**Thought question 4**

For me, defining the role of the coach goes hand in hand with defining the desired outcomes of the team the coach will be responsible for, with both components absolutely vital in the planning and organisation phases of a programme or season.

Defining the role of the coach should start at the very top of the ladder (i.e. the club or organisation), and be made crystal clear to the incoming coach who will then be accountable for delivering a service according to their role. This is particularly pertinent when selecting the coach, as desired and possessed skill-sets differ from context to context, e.g. participation vs. performance (Trudel & Gilbert, 2006).

Having worked within senior and national youth representation where my roles & objectives were assigned beforehand (as outcome driven), I was at the very start accountable and responsible for my work and able to prepare a team, which bought into my/the organizations objectives. My experience tells me that a breakdown in defining the role of the coach can have a dramatic negative effect on the success of the team. FYI guys there are some good examples out there in the field of sport psychology that I have found very useful used over the years when initiating my own periodised programmes.

The coach must be clear as to her/his role, as its them who are required to structure, select, and manage the group in accordance with their own role. At a performance level where coaches roles are often results driven, coach effectiveness is often measured by wins and losses (Mallet & Côte, 2006) - simply put, win and you're your doing a good job, lose and you're not doing a good job. It is the coach that must clearly and succinctly convey the team purpose to its members, so that they themselves can become accountable and motivated to achieving team objectives (Voight & Carrol, 2006).

Again, I have first hand experience of teams losing, not because of a gap in skill-set necessarily, but rather because team members do not understand how they fit into the team roles and are not prepared to address it properly. Players may not believe in their purpose, or worse, may not want to undertake the tasks necessary to reach the team goals.

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I actually have an ethical example that I think may be pertinent to this discussion. Coach A' has recently in the firing line because his team have underperformed during the first 8 weeks of the season. This is his first season at the club, and his' role was set out from the start - to produce a winning team.

8 games in and yet the team have won just 1/6 matches. As an observer I can see that there is a negative atmosphere at training, a huge blame & excuse culture that might explain the interpersonal conflict and a general lack of trust among the team. I understand that no formal process took place upon the coaches' arrival to outline the clubs philosophy and short/long term aims. Furthermore, no team or player goal-setting process has been taken.

Whilst onlookers are placing blame with the players and coach’s lack of ability, I personally feel it has more to do with having no definition of roles and responsibilities, and how they impact on the success of the team.

References.

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