

Coaching Scotland: Summary

*A research study for **sportscotland***

by
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16 Longfield Lane
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with **Eilidh Nicolson**

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Acknowledgements

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Summary

Introduction: What makes you feel valued as a coach?

“Feedback from the children and people that I am coaching. I am concerned with improving each individual’s skill level in basketball, as well as improving team play. When I see somebody that I have coached perform a skill that they just learned, I feel valued. When I see the surprise, happiness and determination to do the skill right again, I feel valued. When I see somebody performing a skill that they felt was impossible to perform a week earlier, I feel valued. When a team that I have coached play extremely well, and play team basketball, I feel valued. Having another coach ask permission to use a drill that they saw you use is a good feeling. To have a conversation with other coaches who you regard highly and feel as if you are on a par with them also feels good. Simply when somebody comes up and says, ‘You have done a good job, thanks.’”¹

It is clear that coaching plays an important role in delivering success in sport at all levels. The national strategy for sport, *Sport 21*, offers a vision of Scotland as:

- A country where sport is more widely available to all;
- A country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured; and
- A country achieving and sustaining world-class performance in sport.

Coaches have an important role to play in achieving all three components of this vision. Coaches enable participation by teaching new skills and introducing a wide range of people to sport. They enable athletes to develop their talent and to progress to higher levels of achievement and competition. They enable athletes to achieve success in world-class sport. If the three visions of *Sport 21* are to be realised, Scotland needs a coaching workforce with ambition, capacity and capability to deliver high quality sport in schools, clubs and community settings and to nurture talented performers to succeed in international events.

The Coaching Scotland Strategic Framework

In 1999 **sportscotland** acknowledged that quality coaching would be crucial to the success of *Sport 21* by providing a framework for coaching in Scotland – Coaching Scotland. Coaching Scotland sat within the context of an overall UK framework which had been set out in the UK strategy document, *The*

¹ Response from one of the coaches who completed the Coaching Scotland Questionnaire 2005.

Development of Coaching in the United Kingdom. The main objectives of Coaching Scotland were:

- To lead in the development of coaching strategies throughout Scotland.
- To support development for individual coaches at both national and local level in conjunction with major partners.
- To increase the quality and quantity of active and effective coaches working at all levels of sport.
- To ensure that effective use was made of the coaching skills and expertise available within the coaching workforce of Scotland.

After the revision of *Sport 21* and the setting of the key target areas, **sportscotland** committed to revising and updating its coaching framework and re-positioning it within the context of the developing national strategy for sport. As a result, in 2005 **sportscotland** established a Coaching Scotland Advisory Group to lead this initiative and appointed Vaga Associates to support this work by conducting desk and primary research and overseeing a period of consultation with key partners. The research consisted of three components:

- Initial desk research on the current state of play of coaching and coaches in Scotland, including a review of key studies of coaching in Scotland and a review of the strategic landscape which forms the context for Coaching Scotland.
- Qualitative research with key partners in the management and delivery of coaching. The primary element of this research consisted of five focus groups involving representatives from local authorities, schools and the education sector, coach managers, Scottish governing bodies of sport and those involved in high performance sport.
- Quantitative research on the coaching workforce in Scotland, consisting of a web-based questionnaire for currently active coaches.

Context and Strategic Landscape

A review of the strategic landscape that provides the context for Coaching Scotland highlights the interconnection between this strategic framework and many other developments at the Scottish and UK level.

The development of a strategic framework to guide coaching in Scotland is complicated by the interplay between the national dimension of Scottish priorities and devolved policy and funding for both sport and education, and the UK dimension represented by the work of sports coach UK and UK Sport on coaching. In addition, there are a range of policy initiatives within **sportscotland**, Scotland's national strategy for sport and the UK more generally that will need to be considered.

Sport 21

The overarching aim of *Sport 21* is that by 2020, 60% of all adults will take part in sport at least once a week. Within the current four-year plan (2003-2007) there are 11 targets which act as stepping-stones to the 2020 aim. Although there is no target that is specific to coaching, coaching contributes to 8 of the 11 targets.

A Scottish Executive-led review of *Sport 21* began in 2006, after the main research for this report was concluded. The updated National Strategy for Sport which emerges from the review will be launched in Autumn 2006, and will form the key policy context for the revitalised Coaching Scotland strategic framework. Coaching will continue to be an important issue under the new national strategy, as it plays an integral role in supporting participation, player development and excellence.

The UK Strategic Context

Two key strategic initiatives at the UK level will have a significant impact on the development of a revitalised Coaching Scotland strategic framework and on coaching in Scotland more broadly: the emerging UK Action Plan for Coaching and the establishment of the UK Coaching Certificate. At the sports coach UK (scUK) Board meeting of September 2005, it was agreed that scUK would take the lead in initiating a UK Action Plan for Coaching.

The plan will map the key roles, relationships and processes and procedures for achieving the required outcomes, which are identified as:

- enhanced quality and quantity of coaching;
- increased number of qualified coaches, leading to –
- sustained and increased participation in sport;
- improved performances in sport, underpinned by –
- the establishment of coaching as a profession.

Twelve indicative actions in five key areas have been suggested for the plan to date, but these may be subject to addition, deletion or amendment when the plan is finalised.

The relationship between the UK Action Plan for Coaching and the Coaching Scotland strategic framework will be a subject for debate.

Managing the introduction and delivery of the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) will be one of the priorities for the new Coaching Scotland framework.

The UKCC is a new structure for coach education and qualification that developed from a study undertaken for the Department for Culture, Media and

Sport (DCMS) in England. The UKCC is an endorsement of sport-specific qualifications and systems against set criteria. The criteria cover quality assurance, content, delivery and assessment, learning resources and awarding function.

Benefits of the UKCC include:

- UK-wide recognition of coaching qualifications;
- Transferability of coaching qualifications throughout the UK;
- Parity of recognition and endorsement throughout the UK;
- Increased quality of coaching delivery through improved training and support of coaches.

In Scotland, twenty-one sports are engaged in developing sport-specific qualifications and systems to achieve UK Coaching Certificate endorsement for January 2007.

The step change that the UKCC sets out to make is the professionalisation of coaching and the establishment of a career pathway for coaches. However, the majority of people involved in coaching in the UK do so in a voluntary capacity.

Therefore, the establishment of coaching as a paid profession with a formal career pathway is very much a long-term goal. Given that the coaching workforce is predominately made up of volunteers, the issue of affordability is central to the successful implementation of the UKCC.

Scottish governing bodies of sport (SGBs) are currently dedicating significant time and resources to training tutors and assessors in line with UKCC requirements. The resource demands on SGBs to achieve UK Coaching Certificate endorsement are likely to be considerable. Currently, SGBs do not have access to established funding streams to support volunteer coaches, unlike their English and Welsh counterparts. This emphasises the need for the Scottish Executive to ring fence funding to develop the UKCC.

The availability (or lack thereof) of ring fenced funding will have an impact on the ability of SGBs to deliver the endorsed product under the UKCC. Following successful endorsement, English and Welsh governing bodies of sport will be able to offer UK Coaching Certificate endorsed qualifications and may be able to access sustainable funding for continued delivery. If the SGBs lack similar funding to support them in offering UKCC endorsed qualifications, Scottish coaches and coaching will be placed at a disadvantage in terms of parity, transferability and recognition of qualifications. This is likely to jeopardise the UK nature of the coaching certificate.

sportscotland's Corporate Strategy

Coaching is one of the seven priority investment areas for **sportscotland**. Many of **sportscotland's** other key areas for investment and infrastructural development also have a vital coaching component, including:

- Active Schools
- Club Development
- Coach Development
- Organisational Development
- Player Improvement
- Sports Partnerships
- Volunteer Development
- Medal Success

Conclusions on Strategic Landscape

The complicated strategic landscape within which the updated Coaching Scotland will sit shows the importance of keeping the coach at the forefront of this strategy, and helping the coaches to know and understand the strategic environment within which they operate.

sportscotland and sports coach UK must work together to ensure that both are benefiting from each other's work rather than duplicating work in isolation. The UK Action Plan for Coaching must acknowledge the Coaching Scotland strategic framework and vice versa.

The UK Coaching Certificate is one of the biggest developments in coaching in the past five years. The impact of this needs to be measured and managed in Scotland and sustainable funding needs to be secured.

There are developments and opportunities which will impact on the requirement for and the development of coaches across all of **sportscotland's** investment priorities. Building a pathway for coaches and coaching is essential with a parallel vertical and horizontal alignment alongside the development of the player pathway.

Desk Review of Coaching Data and Research

The desk review of coaching research focused on work that considered Scotland's coaching within the context of the UK and Europe. There have been three pieces of work that were highlighted as being of particular relevance to the development of an updated Coaching Scotland strategic framework:

- Lyle et al (1997) *Motivations of Sports Coaches*;
- DCMS (2002) *Coaching Task Force Report*;
- MORI (2004) *Sports Coaching in the UK*.

In particular the following areas of concern have emerged from the evidence available:

- The available data on coaches is unreliable and does not provide a sufficient basis for workforce planning.
- The number of coaches per 1,000 population in Scotland is the lowest in the UK. There are also fewer paid coaches in Scotland than the other home countries.
- The percentage of active coaches who hold formal qualifications in Scotland remains low.
- Coaching lacks equity. Women, individuals from black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people are under-represented, particularly at more advanced levels.

Consultation

In addition to providing qualitative data on coaches' thoughts, the consultation process allowed **sportscotland** and the consultant to test ideas and explore issues.

The consultant facilitated a process of consultation to elicit comments on the original Coaching Scotland and to highlight issues and suggestions for consideration in the further development of the strategic framework for coaching. This consultation consisted of three key components:

- The Coaching Scotland Advisory Group offered answers and solutions that tended to be of a strategic nature, addressing structural requirements of the coaching framework.
- Four focus groups of individuals responsible for managing or delivering coaching programmes or networks of coaches offered answers and issues of an operational nature, phrased in terms of issues with the current strategy and delivery problems.
- A survey of coaches, whose answers reflected individuals' issues with the current system and offered insight into the issues at delivery level as perceived by the coaches themselves.

The consultation explored four key topics:

- Education, training and qualifications;
- Workforce planning and payment of coaches;
- Support for coaches;

- Priorities for coaching.

There is significant recognition and support for developing and implementing a new Coaching Scotland strategic framework by local authorities and SGBs and a desire to be involved in this process. The focus group discussions reinforced the early priorities identified by the Advisory Group and reflected four key themes:

- **Coaching workforce** – the need for both an increase in the quantity and an improvement in the quality of coaches working at all levels and in all settings.
- **Education, training and mentoring** – coaches will require easy access to opportunities for CPD at a price they can afford, in terms of location, finance and time.
- **Volunteers and paid coaches** – sport in Scotland needs a career/development structure for both types of coaches.
- **Systems and structures** – nationally coordinated and locally accessible systems for coach support, communication and recognition of achievement are required. The CSAG should explore the potential role of the emerging Sports Partnerships in achieving this goal.

Coach Survey

A web-based survey was conducted, resulting in responses from 300 coaches. The survey provided data on:

- The profile of coaches;
- Attitudes towards continuing professional development;
- Motivations and ambitions.

The majority of coaches, particularly at the grassroots participation and developmental levels, are volunteers. Although the survey of coaches suggested that many coaches would like to receive payment and would be interested in developing a professional career in coaching, a sizeable minority indicated that they had no wish to coach in a paid capacity. Resource limitations and the preferences of coaches themselves emphasise that, regardless of the move toward professionalisation, volunteers will continue to be a vital component of the coaching workforce.

Coaches identified a variety of motivations for coaching. Chief among these was love of the sport and enjoyment of coaching. Full-time paid coaches were more likely to cite success and achievement as their most important motivation.

The survey of coaches indicated a demand for continuing professional development (CPD) and mentoring. A majority of coaches indicated a desire to

undertake further qualifications. Nationally coordinated and locally accessible systems for coach support and communication were identified by coaches and by CSAG as key factors in the development of successful CPD and mentoring systems.

The survey results, along with recent audits of the workforce of some SGBs, confirm that lack of equity is an issue for coaching in Scotland, as well as the UK more generally.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Coaching is critical to sporting development and success. Inspirational and motivational coaches energise others, enabling them to expand their horizons and realise their potential. Talented coaches stimulate interest, encourage commitment and enhance performance in sport.

The study identified five areas of focus for consideration in the process of updating and revitalising the Coaching Scotland strategic framework.

Strategic development and deployment of the coaching workforce. Research has demonstrated a need for greater quantity and quality of coaches and coaching in Scotland. As a result of limited data, we do not know enough at present about the size, makeup or qualifications of the coaching workforce.

Education, training and mentoring. International data clearly indicate the importance of education and training for successful coach development. Coaches themselves stress their desire for continuing professional development (CPD) and mentoring. Implementation of the UKCC in Scotland will provide a basis for the improvement of coach education. But coach education extends beyond the scope of the UKCC, and must incorporate CPD and mentoring opportunities.

Management of the balance between volunteer and paid coaching. While increasing the number of paid coaches is part of the overall strategy of Coaching Scotland, it is clear that volunteer coaches will also have important roles to play in Scottish sport. Coaching Scotland must recognise the requirements for recruiting, training and retaining both voluntary and paid coaches.

Systems, pathways and structures – the implementation of an integrated strategic coaching infrastructure. The consultation and research undertaken for this project suggest that our approach to coaching needs to be more strategic, and that a coaching infrastructure which is clearly articulated to the needs of the long term player development pathway will be crucial to coaching success. Excellence in coaching is not only about winning medals – it means that quality coaches should be delivering quality coaching at every level of the player pathway. This infrastructure will be the basis for linking coaches with Active Schools, local sports clubs, regional academies, Area Institutes of Sport and the Scottish Institute of Sport.

Increasing the profile of coaches and coaching. Coaches need recognition, and it is crucial that the significance of coaches to Scottish sport is clearly understood. Coaching awards schemes may be one primary means of increasing the profile of coaching.

Scottish sport must take this opportunity to look towards the best practice in the world, so that sport in Scotland can provide the best opportunities for both participation and performance.