, specific feedback, athlete input into team values and expectations with parents. A person wanting a checklist may be served by the original without a longer explanation. Its promotional lifetime-impact language is not evidence of a checklist effect. The inspected HTML does not establish downloadable-file accessibility or permission to reproduce or adapt provider materials. PCA, N6, Prioritize Building Trusting Relationships; Create a Positive Team Culture; Make Parents an Asset to Your Team

The official NFHS *Engaging Effectively with Parents* flyer describes a formal course approach: communication systems, preseason meetings and in-season and end-of-season communication, with listed resources. The evidence is an undated one-page outline, not verification of current enrollment, price, delivery, individual resource files or the complete course experience. It is a descriptive resource, not a verified live enrollment destination. NFHS, N7, Course Objectives; Units 3-4; Resources

A current school conversation is another route when the question concerns local policy or the approved channel for a concern. The responsible school role may be more relevant than a national resource. No local route was audited here, and a readable article does not authorize institutional decisions, acceptance of resources or student publicity.

These options answer different questions. A checklist gives direct prompts; a course can offer a structured learning format; reporting can explain context and differing accounts; a school conversation can resolve a local decision. This is a format comparison, not an effectiveness ranking. There is no comparative study here establishing that one route is superior.

More material can create more effort. Reading, selecting, adapting, printing, explaining and following up may involve other adults and families as well as the reader. A companion should not be assumed useful merely because it is downloadable. If the direct resource answers the question, or the missing information is a school decision, another article may add little. These are practical counterhypotheses to test, not manufactured findings of unmet need.

8. Applicability to Coaches Need More

Coaches Need More is a planned free publication beneath Education Needs More, Education Angel Group's editorial umbrella. The approved proposition is an observant magazine about teams, communication and the work behind a season, with practical features and genuine permissioned coach and team reporting. These topic sources can inform its questions and explanations; they do not validate its features or prove demand.
EAG publication context, A0

Selected articles may include an authored companion. EAG's September 25 proposal describes a meeting card about help, the next practice plan and one agreed adjustment, alongside a season-story outline about preparation and changed plans. These are proposals, not coach quotations, implemented team practices or validated outcomes. Their availability and usefulness would require evidence from the actual materials and readers, not borrowed workshop effects.

Ordinary reading does not require an account, team records or a private advice request. Reading, an interview, Challenge participation, membership and publicity remain independent choices. Coverage is not sold as independent reporting through supporter counts, withheld after a commercial decline or treated as school endorsement of Runstr. Identifiable minor features require applicable guardian/institutional permissions and age-appropriate assent, with explicit recording permission. Those are EAG's publication conditions, not permissions established by this report.

EAG is founded and run by Zachary Obasiolu; no newsroom, interview archive or funded reporting capacity is inferred. Coverage implies no personal coach payout, commission, fundraising share or resource ownership. Institutional acceptance remains a school or district decision. The publication is not a recruiting, athlete-ranking, clinical, disciplinary or sports-performance service.

9. What the evidence supports, and what remains open

The strongest conclusion is topic-specific: selected school-sport accounts differ across roles and relationships; participant-derived enjoyment includes more than results; and explanation must preserve those differences and their source limits. The evidence does not establish a widespread information deficit, demand for another magazine or an effect of EAG's work.

This is a focused synthesis, not a systematic review or a comprehensive correction/retraction search. Three empirical studies, two normative guides and two first-party resources serve distinct purposes. Source appraisals recorded on October 11, 2026 supplied the core, with limited October 12 checks of Kerr and Booth. Visek uses the author manuscript's inspected methods and tables; a later blocked PMC request supplied no new content. Booth uses the repository version-of-record PDF when publisher HTML failed. Access dates are separate from publication and measured periods.

The source boundaries remain material: selected and geographically narrow populations, English-understanding consent in Kerr, varying stakeholder tasks and an unestablished collection year in Visek, and researcher roles plus conflicting role counts in Booth. CDC and UNICEF provide guidance, not causal evidence. PCA and NFHS establish described materials, not comparative effectiveness or fully verified current service availability. No actual EAG interviews, school-specific policy audit, completed NFHS course review or multilingual/accessibility reader study was obtained.

No retained source tests Coaches Need More, reader comprehension, companion use, credible representation or comparative benefit. A useful later assessment could examine whether readers understand a complete article's main point, distinguish accounts from wider evidence, recognize important limits and find the material relevant for reasonable total effort. A checklist comparison should use the actual original resource; a season account need not require a companion at all. These are proposed questions, not completed research or an empirical finding of no effect.

Source access does not grant reproduction rights. Booth's CC BY-NC-ND terms do not authorize adaptation of its figures or interview material for EAG. This synthesis does not reproduce study figures or present participant quotations. Earlier coach-training findings and unresolved table/access disputes remain in the complete historical edition; they answer a different intervention question and are not newly resolved or promoted as magazine evidence.

Readers can consider the communication, enjoyment and relationship questions without adopting a program or making their team publicly visible. A fuller account can be useful because it explains a difference or tradeoff honestly. Whether any particular publication delivers that value remains a question for its actual work and readers.

References

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- **N3. Booth, Appleton and Duda.** *Conceptions of the coach-team relationship in the views of youth team sport coaches and athletes*. International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, online June 5, 2025. DOI: 10.1080/1612197X.2025.2512552. Version-of-record repository PDF.
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- **N6. Positive Coaching Alliance.** *Checklist for Positive Coaches*. Undated first-party page, accessed October 11, 2026. Checklist.
- **N7. NFHS.** *Engaging Effectively with Parents*. Undated one-page course flyer, accessed October 11, 2026. Official outline.
- **A0. Education Angel Group.** Approved Coaches Need More publication description, October 12, 2026, with existing editorial independence and permissions conditions. Product authority, not implementation or efficacy evidence. Publication context.