

The Challenge of Coaching

It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.

**John Wooden,
American basketball coach**

One of the major challenges facing every coach is being able to blend all the information available to produce that successful end result. At first glance, the amount of knowledge needed by a coach may seem daunting.

You should not expect to become an expert overnight, but learn at a steady and enjoyable pace. Coaching is similar to performing; as a coach, you encourage your performers to go on learning and seeking new skills and this process of learning should be continuous and long-term for coaches too.

Successful coaches carry on learning throughout their careers and view their work as major learning experiences. Good coaches share their experience or expertise with others and are concerned with continual personal development.

Remember, effective coaching involves three important steps:

- Planning and organising
- Guiding, challenging and directing
- Monitoring and evaluating.

Never forget that coaching is, first and foremost, about people – encouraging them to enjoy the positive benefits of sport and helping them achieve their potential.

Coaching involves more than developing skilful performance. As a coach, you may be asked to exhibit different skills, accept a variety of responsibilities and demonstrate many positive qualities. Effective coaches may come from many different backgrounds, but they also have many features in common; for example:

- An ability to get the best out of participants and colleagues
- An enthusiasm for sport
- A desire to improve their personal coaching skills.

If you possess these qualities, you are ready to take up the challenge of coaching!

Coaches are best when people barely know they exist. Not so good when people acclaim them. Worst when people despise them. Fail to know people and they will fail to honour you. But of good coaches who talk little, when their work is done and their aim fulfilled, their performers will say, "We did it ourselves."

Adapted from Tao Te Ching

