On the Right Track?: Future Directions of USATF Coaching Education

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Abstract

Approximately 47 million boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 18 years take part in sport activities each year, primarily in agency and community sponsored programs (Ewing & Seefeldt, 2002). The high level of participation requires many youth sport organizations to rely on volunteers, without whom there can be no programs. Yet volunteers receive little formal training to prepare them for their respective coaching endeavors (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; Gilbert et al., 2001; Gould, et al., 1990; Weiss & Hayashi, 1996).

Estimates indicate 90% of youth sport coaches have no formal preparation in coaching techniques or injury prevention (Seefeldt, 1992). National sport governing bodies (NGBs) have taken significant steps to educate prospective coaches by conducting face to face training sessions, organizing seminars, preparing resource material, and the like. However, in the case of USA Track & Field, there has been no assessment of whether Level I and Level II training complies with the National Standards for Sport Coaches (NASPE, 2006) or whether it meets the perceived needs of participants until 2009 (Judge & Bodey, 2009).

This presentation will review the results of an assessment on the alignment of USATF Level I and Level II training to the National Standards for Sport Coaches. Further, USATF Level I and II participants’ familiarity with the National Standards for Sport Coaches and perceived need for coaching education content areas which have been, or may be, incorporated into sport specific training will be discussed. Future directions of the USATF CE program will be discussed from the new USATF director of coaching.

A discussion of practitioners’ perceived need for training in specific content areas is aligned with Domain 8: Evaluation (Standard 40: Staff and self-evaluation). This presentation reflects the vision of the USA Coaching Coalition by contributing to the development of sport specific coaching education programs which are aligned with the National Standards for Sport Coaches.