

An Introduction to Sports Coaching

Connecting theory to practice

Second Edition

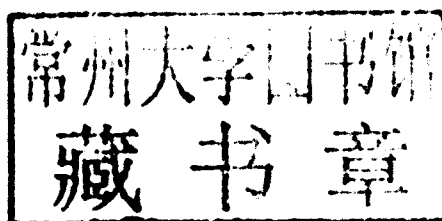
Edited by
Robyn L. Jones and
Kieran Kingston



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to practice

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SPORTS COACHING

An Introduction to Sports Coaching provides students with an accessible and engaging guide to the scientific, social scientific, medical and pedagogical theories that underlie the practice of quality sports coaching. Now in a fully updated and revised second edition, it introduces students to the complex, messy, multi-faceted nature of coaching, and explores the full range of ‘knowledges’ that inform all successful coaching practice.

Written by a team of leading international sports coaching academics and practitioners, as well as sport scientists and social scientists, the book provides a concise guide to every key theme in sports coaching, including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ reflective practice | ■ sport medicine and injury |
| ■ pedagogy | ■ performance analysis |
| ■ skill acquisition | ■ sociology |
| ■ psychology | ■ history |
| ■ biomechanics | ■ philosophy |
| ■ physiology | ■ sport development |

Each chapter makes a clear link between theory and practice, and includes discussion of real-life coaching scenarios and insights from practising international and club coaches. The book includes clear definitions of important themes and concepts, as well as seminar and review questions in each chapter designed to confirm understanding and encourage further enquiry.

No other introductory textbook explains the importance of a holistic approach to sports coaching practice. This is an essential companion to any sports coaching course.

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PREFACE TO 2ND EDITION

BACKGROUND AND AIM

Although scholars agree that coaching is a complex, multifaceted activity involving many different forms of knowledge, the literature which has informed it, particularly at the beginner or introductory level, has been roundly criticised (e.g. Jones, 2006b, among others). The disapproval has centred on the portrayal of coaching as a simple sequential course of knowable action to be delivered and then accepted by the athlete; a picture which grossly oversimplifies the process involved. Such a portrayal has also been fragmented or splintered in nature, presenting coaching as a series of isolated, discrete and largely unrelated components. The problem with such compartmentalisation is that those parts being analysed have been de-contextualised, resulting in a very artificial account of events. As everyone who has coached or been coached can attest, coaching is just not that clear-cut. What has exacerbated the situation is that coaches and students of coaching have been left to make the links between the different theoretical strands and the thorny reality of practice for themselves; a task at which they have consistently failed. Unsurprisingly, it has left the relevancy of such work open to question. The result is that much of coaches' knowledge remains rooted in implicit assumptions as opposed to explicit research and theory. No doubt authors of such introductory texts would rightly protest that there is a need to present coaching in a way that is both accessible and understandable for students and novice coaches. We couldn't agree more. Consequently, those wishing to write a foundational book in coaching are left with a dilemma; how to pen a clear, readable text suitable for undergraduate students and beginner coaches, without dumbing-down the activity so that it lacks any perceived application to the real world.

The first edition of this book was a response to the challenge described, which to a degree was met, as we were invited by Routledge to produce a second. We were pleased to do so for a number of reasons. Principal among these was our belief in the need to improve the text, particularly in terms of strengthening the case related to the value of considered reflection in developing coaching knowledge. This was not primarily aimed at improving understanding of the content contained in the chapters (which remain grounded in differing disciplines of sport sciences), but rather to encourage considered interpretation of how the different knowledge strands presented comprise integrated coaching practice. To help develop such analysis, and consequently a more critical reading of this book, a definitive chapter borrowing, principally from the work of Donald Schön (1983, 1987) on reflective practice, now follows this Preface. This chapter, new to this second edition, encourages readers to become reflexive practitioners by recognising that interpretations of sports coaching are produced and not found (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998). Its primary aim, then, is to promote greater cognitive and creative consideration of the differing strands of knowledge presented within the book's subsequent chapters in relation to everyday coaching practice (Jones, 2000). In doing so, coaching is more firmly positioned as a personal construction where one coach may rely on his physiological or biomechanical knowledge to a greater extent to deal with a particular issue, whilst another, faced with a similar problem, would utilise her pedagogical or psychological skills.

Within this second edition, we have also tried to highlight (and encourage) this constructivist nature a little more in an amended concluding chapter. Here, we present examples of how the holistic approach we call for in the book (taking information from a range of sources) can be realised. In addition to our personal interpretations of a coaching issue (which were a popular feature of the first edition), we also present two additional real-life coaching scenarios to be engaged with. These 'exercises' further emphasise the pedagogical purpose of the book for other users, be they students, lecturers, coach educators or practitioners. Finally within this second edition, in order to take account of the burgeoning field of coaching (and sports science) research, the chapters have been both expanded and updated, often through the invited critique of additional colleagues, thus considerably enriching the original text.

Despite the changes and improvements evident, this second edition retains the three principal goals which defined the first, namely: to introduce students to the multifaceted nature of coaching and the predominant sport science knowledges which inform it; to highlight how such differing perspectives can and should be related to coaching practice; and, finally, to emphasise them as part of an integrated entirety which comprises the holistic nature of the activity. Although an introductory text, then, this is not a simple 'how-to' book of coaching comprising a list of handy hints and quick fixes. Indeed, this is where it differs from much of

what has gone before. Rather, the significance of the book lies in better defining coaching's content knowledges, and how they contribute to a collective body of understanding for beginner coaches and students of coaching. Clarifying in this way holds the potential to increase the perceived relevancy of explicit knowledge sources for readers, consequently reducing the gap between theory and practice.

CONTENT

Although not claiming to cover all the possible information sources available to coaches, the chapters included in the book examine coaching from a number of sport science related perspectives. We're aware that presenting the book in such a format can be seen as going against the argument just given in respect of fragmenting knowledge. However, taking account of the complexity of coaching as a subject and the introductory nature of the book, for the purposes of clarity and to counter fear and frustration among readers, it was decided to delineate or bracket coaches' knowledge along accepted lines within sports science. This is not to say that we have sacrificed the multifaceted and knotty nature of coaching for an easy ride as, although delivered as discrete, each chapter discusses evidence and concepts directly related to coaching's messy and interpretive character. Additionally, in line with the complexity of the subject matter examined, an inescapable element of overlap exists between the notions discussed in many of the chapters. Far from being a bad thing, however, we see this emergent conceptual blending as allowing readers to clearly identify and grasp the most illuminating and consistent ideas that underpin coaching (Jones *et al.*, 2011). For example, following an introductory chapter on reflective practice, the chapters relating to psychology (Chapter 4) and philosophy (Chapter 7) both highlight the relative importance of developing intrinsic motivation in athletes; that is, an appreciation of the game for the game's sake, to maximise performance. The same could be said of deciding what comprises appropriate interaction with athletes, which is discussed (albeit in different ways) both in Chapter 2 ('Pedagogy for coaches') and Chapter 5 ('Sociology for coaches').

To encourage readers to make the required connections between the different chapters for themselves, we have deliberately clustered them into distinct sections or parts, so that each chapter is followed by another that relates to it. For example, following Chapter 1 which comprises Part I, 'Skill acquisition for coaches' (Chapter 3) is preceded by 'Pedagogy for coaches' (Chapter 2) and followed by 'Psychology for coaches' (Chapter 4) – this cluster presented as Part II. The chapters relating to 'Sociology for coaches' (Chapter 5), 'History for coaches' (Chapter 6), 'Philosophy for coaches' (Chapter 7), 'Ethics for coaches' (Chapter 8) and 'Sports development for coaches' (Chapter 9) are similarly

grouped (Part III), as are those related to 'Biomechanics for coaches' (Chapter 10), 'Match analysis for coaches' (Chapter 11), 'Sports medicine for coaches' (Chapter 12) and 'Physiology for coaches' (Chapter 13) (Part IV). Grouping in this way, however, does not imply that cross-cluster connections cannot and should not be made, as the boundaries between the clusters are inevitably flexible and permeable. Indeed, the content of the chapter groups was very much our subjective decision around which there was plenty of enthusiastic debate. The point to be made, however, is that each chapter is inherently linked (in various degrees) to every other and should be read as such.

Each of these discipline-specific chapters is based on a similar format. This comprises a clear definition of the area in question followed by a discussion of a number of important constructs or sub-areas that inform it. For example, within 'Sociology for coaches' (Chapter 5), issues concerned with both micro- (i.e. face-to-face interaction) and macro-sociology (i.e. how wider social forces such as race or gender affect behaviour) are discussed. Far from isolating the knowledge presented, however, we've tried to take account of its nature by contextualising it within coaching. Hence, as mentioned earlier, an attempt is made to illustrate how the knowledge presented in each chapter informs coaching both generally and uniquely. Each chapter also concludes with a series of discussion points related to the information presented within it, which can also serve to check understanding, and additional web resources from which further knowledge can be gleaned. To close the book, an amended final chapter (Part V: Chapter 14 'Tying it all together') outlines a means through which a more holistic and personal approach to coaching, incorporating all the differing knowledge strands previously discussed, can be considered. The aim here is to illustrate how the various information presented in the earlier chapters can be brought together, analysed and applied at an individual level to address unique, contextually defined coaching problems.

WHO IS THE BOOK FOR?

An Introduction to Sports Coaching is a book true to its title in that it provides an introduction to the sport science knowledge behind coaching for undergraduate students and novice coaches. By design, it is clear and manageable. For some students, it will provide their only formal study of coaching, while for others it will serve as a foundation for further investigation. For all, however, it should enhance their general awareness of the various knowledges that underpin coaching and how each can be applied to practice. A further valuable aspect of the book is that, whilst it consolidates coaching's principal knowledges into coherent sections, it also conveys, to some extent, the complex nature of

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preface to 2nd edition

coaching, thus demonstrating to students a little of what it means to be a coach. Our intention, then, is to introduce the value of considered reflection into the thoughts and practices of those beginning their study of coaching. This is specifically so regarding a heightened appreciation of what kinds of knowledges comprise coaching and how they can be better understood and developed to inform practice.

Robyn L. Jones and Kieran Kingston

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