



Competencies of an Effective Coach

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What is Competency

- ‘The ability to do something successfully or efficiently’
- ‘A skill set, understanding of, or personal behaviour trait that is relevant to art and science of coaching which leads to the development of the athlete both on and off the field’

What are competencies of an effective coach

- Through personal experience and research for a masters program the following core competencies were identified;
- Four sports specific competencies
- Four multi sport competencies

Core Competencies

Sport Specific

- Technical Identification
- Tactical Understanding
- Organisation
- Pattern Recognition

Multi Sport

- Capacity for Self-Reflection
- Mentorship
- Communication ability
- Continuous Improvement

Technical Identification

- Pick up on visual cues
- Procedural knowledge- How to perform skill
- Declarative knowledge- How to 'teach'
- Critical moments
- Prior to contact – final prep
- At contact- the event
- After contact- the conclusion and re-prep

Tactical Understanding

- Tactics- *“a combination of the different styles and different formations of play”*
- Tactical Understanding – *“ understanding the different formations and styles of play that allows the coach to organise their team to be competitive, and having the ability to make changes to the team structures in relations to their opponents”*

Organisation

- Organisation of time- knowing when to switch activities
- Organisation of space- knowing when to manipulate the area
- Organisation of team and competitive structure- moving players
- Organisation of the training session- creating random, variable and distributed sessions
- Planning- Micro, meso and macro cycles

Pattern Recognition

- “A branch of machine learning that focuses on the recognition of patterns and regularities in data”
- Reading the game, seeing the play, having a sixth sense’
- Experienced soccer players exhibit superior anticipation skills than inexperienced players due to higher search rates on more locations of the field (Evans, Whipp and Lay 2012).

The Time Paradox

- Abernathy, 1991, as cited in Evans et al., 2012, referred to the time paradox where skilled performers operating under pressure of time appear to have all the time in the world.
- Dennis Bergkamp: about whom former Ajax coach David Endt suggested that ‘The seconds of the greats last longer’

Pattern Recognition

- Expertise is domain specific and experts 'read' faster than novices (Abernathy et al., 2005).
- Higher search rates across larger areas of the field are essential in the skill of pattern recognition (Evans et al., 2012)
- Over time a competent coach will develop this skill then be able to take these patterns back to their practice

Tactics and Strategy

- The terms tactics and strategy are often confused: tactics are the means used to gain an objective, while strategy is the overall plan, which may involve complex operational patterns, activity, and decision-making that leads to tactical execution.
- The difference between strategy and tactics: strategy is done *above* the shoulders, tactics are done *below* the shoulders

Capacity for Self-Reflection

- Reflection is a skill that has to be developed
- Self reflection as a key tool in coach development (Knowles et.al. 2005: Nash & Sproule, 2009,)
- Need self-confidence to fully reflect on performance
- Self reflection not always possible in certification programs

Types of Reflection

- Reflection in action- critical thought about an issue that occurs in activity
- Reflection on action- the issue can be addressed in a timely fashion, but not during the activity
- Retrospective reflection- reflection that happens outside of the activity or present time.

Mentorship

- Not CLONING!
- We all have mentors at different stages
- No set procedures for mentoring
- Formalised mentoring should be part of coach education (Jones, Cushion & Armour, 2003)
- Many coaches ask for help but not all take it!
- When coaches become isolated they stagnate

Mentorship

- Expert coaches are mentored throughout their career, particularly in the early and middle stages of their development (Bloom et.al 1998)
- Effective coaches spend little time annually in coach education and that coach education is more likely to take place when coaches are together discussing and challenging each other (Côté,2006) which is a clear concise definition of coach mentorship.

Communication

- ‘People don’t care what you know until they know you care’ Theodore Roosevelt.
- Knowledge on its own is not enough
- Must be able to convey a message
- Athletes
- Peers
- Parents

Keys to effective communication

- Don't take things personally-even if it is!
- Follow up in a timely fashion
- If possible face to face- decreases chance of poor perception of the message
- What your saying maybe isn't what they are hearing
- What are they trying to say?
- Rehearse and prepare for their reactions
- Don't rush if you don't have to! It CAN wait

Continuous Improvement

- The idea of 'always on' approach to learning can minimise the role of formal coaching education (Christensen, 2014).
- Continued Education Units
- By taking responsibility for their own learning the inquisitive coach can be seen as a transformative intellectual as opposed to the traditional view of a coach passing on information (Jones et al., 2003)

Coach or Organiser?

- Coach
- Looks for new trends and searches for new information that is relevant to their athletes.
- Has the ability to transfer knowledge across different contexts
- Wide bandwidth
- Organiser
- A conduit for information
- Only works within a single context
- Copies
- Clone coach
- Narrow bandwidth

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Questions or comments?

- Thanks for your time today!