

An aerial night view of a large stadium, likely the King Abdul Aziz Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The stadium is illuminated, and the pitch is visible. A large silhouette of a trophy is superimposed in the center of the stadium. The sky is dark with some clouds, and city lights are visible in the background.

# Coaching for Performance and Fitness

## Building Elite Athletes

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Insights from the FIFA Men's & Women's World Cup

# What is Performance Coaching?

2



## Elite Optimisation

Performance coaching is different from recreational coaching because it focuses on optimising athletes for elite competition



## Technical & Interpersonal Balance

A performance coach balances technical knowledge with interpersonal skills to develop athletes systematically



## Central Development Hub

Modern coaches act as the central hub of an athlete's entire development program



## Strategic Training Connectivity

Success requires understanding how individual training elements connect across training cycles

# The Foundation: Organisation and Planning

3



## Core Principles of Session Planning

- **Elite Preparation:** Coaches never improvise; every session is a calculated progression from previous training.
- **Safety & Readiness:** Poor planning compromises athlete safety, biomechanical development, and competitive readiness.
- **Clear Objectives:** Establish session goals that both staff and athletes understand clearly.
- **Individualised Training:** Tailor sessions to each athlete's age, maturity, experience, and physical needs.
- **Resource Optimisation:** Organise equipment before arrival to maximise active learning time.

# Communication: More Than Just Talking

4



## Multi-Modal Approach

Effective communication uses multiple methods: verbal instructions, body language, physical demonstrations, and data feedback.



## The Trust Factor

Trust between coach and athlete creates higher motivation and willingness to work at maximum intensity.



## Essential Learning Checks

Coaches must verify that athletes understand the "why" behind each movement to ensure cognitive alignment.



## Open Inquiry

Ask open-ended questions that require athletes to explain the mechanical or tactical reasoning behind their actions.



## High-Intensity Efficiency

Brief, cue-based language works best during high-intensity sessions to minimise cognitive load during performance.

# Communication: Pause and Reflect

5



## Partner Discussion: Learning Checks

Turn to a partner and discuss: What is one way a coach could use a learning check during a basketball practice?



## Critical Thinking: "Why" Questions

How might asking "why" questions improve an athlete's performance compared to just giving commands?



## Class Discussion: The Trust Factor

Share your thoughts with the class about why trust matters in coaching relationships

# Specialised Knowledge: Biomechanics

6



## Elite Expertise

Coaches must possess deep expertise to meet athlete expectations.



## Movement Optimisation

Advanced biomechanics knowledge optimises movement efficiency and maximises force production.



## Injury Prevention

Understanding joint angles and movement patterns minimises overuse injuries.





## Video Analysis


High-speed video analysis identifies technical errors invisible to the naked eye.

# Specialised Knowledge: Energy Systems

7

 **The Three Systems**  
Coaches must understand ATP-PC (immediate power), Glycolytic (short-term), and Aerobic (endurance).

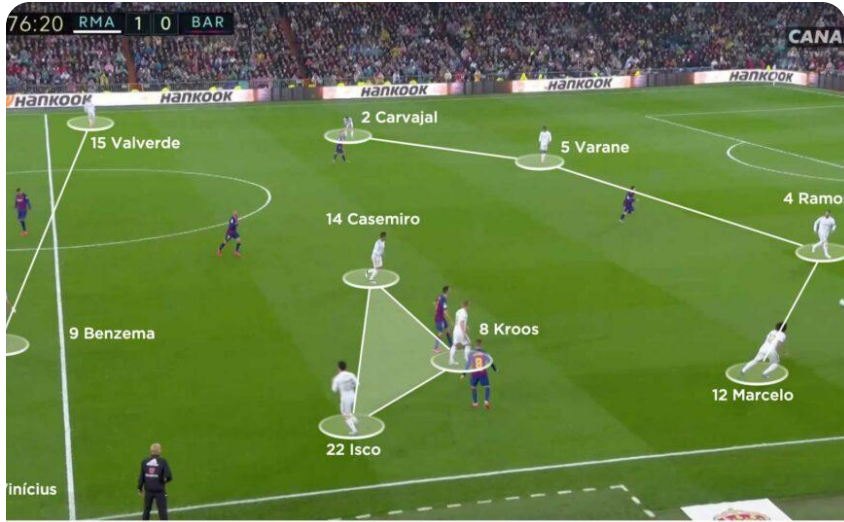
 **Targeted Ratios**  
Training volume and work-to-rest ratios must target the correct energy system for the specific sport.

 **Practical Application: Football**  
A drill with a 1:3 work-rest ratio specifically stresses the anaerobic glycolytic system.

 **Strategic Adaptation**  
Matching training design to energy demands ensures athletes develop the right physiological adaptations.

# Specialised Knowledge: Tactical Strategy

8



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## Critical Success Factor

Adapting tactics based on opponent analysis is critical for competition success.



## Strategic Foundations

Tactical knowledge enables teams to exploit opponent weaknesses while maintaining defensive stability.



## Defensive Counter-Strategies

Coaches must teach defensive structures and phase-of-play patterns that counter specific opponent strategies.



## Elite Performance

Tactical expertise separates good coaches from elite coaches at the international level.

# Coaching Qualities: Motivation & Understanding

9



## The Elite Athlete Profile

Elite performers are complex individuals with specific psychological profiles and personal pressures.



## Balancing Motivation

Coaches must balance extrinsic goals (medals) with intrinsic goals like technical mastery and autonomy.



## Emotional Intelligence

EQ helps coaches handle team selections, media pressure, and athlete frustrations effectively.



## Team Cohesion

Diplomatic coaches preserve team cohesion and shield athletes from psychological distress.



## Individualised Approach

Understanding each athlete as an individual is essential for sustained motivation over time.



# Goal Setting: The Hierarchy of Goals

10



## Primary Goals

Ultimate long-term objectives, like winning a tournament or achieving an Olympic standard.



## Performance Goals

Quantifiable targets based on an athlete's own past performance.



## Secondary Goals

Stepping-stone milestones required to reach the primary goal.



## Process Goals

Precise, technique-focused targets that isolate specific physical behaviors.



## Unified Training Strategy

All four levels must work together in a cohesive and integrated approach.

# Goal Setting Example: Commonwealth Games Athlete

11



## Primary Goal

Win a podium medal at the Commonwealth Games



## Performance Goal

Run a personal best of 44.90 seconds in the 400m sprint



## Secondary Goal

Achieve top-3 finish at the UK Athletics Championships



## Process Goal

Execute aggressive stride-frequency through the second bend with specific knee-drive angles



## Connected Progression

Each level supports the others in a connected progression



# Collaborative Discussion: Goal Setting

12



## Activity Instructions

- Work with a partner to create a four-level goal hierarchy for a sport you know well
- Start with a primary goal and work backward to identify secondary, performance, and process goals
- How do the lower-level goals support the primary goal?
- Be prepared to share your goal hierarchy with the class

# Best Practice: Legal and Safety Requirements

13



## Governance & Compliance

Coaches must comply with National Governing Body codes of conduct and safeguarding regulations



## Risk Assessment

Before every session, coaches must conduct thorough environmental risk assessments



## Comprehensive Documentation

Required: coaching diaries, training logs, medical details, emergency contacts



## Physical Inspections

Inspection of facilities and equipment identifies potential hazards



## Pre-Session Readiness

Safety control measures must be established before athletes arrive



# The Science of Warm-Up and Cool-Down

14



## Warm-Up Phase

Transitions the body from rest to high-intensity exercise using the RAMP protocol.

### RAMP Protocol:

Raise temperature, Activate muscles, Mobilise joints, Potentiate nervous system.



## Dynamic Stretching

Prepares joints effectively without reducing force-producing capacity.



## Cool-Down Phase

Returns body safely to rest; accelerates metabolic waste clearance while reducing soreness and strain injuries.



# Technology in Modern Coaching

15



## Tracking & Metrics

GPS and accelerometry measure distance, intensity, velocity, and acceleration.



## Physiological Monitoring

Heart rate and lactate trackers monitor internal training load and zones.



## Video Analysis

Allows coaches to dissect technique in slow motion for instant feedback.



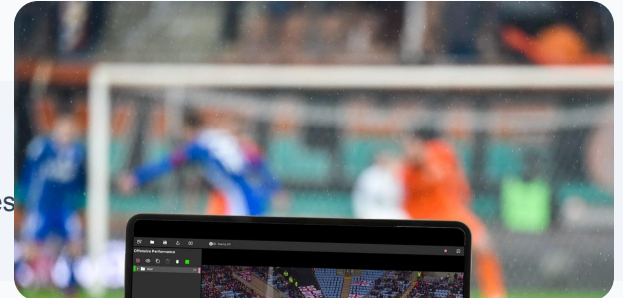
## Objective Decision-Making

Removes subjective bias by providing precise quantitative data.



## Data Filtering Strategy

Data must be filtered to 2-3 key performance indicators to avoid overwhelming athletes



# The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

16



## S&C Coaches

Develop physical capacities through periodised training programs.



## Sports Physiotherapists

Manage injury prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation protocols.



## Sports Psychologists

Optimise mental state, anxiety management, and team chemistry.



## Daily Alignment Meetings

Critical for preventing conflicting professional opinions and ensuring strategy cohesion.



## The Head Coach

Orchestrates the MDT like a conductor, ensuring all specialists work toward one unified philosophy.



# Managing the MDT: Challenges & Solutions

17



## Key Challenges

- High cost and management time for tech & staff
- Conflicting advice from specialists (e.g., rest vs. train)



## Strategic Solutions

- **Authority:** Head coach establishes clear final decision-making
- **Filtering:** Data is distilled into actionable athlete insights
- **Alignment:** Regular MDT meetings ensure unified strategy



# Synthesis: Bringing It All Together

18



## Seamless Integration

Integrating skills, knowledge, technology, and support professionals for distinction-level coaching.



## Technical Foundation

Organisation, communication, and specialised knowledge form the core technical structure.



## Sustained Development

Motivation, adaptation, and goal setting drive long-term athlete growth and success.



## Ethical Framework

Legal compliance, safety protocols, and best practices protect athletes and ensure ethics.



## Modern Elite Coaching

A complex orchestration of science, psychology, and interpersonal excellence.



# Final Reflection: Your Coaching Journey

19



## Core Philosophy

Which coaching skill or quality do you think is most important for developing elite athletes?



## Tech & Communication

How would you balance the use of technology with direct athlete communication?



## Team Management

What challenges do you think a young coach would face when managing a multi-disciplinary team?



**Self-Reflection Period: 5 Minutes**



## Framework Design

How would you create a goal-setting framework for an athlete in your sport?



## Reflection Task

Take five minutes to write down your thoughts and be ready to discuss

