ABOUT ME…

Football coaching aims to be a rigorous and methodical process that embraces the relevant stepping stones for player development (Tromp et al., 2013).

Players are subject to continuous observation and assessment.

Yet how do we assess how well a coach is doing their job?

THE ISSUE…

Why do we need this research?

• Coach recall is often poor
  • Approx. 40-60% of critical moments recalled by elite level coaches (Franks & Miller, 1991; Laird & Walters, 2008)

• Rely on subjective assessments and predisposed opinions
  • ‘Sometimes you can just tell’, ‘you can see it in the athletes’. (Oliver et al., 2010)

• Use of player performance ratings to monitor players throughout time in academy

ASSESSING PLAYERS

Using player performance ratings

• Informational cues may be used to form a player performance rating
  • When assessing more players at once, more cues need attending to

• Cues can be ‘static’ or ‘dynamic’ (Cook, 1971)

• ‘Person cues’ or ‘performance information’ (Horn, Lox & Labrador, 2010)

INFORMATIONAL CUES

What do coaches base their judgements on?
THE ROLE OF VISUAL SEARCH...

• Measuring a coach's direct observation of performance could provide insight into the informational cues being attended.

• Previous research suggests location, duration, and frequency of fixations play an important role in perceptual strategy used to assess performance (Williams, Davids, & Williams, 1999).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH...

• Expert/novice differences observed in gymnastics coaches in terms of length and duration of fixations (Kromer et al., 2002).

• Ice-hockey coaches watched videos and rated players (Tromp et al., 2013).

• Players who executed the most number of actions received higher ratings.

• Players who performed scarcer actions were rated lower.

The Hypotheses...

• The longer a coach spends looking at a player the higher (or lower) their performance rating will be.

• Players looked at for less time will have middling performance ratings.

THE STUDY...

• Three elite level coaches from the Southampton Football club took part.

• 12 football matches (of varying size and duration) were observed.

• Coaches performed their normal role whilst wearing a Tobii 2 head mounted eye tracker which records where their eyes are fixated within the visual scene.

• Coaches also gave their performance ratings for each player following each match on the club’s standardised scale (1-4).

THE RESULTS...

• No significant correlation between fixation duration and player performance rating (p=.13).

• Significant correlation between fixation frequency and player performance ratings (p<0.05).

• Increased fixation frequency associated with increased player performance rating.

• Significant correlation between how many times and for how long a coach looked at a player when they did not have the ball and their player performance rating.

FURTHER RESULTS...

Significant correlation between how many times and for how long a coach looked at a player when they did not have the ball and their player performance rating.
ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

ALL COACHES - TOTAL FOR ALL GAMES

- Ball: 3%
- Space: 48%
- Player with ball (own team): 1.6%
- Player without ball (own team): 29%
- Bench: 7%
- Opposition: 8%
- Irrelevant: 31%

THE CONCLUSIONS

- Link between how often a player was looked at and how highly they were rated
- Do not know if this links to what impact the player had on the game
- Coaches spend a high percentage of time looking at ‘irrelevant’ information
- Differences were found between coaches
  - In what and how long they were looking at
- Does this mean there is poor reliability in player performance ratings?

THE NEXT STEPS...

- Link to performance analysis
  - Are players being looked at more frequently because they are doing more good things?
- How does what a coach is looking at affect their decision making?
- Are player performance ratings reliable within the club?
  - And is the 1-4 scale optimal?
- Is there a link between coach attributes and visual search strategy?

ANY QUESTIONS?

zoe@performancevision.co.uk
@zoeiwimshurst

REFERENCES: