

COACHING

The United Kingdom Coaching Strategy describes the role of the coach as one which "*enables the athlete to achieve levels of performance to a degree that may not have been possible if left to his/her own endeavours*". Dyson speaking to the 19th session of the International Olympic Academy, Greece 1979, widened the horizon when he said that "*the wise coach develops not only the fullest physical potential in his charges, but also those capacities and habits of mind and body which will enrich and ennoble their later years*".

Coaching Skills

As a coach you will find that you need to develop many skills. These include:

- understand the various coaching styles
- understand the capabilities of growing children
- advise athletes on safety
- understand the causes and recognise the symptoms of over-training
- know how to communicate effectively with your athletes
- understand how to reduce the risk of injury to your athletes
- prepare training programmes to meet the needs of each athlete
- understand and implement appropriate teaching methods
- assist athletes to develop new skills
- use evaluation tests to monitor training progress and predicting performance
- advise athletes on their nutritional needs
- understand and know how to develop the athlete's energy system
- advise athletes on relaxation and mental imagery skills
- advise athletes on the use of legal supplements
- understand the learning process and training principles
- evaluate the athlete's competition performance

Coaching Roles

- Assessor
- Counsellor
- Demonstrator
- Friend
- Fact finder
- Instructor
- Motivator
- Organiser

Is Coaching an Art or Science?

Science

To support the coach there is a wealth of scientific information based on research conducted with athletes. Information is available to support the coach and athlete in all areas of training and development including nutrition, biomechanics, psychology, physiology & medicine. There are a number of scientific methods to measure and analyse the athlete's performance e.g. computer aided analysis of lactate levels, running technique etc.

Art

The **art of coaching** comes when the coach has to analyse the scientific data and convert it into coaching and training programs to help develop the athlete. This analysis process relies heavily on the coach's experience and knowledge of the event/sport and the athlete concerned.

By understanding the **science**, which is the foundation of training, a well designed training program can be developed that will help an athlete reach their full potential. The **art** is understanding the **science** and then applying it.