

<p>Institution: University of Abertay Dundee</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 26 – Sports and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism</p>
<p>Title of case study: Coach development and education</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study examines the impact of a series of research articles on coach-athlete interactions. This research has been used in the development of training courses/educational materials, for example the FUNdamentals courses ran by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, and for bespoke training sessions such as the Scottish Institute of Sport’s Coaching Matters series. Additionally, it has been disseminated to larger coaching groups as lay summaries/guidelines published in sport specific magazines such as Athletics Weekly and Cycle Coach. The case is made that this research has been widely disseminated and has had discernible impact on sports coaching practices.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Sport coaching in the UK is becoming increasingly professionalised. This has been driven by recent policy documents including the ‘UK Coaching Framework’ (SportsCoachUK, 2007) and ‘Coaching Scotland 2011-2015: A framework for sports coaching in Scotland’ (sportScotland, 2011). These documents have called for an increased emphasis on professionalisation and a need for research investigating factors related to coach education and effective coaching behaviours. The research findings underpinning the impact discussed in this case study are part of a body of work carried out by Lorimer, a Lecturer at Abertay University. This body of work examined the empathic accuracy of coaches and athletes, a key factor in social intelligence that influences the effectiveness of coach-athlete interactions. This in turn promotes more effective training, increased performance, and coach/athlete personal satisfaction.</p> <p>This research developed an innovative video-based methodology for assessing empathic accuracy in coach-athlete interaction as near to ‘in situ’ as possible, in contrast to the limited questionnaire designs previously used. This video-based approach has also been shown to be useful for promoting reflective practice in coaches, an essential skill, and part of the assessment requirements of obtaining the higher levels of the UK Coaching Certificate.</p> <p>Key findings include a general lack of accurate understanding of moment-to-moment thoughts and feelings, between coaches and athletes of all levels and across all the sports examined. This is important in relation to two approaches to coaching that have seen increased emphasis in the research literature/coaching materials over the past 5-years. These are ‘athlete-centred coaching’ and the ‘personal side of coaching’. Each of these approaches focus on the importance of coaches being trained to understand the individual needs of athletes in order to promote self-ownership, self-regulation, and self-actualisation.</p> <p>This body of research has highlighted a series of potential factors that influence the level of understanding displayed by coaches and athletes. Some factors, such as sport-type, cannot be altered but are flagged to inform coaches, coach educators, and sport psychologists. Other factors, such as relationship duration and group size, can be influenced and this information can play an important role coach planning a potentially important role in policy choices such as which model of athlete and coach progression (e.g. dual development or coaching pathways) to use in the management of a sport and in individual performance enhancement.</p>

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As well as having a theoretical (e.g. inclusion of interpersonal perception in models of the coach-athlete relationship) and methodological impact (e.g., the ability to measure moment-to-moment cognitive processes in sports coaching), this research has also been published as applied guidelines for coach-athlete interaction. These guidelines focus on increased emphasis on the athlete, improved interpersonal interaction, and intrapersonal awareness. This has wider ramifications for coach education and coach development particular in regards to emphasising a need to change coach education from a focus on content/declarative knowledge of a sport to procedural/conditional knowledge of coaching (i.e. how to coach rather than what to coach).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- i. **Lorimer, R.** (2012). The development of empathic accuracy in sports coaches. *Journal of Sports Psychology in Action*, 4, 1-8, DOI:10.1080/21520704.2012.706696.
- ii. **Lorimer, R., & Jowett, S.** (2011). Empathic accuracy, shared cognitive focus, and the assumptions of similarity made by coaches and athletes. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 42, 40-54 (listed REF2).
- iii. **Lorimer, R., & Jowett, S.** (2010). The influence of role and gender in the empathic accuracy of coaches and athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11, 206-211, doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.12.001.
- iv. **Lorimer, R., & Jowett, S.** (2010). Feedback of information in the empathic accuracy of sport coaches. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11, 12-17 (listed REF2).
- v. **Lorimer, R., & Jowett, S.** (2009). Empathic accuracy, meta-perspective, and satisfaction in the coach-athlete relationship. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 21, 201-212 (listed REF2).
- vi. **Lorimer, R., & Jowett, S.** (2009). Empathic accuracy in coach-athlete dyads who participate in team and individual sports. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10, 152-158 (listed REF2).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

As well as being recognised and cited within academic literature this research has also had a verifiable real world impact. It has influenced coach development at several levels ranging from being provided as information/professional guidance to directly impacting on the design of coach education courses such as those delivered by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

The research carried out in the period since 2009 began to have a measurable impact throughout 2011 when the findings/applied recommendations were first made available outside of academic sources via a series of invited lay articles published in the magazines Athletics Weekly (1, readership of 14,000+), Climb Magazine (2, readership of 50,000+), and Cycle Coach (3, readership of 1000+), reaching a readership of coaches, athletes and interested parties. These articles stated the case for a more individualised approach to coaching and provided practical guidelines for implanting this approach and improving relationships between athletes and coaches.

These articles attracted a volume of feedback (mostly via email) from the readership, in the form of comments and observations. Comments came from a range of individuals including athletes and individual coaches, but also from those involved at a higher level and in coach education. An example of this was the Director of the Burton Track and Field Academy (4), a UK Athletics Coach Tutor, who is now incorporating the findings of this research into his own coaching style and in the

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way he approaches the education of other UK Athletics coaches. This research has influenced the Director to begin his own series of research investigating coach-athlete communication, with consultation from the first author of this body of research, and the Director has also written a related article for Athletics Weekly in 2012. The Director stated, "I've been using your work at the academy... my article was published in AW two weeks ago and you were cited in it... I would be interested in taking this work to the next level with you as part of a more formal joint bid for the Frank Horwill scholarship administered by the BMC".

Dissemination through magazines and via coaches has raised awareness of this research which in turn has led to more direct links with coach educators. The findings from this research have been embedded into a core coach education text published in 2013 (5) as well as professional practice recommendations that are being used as essential guidance reading on the California State Mandated Coaching Certification delivered by California State University in 2012/2013 (6).

The Cycle Coach (3) article was made available to Scottish Cycling (7) who distributed an electronic copy of the Cycle Coach (3) article to their sport development team (3 x development/education officers, 5 x regional development officers) and high performance team (6 x talent/discipline head coaches). This led the first author of this body of research being requested to present his findings, links to other research, and practical/applied guidance to Scottish Cycling and Scottish Triathlon high performance coaches as part of **sportScotland's** 2012 Coaching Matters series of Workshops at the EICA in Edinburgh (7, attendance of c.15). The expertise demonstrated in the findings of this research, in relation to coach-athlete relationships, has also led to Scottish Cycling wanting to participate in a research project, investigating coaches' role in preventing doping behaviours and their educational needs for improving their ability to carry out this role (7).

Copies of lay articles and supplementary notes have also been requested in 2012 by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (8) for their coach education resources. This has attracted further feedback and interest from two Scottish national coaches and also the winner of the British Youth Climbing Series. Dissemination of the findings/applied recommendations of this research also directly led to the main researcher (Lorimer) being requested to consult with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (8, 9) throughout 2011 and 2012 in the development of their new range of 'FUNdamental' coach education courses, including consultation with the British and Irish mountaineering councils. This then led to further consultation in 2012 with the Scottish Interest Group of the Mountain Training Association in the development of the content of their coaching badges as part of the new Coaching Certification (9). Lorimer has now been appointed Sport Science Officer of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (8) and Chairs their Coach Development Group responsible for the development of all coaching/instructor training materials, which will continue to be influenced by his ongoing research.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 1 Lorimer, R. (2011). On the same level. *Athletics Weekly, August*, 34-35
- 2 Lorimer, R. (2011). Partners in power. *Climb Magazine, 82*, 64-67.
- 3 Lorimer, R. (2011). Developing independent athletes in cycling: The need for empathy. *Journal of Cycle Coaching, 3*, 8-11.
- 4 Director of the Burton Track and Field Academy, UK Athletics Tutor
- 5 Lorimer, R. & Jowett, S. (2013). Empathic understanding and accuracy in the coach-athlete relationship. In P. Potrac, J. Denison, & W. Gilbert (Eds.). *The Routledge handbook of sports*

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coaching. London, UK: Routledge

- 6 California State Mandated Coaching Certification delivered (via Department of Kinesiology, California State University)
- 7 Coach Education and Training Officer, Scottish Cycling
- 8 Development Officer, Mountaineering Council of Scotland
- 9 Mountaineering Council of Scotland (<http://www.mcofs.org.uk/annualreport2010-11.asp>)