



# **The Professionalisation of Sports Coaching in the UK: Issues and Conceptualisation**

*By 2012, the practice of coaching in the UK will be elevated to a profession acknowledged as central to the development of sport and the fulfilment of individual potential.*

(UK Vision for Coaching, 2001:5)

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**February 2008**

## **Acknowledgements**

sports coach UK would like to thank Bill Taylor and Dean Garratt for the excellent work they put into this project.

Many of the recommendations highlighted have been incorporated into the UK Coaching Framework.

Thanks should also be given to Melina Timson-Katchis and Sue Jolly who made extended comments on the earlier drafts; as well as to Chris Stanners and Joanne Chapman for reading the final proof.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction and background**

- This report was commissioned by sports coach UK and the main purpose of the work is to discuss notions of 'profession', 'professionalism', 'professional practice' and 'professionalisation', and to establish the case for, and conditions necessary to achieve, the professionalisation of coaching in the UK
- The structure of sports coaching in the UK is based on a system whose cultural characteristics are fundamentally premised on volunteerism. In the desire to professionalise the occupation and its working practices, therefore, we must not lose sight of the importance of historical qualities, the role of mutual support, and the strong sense of belonging built upon the love of sport.
- Drawing on a wide range of literature, the report provides a discussion of contemporary issues surrounding the process of professionalisation. It suggests that it may be more useful to consider professionalism as an ideology rather than a pre-specified condition or fixed state, where any given stance within the profession is inevitably constituted by values and ideologies. Manifestations of these put the profession under continuous pressure to mirror both changes and expectations in society and to reflect in broader terms the political influences that continue to impact upon professional contexts.
- The process of professionalisation is not linear and it is important to realise that the vision for the profession of coaching by 2012 that is held now may not be the one that best serves the coaching community in the future. Within the report, it is suggested that movement towards professionalisation may be more prominent in some sports than others. This is because of individual cultural traits and historical market positions, which provide for differences within and between sports and their associated coaching traditions. Moreover, the transition towards fully fledged professionalism for the performance/elite element of sports coaching, for example, may be less problematic, as it already benefits from considerable additional support and funding streams.
- The report was based on a desk-based literature review, alongside an analysis of key documentation.

### **Traits and characteristics of a coaching profession**

- Although defining a profession by its traits and characteristics has a number of disadvantages, inasmuch as it is beset by methodological and positional shortcomings, it does provide an opportunity to identify and understand performance within the professionalisation process. Most professional occupations have:
  - professional education
  - a distinct and specialised body of knowledge
  - career structures and pathways
  - explicit ethical and value systems
  - an independent professional membership body
  - professional practice
  - clarity and definition with regard to their role and remit.

- The development of the UKCC has gone some way to establishing a base for these aspects to develop. Additional work needs to be done in other areas to help support the professionalisation of coaching.

### **The professionalisation of sports coaching: enablers and barriers**

- There are a number of political, cultural and structural enablers and barriers to the professionalisation of coaching. These elements are subject to change as the political, social and economic climate shifts and the development of the occupation brings forward new challenges. These are discussed with reference to the influence they may have on the professionalisation process. Suggestions are made regarding how sports coach UK might manage these elements towards 2012.
- Factors that may be viewed as enablers are:
  - building on a culture of change
  - the establishment of UKCC
  - the 2012 factor
  - partnership in social and health policy
  - a professional body for coaching
  - championing the work of coaches
  - building on internal support from coaching
  - the UK Coaching Framework
  - the Coaching Task Force Report.
- Factors that may be viewed as barriers are:
  - internal resistance from coaching
  - changes in government priority
  - changes in leisure and sport markets
  - lack of opportunities for employment and deployment
  - fragmentation within the professional sector.

### **Benchmarking the future of the professionalisation of coaching**

The future of coaching as a profession is benchmarked against the progress made toward full professionalisation. Gold, silver and bronze scenarios are offered come the year 2012, and key determinants are highlighted as they relate to the professionalisation process. A discussion is provided on how these statements might be regarded and questions asked concerning who might be in the best position to judge the progress the profession has made.

## 1. Introduction

This report was commissioned to explore the conceptual issues surrounding the transition of sport coaching in the UK, with particular emphasis on the processes of professionalisation that will lead towards the development of a coaching profession. In doing so, its remit was to present a discussion concerning notions of professionalism and to identify the characteristics and traits by which an emerging profession, such as coaching, might be best benchmarked.

Alongside any professionalisation process sit a number of factors that will influence, in a positive or negative manner, its development. These factors are given due consideration and suggestions have been made on how these elements might best be mediated and managed in efforts to allow the 'professionalisation process' to be mindful of the changing nature of public perception and demand, while also remaining sympathetic to the traditional voluntary and organic roots of British sports coaching. Keeping this army of voluntary coaches at the forefront of any consideration and policymaking is critical if the processes of professionalisation are going to best serve the very sports communities who are at the forefront of such change.

### Background

Historically, in the United Kingdom, sports coaching has been largely confined to 'grass-roots activity', prospering on the 'good will' of amateurs and volunteers. Indeed, volunteering is a specific form of social action that is unique to Western democracies that grew from democratic principles such as freedom of speech, self-organisation and assembly (Curtis et al, 2001; Cuskelly et al, 2006). Up until the late 1960s and early 1970s, successive governments had an 'at arm's length approach' to sport, governing bodies (GBs) and the coaching practices found within (Coghlan and Webb, 1990; Roche, 1993; Houlihan, 1997). Sports, and by implication their coaches, were seen as 'experts in the field' and the autonomy and sovereignty that this approach provided was valued and maintained by both sides (Green and Houlihan, 2005). The 1970s saw a cascade of government reports and policy that began to draw closer links between sport and the state (1972: GB Sports Council established; 1973: House of Lords Report – *Sport and Leisure* (Cobham Report); 1977: White Paper – *A Policy for the Inner Cities*). While few of these documents made any explicit reference to the occupation of coaching, they did fundamentally alter the relationship between sport and government and engender the use of sport (and by implication its coaches) as a social tool, bringing it to the attention of a wider body of policymakers concerned with the welfare state (Roche, 1993).

The following decade saw a more explicit focus on coaching. The GB Sports Council strategy *Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years* (1982) provided grants to governing bodies (GBs) for elite coaching and its development. In the mid-1980s, the then British Association of Sports Coaches and the National Coaching Foundation agreed to formulate a 'think tank' to consider the future of coaching. Both the Sports Council for Wales (*Coaching, Sports Science and Sports Medicine*, 1987) and the Scottish Sports Council (*A National Strategy for Coach Education and Coach Development*, 1988) produced their own documents with the intention of coordinating and providing structures by which coaching might best develop. *Coaching Matters* (Sports Council, 1991) and the UK Sports Council (*The Development of Coaching in the United Kingdom: a consultative document*, 2001) formalised this call for a more integrated direction. Within these documents, and more recently, there has been a proliferation of debate concerning the professionalisation of coaching and establishing a framework for a coaching profession (Sports Council, 1991; UK Sport, 2001; Department for

Culture, Media and Sport, 2002). For example, in the *Vision for Coaching*, UK Sport strongly recommended that the standards of coaching be elevated to those of 'a profession acknowledged as central to the development of sport and the fulfilment of individual potential' (UK Sport, 2001: 5). Following the publication of the government's *Plan for Sport* (2001) came the establishment of a Coaching Task Force, set up to review the role of coaching and to tackle 'the shortage of coaches, both professional and voluntary, and recognise coaching as a profession, with accredited qualifications and a real career development structure' ([www.culture.gov.uk/sport/coaching.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/sport/coaching.htm), accessed 18-05-06).

This professionalisation process can be seen as a key element in the 'up-skilling' of the coaching workforce and can be considered critical if the occupation of coaching is to play a part in the upkeep of the health of the nation and increase the degree and longevity of the public's participation in physical activity, as well as contributing to the success of our international athletes. It is hoped that the development of coaching into a legitimate profession underpinned by accepted standards of practice and education, ethical codes of conduct and well-formed career and development pathways will have a major positive influence on all aspects and spheres within sport. Professional coaches should raise levels of performance at the elite level, allowing our performers to compete with confidence on the world stage. Professional coaches will be better equipped to inspire and engage young people into a lifetime of physical activity and better health. Professional coaches will be in a stronger position to influence and shape their own occupation as it matures and develops to be seen as an established part of Britain's sporting landscape.

While the aforementioned discussion and policy documents have been united in their desire for coaching to undergo this change and to benefit from the advantages that it will bring, few have offered details on how we might go about the process of professionalisation. If we are to professionalise the occupation of coaching, individual coaches and their practice, how might we actively support this process with a structure for change and provision?

The prospect of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 has further sharpened the focus for the recruitment and support of current and future coaches (sports coach UK, 2006), while simultaneously creating an impetus to develop a coaching profession with enduring qualities and a lasting presence beyond the Olympic Games. The agenda for widening participation in sport and provision of high-quality opportunities for children out of school (Northwest Regional Development Agency Research Unit, 2006) has prompted further investment in coaching as a means of enhancing the participation of young people in sport at all stages of development (Cote et al, 1995; Kidd and Donnelley, 2000; MacPhail et al, 2003). Thus, in addition to notions of elite performance, sports coaching can also be regarded as a vehicle to address issues of community involvement, the development of social capital and notions of corporate social responsibility (Harris, 1998; Jarvie, 2003).

In this respect, the role of 'sports leaders' and coaches has been identified as influential in the development of high-quality guidance on habitual 'life health practices' and physical activity levels (Brown and Butterfield, 1992; Lawlor et al, 1999; Parsons, 1999). Moreover, the relationship between health and sustainability of funding for sport (and by inference coaching) has been recently recognised by Richard Caborn (Minister for Sport at the time), as he urges coaches 'to take seriously the responsibilities for the health benefits of participation in sport at all levels' (transcript from the speech given at The Belton Woods Coaching Summit, 2006).

Against this backdrop, the 'professional coach' is then constructed emblematically, by being both 'reduced' to a 'corporate identity' (through a UK-wide system of certification) and simultaneously 'inflated' to the 'moral agent' (Stronach et al, 2002), combining core moral purposes with objectives towards widening participation and promoting social inclusion. This multiplicity of roles and identities widens the remit of coaching, but, at the same time, brings additional issues of confusion and tensions, with critics suggesting that coaches of the 'new profession' have been reduced to mere technicians through a loss of autonomy and increasing accountability (Hursh, 2005; relating to the professionalisation of teachers' education).

The interweaving of coaching into the wider health agenda provides opportunities for coaching to establish interprofessional relationships and court legitimacy among other professional groups (Nieman, 1988). Yet these new identities have not gone unchallenged (Garrett, 2001; Nichols and Garrett, 2001) and, for many, there remain concerns about the associated commercialisation of coaching practice, as the profession enters into the sport/leisure marketplace: 'the way the market philosophy has hit sport has made a difference... [for] it has certainly hit the opportunities of thousands of youngsters' (Nichols et al, 1998: 41).

Against this evolving professional landscape, sports coach UK, in partnership with national governing bodies of sport and key funding agencies (the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; the Department for Children, Families and Schools; UK Sport; the home country sports councils; the British Olympic Association; Youth Sport Trust and SkillsActive) developed a UK Coaching Framework in 2006, with the following aims:

- clearly map out the key goals, structures, resources and outcomes for the UK Coaching Framework over three main phases: 2006-2008 (three years from time of report), 2009-2012 (seven years from time of report) and 2013-2016 (11 years from of report)
- identify and agree the specific role to be played by sports coach UK as the government-designated support/technical agency for coaching
- identify and agree the optimal working arrangements between sports coach UK and key partners in government and GBs
- identify and agree the processes and procedures required in order for sports coach UK to provide relevant, cutting-edge services, products and systems that support the coaching process at all levels (sports coach UK, 2006).

In support of these aims, a UK-wide process of consultation was launched, with an invitation extended to interested parties, including athletes, coach mentors, national trainers, officials, parents, participants, sports-industry professionals and sports volunteers, to respond to an online or paper-based questionnaire. The survey addressed the role of coaches and coaching in order to develop a definitive plan for coaching over the next three years.

A key focus of the survey was to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the coaching *system as a whole*, in relation to factors of quality, development, recruitment, deployment, management and research development. It does not, however, determine an agenda for exploring the differences that exist between coaching cultures and traditions, across different professional spaces for sport (Bale, 1993). Given the emphasis on determining priorities for action within coaching (in terms of developing a 'more unified approach to the planning and funding of coaching', a 'UK-wide certification system for coaches' and a



'redefin[ition]... of the working relationship between sports coach UK, Coachwise and other agencies' [sports coach UK, 2006]), there is a compelling argument that in addition to establishing a national 'brand' for coaching, it is also imperative to understand the *particular traditions, cultures, and practices* that construct this 'brand' and, more significantly, feed into and inform policymaking at national level.

Professionalisation, professionalism and professional practice are not end points; their definitions and characteristics are under continuous tension while responding to levels of expectation from government, other professions and changes in public demand. The developing profession of sports coaching has to respond to athletes, participants, employers, international structures and shifting market demands. History tells us that the professionalisation pathway of any occupation is neither linear nor uniform, nor is it without its problems (Freidson, 1986). Each occupation has its own history, culture and positions. For example, the medical profession, often cited as one of the model 'old' professional groups, has recently had to deal with a period of change and redefinition as new health professionals (in nursing, midwifery, dentistry and allied professions, such as physiotherapy and speech therapy; Salvage, 2002) seek to establish themselves as legitimate occupations within a profession that has historically been dominated by doctors and protected notions of 'old' professionalism. This particular example has not only seen the growth of new professional groups, but new ways of defining and constructing professional practice. These redefinitions have been contested by doctors, as they seek to maintain the unequal power relationship inherent in their historical position and practice (Salvage, 2002). While we might draw some parallels with other groups and emerging occupations when considering coaching, we must be mindful of the historical and situational nuances of coaching in the UK.

The structures of sports coaching in the UK are fundamentally voluntary in both culture and make-up. In the desire to professionalise the occupation, its systems and its coaches, we must not lose sight of its inherent qualities: mutual support and, from an ontological perspective, its own sense of belonging. Volunteering, as Burden (2001) suggests, is located in the discourse surrounding ideas of citizenship and the development of social capital, where the engagement with community is based around shared values that come from, and are inherent in, the act of volunteering. These actions bring forward and engender a sense of independence and social commitment and help to build and maintain webs of interdependence and mutual support (Taylor, 2007).

It is this sense of service and duty that we must build upon if, in time, coaching is to evaluate itself as being of the same status as other professional groups found in the service and commercial sectors. In turning to these other professional groups, we must be careful in our analysis, for the move to import good practice observed elsewhere into a different professional setting is extremely problematic. Exotic practices will invariably be at odds with the socio-historical traditions of sports coaching, as well as the cultural nuances within particular sports (Green, 1990; Halpin and Troyna, 1995). There are few, if any, professions that have seen this degree of transformation, especially given the distinct historical influences of sports coaching's volunteer and 'mutual aid' bases. Although there may have been some calls from within coaching communities for coaching to develop its own professional practices and to raise its own status, it has never been politically or occupationally strong enough to enact such change. With the professionalisation agenda coming from the outside, from government, the mechanisms of change need to take account of the fragmented nature of coaching in the UK, and be sympathetic to the insecurities this journey will likely engender.

## 2. Research Approach

### Methodology

In response to the tender document (sports coach UK [2006] *Defining and Conceptualising 'Profession', 'Professionalism' and the 'Professionalisation' of Coaching in the UK*), the most appropriate methodology to address the research objectives, as well as the challenges of the timetable, was to employ a desktop-based literature review, along with a textual analysis of key policy documentation. The literature review (in the appendices) summarises most of the key texts that relate to the study and the subject area. The resulting meta-analysis of the 'position and picture' regarding the professionalisation of sports coaching in the UK will provide a common framework from which future research and assumptions could be drawn. As a result of the relatively small number of papers that draw upon empirical research and refer directly to the professionalisation of sport coaching, it will be necessary to examine the wider discourse surrounding the professionalisation of teachers, nurses and other occupational groups, as a means of illuminating key issues within sports coaching.

A cautionary note needs to be struck here. The occupation of sports coaching in the UK is undergoing a dramatic and far-reaching structural and cultural change. The particularities of a strong voluntary base, a diverse and fragmented sports and club structure and the overarching ethos of 'volunteerism' and self-help mean that, while some parallels and lessons can, and will, be drawn from other professional sectors undergoing similar transformation, sports coaching finds itself in unique and relatively uncertain territory, whose landscape defines an exciting period of change.

*Where appropriate, illustrative examples and interview quotes have been used to help contextualise and personalise some of the issues raised in the research. Much of this data derives from one of the research team's ongoing work: an ethnographic study of coaches and their relationship with processes of professionalisation, exploring tensions and possibilities.*

### 3. Traits and Characteristics of a Coaching Profession

*I am looking forward to the day that when I tell people how I earn my living, that is being a coach, they don't look back at me bemused, not really understanding what I actually do each and every day.*

Clare, community football coach

#### Introduction

As suggested elsewhere within this report (Section 7), the terms 'profession' and 'professional' are somewhat problematic, in that any effort to locate the terms by rigidly defining them fails to acknowledge the salient features of any professional process, ie that it is in continuous flux, responding to changing social, political, occupational and market demands.

A number of authors (Johnson, 1984; Eraut, 1994; Stronach et al, 2002) have suggested that the listing and identification of the traits and characteristics of any profession is of limited use in reality. For them, the criteria used to frame these traits as a means of judging professional status has little inherent value. It also presupposes that traits and characteristics are fixed and predetermined, as opposed to a function of the constant pressure and discourses that have influenced and shaped these professions over time. The list approach often takes as its point of reference the 'ideal type' (Weber, 1948): professional bodies in the 'old professions' such as medicine and law. In doing so, it assumes that these professions provide an appropriate gauge by which other professional groups might measure themselves. It could be argued that these ideal-type professions emerged in very different cultural and economic times and, to that end, have little to offer in an analysis of the characteristics that other new occupations should aspire to. Other research (Hickson and Thomas, 1996) has found little commonality in the identified 'core' traits and characteristics held by established professional groups, thereby leading commentators to caution against a list approach.

In addition to the problems of providing a simple list of characteristic and traits, the term 'professional' is sometimes further confused by the number of sub-terms in use. Semi- and quasi-professions seem to suggest some form of halfway house, or nearly a profession. While it could be argued that they help to describe the point an occupational group is at in its journey towards full professionalisation, they do little to add clarity to the use of terminology and may do no more, conceptually, than add one further ill-defined category (Eraut, 1994).

Although this call for caution should be noted, for the emerging professional occupation of coaching, the establishment of a group of traits and characteristics does provide a means by which checks and benchmarks can be made to assess its present state and progression.

Lyle (2002) provides a critical discussion of the characteristics to which professional coaching should sensibly aspire. This is used as a basis against which the emerging profession of coaching can be judged, and in relation to the fundamental and critical changes being implemented by the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) and the UK Coaching Framework.

The suggested criteria by which sports coaching could be judged in terms of its effort to move towards a full profession by 2012 are as follows:

- professional education
- a distinct and specialised body of knowledge
- career structure and pathways
- explicit ethical and value systems
- an independent professional membership body
- professional practice
- clarity and definition of roles and remits
- opportunities for continuous professional development.

### **Professional education**

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of university courses dealing with coaching. The relevance and appropriateness of these, and other courses, will be enhanced by the proposed sports coach UK kite-marking scheme and the incorporation of National Occupational Standards into the curriculum. In addition, UKCC-endorsed GB courses can claim to have undergone a professionalisation process because, for the first time, delivery bodies have to meet 'minimum standards', separate training and awarding functions, and external verification and endorsement. Education about what it means to be a 'professional practitioner' and how this relates to professional behaviour while coaching should be incorporated into the UKCC syllabuses. This is particularly apposite, given the omission of these issues in such syllabuses.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- sports coach UK to take steps to establish a higher education (HE)/further education (FE) kite-marking scheme
- to continue, and monitor, a 'minimum standards' approach to all external verification and endorsement processes within the UKCC and the wider UK Coaching Framework
- UKCC syllabuses to be amended to make the education of professionalism and professional practice explicit at each and every level
- to define coaching expertise and build the education around this notion, not minimum standards.

### **Distinct and specialised body of knowledge**

Within UK HE, and academia more generally, there is an increasing separation of the discipline of coaching from sports science. This has allowed individual aspects found within coaching pedagogy and delivery to develop. These emerging bodies of knowledge are beginning to address some of the social, interpersonal, power and political elements of the coach/athlete relationship and the changing role of the coach. Higher education is likely to take an increasingly central role in the education of coaches at all levels. This includes providing specialist input at UKCC Levels 4/5, where individual GBs feel their own coach educators do not have the expertise to fulfil the content of training at those levels. There is an increasing number of both research/empirical-based and generalist publications focusing on coaching as a distinct research/knowledge area.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- sports coach UK to continue to fund research on coaching and to use its own in-house publications to present research to a wider audience

- to empower a new professional body for coaches to act as a conduit for the dissemination of specialised knowledge (this role could be taken on by another body, should the development of a professional body for coaches not be realised)
- sports coach UK to champion an inclusive approach to all types of coaching research and critical appraisal.

### **Career structure and pathways**

The establishment of UKCC levels 1–4/5 has gone partway to providing a training and education pathway. The generic content across GBs is encouraging and seeks to acknowledge transferability. In turn, this will provide opportunities for individual coaches to obtain a number of awards, particularly at the lower levels, that would aid employability. The content and operational definitions offered by the UKCC helps to outline the appropriate knowledge requirements at each level and provide a clear professional development structure. In addition, the UK Coaching Framework goes some way to mapping the development of a clear career pathway for coaches as they progress. The structures put in place to support long-term coach development will help GBs and other agencies sustain coach competences in the field and fulfil a number of necessary CPD opportunities. A career pathway linked to sustainable and well-paid employment is more difficult to establish. However, there has been some progress shown through the employment of 45 regional coaching development officers and the goal that, by the end of 2006, 3000 community sports coaches should be in place. Historically, access to coaching services in the UK has been relatively cheap; the development of a mature economic market to sustain the employment of a large number of coaches may be problematic and slow.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- sports coach UK, in tandem with other sport agencies, to raise the public's perception of coaching and the value of coaching as an occupation
- sports coach UK to monitor the growth of coaching employment/deployment opportunities within the sector
- the industry needs to realise that, with the onset of professionalisation, there is likely to be an increase in the cost of employing coaches at most levels.

### **Explicit ethical and value systems**

An agreed and established code of conduct and model of ethical practice is central to the formation and legitimacy of any professional group. There are a number of published 'codes of conduct' and organisations who have influenced, and wish to influence, the manner in which coaches practise. A single set of ethical and moral value statements would help bring clarity, define remits and provide boundaries. It is suggested that sports coach UK seeks consultation with other sports agencies (UK Sport, sports councils, Youth Sport Trust, CCPR, etc) in a bid to establish a single code of conduct and ethical model for coaching that will, in turn, help outline the remit of operation for the new professional body.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- to revisit sports coach UK's *Code of Practice for Sports Coaches* to ensure that it represents current 'best practice' and is operated by all aspects of the coaching community.
- sports coach UK to charge a new professional body to hold governance over these ethical and moral value statements; we suggest this action should be given priority

- to ensure that the statements are upheld and to propagate this as a condition of membership of the new professional coaching body

### **An independent professional membership body**

As suggested by Lyle (2002), this is a key element in the establishment of coaching as a profession. It is important that any professional body is seen both internally and externally as viable, worthwhile and legitimate. If coaching and coaches are to position themselves alongside fellow professionals in the health, fitness and sports industries, it is important that the professional body is regarded as being strong enough to establish credibility and able to promote a feeling of trustworthiness. The establishment of any such body must have a close relationship with the 'licence to practise' process, and membership of the professional body must be related to holding such a licence. The report suggests that one without the other would undermine the legitimacy of either and could be seen as imposed and managed, as opposed to self-regulated internal verification. The new body must have the remit to establish 'codes of practice', apply sanctions to its members, endorse 'best practice' and provide legal and protective services. Any membership body, and its developing national and regional structures, is likely to contribute to the development of 'communities of practice' and 'informal knowledge networks'. While past attempts to develop a representative body for coaches have failed, it could be suggested that recent cultural changes and expectations make it unlikely that better opportunities will emerge to establish the new organisation.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- sports coach UK and other agencies should resist the pressure to dilute the strength or remit of any new professional body; the initial founding of an 'association body' or 'representative body' would only hinder the occupation in its long-term aspirations to become fully professional by 2012
- sports coach UK to undertake a feasibility study concerning the establishment of a national professional body for sports coaching.

### **Professional practice**

One of the central tenets of the UKCC is to require any GB wishing to gain endorsement of their coach-education scheme to meet a set of 'minimum operational standards'. These standards refer to the content of each course across the four/five levels, aspects of the delivery of these courses, and the training of the GB coach-education staff responsible for the delivery of these courses. It could be argued that in meeting these requirements, any successfully endorsed GB has undergone a professional induction of its coach-education practice and delivery, and that any successful candidate holding any UKCC-endorsed award has been subject to a 'professionalisation' of his/her coaching practice, underpinned by the enhancement of learning programmes, coach educators, quality-assurance systems, etc.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- to continue, and monitor, a 'minimum standards' approach to all external verification and endorsement processes
- sports coach UK to conduct a regular review and revision of UKCC content to ensure that courses are evidence-based and represent the industry benchmark for current 'best practice'.

## **Clarity and definition of roles and remits**

Despite the increased clarity that the UKCC and the defining of its levels and remits bring, the question of 'what activities should we include under the term "coaching"?' is still open. As Lyle (2002) suggests, the boundaries between what constitutes participation and performance coaching are not clear, nor is there a separation between the physical education teacher and sports coach. Any categorisation of what constitutes coaching needs to consider not just what individuals do, but also the context in which the activity takes place?

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- before the establishment of a new professional body, agreement needs to be reached on what 'occupation roles' would be embraced by that new body; it could be that associated groups, such as personal trainers and fitness trainers, may see a market advantage in aligning themselves with a new coaching profession
- sports coach UK needs to make efforts to adopt and utilise the definition and concepts suggested within this report and encourage the wider industry to adopt such terminology

## **Opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD)**

For professional groups to maintain and secure their status as experts in a particular field, they must convince society that their conduct and knowledge is both informed and consistent with 'best practice'. Central to this process is the continued development of individuals' professional expertise, facilitated by an explicit programme of accessible high-level CPD opportunities. This should allow for continuous discourse, internal debate and the progression of ideas as a means to generate the ongoing professionalisation of the coaching community and its members. It is important for GBs, the new professional body and coaching in general to acknowledge that other occupations, professions and industries offer CPD opportunities that may well enhance individual coaches' CPD and their coaching practice. Tied into this is the UK Coaching Framework commitment to CPD, representing key aspects of long-term coach development and lifelong learning opportunities.

Suggested future progression and considerations:

- to ensure that sports coach UK's own coach-education courses fulfil the needs of an emerging profession's CPD requirements
- to encourage GBs to take on board APEL and APL, where appropriate; the recognition of learning and alternative qualifications gained in other domains can be regarded as supporting the generic nature of coaching delivery and would, therefore, allow other teaching and/or instructional occupations to enter coaching, without beginning at entry level.

## 4. The Professionalisation of Sports Coaching: Enablers and Barriers

*Any movement towards the professionalisation of coaching requires a long-term commitment. We shouldn't, in our efforts to get to that state quickly, ignore the inherent conservatism of the majority of British GBs, and the reluctance of local clubs and sporting communities to lose their sense of mutual aid and volunteerism, which, up to this point, has served many sports and coaching schemes rather well. It is an exciting time for coaching and individual coaches... let's not be held hostage by unrealistic timeframes or visions, and take time to make sure everybody who wants to make this journey is on board.*

National Coaching Development Officer, British Canoe Union

### Introduction

The vision of sports coaching being elevated to the status of profession by 2012 is, by its nature, a long-term aspiration. Most occupations making similar journeys have done so with the implicit, or explicit, support of government studies and reports from other, similar occupational groups (eg nurses, solicitors and teachers) (Eraut, 1994). This suggests that the journey to professionalisation is both lengthy and subject to a number of political and cultural influences and market forces. However, it should be noted that no other UK occupation has experienced a planned and managed transition from a voluntary community base to one of an emerging professional occupation. This is especially delicate given the central role of sports coaching in the government's ambition to improve the health, well-being and welfare of society. Garrett (2001) suggests this ambition is not without problems, as some volunteer groups, such as coaches, will require a sympathetic and carefully managed approach.

Some of the elements expanded in Table 1 will act as enablers, supporting and underpinning the processes of professionalisation, while others may hinder them or redirect efforts away from this goal. It is important to realise that the 'model of professionalisation' that is envisaged at this time (ie the publication of this report) may not be the model that best serves coaches and the wider sporting community in 2012 and beyond.

The following section outlines some enablers and barriers and makes tentative suggestions regarding how these factors may be managed to allow a smooth transition towards professionalisation. The selection of individual enablers and barriers was arrived at from the desktop survey and literature review completed by the authors as part of the wider report. The degree of significance given to each factor also represents the authors' consideration and **judgement** of what can be regarded as important, on the basis of **first principles derived from practical experience**, knowledge gained from limited sources of empirical research and wider reading around the issues within sports coaching and beyond. It is argued that the significance that each factor presents is neither static nor independent and each element's significance should be reviewed as the process towards professionalisation continues to gather momentum.



<b>Table 1: The significance of various enablers and barriers</b>			
<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Building on a culture of change	<b>Strong/ moderate</b>	Internal resistance from within sport	<b>Moderate</b>
The establishment of the UKCC	<b>Strong</b>	Changes in government priority	<b>Moderate</b>
The 2012 factor	<b>Strong</b>	Changes in the leisure and sport markets	<b>Moderate</b>
Partnerships in social and health policy	<b>Strong/ moderate</b>	Unrealistic visions for the future of coaching	<b>Moderate</b>
A professional body for coaching	<b>Strong</b>	Lack of opportunities for employment and deployment	<b>Strong</b>
Championing the work of coaches	<b>Moderate</b>	Fragmentation within the professional sector	<b>Moderate</b>
Building on internal support from coaching	<b>Moderate</b>		
UK Coaching Framework	<b>Strong</b>		
Coaching Task Force Report	<b>Strong</b>		

## **Enablers**

### **Building on a culture of change**

There is little doubt that British sport, and particularly coaching, is already immersed in rapid and far-reaching change (Lloyd, 2005; Green and Houlihan, 2006). The implementation of a number of key government policy documents has seen coaching and coaches at the forefront of these changes. The GBs have already been charged with, and have responded to, some of these movements. The granting of 'modernisation' funding to help GBs establish good practice within their governance, the increased expectation and accountability that comes with Lottery funding and the establishment of directly funded GB performance departments have collectively placed additional demands on GB infrastructures. The establishment of coaching as a profession can be seen as a logical extension to these changes. It is recommended that sports coach UK continues to promote the benefits of professionalism and encourage GBs and other stakeholders to focus on its benefits and value. In addition to this 'culture of change', felt within sports and by their national representatives, there is a wider public debate around the changing role and standards expected of coaches. The establishment and implementation of the UKCC and the resulting changes felt at the coaching interface will fuel this new expectation. At national level, the proposal for the

development of a UK Coaching Centre of Excellence, among other initiatives, will add to expectations and a more general feeling that change is being realised, although it is interesting to recall that one of the first recorded calls for a national centre for coach education was made by Arthur J. Elvin in 1947 in Hedley Trembath's book *British Sport*. Some 60 years on, it may be pertinent to note the difficulties involved in fulfilling such ambitions, especially given the complexity and diversity that is characteristic of much modern-day sports coaching.

*I know that I am only at Level 1, and young to be a coach, but the chance to make this my career...to coach full-time is just so exciting. I just love to coach. Working with these young players is so rewarding. Being a full-time coach would be my dream and make me even keener to go on and get the next level of award. It's an investment in me and my ability to coach football.*

Newly qualified FA Level 1 coach

### **The establishment of the UKCC**

Inherent in the conception, development and implementation of the UKCC is the idea that the scheme should represent an example of current 'best practice' within coach education, assessment and development. Central to this aim is the commitment that the education and training of all GB coach educators and assessors meet 'minimum standards'. These minimum standards are emerging from considered and lengthy consultation within the industry itself, and from the application and adoption of research and lessons taken from education and further afield.

The monitoring of compliance with these standards is the responsibility of sports coach UK and other key agencies. It is fair to claim, therefore, that there has been a professionalisation of the process undertaken by GB coach educators and assessors. This is the first time that a universal standard and approach have been implemented within the coaching schemes of British sport and represents a significant cultural and structural change within the sector. The professionalisation of the GB/UKCC coach educators and the resulting increase in coach education standards will develop a new and important group of coaches who regard coach education as a 'profession', where newly formed occupational skills and aspirations lie.

Alongside the development of the UKCC, there has been a redefinition of the roles taken on by sports coach UK, both in terms of coach education and the implementation of associated initiatives. It could be read as the government's intention to push forward and facilitate the work of coaches, as a critical part of wider sports policy. In addition, the employment of coach development officers, among other new positions, has helped raise the profile of the organisation, increasing the amount of work it has been able to accomplish at local and national levels.

### **The 2012 factor**

Historically, there have been few features of British sport that have remained as consistently fraught as the lack of long-term sustainable planning. The recent expression of long-term aims through the UK Coaching Framework and a planned commitment to a vision for coaching beyond 2012 are now ingrained within UK coaching policy. Indeed, this is a significant cultural change and one which should be both applauded and celebrated. In addition, Britain's commitment to stage the

Olympic Games in 2012 means that there are further opportunities to keep the profile of coaches and the professionalisation of coaching prominent in the public's mind, and also in the foreground of any wider political agenda. It is noticeable that since the awarding of the Olympic Games to London, some sporting commentary has made reference to individual and national performances as being partway in preparation for 2012. It is suggested that sports coach UK makes concerted efforts to encourage all agencies involved in promoting 2012 to recognise the critical role played by coaching and coaches in the run-up to the London Olympics.

### **Partnerships in social and health policy**

It has been suggested that the possibility for long-term sustainable funding for sport and, therefore, coaching, would be enhanced by closer and more direct links to the government's wider health policy (Neiman, 1999; Lloyd, 2005; Caborn, 2006). Key to forging this relationship is the recognition of coaching as a legitimate and trustworthy member of a wider professional community. One of the early problems associated with GP referral schemes is that members of the medical profession lacked confidence in the ability of instructors, coming from the fitness industry, to make sound judgements and sensibly informed referral decisions (Sloccock, 2002; Lloyd, 2005).

If an emerging profession of coaching is to gain the trust of other agents and stakeholders, it must be allowed to develop within a space that is sensitive to, and considerate of, multi-professional knowledge and inter-professional sensibilities. Any alignment with other professional occupations, be they from the health or welfare sectors, would help to develop inter-occupational relationships, built on a platform of mutual professional trust and understanding. These cross-professional or interdisciplinary dependences will place additional demands on certain sectors within the coaching workforce, in terms of both their practice and increased requirements for specialised knowledge (Taylor, 2007). While some sectors of the coaching profession will continue to work with elite and performance-oriented teams and individuals, it is likely that the majority of coaches will also have contact with non-elite participants. This is the case, since coaches are often involved in working with participants for reasons associated with issues of general health and increased personal levels of physical well-being and fitness.

### **A professional body for coaching**

The establishment of a strong and robust independent controlling body and regulatory framework is a key element in the development of any fledgling profession. A professional body established to oversee the sector is in place across a number of other professional groups. In addition, a professional body managed and organised around the wishes of coaches themselves will help engender notions of self-professionalism and determinism. The fact that, at present, sports coaching in the UK does not have one is not insignificant, for any professional body must fulfil a number of objectives. Firstly, it must be creditable in the eyes of customers, athletes, government and other professional groups. Secondly, it must be seen as a valuable and key institution in the protection, promotion and governance of coaches by coaches. The remit of any professional body, ie applying sanctions, establishing good practice, providing continuous professional development and educational opportunities (CPD/CPE) and being the 'steward' of ethical and moral practice, can only be sustained if there is a degree of compulsion for coaches to become members. Lloyd (2005) suggests that in the attempt to regulate the fitness industry and 'up-skill' those fitness instructors working within it, the decision to set up a registration scheme for instructors, as opposed to the development of a compulsory membership body, has led to the failure of the raising of standards. The proposed coach-licensing scheme should be strongly

linked to a new professional body. The linkage of a new professional body with licensing is critical for the long-term success of both initiatives, as well as that of an emerging profession.

The sustainability of any licensing/registration scheme is more likely with the passing over of control of such a scheme to an independent professional governing body. The scheme may transfer from being seen as 'something done to coaches' to 'something for coaches'. A maturing coaching profession would benefit from an organisation through which a self and collective identity could be developed, independent of the GBs that have historically certificated them. A professional body would facilitate access to coaches without the current need to direct consultation through GBs, who may have to balance the views given with the sports wider interests. The self-regulation of a professional body for coaches within the framework of government policy would allow a strong independent voice to inform and debate future policy and direction. Such a body, if organised around the professional needs of coaches and managed by the profession itself, is likely to be afforded greater value by other health/youth/education organisations. These mutually respectful alignments are critical if sport coaches and coaching are to take a central role in the wider agenda and development of social capital and health promotion (Taylor, 2007).

At the time of writing, sports coach UK is undertaking a feasibility study considering the format and procedures for a coach registration and licensing scheme. It is felt that full discussion at this stage might be overtaken by the publication of the study. Any licensing scheme may wish to consider a number of levels of registration and/or membership, depending on the engagement of individual coaches (as voluntary or paid coaches) and the UKCC level of certification they hold. For issues of independence and to allow the newly emerging profession a sense of identity and direction, it may be of benefit if, following the initial set-up, the organisation is administered from within the coaching occupation itself.

### **Championing the work of coaches**

With the exception of football coaches, coaching in the UK suffers from a low public profile. Outside the sport of football, the general public would be hard-pressed to identify the coaches of many of our top performers. This is in marked contrast to other countries, such as the US, where local high-school coaches are often known to the local community and where coaches are seen as pivotal to success at all levels of participation. While the annual sports coach UK Coaching Awards and dinner does help to promote and celebrate the achievements of coaches within the sports community, it could be suggested that it has little wider public impact. Many regional sports councils hold local awards events, but the exposure of these ceremonies is somewhat low key and is presently lacking status and public recognition.

If the profile of coaches could be enhanced as a means to encourage young people and ex-performers to see the role in terms that are rewarding, ie socially rewarded and respected, and also valued as a career pathway, then the decision to enter coaching could be more deliberate than is presently the case.

### **Building on internal support from within the sports sector**

There is some evidence of internal support from within the employer groups (Local Authorities and Education establishment) and the GBs of British sport. Data from the sport coach UK 'Sports Coaching in the UK' survey (2004) conducted by MORI, supports many of the elements associated with the process of professionalisation.

For example, local authority representatives were asked 'What would improve coaching within their authority?' They responded with, 'More recruitment/employment of coaches' (26%, second highest) and 'Improved structure /career pathways' (23%, third highest). When teachers were asked a similar question, 'More coaches/more qualified coaches/specialist coaches' produced the highest response, with 22% of all responses. On the subject of licensing, 80% of Local Authorities, 86% of Schools and 69% of Universities, when questioned, agreed that the licensing of coaches was desirable. When GB representatives were asked to comment on the barriers to taking up coaching, 'Not seen as viable career option' (71%), 'Few opportunities to provide a career' (64%) and, 'Doesn't pay enough' (57%) were the top three reasons given.

### The UK Coaching Framework

Arising from discussions with its key funding partners and the home country sports councils, sports coach UK was charged with the task of developing the UK Coaching Framework for coaching across the UK. The plan's objectives are to:

- 1) map out the resource and outcomes required over the periods 2006-8, 2009-2012 and 2013–2016
- 2) identify and agree the working agreements among key partners in coaching, to develop a holistic and long term plan for coaching
- 3) identify the role sports coach UK will take as the Government lead body for coaching
- 4) provide state of the art support and supplies to the coaching community at all levels.

It could be suggested that, until recently, sports coach UK has been characterised by reactive interventions and short-term planning. The UK Coaching Framework has changed this, providing real direction and vision by which coaching can be recognised as a key component in government policy. Not only does the UK Coaching framework provide a clear vision for sports coach UK as an organisation, but it explicitly maps the process required to see the development of coaching into a professional occupation. In addition to this, the long-term vision for sport sets out two overarching objectives by 2020: to increase and widen the base of participation and achieve success on the world stage.

### Coaching Task Force Report

In July 2002, the Coaching Task Force published its final report and recommendations for improving the development, employment and deployment of coaches in England. Richard Caborn, the former Minister for Sport, welcomed those recommendations and on 24 July 2002, Tessa Jowell, the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced that the Government would invest more than £25 million over the following three years to implement them. For the first time, the Coaching Task Force document brought together a number of aspirations highlighted in earlier reports and documents. It provided the foundation for the development of the UKCC and the deployment of Coach Development Officers and Community Sports Coaches. In turn, it committed the government to identifiable and far-reaching policies that would help raise the level and status of coaching to a professional level.

*'It may seem rather old fashioned but there is still a healthy suspicion within my sport of so-called professionals. The members and the coaches here hold very dearly notions of the common good and volunteering for the love of the game – not what you can get out of it. Government has to be very careful not to alienate the very people that the professionalisation process is trying to help'.*

Captain of a village tennis club

## **Barriers**

### Internal resistance from within sport

The British sporting landscape is both diverse and complex in its socio-cultural make-up and unique history. In comparison with other sporting nations, we have a large number of governing bodies. Within many of the GBs, the ethos of mutual aid and volunteerism are core values. There is some evidence (Green and Houlihan, 2006) of an active resistance to the implementation of policy from central government and a feeling that the professionalisation agenda is being inherently critical of the work of voluntary coaches and their organisations (Taylor, 2007). It is likely that any disquiet felt within certain sports is because of the rate and pace of change, an aspect that is relatively new to inherently conservative GB organisations. In addition, for some, the fundamental restructuring of their internal coach management systems and education schemes will be unsettling and undoubtedly problematic (Taylor, 2007).

sports coach UK need to be aware of these feelings and make an effort to understand their origins, managing the professionalisation movement with sensitivity and taking time to listen to the concerns of the people who will be most affected by change is crucial. This is especially critical, if the people at the forefront of the professionalisation movement are not to be lost.

### Changes in government priority

There is little doubt that the awarding of the 2012 Olympic Games to London has allowed British sport to embrace relatively long-term planning. The alignment with 2012, as being the target for the professionalisation of the occupation, has brought a number of advantages. However, note that, within the period 2006 to 2012, there is likely to be a number of changes in government that will bring new agendas for sport and possibly contrasting fiscal and national policies. In addition, the instability of international politics may take considerable spending away from the domestic agenda. While all parties are committed to hosting the 2012 Olympics, the make-up of funding streams, the roles and remits of sporting Quangos, the performance of the lottery and financing of local authorities may change considerably. All of which may influence the available resourcing that can be directed to help the development of coaching as a profession.

### Unrealistic vision for the future of coaching

While previous policies have outlined the desire for the professionalisation of coaching, none have detailed what this might entail (Sports Council, 1991; UK Sport, 2001; Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002). The transformation of a mainly volunteer-based provision, into one where most coaches are in full-time paid positions, could be argued as being unrealistic. There have been limited investigations into the public's willingness to pay for coaching services at a level that would allow coaches to make the occupation their main source of income. Other related markets such as the fitness industry are characterised by relativity

poor pay, although the industry has considerable private investment and a turnover of over £1.7 billion (Mintel, 2002). The market culture that enshrouds the system of payment for coaching services in the UK is somewhat immature. While there is evidence of a growth in the acceptance of the need to pay for quality coaching, such is the small-scale operation of the paid coach sector (19% of all coaches using 2004 figures); change in the numbers finding full-time employment is likely to be slow. Sports coaching may be in a position where there has been professionalisation of practice, but without a significant paid professional sector. It is important that any vision for the professionalisation of coaching is not drawn toward the idea of full professional employment for all that want it, but rather toward the professionalisation of all coaches who practise, be they voluntary or fully paid-up professional coaches.

#### Fragmentation within the employment and deployment of coaches

Further examination of the data presented within sports coach UK (2004) 'Sports Coaching in UK' report, indicates that out of 1.2 million coaches, only some 60,000 are paid in a full-time capacity. Of those 60,000 in full-time paid employment, it is difficult to ascertain which sport they coach. As the number of full-time coaches grows, it is likely that some sports, due to their advanced market position and internal opportunities, may see faster advancement in employment and deployment rates than others. In addition to these factors, the professionalisation process of complying with the UKCC levels 1–5 criteria, the numbers of coaches seeking and gaining licensing, and membership of the new coaching professional body, will vary among sports. The consequence of this fragmented picture is likely to produce the appearance of a two- or three-tier system, while some of the smaller and less market-orientated sports catch up.

#### Lack of opportunities for employment and deployment

Detailed and comprehensive data on the employment and deployment of coaches in the UK is lacking. Evidence seems to suggest that among paid full-time and part-time coaches, local authorities, GBS, universities and the wider education system still provide most opportunities, where all of these employers have some relationship with the allocation of local and central government spending. This would suggest that, in the short term at least, any increase in employment is likely to come from these areas. The wider commercial market made up of private sports clubs, the sport tourism sector, bespoke coaching and the freelance market is likely to be slower in providing employment opportunities and will be influenced by consumer spending patterns and changing notions of the 'commercialisation' and 'commodification' of coaching as a service.

#### Changes in the leisure and sport market

The leisure industry accounts for over a quarter of all consumer spending in the UK. Within the last two decades alone, spending on leisure, particularly sport, which is the fastest growing sector, has increased considerably (Gratton and Taylor, 2000). In 1998, consumer spending on sport was £13.07 billion, or 2.5% of all consumers' expenditure (Davies, 2002). There is some evidence to suggest that these figures are, in fact, an underestimation, and both growth and total expenditure are higher in sport than has been reported. As a feature, the leisure and sports markets have a relationship to consumer confidence in the general economy and are subject to influences such as fashion, the cost of overseas travel and, more recently, long-term weather patterns (Gratton and Taylor, 2000). It is reasonable to expect the demand for coaching to be related to these wider influences; therefore, account must be taken of wider spending patterns within the sports markets.

## **5. Benchmarking the Future of the Professionalisation of Coaching**

The professionalisation of sport coaching, come 2012, may take on a number of forms. Although this report has helped outline some of the features and characters it may adopt, it is important to re-emphasise that the wider professional culture may change in the next six years. Government and the sport/coaching communities' aspirations will also continue to develop and provide changes of direction and subtle shifts in priority. There is an inherent danger of confusing and conflating arguments regarding the influence of particular barriers and enablers to the growth of the profession (as a culture), with those more concerned with the determination of standards in sports coaching. That is, both the standards by which the profession may be judged, in terms of progression, as well as those benchmarks intrinsically related to particular levels of professional development, encapsulating skills, competences and cultural traits (as outlined in Figure 3). In both cases, while it is true that the selection of enablers, barriers and benchmark statements are literally the informed constructs of the authors, it is important to recognise that, in practice, one is more open to change than the other. It can be argued, for example, that because benchmarks are relatively fixed, in so far as they derive from first principles as 'matrixed' standards, enablers and barriers, in contrast, can be regarded as transient and dynamic, and, therefore, subject to the vagaries of supply and demand, as well as other external influences and conditions. To ignore the argument regarding such confusion and conflation is to systematically undermine the *raison d'être* of scenario building in the first place and to weaken the ambition to determine relatively fixed and impermeable boundaries in the benchmarking exercise. This leaves the following questions: What will the coaching professional look like in 2012? How might we judge the effectiveness of the mechanism put in place to aid its development? Regarding the process of professionalisation, who is in the best position to judge what progress has been made; the Government, the sports, or the individual coaches themselves?



**Figure 3:  
Possible scenarios come 2012 for the profession of coaching**

	<b>Establishment of professional body</b>	<b>Employment and deployment of coaches</b>	<b>Establishment of coach licensing</b>	<b>Development of a market place for coaching services</b>	<b>Establishment of high quality coach education and CPD</b>	<b>Perception of the coaching professional</b>
<b>Gold Scenario</b>	Professional independent body established, responsible for issuing licenses. All active coaches to have some level of membership.	Continued growth in all employment and deployment opportunities for both voluntary and paid coaches. Mixture of centrally funded posts, market demand and perception of career pathways continue to draw people into the profession.	<b>All</b> coaches must have a licence to practice before any engagement. Valued system of control, within the coaching community and externally in the employment sector.	Value of UKCC-qualified coaches drives economic demand. Change in culture towards payment and high expectations in all sectors of sport heightened and matched by public perception of quality and standards across all sports.	UKCC is continuously reviewed to reflect 'best practice', new content evidenced based. HE and FE courses embrace Kite marking. Continued intellectualisation of knowledge base. Coaches' personal development seen as ongoing and demanded/ facilitated by increasingly mature occupational pathways. Coaching seen as central to participants ongoing lifelong engagement in sport.	Coaching professional seen as critical in all sport/health programmes. High degree of social trust bestowed on the community, by other professional groups/clients/ employers.
<b>Silver Scenario</b>	More of an advisory body than a controlling one. Influences policy, but fails to direct it. Not really seen as <i>the</i> industry body.	Maturing of some aspects of the sector. Increased number of coaches engaged across all types of provision. Career pathways clear, but not always realistic or achievable because of structural hurdles.	Only professional full time coaches required to hold licence. Licence seen as advantage, but not a pre-requisite.	Some sports and sectors see growth in market demand, but inconsistent patterns across all sports. Little evidence of fundamental cultural shifts.	Revisions of UKCC not evidence based. Most, but not all, mainstream sports on board. Culture of anti-intellectualisation still evident.	Increased social worth given to coaching. Still seen as secondary in making wider social/health contribution. Limited cross-professional integration.
<b>Bronze Scenario</b>	Acts more like an association, has little power or influence on members, or in the upkeep of professional standards. Some sports' coaches opt out.	Little real change in patterns of employment. Still seen as low-skilled job. High deployment of unqualified coaches. No compulsion on employers to employ only qualified staff.	Acts like a register of coaches. Some areas of deployment allowed to opt-out. Clients and coaches see minimum advantage to system.	Growth of market place undermined by heavily subsidised 'at cost provision'. Culture fails to change due to low value placed on product.	A number of GBs still not seeking UKCC endorsement. Content not seen as related or an example of best practice by client groups (coaches/athletes/employers).	No real change in public perception. Limited celebration of individual or the wider coaching community. Perceived as low value with low worth.

## 6. Literature review

It would be fair to say that questions surrounding the 'professionalisation of coaching', 'coaching as a profession' and notions of what it means to be a 'professional coach', have been given scant regard by most researchers and commentators working in the field of sports science and its related disciplines.

The early papers on the professionalisation of coaching (Lyle, 1986; Woodman, 1993) deal with the subject in a somewhat traditional manner, concentrating on the features and traits that a profession would have to acquire in its efforts to gain acceptance and creditability.

For Woodman the professionalisation of coaching as 'an emerging profession' came about through the adoption and application of knowledge from the natural sciences. In this commonly cited paper, the author celebrates the increasing practice of predicating a coaching programme, its cultural systems and decision making processes, on a foundation of biophysical scientific knowledge. Woodman sees the rationalisation of the process of coaching along scientific lines as evidence of it becoming an emerging profession. This claim to scientific validity is further enhanced by the adoption of certain types of knowledge that already have professional acceptance within other sport science related occupations, such as physiotherapy and sport psychology. The paper goes on to deal with the traits and characteristics of what a new coaching profession may look like in an uncritical and unproblematic manner. Given the fragmented nature of this practice, the nature of coaching, coaching theory and craft knowledge, including possible channels of employment and deployment, have a tendency to be dealt with separately through a deficit model. On this understanding, all coaching needs to do to achieve professional status, is address the shortcomings within these elements. Doing so will produce a naturally occurring occupational maturity, which will lead towards a state of professionalisation and professionalism. The following papers within the proceedings take up, and continue with, this rather insular position. They treat each sub-issue as being independent, without reference to the social, political and cultural processes that are critical to any professionalisation movement. They also fail to attempt to contextualise this movement in relation to the particular structure of British sports coaching, along the lines of voluntarism and community action.

Chelladurai (1986) in the *VIII Commonwealth and International Conference on Sport, Physical Education, Dance, Recreation proceedings*, strikes a note of caution concerning the development of coaching as a profession. While comparing coaching with the archetypal established professions of law and medicine, he suggests that society is unlikely to bestow on coaching the status and authority it seeks. For Chelladurai, the fact that coaching is often judged by the measurement of performance based outcomes and not by the process itself, and because the nature of the activity is less serious than the practice of law and medicine, means that endorsement by the wider community is unlikely. Chelladurai suggests the way forward is for coaching to focus on internal developments, which are an important pre-cursor to the acceptance of the occupation and its professional status.

In the early 1980s a number of countries (Canada, Australia, France and Great Britain) were beginning to establish coach education systems. Campbell (1993) argues strongly that coach education based on coherent and to a degree, generic, content would go some way to underpinning claims that coaching is fast becoming a professional practice.

It is interesting to note that isolated calls within this period by Petlichkoff (1993), to educate coaches in sociological and social psychological knowledge, vital to an effective coach-athlete relationship, have generally gone unanswered. It is not until recently, with the emergence of the sustained critical project of Jones, Armour, Potrac, and Cushion (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2005), that these issues have re-emerged as important points for discussion.

Much of the early work on the coaching profession was descriptive in nature and largely pre-occupied with benchmarking where particular occupations were in the professionalisation process (Lyle, 1986; Woodman, 1993). The authors offered some suggestions as to what the next step was in the process of taking the profession forward. The talk focused on the need to foster a coaching occupation with a common set of desires and outcomes, cutting across national and international boundaries. At no time was any conceptual understanding demonstrated, nor was any sensitivity shown towards the cultural, historical and situational complexities particular to each country and engendered by disparate sport systems. Moreover, the individual and unique position of coaches in relation to their professional development, as well as the particularities inherent to national context, was unfortunately overlooked.

Lyle (2002) returns to the professionalisation process in his book *Sport Coaching Concepts: A Framework for Coaches' Behaviour*. In this later writing, Lyle considers wider issues regarding social status acquired by coaching either as 'ascribed status' (the status given to an occupational group by virtue of characteristics they possess) and/or 'achieved status' (the status gained by achievement, association, and success in the performance coaching arena). Lyle also suggests that 'achieved statuses' could be gained through the acquisition of recognised certification and qualifications. Citing the Office for National Statistics (2000), Lyle notes that sports coaching is now classified as an associated professional group and suggests that this position could be due to 'increasing scientification of practice and the value placed on sport itself' (2002:200). Lyle does allude to the lack of macro and theoretical analysis of sport coaching, and the inclusion of the professional status of coaching, by suggesting that much of the research and commentary has been issue focused. In doing so it has failed to contextualise these issues, or shed light on the tensions that manifest themselves within the wider social, occupational and power dynamics of sports coaching.

Other authors, namely Trevor Slack (who based much of his work on the North American experience) and Geoff Nichols (working from a British and European context), have approached the issue of professionalisation from the perspective of the changing nature and an increasing pressure on GBs. These bodies have been central players in the development of structures that have supported the education and facilitation of coaches and coaching in the UK. To talk of the professionalisation of coaching and the professionalisation of individual coaching practice, without due attention to the role of particular organisations, fails to consider an important element in the development of coaching as a professional movement.

Nichols et al., in their comprehensive paper 'Pressures on the UK Voluntary Sport Sector' (2005), begin to deal with this shortcoming. In doing so, they detail the shift in government policy to force GBs away from a culture of 'mutual aid' and towards one of 'service provision'. The authors argue convincingly that the government's agenda and its resulting pressures to professionalise services and operations, will force GBs to compete for membership and patronage in an increasingly competitive wider leisure market.

In order to provide additional support for this process, and to develop commercial structures and business practices in the internal structure of individual GBs, the government has already started to allocate monies under the 'GB modernisation programme'. Nichols and his team, adopting a critical stance in the analysis, concluded that these central directives and agendas are changing the very fabric of once independent governing organisations. In addition, the continued linkage between the monies that GBs can draw upon from government funding agents and their ability to meet government agendas, has resulted, in some cases, in feelings of resentment, anger, and a loss of autonomy.

While Nichols et al. (2005) only allude to the effect these pressures are having on the occupation of coaching and coaches, most of who work under the direction of GBs, there must be a relationship between the degree of support the GB can provide to its own coaches, while simultaneously being under pressure to modernise its own internal structures and practices. It could be suggested that the implementation of the UKCC and the agenda of sports coach UK has added to the pressures felt by GBs to meet external demands and that this, in turn, has directed attention away from their ability to deal with the day-to-day management of coaches working within their own sport.

Nash (2001) in her study of volunteerism in Tayside, Scotland, considers the pressure on voluntary sport coaches. Nash highlights some of the inherent contradictions in government policy which focuses on the value of volunteering in terms of developing a sense of community and citizenship, while encouraging coaching, as a body, to become more qualified and trained. This small-scale study suggests that voluntary coaches are less likely to heed this subtle pressure, citing the reasons of payment of fees, application and paperwork processes, and limited reimbursement of course costs. The issue of professional development of coaches is addressed in the Jones et al. (2004) book, *Sport Coaching Cultures: From Theory to Practice*. In this text, utilising case studies of elite coaches, Jones et al. suggest that a number of the subjects found coach education courses of little direct benefit to their own professional development. The suggestion is that the past nature of UK GBs' coach education courses has been to focus on technical issues surrounding what should be taught to learners, and has ignored, to the detriment of coaches, the development of pedagogical knowledge and understanding. This omission fails to intellectualise the process of coaching, which in turn has undermined its claim to possess a theoretical body of occupational knowledge.

Turning to the wider literature concerning other occupations and professionalism, much of the debate has been on how contemporary professional identities are formed. These aspects relate particularly to the transitions within coaching which are likely to create plural identities, emergent cultures and traditions, and/or locations that are situated potentially 'in-between' (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bhabha, 1996). This theoretical concern is compounded by debates concerning the nature of 'professionalism' rehearsed elsewhere, and beliefs concerning how the possession of more specialised forms of knowledge can lead to greater efficiency and improved performance within particular designate professions. General debates around the topic (Downie, 1990; Eraut, 1994) are illustrated with numerous exemplars from teaching and teacher education (Guskey and Huberman, 1995; Day and Hadfield 1996; Bates, 2004), higher education (Middlehurst, 1995; Nixon et al., 2001), nursing (Trnobranski, 1997; Humphreys, 2000; Stronach et al., 2002), law (Moorhead, 2001; Boon et al., 2005), the arts (Arts Council England, 2005) and professional sport (Smith and Stewart, 1999; Williams, 2002). These writers have grappled with notions of professionalism and considered how the putative 'professional', largely conceived as a homogenised

subject, can be modelled corporately according to pre-specified boundaries of knowledge, experience and professional practice.

The boundaries that mark out such territory, or professional *emplotments*, and which define the discourses of professionalism and their constituent practices have partly emerged in response to more general socio-historical movements and debates (Hargreaves, 2000). They have also developed from particular economic and political currents, where the imposition of an 'audit-culture' (Power, 1994; Strathern, 2000) has propagated the alliance of accountability (with implicit forms of surveillance, [Foucault, 1979] and performativity [Lyotard, 1984]), within, and across, professional spaces.

Such radical change engendered by post-industrial capitalism and the prevailing influence of globalisation (Giddens, 1998) has not only threatened particular conceptions of professional knowledge, but has similarly introduced new forms of bureaucratisation. That is, a form of reductionism that seeks to 'control consumption [and] fracture the dominant cultural and aesthetic values' (Boon et al., 2005: 474), consequently revolutionising the acquisition and classification of professional practice, from the 'outside in' (Dawson, 1994). More than this, however, new forms of bureaucratisation are simultaneously instrumental in unsettling and reshaping the landscape of professional identity(ies) (Bernstein, 2000; Beck and Young, 2005), creating an elision and conflation between the construction of the 'professional subject' and the classification and framing of knowledge (Bernstein, 1971) within professions. Consequently, imposed forms of regulation that seek to control what counts as knowledge can engender an erosion of the status and legitimacy of professions as organic and relatively autonomous professional 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1988). This is especially true for those where power is significantly constrained or otherwise muted. It is the latter that is especially pertinent to the professionalisation of coaching in sport across the UK, for the aim to universalise standards according to particular benchmarks, presents a technically-rational conception of professionalism (Eraut, 1994) and, further, fails to account for nuanced cultures in disparate areas of practice in sports coaching.

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