



UK Coach Tracking Study

Year One Headline Report

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Executive Summary

The Research

This report provides the headline findings from the main quantitative survey of the *UK Coach Tracking Study*.

The *UK Coach Tracking Study* is a four-year project that tracks UK coaches' experiences and opinions in terms of their learning and development, deployment and employment, and use of support.

The Sample

The first-year sample includes 1264 UK coaches – the largest ever single sample of coaches to be researched.

The sample characteristics are slightly different to those of the UK coaching population – perhaps reflecting less informal 'dads down the park' coaching and female fitness instructors than coaches engaged in formal coaching activity through governing bodies of sport and clubs etc.

The coaches in the sample were largely male (74%), white (96%), non-disabled (94%) and well qualified (37% had a degree-level qualification or above).

Pathways into Coaching

The average age at which coaches entered coaching was 26 years; there were two peak entry ages at 17–18 and 30 years.

Women tended to start coaching at a younger age than men; there is also evidence they exited coaching at a younger age.

Individuals who competed at higher levels (county level and above) were more likely to move straight into coaching without a break, whereas lower-level participants were more likely to take a break.

There are several pathways into coaching:

- the participant route (mentioned by 56% of the sample)
- the parent/helper route (20%)
- the community route (13%)
- the employment route (5%)
- through education and existing volunteering experiences.

The main motivations for becoming a coach include 'giving something back to sport' (53%) and, encouragingly, 'starting a coaching career' (47%).

Once they had started coaching, a majority of coaches (67%) coached only one sport, though a small minority coached up to five or six.

As with previous national research, coaches tended to coach children at the beginner/improver level; however, 6% coached at national level or above.

Coach Development

The coaches used a wide variety of learning sources/environments to inform their development, and though there were preferences at different stages, and to meet different learning objectives, this variety and balance appears important.

Coaching practice, experiences as an athlete/player/participant, and working with/observing coaches from your sport, were seen as most important to the coaches' development.

Three-fifths of coaches (60%) suggest coach qualifications are very important and 92% suggest they are important.

Qualifications were seen to be very important for developing coaches' knowledge and practice; the coaches were most concerned about cost and access.

There were some questions about the effectiveness of information technology-related learning resources such as DVDs, CD-ROMs and web-based facilities.

The coaches spent an average of four hours per week on development activities; this figure increased when the coach was more experienced and/or paid full-time.

Support Services

The coaches had mixed views on the levels to which they were supported by governing bodies of sport, regional and sub-regional agencies, for example.

The majority appeared to suggest they did not feel supported in terms of identifying development opportunities and career progression.

One-to-one support through the coach development officer (CDO) programme was clearly beneficial, facilitating access to workshops, observation and mentoring.

There is clearly work to be done to improve the systems underpinning, and the delivery of, support to coaches.

Coaching Careers

Though the *UK Coach Tracking Study* will provide greater detail on the changes to the coaching workforce as it progresses into Year 2, 3 and 4, the current data provides the opportunity to present a further level of detail on our volunteer, part- and full-time paid coaches.

There appears to be increasing evidence that women coaches are more likely to be paid than males.

Coaches in a number of sports, such as swimming and cricket, appear more likely to receive pay than in other sports like football.

Full-time coaches appear more able to undertake learning and development, while still committing a significant proportion of their time to delivery.

The average annual salary for a full-time coach is just over £20.5k.

The lack of available paid opportunities to coach, as well as lack of support from organisations (eg governing bodies of sport, clubs), were the most cited reasons why coaches intended to stop practising in the next year.

1. Introduction

This report provides the headline findings from the main quantitative survey of the *UK Coach Tracking Study*.

The *UK Coach Tracking Study* is a four-year project that tracks UK coaches' experiences and opinions in terms of their learning and development, deployment and employment, and use of support.

The project consists of two key phases repeated on an annual basis:

- Qualitative phase: In-depth face-to-face interviews with 20 coaches of varying backgrounds and levels. In Year 1, two interviews with each coach were conducted: (a) a focused life history, exploring their backgrounds and pathways into coaching and (b) a reflective interview, exploring their developmental pathways through coaching.
- Quantitative phase: Based on the key issues and themes that emerged from the exploratory qualitative interviews, a detailed quantitative survey was developed and conducted with a large, diverse sample of 1264 UK coaches.

The results will be crucial in informing the development of The UK Coaching Framework and, more specifically, the initiation of a model of coach development, formal coach learning such as the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) and continuous professional development (CPD). Results will also provide feedback on the impact of previous interventions; for example, the UKCC, CDOs, and the establishment of career pathways for coaches.

The research has been supported by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as part of the Coaching Project. This report will be followed by a number of more detailed and specific reports and publications based on *UK Coach Tracking Study* data sets.

2. Method

2.1 Sampling Approach

The success of the project was contingent on recruiting a large and representative sample of UK coaches to form the basis of a robust panel study. A quota/maximum variation sampling approach was adopted (De Vaus, 1996) to reflect the current coaching population in the UK, as profiled in *Sports Coaching in the UK II* (Townend and North, 2007).

Coaches representing the following categories were invited to participate (Table 2.1):

Table 2.1 Participant Sampling Framework	
Sport:	
Demographics:	Gender, age, ethnic origin, disability
Coaching context:	Community, club, elite
Qualification:	Qualified, non-qualified
Employment status:	Voluntary, paid sessional, part- and full-time

Attempts were made to encourage response from voluntary and non-qualified coaches (ie those who are perhaps more disengaged from the 'visible' coach networks; for example, those not typically associated with, and known to, governing bodies of sport and county sport partnerships [CSPs] in England), as these appear to represent the majority of coaches (Townend and North, 2007).

- Contact was made with governing bodies of sport CDOs to raise interest in the study and to establish contacts with clubs and coaches.
- Online information regarding the study was posted on the sports coach UK website. Interested participants were urged to register their details through a dedicated webpage or contact the principal researcher by phone or email. Information was also posted on the coaching pages of a number of governing body websites.
- A press release was sent to local press nationwide.
- Details of the study were included in sports coach UK's quarterly magazine *coaching edge*, which, at the time, had a circulation of 2000+ coaches.
- sports coach UK's minimum operating standards workshops saw 15,000 flyers distributed through sports coach UK's coach development network and regional coaching conferences.
- More than 7000 coaches, including 1000 community sports coaches, were directly invited to take part in the study via a postal mail-out.

As an incentive to participate, all coaches were offered a free subscription to *coaching edge*, which presents information on coaching, coaching methods, development, leading practice and case studies.

Over 3000 coaches were recruited on to a project database. All records were stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.2. Data Collection

The 3000 coaches were contacted by letter and email, and invited to submit their responses in a variety of formats:

- Paper submission: All participants were sent a paper version of the questionnaire along with a prepaid envelope to return it in.

- Online submission: Participants with online access were also sent a secure web link to an online version of the questionnaire. The link, unique to each coach, allowed participants to complete the questionnaire over time and submit it once completed.
- Over the phone: Coaches were also able to complete the questionnaire over the phone with the principal researcher.

The questionnaire used a mixture of closed- and open-response questions and contained questions on the following topics:

- Section A: You and Your Family
- Section B: Education and Qualifications
- Section C: Work Experience
- Section D: Sporting Experience
- Section E: Moving into Coaching
- Section F: Coaching Experience
- Section G: Coach Development Experiences
- Section H: Coach Qualifications
- Section I: Digging Deeper
- Section J: Coaching Careers
- Section K: Support Services
- Section L: The Next 12 Months

The questionnaire was sent to 3000 coaches. Due to the length of the questionnaire and detail required, participants were allowed six months to complete and return it. Regular reminders were sent to participants that had not returned their questionnaire. Of the 3000 questionnaires distributed, 1264 were returned – a response rate of 42%.

3. Main Analysis

3.1 Demographics and Sporting Involvement

Table 3.1		
Coaches by Gender, Age and Parenthood		
	N=	%
Gender		
Male	941	74
Female	323	26
Age		
15-24 years	304	25
25-34 years	207	16
35-44 years	313	25
45-54 years	290	23
55+	141	11
Average age	37.9	
Parents		
Yes	592	48
No	632	52
Total	1264	100

Base: All coaches

Gender, Age and Parenthood

Sports Coaching in the UK II (Townend and North, 2007) suggests male coaches account for about three-fifths (62%) of the current UK coaching workforce. The sample in this study includes a higher proportion of male coaches, with just less than three-quarters (74%) of participating coaches being male (Table 3.1).

Sports Coaching in the UK II indicates that although there is a relatively even spread of coaches within age bands under 55 years of age, there are clusters of coaches within the 15–24 and 35–44 year age bands. The sample in this study depicts a similar trend, with a higher percentage of coaches in the 15–24, 35–44 and 45–54 year age bands (Table 3.1). The average age of a coach in this study was 37.9 years, again similar to the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* study.

Almost half the coaches in the study had children (48%) (Table 3.1).

Table 3.2 Coaches by Disability and Ethnic Origin		
	N=	%
Disability		
Disabled	59	5
Non-disabled	1192	94
Prefer not to say	13	1
Ethnic Origin		
White	1211	96
Black and ethnic minorities	45	3
Prefer not to say	8	1
Total	1264	100

Base: All coaches

Ethnicity and Disability

The 2001 Census of Population indicates that almost 8% of the UK population is from minority ethnic groups. Data from the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007) suggests minority ethnic groups are under-represented in the UK coaching population, with just 6% registering as non-white. The ethnic breakdown of the sample in this study reflects this under-representation, with only 3% of coaches registering as non-white (Table 3.2).

With regards disability, there was a significant under-representation of coaches with a disability, with 5% of coaches stating they have a disability (Table 3.2) compared to 10% of coaches in the UK coaching population (Townend and North, 2007).

Table 3.3 Coaches by Highest Qualification Held (Non-coaching)			
	Number	%	% UK Population¹
Degree (or equivalent)	454	37	16
Higher Education qualifications	229	19	9
GCE, A level or equivalent	251	20	24
GCSE or equivalent	245	20	22
Other	23	2	14
No qualifications	26	2	15
Total	1228	100	100

Base: All respondents to 'education' questions (questions posed to all coaches)

¹Source: Department for Education and Skills (from the UK Labour Force Survey, 2003) 'Office of National Statistics', www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7743

Highest Qualification Held

The coaches in the sample were well educated with 37% having a degree-level qualification and only 2% of coaches having no qualifications (Table 3.3). Data from the UK Labour Force Survey (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) indicates that only 16% of the UK population holds a degree-level qualification, with a further 15% holding no qualification. Other commentaries have also noted relatively high qualification levels among coaches compared to the UK population (North, 2006).

Pre-coaching Sporting Involvement

Data on the coaches' involvement in sport as participants, players and athletes indicates that, on average, each coach sampled almost 16 different sports prior to getting involved in coaching. This figure includes sports sampled at a recreational² and school³ level, as well as at a competitive⁴ level. The data indicates 95% of coaches participated at a competitive level in an average of four sports. No major differences were noted between male and female coaches, or between coaches with different levels of coaching experience.

Table 3.4		
Coaches' Highest Level of Participation		
	Number	%
Beginner	39	3
Improver	34	3
Club	501	41
County	232	19
Regional	157	13
National	127	10
International	120	10
Mixed	12	1
Total	1222	100

Base: All coaches

The results suggest that the coaches tended to reach a minimum level of proficiency as participants with almost all (94%) competing at club level or above (Table 3.4). Indeed, over half (52%) competed at county level or above, and 20% competed at a national or international level. This seems to suggest that past participant performance is a fairly reliable indicator of the decision to move into coaching.

²Recreational sport: any sport played for fun, enjoyment, fitness or socialising that is just organised by a participant or a group of friends, and that is not part of an organised club or league structure

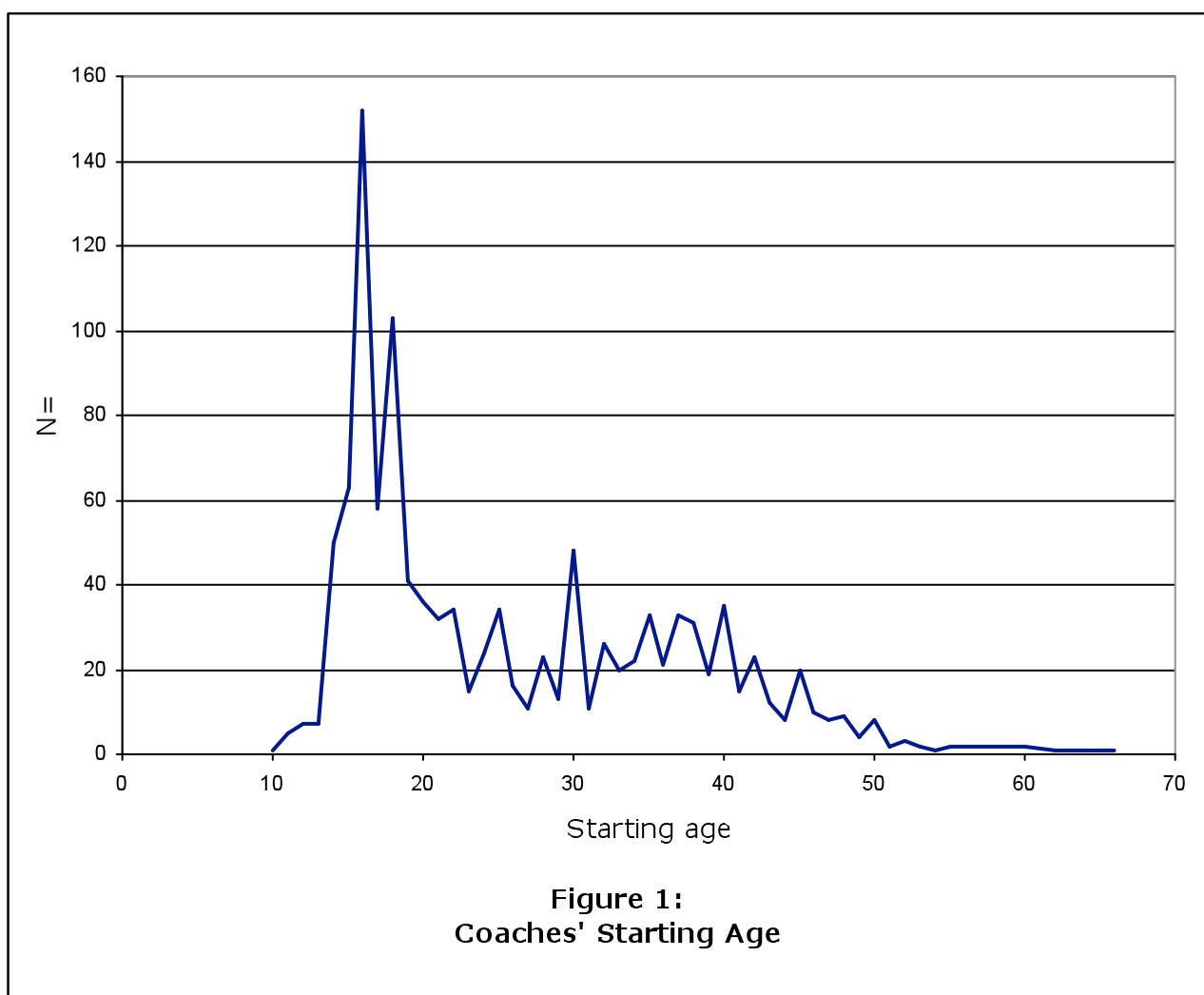
³School sport: any sport played at school within the curriculum but not at representative level

⁴Competitive sport: any sport played at school or outside that is part of an externally organised competitive structure, such as a league system (this also includes sports played at a school representative level)

3.2 Pathways into Coaching

Starting Age

The average age at which the coaches entered coaching was 26 years. Further analysis suggests there are broadly two 'peak ages' when individuals decide to start coaching: (a) between the ages of 16–18 years and (b) about 30 years (Figure 1). This is consistent with the data on the circumstances under which coaches began coaching (see 'Circumstances for Starting Coaching' section). More than half of the coaches (56%) started as a result of their own sporting participation (Table 3.9) and half of those (n=344) started within the youngest age band. The second most important circumstance for getting into coaching was through the parent/helper route (20%) (Table 3.9), and an overwhelming majority of these coaches (68%) started their coaching between the ages of 25–44.



Base: All coaches

Table 3.5 Coaches' Starting Age in Coaching				
Age	N=	%	% Male Coaches	% Female Coaches
15–24 years	558	51	47	64
25–34 years	224	20	21	20
35–44 years	230	22	24	13
45–54 years	67	6	7	2
55+	11	1	1	1
Average starting age	26	---	27.5	22.1
Total	1090	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

Moving on to gender and starting age, women coaches appear more likely to start coaching at younger ages, with nearly two-thirds (64%) starting in the 15–24 years banding, compared to less than half of males (47%) (Table 3.5). This is most likely the result of lifecycle issues, such as having children.

Table 3.6 Coaches' Starting Age in Coaching by Parent Role			
Age	% All Coaches	% Coaches With Children	% Coaches Without Children
15–24 years	51	28	79
25–34 years	20	26	14
35–44 years	22	34	5
45–54 years	6	10	1
55+	1	2	1
Average starting age	26.1	31.6	19.9
N=	1090	596	494
Total	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

Further analysis of starting age highlights parents are more likely to begin coaching at a later age, almost six years later than the average, whereas coaches with no children appear more likely to start coaching six years earlier than average (Table 3.6).

Table 3.7 Coaches' Starting Age in Coaching by Sport				
Age	% All Coaches	% Cycling Coaches	% Squash Coaches	% Rugby Union Coaches
15-24 years	51	19	25	38
25-34 years	20	31	25	28
35-44 years	22	23	46	28
45-54 years	6	21	1	5
55+	1	6	---	---
Average starting age	26.1	35	30.1	28.2
N=	1090	52	24	75
Total	100	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

In terms of starting age by sport, the results suggest most sports had similar distributions to the overall picture. There were three notable exceptions based on those sports where there was sufficient sample to make a robust judgement (Table 3.7). For cycling, the average starting age was almost 10 years older than the average noted for the sample as a whole, with almost a third of coaches starting coaching in the 25-34 years age banding. In the case of squash, the average starting age is almost five years later than the average noted for the sample as a whole, with almost half of the coaches indicating they started between 35-44 years of age. For rugby union, though, more than a third of coaches started in the youngest age group (15-24 years). The average age was also higher than the whole sample, as almost two-thirds of the rugby union coaches started coaching between 25-44 years of age.

Table 3.8 Coaches' Starting Age in Coaching by Highest Participation Level Percentage								
Age	All	Beginner	Improver	Club	County	Regional	National	International
15-24 years	51	31	37	40	65	58	66	61
25-34 years	20	25	17	23	16	21	15	25
35-44 years	22	25	37	27	14	20	15	10
45-54 years	6	9	10	8	4	1	4	5
55+	1	9	---	2	---	---	---	---
Average starting age	26.1	31.9	29.2	28.9	23	24.1	22.8	23.8
N=	1090	32	30	440	201	136	105	109
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

The results indicate that coaches who have participated at higher levels (ie county and above) are more likely to have started coaching at an early age (Table 3.8). It could be inferred that coaches that have participated in more competitive pathways are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment to sport and would pursue lifelong participation in sport through coaching. On the other hand, coaches with experience at lower participation levels (ie beginner, improver) appear more likely to start at a later age, approximately five years later than average. Though results do not offer a definitive explanation for this trend, it is possible that coaches who participated at lower levels did

so at a young age, and stopped and returned to sport in later years, perhaps through the parent/helper route.

Table 3.9			
Main Circumstances Under Which Coaches Began Coaching			
		N=	%
Own sport participation 56%	Coach younger participants while still participating	423	35
	Coach teammates while still playing (player-coach)	150	12
	Began coaching after own sporting career ended	112	9
Parent/helper route 20%	Coach as a result of children's involvement in sport	250	20
Community route 13%	Began coaching as a result of a coaching vacancy at a local club	105	9
	Qualified physical education teacher	31	3
	Qualified non-physical education teacher	18	1
Employment route 5%	Progression from an existing paid job within sport	62	5
Education 4%	Opportunity to coach through education (eg work experience, coaching modules)	50	4
Volunteering 2%	Progression from volunteering (sport or youth programme, eg scouts)	27	2
Total		1228	100

Base: All coaches

Circumstances for Starting Coaching

The research explored the circumstances in which coaches started coaching. The majority of coaches indicated the primary reason that brought them into coaching was through their own involvement in sport (56%). These coaches reported that they were given an opportunity to coach younger participants within the same setting they were participating (35%); to coach their teammates and assume a player-coach role (12%); and to coach so that they continued in sport after their participation ended (eg due to injury) (9%) (Table 3.9).

The second most frequently mentioned pathway into coaching was the parent/helper route, with one in five coaches (20%) indicating this as their primary route (Table 3.9). Over a third of all coaches with children (36%) entered coaching via this route. A further 13% of coaches entered coaching via the community route (Table 3.9). The majority of these coaches (9%) began coaching as a result of a specific, perhaps local, coaching vacancy. The remaining 4% of coaches began coaching as a result of their teaching (both physical education and non-physical education); for example, coaching school sports teams. Approximately one in 10 coaches (9%) entered coaching via the employment route (Table 3.9). These coaches transitioned/progressed into coaching through an existing paid job within the sports industry.

Table 3.10 Main Circumstances Under Which Coaches Began Coaching – By Gender			
	% All Coaches	% Male Coaches	% Female Coaches
Own sport participation	56	54	60
Parent/helper route	20	24	11
Community route	13	11	16
Employment route	5	5	4
Education	4	3	7
Volunteering	2	3	2
N=	1228	914	314
Total	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

Given the high proportion of coaches entering coaching as a transition from their involvement as participants, players and athletes, it was not surprising to see that this was by far the most important reason indicated by both male and female coaches (Table 3.10). However, it is interesting to note that for male coaches, the second most popular circumstance was via the parent/helper route, whereas for female coaches, the percentage for this was much lower (24% and 11% respectively). The traditional roles assumed by fathers and mothers in relation to sport could explain this discrepancy, though this issue requires further investigation.

Motivation for Becoming a Coach

The coaches were asked about their motivations to become involved in coaching (Table 3.11). The most cited reason was 'to give something back to sport' (53%), which is reflected in the fact that more than half (56%) began coaching as a direct result of their own participation (Table 3.9). Over a quarter (28%) of coaches indicated they wanted to begin coaching to remain involved in sport, after the end of their sports participation.

Nearly half of the coaches expressed they wanted to pursue a career in coaching (47%); a finding noted equally for male and female coaches (Table 3.11). This is encouraging, as it would indicate fewer perceived barriers with regards to pursuing a paid coaching career by female coaches. Indeed, research suggests female coaches are more likely to be paid than males (Townend and North, 2007).

Table 3.11 Coaches' Motivation to Begin Coaching				
	N=	%	% Male Coaches	% Female Coaches
To give something back to sport	673	53	52	56
Wanted to start a coaching career	598	47	47	47
To provide coaching due to a lack of coaches	500	40	40	36
To stay involved after the end of their sporting career	347	28	28	25
To help their old club/team	347	28	27	28
To help their child in their sport	325	26	30	15
To provide coaching due to poor quality of current coaching	292	23	24	19

Base: All coaches

Note: Coaches were able to indicate more than one reason, therefore percentages will not total 100

It is interesting to note that a perceived lack of locally available coaches and a perceived lack of quality local provision were cited by coaches as important reasons for getting into coaching (40% and 23% respectively) (Table 3.11). Furthermore, there was a distinct gender difference with regards getting into coaching in order to support/help their own children, with 30% of male coaches quoting this as a motivation, whereas for female coaches this figure stands at 15% (Table 3.11).

3.3 Coaching Roles

In this section, the report presents evidence on the specific roles the coaches were undertaking. Information is initially presented on the sports that coaches worked across, followed by data on the age of the participants they coached, and their level of participation.

Number of Roles and Sports Coached

The majority of coaches (67%) had coached only one sport throughout their coaching career to date. A third of coaches (33%) coached two or three sports, with a very small minority coaching four or more (29 coaches) (Table 3.12). This suggests a significant majority are focusing their expertise development on one sport only.

Table 3.12		
Number of Sports Coached		
Number of Sports Coached	N=	%
1	800	67
2	289	24
3	72	6
4	20	2
5	6	1
6	3	0 (0.3)
Average	1.5	---
Total	1190	100

Base: All coaches

Table 3.13
Coaches' Total Coaching Roles by Sport and
Primary Coaching Role by Sport

	Total Roles		Primary Role			Total Roles		Primary Role	
Sport	N=	%	N=	%	Sport	N=	%	N=	%
Football	722	25.2	385	31.6	Canoeing	23	0.8	12	1
Hockey	225	7.9	85	6.9	Triathlon	21	0.7	11	0.9
Cricket	198	6.9	87	7.1	Skiing	20	0.7	5	0.4
Rugby union	198	6.9	82	6.7	Bowls	19	0.6	8	0.7
Athletics	125	4.4	49	4	Running/jogging	16	0.6	3	0.3
Swimming	99	3.5	44	3.6	Volleyball	15	0.5	5	0.4
Tennis	93	3.3	31	2.5	Movement/dance	14	0.5	4	0.3
Netball	87	3	29	2.3	Archery	11	0.4	5	0.4
Basketball	84	2.9	35	2.8	Weight training/lifting	10	0.3	4	0.3
Cycling	82	2.9	56	4.5	Karate	8	0.3	4	0.3
Equestrian	81	2.8	32	2.6	Sailing	8	0.3	1	0.1
Gymnastics	79	2.8	20	1.6	Keep fit/yoga	7	0.2	1	0.1
Squash	70	2.4	30	2.4	Climbing	6	0.2	1	0.1
Badminton	46	1.6	12	1	Rounders	6	0.2	1	0.1
Orienteering	40	1.4	15	1.2	Windsurfing/boardsailing	3	0.1	2	0.2
Rowing	40	1.4	18	1.4	Angling/fishing	2	0.1	-	-
Golf	34	1.2	22	1.8	Ice skating	2	0.1	-	-
Rugby league	32	1.1	10	0.8	Mountaineering	2	0.1	1	0.1
Table tennis	32	1.1	8	0.7	Shooting	2	0.1	-	-
Judo	28	1	9	0.7	Ten-pin bowling	1	0.03	-	-
					Other	270	9.4	91	7.5

Base: All coaches

In terms of the sports coached, perhaps unsurprisingly, football dominated with 25% of all coaching roles⁵ being dedicated to this sport (Table 3.13) – a figure in line with the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007). Other popular coached sports are hockey (7.9%), cricket (6.9%), rugby union (6.9%) and athletics (4.4%). When looking at the primary coaching role⁶, results continue to highlight a concentration of coaches in a small number of sports, with 32% working within football, 6.9% within hockey, 7.1% within cricket, 6.7% with rugby union and 4% within athletics.

Though the sample characteristics with regards sports coached are very similar to the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007), the breakdown across the sports (beyond football) could also be a sampling issue. The majority of coaches participating in the project were recruited through links within the coaching system (eg governing bodies of sport, local authorities and CSPs). It is possible that the aforementioned breakdown reflects the governing bodies of sport that were more able (eg in terms of time and resources) to engage in the research and support participant recruitment.

⁵ 'All coaching roles' represent all roles identified by coaches throughout their coaching career to date, including possible concurrent coaching roles; for example, a coach may spend most of their time coaching their local club on a part-time basis, but may also coach at a school or on a regional basis with the governing body

⁶ 'Primary coaching role' is the role that coaches identified as the one in which they currently spend most of their coaching time

Age and Level of Participant Groups Coached

In terms of the age groups, data indicates the coaches were working primarily with young people (under 12s and 12–21 years), with 43% of coaching roles being with these groups (Table 3.14). In comparison, only 6% were coaching adult groups. The results are consistent with data from the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007), which reports that the majority of coaches were working with younger age groups (7–11 and 12–16 years).

Table 3.14		
Age of Participant Groups Coached by Primary Coaching Role		
	Primary Coaching Role	
Participant Age Group	N	%
Under 12s	254	21
12–21 years	284	22
Over 22 years (adults)	72	6
Mixed	654	51
Total	1264	100

Base: All coaches

In terms of coaching level, most coaches were working at club level (29%) (Table 3.15). A third (32%) of primary coaching roles focused on participants of beginner and improver levels, which could be attributed to the high numbers of coaches working with younger age groups noted earlier. As might be expected, far fewer coaches appear to work with higher-level participants. For example, only 6% worked at national and international level.

Table 3.15		
Level of Participant Groups Coached by Primary Coaching Role		
	Primary Coaching Role	
Participant Level	N	%
Beginner	240	19
Improver	168	13
Club	366	29
County	72	6
Regional	54	4
National	42	3
International	40	3
Recreational	7	1
Mixed	275	22
Total	1264	100

Base: All coaches

3.4 Coach Development

A key aim of the project was to explore coaches' development in terms of their education, qualifications and experiences. In this section, the report explores coach development in further detail to better understand where coaches gain their knowledge.

Learning Sources/Environments

An important aspect of the research design was to consider the most important sources or environments from which coach learning takes place. Findings from the qualitative research provided 19 identifiable learning source/environment categories (Table 3.16), many of which have been identified in previous coaching studies.

Table 3.16 Learning Sources/Environments Utilised by Coaches Since They Began Coaching							
	Used		V. Imp.	Imp.	Little Imp.	Not Imp.	Imp. Total
	%	N=	%	%	%	%	%
Coaching practice (putting your skills into practice)	93	1161	82	16	2	1	98
Working with athlete(s)/player(s)/participant(s)	76	946	70	27	3	0	97
Working with/observing coaches from your sport	85	1058	62	33	4	1	96
Working with a coach mentor	60	740	62	32	6	0	93
Coaching qualifications (governing body of sport or UKCC)	86	1074	60	32	7	1	92
Experiences as an athlete/player/participant	89	1110	57	34	8	1	91
Reflecting on past coaching	76	948	52	38	9	1	90
Workshops/training events/courses	72	899	45	45	9	1	91
Working with/observing my coach when I was a player	58	717	44	40	13	3	84
One-to-one Training Needs Analysis with a coach developer	25	313	43	44	11	2	87
Experience of being a parent	45	561	39	43	15	4	82
Working with/observing coaching for other sports	57	703	37	46	15	1	84
Coaching conferences	56	700	34	47	17	2	81
Reading coaching books, magazines and journals	83	1033	30	50	18	1	80
Experience at work outside coaching (your day job)	53	660	29	44	22	4	73
Watching DVDs, videos, CD-ROMs	70	874	27	51	21	1	78
Non-coaching related education (ie at school/university)	53	663	26	48	23	2	74
Advice from family/friends	64	800	24	46	25	4	70
Online learning (ie on the Internet)	56	694	20	45	32	4	64

Base: All coaches

Key for Table 3.16

V. Imp. = very important; Imp. = important; Little Imp. = of little importance; Not Imp. = not important.

Learning Source/Environment Usage

The results suggest that coaches **use** a wide variety of learning sources/environments and that many of these are important to their development. In terms of the use of learning sources/environments, those that are immediate to the act of coaching and enable learning through experience were most apparent; that is coaching practice (93%), experiences as an athlete/player/participant (89%) and working with observing coaching from your sport (83%). Given the current emphasis on raising professional standards through qualifications, it is not surprising that a large majority of coaches noted the uptake of qualifications (86%). Other convenient learning media also emerged strongly; for example, four-fifths of coaches (83%) have used books, magazines and journals as a source, and 70% have used DVDs, videos and CD-ROMs.

Other sources, which are often seen as important to the development of coaches, such as mentoring and one-to-one training needs support, were used by fewer coaches probably because they were less available. For example, mentoring had only been used by three-fifths of the sample (60%) (though this is still a majority), and one-to-one support by a quarter of the sample (25%). The latter undoubtedly reflects the recent emergence of the coach developer role; for example, the government-funded CDO role, with only 45 covering the whole of England.

Learning Source/Environment Importance

In terms of the **importance** of learning sources/environments, many of those that are used the most are also seen as being the most important. In line with a great deal of other research on coach development – learning by doing – for example, coaching practice and working with athletes/participants/players are seen as being most important (82% and 70% respectively suggest these are very important) (Table 3.16). Observation, being observed and receiving feedback are also very important to coaches, as is working with/observing coaches from your sport and working with a coach mentor (both 62% very important).

Perhaps surprisingly, given the criticism of formal coach education in some quarters, three-fifths of coaches (60%) suggest that coach qualifications are very important and 92% important. This would suggest a need to look again at blanket/blunt dismissals of existing coach education, because the coaches are clearly getting something out of this learning source (see Table 3.16). Likewise, workshops/training events/courses are also important with 45% suggesting they are very important, and 90% saying they are important. On the other hand, learning sources currently receiving more attention from those promoting coach education, such as DVDs, videos, CD-ROMs and online learning, are not currently having the same level of impact. For example, only 27% of coaches thought DVDs, videos and CD-ROMs were very important to their development, and only 20% thought online learning was very important, though this may reflect the current undeveloped nature of this media.

Finally, the results suggest there are some sources that are of higher use/lower importance and lower use/higher importance and this is worthy of comment. In terms of higher use/lower importance, reading coaching books, magazines and journals (use = 83%; rating 5; v. important = 30%; rating 14) and watching DVDs, videos and CD-ROMs (use = 70%; rating 9; v. important = 27%; rating 16) stand out. In terms of lower use/higher importance, working with a coach mentor (use = 60%; rating 11; v. important = 62%; rating 4) and one-to-one Training Needs Analysis with a coach developer (use = 25%; rating 19; v. important = 43%; rating 10) stand out.

The understanding of coach development is obviously a crucial aspect of research design. The above analysis provides only a headline description of the results from the

survey, albeit using an unprecedented sample size. Further analysis and papers will follow the publication of this headline report.

Time Spent on Learning and Development Activities

The coaches were asked to indicate how much time they had spent on development opportunities (excluding coaching practice) in the past year. On average, coaches reported spending 4.3 hours per week on development opportunities. No differences were found between male and female coaches; however, some interesting trends were noted when compared against coaches' length of coaching experience and their employment status (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17 Average Estimated Weekly Time Spent on Development Activities	
	Hours
All Coaches	4.3
Coaching Experience	
1 year's experience	3.4
5 years' experience	4.2
10 years' experience	5.3
20–22 years' experience	4.7
Employment Status	
Voluntary	3.8
Paid part-time	4.4
Paid full-time	5.7

Base: All coaches

Coaching Experience

Coaches with more experience generally spent more time on development activities (Table 3.17). Those with one year's experience spent 3.4 hours per week on development, whereas coaches with 10 years' experience spend on average 5.3 hours a week. As coaches progress in coaching, they appear to recognise the need to engage in developmental activities, and spend an increasing amount of time doing so up to a certain point (ie 20–22 years' experience), at which point the amount of time they spend may taper off a little.

Employment Status

Coaches working in a voluntary capacity spent less time each week on developmental activities (3.8 hours) than coaches in employment, particularly those working in a full-time capacity (5.7 hours) (Table 3.17). This could be a reflection of the time available to coaches; for example, voluntary coaches are likely to have jobs outside coaching with little time to spare on tasks such as development. Full-time coaches may be more likely to see development opportunities as a central component of their working lives and contribute time accordingly.

3.5 Coach Qualifications

Of the 1264 coaches that took part in the survey, more than 1100 (87%) held a recognised coaching qualification (Table 3.18).

Data from the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007) indicates that half (50%) of the current UK coaching population holds a recognised coaching qualification. While it is encouraging to note that 87% of participating coaches were qualified, this is likely to be a sampling issue. Given the focus of the project on learning and development, coaches more interested in learning and development were more likely to show an interest and participate in the research.

The percentage of male and female coaches with up-to-date qualifications are similar (Table 3.18), whereas the latest survey of the UK coaching population indicates significantly higher qualification percentages for male coaches (Townend and North, 2007).

Table 3.18 Coaches' Qualifications				
Have a Qualification?	N=	% Total	% of Female Coaches	% of Male Coaches
Yes	1102	87	86%	87%
No	162	13	14%	13%
Highest-level Qualification Held				
Level 1	372	35	28	30
Level 2	344	32	25	28
Level 3	240	22	17	19
Level 4	93	9	8	7
Level 5	26	2	3	2
Currently Studying for Another Qualification?				
Yes	526	42	37	43
No	738	58	63	57
Total		100	100	100

Base: All coaches

The majority of coaches were qualified to Level 1 and 2 (67%) (Table 3.18). As expected, fewer coaches held higher-level qualifications; for example, only 11% held a Level 4/5 qualification. Despite the high incidence of qualified coaches within the sample, it is encouraging to see that more than two-fifths (42%) were currently working towards another qualification.

Benefits of Coaching Qualifications

The coaches were asked to comment on the benefits of taking up a formal coaching qualification (Table 3.19). The most cited benefits were, perhaps unsurprisingly, linked to improving knowledge and practice. Four out of five coaches (82%) indicated that studying for coaching qualifications improved their knowledge of coaching, with a further seven out of 10 citing that it also improved their knowledge of sport in general (70%). Qualifications provided them with new information and kept them up to date with developments (66%). Other important benefits were linked to improving coaches' practice, both in coaching (82%) and sport in general (62%).

Table 3.19 Benefits of Undertaking a Coaching Qualification – Percentage Reporting Benefits				
	N=	All	Women	Men
Improves coaching knowledge	434	83	76	84
Improves coaching practice	433	82	78	83
Builds up confidence	408	78	77	77
Takes your coaching to the next level	386	73	69	74
Networking and sharing of ideas	384	73	72	73
Improves knowledge of sport	368	70	70	70
Provides new information/keeps you up to date	347	66	66	66
Improves practice of sport	326	62	64	61
Provides you with credibility	323	61	51	64
Provides a focus for coach development	310	59	58	59
Provides access to new coaching opportunities	255	48	52	47
Gives you the basic skills to start coaching	247	47	47	47
Provides you with skills to coach wider audiences	216	41	51	38

Base: All coaches that indicated they were working towards a new qualification

Note: Coaches could indicate more than one benefit, therefore figures do not total 100

The results suggest that coach qualifications also offer benefits beyond the teaching and learning aspect, that are nonetheless considered as important to coaches' development. More than two-thirds (78%), for example, indicated that attending coach qualification courses was important for their self-confidence as a coach. An additional perceived benefit involved the 'opportunity to network with other coaches' (73%) and 'learn about new opportunities' (48%) which, in turn, influences coaches' employment/deployment prospects. Less than half of coaches (41%) indicated that coaching qualifications gave them the basic skills to start coaching, suggesting that, perhaps initially, experience is more important and qualifications only become meaningful and useful once coaches have accumulated some basic experience.

Problems with Coaching Qualifications

The coaches were also asked about the problems of taking up coaching qualifications (Table 3.20). The most cited problems related to the practical aspects of the courses, such as cost (38%) and funding, and logistical issues such as location (32%) and timing (35%) of courses. Other problems concerned issues of awareness and information provision, with coaches indicating a lack of information regarding funding available for qualifications (34%), not knowing the next logical step in coach education (18%) and, more importantly, a lack of information on accessing coach qualifications.

Table 3.20 Problems of Undertaking a Coaching Qualification – Percentage Reporting Problems				
	N=	All	Women	Men
Courses are too expensive	201	38	40	38
Courses are difficult to access in terms of their timing	182	35	35	34
Not enough information on funding available for coach education	179	34	34	34
Courses are difficult to access in terms of their location	168	32	40	30
Courses take too much time to complete	113	21	18	23
Assessment methods do not reflect coaching knowledge and practice	99	19	22	19
Not enough information on the next logical step in coach education	96	18	13	20
Overemphasis on coaching theory rather than its application in the real world	93	18	21	17
Not enough information on how to access coach education	89	17	18	17
Qualification does not include enough actual practice	78	15	14	15
Tutors delivering the courses are not of a high enough quality	38	7	8	7
Qualifications are only appropriate to early stages of coach development	34	6	5	7
Qualification is not at an appropriate level	29	6	3	6
The language/terminology used in coach education and CPD is difficult to understand	24	5	7	4
There is no need for coach education and qualifications as coaching experience is enough	9	2	1	2

Base: All coaches currently studying for a new coach qualification

Note: Coaches could indicate more than one problem, so figures do not total 100

In terms of the content and quality of the qualifications, less than 20% of coaches cited these as issues. Assessment methods were not seen to accurately reflect a coach's true knowledge and skill (19%); the perceived overemphasis on coaching theory (18%) and lack of practice within the qualification (15%) were the main reasons for this.

3.6 Support Services

Rating of Support Services

The coaches were asked to comment on the support they received from coaching organisations such as governing bodies of sport and other agencies like sports coach UK (Table 3.21/3.22). The results present a mixed picture with about a third of coaches suggesting they feel supported, with the remainder suggesting they are supported a little or not at all. This echoes findings from the qualitative aspect of the study, where most coaches reported being in a 'support vacuum' with little link to support networks and, indeed, access to other peer coaches.

Table 3.21 Rating of Support Received from Coaching Organisations Development Support (eg governing bodies of sport, sports coach UK)						
	Supported	Supported a Little	Not at All Supported	Not Relevant (Support Not Needed)	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	N=
Identifying development opportunities	34	34	28	4	100	1190
Help with the cost of development opportunities	25	22	47	6	100	1128
Identifying your development needs	35	34	27	4	100	1203

Base: All coaches

Regarding the specific results, only three out of 10 coaches felt they were **supported**, both in terms of identifying generic development opportunities (34%) and identifying their own specific development needs (35%). Almost half the coaches (47%) felt they were not receiving any support with regards the cost of their development, a fact in line with comments made by coaches relating to the problems of coach qualifications (see Table 3.20). The results suggest that two primary barriers to coaches' further development are: (a) knowing what opportunities are available and appropriate and (b) the cost of such opportunities.

Table 3.22 Rating of Support Received From Coaching Organisations Career Support (eg governing bodies of sport, sports coach UK)						
	Supported	Supported a Little	Not at All Supported	Not Relevant (Support Not Needed)	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	N=
Help with moving up the coaching ladder	24	29	36	11	100	1198
Help with finding appropriate opportunities to coach	26	26	34	14	100	1198
Knowing the next steps for your coaching	39	34	23	4	100	1191
Help with career opportunities	18	22	41	19	100	1194

Base: All coaches

With regards to support in developing their coaching career, a greater proportion of coaches (39%) indicated they received support on 'knowing how to progress their coaching career' (Table 3.22). However, in terms of getting help to progress their careers, most coaches indicated they did not feel supported. For example, 41% of

coaches indicated they received no help at all with coaching career opportunities. Approximately a third of coaches indicated receiving no support at all with moving up the coaching ladder (36%) or finding appropriate coaching opportunities (34%) (Table 3.22). Though this could be a reflection of the high number of volunteer coaches in the sample, this finding is echoed in the qualitative research. Findings from the interviews highlighted coaches' frustration at having to rely on 'being at the right place at the right time' and feeling that they were not in control of how their careers progressed.

Coach Development Officers

The sports coach UK CDO network has been in operation since April 2004. CDOs work locally with coaches to support and enhance their development. Their role is to improve access to high-quality initial and post-qualification coach education and development opportunities for coaches. The CDOs backed up an existing network of coach or regional development officers employed through, or by, governing bodies of sport. The value of one-to-one coach development support has already been highlighted in the report (see Section 3.4).

Table 3.23 Coaches' Contact with CDOs to Date (sports coach UK, CSPs and governing bodies of sport)								
	All Coaches		Voluntary Coaches		Part-time Coaches		Full-time Coaches	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
sports coach UK CDO	473	37	185	32	171	40	107	50
Other CDO (eg CSP, governing body of sport)	672	53	264	45	243	57	147	69

Base: All coaches

It is encouraging to note that more than half of coaches in the study had, at some point in their career, come in to contact with a CDO, either employed by sports coach UK or through a governing body of sport or CSP in England (Table 3.23). Over a third had established contact with a sports coach UK CDO (37%) and over half with a governing body of sport/CSP development officer (53%). Unsurprisingly, a greater number of full-time coaches had contact with a CDO in comparison to part-time and voluntary coaches (Table 3.23). This is likely to be the result of greater emphasis on development among full-time coaches and the greater amount of time they have to use these opportunities.

Table 3.24 Services Accessed via CDO and Perceived Importance Percentage			
	Service Accessed		Service Considered Important
	N=	%	
Facilitated access to working with/observing other coaches	216	40	97
Facilitated access to workshops, training events and courses	396	73	92
Facilitated access to a coach mentor	132	24	91
Personal development planning	183	34	85
One-to-one Training Needs Analysis	196	36	80

Base: All coaches that indicated they had contact with CDO in the last 12 months

Note: Coaches could indicate more than one accessed service

Contact with CDOs offered coaches an opportunity to focus their development and facilitate access to other support services and development opportunities (Table 3.24). The CDOs appeared to be most able to provide access to workshops, training events and courses (73% of coaches utilised this service), then working with/observing other coaches (40%), one-to-one Training Needs Analysis, and planning and access to a coach mentor. Though all of these services were rated highly, the coaches clearly valued working with/observing other coaches the most (97% suggested this services was important). These results would suggest that this coach development function should focus more efforts on providing these kind of opportunities for coaches.

Table 3.25 Coach Perceptions on Support By Coach Developer Support and Relationship – Percentage Reporting ‘Very Supported’ or ‘Supported’					
	All	Other CDO	sports coach UK CDO	One-to-one Support	One-to-one support sports coach UK CDO
Knowing the next steps for your coaching	39	39	45	44	52
Identifying your development needs	35	35	42	47	56
Identifying development opportunities	34	34	40	43	49
Help with finding appropriate opportunities to coach	26	26	31	32	39
Help with the cost of development opportunities	25	25	31	30	37
Help with moving up the coaching ladder	24	24	28	31	37
Help with career opportunities	18	18	23	27	32

Base: All coaches

Another method of examining the impact of the CDO and coach developer function is by comparing coaches’ views on how supported they feel in relation to a number of important development aspects (already detailed in Tables 3.21/3.22) with their access to CDOs (Table 3.25).

The results are positive: they suggest that those coaches who have received help from a CDO are much more positive about the overall support they receive. For example, two-fifths of coaches (39%) suggested they felt support in relation to ‘knowing the next steps for coaching’ (Table 3.25). This increases to 45% when the coaches have received help from a sports coach UK CDO, and 52% where there is clear evidence of a one-to-one relationship with a sports coach UK CDO. Similar patterns emerge for all the support areas when compared in this way.

There are clearly some support areas that benefit from more intensive CDO assistance (Table 3.25). For example, ‘identifying your development needs’ shows a 21% increase between ‘all coaches’ and ‘one-to-one support sports coach UK CDO’ (35–56%). This makes sense given the services the CDO provides. Other important changes include ‘identifying development opportunities’ (+15%) and ‘help with career opportunities’ (+14%).

3.7 Coaching Careers

One of the main aims of the research is to identify the changing profile of the coaches' careers. This section reports on the coaches' employment status (ie the number of voluntary, part- and full-time coaches), the impact of coaches' employment status on the frequency and time distribution of coaching-related activities and, finally, coaches' pay levels.

Employment Status

The majority of coaches had more than one concurrent coaching role ranging from voluntary to paid part- and full-time. Half of the coaches coached exclusively in a voluntary capacity (48%), a figure much lower than that reported in the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (70%) (Townend and North, 2007). A third (35%) coached on a paid part-time basis and 17% of the coaches worked in a full-time paid capacity (Table 3.26). Interestingly, a greater proportion of female coaches appear to be coaching on a paid basis (both part- and full-time) (63% females compared to 48% of males): a finding supported by data reported in the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007).

Table 3.26				
Coaches by Employment Type				
	Number	%	% Male Coaches	% Female Coaches
Voluntary	583	48	51	37
Paid part-time	427	35	32	43
Paid full-time	212	17	16	20
Total	1222	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

Although the sample sizes are fairly small across individual sports and, therefore, the margin of error potentially significant, it was possible to analyse coaches' employment status by sport (Table 3.27).

There were notable differences between sports. For example, football has a greater proportion of voluntary coaches (68%), whereas cricket has a greater proportion of full-time coaches (29%). Athletics has about average levels of voluntary coaches (51%), but a greater proportion of full-time coaches. Swimming has by far the most employed coaches with almost three-quarters receiving payment (74%), the majority of which do so on a part-time basis (55%).

Table 3.27								
Coaches by Employment Status in Seven Sports								
Sport	Voluntary Coaches		Part-time Coaches		Full-time Coaches		Total Coaches By Sport	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Football	253	68	93	25	27	7	373	100
Cricket	32	37	30	34	25	29	87	100
Hockey	48	58	28	34	7	8	83	100
Rugby union	51	66	19	25	7	9	77	100
Cycling	31	56	20	36	4	7	55	100
Athletics	24	51	12	26	11	23	47	100
Swimming	11	26	23	55	8	19	42	100
All Coaches	583	48	427	35	212	17	1222	100

Base: All coaches

Time Spent Coaching

The research also allowed for a detailed examination of the coaches' use of time, and there were significant differences in time spent delivering coaching by employment status. As might be expected, the full-time coaches were delivering almost every day or for three to four days per week (counted in the 'at least once a week' category). A majority of part-time paid and volunteer coaches were coaching at least once a week, most likely at the weekend (54% and 70% respectively) (Table 3.28). Volunteer coaches were the most likely to coach for at least once a month or less.

Table 3.28					
Time Spent Delivering Coaching by Employment Status					
	All Coaches		Volunteer	Part-time	Full-time
	N=	%	%	%	%
Almost every day	400	33	11	36	91
At least once a week	640	53	70	54	9
At least once a month	111	9	13	7	0
At least once every six months	37	3	4	3	0
At least once a year	12	1	2	0	0
Total	1202	100	100	100	100

Base: All coaches

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 3.29
Coaching Related Hours By Task (Weekly)

	All Coaches		Volunteer		Part-time		Full-time	
Coaching Activity	Time (hrs)	% of Time	Time (hrs)	% of Time	Time (hrs)	% of Time	Time (hrs)	% of Time
Preparation	2.6	14	1.8	19	2.5	16	5.2	12
Delivery	8.1	43	3.7	40	7.1	46	21.7	50
Review	1.7	9	1.2	13	1.5	10	3.6	8
Coach-related administration	2.7	15	1.5	16	2.2	14	6.7	15
Other	3.5	19	2.0	22	3.1	20	7.8	18
Total Coaching Hours	18.6	100	9.2	100	15.4	100	43.5	100

Base: All coaches

The research considered how coaches allocated their time on various coaching-related tasks on a weekly basis (Table 3.29). As expected, the results suggest that coaches' allocation of time was highly contingent on their economic status. Full-time coaches delivered 22 hours of coaching a week (50% of the overall time), compared to seven hours for part-time coaches (46%) and four hours for voluntary coaches (40%). The results suggest, therefore, that full-time coaches are most effective, or have economies of scale in terms of devoting time to the actual delivery of coaching.

Preparation and administration were also prominent in the way the coaches allocated their time. Regarding preparation, full-time coaches devoted the most time (5.2 hours per week), but this represented a smaller proportion of total time (12%) when compared to part-time (16%) and volunteer coaches (19%). The full-time coaches did not notice the same effect, however, when the task concerned administration. Full-time coaches allocated nearly seven hours to administration every week (about 15% of total time), which was about the average for part-time and volunteer coaches.

Reflection and reflective practice are seen as critical components of coach development. The coaches allocated between 8–13% of their time to reviewing sessions after completion; however, it is difficult to make a judgement about whether this is sufficient or insufficient without reference to more details about what processes they used. The 'other' component is likely to include issues such as CPD and travel. Details on the time devoted to CPD are provided in Section 3.4.

Coaching Pay

The study provides some useful information on coaches' pay. The results suggest that the average coaching salary for paid coaches (both part- and full-time combined) is approximately £16,500 per year, with full-time coaches earning just over £20,500 (Table 3.30). This supports other evidence⁷, which suggests that the majority of paid coaching positions are currently between £14,000 and £23,000 per annum (depending on location, qualifications and other specific job requirements).

⁷ – www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/sports_coach_instructor_job_description.jsp
– www.publicjobsdirect.com/Arts-Culture-Leisure-jobs/Sports_Coaching_Jobs

Table 3.30 Coaching Pay			
	All Paid Coaches	Part-time	Full-time
Average paid sessions per week	10.4	4	20
Average pay per session	£21.81	£21.43	£23.95
Average annual salary	£16,432	£6535	£20,609

Base: All paid coaches

When looking at pay on a sessional basis, results suggest coaches were being paid for an average of 10.4 sessions a week, with part-time coaches receiving payment for approximately four sessions, and full-time coaches for 20 sessions. With regards to pay rates for each session, the data suggests the average is approximately £22, with full-time coaches receiving just under £24. This compares to the *Sports Coaching in the UK II* survey (Townend and North, 2007), which suggests the average level of pay for coaches was approximately £18, with part-time coaches receiving just under £17, and full-time coaches just under £24⁸.

3.8 Next 12 Months

As part of the longitudinal design of the study, and in preparation for the second year of data collection, the coaches were asked some general questions with regards to their expectations for their coaching in the forthcoming year.

The good news is that there appears to be a net increase in coaching over the next 12 months, with 45% of the coaches expecting to increase the amount they coach and only 5% expecting to decrease the amount (Table 3.31); half (50%) expect it to stay the same.

Table 3.31 Expectations of Amount of Coaching in the Next 12 Months – Percentage				
	More (%)	Same (%)	Less (%)	Total (%)
Gender				
Men	46	49	5	100
Women	41	52	7	100
Economic Status				
Voluntary	45	51	4	100
Paid part-time	47	47	6	100
Paid full-time	34	59	7	100
Total	45	50	5	100

Base: All coaches

While male coaches demonstrated a similar pattern to the overall sample, a greater percentage of female coaches indicated they intended to decrease the amount of coaching they did in the next 12 months (7% in comparison to 5% with male coaches) (Table 3.31). Although a smaller percentage of full-time coaches indicated they planned to increase coaching in the next 12 months, a third of them (34%) were still planning on an increase, and only 7% a decrease.

⁸Caution is advised when considering this data as it is not directly comparable, as the *UK Coach Tracking Study* calculates 'pay per session' and *Sports Coaching in the UK II* calculated 'pay per hour'

Table 3.32			
Intention to Stop Coaching in the Next 12 Months			
	Yes	No	Total
Gender			
Men	3	97	100
Women	5	95	100
Economic Status			
Voluntary	3	97	100
Paid part-time	3	97	100
Paid full-time	5	95	100
Total	3	97	100

Base: All coaches

When asked to indicate whether they intended to stop coaching within the next year, 3% of coaches indicated they intended to do so (Table 3.32). Interestingly, a greater percentage of female (5%) and full-time coaches (5%) indicated their intention to stop. Given the higher percentages of female coaches working in a paid capacity (Table 3.26), this might explain why more females are intending to stop, as 'lack of available paid opportunities' is the most frequently cited reason for intending to stop (Table 3.33).

Table 3.33	
Reasons for Intending to Stop Coaching	
Reasons Given	Times Mentioned
Lack of available paid opportunities to coach	9
Lack of support from organisation (eg club, governing body of sport, CSP)	5
Personal reasons (eg maternity, travel, health)	5
To pursue a full-time career in sport but not coaching	4
Lack of motivation and enthusiasm, burnout	4
Lack of time to coach	3
Education (eg going to university)	3

Base: Coaches that indicated an intention to stop coaching in the next 12 months

Those coaches that indicated an intention to stop coaching over the next 12 months were asked to provide information on their reasons (Table 3.33). The most cited reasons referred to structural issues within sport, such as lack of available paid opportunities (n=9), lack of support (n=5) and taking on a full-time post within sport but not coaching (n=4): all issues that clearly reflect the coaches' desire to pursue coaching as a career, had they been able to do so. Personal issues were also cited as reasons for intending to stop coaching, such as juggling personal life with coaching (n=5), lack of time (n=3) and motivation (n=4).

4. Commentary

Introducing the UK Coach Tracking Study

To begin this commentary, it is useful to place the *UK Coach Tracking Study* in a 'coaching research' historical context.

Until recently, our understanding of the UK coaching workforce has been based on guesswork and assumption. Since 2004, however, the evidence base has begun to increase; for example, through the *Sports Coaching in the UK* research series (Mori, 2004; Townend and North, 2007). These studies, though a step in the right direction and subject to continual refinement, are based on a general public omnibus survey methodology with a sample of just over 9000 in each instance. The results from these surveys suggest that about 2.4–2.6% of the UK public 'coach', so this method only provides a sample of just over 200 coaches to draw findings from.

If we, as coaching policy makers, educationalists and researchers, are to increase our understanding of coaching experiences, learning and development, career pathways and use of support, then a more robust method must be employed. The *UK Coach Tracking Study* has addressed this issue in two ways by: (a) recruiting the largest ever sample of coaches (1264) reflecting different demographic characteristics, experiences of sport (ie recreational/elite), pathways into coaching, participants coached (ie age group, recreational/elite, sports) etc; and (b) using a panel-study approach to track the coaches as they develop their knowledge, practice and careers (or not as the case may be). The size of the sample and use of a tracking methodology are genuinely novel and unprecedented from a worldwide 'coaching research' perspective.

Pathways into Coaching

Historically, we have known very little about the backgrounds of our coaches: in particular, who they are and where they come from. The picture is being refined as each new project comes through, but with some definitive patterns emerging. Our coaches are mostly male, white, able-bodied, educated and from higher socio-economic groupings. This does not mean, however, that women, black and ethnic minorities, disabled, the lower qualified or less socio-economically advantaged people are not coaching because they clearly are and, evidence suggests, in increasing numbers. This trend is being monitored and the signs are very positive, especially with paid coaching providing an opportunity to address the imbalances (North, 2006).

Regardless of demography, one issue emerges clearly from *UK Coach Tracking Study* research. The coaches, irrespective of background and current coaching position, have experienced a great deal of sport as participants. This is not new for coaching literature, but the results are so comprehensive they are worth repeating. The average number of sports sampled by the coaches is 16, with an average of four at competitive level. Nearly all coaches (95%) have been involved in sporting competition and 94% have competed at club level or above; over half (52%) have competed at county level or above. These findings reinforce the notion that coaches reach a minimum level of proficiency as participants before they become coaches.

The coaches' high level of involvement in sport is reflected in the circumstances that brought them into coaching. For example, over half the coaches (56%) suggested they entered coaching due to an opportunity related to their existing participation, coaching younger participants at the same club, or being a player-coach. Half of coaches (51%) started coaching between 15–24 years, with a key transition age from participation to coaching being 17–18 years. Key motivations for beginning coaching included 'giving something back to sport' and 'staying involved after the end of a sporting career'.

The participation pathway was not the exclusive route for coaches to enter coaching, however. The results suggest that one in five coaches (20%) entered through the parent/helper route. This helps to explain the second key transition age for individuals entering coaching around the 30 years banding. Over a quarter (26%) suggested they were motivated to coach to help their child in sport. Beyond the participation and parent/helper pathways, there is evidence of a group who become coaches as a result of an employment vacancy, perhaps reflecting a shift from an existing related position such as teaching or sports development. Indeed, nearly half of the coaches (47%) suggested they wanted to start a coaching career. This circumstance/motivation to become involved in coaching may become more prevalent as the number of paid opportunities increases and coaching becomes more professionalised. These coaches may bring a different value set to coaching and this will need exploring.

Though there may be differences between the *Sports Coaching in the UK* and *UK Coach Tracking Study* samples, some characteristics are very similar and thus appear to provide a fairly reliable set of findings about the coaching workforce. A majority of coaches tend to coach in a few sports, namely football, swimming, rugby union, cricket, gymnastics and athletics (Townend and North, 2007) and with younger children and beginner/improver athletes. Very few coaches coached adults only, and only 6% of the coaches practised at national level or above, with only 3% at international level.

Learning and Development

The *UK Coach Tracking Study* provides an additional level of data to inform debates on how coaches learn and develop.

Before looking at this information, it is worth reflecting on the *Sports Coaching in the UK* surveys and the *UK Coach Tracking Study* in terms of the high-level picture on learning and development, because there are distinct differences between the studies. In the *Sports Coaching in the UK* surveys, no more than half the coaches have a formal coaching qualification (Level 1 or above), and only just over a quarter engage in regular CPD. The *UK Coach Tracking Study* coaches appear to take learning and development much more seriously, with seven out of eight having a formal qualification (87%). Furthermore, almost all the *UK Coach Tracking Study* coaches regularly committed time to CPD-related activities.

In terms of the *UK Coach Tracking Study* sample, and the incidence of learning and development in that sample, there may be some respondent biases⁹. That is, those coaches more interested in learning and development were perhaps more likely to show an interest in the *UK Coach Tracking Study* research, because the research itself had developmental features. In some respects this is not negative; however, as researchers interested in the development of coaching, we would probably want to study learning and development in those coaches who show a greater aptitude for it in the first instance.

The evidence on learning and development, as presented in the report, is high level but, nonetheless, very interesting. The results suggest that coaches use a wide variety of learning sources/environments to develop their knowledge and skills, ranging from actual practice to mentoring, workshops and learning resources among many others. The key implication here is that it is risky to promote one learning source/environment (eg mentoring) over others, because it is clear a wide range of sources/environments are important and that they all contribute something unique in different stages and contexts (this issue is being explored in more detail in the second year of the *UK Coach Tracking Study*).

⁹The method involved in the *UK Coach Tracking Study* probably enabled these coaches to associate particular activities (eg observation/mentoring) with CPD (a method that was not repeated with the *Sports Coaching in the UK* sample coaches)

That said, there is clearly merit in the argument that coaches should be educated to get the most out of their practice from a learning and development perspective; be provided more opportunities to be observed; observe and work with other coaches; and receive mentoring and one-to-one support as wider research suggests. But, returning to the theme above, this does not mean qualifications and workshops are not useful because they clearly have their place, with coaches recognising they improve their knowledge and practice. Finally, a certain amount of caution needs to be exercised with regards to the faith placed in IT-based and multimedia resources. Currently, they have a reasonably high level of use among coaches, but lower levels of reported impact suggest that, until our knowledge of how to make use of this media is improved, the case for them as part of new developments may be overstated.

Support to Coaches

Though the vast majority of coaches have received developmental support (for example, 87% had undertaken a formal coaching qualification), their perceptions of the overall wider support available to them was mixed. Using a range of qualitative statements to understand the coaches' rating of support (for example, 'help identifying development opportunities' or 'help with finding appropriate opportunities to coach'), no more than two of five (39%) suggested they felt supported. Against one of the statements ('help with the cost of development opportunities'), nearly half (47%) suggested they were not supported at all. Thus, it seems that well over half of coaches feel they receive very little support from governing bodies of sport or national, regional and sub-regional agencies. Indeed, the notion of being in a 'support vacuum' was a common theme in the qualitative interviews.

The introduction of the DCMS-funded sports coach UK CDO network, building on existing provision undertaken by governing bodies of sport (eg through regional and county development officers) and through CSPs in England, appears to have made a significant difference to coaches. Though this type of one-to-one support to coaches is still in its early days and thin on the ground in terms of deliverers, the coaches were much more favourable about the support they were offered if they had developed a relationship with a CDO. In particular, the results suggest CDOs were active in facilitating opportunities to attend workshops, as well as coach observation and mentoring.

There is little doubt the coaches require more support from the governing bodies of sport and other relevant partners. This includes improved thinking around pathways and progression, improved information flow and access to services, and, in particular, access to highly valued one-to-one support, which provides an opportunity to observe other coaching, have their coaching observed, and receive mentor support.

Coaching Careers

The *Sports Coaching in the UK* series suggests there is an increasing trend towards paid coaching. Given the *UK Coach Tracking Study* sample, this can be neither verified nor refuted in Year 1 of the research (though it will certainly be possible in Year 2). However, the research provides an opportunity to present a further level of detail on our volunteer, part- and full-time paid coaches.

Indeed, the results build on the *Sports Coaching in the UK* work by providing further evidence that women coaches are more likely to be paid than males. Coaches in a number of sports such as swimming and cricket appear more likely to receive pay than in other sports like football. Full-time coaches appear more able to undertake sufficient learning and development time while still committing a significant proportion of their time to delivery. The average annual salary for a full-time coach is just over £20.5k.

The availability and amount of coaches' pay would appear to be a crucial factor moving forwards. The lack of available paid opportunities to coach, as well as lack of support from organisations (governing bodies of sport, clubs etc) were the most cited reasons for why coaches intended to stop practising in the next year.

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