The Coaching Process

Submitted by

sxxxxxxxx

2013

The 'coaching process' is both eclectic and multi-disciplinary (Lyle, 1999). It is the coach's role to manage the various parts of the process to form an effective strategy for improving sports performance in the athlete or team. The coaching process is complex but has been broken down to a simple cycle of planning, delivering and analysing. According to Miles (2003), the coaching process is a continuous succession of observation, analysis, goal setting, planning, monitoring, evaluation and action planning for the next cycle. Jones, Hughes and Kingston (2008) consider analysis to be one of the foremost processes as the essence of the coaching process is to promote positive changes in sports performance coaching.

Frank, (1983 cited in Hughes and Frank 1997 p.120) uses a simple flow chart to outline the coaching process in its observational, analytical and planning phases (See Appendix 1). Coaching and teaching skill depends heavily on analysis in order to effect any improvement in an athlete’s performance.

As coaching practice consists of a range of behaviours, activities, processes, and individual and organisational functions, Lyle (2002) states that coaching practice should be the term for the totality of the coach’s professional and personal activity and experience. It embraces observable and cognitive behaviour and acknowledges the environmental context within which the coach operates. Jones *et al* (2008) also refers to the coaching practice as the full range of behaviours, activities, processes, individual and organisational functions, that result from the operationalisation of the coaching role and the coaching process, however to understand the differences in coaching practice some background information is needed. Cassidy, Jones and Potrac (2004) explain that the link between teaching and coaching sport is a historical one. Despite teaching and coaching sharing common history in recent years a number of articles have been written on the theme of coach-teacher differences (Bergman 2000).

A widely accepted definition of sports coaching is that it “centres on the improvement of an individual’s or team’s sporting ability, both as a general capacity and as specific performances” (Lyle, 2002, p.38). Similarly, Kidman and Hanrahan (2004, p.145) state that “one of the primary roles of a coach is to help athletes improve their performance”. Coaching sport is a highly contextual act and there are a number of factors that directly influence the coaching environment however the foundations of good effective coaching are not just knowledge of the sports techniques and tactics but being able to use a process to put these into practice (Douge and Hastie 1993). They identified five principles of effective coaching, suggesting:

1. an order management of the training session,
2. a heavy emphasis on instruction behaviours
3. high frequency of correction and instruction comments,
4. frequent use of questions and asking athletes for clarification
5. frequent provision of feedback.

This could function as a definition of the coaching process as it shares similarities with Franks (1983) model.

Coaches are said to go through stages of volunteer coach, part time coach, career coach and coach for life. At the same time, their roles progress further from instructor, through assistant coach, to club coach and finally head coach (Nash & Sproule, 2011). This model recognises a number of sports coaching environments:

* community coaching,
* competition introduction,
* competition development
* high performance competition.

For example, football has many clubs at grass roots all the way up to professional level, but coaches need to start somewhere. Qualifications can be gained by national governing bodies, who run various courses through the year. Once qualified at various levels, there are various jobs and roles that can be attained, such as community coaches for professional football clubs, local council sports development programs, further education in sport such as degrees in sport science, working at the upper levels of sport with high performance athletes. The way in which a coach implements the coaching process depends to a great extent upon their knowledge base and the coaching environment in which they operate (Nash & Sproule, 2009).

The coaching process should enable coaches to help participants to achieve their personal goals and may influence their attitudes, lifestyle, aspirations and abilities. AS the coaching process is continuous it can start at any point in the cycle but all stages are equally important. A coach plays a major role in operationalising the coaching process for the benefit of all.

References

Cross, N. and Lyle, J. (1999). The Coaching Process: Principles and practice for sport. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Douge, B. & Hastie, P. (1993) Coach effectiveness, *Sport Science Review,* 2, 2, 14-29.

Hardman, A.R. and Jones, C. (ed.). (2011). The Ethics of Sports Coaching. London: Routledge.

Jones, R.L. (ed.) (2005). The Sports Coach as Educator: Reconceptualising sports coaching. London: Routledge.

Jones, R.L., Armour, K.M. and Potrac, P. (2004). Sports Coaching Cultures: From practice to theory. London: Routledge.

Kidman, L. (ed.). (2001). Developing Decision Makers: An empowerment approach to coaching. Christchurch: Innovative Communications.

Kidman, L. and Hanrahan, S. (2011). The Coaching Process: A practical guide to improving your effectiveness (3rd edition). Palmerston North: Dunmore.

Lyle, J. (2002). Sports Coaching Concepts: A framework for coaches’ behaviour. London: Routledge

Nash, C. & Sproule J. (2011) Insights into Experiences: Reflections of Expert & Novice Coaches. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 6, 1, 149-161

Nash, C. & Sproule, J. (2009) Career Development of Expert Coaches. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching,* 4, 1, 121-138.

Appendix 1

