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*Gwangju 2019 FINA World Championships: Swimming
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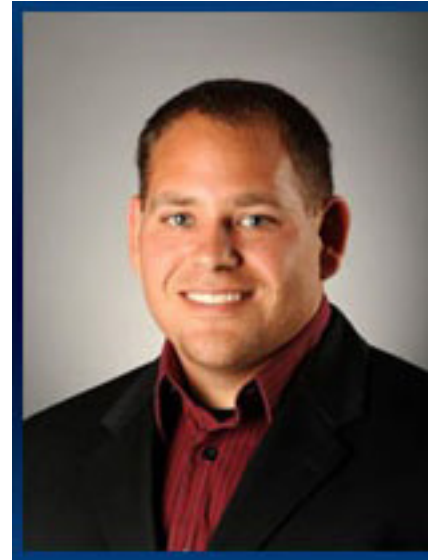
GWANGJU, SOUTH KOREA - JULY 21: Gold Medalists Team USA (L-R) Nathan Adrian, Blake Pieroni, Caeleb Dressel and Zach Apple pose during the medal ceremony for Men's 4x100m Freestyle Final on day one of the Gwangju 2019 FINA World Championships at Nambu International Aquatics Centre on July 21, 2019 in Gwangju, South Korea. (Photo by Clive Rose/Getty Images)

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Message from the
Director of Coaching
Chris Snyder



Welcome to *Olympic & Paralympic Coach* magazine! We are excited to bring you this next issue and share some of the big changes that are happening around Team USA.

As you may have noticed, we have recently changed the name of the magazine to reflect the organizational name change from the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC). We could not be more proud of the ongoing commitment to Paralympic inclusion and likewise excited to put forth this new issue in celebration of the unified movement!

In the next couple issues, you will notice some other changes in the way we message and include USOPC Coaching and Coach Education department communications, including information that we used to share in our monthly newsletter. Our team has transitioned to using this *Olympic & Paralympic Coach* as the predominant source of communication from the USOPC Coaching Education team. We invite you to look for more information on events, information and resources that all coaches can take away and apply in the future editions.

We are grateful for your continued interest in *Olympic & Paralympic Coach*. Please enjoy this issue and as always, let us know what you think. Go Team USA!

Chris Snyder
Director of Coaching Education

Coaching Education: The Secret Behind Long-term Program Success

Kristen Dieffenbach, President United States Center of Coaching Excellence

When athletes win championships and take home trophies, the credit for success often extends to the performance team - the strength and conditioning staff, the nutritionist and the athletic trainers. These are the people who assist the coaches in keeping the athletes healthy, strong and on track. But what about the coach? Who is responsible for helping the coach stay healthy, strong and on track? Coaching within a sports organization ranges from foundational and developmental sport to high performance. Exploring these systems and the people who prepare and support coaches is essential for developing impactful and successful programs. This is the first in a series of articles that will discuss and explore the essential role coaching education programs, coach educators and coach developers play in supporting long-term programmatic growth and positive outcomes.

Coaching: Not Just an Extension of the Athlete Experience

Before looking at coaching education, let's start by considering the coach. Within the sports experience, the coach is essential. Within our culture, the coach is iconic. The power and importance of the coach are frequent areas of study and central topics in many sport biographies and biopics, as 'great coaches' are revered in hopes of uncovering the secret sauce of success. Yet, increasingly both in the academic literature and within applied sport circles like that of the English Football Association (the FA), coaching is being acknowledged as a professional discipline that requires specialized knowledge and specialized preparation and support.

Unfortunately, while billions of dollars are spent on equipment designs and countless hours are spent analyzing data, the preparation and development of coaches as professionals is largely underfunded and disengaged from the essential disciplines that should inform both best coaching practices and best professional development practices. It is not uncommon that the fundamental qualification to coach begins and ends with having been an athlete. While passing a background check, U.S. Center for Safe Sport Training completion, and possibly a sport-specific workshop may also be requirements, the emphasis is on ticking off the boxes, not enhancing practice. This is not to say that experience and relationship factors are not important or that the current coaching education programs do not have quality content. However, given what is at stake (e.g., long-term athlete well-being and quality development) and the multitude of outcome expectations (e.g., good skill development, fitness, confidence, resiliency), let's pause to consider, just like we do with other aspects of sport, what the next steps are for doing what we do better. How can we, as coaching educators, better prepare and support our coaches and the professional preparation of the coaching profession through even better systems of learning and development support?

The Professionalization of Coaching: The Need for Coaching Education

The expectations on coaches are high and continue to rise. In youth sport, both at the entry and de-

developmental levels, the quality of the coaching impacts what athletes learn, if they learn the skills properly and whether or not children remain in sport. If we were to ask parents why they have enrolled their child in sport, common sentiments would include 'to make friends', 'to learn valuable life lessons', 'to get some exercise' and 'to develop great sport skills'. Most of us know, that the expectations of future greatness, college scholarships and related glory also rank (or lurk) high on their list, regardless of whether or not the parents choose to admit it. If we explore youth sport from the academic side, the expectations formalize into models of positive youth development, physical literacy and physical fitness.

While the athlete is ultimately the one on stage at the elite levels, the coach is still vital and in the spotlight. They make decisions and provide input that can negatively or positively impact the outcome. They need both foundational knowledge to understand and correct movement errors and advanced knowledge to push the edge of performance. And just like youth coaches, there are increasing expectations for high-level coaches to be able to facilitate and support holistic development and mental well-being among their athletes.

In addition to increased cultural expectations on coaches, the actual scientific knowledge about sport and exercise that can be used to inform the profession of coaching is growing exponentially. Remaining up-to-date with current practices can be a major professional hurdle. Kinesiology, strictly defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is the 'study of the principles of mechanics and anatomy in relation to human movement'. Kinesiology has also been adopted in academic circles as the umbrella term for the many disciplines that inform what we know about preparing people to engage in physical activity. Journals, books and conferences on sport psychology, sports medicine, motor learning, motor development, physical education, sport nutrition, exercise physiology and other essential disciplines expand our knowledge every year on how to prepare people across the life span and performance continuum to be healthy, happy and successful.

The emergence of long-term athletic development models, such as USA Hockey's American Development Model, brings together current evidence-based best practices to provide pathways for athlete growth that acknowledge their developmental needs in a right age, right stage approach within the sport. Adopting this approach for athlete development requires that the coaches working at each stage not only possess playing experience and an understanding of the sport; they also need to understand an athlete's skill stages and development. And of course, we all know that none of these things happen automatically just because a ball is paired with a playing field. The magic happens through well-designed systems that support development and well-prepared people within the system. A coaching education program that understands the demands of the sport, as well as the relevant sport sciences, will be able to prepare coaches to meet the demands of their profession.

Professional preparation requires an education system that is based on the actual skill and knowledge demanded of the job, which may not always be evident to those entering the profession. This is particularly true in sport. X's and O's are always a popular clinic topic, particularly among novice coaches. However, more experienced coaches know that knowledge of the sport is just the beginning. The demands of the coaching profession across all levels, as defined in the International Sport Coaching Framework (ISCF), notes that content knowledge, an understanding of how

to work with people (interpersonal skills) and self-knowledge (intrapersonal skills) are all essential. This is also emphasized in the Quality Coaching Framework (USOPC 2018) where the information in the ISCF was considered for the American coaches and coach developers and modified to fit the US market. More importantly, professional knowledge is not necessarily linear. There is both a breadth and depth to the knowledge, depending on the topic and context. While quality communication skills are essential for all coaching, understanding how to communicate based on the needs of the athletes at a particular age/developmental stage is just as essential in being effective. Likewise, how to teach effectively will differ based on things like the skill being taught, the age and developmental stage of the learner. Thus, over time, a coach may need training on how to teach the same skill to different levels. Helping coaches get both the foundational and contextual knowledge is an important piece of professional-based preparation.

But we already have Coaching Education?

For many, involvement in sport beyond one's competitive days is not just a professional career option -- it is a passion. It is rare to encounter someone who did not play any sports when you speak to those in coaching and coach education. Yet, despite the passion and best intentions of so many, the research indicates that the lofty ideals of sport are not being met, at least not at a level that should satisfy us. Youth disengagement from sport in the early teens remains high, the national levels of physical inactivity and obesity continue to grow, and our elite sport performance appears mediocre when you consider our Olympic medal count per capita in a country with an incredible depth of possibilities. National-level efforts, such as the Aspen Institute's Project Play and the President's Council on Sport, Fitness and Nutrition's charge to create a National Youth Sport Strategy, reflect the increasing concerns about creating quality programming. Abuse scandals that have hurt many athletes, shaken public trust and rocked sports at all levels of the game, also add to the mounting concerns. While these issues are complex, one of the core points that keeps emerging is the need for quality coaches, despite the many existing systems.

This all leads us to three essential questions:

1. what is a well-designed coaching education system
2. what does it mean to prepare quality coaches, and
3. how do we use this information to enrich the current coaching education systems?

There is not a single right answer to any of these questions, particularly when we consider the many different contexts in which coaching occurs and the range of responsibilities and roles of coaches. However, these questions provide an excellent opportunity for critical thinking about current approaches to coaching education, a first step in determining how to elevate the game.

Program Questions to Ponder

Consider the following questions to spark your thinking about your current coaching education model and possible opportunities for future development:

- Does my current coaching education system provide evidence-based, scientific best practices?
- How often is the scientific evidence from learning theory and other related disciplines supporting our coaching education program reviewed and updated?
- What fields of study inform our coaching education materials? Are they the right fields, given not only the topic, but the context in which it is applied?
- How often is the scientific evidence from exercise science and other related disciplines that is used within our coaching education program reviewed and updated?
- How has our program addressed the connection between athlete developmental needs and coach learning (being the right teacher for the right phase of learning/age of athlete)?
- Does our program provide evidence-based coaching education that involves sport-related content, interpersonal skill development and intrapersonal skill development?

Coaching Educators and Coach Developers: An emerging profession too?

The main focus of this article has been on coaches and their needs as we begin to consider how current coaching education systems might be enriched. However, a discussion of systems would fall short if the focus is only on the outcome and not the process itself. Often, coaching education is regarded as a *thing*. However content, no matter how comprehensive or well-packaged, is not synonymous with, and does not guarantee, learning. Of course, when the learners are adults (like most coaches tend to be), learning is in large part their responsibility. How the content is created, packaged and delivered by a coaching education system can have a significant impact on how accessible it is to the learner, however. This has a significant impact on the overall value of any educational system – does it actually lead to better professional practices? Or has it just been a data delivery or information dump?

Just like the coach is critical in creating a meaningful learning experience in sport, the coach educator and developer needs to be seen as a crucial player in a coach's learning. Earlier in this article, the term "coach developer" was used without a clear definition. A relatively new term in the coaching education conversation, a coach developer is an individual who has the content knowledge and skills necessary to support the professional development of individuals within the coaching profession through direct work (e.g., one-on-one or group teaching settings). While having sport knowledge and experience is helpful, the coach developer also needs knowledge on how to clarify learning objectives, create curriculum to support learning, and deploy information in ways that facilitate learning. These are important distinctions because a quality coaching education program is not intended to teach the coach to play the sport, it is to facilitate coaches as they strive to be better at their profession. Within this context, the role of the coach developer is to help the coach become a better teacher and leader within his/her own sport context.

Here are a few more questions to consider as you examine your coaching education system and the roles and preparation of the people within it:

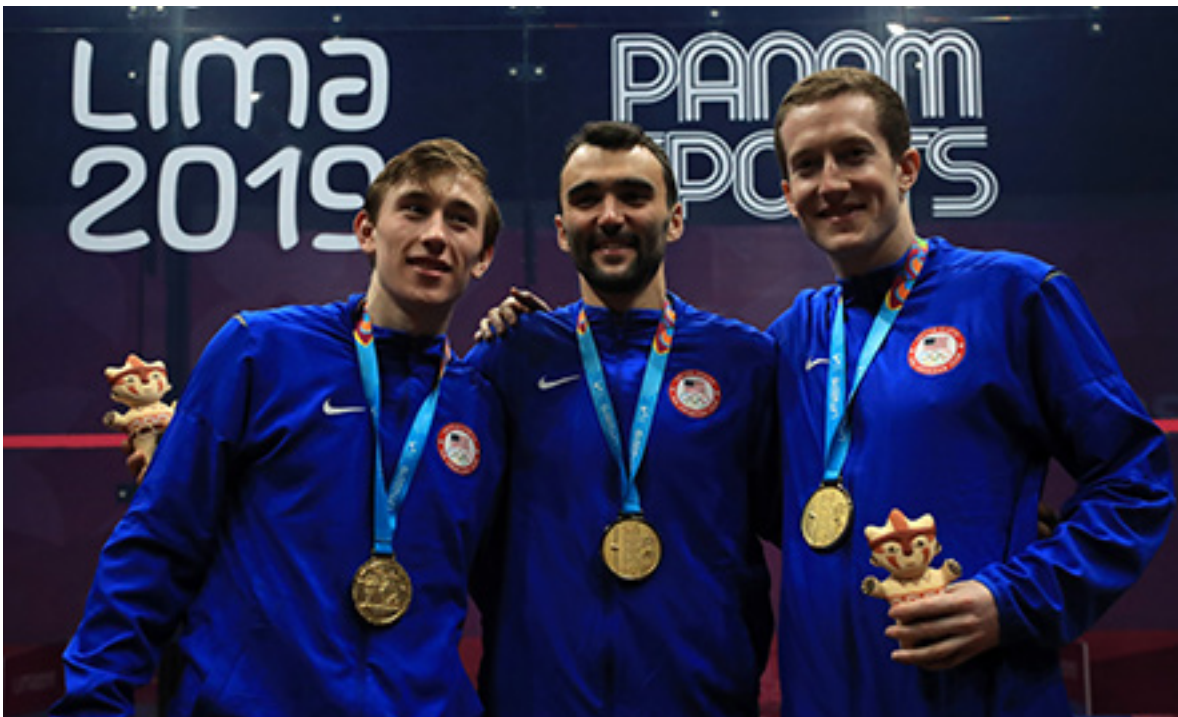
- How does our coaching education program view our responsibility to the learner? Does it serve as a content provider only, or to facilitate learning as well?
- What fields of study have informed the development of our coaching education program? (e.g.

androgogy – adult learning theory, curriculum design, evaluation for learning),

- What qualifies someone to be a coach educator in our system? What further training or knowledge would be beneficial to enhancing our coaching education system?
- What are the skills and knowledge required by the people within our coaching education system to develop our specific curriculum and materials?
- What are the skills and knowledge required within our coaching education system to facilitate learning beyond content delivery?
- Do we know if the coaches are learning and if content is being applied appropriately from our coaching education system? How do we know the impact on athlete development/experience?
- If coaching education is provided in person, how are our coach developers trained? Is being a good and/or entertaining presenter conducive to facilitating learning?

At the beginning of the article, I asked ‘How can we, as coaching educators, better prepare and support our coaches through improved systems of learning and professional development? What do you need to do as a coach educator to do your job better?’ Add to this list of essential relections, what is my role as a coach educator and do I aspire to be a coach developer? If so, what does that look like, not only within the context of my current coaching education role, but more importantly, for me personally?

In future articles, we will explore the concept of coach development and the essential role of the coaching education system in working across the sport spectrum from volunteer coaching to elite sport coaching.



Lima 2019 Pan Am Games - Day 5 LIMA, PERU - JULY 31: Gold medalist Team US in the podium of men's squash team Gold Medal on Day 5 of Lima 2019 Pan American Games at CAR Villa Deportiva Nacional on July 31, 2019 in Lima, Peru. (Photo by Buda Mendes/Getty Images)

Suggested Resources

- Professional Advances in Sports Coaching edited by Richard Thelwell and Matt Dicks (published by Routledge)
- Leader's March 2019 Performance Special Report: Coach education and development: A state of play across elite sport
- The International Sport Coaching Framework from the International Council on Coaching Excellence (published by Human Kinetics)
- USOPC [Quality Coaching Framework](#)
- Coaching Education Essentials edited by Kristen Dieffenbach and Melissa Thompson (published by Human Kinetics)
- The [United States Center for Coaching Excellence](#)
- Interested in learning more about supporting coaching education and coach development and the growing professional network of coach educators and coach developers? Visit the [USCCE's web-site](#) and plan to attend the 2020 North American Coach Development Summit for professionals in coaching education and coach development to be held in

Kristen Dieffenbach is an associate professor of Athletic Coaching Education at West Virginia University and the president of the United States Center for Coaching Excellence (USCCE). Her research interests focus on professionalism in coaching, ethics and moral decision making in coach development and long term athletic talent development. A former division I NCAA athlete, she has coached for over 20 years working with junior, elite and masters athletes and has an elite USA Cycling license and a Level II endurance specialization from USA Track and Field. Kristen is also a certified mental performance consultant (CMPC) with the Association of Applied Sport Psychology and she consults with athletes and coaches across all levels of sport.

Teaching and Learning Facilitation Skills Workshop

Sam Callan, Smartercoaching LLC.

Exhausted.
Exhilarated.
Excited.
Bleary.
Stimulated.

These are just a few of the words that describe what I am feeling a few days after attending the three-day Teaching and Learning Facilitation Skills workshop in Colorado Springs, Colorado in April of 2019. The workshop was presented by the U.S. Center for Coaching Excellence as part of its Coach Developer Academy.

And I loved every minute of it!

Luckily, I had had a few colleagues and friends go through an earlier workshop and knew that it was incredibly fulfilling, but also would be challenging and demanding. But then again, the best things usually are.

The official description of the course reads “This three-day intensive workshop is designed to help professionals develop and hone the skills they need as professional educators who train, support and challenge new and experienced coaches as adult learners to become the best that they can be as leaders and teachers within sport. Topics addressed in the workshop include how adults learn, delivery strategies for effective learning, and facilitation skills for coach educators and developers”. The description above gives the key points, but one of the things not mentioned is how this workshop will change how you go about giving coaching clinics. Think about the last coaching clinic you went to or organized. How was the room set up? Who was the focus of the clinic? Were there clear objectives for the clinic? How do you know if your attendees learned?

My guess is that the coaching clinic likely had lots of sport-specific content with a presenter at the front of the room (likely with a PowerPoint presentation) with the attendees largely being passive learners. I know the last clinic I put on as a NGB coach educator was pretty much exactly like that (down to the PowerPoint).

Now imagine a clinic that engages the learner and shifts the focus from the “sage on the stage” to the “guide by your side”? A clinic that goes by fast and has people excited to learn more? This workshop is designed to teach you, as the coach developer, the skills to move closer to that ideal and move away from the information dump that is all too common in coaching clinics.

One of my first takeaways, and one reason why the workshop was mentally and emotionally draining, was the amount of self-reflection and how self-reflection differs from asking a coach to reflect. In the latter case, a coach will often focus on the athletes or team’s performance. In self-reflection, I have to consider what I am doing well, where I can grow and what my next challenge is. I

learned to choose my words carefully there as well and have ceased using the phrases “get better at” or “need to improve on” as they can carry negative connotations for many people.

Another takeaway for me was the focus on the “how to” and “why” of coaching and not the “what”. Coaches often bring lots of playing experience, but how well do we as coach educators/developers help them learn how to coach? For many coaches, there is a lot of training on the job. I wonder how many coaches we lose from youth sports because they get frustrated that their kids are not getting better or they are frustrated that they want to teach better but do not know how?

To help us learn (and I will come back to this), we discussed what goes into a good explanation, a good demonstration, a good observation, a good analysis and a good method of giving proper feedback. This is an area that was a challenge for many in the group as we were moving away from “what” to “how to”. The steps for each are the same, no matter what the “what” is.

Try this: Pause after this paragraph to think about what goes into a good demonstration? Keep in mind it does not matter if you are demonstrating how to bake your favorite cookie or how to conduct a throw in judo.

In the workshop, we focused on four key elements of a good demonstration.

1. Everyone should be able to see and hear the coach.
2. A good demonstration should have only a few key points (if there are more, people will not remember all of them, especially kids).
3. The demonstration should be properly done.
4. Check for understanding. We did something similar for explaining, observing, analyzing and giving feedback.

Number four was the most impactful to me. How often as a coach (or parent) do you give instructions and then ask “Got that?” before sending out the kids (or even adults). What is the typical response? Head nodding, “yeah”, etc. Then they often go off, confused and perhaps not doing what you wanted. So how do you really know they got it? A good check for understanding is to have the athletes repeat the key steps to you before sending them off.

Another key element to the workshop is the art of facilitation. As I noted earlier, so many coaching clinics have the expert at the front of the room lecturing to (or at) the coaches. At times, such a set-up is necessary. It may be very technical or completely new information. However, whenever possible, facilitating a discussion may be a better approach. Adult learners (and that is our main audience, right?) bring with them knowledge and experience. By engaging them in the discussion, you are acknowledging that they are coming in with some experiences and knowledge. Even the parent who has never played that sport, but is there and wants to help because a son or daughter is playing, has knowledge and experience from other sports or life in general.

I make the argument that, in many ways, facilitating is easier than presenting. In presenting, I have to have all the knowledge and be the expert. In facilitating, I can crowdsource the knowledge and experience from the audience. Facilitation also shifts the focus from me as the presenter to the

learner. It is not all about me, although I admit I get a little ego rush from being the guy with the clicker and laser pointer at the front of the room. Facilitation also enables the learners to direct the learning, not necessarily on what the presenter thinks is important. I will admit, this reinforces something I believed when I was at USA Cycling. The coaches who came to our clinics often had a “burning question” they wanted answered and were paying good money to be there, in addition to time away from family and their own training. They gave off the impression that I should make sure they leave the clinic with that question addressed whenever feasible.

The workshop presented the idea of “push” and “pull” questions, both in terms of delivering a workshop and in working one-one-one with an athlete or coach. While the terms imply a binary set-up, it is better to think of them as a continuum. “Pull” questions seek input from the learner (or the athlete), while “push” questions are more along the lines of the coach directing the learner. The “pull” questions really get to what the learner is seeing or experiencing. Getting that learner to take a few minutes to self-reflect can empower them to be more autonomous. “Push” and “pull” questions should therefore be thought of as being on a continuum rather than being binary options, and both have their uses.

The use of microcoaching using the IKMR process was a really great chance to practice. Microcoaching allows a trainee coach to practice the coaching skills in a safe and supportive environment, using peers as learners (athletes). The IKMR process stands for Introduction, Key Points, Microcoaching and Review. For instance, a coach can practice one of the following: explaining a skill, demonstrating a skill, observing a skill, analyzing a skill or giving feedback. While the trainee coach is teaching other coaches (serving as athletes), the coach developer is observing and then providing feedback to the trainee coach.



Kemba Walker #26 of the 2019 USA Men's National Team listens to head coach Gregg Popovich of the 2019 USA Men's National Team during a practice session at the 2019 USA Basketball Men's National Team World Cup minicamp at the Mendenhall Center at UNLV on August 5, 2019 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Another key learning opportunity was learning how to give and receive feedback using the GRIP method, which stands for defining what the **Goal** was, **Reflecting** on what went well and not so well (reflecting on the former first!), **Input** from the learners, and a **Plan** for what to work on next. To practice facilitating a session, we were paired off to give a 20-minute seminar. During the seminar, each of the facilitators had another person in the course assigned to watch and give feedback afterwards. We broke into two groups. And after my session, Doug led the GRIP session with me on the “hot seat”. Doug followed the GRIP process through a series of questions directed towards me (Reflection) and to the group (Input). At the end, I had to say exactly what I was going to work on when I presented next (Plan).

As you can tell, there was a lot happening in the three days, and I am only touching on a few things that stuck with me. If you ask the others in the group, I bet you will get different takeaways, since we all came to the workshop with varying degrees of experience in this area.

There is one danger in attending this workshop: you may want to blow up the way you teach a seminar. I suspect that if you move to a more facilitated session process, you will find your attendees are more engaged and retain more of the information and concepts presented, especially if you give them a chance to “do”.

Facilitating is a skill that can be learned and improved upon (hence this workshop!). It takes intent, practice and the willingness to give up the laser pointer. Learning to facilitate, rather than present, could make the learning better for your coaches (and athletes).

I want to thank the instructors for the course: Kristen Dieffenbach, Ph.D, Linda Low, Ph.D, and Melissa Thompson, Ph.D and also Ken Martel from USA Hockey for allowing me to sit in on the course with the great crew from USA Hockey. To learn more about the Coach Developer Academy workshops, please visit: www.uscoachexcellence.org/icce-uscce-cd-academy.

Sam Callan is currently the CEO at SmartercoachingLLC. SmartercoachingLLC works with organizations and individual coaches in the area of coaching development. He is the past coaching education director at USA Cycling and USA Fencing. Sam has masters degrees in counseling and in exercise science. Sam has served on the planning committee for the US Center for Coaching Excellence Coach Developer Summit for the past three years and has completed both Coach Developer Academy workshops offered by the USCCE.

The Three-Step Process to Helping Athletes Re-establish a Growth Mindset

Steven Dudley

The journey of Olympic and Paralympic athletes is mentally and physically exhausting, pushing their bodies to the limit, day in and day out with the hopes of micro-advancements. That small progress is what fuels the continued success, but it takes time to see the change. Maybe it is one-thousandth of a second cut off their time, a couple of kilograms added to their 3 rep max, a few millimeters added to their maximum distance. The point is, progress can be hard to measure over time, let alone daily. Yet, these athletes show up anyway. They show up, knowing that they may not feel any differently from yesterday or the day before that, but trust that there will be progress in a month's time. All in all, athletes hope that in four years' time, their training, determination, patience and grit will lead them to ultimate glory.

There are more opportunities to detour on the four-year journey to the Olympics and Paralympics than one can imagine. Yet, these athletes stay true to themselves, true to the mission and true to the ultimate fight for inevitability. The athletes that make it are able to fight back the inner monologue of self-doubt and the inner resistance. The greats are able to maintain a growth mindset throughout their journey and become the very best version of themselves, even when all odds are against them.

Almost all great elite athletes have great coaches behind them and it is these coaches that keep them in a growth mindset. When we think of Olympians and Paralympians and their trainers and coaches, we immediately think about the physical aspect of their journey. The weightlifting, practices, two-a-day sessions, functional movement, technique training, nutrition regimens and so on. That is what trainers and coaches have spent hours developing their skills on, acquiring certifications in and gaining years of experience in. However, the physical element is only half of the battle. The other half is the mental game. The fight between the ears.

Carol Dweck, Ph.D., is the leading researcher in the psychology of motivation and success. Dweck is known for her work on the mindset psychological trait, her best seller, "Mindset: The Psychology of Success" and her viral Ted Talk. In her book, she states, "in a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment" (Dweck 2006).

Simplified, an athlete with a growth mindset has these beliefs:

- Challenges are embraced and seen as positive influences
- Feedback and criticism are essential for progress and development
- Intelligence, skills, and talent can all be learned and developed
- More effort takes you further and is the path to mastery

- Giving up is the only type of failure
- Setbacks are a sign to work harder and smarter
- Competitors' success is inspiring and motivational
- Failure is the best learning tool
- Time and hard work are the best ways to improve
- As long as you're learning, you are growing

You may be saying to yourself, “these all seem obvious and most Olympians and Paralympians wouldn't be here without those traits!” I would agree. However, maintaining this level of psychological competency is where the real challenge lies. The job of a coach is to remind his/her athletes of this mental state when the inner resistance starts to creep in. Coaches are the first line of defense for self-doubt and the fixed mindset. The coaches see it, feel it, and hear it first; sometimes even before the athlete realizes it himself/herself. Coaches have an innate ability to communicate with all three primary senses: kinesthetic (feeling, sensing, touch), visual, and auditory. Therefore, coaches can catch self-doubt, low confidence and change in mindset before it has detrimental effects.

As coaches, what do you do when you notice a change in your athletes and intuitively pick up on a move away from their normal motivation for success and growth?

When you notice a change, you need to act immediately and reframe their mindset. Though, keep in mind sometimes this inner resistance and fixed mindset can pass quickly by itself – it is natural after all! However, if you see, feel, or hear a prolonged slip and things are not changing, then it is time to intervene.

Here is a three-step protocol for a coach and trainer to help their athletes re-instill a growth mindset.

Step 1: Clarity

Clarity is a way to ground your athletes in their past and their future. In step one, we start to reconfigure the brain to focus on the positive and remind them of all the choice they have. The best way to reboot the system is to help them create a clear path to themselves and their future. Clarity comes in two forms in this model: clarity in self and clarity in their vision and direction.

Self - The athletes may need a reminder in who they are, what they stand for and why they are here. Aligning them to their core and helping the athletes remember who they are, where they came from, what they believe, what their values are, and why they started in the first place. Your goal is to help them feel empowered and justified in why they are here. The best way to do this is by sending an onslaught of WHY questions: “Why did you start this journey in the first place?” (past), “Why did you show up today” (present), “Why do you deserve any success?” (future). WHY questions automatically create clarity by grounding them in their self.

Vision and direction – Create clarity in where they are going, what they are doing this for, what the perfect result for them is and re-defining what their goals are, both short-term and long-term, and reducing the boundaries from here to there. The best way to do this is by asking questions such as, where are we going? Why do we train so hard? What would it mean to you to accomplish your dreams? Re-establish the end result they are looking for and making it possible again by re-setting

your goals. Use the goal setting method you've used in the past and establish new goals together. In a simple conclusion to clarity, we are changing the mindset from "I have to do this", "I have to be successful", or "I have to train today and get better", and reminding the athlete that they don't have to do anything and they have choice. Clarity changes the mindset from "I have to" to "I get to". Athletes get to play a sport they love, they get to compete on the biggest stage in the world and they get to train to be a better version of themselves day in and day out.

Step 2: Confidence

With clarity in place, you can now rebuild confidence in athletes and in their growth mindset. The best and easiest way to build confidence and affirm that they are making daily progress is to give them a task they couldn't do two months ago but now can with ease. That could be proof of their strength in the gym or performance in their respected field. Pick a specific exercise, workout, time trial, distance or other measurable and prove to them they are growing and their hard work is paying off. Show them that the version of themselves two months ago was weaker, slower and less talented. This builds confidence, not only in themselves but in their growth mindset. This easy win creates the self-confidence in their abilities as well as their ability to grow. It is a very simple but very effective way to compare the past to the future and reestablish self-worth.

This step is all about action. Words, questions and theory do not belong here. This is where you set your athletes up for success. Play to their strengths and create an element of ease or fluidity. Reminding them of their power within, their natural born talents and athleticism. As a coach and a trainer, this is the fun part; this is where you watch them do what they love.

Step 3: Conviction

Conviction is the belief system. Not believing in yourself is the ultimate path to the one and only type of failure - failure to not get back up on the horse once you've fallen off. Once clarity in oneself and direction are reconfigured and confidence is rebuilt, then you can work on the athletes belief system. It is the single most powerful tool for all success. Your athletes need to believe they can succeed, believe nothing can stop them from growing, and that they can always get back up if they fall.

A coach can only do this next task once they have confidence. Otherwise, it can cause more damage than good. Purposefully, challenge your athletes to an impossible task. You must manufacture a safe failure for them. Once you intentionally get them to fall, your job is to interrogate them while they are down. Asking questions like: What's it like down there? What did this fall tell you about yourself? What happened, what did you learn, what will you do next time? This is your opportunity as a coach to encourage them to get back on the horse alone and go again. This will build the conviction that they can do this and that there is no such thing as failure unless you don't believe you can get back up.

These three steps will reinforce their growth mindset, reduce them of self-sabotage and self-doubt. For an ordinary person going to a 9-to-5 job, it is hard to constantly show up as the best version of themselves. For Olympians and Paralympians, it is even harder, especially when there is a whole

world full of distraction and frustrations so readily available.

Elite athletes are humans, and each athlete has a full life outside of training. At any time, an imbalance can happen. When it does, it can infiltrate our mindset. Our friends, family, spirituality, profession, financial state, love life, hobbies, and more, can all influence our mental state. When one category gets impacted, they all get impacted, thus making it hard to stay consistently mentally strong. As a coach and trainer, you can have a massive effect on your athlete's mental state. By following these three stages and engaging as a curious coach, you are now prepared to quickly navigate your athlete to a growth mindset and optimal performance.

Steven Dudley was a semi-professional athlete before moving on to an entrepreneurial career in the wellness space. He built and sold two businesses in Denver, Colorado. He openly talks about his mental struggles along his journey, and now he is helping his fellow athletes and entrepreneurs conquer their own mental battles. He is a mindset and performance coach for entrepreneurs and competitive athletes, as well as a forum facilitator, speaker and author.



USA v China - Women's FIH Field Hockey Pro League

LANCASTER, PA - MAY 18: Head coach Janneke Schopman (R) of the United States huddles with her team before a Women's FIH Field Hockey Pro League match between USA and China at Spooky Nook Sports on May 18, 2019 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. USA defeated China 3-1. (Photo by Corey Perrine/Getty Images)



Coach and Teammate Cathy Sellers Honored

This past June, one of our Olympic and Paralympic Family members was honored with the USCCE 2019 Legacy Award. Cathy Sellers was recognized at the North American Sport Development Summit in Colorado Springs, for her service to coaches and coach education. Cathy was honored along with Special Olympic's Annette Lynch.

Cathy Sellers retired from the United States Olympic Committee and US Paralympics last year. She served nine years as the Director of Paralympic Track and Field and previously as the Manager of the USOC Coaching Department. Prior to her service at the USOC, she also served as Manager for Development Programs for USA Track and Field for eight years, managing USATF's Coaching Education program, Juniors, Men and Women's Sport Development. Cathy was also a track and field coach for over 40 years at the high school, collegiate and elite performance level for Team USA.

As the US Paralympic High Performance Director, the Team USA Rio Paralympic track and field team garnered 43 medals, more than any sport in Olympics or Paralympics since 1972 under Cathy.

During Cathy's time at the USOC Coaching Department, she spearheaded projects and events such as the Women in Coaching Conference, Training Design, and established the Order of Ikko's medal program that allows Team USA athletes who podium at an Olympic or Paralympic Games the opportunity to present their coach with a medal, in recognition of their impact on the athlete performance. Among many other things, Cathy managed Olympic Coach e-magazine, making it the publication it is today.

Cathy also was the representative interacting with different sport organizations including the USA Coaching Coalition (USOC, NCAA, NFHS and NASPE/AAHPERD) and was a strong voice for coaches and coach developers, always advocating for the value of and impact a coach has.

Cathy, your team USA colleagues are in awe of the legacy that you've left and shared with us, and we're excited that others get to know the positive impact you've had on sport as a recipient of this award!

To learn more about the Legacy Award and to see previous recipients, please visit uscoachexcellence.org/legacyhalloffame.



LONDON, ENGLAND - APRIL 28: Tatyana McFadden of the USA crosses the line in second place during the Women's Elite Wheelchair race during the 2019 Virgin Money London Marathon in the United Kingdom on April 28, 2019 in London, England. (Photo by Naomi Baker/Getty Images)

On the cover: United States of America v Netherlands : Final - 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup France LYON, FRANCE - JULY 07: Rose Lavelle of the USA celebrates with teammates following the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup France Final match between The United States of America and The Netherlands at Stade de Lyon on July 07, 2019 in Lyon, France.

Cover photo by: Richard Heathcote/Getty Images

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Current and past issues of Olympic & Paralympic Coach are available compliments of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee Sport Performance Division. Visit www.teamusa.org/About-the-USOC/Athlete-Development/Coaching-Education.