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In every end, there is also a beginning: Experiences of career transitions through sport

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Abstract

In sport, as in life, people experience transitions on a regular basis. This exploratory research examined the experience of the transitional process within sport using a qualitative methodology. The seven participants had worked within their sport for over 30 years, firstly as an athlete, then a coach, and finally a coach developer. Semi-structured interviews with each participant (x2) allowed for exploration of their experiences of changing roles within their organizations and revealed three themes: importance of timely support; ongoing professional conversations; where am I going with this? These themes, exemplified by the use of direct quotes from the participants, were used to provide context and deeper understanding of the transition from athlete to coach to coach developer. The participants revealed a certain degree of serendipity, due to a lack of structure and process in their experiences. As a result, we suggest some practical steps that organisations could adopt to assist in this process.

Across the lifespan, humans experience so many life transitions (e.g. marriage, parenting, career, etc.) that we have developed a number of colloquialisms to describe them. For example, people frequently say "I'm closing this chapter of my life and starting a new one." or "When one door closes, another opens." or "This isn't the end, it's just a new beginning." While some life transitions are seamless, others are transformative and shift the nature of being. It's not surprising then that sport, commonly referred to as a microcosm of life, would also be full of transitions that are deeply impactful. An emerging body of research in this area has identified that, for coaches, experience as a competitive-athlete acts as an important phase in which coaching knowledge and skills are initially acquired (Christensen, 2013; Watts & Cushion, 2017), that may ease transition from athlete to coach. Similarly, there is now another shift in role, moving from coach to coach developer, requiring a broad set of learning and development skills. These transitions may include change in role, responsibility, required skills, or lifestyle. And, as the field of sport evolves, so do the types of transitions experienced. For the purpose of this paper we are focusing on career transition, which we are defining as '…as the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation to a role already held (altering subjective state)' (Louis, 1980, p.330).

As athletes mature and move up age groups, there are numerous hurdles to clear and barriers to navigate. On one hand, research examining athlete transitions as they move through the early developmental sport pathway is limited in that much of the research focuses on athletes who persist in the system and is void of insight related to those who do not. On the other hand, research on athlete career transition for those who manage to elevate to high performance levels continues to grow and evolve and has resulted in a rather robust body of literature. In fact, the International Society of Sport Psychology released a revised position

stand on athlete career development and transitions in 2021 (Stambulova, Ryba & Henriksen, 2021) that provides extensive detail about the state of discourse related to athlete transitions.

Some transition experiences in sport are predictable, such as those that come with age, fatigue, or reduced interest. In contrast, an unpredictable transition can come in the form of a career-ending injury or being released by a team, that can occur without notice or warning (Wylleman & Reints, 2010), can negatively impact an athlete's experience of leaving the sport in which they have invested significant energy, time, and money. As a result, during transitions, athletes may face challenges such as loss of identity, lack of external support, and/or mental health decline (Moore, Walton, Eckenrod, & Kossman, 2022). Further, as highlighted in a study by Knights and colleagues (2019), many athletes report they are not supported into retirement by either their club or their sporting organization, which can result in athletes being disenfranchised with their club or sport and reluctant to give back to the game. At an organizational level, this equates to a significant loss of resources in the form of potential coaches because, as previously noted, the athlete to coach pathway is strong in most sports (Leeder et al, 2023; Chroni et al, 2021). However, the benefits and difficulties experienced when leaving an athletic career and moving into a coaching role are not as well researched. Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to explore career transitions of athletes who remained in the sport environment after their athletic career ended, specifically those who transitioned into coaching and then subsequently into coach development.

Transitions into coaching

The ease or challenges faced by the move between sport participation and coaching within the same sport have been documented. A former athlete turned coach may experience benefits as a result of his/her past experiences as an athlete such as the ability to establish trust and socialization (Roach & Dixon, 2006). Chroni and colleagues (2020) highlight

coaches initially view their transition into coaching as unproblematic, specifically in skiing. Similarly, coaches within college team sports of volleyball, softball, and football reported thousands of hours and multiple years of athletic experience prior to entering coaching (Gilbert, Côté, & Mallett, 2006). These past athletic experiences emphasize the transferable skills that can contribute to the development of effective coaches (Côté, 2006).

Conversely, the transition itself can be a disadvantage due to the necessary role change resulting in blurred lines between being seen as a peer versus an authority figure (Roach & Dixon, 2006). Rynne (2014) compared the differences between athletes entering coaching through the 'traditional' route of coach education and accreditation versus fast tracking. This concept refers to affordances given to former top athletes within their sport, allowing them a quicker route into coaching than the 'traditional' method. More recently, studies have shown that fast tracking former athletes into head coaching positions can perpetuate certain organizational or sporting norms and philosophies rather than developing new approaches and integrating up-to-date knowledge (Blackett, Evans & Piggott, 2015). This preservation of coaching ideologies due to fast tracking can have even more disturbing outcomes, such as abusive practices (McMahon et al., 2020). However, high performance players moving into coaching from distinguished playing careers often viewed the 'traditional' route as lacking an understanding of the practical complexities and challenges common within coaching practice (Watts & Cushion, 2017), offering support for the need for an alternative pathway into coaching.

The initial transition *into* coaching is only one of the transition experiences for coaches. High-performance sport tends to be characterized by stress, emotion, demanding schedules and competition, with which former athletes would be familiar. Within coaching, however, employment can also be directly linked to performance outcomes, winning or losing. And for many coaches, the challenge lies in one's inability to directly impact the

outcome. Navigating all these aspects can be challenging at the best of times but can be further complicated by ongoing transitions through sport. Coaches experience changes within their working environment, for example, change of club/organization, embedding new learning or working with a different age, stage, and level of performer. The ability to recognize these transitions is critical as it has been documented that coaches are more able to effectively navigate their careers if they recognize their developmental needs and, more importantly, have the motivation and resources to pursue their careers aspirations without formal support (Dawson, Dioth & Gastin, 2016). However, little is known about these transitions through coaching and how coaches can become more adept at recognizing their own needs. Even less is knows about the pivotal career decisions coaches make. As an example, there does seem to be an impetus for coaches to work with ever higher levels of performers – how does this affect career decisions. Many coaches are also fortunate to identify and work with a mentor, whether formal or informal – how does this help with identifying needs and career prospects. We would suggest the two are inextricably linked. Over time, coaches may develop a desire to make a broader impact on their sport through supporting other coaches, which might result in a transition into coach development.

Transitions into coach development

More recently, the role of coach developer has emerged as a critical function in sport systems (Nash et al., 2023). Systems rely heavily on their long-time or expert coaches to train new generations of coaches through formal and informal pathways (Blackett et al., 2021), This may not be the most efficient or effective way of recruiting coach developers. This transition is often slightly different to the transition from athlete to coach, because many coach developers continue in their role as a coach while engaging in coach development activities. Still, limited research examines the experiences associated with taking on the new role. A misplaced assumption that ‘you coached so you can develop’ still pervades in many

sporting organizations, not recognizing the important role of the coach developer (Diffenbach & Chroni, 2023) and the unique skills required for this role. This mimics the lack of recognition highlighted earlier in athlete to coach transition, reinforcing the 'you played so you can coach' notion, demonstrating the lack of attention often paid to the transition process.

Coach developers come from many different backgrounds, often are called by various titles, and do not always follow the route of athlete-coach-coach developer (Nash et al, 2023). Some work full-time within this role, whether within an organization or as a consultant, whereas other designated coach developers are employed in a full-time job with the development role incorporated within a bigger remit. Given the wide range of opportunities to be involved in coach development, it is very difficult to identify specific transition processes that would describe all, which results in gaps in understanding related to the necessary training and support these individuals need. Nash (2023) highlights that many coach developers work across sports where they reported the key element being an approach that embraced lifelong learning, emphasizing reflection and building on experiences.

Although the International Council for Coaching Excellence (2023) produced a coach developer framework to guide organizations in setting up and improving their sporting offerings, much is still unknown about how individuals come to do this work. Uncovering experiences from coaches and coach developers about their transitions between roles will extend the knowledge base in this area, providing essential insight that will help better define the work of the coach developer and the requisite knowledge. This exploratory study examines the experiences of seven professionals who moved into coaching at the end of their elite athletic career and subsequently transitioned into a coach developer role.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were seven coach developers, who had also been involved in coaching as well as playing at a representative level in sport. These participants had operated at a national level within their coaching careers and were currently functioning as coach developers within their national system. They had all been participants for over 30 years in some role within sport. These participants were purposively recruited for this study due to their background, but had no prior relationship with the authors. Further details are contained in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Sport	Time as Athlete	Time as Coach	Time as Coach Developer
Pat	54	Swimming	10 yrs	17 yrs	7 yrs
Alex	46	Basketball	12 yrs	15 yrs	4 yrs
Robyn	55	Athletics	16 yrs	20 yrs	5 yrs
Toni	56	Hockey	15 yrs	19 yrs	8 yrs
Casey	48	Football	16 yrs	16 yrs	4 yrs
Quinn	49	Squash	14 yrs	16 yrs	5 yrs
Morgan	57	Gymnastics	17 yrs	23 yrs	6 yrs

Data Collection

This project adopted a retrospective approach to data collection with all interviews being organized and conducted online using the Teams platform (Microsoft Teams, www.microsoft.com/microsoft-365), due to geographic limitations. There were two cycles of interviews, with the first examining each participant's transition from athlete to coach. The second cycle explored each participant's journey from coach to coach developer. A semi-structured interview guide was created consisting of three separate sections: section 1 collected contextual information around the environment, culture and sport, as well as

timings and job remit; section 2 was conducted to help the participants recall key events and features around the career transition in question. Finally section 3 accumulated data around any barriers and supports that may have aided or hindered the transition process. Questions such as 'how did you find your development as a coach (developer)?' or 'how were you recruited as a coach (developer)?'

The same interview guide was used with all participants to ensure coherence and consistency between interviews (Jones et al., 2013). Probes and prompts were used to help participants further clarify their answers. Section 1, by the nature of the questions, was personal to the individuals, but gathering information around dates and organizational/ structural data. Sections 2 and 3 were probing the athlete, coach and coach developer perspectives so therefore the conversations were characterized by elements the coaches identified as important to their transitions so were fluid and more unstructured. The interview guide was piloted with two coach developers and no adjustment was deemed necessary following their feedback. Reflecting the richness and depth of responses provided, interviews lasted between 50–60 min (M_{duration} = 54.23 min, SD = 2.32).

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis (cf. Braun et al., 2019). Familiarization and immersion with the data was achieved through repeated readings of each transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Jones et al., 2013). Following the inductive analysis, deductive analysis was used to answer the research objectives. Data codes were collated into lower-order themes based on common features, and then subsequently grouped together under higher-order themes representing the highest level of abstraction.

The trustworthiness of the findings was established using three procedures: member reflection, critical friends and the use of direct quotes. According to Smith and McGannon

(2018) the sharing of findings with participants is not to verify conclusions but to gain more insight into the matter at hand. The participants were able to provide further detail around some of the instances, enabling layering of understanding. The researchers acted as critical friends discussing, challenging, and revising the themes until consensus was reached. These themes are highlighted in the findings section by the use of direct, anonymized quotations, enabling sensemaking to happen.

Findings

These participants were all involved in the elite sport context, whether as athletes, coaches or coach developers, so this particular environment is characterized by performance and competition in many instances. The interview data revealed three key themes from the participants' experiences of career transitions. These were: 1) importance of timely support; 2) ongoing professional conversations; and 3) where am I going with this? These themes are exemplified by the use of direct quotes, from the participants, to highlight the key points.

Importance of Timely Support

Support is invaluable at any age and stage of development however these participants identified the importance of the appropriate support at the most suitable time. Interviews revealed that some participants' experiences were this support was either not available at various stages within transitional phases or was not perceived as particularly effective when it was offered. Others gave examples of the advantages proffered when they were able to access assistance when they needed it. The athletics coach reflected;

> I remember moving straight from being a competitor to a coach in what seemed like a week. I didn't want to keep training if I wasn't competing, but I needed to stay in track. My coach, and the club helped me make that change by letting me move into the coaching role gradually, first as an assistant or sessional coach. This was so much

> less stressful for me than becoming a coach developer. No support or introduction! Just thrown in the deep end to sink or swim.

The swimming coach, Pat, had a different experience regarding the lack of immediate support, saying;

> I started coaching very early, at 21, because I suffered a career ending injury. It wasn't the best start to coaching as I was still coming to terms with my exit from sport and I had the perfect storm of moving from home, starting a Masters and running a swim team. It took me a while to get my head straight especially as my support group – family and friends – were thousands of miles away.

Some coaches were specifically targeted to make the transition from one stage to another that led to the need for an understanding of the new role. For example, Casey, the football coach, said,

> I wasn't exactly sure what a coach developer was when I first got involved. It wasn't called that back then. My club were looking to get a Quality Mark award so they asked me if I would take on the role. The [National Sporting Organisation] were great – they ran a series of workshops to explain what coach development was and what I needed to do.

Some of the participants were less able to clearly identify a transition between one role to the next, as they felt the roles merged. Toni, who had spent the longest amount of time as a coach developer in this group, thought;

> I don't really remember stopping playing and starting coaching. I remember being encouraged to coach while I was still playing, someone told me it would help my playing career. I was really happy playing and coaching, it seemed that my life was all about hockey and being part of a really supportive group of players and coaches like

> me. Again, moving into coach development seemed like a natural transition – it was time.

Despite this apparent ease of transition, there was still an acknowledgement that timely support would have assisted participants to feel settled, more quickly in their changing roles. This was summed up by Morgan, who thought 'I've managed to get through relying on colleagues, but coaching, and now coach development has changed. You need support to navigate the obstacles.'

Ongoing Professional Conversations

Discussions have long been advocated as key to development, however the participants in this study were very specific that these were not adhoc chats that happen regularly within the sporting environment. Participants were very clear that these dialogues were planned in advance and carefully considered. The participants in basketball and squash, despite being in markedly different sports, had similar experiences of professional conversations. Alex shared;

> It makes such a difference being part of a team where we deliberately sit down and talk at least once a week – usually more – about how we can make things better, improve the quality. When I first came into this coaching team this made a huge difference to my development and made it much easier to fit in. When I moved into coach development, this was an aspect that I wanted to continue – it is so impactful.

Quinn said,

> Squash is an individual sport, you spend a lot of time on your own as a player, practicing hitting a ball against the wall. Similarly in coaching so it is great to be able to speak to others about the problems in practice, scheduling and just the other things that make coaching challenging. Having those regular conversations about how to

> make things different, better was a huge part of my development as a coach and coach developer – it took me to the next level.

The basketball and squash examples were mainly based on the transition into coaching or into coach development. In gymnastics there appeared to be more emphasis on professional conversations throughout careers, but this may be a feature of other sports too. The gymnastics coach offered his thoughts, saying;

> I've been in gymnastics for most of my life, as a gymnast, a coach and now as a coach developer and the thing that has helped me through all of these stages is being able to talk to others, no matter what stage I was at. They have not always been in the same situation but being able to get someone who understands to listen and offer alternatives is such a blessing. And we look at all the alternatives – cards on the table – there is nothing off limits.

Another form of professional conversation can be that between mentor and mentee, especially within a formal mentoring relationship. Casey highlighted that they were lucky enough to have a mentor while they were coaching and this relationship extended to their time as a coach developer, thinking,

> I was very fortunate to form a relationship with Mike early on in my coaching career. I'd known him from my playing days but when I started coaching, he took me under his wing. We used to talk about everything related to football – he really encouraged me to share my thinking and we got into some deep debates about things. I recognize now that he would prompt me with a question – mostly why. I actually use this technique now as a coach developer.

Where am I Going with This?

All of the participants in this study alluded to challenges encountered from moving from one role to another. They also identified that there was very little clear planning or deliberate thought behind some of the transitions as exemplified by Pat, 'flying by the seat of my pants most of the time with no clue where it was headed.' These participants were cognizant of the opportunities they had to develop a career in their sport, that were not available to everyone. In this vein, Morgan thought,

> Yes, I have been very fortunate as I have lived and breathed gymnastics, BUT it has not been an easy ride. I don't think I have ever said no to any new challenges or roles – maybe I should have. I've just taken a deep breath and said to myself "it will all work out in the end" and over the years it has.

These recollections may be more representative of the lack of a career pathway in sport whether as an athlete, coach or coach developer, although there are more opportunities available currently. However, all these participants considered that these prospects were unexpected, but welcome developments for them. Robyn was even more blunt saying;

> I'm not sure looking back over my time in athletics that I ever had the goal of staying in track. It just worked out that way and that was good for me. With hindsight things could have blown up in my face and I never had a Plan B, just blind faith. There is a god who looks after dingbats but I'm not sure that this would happen for someone entering sport now. It is much more "professional" so I think that people need to know they have a future.'

However, the hockey coach reflected on the differences in planning for their job as opposed to the lack of planning that characterized their development through the sport. Toni said;

> Normally I like to plan my sessions, whether as a coach or coach developer, I like a plan. My career has not been according to plan or maybe I should say I did not have a

> plan. I always thought I would become a teacher, but I kept putting it off as the next opportunity in hockey was just too exciting to pass up.

This notion of excitement or stimulation by their role was also exemplified by the basketball coach. Alex thought;

> You know that analogy of the swan – all serene on the surface but legs going like the clappers under the water – well I feel I've been doing that for most of my time in sport. It's exciting, challenging, exhilarating and downright terrifying all of the time. That feeling of "what now" is addictive but not everyone can cope with that. We need to provide more structure, help, whatever it takes.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the experiences of career transitions from athlete to coach to coach developer. While not all coach developers follow this path, it does appear to be a common route for the participants in this study, although whether this is by design or being in the right place at the right time may be worthy of further discussion. Career transition out of elite sports is a dynamic, multidimensional, multilevel, and multifactor process but much of the published research examines retirement and leaving sport, rather than moving on to a coaching career (Knights et al., 2016; Kuettel et al, 2017, Ryba et al., 2021). Previous studies have studied the development processes of expert coaches (Nash & Sproule, 2009) and coach developers (Nash, 2019), examining the key milestones achieved by those who reach the top of their field. However, few research studies have examined more than one transition. Further, the role of coach developer is just emerging in the sporting landscape. This presents a gap in conceptualizing the process of becoming a coach and becoming a coach developer. The athlete transition literature adopts a fairly linear approach in that there is a stopping point, after which one is no longer an athlete. This study does have the

advantage of investigating a pathway commonly followed by those involved in sport (Kavanagh, 2010). There are a number of entry points into both coaching and coach development yet the findings from this study may inform and assist different transitions into both of these roles. We hope to add value to individuals and organizations by highlighting principles that could be incorporated into ongoing support for those looking to change roles.

In a review of literature related to theoretical perspectives of career transitions, researchers concluded that, while there are five predominant theoretical perspectives (i.e. career-stage; decision-making; adjustment; relational; identity), future research should adopt a holistic view of the career transition process (Sullivan & Ariss, 2021). Therefore, this is the approach we take to discuss critical findings of this project.

The first theme considered the importance of timely support, which may be a concept that is recognizable and generalizable across a number of domains. Within medicine, this support, provided by knowledgeable individuals has engendered many benefits including smoother transitions, less stress and more positive outcomes (Dada et al., 2021). Similar outcomes have been reported in educational settings (Sutcliffe, Tangney & Matheson, 2018; Tarabini & Ingram, 2018). The participants in this study highlighted that no matter what transition they were experiencing, the support offered was from an individual rather than being a process or part of an integrated system of development. While participants from this study highlighted the relational aspect of the transition in the need for support, they also reflected on the process of restructuring their identity and understanding of their new role while also recognizing the need for tools and resources for the new position. Key messages from other areas have emphasized the importance of an appropriately structured programme of support, contributing to the ease of transition (Redman-MacLaren et al, 2021; Glang et al, 2018). Developing a process for each transition, athlete to coach and coach to coach developer, would be of benefit to many organisations. Fundamental principles of transition

research could underpin the process, but sports organizations could, and should, individualize the process to suit the particularities of their environment and requirements, with the focus on either coaching principles or theories of learning and development (Chroni, Pettersen & Dieffenbach, 2020). If those in transition are optimistic and enthusiastic about the changes then there is more likely to be a successful outcome.

The second theme of ongoing professional conversations was also seen as vital to the changing of roles and building upon the more formal process of transition mentioned earlier. A mostly relational influence, the impact of personal and professional relationships was impactful to these participants. Within a numbers of sectors, the benefits of professional conversations can range from simple problem solving and making sense of new information to complex situations, such as sport coaching and coach development, where ongoing dynamics and a largely unstructured environment contribute to the intricacies (Wang & Yim, 2019). Within higher education the practice of professional conversations has shaped developments and curricula, however, unlike this study, these discussions tended to be informal in nature (Thomson & Trigwell, 2018). In professional sports, group meetings are a common way to debrief after a match or competition. Lan and Mehta (2022) found that a we-narrative is essential to build the skills to establish common goals or shared interests and take action to attain those goals/interests. In turn, this built collaborative problem solving, similar to the professional conversations identified by these participants as essential to growth and development by establishing a formal routine to discuss issues, resolve difficulties and agree a way forward.

Finally, all the participants explained that in some ways they were in the right place at the right time, as exemplified by the theme ‘where am I going with this?’ This was characterized by these participants as a lack of structure and long-term planning process but willingness to adapt. This supports the lack of professionalization inherent in many organisations and is

especially concerning for those responsible for hiring coaches and coach developers (Blackett, Evans & Piggott, 2015).

Similar to the transition into coaching, the role of a coach developer requires different skills to those of an effective coach, although again, there are similarities. 'The coach developer's work is educational, developmental, caring and support-oriented: interventions may include the development of technical skills, enhancing interpersonal relationships, evolving effective strategies to manage specific challenges and constraints, or a combination of these' (CIMSPA, 2021, p.4). Many of the skills mentioned here, for example technical development, are those coaches would be expected to have, however the context is different. Coaches, who are experienced in teaching, modifying and refining sport skills, may not have the knowledge and expertise to identify shortfalls and enhance coaching practice as is required of a coach developer. Coach developers must possess the skills to conduct needs analysis, adapt the appropriate information to suit each situation and, rather than telling coaches what to do, enable them to inform their own development (Crespo & Martinez-Gallego, 2023).

According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), career adaptability consists of four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, demonstrated throughout the interviews by these participants. Much of this adaptability appeared to arise as a consequence of the lack of support in their roles and their ongoing career development through their sport. Yet they were willing to choose an alternative plan (i.e. coaching or coach development) to stay in the sport. However, the longevity that each enjoyed, while enhancing career satisfaction, did not necessarily reflect effectiveness in each role (Karatepe, & Olugbade, 2017). The more invested individuals become in their career the harder it becomes to make a break and move into a different environment or role. These participants made no mention of any frustrations with their pathway or organization unlike other coaches who question their

effectiveness in their role (Purdy & Potrac, 2016). However, the lack of structure and process highlighted by these participants may dissuade others from similar transitions or cause others to transition out of sport.

Key takeaways

Career transitions are complex life events impacted by a number of internal and external variables. Certainly they can be stressful and challenging, so developmental support should be available and there are a variety of sources where this can be accessed. However, the participants in this study recognized that being able to access the appropriate support at the right time was vital – the planning of this support appears to be crucial in assisting the transition process. For this reason, we have constructed suggestions, based on these interviews, for how to support the transition from athlete to coach and coach to coach developer (see Table 2). It was also clear that anxiety is normal in these type of situations, no matter the age and stage of career, however the more information that is available in advance lessens concerns. Providing early information sessions, coupled with timely support would assist many with their role change.

Table 2: Suggested principles for support in transitions

What	When	Why	How	Who
Athlete to Coach Transition				
Information Session	Pre-coaching	Athletes are not coaches	Variety of methods but keep informal	Coach/coach developer
Observation of Established Coaches	Pre-coaching & during transition	Introduce new ideas and concepts	Attend coaching sessions BUT also planning & debrief	Club/ organization
Identify Buddy or Mentor	Pre-coaching & ongoing	Ask questions	Planned meetings plus use of social media communication	Club/ organization
Q&A sessions with coaches	Pre-coaching & during transition	Opportunity for discussion on professional practice	Individually or as part of a round table discussion	Club/ organization
5yr plan for Learning & Development	During transition	Establish priority areas of strengths and weaknesses	Knowledge Audit	New coach/coach developer
Coach to Coach Developer Transition				
Information Session	Pre-coach developer	Intro to role & highlight differences	Variety of methods but keep informal	Coach developer/ club/organization

Shadowing a Coach Developer	During transition	Observe realities of role	Attend formal and informal opportunities	Coach developer/ club/organization
How to add value	During transition	Why are you being asked to take on this role?	Identify your strengths	New coach developer
Knowledge of principles of learning and development	Pre-coach developer, during transition & ongoing	People learn in different ways.	Program learning strategies need to be individualized	Club/ organization/ Formal learning
Challenges in quality coaching	Pre-coach developer, during transition & ongoing	Appreciate the 'messiness' of coaching role and steps to support	Understanding of the many interacting variables	Coach developer/ Club/ organization/ Formal learning

Building in opportunities for dialogue, whether informal or more structured opportunities for discussions around professional practice have been identified as key by these participants. By discussing problems of practice in advance those moving from athlete to coach or coach to coach developer can begin to understand and reflect on the challenges and complexities associated with coaching and coach development. Ensuring that those wishing to change roles have both a positive and realistic expectation of what to expect in their new role through discussion with thoughtful and experienced colleagues can also minimize stress and challenge.

Much of the information collected from these participants fits in the 'if only I had known' scenario. Gathering information about changes does allow people to better prepare for the challenges that a new environment brings. Much of the information contained in Table 2 will give participants the opportunities to collect relevant data from a variety of sources, if those sources are carefully selected. This includes steps such as understanding the environment, observing, shadowing and creating a network of supportive individuals to ask questions of and seek help if required.

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