

Key Messages for Session Coaches

Session Coach

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Introduction

Key Messages for Session Coaches is designed to supplement the face-to-face learning programme and online materials available to coaches embarking on their formal coaching qualification pathway. It can be dipped in and out of as the coach requires! It contains useful tips hints and links to external documents that may be of use to you as you develop your coaching skills and practice.

Coaching behaviours, roles and responsibilities:

As a qualified Session Coach there are a number of roles and responsibilities that you will need to perform, from being a good communicator to promoting healthy eating and a drug free lifestyle.

The sports coach UK code of conduct is a useful document that outlines some of the core roles and responsibilities, but equally you should ask to have a copy of your club's code of conduct.

A link to the British Rowing Code of Conduct can be found here:

<https://www.britishrowing.org/upload/files/Association/Welfare/BritishRowingWGI.4.pdf>

If you are working with young people you will also have an additional duty of care and it is advised that you attend a British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop. A useful document for all coaches to read is the British Rowing Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy that outlines some useful guidance for all clubs looking out for the welfare of their participants.

A link to this policy can be found here:

<https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/SPC-Policy-1.pdf>

A guidance document linked to this policy that is applicable across all clubs is British Rowing's Model anti-bullying policy for rowing clubs.

A link to this document can be found here:

<https://www.britishrowing.org/upload/files/Association/Welfare/BritishRowingWGI.1.pdf>

Key behaviours

Safe and professional practice means following RowSafe guidance, carrying out a risk assessment and boat safety checks, attending a capsize drill run by your club so you have an awareness of what to do / advise in the event of a capsize.

Being rower focussed means ensuring you address rower's needs and goals when planning sessions.

Continually developing means attending both formal and informal learning opportunities such as club coaches' meetings or British Rowing Workshops.

Five Cs Coaching System

This is a tool to help coaches to deliver effective coaching to athletes across all sports.

The five Cs stand for competence, confidence, connection and character, and more recently creativity (some coaches also add compassion and caring but we will focus on the five Cs as core principles to develop). Research shows the coach must have knowledge and an

awareness of their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in order to coach effectively. Effective coaching impacts the athlete in four ways.

These are:

1. Improving the competence of the athlete in all aspects of their sport.
2. Improving the confidence of the athlete both in the sport and generally.
3. Creating connections for the athlete with the coach and group.
4. Influencing the character, including issues from fair play to timekeeping and anti-doping.

The five Cs have all been shown to be transferable to other aspects of the athlete's life. The confidence and competence of a person will continue to be impacted upon at all stages of the athlete's development

Five Cs	Summary of outcome
Competence	Positive view of one's action in sport
Confidence	An internal sense of self worth
Connection	Positive bonds with people and institutions
Character	Respect for rules, integrity and empathy for others
Creativity	Developing own solutions to problems and challenges

Planning and preparation

When planning any session for rowers it is key that you know the group that you are coaching, such as their age, training history, individual needs and goals so that you can plan an effective session for them.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 outlines that it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone with a “Protected Characteristic”.

There are nine characteristics referenced throughout the act which appear in alphabetical order. You need to be aware of these in your coaching practice and planning and preparation, so you can look to ensure that you are inclusive in your behaviours.

The nine characteristics are:

1. Age
Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 64 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
2. Disability
A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
3. Gender reassignment
The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
4. Marriage and civil partnership
In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. This will also be true in Scotland when the relevant legislation is brought into force.
Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
5. Pregnancy and maternity
Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
6. Race
Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
7. Religion and belief
Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
8. Sex
A man or a woman
9. Sexual orientation
Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Top tip: The Inclusive Rowing factsheet may be a useful resource to help you plan for rowers with particular needs.

Goal setting

Top tip: SMART is a useful acronym to remember when you are planning your sessions and goals with your rowers. Ensure the goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable / attainable
- Realistic / relevant
- Time related

In this way they are easy for you and your rower to monitor and provide motivation for the rower as they can see the progress being made at whatever level.

Understanding elements of fitness can help your longer term to plan for your rower's needs and goals.

Elements of fitness that may affect your planning are:

- Speed - the ability to move a body part quickly.
- Flexibility - the movement available at the joints.
- Co-ordination - the ability to use the body parts and senses together to produce smooth efficient movements.
- Strength - the maximum force a muscle / group of muscles can apply against a resistance.
- Power - this is the product of strength and speed.
- Muscular endurance - the ability of a muscle to do continuous work over a long period of time.
- Aerobic endurance - when an individual can participate continuously and keep going during activity.
- Agility - the ability to be able to change direction and the speed at which you are travelling, quickly and efficiently.
- Core stability - the ability to control the movement and position of the muscles of the central 'core' of the body which are responsible for posture and limb movement.

Physical, social and emotional adaptations from activity and fitness sessions

When following a training programme, the heart becomes bigger and the amount of blood pumped per beat (stroke volume) increases, so the heart can pump less frequently to achieve the same output, at rest and during exercise. During maximal exercise the increased size of the heart will mean that it will have an increased maximal capacity for pumping blood. The heart rate will increase from rest to meet the muscles increased demand for oxygenated blood from the lungs.

The peripheral cardiovascular system will be improved after training as there will be an increased density of capillaries, which improves the delivery of oxygenated blood to the exercising muscles, meaning that blood flow is improved.

The muscle cells will also improve in their aerobic and anaerobic cellular machinery, improving their ability to do predominantly aerobic or predominantly anaerobic exercise.

The skeletal system will improve through training as the loading stimulus of exercise is important to increase or maintain bone density. The loading of the spine during rowing can increase its bone mineral density.

There are two main groups of muscles involved in the rowing stroke:

1. Mobilisers are the large surface muscles of the body that act to make movements, such as the back extensors, including the gluteal muscles that are involved in increasing the angle between the back and the upper leg during the drive phase of the stroke.
2. Stabiliser muscles are different to mobiliser muscles in that they are smaller and under the surface and act at a low level for an extended period of time to stabilise the structures of the body, such as the spine. The transversus abdominis is a deep corset-like muscle that helps to stabilise the core of the body.

Top tip: Training is just lots of activity sessions put together! Therefore depending on the current fitness levels and goals of the rower, the time or distance, type and intensity, frequency and recovery of each session will vary.

Remember: You should not overlook the importance of ensuring your rower's mental skill and well-being. You need to have an awareness of this and be mindful of the emotional development of your rowers when planning for their needs. Emotional stages of development may affect how well an individual deals with constructive criticism, external pressures or managing a new skill.

As you develop your coaching skills, you can pick up more tools as to how to train mental skills and ensure this is a key part of the training.

Skill development and coaching principles

Skill development is widely believed to be the best way to teach beginners and develop experienced rowers. Skill development covers a range of exercises and drills that can be deployed by coaches to assist rowers in developing skill from the Skills Matrix.

Note: You may find through this method of coaching that your rowers fall into the water and out of their boat while practicing these skills a number of times. This is not a sign that you or they have failed! The key message for the rower in this situation should always be to stay with their boat!

For more information on [capsize](#) / [man overboard](#) and recovery training see the British Rowing website.

Capsize and Recovery - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/courses-qualifications/safety/capsize-and-recovery-2/>

Man Overboard and Recovery - <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/courses-qualifications/safety/man-overboard-and-recovery-2/>

Remember: The Skill Development Handbook is the go-to resource for more information on skills drills and exercises that you can carry out with your rowers!

Top tip: Use your set of waterproof Technique cards to remind you of key pointers when out coaching!

Coaching practice

It is key when delivering a coaching session that you draw upon all your knowledge and skill, so that not only will you deliver technically correct instruction but that you engage and motivate all the rowers you are working with.

In summary you could use the following as a checklist for best practice during a coaching session:

Best practice checklist	✓
Establish and maintain group control and ensure safety and well-being of rowers and others at all times.	
Communicate effectively to build rapport, encourage and motivate and check rower's understanding of the goal(s) of the session, and the planned activities.	
Give technically correct explanations and demonstrations in terms of British Rowing Technique at appropriate levels.	
Coach skill / technical activities appropriate to the needs of the rower(s).	
Analyse rower's performance providing support and feedback to the rower(s).	
Deliver an engaging session in a fair and equitable manner.	
Conclude the session by reviewing the main outcomes and providing whole group and, where possible, individual feedback. Give rowers opportunities to give feedback.	

Remember: There will also be different considerations for coaching different groups that you may need to plan for and deliver. For example how do you manage a large number of rowers? Do you have limited equipment?

Top tip: See “Coaching 100 Beginners” in particular if working in a university setting for some advice and pointers on how to work with limited equipment and managing large groups.