

WORKING GROUPS: COACHING EDUCATION

CHALLENGE: HOW TO INTERVENE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF COACHES WITH EDUCATION IN INJURY RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION OF SPORTS INJURY IN A WAY THAT RESULTS IN A POSITIVE OUTCOME FOR THE ATHLETE AND ADD VALUE TO THE COACHING EXPERIENCE IN EVERY COMMUNITY?

Most youth coaches do not receive any training in key competencies in working with children. Only one in four coaches of youth teams of children under age 14 say they have been trained in effective injury prevention, and one in five in motivational technique, and just one in three in skills and tactics in the primary sport they coach, according to 2013 data produced for Project Play by Sports and Fitness Industry Association. There has been little to no improvement since then, according to 2016 data.

Community leaders in Western New York consistently characterized coaches there as overly concerned with winning and that such priorities were a negative influence on sports participation, according to the Aspen Institute's 2017 report on the state of play in Western New York. The value of trained coaches was established long ago by researchers, with one study (Smoll and Smith, 1992) finding that when coaches were trained in their sport only 5% did not return to play the sport again. With untrained coaches, the attrition rate was 26%.

Community volunteer youth coaches are most often aligned with one sport interest. That sport is part of a community association that provides for the competitive aspects of the sport; rules, regulations access to practice areas and a competitive schedule. These community associations may be part of a regional, state and national governing organizations. Enforcing rules and regulations has little reach beyond the community authority. For that reason, our coaching education course is a collaboration with each municipal government.

The course is a series of two to four minute videos on topics (outlined on page) in sports injury recognition and prevention. Each topic is followed by a quiz of less than ten multiple choice questions. The total time for the course and quizzes is two hours. The "blended learning" course is a class moderator in combination with the online course.

The preferred outcome of this coaching education methodology requires the "blended learning" classroom environment. Short attention spans dictate part of the methodology for teaching in the modern learning environment. We have to grab someone's attention quickly. In the year 2000, attention span -- as measured by adults surfing the web without distraction -- was clocked at 12 seconds and by 2013, that figure had fallen to just 8 seconds.¹ That means that we have to be engaging, interactive and keep moving. Diversifying imagery - using numbers, infographics, charts, pictures and other visual elements that are accompanied by carefully crafted, simple auditory or text-based messages -- means that a single short "course" or learning unit can also appeal to a variety of learning styles. Stringing together several of these "micro" lessons and reinforcing the information with frequent discussion, quizzes or other assessments also leads to higher retention. And in combination with a skilled moderator, these practices pay off. The capacity of short-term memory (STM) is about 4 items;² however, this can be expanded by grouping or "chunking" content which eases integration into long-term memory. Studies demonstrate that this type of "microlearning" can yield an average of 4-5 behavior modifications from a content series.³ And "distributed practice" has been demonstrated to increase performance by 17%.⁴

¹National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine, The Associated Press 2014.

²Bruce Goldstein, *Cognitive Psychology: Connecting Mind, Research, and Everyday Experience*.

³Sebastian Bailey, Ph.D., *Mindgym, Bite-size is the right size*.

⁴*Mindgym, Bite-size revolution: how to make learning stick*.

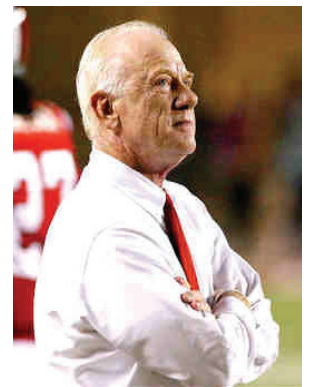
COACHING LEADERS



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