

Positive Coaching: Ethical Practices for Athlete Development



JIM DENISON, PH.D.
**FACULTY OF PHYSICAL
EDUCATION AND RECREATION**
&
**THE CANADIAN ATHLETICS
COACHING CENTRE**

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

What is Coaching?





**What is
Coaching?**

Negotiation

Teaching





What is Coaching?

Management

Leadership






What is Coaching?

Planning

Monitoring

Evaluating

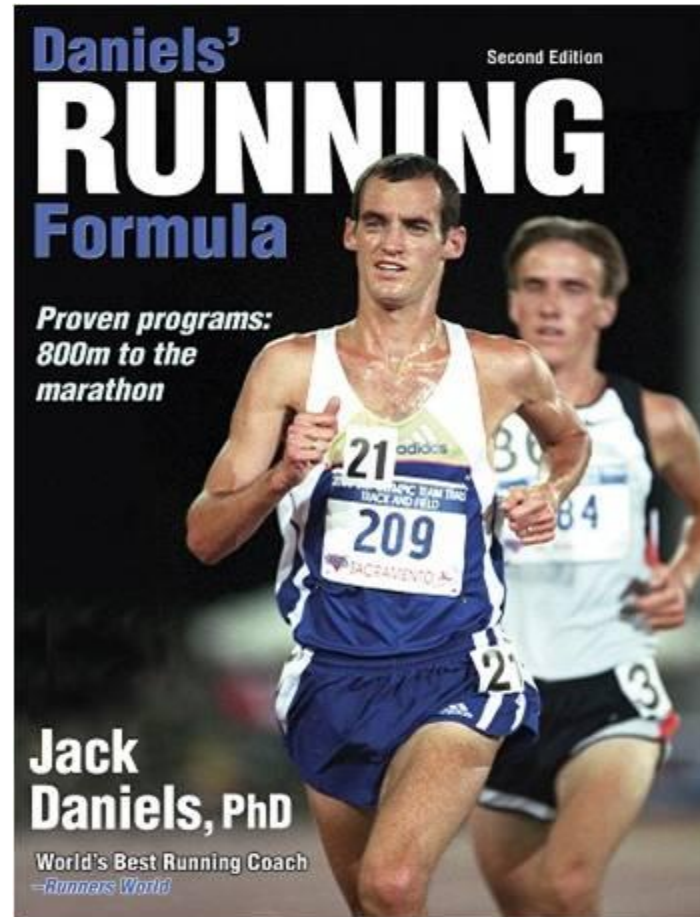




What is Coaching?

Learning

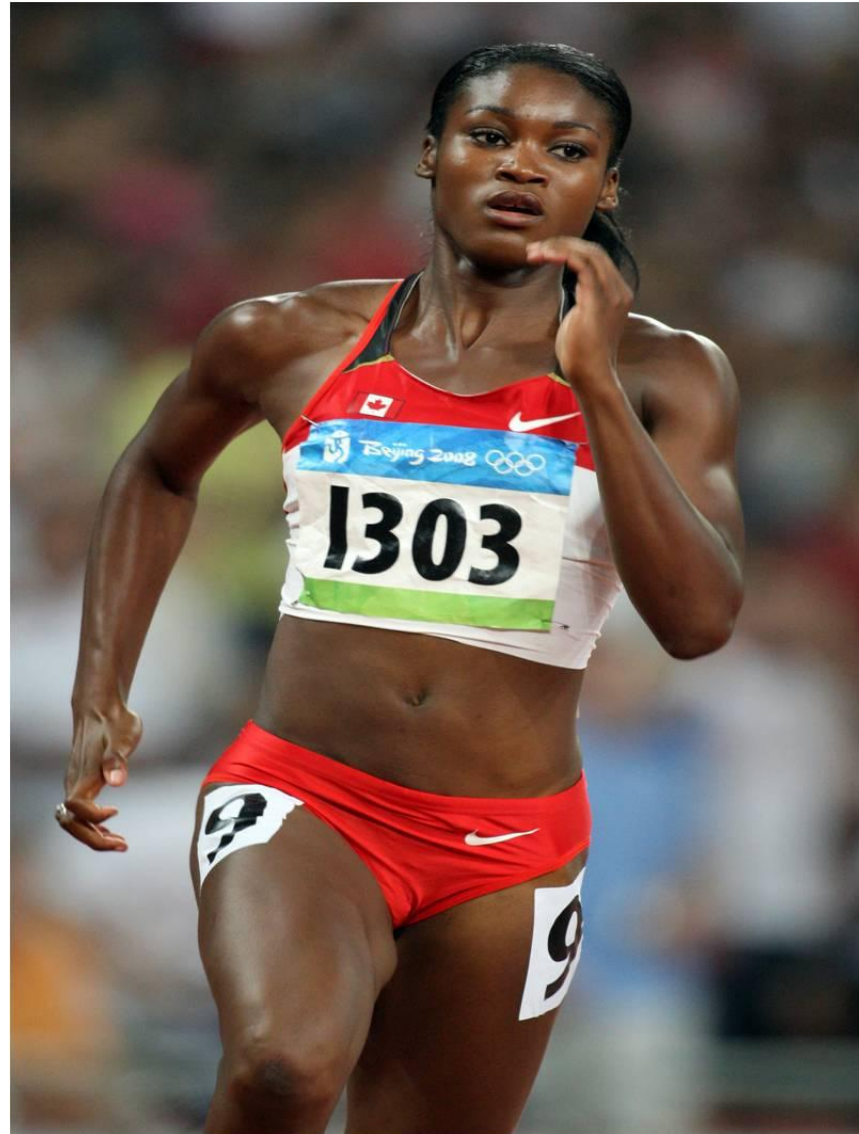
Education





What is Coaching?

Performance



What We Know about Coaching



- To enhance their athletes' performances coaches must be effective at a number of distinct tasks (Lyle, 2002; Nash & Collins, 2006)
- These include: Planning, Organizing, Developing tactics, Communicating, etc.

Coaching's Challenges



- “Coaching is a complex, uncertain, and often ambiguous process inextricably linked to both the constraints and opportunities of human interaction” (Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002, p. 184).

What Coaches Talk about when They Talk about Coaching (Jones, 2006)



- Under-performance
- Injuries
- Relationships
- Training

The Coach as Problem Solver (Denison, 2007)



The Coach as Expert (Johns & Johns, 2000)



Sport's Pain (Lyle, 2002)



Sport's Unknowns (Gilbert & Trudel, 2006)



Sport's Tests (Strean, et al 1997)



“Psyching-out” in Sport



Summary



- How coaches frame problems will always shape how they go on to name and solve problems...
- But the framing and naming of problems is value-laden and can be unethical, problematic or ineffective...
- Therefore, to be effective, coaches must become critical of how they solve problems.

Problem-Setting in Sport



- Lawson (1984): Problems in sport are not just out there, like objects of nature, waiting for the emergence of a profession or specific discipline to come along and solve...but once problems have been selectively framed and named, and coaches' attention have turned towards their solutions, it is unlikely that coaches will ever return to the practice of problem-setting.

Sport's Questions



- Schön (1979): “An emphasis on problem-solving assumes that problems are known and given and that they always have the same form...which can stifle a profession’s ability to change or to respond to new challenges and conditions” (p. 78).



Coaching as a Profession

- Lawson (1984): “True professionals do not just examine current missions or goals...but review why other alternatives have been eliminated...They continually ask themselves, are the problems we have set important, appropriate, complete, correct, and correctly stated?” (p. 51).



Ethical Practices for Problem Solving



Three questions coaches can consider:

1. What do I believe represents a problem in sport and why?
2. What does my representation of problems in sport say about my knowledge and understanding of people and relationships and the body and performance?
3. What potentially problematic or limiting effects, including that which gets left unproblematic, are produced by the way I represent problems in sport?

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving



- Evidence and Problem Solving
- The Coach as Leader
- A Performance Plateau

Positive Coaching



- Denison and Avner (in press): “The development of more effective and ethical coaching practices following a critical analysis of one’s assumptions regarding the truth and nature of problems in sport is what we call, positive coaching” (p. 15).

Positive Coaching



- Movement as holistic
- Leadership as shared
- Identity as fluid
- Knowledge as subjective

Thank you and good luck with your coaching!

