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A Comparison of High-Performance Football Coaches Experiencing  
High- versus Low Burnout Symptoms Across a Season of Play:  
Quality of Motivation and Recovery Matters

Marte Bentzen<sup>1</sup>, Pierre-Nicolas Lemyre<sup>1</sup>, Göran Kenttä<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Norwegian School of Sport Sciences

<sup>2</sup>The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to:

Marte Bentzen, PhD,

Department of Coaching and Psychology, The Norwegian School of Sport Sciences

PB 4014 Ullevål Stadion, 0806 Oslo, Norway.

Email: [marte.bentzen@nih.no](mailto:marte.bentzen@nih.no)

Phone number: +47 990 20 101

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the current study was to provide insights in how and why four head coaches in elite football experienced being either high or low in burnout symptoms (BS) during a competitive season. A longitudinal sequential quantitative-qualitative mixed method approach was used to enhance the understanding of coaches' experiences. First, data were collected using online questionnaires at the start and at the end of the competitive season with all coaches working at the Norwegian Elite Football League level. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with four head coaches who were purposefully selected based on having the two highest and the two lowest burnout scores across the season compared to the overall sample. A quantitative approach was used to explore whether these four coaches differed when compared to the overall population on the associated variables: performance, budget, quality of motivation, perceived workload, work-home-interference (WHI), and recovery. A qualitative approach helped gain more insight in the experiences these four coaches had with possible onset variables. Analyses comparing the two sets of coaches, indicated no difference related to performance, budget and workload. However, the motivational profile, WHI, and ability to meet recovery demands were variables that contributed to explain differences in coaches' BS.

*Keywords:* self-determination theory, work-home-interference, relaxation, psychological detachment, mixed methods, soccer.

1                   **A Comparison of High-Performance Football Coaches Experiencing**  
2                   **High- versus Low Burnout Symptoms Across a Season of Play:**  
3                   **Quality of Motivation and Recovery Matters**

4  
5           People like to be involved in projects that go beyond themselves. They want to develop  
6           their effectiveness by taking on challenges that make demands on all of their abilities and  
7           require a full commitment of their physical, emotional, and creative energy. If these  
8           things were not important, we would not be discussing burnout in the first place.

9           (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 59)

10          Burnout is a work-related syndrome that develops over time and is characterized by  
11          exhaustion, cynicism, and low sense of professional accomplishment (Maslach, Schaufeli, &  
12          Leiter, 2001). Exhaustion is feeling mentally and emotionally overextended and drained, while  
13          cynicism means having a negative and distant attitude towards one's work, where work is  
14          perceived as less valuable or interesting than previously. Reduced personal accomplishment is  
15          felt when one evaluates his or her achievement at work negatively, which is accompanied with  
16          the feeling of poor professional self-esteem (Maslach et al., 2001). In essence, highly motivated  
17          individuals striving to improve performance in a demanding job are at risk of experiencing  
18          burnout as illustrated in the quote from Maslach and Leiter, at the start of the article. High-  
19          performance coaches fit this description, as they have often been described as highly passionate,  
20          persistent, and motivated for their job (Bentzen, Lemyre, & Kenttä, 2014; Lundkvist, Gustafsson,  
21          Hjälml, & Hassmen, 2012). Coaching in sports may be highly demanding for various reasons:  
22          inconvenient work hours, high workload, traveling, short contracts, and media pressure  
23          (Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, & Hays, 2010; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, & Hutchings, 2008). The

1 high-performance sport context as a work environment is described as complex, dynamic, and  
2 turbulent, due to the fact that it is unpredictable, ever-changing, highly competitive, and is within  
3 a high-pressure environment (Fletcher & Scott, 2010; Rynne, Mallett, & Tinning, 2006). These  
4 demands are argued to be particularly intense within football (soccer) both in England and  
5 Scandinavia, as this sport is known for its focus on results and absence of job security (Arnulf,  
6 Mathisen, & Haerem, 2012; Bridgewater, 2006; Nissen, 2014). This implies that coaches are at  
7 risk of getting fired when their team underperforms or fails to meet expectations of stakeholders  
8 (Arnulf et al., 2012; Nissen, 2014). Moreover, research has also indicated that football coaches'  
9 work is greatly influenced by club resources, where fewer resources can increase the demands on  
10 the coach (Hjälms, Kenttä, Hassmén, & Gustafsson, 2007; Thelwell et al., 2008). A recent  
11 longitudinal study found that 24.4% of high-performance coaches, across different sports, were  
12 characterized as high in exhaustion at the end of the season (Bentzen, Lemyre, & Kenttä, 2016a).  
13 Though this is a high percentage of coaches who are exhausted, this finding also clearly suggests  
14 that not all high-performance coaches are experiencing elevated levels of exhaustion.  
15 Consequently, it is of great interest to better understand why some high-performance coaches  
16 experience higher levels of burnout than others, to develop prevention strategies that could be  
17 implemented effectively (Goodger, Gorely, Lavalley, & Harwood, 2007; Raedeke & Kenttä,  
18 2013).

19         The combination of high motivation and a high workload may represent important risk  
20 factors for burning out (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Yet, research has shown that this is not true for  
21 all highly motivated employees experiencing high work demands (Bentzen et al., 2016a; ten  
22 Brummelhuis, ter Hoeven, Bakker, & Peper, 2011). Quality of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002)  
23 and the ability to recover from high work demands are two avenues of research that have shown

1 promising results in elucidating the complexity in the associations between motivation,  
2 workload, and burnout (Bakker, ten Brummelhuis, Prins, & van der Heijden, 2011; Sonnentag &  
3 Fritz, 2007). Using the motivational framework of self-determination theory (SDT: Deci &  
4 Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002), the quality of motivation—not the quantity—is of importance  
5 when predicting adherence, performance, and degree of well-being in the activity (Ryan & Deci,  
6 2002). A quantifiable perspective focuses on the amount or intensity of the motivation  
7 individuals have for an activity (e.g., Goal-setting Theory; Locke & Latham, 1990). Whereas, the  
8 quality of motivation for a behaviour could be differentiated based on how integrated in the self  
9 the behavior is, and is often described as either autonomous or controlled (Chemolli & Gagné,  
10 2014). Autonomous motivation refers to behaviours that are driven by self-determined  
11 regulations, which implies that the behaviour is initiated because it is interesting, fun, satisfying  
12 in itself, and when it is done because the person values the activity and feels it is personally  
13 important. Controlled motivation, on the other hand, refers to behaviour that is driven by internal  
14 or external pressure to avoid guilt and shame, to attain ego enhancement, or to satisfy external  
15 demand or reward contingency (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Coaches who are  
16 largely driven by autonomous motivation at work experience lower levels of burnout (Bentzen,  
17 Lemyre, & Kenttä, 2016b; McLean, Mallett, & Newcombe, 2012), because their internal  
18 regulation for the activity leads to greater levels of energy, excitement, and joy (McLean et al.,  
19 2012). In contrast, when behaviour is largely driven by controlled motives, energy is drained as  
20 the activity is not done of free will and is not found interesting or fun (Ryan & Deci, 2002).  
21 Ambiguous findings have been reported among coaches on the relation between controlled  
22 motivation and burnout, with both positive relations (McLean et al., 2012) and non-directional  
23 relations (Bentzen et al., 2016b). In general, findings suggest that the quality of motivation does

1 matter for burnout vulnerability. However, more research is needed to investigate in greater  
2 depth how controlled motivation, or the interplay between controlled motivation and autonomous  
3 motivation, is related to coach burnout.

4         Within occupational psychology, a "work-demand-perspective" has traditionally been  
5 used when exploring burnout among employees (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Leiter, Bakker  
6 & Maslach, 2014). This perspective states that when demands expected of an employee are too  
7 high over time, this might lead to ill-being consequences such as burnout. One of the most  
8 frequent variables related to burnout within this perspective is perceived workload (Maslach &  
9 Leiter, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001), which is defined as the subjective evaluation of the workload  
10 (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). If there is a mismatch between personal resources and the work  
11 demand it is likely that burnout may occur over time (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). Further, having a  
12 time consuming job might also challenge the balance between work and private life (Lundkvist  
13 et al., 2012), which can lead to additional pressure and loss of energy due to work home  
14 interference (WHI; Bakker et al., 2011). In a recent longitudinal study, WHI was found to be the  
15 single factor that contributed the most in explaining why some high-performance coaches  
16 experienced high degrees of exhaustion, in comparison to low, at the end of the competitive sport  
17 season (Bentzen et al., 2016a). Combined, this implies that high workload and WHI can be  
18 stressful and taxing for coaches. The ability to meet individual recovery demands is therefore  
19 crucial (Raedeke & Kenttä, 2013). Recent studies have examined the relationship between stress  
20 and recovery over the course of a season among six professional Australian Football League  
21 coaches (Kellmann, Altfeld, & Mallett, 2015), and 25 full-time coaches (Altfeld, Mallet, &  
22 Kellmann, 2015). While somewhat inconsistent, findings suggested that the interplay between  
23 stress and recovery was of importance in order to prevent exhaustion and burnout. Kellmann et

1 al. (2015) suggested that if coaches' stress is consistently and necessarily high over a season, it is  
2 crucial to focus on quality of recovery to prevent burnout.

3 Recovery has been more widely studied in organizational psychology among employees,  
4 and is regarded as an important skill allowing individuals to increase resiliency to high demands  
5 (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Two distinct recovery skills are psychological detachment and  
6 relaxation. These skills have both been identified as key factors when predicting employees'  
7 performance and well-being (Siltaloppi, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2009). Psychological detachment  
8 refers to employees' ability to psychologically distance themselves from work during leisure  
9 time (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Relaxation is described as a process where the individual  
10 deliberately choose leisure activities and down time characterized with low activation and  
11 positive affect (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Psychological detachment and relaxation have been  
12 found to mediate the relationship between job demands and burnout (Siltaloppi et al., 2009).  
13 Additionally, the ability to recover have been found to reduce the effect of demands on burnout  
14 propensity (Siltaloppi et al., 2009). Only one known study has examined recovery using this  
15 operationalization in prevention of exhaustion among high-performance coaches (Bentzen et al.,  
16 2016a). Findings indicated that coaches with a higher ability to psychologically distance  
17 themselves and relax during a competitive season were less likely to have higher levels of  
18 exhaustion at the end of the season (Bentzen et al., 2016a). Despite recent research efforts  
19 targeting recovery for coaches as a mean to enhance well-being at work, no previous study has  
20 qualitatively explored the *if* and *how* high-performance coaches are able to recover within their  
21 demanding work-context, and whether these differences might explain diversity in burnout  
22 levels.



## 1 **Data Collection, Participants, and Inclusion Procedures**

2 Data were collected using a sequential quantitative-qualitative approach (Ivankova, 2014;  
3 Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The quantitative data were used for two purposes: a) purposefully  
4 selection of coaches for interview (Ivankova, 2014), b) inform the direct content analysis of the  
5 qualitative data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Further, the qualitative data were used to gain insight  
6 to key differences between the coaches experiencing either higher or lower burnout symptoms  
7 over the course of a season. Mixed methods have increasingly been used in research across  
8 domains to enhance understanding and meaningfulness (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and a few  
9 previous studies have successfully used this in the coaching literature (e.g., Partington &  
10 Cushion, 2013; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002; Vergeer & Lyle, 2007). However, to our  
11 knowledge, mixed methods have not yet been used to explore coach burnout. As burnout is a  
12 psychological syndrome developing over time (Maslach et al., 2001), a longitudinal sequential  
13 mixed methods approach was chosen for the current study (Ivankova, 2014; Tashakkori &  
14 Teddlie, 2010).

15 All coaches working in the Norwegian Elite Football League were invited to participate  
16 ( $N = 169$ ): Premier Football League men (16 teams), second highest division for men (16 teams),  
17 and Premier Football League women (12 teams). The Norwegian Football Federation distributed  
18 emails to all coaches and encouraged coaches to participate. Quantitative data were collected  
19 with an online questionnaire, available in Norwegian, English, and Swedish, three weeks before  
20 the competitive season started and three weeks before it ended (seven months apart). 92 coaches  
21 answered the questionnaire at T1 (54.4%) and 61 at T2 (36.1%). Of the 92 coaches, 93.5% were  
22 males, 6.5% were females; 43.5% coached Premier league men, 33.7% coached the second  
23 highest division men, and 22.8% coached Premier league women. Participants were categorized

1 as head coaches, 28.3%; assistance coaches, 23.9%; expert development coaches, 22.8%;  
2 goalkeeper coaches, 15.1%; and physical coaches, 9.8%.

3         The advantage of collecting the quantitative data first is to ensure that the coaches that are  
4 targeted to enrich our understanding of either higher or lower levels of burnout are indeed  
5 experiencing this according to their differentiated scores on the quantitative data. Further, it  
6 allows an in-depth exploration with a qualitative approach on a purposefully selected population  
7 (Ivankova, 2014).

8         Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Only head coaches were  
9 selected for interviews to ensure homogeneity and eliminate differences in the nature of work  
10 assignments. Inclusion criteria for the interviews involved headcoaches who were working full-  
11 time and participated in quantitative data collection at both time points. Seventeen coaches  
12 fulfilled these criteria. "The healthy worker effect" (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) describes the  
13 challenge doing burnout research on the general working population, where the largest  
14 proportion of the employees are experiencing low levels of burnout symptoms (Bentzen et al.,  
15 2016a). Consequently, the present study aimed to tease out the coaches with the most different  
16 experiences within the current population. These were the two head coaches scoring on average  
17 highest across all burnout dimensions at both time points, and the two coaches scoring on  
18 average lowest across all burnout dimensions at both time points. Coaches mainly differed in the  
19 scales exhaustion and cynicism, whereas no clear differences were found based on reduced  
20 personal accomplishment. Therefore, the coaches were selected for interviews mainly based on  
21 exhaustion and cynicism levels. All four coaches accepted the invitation, and interviews were  
22 conducted within six weeks after the competitive season ended. This time span was chosen as it  
23 was of importance to collect the qualitative data consecutively, and as soon as possible after the

1 season ended to promote trustworthiness of the data that were based on coaches' recall of the  
2 previous season. Statistics for the overall population and the interviewed coaches are presented  
3 in Table 1. The interviewed coaches were similar in terms of age, experience, travel days, and  
4 weekly work hours.

5 The study was approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services and all  
6 participants signed a written informed consent form prior to the study.

### 7 **Measures**

8 Demographic variables were measured at T1, perceived performance was measured at  
9 T2, and budgets of clubs were collected after season's end. All other variables were measured at  
10 both time points.

11 **Burnout.** Burnout was measured with the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale  
12 (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996): measuring exhaustion by five items (e.g., "I feel  
13 emotionally drained from my work"), cynicism by five items (e.g., "I have become less  
14 interested in my work since I started this job"), and reduced personal accomplishment by six  
15 items (e.g., "I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work"). Cynicism showed low  
16 internal consistency at T1 (Table 2), though it was decided to keep it in the further analyses in its  
17 original form due to a combination of few items in the scale and a small population (Dekovic,  
18 Janssens, & Gerris, 1991; Holden, Fekken, & Cotton, 1991). The MBI-GS has previously shown  
19 acceptable internal consistency across occupational groups and over time in Norway (Richardson  
20 & Martinussen, 2005). The participants responded to the following specifications: 0 (*never*), 1  
21 (*a few times a year or less*), 2 (*once a month or less*), 3 (*a few times a month*), 4 (*once a week*), 5  
22 (*a few times a week*), and 6 (*every day*).

1           **Perceived performance.** Perceived performance was measured by perceived goal  
2 attainment and goal probability (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). At T2, the coaches were  
3 asked to look back at the start of the season and write down their two most important goals for  
4 the season. Based on each of these goals, they were asked to rate to what degree goal attainment  
5 and goal probability was achieved on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a*  
6 *large extent*). A sum score of the two answers for each goal was used.

7           **Resources of the club.** Resources of the club were objectively assessed by the overall  
8 accounting costs budget (in millions Norwegian kroners) for the season for each club, which  
9 were collected with help of the Norwegian Football Association (Department of License). All  
10 football clubs gave a written permission prior to this data collection. All data concerning budget  
11 are made anonymous to ensure confidentiality for the four head coaches participating in the  
12 interviews.

13           **Quality of motivation.** Quality of motivation was measured by the Self-Regulation  
14 Questionnaire at Work, which has previously been validated in Norwegian (Gagné et al., 2015).  
15 Autonomous motivation was measured by a sum score of 10 items: three intrinsic regulation  
16 items (e.g., “Because I have fun doing my job”), four integrated regulation items (e.g., “Because  
17 it has become a natural habit for me”), and three identified regulation items (e.g., “Because I  
18 personally consider it important to put effort into this job”). Controlled motivation was measured  
19 by a sum score of 10 items: four introjected regulation items (e.g., “Because I have to prove to  
20 myself that I can”), three external regulation materialistic items (e.g., “Because others will  
21 reward me financially only if I put enough effort in my job”), and external regulation social  
22 items (e.g., “To get others’ approval”). A previous study among Scandinavian high-performance  
23 coaches has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency for both autonomous motivation and

1 controlled motivation (Bentzen et al., 2016b). All items were answered on a 7-point Likert-scale  
2 ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

3 **Workload.** Perceived workload was assessed with the subscale Workload from The  
4 Areas of Work Life Scale (AWS; Leiter & Maslach, 2004). The scale was reversed, so higher  
5 scores indicated higher workload. Workload was measured with six items (e.g., “I do not have  
6 time to do the work that must be done”). The AWLS has previously demonstrated acceptable  
7 internal consistency of its subscales among high-performance coaches (Bentzen et al., 2016a;  
8 2016b). The questionnaire was answered on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*strongly*  
9 *disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

10 **Work-Home Interference.** Work Home Interference was measured based on the scale  
11 “Inter-role conflict” (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983) with five items (e.g., “My work  
12 schedule often conflicts with my private life”). The participants responded to the following  
13 specifications: 1 (*never*), 2 (*sometimes*), 3 (*often*), and 4 (*always*). Acceptable internal  
14 consistency has previously been shown (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2003).

15 **Recovery.** Recovery was measured by two of the subscales in the Recovery Experience  
16 Questionnaire (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Psychological detachment was measured with four  
17 items (e.g., “I forget about work”), and relaxation with four items (e.g., “I kick back and relax”).  
18 The items were answered on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7  
19 (*strongly agree*). Both subscales have previously shown acceptable internal consistency  
20 (Sitaloppi, et al., 2009).

### 21 **Interview Guide and Procedure Interview**

22 Four coaches participated in a semi-structured interview (Patton, 2002). The interview  
23 guide was based on the questionnaire and consisted of five sections: (a) introduction and

1 demographics, (b) motivation for working as a coach, (c) workload and WHI, (d) recovery for  
2 coaches, and (e) performance of their team (see Appendix for interview guide). The interviews  
3 focused on sustaining natural flow and opportunity for participants to tell their own story. The  
4 interviews averaged 102 minutes in length (range 72 – 124 minutes). The first author, who has  
5 many years of experience in individual patient counseling in health care settings, conducted the  
6 interviews. The interviews were conducted either at the sports clubs of the respective coaches or  
7 at their homes, which combined was of importance when trying to create a conducive  
8 environment for the participants to openly share their experiences (Patton, 2002).

### 9 **Data Analyses**

10 Ninety-two coaches answered the questionnaire at T1 (54.4%) and 61 at T2 (36.1%). The  
11 dropout rate was 33.7%. At T1, a maximum of 2.2% of data was missing as single items. At T2,  
12 a maximum of 40.2 % of the data was missing, when combining single items missing and drop-  
13 outs. Little's MCAR test on missing data was conducted using IBM SPSS 21, where results  
14 indicated that the data was missing at random ( $\chi^2 = 403.13$ ,  $df = 11834$ ,  $p = 1.00$ ). Estimates of  
15 internal consistency were done by score reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Preliminary analyses were  
16 conducted by testing for differences between head coaches, and the rest of the coaches by  
17 independent sample t-test. Next, individual profiles of each coach interviewed were reported by  
18 their scores for all variables, and compared to the mean values for the total population. The  
19 individual profiles were evaluated to be different from the overall population if the score was one  
20 standard deviation below or above the mean.

21 The qualitative data was transcribed verbatim, resulting in 102 pages of single-space text.  
22 The MAXQDA program was used to facilitate manual coding of the data. Direct content analysis  
23 was used to organize and classify the data into meaningful patterns, which were previously found

1 of interest in the quantitative results (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This approach is deductive as its  
2 goal is to validate or extend already existing conceptual work and help determine the initial  
3 coding scheme (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). These higher order themes were 'burnout dimensions',  
4 'sport specific demands', 'motivation', 'workload', 'WHI', 'recovery', and 'performance'. In the  
5 second phase of the analyses an inductive approach was used to code the data that were in these  
6 higher order themes into lower order themes (Patton, 2002), which is described as conventional  
7 content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This analysis offered an in-depth insight of the  
8 findings within the higher order themes from step one. Further, these lower order themes were  
9 grouped with those of similar meanings into the final higher order themes displayed in the  
10 results. Thereby, the results from step one were nuanced and changed into the following higher  
11 order themes: 'club's resources and perceived performance', 'quality of motivation', and 'work  
12 demands versus meeting recovery needs'. All of the authors contributed to the qualitative data  
13 analyses to curb researcher bias (Patton, 2002; Watt, 2007), and thereby increased the  
14 trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Thurmond, 2001). The first author coded all raw  
15 data into the higher order themes as a first proposal. The second and the third authors are both  
16 experienced sport psychologists working at the elite level with both athletes and coaches. Their  
17 experience was important and relevant when taking the role of 'critical friends' when discussing  
18 the raw data, coding, and advocating alternative interpretations (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As  
19 a result of ongoing discussion between all three researchers, some recoding was done until  
20 consensus was reached on all themes. The results of the qualitative data are presented as direct  
21 quotes to expand and enrich the findings of the quantitative data within each of the main themes  
22 that emerged.

23

## Results

## 1 **Quantitative Results: Differences in Profiles over the Season**

2           The profiles of the interviewed coaches were compared with the total sample and were  
3 considered different if they were one standard deviation above or below the mean (Table 2).  
4 There was a difference in exhaustion and cynicism at T2: Coach 2 was lower than the mean in  
5 cynicism; Coach 3 was higher than the mean in exhaustion; Coach 4 was higher than the mean in  
6 both exhaustion and cynicism. Coach 1 was not one standard deviation below the mean at either  
7 exhaustion or cynicism, but was lower than both Coach 3 and Coach 4. No clear patterns were  
8 found for the reduced personal accomplishment dimension. From here, the coaches were labeled  
9 as high or low in burnout symptoms (BS): Coach 1—Low Burnout Symptoms (C1-LBS), Coach  
10 2—Low Burnout Symptoms (C2-LBS), Coach 3—High Burnout Symptoms (C3-HBS), and  
11 Coach 4—High Burnout Symptoms (C4-HBS). Individual profiles were examined for sport  
12 specific demands, quality of motivation, and work demands in relation to meeting recovery  
13 needs. C1-LBS showed an ambiguous profile with both adaptive and maladaptive differences in  
14 relation to the overall mean, in regard to what was expected of a coach low in BS. C2-LBS  
15 showed a more comprehensive adaptive profile compared to the overall mean, in accordance  
16 with a low burnout profile. C3-HBS yielded a maladaptive profile, in comparison to the overall  
17 mean, in accordance to being high in BS. C4-HBS showed an ambiguous profile with the  
18 majority of differences being maladaptive compared to the mean. The qualitative results  
19 mirrored and extended the quantitative results, which resulted in the final themes.

## 20 **Theme 1: Club's Resources and Perceived Performance**

21           The results of the objective measure of financial resources did not explain coaches'  
22 variation in BS. Two of the coaches worked for clubs with finances above average, and two  
23 worked within the average for the current league; however, the two coaches within the first

1 category reported both high BS and low BS. Information concerning the club's financial  
2 resources was not explicitly asked within the interview guide. Coaches addressed the topic  
3 spontaneously during the interview as an explanation to hard work, regardless of not explicitly  
4 asking associated financial questions: "Tremendous hours of work is necessary when you, as a  
5 head coach, have to cover the work of missing coach colleagues, because the club has limited  
6 finances and cannot afford a full coaching team" (C4-HBS). In contrast, the other coach  
7 experiencing high level of BS expressed that the job as a head coach had constant high demands,  
8 despite working for a club with above average financial resources and a full coaching team (C3-  
9 HBS).

10 Further, variation in perceived performance among the coaches did not yield clear  
11 indications of why some coaches were higher in BS. Contrary to what was expected, one of the  
12 coaches low in BS, who was below mean in both goal attainment and goal probability, offered  
13 this reflection on how these performance results affected him:

14 Well, we were behind our goal setting [during the season]. In addition, we got injuries,  
15 and I just noticed that we could not live up to our expectations. But it did not stress me. If  
16 I had put this pressure on my players, and the group, we would only have decreased even  
17 more [in performance]. We had to try, without being stressed if we lost. What could I do  
18 about it? Feel sorry for myself? (C1-LBS)

## 19 **Theme 2: Quality of Motivation**

20 Three of the four interviewed coaches described why autonomous motivation was of  
21 importance for them in their job. One coach expressed how the sport was inherently a part of the  
22 lifestyle:

1           It is really about football being a lifestyle, sort of . . . it means a lot of pressure, but at the  
2           same time it is a lifestyle. It is a part of you, much more than if you for instance go to  
3           school and get an education and then becomes something—right? Football is *me* in a  
4           way, if you understand? It is a bit different than planning to become an engineer. (C2-  
5           LBS)

6   Another coach also expressed this, however in a slightly different manner:

7           This is not a job I have only to earn money. It is simply something that I, yeah, I enjoy  
8           being a football coach really. I have this kind of internal driving force. I turn it around a  
9           bit, and I feel I learn something from the players every day, that is the reason I would like  
10          to come back. I am simply terribly in love with football. (C4-HBS)

11   C3-HBS scored lower than the mean on autonomous motivation compared to the overall  
12   population. Despite this, he described how he loved his club, sport, and athletes, though he  
13   repeatedly stated that he would only be a head coach for a short period:

14          You only coach in this position a limited time. I don't think it is healthy, to do this too  
15          long. I use a bit flippant term—if it is like that, that you have to be loco in your head to be  
16          a coach in Norwegian football, I would rather quit before it is too late. (C3-HBS)

17   This coach referred to an extreme range of demands, and even the love for the sport could not  
18   compensate for the heavy demands over time. C4-HBS reported high levels of controlled  
19   motivation at the beginning of the season, in addition to high levels of autonomous motivation at  
20   both time points. During the interview C4-HBS described that a feeling of great responsibility  
21   towards the athletes, which created more work for the coach (within controlled motivation):

1           It is not [swear word] ok [the workload]. Well . . . sometimes when I go to work I have to  
2           drill holes in my eyelid to be able to see. Because you feel so tired, but I have no choice,  
3           that is my point. (C4-HBS)

4           The coach further elaborated about why there was a feeling of not having a choice, which  
5           illustrates his controlled motives:

6           If I take on a job as a coach or a leader, then it will depend on mutual trust, and, the  
7           players trust that I do my job and that I am proficient in my job so they can put their lives  
8           in my hands, and put their future in a community that is run by the coach. (C4-HBS)

### 9           **Theme 3: Work Demands in Contrast to Meeting Recovery Needs**

10           **Workload and WHI.** At both time points, C1-LBS and C3-HBS had average scores on  
11           perceived workload, while C2-LBS and C4-HBS were below and above the mean respectively.  
12           The quantitative findings indicated that C4-HBS perceived the most excessive workload. The  
13           other coaches also experienced a large workload though no difference in workload could be  
14           distinguished between them. Importantly, a critical difference became apparent when they  
15           reflected on the high workload in relation to their ability to manage WHI and essential recovery  
16           needs. C2-LBS, who was lower than the mean on WHI scores at both time points, expressed,  
17           “Well, it is not a nine to five job. That is why I have been intentionally conscious... when I am  
18           at home I will not talk so much [about football], then I just try to be in the moment” (C2-LBS).  
19           This coach describes how situations were handled when it was required to work more than  
20           planned: “Then I rather stay at work a bit longer until 6:00 then, and finish things and write up,  
21           and go home. At home I am not going to . . . then I have to do something else” (C2-LBS).

22           Both C3-HBS and C4-HBS were above mean on WHI at T1 and C3-HBS was also above  
23           at T2. C3-HBS talked a lot about issues related to WHI during the interview:

1           When you come home and you feel you do not have the energy to go out and kick the ball  
2           with your kid. The kid loves to do it, but you do not manage it. Afterwards I feel guilty . .  
3           . and then you get even more frustrated. And then you have a short temper. And really, it  
4           is not their fault. (C3-HBS)

5 Further, C3-HBS described the ripple effects of work on other family members, which again  
6 created additional burdens:

7           But also she (his wife) isolates herself at work because people ask her (e.g., critical  
8           questions when the team is losing). She is nice to me and she avoids talking about this  
9           with me. But I know how it is. Also, my niece, she is in high-school, and they [the other  
10          kids] tell her if we lose. I know that as well, even though they do not tell me. But I know  
11          she has a hard time at school because her uncle is the head coach. Because you get text-  
12          messages when we win, then I get messages that they are proud of me and things like  
13          that. This is tiresome, it really is. (C3-HBS)

14          **Recovery.** C2-LBS showed an overall better profile compared to the mean of the coach  
15 population when it came to both psychological detachment and relaxation,

16          I know that if I am going to stay in this profession for many years, then I have to do  
17          something, qualitatively take care of myself . . . yeah, go on a holiday. I was in an exotic  
18          and warm place for 14 days and relaxed, and stuff like that. (C2-LBS)

19 This coach also described how sleep was important:

20          I sleep well at night, I do not need a lot of sleep. I can go to bed about 12:00–1:00 a.m.  
21          and wake up again at 7:00 a.m. I get the sleep I need, I think, and then you have the  
22          energy. (C2-LBS)

1 In contrast, the other three coaches were below the mean of psychological detachment at T2.

2 C1-LBS described how difficult it was to psychologically detach from coaching:

3 The job is in your head all the time. When I talk about balance, I hope I am OK balanced.

4 I do want to support my children, follow them to activities, and be there for their

5 homework and stuff like that, I try to be present. But you might be physically present, but

6 a large part of your mind is doing other things and is occupied with thoughts about

7 tomorrow's practice and stuff like that. (C1-LBS)

8 C1-LBS elaborated on being preoccupied with the job: "I have constructive football -thoughts all

9 the time, I hope. I get done with thoughts about last football practice at the same time as you

10 build up for the next practice" (C1-LBS). This coach continued in explaining on how reflecting

11 about work, when not at work, could lead to a positive outcome:

12 It is tiresome when things have not worked (at practice), but at the same time, if I just get

13 to think about this and solve it before the next practice, and if that practice works well,

14 then it is energy refill and joy.

15 The two coaches high in BS talked differently about recovery. C4-HBS had just finished

16 the season and talked about how it was hard to relax: "I cannot really sit down and have a cup of

17 coffee . . . it is somehow down and then straight up again. So I don't think it is healthy over time,

18 I don't. I work way too much" (C4-HBS). However, there was discussion around the kind of

19 situations where C4-HBS managed to psychologically detach from work, mentioning activities

20 like working on the house and cabin, or fixing things: "With things like that I manage to detach

21 myself, but I need to work with something completely different to be able to detach from

22 coaching" (C4-HBS).

1 C3-HBS also found relaxing to be difficult, and spoke to these difficulties numerously  
2 throughout the interview:

3 I don't know [how to do it] to be honest. I have told a sport psychologist the same, that I  
4 really do not know how I can do it. I cannot picture myself walking in the woods for a  
5 couple of hours and then you are recovered, somehow, that is just not me. (C3-HBS)

6 The coach found it really hard to do relaxing activities and to psychologically detach, as it  
7 became challenging to go to public places like the gym, cafés, and restaurants. C3-HBS  
8 mentioned that going to a place that provided anonymity helped to increase relaxation. As this  
9 was not an option, C3-HBS spoke to only knowing one solution for recovery on a daily basis:

10 I don't have a problem understanding those coaches [who show signs of alcohol abuse]  
11 during a 10-year period . . . Well, yeah, relaxation for me is to go home and watch  
12 Premier League and drink a bottle of wine. But it does not continue after that. Then I start  
13 drinking Cola. It is actually relaxing and it is of course not healthy. (C3-HBS)

14 In addition, the coach talked about associated problems with sleeping: "I cannot remember the  
15 last time I went to bed about 11:00 or 11.30 p.m. and slept to 7:00 a.m. I cannot remember doing  
16 that, it must have been several years ago." This coach elaborated on the causes of the sleep-  
17 deprivation:

18 I think about it [football] around the clock. You get bad habits then, and you do not sleep  
19 well. It don't do it now either, even though we do not have matches . . . you ruminate all  
20 the time . . . I fall asleep in front of the TV, and if I wake up during the night I put the TV  
21 on again because if I just lay there in a dark room, my thoughts just start wandering and  
22 the way to fall asleep again is to have the TV on because you just sit there and watch it  
23 and then I fall asleep. And of course I understand that it is not healthy. (C3-HBS)

## 1 **Discussion**

2 As a whole, the qualitative findings supported the quantitative profiles, but also enriched  
3 the understanding of each individual profile. The two coaches selected based on higher burnout  
4 dimensions, further described themselves as increasingly exhausted and cynical in their job as  
5 the season went on. They experienced a wide range of burnout symptoms, such as fatigue,  
6 feeling lethargic, sleep disturbances, and short temperament (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998, pp.  
7 21–22). In contrast, the coaches with low levels of burnout on the questionnaires reported feeling  
8 energetic, pro-active, and talked more frequently about becoming re-energized and joyous.  
9 Altogether, using a sequential quantitative-qualitative approach allowed an enhanced  
10 understanding of four somewhat unique coach profiles, potentially representing either an  
11 adaptive (i.e., low in BS and healthy) or maladaptive (i.e., high in BS and unhealthy) pathway.  
12 Moreover, the current approach identified one more comprehensive and one more ambiguous  
13 profile within each pathway.

### 14 **Sport Specific Demands: Resources and Perceived Performance**

15 Previous research indicated that working for a club with few resources (e.g., a small  
16 budget) could increase the demands of the coach and lead to exhaustion (Hjälmsjö et al., 2007).  
17 Results of the present study did not offer a clear distinction between the profiles based on club  
18 budget, either as a single financial measure of resources or as an emerging theme in the  
19 interviews. Performance pressure is an important source of stress for elite coaches (Thelwell et  
20 al., 2008). However, neither goal attainment nor goal probability was associated with differences  
21 between the two investigated profiles. In contrast to our hypothesis, a coach low in BS scored  
22 below mean on these measures. Qualitative findings revealed how the coach used adaptive  
23 coping strategies by focusing on daily work assignments, which were in range of one's control

1 rather than on performance outcomes, which were outside one's range of control (Folkman,  
2 1984). This finding is in line with a meta-analysis showing that problem-focused coping relates  
3 negatively with all burnout dimensions (Shin et al., 2014). Available resources or goal attainment  
4 might therefore not be of direct relevance—rather, what seems to be crucial is how coaches deal  
5 with different situations related to resources or performance. Recent research finding in sport  
6 science (Longshore & Sach, 2015) suggest that mindfulness training for coaches may be  
7 included in coach education in order to provide a method to prevent burnout. More specifically,  
8 mindfulness training may enhance coping with stress and facilitate recovery.

### 9 **Quality of Motivation**

10 Both the quantitative and the qualitative results indicated that three of the four coaches were  
11 highly autonomously motivated. Autonomous motivation was still high for one coach high in BS  
12 at the end of the season. This high quality of motivation among coaches may be explained by  
13 their unique relationship with the sport. Sport has been, and still is, a very important part of their  
14 lives. Being greatly involved in an activity over time could lead to the job becoming a part of  
15 one's identity (Vallerand & Houlfort, 2003), as one of the coaches stated “football is me in a  
16 way” (C2-LBS). Being highly autonomous in their job may place demands on all their abilities  
17 (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). It does not seem, however, that the high degree of autonomous  
18 motivation drove the coaches to work so hard that they got exhausted, rather the autonomous  
19 motivation prevented burn out (McLean et al., 2012). For instance, the coach who was high in  
20 BS and highly autonomously motivated said: “What saves me [from total exhaustion] is the  
21 group of athletes, the locker room, and that I can develop myself” (C4-HBS). This coach was  
22 also above the mean in controlled motivation at the start of the season. His description of feeling  
23 a huge responsibility for his athletes lives lead to a great burden for him, as this internal

1 controlled motivation consequently led him to work numerous of extra hours in an attempt to  
2 avoid failure to help his athletes. This controlled form of motivation was in this situation a type  
3 of regulation that lead to the coach working excessively, and was a likely contributor to being  
4 higher in BS (McLean et al., 2012).

5 Further, C3-HBS had lower values of autonomous motivation at the start of the season,  
6 and stated that if it were no longer possible to continue coaching for the love of the sport this  
7 coach would rather quit. The quantitative results did not yield a clear difference between the  
8 coaches in motivational profiles; however, in combination with the qualitative results, the results  
9 became clearer. All coaches were highly involved in their sport, but both coaches high in BS  
10 presented a maladaptive motivational profile strongly influenced by either lower degree of  
11 autonomous motivation or a higher degree of controlled motivation. These findings are in line  
12 with previous research (Bentzen et al., 2016a; McLean et al., 2012), and extend our  
13 understanding of the driving forces of coaching identities and their love for the sport.

#### 14 **Work Demands vs. Meeting Recovery Needs**

15 Together, quantitative and qualitative findings reveal differences between the coaches'  
16 psychological profiles. All coaches experienced high workloads, which only became problematic  
17 for the two coaches high in BS. One coach driven by controlled motivation seemed to work  
18 excessively by self-defining what feelings were implied to be a head-coach, which led to  
19 working a massive amount of hours a week. Further, for both coaches high in BS, the loss of  
20 energy related to a high-perceived workload was further expressed through the negative  
21 consequences this had on their private life. These findings are consistent with previous research  
22 with high-performance coaches and showed that it was not necessarily the workload that created  
23 exhaustion, though the high workload first and foremost created an interference with their private

1 life (Bentzen et al., 2016a; Lundkvist et al., 2012). This was especially true for C3-HBS, who  
2 elaborated on energy loss as affecting both close family members as well as extended family. In  
3 contrast, the two coaches low in BS did not perceive disadvantages and interference with their  
4 private lives. C1-LBS expressed awareness that the job could be a problem, and that efforts were  
5 used to prevent conflicts. Whereas, C2-LBS was below mean when it came to WHI. The results  
6 of workload and WHI, when combined, explain the difference between the two profiles of BS.  
7 Further, looking at the ability to recover, as an important part of restoring energy in the resource  
8 balance, the coaches high in perceived workload and WHI seemed to be in great need of  
9 recovery.

10         The two coaches high in BS were significantly lower in both psychological detachment  
11 and recovery compared to the overall coaching population at the end of the season, as expected  
12 (Altfeld et al., 2015; Kellmann et al., 2015). Unexpectedly, C1-LBS was also below the mean on  
13 these measurements. A possible explanation might be found in the quantitative measurement of  
14 psychological detachment, which focuses on a person's ability to psychologically detach from  
15 work when off work (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2007). However, this does not consider the kind of  
16 thoughts employees have when thinking about work in leisure time. C1-LBS explained how his  
17 thoughts often were neutral or positive and revolved around problem solving. Even though it was  
18 stated that it could be tiring when problems occurred, this coach found it energizing as it was  
19 often possible to solve problems when thinking about work in leisure time. These kinds of  
20 thoughts (e.g., neutral or positive) are in contrast to those of C3-HBS, who ruminated about work  
21 in a negative manner during leisure time. The nature of the thoughts is therefore of importance in  
22 future research when examining predictions based on lower ability to psychologically detach.

1 Both coaches high in BS found it hard to relax; C3-HBS stated an unawareness of how to  
2 relax on a daily basis and an associated struggle with sleep disturbances. Sleep disturbance is  
3 often caused by difficulties to unwind from high demands (Ekstedt et al., 2006). The relaxation  
4 strategy C3-HBS found most efficient on a daily basis was drinking alcohol. Alcohol  
5 consumption has previously been described as a strategy to achieve psychological detachment  
6 from the stress of work among elite sport coaches (Olusoga et al., 2010). Negative work  
7 experiences predict negative work rumination, which again is positively related to heavy alcohol  
8 use, workday alcohol use, and after work alcohol use (Frone, 2014). The most effective recovery  
9 strategy of C4-HBS was working physically, for instance with handcraft activities. Choosing  
10 deliberately to do other activities outside of the coaching and sport context so that the mind is  
11 solely occupied with one activity could be a helpful detachment strategy (Sonnentag, Kuttler, &  
12 Fritz, 2010). However, if this is the coaches' only recovery strategy, it is not sufficient in the  
13 long run. Contrary, C2-LBS displayed adaptive recovery skills above mean for both  
14 psychological detachment and relaxation, and deliberately paid attention to recovery in everyday  
15 life as a coach to be able to stay in the profession for many years.

16 In sum, the coaches who were high in BS perceived an imbalance between resources and  
17 demands when compared to coaches low in BS. Overall, these results suggest a need for  
18 improved recovery strategies to be implemented with elite level football coaches. Coaching  
19 education and sport organizations should address this need to prevent burnout. Through personal  
20 experiences, numerous workshops, and informal learning situations in consulting with high-  
21 performance coaches, our understanding is that peer learning moderated by professionals can  
22 enhance coaches' learning in the topics of stress and recovery balance. Importantly, there is a

1 need to integrate theory and practice in order to accomplish behavioral change that is adapted to  
2 well-being (Raedeke & Kenttä, 2013).

### 3 **Limitations and Future Research**

4 While coaches were purposefully selected based on their quantitative results compared to  
5 the other coaches, their story is still “their” story as head coaches and cannot be generalized.  
6 Future studies should target other football coaching professions to get a better understanding of  
7 their experienced causes of variation in BS. The findings indicated that there might be a  
8 difference in how the coaches high in BS versus low in BS coped with demanding situations.  
9 However, more research is needed to better understand coaches’ interpretation of situations they  
10 are in, and further explore whether their coping strategies could serve as explanatory variables of  
11 variation in BS (Folkman, 1984). Future research should also examine alcohol use as a recovery  
12 strategy among coaches as it could lead to undermining employee health (Frone, 2014). A central  
13 issue in all burnout research is the difficulty of studying a full burnout process, because the  
14 major challenge is to identify the onset and the development of a fully diagnosed burnout  
15 syndrome. In order to address this challenge in future research longitudinal studies over several  
16 seasons with continuous assessments is required. In addition, a full psychiatric assessment would  
17 result in a more comprehensive understanding of the clinical aspects of the burnout syndrome  
18 among sport coaches. In line with research conducted within positive psychology stating that ill-  
19 being can be reduced by promoting well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), future  
20 studies should aim to better understand why some coaches managed to stay vital and engaged in  
21 the their jobs over a longer period of time.

### 22 **Conclusions**

1 High-performance football coaches have a personal relationship with their profession and  
2 sport. This explains why football coaches, in general, are highly motivated and willing to invest a  
3 great deal of effort in their work. Results indicated that coaches higher in BS were less self-  
4 determined in their motivation over the season. Further, all coaches expressed a high perceived  
5 workload. Differences between levels of BS experienced by coaches were related to how they  
6 managed their WHI and their ability to recover. The two interviewed coaches experiencing  
7 higher levels of WHI also expressed greatest difficulties being able to recover sufficiently, which  
8 led to higher levels of BS. Overall, the findings suggest that sports organizations, as employers in  
9 close collaborations with the coaches, can prevent higher levels of BS. First, fun and interesting  
10 aspects of the job should be a part of their everyday work life, as sustainable self-determined  
11 motivation could help the coaches stay vigorous in a demanding job over time. Second, there is a  
12 need for thorough planning about how to combine a healthy family life with a healthy coaching  
13 life. Finally, greater attention needs to be addressed towards adequate recovery, as this seems  
14 crucial to remain healthy as a high-performance coach.

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- 8

1 Table 1  
 2 *Descriptive Statistics for Total Population and Interviewed Coaches*

	Total Population			Interviewed Coaches			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>Range</i>	C1-LBS	C2-LBS	C3-HBS	C4-HBS
Age	92	40.4 (7.3)	25—58	50—55↑	40—45	40—45	50—55↑
Experience	91	10.9 (7.2)	1—30	20↑	12	7	28↑
Travel days per year*	54	49.4 (24.4)	15—120	100↑	30	30	90↑
Work hours per week*	54	47.7 (11.3)	20—75	60↑	40	50	70↑

3 *Note.* ↓ = One standard deviation below the mean; ↑ = one standard deviation above the mean.

4 C1-LBS = Coach 1—Low-Burnout Symptoms (C1-LBS); Coach 2—Low-Burnout Symptoms

5 (C2-LBS); Coach 3—High-Burnout Symptoms (C3-HBS); Coach 4—High-Burnout Symptoms

6 (C4-HBS). To ensure anonymity for the interviewed coaches, only their “age span” was reported.

7 \*The statistics for these variables are based only on those working 100%.

8

9

10

1 Table 2  
 2 *Alpha, N, Mean and SD for Total and Individual Values for Interviewed Coaches*

	Total Population				Interviewed Coaches			
	$\alpha$	$N$	$M$	$SD$	C1-LBS	C2-LBS	C3-HBS	C4-HBS
Exhaustion T1	.87	90	1.65	1.11	1.00	0.60	2.40	4.00↑
Exhaustion T2	.92	59	2.00	1.30	1.40	0.40	4.80↑	3.40↑
Cynicism T1	.56	90	1.04	.87	1.20	.00↓	.80	2.00↑
Cynicism T2	.76	59	1.37	1.09	.80	.00↓	2.00	2.80↑
Reduced accomplishment T1	.78	90	1.00	.80	.50	.17↓	1.17	.17↓
Reduced accomplishment T2	.90	56	1.08	1.00	.00↓	.50	.83	1.00
Budget club		92	xx	xx	xx↑	xx	xx↑	xx
Goal attainment T2		56	5.02	1.72	1.00↓	7.00↑	5.00	7.00↑
Goal probability T2		55	5.36	1.76	1.00↓	7.00	6.50	7.00
Autonomous Motivation T1	.75	83	5.97	.63	6.50	7.00↑	4.80↓	7.00↑
Autonomous Motivation T2	.86	58	5.75	.84	7.00↑	7.00↑	5.70	6.80↑
Controlled Motivation T1	.75	88	3.95	.99	3.50	4.40	3.90	5.80↑
Controlled Motivation T2	.75	59	4.22	.95	3.90	4.20	3.90	4.80
Workload T1	.74	89	4.10	1.11	4.33	2.83↓	3.83	6.00↑
Workload T2	.85	58	4.25	1.16	4.83	2.83↓	5.17	6.00↑
WHI T1	.72	91	2.29	.42	2.00	1.80↓	2.80↑	3.20↑
WHI T2	.80	59	2.36	.46	2.00	1.80↓	3.00↑	2.80
Psych detach T1	.81	92	2.83	1.13	1.50↓	4.50↑	2.00	2.75
Psych detach T2	.87	60	2.95	1.35	1.50↓	4.00	1.50↓	1.00↓
Relaxation T1	.75	91	4.49	1.26	2.25↓	6.25↑	2.00↓	2.75↓
Relaxation T2	.83	61	4.13	1.40	2.50↓	6.00↑	1.75↓	1.00↓

3 *Note.* ↓ = One standard deviation below the mean; ↑ = one standard deviation above the mean.  
 4 C1-LBS = Coach 1—Low-Burnout Symptoms (C1-LBS); Coach 2—Low-Burnout Symptoms  
 5 (C2-LBS); Coach 3—High-Burnout Symptoms (C3-HBS); Coach 4—High-Burnout Symptoms  
 6 (C4-HBS). xx = anonymized data.  
 7

1 **Appendix – Interview Guide:**

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 **A – Introduction and demography**

- 4 1. To start with, could you please tell me shortly about your career as a coach?  
5 2. Can you briefly describe the job you have today?  
6 3. How would you describe your typical work week?  
7 4. Can you tell me how the competitive season 20xx-xx has been for you as a coach?

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 **B – Motivation at work**

- 10 5. Why are you a coach?  
11 6. How is your relations/cooperation with your colleagues?  
12 7. How is your relations/cooperation with your superiors?  
13 8. How is your relations/cooperation with your athletes?  
14 9. What gives you energy at work?  
15 10. What makes you happy at work?  
16 11. What is draining energy at work?  
17 12. What makes you tired/irritated at work?

18 \_\_\_\_\_

19 **C – Relationship between work and home**

- 20 13. How would you describe your relationship/cooperation in your private life / family life?  
21 14. How do you combine work and private life / family life?

22 \_\_\_\_\_

23 **D – Recovery**

- 24 15. What is recovery for a coach?  
25 16. How do you recover as a coach?

26 \_\_\_\_\_

27 **E – Performance**

- 28 17. To what extent were your goals for the season attained?  
29 18. How does winning and losing affect you?

30 \_\_\_\_\_

31 **Elaboration probes:** When you say XX, can you explain this in greater depth?

32 **Clarification Probes:** I am not sure I understood what you meant about XX. Can you try to  
33 explain/describe it again? Can you explain/describe it with other words?

34 \_\_\_\_\_