



# CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

## CIAC COACHES UPDATE



Volume 11, Issue VIII Dr. Bob Lehr, Editor

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### FIT FOR PURPOSE

As spring continues to unfold, everyone at the CIAC is thinking about our approaching tournaments. Coaches are employing their final preparations to fine tune their teams for the championship run. It is indeed a very exciting time for high school sports in Connecticut.

One of the benefits that our state's coaches enjoy is our coaching education programs. The director of those programs, Fred Balsamo, has assembled a first rate faculty that offers courses that are current, well-organized and beneficial to each coach's efforts to improve their personal coaching skills.

This issue addresses the importance of coaching education and the development of athletes so they achieve their potential in sport. We hope you find it helpful.

Good luck to all those coaches with teams in the CIAC tournaments.

Editor, Bob Lehr

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Video

### The " Parenting Your Student Athlete"

This professionally done video was developed to assist schools with the ever increasing problems created by the parents of athletes. It is 14 minutes long and has a series of vignettes which makes it perfect for your parent meetings. It is an outstanding video and is narrated by Suzy Kolber and Mike Golic from ESPN .

More information at : [www.cadinc.org](http://www.cadinc.org)

**AUGUST 2012  
CEU MODULE OFFERINGS !**



### CONNECTICUT COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

An Alliance of the:  
Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference  
Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors  
Connecticut High School Coaches Association

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REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION AT: <http://www.ctcoachinged.org/>

# Fit for Purpose:

## Linking Coach Education and Development To Athlete Development

**Anne Pankhurst**

Coaching education and athlete development in any sport should be closely linked. They both certainly need to be fit for purpose and train coaches to meet athlete needs in the best way possible. Success in sport, whether as a world class performer or as a weekend participant, depends on the skills and knowledge of the coach meeting the needs of the athletes. The process through which this occurs —coach education—is changing in many sports. This article will suggest some of the reasons why.

In recent years, a number of sports have paid more attention to the pathway along which athletes develop from childhood to adulthood; from young beginner, to adult athlete, to life time sportsperson. The understanding of how and why young people develop in their athletic abilities as they grow and mature, and the impact of these changes on the sport training process, appears to be increasing. Sport development is essentially outlined by the different ages and stages through which young athletes develop, irrespective of their level of ability. Various called long term or progressive athlete/player development, the pathway is at last being understood by governing bodies and coaches as a process that is independent of the level of ability of the athlete. Coach education to date has been associated with the ability of the athlete, rather than the stage of physical, mental and social development and maturation.

The fundamentals of the present athlete development pathway probably began with Bloom's study of talented young people in 1985. However, athlete development research by many child physiologists and psychologists has resulted in Bloom's model being developed and adopted ( and in some cases, adapted!) by a number of sport governing bodies in the US.

While keeping the basic concept, USA Football and USA Hockey both have developed progressive web based models and in the individual sports, US Tennis Association developed a poster of their player pathway several years ago. In Canada many sports base their sport-specific models on the Canadian Sport for Life project.

The progressive development model itself has also developed over time from being an essentially talent based physical, technical, and training model to include data on mental, emotional and social development, volume and type of competition, type of practice at different ages and stages and the role of parents. Much 'external' research has been applied and incorporated into current versions of the athlete development model.

It seems likely that development of such models for young athletes is also responsible for an increasing and welcome focus on coaching becoming more athlete-centered. Indeed, the different stage of the model emphasize the difference between athletes so much that implementing the concepts and the data means

concentrating on the athletes themselves. As a direct result, coaches must be taught to base their coaching on the athlete, rather than the sport. Further, NSCS accreditation in the US means that sports must adopt the athlete centered model as central to their coaching education process.

An equally significant, subsequent move in the change in coaching education, however, is the way in which a number of governing bodies have begun to link their coaching education programs to the athlete development model. In the past, coaching education trained coaches at three levels, each for increasing amounts of time; the inference being that the advanced coach needs to be trained for longer than the beginner coach! These coaches then worked with beginner, intermediate or advanced athletes, irrespective of their age, in a process that simply linked the education level of the coach to the sport development level of the athlete. The adoption of an athlete development pathway, however, means that coaches need different skill sets based on the age and stage of the athlete, rather than the stage of development in the sport. As an example, the basic coaching skills of communication, organization and teaching are important with any age group, but the detail of them will change with different ages, not by their stage of sport development. The skills needed to communicate with or organize a coaching session for a six year old are different to those for a sixteen or sixty year old. The lesson plan for a ten year old athlete with potential cannot be the same as one for a group of adult beginners. The characteristics of a quality coaching environment are as different for eight year old beginners as they are for thirty year old club players or fifty year beginners. And the ethical considerations for different ages and stages will be different too. Thus the use of progressive development models and especially those that include a lifetime in sport focus, mean that coaching education has to change. That change is happening: and for certain athlete development models, the need for an athlete centered approach is a catalyst.

USA Football has begun the process by developing age-based coaching certifications to match the age-based progressive player development model they have adopted. The Professional Tennis Registry (one of the two tennis coach organizations in the US) has changed its whole coaching education structure to educate coaches to work either with children, adults or performance players. Their new programs recognize that coaches need different skills for different groups of players. Further, the children coaches can coach 10 and under or older juniors and the performance group can train to coach juniors with potential or older talented players.

Several years ago the long established levels of coaching education began to be questioned in Europe and the UK. Progressive development models in many sports highlighted that coaches needed more specific training and coaches needed to be specialists in different stages of athlete development. The first step was to identify the stages. The emergent model is for coaches of children, participants, young talented athletes and performance athletes. Further, coaches can progress through different levels of expertise from Level 1 to Level 4 (Master) coaches.

Coaching education is changing: to become a Master Coach, working with young children who are just beginning in a sport, was a dream of some! The advent and understanding of the athlete progression pathways has brought the change. Finally coaches are fit for purpose!

*Anne Pankhurst is an athlete and coach development consultant in the US to United States Tennis Association and the Professional Tennis Registry. She was previously the Manager of Coaching Education for the LTA in London and Manager of Coaching Education for USTA. She works directly with young athletes and coaches specializing in player and coach development pathways. She is currently pursuing her PhD in talent development pathways.*

# CONNECTICUT COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

## AUGUST 2012 CEU MODULE OFFERINGS

Being offered at:

CIAC OFFICE, 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire

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## NO WALK IN REGISTRATIONS

**Thursday, August 23, 2012 (6-9pm)**

**Module 8 - Strength & Conditioning Design**

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**Friday, August 24, 2012 (6-9pm)**

**Module 14 - Critical Incidents & Emergency Planning**

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**Saturday, August 25, 2012 (8:30-11:30am)**

**Module 5 - CIAC Rules & Regulations**

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**Saturday, August 25, 2012 (noon-3pm)**

**Module 4 - Legal Aspects of Coaching**

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**Saturday, August 25, 2012 (3:00-6:00pm)**

**Module 16 - Appropriate Use of Electronic Media**

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Registration for any or all of these 5 modules must be done online at

[www.ctcoachinged.org/CEU.html](http://www.ctcoachinged.org/CEU.html)