



Resource Guide in:

Sports Coaching

INTRODUCTION

Unlike the more established subject areas of physiology, psychology, biomechanics and sociology, coaching, as related to improving others' sporting experience and/or performance, has only recently been recognised as a bone fide area of sport related study. Despite this late start, it is rapidly making up for lost time as evidenced by the increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate courses on offer at British universities. This trend has also been echoed by governmental policy makers who recently sponsored both a Coaching Task Force and, in conjunction with other official bodies, a World Class Coaching Conference, in an attempt to improve the standards and efficiency of sports coaching in the UK. Consequently, there are expanding opportunities to develop both coach education and deployment, with over £25 million having been earmarked to develop a network of Community Coaches throughout the country by 2006.

Traditionally, coaching-related research has been rooted in the principal sport science fields, with psychology in particular being considered its parent discipline. This continues to be the case, although its appreciation as both a critical sociological and pedagogical endeavour has begun to challenge the tendency to portray it in terms of single variables and unproblematic models. Indeed, this growing school of thought believes that scholarly investigation has only begun to acknowledge and explore the essential nature of the activity, which is considered to be complex, multi-faceted and integrated. Such a development has contributed to the debate surrounding the coach's role and associated responsibilities. These relate to the dynamic, intricate and ambiguous nature of the role often as dictated by the context, which demand considerable flexibility and critical thinking skills from practitioners as they seek to create the ultimate learning environment for their charges. Recognition of this complexity and a willingness to engage with it then is where we currently stand; an exciting time when the boundaries of our knowledge, in terms of the what, how, where and when of effective coaching are being constantly challenged and shaped.

The purpose of this guide is to somewhat map out coaching research and texts so that students and scholars can see where concepts and information related to the activity 'fit' into the existing body of literature. It is organised along disciplinary lines with, for example, work rooted in sport psychology appearing under that subject area. Having said that, invariably in such a complex endeavour, it is arguable whether some of the work listed under a certain sub-heading could be more appropriately listed elsewhere. Undoubtedly, there are areas of overlap (which are also open to definitional debate), as one sub-heading cannot be easily

divorced from another, hence, an occasional key text which covers more than one area is listed under both. Consequently, it is advised to treat the following listing as a guide to available research in the field as opposed to a definitive categorisation of work related to coaching. Finally, the guide also possesses a section on the teaching and assessment of coaching as an area of study, which is increasingly becoming a vibrant area of debate within the profession.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO COACHING

As a consequence of being considered coaching's parental discipline, investigations into the activity have traditionally tended to be carried out from a psychological perspective. Such work has utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Topics covered include the perceived effectiveness of interaction, decision making and the complex cognitive thought processes of coaches. Key studies include:

Bloom, G A, Crumpton, R and Anderson, J E (1999) A systematic observation study of the teaching behaviours of an expert basketball coach. *The Sport Psychologist* 13, 157-170.

Bloom, G, Stevens, D and Wickwire, T (2003) Expert coaches' perceptions of team building. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 15(2), 129-143.

Brewer, C J and Jones, R L (2002) A five-stage process for establishing contextually valid systematic observation instruments: The case of rugby union. *The Sport Psychologist* 16(2), 139-161.

Côté, J and Salmela, J (1996) The organisational tasks of high-performance gymnastic coaches. *Sport Psychologist* 10, 247-260.

Côté, J, Salmela, J and Russell, S (1995) The knowledge of high performance gymnastic coaches: Competition and training considerations. *The Sport Psychologist* 9, 76-95.

d'Arrippe-Longueville, F, Fournier, J F and Dubois, A (1998) The perceived effectiveness of interactions between expert French judo coaches and elite female athletes. *The Sport Psychologist* 12, 317-332.

d'Arrippe-Longueville, F, Saury, D, Fournier, J and Durand, M (2001) Coach-athlete interaction during elite archery competitions: An application of methodological framework used in ergonomics research to sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 13, 275-299.

Gilbert, W and Trudel, P (2004) The role of the coach: How model youth team sport coaches frame their roles. *The Sport Psychologist* 18, 21-43.

Gilbert, W, Trudel, P and Haughian, L P (1999) Interactive decision making factors considered by coaches of youth hockey players during games. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 18, 290-311.

Jowett, S and Cockerill, M (2003) Olympic medallists' perspectives of the athlete-coach relationship. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 4, 313-331.

Millard, L (1996) Differences in coaching behaviours of male and female high school soccer coaches. *Journal of Sport Behaviour* 19(1), 19-31

Poczwadowski, A, Barott, J E and Henschen, K P (2002) The athlete and coach: Their relationship and its meaning. Results of an interpretive study. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 33, 116-140.

Saury, J and Durand, M (1998) Practical knowledge in expert coaches: On-site study of coaching in sailing. *Research Quarterly in Exercise and Sport* 69(3), 254-266.

Sève, C and Durand, M (1999) The action of a table tennis coach as situated action. *Avante* 5, 69-86

Smoll, F L, Smith, R E, Barnett, N P and Everett, J J (1993) Enhancement of children's self-esteem through social support training for youth sport coaches. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 78(4), 602-610.

Solomon, G B (1998) Coach expectations and differential feedback: perceptual flexibility revisited. *Journal of Sport Behaviour* 21(3), 298-310.

Solomon, G B, Striegel, D A, Eliot, J F, Heon, S N, Maas, J L and Wayda (1996) The self fulfilling prophecy in college basketball: Implications for effective coaching. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 8, 44-59.

MODELLING COACHING

Many have tried to capture and explain the nature of coaching through the development of models. The desire to do so is based on the assertion that the ability to identify, analyse and control variables that affect athlete performance is central to effective coaching. This loosely sequential view of the activity suggests that improved performance can be attained through a planned, coordinated and progressive process. Within this body of knowledge, two types of models have emerged, those 'for' and 'of' the coaching process. Models 'of' the process are based on empirical research investigating expert and/or successful coaching practice, whereas models 'for' the coaching process are idealistic representations that arise from the identification of a set of assumptions about the process. Key works here include:

Fairs, J (1987) The coaching process: The essence of coaching. *Sports Coach* 11, 17- 19.

Côté, J, Salmela, J, Trudel, P, Baria, A and Russell, S (1995) The coaching model: A grounded assessment of expert gymnastic coaches knowledge. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 17(1), 1-17.

Lyle, J (2002) *Sports coaching concepts: A framework for coaches' behaviour*. London: Routledge (Chapters 5 & 6).

Sherman, C, Crassini, B, Maschette, W and Sands, R (1997) Instructional sport psychology: A reconceptualisation of sports coaching as sports instruction. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 28(2), 103-125.

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO COACHING

This relatively recent line of enquiry is rooted in the perceived dissatisfaction of viewing coaching as a systematic, de-personalised set of standardised models and procedures. Hence, it tends to emphasise the problematic and integrative elements of a coach's role, elements that have often been defined as 'intuition' or the 'art of coaching'. It has also accused previous work of oversimplifying a very complex process, a claim supported by empirical work undertaken with coaches in the field.

Consequently, it is based on the belief that a coach is much more than a subject matter specialist and a systematic method applier, with the most important professional consideration being how the individual perceives the situation, and the resulting interaction that takes place. Issues investigated here include the constructivist nature of coaches' knowledge, coaches' agency, interaction in the coaching context, coaches' power and how they use it, and the coach's social role. Key publications outlining this position include:

Bergmann Drewe, S (2000) Coaches, ethics and autonomy. *Sport, Education and Society* 5(2), 147-162.

Cassidy, T, Jones, R L and Potrac, P (2004) *Understanding sports coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. London: Routledge.

Jones, R L (2000) Toward a sociology of coaching. In R L Jones and K M Armour (eds.) *The sociology of sport in practice*. London: Addison Wesley Longman, 33-43.

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

Jones, R L, Armour, K M and Potrac, P (2003) Constructing expert knowledge: A case study of a top-level professional soccer coach. *Sport, Education and Society* 8(2), 213-229.

Jones, R, Armour, K and Potrac, P (2002) Understanding coaching practice: A suggested framework for social analysis. *Quest* 54(1), 34-48

Lombardo, B J (1987) *The humanistic coach: From theory to practice*. Springfield, Ill: C C Thomas.

Potrac, P, Jones, R L and Armour, K M (2002) 'It's all about getting respect': The coaching behaviours of an expert English soccer coach. *Sport, Education and Society* 7(2), 183-202.

A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO COACHING

Much early research into coaching was carried out using systematic observation instruments; such methods having been pioneered within physical education. Their purpose was to better observe and describe what coaches (both 'good' and 'bad') actually do in practice. This work tended to emerge in psychology, and to a lesser extent pedagogy, related journals in accordance with a somewhat behaviourist paradigm. Although useful information has been gathered, the limitations of such studies have been recently highlighted as only providing a one-dimensional snapshot of coaching which cannot be generalised across contexts. Alternatively, in an attempt to expand current conceptualisations of the coaching role, work is currently emerging defining coaching as being a critical pedagogical process above all else. In support of this position, examples from educational theory have been cited as being relevant to enhance our understanding of coaching and how to go about it. It is based on the premise that coaching is, at heart, a teaching activity, with the ultimate goal being athlete learning. Key references include:

Abraham, A and Collins, D (1998) Examining and extending research in coach development. *Quest* 50, 59-79.

Bergmann Drewe, S (2000) An examination of the relationship between coaching and teaching. *Quest* 52, 79-88.

Cassidy, T and Jones, R L and Potrac, P (2004) *Understanding sports coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. London: Routledge.

Claxton, D (1988) A systematic observation of more or less successful high school tennis coaches. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 7, 302-310.

Cushion, C and Jones, R L (2001) A systematic observation of professional top-level youth soccer coaches. *Journal of Sport Behavior* 24(4), 354-376.

Gallimore, R and Tharp, R (2004) What a coach can teach a teacher, 1975-2004: Reflections and reanalysis of John Wooden's teaching practices. *The Sport Psychologist* 18, 119-137.

Gilbert, W and Trudel, P (2001) Learning to coach through experience: Reflection in model youth sport coaches. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 21, 16-34.

Gilbert, W and Trudel, P (1999) Framing the construction of coaching knowledge in experiential learning theory. *Sociology of Sport Online* 2(1). Available from: <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v2i1s2.htm>.

Jones, R L (ed.) (2005) *The sports coach as educator: Reconceptualising sports coaching*. London: Routledge.

Jones, R L and Wallace, M (2005) Another bad day at the training ground: Coping with ambiguity in the coaching context. *Sport, Education and Society* 10(1), 119-134.

Kahan, D (1999) Coaching behaviour: A review of the systematic observation research literature. *Applied Research in Coaching and Athletics Annual* 14, 17-58.

Kidman, L (ed.) (2001) *Innovative coaching: Empowering your athletes*. Christchurch, NZ: Innovative Communications.

Knowles, Z, Gilbourne, D, Borrie, A and Nevill, A (2001) Developing the reflective sports coach: A study exploring the process of reflective practice within a higher education programme. *Reflective Practice* 2(2), 185-207.

Liukkonen, J, Laasko, L and Telama, R (1996) Educational perspectives of youth sport coaches: Analysis of observed coaching behaviours. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 27, 439-453

Potrac, P, Brewer, C, Jones, R, Armour, K and Hoff, J (2000) Toward an holistic understanding of the coaching process. *Quest* 52, 186-199.

Trudel, P and Gilbert, W (1995) Research on coaches' behaviors: Looking beyond the refereed journals. *Avante* 1, 94-106.

Wilcox, S and Trudel, P (1998) Constructing the coaching principles and beliefs of a youth ice hockey coach. *Avante* 4(3), 39-66.

GUIDE TO JOURNALS

As there is no peer-reviewed academic journal which is exclusively devoted to the subject, coaching scholars have tended to publish their research in a variety of outlets, often dependent on the particular study's disciplinary roots. Although this has meant that most work has appeared in sport psychology-related journals, the recent establishment of pedagogical periodicals has given researchers from more social standpoints greater opportunities to publish their findings. Some coaching studies also appear in sport sociology journals in addition to those with a greater focus on motor learning and skill acquisition. The principal journals in which coaching related research can be found include:

Avante

www.cahperd.ca/eng/avante/index.cfm

International Review of the Sociology of Sport

<http://irs.sagepub.com/>

Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10413200.asp

Journal of Teaching in Physical Education

www.humankinetics.com/JTPE/journalAbout.cfm

Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/17408989.asp

Quest

www.humankinetics.com/QUEST/journalAbout.cfm

Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport

www.aahperd.org/aahperd/template.cfm?template=rqes_main.html

Sport, Education and Society

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13573322.asp

The Sport Psychologist

www.humankinetics.com/TSP/journalAbout.cfm

COMMENTARY ON KEY TEXTS

Australian Sports Commission (2001) *Better coaching* (2nd edn). Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics.

Better Coaching provides updated information on the sport sciences, including anatomy, physiology, psychology, biomechanics, and skill acquisition, which are vital for coaches in a range of sports. It features practical guidelines to develop athletes' endurance, speed, strength, power, and flexibility, and also uses a range of case studies to 'de-mystify' some of the more technical sports science information. Coaching tips at the end of each chapter summarise key messages.

Cassidy, T, Jones, R L and Potrac, P (2004) *Understanding sports coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. London: Routledge.

This book provides an insight into the theory and practice of sports coaching, highlighting the social, cultural and pedagogical concepts underpinning practice. It aims to deepen coaches' understanding of the coaching process in order to systematically develop programmes that will get the very best out of athletes. It explores many aspects of coaching including: athlete motivation, instructional models for coaching practice, planning, management and team control, youth culture and the junior athlete, and coaching philosophy and ethics. Each chapter also includes thought-provoking practical exercises to highlight issues faced by the successful sports coach.

Cross, N and Lyle, J (eds.) (1999) *The coaching process: Principles and practice for sport*. Oxford: Butterworth: Heinemann.

As reflected in the title, this edited book emphasises the processual nature of coaching and how such a notion can be applied to improve athlete performance. It examines the principles of coaching and how these are manifest in practice. Topics covered include sport physiology, biomechanics, skill learning, overtraining and decision-making.

Jones, R L (ed.) (2005) *The sports coach as educator: Reconceptualising sports coaching*. London: Routledge.

Through the writings of leading international scholars in the field, the case is made that drawing theoretical concepts from a critical pedagogical paradigm can enrich the practices of coaches and coach educators by allowing them to reflect upon coaching practice in previously untried, inventive ways. The book is divided into three sections. The first (Chapters 1-3) makes the case for a re-conceptualisation of coaching as an educational endeavour, the second (Chapters 4-7) deals with this proposed change in terms of the coach's role, while the third (Chapters 8-12) examines it in relation to coach education.

Jones, R L, Armour, K and Potrac, P (2004) *Sports coaching cultures: From practice to theory*. London: Routledge.

Sports Coaching Cultures is about expert coaches and their personal beliefs about effective coaching. In the first section of the book, eight well-known successful coaches in top-level team and individual sports reflect upon their careers in coaching, the value of coach education, the principles that underpin their practice, and their professional relationships with

athletes. In the second section, four 'theme' chapters related to coaches' roles, power, pedagogy and interaction highlight some key issues that emerge from a combined analysis of the coaches' stories. Throughout the book, the emphasis is upon considering the *coach as person*, and coaching practice as a complex social encounter, in order to better comprehend the nature of effective coaching practice.

Kidman, L (2001) *Developing decision makers. An empowerment approach to coaching*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Innovative Print Communications Ltd.

This informative book makes the case for employing an 'empowerment' philosophy in sports coaching. Consequently, it offers an insight into an approach that coaches can use to create a dynamic learning environment for athletes. It also includes a case study of Wayne Smith (former New Zealand All Blacks rugby coach), who discusses the merits of the approach.

Kidman, L and Hanrahan, S (1997) *The coaching process: A practical guide to improving your effectiveness*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.

This easy to read, practical book provides a sequential introductory guide to sports coaching. It focuses on the 'how to' of the activity with short, reflective exercises presented at the end of each chapter.

Lyle, J (2002) *Sports coaching concepts: A framework for coaches' behaviour*. London: Routledge.

Many of the concepts introduced in the author's previous work (with Neville Cross) listed above, are expanded upon here. It is a comprehensive text covering many aspects of coaching, including a discussion on such topics as 'What is coaching about?', 'How do coaches behave?' and 'A basis for professionalisation – the way forward'.

Martens, R (2004) *Successful coaching* (3rd edn). Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics.

A very popular introductory text (the first edition was released in 1981), this book adopts a practical approach outlining the 'basic principles' and 'core skills' of coaching. Information is provided on generalist topics as 'the principles of management', 'the principles of physical training' and 'the principles of teaching'.

Lee, M (ed.) (1993) *Coaching children in sport*. London: E & F Spon.

This is an edited collection aimed at providing information to coaches about young athletes, so that they may better understand children's psychological and physiological characteristics. It is also considered an introductory guide to the subject for further and higher education students. Topics covered include 'Skeletal growth and development', 'Treating and managing injuries in children' and 'Important psychological aspects of children's participation in sport'.

Walton, G (1992) *Beyond winning: The timeless wisdom of great philosopher coaches*. Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics.

The 'stories' of 6 famous 'philosopher' coaches are cited from secondary sources. The book highlights the author's interpretation of the philosophies of the coaches cited so enabling the reader to apply them to everyday contexts.

GUIDE TO INTERNET RESOURCES

A wide variety of sport-specific coaching-related websites exist. The list below, however, comprises those sites largely dedicated to generic coaching practice of use to the higher education student.

An annotated bibliography and analysis of coaching science

www.aahperd.org/research/template.cfm?template=grantees.html

This bibliography resulted from a funded project to better categorise, organise and disseminate English language coaching research carried out between 1970 and 2001. The design, which was based on a similar analysis of research in physical education, included the three phases of comprehensive searching, gathering or collating and analysing.

Becoming a better coach

www.coachesinfo.com/category/becoming_a_better_coach/

The Coaches' Information Service is designed to deliver the latest sports science information to practitioners including coaches, participants and physical educators. Its features include (a) sport-specific sections edited by sports scientists with specialist expertise in that field, (b) information that can be applied by sports practitioners, presented in "practitioner friendly" language, and (c) a booking service which can link individuals and clubs to consultants with internationally respected expertise.

Coaching science abstracts

www.rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/coachsci/

The 'abstracts' contained here are interpreted research articles for practicing coaches and others interested in applied sport science.

SportsCoach UK

www.sportscoachuk.org

The stated purpose of SportsCoach UK is to 'guide the development and implementation of a coaching system, recognised as a world leader, for all coaches at every level in the UK'. The home website contains a number of interesting links to all aspects of national coaching practice and policy.

Sociology of sport online (special edition volume 2, issue 1)

<http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v2i1/v2i1.htm>

This special edition of the journal comprises seven articles dedicated to the investigation of coaching and coaches from sociological and socio-psychological perspectives. Topics covered include the knowledge 'frames' of coaches, the case for a greater sociological investigation into coaching, and expertise into teaching and coaching.

Sports coaching

www.sports-coaching.com

Sports Coaching is a consultancy service aimed at assisting people of all ages, fitness levels and abilities to achieve their personal goals in sport.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSING SPORTS COACHING

A recent area of scholarly interest has surrounded the development of appropriate pedagogical strategies to teach coaching. As evidence has emerged that coaches' knowledge is generally gleaned through reflecting on experience, mentorship schemes have been suggested as a particularly suitable means through which coaches can be taught. Some scholars however, while agreeing with this basic strategy, have also called for an integration of theory into the reflective process as a means to further improve practice. Consequently, teaching methods and associated assessments such as problem-based learning (PBL) and the completion of theoretically grounded critical tasks, particularly in higher education settings, have been tentatively suggested as ways forward.

The resources listed under this heading then, provide both a theoretical argument to better educate coaches into the complexities of their work, in addition to empirical evidence supporting it. The texts by Cassidy et al (2004) and Jones and Turner (in press) (see below) can be of additional value in this respect, as they provide specific examples of pedagogical strategies through which coaching can be taught taking account of its dynamic nature. In particular, the latter article contains an illustration of such a strategy in practice on a HE course unit, complete with the unit's aims and objectives, its organisation and procedure, assessment procedures and accompanying role of the tutor. Key publications include:

Bloom, G A, Durand-Bush, N, Schinke, R J and Salmela, J H (1998) The importance of mentoring in the development of coaches and athletes. *International Journal of Sport Psychology* 29, 267-281.

Cassidy, T, Jones, R L and Potrac, P (2004) *Understanding sports coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. London: Routledge (Chapter 16).

Cushion, C, Armour, K M and Jones, R L (2003) Coach education and continuing professional development: Experience and learning to coach. *Quest* 55, 215-230.

Gilbert, W and Trudel, P (1999) An evaluation strategy for coach education programs. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 22, 234-250.

Gould, D, Giannini, J, Krane, V and Hodge, K (1990) Educational needs of elite US national team, Pan American, and Olympic coaches. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 9, 332-334.

Jones, R L and Turner, P (in press) Teaching coaches to coach holistically: The case for a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*.

Sage, G (1989) Becoming a high school coach: From playing sports to coaching. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 66(1), 81-92.

About the Author

Dr Robyn Jones is a Reader in Sports Coaching at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. His research area comprises an examination of the dynamism and complexity inherent in the interactive coaching context and how practitioners manage the inevitable dilemmas that arise. He has published in many leading journals including *Quest*, *Sport, Education and Society*, *The Sport Psychologist* and the *Sociology of Sport Journal* among others. To date, he has authored and co-authored/edited four research-based books and a practical handbook on pedagogy and coaching.



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