

3.4.2: Development planning

Development plan

It is important for sports coaches to produce a development plan for their improvement. This can be done after carrying out a review of several coaching sessions. While developing the plan, they should reflect on their personal level of coaching performance. They should also reflect on their knowledge and understanding of the sporting activity they are coaching.

This plan should focus on the areas of the coaching process where aspects that need improving have been identified. By doing this, the coach can continue to develop and improve. This could lead to the coach gaining a better reputation and allow them to coach athletes or teams at an improved level.

Having identified and recorded the areas where improvements in knowledge or experience are necessary for the coach, the development plan should include short-term targets and long-term SMART goals for the coach to try and achieve. These targets and goals will focus the thoughts and efforts of the coach on the key areas they need to improve and motivate them to achieve greater success.

Methods of improvement

A key requirement of the short-term targets and long-term SMART goals is that they include what the coach needs to do to achieve the improvements identified. There are likely to be several methods of improvement available to the sports coach, with some of the most common available being:

Gaining more experience: coaches should take part in as many sessions with other coaches as possible so they can experience a range of styles and approaches to coaching. This will also allow them to have the opportunity to observe drills, activities and coaching methods that are new to them.

Completion of accredited courses: these are courses run by sports governing bodies so that the coach gains access to the most up-to-date resources and practices from qualified coaches. This will also allow the coach to work with other coaches who are at a similar level of ability and development. A qualified coach is also more likely to be successful with any application for a coaching vacancy than an unqualified applicant.

Observation of good practice: the coach should take the opportunity to watch as many different coaches delivering sessions as possible. They could explore many different sporting activities being delivered to participants with a range of experience and ability. This will enable them to watch how more experienced coaches manage transitions and progression in their sessions and also how they organise the skills, drills and other activities involved.

Increasing subject knowledge: any coach will benefit from increasing their knowledge of the coaching process, the principles of coaching and their knowledge and understanding of the sporting activity they are engaged in coaching. The coach can do this by reading articles online that are produced by academic establishments, sports governing bodies or by nationally or internationally recognised coaches. The coach could also subscribe to publications or websites that focus on sports coaching.

