

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*".

Coaching Skills

As a coach you will find that you need to develop many skills. These include:

- understand the various coaching styles
- understand the capabilities of growing children
- advise athletes on safety
- understand the causes and recognise the symptoms of over-training
- know how to communicate effectively with your athletes
- understand how to reduce the risk of injury to your athletes
- prepare training programmes to meet the needs of each athlete
- understand and implement appropriate teaching methods
- assist athletes to develop new skills
- use evaluation tests to monitor training progress and predicting performance
- advise athletes on their nutritional needs
- understand and know how to develop the athlete's energy system
- advise athletes on relaxation and mental imagery skills
- advise athletes on the use of legal supplements
- understand the learning process and training principles
- evaluate the athlete's competition performance

TASK

Out of the skills presented above, choose three that you consider the most important.

Which of them have you already acquired?

Coaching Roles

What is meant by the following coaching roles?

- Advisor
- Assessor
- Counsellor
- Demonstrator
- Friend
- Fact finder
- Instructor
- Motivator
- Organiser

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.

Successful Athletes

Experts believe that the following characteristics form part of a successful athlete:
Aggression, Ambition, Coachability, Conscientiousness, Determination, Emotional Control, Mental Toughness, Self Confidence and Trust.

Others emphasise these (4 C's):

Concentration, Confidence, Control (emotional) and Commitment.

TASK: Make adjectives from the nouns above.

OVERTRAINING

Athletes must put their bodies under a certain amount of stress to increase physical capabilities. Where the stress loads are appropriate then the athlete's performance will improve but if the stress loads are inappropriate then a state of over-training/burnout could come about for the athlete.

Assessment

Profile of Mood States (POMS) was developed in 1971 for people undergoing counselling or psychotherapy. The questionnaire gained popularity by sportsmen and women and was introduced into the sports world in 1975. POMS, which contains 65 questions, has subsequently demonstrated that it can be used successfully to assess performance status in athletes.

Owen Anderson (PP 163) uses a shorter questionnaire to monitor the performance status of the athletes he coaches. Each morning the athletes assess themselves against the following six questions:

- I slept well last night
- I am looking forward to today's workout
- I am optimistic about my future performance
- I feel vigorous and energetic
- My appetite is great
- I have little muscle soreness

They rate each statement on the following scale:

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

If their score is 20 or above then they have probably recovered enough to continue with the training program. If their score is below 20 then they consider rest or an easy workout until their score rises again.

<http://www.brianmac.demon.co.uk/overtrn.htm>