

**Coaches' Experiences of Job Crafting Through
Organizational Change in High-Performance Sport.**

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1 **Coaches' Experiences of Job Crafting Through Organizational Change in High-**
2 **Performance Sport**

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16

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19

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24 Abstract

25 The purpose of this study was to explore coaches' experiences of job crafting through a
26 climate of organizational change in high-performance sport environments. Semi-structured
27 interviews ($M_{duration} = 83.86$ minutes, $SD = 26.28$ minutes) were conducted with seven
28 coaches ($M_{Experience} = 22$ years, $SD = 7.55$) who had experience of coaching sport
29 performers at international, Olympic and professional level. Guided by Interpretative
30 Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the findings revealed that "the climate of organizational
31 change" for these coaches encapsulated 'job turnover' at various stages of organizational
32 change and 'working in a vacuum and losing sight of the process'. Four subordinate themes
33 were generated to highlight coaches' experience of "crafting the job in a climate of change".
34 These themes included 'motives for job crafting'; 'appraising and re-appraising aspects of the
35 job'; 'mobilizing social and structural resources'; and 'withdrawal from aspects of the job'.
36 The findings advance job crafting theory by demonstrating how organizational change can
37 both constrain *and* stimulate coaches' job crafting efforts in particular ways. Identifying
38 opportunities for autonomy and support resources to craft their jobs helped coaches to
39 maintain enthusiasm, job satisfaction and continue in one's job. To our knowledge, this is the
40 first study in sport psychology literature to explore coaches' experiences of job crafting
41 within a climate of organizational change in sport. We conclude by outlining some
42 recommendations on how job crafting may be optimized to improve well-being and
43 performance in the elite sport working context.

44 *Keywords:* Coaching, coping, IPA, job demands, job resources, occupational stress

45 **Coaches' Experiences of Job Crafting Through Organizational Change in High-**
46 **Performance Sport**

47 In the last decade, elite and professional sport organizations in the United Kingdom
48 have observed a host of unforeseen, rapid and continuous changes in the way that these
49 organizations and their personnel function (Wagstaff et al., 2015; 2016). In this way,
50 organizational change can be considered from an emergent approach (Weiss, 2009), in which
51 change is viewed as a dynamic, turbulent and contested process that emerges in an
52 unpredictable and unplanned fashion. At the same time, organizational change in high-
53 performance sport has been orchestrated by leadership and management teams (Gibson &
54 Groom, 2018), in the belief that changes will result in improved organizational effectiveness.
55 Organizational effectiveness for elite and professional sport organizations may include
56 improving athletic performance, successful delivery of core services to its members and
57 achievement of key organizational performance indicators (Thompson & Parent, 2021). In
58 this high-performance sport context, coaches are important stakeholders whose well-being,
59 career development needs and retention are critical for facilitating organizational
60 effectiveness. Insofar that coaches are often tasked with leading, managing and supporting
61 organizational change initiatives (Gibson & Groom, 2018), they are also expected to adjust
62 their job roles and service delivery to support the achievement of organizational goals
63 (Wagstaff et al., 2016). In the knowledge that high-performance coaches typically experience
64 high workloads (e.g., Norris et al., 2017), job insecurity (e.g., Bentzen, Kenttä, Richter et al.,
65 2020), limited organizational support (e.g., Kilo & Hassmén, 2016), and a poor work-life
66 interface (e.g., Knights & Ruddock-Hudson, 2016), working within a climate of
67 organizational change has the potential to place further demands on coaches' capacity to
68 adapt effectively. A sustained inability to adapt proactively to organizational change may
69 influence experiences of burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001), a lack of satisfaction in one's role

70 (Petrou et al., 2018), turnover intentions (Cunningham, 2006), and in turn influence
71 organizational survival (Russell & McGinnity, 2014).

72 One way in which coaches may proactively adapt their role when experiencing
73 organizational change is to craft their job in line with their personal needs and resources as a
74 way to experience greater purpose, motivation and satisfaction in their work. Job crafting is
75 broadly defined as the physical and mental changes that individuals make in their job roles to
76 achieve greater personal meaning and satisfaction (Demerouti, 2014). Job crafting is
77 considered a bottom-up job redesign approach which describes how individuals change the
78 type and number of tasks they do, the way they interact with others, and how they cognitively
79 frame the significance of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), with the aim of
80 improving person-job fit (Tims & Bakker, 2010). While crafting one's job role(s) in high
81 performance sport has the potential to simultaneously improve stakeholders' work
82 engagement and organizational effectiveness, to date there is a scarcity of research that has
83 explored the phenomena of job crafting in sport stakeholder (e.g., coaching) contexts.

84 **Job Crafting**

85 Job crafting involves making physical and mental changes to one's job task demands
86 and the resources available to them to support their individual needs in undertaking their job
87 role (Demerouti, 2014). Workplaces that support employees' ability to modify how and when
88 work is achieved do so in the knowledge that this increases workers' engagement, job
89 satisfaction and productivity. Job crafting research in the organizational and occupational
90 psychology literature is dominated by two theoretical perspectives. The first is Wrzesniewski
91 and Dutton's (2001) theory of job crafting which refers to the process by which individuals
92 shape their jobs to find greater personal meaning at work. This theory distinguishes between
93 three forms of crafting: task, relational and cognitive crafting. Task crafting includes
94 modifying the task boundaries of one's job role, such as making changes to the type, content,

95 or number of job tasks that an individual is involved in at work. Relational crafting refers to
96 changing who one interacts with and in what fashion whilst completing their job tasks.
97 Cognitive crafting refers to changes workers make in how they view and appraise various
98 aspects of their job. In crafting some or all these aspects of one's work, workers are re-
99 designing their job and work environment (Demerouti, 2014) to better fit their personal needs
100 and capabilities without changing the core of their work (Tims & Parker, 2020).

101 The second theoretical perspective of job crafting builds on the Job Demands-
102 Resources (JD-R) model of burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R suggests that
103 employees experience strain, burnout and poor performance when limited job and personal
104 resources are available to manage the job demands that are encountered. Within work
105 environments where individual control and support are high, it is argued that employees have
106 the greatest potential for job crafting. In line with the JD-R model, job crafting has been
107 conceptualized as reducing hindering job demands and increasing challenging job demands
108 and job resources (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In summarizing the occupational psychology
109 literature on job crafting across a variety of non-sport occupations (e.g., surgeons, nurses,
110 police officers, teachers, construction managers, accountants, civil engineers), research
111 suggests that seeking job resources (e.g., feedback, advice from colleagues) is linked to
112 achieving goals, greater engagement in one's work, improved well-being and performance
113 (Gordon et al., 2018). In addition, seeking challenges (e.g., seeking new challenging tasks in
114 one's role, asking for more responsibility) has been related to improved motivation at work
115 and an increased sense of personal accomplishment (Petrou et al., 2012). In comparison, job
116 crafting by way of reducing hindering job demands (e.g., disengaging from cognitively,
117 emotionally or physically taxing tasks, procrastination) has been linked to a greater
118 perception of work overload, and burnout (Lazazzara et al., 2020).

119 Although these theoretical perspectives highlight distinct ways in which job crafting

120 may be linked to well-being and performance outcomes, the strategies individuals employ to
121 job craft depend on the working context (Lazazzara et al., 2020), and context (e.g.,
122 organizational change experiences) influences hermeneutics of phenomena (Smith et al.,
123 2009). Furthermore, the meaning individuals attach to job crafting may depend on how one's
124 work context (e.g., organizational change) and job role provide constraints or autonomy in
125 how they can behave and function in their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Therefore,
126 it has been recommended that future research should continue to redefine and update the key
127 characteristics of job crafting in diverse working contexts (Demerouti, 2014). Coaching in
128 high-performance sport environments represents a complex and unique working context in
129 which the phenomena of job crafting may be interpreted differently for optimizing coaches'
130 well-being and reducing turnover intentions in the future.

131 *Placing Job Crafting in the Work Context of High-Performance Coaching*

132 Sport coaches who work in elite and professional sport organizations require the skills
133 to adapt to a multitude of job demands. These demands include managing performance
134 scrutiny from a range of internal and external stakeholders, erratic working patterns, high
135 workloads and regular organizational change (for a review, see Norris et al., 2017). In recent
136 times, there has been an exponential growth in research literature highlighting that coaches
137 are not coping well with the ongoing demands that they encounter and require support
138 resources to better manage their job roles for optimized motivation, well-being, and
139 performance (Chroni et al., 2019; Didymus et al., 2019). Moreover, coaches operating in elite
140 and professional sport occupations have been found to suffer from burnout and as a result
141 often resign prematurely from their coaching roles (Galdino et al., 2022; Kilo & Hassmén,
142 2016). This is problematic since their ill-being and burnout could have deleterious
143 consequences for the health and performance development of those who coaches support
144 (e.g., athletes, sport personnel). By optimizing job crafting within coaches' working contexts,

145 there is the potential to enhance their well-being and productivity, and in turn, achieve greater
146 organizational effectiveness. Despite this, currently we know little about coaches' experience
147 of job crafting in sport working contexts and the extent to which experience of specific
148 contexts in high-performance sport (i.e., organizational change) may constrain or facilitate
149 the ability for coaches to job craft in distinct ways. The phenomenological, hermeneutical and
150 idiographic foundations of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are suitable to
151 explore and interpret coaches' lived experience of job crafting. In line with theoretical
152 perspectives on job crafting (Demerouti et al., 2001; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), IPA
153 maintains a commitment to the individual, which promotes the illumination of personal
154 meaning and experiential accounts from a contextualist (e.g., organizational change
155 experiences) position (Smith et al., 2009). Moreover, given the breadth of recurring,
156 interrelating and often unpredictable changes that coaches experience, IPA suits an
157 idiographic exploration of how coaches' holistic experience of organizational change may
158 influence how they make sense of job crafting in this working context. Specifically, IPA
159 provided a detailed, nuanced analysis (Smith et al., 2017) to address the study's purpose of
160 exploring coaches' experiences of job crafting through a climate of organisational change in
161 high-performance sport.

162 **Method**

163 **Research Design and Philosophical Underpinning**

164 The present study adopted a semi-structured interview approach that was guided by
165 the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Dwyer et al., 2019). The
166 use of IPA was consistent with the study's aim of exploring coaches' experiences of job
167 crafting (Larkin et al., 2011) within a climate of organizational change. In addition, the
168 idiographic and phenomenological nature of IPA allowed the present study to explore the
169 individual lived experiences of the coaches within their jobs and working context (Newman

170 et al., 2021). To maintain idiographic commitment of IPA, convergences and divergences
171 were explored both within and across the participants' accounts (Smith et al., 2021). As part
172 of this process, the researcher and participant also engaged in a "double hermeneutic" which
173 allowed the participant to make sense of their experiences (Dwyer et al., 2019). By adopting
174 these approaches the study was consistent with recommendations that IPA research remains
175 grounded in an interpretivist paradigm (Quilico et al., 2021). This was exemplified by the
176 interest shown in the meanings the coaches created and credited to their experience of job
177 crafting within the context of organizational change. In doing so, the present study
178 maintained a contextualized position of IPA (Larkin et al., 2011) whilst adopting a social
179 constructionist stance (Shinebourne, 2011).

180 **Participants and Procedure**

181 Purposive sampling was used to recruit national head coaches who had experienced
182 organizational change in sport. In addition, to protect the anonymities of coaches and their
183 respective sport organizations, we used maximum variation to recruit national head coaches
184 from different sport organizations (e.g., acrobatic, water, multi-discipline, team invasion).
185 This served the purpose of exploring common and unique experiences of job crafting during
186 organizational change (Langdridge, 2007). The participants were seven coaches (Five male,
187 two female; $Mage = 49.14$ years, $SD = 6.74$) who had worked for UK sport national
188 governing body (NGB) organizations. The coaches were of English ($n = 6$) and Swedish ($n =$
189 1) nationalities. These coaches were currently coaching sport performers at international,
190 Olympic and / or professional level. Coaches had between 14- and 35-years' experience of
191 coaching ($M = 22$ years, $SD = 7.55$), and had been undertaking a lead coaching job for their
192 sport organization for at least 2 years. Whilst their main job role was to coach sport
193 performers, all coaches previously held a range of leadership and coaching roles in UK and
194 international sport organizations. Table 1 provides an overview of the coaches' demographic

195 characteristics and organizational change events encountered. Following institutional ethical
196 approval [blinded for review], head coaches and the sport organizations in which they were
197 employed were contacted by email and social media (e.g., LinkedIn) and informed of the
198 purpose of the study. Coaches were then recruited for the research if they believed that they
199 had current or prior experience of organizational change in sport. Prior to each interview,
200 participants were contacted by telephone to discuss the study purpose in more detail and to
201 confirm that each participant had experienced organizational change in sport.¹ Before each
202 interview, participants were given written and verbal information as to the purpose of the
203 study. Once coaches had been assured of voluntary participation, anonymity, and the freedom
204 to withdraw at any time, coaches had the opportunity to ask questions before completing a
205 consent form.

206 *Interview Guide*

207 A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate each discussion. The
208 interview guide was generated from a range of sources. Firstly, background questions were
209 developed to stimulate discussion with the coaches about their job role and organizational
210 change experiences (e.g., “can you tell me about any experiences that you have had of
211 changes that have occurred in your sport organization?”). Secondly, in line with previous
212 research that has explored the nature of organizational change in sport (e.g., Gibson &
213 Groom, 2018) and other workplace settings (e.g., Cunningham, 2006), we probed coaches on
214 their lived experience of the organizational changes that were discussed (e.g., “Who do you
215 think was involved in communicating and implementing the change?”).

216 Thirdly, we drew on broader conceptualizations of job crafting from the work
217 psychology literature (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) to explore how
218 coaches had attempted to craft their job roles during organizational change (e.g., “In your

¹ Organizational change was outlined to represent any positive or negative changes that have occurred within the sport organization that coaches have worked, and have had an impact on coaches' role.

219 opinion, what do you think is the best way to manage organizational change?"; "Were there
220 any times when you put plans in place to manage the change better?"; How important is it to
221 have support resources when going through this change?"). Finally, coaches were encouraged
222 to summarize their views and elaborate on any issues relevant to organizational change and
223 ways in which sport organization stakeholders can job craft effectively. It should be noted
224 that to best "get at" the participants' experiences this semi-structured interview guide was
225 intended merely as a stimulus and was only used flexibly (Smith, 2019). This afforded the
226 participants freedom to explore relevant parts of their experiences as they saw them. Piloting
227 of the interview guide with different coaches ($n = 2$) to the current sample revealed that the
228 interview questions were well-understood and generated appropriate data. To provide the
229 participants with some comfort and security from discussing organizational change at their
230 workplace, the first author conducted five interviews by telephone and two interviews were
231 conducted in a private meeting room at a university.² The interviews ranged from 59 to 133
232 minutes ($M_{duration} = 83.86$ minutes, $SD = 26.28$) and were transcribed verbatim, with
233 participants' names being replaced with pseudonyms.

234 **Data Analysis**

235 Interviews were analyzed by the second author in accordance with Smith et al.'s
236 (2021) guidelines for IPA. This aligned with a bracketing approach in so far that the second
237 author was not familiar with the research literature on organizational change or job crafting.
238 Nonetheless the second author was a sport psychologist who is experienced in IPA. After the
239 audio files were transcribed, each interview was analyzed separately to maintain the
240 idiographic commitment of IPA (Newman et al., 2021). The transcripts were read and re-read

² All interviews were conducted in 2017. At the time of conducting the interviews, all participants were cognizant that UK Sport had recently faced significant scrutiny from the British media based on unanticipated funding cuts to some 'high profile' elite sport national governing bodies (BBC, 2017a), in addition to scrutiny surrounding claims of bullying in UK elite sport organizations (BBC, 2017b). On this basis, prior to being interviewed every coach was reassured that their data would be kept confidential and anonymous, and that the research study was not part of a UK sport-commissioned investigation.

241 so that the second author could immerse themselves in the lifeworld of the participant (Dwyer
242 et al., 2019). After this, exploratory comments were made in the right margin of the transcript
243 to facilitate a close analysis of the text. These notes highlighted the linguistic (e.g., “it’s the
244 way it is” encapsulated Ted’s acceptance of limited support to develop other people,
245 including himself) and experiential (e.g., “I’ve either dodged bullets or maneuvered”) nature
246 of the participants’ accounts. Then the left margin of the text was used to document emerging
247 theme titles which took the initial notes to a higher level of abstraction. This process drew on
248 psychological concepts where relevant to capture the essential meaning in the account (Smith
249 & Osborn, 2006). Through the processes of abstraction and subsumption, the emergent
250 themes were clustered into subordinate themes to illustrate participants’ accounts (Newman
251 et al., 2021). At this stage, the first author reviewed the subordinate themes with the second
252 author and framed them at the superordinate level in line with the extant occupational
253 psychology literature on job crafting. QSR NVIVO was used as a storage for the participants’
254 quotes and emerging themes, and to assist with the process of developing themes with
255 common meanings.

256 **Research Quality**

257 In accordance with the latest guidance for achieving excellence in IPA (Nizza et al.,
258 2021), the present study was guided by four quality indicators of IPA. A “compelling,
259 unfolding narrative was conducted” carefully both within and across themes. Within each
260 theme there was an alternation between carefully selected quotes and analytic interpretation
261 which went beyond the narrative. Consistent with Nizza et al.’s (2021) guidance this was
262 presented at the subtheme level. To achieve coherence each theme contributed to the
263 narrative in an interconnected fashion. Through explicitly engaging with the experiential and
264 existential significance of what the participants were reporting and paying particular attention
265 to their meaning-making a “vigorous experiential account” was developed. For example, the

266 existential significance for coaches trying to take pride and shape their job role within change
267 cultures, which often involved poor leadership and communication, was exemplified through
268 strong data and interpretation. To maintain IPA’s commitment to interpretation and
269 idiographic depth a “close analytic reading” of the participants’ quotes took place. Quotes
270 were not left to speak for themselves and a full meaning to the data was achieved by focusing
271 on what was going on in the immediate quote as well as the context of the wider transcript.
272 “Attending to convergence and divergence” was demonstrated by the present study
273 illustrating similarities and differences both between and within the participants. Through a
274 balance between commonality and individuality the present study highlighted the coaches’
275 higher order qualities, whilst keeping a focus on their idiosyncratic characteristics (Smith et
276 al., 2021). This can be seen by Matt’s account of taking time off during the season.

277 **Transparency and Openness**

278 Audio recorded interviews and transcripts are not publicly available as sharing this
279 information risks breaching participant anonymity and confidentiality. Due to the nature of
280 this research, participants did not agree for their data to be shared publicly. The information
281 presented in this article complies with the APA Style Journal Article Reporting Standards—
282 Qualitative (JARS-Q). The present study was not preregistered. A copy of the interview
283 guide is available as an electronic supplementary material.

284 **Results**

285 Consistent with recently highlighted evidence for achieving excellence in IPA studies
286 (Dwyer et al., 2019; Nizza et al., 2021), two themes are presented which firstly outline the
287 experience of organizational change in elite sport and secondly “capture the heart” of the
288 participants’ lived experiences of job crafting in this context (see Table 2). A summary of
289 “The climate of organizational change” is provided to foreground detailed coach accounts of
290 “Crafting the job in a climate of change” and its subordinate themes.

291 The Climate of Organizational Change

292 Within the theme of “The climate of organizational change”, the participants
293 discussed a climate within elite sport which left them feeling lost and to some degree that
294 they were working in a vacuum. This environment was characterized by what they viewed as
295 poor leadership, which operated without consultation. As Peter highlighted:

296 [Changes were] announced with not a lot of notice, and implemented very quickly
297 without a lot of consultation. It was “this is happening” and “this is the way it is”.
298 They said there was consultation in terms of meeting with the relevant people. But
299 they met with them to tell them what was happening as opposed to discussing how
300 they could improve or change. It was the hard line so to speak, “this is the line, this is
301 what we're doing and don't cross it”.

302 Peter’s account depicted the feeling of an authoritarian “hard line” approach to change
303 which did not engage stakeholders in their organization. This conferred a sense of deflation
304 within the participants’ accounts, and in the meantime led to chaotic circumstances which
305 Ted articulated, “we've got this worse case of ‘you can't do this’, [then] ‘we're gonna do it’,
306 and then it doesn't get done, and that just leads to frustration.” Ted’s account evoked not only
307 an emotional impact in terms of frustration, but it also inferred that this feeling resulted from
308 the “top-down” nature of how change was thwarted, promised, and then ultimately not
309 delivered. This conferred an authoritarian, conforming culture where several of the coaches
310 felt the power was concentrated in too few hands. Tristian’s account exemplified this:

311 They're all yes people...they put in people that they know will tolerate it and do as
312 they're told, and I don't think that's been good for the sport. [It's] a bit like the (car)
313 company who centralized their departments which was ok for them because it sparked
314 creativity. But when they started to separate, one in (country) or wherever it was, they
315 had the two marketing companies that had two different ideas and when they came

316 together it built a quality car. But when they centralize everything then you just
317 conform to that one thought pattern, and I think that's not a good way to do it.

318 Tristian emphasized a belief that change was delivered in a conforming fashion which
319 displayed a lack of contextual intelligence for the sport. Moreover, by drawing on parallels
320 with other industries he implied that this process may not have been delivered in such a way
321 that encourages creativity, diversity, and ultimately guarantees quality performance. Set
322 against this backdrop of a conforming culture and the deflating feelings around organizational
323 change in high performance sport that appear to result from issues around leadership, the
324 coaches portrayed a challenging, insecure context within which to craft their role.

325 In concluding the superordinate theme of the “The climate of organizational change”,
326 coaches often highlighted the fluidity of change, which echoes previous research that has
327 highlighted the repeated non-linear nature of change in high-performance sport (cf. Wagstaff
328 et al., 2016). This fluidity seemingly left many cynical of whether they could legitimize
329 change, which often was poorly delivered and caused a lot of upheaval, as a consequence of
330 poor team and organizational functioning. Linked to this, involuntary (e.g., redundancies) and
331 voluntary job turnover was a common constant spanning several sport cycles which framed
332 how coaches made sense of organizational change. For example, many participants pointed to
333 incidents where coaches had been made redundant, suggesting this was in response to
334 crafting (e.g., resisting or slowing down change, or challenging leadership over top-down
335 decisions). When colleagues voluntarily left their organizations, some coaches appeared to
336 rationalize this as a clash between personal values and the change initiatives being driven by
337 leadership teams. In most of these cases, coaches implied that a ‘backs against the wall’ or
338 ‘we are all in this together’ mentality amongst athletes and staff was required to protect one
339 another from ‘top-down’ driven change. Yet, some coach accounts reflected a realization of
340 the potentially destructive effect that this could have on individual, team and organizational

341 functioning.

342 **Crafting the Job in a Climate of Change**

343 Despite the inherent challenges posed by the coaches within a climate of
344 organizational change, they outlined a variety of approaches to shaping their job role within
345 this context. These included, from a cognitive perspective, appraising and re-appraising the
346 way they viewed aspects of their job. On a social level, they focused on mobilizing structural
347 and social resources to facilitate growth and functioning. Focusing on well-being,
348 withdrawing from negative aspects of the job was also prioritized. At the heart of this,
349 though, was the importance placed on their motives for job crafting.

350 ***Motives for Job Crafting***

351 An essential part of any attempts the coaches made to shape their job role was their
352 motives (i.e., reasons) for doing so. Across their accounts, the participants highlighted their
353 reasons to shape their role, whilst also drawing on some of the potential barriers which might
354 thwart these aspirations. For Tristian the need for control over the job was clear:

355 If you're in control of your environment and you're not having to go cap in hand to a
356 national governing body...if you strive for autonomy, you can control the
357 environment, learn and continue to progress yourself as you would, but if you're in
358 any way cap in hand for some of this stuff then you're always going to be handcuffed
359 to an extent.

360 Tristian's continued reemphasis in this extract around the need to obtain "control" and
361 "strive for autonomy" highlighted the importance of job crafting within high-performance
362 sport for this reason (Buonocore et al., 2018). Moreover, his account alluded to a sense that
363 relying on support from wider sporting institutions and governing bodies to job craft could
364 confer a feeling of having this need for control thwarted. One consistent motive for job
365 crafting according to work psychology literature is to improve one's person-job fit

366 (Demerouti, 2014). However, when person-job fit is regularly compromised, as Peter
367 highlights, there may be little motivation to job craft during change initiatives in the future:

368 I have definitely had to compromise my own values and beliefs, several times ... and
369 I have expressed those with people in the organization. But with the same point if
370 you're working for an organization and you're employed or contracted to do work for
371 them, then by signing that contract you're agreeing to their philosophy, ethos, values
372 and beliefs. So, you know, you're almost a shining beacon for that organization, you
373 can't then go against them and apply your own personal values and beliefs.

374 Despite occupying the same type of role and years in the position as Tristian (see
375 Table 1), Peter highlighted less of a sense of latitude to be able to craft his role in line with
376 his values, within the potentially authoritarian context of sport. A perceived inability to "go
377 against" the organization suggested a much less empowered position than Tristian, though
378 both participants echoed a perception that national sport organizations could be problematic
379 to liaise with in the quest for job crafting during a climate of organizational change.

380 Whilst experiencing organizational change, Verity appeared to point to individual and
381 work-related goals as motives for job crafting:

382 For me personally I've never got a lot of financial gain like the head coach they got a
383 lot of money so once the funding was gone they [head coach] were gone but I, I've not
384 ever been in it for the financial side of it. I do it, it is a great honor for me and I
385 appreciate every time, I'm still cutting that rope, so you know for me it was like
386 "right, is there going to be a [national] team?" And that's still a question you know,
387 we can't not have a [national] team, you know an international team and that's the sort
388 of [motivation] ... "what can I do to ensure this continues?"

389 In this case, Verity expressed a desire to maintain a positive work identity as one of
390 the national coaches. Verity also highlighted a motive to job craft which centered around

391 accomplishment of personal goals, rather than material items such as money. The honor and
392 appreciation she felt suggested something more self-determined and potentially fueled a
393 sense of competence. It is worth considering compared to the other participants that this may
394 be grounded in her position as an assistant national head coach rather than in a lead role. This
395 raises a question whether the requirements of this position may lead to a slightly different
396 lived experience in elite sport. Nonetheless, the uncertainty with which she spoke about the
397 future of the national team was familiar to the potentially need thwarting nature of the other
398 coaches' organizational change climates and the impact this can have on individual job
399 crafting. This was the case for Verity especially, as within her context the lack of resources
400 available seemingly led to questions around whether the national team, and therefore her role,
401 would cease to exist. Yet, she demonstrated motives to job craft regardless of the lack of
402 resources, in identifying ways to ensure that the national team continues.

403 *Appraising and Re-appraising Aspects of the Job*

404 Throughout the coaches' accounts of organizational change, at some stage all of them
405 appeared to change the way in which they viewed carrying out aspects of their work as a
406 consequence of organizational changes. In turn, this can change how individuals and groups
407 of workers approach their jobs (Petrou et al., 2018). Although the coaches outlined the
408 challenging and somewhat problematic nature of organizational change in elite sport, some
409 such as Adrian cognitively emphasized the positives for improving collaborative working:

410 You know it's starting to be much more cohesive and we have access to the senior
411 program now. The senior coaches are coming to see what we do more frequently to
412 have an understanding and probably a real understanding of what does the
413 environment that we work in look like.

414 From Adrian's perspective change seemed to facilitate a more integrated "cohesive"
415 system which resulted in developing greater shared understanding with other coaching staff

416 about each other's job roles. For others, change provided the ideal springboard for them to
417 shape an organization's philosophy within their personal vision. Matt highlighted how he was
418 "fascinated to see if I can... put my knowledge and what I believe a successful organization
419 [should] look like from not necessarily winning trophies but also the culture and the
420 environment that you create." However, it is important to highlight that Matt's views may be
421 a consequence of him transitioning from a high-profile professional club environment where
422 his personal vision towards ways of working clashed with the organization's, to a new club
423 where he could shape his vision.

424 Interestingly, though Adrian and Matt occupied similar positions in terms of their time
425 in their current roles (see Table 1), they seemed to be supported by more long-lasting coaches
426 (e.g., Verity) in reframing the need for change to benefit everyone's roles. Verity's account
427 below implies that she appraised the positive outcomes and opportunities to improve when
428 the national team she coached received an increased team of support staff:

429 What was really good were the support staff, the S&C guy. He was employed for the
430 full year and normally you're just employed for the time in camp. So, the coach knew
431 these players had to be in the best shape they've ever been in. That just doesn't
432 happen over a six-week camp that has to be over the entire season for two, three years
433 so you know that was a really positive change.

434 On the surface this appeared to positively reflect Verity outlining the need for change,
435 yet later she struck a cautionary note:

436 They [the elite performance director] were wasteful, they were trying too hard
437 sometimes because we needed help and support, you know, we were limited...I think
438 they were trying to look at [one percent gains] all of the time, where instead of really
439 sitting down and trying to work out [appraise] what we could do, they just kept seeing
440 these ideas and bringing them in without a discussion.

441 In contrast to some of the other participants Verity was in a situation where the sport
442 received a sudden injection of funding and described some of the perils of this. By perceiving
443 the change as “wasteful” with limited discussion, her account suggests that an apparent
444 positive stimulus in the change context can be more problematic than first imagined and
445 thwarting in terms of coaches expressing their viewpoints.

446 Within a different sudden organizational change context, Ted appeared to initially
447 construct a lack of fairness (Lazazzara et al., 2020) when finding out third hand that the
448 National Governing Body (NGB) had withdrawn from hosting a home world championship
449 in the lead up to the competition. Through reflecting on his ability to utilize meta-cognition,
450 he forecasted personally meaningful outcomes (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) in learning
451 how to approach his interactions with NGB staff differently in the future:

452 I'm not precious about how I get it [the information], if it had been a text message I
453 wouldn't have really given a toss, but I didn't receive anything [from the NGB]... It's
454 a pretty glaring indication that the governing body don't see fit to engage me in
455 decision making ... so understanding those, you know meta-cognitive processes, it's
456 how do we think, how do we interpret the world, how do we make decisions, why do
457 we make the decisions that we do ... if you don't reflect you don't learn, you don't
458 develop, you don't grow, you don't change ... But it's perhaps making it more action-
459 oriented, it's well, now knowing what I know about myself, how I'm perceived by
460 others, how do I change that? How do I then assess what's working well, what's not
461 working, and putting changes into place.

462 Ted's account offered a key insight into the importance of developing meta-cognition
463 within sporting stakeholders, so that they can approach their job roles differently and
464 positively shape the social environment they work within (Demerouti, 2014).

465 *Mobilizing Social and Structural Resources*

466 One means by which the participants felt they could effectively shape characteristics
467 of their work during organizational change was by drawing on social resources. This included
468 proactively building and maintaining effective relationships with performers, support staff,
469 coaches and leadership within their organizations. It also represented searching for advice
470 and counsel from other coaches external to their sport organization. At an individual level,
471 mobilizing social resources included tailoring relationships with performers and sport staff to
472 alter the quality of interactions during change. For Arla, this process was described
473 systemically in terms of working with various external partners during an ongoing cultural
474 change in philosophy towards performance development. During this change, sharing
475 knowledge and ideas with external partners about ways of working collaboratively led to a
476 sense that it was possible for all parties to “get a lot of things done” through collective
477 problem solving. Through outcomes such as “getting a lot of things done” Arla described
478 building relationships as a process where sharing ideas and collective problem solving over
479 issues preventing goal progress appeared to be a very successful crafting strategy for
480 achieving work goals for various partners during a change culture. In addition, to remedy
481 some of the demands of group working, Arla appeared to suggest dedicating more time than
482 usual to understand individuals and their ways of working. Arla neatly summarized this in
483 relation to changes pertaining to rules and regulations in their sport, “Every person is unique
484 and...every person...is worthy of being treated with respect.” Even though Arla was facing
485 challenging circumstances with this organizational change context, it demonstrated the
486 importance placed on a bespoke process to actively changing relationships. By spending
487 more time with some individuals and getting to know them despite the presence of
488 organizational changes, Arla highlighted how it is important to reinforce the value placed on
489 individuals, with the benefit that this may mobilize them as a resource. Matt echoed similar
490 sentiments placing salience on being “player owned, [letting] them take the initiative” in his

491 approach. In contrast, in the context of developing a new professional team franchise, Matt
492 revealed a slight divergence in highlighting that this tailoring of relationships needs to occur
493 at a departmental, as well as individual level:

494 I am the boss but it's not going to be “tell, tell, tell,” we're gonna figure out what we
495 want as a club and then as a department, then we're gonna figure out where you stand
496 with your own [job] responsibilities. So that their roles will be crystal clear but they
497 can take ownership as well ... I think that was really powerful for where we were
498 going.

499 The requirements Matt outlined around avoiding a “tell, tell, tell” approach with
500 individuals suggested organizational challenges faced by coaches who are trying to work
501 collaboratively, which may be reflecting the typically authoritarian nature within high-
502 performance sport. Despite this, his account offered hope in terms of the power of this
503 approach. It is noteworthy that despite the relative difference in Matt’s time in post (see Table
504 1) compared to Arla’s, this notion of working with individuals (people and/or departments)
505 was strong. However, their ability to do this instead may be stimulated in reaction to the
506 organizational changes in rules and regulations.

507 In contrast, other participants had to make greater efforts to maneuver (i.e., alter the
508 quality of relationships) into the ingroup of the leadership hierarchy of their organization.
509 Peter explained this within the context of the national squad training structure that was being
510 centralized:

511 I can maybe voice my opinion and it would be heard and hopefully that would make
512 an impact. But maybe me being on the inside a little, whereas when you're on the
513 outside [of the leadership hierarchy], you have no impact, you can't change the
514 problem.

515 Peter’s references to having influence as an “insider” showed awareness of mobilizing

516 social resources through understanding the micro-politics of their organization. For example,
517 through working on the “inside” of the organization Peter demonstrated the micro-political
518 perspective by using his influence to further his interests (Gibson & Groom, 2018). This also
519 offered potential for how adopting a micro-political perspective can be a successful, proactive
520 relationship building approach, even within cultures which are undergoing rapid change.

521 For some participants, mobilizing resources involved modifying their social resources
522 as well as optimizing their structural resources to achieve work goals and / or opportunities
523 for development. Mobilizing structural resources in the main consisted of prioritizing
524 collective learning at a team and organizational level, but it also included physical and
525 financial resources such as sport science support. During the lead up to an Olympic Games,
526 Tristian had to exert efforts to alter how they negotiated (e.g., social resources) with the NGB
527 to receive continued sport science support (i.e., structural resource).

528 So going into [Olympics Games], the biomechanist, [sport NGB] pulled him from
529 pillar to post, his hours [contract] were done by February ... So I went to [NGB
530 leader] “where is my biomechanist going? Because that’s the guy I’ve worked with
531 for seven years” ... Now I know they are leaving in a week, and the [NGB leader]
532 knows this, but the [NGB leader] has specifically told [the biomechanist] not to tell
533 me. So when [biomechanist] finally left, the [NGB leader] took huge umbrage with
534 him and said nobody can use him, but I’d already made another arrangement with
535 [biomechanist] and said “look, we still want to use you, this is what we want to do,
536 can you do these dates?” and [biomechanist] was like “yeah, that should be fine.” ...
537 I’ve got someone who can win a gold medal and I’m having to, you know, not only
538 am I having to supplement [national lottery] funding, I’m having to negotiate and
539 make this happen, and that is the huge frustration that I have with the governing body.

540 While altering the nature of the relationship with the NGB and sport scientist support
541 may have achieved the end goal of facilitating their performer's pre-Olympic training
542 preparation, Tristian's account seemingly reflected a frustration, exhaustion and futility of
543 trying to negotiate and personally work around the apparent micro-politics of their NGB.
544 Tristian's account therefore seems congruent with the notion that mobilizing resources can
545 help to address organizational demands and achieve performance goals (Demerouti et al.,
546 2001), but at what cost for the coach's job satisfaction and well-being?

547 The degree to which creating opportunities for collective learning was supported
548 within a climate of organizational change in sport varied, showing significant divergence
549 within the accounts. For Arla, putting education at the forefront of their national coach role
550 was pivotal:

551 We have had mentor programs. We have supported the coaches. We have done a lot
552 of work. We have five workshops a year with these coaches, and these programs have
553 been supported by the [national sport organization] ... and I think that's been massive
554 [for growth]. That's one of the key things we've been able to do to develop the players
555 because we [the coaching staff] are speaking the same language, we are wanting the
556 same things for the players' development and for the clubs' development.

557 The repeated use of the word "we," suggests that Arla placed value on the trickle-
558 down effect of mobilizing a team (i.e., a support resource) to develop players, to achieve
559 greater organizational effectiveness. Indeed, work psychology literature indicates that
560 individuals do not only job craft on their own, but they may also decide how work is
561 organized and conducted together with colleagues (Tims & Parker, 2020). This collective
562 crafting strategy was reflected systemically at both an individual and organizational level,
563 suggesting that mobilizing both structural and social resources was supported within this
564 change climate. Notably this was grounded in Arla's position as the oldest most established

565 participant, in terms of the time spent within their current organization, which may have
566 conferred greater decision latitude to shape her leadership role over coaches, support staff and
567 sport performers. This was in direct contrast to Ted, who although occupying a similar role
568 was afforded much less opportunity to seek advice or feel supported by the NGB:

569 I'm currently in theory being supported by our governing body to do a [sport
570 qualification] but I don't receive any financial support for that. I don't receive any
571 feedback [or] mentoring from the governing body...Maybe it's on me to go out and
572 push for it but unfortunately the person that [feedback] would be coming from is the
573 [stakeholder], who I don't think could tell me how to move my coaching forward so
574 it's a sad state of affairs but it's the way it is.

575 This was a contrasting experience to Arla's and highlighted the potentially deflating
576 experience of organizational environments which were not supportive on either a financial or
577 developmental level. Inherent in Ted's sadness is perhaps a realization that some change
578 initiatives (e.g., a change in performance director) can represent a constraining context
579 (Lazazzara et al., 2020) by which they can create and maintain opportunities to develop their
580 knowledge and skills or seek social support. Verity echoed similar sentiments around the
581 importance they place on developing the self, "I do it because it's something I've been
582 interested in and developing myself, but I don't think there is a culture of that [development]
583 within [sport]". Importantly though, Verity described this is a process that needs to be driven
584 individually. Despite Verity also occupying her role for a significant length of time, her
585 account suggests that she had much less of a structural support resource than Arla had
586 previously outlined, to drive this within their organization. The importance Verity places on
587 developing the self perhaps characterizes a 'promotion-orientation' to crafting her role
588 (Petrou et al., 2018), in demonstrating proactive attempts to complete training that satisfy a
589 desire for learning and personal growth during financial instability within their sport.

590 *Withdrawal from Aspects of the Job*

591 Considering the energy that was required to shape coaches' job roles, it was
592 unsurprising that they explored the need to rest within their account, which appeared to
593 constitute as a form of demand reduction (Demerouti, 2014). Matt in particular highlighted
594 how the unrelenting nature of player turnover, coupled with his "problem that I couldn't
595 switch the engine off when I was at home, so the brain was still ticking" drove a "need to take
596 time off during the week." In emphasizing a "need" rather than a "want", this seemed to
597 reflect an entrapment-commitment profile in which the only other alternative to taking time
598 off would be to transition out of their coaching role (cf. Knight et al., 2015). Elsewhere he
599 described how this manifested itself, but then this also led to reflection for shaping his role
600 going forwards:

601 It was engulfing my life ... sometimes you can't see the 'wood from the trees', so you
602 try to work even harder, it's easier to see it now, I'm not doing it... But if I got back
603 into the boiling pot again I'd definitely say "no", I need time off during the season.

604 The divergence in Matt's account was clear from the potentially intoxicating totality
605 of the institution of high-performance sport, through to a growing sense of identity and
606 perspective around having greater decision latitude in their role and meeting their own work-
607 life needs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). His movement from being "engulfed" to
608 "definitely saying no" to taking on more work during organizational changes communicated a
609 change in belief around how he could take more control in this situation (e.g., McEwen &
610 Rowson, 2023). This may in part be explained by Matt's relatively small time in his current
611 role (see Table 1) compared to the other participants. Potentially messages taken from time
612 spent reflecting after being sacked may still have been fresh in his mind here.

613 Adrian had spent a similar time in post to Matt but described a different set of
614 circumstances which might prompt a need to withdraw from his role during an organizational

615 staff restructure rather than take time away:

616 [There is] fear around “am I having to reapply for my own job” or “my job doesn't
617 exist in the [organizational] restructure moving forward so I've got to apply for
618 something else”. I've been fortunate enough that I've either dodged bullets or
619 maneuvered my way through the process to where I am now, but there's been close
620 colleagues and good friends that have either decided to depart because of what is
621 coming or, with the uncertainty, “I'll depart on my own terms and take a redundancy
622 package”.

623 This outlined a much different perspective to Matt's around Adrian's potential to
624 shape the role, which may result from their differing roles as national and professional club
625 coaches (see Table 1). While he described how others have “departed on their own terms” the
626 fortune he described to “dodge bullets” alluded to him finding ways to ‘maneuver’ in the
627 sport organization. This included avoiding direct conflict with key decision makers, and
628 removing himself from the ‘firing line’ by ensuring the roles he undertook were still required
629 after an organizational restructure. Adrian's insights seem to be congruent with the way
630 workers distance themselves from risky work situations or negative interactions with other
631 workers to protect their well-being or tenure (Demerouti, 2014). For Adrian, this need to be
632 reactive may result from the “funding pot not being as large as it was in previous Olympic
633 cycles.” In contrast for Matt the club environment (where he had just experienced the off-
634 season, as he was interviewed during pre-season) may have provided more opportunity and
635 resources for him to feel secure, rest, and reflect on the rest periods needed in the future. This
636 highlights that attempts to manage well-being and seek new job opportunities may very much
637 be localized to different sport organizations, reinforcing the salience of organizational
638 leadership and management contexts on individuals' crafting strategies.

639

Discussion

640 The purpose of this study was to explore coaches' experiences of job crafting within a
641 climate of organizational change in high-performance sport. In doing so, we extend on
642 previous calls in occupational psychology to redefine and update the key characteristics of
643 job crafting in diverse working contexts (cf. Demerouti, 2014). In the main, experiences of
644 organizational change constrained the capacity for high-performance coaches to craft their
645 job role in particular ways, leaving them feeling lost and working in silos under authoritarian
646 leadership. This climate of organizational change made the coaches feel insecure about their
647 jobs and disengaged from interactions with their leadership teams. Despite previous theories
648 highlighting that job crafting behaviors in the workplace are difficult to enact when personal
649 control and support resources are limited (Demerouti et al., 2001), our findings extend these
650 theoretical tenets by illustrating that many coaches in the present study still found ways to job
651 craft. While these findings offer a unique contribution in sport psychology literature, the
652 challenges of job crafting in constraining contexts such as organizational change have been
653 recently documented in other working domains. For example, in a meta-synthesis of
654 qualitative studies, Lazazzara et al. (2020) identified from a small sample of studies that
655 organizational change typically resulted in workers having reactive motives for job crafting
656 and operating in a constraining context. These constraining contexts included workers'
657 perceiving low social support in their workplace and pressure to adhere to authoritarian
658 leadership. Moreover, these constraining contexts led to workers enacting more maladaptive
659 methods of job crafting (e.g., reducing hindering job demands). However, in extending these
660 occupational psychology findings to the elite sport working context, some coaches were
661 involved as drivers of change at a micro- or macro-level, and, therefore appeared more likely
662 to initiate proactive motives for crafting their job. The participant accounts in this study
663 highlight the importance of leadership and organizational support for coaches during
664 organizational change, particularly when the coaches may not be delivering the change

665 initiatives. In collaborating with and supporting coaches during change, the findings highlight
666 the potential for organizations to encourage coaches' efforts to adapt their job characteristics
667 in line with their personal needs (Demerouti, 2014). Consistent with the JD-R model, altering
668 job characteristics such as personal and work resources may prevent burnout or poor
669 performance when encountering a high degree of job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001).

670 Central to the participants' accounts of job crafting was the importance placed on
671 motives for job crafting, in which a desire for control, person-job fit, accomplishment of
672 goals, and to maintain a positive work identity drove coaches' proactive job crafting efforts.
673 Conversely, when control and support was thwarted by organizational factors (cf. Demerouti,
674 2001), this led some coaches to feel less empowered and compromise their personal values to
675 remain employed under authoritarian leadership. This led to coaches withdrawing from the
676 negative aspects of their work (i.e., reducing hindering demands; Petrou et al., 2018). These
677 findings are in line with research in organizational psychology which argue the importance of
678 personal needs in driving the process of job crafting (Lazazzara et al., 2020), advocating the
679 individual needs for control in how people can behave and function at work (Wrzesniewski &
680 Dutton, 2001). As noted from the coach accounts proactively finding ways to mobilize one's
681 job resources (e.g., searching for advice, sharing knowledge, altering the quality of work
682 relationships) can fulfil one's psychological needs in one's work (Gordon et al., 2018).

683 Within coaches' accounts of appraising and re-appraising aspects of the job, many
684 cognitively emphasized the positive aspects of change for personal and organizational
685 functioning purposes and trying to foresee positive outcomes. In addition, coaches saw the
686 benefit of metacognition to explore how aspects of organizational change practices and their
687 responses to them could be improved in the future. While some of these experiences can be
688 explained by Wresniewski and Dutton's (2001) theory of job crafting, in which individuals
689 change how they view their working conditions (i.e., for better or worse), contextualizing job

690 crafting to the elite sport working context highlights a preference for coaches to proactively
691 appraise their work as a meaningful whole for others operating in the sport system (Lazazzara
692 et al., 2020). This is rather than coaches passively accepting how change might personally
693 impact their job role (e.g., Bentzen, Kenttä, & Lemyre, 2020).

694 It was evident from the coach accounts that mobilizing social and structural resources
695 was a key approach *and* avoidant method of job crafting. Coaches approached a range of
696 sport stakeholders in and outside of their organization for guidance and counsel on how best
697 to cope with organizational changes. At the same time, they also developed stronger personal
698 relationships in sport to foster greater individual and collective goal attainment in relation to
699 completing important job tasks (cf. Demerouti, 2014). Conversely, some coaches seemed to
700 alter the quality of work interactions with members of organizational leadership, such as
701 “dodging bullets” during top-down organizational change. These findings can be explained
702 theoretically in several ways. Firstly, according to Wresniewski and Dutton (2001), relational
703 crafting is an important element of re-designing who one interacts with at work and in what
704 frequency to aid completing their job tasks. Secondly, job roles and tasks are embedded in an
705 interpersonal structure (Berg et al., 2010), and others may influence how co-workers craft
706 their roles or decide how their own work is organized and conducted as part of a team (Tims
707 & Parker, 2020). Thirdly, the JD-R model of job crafting and burnout suggests that workers
708 modify the job demands and resources available to them to carry out their work meaningfully
709 (Demerouti et al., 2001). This may include seeking support resources from others to tackle
710 job demands effectively or reducing hindering interpersonal demands that protect one’s well-
711 being or prevent job tasks from being completed (Tims & Bakker 2010).

712 In line with previous conceptualizations that advocate modifying one’s job task
713 boundaries (task crafting; Wresniewski & Dutton, 2001) and seeking new challenges
714 (Demerouti et al., 2001; Tims & Bakker, 2010) to develop new knowledge and skills, the

715 findings in the current study highlighted mobilizing structural resources (often combined with
716 increasing social resources), such as creating collective opportunities for learning and
717 tangible support as a prominent method of job crafting. By the repeated reference to ‘we’ in
718 this context, developing oneself and others revises individual and collective work identities
719 (Wresniewski & Dutton, 2001). In the context of organizational change, framing this as
720 another opportunity for growth represents a shared work identity that allows coaches to
721 reinforce a collective sense of ‘wanting the same things’ for individual and organizational
722 improvement. Collective crafting in this way may enable coaches to experience greater
723 readiness to change whilst remaining committed to their organization (Demerouti, 2014).

724 The final theme that encapsulated the way coaches’ made sense of their job crafting
725 experiences was withdrawal from aspects of the job, which represented efforts to reduce the
726 aspects of their work that were cognitively, emotionally, or physically taxing. Many of the
727 coaches alluded to feeling exhausted from the ongoing commitment to adapting to
728 organizational change, citing ‘engulfed’, ‘wheeling and dealing’, ‘dodging bullets’ and
729 ‘manoeuvring through the process’. Job crafting theory and work psychology literature
730 suggests that withdrawing oneself from work, leaving jobs prematurely and ‘saying no’
731 typically represent maladaptive methods of job crafting (Demerouti et al., 2001; Lazazzara et
732 al., 2020). However, in the coaches’ accounts (e.g., Matt) finding time for rest was designed
733 to improve their well-being and protect work-life balance, particularly when they felt
734 addicted to their work (‘I couldn’t switch the engine off when I was at home’). Therefore, the
735 present findings challenge the degree to which withdrawing from negative aspects of the job
736 are maladaptive for well-being, and may sometimes be beneficial for restoring one’s health.

737 **Applied Implications**

738 From an applied perspective, the current findings suggest that in a potentially
739 constraining context of organizational change in high-performance sport, coaches still find

740 ways to persevere in crafting their job roles. However, the continued ‘dodging of bullets’ and
741 ‘wheeling and dealing’ to improve person-job fit may come at a cost to coaches’ health, well-
742 being and performance (McEwen & Rowson, 2023). Job crafting is a bottom-up job redesign
743 approach to improving working conditions (Demerouti, 2014). However, the coach accounts
744 highlight the key role management teams and wider sport NGB organizations can have in
745 emphasizing the value they place on supporting individual and collective job crafting. From
746 the current findings and previous research exploring coach well-being (e.g., Norris et al.,
747 2017), an inability to job craft in one’s sporting role may have deleterious consequences for
748 coaches’ job satisfaction, experiences of burnout, and turnover intentions, which can all
749 impact on athlete performance development and organizational effectiveness (Thompson &
750 Parent, 2021). Organizational support for job crafting may equip leaders, managers, and other
751 sport personnel with the tools to proactively re-define and modify their job roles in line with
752 their personal needs. Alongside this recommendation, clearly and openly communicated top-
753 down changes, with the space to collaborate, can help coaches make sense of the parameters
754 in which they are aided to job craft for improved personal and organizational productivity. In
755 contexts like ongoing organizational change, leaders and managers may also need to re-
756 evaluate their unrealistic expectations for coaches to job craft excessively to protect their
757 well-being and performance.

758 **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

759 Although this study makes an original contribution to sport psychology and coaching
760 literature by eliciting how coaches experience job crafting in a climate of organizational
761 change, some limitations should be acknowledged. The primary limitation of this study
762 includes the retrospective analysis of coaches’ accounts regarding their experiences of job
763 crafting through organizational change. As one reviewer of the current study critiqued,
764 coaches’ perceptions of organizational change may have changed post the COVID-19

765 pandemic. Although the research was conducted in 2017, to date limited research in sport
766 psychology has explored the phenomena of job crafting in high-performance sport. In
767 addition, researchers can study lived experience in retrospect since it still has meaning for the
768 individuals in question even though events (e.g., organizational change) may have taken
769 place a while ago (Jones et al., 2013). Secondly, we acknowledge the extensive range of
770 experiences that coaches had in relation to organizational change in sport. Although lived
771 experiences of organizational change were drawn on in this study to foreground experiences
772 of job crafting, the broad scope in which experiences of organizational change were explored
773 could have been further delimited to specific organizational change events. Moreover,
774 although organizational change can typically represent a constraining factor for facilitating
775 autonomous job crafting attempts (Lazazzara et al., 2020), it was clear from coaches'
776 accounts that not every organizational change initiative they encountered was necessarily
777 negative for their job roles, organizational functioning, or overall governance of the sport at a
778 national level. It could therefore be considered both a strength and limitation of the current
779 research that the study illustrates coaches' experiences of proactively and passively trying to
780 job craft in a potentially reactive and constraining climate of organizational change. In this
781 way, our findings cannot be generalized to other sport working contexts that may be
782 considered as proactive rather than reactive reasons for job crafting, or contexts in which
783 coaches feel supported or limited in their decision latitude to craft their job role.

784 We recommend that future research continues to explore and understand how
785 members of leadership and management in sport organizations can job craft in different
786 sporting working and personal contexts. Moreover, future research should look to better
787 understand personally effective and ineffective job crafting efforts under additional
788 leadership and management contexts in high-performance sport. Finally, although the

789 participant accounts alluded to how job crafting efforts may be linked to burnout³, well-being
790 and turnover intentions, it was not the goal of this paper to examine these links. Insofar that
791 coach job turnover can occur annually and unsettle sport performer and team dynamics,
792 future research should explore how job crafting throughout sport seasons may be linked to
793 greater health, well-being and productivity in the longer term, irrespective of broadly
794 experiencing organizational change or specific work event contexts. Leadership support for
795 job crafting could also be explored regarding developing job crafting interventions in sport
796 organizations or, assessing how perceptions of leadership support influence sport personnel's
797 job crafting efforts for enhanced well-being and performance.

798 **Conclusion**

799 In conclusion, this paper makes an important theoretical contribution to the job
800 crafting literature by exploring coaches' lived experience of job crafting in a climate of
801 organizational change. Organizational change often represented a poor person-job fit for
802 coaches who work in high-performance sport environments. Contrary to some job crafting
803 theories (Demerouti et al., 2001; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and research literature
804 (Lazazzara et al., 2020), coaches still found ways to job craft despite a poor person-job fit.
805 Coaches' motives for job crafting were influenced by the constraining and reactive nature of
806 experiencing organizational change, which influenced proactive and passive job crafting
807 behaviors. These findings may provide important information to leaders in sport on how they
808 can support job crafting to achieve greater organizational effectiveness. We hope our findings
809 provide a stimulus for exploring job crafting in sport working contexts in the future.

³Although we did not explore burnout in this study, some of our findings align closely to strategies that have been broadly proposed in the sport coaching literature to minimize burnout and optimize well-being. These include considering time for rest and recovery, counteracting a lack of control, and prioritizing self-care (e.g., see Altfield et al., 2018; Bentzen, Kenttä, & Lemyre, 2020; Higham et al., 2023; McEwen & Rowson, 2023; Pankow et al., 2022). However, we also extend the findings on organizational change, well-being and ill-being in sport coaches by highlighting that within high-performance sport contexts where coaches may lack control, resources or a positive person-job fit, coaches can still find proactive ways to adapt their job demands and resources for improve or restore personal meaning and purpose within their roles.

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Table 1*Table of Participant Demographics*

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Coach Status	Years in Current Role	Job Roles Previously Held	Organizational Change Events Encountered	Time of Season	Interview Length
Peter	Male	36	Olympic-level individual coach	5 years	Technical advisor, coach education committee role, national coach	Change of national coach, changes to competition structure, centralization of national squad training and coaching structure	Start of season	59 mins
Tristian	Male	50	Olympic-level individual coach	5 years	National coach, club coach	Change of performance director, change of CEO, sport science support being withdrawn by the National Governing Body (NGB), training facilities being shut down, being sacked	End of season	133 mins
Arla	Female	56	National team coach	12 years	National coach, national assistant coach, professional club coach	Rules and regulations, rise in the quality of squad performers to work with, change in philosophy towards performance development	Pre-season	90 mins
Ted	Male	46	National team coach	4 years	National assistant coach, player/club coach, NGB development officer	NGB withdrawal from hosting the world championships, change of performance director, rise in the international competition profile, national squad training tour being cancelled by the NGB.	End of season	100 mins
Adrian	Male	44	National team coach	3 years	National assistant coach, Academy coach, sport development officer, talent development officer	Organizational staff restructure, turnover of staff, change in talent development pathway, centralization of national performance center	End of season	76 mins
Matt	Male	52	Professional club coach	2 years	Performance director, elite national coach, professional club head coach, professional club assistant coach, player-coach	The development of a professional club franchise, player turnover, change of chief executive, being sacked	Pre-season	64 mins
Verity	Female	53	National team assistant coach	10 years	National team head coach, professional club head coach,	New Olympic cycle, funding cuts, change of national head coaches, injection of funding, increased team of support staff	Pre-season	65 mins

Table 2*Master Table of Experiential Themes for Job Crafting and Organizational Change*

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
The climate of organizational change	Job turnover
	Working in a vacuum
Crafting the job	Motivation for job crafting
	Appraising and re-appraising aspects of the job
	Mobilizing social and structural resources
	Withdrawal from aspects of the job
