



UNIT 33:

DEVELOPING COACHES

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UNIT 33 - DEVELOPING COACHES

A. The Need for Trained Coaches

The most essential requirement in developing top level athletes is the availability of world-class coaches.

If the coach is highly knowledgeable, motivated, intense, sensitive to individual needs, and successful in solving problems, the training environment should generate much success for athletes.

If the coach has poor technical or theoretical knowledge, lacks experience, is unable to direct a comprehensive programme, or is not motivated, or cannot spend the necessary time, the athlete will not reach his or her potential.

It is often extraordinarily difficult for sports in developing countries to create a system to develop top level coaches, but, this challenge must be faced because failure to do so means limiting the programme to a lower level. Just as there are athlete development programmes, there must be development programmes for coaches.

B. Challenges Facing Coaches

A survey was undertaken by a NOC from a highly developed country, and asked seven coaches of medallist athletes to comment on their preparation for the Games, and the conditions they faced there. These responses should have meaning for all NOCs.

1. There appears to be very considerable stress on coaches, many of whom are working under senseless conditions (long hours, little pay, sacrificing personal and family life, not having adequate resources).
2. Coaches require a significant increase in financial support, to even modest levels, and adequate time, to allow them to completely concentrate on their athletes, to have a “normal” family life, and to have a “career” that provides reasonable security and benefits and incentive for continuing.
3. Providing both adequate compensation and time to coaches for them to coach and plan may be the most important issues to address. If coaches are poorly paid, and do not have first rate working conditions, they either will quit being involved, or they will not be able to do their job appropriately.
4. Personal coaches must be supported to travel with their athletes for competitions prior to the Olympic Games. These coaches should be supported to be at the Olympic Games in appropriate contact with their athletes.
5. Most of the successful coaches had only a few athletes that they were responsible for, thus being able to give their attention to them.





In summary, the following are challenges for coaches:

- ◆ personal financial limitations
- ◆ lack of long term security
- ◆ disruption of pressure from family
- ◆ dealing with federation or club politics and administration
- ◆ minimal number of talented athletes
- ◆ limited commitment from athletes
- ◆ limited facilities
- ◆ limited programme resources
- ◆ limited training partners
- ◆ little support from others

The winning formula is obvious; full-time, properly supported coaches, working with a small number of athletes, provide a real opportunity to maximise the potential of the athletes.

C. How to Organise a Coaches Development Programme

1. To start, the sport must identify their needs very specifically:
 - ◆ What level of expertise is needed? World-class? National calibre? Local?
 - ◆ How many coaches are required at each level over the next five years?
 - ◆ What resources/facilities/teachers are available to train them? Are there existing training plans available in your sport that you can consider using?
 - ◆ Who are the quality coaches or teachers in your area? Can they help you plan your programme? Are there other sports bodies who have successfully implemented coaches training plans?
2. When you have established your needs, and have some idea of your resources, you can begin to establish a plan, to guide your efforts in meeting your goals. Training coaches is a long-term project requiring a systematic approach. The plan must also be flexible and sensitive to the ever-changing needs of the coaches.
3. You must consider the available resources.
 - ◆ Can International Federations provide opportunities?
 - ◆ Can Olympic Solidarity funds, used wisely every year, establish a regular programme?
 - ◆ Can government or school leaders help train your prospective coaches?
4. What are the characteristics of a coaches training programme?
 - ◆ Most comprehensive programmes recognise that training must be provided for different levels of experience - usually 2 - 4 levels are established. The first level may be very basic, and be oriented towards encouraging individuals to become involved and to be reasonably competent in working with beginners.
 - ◆ Coaches' training must relate to three needs - sport specific technical knowledge, coaching theory and practical experience.





- ◆ Sport specific knowledge includes subjects such as technique, strategy and training plans.
 - ◆ Theoretical knowledge includes subject areas such as psychology, physiology, biomechanics, principles of training, athletic injuries, diet and so on.
 - ◆ Certification for accomplishing a certain level is important in motivating training and in identifying accomplishments.
 - ◆ Coaching programmes should encourage the development of more coaches and better coaches.
5. Review the possible opportunities for training coaches:
- ◆ sport specific clinics, involving national or international calibre coaches or technical experts
 - ◆ coaching theory clinics (i.e. sport physiology, biomechanics, and training theory)
 - ◆ apprenticeship programmes where a promising junior coach works and trains with a senior level coach
 - ◆ physical education training at a university or college
 - ◆ practical experiences in training and organising athletes
 - ◆ access to coaching literature, films, sport research, publications
 - ◆ monthly seminars on specific topics, inviting coaches to meet with specialists (i.e. medical), or to discuss specific topics (i.e. how to motivate athletes, strength training, diet)
6. Establish your plan:
- ◆ determine the amount and type of knowledge required at each level and the time required to impart it. This would ensure some consistencies in the background of each coaching candidate.
 - ◆ resources must be established for each level
 - ◆ set up a training programme to develop competent instructors for each level, or, locate instructors who are already capable of teaching each level
 - ◆ set up a structure to offer the courses. This should be directed from a central agency, possibly a NOC, but, should encourage involvement from sports governing bodies and educational institutions.
 - ◆ recognise the coaches who successfully complete a specific level by some form of certification. Different levels of competition require different calibre coaches. Coaches then should be encouraged to progress through those levels.
7. The coaching candidates you choose to train should possess most of the following characteristics:
- ◆ intelligent, highly motivated
 - ◆ interested in a long-term involvement with sport
 - ◆ possess teaching skills
 - ◆ have excellent interpersonal relationships
 - ◆ have the necessary time
 - ◆ are practical, problem-solving types
 - ◆ ideally, have training in physical education, or extensive experience in sport
 - ◆ possess integrity



8. Determine how you can keep coaches involved, and working hard, over a long period of time.

As a specific example, details of the Coaching Association of Canada's national Coaching Certification Program NCCP level IV Diploma is outlined in section D. This course is appropriate for those who have already completed Level III certification, and who are coaching national and international level athletes. (The Canadian Olympic Committee requires that all coaches on the Olympic Team have Level IV certification).

D. NCCP of Canada Diploma in High Performance Coaching

The NCCP Diploma in high performance coaching is offered through the country's eight National Coaching Institutes.

The NCCP Level 4 Diploma requires completion of the following ten courses plus four selected from the optional course list.

The compulsory courses are:

Coaching Practicum

Work with a high performance team under the direction of a Master Coach in your sport to learn from his or her approach to athlete preparation.

Coaching Effectiveness

Learn a new approach to coaching training that focuses on the effective design, delivery, and feedback of practice sessions. Receive meaningful feedback on your own effectiveness from experts and peers in a constructive environment. Other topics include the role of deliberate practice and inherent ability in elite performance, and applied video analysis.

Philosophy of Coaching

A highly interactive learning experience that takes a critical reflection approach to developing a personal philosophical base to coaching.

Computer Applications

An introductory course on the use of computers as a tool for high performance coaches. Common and sport-specific applications are covered.

Energy Systems

Understand the energy demands of sport, methods to train and increase the power and capacity of the energy systems; control of intensity; sequencing of training and tapering for peak performance.

Strength Training

Learn teaching progressions for strength, flexibility and agility exercises; unique variations; how to manipulate loading parameters.

Mental Preparation for Athletes

Identify the mental training needs of athletes; refine your mental imagery skills and learn how to cope with distractions; integrate and sequence mental training programmes within the yearly plan.



Planning and Periodisation

Produce optimal athletic performance with systematic integration and sequencing; planning and periodisation models; major and minor peaks; volume and intensity of training; rest and regeneration.

Athlete Long-Term Development

Participate in interactive discussions of long-term athlete development; skill acquisition leading to specialised skill development; talent identification; sport-specific long-term planning.

Leadership Skills

An intense learning experience with an emphasis on values clarification, critical reflection, communication skills, leadership practices and team building.

The optional courses which allow you to customise your programme are:

Nutrition

Analyse nutritional strategies for training and competition; develop a nutritional plan and become familiar with hydration, supplements, nutrition during travel, weight control and special nutrition-related problems.

Environmental Effects on Performance

Adapt an athlete training programme according to environmental influences; changes in altitude, the effect of thermal stress on training, dealing with travel and time changes.

Recovery and Regeneration

Review injuries and mechanisms for healing and recovery as part of the normal training process; non-adaptive responses to training/stress; neurological fatigue and recovery; physical therapies to aid recovery; psychological techniques to aid relaxation.

Mental Preparation for Coaches

Analyse coaching interventions; deal with conflict in national team athletes and practice effective communication; psychological implications of injuries in elite athletes and strategies of intervention.

Biomechanics

Understand how biomechanics can enhance performance and prevent injuries; apply the principles of biomechanics to the detection and correction of errors in technique; video analysis and applications.

Enhancing Coaching Performance

Explore how the demands of coaching influence your personal and professional health, happiness, and productivity; stress and crisis management, problem solving, conflict resolution; learn how to say no.

For more information, visit the Coaching Association of Canada website at:

www.coach.ca



E. The International Council for Coach Education (ICCE)

The above example from Canada is one of several excellent coaching programmes around the world. Countries that are embarking on the development of a coaching education programme should become familiar with these programmes by joining the International Council for Coach Education (ICCE).

The ICCE, whose members comprise the world's leaders in coaching development, is a not-for-profit, international organisation with the mission of promoting coaching as an internationally accepted profession. ICCE members seek to enhance the quality of coaching at every level of sport.

The target audiences for the ICCE are National Representative Bodies responsible for coach education; institutions that deliver coach education; individuals who design and deliver coach education; coaches; and the international sport community at large.

The ICCE works to develop

- ◆ a network of international organisations responsible for the development of coaches in their respective nations.
- ◆ international accords on coaching issues such as ethics, safety, and knowledge/competency.
- ◆ an international coaching culture that supports the values of Olympism: integrity, honesty, fairness, inclusion, tolerance, and commitment to excellence.

For more information:

www.icce.ws

F. Hiring Foreign Coaches

Often, the quickest way of achieving quality coaching is to import that expertise. This may provide the desired result, but, sometimes the results can be disappointing. Again, it is essential for one to know exactly what is needed, and to develop a wise plan.

Advantages to hiring foreign coaches:

- ◆ expertise is immediately available
- ◆ there may be indirect positive effects, such as establishing a role model for younger coaches or establishing training programmes or an attitude of excellence
- ◆ there often is a dramatic improvement in the programme

Disadvantages to hiring foreign coaches:

- ◆ it may be costly, in terms of salary, travel and support
- ◆ there may be culture shock for the coach (and his family) detracting from his ability to perform
- ◆ there may be language difficulties
- ◆ his/her stay may be limited
- ◆ often there is no real residual expertise left when the coach leaves

Could the funds spent on importing foreign coaches be better spent on establishing an ongoing local training programme?

It is very important to have a native coach shadow the foreign coach to learn from him/her.



A valuable resource on the hiring of coaches, native-born and foreign, is “A Guide to Employment Contracts for Coaches” by Rachel Corbett and Hilary Findlay. As well as providing recommendations for the coach on how to negotiate a contract, the guide covers:

- ◆ Job Duties of the Coach
- ◆ Authority of the Coach
- ◆ Reporting Relationship
- ◆ Compensation
- ◆ Duration
- ◆ Renewal
- ◆ Performance Review
- ◆ Termination

For more information:

www.coach.ca

G. Should Coaches Be Paid?

Of all the roles one can play in sport - whether being an athlete, coach, administrator, official or judge - probably the role of coach is the most demanding. Some would argue that it is the most lonely, and intensive role in sport and requires the greatest degree of knowledge and skill. Most would agree that it takes several years of experience to develop a world-class coach, and that it is essential to develop such coaches in order to develop quality athletes.

Therefore, the training and support of coaches are important issues for consideration by sport administrators.

While it is true that world-class athletes can be developed by both volunteer and paid coaches, the demands of international sport today make it more and more difficult to achieve international success without full-time, qualified coaches.

Such world-class coaches, whether paid for their coaching or not, would have a number of common characteristics, such as an ability to work long hours; being strongly motivated; being highly knowledgeable; and establishing an effective athlete-coach relationship.

Do coaches need to be paid? Some do. Some need to work full or part-time at coaching and therefore must have support. Some appreciate or are motivated by being paid.

On the other hand, some coaches have other means of support or another career, and are motivated not by money, but, by the affiliation with sport, with supporting talented young men and women to achieve their goals, with travel and with the numerous challenges in attempting to improve athletes.

As you review the strengths and weaknesses of your coaches, or your coaches' training programme, ask yourself how important it is to provide honoraria or salaries to your coaches.



Ask the coaches what are the greatest difficulties or frustrations they face when developing their programmes. Do they mention the need for a salary, or the conflict that their coaching has with their work, or their family? Feedback from coach to sport administrator is essential and requires frank and open communication. To create a flourishing environment, the coach should always have a voice when decisions affecting him or her are made.

In countries where salaries or honoraria may not be possible, are there other financial incentives that can be organised? For example, will an employer provide time for the employee to undertake coaching responsibilities, without decreasing salary? Be creative. Consider solutions such as job-sharing, which is particularly effective when the sharing is with an individual in a field related to coaching such as teaching and sport administration.

Are there forms of recognition or reward that compensate for lack of financial support? Are your volunteer coaches recognised and really appreciated by your sport? How do you express this support? One simple, free, and effective method is to name the coach and his or her role in an athlete's success in every news release. Consider recognition schemes such as "Coach of the Year". Athletes, parents, and mission staff could nominate coaches who display "a special brand of care and concern for young people".

For countries where financial resources limit the development of such a programme, one option is to apply for Olympic Solidarity funding. The aim of Olympic Solidarity is "to organise assistance to NOCs, in particular those which have the greatest need...this assistance takes the form of programmes elaborated jointly by the IOC and the NOCs, with the technical assistance of the IFs, if necessary".

For more information:

www.olympic.org/solidarity

H. Relationships Between Coaches and Others

At most levels of sport development, the coach often finds himself doing practically everything that needs to be done – recruiting, training athletes, organising competitions, fund raising, counselling athletes, administering the programme, and so on. As the level of training becomes increasingly more comprehensive, there is more and more the need to assist the coach so he/she can concentrate more fully on coaching. This means that the coach must work with others who can support his/her efforts with the athletes.

Who are these other people the coach must interact with? They include the administrators, athletes, their parents, fund raisers, club officials, medical and other experts and federation officials. Relationships with sport administrators, the media, and parents are particularly important.

Coaches and Sport Administrators

There are two important principles for sports administrators to consider. The first is that the athlete-coach relationship is the most important for the development of the athlete. The second is that sport administrators exist to support the athletes and coaches and to develop their sport.

It has been said that the more sports administrators can nourish and develop the training environment, the more successful they are in performing their essential tasks.



If administrators and club officials can provide good facilities and equipment, organise good competitions, raise funds, secure assistance or expertise and assist in promoting success, then they are contributing to the athletes and coaches.

The coach must constantly strive to work cooperatively with parents, club officials and so on. Often establishing good and productive relationships requires a considerable amount of effort, patience and cooperation.

What ties all these groups together are common goals - to provide good experiences for youngsters in sport.

Coaches and the Media

Although most coaches prefer that the spotlight shines on their athletes, they, too, are often the focus of media attention. Who better to analyse and evaluate an athlete's performance? The ability to develop the talent, teach the skills, and nurture the mental toughness essential to high performance attracts media interest in and of itself. The coach who works well with the media has learned to appreciate its reach and understands that smooth relationships can even improve an athlete's performance.

Unfortunately, too often coaches, and athletes as well, are apprehensive when confronted by the media, perhaps viewing the reporter as an adversary who is interested only in digging for the sensational or negative story rather than focusing on the performances of the athletes or the team or the results of the day. The interview process does not have to be a dreaded experience. Rather it can be an exciting opportunity.

Coaches and Parents

"The success of a sport program depends primarily on the quality of adult leadership. Teachers, coaches, officials, spectators, and parents all affect the experience and determine to a large extent whether it will be positive."

*"However, of all the adults involved, parents and coaches are perhaps the most important. It's their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that undoubtedly affect the child the most." **

* Straight Talk about Children and Sport: Advice for Parents, Coaches, and Teachers": For more information, www.coach.ca.

In some countries, tradition discourages parental involvement in children's sport. However, where coach-parent relationships are the norm, the coach's goal should be to develop positive and meaningful interactions with participants' parents. Following a few simple steps can be helpful:

- ◆ Ask the sport administrator to organise a meeting with parents to discuss the programme's objectives and the approach to coaching that will be practised.
- ◆ Describe in detail the behaviour the coach will be enforcing; for example, rewarding effort rather than performance.
- ◆ Explain the behaviour expected of the parents. For instance, make it clear that they are expected to show respect of officials and that they are not to yell instructions to players.
- ◆ Recognise the need for regular and open communication with parents to avoid misunderstandings.
- ◆ Be positive and open about feedback – this will build parents' trust in the coach and lead to an even better programme.



One of the simplest ways of getting some of these tasks done is for the coach to write an open letter to parents. Here is a sample letter:

Dear Parent:

I will be coaching your child this season. I am writing this letter to invite you to a parents' meeting and to tell you a little about my coaching philosophy.

When I am coaching, I emphasise having fun and working co-operatively. I do this because I feel that forming friendships, learning to share things with others, and belonging are important at this age. I want participants to learn all the basic skills and to be the best they can be. On this team, all individuals have an equal opportunity to play or compete during the regular season. This approach has worked out well in the past and so we will go with it again.

I would like to invite all parents to a short meeting at the clubhouse next Thursday night. At that time we can discuss the things you want your child to get out of the sport experience; transportation to and from games and practices; family fun nights; and any questions or suggestions about the upcoming season.

I hope to see you on Thursday from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sincerely,





I. Values and Ethics for Coaches

The coach should:

1. act with integrity in performing all duties owed to athletes, the sport, other members of the coaching profession and the public
2. strive to be well prepared and current in order that all duties in the respective discipline are fulfilled with competence
3. act in the best interest of the athlete's development as a whole person
4. accept both the letter and the spirit of the rules that define and govern sport
5. accept the role of officials in providing judgment to ensure that competitions are conducted fairly
6. express to officials and other coaches courtesy, good faith and respect
7. maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and support the principles of fair play
8. be a resource person able to assist the athlete to develop his/her athletic potential and self-dependency
9. recognise individual differences in athletes and always think of the athlete's long-term best interests
10. aim for excellence based upon realistic goals and the athlete's growth and development
11. lead by example; each and practice cooperation, self-discipline, respect for officials and opponents and proper attitudes in language, dress and deportment
12. make sport challenging and fun. Skills and techniques need not be learned painfully. Be honest and consistent with athletes; they appreciate knowing where they stand.
13. be prepared to interact with the media, league officials and parents; they too have important roles to play in sport
14. ensure that no harassment of any form exists in the sport environment

To conclude, as a sport administrator, below are listed some of the attributes to look for in coaches, remembering that the relationships between coach and sport administrator is essential to athletic success.

- ◆ able to understand the training standards required for international performance
- ◆ willing to do the required work
- ◆ uncompromising in quality of approach – passionate
- ◆ able to convince athletes to follow
- ◆ organised and focused
- ◆ practical problem solver
- ◆ sport expert
- ◆ able to retain total control
- ◆ confident in his/her actions
- ◆ experienced in tactics

An Anatomy of a Good Coach

