



OLYMPIC COACH

SPORT PERFORMANCE DIVISION

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Fall 2012



The Role of Deliberate Practice in Becoming an Expert Coach: Part 1 - Defining Coaching Expertise

2011 USOC National Coaches of the Year

The P.A.C.E. Performance Program: Integrating Sport Psychology into Training Programs

The Three Ds: Helping You Excel From One Competition to the Next

True Sport™. Compete Strong. Play Fair. Achieve More.

What Grassroots Youth Coaches Should Learn From the 2012 Olympic Coaches



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Message from the Chief of Sport Performance

Alan Ashley



Greetings! When our last issue of *Olympic Coach* published in June, we were moving toward the final preparation stages for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. Here we are now in October with one of the most successful Olympic Games in history behind us. It was great to return from London to find so many people throughout our country energized by the excellence of Olympians and Paralympics. Our Olympic family and all of Team USA are incredibly proud of the performances by Team USA athletes in London. Not only were the overall performances inspiring, but Team USA had a number of “firsts” including USA Judo winning their first gold medal ever through Kayla Harrison’s inspiring performance, the first medal in women’s boxing – gold by USA Boxing’s Clarissa Shields, USA Swimming’s Michael Phelps becoming the most decorated Olympian ever, and USA Diving’s incredible gold medal performance by David Boudia in men’s 10m platform diving. On the Paralympic side we saw inspiring gold-medal performances with swimmer Jessica Long (eight medals, five gold), three-time gold medalist Marianna Davis in Road Cycling, and Track and Field’s Tatyana McFadden’s four medal performance (three gold, one bronze).

I want to personally thank all of the support staff around the athletes – from coaches to high performance staff to our sponsors and partners – for making these world-class performances possible. It takes a team to support athletes in achieving their full potential and the role of their coaches in many cases provide the cornerstone in creating that environment. My experience from London is that often times these individuals go nearly unrecognized in the movement, and as we look forward we need to strike the right balance so that the leaders who assist the athletes on the field of play are appropriately acknowledged for their contributions to high performance sport.

The celebrations have continued for Team USA following the fantastic performances in London, including the White House visit for the Olympians and Paralympians in Washington, D.C. More than 400 athletes visited with President and Mrs. Obama where they were honored and enjoyed a very warm welcome, sharing photo opportunities and their stories with the White House family.

Currently, we have a number of initiatives, not the least of which is preparation for Sochi 2014. Our Winter NGBs and Sport Performance staff have already been on the ground in Sochi, learning more about the venues and area in order to support Team USA in pursuit of their Olympic and Paralympic dreams. As we say,

it's not every four years, it's every day. We're also proud to support the University of Delaware's International Coaching Enrichment Certificate Program (ICECP) by hosting the coaches from developing nations at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center to learn more about high performance and sustaining coaching education programs in their home countries. This is also the first year that we're able to support some of our Team USA coaches in this program, so we're excited to provide this as an additional form of professional development.

Moving forward, USOC Sport Performance continues to transition from post-Games in London with some recovery strategies you'll read about in this issue, including the P.A.C.E. program article by the USOC's Alex Cohen, outlining the importance of recovery. We are also pleased to include co-authors Wade Gilbert and Pierre Trudel's article that addresses defining coaching expertise, and we look forward to subsequent articles in future issues of *Olympic Coach*. And we continue to celebrate our USOC Coaches of the Year who were honored this past June at the National Coaching Conference in Indianapolis.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Olympic Coach*, and as always, please let our USOC team know if you have questions or comments.



World Record-setting and Gold Medal-winning Women's 4x100m Relay Team - Allyson Felix, Carmelita Jeter, Bianca Knight, Tianna Madison, Photograph by Alexander Hassenstein, Getty Images

The P.A.C.E. Performance Program: Integrating Sport Psychology into Training Programs

Alex Cohen, Ph.D., CC-AASP, Senior Sport Psychologist, United States Olympic Committee

P.A.C.E. (Perception, Activation, Concentration, Execution)

Following Team USA's successful performances at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, coaches and athletes are already preparing for their upcoming season of competitions. What are the next steps to take in readying your athletes for performance excellence? After competing in the Olympic Games, athletes have consistently reported that, for their next Games experience, they would: a) focus more on sport psychology and mental preparation; b) avoid overtraining/under-recovery and get more rest; c) work with their coaches to optimize their physical training/preparation; and d) find ways to be better prepared to deal with distractions (Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, Dieffenbach, & McCann, 2001; Gould, Greenleaf, Chung, & Guinan, 2002). The P.A.C.E. performance program addresses these concerns by enabling coaches to enhance their athletes' psychological skills at the same time they are improving their athletes' physical, technical, and tactical sports skills. Incorporating the P.A.C.E. performance program into the periodized training schedule can help your athletes peak for performance by training them to *focus on the right things, at the right time, every time*.

Each of the elite coaches I've been fortunate to work with incorporate aspects of sport psychology into their training programs, though they may refer to this type of training by many different names. The P.A.C.E. performance program was designed with these coaches in mind, as a simple acronym to organize and teach psychological skills during training. P.A.C.E. refers to "**Perception, Activation, Concentration, Execution**". While each of the P.A.C.E. components can be worked on individually, I present the program to coaches as an ordered sequence, to provide a simple and comprehensive overview of psychological skills training for performance excellence. While every sport is unique, I think this model can be flexibly applied to many different sport disciplines. Each of the program components will now be described, and then ways to integrate this model into training are explored.

P.A.C.E. program components:

Perception refers to an athlete's thoughts, feelings, imagery, and self-talk about his/her:

- Technical and psychological skills (e.g., emotional control, coping, etc.);
- The performance environment;
- The goals the athlete wants to achieve (i.e., outcome and performance goals; Roberts & Kristiansen, 2010).

The athlete's perceptions (e.g., appraisals, attributions, and their effect on motivation) serve as antecedents for emotion. Athletes experience (and subjectively interpret) a range of pleasant and unpleasant emotional states, in which changes in physiological activation and accompanying action tendencies are often the most tangible indicators of internal emotional status (Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000).

Perceptions are therefore clearly linked to **Activation** (physiological arousal), which exists along a continuum of deep sleep to extreme excitation (Weinberg, 2011). Emotion-related activation can be tracked by assessing the athlete's Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning (IZOF). The IZOF represents

the emotional experiences related to successful or poor performance (Hanin, 2000; Cohen, Tenenbaum, & English, 2005). Once determined, the IZOF is attained through use of emotional regulation skills (e.g., coping, mindfulness) as well as energy management skills - relaxation and activation - to achieve the desired level of physiological activation for performance. Finding the appropriate activation level is essential, not only for maximum energy availability, but also due to the effects of activation on concentration. For example, as physiological activation increases, attentional capacity often decreases (Moran, 2004). Further, anxiety and physiological arousal can affect visual attention, altering the way athletes identify and process visual cues (Janelle, 2008). In essence, if an athlete's activation level increases above his or her IZOF, it may cause inappropriate attentional focus and poor decision making (Weinberg, 2011). Since appropriate attention allocation cannot be overstated in determining performance outcome (Janelle, Coombes, & Gamble, 2010) athletes and coaches must be aware of the influence of activation on concentration.

Concentration is the athlete's ability to exert deliberate mental effort on what is most important in any given situation (Moran, 2011). Athletes need to selectively attend to relevant information and ignore potential distractions, while coordinating several simultaneous actions. It is therefore critical for coaches to create an environment in which athletes learn how to adjust concentration at will and know *what* to focus on *at the correct time*.

Distractions can be particularly performance impairing for elite athletes because of the automaticity of their skills. Because these athletes have largely automated their technical skills as a result of extensive practice, they tend to have extra mental capacity available to devote to other concurrent tasks – thereby increasing distractibility (Moran, 2011). It is clear, then, that concentration has a definite impact on skill **Execution**. Each of the P.A.C.E. components is integrated into the athlete's **Performance Plan**, comprised of the specific thoughts, words, images, feelings, and behaviors developed for competition, including mental, physical, and technical strategies.

With this sequential P.A.C.E. model in mind, the following examples illustrate how proper use of well-practiced psychological skills can enhance performance, while lack of disciplined training in this area can impair performance or contribute to inconsistency. Imagine an athlete minutes before competition, going through his or her pre-competition routine. The hard work and training has been done, yet a number of unpleasant thoughts appear, unexpectedly: "What if I'm not ready? What if I'm not good enough?" Breathing becomes shallow, muscles tighten, heart rate climbs...and the athlete's focus is inappropriately divided - directed to improper cues. Rather than staying with the process of competing, the athlete is now trying not to lose, concentrating on all of the things that could go wrong. Clearly, this is not the most helpful path to executing the performance plan. Now let's consider an alternate example, in which more adaptive perceptions lead to the appropriate amount of physiological activation, allowing the athlete to focus on task-relevant cues. As part of the pre-performance routine, the athlete mindfully acknowledges any unpleasant thoughts or feelings, and then, through extensive practice in letting them go, calmly returns to the thoughts, images, and self-statements that are connected to the ideal pre-performance activation level. This in turn allows for flexibility in focus, as the athlete notes and discards distractions, concentrating only on the simple keys that facilitate execution of the performance plan. The perception in this scenario may be something like, "The outcome I want is _____, and the best way to get there is to keep it simple. All I have to do is focus on the process of performing." This more adaptive perception leads to effective breathing, primed (but not tight) muscles, and

a heart rate zone that is tuned to this particular performance. The plan is clear in the athlete's mind, allowing for any necessary adjustments (re-focusing) in response to varying competition conditions.

The easiest way to integrate the P.A.C.E. model is to think about areas of the training plan that present opportunities to practice psychological skills. Check in with your athletes' perceptions of their technical and psychological skills and see if they're adaptive or unhelpful. Briefly discuss the specific, challenging goals you and your athletes want to achieve for each practice session. These goals may be to improve power, endurance, strength, technique, strategy, emotional control, etc., depending on the periodization phase and proximity to competition. To monitor perceptions about the performance environment, use competition simulation for "practicing under pressure," with an emphasis on thoughts, feelings, and self-talk designed to increase consistency during competition.

Assessing activation level can be accomplished subjectively and objectively. Use of heart rate monitors can provide a crude indicator of physiological arousal, as can asking your athletes to rate their energy level on a scale from 1-10 (similar to assessing rate of perceived exertion, or RPE). It doesn't require much time to raise your athletes' awareness about their activation level and the relaxation or energizing skills needed to adjust it.

As a coach, it was often easy to see where my athletes were sending their focus, simply by observing body language. These behavioral observations provided an opportunity to ask the athlete about his or her concentration, and to offer guidance in adjusting attentional control as needed to maintain focus on important performance cues. Since focus can be internal, external, narrow, or broad (Nideffer, 1990), athletes must be able to train their concentration skills in each of these areas. For example, leading up to a competition, an athlete may go through a progression similar to this:

1. *Broad-External*: Assess the environment and the competition.
2. *Broad-Internal*: Recall individual strengths, review the performance plan.
3. *Narrow-Internal*: Monitor arousal level, mentally rehearse process skills.
4. *Narrow-External*: Focus on a good start, simple cues or keys that make performance automatic.

Competition simulation presents an excellent opportunity to practice concentration and re-focusing skills while implementing a performance plan. This brings us to the last phase in the P.A.C.E. model: execution.

Have your athletes think about the performance plan they used in their best performances. Deliberate practice and disciplined preparation helped them to trust this plan and commit to it before and during competition. A simple and comprehensive plan should address pre-competition; warm-up; competition; any possible distractions before, during, and after competition; and post-competition performance evaluation. The performance plan is a purposeful mental and physical routine that helps athletes to consistently perform at the top of their ability.

The performance plan should be simple and clear. To consistently deliver excellent performance, athletes must monitor their perceptions, regulate activation level, and adjust concentration to execute their plan. In the weeks and days just prior to important competitions such as world championships and Olympic and Paralympic Games, athletes sometime believe they need to change things to achieve success. This is when coaches must emphasize that their athletes don't need to do anything differently or more than they've

already done. Confidence during competition occurs when athletes trust their preparation and training, focusing on execution of learned skills.

Coaches are ideally positioned to incorporate aspects of sport psychology into training, complimenting physical, technical, and tactical skill acquisition and maintenance. The P.A.C.E. performance program is designed to help coaches create an optimal learning environment that allows for repetition of these skills, making it easier for athletes to automatically execute their performance plans, and increasing the likelihood of consistent performance excellence.

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David Boudia, Gold Medalist Men's 10 meter Platform, London. Photographer: Clive Rose, Getty Images

True Sport™: Compete Strong. Play Fair. Achieve More.

Erin Hannan, Communication and Outreach Director, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency

An important part of being an athlete – at any level – is performing well. At the heart of competition is the reward that comes from discovering your potential and achieving your goals. Even without medals or acclaim, participating in sports is tremendously rewarding. But along with glory and success there can be challenges: pressures, insecurity, temptations, and even fear. How one faces these challenges defines the kind of athlete one is.

Every day we hear about rule violations, ethics breaches, and the use of performance-enhancing substances in sport. These behaviors trickle down to youth in the form of early specialization, overtraining, scholarship pressure, overzealous parents, under-qualified coaches, and even performance-enhancing tactics at young ages. These lead to a focus on winning without considering what it actually means to achieve. Tough, high-performing teams win and should want to win! And they can gain this success with true achievement.

Sport is a valuable national asset that is woven into the tapestry of our culture. More than 200 million people in this country have a relationship to sport, whether as active participants, parents of players, coaches, spectators, or volunteers. One of our most beloved pastimes and endeavors, sport touches the lives of most Americans, and it plays a critical role in educating youth and shaping the national culture. However, the rewards and pressures of sport can engender negative actions and dangerous behavior, such as cheating and doping. We recognize the important life-lessons and values sport teaches. True Sport aims to instill and cultivate the positive possibilities of sport, beginning with our youngest athletes.

According to “What Sport Means in America: A Study of Sport’s Role in Society,” Americans believe that performance-enhancing drugs are the number one issue facing sport today. Our country is experiencing the devastating consequences of a culture that often prioritizes winning and taking shortcuts, both in sport and in life. Our children will benefit from values and behaviors that shift this attitude toward a redefined notion of winning that focuses on the journey, and celebrates each stage of the process in addition to the end results.

At least 50 million young people are involved in sport. Therefore, we have 50 million reasons to support and protect the positive life lessons learned through sport. Most kids won’t go on to collegiate or professional careers, so the benefits of sport will help them most in other life paths. We are not alone in our deep-seated passion for sport, and our desire to ensure that sport fulfills its rich promise. It’s a great time for all of us to get involved in doing something about it.

This is where True Sport™ comes to life.

True Sport™ is an innovative initiative powered by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), created to help enhance and preserve the future of sport in America. Focused on healthy performance strategies in sports and in life, True Sport™ is based on core ethical principles, high-impact programming, and a depth of instructive resources, including comprehensive coaching education in Fall 2012.

Ultimately, True Sport™ can impact sport at every level – from Little Leaguers to Olympians, from weekend warriors to professional competitors. True Sport™ is a resource for parents and coaches, school districts, after-school programs, youth sport leagues, and communities where people believe that sport leads to health and social connectedness, builds character, and promotes ethical behavior and positive values.

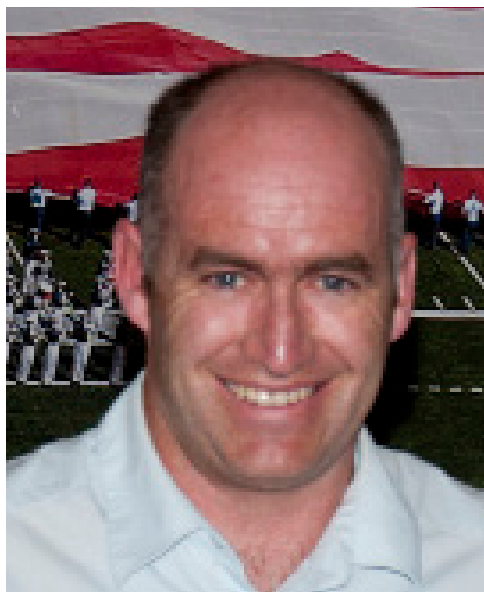
Being a True Sport means finding your unlimited potential, and path to winning and achievement, through hard work, respect, integrity, and the commitment to protecting sport from a win-at-all costs culture.

Visit www.TrueSport.org for more information.

Erin Hannan is the Communications and Outreach Director for the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), focused on contributing to a positive atmosphere in which the anti-doping movement can prosper and facilitate effective change. Her particular concentration is on ensuring that competing athletes and our nation's youth are equipped with valuable tools and skills for making healthy, informed, and ethical choices for their lives.

2011 USOC National Coaches of the Year

The USOC was pleased to honor the finalists for the 2011 National Coach of the Year program at the National Coaching Conference in Indianapolis this past June where the national award winners in each category were announced.



Rick Bower
2011 USOC National Coach of the Year

During his six seasons as coach of the U.S. snowboarding halfpipe team, Bower has played an integral role in advancing women's snowboarding. In 2011, he led his athletes to 31 major event podiums and took snowboarding to new heights after helping Kelly Clark become the first female to land a 1080 in competition. This achievement, at the pinnacle of snowboarding events for the year, had a monumental influence on up-and-coming female athletes and the progression of women's snowboarding. For his efforts, Bower was recognized as the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association International Coach of the Year and USSA International Snowboarding Coach of the Year in 2011.



Dave Denniston
2011 USOC Paralympic Coach of the Year

In his second year as a U.S. Paralympics resident swimming coach at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Denniston was selected to lead Team USA at the Pan-Pacific Para-Swimming Championships. In 2011, 14 of his 16 athletes were selected to major international teams, where they consistently excelled on the world stage. Among his athletes, Jessica Long collected nine gold medals in nine events, while shattering four world records. A 2008 U.S. Paralympian, Denniston also conducts speaking engagements to share his journey from an able-bodied Olympic hopeful to a Paralympic athlete turned mentor. His experience has allowed him to integrate his team practices with elite able-bodied team practices, helping assist athletes on both teams reach higher goals.



James Hrbek
2011 USOC National Developmental Coach of the Year

Devoted to building the sport of judo in the United States, Hrbek scours the world to find unique judo tournaments and training opportunities for young Americans to gain international experience. In 2011, he coordinated the entire junior program for USA Judo, which fielded U.S. teams for dozens of national and international tournaments and assembled U.S. contingents of more than 50 people. As chairman of USA Judo's Junior Athlete Performance Committee, Hrbek created a database of parents, coaches, and athletes that can be used in various judo activities. It is his belief that if properly educated, U.S. junior athletes will have the knowledge to one day become successful coaches themselves, an essential step in building the sport nationally.



Tom Waqa
2011 USOC National Volunteer Coach of the Year

Now in his sixth season as the head coach of Brigham Young University women's rugby team, Waqa has played a key role in molding an unsponsored and formerly unrecognized team into a nationally ranked formidable force. The Fiji native has helped produce All-American nominees in each of his seven seasons, highlighted by 2011 honorees Kristi Jackson, Monica Jackson and Rebekah Siebach, who propelled the Cougars to the Final Four. He also helps identify young talent to compete in the Under-20 National All-Star Championships, which routinely produce scouting opportunities for U.S. national teams. In addition to coaching at BYU, Waqa also volunteers as the Humless men's rugby coach.



Neal Henderson
2011 Doc Counsilman Science & Technology Award

For years, Henderson has been at the forefront of applying scientific principles in the lab and on the field to improve athlete performance in the world of cycling. During the 2010-11 season, he formulated additional tools and protocols for aerodynamic drag analysis, which helped determine the specific power required for cyclists to attain a given speed. The results helped pace Team USA to a silver-medal finish at the 2011 UCI Track Cycling World Championships. Later that summer, Henderson continued aerodynamic testing to help identify the best wheel combinations for U.S. cyclists competing at the London 2012 Olympic Games. A rare, dual-certified elite U.S. cycling and U.S. triathlon coach, Henderson has been instrumental in establishing training methods based on exercise physiology, including supplemental oxygen training and a computrainer program for junior cyclists at the Boulder Center for Sports Medicine.

Congratulations to all of the national award winners, finalists, and NGB coaches of the year. The deadline for NGBs to nominate their coaches for competition year 2012 is January 15, 2013. 2012 Coach of the Year finalists will be honored at the 2013 National Coaching Conference in Colorado Springs June 19 - 21. Contact Christine Bolger (Christine.Bolger@USOC.org) for additional details.

The Three Ds: Helping You Excel From One Competition to the Next

Jim Afremow, Ph.D., Arizona State University

With both the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in our rearview mirror, now is the time to set your sights high—and start mentally and physically preparing—for the next major competition. The “three Ds” are the key feature to winning the mental periodization process: *debrief*, *decompress*, and *dominate*. Periodization refers to how a training program is divided into discreet time periods or phases. You should try to recognize these Ds as unique, *and* overlapping, aspects of an ongoing commitment to superiority in your sport. Once they are firmly in place, you will be able to excel from one major competition to the next.

Debrief. As a mechanism for ongoing improvement, debrief your performance in terms of your technique, strategy, and mental approach. Specifically, ask yourself: What did I do that was *good*? What needs to get *better*? What changes should I make to become my *best*? After answering these questions, immediately put into practice the changes you need to make. Remember: don't talk about it; *be* about it. The aim is to give yourself credit for what you did well and to start working on the right things in training so that you can win your next athletic challenge.

Make sure to celebrate what you want to see happen. Take time to pause and reflect on what was good and what worked. These highlights offer a glimpse into your true potential. Too often, we think back to what went wrong or what we did not do rather than focusing on what went well or what we accomplished. If you did not perform at your best or accomplish all of your goals, the debriefing process will help you to turn the page and confidently move forward—ensuring that there will be brighter things to come. Always celebrate what you have done well and learn from feedback so that you can do even better the next time. Do not overestimate your defeats. Do not undervalue your successes, either.

Decompress. A champion understands that mental and physical regeneration is one key to sustainable success. Burning the candle at both ends by overtraining and insufficient recovery results in burnout and increases the risk of injury and illness. One needs to mentally relax and let the body rest and recover—especially post-Olympics. Think of regeneration as the Yin to training's Yang. Practicing deep relaxation on a daily basis will help you to quiet your mind and keep physical tension at a minimum. Heed these words by the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: “Deal with the small before it becomes large.” Strive to release stress and tension as soon as you notice it is beginning to build.

Take plenty of time to decompress, to get away from the sport, and to get back to training. Try having a rest day (or week) without a purpose or goal—other than letting your body rest and rejuvenate! Also, make room in your schedule for some light-hearted activities. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? What are your favorite hobbies and interests? Aim to relax your body away from training so that you can tax your body in training. To perform at full power, commit to being fully rested and ready for all of your practices and competitions.

Dominate. Create and sustain a winning strategy for your next major competition. Be proactive in seeking help for needed improvements from specialists with unique skills, such as a sports psychologist, performance trainer, athletic trainer, sports nutritionist, sports medicine doctor, sports chiropractor, or other specially trained individual. Working with others, particularly experts who can help you achieve your goals, is the antithesis of weakness. Instead, it shows strength of character and resolve to be the best you can be.

The importance of the mental side of athletics was once brilliantly summed up by basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: “Your mind is what makes everything else work.” As such, in preparing for your next competition, make sure to: 1) set your goals high and clarify what it will take to get there; 2) visualize a positive performance and picture the ideal steps for achieving the winning result; 3) flex your confidence muscles by acknowledging your strengths and recalling past successes; 4) focus on the task at hand to the exclusion of all else; and 5) stay in love with your sport by always training with purpose and passion.

How good do you want to be (highest hopes)? How badly do you want it (commitment level)? As we’ve learned from the “three Ds” of *debrief*, *decompress*, and *dominate*, mental periodization is the right path to take from one major competition to the next. Identify the important lessons and leave the rest behind. Re-group from the high stress and physical demands of competing in the Olympic crucible. And then get right back to being in it to win it—take dead aim at your next goal. Free up your mind to win your next competition; you’re going for gold!

UPCOMING EVENTS

USA Cycling Coaching Summit

October 12 - 14, 2012

Colorado Springs, Colorado

USA Triathlon’s Art & Science of Triathlon

International Coaching Symposium

October 25 - 27, 2012

San Diego, California

7th Annual Coaches and Sport Science

College-East Tennessee State University

December 14 - 15, 2012

Johnson City, Tennessee

AAHPERD National Convention

April 23 - 27, 2013

Charlotte, North Carolina

American College of Sport Medicine’s 60th Annual Meeting and 4th World Congress on Exercise is Medicine

May 28 - June 1, 2013

Indianapolis, Indiana

2013 National Coaching Conference

June 19 - 21, 2013

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Visit www.TeamUSA.org for additional events.

Jim Afremow, Ph.D., serves as a sport psychologist specialist and a senior counselor at Arizona State University. Dr. Afremow provides sport psychology services to numerous college, professional, and Olympic athletes. He is the author of the forthcoming book, Gold Medal Mind: How the Best Athletes Think, Train and Thrive. He can be reached at www.goldmedalmind.net

What Grassroots Youth Coaches Should Learn From 2012 U.S. Olympic Coaches

David Jacobson, Marketing Communications Manager, Positive Coaching Alliance

At Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), we frequently refer to the Olympics for examples of positive coaching to share in our live workshop presentations and online courses for youth and high school coaches. Our viewing of media coverage of the London 2012 Games provided plenty of observable examples.

Most strikingly, three highly successful U.S. Olympic Team coaches – Hugh McCutcheon (women’s volleyball), Pia Sundhage (women’s soccer), and Mike Krzyzewski (men’s basketball) – led their team to medals largely by relinquishing traditional coaching controls. In various ways, they let their players play, freed them to be themselves in and out of the competitive arena and displayed deep, emotional intelligence and a deft, light touch that empowered their athletes.

McCutcheon’s example started taking shape well before the Games, as he transitioned from coaching the men’s team to the women’s team. He showed tremendous emotional intelligence in explaining the difference between the two styles of coaching needed in this quotation in the *Los Angeles Times*: “With the men, so much of it is getting through the ego, getting to the core where they are willing to be vulnerable enough to admit they need to make changes. With the women, there is a lot of fear and insecurity, so it’s more about validating and helping people build trust so they feel like they belong out there.”

That level of sensitivity sustained the team in its hard-fought semi-final defeat of South Korea. Trailing 16-15 in the first set, the team took off on a 6-0 run, benefiting from McCutcheon’s patience and refusal to press players who already were pressing.

PCA workshops for youth coaches emphasize the importance of effort. While winning is important, players cannot control the outcomes of games; they only can control their own effort. Youth coaches can learn from McCutcheon’s example of keeping focus where it belongs, telling the *Los Angeles Times* after his squad fell to Brazil in the gold medal match, “We’re disappointed with the result, but we’re not disappointed with the effort.”

Such a fine coaching touch also marked Pia Sundhage’s management of the women’s soccer team. When one of her players drew media attention with some controversial comments on Twitter, Sundhage exercised both strength and restraint. The coach refused to lower her standards, neither stepping out of character to deride the player, nor letting the player’s behavior slide.

According to the Associated Press: “We had a conversation,” Sundhage said. “If you look at the women’s national team, what do you want (people) to see? What do you want them to hear? And that’s where we do have a choice -- as players, coaches, staff, the way we respond to certain things. Sundhage said she didn’t tell her player to stop Tweeting or to tone it down. ‘I don’t punish people,’ Sundhage said.”

Carli Lloyd may have felt punished when Sundhage kept her on the bench through much of the competition. It is tribute to Lloyd’s character and Sundhage’s knowledge thereof that Lloyd joined the fray when she did in the way she did, scoring both goals in the U.S.’s 2-1 gold medal win over Japan.

Youth coaches can take from Sundhage these lessons: 1) If someone on your team violates team rules, principles or protocols, keep teaching your players, as we tell coaches in our workshops, to “Honor the Game.” 2) If you change the role of a Carli Lloyd, make sure she knows that you know her value to the team, so that when the time is right, player and coach remain ready to respond.

If you think Sundhage faced difficult playing time decisions, consider Coach Krzyzewski of USA Basketball. Every player on his team was accustomed to the starring role. Did he find a way to get them to sublimate their egos? Not according to Chris Paul’s comments to *Sports Illustrated*: “Coach K told us, ‘Don’t leave your ego at the door; bring your ego in.’ That’s what made our team so special. That’s what makes him such a great coach.”

Coach K understood his players – and their sense of mission – well enough to know he should not battle their egos. He let them be themselves, which was going to happen anyway, and he trusted that they all wanted the gold medal badly enough to not let ego interfere.

As Coach K told NBC in his post-game interview: “They cooperate fully. Basically, they’ve said to me, ‘We’ll do anything you want. We’ll come off the bench. Whatever you say, coach, we’ll do.’ They’ve done that every second that I’ve coached this program the last seven years. That level of cooperation, I don’t think people can truly appreciate it....The attitudes are amazing.”

The lesson for youth coaches in this example: Don’t try to control what you can’t. Bring together the best possible players and best possible people – not necessarily in that order – and don’t be afraid to let them lead.

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The Role of Deliberate Practice in Becoming an Expert Coach: Part 1 – Defining Coaching Expertise

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Deliberate practice, or the 10,000 hour rule, is among the most popular and referenced expertise frameworks at the moment. While writing this paper we performed a quick Google search of 'Deliberate Practice' and were rewarded with over 23 million results, surely enough material to keep any coach busy for several lifetimes! We can now even watch a deliberate practice experiment in action as American Dan McGlaughlin attempts to become the first person to systematically test the 10,000 hour rule as he strives to become an expert golfer and qualify for the PGA tour (www.thedanplan.com). Despite its widespread adoption as a guiding framework for developing expertise in performers, we have yet to find clear guidelines for how to apply deliberate practice to the development of *coaching expertise*.

In our current roles we spend much of our time coaching coaches and designing coach education systems. We have found that although coaches are now quite familiar with deliberate practice and make great efforts to integrate the principles into the design of their athlete training sessions, it is not natural for them to use this framework in their own personal development. We have often thought about writing a series of brief articles designed to help coaches apply deliberate practice principles to the development of their own expertise. The current paper represents our first attempt at accomplishing this task. At the moment we envision at least three installments in this series – one to be published in each of the next three issues of *Olympic Coach* magazine. We devote this first paper to describing current views on coaching expertise – the desired outcome of deliberate practice for coaches. We also use this initial paper to provide a brief overview of deliberate practice principles. In the second and third articles we will provide a critical discussion and suggestions on how to apply deliberate practice principles to typical coaching tasks.

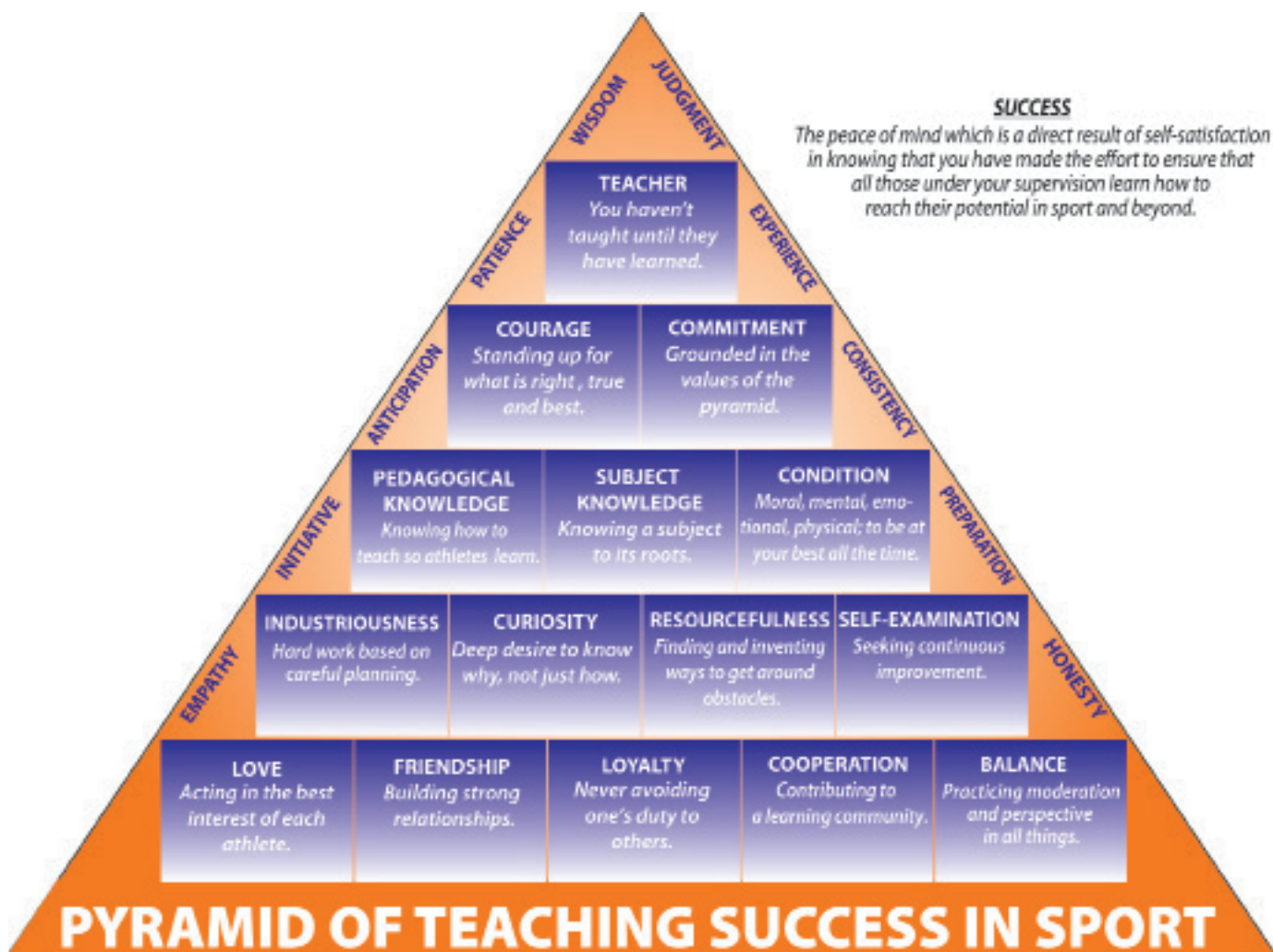
Defining Coaching Expertise

As good a place as any to start looking for insights into the essence of coaching expertise is legendary high-performance coach John Wooden, voted by numerous media outlets as the 'Coach of the 20th Century' (Gilbert, 2010) and sometimes even referred to as 'the greatest coach ever' (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2010). A group of us connected to Coach Wooden recently attempted to summarize the essence of his coaching expertise. Using his original Pyramid of Success as a template and consulting with Coach Wooden along the way, we created the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport (Gilbert, Nater, Siwik, & Gallimore, 2010). Above all else, Coach Wooden considered himself, first and foremost, a teacher, hence the decision to refer to his framework as one for 'Teaching Success' (as opposed to 'Coaching Success'). The Pyramid includes 15 blocks representing common characteristics of effective sport coaches clustered into five tiers (see Figure 1, page 20). The first level includes five coaching qualities believed to contribute to positive coach-athlete relationships: love, friendship, loyalty, cooperation and balance. This emphasis on relationship building as the foundation of effective coaching parallels what many high performance coaches have told us over the

years and may collectively be thought of as a coach's degree of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey 1997). The second level identifies four coaching qualities that contribute to heightened self-awareness and a commitment to ongoing learning: industriousness, curiosity, resourcefulness, and self-examination. These second tier qualities are consistent with what is sometimes referred to as a 'growth mindset' (Dweck, 2006) and indispensable to making the shift from transactional to transformational coaching (Ehrmann, Ehrmann, & Jordan, 2011). The heart of coaching expertise is found in the third tier of the Pyramid: subject knowledge (coaching science), pedagogical knowledge (how to teach the coaching science), and conditioning (mental, moral, emotional, physical) required to master subject and pedagogical knowledge. The breadth of subject and pedagogical knowledge required of coaches is articulated well in the national standards for sport coaches (NASPE, 2006). The two coaching characteristics of courage and commitment comprise the fourth tier. These two qualities are requisites for bridging the gap between the first three tiers (relationship building, self-awareness, coaching knowledge) and the fifth and final tier – teacher. The apex of the Pyramid is perhaps best viewed as an identity, one in which you internalize the view that 'you haven't taught until they've learned' (Nater & Gallimore, 2010). This identification with 'teacher' was the core of Coach Wooden's philosophy and arguably the defining characteristic of his coaching expertise.

Two recent publications illustrate that the inseparable connection between effective teaching and effective coaching clearly resonates with successful Olympic coaches too. In the previous issue of *Olympic Coach* magazine DeWeese (2012) presented results of research designed to capture the essence of coaching expertise with seven current Olympic coaches and eight Olympic athletes. DeWeese concluded that an expert coach is most accurately defined as an effective teacher – one who is highly knowledgeable and able to build strong interpersonal relationships. The 'coach as teacher' theme is once again identified as the hallmark of coaching expertise in 3-time Olympic diving coach Jeff Huber's (2013) comprehensive text on coaching elite athletes. Huber opens his book with the conclusion that "teachers of excellence and coaches of excellence essentially do the same things. Being a teacher and being a coach are the same thing" (p. xi).

The purpose of creating the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport was to provide a simple, applied tool that could be used to help other coaches reflect on their own coaching styles and compare them to that of a legendary expert coach. Although the Pyramid provides a practical framework for understanding the essence of coaching expertise, it is based on our collective understanding of how 'the coach of the century' (Gilbert, 2010) approached his work. To advance as a profession – and position ourselves for a rigorous attempt to articulate deliberate practice tasks – we need to complement this type of exemplar with comprehensive scientific reviews of expertise and coaching literature. The Integrated Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise (Côté & Gilbert, 2009) is one such example that has been well-received by scientific and practitioner audiences alike. Based on a thorough review of coaching, expertise and human development literature across domains the following definition of coaching effectiveness was crafted: "The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts" (p. 316). Côté and Gilbert argue that coaching expertise is evident when coaching effectiveness is demonstrated over extended periods of time (i.e., multiple years, seasons, or Olympic cycles).



©2010 BeLikeCoach, Inc. They Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport© (graphic and contents) is copyrighted and owned by BeLikeCoach, Inc. (BeLikeCoach.com) and is free for public use, copying, and distribution by individuals and organizations dedicated to improving learning, teaching, sport, and youth development.

This definition includes three distinct features – coaches’ knowledge, athletes’ outcomes, and coaching contexts (see Table 1). Coaches’ knowledge is separated into professional knowledge, interpersonal knowledge, and intrapersonal knowledge (Gilbert & Côté, in press). Professional knowledge refers to knowledge of one’s sport and how to apply this knowledge. Interpersonal knowledge refers to the ability to connect and communicate with athletes and other sport stakeholders. Intrapersonal knowledge refers to self-awareness and introspection. Athletes’ outcomes are separated into four broad outcomes for sport participants advocated in the sport and positive youth development literature. The four outcomes are competence, confidence, connection, and character – referred to simply as the 4 Cs (Côté, Bruner, Erickson, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2010). Competence refers to sport-specific technical and tactical skills and physical conditioning. Confidence refers to athletes’ internal sense of positive self-worth. Connection refers to athletes’ ability to develop and maintain positive social relationships with others. Character includes morality, integrity, empathy and personal responsibility. The third and final feature of the definition of coaching effectiveness is coaching contexts. Coaching contexts are

delineated into two broad streams – participation coaching and performance coaching (Côté & Gilbert, 2011). Participation coaching contexts provide sport participants with an opportunity to either sample or refine sport and physical activity skills in a structured, but less competitive, environment. Performance coaching contexts provide sport participants with an opportunity to specialize and invest in sport-specific skill development in highly competitive sporting environments.

Table 1: Integrated Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise Components

Component 1 Coaches' Knowledge	Component 2 Athletes' Outcomes	Component 3 Coaching Contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Knowledge • Interpersonal Knowledge • Intrapersonal Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence • Confidence • Connection • Character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Sport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For children - For adolescents and adults • Performance Sport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For young adolescents - For older adolescents and adults

Collectively, the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport and the Integrated Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise provide us with a sound comprehensive, yet basic, framework for understanding coaching expertise. The Pyramid represents a legendary high performance coach's views on coaching expertise while the Integrated Definition provides a broad-based scientific framework. Although the two tools were created independently, they are clearly aligned. For example, the first three tiers of the Pyramid encompass the three types of coaches' knowledge described in the Integrated Definition (tier 1 = interpersonal knowledge, tier 2 = intrapersonal knowledge, and tier 3 = professional knowledge). The shared emphasis on athlete learning is represented in the athletes' outcomes component of the Integrated Definition and the apex of the Pyramid (teacher – you haven't taught until they have learned). Finally, both the Integrated Definition and the Pyramid recognize that coaching expertise requires constant adaptation to particular contextual factors (i.e., developmental stages of learners, performance orientation of sport setting, etc.). This point is captured in the coaching contexts component of the Integrated Definition and the definition of success in the Pyramid (peace of mind in knowing you made the effort to ensure your athletes reach their potential). One can argue that this 'peace of mind' is dependent upon a deep understanding and appreciation of the context in which you are coaching. In sum, these two overlapping tools provide us with a clear vision of coaching expertise. Furthermore, recent literature summarizing views of Olympic coaches directly supports the conceptual frameworks we have adopted for defining coaching expertise (DeWeese, 2012; Huber, 2013). We now turn our attention in the second part of this paper to reviewing principles of deliberate practice.

Principles of Deliberate Practice

Dr. K. Anders Ericsson is widely regarded as the most influential contributor to the deliberate practice framework. Although he was not the first person to propose the 10,000 hour/10 year rule (Simon &

Chase, 1973), he is the one who most stimulated and shaped the emerging field of expertise development in the years that followed (Ericsson, 2003b). His efforts to coordinate international research teams and conferences on expertise resulted in countless books – both academic and popular – describing the role of deliberate practice in the talent development process (see the Preface in the 2003b text edited by Ericsson for a description of the evolution of this field of study). Despite the volume of scientific study and dialogue on expertise that has been produced in the past 20 years, it is the adoption of deliberate practice by the mainstream press and popular media that has made the ‘10,000 hour rule’ commonplace language. Three hugely successful books in particular were published between 2008 and 2009 that used deliberate practice as their foundation for explaining how to develop expertise across domains: *Outliers* (Gladwell, 2008), *Talent is Overrated* (Colvin, 2008), and *The Talent Code* (Coyle, 2009). In our work with performance coaches we are constantly asked if we have read these books. Clearly the writing style and stories used to explain deliberate practice in these types of books resonate more with coaches than the countless scientific articles on the topic that also are available (e.g., Ericsson 2007; Williams & Ford, 2008).

After careful review of both the scientific literature and popular media summaries, we can distill the essence of deliberate practice into three basic principles. Deliberate practice is different from other types of practice in three important ways: 1) a clearly defined task designed with the appropriate level of challenge for the specific learner; 2) provision of unambiguous feedback; and 3) repeatable to allow for error correction and subtle refinements (Ericsson, 2003b, pp. 20-21). As you can imagine, deliberate practice requires extensive periods of intense focus – focus on the task, focus on the feedback and focus on necessary adjustments. Clearly this is different from ‘rote practice’ that is common in sport training and firmly embedded in the ‘more is better’ training culture. One could argue then that with true deliberate practice ‘less is more’ as the learner will continually be stretched – both mentally and physically in the case of sport training. Ericsson argues for short, intense deliberate practice sessions designed to counteract automaticity, to keep the learner in what is referred to as the cognitive/associative phase of learning (Ericsson, 2003a). When learning a new skill – or variation of a learned skill – learners must concentrate intently on each component part of the skill in order to increase skill efficiency and create requisite mental models of the skill. With training – approximately 50 hours by some estimates – the learner typically is able to perform the skill fairly consistently with minimal cognitive effort. At this point the learner has reached the autonomous stage of learning, where skill execution becomes increasingly ‘automatic’. Ericsson argues that the path to expertise lies in continually redesigning training to counteract this automaticity in order to develop increasingly sophisticated mental models. In other words, the goal of deliberate practice is to perpetually keep the learner in the cognitive/associative phase of learning (Ericsson, 2003a).

Another distinguishing feature of deliberate practice is that it typically is guided by an effective teacher; effective for particular learners at their particular levels of development. This critical point is perhaps best exemplified in Benjamin Bloom’s (1985) seminal study of expertise development across domains, including sport. Athletes who reached the pinnacle of their sports were fortunate enough to have parents who knew when they had exhausted a coach’s expertise for developing athletes at each stage of development. In other words, the parents were adept at noting when their son or daughter’s deliberate practice had hit a ceiling with a particular coach. This also reinforces our assertion that coaching expertise is context dependent (Côté & Gilbert, 2009), and that the development of coaching expertise requires coaches for coaches (Trudel, 2012).

Deliberate Practice for Developing Coaching Expertise

Collectively, the Pyramid of Teaching Success in Sport and the Integrated Definition of Coaching Effectiveness and Expertise help us to clearly 'identify the essence of expertise' in sport coaching. Certainly there are other coaching frameworks in the literature (see Lyle & Cushion, 2010 and Potrac, Gilbert, and Denison, in press for broad coverage of this literature), but we believe the two presented in this article succinctly represent current views on the characteristics of coaching expertise. What is left then is to identify and/or design the 'representative tasks that allow expert coaches to reproduce superior performance consistently'. We will argue in the papers to follow in this series that critical reflection and collective inquiry are optimal representative deliberate practice tasks for developing coaching expertise. We have arrived at this conclusion based on our work in developing the Pyramid and the Integrated Definition, our decades of collaboration with experts across domains, and a review of influential guides to learning and expertise development such as *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 2006), *The Reflective Practitioner* (Schön, 1983), *The Talent Code* (Coyle, 2009), *The Teaching Gap* (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999), *The Road to Excellence* (Ericsson, 1996), *Toyota Kata* (Rother, 2010) and *You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned* (Nater & Gallimore, 2010) to name but a few. In the articles to come we look forward to sharing our insights on how to optimize critical reflection and collective inquiry as primary deliberate practice tasks for developing coaching expertise.



Kayla Harrison, Olympic Gold Medalist, Women's Judo - 78kg, London. Photographer: Laurence Griffiths, Getty Images

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