
The Challenge of the New Intro to Competitive Coaching Model

I believe at the root of the problem for many instructors/coaches is the notion that they may pass or fail. For the vast majority this pass/fail plan challenges our collective understanding of *'the way we do things'*.

What we previously did was essentially give a free unobstructed ticket to coaching simply by the completion of the course. The old Level 2 method has been entrenched as *'the way we do things'* for so long that moving away from this view will require a shift in how we view things. This is known as a paradigm or culture shift. Changing the culture of anything takes a concerted long term investment.

The previous Level 2 method is an *inferior* product to what is now in place.

The value now placed on earning your certification by meeting a *'performance standard'* has the potential to both knock us down and build us up. The knock down will be short term and will likely be hardest for those who have been around coaching for a significant period of time (our veterans), and easiest for those new to our coaching philosophy.

Our new *'performance standard'* is essentially a matter of the coach/instructor demonstrating that they can;

1. Effectively *Communicate* with athletes
2. Effectively *Assess* athletes
3. Effectively *Assist* athletes

The Portfolio – Goals and Objectives

For all of us (players and instructor/coaches) the idea of assembling an Instructor/coach 'Portfolio' that is not just a self serving resume of successes is utterly and completely foreign to us. For many the writing of lesson plans will be mind boggling. And...even more challenging will be the identification of *'specific'* goals and objectives. I want to delve just a bit deeper into the identification of these specific goals and objectives

Goals and objectives essentially mean the same thing. Goals and Objectives are what you want to achieve. Sport Psychologists and research teams have spent innumerable hours investigating the relationship between goals, *performance* (how one can best push themselves to improve), and *outcome* (the final result). Their unequivocal findings are important benchmarks for the development of goals. Some of what they have found as influencing factors in building success include setting;

1. Measureable goals
 - a. As goals are set there needs to also be a concrete or objective method for knowing when the goal is reached. An objective goal is much akin to a true/false test in that there is a clear 'black and white' answer.
2. Control focused goals
 - a. Maximizing the benefit of goal setting requires that the goal is set on things that can be controlled, and what the athlete has best control of is the quality of their execution and mindset. The clarity boils down to the pinpoint accuracy of the goal.
3. Timeline focused goals
 - a. Setting a time to when one wants to achieve the goal is paramount to keeping the athlete on track. In reality all the experience in the world will not necessarily lead you to smack

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right on time lines. Your time lines are educated guesses, or if you like calculated predictions.

4. Framing goals
 - a. Often times athletes and coaches can put up roadblocks to their success by how we frame the conversations we have with ourselves (internal dialogue). One critical ingredient to setting productive goals is framing self talk as a want, or desire, rather than an expectation, or statement that says I must achieve 'X' Psychologists refer to this as goal orientation. Essentially framing relates to the mental and/or emotional side of why you set X goal.

The Portfolio – Rationale

The rationale of your goal explains the why. Why do you want your athlete to practice corners, follow through, ignore the score, or ignore the opposition? I am sure that you can verbalize the why. The remaining task is to now put those words onto paper. Here are a couple of examples that demonstrate all the key elements of goal setting and its accompanying rationale

Goal Setting & Rationale Samples		
Typical Unproductive (less efficient) Goals	Sample Productive Goal	Rationale
Follow through	Hold your follow through for 3 seconds	Holding your follow through demonstrates that the athlete is capable of maintaining balance at release
Get Down or Bend	As you slide bend your knee 10 degrees more.	To get the ball down lower to the lane at release

The Assessment Window

A minimum 3 month window to go back and...implement what was learned makes critical and practical sense. It simply helps validate that NEW learning has begun, and now needs to be reinforced through the repetition of applying the skills coaching. It is not fair and reasonable to expect coaches to be able to put together the portfolio required in advance of the clinic, nor is it fair and reasonable to expect those same coaches to *manufacture* a portfolio '*on the spot*'.

The M.E.D.- On-Line

One of the changes challenging us is the requirement of the Making Ethical Decisions module being done on-line. The reality of the new program is that the Coaching Association of Canada was instrumental not just in pushing the program but also in its design and fundamental requirements. Assuring some level of understanding around ethics may or may not make sense for you. But...let's just work with the notion that what other sports experience we too will have in time. Possibly we already have some major ethical and legal challenges.

I believe at the crux of the problem On-line limits how we can practice and study however maybe a good suggestion comes from a fellow session presenter "*bring groups of potential instructors/coaches together and work through the on-line M.E.D. as part of the course program (either during the*

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weekend course or at the Instructor/Coach Assessment.” This process has done well at reducing the attrition rate, and it increases our collective knowledge. The process has helped those less literate with computers and on-line programs. It also provides needed assistance to those who find reading more of a challenge. I believe there is strength in numbers. So...how about gathering around and doing the On-line together.

The Assessment Pass/Fail

Face it we are not concerned with the pass aspect but rather the **fail** aspect of the assessment. On a personal note I have never enjoyed taking something up that ultimately meant I would pass or fail. Even in my real world of teaching students I down play any aspect of pass and fail. WHY?? Because pass or fail is too definitive. It is like an end or destination. IF all an individual does is set out to **‘just pass’**, or **‘just fail’** they reduce and often times severely limit the opportunity to continue learning.

It is all just a matter of perspective and just possibly a shift in your paradigm of how you think about pass/fail options. My advice rather than looking at this process as pass or fail, look at it as simply saying *“ I have more learning to do”* Yes we all have more learning to do win, lose, pass or fail. We always have the opportunity to learn. It is up to each of us what we want to learn.