

S P O R T S M I N D

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The key to making better athletes is to make better people.

1 The Four Levels of Coaching

The disturbing examples of player (and spectator) behaviour in football this year come as a timely reminder that coaching should be more than simply designing training programs, selecting players and developing sports skills - and that sport has a more important role in society than is often understood by those that are only concerned about whether their team wins or loses on the weekend!

Coaching is truly much more than simply passing on the knowledge of sports skills, training approaches, tactics and experience. It's even more than understanding how to manage and motivate people as individuals and as a team, building mental toughness, or encouraging the competitive fire to compete 100%.

It is truly an ART - the art of bringing out the best in people. Making better people - not just good players.

Elite sportspeople ARE major role models in our society - particularly for young men, so there is a great obligation laid upon coaches to develop the whole person through their coaching.

Yet, until recently, most coaches have had little education, experience or even desire to address these important areas of 'whole person' athlete development.

What are you coaching for?

It's important for all coaches to ask themselves, "What am I coaching for?"

What is YOUR reason for coaching? What do you hope to achieve for the people you coach, as a result of your coaching?

Please consider this question for a few minutes, and discover your personal motivations for coaching.

I suggest that there are FOUR levels of coaching, and these levels reflect the coach's and athlete's purpose for coaching and being coached, and influence and inform both the coaching practices employed and the behaviours fostered and discouraged, not only by players, but also by non-playing club members and spectators alike.

I see these four levels as four, increasingly larger, circles - each larger circle of coaching containing within it the smaller circle/s.

Interestingly, I believe the skills and attributes of each lower level coach can be contained within the higher levels, yet the skills and aspirations of the higher level coaches are not necessarily encompassed, nor understood, by the lower levels.

The levels I suggest are as follows :

MANAGER or RESULTS COACH

The first level of coaching is what I term the manager, or results coach - someone who coaches primarily for the outcome: to win the match, gold medal, tournament, etc.

This is the coach who is primarily concerned with the external 'successes' of their players - winning tournaments, making state or national teams improving their world ranking. They talk tactics and strategy with a clear outcome in mind - winning.

INSTRUCTOR / PERFORMANCE COACH

The second level of coaching is what I term the instructor level coach - someone who coaches for continual personal improvement in performance: reducing race times, increasing first serve percentage or power, reducing number of putts in a round, improving ball handling skills, etc.

This is the coach who is interested in refining the technical aspects of a player's game - footwork, accuracy, consistency, video and biomechanical analysis of a player's shot making to look for areas of improvement, etc.

MENTOR or EDUCATOR COACH

The third coaching level I term the mentor - someone who sees coaching in a much broader and holistic way. The mentor seeks to not simply win medals, or just improve an athlete's sports statistics, but who's primary aim is to make the athlete a better person.



This means addressing not just the physical and technical aspects of a player, but also recognising their mental and emotional makeup and working to improve these areas as well. The player for this level coach is also a person, and the coach is interested in the other aspects of the player's life: relationships, diet, employment, education, etc.

PIONEER or INNOVATOR COACH

The final level of coaching, which I term pioneer, is not about the individual athlete at all. Rather these innovative coaches are concerned with the wider positive social and community influences which their coaching can have.

They see coaching as a mechanism for community development as well as player development: eg. changing the level of violence in sport, raising the profile of women or disabled in sport, using sport as a means of assisting youth at risk, bringing a new innovation to the way their sport is played or seen.

This is the coach who is open to new ideas and approaches, who is continually learning, who promotes the game to the wider community, who reaches out to schools and who interacts with officials to raise the standard of all aspects of the game, works with the club members to establish codes of conduct, etc. - because they LOVE their sport.

Different Coaching Caps

Of course many, if not most, coaches operate at all of these levels, at least for some portion of their coaching. So perhaps it is more useful to think of them not as levels, but rather as different 'caps' that the coach wears throughout the day and throughout his/her career.

Of course there is a role for each level, or cap, of coaching - a role that you take on as a coach - however, I believe it is important to identify where you stand with your coaching at present, and perhaps raise to question some of your motivations as a coach.

What cap have you been wearing mostly of late?

A Challenge for Coaches

This is not to devalue the importance of results and performance coaching - they have their place, particularly at elite level coaching.

However, I believe too much emphasis on the first two levels can lead both players and coaches - and spectators -

to get caught up in outcomes - winning and losing, and then we forget it is really just a game, isn't it? We can forget that there are more important things than winning, or even playing well. We forget the joy of the game itself, the joy of PLAYING our sport.

If you are just coaching for results or performance, is this truly the best that you can be? At the end of your coaching career, looking back would you rather say that you were responsible for such and such player / team winning so many tournaments / championships, or would you rather be remembered because of your ability to positively influence the entire lives of your athletes, not just their sports results?

Would you also like to be thought of as an innovator - someone who developed new techniques and approaches, and who's coaching influenced the way your sport is played and enjoyed, and positively impacted upon the wider community?

I know how I want to be remembered. Maybe it is time to put on the mentor and innovator caps in your coaching, even if just for a short time.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>COACHING CONFERENCES</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">BRISBANE AUGUST 25 - 26</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MELBOURNE OCTOBER 20 - 21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SYDNEY NOVEMBER 10 - 11</p>
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2 Coaching Excellence 2004

Come to Coaching Excellence 2004!

Considering the wonderful comments from last year, and the excellent range of speakers lined up this year, I urge you to make every effort to attend. I've enclosed a conference brochure and booking form, and I think you'll agree that given the topics and speakers scheduled, *Coaching Excellence 2004* will be even better than 2003!

I'd also like to bring to your attention the post conference workshops conducted by myself on *Mindmatters for Coaches* - do consider adding an extra day to your conference, and learn some of the techniques I taught to Jonny Wilkinson's kicking coach prior to the Rugby World Cup.

Bookings are coming in quickly for this unique coach development event, so book your place today - numbers are limited to just 80 delegates.

An 'early bird' discount price of **\$695.00** is available **if full payment is received by 30th June** [Normal conference registration is \$745.00] Full details are in the enclosed flyer.

COMMENTS FROM 2003 CONFERENCES

*** "I enjoyed the conference and have benefited already. All the presenters contributed in a very professional manner and the content was excellent. I've spent the best two weeks since the conference - I have renewed enthusiasm, my delivery is so much better, my enjoyment of the coaching is ten fold and I know my students are the beneficiaries."**

*** "The sessions inspired me greatly ... I will go home a better person and a better coach."**

*** "All presenters were very good. To me the variety was the most beneficial and allowed a different view from other areas."**

*** "Excellent! Would have been happy with one 'take away' - I have ten times that amount!"**

*** "It made me a lot more aware of what it is to be a proper coach, and changed my thinking as a coach for the better."**

*** "I really enjoyed the conference! Different sessions and content gave inspiration and new ideas."**

"Well organised and fun. A good emphasis on practical rather than academic."

*** "It's been a great experience and given me plenty to think about."**

*** "A timely motivator after a very long and busy coaching season. Made me think laterally and gave a reminder of the basic principles of all coaching. Extremely beneficial."**

*** "I've learned so much from the conference - on a personal level, and for who I am looking forward to teaching these skills to."**

3 Sportsmind Network News

The highlights over the past six months have been the victory of the **English Rugby team** in the World Cup final last year! I mentioned in my last newsletter that Dave Alred, (**Jonny Wilkinson's kicking coach**), came to *Sportsmind Mental Mastery* to gain an edge over the competition, and even though Australia lost, it was pleasing to think that

