CHAPTER 5: IMPORTANCE OF VALUES IN THE COACHING PROCESS

Martin J Lee [†]

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper is values in coaching and their role in the coaching process; I will address most of my remarks specifically to the coaching of children. My purpose is to encourage coaches to develop a personal philosophy of coaching that emphasises the well-being of the children under their care. Children are vulnerable to a variety of adult influences and sport provides many opportunities for them to be exploited to meet the needs of other people, even to the extent of child abuse (see for example, Ryan, 1995). For children to get the most out of the sporting experience coaches need to consider carefully how they can best serve primarily the needs of the children while at the same time meeting their own needs and those of the sport and clubs which they represent. Naturally there is a potential for considerable conflict here since the young athletes, coaches, clubs, sport governing bodies, and parents may all have differing ideas about the purposes of sport and the desirability of specific practices.

You may have asked yourselves why we provide sport for children. If so, you have probably also asked why you are part of the process. These questions are very important because coaching children is a great responsibility. Coaches have a great impact not only on how children experience sport but also because children’s attitudes, toward both themselves and the world, are not fixed but still forming, and coaches have an effect on their development.

Knowing clearly what part you are going to play in providing sport experiences for children is a matter of having a personal philosophy, a set of values which guides the things you do to present the sport to the children you coach. You need to be aware of what it is that you are really trying to do, and that it fits what the children need and want.

a) Patterns of growth and participation in youth sport

Population changes and participation patterns among children affect how sports federations promote their own sports and retain the interest of young