

Effects of Team Strength & Conditioning on the Development of Athlete Leadership in Scholastic Athletes

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INTRODUCTION

Existing research has shown that athlete leadership behaviors (ALB) are a valuable component of both successful sport teams and levels of athlete satisfaction. To date, there is a void in existing research exploring ways practitioners can develop or increase ALB's.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between team strength and conditioning (SC) and the development of ALB's in scholastic athletes.

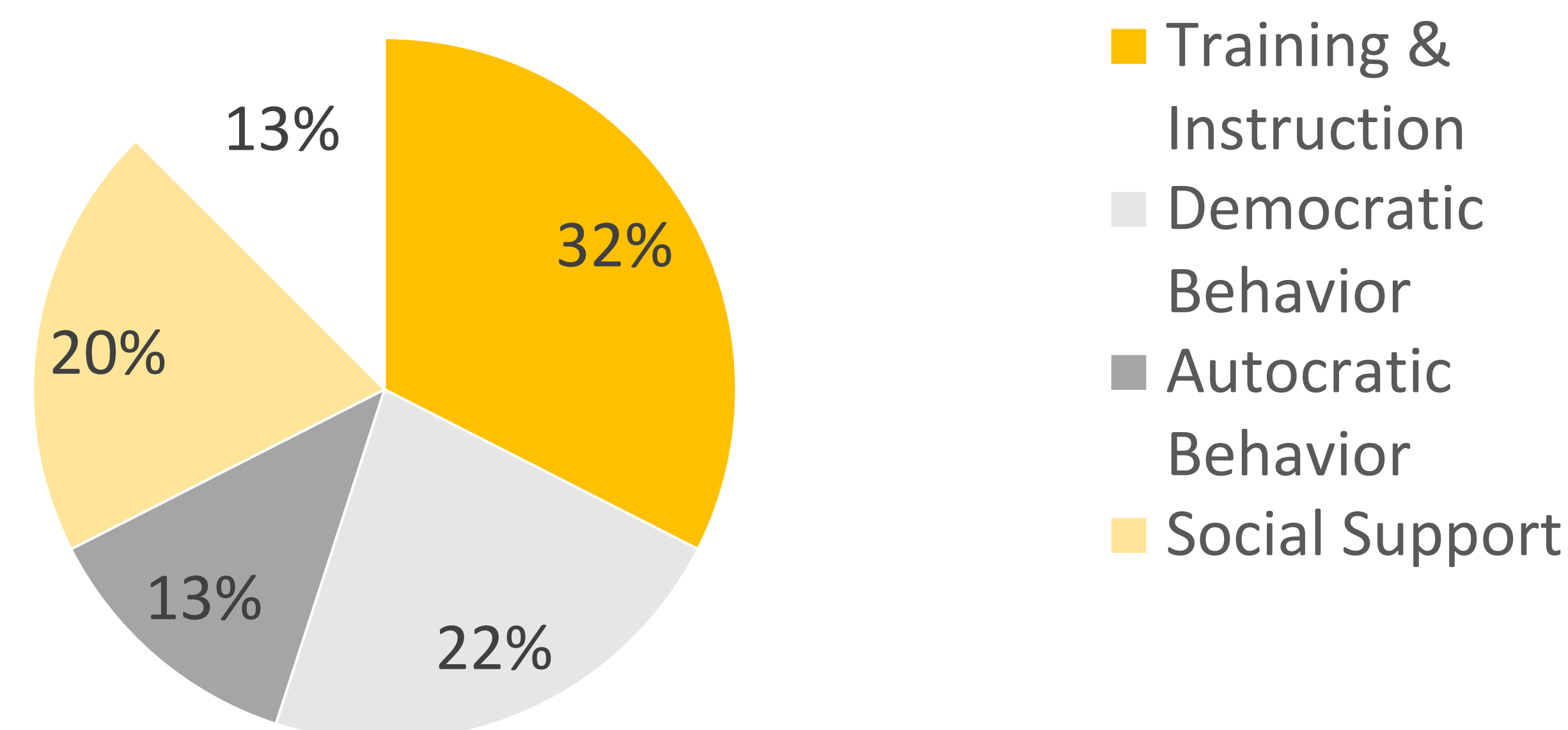
METHODS

A total of 53 athletes participated in team-based SC for 8 weeks during an off-season training phase: baseball (n=12), softball (n=18), girls lacrosse (n=9), boys volleyball (n=9) and girls volleyball (n=5). Teams trained separately and each team was divided into training groups of 2-4 members. Training groups were consistent through the training program. Participants' experience with SC was varied. All participants completed a Modified Leadership Scale for Sports (MLSS) inventory before and after the 8-week SC program. Participants were assigned leadership roles on a daily rotating basis throughout the SC program regardless of sport experience or academic year. Leadership roles assigned on a rotating basis include, leading and cuing team warm-ups and cool down activities, assessing effort of individual's training group members, providing positive reinforcement to training group members, cuing and repetition counting for training group members and recording daily training data for training group. Certain roles overlapped due to the number of training group members. A paired t-test with an alpha of 0.05 was used to analyze data.

Modified Leadership Scale for Sports

- 40 item Likert questionnaire divided into 5 subscales

Figure 1: MLSS Subscales



RESULTS

Statistical analysis revealed that participant's level of perceived TI increased from pre-program (3.360.67) to post-program (3.730.70; $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.54$), participant's level of perceived SS increased from pre-program (3.630.77) to post-program (4.060.69; $p = 0.001$, $d = 0.28$) and participant's level of perceived PF increased from pre-program (3.430.82) to post-program (3.760.72; $p = 0.005$, $d = 0.44$).

Figure 2: Training & Instruction

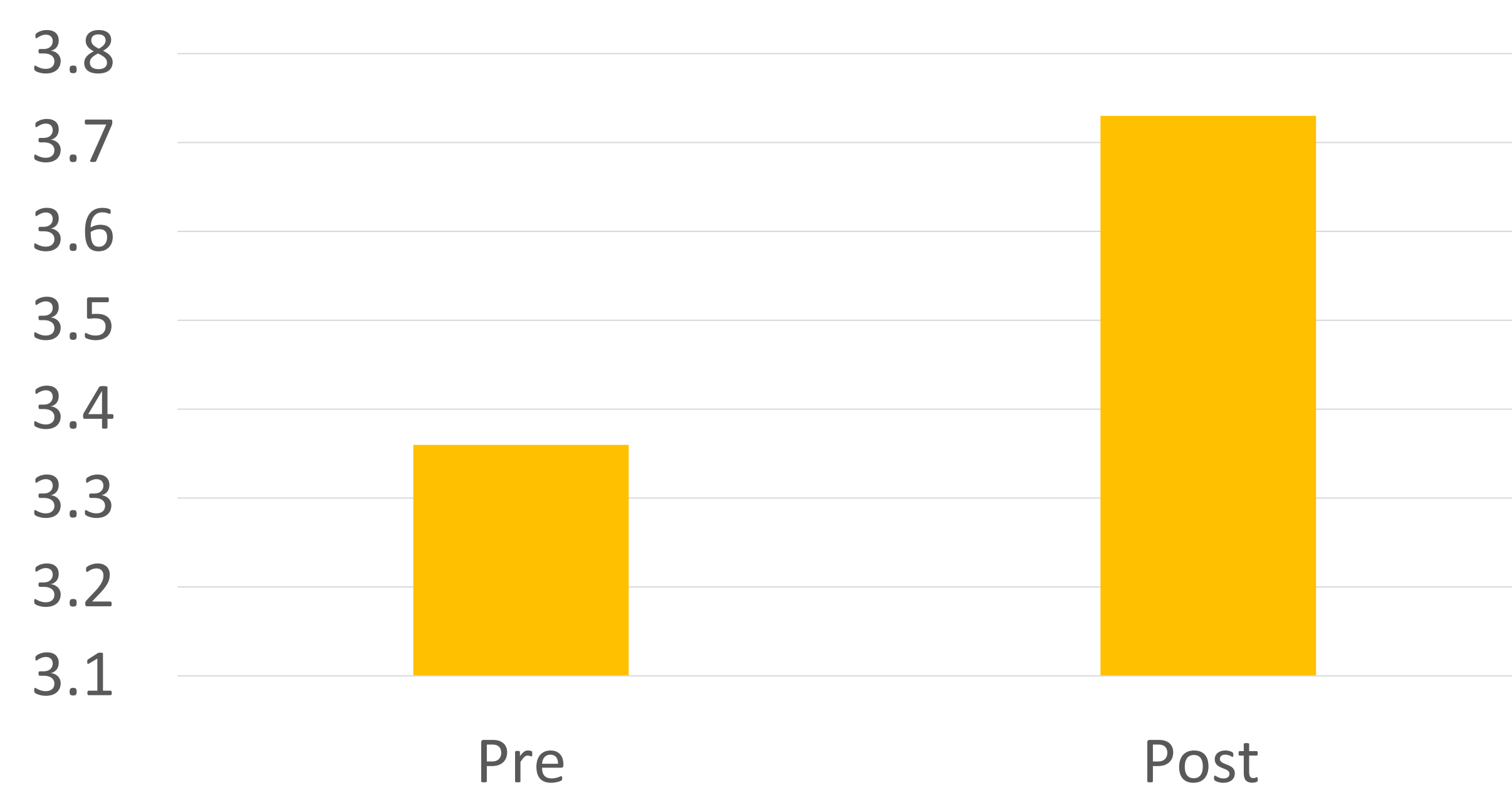


Figure 3: Social Support

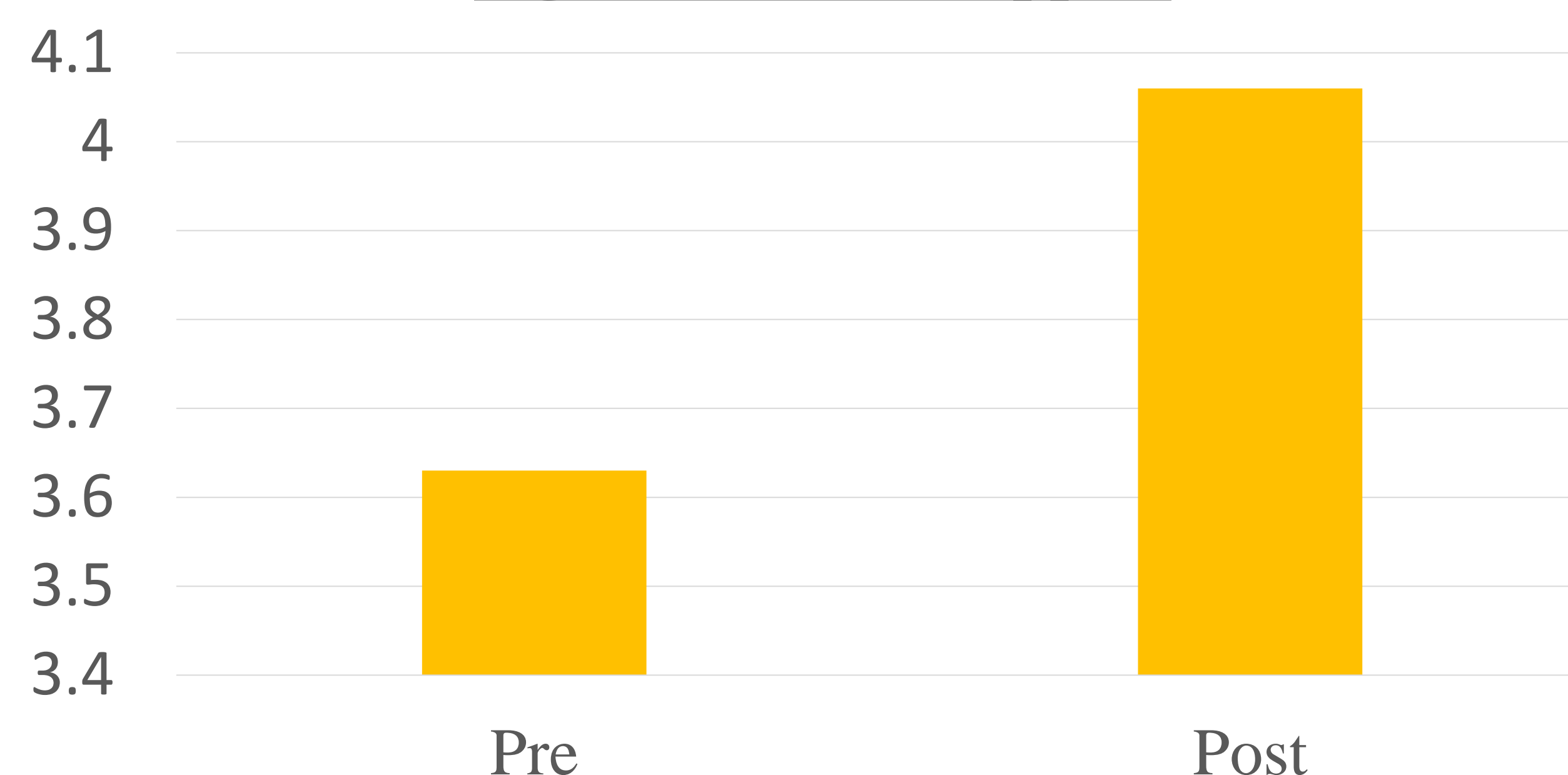
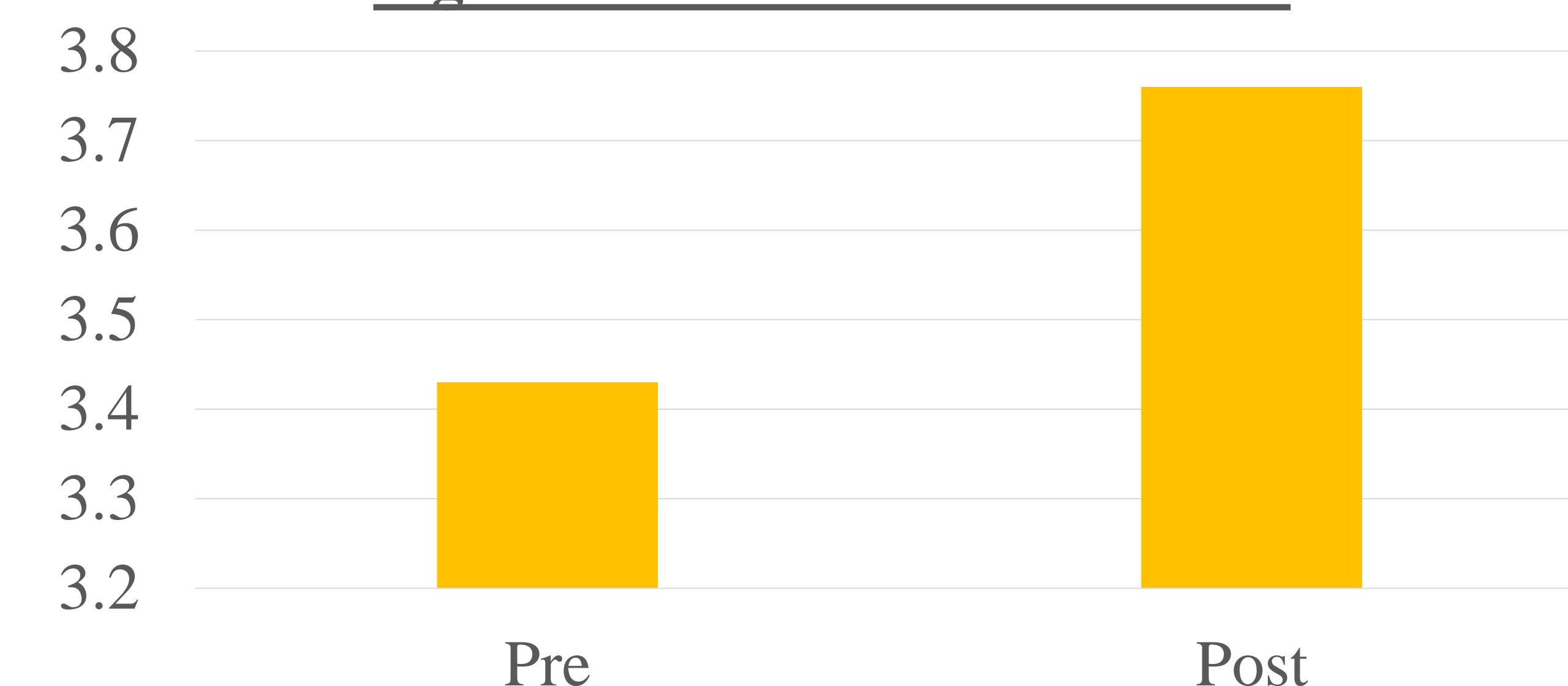


Figure 4: Positive Reinforcement



CONCLUSIONS

These data indicate that team SC using assigned leadership roles increased participants' perceptions of TI, SS and PF.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

SC coaches of scholastic athletes may be able to positively affect team performance and levels of athlete satisfaction by assigning leadership roles to all athletes during team SC workouts.

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