

## **Meeting the Challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Athletics Coach Development**

Coaches who need to be increasingly effective in their role, see personal development as a continuous process, pursuit of which is their own responsibility.

IAAF Member Federations have a responsibility for providing development opportunities for coaches, or facilitate access to it.

Opportunity to progress is variously provided by Member Federations, Coach Education Bodies, National or Area Coaches Associations and IAAF.

In order to ensure all coaches have access to the process, it is proposed that the several “providers” operate in partnership, and it is further proposed that this partnership operates within a framework, which connects the various stages of coach development. Through this framework and the network of resource it represents, it will be possible to make available to coaches of all Member Federations, expertise relevant to their development needs irrespective of their geographic location through a growing range of media and an expanding world of learning technology. Delivery of what is proposed must certainly be to the advantage of athletes, coaches, Member Federations and the sport.

At present, the start of this journey of development is normally initiated by the coach himself or herself. The coach becomes involved in coaching and the Member Federation in the main provides or brokers opportunity to acquire relevant knowledge and skills. Some Member Federations continue with such provision at all development stages through their own program, or by accessing that of coach education bodies or National Coaches Associations or IAAF’s CECS program. Other Member Federations are not in a position to do so. Others lie somewhere between. Every Member Federation needs and wants coaches to be equipped to meet the nation’s athletics’ development and performance requirements, yet it is unlikely that any Member Federation can do so across the range of events for all levels of athlete and/or coach development.

What is proposed is that all Member Federations may be supported in the service they currently offer their coaches, whatever the level of that service. That support, broadly speaking, takes the shape of a coach development framework and a means of accessing it. It compliments and/or supplements existing services.

But what sort of needs must the coach development framework address for athletes, coaches, Federations and sport?

### **Athletes**

Athletes’ development and performance needs change as they progress from beginner through to whatever level of performance their potential suggests. For example, this might be Pre-teenage: Teenage: Junior: U/23: Senior National: International/elite. Coaches must be equipped to provide a coaching service in the best interests of the athlete according to the athlete’s stage of development and specialism.

## Coaches

Coaches must have access to a large volume of information, must understand it; and must be able to implement this through growing experience of and expertise in coaching skills, styles and systems. This large volume of information must be broken down to digestible packages and delivered by those best suited to doing so directly, indirectly and/or remotely. All relevant resource from human through to technological and information on new developments must be identified, accessed and built into the network created through the Coach Development Framework. This should not only mean more knowledgeable coaches, but more effective coaches in delivery of their roles.

For some coaches, in addition to learning how to be better prepared to meet athlete's needs, they also wish to build a career as a professional coach enjoying realistic economic compensation in our sports' increasingly commercial world. They must be encouraged and supported in pursuit of what, for many, is self managed continuous development.

## Member Federations

National Federations within their own development strategies must find ways of preparing coaches not only to meet the athletes' needs and coaches' needs, but also those of clubs and institutions who make athletics available to their members. They must also look to preparing coaches for leadership roles as team coaches or Chief Coaches/Performance Directors from club level through to member Federation level, and to training those coaches who will lead the education and professional development process of the next generation of coaches. In short, Member Federations must invest, in their future through coach development.

## Sport

Guardianship of all aspects of the sport's product and service offering rests with IAAF and the Area Associations. The recruitment and healthful development of athletes and the focusing of their talent and commitment to continuously progressing standards of performance excellence is fundamental to public perception of that product and service offering. It is the coaches who make this possible. It is the coaches' purpose to address the task of delivering performance today while preparing for the changing challenge of tomorrow. It is the coaching mind, which builds the bridges between values and vision through people. It is this that keeps the sport alive and exciting and why the world family of the sport must provide a robust framework to interdependently provide and support coach development.

The guardianship must ensure a growing volume of high quality coaches from Club to Regional to Areas to World level.

## The Framework

A coach's journey through the proposed framework might take the following course: -

1. A coach works with athletes on a regular basis and is involved in a coach development/education/certification program recognized by his/her Member Federation. Such programmes include IAAF CECS. Some coaches, for whatever reason, may not be involved in such a program, but be an accomplished coach who has self managed his or her knowledge of athletics and coaching.
2. The coach chooses to apply for membership of his/her Area Coaches Association directly or indirectly via his/her National Coaches Association (where this exists).
3. The application is accepted on condition that it is endorsed by the National Federation in confirming: -
  - the coach is an active/practicing coach.
  - the coach has completed a basic coach development/education/certification program recognized by the Federation or is acknowledged by the Federation as having a strong understanding of basic coaching principles.
4. The coach will also pay an annual membership fee to the Area Coaches Association and sign up to the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches. The "Bronze" Initial/Basic/Annual Membership package of entitlement is:
  - Access to Annual Coaches' Association Conference
  - Area Coaches' Association Newsletter
  - Area Coaches' Association Conference Proceedings
  - Athletics international
  - Relevant support services and products
  - Registration in the IAAF Coaches' Database
5. As part of building a sense of partnership and interdependence in the coach development process there will be regular communication between all parties involved. For example, dialogue between the Member Federation and EAA Coaching Group and M.S.D. will be initiated soon after a coach's application is received, on matters relevant to coach development/education/certification programmes. This dialogue may include alignment or equivalence of program components, using IAAF CECS I as a reference standard where appropriate. This will take the sport, in time, to a harmonization of standard in basic coach development/education/certification.
6. The coach who becomes a member of an Area Coaches' Association and who is committed to higher levels of coaching knowledge and certification will be invited to move on to the next level ("silver") of Association Membership package entitlements.

This package is designed not only to assist the coach in his/her pursuit of greater coaching effectiveness and of achieving higher coach certification

status, but also in preparing for IAAF Academy entrance, should this be the coach's goal.

The coach will pay the "Silver" Area Coaches Association membership fee and sign up to the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches.

7. The "Silver" membership package of entitlement is: -
  - All "Bronze" package entitlement.
  - Access to other Areas' Coaches Association Conferences.
  - Annual Area/Coaches Associations Conference Proceedings digest. (i.e. other areas)
  - Access to High Performance Training Centres and Area Training Centres.
  - Relevant support services and products in the "Coach 2 Coach" program.
  - Sponsored IAAF publications, e.g. NSA.
8. Again, as part of building partnerships in the coach development process, dialogue will be initiated to work towards equivalence of those coaching awards at the top end of National programs, using CECS II as a reference standard. This dialogue will also contribute to the process of agreeing criteria/conditions for admission, to the IAAF Academy and how to supplement coaches' education where this is required, via the "Silver" package to provide a bridge to Academy entry. In effect, this means shaping the coach's preparation with one of the three IAAF Academy courses.
9. The Area Coaches' Association member who meets the criteria CECS II equivalent, or criteria/conditions for Academy entrance, may move into the next level ("Gold") of the Area Coaches' Association Membership package entitlement. This package is designed to support the coach in meeting the challenge of the chosen Academy course and/or to continue to assist the coach in pursuit of greater coaching effectiveness.
10. Application for Academy entrance is accepted on condition that the Member Federation confirms:-
  - The coach is an effective, active/practicing coach.
  - The coach has met the necessary criteria for Academy entrance. (The Area Coaches Association will endorse the letter).

Academy-related administration, etc. is dealt with by the Academy. The coach will pay the "Gold" Area Coaches' Association membership fee and signs up to the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches.

11. The "Gold" membership package of entitlement is: -
  - All "Silver" package entitlements.
  - The IAAF Academy Coach Programs
  - Access to the World Class Coaches Club.
  - Relevant support services and products.

12. Partnership build, at this level is based upon continuing consultation on, and review of, the relevance and value of all aspects of structure and function in the process of development from beginner to Academy levels, in meeting the changing needs of athlete, coach, club, Member Federation, Areas and IAAF.

13. The detail of operation and of product and service offering is currently being addressed, but broadly speaking, the concept includes the following: -

There will be three courses:( i.e. coach in a leadership role).

- Chief Coach (e.g. Performance Director, National Coach, etc.)
- Elite Coach (e.g. coaching specialist at highest level in terms of event or development level specialism)
- Professional Development Coach (e.g. Coach Development/Education Director, etc.)

There will be a coaches' development resource "market place" of modules and resource materials entitled "Coach 2 Coach". This will be employed on a "pick and mix" basis to suit the personal development needs of coaches at "silver" and "gold" package levels and to those graduated as Academy Coaches and who are, therefore, entitled to the "Platinum" Area Coaches Association membership package (see 14 below). Member Federation's Coach Development Programs will have access to a directory of what exists in the "market place" and may choose to contribute resource or to apply a "market place" resource to help address individual coaches development needs or to compliment/supplement the National Coach Development Program

There will be a service to coordinate Research and Development projects.

There will be a database focussed on performance development and coaching effectiveness.

There will be a continuous review program to monitor the coach development process.

A coach qualifying in any of the IAAF Academy Courses becomes an "Academy Coach".

14. A coach who has graduated as an Academy Coach is invited by his or her Area Coaches Association to accept entitlement of the "Platinum" package. The only conditions which apply here are that the coach remains actively involved in coaching and/or its development and support at National and/or Area and/or World levels, and the coach signs up to the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches. The "Platinum" membership package of entitlement is: -

- All "Gold" package entitlements.
- Free membership of his/her Area Coaches' Association.

15. At the discretion of the Academy, on the recommendation of its award Panel, following nomination by Member Federations and/or Area Coaches Associations, Academy Coaches may be accorded Academy membership or Fellowship status for outstanding contribution to the advancement of coaching theory and practice in athletics.
16. Should a coach move from one Area to another, his or her membership would be transferred.

Coaches in all EAA Member Federations will be invited to enjoy the advantages of the process described here. A campaign to grow European Athletic Coaches Association (EACA) membership volume is already launched to achieve this. EAA fully endorse the process and supports European Athletics Coaches Association in its endeavours to make these advantages available to the widest possible population of eligible athletics coaches in Europe. A membership application form is appended here.