

Coaching diary in Finland (2020-'21 season)

Eu Jin, Yap



Author(s) Eu Jin, Yap	
Degree programme Sports Coaching and Management Programme	
Report/thesis title Coaching diary in Finland (2020-'21 season)	Number of pages 56
<p>This diary-type thesis describes the author's growth and professional development as a coach with a junior ice hockey organization, Kiekko-Nikkarit Ry for ten weeks duration.</p> <p>The diary will first analyze the nature of employment and its organization, followed by the daily entries which describe the daily goal and daily experience. At the end of each week, an analysis report will be produced upon reflecting on the preceding week. The weekly report will analyze the challenges faced during the week and what measures were taken to solve the challenges. The weekly report also describes the author's development progress.</p> <p>The final discussion section will describe the development progress made by the author. Highlighting the areas of development, models, and approaches applied and the outcome based on the author's perception.</p>	
Keywords Leadership, Goal setting, Coach development, Reflection, Coaching	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Framework	2
2.1	Analysis of current job scope	3
2.1.1	Practice planning.....	3
2.1.2	Bench coaching on competition days	4
2.1.3	Evaluation of current development state	5
2.2	Interest groups at work.....	5
2.3	Interaction at work.....	7
3	Diary entries	9
3.1	Observation week 1	9
3.2	Observation week 2	16
3.3	Observation week 3	21
3.4	Observation week 4	25
3.5	Observation week 5	29
3.6	Observation week 6	32
3.7	Observation week 7	37
3.8	Observation week 8	41
3.9	Observation week 9	45
3.10	Observation week 10	49
4	Discussion and conclusions	53
	References	56

1 Introduction

This thesis will cover the author's professional growth and development as a coach for the duration of ten weeks starting from August 2020 to October 2020. For this, the diary-type thesis is preferred taking into consideration that it acknowledges the expression of thoughts and feelings when describing situations accordingly. Diary reports consist of the daily description of the coach's function in achieving task objectives and a weekly report upon analyzing the preceding daily entries to assess the development progress of the coach.

The coach's role mentioned in this thesis pertains to the Kiekko-Nikkarit club and the U18 HYRI team. The main responsibilities for both engagements are deemed similar within the context of sports coaching. Additionally, duties associated with Kiekko-Nikkarit club operation and management are present, however considerably minimal. Therefore, will not be included in this thesis.

Kiekko-Nikkarit Ry - Located in Riihimäki, Kanta-Häme, was founded in 1982. Kiekko-Nikkarit Ry provides and supports ice activities for youth from hockey school to U14 age groups and the men's team. The U15 to U22 playing groups are represented and managed under HYRI Hockey Ry. Established recently in 2020, HYRI Hockey Ry is a cooperation between Hyvinkään Jää-Ahmat Ry and Kiekko-Nikkarit Ry to strengthen the cooperation and relationship between the clubs through reforming and developing regional junior activities for competition age groups.

2 Framework

The “coaches’ knowledge” as defined in An Integrative Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise (Côté & Gilbert, 2009) article will be used as the framework to guide the course of my professional growth and development process. The “coaches’ knowledge” conceptual model highlights the integration of three underlying sorts of knowledge: professional knowledge (sport-specific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge), interpersonal knowledge (relationship and social context), and intrapersonal knowledge (self-aware, ethics, and values) in pursuit of quality in coaching thus influencing overall athletes learning process (Cassidy et al., 2009; Collinson, 1996).

The following additional sources will be adopted to support my framework:

Kidman, L, & Hanrahan, SJ 2011, *The Coaching Process: A Practical Guide to Becoming an Effective Sports Coach*.

This publication provides me with the information in the context of an athlete-centered approach in creating a successful sports environment based on athlete’s contentment and sports development. One of the many reasons for athlete’s participation in sports is the experience of enjoyment and satisfaction (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). The content emphasizes practical approaches in sports coaching that support the athlete’s ability and awareness in taking ownership of their knowledge development and decision making (Mallett, 2005). With the various pedagogy such as case studies, activities, research summaries, and reflective practices to guide my coaching actions and further developing my coaching competency and philosophy.

Gilbert, W. 2016, *Coaching Better Every Season: A Year-Round System for Athlete Development and Program Success*.

This publication provides an organized approach to developing a successful yearly coaching cycle based on proven strategies, principles, and research-supported approaches. The systematic framework provides me with useful knowledge and tools for planning effective practices, focusing on different emphasis in each season within the annual cycle for long-term coaching success. Success is a by-product of a well-organized, and well-prepared preparation (Shapiro, 2008). Also, the four seasons of an annual coaching cycle: Four “Es” (Figure 1) summarizes the crucial coaching focus.

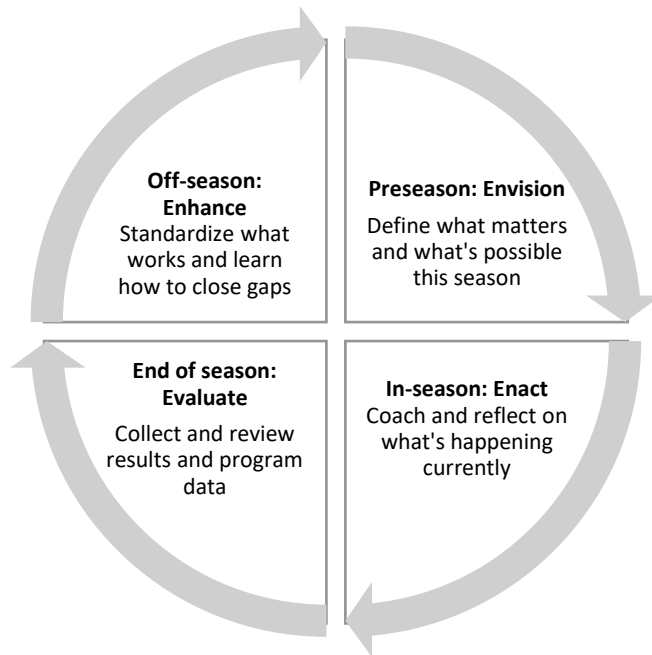


Figure 1. Four seasons of an annual coaching cycle: Four “Es” (Modified from Gilbert, 2016)

2.1 Analysis of current job scope

In this section, I will describe my responsibilities and work tasks associated with Kiekko-Nikkarit and U18 HYRI team. I will also reflect on my development state and its’ foundation later in this chapter. Interest groups connected to my work duties are also explained and clarified as well as skills needed to handle my work duties.

2.1.1 Practice planning

For this, we will first specify the task associated with Kiekko-Nikkarit. The responsibility consists of strategically making plans for practice content and conducting the ice practices accordingly to the athlete’s playing age group ranging from U9 to U14. The youth physical development model (Lloyd and Oliver, 2012) is used to support my planning process for activities, specifically in determining the focus of the physical qualities. The afternoon ice practices are somewhat different from regular team practices in which the focus is on athlete’s development in technical and tactical playing skills, learning the game, and character-building. For every playing age group, the afternoon ice practices are held once every week for fifty minutes duration. My task specifically in practices includes creating a fun environment, yet that challenges the athlete. I also have to communicate with the players

in explaining and demonstrating the activities in an attempt to provide athletes with different learning styles to enhance learning effectiveness (Pallapu, 2007). Also, being attentive with my involvement and interaction with players to support and motivate the players.

Next, we discuss the work task with U18 HYRI. Here, the process involves strategic planning and carrying out the practice content for the entire season. The content is designed accordingly to the specific phases and themes throughout the season. As the emphasis is put towards the tactical aspect of the game for this playing age group, the focus is on enhancing the athlete's playing skills in different playing roles and various game situations based on the team requirements. The frequency of practice sessions occurs on an average of four times every week excluding matches. Here, my actions involve observing the quality of the performance and interaction with the players either in a group or as individuals for feedback and ideas. Similar to the younger age group, attentiveness is shown with the players during practice to maintain a positive learning experience. Information such as the theme or topic for ice practice, key teaching points, number of athletes, and coaching staff is required to ensure the practice is planned and conducted as effectively as possible.

2.1.2 Bench coaching on competition days

On competition days, the work task involves a shared responsibility with the head coach for managing the player's lineup during the match. Also, game observation is performed in parallel for intervention purposes if required. Information required for this task is the player's roster, the opposing team, and objectives for the match.

Skills required for the work task above mentioned are questioning skills and active listening skills when interacting with athletes in exchange for information whether feedback or opinion as part of the learning process. Observation and critical thinking skills assist in providing solutions ethically and rationally when in difficult situations. Goal-setting skills to provide a clear systematic approach in achieving targets are crucial, as well as reflection skills to analyze the experience for self-improvement. Apart from the skills mentioned above, organizational skill allows me to uphold a standard of operation to support the needs of athletes towards achieving a milestone. Critical thinking skill allows the coach in delivering ethical and rational reasonings when dealing with athletes in any situation. Patience is also a crucial skill that plays an important role in my line of work. For example,

restraining from intervening too quickly during a difficult situation, or during the teaching and learning process.

2.1.3 Evaluation of current development state

I consider my current level of competency to be a skillful performer. My past corporate working experiences have given me exposure and experience in terms of leadership and professional conduct which is transferable to sports coaching. I understand the importance of upholding a professional standard of the organization in maintaining its reputation.

In the context of sports knowledge, the sports coaching & management degree study has broadened my perspective on what coaching means. Throughout the past two years of the study course, the different topics and materials from the course have provided me with extensive knowledge which is transferable to my work task. Besides, the opportunity to get involved with practical sessions and projects has equipped me with the organizations and management experience as part of my learning process. Participating in camps organized during the study course allowed me to learn in-depth about sport-specific knowledge and the business aspect of it, which contributes to making my transition to current work tasks smoother.

Regarding the responsibilities, the work tasks are either performed independently or as a team. Therefore, it is required of me to stay organized with the task at hand and capable of obtaining resourceful information independently when required. I feel competent with my abilities and not afraid of putting myself in an uncomfortable situation. Possessing theoretical coaching knowledge itself is insufficient, my objective is to apply these theories into my coaching actions which will be described in my report in this thesis. Throughout this work placement, I aim to create a positive learning experience for my professional growth and development, and the people at the work.

2.2 Interest groups at work

The organization structure (Figure 2) consists of the Board of Directors, which are responsible for managing the club's strategy and finances. The club office bearers, comprised of Executive Director, Office Secretary, Head of Coaching, Club Coach, Equipment Man-

ager, and Skills Coach. They are accountable for the club's day-to-day operating functions. Then Team Coaches and Team Staff are responsible for matters related to the athletes and the team.

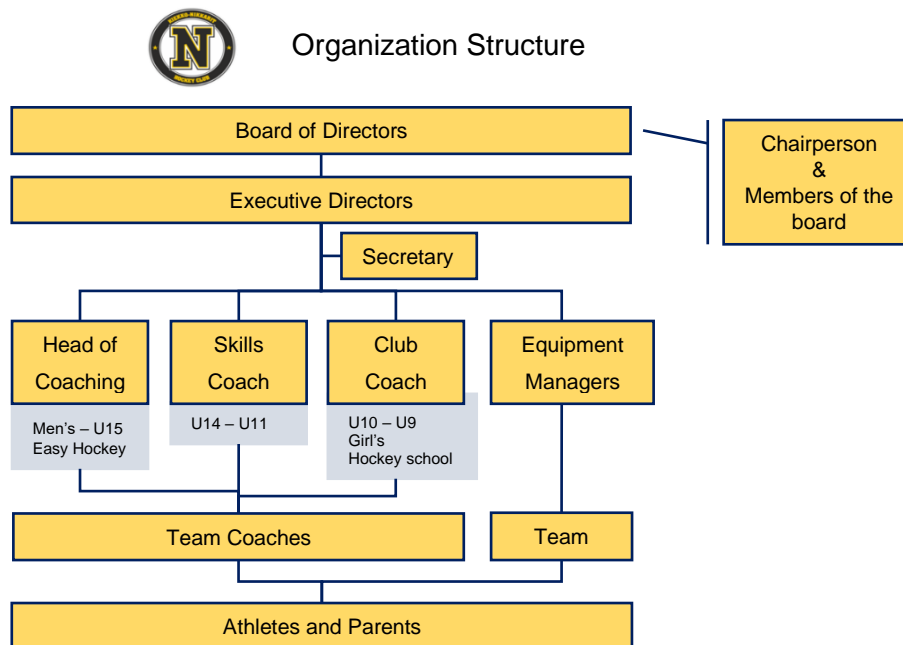


Figure 2. Kiekko-Nikkarit Organization Structure (modified from www.kiekko-nikkarit.fi)

The internal interest group (Figure 3) to which my work may influence in some ways are the office bearers, predominantly the coaches and the athletes. This can be justified by the frequency of interaction that occurs in the workplace between me and characters within the internal interest group.

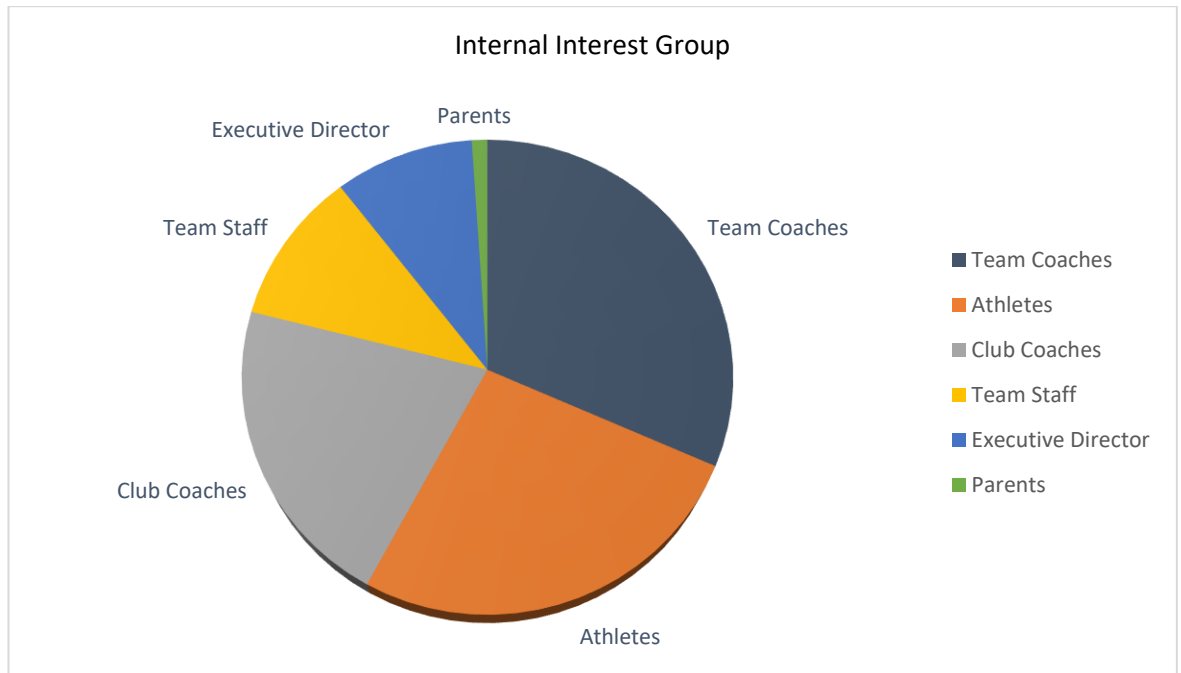


Figure 3. Internal Interest Group

2.3 Interaction at work

Coaches are in the people's business in which the level of satisfaction is perceived as an important element. Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) reveals that an environment that satisfies the individual's basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) can foster greater engagement and wellbeing, thus influencing performance outcomes. The nature of my work relies heavily on the interaction and communication skills to build quality relationships and a supportive environment for athlete's learning and overall organizational success. Such communication plays a vital role in informing, influencing, and structuring the activities and strategies of the organization (Agarwal and Garg, 2012).

As shown in figure 3, Interaction occurs mostly with coaches from other age groups, followed by the athlete, club coaches, team staff, executive director, and lastly parents. Interactions are usually casual and spontaneously that happens in the ice hall. The theme may include daily matters but for the most part, opinions and problem solving related to coaching, or task that requires attention. Formal interactions usually take place during coach meetings, seminars, or events. Interaction with team coaches occurs the most due to my participation in their daily practice. Discussion with head coaches and assistant coaches is commonly about the wellbeing of the team, development ideas, reflection, and sharing for feedbacks. Communication with athletes differs depending on the age group, mostly within this category are the U18 HYRI athletes due to the frequency of training. Topics

usually vary from daily life happenings, their well-being, or hockey-related. Interaction with athletes from other age groups occurs mostly during training sessions. Such as explaining or demonstrating practice activities, questioning players, or sharing my feedback with the players. Interactions with team staff and the executive director are mostly related to the task at hand or seeking guidance. While parents are the least interacted with, all necessary information for parents is done through team staff. Depending on the interaction, questions asked are usually open questions. This allows other characters to respond more freely and leads to two-way communication.

Having said that, communication is an area that I foresee having some minor difficulty due to the language barrier. While the Finnish language is the commonly spoken language among the characters, the proficiency level in the English language varies among the characters. This can sometimes be a challenge when attempting to convey messages or interpretations accurately. This situation occurs usually during practice sessions with the younger age group. Therefore, a list of translated words is prepared to assist with the communication. Having the list allows me to put forth effort in trying to converse in the Finnish language as well with the players. At the same time, I would request the characters to teach me some Finnish words for English words for our learning benefit.

3 Diary entries

3.1 Observation week 1

3 Aug 2020

New chapter with Kiekko-Nikkarit is filled with much anticipation. The goal for this week is to get acquainted with the organization's culture and the characters to adapt to the new working environment. The second reason is to gain relevant information that will be useful for my upcoming work duties. To achieve this goal, I must proactively interact with the people around me to initiate relationship building.

For the next four coming days, two pre-organized events will be held. First, KN Summer Camp will take place during the day. My assignment is with the 07-08 born players, responsibility includes assisting the lead coach in conducting the itinerary programs which include physical activities and ice practices. Then, the U18 HYRI team try-out selection will take place. Responsibility with the U18 HYRI is to assist the head coach in executing the practice plan and players' observation. To be effective with players' observation, information for the criteria must first be obtained from the head coach to ensure a common understanding. Considering that this is the first day, the responsibilities are mostly supporting, in general, to ensure the event runs smoothly.

At the end of the day, my attempt to familiarize myself with the organization was partially achieved. Interaction with several coaches was a success and was done very spontaneously due to the camp schedule arrangements. Through those interactions and observations, I was able to gain some ideas of the "norms" in the organization. With the U18 team, I was able to get a discussion going regards to the team and the requirements for the selection process. Overall interaction with players felt a little awkward, this could be due to feelings of shyness and/or language barrier. However, did not prevent me from giving encouragement and feedbacks to the players.

Overall, I am pleased with the outcome of my actions. I felt comfortable during interactions with other characters. During the interaction, I was able to put the effort into my communication and listening skills. By being observant, I was able to pick up several details on how the daily operation at the ice hall take place. For the upcoming days, I want to take the opportunity again to enhance the relationship with the surrounding characters. I wanted to memorize the names of characters and enhance my hockey vocabulary in the Finnish language to be more efficient during explanation and feedback.

4 Aug 2020

The process to achieve the week's goal continues. Today, the focus is to be more attentive and involved with the coaching process.

After yesterday, I got a better understanding of how the camp operates. For the planning process, I would like to get involved with the coach's discussion to share ideas and feedbacks. With the players, I want to increase the level of interaction and be more supportive during the sessions. A list of English to Finnish hockey vocabulary is prepared on a notepad for when interacting with the players. With the U18 team, I am looking to learn more about the team and the previous experience through discussion with the coaches and management staff.

Upon reflecting on the day, signs of progress towards the main goal were present. Discussion with coaches went well with sharing of ideas for the practice, despite some challenges with communication language, we were able to interpret one way or another. With the list of translated words prepared, I was able to somewhat incorporate Finnish vocabulary in my interaction with the players. It was a fun experience and there was a success in delivering the messages. Players were showing signs of comfort during interaction although several translations were required.

5 Aug 2020

My objective for today is to display my competency in managing the task at hand. This will involve me requesting from the lead coach to take responsibility for some of the sessions for the day.

I communicated with the head coach on my request and was assigned with the physical session. Looking back at how the camp participants progressed for the past days, the morning physical session is usually lively and filled with energy when compared to the afternoon sessions. The plan for the morning physical session was focused on movements with a short competition/races and the second session was more on playing different games. Players were separated into smaller groups for the activities. Overall, the session went smoothly as planned. The head coach was present to assist and observe the sessions. Participants were actively involved and constantly cheering and giving support to their teammates. For the U18 session, I requested permission from the head coach to

lead the physical session. It was important for me to consider that the players get sufficient warmup before the ice session. A short discussion with the players before starting the warmup, asking them about their experience with physical training and informing them about my intentions with the session. Starting with mobility movement and progressively increasing the tempo to get them ready for the ice session. Going onto the ice practice, the plan was playing 5 on 5 regular games. My task was to manage the game while the head coach and head of coaching observed the players from the stands. After the practice, we got together to share their observation of the players between coaching staff.

I felt that my overall performance in leading the sessions was not too bad, despite feeling somewhat nervous. With that said, I had some expectations of challenges which I foresee to occur during those sessions however to my surprise everything went smoothly. Keeping the explanation concise with demonstration to be more effective. I managed to get a positive response from the coaches on my actions during those sessions and was asked if I would like to take lead for the following day to which I agreed. Interaction with coaches and the players increased with a more comfortable feeling. I was able to retrieve more information about the players themselves and insights into the organization as well. There was a feeling of relief as I was able to meet my objectives and goals throughout the day.

6 Aug 2020

Feeling a little anxious today, knowing that I had to lead the practices today. Thinking of practicing ideas and putting them down into my notebook so I do not miss any details. My objectives for the day were to ensure the organization and execution of the practices go efficiently. Also, continue to observe and take note of the U18 player's performance during the sessions for the coach's feedback. By now, we have already shortlisted the list of names for the roster from our previous coach's discussion. Today's practice will continue to observe the players who are sitting on the fence to conclude our final decision.

Upon arriving at the ice hall, I met up with the camp coaches to discuss the day's plan. I wanted to ensure that everyone understood what my intentions were and create a comfortable interaction. Sharing the plans which I had prepared and asking for their opinions. I highlighted the key points for the practices accordingly to emphasize the learning details for players. The task delegation was open for the coaches to discuss and select among themselves. During the practice, my task was to oversee the entire practice and manage the time. Moving around between sections on the ice to communicate with the coaches and players and helping where needed. After the practices, I approached the coaches for their feedback regarding the practice content, did we achieve our key teaching points, and

their perception of it. The U18 sessions were the same as yesterday, the head coach had requested for me to lead the physical session again. During the physical session, I took the opportunity to speak with the players. Asking how they felt about the past days and their overall performance. As for the shortlisted names, I was informed by the coaching staff about the decision of the three goalies that will be included in the roster by end of the day and for players, it will be the next day. A short meeting together with the goalies before the ice session took place to inform them of the situation. There were feelings of nervousness displayed by the goalies upon getting the news.

At the end of the day, I felt like having achieved my goal. I was able to carry out what I had in plan, lots of interactions with the coaches, and practice sessions were conducted smoothly. Positive and supportive feedback was given by the coaches on the overall session. Players were actively involved during practices and having fun. With the U18, I continued to make mental notes and provided my feedback and opinion based on the few players that were observed. Both the head coach and I shared a few common perspectives which gave me an indication of having a common understanding of what we are looking at.

7 Aug 2020

Final day for the camp and U18 try-outs. My objective with the camp and try-outs was to maintain a good atmosphere throughout the sessions and end it on a good note. The plans for the camp are to play games and fun competitions. The ice session for U18 is playing five on five regular games, followed by the final roster announcement at the end of the day. The process will involve a face-to-face meeting with the players who did not make it to the list. Not knowing how or what to expect during that moment, my thought was to face the situation with positivity and professionalism.

The camp sessions went accordingly, the environment was much more relaxed, and players were having fun during games; actively motivating the players during those sessions and as well more time to exchange questions with the coaches in getting to know each other better. During the closing ceremony, there was an opportunity to interact with the player's parents. Many were interested in my background and how I got involved with the sport. As the camp is scheduled to end earlier as well, I took the opportunity to speak with the club's executive director. We expressed our thought and feedback for the camp overall, getting an opinion on my performance for the week. The U18 session started with a short meeting between coaches and the players, followed by a physical session and ice practice. During the meeting, we informed players about the final roster announcement

which will take place at the end of the day; players were showing signs of excitement and looked worried at the same time. The physical session activity was football, which was open for the players to decide. Ice session went accordingly to plan as we continue to observe the players throughout. Now comes the players' meeting. With one after another, we asked about their overall experience and shared our summarized feedback for the individual player. There were some upset, and disappointed faces as they received the decision. Upon finishing the meeting, we walked into the player's locker room and collectively inform about those who made the roster.

I would say that the objective of maintaining a good atmosphere throughout the sessions and ending it on a good note was achieved. Lots of interaction between myself and the characters throughout the day. Coaches and players were feeling at ease and more comfortable during the interaction as of today. Players were having fun and enjoying the activities throughout the day. For the U18, the sessions went well, and we managed to keep a positive atmosphere even during the roster announcement. No other significant occurrence was present.

9 Aug 2020

Today, U18 HYRI will play our first practice match in Vuosaari. My goal is to observe the cohesion between players and recognize the kind of atmosphere during the match. To be more specific, how much interaction occurs among the players? How and what kind of response the players express accordingly to the situation?

The journey to the venue takes approximately 60mins. During the journey, the head coach and I go through the line-ups, decide on the match objectives, and our duty on the bench; my bench duty is to manage the defense line-ups. The objectives emphasize the areas to focus on during the match. Upon arrival, players get settled into the locker room and proceed with the things they need to do. The head coach explains to me the practices of the team. Physical warmups are managed by the players themselves We (referring to the coaches) will step into the locker room after the physical warmup to go through the game objectives. The atmosphere during the objective briefing was positive as two-way communications were going. From there, I was able to identify the more outspoken players and those who tend to shy away. During the match, I got to observe our player's behavior on the bench and the style of interaction between the head coach and players. There were moments throughout the match whereby players were displaying their emotions when things are not going so well. At the end of the match, we shared our match observation

with the players in the locker room and asked them how they felt about the match. Understanding that it was our first exhibition match, it was good to see that players were honest in sharing their feedbacks.

Overall, I was quite satisfied with what I was able to achieve today. The overall atmosphere created was positive despite some heated moments during the match which is normal and manageable. A few players were giving support and motivation to teammates during the match. From that, I was able to further develop my understanding of player's characteristics. The level of interaction was quite good. However, it was mainly from the more outspoken players. They were able to influence those around them.

Weekly analysis

Integrating into unfamiliar territory can lead to having mixed feelings due to differences in culture and language barriers. Reflecting on the first week, I was able to improve my communication skills and building relationship with associates and athletes through daily interactions. Through those interactions, I got to discover their personalities, the club's culture, and social norms. I felt that the quicker I adapt to the environment, the more comfortable I would feel with the characters around me. A study by Hamilton (2007) reveals that an increase in knowledge sharing among peers occurs when there is a presence of relaxed feeling. As a result, decrease in insecurities and workplace problems.

I was able to also narrate my coaching philosophy and principles through my actions during the camp days. This has allowed me to reconcile my values and belief with the characters and culture within the club. A coach must have the ability and awareness to alter their personal views to fit in and work towards the club's vision. Having strong and coherent values facilitates the coach proactively in ethical decision-making and guiding actions (Lara-Bercial & al., 2017, P.20).

Through the daily objectives I have set, there was an opportunity for personal growth and development in the areas of coaching. My level of confidence progressively increased through my actions and was trusted to lead one of the days in camp. Feedback from the coaches was constructive which helped me to self-evaluate my actions. With the U18, I got to experience and learn from the selection process. The knowledge from my studies and with guidance from the head coach further improved my capability in recognizing player's attributes and skills. Our first exhibition game also presented me the opportunity to observe the cooperation between athletes and their style of playing.

To begin the week as effectively as possible, I had to clarify my roles and responsibilities for the camp. This was solved with prior communication with the responsible person. Having to know the task beforehand helped me to have a clearer vision in preparation. The challenge that occurred during the week was communication-related with the younger players. During the practice session, I was able to manage by demonstrating and getting assistance from peers to translate. I do not classify it as a major problem as my Finnish language will only improve with time and consistent use.

There were relationships built between the athletes and me as a coach, it is however still in the early phase. Coaching better every season by Gilbert. W, (2016) explains that the quality of the relationship between coach and athletes is one ultimate factor to success in sports yet a complicated facet. The coach provides care and supports in areas of sport demands as well as psychosocial of the athletes (Jowett and Cockerill, 2002). Achieve the coach-athlete relationship, it will be an ongoing process throughout the months to come. Therefore, the 3+1 Cs model of coach-athlete relationships (Figure 4) will be the guiding principle when it comes to my interaction with athletes (Gilbert, 2016, P.77-78).

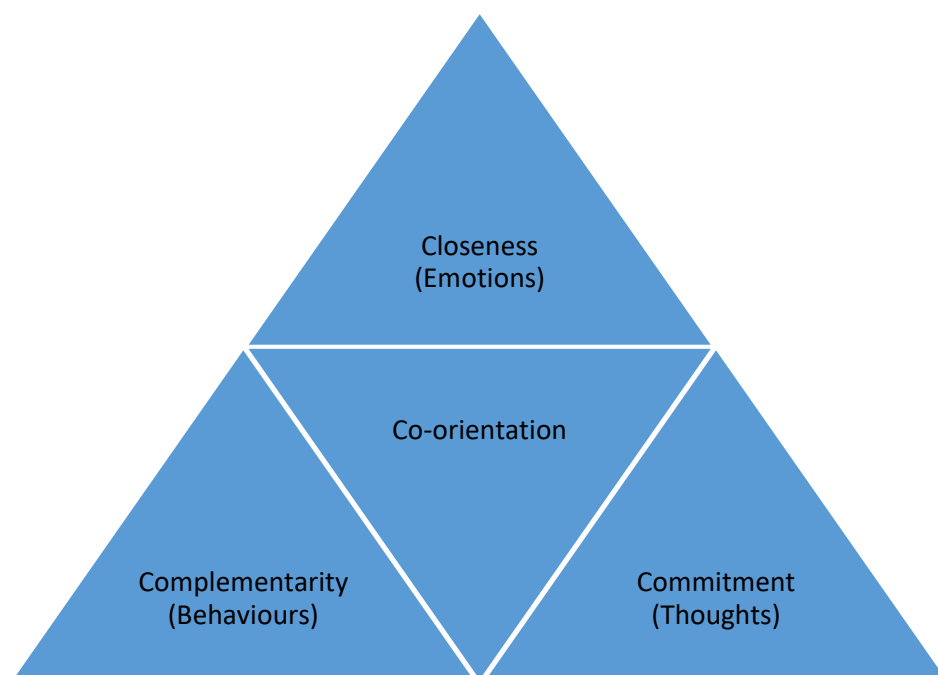


Figure 4. 3+1Cs of quality coach-athlete relationships model (modified from Gilbert, 2016)

3.2 Observation week 2

10 Aug 2020

Today, our first official U18 HYRI practice with the finalized roster begins. Even though spending a limited time getting to know the players, I was able to identify a few players who are easier to approach. That gives me the advantage of initiating conversation with them and progress with others. The goal for this week is to build trust with the players through leadership.

A meeting between team staff and players was organized as a starter. The atmosphere in the locker room was quite relaxed and calm. Again, a short introduction by team staff and players followed by congratulation wishes. Being the only non-fluent Finnish-speaking person in the room, it was quite an interesting moment to observe the player's facial expression as I shared my part. I made clear my intentions and aim to be part of the team's success. Furthermore, I requested the players to help with the learning of the language. I felt that it was a good tactic to initiate communication with them. Our training routine is similar for most days. Starting with a physical training session, ice practice after, and followed by a post-practice cooldown. Throughout the day, I took the initiative to be proactive in communicating with the players by asking questions. However, there was a somewhat awkward feeling when it was a one-to-one interaction compared to in a group setting. Almost every reply was a short "yes" or "no" answer. That was a good indication for me to build on. As it was the first day, I did not want to instantly put them into an uncomfortable situation. Instead, I turned to give them motivation and supportive feedback. I felt that the players were more relaxed and comfortable.

Upon reflecting on my actions, I managed to create more comfortable and relaxed interactions with the players. The first attempt to initiate interaction with the players was to through open-ended questions. Despite most replies given were short and static, I am very determined that it will evolve. Transitioning from asking questions to giving feedback helped me to display my initiative in supporting them. Overall, I was quite satisfied with my progress today and will continue to improve it.

11 Aug 2020

The objective I have in mind today is to increase the level of interaction between the players and me. The plan is to engage the players during the physical sessions by having

some competitions between the players whereby the winning group gets to decide on what the other group must perform. I felt that it was a good opportunity to increase the comfort level during interaction and to observe the physical attribute of our players.

Before the physical training session, I approach the players in the locker room and asked about their day in general. Then we went through the content for the physical session together. I want to set a tone for when we are engaged in any activity in the future. Explaining to the players the environment which emphasizes focus and quality during those practices. Assuming that it was made clear, I asked for their preferred type of competition. "Futis!" (soccer) was the response with excitement by all. We made two groups and asked for a suggestion for which the losing team had to perform. The players were engaged and throwing out ideas individually, which led me to get them to discuss as a group and conclude on one.

A short discussion with the head coach regards to the drills before we went on the ice to ensure a common understanding of what we wanted the players to learn. With that, I could construct my feedback for players accordingly. During the ice practice, effort and enthusiasm from the players were present. The practice was carried out as planned. Whenever feedback was given to players, there was acknowledgment.

The objective of increasing the level of interaction with the player was achieved. Furthermore, overall progress for today was pleasing. The action plan I had in mind was successful in getting the players to interact with me with feeling less awkward. Besides developing my communication skills, I was able to gain some knowledge related to the tactical coaching aspect.

12 Aug 2020

Rest day and U18 HYRI parents meeting in the evening. The goal for the day is to go through some match videos to get ideas for teaching the game. For the parents' meeting, my objective was to share with parents my coaching philosophy and values which I will incorporate through my daily actions in contributing to the team's success.

The parents' meeting began with a brief introduction by the team staff and sharing of background. Then, the team leader went through the club management and financial details for the team. During the Q&A session, there were few questions from the parents to me. Curious about how I ended up in Finland and if there were any challenges in commu-

nication with their kids? I explained that one of my aims is to further develop myself, having to communicate in English might be a challenge for some players but there is a silver lining. I believe that it will be a positive learning experience for both players and me as we learn different languages. That will benefit them for the long run not only in sports but life outside of sports as well. Overall, the introduction went well as I was able to share and provide the answers they were looking for. Gauging from the amount of interaction between parents and me, it gave me the impression that the meeting was a success.

13 Aug 2020

My objective for today was to be more effective in the communication process. I noticed from the past two practice sessions that players were responding to my feedbacks. However, to what extent if they understand the message. Was it due to language barriers? Or merely the feeling of anxiety when I interact with them? Or both? The reason me pointing this out is since even after feedback was given, similar patterns of behavior repeat themselves the following shift.

As we started practicing, I began observing some players closely. Instead of giving my feedback first, I wanted to challenge them to analyze and have an understanding of the situations. For the following shift, I requested that they make one or two mental note of the situation occurrences and share it with me. Take into consideration that there are no right or wrong answers. I intend to get the players to be aware of the surrounding situations (reading the game) and progress from there. At the end of the practice, I approach the same players and asked if it helped by knowing by observing their surroundings during practice. They mentioned that it did help them with their decision-making on the ice because they were able to break down the situation.

At the end of the day, I was able to achieve my objectives. I felt that we as coaches sometimes tend to give feedback without considering the player's perception. I would feel left out and demotivated if I were to put myself in the player's position because no matter what I do, my coach does not trust my decision. Hence, relating both coach's and the player's perception when giving feedback gave the impression that "the coach listens and try to understand what I was trying to achieve and supports me with different ideas to overcome that situation". Through those questions asked above, I was able to get the players to share their thoughts and construct my opinions according to their perception instead of instructing them right away. That way, the players not only feeling more open when receiving feedbacks but also eliminates the fear of making mistakes.

14 Aug 2020

During the day, I took time to think about the interactions I had with the players yesterday. Realizing that the decision-making from players was more effective when they are more aware of the surroundings. That led me to set my goal for today, challenging players to find their cues. By structuring questions for players to identify their cues in situations and overcoming them. When a player is involved in a certain situation, various occurrences are ongoing concurrently. Therefore, some players may panic and feel anxious which affects their decision-making.

Like in any practice session, coaches will briefly explain the upcoming drill to be executed and give one or two key points of emphasis. One example used for this is a two (attacking team) against three (defending team) in the defensive zone corner (PAPP), the aim is for the defending team to win puck possession and skating the puck up the blue line. As the drill was going on, I was observing how our third defending player was playing the situation. Few of the players were maintaining their position and holding back to wait for their teammate to win possession and making the pass to him while some jump straight into overload the opponent. I approached the players who joined the battle right away and asked them "What made them join the battle right away?" "It was three against two, we have one extra player to put additional pressure to win the puck". I approached the player who was maintaining their position and asked them "What made them maintain their position and not join in?" "If the opponent comes out with the puck, then I can give pressure". Again, there is no right or wrong. It is about getting to their perspective and challenging them to find the best solution. I then asked the players who held back, "In a situation where there are three opponents instead of two, would they have joined, and what makes them different? They replied, "yes because we are now under pressured with one extra opponent". I shared with them about finding the cue to help them with their decision-making. In this case, the number of opponents is the varying cue. As we continued with the practice, I reminded the players about the cue and reacting accordingly. As a result, some players began to understand what I was talking about while there were a few who felt frustrated as the outcome was not as successful. At the end of practice, as we proceed back into the locker room. I gave my feedback that they should not worry about the outcome now, the learning process needs to be consistent and will take time.

I felt that at some point, I was able to convey the idea of cue to the players. Some players understood what I was trying to teach them and had some success. Like the players, I cannot be expecting immediate change or success as the teaching process also takes

time. However, it was a good start. From my development perspective, I was able to develop my questioning skills in guiding towards my objective.

Weekly analysis

Looking at how the week progressed, the outcome from the daily objectives was at a satisfactory level. There were consistent interactions with the players in an attempt to display my attentiveness and support for them through my daily actions.

During the week, one problem which I encountered was the level of understanding from the players when upon receiving information. As explained in the daily entries, few players are acknowledging the information shared. However, their actions reflect the opposite. To solve this matter, questions were asked personally to the players to find out to what extent they understand the given information.

Development for this week is focused more on my leadership skills as a coach. Transformational leadership and servant leadership are the two leadership styles that are effective in the context of sports coaching as suggested by Wade Gilbert (2016). Upon further readings, research on factors influencing leadership effectiveness and the use of 'power' in influencing others reveals that a coach's personality traits based on integrity, self-confidence, attentiveness, and respect stand out as the most prominent leadership characteristic. Whereas the expert power; coach's special knowledge, skills and experience, and referent power; coach's positive relationship is the two most considerable types of powers that influence others (Gargalianos, D., Laios, A., & Theodorakis, N. (2003).

Although ice hockey is a team sport, we must take into consideration that every individual is unique, therefore recognizing and applying different approach accordingly to the player's characteristic can enhance the player's teaching and learning process (Kidman, L., & Hanrahan, S. J., 2011, p.44; Gilbert, 2016, p.127). Learning is defined as a process that leads to change, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning (Ambrose et al., 2010, p.3). The principle of athlete's learning and sample coaching strategy (Figure 5) is a guideline that helped me to provide a more effective learning process for the athletes'.

Learning principle	Sample coaching strategy
Prior knowledge can help or hinder athlete learning	Have athletes explain or demonstrate a skill before attempting to teach it to gauge readiness to learn the skills
Athlete motivation directly influences the learning process	Ask athletes for feedback on the difficulty of learning activities to help find the right challenge-skill balance
Skill mastery requires athletes to learn component skills	Try describing and then walking through the steps needed to perform a skill before teaching it to your athlete
Combine deliberate practice with targeted specific feedback	Identify in advance feedback cues and feedback bandwidth to help athletes meet learning and performance standards

Figure 5. Principle of athlete's learning and sample coaching strategy (source: modified from Gilbert, 2016)

3.3 Observation week 3

17 Aug 2020

Today's goal is to demand a consistent level of quality and focus during physical training and ice practice.

To achieve this goal, I must be observant and demanding yet in a respectful manner by approach personally for intervention. Before starting, I gathered the players at the outdoor grass field and briefly discussed the level demanded during practices. This topic can be a challenge to achieve due to other contributing factors that can affect the player's mindset. Nevertheless, I must try to create an environment that supports the goal.

The content for physical training and ice practice is nothing new, players have been performing it in the previous week and understand how the drill operates. Therefore, the emphasis is on quality in performance, doing things right. Whenever there is a need for intervention, a personal approach is taken for intervention. However, I must also consider not overdoing it. After several interventions with a few players, positive changes can be noticed in the level of focus. They realized that I am observing the group from a distance. Sometimes, I would give them a thumbs up or a smile when there is eye contact.

At the end of the day, it was good to get see some positive response from several players upon intervention. Initially, several approaches were needed but the frequency reduced as they understood what was required of them. Having said that, by no means that I approach the players all the time as that could trigger an unhappy feeling. Sometimes, expressing body signals or eye contact helps with sending the message as well. Goals for today were achieved and a good start working towards consistency.

18 Aug 2020

The goal for today was to create a practice environment with effort and motivation.

While the team prepares for the physical session, I asked if they remember what the topic of discussion was in yesterday's session, to which they did. Several players who had my attention from yesterday understood my actions when I approach them. However, today I will take a slightly different approach, this time by starting the session with full energy and motivation, and at the same time, remind for effort if needed. In short, by being demanding however in a positive way with the entire team. The level of effort during physical training and ice practice was noticed, although there are still players who seem to have their focus elsewhere.

The process for achieving today's goal went quite well. Approaching the players with energy and motivation gave a positive response. The players we actively involved with the interaction process and were having fun while challenging each other for success. This attempt was a good challenge for my critical thinking skill in finding a suitable approach when attempting to create an environment that demands effort but still in a positive relaxed feeling.

20 Aug 2020

The goal for today is to discuss with two U18 HYRI players to understand them better and identify what motivates them.

Players arrive at the ice hall and prepare for the physical training session. We went through the content and point of emphasis for the specific movement before start. As players started their training, I too began observing the players and environment of the training. The training went well with not much distraction, the players were in a good mood,

and effort in trying is noticeable. Ice practice was not too bad either, the environment was lively and players displaying effort. There were a couple of times when certain players felt frustrated due to unsuccessful attempts. As the team was walking back to the locker room after practice, I approached two players who I had in mind from the practice observation and inform them about the individual discussion. Together with the head coach, who also assisted with translating, we asked about their feeling from practice, their daily life in general, what motivates them. Another topic we discussed was the frustration during practice when things do not go well. The players informed that the frustration was purely from their performance execution on the ice, nothing from daily general factors. It is normal for emotion to heighten during the situation; however, it is crucial that we can identify the root cause and how to manage it. This is quite a common scene when players get frustrated and affect their overall behavior when it is not intervened.

I believe I was able to reach out to the players and achieve my goals through the discussion we had. I felt that players understood my point in how to manage their emotions when things are not going as well. The approach of getting them to relate to the experience from the practice and think about the cause of frustration was able to get the players to analyze their actions and suggest several solutions as options.

21 Aug 2020

Today's goal is to follow up on the previous player's discussion and to have a discussion with two other players.

Before the start of practice, I met up with both the players from yesterday's discussion and reminded them to try applying the approach if they felt frustrated during practice. As the practice was ongoing, I was being attentive by communicating with all the players and giving my support. One of the players whom I had met before practice approached me and asked for advice, he started to feel frustrated when some of the attempts he tried were not successful. To be specific, it was a battle for the puck in the corner. Him, being a defenseman was having difficulty in securing puck possession out of the corner. To get a better understanding, I told him to elaborate on the situation in as much detail as possible. This was followed by asking for other options that could be used as a solution. I made sure that he understood that there is no hundred percent certainty in success as there are many variables in those situations, however, the aim is that his team gets possession of the puck. Based on his perspective, I would assume that he wants to have possession of

the puck himself coming out of the corner. After several more attempts, he mentioned that he felt less stress from trying to focus on too many things at once.

The outcome from today's goal achievement felt very satisfying. Knowing that there was a success in supporting the players in finding alternative options for a solution to avoid frustration build up. At the same time, it was a positive sign of trust from the player in the coach-athlete relationship.

Weekly analysis

This week, the daily goal relates to instilling positivity and quality within the practice environment. Through my actions, I got to develop the areas of my communication skill with verbal and non-verbal approach, active listening skills, and empathy when sharing thoughts with players, furthermore, influencing player's autonomy in decision making. No major problems were encountered during the week, it was more of a challenge in teaching the players to respond in giving effort and learning to be resilient during the training sessions. For this to be successful, I need to create an environment where players feel a sense of belonging and responsible for their learning process. This, however, takes time to develop.

Having a balanced approach between the coach and athlete is effective in developing an athlete's ability (Gilbert, 2016). A study on motivational climate intervention has revealed that athlete's level of performance anxiety decreases when there is a mastery approach by the coach (Smoll et al., 2007). Another approach that is applicable to create an autonomy-supportive environment is the pull-and-ask vs push-and-tell approach in coaching designed by USA Football (Figure 6). During the player discussion we had, this approach was effective in getting the player to express their thoughts and frustrations. It has also helped the player to understand the cause of frustration and find the solution. Another application for this approach is during practice. I had a player who had difficulty in a game situation drill. Using the pull-and-ask approach, I managed to get the player to be self-aware of his performance by asking him to elaborate and analyze the situation.

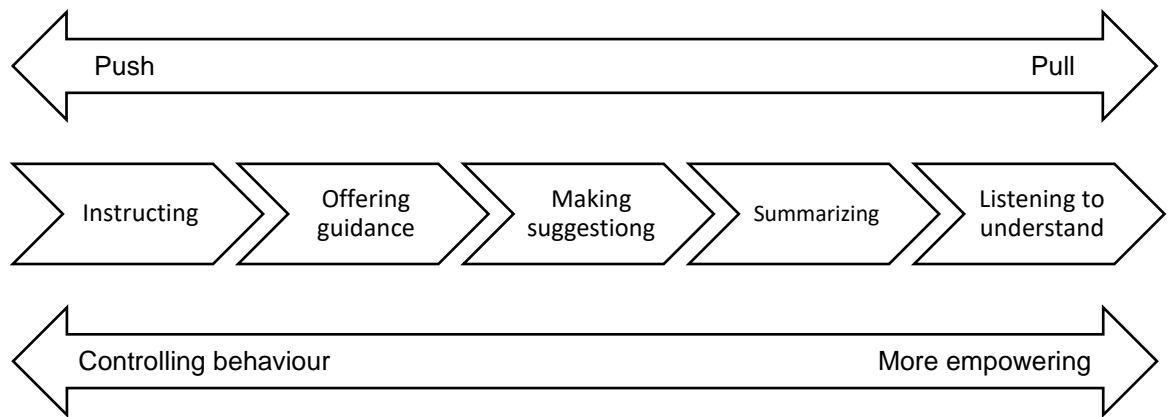


Figure 6. Pull-and-ask vs push-and-tell approach (modified from www.usafootball.com)

3.4 Observation week 4

24 Aug 2020

For the past three weeks, the area of development focuses on the interpersonal aspect of building coach-athlete relationships among the players and learning the operation norms through the daily actions within the organization. This week onwards, I will be shifting my focus towards the areas of professional knowledge development.

The theme for this week's U18 practice will emphasize on defensive zone attacking game. The goal for today is to identify how we want to play in such a situation by discussing with the head coach.

During the discussion, we agreed on using principles instead of setting formations. The reason for this approach is to allow players to incorporate their creativity and style of playing according to the principles. Another consideration point is to allow players to act based on the situation, like when playing in games. Having said that, we also discussed how we want to achieve our playing style. Breaking down our ideas into a tactical aspect that will be incorporated into practice.

The ice practice was quite successful, we went through the practice theme and principles with the players before practice. Throughout the practice, I together with the head coach was consistent with our demands on the principles with the players. Several players were quite consistent with their performance while there were a few that still needed some time to adapt to the habit. Overall, the discussion between the head coach and me was fruitful and a good start towards the week. Thus, the goal for today was quite a success.

25 Aug 2020

The goal for today's U18 practice is to reinforce the principles for our defensive zone attacking play. To achieve this, I will observe how well our players apply the principle to their game and challenge them to assess their performance.

The practice started with an open concept drill that would put players into a situation that would require them to apply the principles before moving into more game-like situation drills. There was a positive outcome as players started to get a better understanding of the idea. That being said, I had the opportunity to discuss with several players based on their performance. The interaction was to challenge them to reflect on how well they performed and if we can make some adjustments to improve. Most of the adjustments are minor tweaking that could significantly improve their playing abilities. I kept most of the discussion short and concise as I did not want to stress them out by overthinking. From these interactions, there was some progress seen although inconsistent. One contributing factor that I thought of is the player's old habit, therefore I have to be consistent in supporting the player for changes to happen.

Even though it is a minor adjustment, changing habits is not as simple as said. I would say that I was able to achieve my goal today and I must continue to also provide the right environment to support the player in creating new habits.

27 Aug 2020

The goal for today is to increase the level of challenge for our players in practice for adaptation. To achieve this, we will create a situation where players will have to perform under additional pressure or conditions that further challenge the players.

The objective is to progress towards cooperation between the players, using individual player's strengths together. To get this going, we made players communicate among their

linemates before their shift on how they will play the given situation. Several players discussed their plan before their shift, it was good to hear them sharing ideas and concluding on to a plan. That being said, it is also quite uncommon that our players discuss the game with each other in-between shifts. They either chatting about random topics or resting aside. Like any other process, this will require some time before players get accustomed to the habit.

The goal for today was achieved to a satisfactory level, there is still work to be done as we need to achieve buy-in and consistency with the players. However, it was a positive day as we observe players who are giving their attention and attempting with an effort to develop themselves.

28 Aug 2020

The goal for today is to ensure a successful practice as the head coach is away. My practice objective is to get players to apply the knowledge from the week into their game.

Our practice today is playing a different variation of games that focuses on our principles in defensive zone attacking play. We counted scores among the groups to create a more competitive environment as well. We then moved on to a full ice regular game, I made sure that I went around questioning and reminding players on the topic we covered and to get discussion among themselves going.

I could say that the overall practice went well. I was able to manage and organize the session without many challenges. Also, there were positive things shown by players according to our theme for the week.

Weekly analysis

This week has been nothing but another learning phase for me. As I start getting more involved with the team process, there are various areas that I need to focus on, and having these daily goals has helped keep me organized with my task and providing me with a clear path of how I structure my coaching actions.

This week's practice theme, the defensive zone attacking game is about developing a structure for how we want to approach the game. To achieve the above mentioned, I have had successful discussions with the head coach to identify our style of playing, using principles as key teaching and learning point, and breaking down our process into smaller bits. The attempt was quite successful based on the progress showed by the players.

My area of development this week has been the application of the constraint-led approach into my daily actions. The constraint-led approach (Figure 7) is an approach that is based on the interrelations of the task, environment, and individual's ability to achieve skill acquisition (Renshaw et al. 2010). By manipulating these constraints, the athlete will require to self-organize in finding the solution to overcome the challenges.

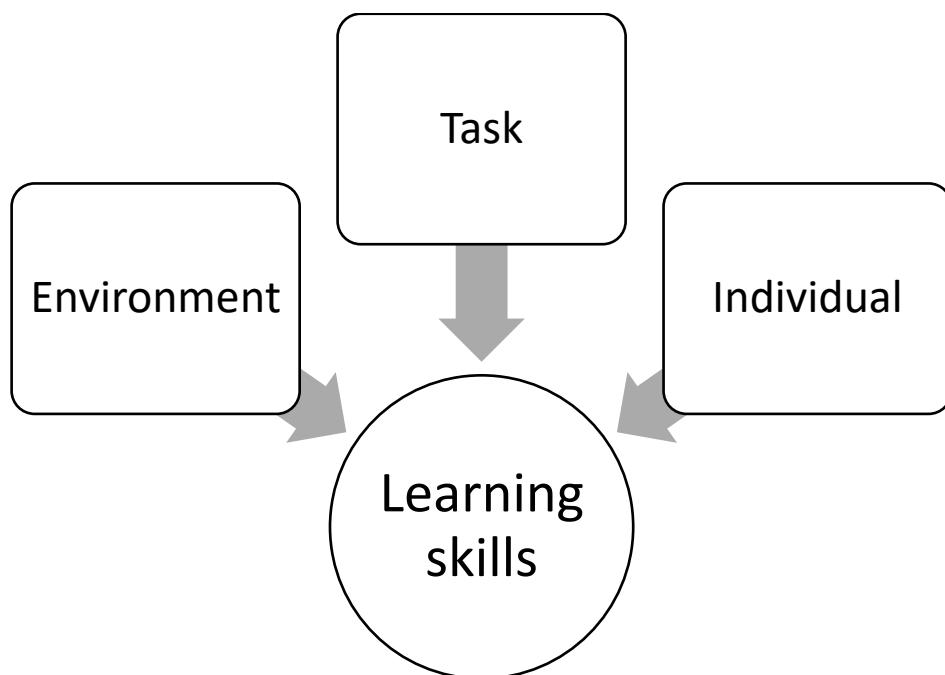


Figure 7. Constraints-led approach (modified from Renshaw et al. 2010)

The things that needed clarification were at the beginning of the week, discussing and coming to a conclusion of identifying the way we want to play in specific zones. However, a meeting with the head coach was held to solve this matter. One of the challenges that I faced was the attempt to get players to be aware and recognizing their old habits. I had few discussions with the players, and they understand what I am trying to achieve with them. However, this will take time and a consistent reminder to make changes.

3.5 Observation week 5

31 Aug 2020

Our theme for this week is the offensive zone defending game, focusing on role three and role four players. The objective today is to get the players to adapt to our principle of offensive zone defending game.

Our focus is to develop a common understanding between players and how each player will perform the roles. We kept the idea simple for players to understand. Again, using certain principles to guide the players, before progressing to more complex tactics. Using role three players as our lead, role four players must analyze and react to the situation. One important aspect is to maintain awareness especially when there is a change of playing roles. It was quite confusing for the players initially as we had players who did not fully understand the concept yet. Reflecting on that, we had some discussion with the head coach after the practice to find an appropriate solution for that.

I felt that my goal for today was partially achieved. In my opinion, it could have been better. The player understood the idea however, the awareness and reaction are elements that we must continue improving.

1 Sept 2020

The goal for today's practice is to go through the plays that we have covered from the past week and goal scoring game. This is to prepare the players for our first game tomorrow.

We went through the principles for our defensive zone attacking game as a refresher before starting the practice. We ran several short but high-intensity drills to get our players prepared and ended the practice with some scoring competition games. We kept the practice environment slightly relaxed however with high demands to avoid stressing out the players. The practice went well in my opinion, players were maintaining a positive attitude and putting in the effort to improve in the executions.

Overall, we were able to see what we wanted to achieve in the practice. We hope that we can carry forward the momentum into tomorrow's game.

2 Sept 2020

Game one, against home team U18 K-Espoo Ch. Goal for today is to observe and make notes for the strengths and areas to improve for our team.

The team has been practicing together for several weeks to date and we have covered some of the important aspects of what kind of game we want to play. We went through several key points for the game in the locker room before starting the warm-up. Several players were seen as a little quiet and showing signs of nervousness during the discussion. I think that it was a good indicator to me that the player is mentally thinking about the game.

As I continued to observe the players who were showing signs of nervousness, it was clear that their performance during the game was affected by it. I had approached these players and tried to talk them out of nervousness. There were good energy and cooperation on the ice and at the bench with players motivating each other. On the other hand, we had some difficulties playing under pressure in our defensive zone. Despite that, I felt proud of our team performance as everyone was putting in effort together. We were consistently giving pressure in the offensive zone and had several scoring opportunities from it. Overall, the game somewhat felt one-sided as the opponent were clearly in advantage compared to our team. That means back to the drawing board and using these games as our steppingstones.

3 Sept 2020

The goal for today is to have a meeting with the player's leadership group, this consists of the team captain and three other alternate captains. The topic for discussion was to get their feedback on the team's performance based on the previous match and how do we progress.

The discussion was held after ice practice. We reflected on the match we played and shared our opinion about the areas that were positive and areas that we need to improve. Another topic in the discussion was the cohesiveness between players, fair to say that there are smaller groups within the team based on my observation. Understandably, they are friends as well outside of the rink. However, when we come together as a team, we must include everyone.

Overall, I achieved my goal with the leadership group discussion and was able to share my observation regarding the smaller groups within the team.

4 Sept 2020

The goal for the day is to align our focus back to the week's theme, offensive zone defending game. Our main objective is to get our players to be proactive in reacting to the situation.

One of the challenges we must overcome is to increase the readiness of the several players when transitioning from attacking play to defending play. This means, immediate pressure from the closest player to the puck (role three) as soon as losing puck possession, while role four provides support and reacts to the play. During the practice, we were able to highlight these issues and using the coaching board as a teaching tool. The level of intensity in practice was good, players were putting in the effort.

I was somewhat able to achieve my goal today however not to the level of satisfaction. We need more repetition and consistency to achieve the set goal.

Weekly analysis

This week has been quite a challenge for me personally. My daily goal achievement did not feel as successful. One of the challenges for this week is the concept of awareness and readiness time when transitioning from attacking game to defending game. We discussed with the players about the matter and attempt to find the best solution for it. Nevertheless, it was a positive discussion as the player kept an open mind and understood what needs to be improved. The challenges faced this week did stress me out a little. The outcome of our match also somehow affected my thoughts. I felt that I could have been more patient with myself. It could be just one of those moments where I feel nothing is going well. I decided that I will take the weekend easy to relax and regain my focus for the following week.

Thinking back about the week, I felt that my performance was just moderate. Something that I neglected throughout the week was my psychological state. The same applies to the players, I may have been too carried away with achieving my goals and not considered the player's well-being. Distractions, feelings, and fatigue are examples of factors that

could influence our player's motivation throughout the past week. Psychological traits are considered to influence athletes in attaining optimal performance (Hardy et al., 1996). This is an area that I need to take extra measures in ensuring the player's well-being is taken into consideration as part of the learning process.

3.6 Observation week 6

7 Sept 2020

The theme for this week is to continue with our offensive zone defending game. The goal is to break down the tactical elements into details to support the players learning process.

Our focus today is to work on improving players' ability to assess and react quickly to situations. To achieve this, we will use small-area games as our teaching tool. We want to create an environment that would stimulate players' awareness and reaction. The practice started slowing however we manage to slowly increase the intensity as we progressed. This was a positive sign as players started to understand the idea of the game hence also showed improvement in their awareness and reactions. Players at this level have the skills and understanding of how to play the game, therefore, improving their cognitive ability also contributes to the performance outcome.

Practice today was quite a success; the player was able to demonstrate what we aimed. The idea of using small-area games with the right conditions went well, it provided the type of stimulus to assist with the players learning.

8 Sept 2020

The goal for today is to continue reinforcing what we learned, incorporating it into the tactical plan. We will also incorporate the transition phase into the attacking game.

The practice today will include a mini-competition that will demand all the areas that we have covered in past training. Having to compete, applying the principles and their skills to win over their opponent. The practice went well, players were working hard, and we could

observe several players applying the principles into their game. The environment was competitive yet fun.

I can say that the goal for today was achieved, I was pleased with the performance shown by the players. It was good to see how players are putting effort in the attempt to develop their craft.

10 Sept 2020

The goal for today's practice is to put together the skills and tactics we covered for the offensive zone defending game and work as a unit.

By now, players should be familiar with their roles and principles of playing in the mentioned situation. As we have two games on the weekend, we wanted to keep a good environment in the practice. Having short and high-intensity shifts for the sessions. We took additional time to communicate on their tactics as a unit and to get feedback based on their performance. The discussion went well, and we got to hear players are opening up and sharing ideas on how they can create plays together.

I would say that the goal for today was achieved. Also, players' communication with each other increased the level of cooperation and chemistry during their shifts. It was a positive sign as players are now focused on improving their game as a unit.

11 Sept 2020

Today's goal is to prepare the team for the weekend and keeping a positive environment for the players.

We will go through some of the important aspects of the game through the drills. Refining on our defensive zone attacking game and offensive zone defending game, finishing off with fun scoring games to create some competition. The practice went well, and the players were in a positive mood during the training. There was lots of interaction among the players and coach as well. I felt that the environment was good as players are giving effort when needed otherwise taking it easy. The scoring competition was a good choice as players could use it as a preparation for the match at the same time having fun with teammates.

Overall, the goal for today was achieved and went accordingly. We were able to maintain a good atmosphere during practice and players were also giving their attention when required.

12 Sept 2020

Matchday for U18 HYRI, playing against home team HAKI. My goal today is to maintain a positive and motivating environment throughout the match.

The first period ended with no goals from both sides. Our players were playing quite well and giving the opponent a tough time. In the second period, we managed to score the first goal and that gave the team a boost that we have been wanting. However, our opponent started to play more aggressively to get into our players' heads and resulting in our team getting penalized due to retaliation. By this point, our players were starting to feel frustrated, and tension could be felt. The tactic of getting under our players' skin worked out for the opponent as our players started to lose focus on playing the game and the opposing team managed to end the second period leading with two goals. Despite trying to calm the players down on the bench, it did not go so well. I started to feel frustrated as well by watching the reaction of our players. Having said that, I had to maintain my cool and thought of a solution to overcome that situation during the period break. As we settled down in the locker room, several players' heads were looking down and some were complaining about the officials and the opponent. I discussed with the head coach and informed him of what I wanted to share in the locker room. Given the green light to go ahead, I asked the players how did it feel with the opponent getting under our skin? To summarize it, it felt bad. I shared with them about the tactic used by the opponent, and how it worked out well for them. "There are things we can control and thing beyond our control, it seems that the opponent is controlling us now". I positively raised my tone to remind them that "Let's use our emotion as energy to control the game!" Let us return the favor of getting under their skin. To achieve that, we will take the hits, smile back, and keep our legs moving. Starting the third period feeling motivated and applying what was discussed, our players' soon realized that the opposing team is getting penalized more often. That indicated that our plan is working and kept battling while maintaining good conduct. We managed to tie the game with two goals scored in two different powerplay situations. With the score tied, we went into overtime. We stuck to our plan and got another powerplay in the overtime. At this moment, our players were all fired up and have the advantage over our opponent. However, we could not put the puck past the goalie in overtime. We had success in the shootout and scored our winning goal.

Overall, I can strongly say that I was successful in achieving my goal. We were able to turn the table around in the second period after attempting to influence the players' behavior and emotion. Although there were times when I felt frustrated, I reminded myself to maintain a positive mind and showed the players my support throughout the match.

13 Sept 2020

Game three for U18 HYRI against K-Espoo Ch. My goal is to continue with a positive attitude for the game and supporting the players with motivation.

Personally, knowing that our opponent has an advantage over us, I was prepared mentally. Our team was playing well at the beginning of the first period, with lots of battle and scoring opportunities from both ends. However, it started going downhill after the opposing team scored the first goal. Followed by another three goals before the end of the first period. During the match, our players started getting frustrated as we could not get any chances. In the second period, four more goals were scored against us. Making the score eight to zero.

By then, our players had completely lost their focus and motivation to continue playing. Player's emotion was getting on their nerves and this caused some of our players to raise their voice and giving negative comments to each other. In the third period, two more goals were scored against us.

During the first intermission, we quickly discussed what went wrong and how can we make things better for us. We were competitive, effort is there. However, we just could not get hold of any opportunity. We tried to stay positive, but it just did not go as well. By the end of the second, this is where our players felt completely lost of motivation. I was personally feeling upset as well. However, the game is not over yet. We must keep pushing forward no matter what. Both I and the head coach discussed before we walked into the locker room. We had to face the fact that our opponent is better than us, taking into consideration external factors such as geographical area and the number of players. We shared the same discussion with the players and informed them that these are just facts that we cannot deny. Despite the result, we are proud to see everyone putting in their effort. Another matter to overcome is the negative comments among each other, we must work together and take responsibility as a team.

In the end, I did not feel that my goal was achieved despite staying positive and trying to support the players. This felt like one of the days where nothing was going right and when it is pointless to over-stress about it.

Weekly analysis

This week has been a much better week. There is a positive outcome from the daily goals set. I reminded myself at the beginning of the week to take things in a more relaxed manner. We wanted to start the week by having a good practice environment knowing that we have two matches on the weekend, we needed to attempt to maintain positivity for the entire week. The approach I used for this week was to also communicate with the player more about topics on their daily happenings, random things. For ice practice, flow drills and small area games were used to achieve our key learning point. I can say that the level of improvement was a lot better, and players seemed to have shown more attention.

It was a good week of learning for me, taking care of the players' and my own well-being, and communicating with the head coach in seeking different ideas and approaches to deal with challenges I have had.

Our match on Sept 12th got heated up as our opponent managed to get under our skin and caused our players to feel agitated and lose focus on the game. Our players started retaliating more frequently, causing us to get penalized. At that moment, I was able to intervene during the in-between period and apply breathing exercises for relaxation, and communicated in an attempt to get our players to their optimal arousal state based on the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning model (Hanin, 1997) as shown in Figure 8. Relaxation exercises have been shown to reduce distressing thoughts without completely losing the focus to compete (Kellmann & Beckmann, 2004). The outcome of this approach led our player to turn the game around and taking the win.

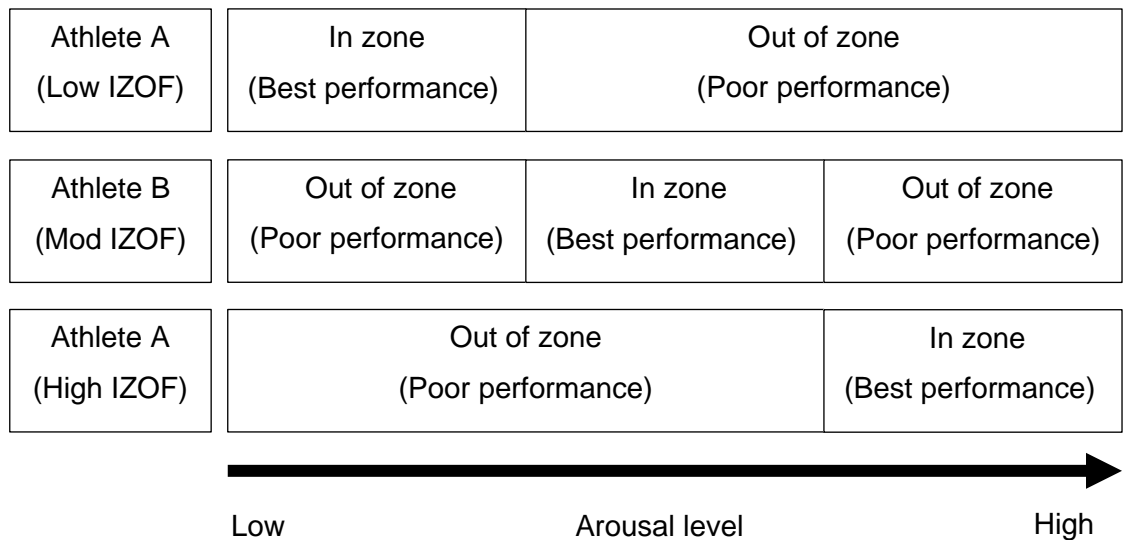


Figure 8. Individual zones of optimal functioning (IZOF) (modified from Hanin, 1997)

3.7 Observation week 7

14 Sept 2020

Today, the goal for today's practice with the '07 & '08 playing group is to cover the topic of puck possession. Players will go through a series of progression starting with getting a feel of the skills required and progress to application in a game-like situation.

The overall practice went well according to the plan despite some challenges faced. Players were competitive and showing effort during the session. The focus in today's practice emphasizes Role 3 (Defending against puck carrier), teaching the habit of applying pressure to win puck possession. To meet this objective, the practice content is designed with an even number of players during drills and games. From observing the practice, few players were having difficulty in an attempt for success. An approach to get the players to analyze their actions in between shifts by asking questions was done. During the practice, there were several situations where it was pretty hectic with players messing around with each other while waiting for their turn.

15 Sept 2020

Today's practice is with the '12 born playing group. The goal for the practice session is to improve on the players' fundamental skills focusing on mostly skating and puck carrying through games and mini-competition.

For this age group, the environment must be fun and players learn by playing through the activities. Meaning, players are actively participating in the training and less specificity in teaching. During the training, coaches were also involved in playing together alongside the players. To achieve this, the training organization must be easy enough for players to understand and perform. The training started with "hippa" (game of tag) with different rules which helps the players to improve their balance in skating. Followed by "king of the circles" where one player without the puck is trying to hit other players' puck out of the circle for puck carry skills followed by a relay race for the puck. At the last ten minutes of practice, we gave freedom to the players to choose their preferred game.

Overall, the training went well and was fun based on the response from the players. The goal of focusing on the skill achieved through the different exercises planned.

16 Sept 2020

Although Wednesdays are my rest days, I wanted a reason to get on the ice be involved as much as I can. Seeing that there are the girl's practices on Wednesday, I wanted to speak to the coach responsible and get his clearance to assist with the practice. My goal was to participate in the practice and learn how I can contribute to the practice.

To achieve my goals, I had some discussions with the coaches involved in the practice and enquired about the plans and goals for the upcoming training. There was quite a good number of players who were actively participating in the training. However, the training is a mixed pool of players ranging from seven, the youngest up to fifteen years of age. One of the areas highlighted by the coach is to close the gap in basic playing skills especially for the elder players, while fun is the priority for the younger age groups.

The goal for today was met upon observing the practice and discussion with the coaches. One area highlighted in the discussion was developing skating proficiency with the players and collectively agreed to include skating skills at the beginning of future practices.

17 Sept 2020

Practice session with '10 & '11 born players today. The goals for the practice were to design and lead the practice plan that would cover puck carrying skills, passing & receiving, puck control, and some games to end the practice.

Before the start of practice, I shared my plan with the coaches and explained the key teaching point for each skill. The structure of practice will be run concurrently in three separate stations on the ice. First, an obstacle course where players are required to skate with the puck through the obstacle using different sides of the stick blade and different skating directions. The key teaching here is to keep the puck on the blade whilst keeping a peripheral vision. The second station is a game of chaos, the player without a puck will have to steal the puck from the opponent. The key teaching point is to keep the puck by skating and using their body to protect the puck. The last station focuses on passing & receiving and finishing with a scoring attempt. Players are required to focus on making quality passes to their partners and using their stick blade as a target for passing. To end the practice, a mini cross-ice game is played to incorporate all the skills learned.

My task was to ensure that the practice runs smoothly and time management, this requires me to move between the stations and interact with the coaches and players for feedbacks.

At the end of the day, practice went smoothly and was conducted as planned. During the discussion, coaches were sharing positive feedback that players are actively participating with minimum waiting, which was a good sign for me. From my observations, the coaches were actively supporting the players with motivation and teaching points. An area which I needed to look into is my time management, the transition between one station to another took longer than expected which caused delay. Having said that, it was also a learning point for me to keep in mind when planning future practices.

18 Sept 2020

Practice with '13 & '14 born age group, goal for this session is to create a fun atmosphere during practice. To assist with my interaction, I prepared some simple Finnish terms on

my palm as a reference to communicate with the players as English is still foreign for players at this age. My specific task for this practice is to manage one of the assigned stations together with another coach.

The ice practice went well with kids getting involved and actively participating in the games. The instructions for the first group were presented by the other coach to get the games started. During that session, the list of words I prepared was a big help in interacting with the players. However, there were also challenges when players approach me for questions as I could not understand them. When it was the second groups' turn, I took the initiative in trying to explain the drill to them. However, it was not successful. It did feel frustrating as I could not attend to the needs of the players. However, I was able to not let that influence my actions and continued to give cheer and motivate the players. In addition to verbal communication, I also showed my excitement with my body language. Skating with them, celebrating when they succeed, and giving fist bumps.

Overall, the goal of achieving a fun environment was met by actively participating together in cheering and motivating the players. However, I did not feel as satisfied with my performance, especially during the communication part.

20 Sept 2020

The goal for today's U18 match against Haki is to apply what we have been practicing into the game; defensive zone attacking play.

We have been having difficulty with moving the puck up ice for the past few games, we have the habit of turning around or playing the puck back behind our goal line when our player sees an opposing player approaching them. Something we noticed is that several of our players tend to panic with the puck in the presence of pressure causing turnovers. Hence, this is something we have been addressing in our practices.

The final score was not to our advantage. However, we were quite satisfied with how we played especially in the area that we wanted to improve on. Players shared their thoughts on how they tried to maintain their composure during pressure and looking for options to move the puck up.

I felt that we were able to achieve the goal today and our players were not as tensed during the game. Having more success in our defensive zone also contributed to an increase in player's self-confidence and team performance.

Weekly analysis

This week has been quite a success in working with the players from the different age groups. I got to develop my knowledge about the training needs of the different age groups. The things I had to clarify at the beginning of the week were the teaching of the sports skills and technique, what are the priorities for the different age groups. This was achieved through discussion with the coaches and my observations during the practices.

Furthermore, using resources on the internet, I was able to find additional materials to support my learning process. The International Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence (IIHCE) and International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) provides resources that support and recommendations for junior hockey activities. According to the guidelines from IIHCE, the practice of techniques and skills emphasizes three sub-goals according to different ages. First, learning the techniques, followed by the repetition of technique, and last, application of the technique into play. Skills include skating, puck management, shooting, and passing & receiving. Using the guidelines provided to design my practice has been helpful, this also challenges me to be creative and think of variations to make the practice content fun for the players. The developmental model of sports participation (DMSP) suggests two possible sports trajectories, recreational participation, and elite performance. Both categories will go through a sampling year, where children aged 6 – 12 takes part in various fun activities and develop fundamental motor skills. Next, young athletes will continue to follow their choice of sports and lastly, decide to either remain for recreational purposes or focuses on achieving elite performance (Côté and Gilbert, 2009).

3.8 Observation week 8

21 Sept 2020

The goal for today is emphasized on playing role 1 (Offensive player with the puck) with the '07-'08 born practice. The focus is to create scoring threats with active skating and straight attacks in the opponent zone.

We worked on puck carrying skills, in the beginning, to let the players get comfortable before progressing to more game-like situations. I aimed at getting the role 1 player to create scoring threats. Some of the players were demonstrating their speed and creativity in managing the puck against the opponent while some were very predictable when executing the movement due to the difference in skills. However, we were able to adjust the difficulty of practice to create some challenges for the players.

I felt that we got to achieve our goal today. Although there were times when several players were trying to overplay the puck instead of taking the opportunity to score. Nothing wrong with that as it helps to build their confidence at the same time. One solution that came to mind is to consider making it into a competition where scores are being counted to fulfill the goal.

22 Sept 2020

The goal today was to develop skating skills with the '12 born players by creating an environment that challenges the players' confidence when using their skate blade edges.

The players were put through different skating movements that challenged them out of their comfort zone. The method used was to alternate between movements that players feel confident in and then challenging them to a more difficult movement. It is not about executing the move perfectly, instead the confidence in trying. The main point was to teach the players to find their breaking point and work from there. Having said that, I was happy to see the confidence in attempting and slowly progressing as the practice went on. To help with building their confidence, it was also good to demonstrate and make mistakes by purpose to show that mistakes are ok and part of learning.

The practice went well, and I felt satisfied with the achievement today. We discussed among coaches after the practice to reflect on the activities. The coaches were also giving positive feedback on the type of movement that was used with the players. Although certain movements we did are not directly applicable to the game, the purpose is to help develop the players' self-confidence and physical literacy.

23 Sept 2020

My goal for the girl's practice today is to go through skating skills that help to improve balance and body control.

We went through several different types of skating skills using different edges on single and both skate. Starting with simple movement and progressing to more challenging movements, one of the factors to consider in this training are differences in skills competency. Therefore, the idea was to allow the players to perform the movement at their own pace. It was good to observe as several players slowly made progress and showed signs of satisfaction as a result. These skating sessions are usually ten to fifteen minutes long, hence it will require many hours before significant improvement is seen.

Based on the players' performance, I can say that the goal was achieved to a satisfactory level. It was good to see the players trying and having fun during the skating session. The other positive aspect was the environment, skating practices can be somewhat boring as they require many repetitions and focus. However, this was solved by incorporating fun elements into the movements.

24 Sept 2020

The goal for '10 & '11 born practice today is to continue working on the playing skill through games.

The practice design consists of 3 stations. Each station covers a specific theme through playing. To improve skating, players will compete in a relay race for the puck. One-on-one gate game to help players improve their puck carry skills and a mini two-on-two with a pass rule. From my observation, the practice was successful, and players were all engaged with the minimum waiting time. With this age group, our priority is to get maximum participation from the players. Coaches were moving around and motivating the players during the play.

At the end of practice, we often discuss what kind of practice should we implement for this age group for the upcoming session. Me being me, I tend to also ask myself the same questions. At times, this would make me confused and overthinking of the type of practice to run. This is an area I would need to improve on. Nothing wrong with being creative and thinking out of the box, however keeping it simple is sometimes the best solution.

25 Sept 2020

Practice with '13 & '14 born group today, the goal is to focus on skating skills at the beginning of the practice and proceed to cross-ice games.

For this age group, understanding how to use edgework is the least priority. Therefore, the skating practice needs to be fun for the players. Instead of conducting skating in lines type of drills, races and competition that requires the players to use their balance and speed were used. Games that require turns, sliding on their knees, hopping, and pulling a teammate were incorporated

The skating session went well, players were laughing and having fun while performing the movement. The idea of shifting their focus from concentrating on skating to playing worked out very well. Instead of thinking about how to perform the movement, players were performing without focusing on it. At the end of the practice, we asked the players for their feelings about the training which can be summarized as "Fun!"

Weekly analysis

This week, I have felt much improvement with my practice planning competency and my confidence in working with young athletes. Despite some language barriers, I was able to overcome these challenges and engage them in a fun learning environment. Referring to the knowledge gain from the study course, I was able to apply various methods and approaches in catering to the needs of the players and according to the learning process.

The challenge I faced other than the language barrier was incorporating a learner-centered approach into the teaching of skills for the young players. Learning specific techniques or skills may require specific feedback and may be boring after a while. I wanted to challenge myself to think of ways that I can turn the learning phase into something fun and enjoyable for the players to learn. I did some research and opted to apply the Teaching Games for Understanding model (Figure 9), this approach requires players to decide in

attempting to understand the game (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982). In addition to this approach, I added certain conditions based on the specific learning objectives. It turned out well, as players were concentrating on playing while indirectly fulfilling the condition.

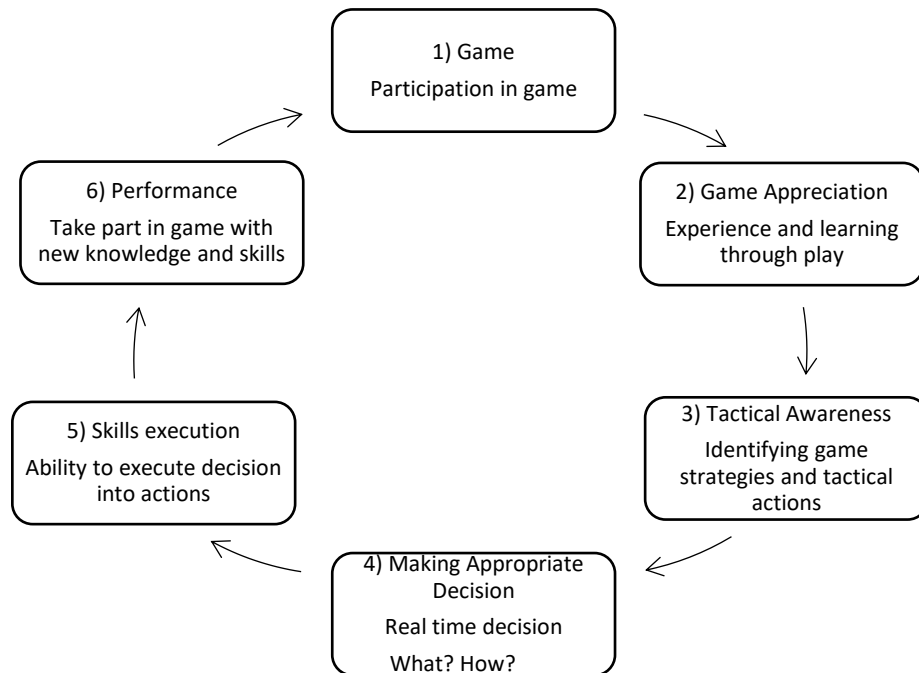


Figure 9. Teaching Games for Understanding model (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982)

3.9 Observation week 9

28 Sept 2020

The goal with '07 & '08 practice today emphasizes playing role 2 (offensive player without the puck), the aim is to strengthen cooperation between role 1 and role 2 players by providing support for scoring opportunity and/or passing option.

The practice begins with players going through a passing while skating movement as a warm-up and learning the purpose of our practice goal today. To further support the players learning, games require the player to execute the necessary skills and tactics to gain an advantage over the opponent. "Gate game", a game where players must pass the puck through gates (using tires or cones) that are placed on different areas on the ice to gain a point. Another cross-ice game played is with rules applied. The first half is done with the rule of completing one successful pass in the defensive zone followed by scoring

from a pass. Therefore, a role 2 player is required to actively skate to empty ice to provide an option for a puck carrier.

During practice, players can be seen competing and giving effort going against each other. The game itself was a good teaching tool as the players were required to execute what we were aiming to teach. I felt that the practice outcome was a success as we were able to create an autonomous environment for player's learning.

29 Sept 2020

Goals for '12 practice is to teach about playing the game. The objective is to design suitable mini-games that teach the principle of the game by playing to learn.

The first station is a one-on-one game, objective of the game is to teach players to gain a territorial advantage by carrying the puck through the opponent's goal. The second station works on skating skills by winning the loose puck through relay skating competition. The third station is a cross-ice game with the condition of making a pass through the middle line before scoring, this is to teach the players without the puck to provide support by skating to empty ice.

The first two stations went well with players having fun playing and competing against each other. The third game seems somewhat more difficult for the players, this was due to the level of the player's skill ability. However, this obstacle was foreseen during the planning phase. The reason to proceed with the rule was to observe how well the players can achieve the outcome. We started with the initial rule for half the time and modified the rule to making one successful pass before scoring.

30 Sept 2020

Girl's practice, my goal was to run more complex skating skills with the elder players. The objective is to incorporate puck handling while performing the skating skills.

As we went into the drills, several of the players were having difficulty trying to coordinate the upper body and lower body initially. One of the most noticeable issues is body stiffness, this can be very common as the upper body intend to follow where the direction of

the lower body. As the time allocated for skating is fifteen minutes, I did not want to interrupt the time for explanation especially when there is additional time needed for translation. I felt that players were trying to perform the skill but also could see that they were struggling at the same time. So instead, I resolved the matter by adjusting the level of movement difficulty so that players do not get discouraged.

The goal for the skating session today was partially achieved as I was not able to fully address the challenges faced by the players. At the end of practice, I shared my thoughts with the coach responsible based on my observation and suggested that these are linked to the player's physical development traits which can be improved off the ice with physical activities.

1 Oct 2020

Practice with '10 & '11 group. The goal is to have one of the three stations working on passing accuracy and receiving skills while games in the other two stations.

The aim was to teach the sweeping motion when passing and using the stick blade as the passing target. The practice started with basic passing and receiving in pairs while moving around the designated area and followed by playing "monkey in the middle" where one player is attempting to intercept the pass.

We were able to achieve our goal for this as players are starting to have more successful passing and receiving when applying the method. Before this, several players were having the habit of hitting the puck which causes the puck to flutter, or only putting the stick down when the puck is close to them when receiving.

2 Oct 2020

Practice with '13 & '14 group. The goal for today is to work on players' balance and coordination skills through skating. This is a continuation from the previous week.

I planned to use the same practice content as before. At the same time, I challenged myself to think of different ideas that would accommodate my goal and according to players' psychological needs. Comparing to the previous week, the skating session was successful from the aspect of the organization, and goals were achieved based on the

progression showed by the players. For players this age, we avoid emphasizing the techniques during the session, instead, we used various skating movements to achieve our learning objectives. Players were also given the opportunity to demonstrate their choice of movement and followed by the rest.

The goals for today were achieved and our players are showing good progress. The skating session, in the beginning, is paying off and we will continue to run a couple more sessions before making changes.

Weekly analysis

The skills I was able to refine and further develop this week are in the area of quality practices. This week's practice consists of mostly games as teaching tools, the players showed a positive response and enjoy the practice session. Using games also allowed the players to react according to the situation and use their creativity in finding solutions.

Coaching better every season, (Gilbert, 2016) explains the four features to consider for quality practices.

- Feature 1: Set challenging and specific practice goals
- Feature 2: Keep athletes physically and mentally active throughout the practice
- Feature 3: Give athletes choices and ask for input on practice design
- Feature 4: Create competitive game-like practice activities

From my experience, the application of the features above has helped to keep my coaching actions aligned. The process starts with clarifying the training topics for the respective age group, this was solved by discussing with the coach responsible. With the topic identified, I will start to write down not more than three learning goals. These learning goals are either independent or can be progressive depending on the topic. When deciding on the type of activities for young players, I would often take into consideration to include all. If not, the greatest number of players that is active simultaneously, therefore avoiding long-standing. We do have allocated time during training sessions which we let the players decide on the activities they like. To be honest, this week went well without any significant drawback.

3.10 Observation week 10

5 Oct 2020

Practice with '07 & '08, the goal is to further improve the cooperation between role 1 and role 2 players in the attacking zone. At the same time, teaching the players to incorporate deception skills.

We went through the idea and purpose of the skills; how does the skill help players in their attacking game. The practice went well as the players slowly getting comfortable with the execution of the skills. As we progressed into a game-like situation, the players had some difficulty in putting it together into their game. Based on my observation, this was due to a lack of communication and readiness, especially with role 2 players. Although it was not so successful, it is a good sign that the players are out of their comfort zone and therefore will challenge them to learn. I can say that the players understood the idea behind what we were trying to achieve. However, not to the level where it is effectively executed yet. At the end of the practice, I discussed with the coaches to ask for their feedback and opinion based on my coaching actions, practice content, and organization. Areas that can be improved were also discussed.

Overall, I can say that the goal was partially achieved. The players were also eager when trying out the idea of deception as it was fun when they can 'trick' their opponent.

6 Oct 2020

Practice with '12 today, the goal is to work on different shooting options, goal scoring, and putting pressure towards the net for rebounds.

The practice went well, the players were excited as we are covering one of their favorite skills which are shooting and scoring. We shared three key points for the players to apply, aim for a target, shoot as hard as they could and stop in front of the net for rebounds. The

teaching part was carried out individually to further help the players by asking them questions. The next step is to incorporate shooting with skating, this is an area that I have noticed that is lacking even with the older age groups. Therefore, it is a good opportunity to introduce the skill to them as progressively turn it into a habit. This also helps the players to be aware and learn to control their body movement. With more repetition, we are sure to see players showing improvements in their shooting technique and shots will eventually get better and stronger. That being said, the players were happy getting to score several goals past the goalie.

I would say that today's goal was achieved. The players were giving their effort during practice and taking the right measures towards their development.

7 Oct 2020

Girl's practice today, the goal for today is to go through the principle of playing role 2. The objective is to create a habit of skating to open ice to provide support.

The practice went accordingly however there were some challenges faced. Players understood what they are supposed to do; offensive players without the puck must skate to open ice to provide support for passes. I find that I had to constantly remind the players as they would be passive and lose focus on what they needed to accomplish. This was not due to language as we had a translation done for them and several players could understand English. It felt like the players' focus was elsewhere.

Although it was quite a challenge for me to get them to stay focus, there were positive aspects from the session as well. We could see that several players showing leadership by guiding other players. That could be an idea for the future session to get them involved with the teaching process.

8 Oct 2020

The goal for today's '10 & '11 practice is improving player's puck carrying skills. We will go through puck carrying skills using both forehand and backhand sides of the blade. To achieve the goal, we started with a chaos puck carrying drill where all players are active and skating around with the puck trying to not run into each other. We progressed to a game of carrying the puck in the circle while attempting to hit other players' puck out. For

this drill to be fun, we made use of three circles, players that lose their puck will move from one circle to another until there is one player left in the circle.

Players were having fun and giving effort during the game, the session went well, and I was able to achieve my goal for today. This has been a challenge for me for some time with a certain type of skills learning where trying to make it as fun as possible for the players. Using games to teach skill act as a camouflage to avoid players feeling bored when having to put focus on repeatedly performing the movement.

9 Oct 2020

Practice with '13 & '14 players, goal for the practice is to design fun games with an emphasis on skating.

The practice environment today was fun, and players seemed to enjoy themselves. I also noticed improvements from the players as they were playing the game which was a pleasure to watch. I believe that we are on a good path in terms of developing their skating abilities and motoric skills with the utilization of fun games.

I would say that I was able to achieve my goal and felt pleased to see improvements from the players.

Weekly analysis

With the progress made from the week, I made improvements with my reflection skills. Self-reflective practice is beneficial for expanding coaches' knowledge by learning through their experience and integrating it as part of their daily actions (Farres, 2004). In addition to the self-directed method, asking for feedback from peers is another approach to get thoughts from external perception. When accepting feedback from an external source, we must have a growth mindset over a fixed mindset (Figure 10). Greater achievements were shown by individuals who believed in the effort, determination, and feedback from others possesses a growth mindset as opposed to individuals that believe that their talent and abilities are innate, fixed mindset (Dweck, 2008). Incorporating a growth mindset in my daily practice has helped me to analyze, and learn from my mistakes. We should not be afraid of owning our weaknesses and mistake, growth mindset is a positive leadership trait

to demonstrate when working with young players although they might not have an understanding of it yet. Being a coach does not mean we know everything; we are also a student of the game and we learn as we progress, just like the players.



Figure 10. Growth mindset vs Fixed mindset (modified from Dweck, 2008)

4 Discussion and conclusions

The ten-week observation period is now done. I feel that ten-week is relatively a short period to develop my craft in the context of coaching. Nevertheless, this ten-week journey has been filled with memorable experiences through the opportunities and challenges that arise. This diary writing process has been a practical method in keeping me on track with my coaching actions and routine. Setting goals for the day, thinking for ideas and approaches to accomplish the intended goals, reflecting, and recognizing the significant occurrences have been effective in keeping my work task organized.

Upon reflecting on my first day with the organization, I have gained tremendous experiences and knowledge both as a person and a coach. Firstly, my communication skills and Finnish language have improved over time. This has been a concern for me since moving here. Although it is still within the context of coaching and hockey, it helped me to communicate more effectively with players and colleagues at work. Through these interactions, relationships and trust are built. Improving my communication skills has also benefited me when interacting with other individuals, learning how to actively listen, responding accordingly in different situations, and influencing behaviors. Also, I got to learn more about the culture and social context within the community which made my transition more welcoming. Despite the cultural differences, I was able to adapt myself without any major setbacks.

Secondly, having worked with players from U9 to U18, I have further developed my knowledge in the context of general sports knowledge and sport-specific knowledge through my work. The lessons from the first and second year in the study course have been beneficial and applicable to my current work task. In the areas of physical knowledge, incorporating the youth physical development model as part of my guidelines for practice planning has been beneficial in supporting young athletes to develop their physical qualities in addition to sports skills. Furthermore, self-learning the relevant topics as I make my plans has helped me with my coaching process. Gaining knowledge in the areas of sport-specific and general sports knowledge has enabled me to be more competent when sharing ideas and giving feedback during discussions. In the areas of sport-specific knowledge, I have also expanded my knowledge in the aspect of technical and tactical skills. I have also learned to better understand the needs and demands of the game for the different age groups accordingly. However, I still do not feel as competent with my capability. This is something that has been bothering me for a long time. There are plenty of resources available which provide information on sport-specific knowledge.

However, this can be a tricky topic. With the variety of resources available at our fingertips, I must be able to identify what information is necessary and required based on the needs of our players instead of what looks good or trendy.

Another area that I have developed is my approach to athlete-centered learning. Coming from a traditional culture that practices an authoritative style of teaching, this transition has developed me as a person by allowing me to take ownership in my learning. Taking into consideration physical and physiological factors when creating a fun and engaging environment for players increases their motivation and learning process. Thinking back to when I was active as a player, I felt there was no room for creativity in finding solutions. That being said, I am not against the idea. There needs to be a balance in approach. Having to use an athlete-centered approach has made practice sessions more engaging. Players are not afraid of making mistakes, sharing their thoughts, and using their creativity in finding solutions. As mentioned above, there must be a balance in approach. There are some days where I was required to intervene due to a lack of effort and motivation.

I have also developed my organization and management skills. In the beginning, there was a moment where I questioned my self-confidence. Although working in an environment of people with more experience in this field, I must take responsibility and be capable of carrying out my duties. That is one way of gaining trust. As I started planning practices, working with other coaches, and sharing my ideas, I also developed my confidence. This has led me to be trusted with planning and leading practices. Having clear plans prepared and achieving a common goal in practices have been effective. This has also strengthened the teamwork among coaches.

Problem-solving skill is another area of my development. Coaching is about supporting the growth and development of an individual, which translates to assisting in finding solutions. The solution here does not necessarily mean providing the answer. I find coaching a very interesting field to be in. We apply an athlete-centered coaching approach to create an environment that allows players to self-organize and develop their findings. An example here can be practice planning and the type of activities, rules, and conditions that we implement into the situation.

Lastly, I have also developed my intrapersonal skill. Through my daily task and actions, I tend to reflect on my judgments and decision at the end of the day. Hence, writing this diary has been helpful for this situation. I am also a very detail-oriented person and always give my full focus on my task. However, I am never satisfied with my output and starts to reflect and put my thought around it. Hence, this causes me to overthink and sometimes

stress myself out. To counter this, I practice self-talk and relaxation methods to avoid stressing myself out and keeping my mind focused. Personal well-being is an important area that coaches should also be aware of. Working as a coach can be fun yet mentally exhausting as well. We must learn how to manage and cope with our stressors before it affects our coaching performance and health. Allocating time for family and friends, time to recharge, doing physical activity, social interaction, and mindfulness are good ways to help avoid stress.

During the process of writing this thesis, I find that setting weekly goals or theme is much more effective as compared to setting the daily goal. The reason for this, setting weekly goals provides a progression and easier to plan my process and follow it up.

These daily entries will be a useful reference for when I encounter similar situations in the future. Furthermore, these are experiences that I can look back on in the future to remind me of my past. I have a journal with me that I write down significant daily happenings, I find it to be very helpful when writing down my thoughts and ideas. Writing daily happenings is something that I would continue in the future and having to write this diary thesis has given me new ideas for structuring my writing format.

Looking ahead, I will continue to put the effort into developing my knowledge and sharpening my coaching craft by keeping myself up to date with new research and reading material. Coaching is a broad field of work-taking into consideration the holistic approach, the different age range, the physical and sport-specific aspects of it. The most rewarding outcome from this diary are the approaches and methods that have been applied to my daily actions, these can be implemented for future cases. Another positive outcome is the reflection on my behavior and actions. This guides me to become a better person, a better coach, and a better leader.

References

- Agarwal, S. and Garg, A., 2012. The importance of communication within organizations: A research on two hotels in Uttarakhand. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 3(2), pp.40-49.
- Ambrose, S.A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M.C. and Norman, M.K., 2010. *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Beckmann, Jürgen & Kellmann, Michael. (2005). *Self-Regulation and Recovery: Approaching an Understanding of the Process of Recovery from Stress*. Psychological reports.
- Bunker, D., & Thorpe, R. (1982). A model for the teaching of games in the secondary school. *Bulletin of Physical Education*, 10, 9-16.
- Côté, Jean & Gilbert, Wade. (2009). An Integrative Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching - INT J SPORTS SCI COACH*. 4. 307-323.
- Cassidy, T., Jones, R. & Potrac, Tel. 2009. *Understanding sports coaching: The social, cultural and pedagogical foundations of coaching practice*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Collinson, V. (1996). *Becoming an Exemplary Teacher: Integrating Professional, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal Knowledge*.
- Dweck, C. S. 2008. *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Ballantine Books Trade Paperback Edition. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Farres, Laura. (2004). *Becoming a Better Coach through Reflective Practice*.
- Gargalianos, D., Laios, A., & Theodorakis, N. (2003). Leadership and power: Two important factors for effective coaching. *International Sports Journal*, 24, 150-154.
- Gilbert, W. 2016. *After 22 NCAA titles and a World Cup championship: Winning lessons from Anson Dorrance*.
- Gilbert, W. 2016, *Coaching Better Every Season: A Year-Round System for Athlete Development and Program Success*, Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL.

Hamilton, E.A. (2007). Firm friendship: Examining functions and outcomes of workplace.

Hardy L, Jones G, Gould D. Understanding psychological preparation for sports. Theory and practice for elite performers. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996.

Hanin, Yuri L. (1997). Emotions and athletic performance: Individual zones of optimal functioning model. *European Yearbook of Sport Psychology*, 1, 29-72.

International Ice Hockey Federation, Development Hub

<https://www.iihf.com/en/statichub/4625/development>

Accessed: 14.09.2020

International Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence, Ice training

<https://www.iihce.fi/suomeksi/J%C3%A4%C3%A4harjoittelu/tabid/221/Default.aspx>

Accessed: 14.09.2020

Jowett, Sophia & Cockerill, Ian. (2002). Incompatibility in the coach-athlete relationship. 16-31

Kidman, L, & Hanrahan, SJ 2011, *The Coaching Process: A Practical Guide to Becoming an Effective Sports Coach*, Taylor & Francis Group, London.

Lara-Bercial, S. North, J. Härmäläinen, K. Oltmans, K. Minkhorst, J. Petrovic, L. 2017. *European Sport Coaching Framework*. Human Kinetics Publishers.

Lloyd, Rhodri & Oliver, Jon. (2012). The Youth Physical Development Model. *Strength and Conditioning Journal*. 34. 61-72.

Mallett, C.J., 2005. Self-determination theory: A case study of evidence-based coaching. *The sport psychologist*, 19(4), pp.417-429.

Pallapu, Prasanthi. (2007). Effects of Visual and Verbal Learning Styles on Learning.

Renshaw, Ian and Chow, Jia Yi and Davids, Keith W. and Hammond, John (2010) A constraints-led perspective to understanding skill acquisition and game play: a basis for integration of motor learning theory and physical education praxis? *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*.

Ryan, Richard & Deci, Edward. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *The American psychologist*. 55. 68-78.

Shapiro, R.M. and Jordan, G., 2008. *Dare to prepare: How to win before you begin*. Currency.

Smoll, F., Smith, R.E., & Cumming, S. (2007). Effects of a motivational climate intervention for coaches on changes in young athletes' achievement goal orientations. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 1, 23-46.

Wooden, J., & Jamison, S. (1997). *Wooden: a lifetime of observations and reflections on and off the court*.

Weinberg, R.S., & Gould, D. (2007). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (4th ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.