We Need a Taxonomy of Coach Development Programs in the United States

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Examining Coaching and Coach Education in the United States
An open public discussion supporting quality coaching within the American sport system
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Problem: Large-scale efforts to educate entry-level coaches have not been catalogued, nor have they been of much interest to researchers.

Sport providers such as national governing bodies, scholastic athletic associations, and non-profits, have a mandate to educate their coaches.

Many sport providers educate their coaches through online programs that are:

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- Remote
- On-demand
- Far-reaching
- Inexpensive
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- Basic data on their implementation
- Evaluations of their effectiveness
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The coach development literature... Highlights individual coach development trajectories and elite coach development.

Highlights coach development programs that are:
- Facilitated
- In-person
- Longitudinal
- Novel
- Resource-intensive
So what?

As scholars, we are making a choice on what types of programs we feel are valid and worth investigating.

Do we need to pay more attention to programs designed to serve the masses?

If we do, then where do we start?

We don’t have a standardized way of accounting for the ways in which sport providers prepare their coaches.

This becomes a problem when we want to compare programs, evaluate program effectiveness, or even find basic statistics like the number of credentialed coaches.
Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal
Create a taxonomy of coach education and coach development programs in the United States

Specific Purpose
Conduct an audit of requirements for becoming an entry-level coach, with specific attention to method of delivery

- Online Course
- Hybrid (online course + in-person training)
- In-person training
- Correspondence or exam-based
- Non-uniform or no requirement
Stage 1: Collect Publicly-Reported Information from Sport Provider Websites
- Requirements for entry-level coaches
- Classify the method of program delivery

Stage 2: Verification and Follow-up (ongoing)
- Seek clarification from sport providers on our findings

Round 1
National Governing Bodies

Round 2
Scholastic Athletic Associations

Round 3
Private or non-profit sport providers

Special thanks to my research assistant Lauren Secaras.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Course</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>In-Person</th>
<th>Correspondence or Exam</th>
<th>Non-Uniform or No Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Curling</td>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>Biathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Synchronized Swimming</td>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Boxing*</td>
<td>Golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobsled</td>
<td>Team Handball**</td>
<td>Ice Hockey</td>
<td>Canoe</td>
<td>Judo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>Tennis*</td>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
<td>Figure Skating*</td>
<td>Karate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxing*</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field*</td>
<td>Luge</td>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>Modern Pentathlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure Skating*</td>
<td>Racquetball</td>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Skateboarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>Speedskating*</td>
<td>Water polo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Volleyball*</td>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>Tennis*</td>
<td>N = 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski &amp; Snowboard</td>
<td>Wrestling*</td>
<td>Tennis*</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field*</td>
<td>Water polo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>N = 18</td>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>Wrestling*</td>
<td>N = 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speedskating*</td>
<td>Weightlifting</td>
<td>Volleyball*</td>
<td>N = 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Type of learning program used to deliver entry-level coach requirements for 48 national governing bodies of sport in the United States.

* Sports that allow requirements to be met by either online or in-person training.

** Team-handball allows either online or hybrid training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA Swimming</th>
<th>USA Weightlifting</th>
<th>USA Volleyball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Training</strong></td>
<td>Foundations of Coaching 101</td>
<td>USA Weightlifting Level 1</td>
<td>IMPACT Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>In-Person*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time to Complete</strong></td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>2 days + online courses</td>
<td>1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability</strong></td>
<td>On-demand</td>
<td>Weekly (5-7 regional options)</td>
<td>“Scheduled periodically”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost to Student (Coach)</strong></td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$499</td>
<td>$25 (in AZ, varies by region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Teaching skills and drills</td>
<td>Coaching principles</td>
<td>Coaching principles, communication, philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning &amp; managing a practice</td>
<td>Sport science topics</td>
<td>Sport science topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developmentally-appropriate practices</td>
<td>Technique, assessing movement</td>
<td>Athlete safeguards, Ethics, legal, risk-mgmt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource library access</td>
<td>Technical progressions of specific lifts</td>
<td>Practice design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credential</strong></td>
<td>Coach Membership</td>
<td>Level 1 Coach Certification</td>
<td>Coach Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of coaches served</strong></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Training also offered as an online course

Table 2. Comparing online, hybrid, and in-person trainings offered by three different national governing bodies.
What is needed?

Taxonomy of coach development and coach education programs

Include national governing bodies, scholastic sport associations, and private/nonprofit sport providers

Standardized way to catalog and compare existing programs

Next Steps

Conversation Point:
What criteria should we include?

- What topics do coaches need to know? (Content knowledge)
- What are the entry-level coaching requirements?
- Method of delivery and logistics (time, costs to coach and organization)
- How are coaches instructed? (Pedagogy)
- Outputs such as numbers served, type of credential
- Program evaluations