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**INTERNATIONAL SPORT COACHING JOURNAL**  
**DIGEST VOLUME 3, ISSUE #1**

Compiled by Emma Boocock, Sergio Lara-Bercial, Lea Dohme, Andrew Abraham, Dave Piggott and Kevin Till from the Sport Coaching and Physical Education Research Centre at Leeds Beckett University, UK

*Digest contains a listing of pertinent, recent coaching and coach education articles and updates from other sources.*

**1. What is Physical Literacy, Really?**

Jurbala, P. (2015). *Quest*, 67, 367–383.

This paper revolves around the increasingly important concept of Physical Literacy. Physical literacy has become an influential idea in the past few decades, and is being woven into education, sport, and recreation policy and practice in many countries around the world. The term is based on a metaphor that likens movement fluency to language literacy. The paper argues that a lack of clear theoretical foundation has enabled various interpretations and re-definitions of the term. It thus proposes an understanding of physical literacy that encompasses and reunifies the interpretations, helping physical literacy to be theoretically understood, practically researched, and instrumentally employed. The unifying theme of communication between our bodies and the environment is identified, and based on this a new definition of physical literacy is advanced and a model of physical literacy development is proposed. A multi-disciplinary approach to physical literacy practice and research is presented to continue developing this worthy area of work.

**2. A Case for Coach Garfinkel: Decision Making and What We Already Know**

Jones, R.L. & Corsby, C. (2015). *Quest*, 67, 439-449

The purpose of this article is to deconstruct the decision-making processes of sports coaches through the writings of the sociologist Harold Garfinkel. Specifically, the authors draw upon Garfinkel's (1967) writings on jurors' decision making to challenge current cognitivist bound conceptualization to better interpret coaches' sense-making—why and how they make their decisions. The authors emphasise the need to further decipher the meaningful structures of daily coaching lives; within whose limits coaching decisions unfold. A call for a greater understanding of the social nature of coach decision-making by researchers and coach educators. Allowing coaches to better understand why and how they make decisions from a social perspective can enrich existing knowledge networks and support the development of new ones.

**3. Positioning Mentoring as a Coach Development Tool: Recommendations for Future Practice and Research**

McQuade, S., Davies, L. & Nash, C. (2015). *Quest*, 66, 317-329

This paper offers an overview of the history and research in mentoring in domains outside of sport and concludes with a series of reflective questions arising from the findings designed to engage the potential coaching organization with the mentoring process. The premise of the paper is that, even though current thinking in coach education advocates mentoring as a development tool to connect theory and practice, little empirical evidence exists to evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring as a coach development tool. The authors also contend that mentoring remains an ill-defined activity, especially in sport coaching, possibly due to the diverse use of the term and variety of contexts in which mentoring occurs. Business, education, and nursing precede the coaching industry in their mentoring practice, and research findings offered in these domains are drawn upon to position mentoring as sports coaching development tool.

#### **4. Reviewing the Family Unit as a Stakeholder in Talent Development: Is It Undervalued?**

Taylor, R.B. & Collins, D. (2015). *Quest*, 66, 330-343

The present article reviews the role of the family in the development of young talent as elite youth sport becomes more organized and professionalized. High-profile examples across a range of professional sports, both positive and negative, have drawn attention toward this important stakeholder. Accordingly, this review first examines the key issues in relation to family involvement in talent development in relation to what is perceived as good and bad practice on behalf of the family. Using Family Systems Theory as a conceptual framework, the authors provide a summary of where the current literature leaves us and where we can progress from here. Two possible inputs are suggested that could benefit the effectiveness of family involvement: a focus on the family holistically and a second on the role different family members can play.

#### **5. Psychobehaviorally Based Features of Effective Talent Development in Rugby Union: A Coach's Perspective.**

Hill, A., MacNamara, A. & Collins, D. (2015). *The Sport Psychologist*, 29, 201-212

This paper elaborates on the role of psychobehavioral components in the Talent Development (TD) process. The authors argue that despite psychology being recognised as a key determinant of long-term success in sport, there is a relative dearth of research examining the psychological characteristics that may benefit or derail development. A retrospective qualitative investigation was conducted with academy coaches and directors within rugby union (n = 15), representing nine different elite English rugby union academies, to identify both positive and negative issues that influenced TD. Comprehensive support was found for existing positive constructs as facilitators of effective development. A range of inappropriately applied 'positive' characteristics were identified as having a negative impact on development. Potential clinical issues were also

recognized by coaches as talent derailers. The authors propose that incorporating these potentially negative factors into existing formative assessment tools can lead to a more effective TD process.

#### **6. “It’s Not Just Your Dad, It’s Not Just Your Coach...” The Dual-Relationship in Female Tennis Players**

Schmid, O. N., Shannon, V.R., Bernstein, M., Rishell, C. & Griffith, C. (2015). *The Sport Psychologist*, 29, 224-236

The article reviewed here deals with a key issue in coaching; the relationship between parent-coaches and their athlete-children. The authors investigate this dual relationship in the context of tennis. An open-ended interview approach was used to examine how female tennis players previously coached by their fathers (professional coaches) before competing in college tennis perceived their experiences with the dual-role relationship and the coaching transition. A holistic narrative approach was used to reconstruct retrospectively the stories of the participants’ experiences and understand their development. Despite some beneficial aspects, a majority of participants emphasized their challenging experiences with regards to their needs to manage blurred boundaries, receive paternal approval, and endure their fathers’ controlling and abusive behaviors. The authors propose that sport psychologist can play a significant role in supporting both parent and athlete in maximising the benefits and minimising the negative impact of this very special parent-offspring relationship.

#### **7. Maturation and sex differences in neuromuscular characteristics of youth athletes**

DiStefano, LJ, Martinez, JC, Crowley, E, Matteau, E, Kerner, MS, Boling, MC, Nguyen, A-D, and Trojian, TH. (2015) *J Strength Cond Res*, 29 (9), 2465–2473

Neuromuscular factors, such as landing kinematics, muscle strength and flexibility are all associated with lower extremity injury. These factors change over time. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare landing mechanics, hip and knee isometric muscle strength, and lower extremity flexibility between sexes and maturation stages in youth athletes. Using a cross-sectional design, 113 youth athletes were grouped according to maturation status and completed assessments of landing mechanics, isometric muscle strength, and flexibility. Results showed that postpubertal females landed with less knee flexion and demonstrated lower knee extension strength than postpubertal males and prepubertal females. Postpubertal males landed with less hip frontal plane displacement and lower peak force compared with postpubertal females and prepubertal males. These findings suggest encouraging sagittal plane absorption (i.e., flexion of the ankle, knee and hip) and increasing quadriceps and gluteal strength may be important for

reducing injury risk in postpubertal athletes. Coaches can provide verbal cues such as “land softly,” “bend your knees,” “sit into a chair,” and “get low,” in sagittal plane squat and land type movements to increase the effectiveness of these interventions.

#### **8. Psychological skills usage among Japanese rugby players.**

Tanaka, S. & Gould, G. (2015). *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 13, 309-319.

This study aimed to assess the usage of psychological skills by Japanese rugby players in practice and competition environments. Further, it aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Test of Performance Strategies (TOPS) in differentiating players of differing competitive and experience levels. The TOPS was administered to 95 Top League and 257 university players. Results indicated that psychological skills (e.g., goal-setting, activation, and relaxation) were used more frequently by Top League players in comparison to university players, and experienced versus less experienced players. It was perceived that the more frequent use of psychological skills enabled a more facilitative psychological status in athletes. The results of this study also revealed that the TOPS successfully distinguishes between more and less experienced players in both competition and practice settings. However, caution needs to be taken when administering the TOPS in different cultures to eliminate cultural or linguistic bias.

#### **9. The relationship between implicit beliefs, anxiety, and attributional style in high-level soccer players.**

Gardner, L. A., Vella, S. A., & Magee, C. A. (2015). *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 27, 398-411.

This quantitative study aimed to investigate whether attributional style mediated the relationship between implicit beliefs and competition anxiety. The Conceptions of the Nature of Athletic Ability Questionnaire–Version 2, Sports Competition Anxiety Test, and short form Sports Attributional Style Scale were administered to 72 soccer players. Results indicated that entity beliefs were associated with heightened and incremental beliefs with lowered feelings of anxiety. The relationship between entity beliefs and anxiety was mediated by uncontrollable and global attributions, whereas the relationship between incremental beliefs and anxiety was mediated by controllable and specific attributions. In relation to the practical implementation, these findings give insight into the nature and influence of competition anxiety, which may be of importance for competition anxiety sufferers. Identifying the belief systems and the specific type of attributions that are associated with heightened competition anxiety levels, might enable coaches and practitioners to implement strategies to alter these underlying beliefs and potentially regulate competition anxiety levels.

**10. The Open Society and coach education: a philosophical agenda for policy reform and future sociological research.**

Piggott, D. (2015) *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 20(3), 283-298.

Over the past decade there has been a significant rise in interest in the education of coaches from both policy makers and academics. This article goes some way in providing a clear philosophical argument to aid in the reform of coach education for the future. Previous research in this field has provided a fairly troublesome picture of coach education but previous academics fail to provide any suggestions for improving the coach education landscape. Within this article, the author introduces the concept of the Open Society as a better prescriptive model for coach learning, which is a Popperian ideal. This concept offers a clear agenda for policy reform within coach education and provides policy makers a better method by which can be used to measure a programme's achievements. The article also questions the quality and reliance of Communities of Practice in coach learning. Originally a descriptive model of how knowledge communities are formed, this has somewhat merged into a prescriptive model which seems to be favoured by policy makers and academics alike. A thorough insight into how underpinning philosophies need to start driving future coach education and sociology research is offered.

**11. The impact of a coaching/sporting culture on ones coaching identity: how narrative became a useful tool in reconstructing coaching ideologies.**

Zehntner, C. & McMahon, J. (2014) *Sports Coaching Review*, 3(2), 145-161.

In this article the author uses their own experiences to produce a narrative account to induce change within their coaching identity. More specifically the authors looked into the relationship that was developed between themselves and their mentor, providing some key insights into how they viewed their identity within a power relationship and specific culture. Throughout the article it becomes clear that the use of narrative became an integral part of the education of this coach, signally specific turning points in their development pathway relating to power relationships and identity. The authors conclude by stating the usefulness of using narrative as a reflective and reflexive platform for learning. As well as this, narrative allowed the author and coach to critically investigate the dominant ideologies in play within that specific coaching culture.

**12. Home advantage in soccer – A matter of expectations, goal setting and tactical decisions of coaches?**

Staufenbiel, K., Lobinger, B. & Strauss, B. (2015). *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 33(18), 1932–1941,

In this study the authors are interested in building on the largely descriptive research base that has examined the phenomenon of Home Field Advantage. Drawing on the Framework for Homefield Advantage the authors identify that examining the way in which coaches make tactical decisions and form expectations for their players may provide more depth of evidence to support the predominant descriptive evidence. 297 soccer coaches of high or low expertise were asked to identify how they would prepare their team. Half were told they were playing at home, the other half were told they were playing away. Results identified that coaches preparing for

home games expected to win more and would be more offensive in their tactics than coaches preparing for away games.

**13. Do the structures used by international hockey coaches for practising field-goal shooting reflect game centred learning within a representative learning design?**

Slade, D.G. (2015). *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 10(4), 655-668

The aim of this study was to examine the pedagogical methods employed by head coaches of international field hockey teams at the 2011 Mens Champions Trophy tournament. In particular the author was interested in how coaches were preparing their teams to score field-goals during game play. Finally, the author was interested to see if there had been a shift from the predominant drill based approach to developing teams to score field-goals observed at the same tournament 12 years earlier to a more representative learning design through game based learning. In total seven coaches and their teams engaged in the study. Observation of practice revealed that six out of seven teams were predominantly engaging in Game Centred Learning. Coach interviews revealed a deliberate strategy to engage their teams in games that were representative of the game approach they wish to recreate in competition. The authors note that this represents a dramatic change in approach in a relatively short period of time. There is some suggestion that this may have been in part triggered by a change in rules in 1999.

**14. Blaming Bill Gates AGAIN! Misuse, overuse and misunderstanding of performance data in sport**

Collins, D., Carson, H.J., & Cruickshank, A. (2015). *Sport, Education and Society*, 20 (8), 1088–1099

This article is a response to a previous article published in the same journal that had been critical about the manner in which results from technology (i.e. performance analysis) were being used to exert power and control over athletes in elite sport. The authors argue that the sociological and decontextualized nature of the original analysis meant that important considerations were missed. Two broad critiques are offered. The first argues that the original authors lacked methodological coherence in their approach and that the assumptions of the methodology employed were violated on occasions. In particular the number of participants in the study is suggested to be too small and that there was a contradiction in the employment of deductive methods while stating the study was inductive. The second critique was that if the same data was viewed from the perspective of evidence based coaching a very different interpretation could be reached. The inference offered is that data on athletic performance is crucial in professional coaching and that it should be made clear to players that this will form a core part of the environment and their development. The authors also state that coaches should therefore consider what technology is employed, how and why to ensure professional standards are maintained.

