



THE ROLE OF THE COACH IN WATER SAFETY IRELAND Lifesaving Sport

(1) MOTIVATION

Every athlete must be treated with equity, and where a club mate of yours is on the team, you must be extra careful in ensuring they are treated in the same manner as other team mates.

Performances should always be praised on the basis that you expect each athlete to perform to the maximum of their ability at all times in competitions. All team members must support their colleagues before, during and after an event.

(2) TECHNICAL ADVICE

The Coach is the technical advisor to each team and separately to each individual. The primary function of the Coach is to improve performance by identifying and eliminating perceived weaknesses in skills, endurance, technique and mentality.

Many athletes have club coaches, so it is important that you do not openly criticise athlete's technique or offer solutions without in the first instance, establishing/discussing why the athlete performs in a specific way.

If you have concerns about an individual athlete's performance, technique or endurance, which might impact on future events you, should discuss your observations with the athlete or their coach after the competition.

In conjunction with other team officials you should be active in developing team spirit and in helping create a team atmosphere, which is inclusive of every athlete on the team.

The way you speak to an athlete is always important but especially so in the heat of a competition. Words out of place can have a major impact on the morale of an athlete and or the team. The tone should be supportive, encouraging and especially so after a disappointing race.

If following completion of the day's events, you feel it appropriate to point out weakness then you can do so in simple and supportive terms always finishing with a few positive and forward looking words making sure not to isolate any individual.

Issues of concern, which arise during each day, should be reported to the team manager. The coach and team manager should work closely as a team but the ultimate responsibility for conduct and discipline Etc. lies with the Manager.

The coach is responsible to the Manager in all non performance related matters.

(3) TEAM MEETINGS

A daily meeting should be pre-planned with the Manager as a co-ordinated approach is advised. In general, logistics should be dealt with first by the manager then move onto competition preparations i.e., selection of athletes /teams for specific events, rules for specific events, doping control (liaise with manager on this), gear to be worn etc.

Inform the team of warm up times, event start times and travel times.
Check athlete requirements (boards, skis) and availability.

During warm ups, encourage stretching and keeping warm. Keep an eye on the team as they warm up to ensure nobody over does it or under does the warm up. Briefly chat to each athlete, help to keep them relaxed, give advice re race plans and generally keep them focussed and encouraged. Encourage swim downs after events. Keep it positive.

(4) DURING THE EVENT

The team should where possible sit together, and actively support their colleagues. Ensure each athlete returns to you for debriefing after each event.

Keep it positive, "learn from it and move on". Ensure athletes stay hydrated by drinking fluids, keeping warm and eating suitable foods.

The whole atmosphere must be positive and supporting. Do not accept mediocrity from the team or yourself, try to set consistent standards of excellence. Everyone should endeavour to perform to the max of their ability, they can do no more.

(5) RECORD KEEPING

On representative trips, you must record each athletes result/placing and record notes on the event itself.

These notes might note weaknesses, skills that need improvement etc. This is not a critical analysis, just an analysis from which you might form an opinion for your final report.

Back in the hotel tidy up your notes, review the day's events and plan for the next day's events.

When the event finishes, begin your final report. Your final report should be a review of the preparations, and the performances and any relevant recommendations you feel might assist in improving performances in the future, or any concerns you might have

Please make your report to the Chairman of the Sports Commission within two weeks of your return if your report relates to a representative event.