

The 5Cs for coaching: coaching the whole child

During 2008 Sportscoach UK gathered some of the foremost names in coaching to further evolve the participant development model. As we head into 2010 the nation's lead coaching agency is pioneering a truly developmental approach to coaching children. David Haskins explains why the '5Cs for Coaching' offers a different approach for coaches in this country.

When Sportscoach UK pulled together a working group to look again at the participant development model the names involved formed a roll call of eminence in the field of pedagogy. Richard Bailey, Istvan Balyi, Clive Brewer, Dave Collins, Jean Côté, Pat Duffy and Rod Thorpe; these are names and reputations that demand respect and it is no surprise that their collaboration could result in a fundamental change in the way children are coached.

Early on in the collaboration Jean Côté suggested using the 5Cs concept that was being successful when targeted at positive youth development as both a framework and a hook on which to hang the results. Richard Bailey and Rod Thorpe were quick to help develop and adapt the concept and we now have the 5Cs for Coaching: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring and creativity. Côté, a Canadian specialist in psychopedagogy, is fully committed to the developed model and has written a useful paper (Côté 2009) that gives a full justification of the use of the 5Cs within the coaching field. In it he gives full significance to the model and proposes the following definition of coaching expertise which, for him, is the "consistent application of sport-specific, inter-personal and intra-personal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character in a specific coaching context."

This is a definition full of wonderful language concerned with developing people as well as performers, and it is no surprise that Sportscoach UK has now developed a workshop and an accompanying book based on the 5Cs concept called Coaching the Whole Child: Positive Development Through Sport. What follows is a whistle-stop tour of the five basic concepts. The development of competence is central to coaching and the 5Cs use the first three stages of the player development pathway to show how young people should develop. Confidence is often mentioned as a consequence of coaching and the 5Cs tackle its development directly. Coaches are encouraged to think about success ratios for young people when practising and also to think about how they can get young people doing different practices according to their ability. Connection is concerned with connection to sport, all those things that make sport interesting: roles in teams, being a captain, helping others, leading, officiating, devising training schedules. The 5Cs suggest that young people should be engaged more directly in their coaching sessions through these types of activities so they can really connect with sport. Fair play and the development of character are often talked about as desirable, but sometimes the practice does not match the talk. By including character in the 5Cs, coaches are encouraged to teach fair play and develop sportsmanship among players. And creativity has been added to ensure that young people are given the chance to develop their own ideas and become creative players and participants. It is an important area of the gifted and talented pathway and the 5Cs suggest that it should be important for all coaching practice.

The practicalities of embedding the 5Cs in coaches' practice will be addressed by the 5Cs workshop, which will be delivered through Sportscoach UK from January. The workshop will give coaches the chance to learn about the ideas and to begin to experiment with them practically. By coaching the whole child, coaches really will begin to change their practice when working with young people.



Dave Haskins: making light work of heavy going
Photo: Boswell Photographic

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David Haskins is the author of Coaching the Whole Child: Positive Development Through Sport, which will be available from the Coachwise website www.1st4sport.com early in 2010.

If you are interested in booking onto the workshop please contact the Sportscoach UK workshop booking centre on 0845 601 3054 or email scukworkshops@sportscoachuk.org

The Leisure Review is written,
designed and published by:

tlr.comms
TLR Communications Limited

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The Leisure Review, December 2009

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