

## Getting coaching back on track

**When Sportscoach UK lost both its leaders in quick succession the vacuum was filled by Philip Kimberley, a man with a history in oil and hockey, who set about a root and branch review. The Leisure Review was lucky enough to grab a few moments of his time to ask the questions that we think are on everyone's lips.**

**Looking at various versions of your CV, it is your business skills and your application of them to sporting contexts that are emphasised. Is there much difference between the worlds of Burmah Castrol and England Hockey?**

Absolutely! Burmah Castrol was a £3 billion turnover business with 25,000 employees scattered round the world. England Hockey has an income of £7 million and 70 staff all in England. Running a multinational business is relentless and it takes decades to build successful businesses up, though they can be destroyed at a stroke by poor strategic decisions, for example the Royal Bank of Scotland's takeover of ABN AMRO. Running an NGB has similarities: both require a clear strategy, an appropriately designed organisation to deliver such a strategy and quality staff trained to deliver it.

One key difference is that sport doesn't seem to be given much time to put such plans into place. It took me four to five years to get England Hockey back on its feet to the point where I was happy that we could move to a higher level, which is what Sally Munday, the new full-time chief executive, is tasked with doing. Building a successful business takes years and years of implementing a consistent strategy, as it does in sport. Look at Manchester United, Arsenal, British Cycling and sailing; their success has taken years if not decades to achieve and still requires fine tuning and constant 'raising of the bar'.

**What is your role at Sportscoach UK and what circumstances brought you to it?**

I was asked to step into the chair's role to settle things down following the departure of Dr Duffy, the previous chief executive. Ian McGeechan had been chair for several years but took a sabbatical for this year with his Lions duties and the individual who stepped in to take his place became unwell. I will therefore be looking to recruit a new chief executive but am also looking at whether the governance processes can be improved. I am, however, only there for a few months.

**You have been credited with having led the rebuilding of hockey's governing body after a financial and governance meltdown. Now you have been parachuted into Sportscoach UK. Many will read that as saying Sportscoach UK is in trouble. Is that the case?**

No, I wouldn't say that. Sportscoach UK is financially in very good shape, unlike hockey, which had in fact gone into administration when I stepped in six years ago. Sportscoach UK has the support of its two key funders, which is vital. However, when a chief executive departs suddenly there is always a period of uncertainty and instability. I will be able to give it some stability until the new chief executive is appointed and hopefully add some value to the board in the next few months.

**The UK Coaching Framework is just beginning to impact on 'real people', that is coach developers and even coaches rather than the professionals in the Policy Maker and System Builder strands. What milestones should people in the sport system who may not be au fait with the UK Coaching Framework be looking out for?**

The UK Coaching Framework is a UK-wide vision and strategy for raising standards of sports coaching in the UK. It has buy-in from government, NGBs [national governing bodies of sport], key funders – Sport England and UK Sport – and other sports councils. Now is the time to start delivering key areas within

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Philip Kimberley: in charge pro tem

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the framework and every partner has a role to play in that. Sportscoach UK has a pivotal role in energising the coaching landscape and supporting the NGBs and other key partners, for example county sports partnerships, to enable them to train and educate the myriad coaches within the community as we move towards our ambition of having a 'world leading' coaching system in place within the next decade.

**Beyond Sportscoach UK and given that you are a board member of UK Sport, what are the immediate challenges that face British sports?**

I see several key challenges ahead: delivering success at both the 2012 Olympics/Paralympics and 2014 Commonwealth Games, though I believe we are well on track to deliver our targets; embedding successful athlete and coaching pathways in sports so that we leave systems in place that produce world-class athletes and coaches, on a regular basis beyond the immediate horizon; building on the undoubted 2012 feel good that will occur to get more people participating in sport on a regular basis; and ensuring that strong government funding for sport continues beyond 2012/2014.

**And finally to a perennial TLR bugbear. The Coaching Workforce 2009-2016\* tells us that "68% of coaches are qualified". Why expend so much time, energy and personal angst on the delivery of the UK Coaching Certificate across the board when you are prepared to accept that qualifications are not required if you want to call yourself a coach? What exactly is an "unqualified coach" other than an accident waiting to happen?**

Raising coaching standards has to be a sound objective; ensuring that coaches are qualified in the context of up-to-date curricula similarly so. That will continue to be a challenge in an environment where sports' coaching as of yet is not regarded as a widely held career vocation and where lack of money in many sports prevents people from making a decent living from coaching. Those challenges need to be overcome.

\*The Coaching Workforce 2009-2016 (April 2009) is a Sportscoach UK research document that provides a methodology for more systematic workforce planning and represents a starting point for planning and organising front-line coaching delivery.

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