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Key-Note Presentation, Mittwoch, 6. Juni 2012

Marking the Boundaries of Sports Coaching

The concept of coaching is one that finds expression in sport, education, business, drama, health and wellbeing, and other spheres of activity. A perennial issue is whether the assumptions and understanding

about coaching are shared across these diverse areas. This keynote presentation describes the sports coaching process and identifies its characteristic features. In doing so, we intend to convey a perception that the concept of coaching is contested and problematic. We will suggest that no generic concept of coaching will provide any insights into coaching practice in sport or is applicable across different fields.

Sports coaching is a term for a family of roles and activities that share a purpose and intention to improve sports performance. However, this superficial description masks a range of roles, domains, expertise and functions that require much more detailed attention. The term coaching tends to be attached to the process of 'delivery' itself, but we will argue that the term is imprecise, and cannot represent the plethora of activities, interventions, behaviours and relationships that characterise the coaching process, nor reflect the social context of its operation. Rather, we will propose that 'coaching' is best used to describe a purposeful, instrumental and social relationship between athlete and coach, although occupational boundaries are social contexts are diverse.

There are a number of features of this relationship that perhaps distinguish it from other coaching processes. In the presentation, we will identify (a) the active role of the coach in achieving the sporting outcomes, (b) the 'continuous practice' element of the sports coaching role, (c) the public nature of the evaluation of sports coaching, (d) the sport-specific behaviour and practice, (e) the contested nature of the outcome goals, and (f) the social context of coaching. We conclude that sports coaching is an occupational practice of enormous variety and scope, and that the generic term coaching is an inadequate descriptor for the activities and processes it embraces.

Biographies

Professor Dr John Lyle was until recently Professor of Sports Coaching in the Carnegie Faculty of Leeds Metropolitan University, and prior to that Dean of the School of Psychology and Sport Sciences at Northumbria University. This was the culmination of a long and successful career in higher education, first in physical education and thereafter specialising in sports coaching studies. He established the first professional diploma in sports coaching and the first Masters degree in coaching studies in the UK. He has played a significant role in the development of sports coaching as an academic field of study, and is the author of three influential textbooks, including *Sports Coaching Concepts* (Routledge, 2002). He combines a role as an academic with a role as research consultant, collaborating with a number of universities and national sports agencies. John's academic experience is complemented by a considerable personal experience as a coach, involvement in the determination of sports coaching policy in the UK, and engagement in the delivery of coach education and development. He has coached and played volleyball at international level, including

the European Championships, World University Games and European club championships. He was also a professional soccer player.

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Dr. Christopher Cushion took up, after completing his undergraduate degree at Brunel University, a PhD studentship and completed his PhD, an ethnography of the coaching process in elite youth football, in 2001. He was appointed a lecturing position in Sports Coaching and Performance, and progressed to Senior Research Lecturer in Coaching and Performance; being appointed as the pathway leader for the MSc in Sports Coaching. In 2006, Chris was appointed as Course Director for the BSc Sports Coaching and Teaching/Research Group Leader for Coaching at Leeds Metropolitan University. He has a wide interest in coaching being involved as an external reviewer in the UK Coaching Certificate endorsement process and a range of coaching related consultancy projects for both the public and private sector. Within sport and industry, his clients include Chelsea F.C., Fulham F.C., Bath R.F.C., Tottenham Hotspur F.C., The Football Association, Sport Universal (Amisco) Sport Coach UK, Skills Active, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, OPTA, Elite Analysis, Sport Scientific and Sports Hub. Chris is actively involved in coaching practice being a UEFA qualified football coach. He has extensive experience in sport from participation to performance coaching in the UK and the United States including 10 years work in professional youth football for a range of clubs. These included Norwich City F.C., Brentford F.C., Queens Park Rangers F. C. Fulham F. C., and Derby County F.C.

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Important Literature

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