IN-SEASON
Guiding Athletes and Teams to Peak Performance

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Purpose

Quality coaching in practices and competitions
Part II In-Season: Enact (How to optimize performance and skill development)

Chapter 5 Develop Athletic Talent and Skill
- Genetic Influences on Athletic Skill
- Deliberate Practice
- Long-Term Athlete Development
- Physical Literacy
- Developmental Model of Sport Participation
- Free Play
- Sport Sampling
- Multilateral Development
- American Development Model
- Athlete Development Models in Action

Chapter 6 Optimize Athletes’ Learning
- Individual Learning Needs
- Athlete Prior Knowledge
- Athlete Learning Values
- Goal Importance
- Expectancies
- Component Skills
- Expert Blind Spot
- Instructional Cues and Feedback

Chapter 7 Design Quality Practices
- Mastery Practice Goals
- Growth Mindset
- Learning Scorecards
- 8 Principles of Practice Design
- General Motor Programs
- Random vs. Blocked Practice
- Autonomy-supportive Coaching
- Functional Variability
- Game-like Approach
- Maximum Individual Participation

Chapter 8 Ensure Precompetition Readiness
- Sleep Guidelines
- Food and Hydration Needs
- On-site Warm-up
- Stretching
- Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning
- Deep Belly Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Imagery and Pre-game Music
- Pre-game Speeches
- Checklists and Routines

Chapter 9 Coach Effectively on Game Day
- ‘Bench Coaching’
- Examine, Encourage, Educate
- Competition Check Points
- Momentum Triggers
- Momentum Strategies
- In-game Adjustments
- Time-outs and Contingency Plans
- Post-competition Routines
- Competition Reflection Cards
- Post-competition Checklists
Keeping Bench Players ‘In the Game’

Quality coaches understand that a successful program requires the right team climate in which every player has a chance to improve his or her skills during competitions. This requires a game plan not only for those who will get most of the playing time but especially for those who will have fewer chances to compete.

Other tools for competition coaching...

Register for Live Webinars
In-Season: Guiding Athletes and Team to Peak Performance
End-of-Season: Assessing Progress Toward Achieving the Vision
Off-Season: Recharging and Improving for Next Year

View Recorded Webinars
Raising the Performance Bar Through a Season
Coaching Your Best in Competitions
Coaching Athletes to Perform at Their Mental Peak
In-season Coaching

- Principles of Athlete Learning
- Quality Practice Design
- 3 E’s for Competition Coaching
In-season Coaching

Principles of Athlete Learning

Quality Practice Design

3 E’s for Competition Coaching
Athlete Learning

Process that leads to desired outcome or change in skill or behavior
21 months – time from 1st attempt in practice to 1st attempt in competition
(Willmott & Collins, ISCJ, in press)
4 Principles of Athlete Learning

• Prior knowledge can help or hinder
• Motivation directly influences learning
• Skill mastery & component skills
• Combine deliberate practice & feedback
Athlete Prior Knowledge

- Gauge readiness to learn
- Have athletes explain or demonstrate skill

Self-Assessment for Swimming Technique

How familiar are you with the underwater butterfly kick?
- ☐ I have never heard of it.
- ☐ I have heard of it but don’t know what it is.
- ☐ I have some idea of what it is but don’t know how or when to use it.
- ☐ I have a clear idea of what it is but haven’t used it.
- ☐ I can explain what it is, and I can demonstrate it.
Motivation Influence

• Challenge-skill balance

• Ask for feedback on difficulty of activities
High challenge

Anxiety (too hard)

Learning “sweet spot” (high intrinsic value)

Apathy (don’t care)

Boredom (too easy)

Low skill

Low challenge

High skill
“High perceived risk, low actual risk”
Component Skills
Component Skills

• List and describe pieces
• Walk through before teaching it
• Test on friend or someone from other sport
Deliberate Practice & Feedback

- Identify feedback cues in advance
- ‘Mental representations’ key to learning
Deliberate Practice & Feedback

- Feedback bandwidths

Look at each approach. On a scale of 1 to 10 identify how much you use this approach, with 1 being all the time and 10 being never.
In-season Coaching

- Principles of Athlete Learning
- Quality Practice Design
- 3 E’s for Competition Coaching
Practice Design

Maximize skill development while nurturing athlete motivation
Musashi Fuchu Little League baseball players spend eight to 10 hours a day on weekends practicing on this field on the outskirts of Tokyo. This traditional powerhouse team has won the Little League World Series twice before, in 2013 and 2003, but did not qualify this season.
Practice Efficiency

Today we only ran 20 plays instead of 80 in weeks gone by. Guys are going to be fresh and ready. But details and speed ought to improve.
Characteristics of Quality Practices

• Purpose
• Variety
• Competition
• Game-speed
Gameline Practice Activities

Every major college program today has a teacher-coach at the helm, and they all run practices that are highly organized with competitive segments that mimic game conditions.
Gamlike Practice Activities

• Techniques and tactics taught primarily through small-sided games (‘playing form’)
Gameliike Practice Activities

Practice teaching grid

a. Basic 30 x 20 meter playing area for 5-v-5 games

b. 6 x 10 x 10 squares 4-v-1 and 3-v-1 possession games

c. 3 x 20 x 10 corridors for dribbling games and 2-v-2 dribbling/screening game in 10 x 10 square with 1 meter goal in each corner

d. 30 x 20 field continuous 4-v-3 go-for-goal games

e. 3 x 10 x 10 squares 2-v-2 dribbling screening and passing games (with small 1 meter goals)

f. 30 x 20 field continuous 3-v-1 or 3-v-2 games
In-season Coaching

- Principles of Athlete Learning
- Quality Practice Design
- 3 E’s for Competition Coaching
Competition Coaching

Balancing coach tactical decisions and support with athlete decision-making
Competition Coaching: 3 E’s

Examine

Encourage

Educate
Examine

‘Listening to the match’
Examine

• Silently observe performance
  – Own athletes and opponent

• Look for:
  – Opportunities to make strategic adjustments
  – Potential signs of athlete fatigue (momentum)
Examine

- Top coaches give 50% fewer comments to athletes during competitions than less successful and less experienced coaches.
Encourage

• Regularly give praise for:
  – Successful performance outcome
  – Quality of performance
Encourage

• Genuine praise for quality performance, athletes:
  – Perform better (confidence)
  – Greater enjoyment
  – Rate coaches more effective
  – Raises effort level
Educate

• Look for teachable moments
• Quick feedback and reminders (cues)
• Natural breaks when possible
Educate

- Athlete like the rock moving down the ice, coach is like the brush that follows alongside and intervenes (sweeps) only when rock appears to be veering off course

Honesty makes it easier to walk the fine line between friend and authority figure.
In-season Coaching

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