



NEWS

COMMENT

LEARNING

FROM THE SIDELINES



“Not in time, place or circumstance, but in the man - lies success...”



SEVEN SPORTS

In November seven sports including golf and rugby made their cases for re-inclusion in the Olympic Games. The events for London 2012 have already been defined but there is an opportunity for the sports making bids for the 2016 games. They will have to wait until October 2009, to find out if they have been successful. The IOC has set a limit of 28 sports for 2016, of which 26 have been confirmed leaving two available positions. Notably baseball and softball have made bids, after being dropped from the 2012 programme. Golf and rugby last competed at the Olympics in 1904 and 1924 respectively. The three other sports making bids are squash, roller sports and karate.

SPANISH SUCCESS CONTINUES

To complete a great year, Fernando Verdasco won in five-sets against Jose Acasuso to earn Spain victory against Argentina in the Davis Cup final. It was believed that the final which took place in Argentina was the hosts best chance to win the event after finishing runners-up to the U.S.A in 1981 and Russia in 2006. Spain in contrast had won the Davies Cup in 2000 and 2004. The victory was particularly special for Spain who were able to win the final without World number one Rafael Nadal, who had pulled out with a knee injury.

MVP – MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

At the recent awards Albert Pujols (St. Louis Cardinals) and Dustin Pedroia (Boston Red Sox) were named as Major League Baseball's Most Valuable Players for 2008. Pujols had previously won the National League award in 2005 had a batting average of .357 in 2008, which consisted of 37 home runs and had 116 runs batted in (RBI). Pedroia in only his second full season in the majors, batted .326, hit 17 home runs with 83 RBIs, and only made six fielding errors all season. MVPs are determined by the Baseball Writers' Association of America and results are based on performance in the regular season.

QUALIFYING SCHOOL

Sweden Oskar Henningson made history in November by becoming the first golfer to come through stages one and two of qualifying school and win the six round final. Henningson finished at 21-under in Girona (Spain) to claim one of the thirty European Tour cards. Notable players who also earned cards were ex-Ryder Cup players Andrew Coltart and Joakim Haeggman while Chris Wood who finished fifth at the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale in July also earned his card. Final Qualifying for the PGA Tour will take place between the 3th - 8th of December at PGA West.



Albert Pujols

NL MVP: St. Louis Cardinals

MLB AWARDS 2008

AL MVP:	Dustin Pedroia
NL MVP:	Albert Pujols
AL Cy Young:	Cliff Lee
NL Cy Young:	Tim Lincecum
AL Rookie:	Evan Longoria
NL Rookie:	Geovany Soto
AL Manager:	Joe Maddon
NL Manager:	Lou Piniella



A COACHING CHALLENGE

Coaching is a messy business, as a recent transfer from a European airport reminded me. I had just arrived and was being taken by bus to the hotel. Tired after a long journey but not wanting to fall asleep I decided to bring my PDA upto date with appointments to be scheduled and input the details of several business cards that I had accumulated over the previous few days. Behind me sat two men who I had not taken any notice of when taking my seat, but it was clear from their conversation that they were obviously from a football team and that their coach had recently changed. I must stress that I am not in the habit of listening into other peoples conversations but I could not help but over hear as there debate became more animated.

One of the players was clearly much more experienced than the other, he tended to dominate the conversation and trotted out several phrases such as “you can’t buy experience” and “our former coach has been a winner as a player and you have to be a winner to know what it feels like”. He also appreciated the former coaches’ ability to demonstrate dead ball kicks and said that “the coach could easily fit into the team even if only for set play”.

The newer player clearly had other views and said that he wanted the coach to help him develop the skills that the coach had obviously exhibited but to simply show and tell, was in his mind not good enough. He also had other views on the coaches past record of success and stated that “he wasn’t too concerned about whether or not the coach had been a winner as a player, but he wanted to know the coaches results as a coach, “yes I know coach won many medals but will that help us to win?” was the thrust of his question.

The subject of tactics for the upcoming game was also discussed and again a difference of opinion was evident. The less experienced player was strongly for being adaptable and using tactics that allowed the team’s strengths to be used, “let them worry about what we are capable of” was his attitude whereas his teammate clearly had other ideas. He advised that “If we stop the opposition playing to their wide men then they are no threat”.

The journey passed quickly and I felt quite refreshed when arriving at the hotel, I had been stimulated to think about how I would deal with the two players and the challenges that the new coach would have to face in the coming weeks and months. Differences of opinions are common amongst players and it is clear that the coach will have to employ various coaching strategies with these two players and other team members. Of course some players will be close to the coaches own favoured style and so it will be easy while others will be at the opposite pole and so the work will be more challenging. Oh and by the way as they left the bus they were saying, “the nice thing about her is that she is passionate about helping the players to enjoy the process of learning!”



A coaching challenge

COACHING

- Coaches must be adaptable to deal with athletes who have different views.
- When planning training sessions the coach must exhibit flexibility and be able to relate to different types of athlete motivation.
- The coach is often responsible for technical, tactical, motivational and logistical detail.
- Coach adaptability is important.
- Demonstration is important but not at the risk of patronising the athlete.



TALENT & ABILITY

“The will must be greater than the skill.” (Muhammad Ali)

It is a given fact that if an athlete wishes to reach the higher levels of their chosen sport, then both skill and will are necessary requirements. How often have we heard that so and so is talented or is blessed with natural ability? First I think it is wise to look at definitions of the terms talent and ability.

Talent: Special innate traits of character that cannot be taken away, or used by another.

Ability: The quality or state of being able. The power to perform. Considerable proficiency. Natural capability.

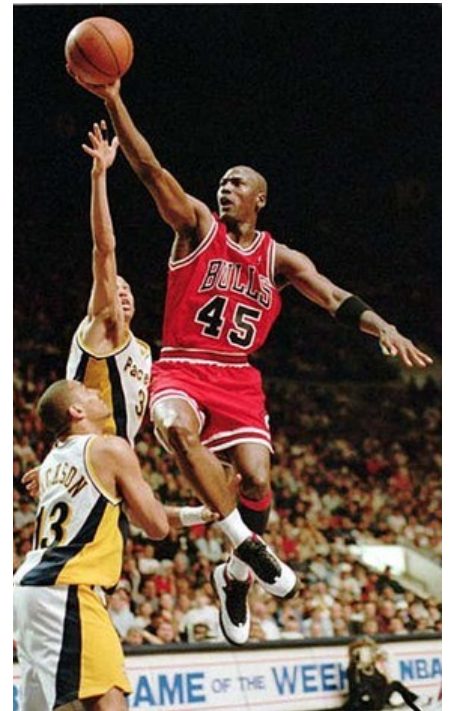
The World is full of gifted also ran’s and it seems that only a few of these go onto become sporting legends. On the flip side we often hear that somebody has worked hard to make the most of their ability and yet it seems that these athletes are thought of as a lesser performer by the general public.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) as revealed by Deci and Ryan’s work (1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002) explores reasons why individuals are motivated to participate and exert effort in a chosen endeavor. In order to reach the highest level athletes are seldom labelled with the “Amotivation” tag but instead exhibit traits of either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation.

Beware of the over achiever, they are often totally committed and exhibit perseverance traits that are far higher than normally found in their competitors. Golfer Padraig Harrington has a steely determination to succeed and although early in his career he was rarely one of the first names to be inked on the team sheet, he has (with the help of his coaches) turned himself into one of the top five players in the World.

Michael Jordan was famously turned down for an early basketball team and yet went onto become the World’s most famous basketball player, ultimately becoming a legend in the process. With these and hundreds of other examples perhaps we have to look at athlete ability / talent a little differently. I believe that both Harrington and Jordan were talented athletes that made the most of their ability.

Talent Identification programmes look more at the innate skills of determination and other personality traits? Should Talent Identification programmes be better described as Ability Identification programmes?



Michael Jordan

MICHAEL JORDAN	
Position:	Shooting guard
Career Points:	32,392
Rebounds:	6,672
Assists:	5,663
NBA Champion:	6 times
NBA MVP:	5 times
NBA All Star:	14 times
NBA First team:	10 times



NEW SCORING SYSTEM?

In November, Lewis Hamilton became the youngest Formula One World Champion with a dramatic finish in Brazil. Lewis Hamilton who had led Felipe Massa by seven points going into the last race, needed to pass Timo Glock on the final lap in order to win the title. In a bid to make next season more exciting (if possible) Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone stated in November that he would like to introduce a new scoring system which would reward the driver with most wins crowned as champion. Ecclestone's comments follow some commentators' opinions that races are no longer providing the incentive for drivers to overtake. Under such rules Lewis Hamilton would have finished second. The proposal still requires approval from F1's governing body, the FIA who meet in December.

COACHING AWARDS

In November Billy Pye (Swimming) was named as coach of the year at the annual Sports Council for Wales awards. Pye led his squad of eight swimmers to 13 medals consisting of 9 gold medals at the recent Paralympics. One of the highlights of his team was Eleanor Simmonds (13) who became the youngest Paralympic or Olympic medalist ever by winning gold medals in both the 100m and 400m freestyle. Prior to coaching Pye was a former miner and had learned to swim in the local river.

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Yelena Isinbayeva and Usain Bolt have been granted the titles of athletes of 2008 by the International Association of Athletics Federations. Both athletes have had exceptional years, with Isinbayeva raising the world record in pole vault three times during 2008; her last record of 5.05m enabled her to retain the Olympic title. Usain "Lightening" Bolt became the first man in history to break World records in all three sprint events. Usain's motto is "anything is possible". Also honoured was Pamela Jelimo who won the 800m in Beijing at the age of 18; Palmela was awarded the "revelation of the year".

WORLD CUP SNOWBOARDING

The Northern hemisphere snowboarding season started in London in November. For the first time the United Kingdom held a World Cup snowboarding event, Peety Piironen won, with Benedikt Nagel coming second. "London Big Air" took place at Battersea power station and consisted of a four day winter sports festival; planning for the 2009 event has now started.



Lewis Hamilton

F1 Champion

SPORT DATES DECEMBER

- 2nd - 7th (USA)
FIS World Cup (Skiing)
- 3rd - 8th (USA)
PGA Qualifying School (Golf)
- 9th - 14th (Korea)
International Challenge (Badminton)
- 11th - 13th (Columbia)
Track World Cup (Cycling)
- 11th - 14th (Croatia)
European Short Course (Swimming)

How to view the Hole

Break 30 is a new, scientific Putting programme that set to become the industry standard in 'How to coach Putting' - CORRECTLY, EFFECTIVELY and CONSISTENTLY.

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