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## Coach migration and the sharing of British expertise: some historical perspectives

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## Coach migration and the sharing of British expertise: some historical perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

While indigenous coaching cultures are founded and sustained according to national traditions, coaching preferences cross national boundaries to influence cultural developments in other nations. This phenomenon occurs through neighbourhood diffusion, the adoption of practices in adjacent countries, and hierarchical diffusion, whereby emerging nations adopt structural features of advanced nation's sports programmes and recruit coaching experts from those countries. This paper addresses a phase of coach migration from Britain that occurred during the late Victorian period and utilises a range of sources to present biographies of some British coaches who made an impact in America. Their collective biography illustrates some common features of these men's lives and the effect that they had on their host nation's coaching culture, contributing in the process to our understanding of the ways in which national coaching cultures have evolved and the relationship between the exchange of sports coaches and the transfer of knowledge and experience.

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## Introduction

From the twelfth century onwards, Britons engaged in leisure and competitive activities with the help of indigenous professional falconers, wrestling trainers, and masters at arms, while other experts, particularly fencing, dancing, and riding professors, were often recruited from overseas. Motivated by the potential financial returns, the mobility of these masters and professors was facilitated by their connections to the social elites who shared practices and values across the Royal Courts of Europe and whose influence continued well into the nineteenth century. During the European Enlightenment (circa 1685–1815) the work of these individuals was

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influenced by a reassessment of traditional ideas relating to the body leading to the belief that the application of science-based knowledge within systematic training programmes could enhance the performance of humans beyond their natural, God-given abilities. Concurrent with this philosophical shift, increasing industrialisation brought with it a focus on achievement through improved performance as the British began to systematically rationalise their pastimes, making application, discipline, and rigorous training, an integral feature of sport. As a result, several professional working-class male coaches and trainers were being engaged by both professional and amateur athletes in rowing, cricket, boxing, athletics, and swimming, by the mid-nineteenth century.

These coaches operated within a sporting landscape that was increasingly being shaped by a middle-class hegemonic group of public-school and university elites who structured their sporting organisations and framed their rules around their ethos of amateurism. A central tenet was the marginalisation of professional coaches, as when the Henley stewards decided in 1902 that no crew could compete in their regatta if they had been coached by a professional during the previous four weeks. In many ways, the social status of professional coaches across most sports mirrored the master–servant relationship characteristic of upper-middle-class life. The working-class professional coaches who began to be employed in lawn tennis clubs from the 1880s tended to be referred to by their surnames, as were their counterparts in cricket, and they were expected to behave deferentially towards club members. The power relations that initiated and sustained this peculiarly British “intangible cultural heritage” (ICH) of coaching resulted in that heritage being transmitted across generations, through workplace skills, family histories, oral histories, and social traditions (see Day, 2021b). This paper considers the ways in which the constraints on coaching practice that resulted from this ICH encouraged British coaches to travel abroad and the malleability of that ICH when placed in a different national context, emphasising how coaching as a social activity is always influenced by the culture in which it is situated.

Coaching heritages are always susceptible to external influences and when coaching preferences traverse national margins to stimulate cultural developments in other nations many variants are created. Although a negative attitude towards professional coaching was exported as an integral feature of British sports, it was always reinterpreted in the context of local, regional, and national, historical traditions. In America, the word “professional” was applied to those who were not only paid for coaching, but also did it well so the distinction between amateur and professional became as much about proficiency as it was about money. In contrast to the master–servant relationship that characterised amateur attitudes to coaches in Britain, professional coaches in America became respected cultural

figures, while indigenous sporting histories, cultural attitudes, and social contexts resulted in distinctive European coaching heritages that were not obsessed with amateurism (see contributions to Day, 2021a). In 1924, Britain suffered her first Olympic water polo defeat, to Hungary, and, after Britain came last in the 1929 European Games, one British observer complained that foreign teams were “absolutely under the control of their managers, train strictly and take the game seriously – we do not!” (Shephard, 1930, p. 9).

This use of the term “manager” highlights the need for the coaching historian to first decide what constitutes “coaching”, the definition of which changes according to social, cultural, temporal, and geographical parameters. The increasing use of the term in non-sporting contexts emphasises that “coaching” is being constantly reinterpreted, as, indeed, it always has been. “Coach” first appeared in English as “coche”, a large carriage, before becoming a colloquial expression for a private tutor who “crammed” candidates for examinations, and then being used by nineteenth-century sportsmen who applied the language of school and university to their leisure activities, especially rowing and cricket. Meanwhile, the label “professor” was often used for expert swimming and boxing instructors while the term “trainer” was commonplace in other working-class sports, such as pedestrianism, cycling, wrestling, and football (Day, 2017, p. 21). Globally, the coach can still be referred to as “manager”, teacher, “technician”, “instructor”, or “trainer”, but throughout this paper the term “Coach” is applied to any individual responsible for training others for an athletic performance.

### **Coaching practice**

Diverse cultures, then, are characterised by different coaching traditions and for the historian of coaching, it makes more sense to refer to “histories of coaching”, rather than “a history of coaching”, since coaching as a social practice can only be fully understood when referenced to the culture and environment in which it is situated. National coaching heritages are invented, constructed, and institutionalised as the norms and values associated with that ICH are constantly reinforced through social reproduction and they remain resistant to rapid change. Since coaching in every nation developed in accordance with indigenous societal and political norms, there were inevitably differences in the ways that the notion of coaches and coaching were interpreted, the primacy given to coach experience or to science, the influence of amateurism, and the value accorded to the coach practitioner. In Victorian Britain coaches possessed a body of craft knowledge, acquired through socialisation, and transmitted through oral culture. Daily engagement with others happened within informal groups, communities of practice, which shared experiences, stories, and solutions, resulting

in learning occurring at an embodied and unnoticed level and facilitating the reproduction of skills and knowledge across generations (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

At the centre of each Victorian coaching community was a working-class individual whose knowledge and experience provided guidance and inspiration for both core and peripheral members of the extended community, although few of these coaching lives have been explored in any detail. The writing of coaching journeys remains a rarity in contemporary research (Watts & Cushion, 2017) even though Lemyre and Trudel (2004) argued that telling coaches' stories can help expose the sociocultural context and the expectations and norms of their community. From a historical perspective, case studies of coaching lives can illustrate the extent to which power dynamics, gender, political imperatives, and transnational influences, have been central to the creation of national coaching traditions. This is especially useful in the context of expatriate coaching. Below the level of national teams, many migrant coaches worked out of the limelight and the majority left little trace in the historical record. Wherever possible, their narratives should be uncovered to facilitate an understanding of how they worked within the constraints established by their employers and the cultural contexts that surrounded their coaching practice. While this paper presents some exemplar biographies of British coaches who coached abroad, particularly in North America, many more need to be constructed from newspaper and periodical archives, photographs, trade directories, census material, contemporary maps, travel documents, and local and family histories, to collate information on coaches' origins, economic class, social networks, and daily practice.

### **Coaching agency: transmission and transformation**

If the history of all cultures is indeed “the history of cultural borrowings” (Said, 1993, p. 217), coaching historians need to consider the complicated interactions that occurred between national, social, and cultural boundaries as indigenous coaching preferences crossed national margins to influence other ICHs of coaching. In his analysis of the mechanisms through which the historical growth of international sports could be understood, Bale concluded that this happened through a combination of neighbourhood diffusion and hierarchical diffusion, and it is suggested here that the same methodology can be employed to explain the spread of coaching knowledge, practices, and traditions. With respect to neighbourhood diffusion, the only European countries to adopt soccer (assessed by the formation of a national association) before 1890 were geographically adjacent to England and the last to adopt it were at the geographical periphery of Europe. Other examples of sports entering a country from its immediate neighbour include

gymnastics from Czechoslovakia to Poland and rugby from England to northern France. For Bale, hierarchical diffusion referred to the spread from industrially advanced to industrially advancing nations. By the 1880s, Britain, the leading European industrial power, had twice as many national sports federations than its nearest rival, providing an example that was adopted elsewhere as nations industrialised. Following the British creation of an Amateur Athletic Association in 1880, all the major European powers had adopted track and field athletics by 1900, while the less industrialised European nations generally adopted the sport more than a decade later (Bale, 1984).

This notion of hierarchical diffusion is based on the premise that there was a relationship between levels of economic development and the growth of sport, but it is a model that can equally well be applied to an analysis of the drivers for coaching migration if advanced sporting expertise is substituted for advanced industrialisation. Expertise from developed nations impacts on less advanced national coaching systems at both a macro level, through the adoption of overseas coaching structures that had been effective in achieving international sporting prominence, and, at a more micro level, the stimulus made by individual migrant coaches to the enhancement of native coaching traditions. Contemporary expatriate coaches tend to come from countries that have been more accomplished and successful on the international stage than their receiving countries (Torres, 2012) and in the Victorian period Britain was the pre-eminent sporting nation. Given that coaches developed their skills through experiential learning and collaborating in communities of practice, it was inevitable that those living and working in societies that were more advanced in terms of their sports organisations became the earliest experts in both physical and technical preparation. In that respect, there was a hierarchy of nations in terms of coaching expertise, whether that be football in Britain or gymnastics in Switzerland, with less advanced nations turning to more advanced nations for exemplars of coaching structures and for individuals they could recruit to develop their athletes and coaches, as well as the broader coaching culture.

### **Coach migration: out of Britain**

Twenty-first century elite coaches, who generally migrate through an informal mechanism of recruitment reliant on their networks, are motivated by a combination of economic, career, family, and sports development aspirations. Interestingly, the lack of coaching recognition in their own country has also been highlighted as a driving force for migration by German coaches (Orlowski, Wicker, & Breuer, 2018) which echoes many of the sentiments expressed by nineteenth-century British professional coaches.

The international adoption of sports provided opportunities to pursue coaching careers for British coaches who were struggling from the restrictions being introduced by emerging amateur governing bodies at home and several individuals travelled abroad, especially to America, where a more pragmatic approach was taken to professional coaching. Opportunities for the professional coach in English rowing, increasingly dominated as it was by an Oxbridge elite that preferred amateur coaches from their own peer group, reduced significantly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Several leading sculling champions emigrated to Australia in the 1850s and took up coaching careers while some, such as James McGurk, who coached in Sweden in 1884, stayed closer to home. Others regularly spent time in Germany and Austria on training contracts with nine of them succeeding one another as coach at Berliner Ruderclub (Halladay, 1990).

English cricket professionals also found it profitable to coach abroad where a greater freedom existed for experimentation and, after a visit by an English team in 1861, English professional coaches were employed in Australia. For some practitioners, migration became necessary after they ran into trouble with the British authorities. When Tod Sloan was prevented from riding in England by the withdrawal of his licence he became a trainer of racehorses in France, athlete William Snook, suspended by the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) in 1887, subsequently trained cyclists in France, where he was trainer to Racing Club de France by 1900, while James Edward “Choppy” Warburton, who also got into trouble with the AAA, became well known in France as a cycling trainer. Supporting the notion of hierarchical diffusion, this was not a one-way process and imported coaches were influential in areas where the British lacked expertise. Rudolf Oberholzer, leader of the British 1912 Olympics gymnastics team was a fifty-two-year-old Swiss national who was a professional gymnastics instructor, employed by the Northampton Institute in London, and the wrestling trainer in 1912 was Prussian-born William Hugo Klein, who had reportedly trained weightlifter Launceston Elliott, Britain’s first Olympic champion in 1896.

As soccer spread around Europe through a process of neighbourhood diffusion, a parallel process of hierarchical diffusion occurred as developing countries looked to Britain for their coaching expertise. Although football coaches were not considered essential within the British game, they were always in demand elsewhere. In 1900, Bassett of West Bromwich Albion was offered expenses and £100 by each of two German clubs to give them a month’s coaching. John “Jake” Madden, the ex-Celtic and Scotland player, was coaching Bohemia in 1909, after becoming coach at Czech Republic team Slavia Prague in 1905, while William Garbutt, who left in 1912 to coach in Italy, reflected on “why one has to come abroad to teach football, when there are none, or very few, coaches employed in England” (*Athletic News*, 8 December 1919). In the London Olympics of 1908, Holland was



coached by Edgar Chadwick and four years later Sweden was coached by Charles Bunyan, formerly the professional at the OrgrYTE Athletic Club, Gothenburg, Sweden's leading club side.

Charles, who became a professional footballer in 1887, was appointed football and cricket coach to the Racing Club de Bruxelles in Belgium in 1910 where he was highly rated as a coach. He served as assistant to Willie Maxwell, the Belgian national manager, and continued in this dual role until moving to Sweden. Bunyan returned to Belgium in 1912 to coach Standard Liege until 1915, when went home to volunteer for the army. Bunyan was discharged suffering from shell shock in May 1916 and following the war, he went back to Belgium to coach Anderlecht and run his sports equipment business. Writing about British football in December 1920, Charles said "I am afraid that those who have control of the Big Clubs don't realise the value of coaching and what could be done by placing promising young players under the control of a competent coach. Myself having devoted a many years to the practice and study of coaching. Am afraid it would not be possible to obtain a living wage in England for my services". He was "heart and soul in the game and able to teach the game in every detail from A to Z in both individual and collective play" (John Catton Scrapbook, National Football Museum).

Charles died in Brussels in 1922 and son Maurice, who coached in Belgium and France from 1910, went on to write coaching manuals in French and manage Bordeaux between 1945 and 1947. British football coaches such as the Bunyans were essential components of the transnational networks through which information and ideas about football were exchanged. In the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, France, and central Europe, British coaches helped to develop local coaches who went on to transmit this knowledge around the globe (Taylor, 2010). Jimmy Hogan managed in seven different countries and many of his Austrian and Hungarian pupils became coaches taking his methods to other parts of Europe and South America. Dori Kürschner, who succeeded him as coach at MTK Budapest, later influenced the development of football in Brazil, and Hungarian football coaches trained teams all over the world in the inter-war years (Szente-Varga, 2021).

### **A transatlantic exodus**

The spread of British coaches abroad occurred at a time when the British were considered world leaders and, as is suggested by the hierarchical diffusion model, their experts were imported to make good a perceived gap in expertise in less advanced nations. Migration incorporates the transition of ideas, values, and social and cultural practices, as well as humans, and coach migration led to a merging of coaching approaches, although the

cross-cultural transfer of knowledge was rarely straightforward and British coaches did not merely reproduce an orthodox body of knowledge. They were free to innovate and adapt personal methods to local circumstances, so skills, tactics, and technical knowledge, were often modified to suit local conditions. In this respect, the dissemination of knowledge by British coaches highlights the complexities of transfer identified by historians of other cultural activities such as music. Part of that complexity was the ability of receiving nations to modify a cultural import, as, for example, when the British responded to the importation of non-traditional food by incorporating exotic ingredients into traditional British dishes or modifying foreign recipes to suit British taste. With respect to coaching, it was America that assimilated British coaches and their practices in the nineteenth century and employed them to help develop a national coaching culture intent on demonstrating American superiority on the world stage.

### ***The swimming coach***

In the latter stages of the nineteenth century, Americans built on the competitive swim meets first started in 1877 by the New York Athletic Club to generate a vibrant swimming scene dominated by similar urban, private-membership, wealthy athletic clubs who could afford to employ professional coaches. In contrast to Britain, where the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) continued to marginalise professional coaches, American career coaches were recognised as integral to the swimming environment. Swimming rapidly became an important sport in colleges, high school, YMCA, and Boys' Clubs, thereby increasing employment possibilities and stimulating coaching communities, and by 1905, America had become the dominant swimming nation. It had also proved to be the perfect environment for several English swimming professors who wanted to make a living from their expertise.

### ***Professor Fred Cavill***

Among the many British swimming professors to go abroad was Frederick Cavill, whose swimming family went on to develop the sport in Australia and America. After twice failing to swim the Channel, Frederick emigrated to Australia in 1879, establishing a bath in Sydney where he seemed to have made a reasonable living. As well as giving swimming lessons, the professor also trained competitive swimmers, including his sons, three of whom, Sydney, Arthur, and Dick, were integral to the development and worldwide adoption of the front crawl stroke. In the tradition of the sharing and developing of craft knowledge, the stroke emerged from the observation of local practices and a willingness to experiment and innovate, driven by a desire for competitive success. The Cavills adopted a particular local

kicking pattern and experimented with finding an arm action to accompany it. In his first public outing Dick reached halfway five yards ahead of the field and, although he was subsequently overtaken, this performance gave coaches an insight into the stroke's value. Another son, Percy, broke several records in England during 1897 and, in 1902, Dick swam 58.6 seconds in a 100 yards handicap in Hornsey Baths, London, although the ASA decided that a record could not be approved because it was not a scratch race.

Cavill's sons transported the crawl stroke to America when they took appointments as coaches. Sydney Cavill had a 24-year tenure as instructor at the San Francisco Olympic Club from 1899 where he coached many champions at club, Pacific Coast, national and Olympic levels, as well as the 1920 national championship winning water polo team. From 1902 until his death in 1914, Arthur held a series of instructor and lifesaving positions on the West Coast while Dick became director of swimming for the New Zealand Department of Education in 1905 before being appointed as swimming instructor at the Illinois Athletic Club in 1910, where he trained two men who competed in the 1912 Olympics. He was employed by the Pittsburgh Athletic Association in 1911 but dismissed in early 1912 after complaints that he showed favouritism to younger women. Percy Frederick Cavill moved to the United States in 1900 aged twenty-five, first to Miami in 1901 as swimming instructor at the Royal Palm Hotel. He was swimming instructor, and later manager, at the Royal Palm Casino before moving to the newly developed Miami Beach in 1914 to manage the Pavilion. By 1920, he was based as a swimming instructor in the Bahamas, and he is credited with mentoring later influential swimming instructors including Gene McClure, Alexander Ott, and Willis Cooling (Osmond, 2009, 2019). As was characteristic of innovative craft communities, the introduction of the Australian crawl into America by the Cavills stimulated further refinements by American coaches who improved the stroke efficiency so that it could be used for longer distances with greater economy of effort, contributing in the process to the rapid dominance of American swimmers on the international stage.

### ***Instructor Charles Holroyd***

Charles Holroyd, born in Bradford, England, circa 1861, landed in America in March 1889 and in 1892 he became coach to the recently organised Philadelphia swimming club. The following year this "authority on American swimming" was employing his entrepreneurial skills to propose staging an event in Chicago that would bring together the world's best amateur and professionals competing in similar events so that their performances could be compared, which one writer thought would be an excellent opportunity to demonstrate English "supremacy" in the sport (*Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 29 October 1892, p. 3). After Columbia University of

New York became the first educational institution to make swimming part of the college curriculum in 1898, Holroyd was appointed to teach the students. In 1902, the “instructor in swimming” at the Columbia gym was appointed to oversee the swimming classes for the summer and the pool, which was below the floor of the gym, was to be open to women for certain hours each day, except Sunday. Every student taking a physical education course was taught to swim while free classes were formed for students taking only the general gymnasium exercises (*New York Daily Tribune*, 3 April 1902, p. 6).

By this time, Charles had married Mary McCrea, a teacher, and the New York census for 1905 shows swimming instructor Charles living with his wife and daughter. He was clearly being regarded as something of an aquatic expert. While at Columbia, he had developed several inter-collegiate champions and, in creating Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and intercollegiate competitive events, he was “one of the foremost factors” in making swimming a leading amateur sport. Charles had also overseen the amateur swimming at the St Louis Olympics in 1904, and he was happy to pronounce on the state of American swimming. Having won “innumerable medals for his skill”, been instructor of swimming at Columbia University for seven years, and as a “cosmopolitan” who had witnessed and participated in many contests he believed that the swimming of American amateurs was far below what they should be achieving. He attributed this to the “indifference with which the American amateur regards all matters of athletic training. He tries many things and achieves distinction in none”. This “indifference” meant that there was little call for technical knowledge and no demand for capable instructors, so there were not many Americans making a career out of teaching and coaching swimming. Charles was also keen to put on record that his “efficacious” system of teaching had emerged from his many years of experimentation (*Omaha Daily Bee*, 30 June 1907, p. 18).

After leaving Columbia in 1905, Charles was engaged at the Normal School of Physical Education in New York for a year before going to Waltham where he and Mary took charge of the swimming course in the physical education department at Wellesley College (*Boston Globe*, 4 September 1912, 7). When the swimming pool closed in 1912, Charles, one of the “most famous instructors of the country, having devoted years of his life to the study of the art”, was left without a job but, when the Board of Education in Pittsburgh made swimming a part of physical education in the public schools, Charles, one of the “best swimming teachers in this country”, was appointed to the programme. While swimming instructor at Waltham, Holroyd had done an “immense amount of good work for swimming on educational lines”, including formulating the rules that were adopted at Pittsburgh for the examination of qualified teachers (*Pittsburgh Press*, 5 September 1912, 17). The 1920 and 1930 U.S.A. censuses and the 1929

Pittsburgh directory recorded Charles as a teacher in the public schools, but he had been retired by the Board of Education by 1935, the year he died in Leeds, England, on 5 June leaving £504 0s 3d (1935 Probate; *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 2 July 1935, p. 18).

### **Coach George Kistler**

A contemporary of Holroyd was Cornish swimmer George Kistler who left for America in 1893, where his subsequent career as a swimming professor and coach straddled the changes that occurred in American swimming. His early days in America were marked by racing, endurance swims, exhibitions, taking benefits, and constant self-promotion in a way that was entirely in character for swimming professors of the period. However, the swimming structures and the positive attitudes towards professional coaches that emerged in America during the latter part of the century afforded Kistler a range of other opportunities. In particular, the recognition of the professional as an essential part of competitive preparation, especially in the colleges, enabled him to make the transition from swimming professor to swimming coach and this was reflected in the terminology employed to describe him. Although the 1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses describe him as a swimming “instructor” employed by a college, as do his application for naturalisation in 1911 and his passport applications in 1917 and 1918, he was increasingly referred to as “Coach Kistler” in newspaper reports.

In July 1895, the National Swimming Association (NSA), a Philadelphia-based club established in 1893 with Charles Holroyd as one of its instructors, featured Kistler in an aquatic entertainment organised at the opening of the Wayne Natatorium. In 1896, Kistler became a swimming instructor at the Natatorium, before being taken on at the University of Pennsylvania through the university’s Houston Club, a student-run organisation independent from the university authorities. George assumed coaching responsibilities for representative swimmers and the water polo team, and he later credited his subsequent coaching successes to his own years of experience as an elite athlete. Kistler’s transition from instructor to coach was helped by the opening of Weightman Hall, its 100 ft by 30 ft swimming bath, in 1904, and the Director of Physical Education’s decision to make it mandatory for all students under the age of twenty-one to be able to swim at least two lengths. Kistler was appointed as administrator of the swimming programme, enabling him to identify and recruit potential talent for his teams.

It would be 1905 before the first official inter-collegiate championship was held, but by organising several competitions in the tank at Houston Hall, to which he invited other universities, Kistler could justifiably claim to have inaugurated inter-collegiate swimming in America. In March 1905, the inaugural championship of the intercollegiate swimming association was won by Pennsylvania, with Columbia, under Charles Holroyd, second and

Yale third, and a year later the success of the swimming and water polo teams under Kistler began to attract funding from the University's Athletics Association. By 1908, the intercollegiate swimming association had expanded to include Princeton, Yale, Harvard, and Brown, the City College of New York, and the universities of Chicago, Missouri, and Illinois. In 1913, there were five meets on the University of Pennsylvania swim schedule, and this had expanded to ten meets by 1920.

At Pennsylvania, Kistler worked alongside track and field coach Mike Murphy, the doyen of American track athletics coaches. Direct comparisons were made between them in the American press and both men gained a reputation for identifying and developing raw talent, and for inspiring and instilling loyalty and team spirit. Both recognised the importance of scientific training and, in 1906, Kistler ascribed the improvement in the 100 yard record from 1 minute 12 seconds in 1885 to 58 seconds to a better understanding of mechanics and physiology. Both men also experimented with technical innovations, Murphy with the crouch start and Kistler with pool turning techniques. His expertise meant that he was always in demand for coaching engagements outside of the university. In June 1899, he was hired to "instruct, train and coach" the NSA swimmers during the summer and in 1900 he was also coaching the Pythian Athletic club. In 1902, he was teaching in Canada and prior to Duke Kohanamoku's successes in the 1912 Olympics he worked with Kistler to perfect his turns. In the summers of 1917 and 1918 Kistler was employed as swimming instructor with Havana Yacht Club in Cuba. Described as a "crusader" in making swimming a "must" at American Universities, George retired in 1927 and he died on 18 January 1942, aged 78, leaving £397 17s 4d (*Wilkes Barre Times*, 19 January 1942, p. 12; Death Certificate; 3385/22. Probate). Like many swimming professors, he passed on his knowledge to his son, George Herbert who, after appearing in his father's exhibitions as a child, captained his High School swim team and then obtained a swimming teacher post in 1919.

## **The trainer**

### **James Robinson**

British athletic trainers were often in demand in the American private clubs and Universities. Professional middle distance runner Bob Rogers became trainer to London Athletic Club and then he went to America in the 1880s where he was appointed trainer to New York Athletic Club (NYAC). He was followed as trainer to NYAC by professional distance runner Nicholas Busvine Cox from Bristol, who was hired in 1889 and stayed until 1893 when he returned to Britain after the Scot George Goldie's tenure as director of coaching at NYAC (1885–93) ended. Michael Joseph Dee, born in Limerick, Ireland, on 15 May 1868, was assistant trainer to Mike Murphy at

the University of Pennsylvania from 1904 to 1909, and trainer at Philadelphia in the National League from 1910 to 1919, before returning to the University of Pennsylvania as aide to Lawson Robertson from 1920 to 1935.

James Robinson, athletic trainer at Princeton, Harvard, Michigan, and Yale, had been born in Manchester, England, and then emigrated to America in 1879 (for a fuller biography of Robinson see Oldfield, 2016). During his youth, he had been a well-known pedestrian before he capitalised on his reported veterinary qualifications by being appointed as a trainer at the Saratoga Stables in New York, where he was responsible for the race-horses, as well as the breeding of cattle and show and race dogs. He was also appointed trainer to the long-distance athletes at the Harlem Athletic Club. From 1881, he was athletic trainer at Harvard where he was responsible for the training of the track team, although the Harvard authorities had always admired the amateur approach taken by the English Universities and an anti-professional purge resulted in William Bancroft, the rowing coach, and Robinson having their contracts terminated in 1882. Robinson relocated to Princeton, New Jersey, in May 1883 where, after training men for the intercollegiate games, he was appointed to condition the football team and review other college sports, as well as looking after the “Varsity Grounds” and officiating intramural sporting events. Normally, each university athletic team had its own trainer, but, between 1883 and 1906, Robinson fulfilled this role across a wide range of Princeton’s sporting clubs and by October 1885, he was being paid an annual salary of \$750, split between the Princeton undergrads and alumni (*Sporting Life*, 28 October 1885, p. 6).

An 1889 interviewer described Robinson as “one of the finest developers of all that is athletic in a man in the United States” and reported him as saying that his training system was not “easily described”. He always started by familiarising himself with the “constitutional peculiarities of the men” and then structuring his programme to suit each individual because it was a mistake to train everyone the same way since one may “loaf” on work that would kill another (*Daily Illinois State Register* 24 December 1889, p. 2). His systematic methods of conditioning athletes were widely admired and Robinson’s skills were acknowledged by the Manhattan Athletic Club (MAC) who offered him the position of head trainer and director at their newly constructed clubhouse in New York City at a salary “three times as large” as that of Princeton, making him, at that point, the highest paid trainer in American athletic history (*Daily Princetonian*, 28 February 1900, p. 1). He regularly visited England to scout for new talent and offer them incentives to join MAC, encouraging prominent working-class northern athletes, who were struggling to maintain their amateur status under the British system, to default to America. His regular column in the *World* provided a platform to outline his methods and discuss his views on athletics, contributing further to his reputation as a pioneering trainer

(*Daily Princetonian*, 3 November 1886, p. 3), and his engagement in all areas of player preparation highlights nicely the overlap between coaching, training and physical conditioning that was typical of coaching practice in this period.

In 1896, Robinson trained the Michigan football team and he spent 1899 at Yale as football trainer where he was employed to take charge of the physical conditioning of the players while “coachers” took charge of the playing side (*New Haven Register*, 19 September 1899, p. 2). Robinson was then signed by the Yale track athletic team to take control from February 1900 until after the intercollegiate meet in late May before being reappointed at Princeton in 1900 as general athletic trainer and overseeing the preparation of two championship football and four baseball teams (*Trenton Times*, 20 March 1906, p. 11). Again, he noted that he would have entire control of the players, including ordering and inspecting their food, although he would have nothing to do with coaching the teams (*Evening Star*, 6 August, p. 9). Robinson returned to Princeton at the end of October 1905, and was anticipating taking charge of the squad again, but he died from heart failure less than a year later. His funeral was attended by several athletes and administrators as well as Mike Murphy, the “celebrated trainer” from the University of Pennsylvania who “came up to pay his respects to the body of his fellow-trainer” (*Trenton Evening Times* 23 March 1906, p. 11).

### **The rowing coach**

#### **William Haines**

Between 1890 and 1898, when he beat George Bubear in a single scull contest, professional sculler Bill Haines stroked both two and four oared shells, winning the National Regatta for three successive years and the punting championship eight times. By 1902, he was running *The Buffalo Hotel* in Blyth and coaching James Lavery, who himself subsequently became an assistant club coach in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1911. After a period coaching the Royal English College from 1905, Haines moved on to run the *Star and Garter* and to coach London Rowing Club in 1910. Following coaching engagements in Norway, Germany, and Austria, he went to America in 1911 to coach the Union Boat Club in Boston and between 1912 and 1914 Haines competed in professional sculling events in America before coaching at Harvard University in 1915. His crews performed well in beating Yale three years out of five and one of his Harvard crews made it to the final heat for the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley. In December 1923, he accepted the head coach position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where rowing prospered under Haines who built up a rowing programme from 1924 that “created a crew spirit and



a real interest in the sport” (*The Tech*, 8 December 1924, p. 4). After only one year at MIT, Columbia, whose coach, Fred Miller, had resigned by mutual agreement before the end of the rowing season, asked Haines to prepare their crews for the Poughkeepsie Regatta, following which Haines returned to MIT as coach. Haines retired from MIT in 1937 and passed away in 1948 after a long illness. In another example of how families were often drawn into coaching communities, his nephew, Henry Herbert “Bert” Haines, was coach of Harvard crews, first of the freshman 1920–1936 and then head coach from 1937 to 1952.

### ***The lawn tennis coach***

#### ***Charles Edmund Haggett***

One of the most prominent coaching exports to America was lawn tennis coach Charles Edmund Haggett, born 24 December 1882, in Birchington, Kent. According to later newspaper reports, Haggett’s father had been a sea captain before becoming a turf expert for a club in Kent. When Charles was thirteen, they moved to Queen’s club in London where he learned lawn tennis from the best English players of the period. He had a rare natural ability and for twelve seasons from the age of seventeen he was engaged by the Royal Club of Stockholm where he taught members of the royal family and the aristocracy. At the end of indoor tennis season in Stockholm he would go to the Continent, first to Copenhagen, then to the Vienna Park Club, the Krestoffaky club in St. Petersburg, and the Sport Club in Leipsic among others. Most of the continental royalty, among whom tennis had become an important sport, received their tennis knowledge from Haggett. He spent three summers travelling through Germany stopping at one club after another by appointment and he was enthusiastic about the way they were going about their training in their normal systematic, scientific way (*New York Times*, 14 September 1913). According to him, England had been falling behind largely because she had allowed all her best professionals to leave the country. France and Germany had imported all the best teachers from England and, as a result, had improved enormously (*The Evening Herald*, 13 June 1913).

From October 1911 Charles was engaged by the Swedish Olympic Lawn Tennis Committee to prepare their players for the covered court competitions, and afterwards, during June 1912, for the outdoor events. In February 1913, he was instructing on the lawn tennis stand in Harrods, at which point he was attached to the Covered Courts Club in Dulwich. That year he married Hilden (Hilda) Kirsteina, and they left London for New York in April where he was engaged as professional to the West Side Club, the venue for the first of the international matches between Australia and the United States due to be played in June. Charles worked briefly with

the Australians before travelling to Westchester to coach the Americans (*New York Tribune*, 31 May 1913) after United States Lawn Association officials decided to put him in charge of their training. This was an entirely new initiative for American tennis, but later observers believed that Haggett's contribution had significantly improved their chances of success. In his first few weeks in America, he had already shown an ability to teach the principles of scientific tennis (*The New York Times* 25 May 1913) and his coaching practice involved working players hard when they did work and then giving them complete rest in between. He was not keen on having players "dawdle about the courts" and throughout practice he played with the athletes to show them their own weak points and eliminate faults in the way they covered the court. Tennis was "a science to Haggett" who had played and studied the game since he was thirteen, giving him "an intuition that told him the proper move at every turn". Haggett considered the game in America to be in its infancy, despite the highly competitive players that were being produced, and thought that it needed direction from the national organisation. Clubs needed competent instruction but the problem was that the number of men who were professionals, or wanted to be professionals, was small and the demand was far greater than the supply with professionals who had any reputation always receiving requests to sign a contract with clubs for five or ten years. A school of professionals, a tennis school for the training of tennis teachers, had been discussed in England, which would be a great thing for tennis everywhere since America, England, and the continent could all draw on this school for instructors.

The employment of a tennis professional was unusual in America and the two or three coaches who had been engaged previously had made little impact on the development of the game, but things would be different after Haggett who set an example for future professionals. While he had been employed in helping the Australian and American teams for international matches most of Haggett's time had been spent teaching the male and female members of the West Side Club where the demand was such that he was occupied almost every hour of the day. He had "time to eat and sleep and smoke an occasional cigarette" but that was about all (*New York Times*, 14 September 1913). However, although the West Side club regarded Haggett as a "wizard in his way and unquestionably one of the greatest lawn tennis players in the world" the Club decided not to retain him, and Charles, reputed to be the highest salaried lawn tennis professional in the world, left the club in December 1913 with those close to the "little Englishman" believing that he would probably return to Europe because he had had several offers from prominent clubs (*New York Tribune* 25 December 1913, p. 8). Charles stayed in America though and in 1916 he was celebrating the opening of new courts at the North Shore Country Club, Glen Head, Long Island (*New York Tribune* 22 May 1916, p. 14). His 1917 WW1 Draft card, 1919 Naturalization

Petition, and the 1920 US Census recorded him living at 63 Lexington Ave with Hilden and described the self-employed lawn tennis trainer and teacher as of medium height, medium build, brown eyed and brown-haired. He married for a second time in 1920 and then again in 1927. In the 1930 census Haggett, teacher of tennis, was in New Jersey with his third wife Kathleen and the 1940 census recorded Charles, a private instructor of tennis, living with twenty-nine-year-old Kathleen, son Charles and daughter Patricia. On his WW11 Draft card circa 1941 Charles was being employed by the County Tennis Club of Westchester. Charles died aged 63 in 1946 in Jersey City, Hudson, New Jersey.

## Reflections

While an individual life course cannot on its own definitively highlight wider social trends, this collection of short biographies of Bunyan, Cavill, Holroyd, Kistler, Robinson, Haines, and Haggett illustrates nicely the social and economic origins of those British coaches who chose to travel abroad. As skilled working-class men with an aptitude for training and coaching their opportunities were inevitably limited by a sporting culture in which they were treated as servants rather than experts in their craft. In leaving Britain for America during the long-Victorian period they were exchanging an environment in which their expertise and experience was being increasingly marginalised for one in which their skills were highly valued and the length and depth of their involvement with the American system suggests that it was also economically worthwhile. Given that America had yet to develop many of the sporting structures already established in Britain, it was natural that a hierarchical diffusion took place in which experienced individuals were imported to help develop clubs, universities, individuals, and, indeed, different sports. In the process, the presence of these migrant coaches stimulated the creation of a culturally specific coaching heritage, one that significantly altered the balance of power in international sport. The value accorded to the professional coach and a focus on victory rather than participation became defining characteristics of American sports at all levels and as the modern Olympics became dominated by Americans, a second phase of coach migration saw Europeans nations turn to North America, rather than Britain, for coaching expertise. Elite athletes increasingly regarded the United States as “the exemplar of modernity, technology, and progress” and respected the nation’s dominance in international sport as the result of “rigorous and extensive training and careful attention to efficiency” (Keys, 2004, p. 180). Prior to the proposed 1916 Berlin Olympics, Austria engaged an American coach, Alexander Copland, while Germany appointed four national athletics coaches, headed by Alvin Kraenzlein,

formerly coach of Princeton University and four times Olympic champion. Lawson Robertson was recruited by Hungary and even the British Amateur Athletic Association turned to a Canadian W.R. Knox, who had coached the Canadian team in 1912, when they finally appointed a national coach in 1914.

This mobility of coaches was critical to the dissemination of coaching knowledge and to the improvement of native players and coaches (Torres, 2010, 2012) and it was a major factor in the spread of indigenous sports. The globalisation process of Asian martial arts started with judo during the late eighteenth century when Kano Jigoro toured Europe and the United States, while the early globalisation of taekwondo relied on the efforts of private instructors in North America and Europe, especially West Germany. By the late 1960s, several of the Korean taekwondo instructors who had settled in West Germany went on to other European countries and Canada. Many early Korean martial arts leaders emigrated to the United States to teach taekwondo, primarily because of its favourable environment for establishing commercial martial arts schools, while Choi Hong Hi emigrated to Canada in 1972 (Moenig & Il Kim, 2020).

Hierarchical diffusion through the importing of coaching expertise accelerated after the Eastern Bloc began to look outwards in the latter stages of the twentieth century. During the 1970s and 1980s, the USSR dominated world gymnastics and many nations attempted to learn about the Soviet system through visits and gymnastic tours. After former National Coach, Andrei Rodionenko, fell out of favour with the Soviet government in the late 1980s he was employed in Australia and became the first Soviet coach to emigrate. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, constituent countries experienced a “brain drain” as skilled coaches migrated to countries where their skills would be more highly valued, often relying on their social networks to facilitate their migration (Kerr & Cervin, 2017; Kerr & Obel, 2018, p. 615). Eastern European coaches were “highly knowledgeable, disciplined, and by Western standards, relatively cheap”. British sport now looked towards the more successful nations in international sport and recruited their coaches to compensate for a lack of indigenous expertise. The impact of the Bulgarian gymnastics coaches who migrated to Great Britain in the 1990s and significantly raised the standard of British gymnastics (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004, p. 825) was but one example of how British coaching benefitted from accessing other coaching traditions through hosting overseas coaches.

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