



EDITORIAL

Coaching in this day and age.
Reflections on an increasingly
complex profession.

Coaching has always been complex, coaching has always required great professional skills, knowledge in different fields and, in particular, critical thinking. Because yes, coaching is substantially a critical mindset, the ability to explain phenomena which often are not measurable but, nevertheless, greatly influence performance.

Today, however, coaches are required to go even further. They need to possess authentic managerial skills that go beyond the mere application of the method and beyond the evaluation of the same. The world of today's athletes has totally changed in the space of just a few years. Interests have changed, the way in which we choose a sport has changed, as has the way in which we live a sport. The way that groups created within sports interact with each other has changed. The way of communication between the various figures in the sporting world: coaches, athletes, management, family, public. In fact, everything has changed in communication - from method and timing, to contents and interests.

The organisation of the world of sport has also undergone change. Many of the rules that regulate the world of sport have been altered. There is much more sedentariness and an intensification of physical inefficiency. There is an increasing number of disuse pathologies, and lifestyles that are not befitting to the protagonists of sport.

In addition to all this change, coaches find themselves sharing their role with a whole series of parallel figures who interact with the athlete, the trainer, the managers and with the fed-

erations, or clubs. The big clubs in particular. We could call it a whole new world. A sort of puzzle that introduces competences, conflicts, different points of view, different approaches that should then merge into one reasoned solution. This also applies to personal trainers who work in fitness centres or on a one to one basis. All very interesting, fascinating even.

How does a coach prepare for all this? What training is provided in a country that should devote time to these aspects and implement the best projects on these aspects? The answer is that there can be no answer. The world of training in this field is too complicated and too afflicted. To begin with, however, we should establish a univocal, resolute definition, recognised by specific legislation that begins with stating who a coach is and what characteristics he/she must have. Lastly, what minimal training he/she must possess and, who certifies all the above.

We have entered a perfect Tower of Babel. In Italy anyone can do training in this area. No experience is required, and neither competence nor quality is assessed. Only the institutional sports sector has a minimum number of regulations for the training of coaches or adherence to the European Qualification Framework, designed for national federations. This has partly solved the problem, in other words, it has been established in quantitative terms what must be done, how many hours for example, to dedicate to one subject as opposed to another. However, this has nothing to do with controlling the quality of the training and the trainers.

A real dilemma, to which we must add the training of those who fail to follow even these minimum rules and go crazy in a market without rules. Since there is therefore no real regulation in this regard, today anyone can become a coach or personal trainer or physical trainer in a couple of weekends. And the European community? It has never actually raised the question, it has never given an appropriate and definitive answer, and often it even seems ignorant of the problem. Again, for example, many training institutions, in the free market, omit or make misleading advertising claims about the legal value of the qualification. They never explain where a qualification can be used and its real application.

And if it is true that a lot has changed in the world of sports and recreation, then perhaps it is time that the international Federations or the IOC decide what is the path one must follow to enter into the world of sport, and demand that every professional figure have tread this path and have a minimum standard of qualifications and quality.

Antonio Urso
EFW President

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