

## **Coaching Research Abstract**

**Stream: High-Performance Coaching / Coach Developer**

### **Understanding Reflection in High-Performance Sport Coaching: A Framework**

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Although reflection is established as important in coaching and coach development a number of issues with it remain – in particular, it is poorly understood conceptually, practically and definitionally. The purpose of this research therefore was to construct a common understanding of reflection in high performance sport (phase 1) and create and share a framework within coach education (phase 2). In phase 1 data were collected using an ethnographic framework on a high-performance coach education programme delivered by a National Sports Organisation (NSO). This included twenty-nine semi-structured interviews with twenty high-performance coaches and nine coach developers. Participant observation was undertaken with six coach education workshops each running for three days. A review of the extant reflection literature was also undertaken. Thematic analysis suggested a varied understanding of reflection with coaches' drawing on their experiences to inform their reflective practice - reflection had become a slogan for a wide range of activities. 'Levels' of reflection were identified with limited critical reflection undertaken to challenge existing beliefs and assumptions or actions striving to challenge and change established coaching practice. Analysis highlighted the uneven practices and experiences of reflection within the coach education programme. This analysis informed phase 2 where a reflection framework was developed and shared with each coach developer ( $n = 6$ ). This included an initial explanation and a follow-up interview three months later exploring how the framework had supported their coach development. Data were analysed thematically and showed that two developers had 'used' the framework to guide their practice while four developers provided their perceptions of the framework, that included how it could be 'used'. These applications and perceptions varied between developers. These initial findings showed that an explicit guide to frame reflection improved notions of consistency, structure, assessment of reflection and improved awareness of reflection types and content that may have been missed previously with coaches and developers. The findings also showed that the coach developers were able to 'recognise' the contents as it captured

their understanding of reflection. This implies that an explicit context-specific understanding of reflection could support reflective practice within coach education.