COACHING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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Full Presentation: 50+ slides
• A photocopy of the major points addressed will accompany this presentation. Focus can therefore be on looking, listening, questioning.

Also: *Standard Strategies: (Swimming & Athletics)*
and other materials, may provide additional issues for consideration.

• Any person who would like a copy of any materials or resources referred to in the presentation should contact me direct:

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A Coaching Philosophy ??

YOU WOULDN'T EVEN CRY IF I DIED!

YES I WOULD

SHOW ME HOW MUCH YOU WOULD CRY!

DIE FIRST
Coaching Philosophy

You will have your own “coaching philosophy” .. you may make personal modifications to ideas you encounter: but, keep in mind:

*Everything you do and everything you say will be dinner conversation in each athlete’s home over the next few days.*

YOU will not be represented at that report
Your perception of your own performance as a coach or teacher is sometimes the least important consideration.
The Focus

- We are focused on learning / teaching.
- The forum in which we apply teaching/coaching skills may be sport (swimming, athletics, soccer, …) OR, in life.

It is relatively easy to identify errors; correction strategies = the real challenge

Only Plenty of Perfect Practice Produces Professional Performance
But … skills and strategies developed in sport can be applied in many aspects of life.

We learn errors as easily as we learn correct procedures, and, practice makes permanent.

50 repetitions forms a habit

BUT

it takes thousands of repetitions to change a habit.

So …. pursue accuracy / excellence right from the start.

We are what we repeatedly do (you can) make excellence your habit
• Good is not enough, when better is possible

• *We are what we repeatedly do … excellence can become your habit*

• *No one can make you feel inferior, without your consent*
Never compromise your standards

Compromise can create catastrophe
The Focus

• To enhance self-esteem.

• In sports, *Speed is a Key* .. so, develop the appreciation of youngsters as to how to perform faster.

• Even if “fastest” is not the outcome, enhanced appreciation will produce personal satisfaction and greater support.
We can’t all swim or run as fast as Olympians (Ian Thorpe / Cathy Freeman),
BUT
We can all swim or run as well as them.
So, with appropriate specific modifications, the general principles of sound teaching / coaching can apply in many settings.
As Development Coaches
(I don’t like the term “Junior” Coach)
our major priority is to
enhance skills
and thereby
enhance self-esteem
What does this photo say:
- to athletes?
- to you (as a coach)?

To me it says

Responsibility
and
fulfilment
of
responsibility

We can’t all be winners, but
We can all be champions

Sebastian Coe, Olympic Champion
Teaching / Coaching Effectively
A few tips

1. Know your event / subject ..
   sound basic knowledge is essential.

   Athletes are seeking, and appreciate leadership.
2. **Speak / write clearly and confidently.**

Young athletes will make their evaluation of you in the first 30 seconds; there may be refinements to their opinion and reaction, but seldom fundamental changes.

The first 30 seconds is YOUR chance to make a positive impression.

Your Appearance & Manner Counts.
Keep your approach simple and consistent

3. Don’t complicate things

Simplicity facilitates success.
4. Demand attention, (looking and listening), and, do not proceed without it.
5. Praise (and reward) endeavor.
6. Show confidence in the ability of athletes to achieve the standards set.

What you can conceive and believe YOU can achieve

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7. **Position athletes** e.g. so they are not looking into the sun when you are talking.

Ensure all can see you; often the seemingly little things count most.
8. Don’t talk too long: talk ► activity ► talk ► activity .. it’s about athletes learning, not the teacher/coach performing.

Young children bore quickly and tire quickly … attention spans vary, but seldom exceed 2 minutes.

OK! I used to be a great starter …. so remember all we’ve talked about .. shoulders above the hands, bridging on fingers, etc. etc. etc.

Just Relax .. think how relaxed you are .. Stay loose ....

RELAX ...
... RELAX, RELAX ...
DONT TENSE UP ...
RELAX .. RELAX does it ...
RELAX ... WAIT FOR THE GUN ...
RELAX .. RELAX .... RELAX .... RELAX ....
RELAX .... RELAX ...
... RELAX .... ZZZ
9. Review skills from the previous session.

10 – 20% of time allocated should be associated with this purpose

Swimming

A productive training session format for an introductory squad might be best structured:

A  Dryland Exercises, 20%; Drills, 5%; New Skills, 5%; Races, 30%; Swim, 40%
B  Swim, 50%; Kick, 15%; Drills, 15%; Starts, Turns & Finishes, 10%; New Skills, 5%; Fun Activities, 5%
C  Warm-Up 10%; Speed Endurance Sets, 35%; Speed Sets, 35%; Fun Activities, 20%
D  Swim, 10%; Kick, 40%; New Skills, 30%; Fun Activities, 20%.

There is no set formula; be reactive to circumstances and the skill level of your group, e.g. a Monthly Test

Do not prioritize skill extension ahead of skill acquisition.

Simple, sample tests are available
Sample Test Questions

**Swimming**

Which of the following best represents the cue sequence used to enhance breaststroke skills?


**Track & Field**

(Select the best response)

Training to develop sprint speed should feature:

A. Long Runs (>150m) / Complete recoveries
B. Short Runs (<50m) / Complete recoveries
C. Short Runs (<50m) / Short Recoveries (1 min.)
D. Long Runs (>150m) / Short Recoveries (1 min.)

Be prepared .. have your test(s) and reward(s) .. for ALL .. ready

A simple reward, e.g. a laminated tag

Sample Tests are available for those who are interested in applying the idea.
10. Continually and consistently reinforce expectations.

It’s not about winning – it’s about having the courage to join the race.
11. Prepare .. yourself – your equipment

Perfect Planning MUST Precede Professional Performance

Some say, I'm disorganised

Me? I think I'm work in progress
12. **Punctuality**: don’t be on time .. be early

13. **Do not** compromise standards.
    Be fair .. Be patient .. Be consistent
14. Be prepared

Why are we doing this?

Encourage athletes to (politely) question; and .. have an answer. Relate activities (drills) to the outcomes you are seeking to achieve.

Always outline in advance to the athletes what’s in the session / the drills for them. **Respect** and **reward endeavour**.

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**Champions are distinguished by differences ..
The different things they do, and
The things they do differently**

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**Fast Claw**

Learning New Skills involves helping one another

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15. Use incentives and rewards e.g. cards, certificates - recognise and reward endeavour

Sample Reward / Skill / Motivational cards

Never Give Up
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The Quitter never wins
The Winner never Quits
www.nwaswimaths.com

Potential is what you may be capable of doing
Motivation directs what you do
Attitude determines how well you do
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Today I did my best
It’s not about winning – it’s about having the courage to join the race
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Do not under-estimate the importance of acknowledging endeavour and achievement
Potential is what you may be capable of doing  
Motivation directs what you do  
Attitude determines how well you do  

Rewards can be generic, skill specific, or personalised

Fingers always point to the bottom

Freestyle
• Strong, continuous kick with extended legs – pointed toes
• Bent Arm Recovery with slight elbow lead, thumb first
• Controlled breathing & head position
• Long stroke with slow arms
Fingertips–wrist–elbow–shoulder
No splash entry

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The range of applications is unlimited .. e.g. currently we have over 300 swimming tags

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2
A-Skip
Alt. Butt Kicks
Alt. Fast Leg Combinations
Fast Claw

NWA Swimming
Improvement Award
Well done !!

www.nwaswimaths.com
Among my favourites

You can be a swimmer for a few exciting years

You can be an outstanding person

All your life

www.nwaswimaths.com

Potential is what you may be capable of doing

Motivation directs what you do

Attitude determines how well you do

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No one can ever make you feel inferior .. without your consent

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We can’t all be winners but,

We can all be Champions

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Limitations are only imposed by your imagination
16. **Praise** at some stage to every athlete, but, be sure to expect the best that they can offer

**NO MORE !! NO LESS !! NO EXCUSES !!!**
17. Positive corrective feedback should prevail.

Athletes should walk away from every session confident that they have enhanced their knowledge and/or skills.

Do things for a reason, and make the athlete aware of the reason

Understanding = Empowerment = Enhanced self-esteem

But

Why?
18. Be in control at all times

- **YOU** allowing athletes to make decisions is just another way of **you** being in control.

- Keep the session moving.

- A minimum of talk.

“I said .. False start !”
• Demonstrate, explain.. but on a needs basis. But remember: don’t let kids just do what they like ….. parents are watching. They expect leadership. (Parents vote with their feet)

• Be accountable

(a term often used, not always well understood).
19. Have a theme for each session

*Example:* 100% Right is 100% Right ....
99% Right is 100% Wrong

Good is not enough, when better is possible

The difference between ordinary and extra-ordinary

... is that little extra
20. Use care and common sense, but don’t be afraid to challenge athletes

- Young people love to acquire new skills and **have those skills recognised**.

  Acquiring new skills is important … **super-important**, however, is recognition and acknowledgement of that skill by persons the young athlete respects.
A few samples

North West Athletics Swimming Skills

Skills I can apply
• Standing Somersaults
• Lane Line Somersaults
• F/S Scull and Kick
• F/S Scull & Kick to somersault at the wall
• B/R: 1 Pull – 2 Kicks (Heels Together .. Hands Apart)

Skill I am learning
• Tumble Turns

PB under pressure
Well Done !!

Circuits
Core Body Strength & Event Specific

Examples only .. separate circuit cards are available
Go for it !!

Today I was a Star

Fingers always point to the bottom

NWA Swimming Freestyle

Bi-lateral Breathing (3/5): helps balance your stroke

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DIVING
I can do that

Well Done !!

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21. Do something positive and personal for every athlete, every session

- Praise.
- Technique evaluation.
- Special attention.
- A comment / joke.
- Personal comments to the athletes in view of the parents.
- Have the athlete demonstrate to the group, lead a drill, or answer a question(s) correctly.

*No one can ever make you feel inferior.. without your consent*

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But .. keep in mind that teaching is fundamentally a simple process.

- You take a group of students/athletes into a classroom / to the pool / on to a track.
- Show them / explain to them how to do something.
- Organize skill acquisition opportunities.
• Provide appropriate feedback .. visual if possible
  Remember the Athlete “feels” – the Coach “sees”

• Then, let them have a series of attempts.

• See how they perform.

• Reinforce - Refine – Repeat

The learning process never ends (for coach and athlete)
There are many issues

- Every athlete is an experiment of one
- A Child is not a Little Adult
- You will constantly add to your strategies
  It’s called experience

(you can’t buy it .. only acquire it).
Young athletes progress because of natural growth and maturity

Young athletes should try to get as far as they can on as little training as they can. There is plenty of time to train harder.

For young athletes, skill enhancement is a far higher priority than “hard” training.
Be Proud to be a Development Coach

• Provide *skill development* opportunities.
• Show young athletes that their efforts are *recognised and respected*.
• Develop athlete *appreciation* of their sport … young athletes should enjoy their time working hard to advance their skills …

Surely, one of the greatest enjoyments is to be able to do what others cannot do .. a tumble turn, a 3 pt. start, alternating butt kicks, combinations drill …
You need to work on your skills

Sharing ideas / knowledge / experiences .. working in the best interests of the young athlete = critical strategies

Beware the coach with a closed mind..
sometimes presents as the “over-protective” coach

“That’s-my-athlete .. stay away”
(there are communication protocols that **MUST** be followed)

**BUT**

When you see such behaviour, that coach is part of the problem, and, unlikely to be part of any solution.
Coaching is a challenge .. Learning is a challenge
Life is a challenge

There is no giant step that does it,
It’s a lot of little steps
Learn by Doing

• **Hear something** and you’ll forget it.
• **See something** and you’ll remember it.
• **Do something** and you’ll understand it.

Youngsters do **NOT** want you to constantly show them how good you are .. they want, they respect, a teacher / coach who provides a structured, controlled and consistent learning environment in which **THEY** can develop **THEIR** skills
We are developing people, not just athletes

- We may have a long lasting influence on them.
- What we say is (can be) important.
- The opportunity we have is fantastic.

Enjoy the opportunity .. but, with every opportunity there comes responsibility.

Knowledge only accumulates quickly in an open mind
Associated Handouts

- Presentation Details
- Various Drill Progressions .. Athletics / Swimming
  (sample motivational / skill awards)

Other Presentations
Hurdles .. Introducing the Skills
Sprint Hurdles .. An Analysis
Why Drills?
Learning New Skills is Fun .. Athletics
Skill Progressions .. Swimming
Pallikoodam .. A School in India
and others
Presentation prepared by

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Drawing also on some ideas and themes of Bill Sweetenham (former Australian Olympic Coach; Head Coach of Great Britain), Phil King (former Head Coach of Athletics Australia), and Mark Woodbridge (ATFCA).

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Various other sources, including O’Donnell / Seagrave: Speed Dynamics

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