

6. Coaching skills and roles, coach vs trainer, is coaching an art or science?, the 4 c's, your personal experience

What is Coaching?

The United Kingdom Coaching Strategy describes the role of the coach as one which "*enables the athlete to achieve levels of performance to a degree that may not have been possible if left to his/her own endeavours*". Dyson speaking to the 19th session of the International Olympic Academy, Greece 1979, widened the horizon when he said that "*the wise coach develops not only the fullest physical potential in his charges, but also those capacities and habits of mind and body which will enrich and ennoble their later years*".

What Coaching Skills will you need?

As a coach you will initially need to develop the skills of: organising, safety, building rapport, providing instruction and explanation, demonstrating, observing, analysing, questioning and providing feedback.

Organising

In organising the training session you need to plan in advance how you will manage the athletes, equipment and area - group athletes accordingly to numbers, ability and the activity - continually check the plan is safe during the session.

Safety

In providing a safe environment for the athletes you must assess the risk of: the area, equipment and athletes - continue to assess risk throughout the session - keep athletes on the set task and follow correct practice.

Building Rapport

In building rapport with the athletes learn and use their names, smile and make eye contact, coach the athlete rather than the sport, show interest in and respect for the athletes.

Instruction and explanation

In providing Instruction and Explanation you should think about and plan what you are going to say, gain the athlete's attention, keep it simple and to the point and check they understand by asking open questions.

Demonstration

In providing demonstration make sure you are in a position where the athletes can clearly see you, focus on only 1 or 2 key points, repeat the demonstration 2 or 3 times (side, back and front view), ask if they have any questions and check they understand by asking open questions. There are times when it might be more appropriate to use someone else to provide the demonstration.

Observation and Analysis

In observing and analysing break the action down into phases, focus on one phase at a time, observe the action several times from various angles, compare the action with your technical model and if appropriate determine what corrective action is required.

Feedback

In providing feedback encourage the athlete to self analyse by asking appropriate open questions, provide specific and simple advice, limit the advice to 1 or 2 points, check they understand what they

will do next and make the whole process a positive experience for the athlete.

In addition to the above mentioned you will also need to

Understand the various coaching styles (autocratic style, democratic style etc.)

Understand the capabilities of growing children

Understand the causes and recognise the symptoms of over-training

Understand how to reduce the risk of injury to your athletes

Understand and know how to develop the athlete's energy system

Understand the learning process and training principles

Assist athletes to develop new skills

Advise athletes on their nutritional needs

Advise athletes on relaxation and mental imagery skills

Advise athletes on the use of legal supplements

1.assessor.....	Assessing athletes performance in training and in competition
2.counsellor....	Resolving emotional problems on the basis that sharing anxieties can be both relieving and reassuring.
3. ...demonstrator...	Demonstrate to the athletes the skill you require them to perform.
4.friend.....	Over the years of working with an athlete a personal relationship is built up where as well as providing coaching advice you also become someone, a friend.
5. ...fact finder...	Gathering data of national and international results and to keep abreast of current training techniques.
6. ...instructor...	Instructing athletes in the skills of their sport.
7. ...motivator...	Maintain the motivation of all the athletes the whole year round.
8.organiser....	Preparation of training plans for each athlete and organise attendance at meetings and coaching clinics.

Is Coaching an Art or Science?

Science

To support the coach there is a wealth of scientific information based on research conducted with athletes. Information is available to support the coach and athlete in all areas of training and

development including nutrition, biomechanics, psychology, physiology & medicine. There are a number of scientific methods to measure and analyse the athlete's performance e.g. computer aided analysis of lactate levels, running technique etc.

Art

The art of coaching comes when the coach has to analyse the scientific data and convert it into coaching and training programs to help develop the athlete. This analysis process relies heavily on the coach's experience and knowledge of the event/sport and the athlete concerned.

By understanding the science, which is the foundation of training, a well designed training program can be developed that will help an athlete reach their full potential. The art is understanding the science and then applying it.

Others emphasise developing the 4C's to sports success:

- C**oncentration - ability to maintain focus
- C**onfidence - believe in one's abilities
- C**ontrol - ability to maintain emotional control regardless of distraction
- C**ommitment - ability to continue working to agreed goals

Adapted from <http://www.brianmac.demon.co.uk/coaching.htm>

TASK

Describe your personal experience with

1. as a coach training athletes or
2. as an athlete who is trained by a coach