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Compiled by Lea Dohme, Emma Boocock, Andrew Abraham, Dave Piggott, Kevin Till and Sergio Lara-Bercial from the Sport Coaching and Physical Education Research Centre at Leeds Beckett University, UK

Digest contains a listing of pertinent, recent coaching and coach education articles and updates from other sources.

1. **Public Expectation, Pressure, and Avoiding the Choke: A Case Study from Elite Sport**

Hodge, K & Smith, W. (2014). *The Sport Psychologist*, 28, 375-389

This case study focused on pressure, stereotype threat, choking, and the coping experiences of the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team during the period from 2004–2011 leading into their success at the 2011 Rugby World Cup (RWC). Employing a narrative approach this case study examined public expectation, pressure, and coach-led coping strategies designed to “avoid the choke” by the All Blacks team. The analysis revealed five key themes: public expectation and pressure, learning from 2007 RWC, coping with RWC pressure, decision-making under pressure, and avoiding the choke. Based on these findings, the authors offer a number of practical suggestions that may be useful for coaches of elite sports teams to contemplate when working in highly pressurised elite sport environments.

2. **Group Norms in Youth Sport: Role of Personal and Social Factors**

Bruner, M.W., Carreau, J.M., Wilson, K.S. & Penney, M. (2014). *The Sport Psychologist*, 28, 323-333

The purpose of this study was to investigate youth athletes’ perceptions of group norms for competition, practice, and social setting contexts in relation to personal and social factors. The results indicated that female teams held higher perceptions of norms for competition, practice, and social settings than male teams. The researchers suggest that examining the characteristics of the team members (i.e., gender, team tenure) and team (i.e., type of sport) may enhance our understanding of group norms in a youth sport setting. From an applied perspective, the study suggests that coaches of youth sport teams should be mindful of these findings and offers a number of strategies to promote desired norms within teams.

3. From players to teams: towards a multi-level approach of game constraints in team sports

Bourbousson, J., Deschamps, T., & Travassos, B. (2014). *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, 9(6), 1393-1406

This study examined the multi-level nature of the game constraints that afford the action of a drive in basketball (dyadic attacker-defender versus inter-team relationships) using an ecological dynamics approach. The results mainly revealed: a) that the pre-existing conditions that constrained the drives were only of inter-team level; and b) the importance of time scale for observing these relevant fluctuations. The authors contend that the findings support the need for a shift from a constraints-led approach to a multilevel constraints-led approach in understanding and coaching team sports. They also provide examples of collaborative work with basketball coaches to design team-oriented training activities which support the development of individual decision-making.

4. The Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport: Factor Structure Examination for Singaporean Youth Athletes

Koh, K.T., Kawabata, M. & Mallett, C.J. (2014). *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, 9(6), 1311-1324

The Coaching Behavior Scale for Sport (CBS-S) is designed to evaluate coaches' involvement in developing athletes along seven dimensions, taking into considerations the complex training and competition environment. The present study was conducted to assess the factor structure of the CBS-S for Singaporean youth athletes. The findings from this study supported the factorial validity of the CBS-S for the present sample. The authors also argue the potential value of the CBS-S for coaches a source of feedback, tool for reflection and improvement and as a means to show athletes how the coach values their opinion with the collateral benefits gained from this.

5. Epstein's TARGET Framework and Motivational Climate in Sport: Effects of a Field-Based, Long-Term Intervention Program

Cecchini, J.A., Fernandez-Rio, J., Mendez-Gimenez, A., Cecchini, C., & Martins, L. (2014). *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, 9(6), 1325-1340

The aim of this study was to assess the long-term effects that the manipulation of the motivational climate can produce on social factors, psychological mediators, motivation and behavioral consequences. Epstein's TARGET strategies were applied to the experimental group during 12 weeks by specially trained coaches. The repeated measures MANOVA showed significant changes in all variables in the experimental group in post-test 1. No significant changes were observed in the control group. In addition, most of the significant changes assessed in the post-test 1 were also observed six months later. These results reinforce previous research

studies that demonstrate that short coach education interventions can produce significant and lasting changes in coaching behaviour and athlete outcomes.

6. Influential Relationships as Contexts of Learning and Becoming Elite: Athletes' Retrospective Interpretations

Storm, L.K., Henriksen, K., Larsen, C.H. & Christensen, M.K. (2014). *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching*, 9(6), 1341-1356

This paper postulates that becoming an elite athlete is a social affair and thus aims to explore and identify elite athletes' key persons in their career and to explore how these key persons are influential for athletes. The researchers concluded that athletes had two main types of relationships with key persons (transitory and existential), both of which had critical significance. The authors recommend that coaches, clubs and organisations be open and to let their athletes establish deep and meaningful relationships with other people in other settings and that they should not consider other coaches or key persons as rivals but as resources. Finally, the researchers also make a case for coach education programs to go beyond technical and tactical aspects and focus on the coach's personal and social qualities and competences.

7. Communities of practice, social learning and networks: exploiting the social side of coach development.

Stoszowski, J. & Collins, D. (2014). *Sport, Education and Society*, 19(6), 773-788.

Coaches tend to view large scale coach education programs as failing to meet their needs which therefore results in many placing more value on informal and non-formal learning means. This article looked to explore the opportunities and threats that social learning methods present for coach developers. The authors argued that coaches arrive at any learning opportunity with a set of pre-existing beliefs which influences their behaviours. There is a great opportunity here for coach developers to manipulate and exploit this knowledge in order to change coach behaviour and raise standards. The authors conclude by stating that formal education is not dead in the water but more needs to be done to exploit the potential mechanisms for promoting change and enhance the professionalization agenda within coaching.

8. Tweet me, message me, like me: using social media to facilitate pedagogical change within an emerging community of practice.

Goodyear, V. A., Casey, A. & Kirk, D. (2014). *Sport, Education & Society*, 19(7), 927-943.

Typically e-support has been used as a vehicle to overcome time and financial constraints in professional learning. This specific article explores how social media could operate as an external communicative space for an emerging community of practice of trainee teachers. The

authors found, over a period of 2 years, that social media provided valuable interactions between the facilitator and teacher; promoted teacher enquiry; provided a platform to develop and share practices and finally challenged existing pedagogical beliefs. In conclusion they promoted social media as a 'new' method for professional learning that actively supports pedagogical change over a period of time. This study, although set in an educational context, has potential implication for coach education programmes worldwide, particularly where resources are limited.

9. Recovery-stress imbalance in Australian Football League coaches: A pilot longitudinal study.

Kellmann, M., Altfeld, S., & Mallett, C.J. (2015). *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1, 1-10.

This quantitative research study was conducted to investigate six professional Australian Football League (AFL) coaches' stress levels and ability to engage in recovery during the pre- and competitive season. Results indicated that stress levels did not increase significantly during the competitive season, however decreases in recovery scores were noticed. These findings highlight the importance of coaches' controlled recovery to manage the recovery-stress balance that occurs in the challenging work environments of coaches.

10. Shared mental task models in elite Ice Hockey and Handball teams: Does it exist and how does the coach intervene to make an impact.

Giske, R., Rodahl, S. E., & Hoigaard, R. (2015). *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 27, 20-34.

This quantitative research study investigated if a shared mental model exists in elite ice hockey and handball teams. A shared mental model was thereby defined as knowledge structures of members of a team that enabled them to create accurate explanations and expectations for a task, and thereby prepare the players to coordinate and synchronize their behaviour with other members of the team. Results supported the existence of shared mental models in both sports. Establishing a shared mental model which facilitates the effectiveness of team performance was found to be strongly impacted and constructed by the coach. It was therefore recommended that coaches should have an awareness of and established knowledge about shared mental models within their players to facilitate performance enhancement.

11. Modifying Equipment in Early Skill Development: A Tennis Perspective

Buszard, T., Farrow, D., Reid, M. & Masters, R. S. W. (2014). *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 85(3), 218-225.

This study sought to generate objective evidence to substantiate the arguments for the use of modified equipment for early skill development in tennis. In the study, eighty 6-8-year-old

children took part in a forehand hitting task using a variety of racquets and balls. In all three cases, the *small* racquet and *low compression* ball combination led to the best performance. Importantly, not only did shot outcome improve, but also ideal contact and swing path was achieved more often. Coaches in all sports should therefore consider using “scaled” equipment that better suits the child’s size in order to accelerate motor learning. This may require some experimentation, but the authors also note that children often select appropriately scaled equipment when offered a choice.

12. Integration of Professional Judgement and Decision-Making in High Level Adventure Sports Coaching Practice

Collins, L. & Collins, D. (2015). *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 33(6), 622-633.

This paper explores the decision-making processes of high level adventure sport coaches (ASCs). Rapidly changing environments in adventure sport can lead to equally rapid changes in task difficulty and the perceived ability of the performer, placing very high decision-making demands on the coach. The study therefore explored how high-level ASCs make “space” for reflection on individualisation and differentiation of practice during coaching. Interviews with five expert ASCs also revealed that promoting performer autonomy, careful environment selection and offering staggered and linked activities helped to increase learner independence and reduce the need for direct contact with the coach. The authors claim that all coaches could learn from this example of skilful manipulation of challenge and promotion of learner autonomy, within the limits of safety.

13. Field Dimension and Skill Level Constrain Team Tactical Behaviours in Small-Sided and Conditioned Games in Football

Silva, P., Duarte, R., Sampaio, J., Aguiar, P., Davids, K., Duarte, A. & Garganta, J. (2014). *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 32(20), 1888-1896.

This study examined differences in team tactical behaviour as a result of changing pitch dimensions and skill level of football players. The authors compared national and regional level players’ tactical play in 5v5 games on large, intermediate and small pitches. The results showed that the more skilled players adopted a more elongated shape as the pitch size increased and also more unpredictable movements as they tried to ‘lose’ immediate opponents. The results suggest that coaches can effectively manipulate tactical behaviours by changing the size and shape of the playing area in small-sided training games. The authors also suggest that coaches might use such games for talent identification, as more skilled players appear to use more space than, and evade immediate opponents better than, less skilled players.

14. Plyometric Training Effects on Athletic Performance in Youth Soccer Athletes: A Systematic Review of Plyometrics and Youth Soccer Performance.

Bedoya, A.A., Miltenberger, M. R., & Lopez, R. M. (2015). *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, Epub ahead of print.

This systematic review analysed the effectiveness of plyometric training in youth soccer athletes on athletic performance. The systematic review found evidence to suggest that plyometric type training should be implemented two days a week with a 72 hour rest period between training days within youth soccer to improve both athletic performance and sport specific skills. Although plyometric training has performance benefits the review also emphasized the safety aspects of implementing such activities, especially in minimising injury such as number of foot contacts per session, jumping and landing technique and variation of exercises. Therefore, coaches should aim to implement plyometric based activities within their sessions for performance enhancement but understand that large loads may lead to overuse injuries.