BEST PRACTICE SUMMARY – COACH DEVELOPER STREAM

Submitted by Hayley Harrison, Sport Ireland Coaching, Ireland (HHarrison@sportireland.ie)

This 'best practice' summary relates to the training of Coach Developers in the Republic of Ireland, specifically in the area of 'coach support provision' and the variety of ways National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) are employing Coach Developers to support coaches 'in the field'. Two NGBs have been highlighted to demonstrate two different approaches, both have proved to be effective in the Irish context, a country with a population of 4.6 million people and 62 recognised NGBs.*

The Coach Developer training programme run by Sport Ireland Coaching takes 12-18 months to complete (depending on the NGB's ability to support and provide assistance to the trainee Coach Developers) and encompasses three main areas: 'coach education course delivery', 'coach support provision' & 'programme design'. This best practice summary outlines the training the Coach Developers receive related to 'coach support provision' & the analytical skills used to determine what type of support would best suit individual coaches and why. The 'wall of support' will be explained and the NGB examples of how they are using these Coach Developer skills will follow.

The NGBs chosen to demonstrate 'coach support provision' by the Coach Developers for this summary are: the GAA (the largest sporting organization in Ireland with a membership of approx. 1 million people in 2300 clubs) and Kickboxing Ireland (one of the combat sports in Ireland with a membership of 1700 people in 58 clubs). The GAA employ a large team of full time Development Officers whose primary focus used to be the delivery of coach education courses. Since being trained as Coach Developers, their focus now is the delivery of the GAA's newly formed 'club engagement programme'. This programme delivers direct support to clubs and the coaches within those clubs, 'in situ', by the Development Officers. Kickboxing Ireland are a small NGB who asked their recently trained, volunteer based, Coach Developers to re-write their coach education programme with 'coach support' as the focus, cognisant of limited financial support and trained personnel. The programme they designed is primarily 'non-formal' in its structure and is based on short workshops & mentoring provision. Their programme now supports coaches throughout the year rather than bi-annually.

*A recognized NGB is a sport who has demonstrated their compliance with published qualifying criteria and has been approved by the Sport Ireland Board, representing the Irish Government.