



Club Coach Coordinator Newsletter

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Dear Club Coach Coordinator

Welcome to issue 10 of the CCC Newsletter and many thanks for your continued hard work. As a department we fully appreciate the role you play in the development of coaching and playing standards and we would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for the support and service you provide to the game.



This edition looks at the changes to the Coaching Department, the RFU Continuous Personal Development Programmes that are available to your coaches, coach inductions, player development research, the National Coaching Calendar and examples of good practice from CCCs.



We would like to wish you every success for the season ahead – whatever success might mean to you. Hopefully for many of you that success will mean the recruitment and retention of players through meaningful coaching, and the recruitment and retention of coaches through good club support and an active coach development plan.



The development of coaches is crucial to the success of the game and your role in that cannot be underestimated. The publication and promotion of courses is one part of that role but the encouragement and support that you give is invaluable.



In this issue "Pause For Thought" looks into some of the reasons why children drop out of sport in the USA, the coach parent relationship and the role of reflection in coach development.



Goodbye CDO – Hello CPDO!

Since the last issue of the newsletter there have been a number of changes to the department. What was once the Coaching Department is now the Coaching and Player Development Department. This change reflects the positive developments taking place in the RFU as we look to align coach and player development programmes.

Gary Townsend has become Player Development Manager, Nick Scott is now Coach Development Manager with responsibility for award course development, coach licensing and the coach development model, whilst I am responsible for the line management of the 8 regional Coach and Player Development Officers, and management of the CCC network and CB Coaching Sub Committees.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce and welcome on board, two new CPDOs – David Fraser has taken over from Nick Scott in Midlands East and Alan Moses from myself in the North East and Yorkshire.

John Lawn

Coach Development Manager

GOOD COACHES ENGAGE IN CONTINUOUS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuous Personal Development, in conjunction with regular coaching and reflection, is the fuel that keeps the fire burning within the coach; it introduces them to new concepts and ideas, stimulates debate and reflection, provides opportunities for them to interact with other coaches, share problems and identify solutions.

In preparation for the season ahead now would be a good time to begin planning your club's CPD programme.

Keep it local



With the new season **upon us** hopefully you are thinking about the development needs of your coaches. I am sure that when you ask them what they want, 'more ideas' and 'local courses' is an often-heard reply.

Have you considered arranging CPD courses based on the needs of your coaches at your club, or even better, arranging a number of courses in conjunction with other clubs in your locality?

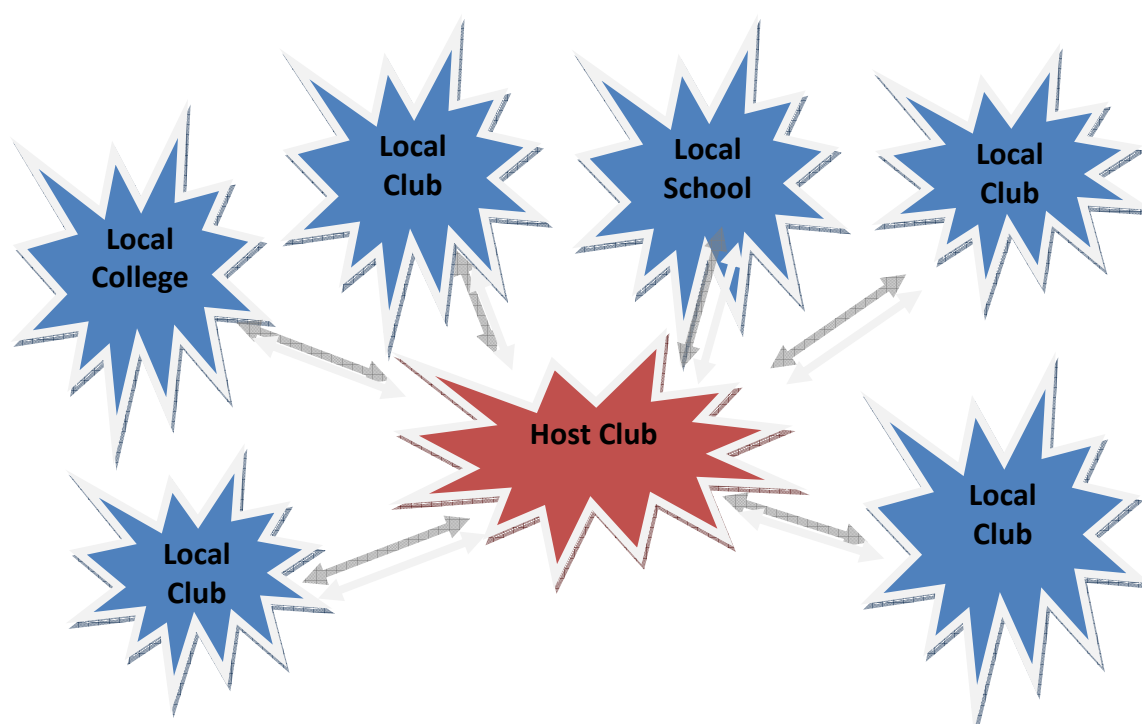
How it works – Easy as 1 – 2 – 3

1. Identify the needs of your club's coaches and players – audit & identify need
2. Speak to CCCs in clubs local to you – compare their coaches needs with yours and agree a programme of events
3. Contact your regional Coach & Player Development Officer – arrange the courses

The benefits:

1. It's local, reducing travel time and costs
2. It brings coaches together and allows them to learn from each other
3. It helps ensure that courses can run with the minimum numbers of coaches

What it looks like



The RFU now offer a range of Foundation, Award and CPD courses.

To find out more about running a course at your club please contact your Regional Coach & Player Development Officer to find out how.

Coach - Parent relationships



Ask a group of coaches what the most challenging part of their job is and they will probably state, "Parents". Many coaches are shocked at how much time they spend dealing with parents.

The relationships coaches have with the parents of their athletes can be either helpful and supportive, or stressful and frustrating. Hooper and Jefferies (1990) described a healthy parent/coach relationship in terms of an "athletic triangle" involving the coach, the athlete, and the parents. By appropriately including parents in the triangle, and thus involving them in the coaching **and** playing programme in a positive manner, coaches can improve not only the relationship with parents, but also improve the experience of the athletes

The results of a recent study from Canada that asked parents to list the preferred characteristics of coaches working with their children make interesting reading

Preferred Coaching Characteristics (from Most Preferred to Least)

Top 3

1. Fairness and honesty in dealing with their athletes
2. Ability to teach well
3. Commitment to the development of sportsmanship

Middle 4

1. Knowledge of the skills of the sport
2. Commitment to having their players enjoy the game
3. Knowledge of the rules of the game
4. Knowledge of prevention, care and rehabilitation of injuries

Bottom 3

1. Experience as a player in the sport
2. Providing an experience that will improve player's chances at playing at a higher level
3. Commitment to winning

You may wish to draw your own conclusions from the above but it would be an interesting exercise to ask your mini and youth coaches (many of whom will be parents) what they think parents and their children want from them and your clubs coaching and playing programme. Hopefully we will all want the same; the best for the child!

The above article can be found in full at coachesinfo.com

A beginner's guide to rugby can be downloaded from the IRB website; it is particularly useful for those who have little or no experience in or of the game <http://www.irb.com/newsmedia/news/newsid=2030335.html#a+beginners+guide+rugby>



As the season approaches children will be heading to their local clubs but will they still be playing the game in April? In this article written by Vince Ganzberg, Director of Education for Indiana Youth Soccer he looks at some of the reasons why children stop playing and some of the solutions to this age old problem.

Why They Stop

"Mum and Dad, I don't want to play anymore!"

After investing the time and money into any sport, this is the last thing a parent wants to hear, but it happens, frequently.

Children quitting organised sports occurs more often than one might think. Research has shown that approximately 70-75% of children will quit playing a sport by the age of 14. Why do they want to stop? To answer that question let's look at why they start, or why parents put their children into a sport in the first place.

1. Competence (learning and improving)
2. Affiliation (being a part of something like a team or a club)
3. Fitness (agility, balance, coordination, and physical health)
4. Fun (this is the overwhelming reason why children play sports)

Notice that "winning" is not one of the reasons.

When children leave a game, they want to know two things: 1) When do we play again? 2) Where is the snack? Children are not as concerned about winning as adults may think. Children all want to compete, but they each have their own interpretation of competitiveness. For most, if one team is red and the other is blue then "game on." Children strive to do their best when they step into "competition." They also want competitive matches. Remember when you were a child playing in the backyard and the game was too lopsided? What did you do? I remember stopping those games to start a new one with different teams or balance the game out. I think many of us forget what emotions we went through growing up as a child and how we viewed competition.

Let's get into why they stop. Research says children stop playing sports for a variety of reasons. Six of the seven primary reasons are "ADULT CONTROLLED" behaviours. Can you guess which one isn't?

- Lack of playing time
- Overemphasis on winning
- Other activities are more interesting
- Lack of fun
- Coaching/adult behaviors
- Dissatisfaction with performance
- Lack of social support

If you guessed "Other activities are more interesting" then you are correct! Give yourself a pat on the back. There are times when a child just finds something new that they really like. The rest of the reasons are adult controlled behaviors. When adult controlled behaviors are forcing children out of a sport, adults are putting themselves before the needs and development of children.



Lack of playing time



This is an adult controlled behavior due to the coaches and parents wanting to "win" the game. Do players want to win? Absolutely! They all strive to do their very best to win. Research has also shown that children today would rather play than sit on the bench for a winning team. Allow your players to play in the game for their own sake. As a coach you need to see their "soul" on the field and allow them to get into the game so they can get better. Not putting children into a game is like not allowing them to take a test in school. There is nothing wrong with having some players earning more time, but all players should be given a minimum time to play.

Over-emphasis on winning



"Winning isn't everything, it is the only thing". That is the famous Vince Lombardi quote which was also misquoted. He actually stated "The will to win isn't anything, it is the only thing". So many coaches feel as though their whole self-worth is out there on the field, and if they don't win as coaches, then "they", not the children, are a failure.

The same goes for adults on the sidelines. A recent statistic showed that 25% of coaches quit due to ~~adult~~ expectations with regard to outcome. The late Bill Walsh stated that "Twenty percent of every game is by chance." In the 1980 Winter Olympics, the Russian hockey team would have probably beaten us 9 out of 10 times, but that day it was America's day to win.

As a coach or parent, you can't control the outcome. If it is the other team's day, it's simply their day! Only two teams need to win in our country, and those are our men's and women's national teams. Soccer is a team sport that is "player" driven - once the ball starts rolling, there is nothing people outside the lines can do. Give them the game, and let them determine the outcome!

Lack of fun



Children view sports differently than adults. Most children, if not all, start playing a sport because it looks fun. There is a saying "Get them playing-keep them playing." Get their interest and then maintain it.

There is also a saying that "Drills destroy skills." No lines, laps or lectures. Soccer is a free flowing game where the players make decisions and decide the outcome. Instead, use training sessions that put players in an environment where they can make decisions and maximize touches on the ball.

As Director of Education traveling around the state, I am always surprised at how many coaches use the age-old practice plan starting with "laps." Coaches and adults need to know that endurance training is only effective at 12 to 18 months after PHV (Peak Height Velocity), which is about 13 years, 6 months for boys and 11 years, 6 months for girls. For the younger ages (6-10 years of age), you can work on their fitness (not just endurance) with the ball, rather than running laps.

"Teach don't talk." Our children live in a very busy world today. As a result, the ability for them to listen to coach talk has declined. Teach them in training, but make your points short and sweet. Also, include them in the process of learning by asking them questions on the topic you have for that training session.

Finally, let them play! "Over the past two decades, children have lost 12 hours of free time a week, including eight hours of unstructured play outdoor activities. The amount of time children spend in organized sports has doubled, and the number of minutes children devote to passive spectator leisure, not counting television but including sports viewing has increased fivefold from thirty minutes to over three hours," (Elkind, 1).

It is a different world we live in now. As a coach, you can give them some of that "free time" back by allowing them to play as soon as they arrive. I observed a club who does this, and their players are begging their parents to get them to training early because they know they get to play the game at the beginning. The game is the best teacher; so as a coach, allow them to play and express themselves and to have FUN!

Coaching/Adult behaviours



For some reason, some adults and coaches transform from Winnie the Pooh to a grizzly bear when a game rolls around. Everything from yelling at officials' bad calls to conversing with parents from the other team is widely seen throughout youth sports. Remember this - without referees, there is no game!

Put yourself in someone else's shoes. Imagine that your child (who is a new referee) is getting verbally abused by adults because a hand ball was not called during a U6 match? As a parent, you have taught your children to be respectful of their elders and to give their very best on the field. Verbal abuse of the officials on the field leads to referee loss. Did you know that nearly 75% of the referees in Indiana are under the age of 16? We must provide a tolerant, respectful, safe environment for these referees to use as a training ground, and it starts with each and every one of us. It takes a village to raise a child, whether they are players or referees.

Be a role model for your child. Try to view a game like a "grandparent." They just want to go and see their grandchild be happy. Let's take a lesson from this. They have been there, done that. Experience is a great teacher. As a parent you want to see a child's "soul" when they are out on the field and not just their face. Kids can only play freely when we, as adults, allow them to control their own destiny.

The numbers don't lie, only a small percentage of players will go on to play in college, and even fewer than that will play at the professional level. Refer back to the reason why you enrolled your child in a sport in the first place. I am sure for the majority of you it was for one of the four reasons at the beginning of this article – competence, affiliation, fitness or fun. Please remember that your child is not you! Your childhood is over - give your kids the game.

Dissatisfaction with performance



Stay away from "PGA" or Post Game Analysis in the minivan/SUV after the match. Coaches, stay away from the "PGA" closing statements after a tough loss. Children remember this, and feedback isn't always what they want to hear. Children know when they make a mistake in a match. Repeating it again verbally isn't the answer. Try to shift gears and turn a negative into a positive. Let it go, and make sure that they know you still love them no matter how many mistakes they make. There is a reason why the X Games are popular with children. The most prevalent is that they can determine their own outcome, be creative, and make mistakes, without anyone analyzing their performance.

Lack of social support



There is "tough" love and there is "TOUGH" love. Most athletes that make it to the next level mention their parents gave them "tough" love but were supportive of them every step of the way.

This actually ties in with dissatisfaction of performance. Be there for your kids through the tough times and the good. It is easy to be supportive of them after a victory, a game winning goal or an important save. Remind your children that tough times don't usually last, but tough people do. When children feel abandoned by their parents/coaches that is when they often go to something else. Sometimes, that something else isn't a positive activity.

We all can help create a better environment to make sure that children begin playing and keep playing, staying active, keeping healthy, and making them lifelong participants in athletics.



GOOD COACHES REFLECT AND REVIEW THEIR COACHING BEHAVIOURS



Coaching is a complex, dynamic social activity that requires coaches to have technical, teaching, communication and management skills.

Coaches learn these skills through a variety of methods including formal qualifications like the RFU Level 1 and 2, informal continuing professional development, learning from their playing days and by observing other coaches.

Research has shown, however, that one of the most common, and most effective ways of learning is by doing – experiential learning - as academics call it. Learning by doing is how most adults learn most things – we do something, think about how we did it, then do it better the next time. The 'thinking about how we did it' is known as reflective practice and research from other fields such as healthcare and education suggests reflection is the most effective way to learn and for many of those disciplines it is the primary learning method employed by learners.

To be fully effective however, reflective practice must also be critical. By that we mean the reflection has to go deeper than simply describing what happened in a session. Coaches need to analyse the outcomes of the session or game, compare it with the intended objectives, and ask themselves whether those objectives were achieved. Often in coaching we get 'surprises' – things that didn't go according to plan – and it is these surprises that can kick off our thought processes.

In order to be truly effective though, reflection has to question the underlying assumptions about what you do and how you do it. That's not easy – by definition assumptions are often hard to uncover and discuss. To help coaches do that they can ask themselves a series of questions in a reflective conversation – questions like:

- What happened?
- How do I feel about that?
- What was good and bad about it?
- What sense can I make of it?
- What else could I have done?
- If it happens again what will I do?

As Club Coach Coordinators we can encourage reflective practice by setting up coaching clinics, encouraging senior coaches in our clubs to mentor less experienced coaches, and by generally promoting the concept of reflective practice to our coaching colleagues. There are many tools available to us that can facilitate reflection, including coaching diaries, video, and coaching clinics.

These will work in different ways for different people but research in other fields has shown that talking about what we do to others – coaches, partners, players – is one of the most effective ways of having those reflective conversations. In reflective practice then 'talking to myself' might NOT be the 'only way to get any sense'.

Finally, you might get asked 'why should I try to change what I do? I'm pretty good!'

Here's Wayne Smith, All Blacks coach, on the qualities needed to be a good coach:

"The key thing I think is the openness to learning. I think coaches need to look at things on merit and understand that just because they've played the game, they don't know everything about it. Having a passion to improve is important. Knowing that you are part of the problem means that you can also be part of the solution."

If you would like to know more about reflective practice please feel free to contact me at johnpeel@yahoo.com.

John Peel is CCC at Wallingford RFC. He coaches at Wallingford and Oxfordshire School of Rugby. He is studying reflective practice as part of a MSc in Coaching at Loughborough University.



The National Coaching Calendar



Accessibility and availability of places on RFU Award Courses is a much-discussed topic amongst CCCs and coaches alike. From July 2011, the RFU Coaching Department will be introducing a structured coaching calendar. This will provide discrete periods in the year when Award, CPD and Foundation courses will be delivered. Level 1 & 2 will be held, predominantly, in the traditional off season with some courses running late and early season. Both courses have considerable practical content, and we hope that we will now avoid cancellations and or cold and wet coaches by scheduling these courses in the supposed warmer months!

CPD & Foundation Courses will be predominantly held during the season, and, in the majority of cases, will be held at clubs. Aimed at servicing local (cluster) development needs these courses are 2.5 – 3hrs in duration and can be delivered to mini, youth and adult coaches

Level 1 Courses

March, April, May, June, July, August, October, November

Level 2 Courses

May, June, July, October

CPD & Foundation (Rugby Ready & Tag) Courses

January, February, March, April, August, September, October, November

Details of all RFU Award, CPD and Foundation Courses taking place near you in the 2010 – 2011 season can be found at <http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/Coach/FindACourse.aspx>

Under 18 year olds attending Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Rugby Union

Please note that from September 2010 applicants to Level 1 courses who are aged 17 or below at the start of the course will not be accepted on to a Level 1 Coaching course.

This decision has been taken by the RFU following consultation and in conjunction with the Scottish & Welsh Rugby Unions, Coach Educators and 1st 4 Sport Qualifications, the Awarding Body.

Applicants should be made aware of a new course developed by the RFU "1st 4 Sport Leadership through Rugby Union." The course is a recognised qualification to be delivered in an educational environment and is 50 hours in duration. It covers many areas of activity leadership, including planning, leading and officiating in rugby activities as well as organising a festival, candidates will complete both the Tag and Rugby Ready Awards as part of the qualification. This qualification is recommended by the RFU appropriate for under 18s.

For further information please contact the CPDO for your region.

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