Moments that contribute more decisively in winning or losing are called critical moments (Sampaio, Ferreira, Ibáñez and Ribeiro, 2004). Regarding many views of critical moment’s analysis in basketball, it is outstanding the coach’s point of view (Ferreira, 2006). Then, for example Vallerand, Colavecchio, and Pelletier (1988), Taylor and Demick (1994), Burke, Edwards, Weigand and Weinberg (1997) and Ferreira (2006), base their researches on coach consultation, considering coach’s concepts, methodology and experience.

Lima (2000) highlights the close coach performance, before, during and after the competition. Teodorescu (1984), determines that in every main stage the coach’s decision is essential to face the game successfully. Pajares (1992), says coach’s knowledge is a result of episodes of thought and the interpretation of intense experiences. Bar Eli and Tenenbaum (1989), show the coach’s figure as a key to face stress moments and give an advice list based on psychological techniques. As Ferreira (2006) argued, the coach should think on the basketball game constraints. So, the coach’s thought is very important for the whole game understanding.

Up to now, most of the critical moment’s researches, have had a main aim, either analysing performance in competition, trying to state the variables that better discriminated winning and losing teams in critical moment, or have intended to analyse the player’s state (Bar Eli and Tractinsky, 2000; Burke et al., 1997; Ferreira, 2006; Kaminsky, 1990; Kozar et al., 1994; Ribeiro and Sampaio, 2003; Sampedro and Prieto, 2012; Taylor and Demick, 1994).

That is why we try to state another approach to the study of critical moment based on the interview to one of the main character of the game, the coach. The aim of this study was to analyze the critical moment from the perspective of the coach, based on the definition, location and variables.

**Method**

In our research it was used qualitative methodology. And the semi-structured interview was the instrument to obtain the data (Patton, 2002). The sample has been composed of 12 coaches training in ACB league during the 2011/12 season. The design of the interview was conducted using the following process (Jiménez et al., 2009): a) At first it was designed the interview protocol, which was revised by experts; b) then was obtained the final protocol; c) interviews were done, and finally the transcription and codification of interviews.

The analysis of the interviews was realized considering the grammatical criteria, according to Rodríguez et al. (1996). The selected unit of meaning was the sentence, we have found 173 units of meaning. These units of meaning were reviewed for clustering them around labels, then around properties and finally around categories.

The reliability of the analysis has been established by an independent expert from the classification of a random sample of the participants’ answers.

From each category we have selected the more representative properties in which all participants agree.
Results

Associated with the definition of critical moment, all coaches admit that it is a difficult concept to explain and that is tied to the uncertainty that characterizes the game of basketball, also, all agree about there can be many critical moments in a game.

I think there is always a special situation that you can call a critical moment. The bad aspect about this is you never know when it will happen. I believe basketball is an action and reaction sport, and if you have that ability to react as soon as possible in view of an event, to change the defense, substitute a player or a player making a decision, that is the important moment; the critical moment (Coach 1).

There are many critical moments in a game, for me, you need to be very alert, because the game could be broken at any time, and it depends on each team’s reactivity (Coach 5).

All coaches highlight the importance of feelings as a result of their experiences in the game, and the psychological factor as the key to face the critical moment successfully.

I think the most important is the player psychological capacity... I was lucky to train P. late in his career, and his attitude was the key in this kind of situations. And then, analyzing other players, you realize that those with the most aggressiveness and ambition... that mentality is what finally allows players with similar or even lower physical and technical capacity to get further (Coach 7).

I wish the team, in that moment, had reactivity (Coach 1).

In terms of location, all coaches agree that the end of the fourth quarter in a close game is one of the obvious locations.

If you reach the end, point up, point down, the critical moment is that instant that can be decided in 5 seconds (Coach 10).

At the same time they recognize that the overtime is a critical moment itself.

You can also interpret that the five minutes of overtime are critical and you have to choose your players carefully to reach the end properly. It all depends on the way you feel the game, if you have been losing you are the team in the ascendency... the opposing team will feel that the next moment is critical. The first minutes are critical (Coach 12).

There is no variable in conventional statistics that all coaches recognize as a key to winning or losing the critical moment, however, all agree about not giving up their own game philosophy in those critical moments.

When a team has a fiery playing concept and it remains firm in that concept, and that playing concept is notable, the team transmits light and sparkles in action. Teams do not universally share an objective, and in my opinion, I think this has to do with idiosyncracy within each group (Coach 7).

Discussion

One of our research’s result is the difficulty associated with the study of the concept of critical moment, in addition that many critical moments can occur during the game. Uncertainty, subjectivity and interdependence are the concepts associated with the notion of critical moment in the game (Ferreira, 2006). Each subject faces a critical moment as a self-perception (Cornelius, Silva III, Conroy and Petersen, 1997; Taylor and Demick, 1994). Each game may present many critical moments, taken as time instants, they are considered as a sequence in which these disturbances are found, showing the ruptures of the dynamic course of the game (Bar- Eli and Tractinsky, 2000).

Another obtained result has been the importance that coach gives to sensations and psychological aspects based on experience in order to face up that critical moments.

The stress the player reaches in the last 5 minutes of game, in which the critical moments are detected in close games (Bar Eli and Tractinsky, 2000; Kaminsky, 1990; Kozar et al., 1994; Ribeiro and Sampaio, 2003), as a result of the psico-physiological alterations that arise from the competitive requirements, can unleash in a “state of psychological crisis” (Bar- Eli and Tractinsky, 2000). The above mentioned state is characterized by the decrease on the performance of the player. Experience, knowing your players and the competition itself, contribute to know the starting process of critical moment, and therefore to predict and guide us in facing this situation (Ferreira, 2006).

Our results also have revealed that all coaches agree about pointing out the last minutes of play as critical moments, also the entire the overtime. The last five minutes in close games have
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been studied as a critical moment in a game (Bar Eli and Tractinsky, 2000; Ferreira, 2006; Kaminsky, 1990; Kozar et al., 1994; Ribeiro and Sampaio, 2003), that is the reason why overtime is considered as critical moment (Bar Eli and Tractinsky, 2000). Bar Eli and Tenenbaum (1989), suggested working with players imagining hypotetic scenes that resemble real situations of competition, so that players are able to self-manage their stress and get over the “psychological crisis”.

All coaches agree that it is within the critical moment when you have to remain faithful to the team philosophy. Silva et al., (1988) and Richardson et al., (1988), hold experience is critical for both the player and coaches to achieve success in competition, then the coach must consider three points: a) at the end of the game, the expert players to be the main characters, b) that these experts should get as refreshed as possible both physically and psychologically at the final of the game, and c) that the coach should transmit calm to his players according to the idiosyncrasy of the team.

ANÁLISIS CUALITATIVO DE LOS MOMENTOS CRÍTICOS EN BALONCESTO

PALABRAS CLAVE: Entrevistas a entrenadores, Momentos críticos, Baloncesto.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste trabalho foi conhecer o ponto de vista que o treinador relativamente ao conceito de momento crítico no basquetebol. Para este fim, realizou-se uma investigação qualitativa, utilizando como técnica de investigação a entrevista semi-estruturada. Foram entrevistados 12 treinadores que militavam na liga ACB (Associação de Clubes de Basquetebol), durante a temporada 2011/12. Os resultados indicam que a amostra concorda que algumas regras são essenciais para enfrentar os mesmos.

ANÁLISE QUALITATIVA DOS MOMENTOS CRÍTICOS NO BASQUETEBOL

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References


