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A SEASON-LONG STUDY OF QUESTIONING BEHAVIOURS BY AN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY COACH.



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AIM

A Game Sense approach is actively promoted in UK rugby coach education [1]. Questioning behaviours are integral to this philosophy. However, little is known about the use of questioning by rugby coaches. This study investigated the questioning behaviours of an international rugby head coach across an entire competitive season.

METHODS

Behaviour intentions / “coaching philosophy” were investigated through semi-structured interviews. “On-pitch” coach behaviour was systematically observed using the Rugby Coach Activities and Behaviours Instrument (RCABI) [2].

- 1021.15 mins. of behaviour analysed using RCABI across 14 training days & six competitive matches.
- Training form activity categories (drill-like): fitness, technical, skills.
- Playing form activity categories (game-like): small-sided games, phase of play, conditioned games, competitive match play.

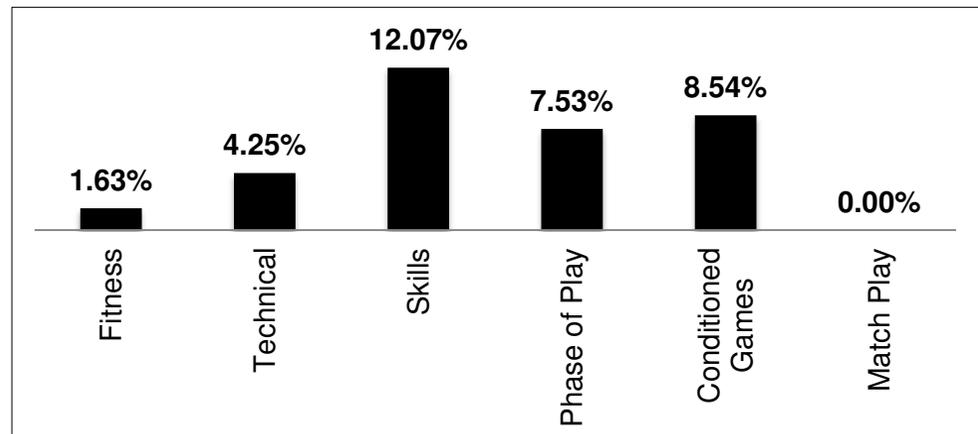


Figure 1.0 Questioning as a % of total behaviours by activity state.

RESULTS

Overall, questioning accounted for only 6.34% of “on-pitch” behaviours, but this varied between activity contexts (see Figure 1.0) & was the coach’s most frequent direct interaction with players.

- **Intentions:** Check player understanding; promote cognitive links between training & performance (match) contexts; encourage problem solving; empower players.
- **Context:** More time was spent observing (26.29%) training sessions & conferring with assistants (19.70%), underpinning a deliberate, targeted approach to the use of questioning.
- **Constraints:** Need to balance time stood still in discussion vs. time spent in active practice; small-group activities (i.e., skills) perceived as particularly suited to questioning behaviour; physical barriers, time pressures & perceived player cognitive load inhibited questioning during match play.

CONCLUSION

Nuances of questioning behaviour need to be examined in greater depth. Classification of activity context, relationship to other behaviours & qualitative methods are essential to understand **how & why** questioning is used in “on-pitch” & “off-pitch” contexts. Future studies need to investigate the content of questions (i.e., convergent, divergent types), their intended purpose, the impact of context, & the perceptions of recipients (i.e., impact on players).

REFERENCES

- [1] Reid, P. (2003). More than a game? The role of sports governing bodies in the development of sport education programmes. *European Physical Education Review*, 9, 309-317.
- [2] Hall, E. T., Gray, S., & Sproule, J. (in press) The microstructure of coaching practice: behaviours and activities of an elite rugby union head coach during preparation and competition. *Journal of Sports Sciences*. doi: 10.1080/02640414.2015.1076571.