

Title: Loosening the shackles: Developing more realistic forms of coach assessment

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to ascertain the usefulness of keeping log books as a means of planning, recording and learning from coaching sessions. Such books form part of the assessment criteria of the UEFA A football licence administered through the Football Association of Wales (FAW). The investigation utilised (n=6) coaches, chosen via purposive sampling in line with given criteria. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and subsequently analysed through a variant of grounded theory. Results indicated that coaches complete the required exercise (i.e., keeping log-books) out of necessity for certification, ceasing to do so once the qualification had been gained. Similarly, the personalized coaching plans developed for everyday practice were often sanitized and amended in line with perceived assessment requirements, whilst many personally meaningful events that happened within the coaching environment went unrecorded. Whilst not dismissing the value of log books altogether as a means of coach assessment and learning, the findings indicate a need to develop a more dynamic and flexible version which allows coaches to submit personal, imaginative session plans which better reflect the complex interactive coaching context.

About the authors:

Gavin Chesterfield is the programme leader for the BSc in Sports Conditioning and Coaching at Hartpury College, part of the University of the West of England. He is a UEFA Licensed coach and former professional football player. His main research interests surround the use of reflective practice in the development of coaching knowledge, coaching pedagogy and coach-athlete interaction.

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