

## Coach and Coaching Development

A number of people have messaged me to ask for some more detail about some of the recent comments about Coach and Coaching Development. The best I can do at the moment is to list some of the presentation slides from a 2021 international conference that might add some illustration to a few of the arguments.

### 1. Is anyone looking that far ahead?

*The lifetime of the current bureaucracy or the lifetime of current 7-8 year old's?*



“The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.”



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**NGB's - Have you any idea what is going on in each training session?**

**Are you watching "What" is being coached and "How" it is being coached?**

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### Worldwide Errors / Issues in Talent Development

1. The best and most experienced coaches are **NOT** centred in Development sectors
2. Investment in high quality coaching at Development level **seldom exists**.
3. Coach Education currently has a focus on Technical & Tactical elements and not the '4 Pillars'.

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4. Trophy hunting or 'winning for NOW' exists in the current strategy. Early engagement has given over to early specialisation.

5. Selection / Retention decisions are made too early. 'Size, Speed and Strength' predominate criteria (Relative Age Effect)

6. Well-titled pathways lack substance especially the alignment of player and coaching strategies.

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*By being an income stream for NGB's, Coach Education is often ruined by the profit-margin issue.*



"Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I'll tell you what they are."

**Deliver it cheaply and make the biggest profit.**

**Count the money – ignore the quality.**

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**Investment in high quality coaching at Development level does not exist.**

We rely heavily on volunteer manpower who are faced with expensive and inappropriate coach education processes and content....

...and then we ignore them.

...not an attractive place to stay (unless your own kids are present)

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Trophy-hunting / results / selection colours the coaching philosophy

Supported by Coach Education with technical / tactical predominating.

Supported by selection to squads with 'winning now' as the key criteria.

Supported by the mind-set of many parents and coaches which revolves around selection and results.

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"....maniacal preoccupation with competitive games, results and kids rankings."

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*Talent Identification* and *Talent Selection* trinkets have been:

- (a) unwisely chosen as being important and
- (b) inappropriately activated...

...while *Talent Development* has been relatively ignored.

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I heard these same answers in reviews back in the 1980's, 1990's and 2000's

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Many have tried...

....and failed

The common practice sees the creation of a Player / Athlete Pathway usually based on outdated, tired information but made up of some meaningless jargon e.g.

'From Practice to the Podium'

'Australia's Winning Edge'

'Own the Podium'

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Even those who created an appropriate Athlete Pathway...

...failed to align the Coach Development pathway.

There are some who applaud themselves on their new Coach Development plan but who based the content on *where the sport has been* rather than *where it is and where it is going*.

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They run *theory* workshops that are largely based on sports science, gimmicks, fads, spells, potions, gadgets, gurus and short-cuts.

*Coach mentoring is like politics. Everyone talks about it but few understand it and none have committed the required resources to it.*

Wayne Goldsmith

Delegates leave the conference / workshop embracing their new certificate and nothing changes in the next session.

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### Current observed mistakes domestically and internationally:

Assuming that current decision-makers know what is needed.

Assuming that current Coach Education content is appropriate.

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*Early focus on competition results, as a means of assessing development pathway efficacy, simply drives the start-age lower and lower and the volume of training higher and higher.*

*There is a significant conflict between how children learn and how development programs operate.*

Richard Bailey

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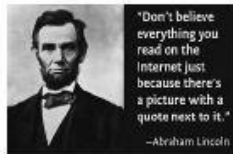
*Most development programs are not designed to meet children's needs; they are designed entirely for adult ambitions.* Richard Bailey



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*Sport wastes a lot of time trying to convince people that they are developing athletes when they are clearly not.*

*Many programs are selling fake fundamentals (at a very high price!).*



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*The greatest enemy of progress is an environment that allows any kid to be defined as a high performer. That's just status anxiety masquerading as development.* Al Smith

*Once we truly understand how a developing athlete (8-18 years) **learns things and adapts to maturation** then we might be able to create appropriate Coach Education content.*



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*Probably best to invest more time in coaching the adults than coaching the kids. Al Smith*

*The more we talk about learning stuff and the less we talk about winning stuff the better we get at developing excellence and the more likely we are to win. Al Smith*

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If you continue to think that the more certificates you award the better your Coach Education process is.... your room in that special home for the bewildered is ready for you.



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Thinking that all will be well at session level when the course finishes.

*Not realising that the best coach education should be occurring in the session where on-going, long-term, live learning opportunities – supported by experienced mentors (aka Development Officers) – will act as quality control for the coaches development.*

*The structure and content of Coach Education courses should see the delegates learning more than is in the lecturer's notes. Adapted from Per-Goran Fahlstrom*

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Thinking that it is a "Top Down" solution.

*Starting with re-organising, re-structuring, and re-resourcing the administration and bureaucracy and then when there are no more resources left, hoping that the coaching session benefits.*

Thinking that a new, sexy title coupled with the same people who made the mess in the first place will create effective change.

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What has worked?

Starting where the rubber meets the road:

The coaches

The athletes

The coaching session

Don't start any higher up the food-chain than these levels.

While there are so many more positions to take and thoughts to share on this matter, maybe these notes can stimulate more discussion and actions towards supporting coaches at all levels. If any of these arguments / comments help in any way feel free to run with them.

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