

2007 ICCE Global Coach Conference
Beijing, China
31 August-2 September 2007

Developments in High Performance Coaching within the Australian Sports Commission

- At the ASC we have described our high performance sports programs as ‘athlete centred and coach driven’ for the last fifteen years.
- However, the level of support for coach development during that time, particularly since the Sydney 2000 Olympics, has not matched the level of resources dedicated to other areas of high performance programs.

Need for more support for high performance coaches

- In recent years, the need for additional programs and services to support the development of high performance coaches has been identified as a key focus for the ASC and Australia’s high performance sports system.
- This has been highlighted by the consistent identification of “gaps” in the coaching pathway in a number of reviews, plans and consultations.
- The ability to recruit, develop and retain international standard coaches is becoming more and more difficult due to financial and competitive forces.
- NSOs and other employers in the system are struggling to deal with the demands to develop and educate high performance coaches.
- As the high performance coaching profession evolves, we need a system that
 - supports and develops coaches,
 - provides them with a career structure,
 - keeps them at the forefront in international coaching developments
 - provides educational and professional development opportunities
 - provides a greater recognition of the value of coaching and coaches

The ASC has responded to this need in several significant areas to date.

- As from 2006/07 financial year additional funding was allocated to the ASC introduce three new programs to complement the existing support and programs provided for High Performance Coaches.
 - Enhancing development opportunities for coaches (through the Elite Coach Development Program - EDCP)
 - Provision of career planning and support for coaches (through the National Coach Career Management Program - NCCM)
 - Increased personal welfare for coaches (through the AIS Coach Services Co-ordinator)

- These programs complement the existing programs for coach education, accreditation and development.

National Coaching Accreditation Scheme

- The underpinning program is the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.
- The NCAS is a progressive competency based coach education and training program. The NCAS is available for all coaches in the 70 + sports which participate in the NCAS. We recommend that all coaches become accredited through the NCAS. Accreditation is compulsory in some sports in Australia.

High Performance Coach Workshops

- However, through some benchmarking work, we have identified that we have about 475 high performance coaches working in our Olympic and Commonwealth Games sports.
- The ASC provides a small number of professional development workshops for these coaches. This may take the form of presentations from AIS sports science specialists, high profile coaches or presenters from other fields (e.g. social demographers).
- We work in conjunction with and compliment the professional development activities offered by other stakeholders – State Institutes and departments of sport, National Sporting Organisations(NSOs), Academic bodies, commercial bodies and so on.

National Coaching Scholarship Program

- The existing National Coaching Scholarship Program (NCSP) involves approximately 15-18 individual scholarship coaches each year.
- The NCSP aims to provide an intensive coaching development opportunity for potential or developing high performance coaches.
- This program has evolved into a more flexible program in recent years. The program:
 - can be 1 or 2 years,
 - full-time or part-time,
 - is available to aspiring or established high performance coaches,
 - places coaches in an appropriate full-time high performance program, under a mentor head coach,
 - provides suitable formal education,
 - includes an individual professional development program developed through the NCCM program, and
 - involves group professional development workshops,

- NSOs apply for a scholarship position and individual coaches must meet the criteria to be awarded a scholarship.

National Coach initiatives

- The National Coach Initiatives are development activities specifically for national head coaches, held once or twice per year. They may be seminars, specialist workshops, broader professional development and/or networking opportunities.

The new programs introduced in 2006/07.

National Coach Career Management Program

- The ASC has established a National Coach Career Management program which provides coach career and education planning and support to high performance coaches.
- This program has been established as a distinct element under the National Coach and Athlete Career Education program and is based on the successful Athlete Career and Education model.
- The program provides individualised personal, education and professional development planning and support from specialist career advisors. A wide range of networks and providers in the training and education arenas can then be accessed to support the development of the coach.
- The NCCM offers a range of support services including an individual coach assessment, development of an action plan, 4 face to face meetings per year and monthly email contact.
- Plans are both short and long term, and include development for career opportunities post coaching, if appropriate.
- The program aims to assist coaches to become a better coach and a better individual in a holistic sense, enhancing both their coaching performance and broader life experience.
- NCCM underpins other coach development programs with the individual assessments and plans applied to all coaches involved in the NCSP or the ECDP are supported by receive support through the NCCM program.

Elite Coach Development Program

- The Elite Coach Development Program (ECDP) will provide a 2-3 year period of assistance, support and monitoring to a personalised technical professional development program for a coach currently in the HP coaching structure of the targeted sport.

- The program purpose is “to fast track” the development of potential, and where appropriate, existing national coaches within targeted sports.
- Each individual coach will be supported by;
 - an individual coach assessment of their personal and professional capabilities and needs conducted by the NCCM Program,
 - a flexible framework of professional and personal development, specifically designed to fast track the high performance development of the targeted coach; and
 - a centralised (ASC) program of professional development, monitoring and assessment.
- The program is developed in consultation with the identified coach, their NSO, the coach’s employer, (which is often not the NSO), the national head coach and the NCCM consultant.
- Focussed on sport specific technical development with support from the co-ordinator of the program as well as access to the additional opportunities and initiatives.
- In the first year (2006/07) 18 coaches from 11 targeted sports were involved in the program.

AIS coach services

- The ASC does not employ most of these coaches. But it does employ the AIS coaches. Some AIS coaches are also national head coaches, but others are assistant coaches, head coach of development programs and discipline specific coaches all of whom may or may not have a national role.
- Within the AIS, we have also established a coach services co-ordinator.
- As well as providing AIS specific professional development opportunities, the role for this position is to support the life balance and welfare issues of the AIS coaches.
- The role addresses issues such as family support and child care when the coach is travelling internationally and assistance with personal and family commitments and social networks and activities for spouses.
- This position also assists with relocation issues and provides co-ordinated assistance with relocation of coach and family, choosing accommodation, schools, doctors and other services.

In summary, we now have a more comprehensive suite of programs and support for our high performance coaches.

Next Steps

- These new programs are in the early stages and further refinement will undoubtedly occur.
- Each area works in conjunction with and compliments the other program areas and initiatives, with a number of joint projects.
- We also have other stakeholders that we need to co-ordinate with, particularly the state institutes of sport, who are a major employer of the coaches.
- While the high performance coaches from the Olympic sports are the major priority of these programs, there is regular involvement from the leading coaches in the professional sports for mutual benefit of both groups.
- We have partnered with the University of Queensland in a research project on the learning processes of high performance coaches.
- These have been a good step forward for the support of high performance coaches in Australia, but many challenges remain.
 - To extend these programs to support more coaches.
 - To strengthen the pathway and help bridge the gap between the amateur or part-time coach and the full-time coach.
 - To assist coaches to keep up with the rapid advances in technology and the increasing information available.
- If we expect and support a continuous improvement model for our athletes then we must expect and support the same model for our coaches.