

Micro-Learning Club Coaching- Week #1



Athlete-Centred Coaching:

This is a philosophy that prioritises the athlete's development, autonomy, and decision-making, fostering long term performance and personal growth.

Core Principles:

Athlete-Centred coaching emphasises empowerment, responsibility, and self-awareness. Coaches focus is on helping athletes take ownership of their performance, understand the behaviours that lead to success, and develop the ability to self-correct and make informed decisions during competition or training. This approach respects each athletes uniqueness, tailoring coaching strategies to individual needs, abilities and personality traits.

Theoretical Foundations:

This coaching philosophy is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which believes that individuals learn best when actively constructing meaning from their experiences. It also draws on self-determination theory, highlighting that intrinsic motivation thrives when athletes experience autonomy, competence and relatedness. Additionally, ecological dynamics informs athlete-centred coaching by emphasising skill development through interaction with the environment promoting adaptability and decision-making rather than prescriptive instruction.

Practical Applications:

Athlete-centred coaches employ strategies such as:

- Customised training programmes based on individual assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
- Collaborative goal-setting, allowing athletes to participate in defining objectives for skill, confidence, or tactical improvement.
- Open communication and feedback, fostering trust and encouraging athletes to share ideas and concerns.
- Game-based learning approaches, like Athletics NZ ASB Run Jump Throw to develop tactical creativity and thinking athletes.
- Holistic development, supporting both physical skills and mental well-being.

Benefits:

Research and practice indicate that athlete-centred coaching:

- Enhances intrinsic motivation and long-term engagement.
- Improves decision-making, resilience and adaptability in competitive environments.
- Promotes self-regulation and reflective skills, enabling athletes to manage performance demands independently.
- Supports life skill development, preparing athletes for success beyond sport.

Conclusion:

Athlete-centred coaching moves beyond traditional instruction by placing the athlete at the heart of the learning process., fostering autonomy, confidence, and long-term performance. It is applicable across all levels of sport, from youth to elite, and is particularly effective in creating athletes who are not only skilled but also self-aware, adaptable, and motivated.

Yours in Athletics

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(sources from: athletesassessments.com, thecoachingmindset.org and sportconn.com)