

Are you performance or participation?

Run Leading or coaching is a very rewarding voluntary or paid activity and one that hundreds of thousands of individuals around the UK take part in every week. Sports coach UK, suggest that there are around 1.1 million Leaders/Coaches across all sports in the country, the vast majority of which are voluntary. Giving up time to give so much to participants in a variety of sports they are only doing good!
This is our debate!

Performance v Participation

Leaders and coaches undertaking such important roles play a significant part in the development of participants. However if the leader/coaches motives are misaligned can they cause more problems than they solve?

Professor John Lyle of Stirling University highlighted, in a paper that he had written, the differences between Performance and Participation coaching. The challenge for all Leaders/Coaches is to:

- Understand the differences between participation and performance coaching/Leading
- Recognise in which environment they are leading/coaching.
- Develop the right skill-set, knowledge, aims and approach for their leading/coaching role
- Monitor what is needed and adapt their approach as appropriate

Participation leading/coaching

In this environment individuals want to take part safely, be competitive and to enjoy sport events. Their reasons for taking part are likely to be social, health or enjoyment based, rather than ‘winning’ or reaching their peak. The winning v development debate is a common one that all leaders/coaches should consider when developing their own personal coaching philosophy. There is nothing wrong with either approach as long as it is used with the right participants.

Participation coaching is not about ‘winning’ or reaching a peak It’s about being ‘competitive’ and enjoying taking part in the sport.

Coaches or Leaders look to enable participants take part with sufficient skills necessary to enjoy competition, to do so safely, effectively and in an environment they want to keep coming back to.

Performance coaching

The majority of sport in the UK is participation orientated and Running/Athletics is no exception so by its very nature most of the leading and coaching will be aimed at a participation level and this is even more so nowadays as we are encouraged to bring more entry level runners into the sport.

So, as a leader/coach do you analyse, review and adapt training to build, improve or change what you do for your groups so that they continually improve or do you lead/coach for the same reasons as the ones that you lead/coach (so to be social and for health benefits etc) no matter how “competitive” the group is?

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