

THE EFFECT OF A TRAINING EVALUATION TOOL ON JUNIOR COMMUNITY COACHES

Cotton, W. 1) & O'Connor, D. 1)

1) The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Keywords: coaching, junior, rugby

Introduction

Following on from the 2009 Community Junior Sport Coaching research project commissioned by the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, a paper based *Training Evaluation Tool* was designed and developed. The purpose of this Tool was to assist community coaches by enabling the coaches to easily and accurately gather information about the skill development opportunities and physical activity levels of players during their training sessions. It was hypothesized that by using the Tool coaches could more accurately review their training session and increase the activity levels and skill development opportunities of their players. The aim of the research was to assess the effectiveness of the *Tool* on junior sports coaches.

Methods

The research was guided by the principles of controlled experimental design and involved the systematic observation of 64 under10 coaching session consisting of 480 Rugby League and Rugby Union players and 32 different coaches. Data was collected using the following instruments: a modified SOFIT instrument; a developed Junior Coaching Observation instrument; a modified Rating scale for coaching sessions; and pre and post training session coach interviews.

Results & Discussion

Results from the study revealed that no significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were found between the control group of coaches ($n=16$) and coaches who had access to the *Training Evaluation Tool* in the following areas: players' levels of physical activity during the training sessions; the amount and type of skills practice during the training session; and, coach behavior. However, coaches who used the *Tool* were found to give effective pre-activity instructions and concurrent instructions as these were of a significantly shorter duration.

Conclusion

The majority of coaches who used the *Training Evaluation Tool* indicated that they were surprised by the results of the *Tool*. The coaches also reported that they believe the *Tool* assisted them to make positive changes to their coaching. However, little empirical evidence from the data collected supported these claims. Despite this, it is believed that the *Tool* is perhaps the first step in improving coaching practice (increased awareness) but consideration still needs to be given with what to do with the knowledge produced by the *Tool*.