

How to Train Elite-Sport Coaches?

Denis Musso, Institut national de l'éducation physique et du sport (INSEP) Paris. France,
denis.musso@insep.fr

Abstract

Research Question / Aim of Presentation

How to train effectively Elite Sport Coaches (ESC)? In France the ministry of sport is currently faced with this question. Based on a few observations from different countries this paper tries to raise some ideas that could provide some pointers for action.

Results

1. ESC is recognised as a strategic segment and is part of the Elite sport policy.
Notably two international studies show this.
The first one based on 6 countries noted the emergence of 10 key success factors; in particular, "the realization of sports services to create a culture of excellence in which each member of the collective (athletes, coaches, managers and scientists) can interact formally and informally." Another ongoing study, focused in 2006 on 6 countries identified 9 key success factors including a focus on quality and the system developed to provide Olympic sports performance coaches.
2. Complexity of the context
ESC is involved in a complex environment because of the multiplicity of players around Elite sportspersons, the emergence of full-time sportspersons, the sophistication of the competition system, the legal and hybrid situations of sportspersons.
3. Between a "one man-band" and an «orchestra conductor"
Based both on a French study and an international one, the role of High Performance Manager (HPM) is located between a general manager (CEO / Manager) and a coach. The component of the job includes the roles of a strategic leader and an operational coordinator and also a sport manager and a coach.
4. Professionalisation and leadership in the training system of ESC
The building and organization of the ESC training is at the crossroads of many players: the sports movement, public authorities, coaches unions, market regulation. Depending on the features of the country and the sport, a dominant player can appear. However the situation rather refers to a coalition of players led by spirit of "coopetition", ie characterized by both a competitive and a cooperative dimension.

Discussion

1. Coaches for elite or elite coaches?

The question is to identify the population on which to deliver the effort of training. How to identify, select and do with the best coaches? As for athletes a special category, "World Class Coach" is adopted in many countries. However the issue is different for coaches because of the difficulty in identifying performance indicators and a long-term and a late maturity of professional career.

2. Train individuals or teams?

The current realities show a plurality of players around elite sportspersons. This situation questioned training policies. Should we isolate the coach and enrol him in a journey of individualized training, or put him with coaches of the same rank even from other sports, or leave him in his context? Pooling their experience, their tools and their doubts would be a significant added value for coaches.

3. What balance of resources to invest in elite sport / mass sport?

The issue of resources distribution between mass sport and elite sport is increasingly being posed in several countries. One of the recommendations for action of the white paper on sport of the European Union (2007) is to develop studies on the funding of amateur sport which may appear neglected by the government compared to high – level sport. Several countries are developing tailor-made courses at a very high cost for the training of ECS.

4. for coaches, by coaches

The reality is somewhat overshadowed by the fact that in France national coaches and "DTN" are employed by the Ministry of Sports and benefit from a recognition and a "status". In other countries this quest for recognition urges coaches to organize a professional group to put pressure particularly on the government to succeed.

5. The issue is the role and the place ESC can/want to play in the system.

How to respond in training to the situation of a coach-manager?

The question of the division of labour between coaches and managers is central and has an impact on the training of coaches. This creates a real challenge between experts from both fields and coaches to find the appropriate balance between the training focused on the external (manager role) and focused on the internal one (as coach).

Conclusion

The issue of training for elite coaches is part of professionalization issues. Finally the segment of high-level competition is worked by forces and trends converging toward a single and universal model that also encompasses ECS as highlighted by Green and Oakley?

References

- i Musso, D., (2007). La formation des entraîneurs de haut niveau à l'étranger, étude INSEP, not published.
- ii The Elite sport coaching features are influenced by the context of each country also, taken out of context, a number of data and information should be considered with caution.

- iii Oakley, B., Green, M (2001). The production of Olympic champions: international perspectives on elite sport development system. European journal for sport management, vol8, special issue, 83-105.
- De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., Van Bottenburg, M., & Shibli, S. (2006). A conceptual framework for analysing sports policy factors leading to international sporting success, European Sport Management Quarterly, 6-2.
- iv Fleurance, P., Perez ; S. (2006), Rapport d'étude sur les référentiels professionnel et de formation des entraîneurs nationaux "Chef de projet performance",
<http://archiveouverte.campus-insep.net:81/archimede/ExploreOneUpload.do?vref=382>
- v Smolianov, P. & Zakus, D. (2006). Managing High Performance Programs. 13th and 14th Congress of European Association for Sport Management.