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A qualitative study of Norwegian athletics  
coaches and their focus on psychological skills  
and psychological skills training

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Masteroppgave i  
Seksjon for Idrett og samfunnsvitenskap  
Norges idrettshøgskole, 2022

## **Abstract**

*Introduction:* The margin between losing and winning has never been smaller. Athletes are looking for ways to get an edge on their competitors and they are more open to work on their psychological skills (Williams & Krane, 2015). PST refers to “*the systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment or achieving greater sport and physical activity self-satisfaction*” (Weinberg & Gould, 2019, p. 248).

*Research questions:* To what extent do Norwegian athletics coaches focus on psychological skills training in everyday workouts? Which psychological skills and techniques are emphasized?

*Method:* In the current study a qualitative research method was used, conducting semi-structured interviews and analysing the data using a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Seven coaches in athletics, four women and three men, and represented different levels of experience as coach, all of them also had experience as an athletics athlete

*Result:* The result of the analysis is four overarching themes describing how coaches in Norwegian athletics focus on psychological skills training: (1) Facilitating for psychological skills through the structure of the workout (2) Communication as a tool in psychological skills training. (3) The coaches’ challenges associated with psychological skills training. (4) Improvements and possible changes to make

*Conclusion:* Based on the results the current study it seems likely that Norwegian athletics coaches do not have any focus on PST and limited focus on psychological skills in their athletics every day. Mostly they focused on the coach-athlete relationship, and they reported that they indirectly work on motivation

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## **Preface**

After working for one year on this master's thesis, a two-year course of study ends at the Norwegian school of sport sciences, where I have acquired good knowledge through the master's program coaching and sports psychology, within the Department of Sport and Social Sciences. This study is based on my own interest in the topic and has been an educational study to work on.

I would like to give a big thank you to my supervisor Gro Jordalen who has patiently and calmly guided me through this process and the year that has been. Who listened, been engaged, and provided good professional and methodological guidance.

Furthermore, I would also like to thank the participants in the study, for participating in either an in person or an online interview and sharing their experiences with me. I really appreciate that you shared your knowledge and experiences as a coach.

I would also like to thank my boyfriend, family, and close friends, for good conversations, support and cheering words through this time. I am eternally grateful for that,

Karoline Saur Heiland

Norwegian school of sport sciences, 01.06.22

## **I.0 Introduction**

*“Every sport performance is a result of physical, technical, tactical and psychological properties and skills.”* (Pensgaard, 2005, p. 17).

The margin between losing and winning has never been smaller. Athletes are looking for ways to get an edge on their competitors and they are more open to work on their psychological skills (Williams & Krane, 2015). Athletes get challenged on the physical as well as the psychological skills when doing sport, due to sport being unpredictable and the intensity of workouts and competitions (Kumar & Shirotriya, 2010). Mental preparation can therefore be as important as physical preparation (Noakes, 2003). Elite athletes require a *“psychological edge that enables them to generally cope better than their opponents with the many demands (e.g. competition, training, life style), that sport places on a performer”* (Jones, 2002, p. 209). Psychological skills and mental techniques have been extensively researched, but often in isolation and not as a program combining the various techniques (e.g., Locke & Latham, 2002; Vealey & Forleza, 2015; Williams & Krane, 2015). Currently, the focus on psychological skills training (PST) has increased, comprising the systematic and consistent exercise of psychological skills to improve performance, increase joy, or achieve greater satisfaction in sports and athletics (Birrer & Morgan, 2010, p. 78).

### **I.1 Rationale for choosing this topic**

The reason for choosing a topic within sport psychology is complex, and is a result of my own interest, background, and curiosity. After many years in athletics, both as an athlete and coach, many opinions and thoughts have been formed about development and achievement in athletics. Historically the focus in athletics has been on the physical and technical characteristics of the athletes (Hut et al., 2021). However, the importance of psychological skills has over the last few decades increased. Even though sport psychology has been more recognized, my experience, is that many coaches do not focus on psychological skills training (PST) in everyday training. This is also mirrored in the

Norwegian athletics federation's focus on the subject, by how rarely the concept of psychological skills is mentioned in their "Analysis of demands" and how little focus on PST there is the education of coaches (Norwegian-Athletics-Association). Furthermore, there is no researcher focusing on PST in the context of Norwegian athletics.

## 1.2 Research question

The purpose of the current study is to describe what and how much focus coaches have on psychological skills training and which psychological skills they priorities, in young athletes in Norway. Giving these research questions:

- To what extent do Norwegian athletics coaches focus on psychological skills training in everyday workouts?
- Which psychological skills and techniques are emphasized?

## 2.0 Previous research and theory

### 2.1 Psychological skills training

Nowadays it is commonly known that the contribution of psychological skills is required for excellent sport performance. There is a lot of different terms labelling the effort of improving psychological skills, for examples psychological skills training and mental practice. Mental practice refers to "*cognitive rehearsal of a task in the absence of overt physical movement*" (Driskell et al., 1994, p. 481) and PST refers to "*the systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment or achieving greater sport and physical activity self-satisfaction*" (Weinberg & Gould, 2019, p. 248). Therefore, PST needs to be systematic, planned, goal-oriented, controlled and evaluated (Seiler & Stock, 1994). In the current study the PST definition will be used.

Sport psychology involves everything from motivation, thoughts, and feeling to cohesion and relationships (Williams, 2015, p. 1). The benefit of PST is widely documented and the fact that psychological skills positively contributes to an individuals' optimal performance is emphasized (Hardy et al., 1996; Vealey, 2007). For example, PST improves overall performance by increasing self-confidence, and improving the performance of sport-specific tasks (Johnson et al., 2004; Thelwell et al., 2006). That is, PST and mental preparations are likely key for performance in athletics (Wann & Church, 1998). Additionally, Birrer and Morgan (2010, p. 78) pointed out that the physiological and psychological demands of the specific sport should influence the content of PST. Pensgaard (2005, p. 17) states "*different sports need to priorities which skills should be focused on and evolved*". This means that different athletics events can and will have different PST programs, since the demands are different. Summarized, there are numerous evidence that PST combined with physical training improve performance beyond physical training individually (Kumar & Shirotriya, 2010).

Research shows that elite athletes tend to be more focused, determined, in control and confident, even though the pressure and demands are higher on the elite-level (Jones, 2002; Kumar & Shirotriya, 2010; Noakes, 2003). Olympic athletes master the ability to cope and control their anxiety, they are focused and can easily block out distractions as they achieve their goals (Gould et al., 2002). Additionally, athletes often have high levels of sport intelligence, adaptive perfectionism, confidence, strong work ethic, optimism, hope and demonstrate competitiveness. Olympic medal athletes exhibit better control over their emotions and have less negative self-talk the athletes how did not make the podium (Taylor et al., 2008).

In a study by Heishman and Bunker (1989), they found that 81% of a sample of elite lacrosse athletes, considered mental preparation to be an important part of their



performance. Nevertheless, only 44% of these athletes used different mental strategies and techniques. This research concluded that most high-level athletes have knowledge and understanding of the importance of psychological skills training and the development of psychological skills, but fail to use it systematically and over time in the training process (Vealey, 2007). With athletics athletes Lawless and Grobbelaar (2015, p. 128) found that 26 % perceived psychological skills as very important, 47% perceived it as important, 1% said it was a waste of time, 2% said it was unimportant and 24% was natural. In the same group of athletes only 24% had previous experience sport psychology with consultation or had a PST program.

### 3.2 The Norwegian Olympic Training Centre model on psychological skills

The Norwegian Olympic Training Centre has a model for development of psychological skills. The basis for this model is that mental training is procedures and exercises which increases the athletes ability to become more effective and better prepared mentally when they try to achieve sports-related goals

(Pensgaard, 2005, pp. 17-19). The model is made up of three levels - basic techniques at the first level, sport-specific psychological skills at the second level and competition plans at the third level. The idea with this model is that an athlete should master the basic techniques, before learning the more sport-specific psychological skills, and that the athlete needs to know techniques and

skills before making a competition plan. On the second level, athletes need to ask, “What is appropriate to focus on in this sport?” In the current study, the model will be used as a reference to what psychological skills and training are. Within this model PST is referred to as a procedure and exercise that will increase the athlete's ability to be more effective and better prepared when trying to achieve something sport-related (Pensgaard, 2005, p.

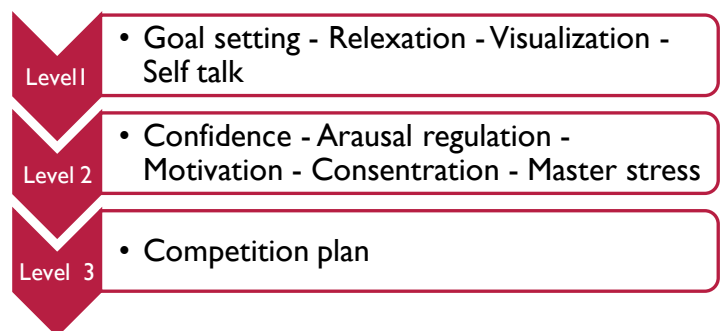


Figure 1 shows the Norwegian Olympic Training Centre model on psychological skills. This model provides an overview of what is considered psychological skills in this study. The model is adopted from Anne Marte Pensgaards model in «Mental trening – veien til optimal prestasjon», 2005, Norsk idrettsmedisin, nummer 1, s. 18.

17). The four basic techniques on level one is visualization, relaxation, goal setting, and self-talk. There are a lot of studies on these techniques, and a lot of them show an effect on the development of sport, over some time (Slimani et al., 2016).

All the four basis techniques will be important in PST work, as they have been shown to have a positive effect on results in competition (Krane & Williams, 2015, p. 165). In order to develop and perform at the highest possible level, good psychological skills and techniques are required. Visualization, self-talk, relaxation, and goal setting are basic techniques that have been proven effective in the development work for athletes. In order for an athlete to perform successfully, they need to develop good arousal regulation, imagery, self-confidence, motivation, commitment, goalsetting and concentration skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). Visualization can be defined as "*using one's senses to recreate or create an experience in the mind*" (Vealey & Forleza, 2015, p. 240). Self-talk describes all our words and thoughts that we direct towards ourselves. The process can be seen as a continuous stream of random, conscious, or purposeful thoughts (Dohme et al., 2019, p. 267). According to Hardy et al. (1996, p. 13), there are two types of relaxation. The first one is mental relaxation, where the relaxation occurs when the athlete manages to regulate her or his thinking. The second one is physical relaxation, where relaxation occurs when the athlete can regulate physical parameters. Strategies for relaxation can be breathing exercises, meditation, and visualization (Parnabas et al., 2014). According to Locke and Latham (2002, p. 705), a goal is an "*objective or aim of action*" meaning that often within a time limit the athlete should have become proficient in a set task.

### 3.3 Sport-specific psychological skills

An available source for sport-specific skills is a webpage with the demands for performing successful in athletics. In the section about psychological skills important to master, skills like motivation, self-confidence, and focus are listed (Norwegian-Athletics-Association).

They also recommend reading the book written by Pensgaard and Hollingen (1996), "Idrettens mentale treningslære" to learn more about the this form of training.

There is found a link between the use of imagery, confidence and perseverance with Olympic success in athletics (Vernacchia et al., 2000). A key determinant for talented athletes to enable their potential to optimize their performance is psychological skills, and some of these skills are motivation and performing under pressure (Butt et al., 2010; MacNamara et al., 2010). More talented youth sprinters was found to set "better", more realistic, and specific goals compared to athletes not at this talent level (Kruger et al., 2012). Clearly defined and realistic goals, as well as a meaningful commitment to their goal setting, is a factor observed to play a role when elite junior athletes took the step up to senior athletes (Hollings et al., 2014). After a programme combined of self-talk, goalsetting, relaxation skills, concentration skills and imagery, middle-distance runners improved their performance significantly (Pieterse & Potgieter, 2006). However, no research has been done on how Norwegian athletics coaches work with psychological skills in everyday life.

Beckford et al. (2016, p. 339) state that mental toughness and coping skills are key psychological skills for sprinters. They found that elite athletes had a higher score on these psychological skills than the second best athletes. Lawless and Grobbelaar (2015) looked at achievement motivation, goal-directedness, activation control, maintaining self-confidence, concentration, and imagery for every group of events (jump, throw and run), and found that the elite level athletes consequently scored higher on these psychological skills compared to the second-best athletes. In their summation of important psychological skills in high intensity sports, Birrer and Morgan (2010, p. 81) highlighted five important psychological skills. Their definition of high intensity sport was sport with a duration between 1 to 8 min, with a high impact intensity and a continues power input. The ones

they highlighted are arousal-regulation skills, personal development, and life skills, motivational skills, recovery skills, and volitional skills.

## 2.4 Motivation

One of the sport specific that a lot of studies highlights as important to perform on a high level, is motivation (e.g., Butt et al., 2010). In this study two motivation theories will be prominent. The first motivation theory is self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Six smaller theories are combined to create self-determination theory. In the current, especially relevant is the Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT). This theory says that internalization of motivation requires basic psychological need satisfaction. Basic needs are defined as innate psychological nutrients, fundamental for the innate tendency to act and for psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to BPNT there is three separate and universal needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy is the need to be the endorser of one's behaviour and need for volition (Decarms & Carpenter, 1968). Competence is the need to feel effective in dealing with the environment in order to achieve the desired outcome, and thus feel competent (White, 1959). Finally, relatedness is the need to experience support, security and belonging with others. The feeling of connection with the coach or a team, may fulfil a sense of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Furthermore, all three basic needs are important for optimal development, and neither of them should be thwarted or neglected (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The second motivation theory is self-efficacy theory, where self-efficacy is defined as the belief an athlete has in his own abilities to successfully execute a task to achieve a specific result (Bandura, 1977). These beliefs are not judgemental on the athletes' skills, but rather pertain to what the athletes believes she or he could do with their skills (Bandura, 1986). Meaning that self-efficacy judgments concern what athletes think they can do, not what they have achieved previously. Self-appraisal and self-persuasion processes which depends

on cognitive processes from different sources of efficacy result in these judgments (Bandura, 1990). According to (Bandura, 1977, 1986) sources of self-efficacy include past performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states.

## **2.5 Integrating and implementing PST**

A PST program should be planned, implemented, and supervised by a qualified consulting sport psychologist (Weinberg & Williams, 2015, p. 332). A qualified sport psychologist has most likely more specific education and experience than a coach. As the sport psychologist do not organize the athletes and their training and competition, it could be easier for the athlete to discuss their psychological difficulties with a sport psychologist compared to their coach. Even though it is attractive to have a sport psychologist administer the program, not everyone has access to a sport psychologist. Except perhaps at the highest level of competition, and even then, the psychologists are not necessarily accompanying the athletes on every competition and travel. Given this the coaches has some responsibility to provide PST and strengthen the optimal psychological state (Weinberg & Williams, 2015, p. 332). Who knows the athletes better, and works with them more closely?

In enhancing psychological skills coaches plays a critical role, they need to create a tough but positive environment (Lawless & Grobbelaar, 2015). Coaches for Olympic athletes believes that high level of confidence and a plan to deal with distractions is required for ideal performance (Gould et al., 2002). The coach should be involved in group sessions for several reasons (Weinberg & Williams, 2015, pp. 332-333). First, it confirms that the coach takes sport psychology seriously. The participation can also give the coach some inside knowledge of what the sport psychologist is doing, so that the coach can guide the athletes when the sport psychologist is not there. Further, the risk of misunderstandings between the coach and the sport psychologist on what they are doing is reduced. This may

also result in improved communication between the sport psychologist and coach, which is important as the coach can learn how to implement PST in physical practice (p. 333).

The quality of the relationship between the consultant and the athlete influence how effective the interventions can be. (Petitpas et al., 1999). According to Sharp and Hodge (2011) building a connection, building a professional consulting relationship and assuring that the cooperation meets the needs of the athlete are three of the most important characteristics for an effective consultant. If the coach and athlete have a good relationship, a coach with the correct knowledge could be the right person to help the athlete.

### **3.6 Coach-athletes relationship**

Jowett and Shanmugam (2016) defined the coach–athlete relationship as a social situation, which is shaped by interpersonal feelings, thoughts and behaviour from both partners (p.3). This also implies that the athlete and the coach are causally and mutually interdependent, thus they will affect each other’s feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. To describe the quality of the relationship between coaches and athletes Jowett and Shanmugam (2016) made an operational model, which includes closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation. A high-quality coach-athlete relationship emerges when both parties invest time, energy and effort to achieve shared goals and priorities they have set together. On the other hand, a relationship with poor quality will lack both commitment and the desire to pursue goals, and the parties are not willing to work together for the athletes to develop physical skills, get through hard times and achieve important outcomes together with the coach (Jowett, 2017). A relationship with good quality, is defined by collaboration, trust, commitment, and respect, and it is important for the relationship to be positive and mutual. Without these qualities the relationship and overall coaching will suffer due to the lack of care, commitment, or cooperation with one another. Thus, the relationship between a coach and an athlete is a medium that can motivate, give comfort, and support to enhance athletes experience, performance, and well-being.

One relationship management model is the COMPASS model, which is based on Jowett and Shanmugam (2016) relationship operational model, which contains maintenance strategies in a coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). According to this model a positive relationship is close, committed, and complementary. The COMPASS model suggests seven maintenance strategies referred to as conflict management openness, motivation, positivity, advice, support, and social networks.

Openness is related to the disclosure of one's feelings (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). According to the model there are three strategies related to being open, the first one is non-sport communication where the communication is about issues which does not directly relate to training or competition. The second strategy is to talk about anything, here both parties should make it clear to the other person that they can talk about any topic. The last strategy is other awareness including making an attempt to understand the other persons feelings. Motivation includes strategies either to make the other person want to continue the relationship or showing their own motivation to continuing the relationship. Strategies focused on motivation is showing effort, both during training and competition, motivate the other person, making the interactions fun, and showing that the relationship has the capacity for success. Positivity is split into three and concerns adaptability including altering one's behaviour to fit the preferences of the other person, fairness is demonstrating good sportsmanship, and external pressure is dealing with external stressors positively. Advice involves giving and receiving feedback positively and openly and expressing an opinion on problem encountered by the other person. Sport communication consists of rewarding feedback when one of the participants praising the other and constructive feedback where a participant, usually the coach, gives instruction to improve performance, but not to criticize. Support also include showing commitment to the coach-athlete relationship and being available for the other person, as well as giving assurance, showing commitment, providing sport-specific support like giving support after bad performance,

and personal support including supporting in regards of non-sport issues. Social networks are about spending time with the other person outside the track: socializing and spending social time together and shared network and having time with mutual friends (Rhind & Jowett, 2010).

Communication is the foundation of a good relationship, because it can prevent a lot of misunderstanding. In addition, athletes may experience more fun if the climate or atmosphere is healthy and communication with the coach is good. Communication is a multidimensional process, because it involves sending, receiving, and interpreting messages through sensory modalities (Williams, 2015). Communication can be verbal including spoken or written communication or nonverbal including body language, body positions, and facial expressions. Different settings, contexts, and emotions can change the meaning of the message and therefore play a big role.

## 2.7 Structure in Norwegian athletics

### 2.7.1 The organization of Norwegian sport and athletics

Research mentioned thus far in the current paper is exclusively carried out abroad, and no study has confirmed findings in the context of not done in the context of Norwegian athletics. Norway is a social-democratic welfare state with humanistic values, such as equality and universal rights. These values extend to Norwegian sport as well (Skille et al., 2020, p. 97). The most central areas in the Norwegian sport model: participation for all, sport facilities as a tool for improving public health and elite sport is a motivator for grassroots sport (Rafoss & Tangen, 2017, p. 154). Framework conditions for Norwegian sport are voluntariness, economy, and competence (NIF, 2019). Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) is Norway's largest voluntary organization. Norwegian sport as we know it, from the day-to-day operation of sports clubs to the arrangement big international competitions, would be nothing without the



contribution of volunteers (NIF, 2019). The day-to-day voluntary operations include, among other things, coaches. Good coaches are important to work towards the NIF vision, "Participation for all!" (NIF, 2019). NIF states that a good coach is a coach with competence and a coach who can create quality. Competence is also important in the other level of the organization since the goal is that "everyone shall experience sport mastery, and development in the sport safe and good community". NIF visioned youth sport to be playful, ambitious, honest, and inclusive. Furthermore, NIF aims to give everyone the occasion to practice sport centred around their wishes and needs, without experiences of unreasonable or disproportionate discrimination (NIF, 2019).

On the 23rd of May 2021, the athletics council had a meeting and adopted the Norwegian athletics strategy plan for the next four years (NFIF, 2021). They presented their vision as "athletics for everyone", and their values as wanting to have a safe and inclusive arena, an open and honest organization with activity based on mastery, sport enjoyment, and good health. The organization has three main goals for the period. The first is that Norwegian Athletics will recruit and take care of athletes and members through a safe and wide range of activities. Secondly, Norwegian athletics aims to develop athletes who take medals in International senior championships. The last one is that Norwegian Athletics must be a value-based and sustainable social actor (NFIF, 2021).

### 2.7.2 The foundation of Norwegian athletics

Sport clubs are the foundation of Norwegian athletics. These club's most important role is to create activity and receive and take care of those who want to take part in athletics (NFIF, 2021). It is therefore important to work for more well-run and solid clubs with good reception apparatus. According to the Norwegian Athletics Association (NFIF), the objective is that these clubs have comprehensive focus and develop all the areas of in their "organizational wheel". These areas are organization, coaches, management, facilities, activities, and events. What makes Norwegian sport noticeable is the fact that sport clubs

are mostly run by volunteers (Enjolras & Seippel, 2001, p. 75; Enjolras et al., 2011, p. 41). Throughout, one week a sport club has approximately 45 hours of volunteer work performed, and more than one third is coaching related (Enjolras & Seippel, 2001, pp. 76-77). Thus, the majority of the coaches in sport clubs work voluntarily, and these coaches are often parents how have a child or youth athlete in the group they are coaching. It is also normal for sport clubs to have active and older athletes coaching younger athletes, and they get some payment, therefor they are not a part of the third mention by Enjolras and Seippel (2001).

### **3.0 Method**

The purpose in this study was to get a better understanding of the focus coaches have on psychological skills training and which psychological skills and techniques they focus on. To understand the participant the experiences the researcher needs to pick a method where he gets the opportunity to investigate participants' understandings, experiences, and thoughts on the topic on a deeper level (Thagaard, 2018). Thus, a qualitative approach is applied in this study. The qualitative approach is a research method mainly about studying life from the inside investigating how different people live their lives; how they understand the world and attach meaning to the events they experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Thagaard, 2018). The method therefore provides the possibility of a deeper insight and increased understanding of the phenomenon one is researching. Within the qualitative approach, there are a number of research methods (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 7; Smith & Osborn, 2015), and for this study qualitative semi-structured interviews are utilised to collect data, followed by a reflexive Thematical Analysis (rTA) to analyse data in the search of answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

A qualitative method and rTA is open and flexible, but even though the method are flexible, a philosophical perspective provides some guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2019,

2021a; Thagaard, 2018, p. 27). The next section will take a closer look at semi-structured interviews and rTA as methods and link the method to my own methodological choices.

### **3.1 Semi-structured interview**

A qualitative interview is often semi-structured, and this type of interview is the dominant form of a qualitative interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 143-146; Thagaard, 2018, p. 78). This method is suitable for this study since semi-structured interviews gives a good basis for finding out and understanding people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Kvale et al., 2015). A qualitative interview can give comprehensive information about other people's opinions, attitudes, experiences, opinions, and how they evaluate their life situation (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2012, p. 17; Thagaard, 2013, p. 95). In a qualitative interview it is possible to explore and elaborate on interesting topics, increasing our understanding of a social phenomenon (Thagaard, 2018, p. 11). In addition, this method is also appropriate when there is little previous research on the subject (Thagaard, 2018, p. 12). With a direct connection with the participants, we can together develop understanding about their actions, experiences, intentions, and perspectives (Thagaard, 2018, p. 13 + 89). Qualitative research in the constructive paradigm is a collaboration between the participant and the researcher, thus the semi-structured interview gives an opportunity to follow the flow of the conversation, ensuring that interesting and important topic are discussed. (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). When using this structure, the topics in the interview are mainly decided beforehand, but the topics can be addressed in random order along the way (Thagaard, 2018, p. 91). Semi-structured interviews are suitable when the goal is for the participant to follow their story, while at the same time allowing the researcher to get the answers to questions they want and discuss all the topics they are researching. The questions must be asked in a way that allows the interviewee to reflect on the topics we address (Thagaard, 2013, p. 100).

This method is also appropriate when there is little previous research on the subject (Thagaard, 2018, p. 12). With this study design, the researcher gathers qualitative data, and this text, nonnumerical data, is the foundation of the analysis.

### 3.2 Thematic Analysis

TA is a qualitative research method that can identify, analyse and report patterns within data gathered in the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Utilising this method, you get rich descriptions of your data set through minimizing and organising the data. To accomplish this organization, and to help interrogate and interpret the data, rTA offers tools, concepts, techniques, practices and guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 4). Subsequently, these tools and guidelines facilitates deep, rich and robust engagement with the data that can result in knowledge production (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). However, it is the researcher's job to navigate the data material and make choices. In short rTA is a flexible method which involves searching to find patterns of meaning repeated in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). rTA is a rather flexible method because the method is not linked with any pre-existing theoretical framework, however, it is not atheoretical (Braun & Clarke, 2019). That is, the analysis can be used within different theoretical frameworks, dependent on the researcher's positioning and the framework best suitable answering the research question.

This study will follow Clark and Braun's rTA approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). This approach value a subjective, situated, aware and questioning researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 5). A fundamental characteristic of rTA is a reflexive researcher, reflecting on the role as a researcher as well as reflecting on the research method used. The foundation in rTA is a Big Q framework (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Big Q is qualitative research conducted in the qualitative paradigm (Kidder & Fine, 1987). In Big Q approaches the meaning is closely tied to the context it is produced, therefore is no universal meaning. These approaches emphasize the active role of the researcher embracing the researcher

subjectivity (Clarke et al., 2015, p. 223). Braun and Clarke's rTA approach is Big Q based on their organic approach to coding and development of themes, where the process is coloured by the standpoint of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). It is also fluid, flexible and responsive. Criteria for Big Q is putting process and meaning over cause and effect, approaching knowledge questioning, critical reflection on the researcher's cultural context and some analytical and active reading and listening of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). Some additional criteria is wanting an understanding that is nuanced, complex and contradictory, rather than one explanation, long answer, that knowledge comes from a position and should be embraced, not interested in on singular universal truth and tolerating some degree of uncertainty (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 7)

TA can be for example a realist, constructionist or a contextualist method (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). With a realist method one can report meanings, experiences, and the reality of the participants, and with a constructionist method one can examine how different discourses in society affect the realities, meanings, and experiences of people. The contextualistic method is between the realist and constructionist method and are characterized by theory, acknowledging both how the individual makes meaning of their experiences and the social influence of the contexts. Therefore, thematic analysis can unravel reality and reflect reality. The analysis in the current study will be realist to capture the truth and the reality that is within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.3 Sample**

The qualitative approach is characterized by a smaller sample compared to the quantitative approach (Thagaard, 2018). It is therefore important that one strategically selects the participants who have the qualifications required to be able to investigate the study's research questions (Thagaard, 2018, p. 54). In this way the sample represent a perspective not a population (Smith et al., 2009). Accordingly, the sample in this study was selected on

the basis of these inclusion criteria: Coaches in Norwegian athletics, coaching athletes between 16-19 years old.

Regarding the question of sample size, data saturation is often referred to as a golden standard (Braun & Clarke, 2021c). The data is fully saturated when there are no new themes yielded from the data. However, Braun and Clarke (2021b, p. 295) find the use of saturation problematic in rTA. An alternative concept is information power, which suggest the more relevant information the sample holds the less participant are needed (Malterud et al., 2016). In rTA information power seems to offer a practical option to data saturation for justifying sample size.

In the current study seven coaches in athletics, four women and three men, were sampled to partake in one semi-structured interview. Through criterion-based sampling we were able to recruit seven coaches with different level of experience. Recruitment included sending email to sport clubs asking if they had coaches matching the inclusion criteria and thereafter sending an email directly to the coaches. Given that this did not provide an adequate number of participants, I contacted some coaches recommended by the coaches participating coaches. In addition, I asked coaches in the local athletics community the age of their training group and invited the coaching if the match the inclusion criteria.

Participants ranged in age from 24 to 45 years old and represented different levels of experience as coach (couple of months to 30 years), all of them also had experience as an athletics athlete. Everyone but one had taken at least level 1 coach education organized by Norwegian Athletics Association. Neither of the coaches are volunteer coaches - two of them worked as an athletics coach fulltime, and for the rest they were employed and got some kind of payment. To give a better flow in the text and to keep their anonymity, I have

further in the study chosen to give practitioners fictitious names, and they will hereinafter be referred to as Monica, Chandler, Josef, Ross, Phoebe, Rachel, and Janice.

### **3.4 The research process**

In this section I will describe the execution of the interviews, the transcript, and the analysis process.

#### **3.4.1 The interview guide**

To make sure there is a natural flow in the conversation, and that the key questions and topic get discussed during the interview, an interview guide (attachment 1) was made formulating specific questions and possible follow-up questions (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 10). The aim in this semi-structured interview is to obtain an in-depth understanding of coaches focus on psychological skills training and psychological skills. Therefore, I made fewer questions and a number of follow-up questions to probe for more information (Purdy, 2014, p. 165). By having a plan for which topics and questions to ask the participant, I ensured that the important topic was discussed. Through a series of open-ended questions, the participant were able to answer freely and in their own words (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 79),

The interview guide in this study was developed in line with Kvale et al. (2015, pp. 162-163) reports on the structure of interviews, consisted of two parts: a thematic dimension and a dynamic dimension. In the dynamic dimension, a number of questions were developed that were easy to understand, simple and short. These are introductory questions providing background information, and at the same time they could make the participant and the interviewer more familiar with the process (Purdy, 2014, p. 164). These questions were intended to create a good interaction with the participants and should help to give the thematic questions a more everyday language. In the thematic dimension, there will be a

gradually increase in difficulty of the questions. In this dimension, questions were created that would thematically create knowledge about the study's themes. These questions were theoretically formulated and were linked to the Norwegian Olympic Training Centre model on psychological skills. With this approach the hope is to develop rapport with the participant, hopefully resulting in participant freely elaborating in their answers (Purdy, 2014, p. 164).

### **3.4.2 Pilot interview**

During the work with the interview guide I conducted four pilot interviews. Between every pilot I used the notes from the previous pilot to do adjustments and improvements for a better and more optimal guide matching the research question in the current study. Two of the pilots were fellow students both with coaching experience, but not in athletics. Conducting these interviews gave me experiences both on the conduction of the interview and the content of the questions since the participant have coaching experience and knowledge about the research process. I realised I was rushing a bit, and changed some procedures in the interview (e.g., I tried different ways to take notes and sat opposite the participant). The last two pilot were with two coaches in athletics, these interviews gave me comments on whether the questions where understandable and that relevant in athletics. After the last two pilots I rephrased some of the question, because they were too theoretical and therefor a bit difficult to understand. All of the pilot interviews gave valuable feedback, and I recognized some mistakes and was able to correct them before the “real” interview began.

### **3.4.3 The interviews**

The interview was conducted in a period of time between September 2021 and November 2021 and had a duration of somewhere between 25 to 50 minutes. During every interview I took notes in a notebook, the notes consisted of short points that could be important to remember in a later part of the interview and descriptions of body language. After every interview I evaluated both how I conducted the interview and the quality of the questions



and evaluated if the answers to the questions could answer the research question. First, I conducted three interviews in rapid session, subsequent to a longer break prior the last four interviews. This break between the interviews gave me better time to evaluate and make some adjustments.

In the start-up phase of the interviews, I wanted to create a safe environment for the participants. By introducing myself, the study and recounting their rights, I wanted to make the situation safe and try building rapport. On the same basis, I asked light, fact-based questions in the introduction, where the questions were about the participants, their role in the organization and their education (Johannessen et al., 2016). In the main part, was questions more related to the actual topic of the thesis, where the interviewees were allowed to describe, as well as talk about their experiences (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). To end the interview, the participants were allowed to add information or provide deeper insight at their own request. All interviewees could add and provide a form of summary of the conversation at the end, which provided a lot of information and data about the most important findings.

As a consequence of the pandemic (COVID-19), three out of the seven interviews were conducted over the internet, and the video conferencing service Zoom was used for this purpose. To ensure ethics and privacy, some routines were formed under the auspices of the NIH routines and guidelines on how to use Zoom as an interview tool (attachment 3). The location of the four that was conducted in person was decided by the person who got interviewed (Purdy, 2014, p. 166). In the mail correspondence before the interview, I asked if they had a preferred location for the interview or if they would prefer it to be at NIH.

#### 3.4.4 Voice recordings

Every interview was recorded on an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (VN-541PC), rented from NIH. These recorders are not connected to the internet and are approved to be used in studies like this. There were several reasons I decided to record the interview, it is an easy way to make sure you get everything that is said and every noise, so that you get the most accurate data set for the analysis (e.g., Wording, cadence, pauses, laughter, uncertainty) (Kvale et al., 2015, pp. 205-206). It also allows one to concentrate on the topic and dynamics of the interview, without worrying that important information will not be noted and forgotten. You also get the opportunity to listen to the recording several times and can use it in the analysis.

It is important to remember that the recording can cause stress during the interview. To make sure the participant feel more at ease with getting recorded I told them that the recording would be deleted from the recorder and stored at a password locked computer, placed the recorder to the side so they did not have to look at it and reminded them of their confidentiality, and anonymity (Purdy, 2014, pp. 166-167).

#### 3.4.5 Transcription

The transcription of data is a time-consuming and extensive process in a qualitative study however it is absolutely crucial for a correct and accurate analysis (Postholm, 2010).

Transcribing is the process of writing down everything that is said in the interview from the recording (Purdy, 2014, p. 167). Although there are no exact guidelines when it comes to transcription in a thematic analysis, I was concerned with noting everything that was said accurately and correctly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are several ways to transcribe, The most used is transcribe verbatim, meaning “*the actual words spoken by your informants, however repetitive, slangy or ungrammatical*”(Riley, 1990, p. 25). This is the way I chose to transcribe. Included in this is pauses, repetition, different remarks (e.g. “you know”, “like”) and laughter, basically everything that was said during the interview (King

et al., 2018). In addition, I noted comments about behaviours and the way things were said in the margin, which could say something about the meaning behind the statements. The transcriptions were made shortly after the interviews. I did this to remember the participants body language better, and so the notes I took during the interview were fresh in my mind. I transcribed the first interview in Word, however after testing MAXQDA, I found it a lot easier and faster to use since the audio file and text file was in the same program, so the last six interviews I transcribed there.

#### **3.4.6 Analysis**

The analysis process in rTA can take different forms, and the method opens up for the researcher to be innovative in the way he or she conducts the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021b). For beginners, it is recommended to follow the guideline, and I used guidelines developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) consisting of six phases. The six phases was first described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) and have later been upgraded by the same authors (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2021b; Braun et al., 2016). It is important to remember that these phases are guidelines not rules. Phases one and two is familiarizing yourself with and coding the data, phases three to five is development of themes, refining and naming themes and the sixth phase is to write the final product.

In the beginning of the analysis, I started familiarizing myself with the data. This phase of the analyses demands a researcher which is engaged with the data, to develop a deep and intimate knowledge of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 42). I engaged with the data by transcribing the audio file, listening to the file multiple times, and reading and re-reading the transcript taking some notes along with my initial ideas. While reading and listening to the interviews I locked out everything else, and actively read and listened to keep me engaged with the data. For me it helped reading the interviews out loud and asking questions during the listening, scribbling some notes in the margin.

The next step in my analysis was coding, which consist of marking interesting elements in the data across the whole data set in a systematic way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding is a process resulting in a lot of codes (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 53). This process needs the researcher to be thoroughly engaged and systematic. My coding process started with me reading through all the transcripts and marking everything that was of interest linked to the research question. In the first round of coding, I was using markers on a printed document to mark everything interesting in the text and took notes in the margin. I found doing this process on paper a bit messy, so I returned to MAXQDA and took the rest of the coding there. The next two rounds of coding were very similar to the first round of coding; however, it was conducted in MAXQDA. These rounds consisted of reading every interview, marking everything of interest to the research question. This was a more inductive round of coding, where I marked everything that could be interesting, being as inductive as it can be consider I always carry with me my assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 56). I ended this phase when I had coded every interview thoroughly three times, knowing that I could go back to the codes at a later point if I needed it.

Subsequent to the coding process, I downloaded the codes as an Excel file. I gathered every code in one sheet and clustered similar codes in a new sheet. Thus, every cluster of codes got their own sheet in the Excel file. These clusters of codes are representing potential themes. When gathering codes, I tried to organize the codes with a central organizing concept. The first round of coding the codes was organized into categories given by the model from The Norwegian Olympic Training Centre (Pensgaard, 2005). There was one category related to each of the four basic techniques (visualization, relaxation, goal setting, and self-talk), one for sport specific skills, one for competition plans and a “general” with all the codes that did not fit in the other categories. However, this sorting gave me a lot of codes in a “general” category that contained everything I found of interest that can answer the research question and did not fit into the other categories. After the sorting I made a thematic map and tried to find how these themes

were related and how they could tell a story. However, looking at these themes, they did not have a central organizing concept and had little to no relation to each other. Meaning they did not stand to the first step of reviewing. They were more theme summations than themes.

After moving the codes around, trying to make the themes work, I decided to start all over. I wanted a fresh start, so I went back to the Excel sheet with all the codes. This time I sorted the codes that were similar, without having any model or predetermined boxes the code “should” or must fit in to. Meaning that this time the search for themes was more inductive, compared to my initial deductive search. This approach was definitely better for making sense of the dataset. During this process I allowed me self to take more time, reflecting over the codes that made sense clustering together, moving codes around.

After reviewing the themes, it was time for naming, defining the themes and finding the structure and flow of the analysis. Here I wrote a short descriptive definition of each theme clarifying and illustrating what every theme is about. Included in these definitions were the central organising concept and some key takeaway points. I tried to give themes informative, concise and catchy names (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

The last phase is writing the current paper. Writing an interesting and relevant introduction, explaining the methodological choices I made, how did I conduct the interview and lastly presenting and discussing the result. One of the last things I did in writing this master thesis is translating the quotes used to illustrate my findings. Trying to make sure that the translation had the same meaning in English as in Norwegian, I asked three bilingual fellow students, to translate the quotes, finally evaluating the translated quotes.

### 3.5 Ethics

When working on this study, I followed ethical guidelines made by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and Norwegian school of sports sciences Ethics committee (NIH, 2021). The study applied for and received approval from NSD (attachment 2). The participants were informed orally and in the information letter about the study's content, purpose, and about the methods (attachment 4). Written informed consent was collected. The participant was able to withdraw the consent at any time, no reason needed. If the consent was withdrawn the data on that participant was deleted. The data got anonymized, and the anonymized data got stored on a computer to which only the student had access.

The completion of this study did not involve any risk for the participants, except that they started to reflect on the topic.

#### 3.5.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essential in reflective TA. Braun and Clarke (2021b) uses Berger (2015) definition on reflexivity:

*“It means turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one’s own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being ask, data being collected and its interpretation. As such, the idea of reflexivity challenges the view of knowledge production as independent of the researcher producing it and of knowledge as objective”*

*(2015, p. 220)”*

Regarding reflexivity there is three areas that will influences the research and the produced knowledge. These three areas are personal, functional, and disciplinary, which include the

researches values, the design of the study (method) and academic disciplines (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

To make sure the process was reflexive I regularly reflected on my assumptions, expectations, choices and actions (Maso et al., 2003). More specifically I was keeping a reflective journal (self-critical account of the research), where I took notes of my choices and my thoughts during the process (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 269). I was also allowing myself to use plenty of time in the analysis process, starting all over again, and going back to codes and moving codes around to find the right fit. Trying failing and trying again. During this process I gained insights from others (fellow students), and read articles using rTA

### **3.5.2 The researcher's pre-understanding of the topic**

As part of the ethical reflections around the research studies, Staksrud et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of referring to how professional approaches and theoretical points of view within the social science research may open for different but reasonable interpretations of the same data material. Hence, in this section I will present my context, and give a summation of different aspect that can influence me during the analysis.

During my upbringing I competed in athletics for eleven years, and I dedicated a lot of time to athletics. In this period, I experienced a lot of competition nerves to a point where I could not control them. Furthermore, I have background as a coach in athletics and as a master's student in sports psychology at NIH, where I have acquired a number of experiences and knowledge from both these two fields. The challenges I experienced with nerves has together with the curiosity for the field of sport psychology, contributed to the choice of the theme in this study.

This preconception that I carry with me, can be both a strength and a weakness in the study (Smith, 2003). On the one hand, it has been beneficial in meeting participants, and has helped me understand participants' perspectives about the studies theme. On the other hand, my preconception may have coloured the data material and the interpretation of the data. It is therefore important to consider the results and my interpretation in light of it the preconception presented here (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

### 3.5.3 The study's trustworthiness

In the qualitative approach, a number of criteria have been developed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, and include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). This section will take a closer look at these quality criteria and refer to how they have been expressed in this study.

Credibility is linked to the internal validity of the research and concerns the validity of the interpretations that the researcher arrives at and whether the findings correspond to reality (Shenton, 2004; Thagaard, 2018). To ensure the credibility in this study, I followed the recommendation to apply a well-established method that refers to clear guidelines for how to study the phenomenon being investigated (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, this study has a qualitative approach for general guiding and rTA contributed with more specific guidelines for how I conducted the analysis to investigate the research questions. One can also enhance the study credibility by having a random selection of participants (Shenton, 2004). This is often difficult in qualitative research when the sample is strategically chosen through participant experiences or environment so they in the best possible way can answer the research questions. In the current study there has been applied strategically selection of participants, with some specific inclusion criteria. However, there were no restrictions concerning gender, coaching experience, background or the size of the sport



club where the participant worked as a coach. This resulted in participants having different levels of experience and both female and male coaches were recruited, which gave variation in the answers related to the understanding of the current study's topic.

The researcher's pre-understanding of the topic has also been explained, and the researcher's interpretation of the findings in this study has been linked to and justified by previous literature and theory on the topic (Shenton, 2004; Smith et al., 2009; Thagaard, 2018).

Ensuring the honesty of the participants can also contribute to the credibility of the study (Shenton, 2004). Ensuring honesty can be difficult, and there is no guarantee that attendees are honest in their answers. To ensure honesty in the best possible way, voluntary participation was emphasized. The participants in the current study have been informed that they at any time can withdraw from the study. They were also informed that they could choose to not answer questions and that there is no right or wrong answers to, since the study is looking for the participants' personal experiences, opinions and perspectives (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability is linked to external validity and is about whether the study's findings can be used in other situations (Shenton, 2004). Since the qualitative research method likely has a sample with few participants, seven in the current study, findings and conclusions cannot be generalized to other situations or larger populations (Shenton, 2004). The current study findings are related to personal experiences concerning psychological skills training in athletics, and how the participants incorporate this training in their practice. To link participant experiences to other situations or populations will therefore be difficult in that individuals' experiences differs from and is governed by cultural and social conditions. The coaches' practices must also be seen in the context they work in, and therefore, not

everyone can relate to their understanding of the topic. Similar findings related to the theme can still be seen in connection with each other, and one can evaluate the findings in the current study in light of previous research and theory within the topic, and in this way supplement to the understanding of the theme. It is also possible that other coaches with similar working conditions may recognize themselves in how the participant in the current study understand concept of coaching experiences and how these experiences affect them.

Dependability implies that the research process is accounted for in such a way that it becomes transparent. To achieve this the researcher provides a detailed description of the research strategies and methods, with the intention that the reader should be able to understand and evaluate the research process (Shenton, 2004; Thagaard, 2018). To further ensure the dependability of the research, there needs to be clarification around what is primary data and what is the researcher's interpretation of the data material in the results and discussion chapters (Smith et al., 2009; Thagaard, 2018). The context in which the practitioners' answers are given is described and in that several of the quotes have been linked to the original questions that the practitioners answered in the interview.

Confirmability is about whether the findings are a result of the participants' experiences and ideas and not based on the researcher's preferences (Shenton, 2004). According to this, all the choices that have been made in the research process should be explained, and weaknesses of the process should be presented. To ensure confirmability in this study, the individual participants highlighted and include both differences and similarities in the participants' experiences of the theme. In addition to this, the research process has been accounted for in detail, and weaknesses in the study has been presented at the end of the discussion chapter (Shenton, 2004).

## 4.0 Result

The result of the analysis is four overarching themes describing how coaches in Norwegian athletics focus on psychological skills training: (1) Facilitating for psychological skills through the structure of the workout (2) Communication as a tool in psychological skills training. (3) The coaches' challenges associated with psychological skills training. (4) Improvements and possible changes to make. This section of the thesis a richer description of these overarching themes and the themes within them will be presented.



**Figure 2** shows a thematic map, which illustrates how the result is structured. With the overarching themes in the left column, themes in the middle column and the sub-themes in the column on the right.

4.1 Facilitating for psychological skills through the structure of the workout. This theme focuses on how the coaches facilitate for learning psychological skill during the workouts. In this is how the coaches structure PST and how they structure the trainings to facilitate learning psychological skills in everyday training. Two themes were found within this overarching theme, no PST structure and picking the exercises to facilitate psychological skills.

**No PST structure.** None of the coaches have a systematic plan for training psychological skills, i.e., there is no planning or evaluation of the PST. The coaches had no planned and evaluated structure regarding psychological skills training, and therefore do not conduct PST. According to the PST definition used in the current study. Meaning that the answer to what focus coaches have on PST is easy, no focus! They do not schedule PST in separate workout. This is illustrated by the quotes by Chandler «*We do not have training hours solely for PST*» and Monica agreed «*I do not have a fixed strategy for that*». Finally, Phoebe confirmed «*I really have no structure for PST* » and Josef «*I still haven't ... sat down and made a plan for psychological skills and find time for practice, but as mentioned there's no training without it present.*». However, with the lack of PST do they have any focus on learning psychological skills during the workout even though they do not have a separate part of PST?

**Picking of exercises - facilitate psychological skills.** Although none of the coaches had a plan or fixed structure for PST, the coaches do have some psychological factors in mind when choosing which exercises to do in training. In this theme there is four subthemes which consist of different aspects that influence what exercises the coaches choose for a workout. They consider whether or not the athletes know how to do an exercise, variety in what the athletes wants, and is this close to competition.

*Building confidence by varying the exercises.* When considering the first aspect the coaches make sure that there is a balance between exercises the athletes know how to do and exercises that the athletes do not know how to do. They choose exercises athletes know how to do to make sure that everyone achieves something during a session, so as not to damage their self-esteem too much. Illustrated by Monica's statement "*Typically, we did things we haven't, or things we have done before*". The reason why they choose more difficult exercises for the athletes to challenge themselves and build mastery when they learn a new exercise. After a difficult exercise, they re-choose a familiar exercise in order to maintain and build self-confidence and mastery.

*Variation to keep the workouts fun.* The second aspect when coaches select exercises is to keep the workouts fun, and they believe that a varied the workout will keep the athletes motivated. For example, doing the same exercises again and again when training the same type of workout, can be repetitively and can be perceived as boring if the variation is limited over time. When Monica was asked how she tried to facilitate motivation she answered, «*I try to encourage so [the athletes] build confidence and motivation through different exercises and stuff like that*». Taking the physical out of the equation, keeping the athletes motivated by trying to do the workout fun is why the coaches choose to have different exercises. Janice stated "*if they find it very difficult with something, you can make it a little more motivating to take down the level of difficulty*"

*Autonomy to create motivation.* The third aspect revolves keeping motivation in the athletes. The coaches choose exercises influenced by what the athletes want to do. They give the athletes a framework and the opportunity to choose exercises themselves. By giving athletes autonomy in this way, they want the athletes to experience motivation. When asked how she motivates the athletes, Janice said "*see a little what they think is fun then and let them be allowed to be in control of what they do in the training*"

*Authentic to the competition setting.* The four and last aspect is keeping the workout authentic to competitions. When the competition season is getting closer, the coaches focus on workouts is on making the athletes comfortable in a competition situation. This is how Rachel describe how she is making the athletes comfortable with competition:

*“I believe it is more that I try to prepare my athletes for the competition. By, for example, we plan a lot of the same warm up as in a competition, so we avoid encountering new things then, so they can rehearse this and get to ‘I’m comfortable with this’”*

What they do in their workout is making these workouts similar to a competition. With the same warm up and the same intensity as in the competition, so the athlete knows how to warm up, and do not experience anything they do not know before. Phoebe explain the process like this:

*“There are more processes like, or me working with them being comfortable and knowing what to do when they enter a competition, also focusing on the possibly of both performing well and performing badly, you need to deal with both, and you can’t do better then and there.”*

**4.2 Communication as a tool in psychological skills training.** This overarching theme focuses on how the coaches communicate with the athlete. Coaches use communication as a tool when working on psychological skills with the athletes. This overarching theme includes various aspects the coach thinks about when it comes to communication. Three themes were found within this overarching theme.

***Communication is a natural part of the work out.*** Communication is something that is always there, in every workout. From the second they meet athletes at a workout until they

leave, coaches and athletes communicate. All coaches agree on this, and Chandler shortly summarised it «*[Communication] is something that's always present*». It is something they always do, and a lot of the communication is “planned” and thought about prior to workout. Choosing the correct words when bringing something up and trying to find the right time to do so. One type of communication always present during each session is feedback, guidance on how athlete can improve their technique. This feedback is well prepared and planned, and something the coaches deliberately reflect on before giving it. Thus, the coaches have thought about what words they use and the timing of the feedback, to make sure the athlete understand what they mean. They also want to foster the athlete's confidence, and make sure that the athlete understand that the feedback is to help them get better and that it is not criticism on their competence. When asked more about feedback Phoebe answered:

*“When giving feedback we are careful that we are not to negative, at we choose the right words and that the feedback is technical feedback, we don't want the confidence to get challenged. We are also concern with motivation when giving feedback.”*

***Communication is a tool for building relationships.*** The participants identified that building a relationship with the athletes are important, and they used communication actively to improve the coach-athlete relationships. Three subthemes were identified, including two strategies the coaches used to build relationships with the athletes.

*Always being open for conversation.* The first strategy was always being open for a conversation. Always engaging when the athletes wanted to talk about something. Making sure they have time where they are being available to talk. Some of the coaches solve this by coming early to the workouts and staying a bit later after the workout is over as Josef states «*I'm always careful to arrive 30 minutes before training starts so I can talk with*

*those who are early, and I am usually the last ones to leave, because there is always someone who needs to talk a bit and stuff like that.*”. Coaches mentioned they talked about everyday topics, not only sport specific, for example by asking how school is. Getting to know the human being behind the athlete, knowing their other interests outside sport. Rachel highlighted: *«I try to get to know my athletes and who they are outside of sport, and therefore ask about other stuff in their lives»*. The coaches are also always available for a chat whenever the athletes need it, either on text, on the phone or on messenger.

*Creating an open and safe environment.* The second strategy was trying to create an environment where the athlete is comfortable voicing their opinions and concern. When asked to elaborate on her answer about building relationship, Janice said *«I try to open a very open dialogue or a type of dialogue relationship where I try to always keep the door open»*. They put in a lot of preparation to create an environment with openness, a stable leader and conversation rooms. When asked what was important when communicating with the athletes Phoebe answered *«Good connections to create safety so that [the athletes] can actually come and say something to you»*

*Showing their human side.* The third strategy is showing that they, the coaches, also are human beings. They do this through both telling and showing the athlete if they have a bad day, illustrated by Janice *“let them know when I had a bad day, when I was angry, show that I'm also human and stuff like that, that when I asked them about things, they felt they could talk to me”* and Josef *«I try to talk to them and show that I am human, and I try to put myself in their situation»*. They are also sharing their stories and not only the good ones. Showing that they are not perfect, admitting that they do not know everything, that they need help, have their strong and weaker sides, showing that everybody can have a bad day.



***Different communication based on the relationship.*** Every athlete is different, have different needs and the coaches one has a different relationship with the different athletes. This comes into play when the coaches are to communicate with the athletes, as Monica says “*It is very individualized in relation to who I have in front of me*”. The relationship matters when it comes to how the coaches communicate with the athlete. Ross sums it up quite nicely:

*«You can see it in athletes, they react so differently and I as a coach must find how to talk to the athletes because they will not always react in the same way. Some I can be a little tough with, and some I cannot be tough with. You can scare someone away from competition if you say something wrong, you know. It's a lot about how the athletes handle it, if you get a little stronger athletes who can withstand a little more than it is easier to work with, in a way”*

Janice agrees:

*«one can be confrontational if one has very good and a little deep relationship or one can be a little more evasive but questioning then but I can go directly to the athlete to bring stuff up or I can walk a little around the porridge and try to build another trust»*

**4.3 The coaches challenges associated with psychological skills training.** This overreaching theme focuses on what the coaches find difficult with psychological skills training or psychological skills in everyday training. Four themes were found across the data material.

***Time.*** Probably the most prominent theme in this analysis was lack of time to do PST. Chandler said it best when answering a question asking about the biggest challenge with PST: *«Time»*. All coaches agreed, and Ross said it nicely *«one challenge is that [PTS] is*

*time consuming work*». To be able to priorities PST they need to take away from the time they spend on physical training, and they will always prioritise physical workouts when there is little time. When there is limited time they prioritize to work on the most important, and Chandler puts it nicely *«we need to remove some of the other training [to] prioritize it»*.

Considering the topic of time, there is not only considerations that there is too little time, but with the limited time there is too many athletes to divide the time between. Within the groups there often is a lot of athletes, and the time available is not adequate. There is not enough time. *«Many athletes, we would like to follow them up more closely, and would like to have time for everyone»* Phoebe answered when asked to elaborate on her previous thought related to the theme of “time”. Not only is PST time-consuming for the coach but it is also time-consuming for the athletes. In an athlete’s life athletics is not the only thing, the athlete has school, friends, family and maybe a job they have to prioritize as well. With so many puzzle pieces to fit in the picture it is not easy finding additional time to do even more.

***Too little knowledge.*** A prevalent issue the coaches had with conducting PST was the lack of knowledge on the topic.

*”The biggest challenge is probably competence, this is not something many knows a lot about, and when there is not enough knowledge, we will not prioritized to set aside time for PST. So I think, the two are a bit connected”.*

- Phoebe

This quote exemplifies that the coaches do not know how to help or what to do. They do not know what to do during a normal workout. They do not know techniques to pass along

to the athletes. When elaborating on the topic Ross adds *“I think that some of [the psychological skills] we can do during a workout, but I don't think we're aware of that.”* There is also a lot of different types of problems an athlete can have, so knowing what to do with the exact problem is one of the challenges the coaches meet.

***Every athlete is different.*** Participants identified how difficult psychological skills training can be due to the fact every athlete is unique. Every athlete is different, has different needs, different problems, as Janice states *“the challenge is that there are individual athletes and that they are at incredibly different levels”* and Phoebe agrees with *“There is many individual needs, I would think”*. Thus, this theme related to the previous theme, these differences or varieties make it difficult knowing what to do. When everybody is different it is difficult to put together a PST program a group can do together as a group. Regarding the differences of athletes Ross has these thoughts

*“[Psychological skills] is something that vary a lot from athlete to athlete. Someone has [Psychological skills] already in place, almost without talking about it. They do not necessarily know it themselves, but it just like somehow they have found out what works for them. But with others, you have to talk about the first level here [Pointing to level 1 in the Norwegian Olympic Training Centre model on psychological skills] and you have to work a lot with it then”*

***You can make the problem something bigger than it really is.*** Even though talking about mental health has become more common, there seems to still exist a tabu concerned to the topic of mental or psychological issues in Norwegian athletics. The coaches struggle handling the topic in a manner that benefits the athletes, and knowing how to address it, illustrated by Chandler *“it's a bit like that for many [athletes] when you start talking about psychological skills training then there are many who think that ‘I have a problem’ so then there is one more problem we should fix”* and Phoebe *«you should not make it so*

*dangerous, like that now I see problems with competing I think we need to bring in a mental trainer for you». Hence, the coaches struggle knowing how to talk about psychological skills training without the athlete thinking that they have ill mental health or have mental health problems.*

**4.4 Improvements and possible changes to make.** This overreaching theme focuses on what improvements and possible changes the coaches may implement. This theme has three subthemes easier access to knowledge, mentor and talks from experts.

***Easier access to knowledge.*** Participants identified that access to external resources is important. And as mentioned earlier one of the challenges the coaches' faces is the lack of knowledge on the topic, so all the coaches mentioned that they wanted the knowledge to be more accessible and Josef made a very good point

*«I really think that the solution is that the coach has knowledge and experience about [PST], in the same way that I really think it is easier to have a coach who knows a little about sports medicine then than it is to have a physiotherapist in the club».*

One solution to the problem, that many of the coaches agreed on is easier access to information, some kind of ABC of sport psychology or list of tools and techniques. When asked what improvement Ross would like to happen, he answered *“There should be more accessible literature or one available list of tips and tricks”.*

***Mentor.*** Participants identified that access to external resources could be beneficial. Many participants spoke of missing a person who can observe practices giving advice, in Ross own words *“[someone who] could come with suggestions, encouragements or helped us a bit with, giving us some info”.* They would like to have a person they could ask

question and have discussions with. A person that knows their situation, know the athlete a little, and can give personal advice is what Ross wanted *«that we had a person who could help with [PST] would have been ideal maybe, or yes if there was someone who worked there permanently or that the resource was readily available then»*.

**Talk from experts.** This theme is twofold, on the one hand the coaches should have access to sport psychology experts and on the other hand the athlete also need these resources. Monica said *«what would have been ideal was if you could go and get a little course, that someone came to give a lecture for us»*. The coaches saw a significant benefit inviting an expert on psychological skills training to give advice. Talking about beneficial techniques, giving them some tools, they could teach to their athletes, knowing what to look for. In addition, the coaches saw the benefit of having experienced athlete come talk to the less experiences' athletes, speaking of their experiences. For example, Janice stated

*“Invite someone who could talk about [PST and psychological skills] so you could become a little aware and if [the athletes] afterwards wanted to have, in a way, more like one to one coaching then you could get in touch”*.

## **5.0 Discussion**

The current study explored the knowledge and current use of PST in seven Norwegian athletics coaches using qualitative data and rTA. Key findings include these overarching themes named how coaches structure the workouts, how they communicate with the athletes, problems they face and possible steps forwards for a better way of exercising PST. Findings extend our knowledge of how athletics coaches in Norway work related to PST, and according to the context they work in. This section of the thesis will be a discussion of the themes, and all of the theme will be discussed by them self.

### 5.1 Facilitating for psychological skills through the structure of the workout

As the result showed the coaches had no planned and evaluated structure regarding psychological skills training, and therefore do not conduct PST according to the definition used in this study (Birrer & Morgan, 2010; Pensgaard, 2005). However, the lack of an explicit PST focus and the fact that they did not have a separate part of PST during workout did not mean that they do not focus on psychological skills at all during their workout. When the in the current study coaches plan the workout, they plan a structure in a way they believe facilitates motivation and confidence. They do so through variation, adaptation of the exercises according to the skills of the athletes and giving the athletes autonomy.

When picking exercises, the coaches strive to have a large variation of exercises to facilitate self-efficacy and motivation. This variation will likely facilitate self-efficacy by using exercises the athletes already knows, and by mastering the new exercises. The way they adapt the exercises according to skill level is consistent with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. Strengthening the athletes belief that they can do the exercises (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977, 1986) sources of self-efficacy include past performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Giving the athletes exercises the coaches thinks the athletes already know how to do; the coaches make the athletes experience past performance accomplishment. The athlete's earlier performance is proven to be the source to influence self-efficacy the most, this is because it is based on the athlete's own mastery experience (Bandura, 1997). If the athlete constantly viewed her or his experiences as successes, self-efficacy beliefs will increase; and self-efficacy beliefs will decrease if the athlete view these past experiences as failures. Past performance affect self-efficacy, though this depends on to how difficult the performance is perceived by the athlete, what effort the performance took, how much guidance the athlete got, the temporal patter between failing and success, and whether the

athletes believe the particular skill is an inherent aptitude or something the athlete can learn (Bandura, 1986; Lirgg et al., 1996).

There have been several studies within the context of coaching researching how coaches influence the athlete's self-efficacy (Gould et al., 1989; Vargas-Tonsing, 2004; Vargas-Tonsing et al., 2004; Weinberg et al., 1992; Weinberg & Jackson, 1990). Promoting positive self-talk, using rewarding statements, and modelling confidence is some strategies coaches use to build self-efficacy (Gould et al., 1989; Vargas-Tonsing, 2004). Meaning that the coaches in the current study have more ways building athletes' self-efficacy than they are currently using. There were some few mentions of some of these strategies during the interview, such as rewarding statements, but the coaches do have more strategies they could learn and implement during their workouts.

One other method for keeping the athlete motivated is giving the athlete opportunities to choose exercises and setting a frame letting the athlete choose within the frame. According to SDT autonomy is a key factor of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). BPNT is one of the several mini theories which make up self-determination theory. This theory says that for internalization of motivation, basic psychological need satisfaction is required. According to this theory there are three separate and universal basic psychological needs: the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need to be the endorser of one's behaviour and need for volition (DeCharms, 1968). When the coaches give the athletes an opportunity to influence their workout, they are an anatomy supportive coach. The coaches in the current study are anatomy supportive coaches when they give the athletes a framework, and let the athlete chose what exercises they want the workout to consist of. Behaviour supporting autonomy is positively associated with satisfaction of the basic needs (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 136). Meaning that giving the athletes opportunities to contribute and give input is necessary to create an environment

where the athletes can satisfy their basic needs (Felton & Jowett, 2013, p. 136). If the athletes experience their coach as controlling this may lead to thwarting of the athlete's needs. Less controlling coach behaviours rather providing autonomy support more likely promotes needs satisfaction within the relationship (Blanchard et al., 2009). According to SDT the higher satisfaction of the three basic needs the more likely and athlete originally external regulated behaviour tends to be integrated. To become self-determined the athlete needs to experience choice and freedom, making autonomy support play a critical role.

To make sure that the athletes are more informed about what to expect in a competition the coaches make the workout more authentic to what a competition involves. Elite coaches highlights the value of authenticity in their workout (Nash et al., 2011, p. 233). To get the competition authenticity during a workout they integrate some aspect of competition, to reflect the stress and intensity of a competition. In their study one of the coaches highlights that the athletes needs to perform most effectively in a competition, therefore need a workout that includes some kind of element that mimics the competitive environment (Nash et al., 2011). Making sure that the athletes are accustomed to the pressure and anxieties that is present during a competition.

## **5.2 Communication as a tool in psychological skills training.**

Communication and verbal interchange is key factors achieving good performances (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006, p. 165). The content of communication between coach and athlete consists partly of topics surrounding the sport activity (i.e., training programmes, technical advice). Other parts of the content in this dialog is personal discussions. The importance of communication is linked to getting to know each other on a personal level, and above all, knowing the needs of the other. The coaches in the current study highlight communication as way they are working on the coach-athlete relationship. They are showing up early and staying late and are always open for a conversation. According to the swimmers in Antonini Philippe and Seiler (2006, p. 165) study open



channels of communication as important to work effectively and productively with their coach. They also view it difficult to establish a good relationship with a coach without knowing the coach, and the coach knowing them. Gould et al. (2007) interviewed 10 elite American football coaches rewarded for their abilities to facilitate athletes' personal development. And found that the coaches emphasised the importance of communication. The things they swore by was always having open lines of communication, being clear about their expectations, and holding the players accountable, similarly to the coaches in the current study.

Advice is defined as one's opinion on issues encountered by the other person, given and received in an open and positive way (Rhind & Jowett, 2010, p. 115). Advice is viewed as a central process in a sporting relationship (Smith & Smoll, 1990). Thus, the meaning of the advice is more than simply helping on a problem, but also include praising and constructive feedback as well. The type of feedback referred to in the results of the current study is constructive feedback (advice or instructions aiming to improve performance, not critic) and reward feedback (for example praising the athlete's good effort). Another style of feedback similar to constructive feedback is corrective feedback, which is competence-related information given on how the athlete can improve a movement or poor performance (Mouratidis et al., 2010, p. 620; Reeve, 2006). Corrective feedback should not be mistaken as negative feedback, negative feedback focuses on the end result (the failure to achieve the wanted outcome) whereas corrective feedback focuses on the process (Mouratidis et al., 2010, p. 620). Feedback given after poor performance can be separated varying on the message it conveys, criticism, information, or neutral statements (Amorose & Weiss, 1998). Corrective feedback involves pointing out the athletes faults or weaknesses in their technique to improve athletes' performance, the feedback needs to be given in a motivating way (Mouratidis et al., 2010, p. 621). This is something every coach should be aware of, and the coaches in the current study seems to be aware of it, giving corrective feedback is closely tied up with the learning process. A critical question is

whether or not there is different styles of communication the feedback, and how it affects the athletes' motivation, wellbeing and self-efficacy. Some studies have found factors that can boost the beneficial effects of the corrective feedback. Even though, the athlete most often perceive their coach as honest, trustworthy and prestigious, the feedback must be given in an autonomy-supportive way, the feedback should be focused self-referenced improvement, and is referring to as a successful attempt of task which is realistic and specific (Bandura, 1977; Henderlong & Lepper, 2002).

Realistic feedback is a way coaches can verbally persuade the athlete of their abilities which links feedback to increased self-efficacy in the athlete (Bandura, 1977; Feltz & Lirgg, 2001). The coaches in the current study plan their feedback, making sure to not damaged the athlete's self-confidence. For the athlete to get higher self-efficacy from the feedback the athlete needs to perceive the coach as credible and honest (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Coaches are generally considered to be reliable sources of their athletes' capabilities (Feltz & Lirgg, 2001, p. 4). Evaluative feedback and verbal persuasion is some of the persuasive techniques which is often used by coaches attempting to build self-efficacy in their athletes (Feltz & Lirgg, 2001). However, a better source of self-efficacy is one's previous accomplishments. Positive competence-related feedback is important, but it is not inadequate to secure good self-efficacy, this is cause demonstrating ones competence strengths ones believe on ones abilities more than someone telling you that you can do it (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A combination between one's accomplishment and persuasive means is better to strengthen the athlete's self-efficacy, then only persuasive means alone (Bandura, 1977).

Feedback is also shown to be a good strategy to maintain a coach-athlete relationship (Rhind & Jowett, 2010, p. 115). Technical advice, such as constructive feedback, is important, however not as important as *Savoir-être* (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006, p.

165). *Savoir-être* refers to communication or social skills, and examples of these skills are motivating or giving someone confidence or providing a 'sympathetic ear' (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Therefore, a coach should be a good listener, trying to understand the athletes, identifying their problems, finding out how to best instruct, support and guide them on an individual level (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006, p. 164)

### 5.3 Communication for building relationship

The relationship between a coach and an athlete is a key factor for performance in sport (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006, p. 160). They are mutually dependent, since the athlete needs to acquire knowledge, competence and experience from the coach, and the coach needs to transfer their competence and skills to performance and success in their athletes. Some main aspect contributing to a successful coach-athlete relationship is mutual trust, respect and support (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2007; Lafrenière et al., 2008, p. 541).

The results in the current show that the coaches communicate with the athletes in a way that fits within the framework of maintenance strategies in the COMPASS model (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). According to this model a positive relationship is close, committed, and complementary. The COMPASS model suggests seven maintenance strategies that is conflict management, openness, motivation, positivity, advice, support, and social networks. The coaches in the current study do some of these strategies but not everyone. They have a lot of focus on building relationships through the strategies such as always being open for conversation, creating an open and safe environment, showing their human side. Even though they had another wording the coaches' strategies correspond with these COMPASS model strategies: openness, positivity adaptability, advice, and support. Showing that the athletics coaches in Norway have some good strategies on maintaining relationship with their athletes, but at the same time, they even have some strategies left they could include in their coaching.

Regarding openness in the COMPASS model, there is three ways to be open that is non-sport communication, talk about anything and other awareness. The result of the current study showed that the coaches is prioritising open communication, and not only communication about the sport, but non-sporting topics as well. In order to get to know the athletes better (e.g., learning about the athletes likes, dislike and their life outside sport). Among the interpersonal skills Gould et al. (2007) highlight in their research of award-winning coaches open lines of communication is one of them. As mentioned earlier, advice or feedback is a strategy for maintaining the coach-athletes relationship. Advice includes feedback given/taken positively and openly and giving opinion on problem encountered by the other person.

Positivity adaptability is about changing ones behaviour to better suited the athletes preferences and the coaches in the current study communicate differently with every athlete, and switching the communication based on their relationship with an athlete. (Rhind & Jowett, 2010, pp. 114-115). When adapting one behaviour to better suit the athletes the coach shows acceptance of the others better and poorer qualities, however the coach should focus more on the better qualities (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006, p. 166). Every person is different, and the coaches need to know how to make the best use of these differences. The athletes in Philippe and Seiler (2006, p. 166) pointed out that being different from the other person in the relationship was a positive element in the relationship. Even though, it is hard at times the athletes look at the differences as a benefit for development for both the athlete and coach.

The effectiveness of the interventions in a PST program are connected with the quality of the relationship between the consultant and the athlete (Petitpas et al., 1999). According to Sharp and Hodge (2011) building a connection, building a professional consulting

relationship and assuring that the cooperation meets the needs of the athlete are three of the most important characteristics for an effective consultant. If the coach and athlete have a good relationship, a coach with the correct knowledge could be the right person to help the athlete.

#### **5.4 The coaches challenges associated with psychological skills training**

There were two dominating problems the coaches in the current study have when implementing PST, a lack of time and their lack of knowledge on the topic. It is easy to understand the coaches do not have enough time, who have enough time in everyday life to add something extra or do even more than they are already doing? This is definitely not different for coaches and the coaches in the current study struggles to find the time where they could add anything extra, in the limited time they have with the athletes. In studies that study the effect of a PST program they have workshops and sport-specific psychological skills drills form one hour up to two hours (e.g., Stenzel et al., 2021), and it is easy to understand the difficulties of implementing this without any extra support. It is not only the coaches who lack the of time, the coaches in the current study mentions that the athletes lack the time. One barriers Athlete have for seeking PST help is time (Gulliver et al., 2012; Moreland et al., 2018). Except training athletes usually have studies and or other time demanding thing to do, which may contribute to the athletes not taking time to seek out psychological services or help (Burnett et al., 2010). If the intervention is a 10-week intervention program, with two 50 min lessons a week, meaning that the athlete needs to find 100 minutes during the week which they otherwise would use on school, friends, or physical training. Furthermore, coaches often neglect PST due to their perceived lack of time and their lacking knowledge on psychological skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). They lack the knowledge on how to teach them to athletes or how to incorporate them in workouts.

A challenge that recurred during the interviews was the lack of PST knowledge. Multiple studies have found that the reason why coaches fail to implement PST programs is primary determinant of their lack of knowledge on the topic (Gould & Eklund, 1991; Gould et al., 1999; Grobbelaar, 2007; Ottley, 2000). They lack the knowledge on what the program should consist of, and how the procedure should look like. This lack of knowledge could be linked to the education from Norwegian Athletics Association and the lack of psychology related subjects in this education. Other studies have also found that the sport psychology related education is a problem (Gould et al., 1991; Gould et al., 1999).

### **5.5 Possible changes**

A lot would be changed if the coaches had a little more knowledge on the topic. Either if they had mentors, lectures from experts or easier access to knowledge as the coaches suggest, they would learn more. Research shows that the athlete needs to trust the person giving the advice to actually follow it. If the coach-athlete relationship is good and the coach has more knowledge, the athletes would potentially have better output of the PST. It would make the process take less time, since the report is already there, compared to if an external sport psychological consultant is hired. In some PST research the psychological consultant has used a lot of time on the field, with the athletes to get to know them better (e.g., Dohme et al., 2020; Horn et al., 2011).

A PST program should be planned, implemented, and supervised by a qualified consulting sport psychologist (Weinberg & Williams, 2015, p. 332). The PST also needs to be sport specific, and who knows the sport better than the coaches themselves? This related to both language and sport demands. Even though it is attractive to have a sport psychologist administer the program, not everyone has access to a sport psychologist, except perhaps at the highest level of competition, and even then, the psychologists are not necessarily accompanying the athletes on every competition and travel. This is the basic premise of

Weinberg and Williams (2015, p. 332) chapter, stating that the coach also has some responsibility to provide PST and strengthen the athletes' optimal psychological state

A third benefit from the coach having more knowledge is the fact that if the coach show that PST is important, the athlete will take the program more seriously (Weinberg & Williams, 2015). A lot of the literature shows that if a psychological consultant or an expert is to implement a program, it help if the coach participates, especially in group sessions, because it shows the athlete that the coaches view PST seriously. This would also give the coach more knowledge and opportunity to learn how they can implement PST on the field.

### **Limitations**

The current study accounts for certain limitations. From my point of view, I have focused on what the coaches think and do concerning the psychological, but it is difficult to ensure that the participants have answered what they actually think. In this way, it can be argued that the study should have included more participant, in order to a greater extent be able to cross-check and look at the answers against each other.

First and foremost, this is the first time I do interviews and a thematic analysis. Have I done a good enough job, did I dig deep enough, ask the right follow up questions, and so on (Connelly & Peltzer, 2016, p. 52). One example here is the coaching context. Did I explore it enough, is the age, education and experience enough? I could have explored if the coaches in for example recreational sport, developmental sport, or elite sport (Côté & Gilbert, 2009, p. 314). The coding, choice of themes, interpretation of the data and presentation of the results are carried out within a thematic analysis. This means that this task is completely dependent on me as a researcher and at the same time influenced by the

alternation between the inductive and the deductive approach. Had the same study been attempted to be reproduced by one another researcher, the probability is high that one had obtained other results. In the thesis I have chosen to summarize the discussion and results section. This may weaken the structure of the study, but at the same time help to create a holistic impression and more life to the findings.

Another limitation with a qualitative study is the process of transcribing. There is a lot that disappears of significance when transcribing, tone of voice, and it is not as easy to get breaks. Interview over zoom created some nicks in the conversation, and it could be difficult to hear what was said on the recording afterwards during the transcript and the first phase of the analysis when getting to know the data. Furthermore, in a research interview there is an asymmetric power relationship (Kvale et al., 2015, p. 52). This is not an open everyday conversation between equal partners. The researcher most likely has the power, with all the questions, making it a one-way dialogue, where the interrogation goes in only one direction. One last reason why it is a asymmetric power relationship is that the researcher has a monopoly on interpreting, the participant has nothing to say in this process (Kvale et al., 2015).

### **Strengths of the current study**

The strength of the current study is that the sample consisted of coaches from different parts of the country and with different levels of experience. This may strengthen the current study findings because the coaches may have different prerequisites or have other views based on where in the country they come from and the level of experiences they have. This gives the data a greater nuance. Interviewing over Zoom made it easier to reach the coaching in other places in Norway, making Zoom-interview more of a strength than a weakness.



With my experience I know the athletics environment. Through eleven years as an athlete and 3 years as a coach. This helped me build rapport with the coaches, because I know the language and understand the situations their in.

Before starting the analysis, I read up on rTA, to understand the analysis, how to do it and the strength and weaknesses. During this process I had discussion groups with my supervisor and a fellow student who also is using TA. I spent a lot of extra time on the analysis and discussed the coding and the themes with other students. This really helped me being critical to myself and kept my reflecting on what I was doing.

### **Practical implications**

The findings of the current study have the potential to be generalized in certain ways. Specifically, naturalistic generalizability in that the results can resonate with the reader and their personal engagement in similar experiences (e.g., building relationship), and inferential generalization in that these findings could transfer to other contexts if a group or individual considers adopting (Smith, 2018).

Especially one take home message needs to be highlighted in the current study, the coaches need more information regarding PST. The first step here should be to update the demand analyses in every event and describe the psychological demands for each of them in more detail. Moreover, the coach-education should include more information regarding PST, including techniques coaches can teach the athletes and how they could implement it in everyday workouts. The education should include how to practice on the skills from the The Norwegian Olympic Training Centre model on psychological skills and skills that the demand analysis highlights as important(Pensgaard, 2005).

Furthermore, either the Norwegian Athletics Association or every athletics circuit, or both, need to have someone responsible for the psychological aspects of the sport. This person could go to the clubs educating both coaches and athletes and could act like a mentor as well as a person to reach out to for the coaches and athletes, giving tips and guidance.

However, these are likely preliminary implications, and more research should be conducted on implementing PST in Norwegian athletics.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Based on the results the current study it seems likely that Norwegian athletics coaches do not have any focus on PST and limited focus on psychological skills in their athletics everyday. None of the coaches had a structured plan regarding PST, but they all had some focus on psychological skills coaching athletes. Mostly they focused on the coach-athlete relationship, and they reported that they indirectly work on motivation when trying to facilitate competence and when picking exercises. Enhancing the coach-athlete relationship they are reinforcing the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for relatedness and in addition giving the athletes the opportunities to influence their workout.

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## Attachement I:

Generell informasjon som skal gis før selve intervjuet starter

1. Introduksjon av meg (Masterstudent, idrettsvitenskap – coaching og idrettspsykologi)
2. Presentere oppgaven
  - a. Forskningsspørsmål
3. Grunnlag for at vedkommende har blitt spurt om å delta
  - a. På grunn av din rolle i klubb/skole
4. Sikkerhetsinfo
  - a. Lydopptak
    - i. Oppbevaring
    - ii. Sletting
    - iii. Gjennomlesing av sitater – (kan rette, slette og legge til informasjon).
  - b. Frivillig deltakelse
  - c. Masteroppgaven
    - i. Aidentifisering
    - ii. Hvem har tilgang til infoen?
    - iii. Personregelverket – konfidensielt og i samsvar med de reglene.

OBS! Vær selv oppmerksom på hvilke spørsmål du spør og hvordan du spør spørsmålene. Finn ut om trenere som ikke legger opp til mental trening, har noen tiltak/jobber med det ubevisst eller uten en plan.

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Selve intervjuet

1. Kan du presentere deg?
  - a. Erfaring
  - b. Utdannelse
  - c. Arbeidsoppgaver
    - i. Tid med utøvere
    - ii. Gren
2. Hvilken kunnskap/utdanning sitter du med om mental trening?
  - a. Har du noen kunnskap rundt mental restitusjon?

- b. Hvordan mener du en utøverne kan kjenne at de trenger en mental pause, for å igjen være 100% på (tilstede, fokusert, konsentrert, osv.)?
- 3. Først et helt generelt spørsmål; hva slags rolle har du i teamet med tanke på utøverutvikling?
  - a. Hva er din visjon og mål?
  - b. Hva slags utøvere ønsker du å skape?
- 4. Er det noen som har ansvaret for den mentale treningen på din skole/ i din klubb?
  - a. Hver enkelt trener eller eksterne personer?
  - b. Har du tilgang på en mental trener?
    - i. Skulle du ønske du hadde det?
  - c. Hvordan fungerer samarbeidet?
  - d. Følger du opp utøver?
- 5. Hvor viktig mener du mentale ferdigheter er i friidrett?
  - a. I forhold til taktiske, tekniske, sosiale og fysiske egenskaper?
  - b. Hvorfor mener du at det ikke er viktig?
- 6. Hva mener du er de viktigste mentale ferdighetene og mentale teknikkene i friidrett?
  - a. Varier det fra gren til gren?
  - b. Har du hørt om Olympiatoppens modell for mental trening? **VIS**
- 7. ...

<p>Hvordan settes det søkelys på den mentale treningen i din praksis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ressursbruk og tidsbruk</li> <li>b. På hvilken måte prioriterer du?</li> <li>c. Har du søkelys på mental restitusjon, som del av den mentale treningen? (avslapning, både mentalt og fysisk, hvordan klare å koble av, ta litt pause, senke skuldrene).</li> </ul> <p>Tror du utøverne ser at du setter lys på mentale ferdigheter?</p>	<p>Hvorfor setter du ikke søkelys? Hva skal til for at du skal gjøre det?</p>
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8. ..

<p>1. Hvordan legger du opp til mentale trening?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mentale teknikker (målsettinger, avspenning, indre dialog, visualisering)</li> <li>b. Implisitt / eksplisitt</li> <li>c. Har dere gjort noen konkrete tiltak?</li> </ul> <p>2. Av disse; er det noe du syns har bedre effekt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sett i lys av utvikling og prestasjon</li> </ul> <p>Mental restitusjon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Har du noen teknikker du lærer utøverne for å restituere mental?</li> <li>c. Vet du av noen teknikker utøverne gjør for å restituere mentalt?</li> </ul>	<p>For de som ikke legger opp mental trening: Gjør du noe for å motivere utøverne? Hjelper du de å sette opp mål? Hva gjør du hvis en utøver er nervøs? Osv.</p> <p>Mental restitusjon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Har du noen teknikker du lærer utøverne for å restituere mental?</li> <li>b. Vet du av noen teknikker utøverne gjør for å restituere mentalt?</li> </ul>
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9. Hva gjør du om du ser en utøver sliter med noe?

- a. Konsentrasjon
- b. Stresset

c. Spenningsregulering

#Referer til svar om hvilke mentale ferdigheter de syns er viktige

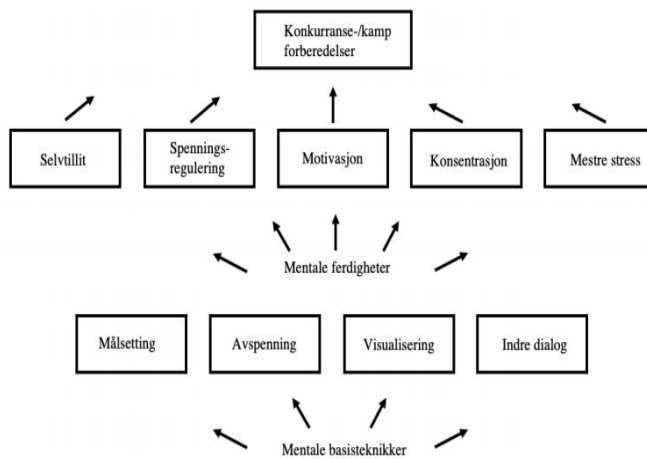
10. Hva er den største utfordringen du møter på med den mentale treningen?

11. Avslutningsvis, om vi ser bort fra alt av ressurser (penger, tid osv) hva ville vært drømmesituasjonen rundt mental trening i din skole/klubb?

a. Hvordan ville det sett ut?

# **Gi tid til å tenke seg om her!**

12. Er det noe du vil legge til?



## Attachement 2:

Meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger

# Vurdering

**Referansenummer**

556409

**Prosjekttittel**

Fokus på mental trening blant norske friidrettstrenere

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Norges idrettshøgskole / Institutt for idrett og samfunnsvitenskap

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Gro Jordalen

**Student**

Karoline Saur Heiland

**Prosjektperiode**

21.08.2021 - 31.05.2023

[Meldeskjema](#) 

**Dato**

30.07.2021

**Type**

Standard

**Kommentar**

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 30. juli 2021, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

**TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET**

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 31. mai 2023.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

#### TAUSHETSPLIKT

Deltagerne i prosjektet har taushetsplikt. Intervjuene må gjennomføres uten at det fremkommer opplysninger som kan identifisere elever/utøvere.

#### PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettfærdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen - formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet medprosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema> Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Njaal H. Neckelmann

Lykke til med prosjektet!

## Attachement 3:

# Rutine for bruk av Zoom til innsamling av forskningsdata ved NIH

## Virkeområde for denne rutinen

Denne rutinen gjelder for all bruk av Zoom som omfatter eller behandler persondata klassifisert som oransje eller røde etter instruksen «Om eierskap og klassifisering av data ved NIH - hvordan vurdere hvilken klasse du skal bruke». Rutinen gjelder for all bruk av Zoom i forskningsprosjekter ved NIH.

Merk: det er ikke tillatt å benytte Zoom utenfor NIH (<https://nih.zoom.us>) til innsamling av forskningsdata.

## Forutsetninger

### Tekniske forutsetninger

- Man skal kun bruke NIH sin variant av Zoom, som bruker NIH-bruker ID og Feideinnlogging (SSO), på adressen <https://nih.zoom.us/>
- Den parten som er ansvarlig for samtalen og eventuelt opptak skal kun benytte NIH-eid og -driftet utstyr.
- Utstyret skal være godkjent for behandling av oransje og røde data etter NIHs retningslinjer for lagring.

### Andre forutsetninger

- Den som er ansvarlig for samtalen skal ha satt seg inn i, og følge, hele denne rutinen.
- Eventuelle unntak av hele eller deler av denne rutinen skal være godkjent av [avdelingsleder IT ved NIH](#).
- Skal det gjøres opptak skal det innhentes godkjenning fra kan bare lagres på utstyr eid-, satt opp- og driftet av NIH.
- Den som er ansvarlig for prosjektet, dvs. prosjektleder, skal sikre at alle godkjenninger er på plass.
- **Merk:** Gjennomføres samtalen som en erstatning av fysisk møte i forskningsprosjekter, så kan det være nødvendig med endringsmelding til NSD.

## Gjennomføring av zoom-intervjuer med oransje- eller rødt innhold

Punktene under skal følges for gjennomføring av alle zoom-møter til innsamling av data med oransje eller rødt innhold. Punktene som spesifikt gjelder opptak kan en se bort fra om det ikke tas opptak.

### Før intervjuet starter

- Send ut informasjonskriv og samtykkeerklæring før datainnsamling starter, slik at informert samtykke er på plass før intervjuet.
- Til gjennomføring av intervju kan bare utstyr eid-, satt opp- og driftet av NIH brukes.
- Den som er ansvarlig for intervjuet skal ha gjort seg kjent med Zoom som verktøy og testet at alt virker uten sensitivt innhold. Det skal benyttes generert møte-ID, ikke ens personlige møte-ID. [Bruk funksjonen «Generate automatically»](#). Denne ID-en skal kun formidles til de som skal delta i møtet. Merk at om kalender i Outlook eller lignende benyttes for å kalle inn deltakere, så skal ikke møte-ID ligge åpent. Den må enten utelates fra innkallingen, eller innkallingen må settes privat.
- Møter skal passordbeskyttes. Passord for møter skal ikke gjenbrukes og kun oversendes de som skal ha tilgang til møtet. Det skal benyttes venteromsfunksjon for å slippe inn bare riktige deltagere. Dette heter «Enable waiting room», og er ikke det samme som «Breakout room».
- Om det skal benyttes deling av skjerm for å vise frem tekst eller bilde, sørg for å stenge ned e-post, andre dokumenter og/eller andre programmer for å minske risiko for deling av feil innhold.
- Om chatte-funksjonen ikke er strengt nødvendig for gjennomføring av møtet – så skal funksjonen skrues av.
- Gjør klar påkrevd informasjon som skal gis til deltakere før møtet starter.
- Påse at det ikke er fare for lydlekkasje der samtalen utføres. Sikre at lyd ikke overhøres av uvedkommende. Hodetelefoner bør benyttes der det er praktisk mulig.
- Påse at uvedkommende ikke har innsyn til skjermen under samtalen.

### Spesifikke tillegg dersom det skal gjøres opptak

- Opptak kan bare lagres på utstyr eid-, satt opp- og driftet av NIH. Opptaket transkriberes så raskt som mulig. Deretter skal opptaket med en gang slettes eller lagres i NIHs sikre sone for forskningsdata.
- Gjør klar egnet lagringssted for opptak på NIH PC som skal brukes. Dersom opptak skal lagres i NIHs sikre sone for forskningsdata, må du sørge for at det er lagt til rette for dette (registrer prosjektet i Prosjektweb, og ta kontakt med IT avdelingen).
- Navngi mapper eller filer med opptak entydig så det er lett å holde orden, men unngå personidentifiserende navn på disse.

- Det kan være lurt å skru på funksjonen «Add a timestamp to the recording» for å lette navigering i slutført opptak for evt. klipping eller sladding av deler av opptaket.
- Vurdér om det skal benyttes «virtual background» for å hindre at andre personer, bakgrunn og/eller dokumenter kommer med på opptaket.

## Under samtalen / opptaket

- Når deltaker(e) er sluppet inn i møtet, sjekk at det ikke er deltakere som ikke skal være der.
- Om det er uvedkommende inne i møtet, avslutt straks møtet og [IT avdelingen om avviket](#).
- Sjekk at alle innstillinger er satt som ønsket – for eksempel at chat er skrudd av om den ikke skal brukes osv.
- Lås møtet. • Noen deltagere ønsker kanskje ikke å fremstå med reelt navn i opptak. Dersom det skal benyttes chat eller deling av skjerm, vurder å be deltakere endre navn i møtet.
- Om det skal gjøres opptak, gi informasjon om dette og annen påkrevd informasjon.
- Informér om chat skal benyttes eller ikke, og om den skal lagres eller ikke.
- Om det hender eller sies noe under møtet som må fjernes i etterkant, legg merke til tidspunktet for lettere å kunne klippe/sladd.
- Om det ikke gjøres opptak, men en tar notater av møtet/samtalen så merk at notatene kan ha samme klassifisering som samtalen.

## Etter samtalen / opptaket

- Når samtalen er over – stopp opptaket.
- Avslutt møtet ved å klikke på «End» og velg «End Meeting for All» for å sikre at alle blir stengt ute fra møtet.
- Om det er gjort opptak så kan maskinen trenge noe tid på å behandle opptaket. La maskinen gjøre seg ferdig før du lukker lokket eller skrur av datamaskinen.
- Sjekk at opptak har blitt lagret på ønsket sted, og at du vet hvor det ligger.
- Slett eventuell unødig informasjon. For eksempel kan lydfiler slettes om man kun skal benytte video.
- Du må så raskt som mulig slette opptaket (etter transkribering), eller overføre det til NIHs sikre sone for lagring av forskningsdata.



## **Attachement 4:**

# **Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet «Fokus på mental trening blant trenere i norsk friidrett»?**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt på Norges idrettshøgskole (NIH) hvor formålet er å kartlegge om trenere i norsk friidrett har fokus på mental trening og mentale ferdigheter i treningshverdagen. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

### **Formål**

I friidrett har det, historisk sett, blitt satt fokus på fysiske og tekniske egenskaper hos utøverne. Men viktigheten av mentale ferdigheter har, i løpet av de siste tiårene, virkelig blitt satt søkelys på.

Formålet med studien er å se nærmere på hvilket og hvor mye fokus friidrettstrenerne har på utviklingen av mentale ferdigheter hos unge friidrettsutøverne i Norge. Data fra studien vil være grunnlaget for mastergradsprosjektet til Karoline Saur Heiland.

I dette prosjektet er det satt opp to forskningsspørsmål:

- Har trenere i norsk friidrett fokus på mentale ferdigheter i treningshverdagen med sine utøvere?
- Hvilke mentale ferdigheter fokuseres det på?

### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Prosjektet gjennomføres av masterstudent Karoline Saur Heiland, og hovedveilederen og prosjektansvarlig for prosjektet er Gro Jordalen (NIH, Institutt for idrett og samfunnsvitenskap). NIH er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Vi ønsker å snakke med friidrettstrenerne som jobber med friidrettsutøvere i alderen 16-19 år. Derfor har vi tatt kontakt med sportslig leder på videregående skoler og i klubber med utøvere i denne aldergruppen, og fått kontakt informasjonen din fra sportslig leder på skolen/i klubben din.

### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du skal delta i et intervju. Intervjuet vil skje på et egnet sted, hvor undertegnende, Karoline S. Heiland, og du, vil være til stede (fysisk eller digitalt oppmøte avklares med tanke på Covid-19 på gitt tidspunkt for intervju). Intervjuet vil ta omtrent en time. Spørsmålene vi ønsker å stille handler om mental trening i friidrett, hva du synes er viktig og hvordan du legger opp til mental trening. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp med lydopptaker, og transkribert på PC. I transkripsjonen, oppgaven og i en eventuell publikasjon i forbindelse med oppgaven vil du være anonymisert.

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun student og veileder/prosjektleder som vil få tilgang til innsamlede data (rådata). Rådata vil bli lagret i tråd med NIHs retningslinjer for sikker oppbevaring av data.

Navnet og kontaktopplysningene dine vil jeg erstatte med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Opplysningene dine slettes når prosjektet avsluttes, noe som etter planen er 01.06.23.

## **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

## **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra NIH har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

## **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- NIH ved masterstudent Karoline S. Heiland, tlf: 91526528, e-post: [Karolinesh@nih.no](mailto:Karolinesh@nih.no)
- NIH ved veileder/prosjektansvarlig Gro Jordalen, tlf: 99778965, e-post: [gro.jordalen@nih.no](mailto:gro.jordalen@nih.no)
- Personvernombud ved Norges idrettshøgskole, e-post: [personvernombud@nih.no](mailto:personvernombud@nih.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på tlf: 55 58 21 17 eller e-post [personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no).

Med vennlig hilsen

Gro Jordalen  
(Prosjektansvarlig)

Karoline S. Heiland  
(Student)

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## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Fokus på mental trening blant trenere i norsk friidrett» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)