Modern coaching cultures and practices: Instruction is dead, long live the question?

According to (Fiander, Jones, Parker, 2018) coach behaviour and the self-perceptions a coach has on the effectiveness of their own strategy towards practices and development of their players is a contested debate. The grey areas and contradictions of what coaching actually constitutes are clearly visible within the context of many coach education syllabuses. For example The FA (2010) rolled out their coaching philosophy ‘Whole Game’. The basis for this philosophy is that coaches should use whichever methods of coaching they feel necessary for a particular age group or induvial. This vague non prescriptive idea becomes an area of confusion when coaches are taking part in FA coach education assessments and discover what they perceive to be effective coaching, is in fact dated or not what the educators view as effective.

Cushion, Ford & Williams (2012) explore the notion that what coaches do and say are central to players learning, development and overall achievements. This implicates the idea that a coach has to be instructing a player towards every aspect of their learning. The impact of modern day technology in monitoring a player’s development and also coaching behaviours, suggest otherwise (Cushion, 2012). Exploring this further Cushion (2012) looks at the varying aspects of coaching behaviours and highlights the fact that coaches have very little awareness of how they actually behave while coaching. With that lack of awareness and no challenge toward their practices, coaches are inclined to demonstrate a belief that continually coaching a certain way is the right way based on what they perceive what coaching actually constitutes.

Nicholls, Morley & Perry (2016) offer an alternative view to coaching behaviours. The findings they present suggest players are more inclined to react positively to a coach who is more supportive, who asks questions, looks to receive feedback and understands how a player is feeling. The players in question also express that they look for positive motivation from the coach. Nicholls et al (2016) explore these motivational climates and suggest that perceptions on motivating players can be misconstrued as simply giving instructions and shouting orders to players to perform a task, when in reality the players feel more inclined to perform and improve when the coach offers the players a chance to express that knowledge by simply asking questions.

As this brief summary of an issue concludes, focus is given back to the title. It states Instruction is dead, long live the question? In truth, the answer lies with the player, not the coaches’ perception.

References

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