

3.1.1: Coaching skills

Adaptability

Adaptability allows coaches to deliver successful training sessions, even if factors outside their control cause them to have to change their original plans at short notice. Examples could include inclement weather limiting a planned outdoor training session or equipment not being available as planned. A coach should also be flexible enough to adapt the content of their sessions if the participants are finding the session too easy or too difficult.

Observational skills

Sports coaches must be able to identify any performance issues and then be able to provide the athlete or team with the necessary feedback in order to improve their performance. Successful coaches will also constantly be observing the participants during their training sessions to see who is working well or who is successful. They will then be able to praise these athletes. This observation will also enable the coach to identify anything that needs to change during the training session, meaning that they can adapt the activities to make the session more appropriate.

Effective communication

Sports coaches will need to use a range of verbal and non-verbal methods of communication while coaching.

Verbal communication - used to explain techniques or drills. It is also used when the coach is passing on information during half time or a break in play during a competition.

Non-verbal communication - used when the athlete is too far away to be spoken to. The coach might use facial expressions or gestures to communicate with the athlete or team.

Empowerment

Successful sports coaches have the ability to empower the athletes they are coaching to develop the following:

- their self-confidence
- their motivation to succeed
- their level of enjoyment
- their sporting values and ethics such as their belief in fair play and sportsmanship.

This empowerment will have a hugely positive impact on these athletes, as they will begin to take more responsibility for their development in both their sporting activity and in other areas of their lives.

Knowledge of sporting activity

Without good knowledge of subject content, no sports coach will be successful. The athletes being coached will need to be confident in the subject knowledge of their coaches as, without this knowledge, the coaches will not be respected and will not be able to improve the sporting performance of the athlete. This knowledge will enable the coach to analyse sporting performances, identify weaknesses and plan sessions that will include feedback, activities, drills and coaching points that will focus on the weak areas of performance.

Organisation

A sports coach will be involved in organising a number of different factors before, during and after their training sessions. These include:

- resources/equipment to be used during the session
- participants in the session
- facilities to be used for the session
- the timing of the session itself and the different activities during the session
- planning of the actual content of the session.

An organisational failure in any of these areas will have a potentially serious impact on a training session.

