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Sports Migration:

Ten Coaching Strategies for Retaining Athletic Talents in Developing Countries

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Sports migration refers to the movement of athletes from one country to another for the purpose of competing in sports. This phenomenon is a growing trend in the world of sports today, particularly at the professional and elite levels (Thibault, 2009). In recent years, there has been a growing trend of elite athletes from developing countries migrating to more developed nations in search of better training facilities, coaching, and competition opportunities (Rojo & Starepravo, 2021). According to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2009), athletes migrate for several reasons, including limited economic opportunities, political instability, and lack of resources in their home country. For example, out of the 558 athletes representing the United States in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, 44 were foreign-born and came from 28 different countries. Additionally, in the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, more than 60% of Azerbaijan's delegation consisted of foreign athletes who had changed their citizenship to compete under the country's flag, including 7% who were originally from Iran (IOM, 2019).

For many athletes, migration is viewed as a way to escape poverty and gain access to better opportunities. Moreover, migration can provide access to better resources, higher levels of competition, and potentially greater financial rewards. However, migration can also be a challenging experience, particularly for athletes who face cultural and language barriers in their new country (Ogden, 2019). However, for the home countries of migrating athletes, the loss of talented athletes can be a major setback for their sports programs. Developing nations in particular often invest a significant amount of resources in developing their athletes, and the loss of talented individuals can perpetuate a brain drain of skilled individuals from these countries. Additionally, the loss of athletes can have broader economic and social implications for these countries (Berlinschi et al., 2013).

On the other hand, the migration of elite athletes can also benefit the countries to which they migrate. For example, athletes from developing countries can bring diversity to their new teams and help to raise the level of competition. Additionally, the migration of athletes can be seen as a form of global talent exchange, which can be beneficial for the development of sports worldwide (Esguerra et al., 2023). Overall, sports migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has significant implications for athletes, their home countries, and the countries to which they migrate. Hence, this topic requires careful consideration and analysis to better understand the motivations, influences, and potential benefits of sports migration. Developing countries can take several steps to mitigate the negative effects of sports migration. Therefore, the purpose of this coach's corner is to provide 10 coaching strategies and suggestions for retaining athletic talents in developing countries.

1. **Investing in sports infrastructure:** Developing countries should invest in sports infrastructure to retain talented athletes. For example, countries can build new training facilities, provide better coaching, and improve their

sports programs, making it more attractive for athletes to stay.

2. **Providing better financial incentives:** Countries can offer better financial incentives and support for their athletes to encourage them to stay. This can include funding for training, equipment, and travel expenses; support for living expenses; and financial rewards for success in sport competitions.
3. **Offering dual citizenship:** Countries can consider offering dual citizenship to athletes by allowing them to represent their home country while competing for another country. This can help to retain talented athletes while still allowing them to compete at the highest levels.
4. **Collaborating with other countries:** Countries can collaborate with other countries to develop global talent exchange programs. The areas for collaboration can involve sharing expertise, resources, and knowledge to help develop sports programs worldwide while retaining skilled athletes in their home countries.
5. **Addressing political and economic instability:** Countries should address political and economic instability to retain their talented athletes. Creating a stable and supportive environment in which athletes train and live leads to athletes thriving and achieving their goals, along with other social benefits for the communities in the country.
6. **Providing education and career opportunities:** Countries can provide education and career opportunities to their athletes to encourage them to stay, such as scholarships, vocational training, and job placement programs. By offering these opportunities, countries can help athletes prepare for life after sports and provide a sense of security for their future.
7. **Creating a positive sports culture:** Countries can create a positive sports culture and atmosphere that values and celebrates their athletes. This can include promoting sports events and competitions, providing media coverage of athletes' achievements, and recognizing and rewarding athletes' successes. Thus, by creating a positive sports culture, countries can encourage athletes to stay and inspire young people to pursue their goals for sports.
8. **Providing mentorship and support:** Countries can provide mentorship and support for their athletes to help them achieve their goals. This can include providing access to experienced athletes and coaches who can offer guidance and advice, as well as mental health support to help athletes cope with the pressures of competitive sports.
9. **Encouraging community involvement:** Countries can encourage community involvement in sports by creating sports clubs and programs that involve local communities. This can help create a sense of belongingness and pride in the community by encouraging athletes to stay and represent their community.
10. **Investing in technology:** Countries can invest in technology for the coaching and selection of talents. Currently, there are many more available technologies on the market that are affordable and can provide creative and

effective solutions for talent selection, scouting, performance tracking, and assessment.

In conclusion, developing countries can address the challenges caused by athlete migration by investing in sports and human infrastructure. By taking the steps mentioned above, developing countries can create an environment that values and supports their athletes, encourages them to stay, and enables them to retain their talented athletes while developing a stronger national team.

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The purpose of the Coach’s Corner column is to feature short articles about one specific coaching lesson that readers can immediately implement with their team. Articles should contain a brief introduction, followed by quick-hitting information such as bullet points or lists. Submissions should not exceed 1,000–1,500 words (or roughly four typed, doublespaced pages).