

A GLOBAL INVESTIGATION OF BASKETBALL COACHES' PROFESSION: INITIAL FINDINGS AND FUTURE ORIENTATION

Alexis Lyras, Andrew Yiannakis, & Mikos Karakalis, University of Connecticut, USA

Context

The coaching profession faces similar challenges and barriers around the globe. Due to the significant influence that sports have on the micro and macro levels of society, specific orientation and educational models should be developed towards enhancing and progressing coaches' education. Although numerous groups, from international organizations to school boards and sport clubs, have stated the need for more, better qualified coaches, they fail to define what characteristics contribute to an ideal structure and educational model. This presentation will demonstrate patterns that exist in the basketball coaching profession worldwide and identify differences between basketball coaching structures in countries of European Union and countries from other continents. We attempt to provide common national and international orientations that would facilitate a European convocation in licensing, educational and ethical issues. This common direction has the potential to develop an EU sports model with multidimensional benefits to each member country. Through these common goals, an improved structure of coaching at both national and international levels can be achieved.

Methods

In March 2003, the Executive Board of the World Association of Basketball Coaches (WABC), at its meeting in Geneva decided to take some actions to improve various aspects of coaching. One of the first tasks was to conduct a global survey to determine what is the real situation regarding coaching structures and coaching education. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the existing situation of coaches' profession and from the results, determine how the WABC and the International Basketball Association (FIBA) would proceed with further actions towards implementing a long-term development plan. The survey was sent to all National Basketball Associations of the five FIBA continental zones. FIBA received results from 87 countries. We used descriptive statistics and frequencies to investigate the overall situation of coaches' status at national and continental levels, and identify general structural patterns of the coaching profession around the world.

Results

Initial results were presented at the annual conference of the Northeastern Educational Research Association (Lyras, Brown, Radovic & Meng, 2004). These indicated a general trend for implementing structures with five training levels for coaches that require them to attend theoretical and practical sessions. Despite most countries' common practice in follow having a five-level model, there existed great variance in the theoretical and practical hours required. At all five levels the standard deviation is greater than the mean, which indicates the global inconsistency and the heterogeneity of these programmes. However, Europe had more countries with official degrees compared to the other continent zones (33 countries, 84.6%) and America had the lowest percentage (25%) with 2 countries, Asia had 6 countries (42.9%), Africa had 7 (58.3%) and Oceania 2 (50%) with degrees in Basketball coaching. Europe also had the highest percentage of countries that require coaches to hold a degree in order to be eligible to coach at different levels. Africa had the lowest percentage – 25% with 3 countries, America 2 countries (28.6%), Asia 5 (38.5 %) and Oceania 2 (50%).

Discussion/ Implications

It is acknowledged that sports have multiple effects at both macro and micro levels of society. At an individual level, sports can become the vehicle for possessing social and psychological skills (Cahill & Pearl, 1993). However, sports can act as a 'double-edged sword' with both positive and negative outcomes (Hardy, 1986; Martens, 1993). Coaches and sport authorities that hold this 'sword' should consider many factors that influence performance and development and contribute to their athletes' benefit (Brady, 2004). Athletes need guidance to gain positive attitudes, physical abilities, ethical approaches, persevering behaviour, and adequate knowledge that will help them enhance their athletic

abilities and aid their holistic growth and development. At the macro level, people that are close to the teams are often influenced by the results, which effects the way they act in their community. Bernhard, Dabbs, Fielden & Lutter (1998) suggested that individuals often take the efforts and the achievements of their heroes and their favorite teams as an extension of their personality. Bernhard et al (1998) indicated that the achievements and the failures of individuals' favorite teams affected self -esteem, mood and pro-social behavior. The findings of this study can provide important information for developing a sport educational, ethical and licensing framework with higher standards for each country that are based on universally accepted values and principles.

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Contact: Alexis.Lyras@uconn.edu