With love to

Zachariah, Tobias and Joshua

Foundations of Sport Coaching: Applying Theory to Practice

(3rd Edition)

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*Publisher’s Information*

**Contents**

*List of Illustrations*

*List of Appendices*

*Foreword*

*3rd Edition Preface*

*Acknowledgements & Contributions*

*Permissions*

**Chapter One**

***The Continuing Professionalisation of Sport Coaching***

**Chapter Two**

***Coaching and Performance***

**Chapter Three**

***Coaching Populous Groups*** *(Guest Contributor: Mr. Gareth M. Barrett)*

**Chapter Four**

***Effective Coaching***

**Chapter Five**

***Structure, Planning and Preparation of Coaching***

**Chapter Six**

***Coaching Philosophy*** *(Guest Contributor: Mr. Christie Scanlon)*

**Chapter Seven**

***Coaching Pedagogy*** *(Guest Contributors: Mr. Chris Brammall and Mr. Jonathan Lowes)*

**Chapter Eight**

***Creating A Positive Learning Environment*** *(Guest Contributor: Mr. Chris Lee)*

**Chapter Nine**

***Performance Analysis*** *(Guest Contributor: Dr. James Brouner)*

**Chapter Ten**

***Talent Identification and Development*** *(Guest Contributor: Mr. Stuart Wilkinson)*

**Chapter Eleven**

***The Reflective Coach*** *(Guest Contributor: Mr. Martin Dixon)*

*Appendices*

*Index*

**Illustrations**

**Figures**

2.1: The relationship between forms of coaching and boundary criteria

2.2: ‘What level do they participate in?’ from UK Coaching’s ‘Coaching in the U.K.’ survey (2019).

2.3: ‘Where do they receive coaching?’ from UK Coaching’s ‘Coaching in the U.K.’ survey (2019).

2.4: Four-Stage Coach-Performer Participatory Model

3.1: STEP Model

3.2: Coaching to support mental wellbeing

4.1: Coaching Styles Continuum

4.2: Coach-Athlete Learning Styles Interaction

4.3: Activist Characteristics

4.4: Pragmatist Characteristics

4.5: Reflector Characteristics

4.6: Theorist Characteristics

4.7: Learning Styles and Coaching Strategies Model

4.8: Observation Process Model

5.1: Tri-Cycle Coaching Process

7.1: Coaching Pedagogy Model

7.2: The Football Association 4-Corner Model

8.1: The 3 C’s +1 Model of Quality Coach-Athlete Relationships

9.1: Shots on Target from an EFL Soccer Game

9.2: Annotated schematic of a netball court, arrow depicting direction of play

9.3: Schematic of a netball court, blue stars meaning successful pass, red depicting unsuccessful, arrow depicting direction of play

9.4: In-Play Online Performance Analysis software

9.5: The Coaching Cycle (adapted from Carling, Williams and Reilly, 2007)

11.1: Framework for the Reflective Coach

**Tables**

3.1: Types of Participants That Coaches’ Coach by Gender

3.2: Incidence of Coaches and Coached Participants

3.3: What Coaches See as Their Primary Role by Year

3.4: Definitions of the ‘C’ System

3.5: Behaviours and Examples of Abuse

3.6: Percentage of coaches with a good level of understanding in coaching different groups by year

4.1: The Principles of a Code of Conduct and their Main Focus

4.2: Four ‘Athlete Outcomes’

5.1: Basic Periodised Season Plan for a Soccer Team

5.2: Individualised Training Needs Analysis

8.1: Table of ROLL Component Parts

8.2: Best Practice Goal Setting Guidelines for Coaches

8.3: Linking Different Types of Goals for Success

8.4: Different Types of Social Power

8.5: Emotional Intelligence Components and Definitions

9.1: Locomotive velocity definitions

9.2: Movement intensity definitions from the Bloomfield Movement Category

9.3: An example of a soccer frequency table

9.4: An example of a simple sequential table for rugby

10.1: Innate talent: Reality or Myth?

10.2: Common Sports Donors

**Photographs**

3.1: Coach Addressing a Group of Performers

3.2: Coaching Children

4.1: A coach observing performance

4.2: Coach going through a safety check

4.3: The coach exhibiting negative body language and behaviour

4.4: A coach instructing a group of soccer players

4.5: A coach correcting technique and providing feedback

5.1: A coach setting-up practice

11.1: Reflection in-action

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Blank health and safety checklist

**Appendix 2:** Example health and safety checklist

**Appendix 3:** Blank risk assessment form

**Appendix 4:** Example risk assessment form

**Appendix 5:** Blank accident report form

**Appendix 6:** Example accident report form

**Appendix 7:** Blank practice needs analysis form

**Appendix 8:** Example practice needs analysis form

**Appendix 9:** Blank session plan

**Appendix 10:** Example session plan

**Appendix 11:** Blank evaluation

**Appendix 12:** Example evaluation

**Appendix 13:** Blank practice needs analysis form (boxing)

**Appendix 14:** Example practice needs analysis form (boxing)

**Appendix 15:** Blank season plan

**Appendix 16:** Example season plan

**Foreword**

Working as one of several professionals supporting undergraduate and postgraduate sport coaching-related curricula at Staffordshire University, it has been a pleasure to witness Ashley’s expertise at supporting students applying theory to practice first-hand. Considering this learning environment prompts me to reflect on my own development in the years since, at the tender age of fifteen, I was introduced to the satisfying role of volunteer coach. Reminiscing about those days, it feels like my younger self would have found it inconceivable that most of my working life to come would be filled with the joys, challenges and successes of coaching.

There are many roads and junctures in life and the journey of coaching can, and has, provided many unique, incredible and rewarding experiences for me. It is these experiences that have developed my understanding of the multifaceted nature of coaching during 23 years of voluntary and paid employment as a practitioner in various roles, but most recently as Coach Developer at the English Football Association.

Progressing through my coaching career to gaining the UEFA A License and beyond, I have experienced many challenges and successes which have proved vital in developing understanding regarding the role of the coach and coach development. Encounters with Ashley, you quickly appreciate he has been on a similar journey within the world of coaching, experiencing the unpredictable ‘real world’ of volunteers and the multidisciplinary environment of a professional practitioner. The contextual learning experiences Ashley provides for students are a valuable commodity to not only the aspiring coach but also to those established within the industry. Ashley brings both his experience as a coaching practitioner and knowledge of academia to his text, grounding learning experiences and allowing for an authentic appreciation of the challenges and tasks of the modern coach.

The coaching world can, at times, seem chaotic and filled with many generalisations which can cloud our vision of the purpose and impact of our role, therefore inhibiting the potential of the coach and athlete. The nature of sport and coaching encourages differing perspectives in which coaches searching for a holy grail of what and how to coach, will be disappointed by this elusive vision. The relationship between success and coaching practice is not linear or even similar between disciplines. The leadership style of one successful coach can be in stark contrast to another successful coach and the methodology within one sport doesn’t necessarily transfer to other sports. Coaches not only have to navigate the conflicting opinions of others but also the differing abilities, opinions, needs and wants of, in many cases, many participants within their care. These various demands can stand in conflict with a coach’s own values and beliefs regarding what, how and why to coach, and often develop additional complications upon entering the practical arena, where practice and behaviours must support a coach’s philosophy and vision. In this multifaceted industry the reliability and validity of information is not always guaranteed and having confidence in what to believe can be challenging for professionals and even more so for volunteers, where coaching often sits parallel to employment and the demands of family life. This book helps liberate coaches from being engulfed in endless swathes of information, while still participating in the pursuit of informed practice. This book acts as a mediator between academic evidence-based theories and the real world of coaching practice.

In the fast-paced ever-changing world of coaching, this book serves as a coach-friendly resource dealing with contemporary facets of the coaching world. Whether your interest is the fundamentals of coaching, coaching pedagogy, talent ID or development you will find the content clearly conveyed to assist you in navigating this winding, rocky terrain. The evolution of coaching has seen the industry reposition from traditional coaching to games-based methods utilising constraints-based approaches over recent years. At the same time coaching philosophy and reflective practice has received much attention from the academic world, while within the coaching fraternity the acceptance and understanding of evidence to support this shift and how best to apply to real-world practice is still in its infancy. The world of informed coaches is growing at a time in which applications for coaching positions are under increasing competition. Accountability is increasing in many industries and coaching is no different, and a need to provide rationalisation and justification for practice and behaviours is the norm. The professionalisation of coaching has placed increasing pressure on stakeholders to keep abreast of current coaching practice and is a pre-requisite for the modern coaching professional.

This book is applicable to a wide audience, including those wishing to commence their coaching and explore the fundamentals of the industry, established coaches seeking reassurance of good practice and further direction and experienced practitioners wishing to keep up to date with modern trends. The book reinforces key principles regarding the International Sport Coaching Framework and acts as a central focus for discussion within many spheres of coaching, exploring coaching standards and supporting organisations and coaches to make informed coaching decisions. The book is also enriched with the addition of case studies demonstrating professional journeys and identifying potential employment opportunities.

In my professional capacity, I see a huge number of coaches seeking support in making sense of coaching and developing knowledge and skills to support their participants for the technical, tactical and strategic demands of their sport. This book contains numerous concepts, theories, practical guidance and strategies to support coaches developing their practice and behaviours to provide the best environment for their participants to develop. Irrespective of age, gender or abilities of participants, advice within the book will support coaches to plan fun, progressive, developmental sessions within the recreational and performance environment. I also feel that, as a senior lecturer and sport coaching practitioner, Ashley is well placed to write impart learning which supports students and practitioners to become the best versions of coaches they aspire to.

Finally, for contemporary coaches, who are reflective practitioners seeking to further develop and keep abreast of current coaching practice, striving to make informed judgements to develop and extend their coaching expertise, this book will certainly meet expectations and is one which will have a prominent place on my bookshelf.

Mr. Ronnie Reason,

The English Football Association

**Preface**

**Foundations of Sport Coaching: Applying Theory to Practice**

The coaching landscape has widened significantly since the previous edition of this book was written and published in 2014. Whilst nowhere near ideal, the gulf between sport coaching theory and practice has narrowed somewhat in recent years, with most research now focused upon having an ‘applied’ focus to coaching practice. Still this translation from theory to everyday coaching practice has proven challenging in the past, and still is to an extent. Therefore, the 3rd. edition of this popular ‘Foundations of Sport Coaching’ textbook is pitched between both academic and vocational domains, providing both practitioners and students alike with a comprehensive, wide-ranging and engaging introduction to both the theoretical and applied practical principles that underpin the sport coaching process, from both a participation and performance perspective. The focus of this newly updated and contemporary edition is to further bridge the gap between practical sport coaching delivery and the conceptual theories that underpin a sport coaches practice; whilst maintaining the previous versions’ easy to understand style and international approach to sport coaching. It provides a wealth of real-world examples and contemporary case-studies from a wide-range of sports to support the developing practitioner/student, and help sport coaches understand how to apply key concepts and theories to their practice. In addition, there are countless practical coaching tips, techniques, strategies to further support the coach/student in their development. The book will provide the reader with the skills, knowledge and background that they will need to prepare athletes and sport people technically, tactically and strategically. The book continues to meet the needs of a diverse range of individuals from those based within sport coaching as practitioners, coach educators, as well as students on A-Level, BTEC, Foundation Degree, and undergraduate degree courses. To that end, the 3rd. edition of the book covers the key components of an undergraduate course in sport coaching, including topics such as:

■ Development of Sport Coaching as a Profession

■ Fundamental Skills of a Sport Coach

■ Effective Coaching: Planning and Management

■ Coaching Philosophy

■ Coaching Pedagogy

■ Creating a Positive Learning Environment

■ Talent ID and Development

■ Reflective Practice in Coaching

■ Contemporary Developments in Performance Analysis

This updated 3rd. edition has an updated format, whilst developing on previous versions of the book with the inclusion of all-new chapters focusing upon coaching philosophy, coaching pedagogy, learning environments, talent identification and development, performance analysis and reflective practice. All of which are relevant to the contemporary coach and their quest to provide the best possible opportunity for athletes to develop, reach their potential and succeed.

This edition of the book will provide a plethora of useful material for classroom discussion and form a framework for aspiring sport coaches to develop their craft. The book also expands well beyond the U.K. by including a wide-range of international examples, references to contemporary research, examples and case-studies to support theoretical discussion, and questions in each chapter to encourage the student to reflect upon their own coaching practice.

We hope that you enjoy the latest edition of the ‘Foundations of Sport Coaching: Applying Theory to Practice’ book.

Mr. Ashley J.G. Gill

Coach, Educator and Researcher

**Acknowledgements and Contributions**

Firstly, I would like to thank Paul E. Robinson for happily passing on the baton to myself, the opportunity and support is greatly appreciated. I would like to extend special thanks to UK Coaching, The F.A., Prof. Sophia Jowett, Dr. Steve Bull, Prof. John Lyle and Prof. Chris Cushion for their kind permission to use their respective material within this text (see *Permissions*). I would also like to thank the following for their time and input in developing content for this text: Ronnie Reason of The F.A., one of the best coach educators out there, period; Gareth Barrett of Staffordshire University, a friend and fellow coach and lecturer (Coaching Populous Groups), as well as Steven Bancroft, Chris Chapman and the team at UK Coaching for their contribution in the development of Chapter 3 alongside Gareth; Christie Scanlon of University Campus of Football Business, a good friend and blossoming academic (Coaching Philosophy); Jonathan Lowes of University of Cumbria, a friend, fellow academic and coaching practitioner (Coaching Pedagogy); Chris Brammall of The F.A. (Coaching Pedagogy); Chris Lee, friend, mentor and all-around good human being, formerly of Staffordshire University (Creating a Positive Learning Environments); Dr. James Brouner of Kingston University London (Performance Analysis); Stuart Wilkinson of The University of Central Lancashire (Talent Identification and Development); and Martin Dixon, good friend, great coach and fellow academic at San Francisco State University (The Reflective Coach). Furthermore, I would like to thank John-Paul Stanley for his editing work on the photographs used throughout this text, without him I would have had little clue on technical specifications of images. Finally, I would like to thank Staffordshire’s very own David Varley, Senior Editor in Sport and Sport Science at Routledge for his valued advice, support and relaxed approach throughout this process.

Thank you all.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**Editor of Foundations of Sport Coaching (*3rd. Edition*):**

*Mr. Ashley J.G. Gill:* Ashley is the Editor of this edition of the text; a curator and contributor to all aspects of the text in its current iteration. In his day to day life, Ashley is an experienced senior member of the Sport and Exercise department at Staffordshire University, U.K., who’s role is that of Course Director of Postgraduate Study in Sport & Exercise. He is both an academic and coach educator, with key responsibilities revolving around the management of curricula, as well as teaching and research for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Ashley’s main research interests broadly lie in sport coaching, applied coaching practice and education. Ashley has worked as a coaching practitioner in a range of contexts from community to performance level sport over the last 20 years; with his main coaching passion being the sport of basketball.

**Insert Bust Photograph 1 here**

**Guest Contributors:**

*Mr. Gareth Barrett:* Gareth has contributed ‘Chapter 3- Coaching Populous Groups’ for this textbook; with contributions from the team at UK Coaching further supporting the development of the chapter. Gareth is a part-time lecturer at Staffordshire University, U.K., within the department of Sport and Exercise. Gareth’s research centres on Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) within higher education, physical education and pedagogical methods in coach education, talent development, disability sport, and career pathways of women sport coaches. Gareth has a background in Rugby Union working with both genders as a Level 3 coach and works with Goalball UK to support visually impaired athletes and raise awareness of the sport in schools and colleges.

**Insert Bust Photograph 2 here**

*Mr. Christie Scanlon:* Christie has contributed ‘Chapter 6- Coaching Philosophy’ for this textbook. He is a lecturer at the University College of Football Business (UCFB) in Manchester and holds responsibilities in teaching, research and administration. Christie holds a Ba Hons. in Sport Development & Coaching (Staffordshire University), an MSc in Sport Coaching (University of Birmingham) and is currently undertaking a PhD in Sociology at Liverpool John Moore’s University. Christie further holds a higher education teaching certification and is a licenced soccer coach. Christie has held previous positions at Staffordshire University and West Bromwich Albion Football Club before relocating to the North-West of England in 2018. Christie is broadly interested in the social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of sport in which he teaches across a range of undergraduate programmes. His research interests also extend to the sociology of football and physical education.

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*Mr. Jonathan Lowes:* Jonathan has co-written ‘Chapter 7- Coaching Pedagogy’ for this textbook. Jonathan is a senior lecturer and programme leader for both the Sport Coaching and Physical Education and Sport and Exercise Science programmes within the Institute of Health at the University of Cumbria. His main responsibilities revolve around the teaching and administration of undergraduate sport coaching related curricula across both programmes. His research focus is related to sport pedagogy, coach education and coach/athlete interactions including critical analysis of the application of care in community coaching contexts. Jonathan coaches a number of sport’s and his main coaching interests are football and table tennis. He has worked in a range of contexts ranging from community to performance level sport for the last 20 years.

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*Mr. Chris Brammall:* Chris has co-written ‘Chapter 7- Coaching Pedagogy’, along with Jonathan Lowes for this textbook. Chris Brammall is a Regional Manager with the Football Association’s P.E. and Coaching in Education Department. His main responsibilities are to lead and manage a team of specialist P.E. teacher trainers who support Primary School class teachers and Secondary PE teachers to develop their pedagogical skill set in PE. Chris and his team also provide strategic pedagogical support to the FA’s Girls Football School Partnerships & the Premier League’s Primary Stars PE programme and coaches. After qualifying as a teacher, Chris taught PE in a Primary School for nine years and was Course Leader on a Foundation Degree in Sport Coaching for Leeds Beckett University. Chris’s passions lie in supporting teachers to deliver high quality PE in schools and supporting coach development in Football and Multi-skills. Chris is a practicing UEFA A licenced soccer coach.

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*Mr. Chris Lee:* Chris has contributed ‘Chapter 8- Creating a Positive Learning Environment’ for this textbook. Chris is a former Senior Lecturer in Sport Coaching at Staffordshire University. Chris was course leader on the undergraduate Sport Development and Coaching degree, whilst also leading on the postgraduate Sport Coaching course. Chris is teaching focused and was awarded a Teaching Excellence Fellowship from Staffordshire University and is also a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. During his tenure at Staffordshire University, Chris had a particular interest and expertise in developing student placements to enable students to gain practical coaching and teaching experiences in real-life environments. His research interests include creating optimum performance environments for coaching, the coach athlete relationship, teaching games for understanding coaching methods, developing emotional intelligence in coaches and using reflection to improve future coaching practice. Chris is a practicing soccer coach holding a UEFA B coaching licence and sport/education consultant.

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*Dr. James Brouner:* James has contributed ‘Chapter 9- Performance Analysis’ for this textbook. James is the course director for both the Sport Science BSc (Hons) and Sport Science (Coaching) BSc (Hons) at Kingston University, London. He currently delivers all Performance Analysis based content across both undergraduate and postgraduate provision at Kingston. Within this area James focuses on the methodological aspects of data collection and analysis and delivery of impactful, data driven content to applied settings. His main research interests are performance analysis in both team and individual sport, biomechanical analysis of fatigue, optimal nutritional strategies for endurance sport and the biomechanics of dance science.

**Insert Bust Photograph 7 here**

*Mr. Stuart Wilkinson:* Stuart has contributed ‘Chapter 10- Talent Identification and Development’ for this textbook. Stuart is currently a Lecturer in Performance and Coaching, Course Leader and PhD student at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, U.K. Previously Stuart had a career as a professional Rugby League player in the U.K. and Australia, and later a professional coach at Leeds Rhinos, Wigan Warriors and Salford City Reds. Stuart was the U.K.’s first Player Performance Manager and Head of Youth Performance in the sport of Rugby League at Leeds Rhinos. Stuart has coached International sport with England School boys, Great Britain Academy, England, and the British Lions. He has also coached four different Nations over four World Cups, including Wales, France, Russia, and more recently Serbia. He has worked as high-performance consultant for the European Federation, Sale Sharks and was a full-time National Performance Coach within The Rugby Football League.

**Insert Bust Photograph 8 here**

*Mr. Martin Dixon:* Martin has contributed ‘Chapter 11- The Reflective Coach’ for this textbook. Martin is a lecturer in kinesiology at San Francisco State University, specialising in sport coaching, motor learning, and research methods. Martin’s research interests include the use of strengths-based reflective practices to develop learning and performance. Additionally, his research examines how reflection can influence sport coaches’ experiences of and subsequent responses to stress. Martin’s research has also focused on the application of reflective practices from sport coaching and sport psychology to professional development in other fields. Martin is a UEFA qualified soccer coach and has previously coached academy and university teams in the U.K. He is currently technical director and coach at Belmont United Soccer Club in California.

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