

Journal of Coaching Education

USOC Coaching Education Department/Sport Performance Division: “What We Do”

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We would like to thank the *Journal of Coaching Education* and NASPE for the opportunity to share information on the United States Olympic Committee’s (USOC) coaching education initiatives. With the record-breaking performances by our winter sport athletes in Vancouver, and our summer Olympic team building toward 2012 in London, we are excited about the new challenges we face in providing our next generation of Olympic coaches and athletes the opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

In this two-part series we will provide a look into what the USOC Coaching Education Department is doing presently to support coaches throughout the Olympic development pipeline. In the next installment, we will review how far the USOC Coaching Education program has come, and peer into the future to propose a new approach to prepare our future coaches to meet our goal of “Sustained Competitive Excellence.”

USOC Coaching Education 2010: The Challenges

The USOC faces many challenges, not the least of which is being the only National Olympic Committee that is not funded by the government. What this means is that the USOC seeks sponsorships and financial support from companies and organizations in order to fund initiatives and maintain a competitive edge. Many countries invest hundreds of millions of dollars to conduct research, finance athlete training and support sport science services to improve the performance of their Olympic athletes. Being one of the most populated nations in the Olympic movement and facing financial challenges, the USOC needs to invest wisely and make the most out of the dollars it has. That said, the USOC has world-class professionals who are dedicated to supporting the athletes and helping them reach their full potential.

The USOC’s Sport Performance Division provides support to the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) in the United States by utilizing experts in nutrition, biomechanics, medicine, physiology, psychology, strength and conditioning, and performance technology. The Sport Performance Division employs personnel in the Operations Department to focus on coaching, recovery, performance lab, scientific resources, and medical support. The intention is to provide world-class resources to our Olympic athletes and NGB partners to result in world-class performances in competition.



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The USOC Coaching Education Department has an athlete-centered, coach-driven mentality and strives to provide support that will result in more knowledgeable coaches who can translate research into practice and improve athlete performance. Below is an overview of our current initiatives.

NGB Support

The Coaching Education Department engages with our NGB partners to assist in development or improvement of coach and athlete performance. Through an NGB Advisory Committee made up of representatives from various NGB coaching education personnel, the Coaching Education Department receives first-hand information on the needs, issues, and challenges faced by the NGBs. The Advisory Committee is a vital component of the connection between our department and the NGBs we serve.

Team USA Website

We are currently building the Sport Performance Division website that outlines services and resources available to our Team USA athletes and NGB partners - www.teamusa.org/resources/usoc-sport-performance. This website includes all departments within the division and outlines responsibilities and information available for public consumption relative to the various areas of sport performance. For instance, our Nutrition Department offers information on nutritional guidelines, sport-specific fueling, and performance foods. Our Sports Medicine Department website outlines the medical services available to our athletes, as well as ways to become involved in the Olympic movement. Check back for continued updates and new information from other areas on the website. The USOC intends for this website to showcase the expertise and professional opportunities available through the USOC Sport Performance Division.

USACoaching.org Website

The website, www.USACoaching.org, was developed by the Coaching Education Department in 2009 and is intended to be a clearinghouse of quality information for coaches and coach educators. The availability of a one-stop shop for materials, resources, and programs that coaches can use should make it an easier and more effective way to train coaches, making them aware of opportunities for professional development and certifications. This resource is a great step toward the professionalization of coaching and demonstrates the value placed on quality training opportunities.

Educational Conference Series

With our commitment to supporting the NGBs by providing cutting-edge information and opportunities, the Coaching Education Department is excited to offer professional development opportunities for coaches, high performance directors, and others involved in athlete support through conference programming. From developmental to elite coaches, the Educational Conference Series offers programming for all levels of coaches applicable to all sports.

The Educational Conference Series includes four annual events:

- *Training Design Symposium* – focuses on best practices in training programs for athletes
- *National Coaches Conference* – focuses on elite performance information for NGB coaches



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- *National Coaching Educators' Conference* – in partnership with NASPE, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations (NFHS), we offer standards-based programming targeting professionals who develop and deliver coaching education training
- *Minority Women in Coaching Conference* – focuses on leadership skills and development for minority women and future coaches

Semi-annual conferences include:

- *International Altitude Training Symposium* – focuses on training at altitude and the effects of altitude on endurance training
- *Nutrition Conference* – offering best practices and the latest science behind fueling for performance
- *Sport Medicine Conference* – focuses on the integration of sport medicine into a high performance plan
- *Performance Technology Conference and Workshops* – focuses on the latest technology that could be used to analyze and improve athlete performance

Additional topical conferences and symposiums are conducted and scheduled based on need and critical information.

Olympic Coach E-Magazine

Olympic Coach has been a mainstay as a resource for coaches through the USOC. It offers perspective from the Sport Performance Division and also valuable information from around the US and world on coaching and training athletes. *Olympic Coach* has made the transition from hard copy to e-copy publication. For issues of the e-magazine, visit www.teamusa.org/resources/usoc-sport-performance/coaching-education/olympic-coach-e-magazine.

Olympic Coach has been on hiatus for a while, but we hope to publish the next issue before the end of 2010.

Next Steps

In the next *JCE* edition, the article “Taking Responsibility” will examine a bold new plan from the USOC relative to coaching education. With a solid foundation and a staff passionate about giving their best to athletes and coaches at all levels, the USOC Coaches Education Department looks to the future by finally taking on the role that was prescribed for it 32 years ago by the United States Congress. Faced with challenges from other nations who have well-funded and well-developed national coaching and athlete development programs, the USOC coaches education program proposes a new focus for its efforts in order to take advantage of the strengths and opportunities of America’s unique amateur sport system.

