

Day, D. (2006). Sport Psychology: Another Cuckoo in the Coaching Nest. *Practices and Representations of Health: Historical Perspectives* Society for the Social History of Medicine Annual Conference 28-30 June University of Warwick

Victorian sportsmen referred to their sports as "scientific" but scientifically determined training regimes are comparatively modern and coaching was considered an art, just as much as a science. Coaching operated as a trade or a craft with the typical coach relying on experience, traditional authorities, and specialised knowledge gathered through observations. In particular, experiential learning taught these craft coaches much about both physiological and psychological issues. However, late nineteenth century programmes for physical educationalists enabled academics in anatomy, physiology of exercise, anthropometry, motor development, and psychology, to establish themselves as gatekeepers of this specialist knowledge. Psychologists, for example, rigorously promoted their own work and, by 1921, psychology was represented by a professional organisation, professional journals, college and university courses, laboratories for research, and programmes within universities leading to advanced degrees. As sport psychology became a disciplinary subculture, similar structural controls were established. The professionalisation of sports psychology, and other sport sciences, led inexorably to the exclusion of craft coaches from the knowledge transfer process. Current initiatives to professionalise coaching further consolidate the position of academics by centralising their "expertise". Aspiring coaches are educated to expect that science will supply them with short cuts to knowledge and coaching credibility is only awarded to those who progress through science orientated coach education programmes.

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This paper arises from a number of ideas gathered from personal experiences as a coach and coach educator as well as my research towards a PhD on coaching in Victorian and Edwardian England. It first considers the nature of coaching communities of practice during that period and then discusses the impact on that practice resulting from an increasing reliance on academically driven sports psychology, particularly within coach education programmes. While the focus is on the professionalisation of sport psychology and the resultant marginalisation of craft knowledge, these comments could equally well apply to all areas of sport science.

Although not a use of the word that early Victorian trainers would have been familiar with, the term "coach" has been broadly interpreted in modernity as the individual responsible for training others for athletic contests. Scientifically determined training regimes are comparatively modern. Although Victorians often referred to their sports as "scientific" coaches considered that working with athletes was an art, just as much as it was a science. In 1908, John J. Mack, the Yale football trainer, observed that "I have often puzzled over whether training college football men is an art or a science...if there was a word that meant about half of each, I think that would be the proper one to use...".¹ Because its use conferred prestige and suggested moral superiority and intellectual ability,² many professional coaches in boxing, swimming, fencing, and athletics designated themselves as

¹ Mack, J.J. (1908). How Yale Deals with Beef and Brains. *Baseball Magazine*, December, pp.15-16.

² De Bellaigue, C. (2001). The Development of Teaching as a Profession for Women Before 1870. *The Historical Journal*, **44**(4), pp.963-964.

“Professors” but, realistically, coaching operated more as a trade or a craft than a profession. Indeed, this may still be the nature of coaching two thousand years after Pindar referred to the coach as the *tehton* (carpenter or builder) of the athlete.³

The increasing seriousness of competition at the cusp of the nineteenth century meant that there was already a demand for coaching services. In 1806, Sir John Sinclair attempted a survey of training methods but met considerable resistance since coaches tended to keep their knowledge to themselves. These coaching cultures, acting through tightly connected communities of practice, grew out of a form of cottage industry led by local experts, organic intellectuals, whose knowledge was transmitted orally or through demonstrated practice, and whose methods were perpetuated, in turn, by their close confidants. These coaches were not scientists, except in the sense that they employed systematic methods in their work, and they utilised their own experience without having to legitimise their actions with a theoretical underpinning. The very nature of these communities, being small, non-regulated, and self-contained, could lead to traditionalism and certainly led to criticism, especially from the medical community, for encouraging the perpetuation of “fads” and secret training methods. However, this craft approach enabled successive generations of coaches to impose their own ideas and practices on training regimes, add innovations, and to use their intuition in the implementation and evaluation of training.

As the nineteenth century progressed there were a range of influences on which coaches could draw for new ideas, including medical science, physical educators, animal trainers, and circus performers. When international competition increased many coaches travelled with their athletes, synthesising information as they went, while, at home, rising levels of literacy were accompanied by an increasing volume of literature, sports related and scientific. Arguments that professional coaches were working-class and, therefore, illiterate ignores the artisanal nature of the activity and the concomitant values and practices that were associated with that status. While it is unlikely that many coaches spent time perusing scientific journals such as *Nature*, *Mind* or the *American Journal of Psychology*⁴ there were more accessible science magazines, such as *Hardwicke’s Science Gossip*, *Science Monthly*, or *English Mechanic and World of Science*.⁵ Athletes, physicians, and educators wrote in popular magazines on topics such as the importance of physical training and commenting on psychological aspects of elite athletics.⁶ Late Victorian craftsmen coaches certainly recognised that “mind” was as important as “body” for successful performance and experiential learning had taught them effective means of dealing with psychological issues. Mussabini acknowledged that “Nerves’ will always get hold of the athlete, no matter how fit he may be”⁷ but pointed out that this was to be expected. Harry Andrews observed that just because an athlete was “excessively nervous” he is not necessarily “chicken-hearted”. However, to “funk...just before the race, is somewhat against a competitor” and the coach should alleviate this by talking to him about anything else but the race itself to keep his mind occupied.⁸

The passing on of this type of coaching knowledge was often achieved through coach-athlete relationships. Mussabini drew up training and racing schedules for Olympic champion Albert

³ Harris, H.A. (1964). *Greek Athletes and Athletics*. Hutchinson & Co. Ltd p.179.

⁴ King, D.B., Raymond, B.L. and Simon-Thomas, J.A. (1995). History of Sport Psychology in Cultural Magazines of the Victorian Era. *The Sport Psychologist*, **9**, p.376.

⁵ Lorimer, D.A. (1990). Nature, Racism, and Late Victorian Science, *Canadian Journal of History*, **25(3)** pp. 369-386

⁶ King, D.B., Raymond, B.L. and Simon-Thomas, J.A. (1995). History of Sport Psychology in Cultural Magazines of the Victorian Era. *The Sport Psychologist*, **9**, p.376.

⁷ Mussabini, S.A. (1934) *Track and Field Athletics*. London: W. Foulsham & Co. Ltd. 93.

⁸ Andrews, H. (1903). *Training for Athletics and General Health*. London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd.

Hill who subsequently passed on these methods to Sydney Wooderson. Harry Andrews worked with Alfred Shrubbs who then moved on to coach athletes at Oxford University.

Coaching craft was also transmitted through family ties. Frederick Beckwith's career as a swimming coach and natatory entrepreneur is one example of the role of the organic intellectual in stimulating local interest in his sport, in this case in Lambeth, and of the interactions that took place between coach, family, and other connected individuals.

Beckwith claimed the English swimming championship in 1854 and subsequently coached other English champions. He wrote on swimming technique and knew how to "get himself puffed", referring to himself as "This celebrated Ex-Champion Swimming Teacher" and "the world-renowned swimmer".

By 1861, Beckwith was giving his occupation as a Professor of Swimming and his children were already involved. Frances, aged 8, and Frederick, aged 6, were both "public swimmers" and William, aged 3, appeared in swimming exhibitions. David Pamplin, later to become Swimming Master at Camberwell and Dulwich Baths, exhibited as a professional swimmer under Beckwith in 1858, aged ten.

Beckwith had two further children, Agnes 19 and Charles 17 by 1881 and the family, along with long-term associates such as Thomas Attwood, appeared regularly in aquatic shows inside and outside of London. Agnes, the "Premier Lady Swimmer of the World", began assisting her father at six when she gave displays of "ornamental" swimming. By 14, she was swimming marathon swims in the Thames, the swimming baths, or the aquarium tank as well as in France, Belgium, and America. Beckwith reportedly owned a cigar shop and ran a swimming club at the Lambeth baths where he organised galas, offered prizes and trained swimmers. During the winter, he rented the baths to run a gymnasium and he gathered around him an assortment of swimmers, gymnasts, and writers.

Both Willie and Charles were still earning their living from swimming in 1891. The professor had moved again, this time opposite to the venue of his ten year engagement at the Royal Aquarium in Westminster where the aquarium tanks were used to display "Professor and Mrs. Beckwith & family demonstrating undressing, smoking, and eating two sponge cakes under water." Beckwith had also recruited further professional swimmers for his displays.

Coaches like Beckwith clearly had multiple roles as trainers, technicians, psychologists, managers, publicity agents, and entrepreneurs. Operating mainly, but not exclusively, at a localised level they not only had responsibility for the performance of their athlete but also for the progress of their sport, since they depended on profile for economic gain and social status. Their intimate circle contained family, who were often involved from an early age, and others who were drawn into their "stable" either as an athlete to be trained for competition or as someone who could contribute to entertainments. Both the family and the other athletes often went on to develop the sport further, using the tried and tested methods of the originator but with their own approaches and innovations. At the heart of their ability to succeed was the continuing success of their athletes which would maintain the coach's expertise in the public eye. There has been a tendency to denigrate their methods, Bannister referred to them as "bath attendant" coaches, but such attitudes fail to reflect the effectiveness of their innovations in the physical and psychological preparation of athletes. By the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to this coaching expertise, well-trained professional athletes were superior to amateurs in almost all events.

As the nature of British society changed during the course of the nineteenth century, these localised coaching communities came under threat. Middle class sporting administrators

employed structural definitions to exclude professional coaches when formulating rules for their sporting associations. However, the effect of the amateur professional divide in sport needs to be viewed as something other than a sudden fault in the timeline of coaching. Despite structural constraints, professional coaches continued to find work both at home and abroad. Amateur officials may have ostracised but they appear not to have eradicated professional coaching. Other factors such as industrialisation and the rationalisation of working practices, together with the elevation of the status of the professions, especially science and medicine, prove more potent in eroding the traditional context of the coaching workplace.

The elevation in the status of science in the nineteenth century prompted psychologists to promote their work as a means of serving practical ends and the general acceptance of psychology as a science attests to their success in establishing a public identity. In America, psychology was represented by a professional organisation, professional journals, college and university courses, and laboratories for research by 1921. As psychology consolidated its status as a "science", it attracted attention from coaches interested in its competitive potential. In the 1920s and 1930s, a systematic research programme took place at Stanford University, where Miles recorded the reaction of linemen to an auditory signal.⁹ "Pop" Warner, the veteran Stanford football coach, known for his innovations as a football strategist, presumably reached the conclusion that the research was not helpful and Miles was not invited to work with the football team again.¹⁰ Between 1925 and 1931, Coleman Griffith at the University of Illinois analysed the psychological factors in athletic competition, wrote *The Psychology of Coaching* and *The Psychology of Athletics*, and corresponded with leading coaches. In 1932, however, his laboratory was closed partly, it has been suggested, because Griffith lost support from Robert Zuppke, the football coach, who failed to see any improvement in the play of his teams as a result of Griffith's research.¹¹ Progressive coaches, such as Warner and Zuppke, as well as being practical psychologists, have always intuitively accepted, rejected, or modified new ideas and methods.¹²

After Griffith, sport psychology remained dormant in the West until the mid 1960s when research mainly investigated personality. Subsequently, sports psychologists turned their attention to social facilitation, achievement motivation, social reinforcement, arousal, cognitive approaches, and field methods.¹³ As sport psychology became a disciplinary subculture, structural control of the field followed. The professionalisation process often involves restricting the number of legitimate outlets for technical scientific publication, since this consolidates elite authority, and sport psychologists from the 1970s employed similar exclusionary mechanisms. The International Society of Sport Psychology was created in 1965 and has promoted the *International Journal of Sport Psychology* since 1970. The *Journal of Sport Psychology* was begun in 1979 and Division 47 (Exercise and Sport Psychology) of the American Psychological Association was founded in 1986, when *The Sport Psychologist* was established. In 1989, the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* began publication and, in 1991, The Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology established "certified consultant" status.

⁹ Gould, D. and Pick, S. (1995). Sport Psychology: The Griffith Era, 1920-1940. *The Sport Psychologist*, **9**, pp. 341-405.

¹⁰ Baugh, F.G. and Benjamin Jr., L.T. (2006). Walter Miles, Pop Warner, B. C. Graves, And The Psychology Of Football. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, **42(1)**, pp.3-18

¹¹ Gould, D. and Pick, S. (1995). Sport Psychology: The Griffith Era, 1920-1940. *The Sport Psychologist*, **9**, pp. 341-405.

¹² Colwin, C.M. (1992) *Swimming into the 21st Century* Champaign, Illinois, Human Kinetics Publishers p.181.

¹³ Feltz, D. (1992). The Nature of Sport Psychology in Thelma S. Horn (Ed.) *Advances in Sport Psychology*. Human Kinetics, Champaign, Il. Pp. 6-8

Bernard Shaw defined a profession as "a conspiracy against the laity"¹⁴ and the professionalisation of sports psychology had long-term implications for the centrality of the craftsman coach and for the perpetuation of the practice of coaching as a learned trade. Expertise is defined in terms of the number of facts that are known by a member of profession. Craft knowledge, which develops with experience, is a subsidiary aspect of expertise, but such knowledge is subjective.¹⁵ The subjective experiential knowledge of Victorian and Edwardian coaches mattered little when measured against the expertise of professionals. Late nineteenth century programmes instituted for physical educationalists focussed, in varying degrees, on anatomy, physiology of exercise, anthropometry, motor development, and psychology. Subsequently, academics in these disciplines established themselves as the gatekeepers of this specialist knowledge. The current professionalisation of coaching further consolidates the position of academics by centralising their technical and science based "expertise". Craft coaches have been effectively deskilled and disempowered, since coach education programmes, designed with professional status in mind, now rely on a set of knowledge parameters established by academics not by coaches.

The increasing tendency to refer to athletes as "performers" projects the modern image of athletes as regimented individuals who function as a result of standardised, pre-programmed, and scientifically organised preparation. Since this is assumed to be a quantifiable process, educators believe that it can be distilled to aspiring coaches as a set of prescriptive guidelines for practice. Through the embedding of sport science into coach education programmes, and by committing coaching to a formal qualification process, aspiring coaches are educated to expect that science will supply them with the answers instead of trying to become more competent and self-sufficient by testing new ideas as part of their practical coaching. These short cuts to knowledge mean there is no longer any incentive for experimentation and the rational, scientific, and mechanistic management coach has become the ideal while creative and imaginative coaches have been marginalised, often being dismissed as "mavericks". In the current climate of industrialised, science-based, performance sport there seems to be little scope left for a more fluid interpretation of coaching or for the artistry, craftsmanship, and intellectual contributions of a Mussabini or an Andrews.

However, in the same way that the late nineteenth century amateur hegemony in sport should not be seen as immediately leading to the extinction of professional coaching cultures it is possible that existing remnants of craft coaching may survive further standardisation. The craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and innovative contributions of a Frederick Beckwith may not reappear in their original form but at certain levels of sport, and in some sports more than others, the importance of the organic intellectual's contribution to coaching through close-knit groups, may will continue. At pre-qualification levels of coaching the local expert is still the key to initial coaching involvement, whether to a parent gradually immersing him or her self into local coaching traditions or to an athlete moving on to coaching and perpetuating or modifying his or her own coach's training methods. At elite levels, those coaches who have gone beyond the remits of the qualification process will share knowledge through a variety of information channels, normally with a group of like-minded individuals, and use their intellectual processes to initiate and drive innovations, often despite resistance. Recent studies confirm this process. Elite youth soccer coaches have reported that the most significant contribution to their knowledge came from watching

¹⁴ Elcock, (1986) *Local Government*, Methuen

¹⁵ Knowles, Z. and Borrie, A. (1998). Towards Reflective Coaching in Gymnastics BAGA. Available online at: <http://www.jonatmat.zen.co.uk/jonatmat/towards.htm> (accessed 12 October 2000).

and learning from other coaches.¹⁶ Elite men's gymnastic coaches identified mentor coaches as their most important resource and experimentation as an important source of gaining coaching knowledge. Only a third considered coaching courses as important preferring relevant discussion and debate as sources of knowledge.¹⁷ Even between these two extremes, some coaches on qualification courses will challenge standardised practice and others will continue to return home from these experiences merely to continue with their traditional practice, albeit with a certificate in their hand. Unfortunately, in the end, these points of difference and resistance may not be enough to radically alter the grinding process of standardisation through professionalisation.

¹⁶ Smith, M. and Cushion, C.J. (2006). An Investigation of the In-Game Behaviours of Professional, Top-Level Youth Soccer Coaches. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, **24(4)**, pp. 355 – 366

¹⁷ Irwin, G., Hanton, S. and Kerwin, D.G. (2004). Reflective Practice and the Origins of Elite Coaching Knowledge. *Reflective Practice*, **5(3)**