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Title: "Recruitment pathways of performance field hockey coaches."

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Format of Presentation: Poster

Alan Lynn is an elite swimming coach and academic-practitioner. He is a former Technical Director of Scottish Swimming and now UG Course Director in Sport Studies at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. He has written two highly successful books on swimming and a third is in production. His ongoing doctoral project is investigating the development of elite sports coaches in the UK.

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Coaching has been acknowledged as central to the development of individuals and teams in sport (Harrison & Crouch, 2002; and Hickey, 2003). Lyle (2002) suggests that at least two forms of coaching are helpful in delineating and understanding the context in which coaches operate: participation coaching (non-competitive, mainly instruction with children) and; performance coaching (competition based, regular contact between coaches-athletes and across all ages).

Until recently, coaching has not received adequate attention in the academic literature (Lyle & Lynn, 2005). This may be due to a number of factors (e.g. neglect, lack of funding, no consensual framework), but one important outcome is the dearth of research into; Who coaches? How they were initiated into coaching? And, what motivates them to continue? The recruitment of coaches is a multifaceted issue, extending beyond education and training (Lyle, 2002). A paucity of research into field hockey coaching has been highlighted by Cross & Ellice (1997) and in particular no research had been completed regarding the recruitment pathways of performance field hockey coaches.

This study investigated the recruitment pathways of performance field hockey coaches in Scotland. National League Division one coaches (men & women), sports institute coaches and the coaches of the men's & women's National teams were selected for interview (n=15). A further group of coaches (n=41) with a variety of coaching expertise and experience completed questionnaires to provide initial baseline data. The results show that most performance field hockey coaches in Scotland are male (83%), they were (or still are) performance hockey players (98%) and that they were initiated into coaching in three ways: (i) associated responsibility (they were already a team 'leader'); (ii) serendipity (they just happened to be 'there' at the time); and, (iii) direct transition (they were asked as a result of being thought 'capable').

A further, significant finding from the interviews with implications for coach recruitment and education is the fact that almost all of the sample (n=14) highly valued mentoring as a means of improving knowledge and effectiveness. The National Governing Body for field hockey (like many such organizations) does not currently have a formal mentoring scheme.

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