

Abstract. *The article has the purpose to present the three roles a coach plays at a rugby team: leader, manager and trainer. In his leader role, the coach has to influence the player to follow him on the way of obtaining a common goal, which is, mainly, sporting success. In the analysis of the coach's leader role, the focus is set on his social relationships with the rugby players and the other human resources in the rugby club, whereby the presentation of the managerial role focuses on how the coach may use the resources in the club in order to develop a solid organization, with a powerful administrative basis. Last but not least, the article presents the differences between the training tasks and the managerial and leadership ones. For a better understanding, the principles of governance in rugby – which includes all leadership, management and training - are also presented. According to the governance principles, the coach has to use his leadership, managerial and training roles in order to influence two social groups: the players' group and the stakeholders' group.*

Keywords: professional sport, rugby coaching, rugby leadership, rugby management, sports management.

THE RUGBY COACH AND HIS THREE ROLES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF A RUGBY TEAM

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1. Introduction

In the last decades, complex responsibilities which extend beyond the classic role of the person who has to physically train his players for the next match were attributed to the rugby coach. The coach must pay attention not only to his work with the rugby players, but also to his role in the entire rugby club. He must be aware that his attributions overreach the boundaries of the relationship with the players and enter the sphere of the club management. The coach has become a manager who has to make decisions regarding investments in people and facilities and who has to maintain a good relationship with the mass-media, the stakeholders and the business partners. The coach has to coordinate the activity of his players and colleagues in the rugby club, as well as the relationships with the partners and the fans of the club. The modern coach is, thus, a person with multidimensional roles.

The role of a coach – especially after the game has earned a professional status, in 1995 – supposes assuming obligations, receiving, in exchange, some rights, and, moreover, an exposure at major risks, induced by the unpredictability of the outcome^[1], which puts pressure on the coach, making his job at the club depend on obtaining success (Camy et al., 2003). In many cases, the coach is the person found guilty for defeats. When the team isn't performing well, the coach is often the first who is forced to resign, not the players. The solution for avoiding such unpleasant situations exists and is in the hands of the coach: implementing a winning mentality (culture) at the rugby club. But, such a culture is characterized by complexity, its *mise en scene* requiring the coach interdisciplinary knowledge, from the fields of sport, sociology, psychology, physics, economy or management. Thus, a coach must be a sports trainer, a manager and a leader at the same time. In order to obtain success, the quality of the management, the leadership and the sporting instruction – so of all the three roles a coach plays in a rugby club – must be at a high level. Only by combining interdisciplinary knowledge can a coach lead his rugby team to sporting glory.

The multiple qualification means that, next to his core knowledge – which is the rugby knowledge, the sporting training of the players – the coach must also show leadership and management skills (Burduş, 2005, p. 100). Figure 1 presents the attributions a coach has in a rugby team, being at the same time a trainer, a manager and a leader. For the rest of the research, the term „coach” will be used to describe the person who is at the helm of a rugby team, and who is at the same time manager, leader and trainer.

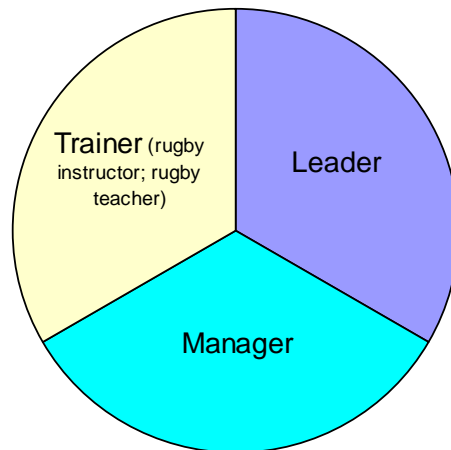


Figure 1. The attributions of a modern coach

In a rugby team, the coach has a leading position. He has to influence his players and the persons he is working with in such a way that together they fulfill the objectives of the team (Conquet and Devaluez, 1978). Katz, cited by Burduş (2005, p. 100-102), identifies three knowledge types which are necessary for persons who have leading functions in organizations, thus for coaches too. Technical knowledge is given by the know-how of the coach in his core specialization, thus by his knowledge regarding the game of rugby, in particular, and sports, in general. In rugby, the technical knowledge has the most influence in naming a person as coach of a team. In other words, even if he is a good manager or a good leader, if he doesn't know how to train his players or doesn't know what tactical advice to give to them so that they can play a game after his indications, a coach won't be appointed at a rugby team. In coaching, the trial is made by the speciality knowledge: who doesn't master speciality knowledge has only few chances to be a good coach. Speciality knowledge is gained as well through experience (Carter, 2006) – most of the rugby coaches being former rugby players -, as through the coaching courses which a person has to attend if he/she wants to receive his licence, which gives him the right to train a rugby team^[2].

Next to the technical (speciality) knowledge, a coach also has to show social and conceptual knowledge. The social knowledge is attributed to the leadership role of the coach and targets „the motivation of the staff for participating at the fulfillment of the objectives” (Burduş, 2005, p. 101), while conceptual knowledge is used by the coach when he exerts his managerial role. Conceptual know-how is represented by the „ability to coordinate and integrate all the interests and activities from within the organization” (Burduş, 2005, p. 101). Table 1 sums up the types of knowledge a coach has to master in order to lead his team to winning matches and obtaining sporting glory.

Table 1

The types of knowledge and of information a coach needs when working with a rugby team

Role	Trainer (Rugby instructor)	Leader	Manager
Knowledge	Technical	Social	Conceptual
Information needed	Speciality information (rugby specific information)	Social; from the field of human resources management	Organizational

The previous lines and Table 1 show that a coach has to master the ability of managing knowledge. First of all, the more knowledge – whatever its type – a coach has, the more powerful his thinking models are (Brătianu, 2002), thus the better the decisions he makes (Brătianu, 2009). Making good decisions is critical in approaching sporting success. Moreover, in sports not just making the good decision is important, but sometimes, making it fast too also counts. Think, for example, of a situation when the rugby team loses the lead on the scoreboard with just few minutes until the final whistle of the referee. In such a case, the coach has to think fast and make a decision which to turn the score in favour of his team. A decision which to bring success to his team. So, next to knowledge, rugby coaches also need inspiration. Just that inspiration is also a product of knowledge. The more knowledge a coach has, the more powerful his thinking model, thus the greater the chances for him to have good ideas, which to help him make an inspired choice. Coaches who want to achieve success with their teams have to create a knowledge-driven environment in the rugby club (Roșca, 2010, p. 136). This task can be fulfilled by the coach by playing his managerial role, through using the resources of the club for building the proper knowledge environment. Creating knowledge in organizations helps the rugby club to establish a competitive advantage (Nonaka, 1994; Perry et al. 2006), not at last because having more solid knowledge, the players and the staff members make better decisions. Not to mention the coach, who is a key element in the governance of a rugby team/club.

Governance in rugby

Because success in rugby is a result of the collaboration between more persons (players, coaches, managers, medics etc.), governance – whatever form it may have, be it training, leadership or management – plays an important role in winning matches and competitions. An efficient governance is the most influential factor in obtaining sporting success. For example, a rugby team which targets to be a champion team, must be trained, managed and led by a coach which has to prove his ability to lead people and manage an organization.

Generally, as can be seen in Figure 2, a coach has two interest groups to which he has to apply (and, if necessary, adapt) his governance style. It can't be said that a group is more important than the other, because if the coach and his team want to win matches, the groups have to coexist. But, each group has its specific. In one of

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the groups we can find the rugby players, whom the coach has to govern with the aim of winning the rugby matches on the field. The coach plays the role of the rugby trainer during the training sessions, the games or the tactical meetings, and the roles of leader and manager as well as in the presented situations, as also in the rest of the time he spends with his players. The difference between the players' group and the stakeholders' group (the other group which the coach has to govern) is that the coach exerts his trainer role just for the former one, not also for the latter one. In the stakeholders' group, in which we can find the assistant trainers of the team, the medics, the members of the clubs' top management, the fans or the mass-media, the coach is just a leader and a manager, not a trainer, role exerted exclusively on rugby players.



Figure 2. The groups which a coach governs

In the following lines, let us have a look upon the three roles a coach has to play in a team: leader, manager and trainer.

2. Leadership

Leadership is a group phenomenon, in which human beings are implied, and whose appearance depends on the existence of a group: there can't be any leaders if there isn't at least one person to follow them. In the most real situations, there is one leader and many followers. The leader and his followers do not come together by

accident, but because they have a common goal which they try to fulfil by working together. In this work, the leader has the role to influence the people and help them achieve the objective. The leader obtains the power to influence after he is accepted by the members of the group as an expert in their field of activity, as a person who can find solutions. Influencing the rugby players can be linked with the attitude motivation, which works through inspiring the thoughts of the people the leader is working with (Denny, 2006, p. 8). Note that the other type of motivation, incentive motivation, is not an attribution of the leader, but of the manager of the rugby club, because incentive motivation is based on rewarding the players with financial or material resources of the club.

Another factor without which leadership wouldn't exist is communication. The leader and the followers have to determine what has to be done and how it must be done, as well as to come to a common agreement regarding the process of facilitating the individual and collective efforts of fulfilling the common objectives of the group (Yukl, 2006, p. 8).

Burduş thinks that leaders are characterized by intuition, by strategical and multidimensional thinking, by a good analysis capacity, as well as by the ability to communicate (1999, p. 101). What Burduş refers to as strategical thinking, may be also presented as the capacity of the leaders to think in perspective. The perspective thinking helps leaders to easily recognize a final result of their work, even if it is still far away. Thus, leaders are visionary people.

Leadership exists in rugby because there is a common goal which has to be fulfilled by the team. The goal of the really good teams, who want to achieve excellence and sporting glory, is success. Defeating the opponent and winning matches are the reasons why rugby players step onto the pitch. If scoring tries is the essence of rugby, success is the supreme objective. Or, if you want, obtaining success is the mission of the team and the vision of the coach. The members of a rugby team are aware of their wish to win matches and trophies, from here resulting one of the characteristics of leadership in sports: the common existence of some people who have the same wish – to win. The work of the group won't be successful if just a single member of the team won't think the same as the others do. It's enough to have not more than one player who does not dream or want to obtain success as his colleagues do, and the chances of fulfilling the mission or the objectives of the team will be drastically reduced. This is why it is essential that all the members of the rugby team, from players, to the staff and to the coach, think the same way, that all the noses point to the same direction. The members of the team must realize that they build a group in order to find a common denominator, and the coach has an important role in manipulating his players towards a unitary thinking. Evenmore, the coach has to be the initiator of the common thinking, after analyzing the potential of the team and setting an appropriate goal. It is easier for the coach to inspire and motivate a player to work when the player has a desire to win. The player will let himself led by the coach because he knows that with advice from him, he can become a succesful player. The coach must be a leader, so he must have a vision which to help him guide his

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players to the common goal. Having to have a vision means that the coach – in his leader role - has to be the clear mind of the team, the person who recognizes future situations the easiest and the fastest, and guides the others depending on what he recognizes. According to Burduş, whoever wants to be a leader has to change his mindset and target the achievement of *excellence* (2005, p. 126). Excellence in rugby can be translated through sporting glory, or success. A won game is not excellence, but just a won game, nothing more than that. But, a won championship after a series of successful matches is excellence. A team does not achieve sporting glory if it wins a match against another team. If it wants glory, the team has to realize an imposing performance, which to be remembered by all the players, coaches, fans or any other stakeholders as a unique, unforgettable experience. But, the process of obtaining this glory runs over many years, and comes only after hard work. When targeting sporting excellence, a rugby team enters a long term track. But, if the noses of the team's members do not point at the one and the same direction, then the team can easily be thrown out the track. The leadership role of the coach is to keep a vision which to help motivate his followers – the rugby players – over the long run. As earlier presented in the paper, one of the characteristics of sport is the unpredictability of the result. So, even if a team wins several matches in a row and seems to grab silverware, to obtain sporting glory, there can come one bad day when it may suffer defeat. The coach has to motivate his players, make them forget the defeat as fast as possible, and put the team back on track, so that the road to glory can continue^[3]. But, in order to keep a clear mind and to be a visionary, the coach has to make proof of realism, courage and perseverance.

Vision is a key element in leadership, and in rugby it makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful coaches. Not all the coaches have a developed leadership spirit, so many of them don't have a vision, or, better said, do not have the capacity to think visionary. Many of them coach without a vision, without a goal which they want to fulfil, but only to do their job. The coaches who govern their team guiding themselves after a vision are, often, successful.

By communicating his vision to the team, the coach can help the players understand why exactly do they train and play, and where are they going to be after some years. The years, thus the long term orientation, give power to the vision. The players know that if they work hard today, after five or six years, the chances of winning a championship will be high.

The leader has to bring the members (and the stakeholders) of a rugby team closer to each other, and make them think towards achieving a common goal. If the vision is a „property” of the leader, coming from his thoughts, and helping him guide his players, when the coach chooses to communicate it to the players, the club, the mass media or the fans, thus when he makes it public, the vision becomes a mission. From that moment on, the vision remains with the leader, while the mission is attributed to the club and to the managerial function of the coach.

3. Management

So, one of the managerial tasks of the coach is to help achieve the mission of the team/club. Indeed as the leadership, the management is a result of human work in groups. In order to have better working results, people needed organization and coordination. First of all, persons were guided in their working process, thus leadership was executed, but it didn't take long until a switch from humans to organizations was made, and management appeared. If leadership implies leading and motivating the people, management means running the organization those people are working in. The coach leads his rugby players, while also managing the team/club that the players are members of.

If, in general, management can be defined as the science of organizing and leading an organization (Burduş, 1999, p. 14; Nicolescu, 2000), in particular, sport management can be presented as the science of organizing and leading a sports club. Becoming more and more complex organizations, especially after the switch from amateurism to professionalism, rugby clubs needed a performant management if they wanted to obtain sporting success. Gradually, coaches began to take over managerial tasks - like for example deciding upon how to invest the financial resources of the club or upon what wages to pay to the players – because they were the liaison between the players (part of the team) and the top management (part of the club). Nowadays, a coach who wants to be performant has to show not only technical or social knowledge, but also organizational one. The coach has to be able to have a firm word in the management of the club.

Mary Parker Follet insists upon the human side of management, defining the latter one as the art of achieving goals through the help of people (cit: ManagersHelp.com). Making the passage to the theme of the present research and bearing in mind Follet's idea, for a coach, management would mean the art of winning and obtaining sporting success with the help of the rugby players, the staff, the managers of the club and the business partners. And, the coach is the one who creates the art of winning, by using his managerial competences.

Other authors regard management out of a more technical point of view, insisting upon its labour processes, and stating that the managers have to analyze, organize (planify), coordinate, lead and control (Burduş, 2005, p. 106; Nicolescu, Verboncu, 2000). The first step a coach has to do when managing a team is to analyze and evaluate the potential of the team, by identifying its strengths and weaknesses. When evaluating, the coach has to reflect upon the sporting abilities of the players as individuals and as a team, as well as upon the administrative capacity of the club. Under administrative capacity we understand the availability of resources which the club needs for its existence and development, like for example economic, financial or managerial ones.

Depending on what resources he has in the team and in the club, the coach reflects whether some objectives are more appropriate for the given perspective than other ones. In the end, while keeping a realistic view of the situation, the coach has to

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set objectives for the team, and come up with a strategy which to permit the fulfillment of the objectives. The strategy – which, if the team wants to achieve sporting excellence, has to target winning and obtaining success – must be first planified, then elaborated, and afterwards implemented.

After having decided for a strategy, the coach has to coordinate his colleagues^[4] in the club and organize them in managerial systems. Managerial systems are useful because they help having a clear order and an organizational structure in the rugby club, by fixing policies, procedures and organizational norms which clearly state who are the persons with governance functions in the club, and what responsibilities and duties do they have. A management system facilitates the process of winning and obtaining sporting success in two ways:

- First, it supports the mission of the club and the vision of the person who has designed it (thus, of the coach), while also creating the necessary premises for accomplishing the goals of the team;
- Second, it offers tools which the persons with decision power in the rugby club have to use in order to lead the rugby team to sporting success.

According to Woodward – world champion coach with the national team of England – at least the following components of a managerial system must exist in a team which strives for success: leadership, management, training, fitness/nutrition, psychology, healthcare/recovery and statistics/informatics (Woodward, 2005, pp. 412-413). The coach can delegate the issues regarding nutrition to a qualified nutritionist, the ones regarding health to a medic or the ones regarding psychology to a psychologist, but he can't do the same with leadership, management and training, which are his duties and which must be performed by himself.

After having implemented a managerial system and delegated tasks, the coach can „start the engine”. With each person knowing his/hers duties and rights, the actual work can begin. The coach has to motivate his colleagues and players to use the tools of the managerial system in order to achieve the objectives of the club. In order to find out if the objectives were met, the coach has to control, in other words to compare the results with the projections, this being th last step of the „technical” managerial process.

In his managerial activity, the coach has to take into account both the technical and the human factors. He is working with humans, and in sport, the humans are the ones who can bring success. A champion's title can't be bought with money, but it can be won by the rugby players, through their work on the pitch. This is why a rugby coach must manage the following human ressources activities during his reign at the helm of the team: the management of professional knowledge, player recrutement, performance management, human ressources decelopment, reward management and employee relationships (Armstrong, 2003, pp. 20-22). More important, the coach has to combine the technical and the human factors of the rugby management. Without setting objectives, the coach wouldn't know towards where to head his players and with what purposes to use them. The other way round, without valuing his players, the coach would not have with whom to fulfil the objectives.

Tanțău sums up Parker Follet's and Burduș' ideas about the social, respectively the technical aspect of management, by insisting that management should not be perceived from just one single direction, but from at least three points of view, these being the institutional management, the functional management and the procesual management (Tanțău, 2006, p. 25). The institutional management deals with the aspects of the administrative structure of the rugby club, deciding upon the rights and the obligations of the persons who can make decisions in the club or at the team. The functional management evaluates the results of the rugby clubs' managers (including the board members), especially those of the coach, analyzing the five tasks they have to do: planify, organize, coordinate, lead and control. Last but not least, the procesual management is oriented towards the structure of the work processes in the club, thus also the production of the rugby game by the players.

4. Training

Training is the work done by the coach with the aim of obtaining some clear targeted physical and psychical abilities of the rugby players he is coaching. Often, the theory distinguishes training from pedagogy, assigning training with the physical teaching of the players, while pedagogy with the development of the individual. The development of sport, however, required the trainers to be pedagogues also. The change became obvious in the nineteenth century, when the newly appeared Public Schools – one of them being Rugby, the „birthplace” of the game (Richards, 2007) – brought an innovative educational programme, with physical training classes in the schedule. Next to the classical qualification, the teachers also wanted their students to receive a spiritual and moral education, which was to be brought to them with the help of physical activity. It didn't take long until professors realized that the sport games can contribute to the development of the pupils, and the effect was the apparition of especially trained physical education and sports professors. These sports professors were the first coaches of modern rugby (Conquet and Devaluez, 1987).

Next to the physical training, coaching implies the teaching of strategies, tactics, techniques, routines and methods of playing the game. Ian McGeechan, five times member of the British and Irish Lions' coaching team, says that a coach must create an environment which to enable its players to learn as a group, and, as individuals, to allow them to better understand the game (Hughes et al., 2008, pp. 3-4). According to Miles, training means „the development and the improvement of people in a sporting context”, as well as „the creation of a proper environment in which sport can be practiced” (Miles, 2004, p. 1).

The training process is based on merely the same steps as the managerial one. When training his players, the rugby coach has to planify, to act and to evaluate. For example, the coach planifies the training sessions, he runs them, and afterwards, he assesses the behaviour of his players. The same steps are followed during rugby games.

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After playing his managerial role and setting objectives for the team, the coach enters his trainer role and planifies the evolution of the team, designing training programmes in a way that enables him and his team to fulfill the objectives at the agreed date in time. For each training session, the coach has to set objectives, to present them to the players, to communicate to the players what expectations he has from them and to create the best conditions for the development of the rugby skills of the players. At the end of the training session, the coach has to evaluate, to decide whether or not the objectives were met, to identify in what particular fields may he improve the quality of the players and how could he do it, and, last but not least, to identify a way to implement what he has taught at the training sessions then when it really counts: during the official matches.

5. Conclusions and further research

The same as management, rugby coaching can be seen both as a science and as an art. The science of coaching refers to the information available to the coach, while the art to the capacity of the coach to transform the information in practical programmes serving to the development of the players, of the rugby club, and to obtaining success. This research presented the requirements of a rugby manager's job. The person at the helm of a rugby team has not only to coach, but also to manage the club's/team's resources and to inspire (to lead) the players, with the aim of achieving the set objectives.

Only by integrating the training sessions in a professional, solid, managerial system, may a rugby coach achieve sporting excellence. One important duty of the modern coach is to establish a managerial system which to integrate the sporting performances of the rugby team with the administrative duties and opportunities of the club the team is belonging to. Not to be forgotten are the leadership abilities of the coach: either when he is managing the club or he is training his rugby men, the coach has to be a leader who to motivate colleagues, players and business partners to follow him. Because leadership is an interpersonal activity (Landsberg, 2008), the coach has to find time to talk to people and to convince them of his vision. After waking the desire to win – to become champions – in the spirit of the rugby players and of the club's staff, the coach has to motivate them to achieve the common goal: winning, obtaining sporting glory. From that moment on, the vision of the coach becomes the mission of the rugby club. In order to fulfill his vision and to inspire people, the rugby coach has to be enthusiastic. Only through enthusiasm can he convince the players and the members of the staff to follow him on the road to success.

A short passage in the paper presented how the manager makes decisions and why are these important for the team. Anyway, not decision-making was the focus topic of this research, but a differentiation between the three roles that a rugby coach plays in his team (trainer, manager and leader) and a short presentation of these roles. A research possibility in the field of sports management may be to focus only on presenting the process of decision making in rugby.

Further scientific research in the field of sport business may concentrate upon the characteristics of leadership or of management in rugby, like for example the process of setting objectives for a team. Another research idea may be to make a detailed analysis of how the five managerial functions (analysis, organization, coordination, action and control) are fulfilled by a rugby manager at his team or his club. If the implementation of the managerial functions is analyzed at the level of the team of rugby players, then, the research has to approach the social aspects of management. Otherwise, if the implementation of the functions is analyzed at the level of the whole rugby club, then the technical (organizational) aspects of management are more appropriate. Last but not least, another interesting research idea would be an analysis of how social and organizational management coexist in a rugby club.

Notes

^[1] The unpredictability of the outcome is a characteristic of the sports management, referring to the fact that the result of a sporting clash between two or more teams or athletes can't be known, hardly even guessed, until the end of the competition, be the competition a single game or an entire championship, for example.

^[2] Coaching schools for obtaining the licence are organized by national rugby associations/federations.

^[3] The given example also tries to show that, as Clive Woodward says – and his opinion is true for all life situations, or for the business world, not just for sport – „Success doesn't happen in a straight line. Sometimes you have to experience frustration before you break through the next successful stage in winning. That's just the process in action” (Woodward, 2005, p. 420).

^[4] Under „colleagues” understanding both the players, as well as the rest of the club's employees, like for example directors of departments.

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