

## Modern coaching approach – the operational impact

**MC:** Loryn Ettridge

### **Presenters:**

- Will Vickery – Senior Coach Advisor, Sport Australia
- Graeme Hill – General Manager, Coaching Development, Swimming Australia
- Simon Woinarski – Program Coordinator, Coaching and Officiating, NSW Office of Sport
- Leslee Reif – Community Coach
- Rebecca Clark – Coach Advisor, Sport Australia

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:00:03] Hello and welcome to the Modernised Coaching Approach Webinar. I'm Loryn Ettridge, communications advisor at the Australian Sports Commission, and I'll be your emcee for today. Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which each of us is working from today and pay our respects to the elders' past, present and emerging. This afternoon, we're putting the spotlight on community coaching and sharing how we plan to make the experience for coaches and participants a whole lot better. Over the next 60 minutes, we're going to deep dive into why we're shaking up the coaching approach, the positive impact it will have, and what you can expect to get out of the coming months. Oh, now hand it over to our senior advisor of coaching at Sport Australia, Will Vickery, to give the official welcome and provide some background on the modern coaching approach. Thanks, Will.

**Will Vickery** [00:00:58] Thanks, Loryn. Firstly on behalf of Sport Australia, I just want to take the time to thank everyone for tuning in and listening to some of the exciting things that we've got to share about how we're aiming to have the best sport system in the world so that our coaches can become the best at what they do. So the value and importance of a coach is often understated and not often understood to its full amount coaches, regardless of what sport, what age group, what ability level or playing and all, have a critical role in the positive experiences that our participants have and the engagement with the sport that they play for the rest of their lives. And those who coach in any level, whether it be community all the way through to kind of higher levels. These are some of the first people that our participants interact with in a sporting environment which makes the role of a coach even more invaluable. The coach's role, particularly at a community level, spans across the more well-known stereotypical roles of a coach, such as developing and leading training sessions. But it also means that they're involved in managing before, during and after a session or match day, interacting and engaging with our participants on a personal level and creating opportunities not just for our participants, but those who are actually there to support the coach as well when they're actually looking to actually create a real positive environment. A list of the roles of any coach could be. Analyst. So what we're trying to do and why we and what we really see as important is that these coaches get the most up to date information so that we can support their development and help them to create the best experience that's possible for their participants. Now to make sure that this is possible for every current and future coaching coach across Australia. We here at Sport Australia have modernised this approach to coaching. Can I get the next slide? Thanks. This modernised approach to coaching redefines the sporting experience with the intention to have our coaches build positive learning experiences and create a more vibrant sports sector so that we see more participants playing and enjoying sport. It means that we're taking a wider view of the roles of a coach beyond what we stereotypically see or consider. In other words, we want to broaden the view that people have of a coach by providing them with information that

focuses on how to coach as opposed to what to coach. We want to move the thinking of our coaches towards that of the participant and creating environments that align with what they need and what they want, rather than having a more traditional approach of what we think participants should be doing in order to be successful. The modernised approach to coaching recognises the different needs, aspirations and motivations of our participants and that they're at the core of coach development. We know that focusing on the participant empowers them to achieve personal goals while delivering physical, psychological, sociological and health and wellbeing benefits. This approach recognises that each coach and the environment they work in is different. So it's important that every coach is supported to provide an experience for their individual participants, regardless of their stage of development. By providing our community coaches or any coach for that matter, with information that allows them to create optimal learning and development opportunities, they'll be in a position to create the best environment for their participants.

Next slide. Thanks. Now, as you can imagine, this this change of mindset and information has and is no small, no small feat. So to make sure that the information we have and provide is ultimately available to all our coaches across the country, the first thing we need to do is to understand what it is that our coach coaching workforce does as well as have a greater awareness of what it is that actually motivates our participants to get them involved and remain in sport. But this. Besides using the knowledge and experience of our own team, we collaborated with a wide variety of experts across the coaching space, whether it be in academia, at national sporting organisations, national sporting organisations for people with a disability, and even those who coach across the community, across all different environments. These experts have been able to provide us with the insight to what our coaches need to know in the current sport, current sport environment in order to provide a positive experience for our participants. And this has allowed us to create bespoke content for our coaches that does indeed align with their needs, aspirations and motivations. And what we're trying to do is support them here more than we have in the development ever before, using a blended learning approach so that every coach has access to high quality resources to support their ongoing development. Next slide. Thanks.

So what you see on the screen, some of the various resources and methods that we are currently making available have available to coaches or some that are actually being developed. For example, this is the first of a series of or some webinars that will actually take place with more to come in the future that align with the bespoke content that we are developing and have developed. Many of our sporting organisations have also made use of the advisory services that our team here at Sport Australia are able to provide to facilitate the development of updated coach education frameworks. All that align with the modernised approach that we're kind of, although we have developed. You may also be already listening in or at least aware of the Sport Australia podcast, where we chat to some of Australia's leading sport coaches, athletes, officials and researchers about their experiences and insight into the modernisation of coaching. Also if you had to the Sport Australia coaching coaches at official website. You'll also see a number of updated resources and tools that coaches can use to assist and guide the development, all aligning with the modernised approach. One resource in particular is the community coaching Essential Skills course. It's a free online course that's been available since April 2022, and it's designed so that every single coach can learn at their own pace anytime, anywhere, and on any device. Next slide. Thanks.

Now specifically, the community coaching essential skills course is made up of eight modules with the aim of guiding a coach's understanding of how to create safe, inclusive and positive learning environments for their participants. The first module that coaches complete was developed alongside Sport Integrity Australia, focusing on safeguarding with sport. Following this, coaches are introduced to the concept of knowing who they're coaching. This module is all about recognising that participants have a variety of different needs, as well as aspirations and motivations for playing sport

and the role that a coach plays in creating a positive, engaging environment to suit each of these. The next is focused on where the coach or the way the coaching takes place, highlighting what space, equipment and facilities are needed to create a safe and positive environment. After this, coaches are provided with information relating to session planning, such as what makes for an effective session plan, the various approaches that a coach can use, and what impact the session plan can have on their participants. The fifth module is all about communication. Here, the coaches will gain knowledge in the different ways that they can connect and interact with their participants and begin to consider what might be the most effective way to communicate. Depending on the environment they're in. This then moves on to the topic of stakeholder management, focusing on identifying who can who a coach can get support from within the environment, within their community, I should say. Sorry, and how these individuals can assist in creating a positive experience for their participants. The second to last module provides coaches with information on what they should consider when delivering a session. This includes effective grief management and how to ensure that the sessions are inclusive for every participant. Final module introduces coaches to the concepts of reflection and how this can be used to not only improve the experience that they provide to participants, but also their own coaching knowledge and ability. Overall, the coaching community, community coaching, essential skills course and the various additional resources that you'll find on the website provide everyone that completes it with the knowledge and tools to begin their coach development journey in creating fun, engaging and even challenging environments that will lead participants to have a positive sporting experience. Next slide. Thank you. Now the outcome of this modernised approach, which is what we're after, what we're hoping for, is that the experiences that that are the experiences that a coach provides are individualised to each participant, and they focus on what they enjoy and require. There's a lot of evidence to suggest that simply by listening and speaking with participants and understanding what they what it is they want to achieve and what they want to get from playing sport goes a long way in improving their experience. A playing sport on their own terms and having insight and some involvement in what this looks like. Participants of all ages and all abilities feel a sense of belonging and autonomy, meaning that they feel empowered to learn and take part in the session and the various activities that a coach has planned. Since they're doing that, they are doing something that they can see benefit within themselves. This focus on the participants needs, aspirations and motivations are also linked to them feeling more connected to their team-mates, their coach and the other stakeholders that are involved in experience. Are also numerous sports specific benefits that come from this, whether it be physical, technical or tactical? Recognising what a participant may want to develop and aligning this with what motivates them is a really effective way of improving sports specific skills. Most importantly, by modernising coaching, we're creating coaches that inspire our participants to remain in sport and gain all the benefits that this brings for the rest of their lives. Finest light. Thanks. Now at the time of this presentation, there's been more than six and a half thousand coaches who have completed the community coaching Essential Skills course with another four, four and a half thousand currently undertaking it. These numbers are really encouraging, and it suggests that a lot of coaches can really see the value and the benefit that this approach, this modern approach to coaching has. Just to keep you in the loop as to where things are headed and what we're trying to do to continue to support our coaches using this modernised approach. One of the things that we're actually doing is we're assisting all of our national sporting organisations and our national sporting organisations for people with a disability from all across Australia. On what the modern approach to coaching is with respect to their own coaches and how this can be integrated into how they approach coach education. Because of this modernised approach. Some sports are also starting to begin. What are beginning to move? Moving away from traditional methods of coach

education to make things more accessible to all our coaches. We're also looking at doing deep dive modules, which is a series of seven modules that all coaches will have access to, to support and expand upon the learning they gained from the community coaching essential skills course. The information from these modules will guide coaches on how to apply the knowledge to their own context to support participants. Another project that's underway as well is in collaboration with our sporting organisations, is the development and update of various coach education roles. Just like everything else, a modern approach has been taken to how this information is being delivered and what these roles entail within the current sports environment. These are just a few of the things that we're working on at the moment and have upcoming. All of which aim to create the best sport system in the world. The best coaches in the world. And get everyone playing sport. Thank you.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:14:07] Fantastic. Thanks so much, Will. All right. I'd now like to welcome up for special guests to our panel, coach advisor at Sport Australia, Rebecca Clark, general manager of Coaching Development at Swimming Australia. Graeme Hill, Program Coordinator of Coaching and Officiating at New South Wales Office of Sport. Simon Now ski and triathlon community coach Leslee Reef. Graeme let's start with you. So Sport Australia has been working pretty closely with swimming over the past 12 months. Can you shed some light on how the partnership came about and what's been achieved off the back of it?

**Graeme Hill** [00:14:47] Yeah. Thanks, Loryn. We we're in a position where at Swimming Australia, we had developed our coaching blueprint with the vision of coaching excellence at all stages of the swimming pathway. The Swimming Australia coaching blueprint was focused on coaches as the facilitators of athlete development and as such we were looking at establishing excellence in our coaching standards, looking at increasing the capability and capacity of our coaches, looking to develop a more diverse and better supported coaching workforce. We wanted to embed a culture of self-improvement and self-reflection and we wanted to recognise coaching as a profession, but also as something that has a valued role in our communities. So I reached out to Cam. I can still remember coming into the office there and sitting down with Cam and sharing some of the challenges that we saw with inside coaching and moving forward. And some of those challenges that we sort of nussed out were how can we optimise the athlete experience in that coaching environment? How can we prioritize the essential skills of how to coach in order to be able to more effectively engage athletes, what skills the coaches require to create that positive environment for athletes? How can we build a coach's toolkit of skills to allow them to be more adaptable and more person centered in their coaching approach? And how can we recognise in profile coaching and the coach's role in sport and the greater community? Now anyone who knows Kamini, now we both love to have a bit of a talk, so you can imagine us talking at the top of each other with excitement, trying to sort of work through how that was going to work. So what we've achieved off the back of that, that initial conversation and then I suppose the ongoing partnership was a really strong alignment and a shared philosophy on the future of coaching, a commitment to bring the modernised approach to coaching to life. We've got a range of projects and initiatives that we've done both independently and collaboratively, to drive continuous improvement in coaching. And we're currently in a position now where we're reviewing our national coaching framework with a focus on embedding the modern coach approach. And in the interim, we've actually embedded the community coaching essential skills that we all mentioned previously that's been embedded in our entry level coaching course as soon as it was available. So yeah, it's been a pretty busy but really energising last 12 months working with Cam and the team.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:17:42] Yeah, fantastic. Now, Simon, you support a number of sporting organisations who oversee thousands of coaches across New South Wales and each of them understand the pressures and the challenges that coaches face. And how will this new approach significantly change the experience for both coaches and participants?

**Simon Woinarski** [00:18:05] Thanks, Ron. I just want to stop and start by relating a true story quite a few years ago now, but I was working for the football coach here in Sydney. We were approached by a well-regarded and well credentialed accreditation senior coach. In other words, the culture of adults. I think one of the points here is time to work on the athlete pathway here in Sydney. So we put the guy in charge of a water and development squad and that meant he had to oversee the selection trials training once the week leading up to a match continue training leading up to another match to ritual is actually during the course. So I quickly discovered all that there were some things that he just wasn't quite prepared for. Firstly, it was completely different communicating with 40-year-old boys, to communicating with adult men. Secondly, the types of training activities that he wanted to run for the coach weren't what he was expecting they were capable of. And thirdly, he had to deal with things like parents asking him to for reasons fly over. The boy wasn't getting more time in the forward or in the midfield. He was unprepared for this and as a result, whilst he was doing a good job, I think the experience was a suboptimal one for myself and for the whole. He wound up leaving the talented athlete pathway and returning to senior coaching, so we lost him from the pathway. I think it just goes to show that if coaches have access to more specifically relevant development activities that are tailored to the type of athlete and the talent involved with the coaching, then it will improve their coaching. And what we target adult learning is that when adults are engaged in training and development activities that are more relevant to their needs, are his activities more engaging, more impactful? And if we apply that to the coaching situation, that what was also stated in the standard of coaching across sport and that will lead to a much better experience for the coaches when they are coaching. As to the athletes themselves, if we have better coaching, what we're going to find is that athletes at all levels are going to play more engaged, going to be present with more engaging training sessions. I think better communication from their coaches and all of this will result in more opportunities to learn and improve the athletes and increase motivation to get trained and participate in the sport. So what we are looking at this a greater standard of performance across the board and more enjoyment for everyone who's participating in the sport.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:20:45] Yeah, right. And the modern coaching approach supports both coaches to deliver quality learning environments, as well as supporting sports to develop scaled workforce plans. How does this provide value to sports who deliver nationally?

**Rebecca Clark** [00:21:02] Thanks, Loryn. Yeah, as Will mentioned earlier, the modern coaching approach supports the development, education and training of coaches to provide that safe, fun and inclusive environment that focuses on the needs of the participants to support coach coaches to achieve this. We really require sports to create a system that can support coaches to have ongoing personal and professional development to develop cross-functionally. A scalable workforce plan is something that our Sport Australia Advisory Team is working to support sports, to really understand how to review what they currently have, to plan embeds and measure the impact of facilitating the modern coaching approach. This is really, really important to really optimise coach development, education, training ongoing throughout their journey as a coach. The plan itself really needs to include the formal education training for the environmental context in which they are coaching, but also includes ongoing informal development and training. The informal training includes mentors, coach, educators, for example, and as all

sports have, they already have these variety of roles within their sports. But it's really important that they start to identify the right people for the right roles to continuously develop coaches within different environments. This type of journey can also be facilitated through and through different learning mechanisms, such as social learning environments, such as communities of practice. The idea of the modern coaching approach does not need to focus, does not focus on the idea of this one size fits all. It's really important that sports understand that it's vital to support both formal and informal education training of coaches, and to ensure that their education is whether it's environmentally specific or big bulk, broad transactional type education, that it still has that reliability and that context to the environment which the coaches are coaching within. The Scalable Workforce Plan provides sports with that blueprint to develop quality coaches that meets the needs, requirements and motivations for their participants, regardless of which location they are coaching within, regardless of who's in front of them. It's for the participants.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:23:47] Great. Thanks so much, Bec. Now, Leslee, as someone who coaches grassroots sport in a remote area, what will it mean to have this sort of additional support at your fingertips?

**Leslee Reif** [00:23:59] Well, a lot of us are very torn, Paul, especially if we're a volunteer and we're parent and we also work, you know, in a real job or a full-time job. So I think having this sort of resource at our fingertips means that it can be a self-paced learning opportunity. It's not daunting. You're not in a classroom situation. You can do everything in your own time. There's a there's enough information in there that you can add to Toolbox. So if you're already coaching, there's some great stuff that there's some great visuals on the website that you can have a look at. Go to that looks like a fantastic activity. I'd like to try with the kids that I'm coaching. Yes. Self-paced, it's free and we're all sort of, you know, concerned about the cost of sport sometimes. And also, you know, going on a coaching course or having to fly somewhere to undertake a course costs a lot of money. So the fact that this is free is fantastic. And it's great for me as a coach to be able to go to a parent who's interested in perhaps starting their coaching journey and directing them to that resource because it is fantastic. It's modern, contemporary and it's a, you know, a philosophy that we're all trying to empower people with across the country to make sport better.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:25:22] Thanks, Leslee, back to you. Graeme, what's been the response from coaches on the ground or in the poll and what results we're already seeing or are they looking forward to seeing?

**Graeme Hill** [00:25:35] Yeah. Thanks, Loryn. Look, the feedback from coaches has been fantastic. They actually have a very good understanding of the challenges that the coaches are facing. What came back from them that was really valuable was that the modern approach to coaching, the philosophy behind that matches what they were learning from their time on pool deck and what they were seeing. So they were understanding that society was shifting and that that coaching needed to also shift. And they also recognised that generational change in the athlete definitely required a more person focused approach. And that was really well aligned with the modern approach to coaching. So the challenge I think is that yet to maintain the coaching excellence that we're kind of aiming for, which is, you know, it's not just high-performance coaching excellence, it's, it's actually quality coaching at all levels. The ability to continue to deliver that is constantly evolving. And I think that's where the ongoing training and development and continued access and development of resources, such as the ones that have been mentioned already. I think the understanding is that those things are going to be critical to

this evolution. Now, what we're expecting to see, we're expecting to see increased enjoyment from the athletes. We want to know we want to see improved athlete experiences that will lead to that. And I think more effectively engaged athletes will also see that increased enjoyment coming from that. We also are hoping and expecting to see increased athlete development. I mentioned before that we see the role of the coach as a facilitator of athlete development. I think the improvements in that are going to come from this better understanding of how to create a positive learning environment for their athletes. And also from that improved coach's toolkit of skills, increasing a coach's adaptability and their and their capacity to be able to deal with different athletes and sort of that more bespoke coaching model that's been talked about by a couple of the other panel members. So we've got really great expectations on what we're going to see. But at the same time, we understand that that system changes and impact happens and it happens relatively slowly in the scheme of things. So I think we're just going to continue to move forward. We're going to continue to review what we've got. How can we improve it in alignment with the modern approach to coaching? And I think we'll see that that build from the grassroots up as coaches are coming through the pathway and working with different athletes. So yeah, we're really excited at Swimming Australia about the impact that this is going to have.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:28:44] And some really good points there. Graeme, back to you. Can you shed some light on the community coaching essential skills course that Sport Australia recently launched and how does this tie into the wider approach?

**Rebecca Clark** [00:29:00] Well, the essential skills course, as Will mentioned earlier, is a free online course that replaces the decommissioned general principles in mid-April. It's really exciting, as we mentioned, having close to 11,000 people completing or nearly completed the course, which is really exciting to see. The modern coaching approach has moved from this idea of linear approach to coach education, where coaches are educated in this level one level to level three accreditation approach, which means that when people move through their accreditation and start expanding on their professional development, that sometimes the information that they're learning is not necessarily relevant to the environment, that the coaching within. So for example, you might have a beginner coach or a first-time coach that's been said to do these level one, two and three. And they're starting to gather this information that might not be relevant for them to coach at that beginner level and engage kids in sport and start introducing fun and connecting that fun. The modern recruit approach really focuses more on a horizontal approach in which it's the environment it looks at the environment in which the coach is coaching with him. So whether they're coaching participants who may be learning sport, who might be just playing socially or within modified formats, competing or within high performance, the approach itself looks to develop coaches within that environment. The essential skills course is a structured coaching approach process, which is underpinned by seven key categories, which educates coaches on how to create that right learning environments for which they're coaching within to provide that quality experience for the participants, regardless of whether they're learning, playing socially or playing modified formats. For example, the modern the coaching approach is very progressive. And we've also, as Will mentioned earlier in the presentation, we have started to develop different resources to continually support this and to support the ongoing development of coaches. Apart from the recent release of the Essential Skills Course, we have released a coach development model which is available on the Sport Australia website, and we encourage anyone listening to this webinar to jump on and have a look at that coach development model. The model represents each community's coach's personal journey and what they what is required to create the environment through what they know and who they know and what

they do and provides that participants experience to understand what they think and what others may think. For example, it looks at motivation, adaptability, and how this can affect your engagement and your participants growth. Thanks, Loryn.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:32:08] Thanks, Vic. And Simon, following on from what Bec just said, why is it so important that we transition into from a one size fits all approach to a more participant centered model?

**Simon Woinarski** [00:32:22] The short answer is that while it will lead to better coaching. And what we know is that the quality of coaching is one of the true deterrents and whether an individual continues to work hard for. So we can actually take improved experience of those athletes within the sport. Along with that, coaches are better prepared to coach the types of athletes that will lead to a better experience for them and improve the changing coaches within the sport. Well, I think we'll see down the track is improved coaching for better athletes and greater performance, more enjoyment through the whole spectrum of the athlete population because sort of an international level. That's a move in the right direction from what.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:33:06] Graeme and Leslee. Now you're a great example of someone who takes the time to understand each participant's needs and motivations before even planning a session. What sort of environment does this help create and how does it impact engagement levels?

**Leslee Reif** [00:33:25] Oh, I guess by having a proactive approach at the start doesn't guarantee a, you know, prolonged engagement in sport and physical, physical activity. However, what I find is that with the sessions that I run, because I have a mixture of age groups and abilities, boys and girls, and the program doesn't particularly look like sport per say. So I like to find out basically where does this child fit in the family group? Are they the oldest middle youngest child? I try to find a little bit about their previous sporting experiences, what they like, what they don't like, perhaps even, you know, what they are good at school, what they don't like about school, can they ride a bike? So just by gathering that sort of information, I can start to get a little bit of a picture of the individuals that I'm dealing with. And that really helps because I can then plan my sessions in advance to help cater for all of the mixture of individuals that I have. You know, sometimes you've got to be reactive and adapt as you go because some things may not work and you've got to, you know, then modify what you're doing. So by being, you know, that proactive approach really helps you to help plan your sessions. It helps me plan for the outcomes that I'm trying to achieve. So if I'm looking at running a six-week physical literacy or fundamental movement skills program, then, you know, there's a lot of kids that come to the sessions that have never thrown a ball that can't jump with both feet together. So it's looking at the progressions and the regressions for that group of kids where everyone feels still engaged because there's, you know, there's a there's a broad spectrum of physical abilities. Sometimes with the older kids, I will ask them, you know, well, they might be a role model in the group or be, you know, help out with demonstrations and things like that. So you can get sort of really good engagement from not just ticking the physical boxes. So, you know, the psychological, the social and emotional boxes for these kids. And that way you can sort of plan by design and not by default, you know, to achieve these outcomes that you want. And I guess if you're if you have a child and they feel that you actually care about them and how they interact with the program, then they're going to keep coming back and everything has to be wrapped up in a, in a lot of fun. So planning sessions proactively with that goal in mind really helps. And you just know that the end of

the session you've gone, Yeah, that was really good. And the kids go away feeling positive. They want to come back and they want to keep coming back.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:36:37] Great work. Thanks, Leslee and Bec, last question before for you. Before we wrap up, what are the key takeaways for people tuning in today?

**Rebecca Clark** [00:36:45] Look, I think that a lot of the panelists have all touched on key takeaways, but for Sport Australia, for us it's about for sport. It's really about having that scalable workforce plan that focuses on all the requirements, whether being both formal and informal learning. It's about having the right education and training. Coaches for the environment, the coaching within, whether they live regionally, whether they live in the middle of the city, whether they have participants learning to play or playing socially. For coaches, it's about understanding the needs, the requirements and the motivations of the participants. It's learning about how to be adaptive and to plan your sessions accordingly. It's about continuously seeking how to develop and to seek the right type of support, whether it's for a mentor from other coaches or even non coaches that that are with to learn key, key facts about how to become a better coach. The modern coaching approach is really about creating quality coaches who create fun and that inclusive environments and that services those who are in front of them to engage participants in sports life, whether it's the sport that you're coaching within or with other sports that they play along their life. Thanks, Loryn.

**Loryn Ettridge** [00:38:09] Thank you. And that just about does it. So thank you so much to all of you for sharing such fantastic insights and ideas. It's very much appreciated. We hope for those tuning in. You got a lot out of this webinar and if you do have any questions or would like to know more, please reach out to our team at coaching at us sport dot gov dot are you. And thank you so much for tuning in.