

Coach Mentor Programme



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Dr Lewis McGill; who developed and wrote the programme.

Readers who have questions about the programme may contact Dr McGill through the SPARC Community Sport and Recreation Team.

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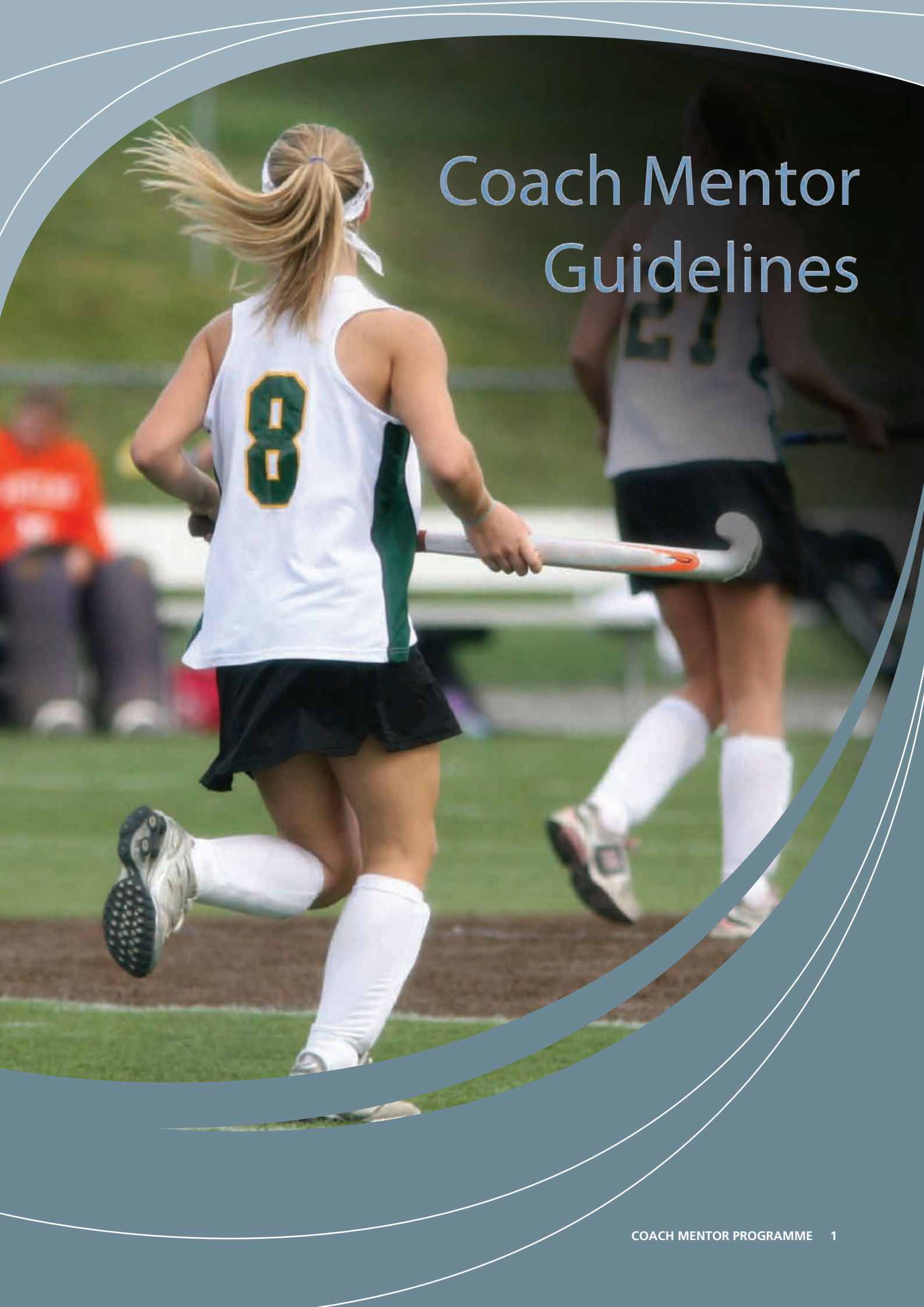
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“ We do not stop playing because we grow old,
we grow old because we stop playing.”

George Bernard Shaw



Coach Mentor Guidelines



Basic Principles

Based on trust and commitment to help coaches raise their level of performance and effectiveness

- Performance processes not assessment
- Mutually agreed process
- Nature of coach/mentor meetings
- Use of diary to record and measure progress
- Coaches work to help athletes improve level of skill performance
- Instruction is core behaviour

Theory

Adult learning
Target behaviours

- Selection
 - Prioritising
- Selecting behaviours
- Athlete
 - Coach
 - Analysis
 - Measure progress

Working Definitions

- Mentor
- Coach
- 'Significant others'
- Self-esteem
- Mentoring-Coaching continuum
- Mentoring cycle

Management Techniques

- Questioning
- Active listening
- Role play
- Observation and recording
- Feedback

Relationships

- Understanding relationship between coach and mentor
- Assistance to help maintain relationship
- If necessary, how and when to opt out

COACH MENTORING STRATEGIES

Ongoing Training and Assistance

- Mentors
- Coaches
- Involve Sports Trusts
- Cross-sport approach
- Train the trainers

Mentoring

- Self-esteem – the target
- Unconditional acceptance
- Confidence
- Significant others
- Time
- Standing in their shoes

Monitoring

- Use of data to be restricted
- Diary and self-assessment report

Objectives

- Based on trust and commitment to help coaches raise their level of performance
- Improved instructing skills
 - Improved provision of feedback, correction, encouragement
 - Focus on individual performance processes not assessment
 - Selecting target behaviours to address
 - Set example with preparation and planning

Reporting

- Coach to mentor
- Mentor to coach

Communications

- Email and telephone are essential
- Use Skype to talk over distance
- Talk and timely feedback are vital

Mentoring Techniques

- Unconditional acceptance
- Standing in their shoes
- Questioning
- Active listening
- Observation and recording
- Use of role play and rehearsal

Contacts with each other

- Make them regular
- Build relationship so either person can make contact
- Agree on the Mentoring–Coaching continuum
- Performance management
- Agree to set a number of visits for the season

Logistical Requirements

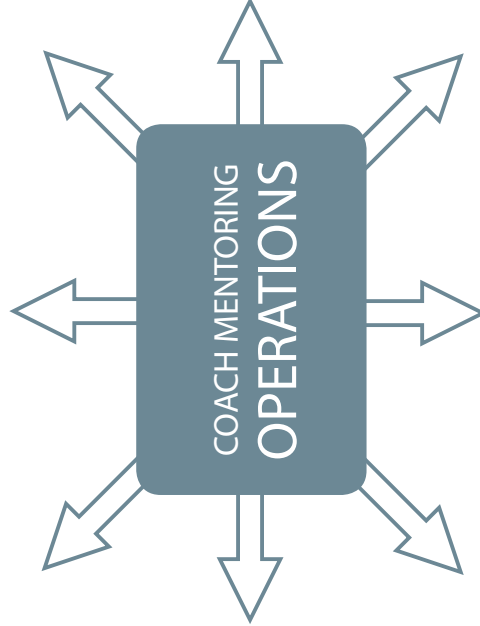
- Coach and mentor to keep diary
- Regular contact between coach and mentor
- Set up date for observation in advance
- Resources; development and sharing

Authority levels

- Use of data to be confidential and restricted
- Maintain diary and self-assessment reports

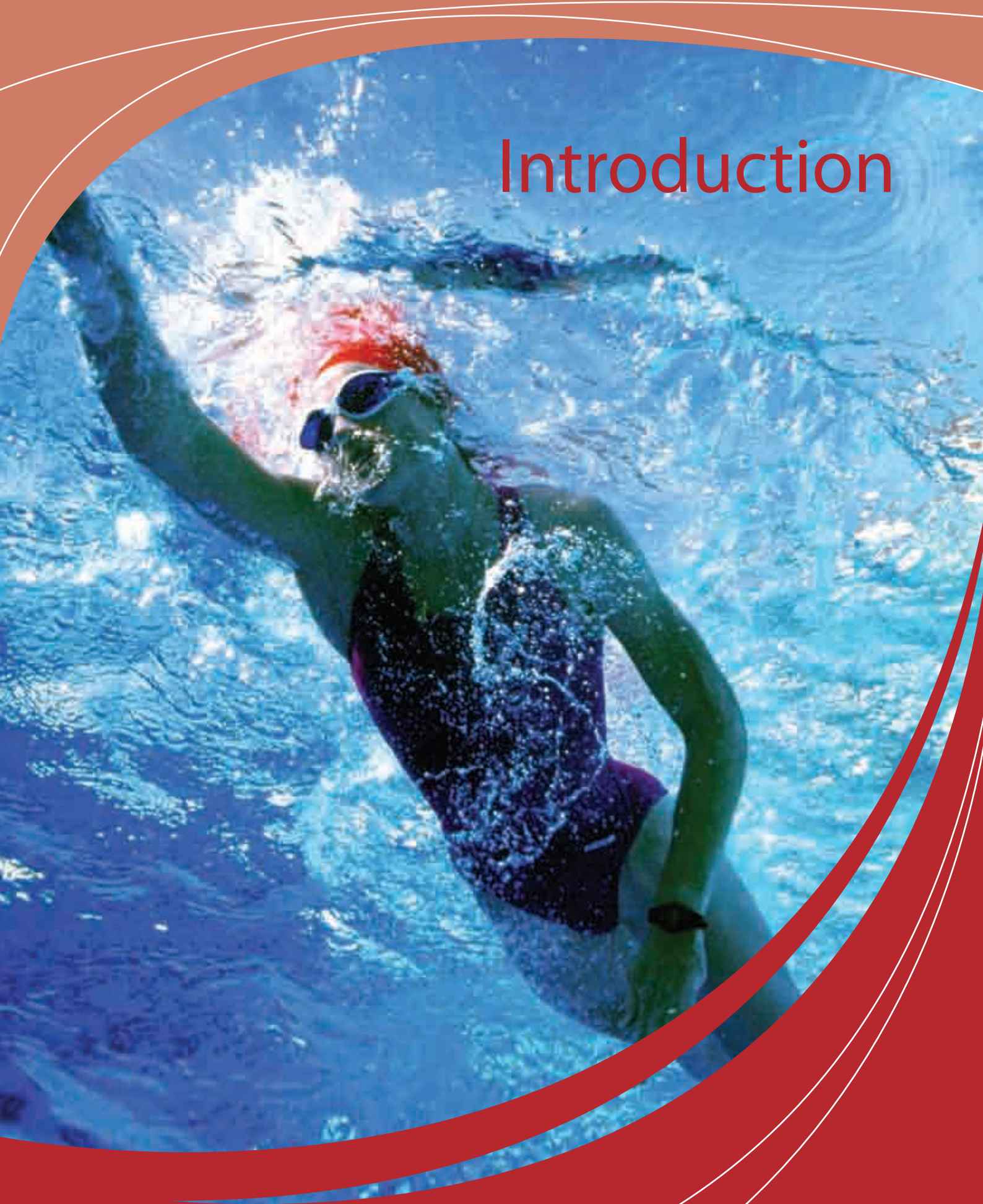
Contacts with ...

- National Sport Organisation person
- Regional Sports Trust





Introduction



Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Sports coaches are increasingly under the spotlight for their performance and effectiveness. Spectators, family members and athletes are expecting coaches to be continually improving. In addition coaches have to juggle their personal life with the demands of being a coach. For many sports their season extends for almost the whole year, which brings with it more challenges for the coach and their athletes.

With all of the time and effort a coach needs to put in for others, it is often difficult to find time for themselves. A mentor is an outside person who can help the coach find ways to prioritise their tasks, to make the most of the time they have available, and to work on improving their coaching effectiveness.

Coaches with high effectiveness have higher winning percentages, players with higher levels of satisfaction, use more praise and encouragement, and use fewer instructional and organisational behaviours than coaches with low effectiveness.

WORKING DEFINITIONS

It is important to understand the main terms.

Athlete: a learner, sportsperson, someone who wishes to improve their level of skill and playing ability or someone who is coached.

Team: a group of athletes working together towards shared objectives or goals.

Coach: an individual who plans and orchestrates the training, learning and participation of an athlete and/or a team.

Sport: activities which are accepted in the community as being of a competitive nature, and which involve skills that generally require training and practice to develop proficiency. Sport is set in an artificial environment in which rules and regulations guide and limit the behaviour of athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.

Coach Mentor: an individual who works in cooperation with a coach with the prime aim of helping that person to raise the level of their capability as a coach. This will be achieved through the mentoring process.

Mentor Trainer: an individual who trains people who wish to mentor a coach. The mentor trainer may also be involved in the selection and 'matching' of mentors with coaches.

Competition: a sporting event in which athletes pit their skills against opponents and where those involved have agreed to try their best to win within the letter and spirit of the laws. The athlete or team who accumulates the greater number of points, or other agreed measures, is considered the winner. Competition is a necessary part of sport and is where each athlete can measure his or her ability against fellow athletes.

Teaching/Instruction: is a process used to deliver the information we want our athletes to learn. For coaches this information is everything required for the athlete to effectively participate in their particular sport. Instruction and teaching are sets of behaviours planned and carried out by an individual with the intention of helping another learn. This person can be a coach, a teacher or an instructor.

There is no direct cause and effect link between instruction and learning. Often observable and measurable changes in the behaviour and knowledge of a learner are demonstrated well after the instruction has been completed.

Styles of instruction: There are a number of styles of instruction described in the professional education literature. For example, command instruction, guided-discovery instruction, differentiated instruction. A well-known author and

researcher, Prof Muska Mosston, described a range of styles of teaching/instruction in Physical Education (see Appendix One for a detailed description of these teaching or instruction styles).

Many factors influence learning. The aim is for instruction to be a positive influence. All effective styles of instruction take into consideration the needs and aspirations of the learners.

Instruct: to provide with knowledge, especially in a methodical way. As with teaching the intention of those who instruct is that others will learn. Some confusion can occur when individuals equate 'to instruct' with 'to direct', where the meaning is 'to give orders'.

Skill: a skill is a movement requiring experience and practice for its execution. Skills are an essential component of sport. Skill enables athletes to produce predetermined results with maximum certainty, often with minimum expenditure of energy. There are three important components of skilled performance: effectiveness (the accuracy of response and the economy of effort used), consistency (ability to reproduce the skill), and efficiency (maximum effect with economy of effort).

The performance of motor skill demands high levels of sensory perception, integration with the central nervous system, and coordination of different muscle groups. Skills form a continuum from fine motor skills, requiring delicate muscle control, to gross motor skills, requiring the coordination of many muscle groups. The performance of skill in sport is more than the mere execution of the skill as technique. When skills are performed in all the complexity of sport, the athlete has many things to consider, including:

- decision making; selecting the correct skill for a particular situation and to achieve a specific outcome
- space; moving into, passing to teammate, making space
- opponents; avoiding and trying to counter opponents while they are performing their skills
- cooperation; performing in harmony and working with teammates
- modification and adjustment; changing the way a skill is performed when demanded by the situation.

COACHING IS CHALLENGING AND DEMANDING

It is challenging and demanding being a coach. Each coach has so much to deal with in the course of a season that any thought of working on his or her skills and competencies is often considered just something else to squeeze into an already overcrowded schedule. Mentoring can be a way to achieve improvement alongside those other commitments. It is often difficult to make changes alone but mentoring as a process allows for change of behaviour with the support of another person but on the coach's own terms.

The majority of coaches involved in sport are volunteers. The most difficult situation is when people, who are giving freely of their time, skills, knowledge and resources, are asked to change or modify their behaviour, learn new skills or even move to another role. This is a delicate situation for all concerned. The worst-case scenario could be the coach 'picks up their equipment and goes home' and another volunteer helper is lost. The usual situation is everyone behaves 'normally', as though everything is fine with everyone afraid of offending the individual in question. The result is everyone continues to function at levels well below what might be possible and which would provide the best environment and opportunities for the athletes.

Mentoring provides a non-threatening and supportive process whereby an individual can learn about their present levels of ability and competence, and explore ways of improving.

THE COACH

A role of the coach is to plan and conduct training sessions to enable the athletes to make the most of all their talents. The primary purpose will be to help the athletes to improve their performance. Outcomes will also be influenced by the attitude of the athlete, and how they practise and apply the advice and information presented by the coach.

WHAT A COACH DOES

A sports coach has to perform a wide range of roles. Some of these roles are directly related to their sport while others are complementary and related to the athletes and others away from the game. These roles include:

TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR

A coach teaches and instructs in the range of skills, attitudes, values and traditions interwoven within the sport; knowledge of the sport; and tactics and how the game is played.

A coach is an instructor every time they help athletes:

- learn skills
- perform skills at higher and more sophisticated levels
- correct errors
- understand theory related to the sport
- use skills in different ways and for different purposes
- use skills in competition
- select the appropriate skill to use during specific situations in competition
- learn from mistakes and prepare for future competition
- develop and implement game/race plans
- plan, conduct and assess training regimes.

Athletes learn in formal and informal ways. They learn from the coach intentionally and unintentionally. Being a coach requires commitment and ongoing responsibility.

MODEL/EXEMPLAR

The coach is observed and monitored all of the time. Athletes and others note their performances, actions and what they say. In this way the coach serves as a model or exemplar in sport and in other areas.

This can occur when the coach:

- performs or demonstrates a skill
- expresses attitudes and opinions about a range of topics, both sport related and other
- uses equipment
- interacts with other people, including members of the team, opponents, other coaches, family and others.

It is important coaches recognise this role and learn to use it to their advantage and for the positive benefit of their athletes.

MOTIVATOR

The coach uses a range of skills and strategies designed to assist athletes to achieve at their highest level.

The coach will enhance their motivating ability through:

- understanding the basic concepts of mental skills as applied to sport; for example, self-efficacy, confidence, control, goal setting, motivation and imagery
- a passion for the sport
- having a commitment to the athletes and the team (loyalty)

- being comfortable with the vicarious satisfaction attained from the achievements of the players and the team. The coach allows the athletes to accept the credit for their success
- variety of communication methods which are adjusted to meet the preferences and needs of individuals and teams
- positive attitude. Sees challenges as opportunities for athletes to display their level of competence and capabilities
- learning from experience and making the necessary adjustments for future training sessions and competitions
- building the group into an effective and high-performing team.

ORGANISER

Organisational skills are required to ensure the most effective use of resources.

This will be achieved through:

- self-management (time management)
- planning: use of resources, training programmes
- organising other people to perform relevant tasks
- keeping records: a diary/log book is essential to serve as a plan, and then as an historical record of what took place
- schedules: games, travel, training, rest
- negotiating contracts and working relationships with players
- assisting with raising funds
- liaising with management: club president, other officers, National Sporting Organisations
- attending team, club and other administrative meetings.

LINGUIST

Part of the process an athlete uses to be assimilated into the sport is to know about and use the terminology of the sport. The coach explains these terms to the athlete and helps them understand the various levels of meaning for sport-specific words and phrases. This also assists with the communication between coach and athlete and over time they develop a shared vocabulary which can serve as a shorthand method of communication.

SUBSTITUTE PARENT/CONFIDANT

The concept *in loco parentis* applies to the role of a sports coach. Although that concept does not have formal support in New Zealand law it is still assumed by parents and other family members that a coach will act as a responsible individual when dealing with athletes – as a responsible parent might act.

This aspect of their role can be seen when they:

- assist athletes to face and deal with personal issues
- provide a personal touch to interactions with individuals
- advocate on behalf of athletes
- show compassion and concern when appropriate
- set reasonable boundaries and standards for acceptable behaviour
- put the personal welfare and support for the athlete ahead of their own needs.

DISCIPLINARIAN

When groups of individuals work together towards common goals and purposes it is necessary to have agreed standards of behaviour and levels of skill performance. The coach can play a major role in keeping the members of the team behaving within the required standards. This will be achieved through:

- use of reinforcement, both positive and negative, when and where appropriate
- maintenance of standards for dress, decorum, attitudes
- setting an example of acceptable standards of dress and behaviour
- timetables being set and adhered to
- interacting with individuals and groups in a professional and sensitive manner
- understanding of human behaviour, the use of rewards and reinforcement, and censure.

POLITICIAN

When two or more people work towards common goals it is important they understand those goals and the manner in which they will be achieved. The coach will be able to encourage the members of the group/team to pool skills and resources in order to maximise the chances of reaching the planned outcomes.

It is also necessary for the coach to enlist the aid of people outside the team. These people may be parents and family members, supporters, administrators in the sporting organisation, management team members, sport science support people and people not directly involved in the sport such as businesses, media and sponsors.

SUPPORTER/FAN

No matter the level of performance or achievement of the athletes, the coach is always the number one supporter or fan. It is reasonable for athletes to expect and receive support and assistance from their coach both during training and competition.

WHY ARE YOU A COACH?

Although it is important to examine the motives given by athletes for their involvement in sport it is also necessary for coaches to examine their own reasons for being a coach. What is your position with regard to the following topics, questions or issues? What are your values as a coach?

- Do you support the notion of the importance for your athletes to participate within the letter and the spirit of the laws and rules of your sport?
- How do you view professional fouls? Does your position change depending on the state of the match and the time remaining?
- Do you support having an injured player receiving treatment and then returning to the competition? Would your attitude be different depending on the state of the game, the ability of the player, the level of the competition and the position of your team in the competition?
- Would you be prepared to poach players from other teams or districts?
- Should all players get game time? Again, could your position change depending on the level of the competition, position of your team in the competition, or during the play-offs?
- Do you instruct or condone your athletes to intimidate the on-field officials? Do you condemn this type of behaviour but turn a blind eye when it happens, particularly when your athlete or team gains an advantage?
- Do you provide a balance at training sessions between fitness and skill development? Do you simulate game conditions during training sessions? For example, do you conduct skills drills when athletes are fatigued?
- How important is it to keep score during practice drills and games?

PRESSURES AND EXPECTATIONS

A coach must take notice of attitudes, opinions and information from a wide range of people and groups. However, the coach must also be judicious about what they take notice of. Here are some examples of the pressures and expectations targeted at coaches:

ATHLETES

There are no coaches without athletes. Athletes have their own goals, expectations and personal preferences. Some will coincide with those of the coach and others will not. The ability of the athlete to work and achieve their goals will be affected by injury, a performance slump, change in motivation, and personal and family issues. Even the people for whom the coach is doing the most will vary in their desire and ability to reach the planned goals and standards even though they have been involved in their formulation.

COACHES (WITHIN THE SAME CLUB)

Coaches within the same club can provide assistance, support, motivation and inspiration. However, pressure can also come from these coaches in the form of rivalry and resentment: rivalry, when each coach tries to achieve the best results with their athletes; resentment, or jealousy, when a coach achieves success or an appointment to a more senior team and others do not.

Conscientious coaches look to further their career and so some inter-coach competition will occur. It is not necessary to view this as pressure but rather as a challenge which can spur a coach on to greater heights of success and satisfaction.

COACHES (FROM OTHER CLUBS)

Competition between coaches from different clubs can be a positive stimulus for each of them to help their athletes achieve their best possible results. It is natural for a hierarchy to form within the coaching community and this can be a healthy adjunct to the process of doing their job. It is also possible the success or otherwise of other coaches can have a negative impact on how a coach views their ability and effectiveness. This need not be the case when the coach is comfortable with themselves and the quality of the task they are undertaking.

ASSISTANT COACHES, ASSISTANTS, TRAINERS, MANAGERS

There is an increasing trend for coaches to appoint a team of assistants. These people must be assigned specific tasks and be managed by the coach as part of the overall team. Their role is to cooperate, fit in and provide effective specialised service and assistance as required and directed by the coach. The coach should not allow these people to apply pressure to take over areas of responsibility which 'belong' to the coach. The coach has been appointed because of their experience, skill and knowledge. It is therefore important the coach demonstrates their coaching skill and not let it be subverted by their assistants.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Coaches are constantly being bombarded with new ideas for performance and training, and there is pressure to adopt new techniques. In fact, very little original information about training and technique has been discovered in the past half-century or more. Most of it is old information dressed up as new, in different wrappings. Often what is presented as new is something which was in vogue a decade or two ago. The coach must assess each idea for its validity and relevance, and then decide whether to incorporate it in their programme.

The basic ingredient for success is hard work, and the coach and their athletes working on being better at the basics than any of their competition. This means training must be centred on skill and performance development, which is then transferred to the competitive situation.

CAREER/VOCATION

Amateur coaches must balance the demands of coaching with their family life, job or vocation, and other interests. Tension can develop if one takes precedence over any of the others.

Professional coaches are always under pressure to produce results. For many the pressures from off-the-field sources appear to be greater than working with athletes. It can be a serious distraction if the coach is continuously concerned about their ongoing employment status, so again the coach needs to be comfortable with their knowledge, coaching skill, professional development and the quality of effort they are applying to their job.

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

We all know they are indispensable. However, they can be annoying, cause frustration, interfere, undermine the coach's actions and contradict their message to the athletes. All of this will place more pressure on the coach when they would be more effective focussing on working with the athlete.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Most family and friends are supportive. They mean well. As with parents and caregivers, family and friends are an essential ingredient in the athlete's attendance at training, performance in competition and often the intensity of their motivation and focus. But they can intrude at inconvenient times and can have nuisance value by trying too hard to help the athlete.

Dealing with pressure from family and friends will test the coach's interpersonal and diplomatic skills. The coach will go a long way towards gaining their trust when the goals and aspirations of the athletes and team are shared. A suggested approach would be to call a pre-season meeting at which the coach recognises their role of supporting the athletes and explains the best ways they can be of assistance. In most cases this will involve staying well away from the athletes during training and competition thus allowing them to fully focus on the task of training and improving their performance.

The presence of an audience, particularly of critical family and friends, acts as an impediment to learning when athletes are trying new skills and routines. During competition, they could help by staying away from the athletes in the 30 minutes before the competition, during competition talks (during intervals) and the end-of-competition debrief. These times should be for the athletes and coach alone.

FANS AND SPECTATORS

The unpredictability of sport is its attraction. In higher levels of sport, fans and spectators expect a spectacle with athletes striving to get the better of each other and win the contest. This means the coach is expected to select the best injury-free athletes. Fans also express their support or otherwise and their reaction makes itself felt in various ways — not the least of which is financial, reflected in gate takings and the ability to attract support from sponsors.

The coach cannot afford to be too concerned about the fans and spectators, and their expectations and reaction. A coach can only work to their optimum and give of their best. Being fickle seems to be a prerequisite for being a fan. Remember, too, they are part of the wider world of sport. Fans develop feelings of ownership and loyalty as their involvement increases. Consider for a moment having athletes performing in empty venues. No cheering. No joy of showing others how well they can perform. Coaches should notice fans and spectators, and recognise their role, but not focus too much attention on their expectations and reactions.

SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS

Politics! Politics is people manoeuvring to get their own way. Individuals with their own particular reasons for being involved form the organisational infrastructure of sporting organisations. Often the motivations of administrators are at variance with what is best for the coach and athletes. How many coaches have been involved in discussions about travel arrangements for a team and been told the team would arrive at an away venue at a particular time before the competition starts because it is the most economical (cheapest?) way to organise transport? This scenario has happened at all levels, often because administrators are not fully in tune with what is best for the athletes and coach. When it happens the possibility of the best results being achieved is greatly reduced.

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

Local office holders often see the coach and athletes as a means to an end, which is the success of the club or sports organisation. But their definition of success may not coincide with that of the coach and the current stage of progress being made by the athletes. A pre-season meeting with office-bearers at which the coach outlines plans for the season and the strategies being used to achieve the goals would be a wise step in getting their ongoing support.

National and international – these bodies have a role related to the overall administration of the sport, rules and regulations, and setting criteria to be met by athletes who compete at these levels. Although the role of national and international bodies may seem daunting and distant to the local coach it is important they keep abreast of developments, particularly in the areas of trends in the sport, competition laws and rules, performance standards for athletes, changes in equipment and training methods. It may be feasible for the local sports body to appoint someone to keep coaches informed on matters which directly affect their athletes thus removing a potential source of concern.

SPONSORS AND MEDIA

Sponsors, media and equipment suppliers are outsiders who use sport for their own purposes. Their focus is to meet objectives which often bear no relation to those of the coach and athletes. Coaches need to learn strategies for interacting with sponsors and media so as not to cause themselves stress and unnecessary pressure while at the same time maintaining ongoing support and increasing the profile of the athletes and the team.

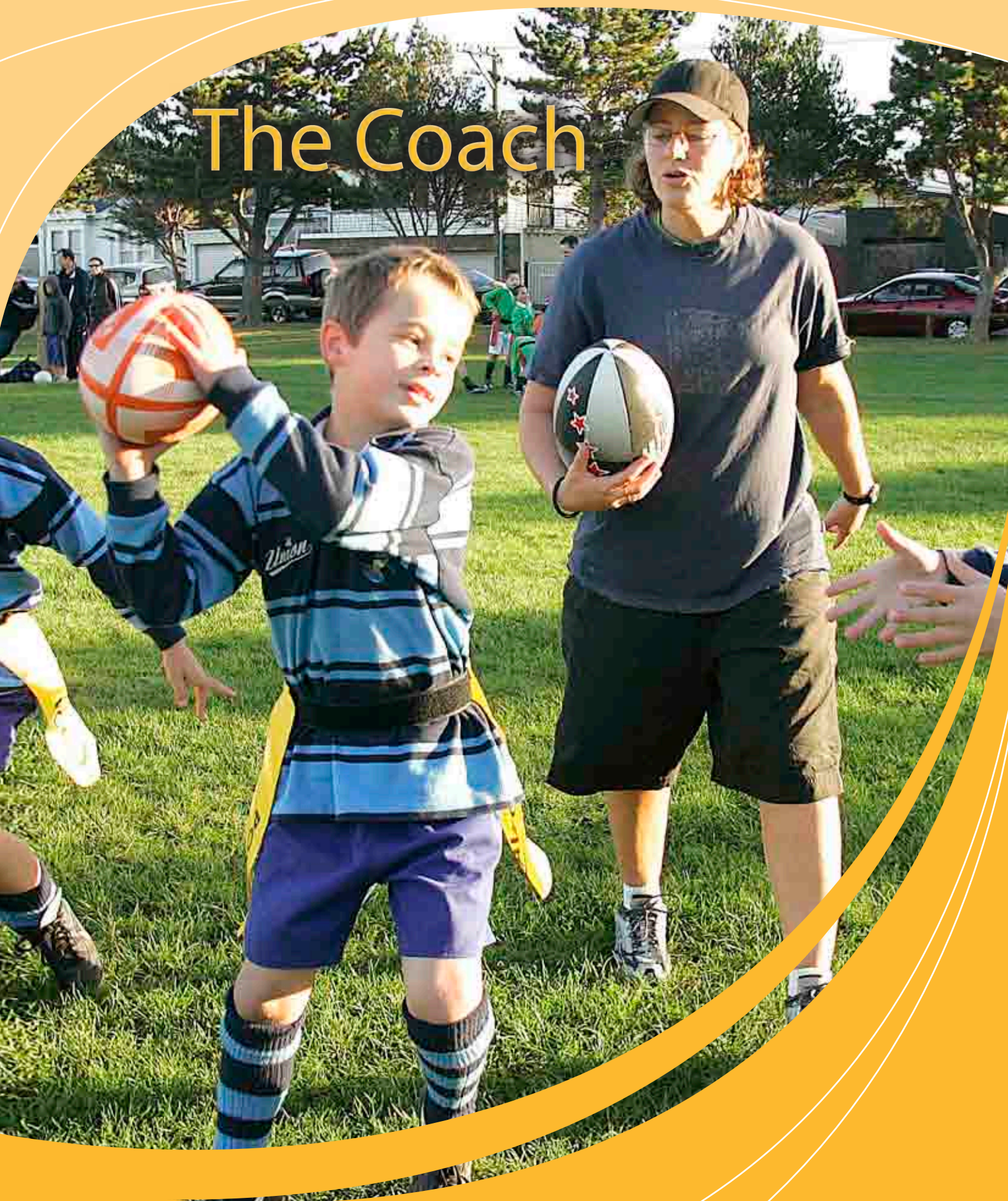
THE COACH'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY

A coach must be an exceptional individual. For professional coaches the success of their athletes is often the most significant factor used by others to determine whether a coach keeps his/her job. This creates uncertainty, which affects their relationships with family and friends.

In addition to helping a coach improve their coaching ability it is hoped this mentoring programme will assist coaches in coping with the many pressures and expectations placed on them.



The Coach



The Coach

Coaches have an amazing wealth of knowledge, and range of skills and strategies which are used in varying combinations every time they interact with their athletes and others in their sport.

People are involved in coaching to be an influence for improved performance and results by their athletes. Coaches want their athletes to be successful.

THREE ESSENTIALS OF COACHING

There are three essentials in coaching — athletes, coaches, and competition.

- Athletes, who are using their skills against one another to be the best on a particular occasion
- Coaches, who have the job of assisting athletes to perform in sporting contests. A coach's role is to provide athletes with opportunities and resources to raise their skill level and increase the possibility they will be successful
- Competition, or contest, is the vehicle by which athletes compare their skills and prowess with those of others.

THE SCOPE OF COACHING

Coaching is concerned with facilitating learning and understanding, improvement in performance and the ability to compete. Coaching must focus on the athlete (learner) and the outcomes or goals they are working towards.

Therefore coaching is about:

- Teaching athletes to perform better than their opponents
- Teaching athletes to use their skills to counter (against opponents), and cooperate with others (with teammates)
- Building and moulding an effective team or group of athletes
- Forgoing personal goals and satisfaction for those of others, and
- Gaining personal satisfaction from the success of others.

DEFINITION OF COACHING

Athletes will achieve their goals and outcomes through their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual capabilities. A role of the coach is to plan and conduct training sessions to enable the athletes to make the most of all of their talents. The primary purpose is to help the athletes to improve their level of performance. Outcomes achieved will also be influenced by the attitude of the athlete and how they practise and apply the advice and information presented by the coach.

Coaching is a set of behaviours intended to develop skilled athletes. It uses a range of strategies designed to enable the athlete to perform at their highest possible level. At the same time it recognises individual needs and preferences with regard to participation and competitive experiences, and makes the necessary changes to accommodate these needs and preferences. The coach is an instructor who helps athletes to improve their performance. A coach who does not intend to help their athletes to change their performance is not a coach but a manager, supervisor or trainer.

COACH'S EFFECTIVENESS

Coaches coach because they want to make a difference. Effectiveness is always an issue for coaches. Coaching effectiveness is the extent to which a coach believes they can affect the learning and performance of their athletes. It includes the coach's confidence in:

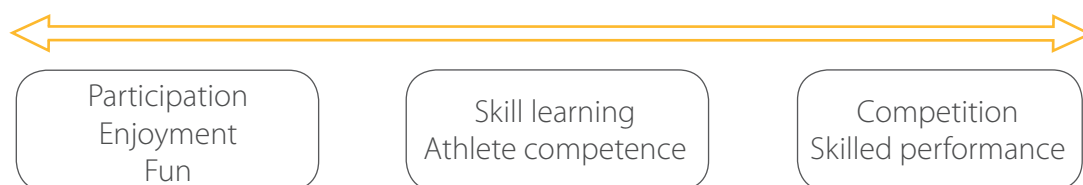
- Game strategy: confidence coaches have in their ability to coach during competition and lead their team to a successful performance
- Motivation: confidence coaches have in their ability to affect the psychological skills and states of their athletes
- Technique: confidence coaches have in their instructional/diagnostic skills
- Character building: confidence coaches have in their ability to influence a positive attitude towards sport in their athletes.

The most important sources of coaching effectiveness are years of experience and community support, although past results, perceived athlete/team ability and parental support are also related to feelings of coaching effectiveness.

A coach needs to know they are making a difference for their athletes. This difference can be in skill performance, tactical knowledge and performance, understanding of the game and enjoyment of participation.

MOTIVES

The basic motives of coaches can be set out on a spectrum with participation, enjoyment and fun at one end and a focus on preparing athletes for high level or elite competition at the other.



Coaches at the participation end often see their role as teaching some basic skills and getting athletes, especially children, interested so they will keep participating in the future. These coaches can fulfil a role of recruiting athletes into the sport and will evaluate their effectiveness by the number of children/athletes who remain in the sport. At the competitive end coaches are focussed on preparing athletes for competition. Their measure of success is the number of trophies or competitions won. At the extreme end this group will include professional coaches and those who are looking to make a career in coaching.

Most coaches are clustered towards the centre of this spectrum. They are involved to help athletes develop skills and playing ability so they will have a reasonable chance of success. Whatever the approach and whatever the goals a coach and their athletes may set, coaching effectiveness remains a factor of paramount concern.

Outcomes are the essence of sport. Coaches must plan for and expect a set of outcomes from every coaching session and every coaching action. This is important even for coaches who subscribe to the participation, enjoyment and fun approach to sport. These coaches need to focus on how best to get their participants to achieve the outcomes of enjoyment and fun. An outcome common to all is having the participants return to the next session and contest.

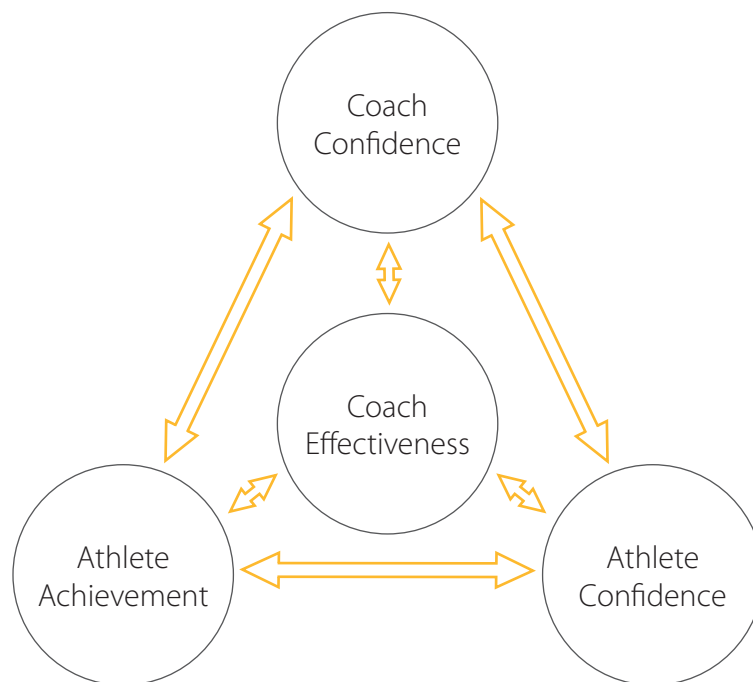
CONFIDENCE

Coaching confidence and coaching effectiveness are inextricably linked. As one thrives so the other increases, and vice versa. The confidence of a coach affects the performance of the athletes. More confident coaches will be more successful, their teams will succeed more often, they will remain committed to their role (minimising burnout) and they will enjoy their duties more.

Because a coach plays such a central role in any team, or with individual athletes, their confidence will have an impact, not just on their own behaviour and attitudes, but also on their athletes. Athletes sense the level of confidence which their coach brings to the coaching session and competition. So there is a direct relationship between coach confidence, coach effectiveness and athlete achievement. This may be viewed as an interlocking puzzle and indicates the degree of harmony and health in the athlete–coach relationship.

Coaches cannot guarantee the performance level or results achieved by the athlete. However, the athlete's chances of success are greatly increased with a coach who has a high level of confidence and effectiveness.

How often have you observed a coach dealing with an athlete in a manner which reflects their belief in that particular athlete's ability? This can be overt through the tone of voice, words used and body language but it can be more covert — for example, in the amount and quality of feedback and encouragement given to the athlete and even whether the athlete is selected. Often athletes produce the results expected of them. Champions behave like champions. Confident coaches exude confidence.



The inter-relationships between Coach Effectiveness and Coach Confidence, Athlete Confidence, and Athlete Achievement.

DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is the belief you can successfully perform a desired behaviour. For the athlete this desired behaviour may be passing a ball, throwing a javelin, hitting a ball, scoring a goal or running 100 metres in a set time. For the coach it would be knowing you have a positive effect in assisting an athlete to achieve their goals.

CONFIDENCE IS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

Many factors influence a person's level of confidence. Confidence is affected by the specific attitude or culture within the sport, and by the interactions of the people involved in the sport. In other words, those sports, clubs, coaches and athletes who convey a positive self-assured attitude are more likely to do well because others, including opponents, are influenced by that self-confidence.

Confident athletes believe in themselves, which means:

- They believe in their ability to acquire the necessary skills and competencies (physical and mental) to reach their potential
- They believe in their ability to execute the appropriate physical skills
- They are confident of their physical fitness and quality of training
- They can use perceptual skills for decision making and adapting to specific demands during competition
- They can use psychological skills (e.g. imagery, self-talk) to complement their performance.

All-in-all confident athletes see opportunity where others see difficulties and problems, and they reinforce their self-belief by associating with confident and successful athletes and others. This is the ultimate in self-fulfilling prophecies and reinforces why a coach needs to develop and support a positive and supportive climate within their group or team. Confidence can be contagious and must pervade all levels of a sporting organisation if the members want their athletes to consistently achieve at the highest level.

To summarise there are two points of importance to coaches:

1. Each coach needs to work on developing and nurturing their own level of confidence because of its direct effect on athletes.
2. Athletes will benefit when the coach helps them develop and nurture their confidence.

Coaches have a number of avenues to maintain and bolster their confidence:

- Know their sport; keep up to date
- Associate with other successful coaches
- Engage in coach development opportunities and use the most relevant information
- Maintain a life balance. Although sport is important, so are family, other people, career, health and wellness, and rest and recreation
- See opportunities in every challenge and setback
- Expect success
- Make the most effective use of a mentor.

Performance accomplishments represent the most powerful way to build confidence. Coaches are encouraged to manipulate or create situations which allow participants to experience success and a sense of accomplishment.

COLLECTIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Many researchers have described characteristics of successful teams. One such study which included teams in medicine, building jet airliners, sport and business described elite teams as possessing the following characteristics:

- Clear, elevating goals
- Results-driven structure
- Competent team members
- Unified commitment
- Collaborative environment
- Standards of excellence
- External support and recognition
- Principled leadership.

Collective or team effectiveness refers to a belief or perception shared by members of the team regarding the capabilities of their colleagues or teammates. In short, it is each individual's perception of the effectiveness of the team as a whole. Creating a belief in the team and its ability to be successful as a group appears to be critical to success in addition to individual athletes simply believing in themselves.

THE COACH AND THE ATHLETE

It is important for coaches to understand the needs and expectations of the athlete, and to match their coaching style accordingly.

Coach behaviours, skills and attitudes will influence the experiences of athletes. It is also important for athletes to recognise their own responsibilities while pursuing their sporting dreams. Through all of this coaches must know and recognise their own needs and make a special effort to take care of themselves.

STAGES IN AN ATHLETE'S DEVELOPMENT

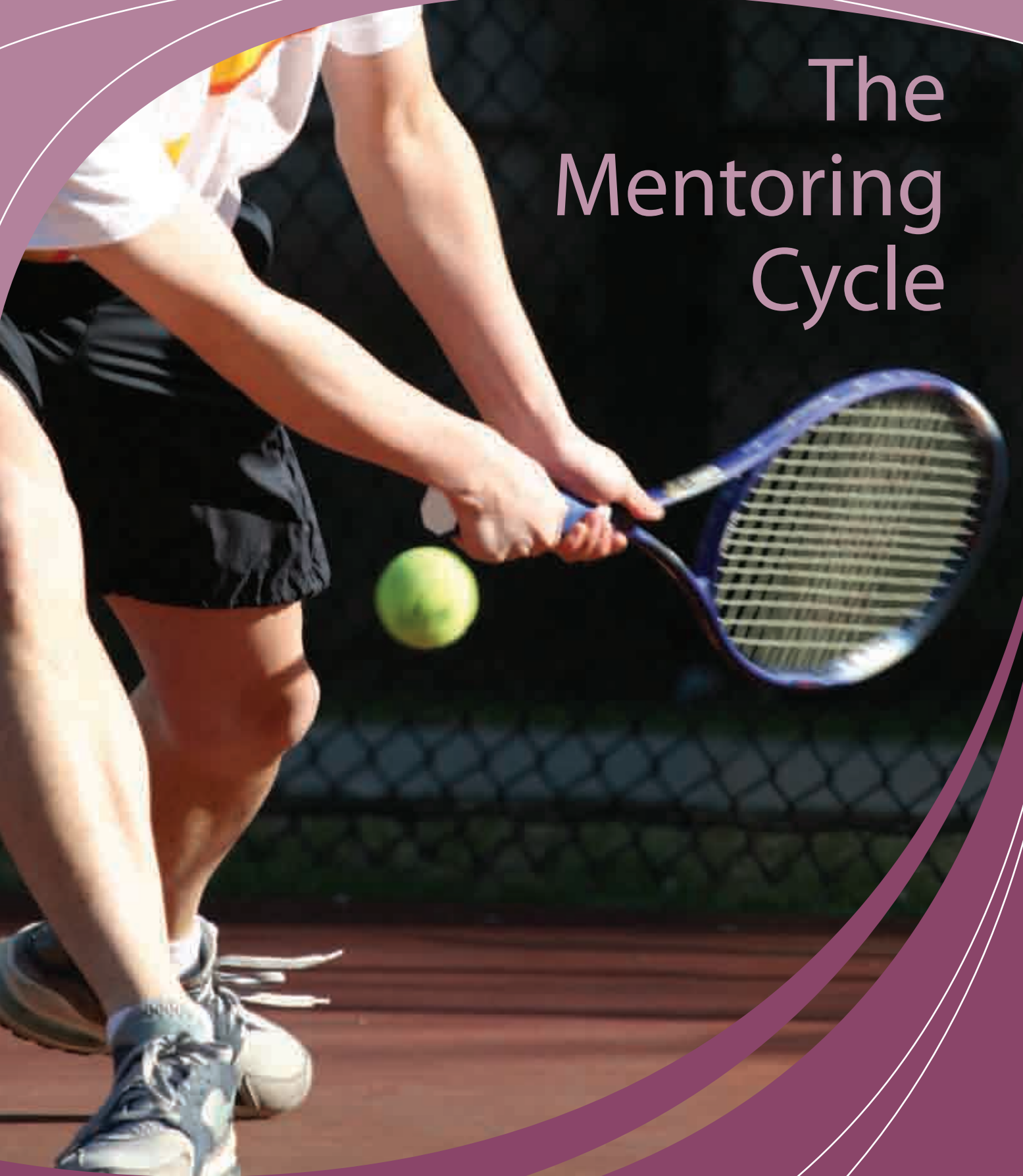
The needs and aspirations of individual athletes change as they grow, mature, gain experience and improve their range and level of capabilities in sport. An athlete's sporting development depends on many factors including their talent, age, personal needs, capabilities and aspirations.

Some individuals make rapid progress through the beginning stages of learning sport and are eager for competition. This can be seen particularly in individual sports such as, but not limited to, gymnastics, diving and swimming. On the other hand some individuals move to competition later. These people may be the classic late developers or may have chosen a sport for which their new body shape and size was not suited and so changed sports and then found success. The 'average' progression into competitive sport typically occurs through the early teen years as athletes raise their level of performance and are also able to cooperate with others in team or group tactics.

A coach has to accommodate the challenges presented by this range of stages at which individuals may move from involvement and fun of sport participation to the competitive realm.

A different set of challenges present themselves when athletes reach their peak and then move down the escalator of sport participation. Coaches may need strategies to cope with this, both with their own athletes and with opponents. This can occur, for example, when exuberant school-aged athletes compete with experienced adults who use negative tactics to avoid defeat by their younger opponents.

The Mentoring Cycle



The Mentoring Cycle

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring a coach is a relationship and a process entered into willingly by the coach and the mentor. The purpose is to help the coach to raise their effectiveness. The mentoring process is about facilitating, modifying and improving current skills and competencies, learning new skills and strategies, and overcoming personal and situational challenges and barriers.

Mentoring implies the coach and mentor have agreed to develop a plan to work on selected skills and strategies in the coach's repertoire. The mentor will also have knowledge and skills which will be of assistance to the coach both in improving their coaching skills and personal capabilities. The mentor will have sport-related knowledge and may have coached. This means the mentor will have an understanding of the pressures and frustrations, as well as the excitement and successes, which accompany a coach on their journey.

Mentoring is a process designed with the intention of helping a coach to improve their level of performance and understanding of the coaching process through guidance, encouragement, data and feedback. It involves a process of interaction between the coach and the mentor.

HELPING THE COACH

This programme is also designed to help increase understanding of coaching and to learn about the mentoring process. The purpose of all this is to assist the mentor to help the coach to develop and extend their repertoire of coaching skills. The coach will then provide appropriate opportunities for their athletes to raise their level of performance. Improvement of athlete performance is the ultimate aim of all coaches.

THE GROUND RULES

Before active mentoring begins it is important that the mentor and the coach understand and agree the ground rules which underlie the mentoring programme.

Number one

The coach works with the athletes.

Number two

The mentor works with the coach.

This means the mentor remains as an observer, is not a master coach and does not interact with the athletes. The coach may wish to explain to the athletes the reason for the mentor's presence.

Number three

Information discussed between the coach and the mentor cannot be used for any purpose other than within the mentoring process. This also means the mentor should not be asked to assess or evaluate the performance of the coach for reasons such as continuing in their position, promotion and end-of-season performance review.

Number four

Either participant, coach or mentor, can withdraw from the mentoring process without prejudice or needing to provide reasons. If the relationship is not working there is no reason for it to continue.

Number five

The coach and mentor will keep a written record, diary/logbook, of each session. At the end of the season the information will be used to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring programme.

MENTOR AND COACH WORK TOGETHER

Mentoring can lead to surprising and often unpredictable changes. As in the case of a volleyball coach who was asked a simple question, "How do you know your athletes understand what you are saying?" The answer is, "ask them." In this way he discovered an analogy he had used for years when describing the spike as being like 'swatting a fly' was completely unintelligible to present-day athletes. The aerosol can has replaced the fly swat.

Coaches have their own preferences and values about what they believe is appropriate for them and other coaches. Everything they do is consciously and subconsciously checked against their values and they will select actions which are in harmony with their beliefs. A mentor's role is to understand the position of the coach and to support them in the decisions they make. It will not be possible for a coach to make changes if such changes do not match their fundamental beliefs and the manner in which they prefer to carry out their tasks.

BEING A COACH MENTOR

What does it mean to be a coach mentor? A coach mentoring programme is fundamentally about guided discovery learning both for the coach and the mentor. The coach and mentor will learn about themselves, their strengths, preferences, biases and areas to be improved. They will also learn to share information, ideas and personal stuff, and above all to experience the feelings associated with success. Throughout the mentoring process they will learn about coaching and how particular actions impact on the performance of athletes.

The coach will have opportunities to explore a range of skills and strategies which can help to improve their effectiveness. The mentor will learn to appreciate the satisfaction gained from another's improvement and success. Mentoring is a human enterprise in communication.

AN INCENTIVE

A coach mentoring programme can provide the incentive for a coach to take time to work on their toolkit of coaching skills. It can be the vehicle to obtaining the greatest benefit for them as a coach and, in turn, for their athletes.

POSSIBLE BARRIERS

Sport is crowded with success stories. Individuals and teams who have overcome seemingly impossible odds to compete and then to win. It is one of the important messages sport can convey to the community; focus, determination, hard work and a dream are essential components for being successful. However, there may on occasion be less progress than is expected by the coach and the athletes. It may seem there are barriers to further improvement.

It is hoped the structure of this programme and the manner in which it is practised and followed will counter effects of any possible barriers. Barriers can be viewed as opportunities to demonstrate higher levels of skill and capability, and in this sense can be seen as challenges which, when met, will raise one's level of performance.

OBSERVATION AND SUPERVISION

Observation and conferences provide the opportunity for the mentor to observe the coaching and learning process, and discuss the information gathered after the session is completed. The mentor is not an assessor or master coach, but a peer using tools to gather information in order to assist coaches. Trust and open communication must exist to get the most out of the supervisory process, which is the core of the mentoring cycle, and to create a cooperative and non-threatening environment.

The process used in this programme is based on the Clinical Model of Supervision originally developed by Cogan (1973) and Goldhammer (1969). Teachers and teacher educators developed this model for use when they observed student teachers in school classrooms. The information collected could then be used to improve future teaching.

THE MENTORING CYCLE

The clinical supervision concept is intended to be a cyclic process. This implies the mentor and coach will work together through a series of cycles. In this model 'clinical' is defined as a formative evaluation process involving a pre-observation conference, observation and post-observation conference cycle. It also implies that detailed planning, cooperation and mutual trust are incorporated at each stage of the cycle. It is not judgemental.

PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

The purpose of the pre-observation conference is to plan for the observation. During the pre-observation conference the purpose of the coaching session will be clarified and the specific goals the coach is planning to accomplish and the outcomes the coach has identified for the athletes to achieve will be identified. The plans for the coaching session will be examined and the mentor will take this opportunity to ask questions for clarification. Together the coach and mentor will select and discuss the target behaviour, the type of information which will be collected and any other topics relevant to the session. The objectives of the coaching session, and any particular management and instructional strategies which are intended to be used to meet these objectives, will be clearly understood by the end of the pre-observation conference.

The pre-observation conference is a time for the coach and mentor to discuss and plan the upcoming observation session. Discussion will probably centre on issues such as:

1. The establishment, or re-establishment, of communication.
 - Some coaches may feel anxious about the upcoming observation session and this initial talk can help the coach overcome some of his/her anxiety
 - It is also a time when the coach can update the mentor on previous coaching sessions and competition happenings, and raise any questions or concerns.
2. The goals and intentions of the coaching session.
 - The coach explains the intentions of the upcoming coaching session
 - Discussion of any particular area of instruction which may be of concern
 - If the coach anticipates any problems these can be discussed.
3. As a result of the pre-observation conference the coach may want to rehearse parts of the session.
 - If the coach foresees a potential problem or difficulty (for example, with a practice drill, a game-like activity or the teaching of a new skill) the mentor can help the coach rehearse possible scenarios so they will be better prepared for unanticipated reactions from the athletes.

4. Revision of the coaching session plan.

- If, based on the conversations, the coach deems it necessary to alter the session plan, this can be done at this time.

5. Setting the ground rules.

- The mentor and coach must agree on the terms of the upcoming observation session; what each of their roles is to be. Note: a list of ground rules, which govern the coach mentoring programme, is given on page 22.
- The target behaviour will be the focus of the mentor. The coach is to conduct the session as 'normally' as possible and not put undue stress on the target behaviour.

6. Choice of an observation instrument or method of data collection.

- After the target behaviour has been selected an observation instrument appropriate to the collection of data on the behaviour must be chosen or an appropriate instrument developed. It is important to remember the data provides an objective way to capture the realities of the coaching session and this will be used to improve future coaching.

It is helpful for the coach and mentor to determine the type of data that would be most useful to assess the extent to which the instruction and learning goals were met for the particular observation. The information must be as objective as possible. When objective behaviours become the focus of observation the coach and athletes are more likely to benefit from the process.

7. Other topics the coach and mentor may want to discuss include:

- The mechanics of the observation (where the mentor sits, length of the observation, selection of athletes to be observed, etc.)
- Any specifics of the upcoming session which the mentor may need to know (e.g. number of athletes present, athletes with specific requirements, any expected interruptions).

ROLE OF MENTOR: PRE-OBSERVATION

Role of the mentor during the pre-observation conference. The mentor:

- Needs to remember the coach may be a little nervous or apprehensive at the beginning of the observation time. To reduce this effect the coach should remember the mentor is looking at him/her and recording behaviours, and is not assessing
- Listens closely to the coach to ensure the coach's goals for the session are clear.

OBSERVATION

The observation session is intended to focus on the coach's performance and the athletes' response, and the context in which everything takes place. The observation can be seen as a method of capturing the realities of the coaching session objectively enough to enable the mentor and coach to reconstruct the session as accurately as possible afterwards, in order to analyse it. The mentor should focus on the target behaviour and may note any information which contributes to the overall conduct of the session.

ROLE OF MENTOR: DURING OBSERVATION

Role of mentor during the observation:

- Observe and record all information which is related to the target behaviour
- DO NOT make value judgements
- If there are any personal comments or questions which arise they should be noted on a separate sheet which is independent of the objective data on the target behaviour
- The mentor should not intervene in the coaching session. The only exception would be when a safety issue arose.

POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

The post-observation conference is an opportunity for the coach and mentor to analyse and discuss the data collected during the observation. It is an opportunity for the coach to receive feedback about his or her coaching performance and the responses of the athletes. At this point the coach should see the data collected during the observation. The coach must be able to study and interpret the data and discuss the conclusions with the mentor. The congruencies and discrepancies which may exist between what the coach planned, what the coach thought they executed and what was recorded during the observation should be discussed. The aim of this conference is to develop an understanding of what happened and to decide on actions for implementation in the future.

ROLE OF MENTOR: POST-OBSERVATION

Role of mentor during the post-observation conference.

1. The mentor should ask the coach to reflect on his/her coaching. It is a good idea to begin the conference by asking the coach how he/she thinks the coaching session went. The mentor can probe for additional information, clarify points and direct the conversation to the target behaviours.
2. Show the data to the coach.
 - If necessary describe the data to the coach without making any value judgements. Allow the coach ample opportunity to interpret the data. (For example, what does the data mean for athlete participation, performance levels or involvement of the coach?)
 - Discuss the congruencies and discrepancies which may exist between what the coach thought occurred and what the data showed
 - Encourage the coach to suggest and explore possible alternatives or changes they could make in the near future
 - The coach could generate a series of alternative explanations, or practice drills, or organisational arrangements (teams, groups) of the athletes.
3. Choose a course of action.
 - After the discussion about the data the coach can be encouraged to plan for the next coaching session taking note of the lessons learned from the current observation.
4. Summarise the conference.
 - Before leaving, ensure both the coach and mentor are clear regarding the next steps and the tasks each has agreed to complete.
5. Set an appointment date for the next conference.
6. Remember to remind the coach of the positive behaviours which were observed during the session.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is an integral part of the pre- and post-observation conferences. It is through active listening the mentor will understand the coach, their abilities and goals. Active listening is a process which helps to reduce levels of anxiety because it is the way in which the mentor asks questions for clarification and so prevents any misunderstanding.

Active listening is a habit and an effective communication tool which can help each person involved in a conversation to clearly understand and be understood. Active listening is about focussing on the person who is speaking. An active listener needs to focus their full attention on the person who is speaking. Active listening is about understanding, not necessarily agreeing. A listener can demonstrate they are actively listening by doing the following:

ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

Questions can serve the following purposes:

- Clarify meanings (shared meanings).
I heard you saying the players enjoyed their practice.
- Learn about the thoughts, feelings and wants.
Tell me more about your ideas about the coaching session.
- Encourage elaboration.
What happened next? How did you feel?
- Encourage discovery.
What other options were there?
- Gather facts and details.
What was the athlete doing before this practice drill?
- Ask for clarification.
I'm not sure what you mean. Please tell me that part again.
- Check tone of voice for sincerity.
Be genuine in your voice and body language. Do not be condescending or sound bored or frustrated.
- Show interest.
Tell me more about that. I understand, keep going.
- Use open-ended questions.
These allow for a variety of responses.
- Don't give advice until asked for it.
What are some other options? What do you think should happen?

EMPATHISE

Being empathetic shows you are able to put yourself in the other person's shoes. To empathise you must put aside your perception of the situation for the moment and accept what the speaker is telling you.

- Show you are really trying to understand the words and the ideas
- You do not have to agree to be empathetic
- Your body language and tone of voice will match
- Your tone of voice and feelings match
- You do not impose your feelings, thoughts and ideas throughout the conversation
- You refrain from immediately giving advice or your point of view
- You can be tired after listening because it takes energy.

LISTEN NON-JUDGEMENTALLY

- Do not react to what is said in a confrontational manner
- Do not disagree with what is being said
- Do not interrupt
- Do not finish the sentence of the speaker
- Be patient
- Your body language and tone of voice match
- Your tone of voice and feelings match.

PARAPHRASE (RESTATING)

- Ensures the message has been correctly understood
- Helps to draw out more information
- Helps the speaker to know they have been heard and you are interested
- Opportunity for speaker to make correction.

RESULTS

- Active listening takes time and practice
- Each succeeding conversation usually becomes easier
- Active listening is a learning event and an effective communication experience.

EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS

The level of success of the coach mentoring programme will be reliant on the way in which the mentor and the coach engage in the mentoring cycle. Both participants will reap a wide range of benefits and as a consequence the athletes will be provided with the best possible coaching when the mentoring cycle is used in the most effective manner.

The table on page 29 can be used as a guide and checklist to ensure the key steps of the process are covered. Sample sheets for recording the Pre-Observation Conference and the Post-Observation Conference are on pages 30 and 31 respectively.

THE COACH MENTORING CYCLE

	COACH	MENTOR
1.	PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE	
a.	Reviews - Previous coaching session(s)	Previous coaching session(s)
b.	Selects - One Target Behaviour	
c.	Discusses - Last observation session - Application of data - Points learned and behaviours to be worked on	
d.	Selects - Target Behaviour for observation - Planning approach and prepares session	Plans data collection sheets and other recording instruments.
2.	OBSERVATION SESSION	
	Conducts coaching session or Attends and supervises the competition/game	Observes Records data Records what is observed and/or heard. NO EVALUATION.
3.	POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE	
a.	Reports - what happened - feelings, successes, etc - comments about Target Behaviours - overall rating of session Listens Replies/responds Discusses	Asks questions for clarification - What was happening when ...? - Why did ... happen? - How many times did ...? Listens Discusses
b.	Coach's perception of what happened is compared with the data. Was there an improvement from last time? Were there any significant challenges?	
c.	Selects and agrees to Target Behaviour for next session and, if necessary, areas to work on.	Agrees to decisions taken by coach
4.	TRANSITION	
a.	Moves on and prepares - Prepares next coaching session	Reviews observation procedures
b.	Begins - Preparing for next observation	Preparing for next observation
c.	From the beginning - The end of one coach mentoring cycle becomes the lead-in to the next.	
d.	Record keeping - Completes record sheet	Completes record sheet

Sample Recording Sheet: Pre-Observation Conference.

Coach
 Session number
 Sport
 Venue
 Scheduled start
 Scheduled finish

Date
 Number of athletes
 Team
 Weather
 Actual start
 Actual finish

1	Aims/goals for coaching session	1 2 3 4
2	Target Behaviour	
3	Reasons for selecting Target Behaviour	
4	Type of data to be recorded [e.g numbers, words]	
7	Comments	

Completed by		Coach		Mentor
(Tick and name)				
Sign			Sign	
Date				

Sample Recording Sheet: Post-Observation Conference.

Coach
 Session number
 Sport
 Venue
 Scheduled start
 Scheduled finish

Date
 Number of athletes
 Team
 Weather
 Actual start
 Actual finish

1	Aims/goals for coaching session	1 2 3 4
2	Target Behaviour	
3	Summary of data	
4	Conclusions from data	1 2 3 4
5	Plan for future action(s)	
6	Recommended Target Behaviour for next coaching session	.
7	Comments/discussion/questions arising	

Completed by		Coach		Mentor
(Tick and name)				
Sign			Sign	
Date				



Target Behaviours



Target Behaviours

Data collection is a fundamental component of this coach mentor programme because it provides objective information about behaviours. Information is important because it enables the coach to make informed and reasoned decisions.

Without objective information it is almost inevitable opinions will be expressed and disagreements will arise. If there are misunderstandings the coach will inevitably develop feelings of insecurity and even of being under siege. The coaching process is too complex an enterprise to consider introducing more uncertainty and possible sources of threat to the coach's self-esteem. Negative feelings such as these will almost certainly work against a coach being prepared to look at their coaching behaviours, let alone being prepared to change.

The selected Target Behaviour can be either of the coach, the athletes, or both as they interact. The evidence is examined and discussed by the coach and mentor at the post-observation conference. Hence it is possible for the coach to explore coaching behaviour and athlete performance in a way which eliminates value judgements and personal biases and preferences. They are more able to explore 'what if' scenarios and to look at a wider range of possibilities for themselves and their athletes. There is more detail in the next chapter about data collection.

SELECTION OF TARGET BEHAVIOURS

Coaches and mentors will be able to identify many behaviours they may wish to look at, analyse and discuss, but the major challenge will be to identify and then select one Target Behaviour to focus on. But how will they start the process of making choices?

To make this process less haphazard the following are categories into which behaviours may be grouped. The mentor may:

- a. Watch the coach,
- b. Watch the athlete, or
- c. Watch the interaction between coach and athlete.

This sounds simple, but it is where the simplicity ends. The number of behaviours occurring during a coaching session is far greater than any one person can observe and record at any one time. In fact without planning it is almost impossible to record meaningful and useful data.

The following table is designed as a simple starting point for selecting a Target Behaviour.

The Coach	The Athlete	Both
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the coaching session • Flow of the coaching session (transition from one activity to the next), pacing • Demonstration of skill • Talk • Directions • Instructions • Asking questions • Providing answers • Feedback • Correction • Encouragement • Movement around the area • Use of time • Use of equipment • Gestures, other mannerisms and idiosyncrasies • General observation of action • Officiating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time on-task • On-task activity • Off-task activity • Number of practice trials • Questions asked of coach • Listening • Directions • Instructions • Explanations • Questions • Answers • Adherence to instructions • Questions asked of others • Comments to other athletes • Waiting turn at activity • Waiting for something to begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General talk — not directly related to the coaching session • On-task activity • Off-task activity • Discussion related to instructions, demonstration, feedback, correction, encouragement, questions • Athlete-to-athlete communication • Coach talk : athlete activity ratio • Coach talk : athlete talk ratio • Strategies for forming groups and teams

WHICH TO SELECT

The primary aim for coaches involved in this programme is to help their athletes improve their performance. Behaviours which are related to the instruction/learning process are more likely to contribute to this type of improvement. Therefore, it is recommended the first Target Behaviour to be selected be related to instruction. The initial reaction may well be to observe the coach. However, this may contribute to anxiety for the coach, so on balance it would probably be preferable to begin by observing athletes and collecting data on their behaviour. After all, the athlete is the main focus of the coaching sessions. Deciding to observe the athletes will reduce pressure and anxiety on the coach. Selecting a Target Behaviour and then collecting data about that behaviour will help to diffuse any apprehension and negative reactions the coach may have in the presence of the mentor.

The challenge is to develop a priority listing and then to select the first Target Behaviour. One question to consider is, 'which behaviour, when changed or improved, will yield the highest quality results in the shortest possible time?'

GUIDELINES

Data collected should reflect the selected Target Behaviour. Data should be:

1. **S**imple. Recording data must be simple for the mentor (recorder) to keep up with the action.
2. **A**udible. When you are collecting data about what the coach and athletes say, then you must be able to hear.
3. **V**alid. The data accurately measures what it is supposed to measure.
4. **O**bvious. You must be able to see the behaviour.
5. **R**eliable. Two or more observers would obtain the same results with more than 90% agreement.

After the first session the coach and mentor should have a reasonably accurate idea of what behaviour(s) should be targeted. They will be able to make their own informed decisions about which behaviours to observe and which are the most important. The behaviours can be prioritised according to the highest perceived value for the athletes.

A suggested hierarchy of Target Behaviours, all of which are related to the development of skilled performance, is:

Priority	Target Behaviour of coach	Reason	Theory support
1	Provision of feedback, corrections and encouragement	Primary factor which impacts on learning	Feedback is essential for learning
2	Time athletes are actively involved in On-Task behaviours	The time available for performing is related to the possible number of practice trials	Sufficient successful practice
3	Number of practice trials performed by athlete linked to quality of performance	Specific time on On-Task practice is related to level of capability	Sufficient successful practice
4	High athlete activity; low coach talk	Athletes cannot practise while listening to coach talk or while waiting	Sport is action Sufficient successful practice
5	Instructional sequence	Instruction helps athletes to learn new skills, modify current skills and correct errors	Learning from the experience of others, thus saving time Building on prior learning

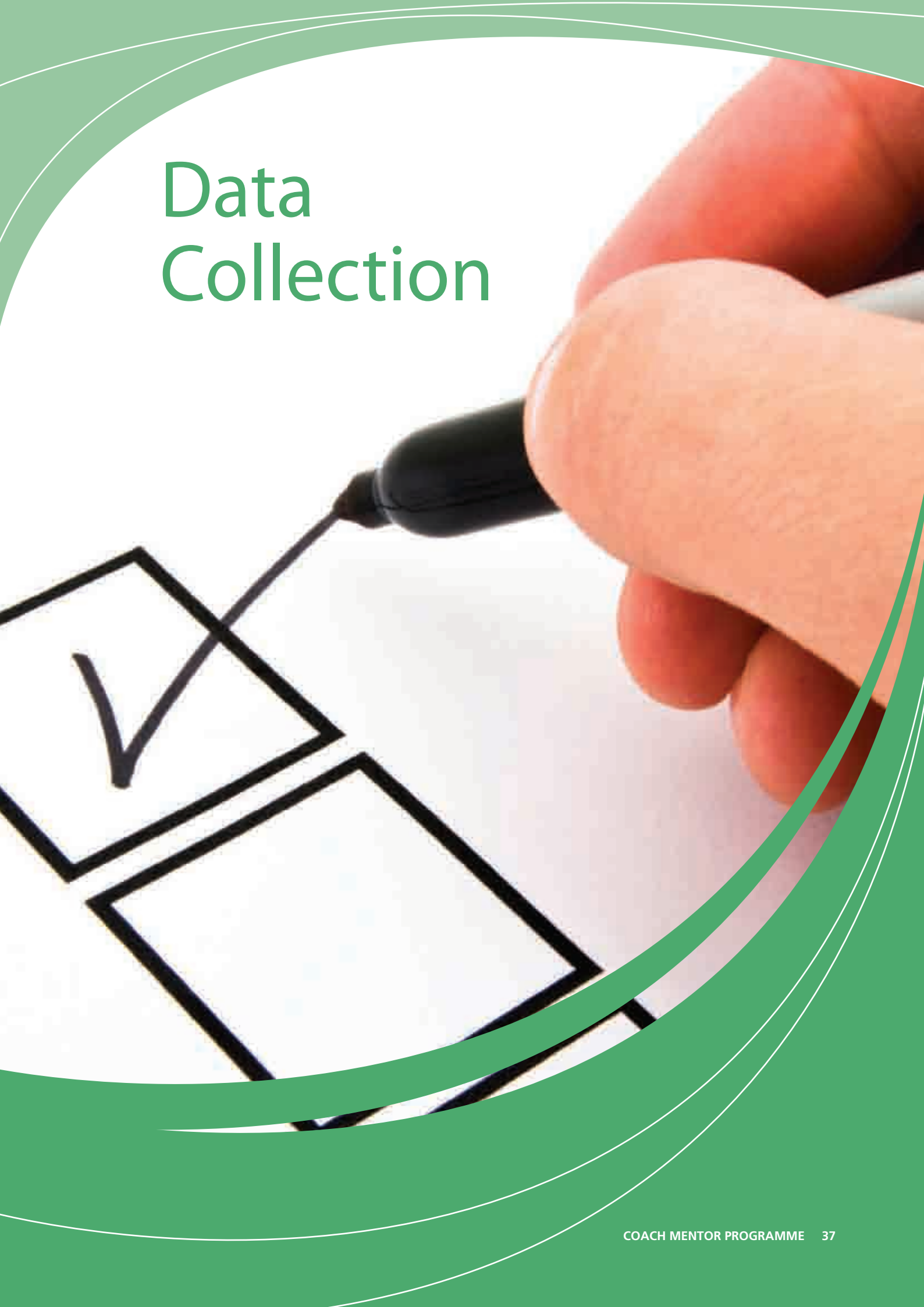
The Target Behaviour selected should be a natural part of the coach's repertoire; it must be simple and obvious. If the coach must spend time focussing on performing the Target Behaviour this will become a distraction and have a negative effect on the conduct of the coaching session.

PRE-SESSION PLANNING

Some coaches may wish to receive assistance with planning their coaching sessions. This should take place at least a day ahead of the session. Assistance can be sought from the mentor, another coach or other knowledgeable people. The proof of the planning will be seen in the quality of the coaching session. However, a coach cannot change behaviours which cannot be seen. The quality of the planning will be reflected in the following:

- Skills, games and practice drills selected.
- Sequence of activities during the session.
- Transition from one activity to another.
- Quality of instruction, feedback, corrections and encouragement.
- Order and length of each section of the session.
- Preparation for the activity including organisation of the equipment, collecting and redistribution of equipment, keeping account of equipment (all equipment collected at end of session).
- Safety (visitors and helpers, use and storage of equipment, sun and other natural elements) and risk management.
- Starting time, rest intervals, finishing time; including when athletes begin their warm-up.

Data Collection



Data Collection

A large amount of potentially confusing activity goes on during any coaching session. Therefore it is necessary to have a simple process to classify behaviours, select Target Behaviours and be able to understand what is happening.

One question coaches often ask themselves is: if an athlete can perform a skill perfectly once, then why not several times? And, in particular, why not under the pressure of competition? Collecting data may assist the coach to help the athlete understand the conditions they require for high quality performance.

FIRST TIME DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned previously the first data collection session has the potential to be stressful for the mentor and coach alike. The mentor will need to come to grips with the process of recording data and the coach will need to get used to having someone present as an observer. Experience has shown both individuals quickly become accustomed to the situation.

TIME SPENT AND SEQUENCING

At the first data collection session it is suggested that the focus be on how time is spent and the way in which the session flows or what is called sequencing. The only equipment required by the mentor will be paper, a writing instrument, a watch or stopwatch, and a data recording sheet.

The analysis of the information will provide details on the amount of time the coach talks, the time spent by the athletes being active, the sequence of game-like activities, drills, practices, and the type of coach talk throughout the session. The data can also be compared with the written coaching session plan to see how the plan was carried out.

The following table details information collected about the use of time and the overall structure and sequencing of an actual hockey coaching session.

SAMPLE RECORD OF TIME SPENT AND SEQUENCING

Coach:		Date:	Sport:
Coach	Athletes		Time Elapsed
1.	Coach sets out and organises equipment and training area.		15 min
2.	Coach greets athletes and explains presence of mentor.	Athletes greet coach and mentor.	2 min
3.	Coach explains content of coaching session; specific areas to work on after last week's match; makes comment to specific athletes about good performance in the game.	Athletes listen, ask questions. General good-humoured banter.	7 min
4.	Coach gives instructions and demonstrates the sweep shot.	Athletes listen and watch.	2 min 30
5.	Coach visits each pair and provides individual assistance, including feedback, corrections.	Athletes practise skill in pairs.	8 min 30
6.	Coach gives instruction about dribbling.	Athletes listen and watch.	1 min 30
7.	Coach watches, helps some athletes.	Athletes practise dribbling drill.	1 min 30
8.	Coach gives instruction and demonstrates dribbling and goal-shooting drill.	Athletes listen and watch.	3 min
9.	Coach watches.	Dribbling and goal shooting drill.	3 min 18
10.	Coach gives instructions.	Athletes watch.	36 sec
11.	Coach watches.	Dribbling and goal-shooting drill.	3 min 16
12.	Coach gives instructions.	Athletes listen.	1 min
13.	Coach watches.	Athletes perform goal-shooting drill.	5 min 40
14.	Coach explains tactics.	Athletes listen.	2 min 25
15.	Coach gives instructions of a different drill, goal-shooting drill. Demonstrates once.	Athletes watch and listen.	1 min 25
16.	Coach watches. Provides assistance to some athletes.	Goal-shooting drill.	5 min 50
17.	Coach summarises skills and drills done today. Organises group into two teams.	Athletes listen.	4 min
18.	Coach officiates and gives feedback.	Athletes play game.	10 min
19.	Coach gives instruction to one athlete.	Other athletes depart.	10 min
20.	Coach collects equipment.		5 min

The mentor has briefly described what took place each time the action changed. Alongside each description is a record of the time spent on that activity. Although the time has been recorded as a total the actual time each activity started and stopped could have been recorded. The mentor can use the system they prefer.

ATHLETE BEHAVIOURS

Athletes, if they wish to improve, need to perform skills and drills, and play games related to their particular sport.

The following example is based on classifying whether the athlete is On-Task or Off-Task. It would be impossible to observe and record the activity of every athlete, therefore a smaller number of athletes need to be selected. It is possible to follow and record the activity of four athletes during one coaching session. If the activity of four athletes is sampled every minute, data can be recorded on an athlete each 15 seconds and in one hour 240 pieces of data will have been collected. This would provide the basis for meaningful analysis of the behaviour of the athletes. The Data Collection Sheet: On-Task and Off-Task Behaviours of Athletes, on page 54, is an example of this method of sampling behaviours by selecting four athletes to observe.

An obvious question is which athletes to select. The first idea may be to make a random selection. This sounds good and would probably serve the purpose, but it may be better for the coach to make an informed selection.

Here are suggested guidelines to help:

- Which athlete needs to work most on their technique?
- Which athlete has the most difficulty during games? Or makes the most mistakes? Or selects the wrong skill option?
- Which athlete has an attitude problem?
- Do some players have difficulty performing under pressure?

ANALYSING NEEDS OF THE ATHLETES

Answering the above questions focuses on the needs of the athletes. The reasons for selecting particular athletes will become apparent when the data is analysed. For example, the athlete who has difficulty performing under pressure may not be spending all of the available time during coaching sessions practising the most appropriate skills. Or, the athlete who has difficulty during games may also be having difficulty performing the skills under pressure during the training session, or they may be the one who spends the least time engaged in On-Task activity. Or, the athlete with the attitude problem may not be challenged by the practices and drills, and this is reflected in data showing them involved in a relatively high amount of Off-Task behaviours.

In this way the data collected on specific athletes can assist the coach in assessing the effectiveness of specific practice games or drills for particular athletes. This is an example of how the mentoring process can benefit both the coach and the athlete.

SELECTING ATHLETES

Rather than addressing errors and challenges experienced in competition, criteria that focuses on helping the athletes perform their skills at a high level of competence could be used. Consider these:

- The position of the player (offence, defence)
- Role in the team (captain, group leader, e.g. offence)
- Special tasks, e.g. penalty corners, penalties, making strategic decisions
- Specialised skills, e.g. scoring goals, defending goal
- Seniority

This approach will enable you to collect data on how these specific athletes train during coaching sessions. It will also provide a specific focus for the data and may help the coach to modify, improve and maybe change activities included in the coaching session.

An example could be the player(s) responsible for converting a penalty situation, for example in hockey, football, basketball or rugby. Collecting data on how they train may shed some light on their performance, success or otherwise, in competition. A player may be having only a few practice shots during coaching sessions and these may be occurring in conditions unlike those experienced in competition. When there are no consequences and no pressure in training, it is not reproducing the conditions under which the athlete needs to perform in competition.

Another athlete may practise with high levels of intensity in the presence of the coach but not when unsupervised. The player who has a low conversion rate of penalty points in competition may be practising in a 'casual' manner and thus does not practise in the manner they need to compete. In this case they may react to an unsuccessful attempt with a blasé attitude. This may indicate the athlete does not have any personal association or commitment to working and being successful at a high level of competence. The challenge for the coach is to find out why this is the case.

It would also be helpful to know what the coach is doing in these situations. For example, the coach may not be providing feedback at the most appropriate times for it to have the most effect. This can result in the athlete thinking the coach is not interested in them.

The collection of data and its analysis can have an impact on a wide range of behaviours within a coaching session.

ON-TASK AND OFF-TASK BEHAVIOURS

To make the On-Task and Off-Task behaviours more useful it is possible to devise categories of athlete behaviour as illustrated in the following table. Note this will require the mentor to concentrate on the data collecting task. If the mentor is distracted or gets behind they can take up the recording as soon as possible but make a note on the recording sheet.

Categories and codes for athlete behaviour during coaching session

	Categories	Explanation	Code
1.	On-Task	Related to the sport, skills being used. Following directions of the coach. For example, performing skills or drills, or participating in games, all as directed by the coach or selected by the athlete.	ON
2.	Exercise/training	Aerobic, anaerobic, strength, flexibility, power or speed. Exercises and activities. For example, performing all exercises as directed by the coach or selected by the athlete.	EX
3.	Practice	Refining skill. Correcting error in technique. Practising new skill. For example, athlete is performing skills of the sport.	PR
4.	Tactics	Putting skills into game-like plays and strategies. Rehearsing set plays. For example, all practice drills and game-like activities.	TAC
5.	Waiting	Waiting for something to happen. Waiting for turn. For example, the athlete is waiting in line or for the coach to give directions.	WAI
6.	Listening	Listening to instructions from coach to other athletes, or to answers of questions asked.	LIS
7.	Resting	Recovering from activity. End of practice drill.	RES
8.	Off-Task active	Not following directions of the coach. For example, athlete in hockey is hitting ball and not playing a push shot.	OFA
9.	Off-Task inactive	Being inactive and not doing anything related to the session. For example, the athlete is using mobile telephone or talking to spectators.	OFI

Note: it will take practice and perseverance to be able to effectively and accurately complete a form that involves this amount of detail. You may need to make adjustments. For example, the mentor may prefer to enter numbers instead of the letter codes.

INDIVIDUAL SPORT CONSIDERATIONS

Individual sports offer their own challenges with regard to collecting data on athlete activity but in many instances the task is more simple and straightforward.

Swimmers practise turns and dives; tennis players execute serves and ground strokes; golfers play a variety of shots; and track and field athletes practise their specialty event. It is relatively simple to compose observation sheets for individual sports or athletes practising specific skills.

There are two distinct aspects of the performances which can be observed: quantity and quality. Quantity is the number of practice trials of specific skills an athlete performs during a coaching session. This is simple but may not yield enough information. Adding the dimension of quality to the data collection means the data will reflect the number of times a skill is performed and the success rate of these performances. Quality can be measured as success, that is the percentage of successful performances or how close the performance is to the ideal. The skills may be performed in a test setting or as part of a group practising moves, drills and strategies.

RECORDING DATA

The quality of a practice trial is as important as the total number of trials executed. Athletes get better at what they practise. Correct practice makes perfect. Practice can simulate the pressure of competition.

The mentor can record the data for all athletes who practise the skills which the coach has marked as being important. For example, if the coach has organised the skill practice portion of the session into practice stations, the mentor could observe just one station. The mentor will get to observe all athletes as they rotate through the stations. Here is an example of athletes working in a game-like activity, attacking the goal in, for example, hockey or football.

Athlete	Skill	Number	Skill	Number	Skill	Number
Bruce	Dribble		Trap and pass		Shot at goal	
Alan	Dribble	 	Trap and pass		Shot at goal	

* This is too simple. More information can be gained if the direction and destination of the ball is recorded. The desire to collect this kind of information can lead to the development of a more complicated chart/grid which could look like this:

Data Collection Sheet: Shots on goal, successes and misses.

Purpose: to record the number of shots on goal and classify the success rate.

Location:

Team/Athlete:

Coach:

Date:

Instructions

1. The lines represent an imagery grid superimposed on the goal area.
2. Each time the athlete shoots at goal the number of the attempt is entered into the grid indicating the position at which the ball either crossed, or would have crossed, the line.
3. Develop your own code to provide the information which will be the most useful for the athlete and coach. For example, draw a line through each number when the goalkeeper saves the shot.

1						
	8				5	
		2				
	4	9		6	3	7

Wide of goal: 10

Two ways of analysing the data are:

A.

1, 4, 5, 7, 8	Ball crossed goal line
2 , 3 , 6 , 9	Ball blocked by goalkeeper
10	Ball wide of goal

B.

A. Attacker	Successful	Wide of goal	Saved
	50%	10%	40%
B. Goalkeeper	Successful	Wide of goal	Goals scored
	40%	10%	50%

Note. An analysis such as this will give information about both the goal shooter (A) and the goalkeeper (B). Success for the goal shooter is a failure for the goalkeeper.

DATA RECORDING TEMPLATES

A collection of sample templates has been included on the CD which accompanies this book. These include some of the templates in this manual and a sample of other templates. These can be adapted or used as models.

List of general recording templates provided:

- Recording Template 1: Coaching Session Plan
- Recording Template 2: Action Plan
- Recording Template 3: Pre-Observation Conference
- Recording Template 4: Post-Observation Conference

List of data recording templates provided:

- Data Recording Template 1: Time spent and sequencing of sessions
- Data Recording Template 2: Coach talk to athletes
- Data Recording Template 3: On-Task and Off-Task of selected athletes
- Data Recording Template 4: On-Task and Off-Task of selected athletes with detail
- Data Recording Template 5: Coach Talk; feedback
- Data Recording Template 6: Coach Talk; frequency of words when providing general comments
- Data Recording Template 7: Coach Talk; frequency with individuals
- Data Recording Template 8: Coach Talk; word frequency when providing corrections
- Data Recording Template 9: Recording of instructional sequence
- Data Recording Template 10: Individual; basketball free throw
- Data Recording Template 11: Individual athlete; tennis serve
- Data Recording Template 12: Individual athlete; cricket batting
- Data Recording Template 13: Individual athlete; lawn bowls
- Data Recording Template 14: Individual athlete; lawn bowls feedback

FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Coaches will often include fitness activities in the coaching sessions. These activities can also simulate particular incidents in competition.

For example, in sports such as track, swimming or cycling, practices or drills can be included which involve the athlete running, swimming or riding a prescribed distance for a set number of repetitions. In swimming these are called sets. The purpose of such sets is to provide the athlete with an opportunity to develop specific parameters of fitness — in particular aerobic capacity.

The mentor could record the number of repetitions each athlete completes in a set. But these types of training exercises also enable the athlete to learn about their performance at a critical stage of a competition, for example, the finish of a race. The mentor could record each time the athlete completes the whole distance or slows down. This is what can be called training the last 3 metres because it is often in this distance a race can be won or lost. Athletes who pull up short of the finish are learning a habit which is not conducive to an all out effort to beat opponents to the line.

The Data Recording Sheet on page 45 can be adapted to obtain the appropriate information.

Data Collection Sheet: Athlete activity, frequency.

Purpose: to record the number of times athletes perform each practice drill and skill practice.

Location:

Team:

Coach:

Starting time:

Finishing time:

Date:

Recording started at:

Instructions

1. Start the stopwatch as the session begins.
2. Record the start time of each activity.
3. The start time for one activity will be the finish time for the previous activity.

Start	Activity	Tally	Number	Total time

Examples of activity descriptions

- Warm-up drill. Tally the number of times the group completes one action (e.g. lap).
- Skill drill. Tally the number of times the group completes a trial. Name the drill, e.g. goal shooting, dribbling, passing, group offensive drill.
- Coach talk: explanation, directions, demonstration, general talk.
- When the team is divided into groups you may wish to select one small group (2s or 3s) and tally the number of times they complete the skill.

Analysis of data

1. Total time athletes active.
2. Total time of coach talk.
3. Total number of skill trials completed by athletes.

LIVE EXAMPLE

Data Collection Sheet: Athlete activity, frequency.

Note. This recording sheet displays additional data from the same hockey session recorded previously on page 39. It shows how data from the same session can be recorded and analysed to yield different information. The original data was recorded on the Data Recording Sheet illustrated on the previous page.

Purpose: to record the number of times hockey players perform each practice drill and skill practice.

Location:

Team: Junior Hockey

Coach:

Starting time:

Finishing time:

Date:

Recording started at:

Start	Activity	Tally	Number	Total time
	Dribbling		7	6 min
6:00	Coach talk. Instruction and demonstration of sweep shot			2 min 30
8:30	Individual practice in 2s	(not possible to record individual tallies)		8 min 30
17:00	Coach talk			1 min 30
18:30	Dribbling			1 min 30
20:00	Coach instruction, demonstration. Goal shooting team drill			3 min
23:00	Goal shooting drill		20	3 min 18
26:18	Instructions demonstration			0:36 sec
26:54	Restart goal shooting drill		11	3 min 16
30:10	Coach instructions			1 min
31:10	Goal shooting		20	5 min 40
36:50	Coach; tactics			2 min 25
39:15	Coach; instructions new drill; goal shooting			1 min 25 sec
40:40	Goal shooting		35	5 min 50
46:30	Stop. Organise teams for game			
49:10	Game			

Analysis of data

Athlete activity	34 min 04 sec	34.07 min	73.27%
Coach talk/athlete listening, waiting	12 min 26 sec	12.43 min	26.73%
Total time	46 min 30 sec	46.50 min	100%

Data Collection Templates

Location:
Coach:
Starting time:
Date:

Finishing time:

Recording started at:

ID																				
E.g.																				
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6																				
7																				
8																				
9																				
10																				
11																				
12																				
13																				
14																				
15																				
16																				
17																				
18																				
19																				
20																				

Recording started at:

DIRECTIONS

- One line in table is equivalent to 1 minute. Record an entry every 15 seconds.
- Place a √ in the column corresponding to the type of activity at each observation.
- Identify each athlete in space provided.

Data Collection Templates

The following pages contain examples of four data collection sheets which mentors can use for collecting data in the initial coaching sessions. Using them will help mentors learn about the process of collecting data and provide a starting point to change these sheets and develop their own. The two main criteria to meet when designing a data collection sheet are that the data accurately represents or describes the Target Behaviour and two people recording data on the same Target Behaviour at the same coaching session will obtain a high degree of agreement in the collected data.

A collection of additional templates is available on the CD provided with this resource.

Data Recording Sheet: Time Spent and Sequencing of Session.

Purpose: to record the time spent on each activity and the flow or sequencing from one activity to the next.

Instructions:

1. Write a BRIEF description of the behaviours and activities of the coach and athletes in the spaces provided.
2. Record a new activity on a new line.
3. Enter starting and ending times for each activity or behaviour.

	Coach:	Date:	Sport:
	Coach	Athletes	Time
1.			Begin:
			End:
2.			Begin:
			End:
3.			Begin:
			End:
4.			Begin:
			End:
5.			Begin:
			End:
6.			Begin:
			End:
7.			Begin:
			End:
8.			Begin:
			End:
9.			Begin:
			End:
10.			Begin:
			End:
11.			Begin:
			End:
12.			Begin:
			End:

	Coach:	Date:	Sport:
	Coach	Athletes	Time
13.			Begin:
			End:
14.			Begin:
			End:
15.			Begin:
			End:
16.			Begin:
			End:
17.			Begin:
			End:
18.			Begin:
			End:
19.			Begin:
			End:
20.			Begin:
			End:
21.			Begin:
			End:
22.			Begin:
			End:
23.			Begin:
			End:
24.			Begin:
			End:
25.			Begin:
			End:
26.			Begin:
			End:

Data Collection Sheet: Athlete activity, frequency.

Purpose: to record the type and frequency of each activity or skill performed by the athletes.

Instructions: record each time a skill or activity is performed. For example, within a group practice, each time an athlete executes a skill or a drill record it as one occurrence. Sometimes, when the whole group practises skills in small groups, it may not be possible to record frequency of the whole team — you may select one group as a representative sample.

Coach:

Team:

Location:

Starting time:

Finishing time:

Date:

Recording started at:

	Activity	Tally (IIII)	Number	Total time
Cumulative time				

	Activity	Tally (III II)	Number	Total time
Cumulative time				

Analysis of data

Time spent on:

	Time	Per cent
Athlete activity	min	
Coach talk/athlete listening, waiting	min	
Total time	min	100%

Data Collection Sheet: On-Task and Off-Task Behaviours of Athletes.

Purpose: to record and analyse the On-Task and Off-Task behaviours of selected athletes.

Instructions

1. One line in the data recording table on the next page represents 1 minute. Record an entry every 15 seconds.
2. Write the identity of each athlete in the space provided.
3. For each entry:
FIRST decide if the behaviour is: Active or Inactive
SECOND decide if the behaviour is: On-Task or Off-Task.
4. This classification process will become easier with experience and practice.
5. Often entries for several time slots will be the same as the previous entry because behaviours usually last for more than one minute.
6. Place a ✓ in the column corresponding to the type of activity at each sampled observation time slot.
7. Make copies of the sheet if the coaching session is longer than 30 minutes.
8. On-Task: behaviours related to the sport or the instructions of the coach. Off-Task: behaviours not related to the sport or the instructions of the coach.

An athlete can perform a skill related to the sport but which is not according to the instructions. For example, jump shot instead of a lay-up, forehand instead of a backhand. These would be classified as Off-Task.

Analysis of Data

Athlete	Active		Inactive	
	On-Task	Off-Task	On-Task	Off-Task
1.				
%				
2.				
%				
3.				
%				
4.				
%				

Turn page for Data Collection Sheet

Data Collection Sheet: On-Task and Off-Task Behaviours of Athletes.

Location:

Team:

Coach:

Starting time:

Finishing time:

Date:

Recording started at:

ID	Athlete: :00				Athlete: :15				Athlete: :30				Athlete: :45				
	Active		Inactive		Active		Inactive		Active		Inactive		Active		Inactive		
	min	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off
E.g.		✓			✓							✓				✓	
1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5																	
6																	
7																	
8																	
9																	
10																	
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19																	
20																	
21																	
22																	
23																	
24																	
25																	
26																	
27																	
28																	
29																	
30																	

Recording stopped at:

Data Recording Sheet: Coach Talk — Frequency with Individual Athletes.

Purpose: to record the frequency of coach talk with each athlete.

Location:

Team:

Coach:

Finishing time:

Starting time:

Date:

Instructions: place a mark in the appropriate column each time the coach talks with an athlete. This is a record of frequency and not duration. For example, you would record four (4) separate incidents for this sequence: coach talks to Athlete A, pauses to give short comments to Athlete B and Athlete C, and returns to talk with Athlete A [reason: the incidents are recorded in lineal sequence, as they happen]. Record when the coach talks to groups of athletes at the bottom of the sheet.

Recording started at:

	Athlete	Athlete identification	Tally (IIII)	Total
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
	Group of 2			
	Group of 3			
	Group of 4			
	Larger groups			



Concluding Chapter



Concluding Chapter

Time is precious, and for coaches doubly so because they have to balance their coaching duties with every other part of their lives. It is hoped this coach mentor programme will provide both mentors and coaches with a vehicle by which they can improve their effectiveness and use the time they have in the most efficient manner.

All training programmes change with experience and feedback from participants. The basic theory and principles of this programme will remain largely intact but changes could evolve over time as coaches and mentors become familiar with the data collection process and understand how changes in coach behaviour can impact on the performance of their athletes.

Readers are reminded of the relationships between coach confidence, coach effectiveness, athlete confidence and athlete achievement. As a coach builds their confidence, and supplements their skills with increased knowledge about the coaching process, there is bound to be a positive effect on athlete performance. The coach mentor programme will contribute to the coach's knowledge and assist them in the skills of instruction, which in turn will relate to the improvement in athlete skill levels.

Sporting bodies are encouraged to develop their sports-specific data collection sheets which can then be shared with other sports. Although this resource and other coaching and teaching resources contain examples of statistical analysis templates, the most useful instruments will probably be the ones mentors and coaches develop for themselves. The only proviso is that they meet two simple tests: they are valid – recording data about the behaviour being observed, and they are reliable – two people observe the same session and get at least 95% agreement with the data. Data collection techniques can be changed to meet individual goals and needs, and will evolve with experience. Many sports now collect data during games. At elite levels, sports like netball, football and rugby have sophisticated electronic tools designed for this purpose. How much of that information is used by the coaches to examine their coaching methods and procedures? For example, if a small number of players are repeatedly featured in particular statistics does the coach look at the various portions of their coaching sessions and see any relationships?

In the course of preparing this material a conversation was held with a coach about his football team and how they were to approach an upcoming tournament week. His coaching over the season was reviewed and he described a process which the players had followed to develop goals, and a support system within the team which included providing each other with positive feedback and encouragement. The main question to him then was, 'What is the overall, simplified goal for the team?' Answer, 'To win.' Next question, 'How will they win?' Answer, 'By scoring goals.' 'What is the act of scoring goals?' 'It is a skill.' How does the development of team and individual goals, and a feedback and encouragement system, relate to scoring goals?

The only way a football team can win games is to move the ball into the opponent's goal. (The exception is for the opponents to put the ball into their own goal, but either way the ball must cross the goal line between the uprights and below the crossbar.) Without the ball crossing the goal line the best result a team could manage would be a nil-all draw.

This series of questions became a 'cause for thought'. How many shots on goal has the team averaged per game through the season? What effect would there be if at half-time you were to tell the team the number of shots on goal?

The conversation then moved to the game plan. It would seem reasonable to suggest that a game plan could be based on the premise that everything a player does contributes to the team effort of increasing the number of shots on goal. That is, Game Plan = Maximum shots on goal, because the more shots on goal the more likely it is for goals to be scored, which in turn increases the chances of the team winning the game. Each player could ask themselves, 'That action I just performed, did it help to increase the shots on goal?'

This sounds very simple and may seem to some to be superficial, but it is not. It highlights the major challenge for every team coach: how is it possible to increase the scoring capability of my team? The answer lies in skill instruction, which in turn relates to increasing athlete performance.

This comes back to the primary aim of all coaches — to provide all possible assistance to athletes so they can raise their level of performance and success.

We can be tempted to take everything in life too seriously, including coaching and sport. It is helpful to occasionally slow down and take a fresh look at one's motivations and reasons for doing what we do.



PAUSE FOR A BIT

Pause for a bit. Poet Doug King made this comment on the value of incubating: 'Learn to pause ... or nothing worthwhile will ever catch up to you.' Allow the Muse to whisper in your ear. How would your problem benefit if you paused in the next hour? Day? Week? Month? What might you gain or learn?

BE PERSISTENT

Be persistent. Two frogs fell into a bucket of cream. The first frog, seeing there was no way to get any footing in the white fluid, accepted his fate and drowned. The second frog didn't like this approach. He thrashed about and did whatever he could to stay afloat. Soon his churning turned the cream into butter, and he was able to jump out. How persistent are you? What if, during your pursuit of your issue all your friends thought you were crazy? How would you maintain your resolve?

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

In preparing for the Olympics, the coach of a leading rowing team invited a meditation instructor to teach awareness techniques to his crew. He hoped that such training would enhance their rowing effectiveness. As the crew learned more about meditation, they became more synchronised, there was less resistance, and their strokes got smoother. The irony is that they went slower. It turned out that the crew became more interested in being in harmony than in winning. What are the unintended consequences (both positive and negative) of you being successful in your field?

BREAK OUT

Give yourself a whack on the side of the head. The more often you do something in the same way, the more difficult it is to think about doing it in any other way. Break out of this 'prison of familiarity' by disrupting your habitual thought patterns. Write a love poem in the middle of the night. Eat ice cream for breakfast. Wear red socks. Visit a junkyard. Work the weekend. Take the slow way home. Sleep on the other side of the bed. Such jolts to your routines will lead to new ideas. How can you whack your thinking? What would really disrupt the way you are currently thinking about your problem? How would each of the following situations change the way in which you think about your issue: not being able to talk for a week ... breaking your leg ... losing your job ... the economy going into a deep recession ... suddenly being ten years older ... suddenly being ten years younger ... swallowing a pill that gave you three times as much energy ... having to sleep fifteen hours a day ... your being forced to spend a night in a scary graveyard ... having your IQ increased by 50 points ... having your IQ decreased by 50 points ... having to crawl to work on your hands and knees ... having a good friend from your past allege that you did evil things ... suddenly becoming ten years older for a day ... a vicious civil war in your country ... heatwaves in the winter and snowstorms in the summer.



Notes from Roger von Oech, author of *A Whack on the Side of the Head*.



Appendix



Appendix One

SUMMARY OF MOSSTON'S TEACHING STYLES

The following summary is based on Muska Mosston's spectrum of teaching styles. These styles are described to assist the teacher in Physical Education to use a variety of teaching strategies to enhance learning and development of students. In many cases, the type of activity or sport dictates the style or strategy used. In addition, the characteristics of the teacher and the learners affect how the material is presented and assimilated.

STYLE	OBJECTIVES	IMPLICATIONS
A - COMMAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher makes all decisions • teacher directed instructions re: location, start time, pace, stop time, demonstration, etc. • learner responds to instructions • class is set up in an orderly manner • teacher circulates to give feedback • examples include dance, aerobics, drills, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficient use of time (time on-task is high) • learning by recall and repeated performance • fixed standard of performance (based on model) • progress is rapid • no 'thinking' on part of students other than memory
B - PRACTICE (TASK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learner performs tasks prescribed by teacher, but learner determines pace, rhythm, start, stop, interval • teacher circulates to give individual feedback • designed for individual practice, class is dispersed • examples include individual skills in volleyball, basketball shooting, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners held accountable for decisions • learners begin to experience independence • provides activity for students who finish task • time On-Task can be affected
C - RECIPROCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • class is organised in pairs or threes • observer gives feedback; doer performs the skill; feeder, if necessary, feeds object to doer • observer makes feedback decisions, rather than teacher • use of task cards or criteria sheets designed by teacher • teacher communicates only with observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater socialisation between students • students take a more active role in the learning process • constant presence of teacher not required • teacher trusts students to make decisions
D - SELF-CHECK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners assess themselves in comparison to criteria sheets established by teacher • examples include individual skills, target games, fitness results, etc. • teacher provides feedback at the end of class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students monitor themselves • self-check is private • students learn their own limits, successes and failures • more concerned with the results of a movement, not the movement itself

STYLE	OBJECTIVES	IMPLICATIONS
E - INCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple levels of performance of the same task to allow for success of all learners (slanted rope) • accommodates individual skill differences • student chooses the level of performance based on perceived ability • self-assessment • teacher provides feedback regarding the decision-making process, not the chosen level • examples include gymnastics, basketball shooting (distance from basket), fitness and weight training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students can take a step backward to experience success • inclusive, invites involvement • be aware of the gap between reality and aspiration • some students have difficulty choosing a particular level because they are conditioned to being told • often a positive style for students who get excluded from other activities
F - GUIDED DISCOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher guides students through a series of problems in which students make decisions to arrive at solutions • each step is based on the response to the previous step • teacher must wait for the learner's response and offer frequent feedback or clues (patience) • examples include centre of gravity in gymnastics, levers, stability, strength, speed, the need for a variety of passes in basketball, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lots of preparation on part of teacher • teacher must be prepared to experiment with the 'unknown' because responses may be unanticipated • minimal social contact with other students, but cognitive involvement is high • level of physical activity may be low
G - DIVERGENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learner is engaged in discovering a number of solutions to a problem • cooperative learning, each solution has value • teacher merely encourages responses, does not make judgements • examples include rolling the body, getting from one side of the gym to another using limited equipment, combining movements in gymnastics or dance, tactics in sport, game situations, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demanding for the teacher, must have expertise in the area • creativity of students • cooperation of students
H - INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme developed by the learner based on physical and cognitive abilities • highly individualistic, not suited to all learners • learner designs the questions and the solutions • teacher observes, guides and provides individual conferences • enrichment activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior experience in an activity is necessary for learners to engage in this style • time consuming – thinking, experimenting, performing, recording

Source: <<http://www.nipissingu.ca/education/barbo/Mosstons_TS.htm>> accessed 22 October 2008.

This table is included to demonstrate the range of outcomes which are possible when a teacher or coach interacts with learners. There is an approach to suit the preferred style of anyone who wishes to assist others to improve their level of performance.

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