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Building community partnerships to enhance participation in sport and physical activity: coach education in tertiary institutions

Paul I. Webb

University of Wollongong, paul_webb@uow.edu.au

Philip J. Pearson

University of Wollongong, pearson@uow.edu.au

Kim Mckeen

University of Wollongong, kmckeen@uow.edu.au

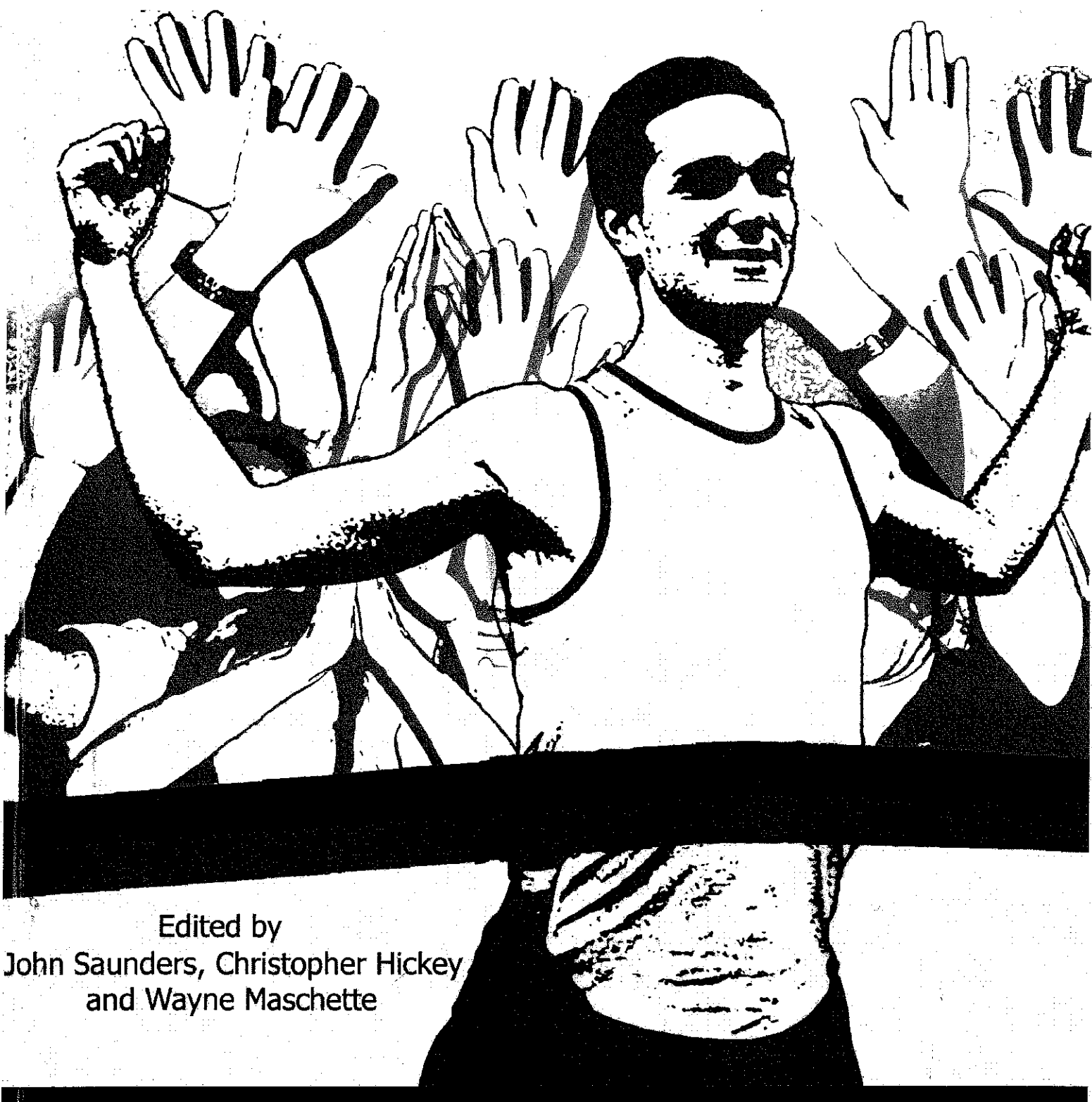
Publication Details

Webb, P. I., Pearson, P. J. & Mckeen, K. (2009). Building community partnerships to enhance participation in sport and physical activity: coach education in tertiary institutions. In J. Saunders, C. Hickey & W. Maschette (Eds.), *CISC 2006: 13th Commonwealth and International Sports Conference* (pp. 102-107). Melbourne, Australia: Artillery Press.

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Physical Education and Sports Coaching

People, Participation and Performance



Edited by

John Saunders, Christopher Hickey
and Wayne Maschette

***People, participation and performance:
Physical education and sports coaching***

John Saunders, Christopher Hickey and Wayne Maschette

Melbourne: Artillery Press

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Building community partnerships to enhance participation
in sport and physical activity: Coach education in tertiary institutions

Paul Webb, Phil Pearson and Kim McKeen

University of Wollongong

Chapter 11

Introduction: The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme in Australia

Since 1979 the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme has been established in Australia firstly under the Australian Coaching Council and more recently as a program of the Australian Sports Commission. The vision of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme is “that all Australian sporting participants, irrespective of their age, gender, level of sporting ability or choice of sport, have access to highly qualified and experienced coaches,” (Australian Sports Commission, 2000).

Eight Aims Of The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.

1. To increase confidence and competence in coaching ability, and promote an ongoing progressive improvement of knowledge and expertise as coaches move through levels of the scheme.
2. To incorporate an involvement with and an understanding of sports science, enabling a more in-depth approach to teaching.
3. To promote the use of safe and correct techniques.
4. To improve communication skills.
5. To encourage the development of innovative coaching techniques.
6. To develop quality controlled learning in all courses.
7. To increase the enjoyment of sport, both for coaches and athletes.
8. To promote a safe and harassment-free sporting environment.

The framework consists of five levels:

1. Orientation to coaching
2. Level 1
3. Level 2
4. Level 3
5. High performance

The general principles of coaching apply at levels 0, 1 and 2. Level 3 and above are entirely sports specific.

Tertiary institutions and coach education

Coach education in universities addresses the graduate attributes required by institutions. For example, at the University of Wollongong coach education addresses the following graduate attributes:

- Coherent and extensive knowledge in a discipline, appropriate ethical standards and, where appropriate, defined professional skills. Coach education provides theoretical aspects of the discipline such as Exercise Physiology but then also applies this to practical applications in the coaching setting. Ethical standards are also important and take place through developing an understanding of codes of conduct;
- A capacity for, and understanding of teamwork takes place throughout coach education courses where participants take on leadership roles and specifically undertake people management strategies;
- An ability to logically analyse issues, evaluate different options and viewpoints and implement decisions requires participants to respond to and devise solutions to problems through scenarios in coach education courses

(University of Wollongong Graduate Attributes Tertiary Literacies, 2001).

Improving the quality of teaching, and ultimately the education and training outcomes, has been on the agenda of the teaching profession for many years. The establishment and further development of teacher registration bodies and institutes of teaching, research and development on professional teaching standards and support for the profession from education systems and professional partnerships with other groups is recommended. 'Achieving success will require strengthening of existing partnerships as well as forging new alliances in order to generate improved outcomes for our students, teachers, parents, the wider community, and society as a whole' (Australian College of Education, 2001, p.34).

The NSW Institute of Teachers (2005) has developed a framework of professional teaching standards that describe what teachers need to know, understand and be able to do as well as providing direction and structure to support the preparation and development of teachers. There are many similarities in this framework with that of coach development. Domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional commitment provide the teacher/coach with knowledge of content and how to teach/coach, knowledge of how students learn, planning and evaluation skills and effective communication skills. These common domains also provide the teacher/coach with management skills, strategies for inclusion, provision of feedback, creating a safe and supporting environment and ongoing professional development.

Coach education also enables a wider curriculum by 'importing' expertise. It gives the student teachers potential future career opportunities through sport related careers other than teaching in schools. Job advertisements in the Australian sport sector continue to grow with almost 2000 positions advertised in 2004, an increase of 23% compared to 2003. The data show the market continues to enjoy strong growth with the number of jobs in sport at its highest level in eight years (Sportspeople, 2004). Coaching and instructor jobs topped the survey while community sport, leisure and fitness centers and the government sector continue to lead the market in terms of employment opportunities (*ibid*). "The 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games also made a positive impact, with 150 jobs advertised...while initiatives such as the Active After School Communities (AASC) program...played a significant role in the jobs market with 131 appointments across Australia in 2004" (*ibid*).

Coach education in tertiary institutions also benefits sporting organisations as it enables them to gain access to potential coaches. O'Brien advocated that the physical education graduate with the background of knowledge and the practice of teaching-learning concepts needs to have his/her coaching course devised around sport-specific information and this can be effectively included in the tertiary teacher education program (O'Brien, 1988, p46). Most Universities can offer future primary and secondary teachers coach education in approved National Coaching Accreditation courses - for example, level 1 and 2 or non-accredited level 0 – an introduction to coaching.

For future physical and health education teachers

Many options are available. They include:

- Coaching or officiating subjects being part of a requirement for graduation; (For example, one Australian University used to have students complete four coaching or officiating certificates before graduating. However, this is no longer a requirement primarily because of the difficulty of administering it.)
- Practical games subjects within the degree including Level 0 and 1 coaching courses. (At one Australian University practical games subjects take the form of 12 hours - 6 sessions of 2 hours or 12 x 1 hour sessions. It is possible therefore to include level 0 or level 1 coaching courses. For example touch football level 1 is offered to students. This is a specific course designed for teachers where the theory components are covered by completing a workbook and there are touch football specific practical components. In addition a community coach (level 0) in touch football also can be undertaken).

Elective subjects within the degree can also include coaching and coach education. In one example, the Bachelor of Education (Physical and Health Education) contains three elective subjects that 3rd and 4th year students may take. One of these subjects, *principles and practices of coaching*, contains both theory and practical components. The general 'principles of coaching' level 1 is completed as part of the subject and a sports specific level 1 coaching certificate or coaching practicum is also offered as part of the assessment. In addition, a sports studies subject offers a choice of a sport specific level 1. Degrees may also offer specialisations. For example, if there are three elective subjects in the degree, the student could complete a three subject specialisation in coaching.

For future primary school teachers and diploma of education teachers

Levels 0 and 1 coaching courses can be offered as part of their physical education compulsory or elective program. For example, one of the elective subjects at one Australian University is *Coaching and Sport Administration*. In this subject the students complete the general principles of coaching level 1 which includes the following: role of the coach, planning teaching sports skills/games, group management, coaching communication, physical conditioning, sport safety, 'coaching better', coaching team sports, coaching children, coaching female athletes, coaching veteran athletes, coaching athletes with disabilities, sports nutrition, drugs in sport, sport psychology and development of the athlete. In addition, students also have the opportunity to complete a sport specific level 1 as part of the assessment.

The sport administration component consists of the Volunteer Management Program (VMP) where the students complete the following components: legal issues and risk management; financial management; club planning; sponsorship; fundraising and grants; conducting meetings; committee management and volunteer management and; a guide to good practice.

Factors that sporting organisations need to consider

In a development officers' survey of touch football, many saw the inclusion of touch football in tertiary institutions as very important, citing reasons such as: "offering our sport to a large population" and "demographics at University campuses will increase membership" and "targeting teaching students would allow us to educate and provide the opportunity to accredit people who after graduation will teach in schools" and "if touch football is a familiar sport it will be more likely to assist the development of the game and students in our sport."

For sporting organisations there are many factors that they should be considering when attempting to have their sport included within the tertiary education curriculum. In the first instance they need to establish a contact within the relevant institution. Following this they need, to consider offering a range of options to allow for flexibility in the tertiary institution's timetable. Options can include a 1-2 hour introduction to the sport, an orientation to coaching (4-5 hours) or a sport specific level 1. The sport should also consider offering a teacher specific level 1 which takes into account the specific needs of this group. Finally cost of the course should be kept to a reasonable amount.

Conclusion

In conclusion, universities and sporting organisations can benefit from developing a strong partnership which will enable them to offer coaching accreditation to prospective teachers. This paper has addressed some of the key issues which both parties need to consider in offering coaching courses to future teachers.

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