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This paper arises from ideas gathered from personal experiences as a coach and coach educator as well as my research on coaching lives and practices in Victorian and Edwardian England. It considers the nature of coaching communities of practice during that period and then illustrates, through the biographies of coaching practitioners, the impact of the creation of amateur controlled governing bodies of sport. I conclude with comments on the current "professionalisation" of coaching, drawing particular attention to the marginalisation of the social aspects of coaching resulting from an instrumental approach to coaching education and a standardisation of coaching practice.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the idea was widespread that the implementation of training schemes could enhance the performance of sportspeople beyond their "natural" abilities. Members of the gentry employed runners and fighters for the purpose of making matches for a financial return and they imposed training programmes to improve their chances of success, placing their athletes with a trainer, who treated them as "he would a running horse, under like discipline". Since backers made heavy investments in training costs and wagers, the trainer, a "coach" in modern terms, tried to ensure that his man was well prepared. By the 1820s, pugilist and pedestrian training regimes lasted about two months and when "in training", contestants lived with their trainers, who maintained constant surveillance over their diet, their exercise, and their amusements.

Coaching cultures, acting through tightly connected communities of practice, were led by local experts, whose knowledge was transmitted orally or through demonstrated practice, and whose methods were perpetuated by their close confidants. Over time, and with sustained interaction, members of these communities developed a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems. The main recipients of knowledge transfer might have been within the kinship group, as with the Claspers in rowing, but the passing on of coaching knowledge through coach-athlete relationships also replicated this craft mentality. Robert Barclay, having trained with Jacky Smith for his successful challenge of 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours for a 1,000 guineas, became a trainer himself and worked successfully with Tom Cribb for his fight with Molyneaux in 1811. The very nature of these coaching communities, being small, non-regulated, and self-contained, could encourage the perpetuation of "fads" and secret training methods. However, these communities also allowed successive coaching cohorts to impose their own ideas and practices on training regimes, without having to legitimise their actions with a theoretical underpinning.

As British society changed during the nineteenth century, localised coaching communities inevitably came under threat, especially when middle class sporting administrators employed structural definitions to exclude professional coaches. Gentlemen amateurs designed their sport to reserve part of it for amateur participation only or, at the very least, to keep professionals under control through legislation and by imposing a master-servant relationship on the teaching professional. Rowing, for example, included a caveat that an amateur must not have "ever taught, pursued, or assisted in the pursuit of athletic exercises of any kind as a means of livelihood."

Despite these structural constraints, professional coaches continued to find work. "Choppy" Warburton trained cyclists when his own running career was over and he became well known in France, coaching three World Champions. Sam Mussabini coached running and cycling at Herne Hill track, was employed by Polytechnic Harriers in 1913 as their senior coach, and had successes at four Olympics. He drew up training and racing schedules for the double Olympic champion Albert Hill who broke the British

mile record that had stood for twenty-nine years. When Mussabini retired, Hill assumed his coaching role and used his received wisdom to assist Sydney Wooderson to break the world record. Harry Andrews, trainer to South London Harriers, worked with swimmers, cyclists, and athletes, most notably Alfred Shrubbs, the holder of every world record from two to ten miles, who then moved on to coach at Oxford University from 1915 until 1926, when he was succeeded by Bill Thomas, who then trained Jack Lovelock.

These men clearly had multiple roles as trainers, technicians, psychologists, managers, publicity agents, and entrepreneurs. By the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to this coaching expertise, well-trained professional athletes were superior to amateurs in almost all events. John White ('The Gateshead Clipper') broke the world record for six miles in 1863 with a time that lasted until 1921. Walter George ran 4:12.4 in the mile in 1885, which went unmatched until 1915, and the 1899 professional 10-mile mark stood until 1945. H. M. Johnson lowered the professional 100-yard time to 9.6 in 1886, twenty years before the first amateur.

In swimming, the professional invariably triumphed in racing against the amateur during the mid-nineteenth century. Between 1851 and 1861 Frederick Edward Beckwith established his swimming credentials by winning the Championship of England, subsequently designating himself as Professor, thereby advertising his personal expertise and the fact that he earned his living through the activity. Frederick began his coaching career during this period and was writing on swimming, as well as creating the National Philanthropic Swimming Society in 1859, to spread among the working classes "a knowledge of the art of swimming". He became swimming master at Lambeth Baths for more than twenty years, managing the gymnasium there during the winter. He also evolved displays "of feats of natation" at the baths and taught at a number of schools. In 1861, he took over *The Good Intent*, which became the most celebrated sporting resort on the Surrey side of the water by 1862. Inns provided an important conduit for knowledge transfer and information on every sporting event of the day could be "constantly gleaned" at the house of the Champion Swimmer of England where aquatic pastimes were discussed by "leading professional visitants".

By 1877, Beckwith was running the *King's Head* hotel and an 1884 *Business Directory* listed him as a teacher of swimming, an agent for aquatic galas with his family, and a tobacconist. His aquatic entertainments, featuring among others Willie and younger brother Charles, included tank displays in music halls, theatres, and aquaria. Daughter Agnes, the "Premier Lady Swimmer of the World", maintained a lifetime's association with swimming, as teacher, competitor, and performer. She married theatrical agent William Taylor, an integral part of the Beckwith community, in 1882, and he accompanied Agnes, Willie, and Willie's wife, Emma, when they exhibited in America and Canada in 1883.

Coaches like Beckwith were the focal point of an intimate circle that contained both family and others who were drawn into their "stable" either as an athlete who could be trained for competition or as someone who could contribute to their entertainments. Community members, like David Pamplin, who exhibited as a professional swimmer under Beckwith in 1858, aged ten, and later became Swimming Master at Camberwell and Dulwich Baths, often went on to develop the sport further, using the tried and tested methods of the originator but with their own approaches and innovations. Their long-term success often depended on how well they established networks with other useful and powerful individuals. Beckwith had the acumen to develop his public persona and recognised that survival depended on judicious presentation of himself to as broad a church as possible. He counted the Rothschild children among his pupils and he consorted with influential men like Frank Buckland, owner and editor of *Land and Water*.

Beckwith was as responsible for the growing appreciation of swimming at the end of the nineteenth century as any individual or organisation but he remains relatively unknown

because it was the amateur governing body that ultimately wrote the history of swimming. In 1869, London swimming clubs formed the Metropolitan Swimming Club Association, which had evolved into the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) in 1886 after which the organisation concentrated on regulating the sport, encouraging participation and life saving skills, excluding professionals, and abolishing gambling.

ASA laws consistently deemed swimmers as professional if they were paid for teaching, training, or coaching, but the ASA eventually conceded that professional teachers were essential for increasing participation. The key was to ensure that professionals remained under their control so the organisation instituted a Professional Certificate in 1899, which was granted, upon application, "to such as are desirous and deemed worthy of obtaining them". ASA District Executives had to be "satisfied as to the character and antecedents of an applicant as well as to his ability as a professional teacher" before recommending him. Certificate number ninety-six was awarded to Walter Septimus Brickett and the impact of the changing nature of the sporting context in the late nineteenth century is demonstrated by the coaching life experienced by Brickett, whose coaching career intersected with Beckwith's, spatially and temporally.

When the British team attended the Stockholm Olympics in 1912 it was accompanied by a number of trainers, including Brickett. Walter was born in 1865 in Camden and he followed his four brothers in becoming a *Pianoforte Maker*, which remained his primary occupation until at least 1901. Between 1883 and 1898, he competed regularly in amateur swimming and athletics events. Walter established himself in many areas of swimming, notably life saving, being involved in the formation of the Life Saving Society in 1891. He also became a prominent coach. In 1908, Walter was appointed trainer to the Olympic team and then again, as "trainer and adviser-in-chief", for Stockholm.

Walter also trained Channel Swimmers, notably Jabez Wolffe who went on to coach a number of successful swimmers himself. Walter's sons Sidney and Reg were founder members of the National Association of Swimming Instructors and Reg became President of the Swimming Teachers Association of Great Britain. In that respect, Walter behaved much like Gramsci's local, organic intellectual, initiating and sustaining a traditional coaching community of practice, although a combination of factors specific to him generated an acceptance by the swimming establishment that was denied to some of his predecessors. Walter's social background was rooted in the artisan class and it is a measure of the potential democracy of amateur sports organisations like the ASA, that a man from this class could be involved in the formation of the Royal Life Saving Society and then be appointed as a trainer to successive Olympic teams. Just as some English workingmen could be respectable, so some professional coaches, like Walter, could display amateur-like qualities.

Brickett and Beckwith encountered different swimming worlds which required different solutions. Both men recognised their own strengths, took the opportunities that were open to them, and, in different ways, achieved a measure of recognition. In this respect, there is a degree of continuity in their coaching lives although the considerable variation in their coaching biographies, despite their temporal proximity, is also lasting testimony to the power of amateur sporting associations to structurally influence the nature of the coaching environment. However, they never eradicated professional coaching or eliminated traditional training methods that continued to rely heavily upon the accumulated experience of successful coaches.

Rather than the structural changes imposed by amateur governing bodies it was a more subtle process of certification and professionalisation that eventually altered the nature of coaching. During the nineteenth century, there had been little contact between scientists and coaches but when scientists began investigating sport they initially consulted these experts. The 1911 Dresden International Hygiene Exhibition provided the impetus to launch the sport sciences and the movement toward a reductionist view

of athletic bodies accelerated as sport scientists gradually established themselves as the gatekeepers of specialist knowledge, effectively deskilling and disempowering leading coaches by appropriating their unique expertise.

The current initiatives to professionalise coaching are a logical inheritor of this process. Bernard Shaw defined a profession as “a conspiracy against the laity” and professions limit the number of potential entrants to enhance exclusivity, often through formal education mechanisms. Expertise is defined in terms of the number of facts that are known while craft coaching knowledge is viewed as subjective and therefore inferior to the objective expertise of academics in sports science. The current professionalisation of coaching centralises this “expertise” and coach education programmes, designed with professional status in mind, now rely on a set of knowledge parameters established by academics not by coaches. Coaching practice has been constructed as a systematic and constrained process, especially by coach educators. A hierarchy of coaches, determined by formal qualifications rather than coaching successes, organises, instructs and accredits incoming coaches. This *cochauracy* essentially becomes the means through which coaching credibility and status is awarded. Coaching skills are reduced to the application of standard templates and qualified coaches inevitably perpetuate the stereotypical and reductionist view of coaching that they have been presented with. In the current climate of industrialised, science-based, performance sport there seems to be little scope left for the artistry, craftsmanship, and intellectual contributions of a Beckwith or a Mussabini.

However, I remain optimistic that some remnants of these cultures will survive since, clearly, coaching is about people and social interaction as much as about explicit knowledge. 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 communities will continue. At pre-qualification levels the local expert is still the key to initial coaching involvement, perhaps as a parent gradually immersing him or her self into the local coaching traditions or as an athlete moving on to a coaching career and perpetuating or modifying his or her own coach’s training methods. At elite levels, coaches who have gone beyond the remit of the qualification process will share knowledge through a variety of information channels and use their intellectual processes to initiate and drive innovations. Even between these two extremes, some coaches on qualification courses will challenge standardised practice and many will return home from these experiences merely to continue their traditional practices, albeit with a certificate in their hand.