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BTBA COACHING

PRESS RELEASE

FUTURE-PROOFING OUR PROGRAMS
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This press release highlights the rationale behind many of the key decisions made within coaching over recent months and is designed to answer questions that many of you have.

This is a follow up to the white license announcement from May 2017 and provides the context behind the decisions.

Please take the time to read through the document in full and share with your colleagues although it will be available via the BTBA Coaches website.

Qualification update

Firstly, as stated in the white license announcement, recent events in other sports have shown us the necessity to have all our coaches on the enhanced DBS system whether they intend to coach children or not. This gives peace of mind to anyone who wishes to have coaching from a current BTBA registered coach.

It also shows our intent as a sport to being totally committed to the welfare and safe guarding of all our members, especially children. We have a way to go yet but we are on the right path.

Secondly, there are comparisons that are being made between the old qualifications and new qualifications. Unfortunately, they are not being made in the correct way. We may have contributed to that in trying to offer brief outlines of the courses, namely the Fundamentals courses, which have been misinterpreted as making them sound unimportant and low level.

The old Phase courses were written a long time ago, the most recent one, Phase IV, was written approximately 20 years ago and the Phase 1 more than 50 years ago!

If nothing had changed in our sport in that time then there wouldn't be a need for a change in the coaching program.



The only thing that is the same as it was 50 years ago, is that we use a ball on a lane with oil on it and bowl at the pins. Now if I left that sentence there I believe I would hear some say: Exactly, what's the problem? Why do we need to change when we are still using the same things?

Bowling balls have gone through 5 changes in material since then and the lanes we bowl on have gone through at least 2 changes in material and even more changes to the type of coating that is put on a wood lane.

The oils are continually going through changes and bear very little comparison to oils used back in the day.

The construction of the bowling pin has also changed in many ways both on the outside and on the inside.

It's because of all these changes in the equipment we use that we have to adapt the coaching techniques in order to be able to play the sport successfully and enjoy it at the same time.

The most recent change we have had in the BTBA Phase coaching program was 20+ years ago and at the introduction stage it's more than 50 years old.

Does anything more really need to be said?

The knowledge content of the old phase levels is either now in the wider public domain and can be accessed by google & other search engines, or has already become obsolete; therefore, it's the knowledge content that is the comparison to make. I stress this is not measuring the coaching skills of those coaches, it is purely measuring the relevance of the content in today's bowling environment.

(At the end of this notification there is a separate section devoted to coaches with "old" qualifications who feel that their voices are not being heard)

The best example to give is the 2-handed approach style, which wasn't even considered a style back in the day, now you have to be able to teach it and teach it correctly to avoid injury to young and older players alike.



All the new qualifications include elements that are required by all European sport governing bodies (we will still be within the European region for sports governing bodies after Brexit)

The ETBF courses are part of the ENSSSHE's (The European Network of Sport Sciences in Higher Education) system which means that when you are qualified to their levels I, II, & III you will be teaching to the equivalent standard of other sports, and this will enable you to teach the sport in other European countries and around the world, one of only 2 programs recognised as such by World Bowling.

You may not wish to use it in this way, but more importantly it does allow us to be considered for greater future funding from these governing bodies such as Sport England, which I believe is in the best interest of every coach, player and bowling centre proprietor who participates in the sport of tenpin bowling.

The BTBA qualifications and enhancements to these ETBF courses allow you to coach at that level straight away while you are gaining your experience through the required number of hours to become a full status ETBF coach (as demanded by the ETBF).

All our courses now contain CPD (Continuous Professional Development) programs to allow us to maintain our coaching standards while also staying abreast of new techniques. Things change very quickly in the world and bowling is no different, that's why we must do it on a yearly basis.

The BTBA Bowler Development Pathway conforms to the LTAD model (Long Term Athlete Development) which is an expected element of many sports governing bodies' policies, and it shows that we are teaching the right things at the right stages of development especially in younger players.

As a coach you need to be able to assess at what level that a player needs to be introduced to the sport at e.g. Whether a player needs to be introduced to Fundamentals, you may have players that come along that don't need this training as they are already past this stage of development and therefore they would need to be coached by someone with Foundation level certification or higher. This is a very important aspect of your role as a coach. Another important part is knowing when a player needs help beyond your skill level, passing a player on to someone with a greater knowledge is probably one of the best things you could ever do for that player.



Shortly we will be introducing our Coaching Support initiative that will allow all YBCs and individuals to have access to coaches of any level that they may require in their region of the country. More details to follow.

Here is a description and intention of the new qualifications:



BTBA Fundamentals Coach

Possibly the most important Coach in the life of a bowler!

You are gifted with the joy and responsibility of introducing new bowlers to our great sport. It is under your guidance and direction that we (and especially parents) entrust all new players to you.

How you treat and teach players has a great bearing on whether they stay in the sport and we are not just talking about juniors here, our future aims are to run fundamental courses for all age groups.

The Fundamentals course seeks to teach a straight shot, a roll type release with the hand essentially behind the ball to do exactly that, roll the ball off the hand.

Crucially to start the player with a straight swing rather than trying to hook the ball with an incorrect motion often produces a bad swing plane. Although this is basic it does not mean it is “easy”, but it is straight forward. It allows new bowlers to play in the middle of the lane and have more chance of hitting more pins because the ball will be going straight up the lane between the 3rd and 4th arrows

As we all know the last thing we want people to do while learning a physical attribute is to score but there is also an important element for you to introduce at this level, which is to have fun, but the bowler’s initial understanding of fun is to knock pins over.

So, the quickest way to engage them, is a straight shot! This on their terms it is then your job through your skills to go on to the next stage of their development.

Once you have done this, then as they go through the development stages you can introduce them to more formal training exercises; it has to be fun first to get them to come on a regular basis.



But the emphasis is not only on bowling specific skills, you will also be introducing players to Physical Literacy skills and using established exercises to develop this where necessary.

Governments around the world know the importance of a healthy, fit population and are keen to get all age groups engaged in physical activities, again especially children; bowling can do that in a fun way, and we as a sport will be contributing to the health and general wellbeing of a great part of the population.

The more we can do for the community as a whole the more it will allow us to obtain greater funding which will go back into providing more and better coaching facilities.

We may have contributed to the flawed comparisons by trying to give a brief, lighter introduction to the course.

It is not only the best place to start if you do not have any previous knowledge of bowling or coaching experience, but also as an experienced coach it gives you the opportunity to give your pupils the best possible start in obtaining the necessary skills to go on and enjoy sport in general as well as hopefully becoming a bowler for life.

Is there anything more important than that?



BTBA Foundation Coach (ETBF level I)

This level is where a large part of our future core coaching will be done.

It follows on from using the good base release and straight swing that has been introduced at the Fundamental level. Now we add in much more emphasis on timing built around that straight swing introducing a range of training drills which will be used for life.

In general, the ball speed required to keep the highly aggressive reactive coverstocks on the lane (even the so called “entry level” reactives are stronger than anything that was used back in the day) is higher, this is also needed when playing on badly maintained lanes.

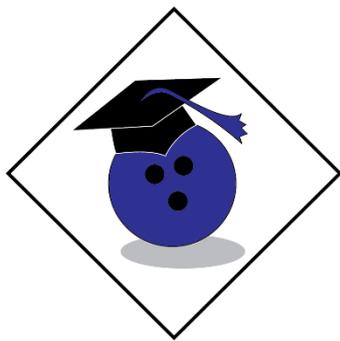
Old timing systems allow little for this increase in speed and if they do, the old-style release just creates a more uncontrolled, bad ball motion right in the area where you need good ball motion.



A greater understanding of equipment is also required by coaches than ever before, and this course and the enhancements include the introduction of this knowledge.

This allows a coach to understand the difference between a player making a good shot with the wrong ball in the wrong part of the lane rather than just simply seeing a bad shot based on the result at the pins, which gives out the wrong signals to a player, whose trust you may lose forever.

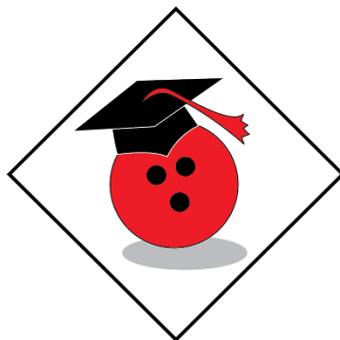
The players you coach at this level will probably have a greater number and range of bowling balls than any in any previous era, so knowledge of this kind is needed more than ever. You also need to know whether they have a good fit or not, and how to check a span and fit of a ball correctly is also introduced in the enhancement program.



BTBA Development Coach (ETBF level II)

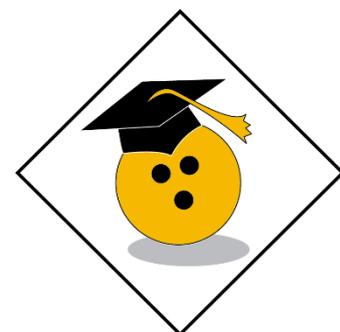
This course is designed with the serious sport bowler in mind.

The emphasis is still on good timing techniques but now the skills of lane play and understanding of ball motion are taught in great detail, allowing coaches to really get to grips with developing their pupils' potential to the maximum possible.



BTBA National Coach (ETBF Level III)

This level is aimed at those coaches who wish to go on and coach at National Team level, who can devote their time entirely to the National Team Coaching program.



BTBA Master Coach

This level will be achieved by very few, purely because it will need a total whole life approach to be able to study the course while at the same time coaching at a National Team age group level. It is a full-time job that doesn't currently have a full-time wage.



The coaching program being put in place by the BTBA intends to change that and if successful will go some way towards providing the funding to allow individuals to follow their dreams; to earn a living from doing something they love in a sport they care about passionately.

It is being said that why should an individual coach have to pay for the updating of their knowledge?

I don't know of any professional service where the training is provided for free.

I believe that if a coach truly cares passionately about their sport then they would want to keep abreast of all new techniques that can enhance their coaching knowledge as well as improve their coaching skills.

More importantly it is about making sure you have the knowledge and skills to help your bowlers develop their game as much as they wish to. Also to minimise the possibility of injury.

It is unfortunate that the coaching program has not been updated for such a long time and therefore coaches have not had to invest in themselves and their knowledge for this period.

The argument also states that if they provide their coaching on a voluntary basis then they should have the training for free.

I'm afraid the world doesn't work that way.

Who then pays for those coaches to get that knowledge in order to teach other coaches?

It just isn't a model that is in place in any sport.

In fact, the smaller a sport is in general the greater the cost of training the coaches becomes.

Coaching courses in any sport are not free!

We have researched many sports and found our course fees to be very favourably compared to the costs in other sports, especially in terms of time; many other sports ask you to pay double the fees and also take the course over a period of weeks or even months.



Volunteer coaching

We do truly appreciate that if you wish to give up your time to help bowlers to become better, that it is a personal choice to do so and is very community spirited, but WHAT you teach has to be of the same level as all other coaches at that same level professional or otherwise to ensure we maintain consistent standards at every level.

At the risk of displeasing those coaches who have already seen the importance of the updating of the knowledge content, we have put in place a discount scheme that allows YBCs and individuals to spread the cost of the courses.

Funding

We have recently launched the BTBA YBC Coach subsidy of £15 per current licensed coach, allocated for all coaches old Phase qualified or those who have already attended a new course. This amount is to be used however you see fit within your YBC against the cost of one or more courses paid for before 31st December 2017.

For example; if you currently have 5 coaches you will be allocated a £75 subsidy. You could then use it against one Foundation Coach course or against 5 FUNdamentals Coach courses, it is entirely your choice.

Please contact me directly or your Regional Coaching Manager.

We can even provide the courses in your local centre, circumstances and dates permitting.

If you wish to hold a course in your centre please contact me at andy.penny@btba.org.uk

Existing Coaches – you matter

To emphasise - we are not seeking to lose you at all!

Your coaching skills are not what is in question, merely the content and drills you use.

You were taught very little, if any, actual coaching skills on the old phase courses.



What has changed is the content of the new courses which will enable you to teach modern techniques that match up with the skills that today's bowlers need to combat current conditions.

Your old courses were built around a release type that worked on prevailing lane conditions from at least 15- 20 years ago and even further back . That type of release was to essentially hit up on the ball while applying a turn of the wrist to impart side roll.

A lot of the bowlers from that era misinterpret this and finish with their hand on top of the ball at release, essentially a spin type release.

There are totally different skills required for today's lane conditions

The Fundamentals course seeks to teach a straight shot, a roll type release with the hand essentially behind the ball to do exactly that, roll the ball off the hand.

This straight shot and straight swing can then be used as the base for a strong forward rolling release that will be less sensitive to the very fast changing and invisible environment, it will also have a greater impact on the pins

It is a well-documented fact that while training and learning any physical technique in any sport it needs to be done in a non-competitive environment (i.e. a training session outside of all competition).

In fact, recent research shows that breaking down a process like the bowling approach and release into smaller sections and doing it in slow motion is the best way to teach and the best way for your pupils to learn. All our new qualifications and teaching methods will employ these crucial learning elements.

We understand that you care deeply and passionately about this sport as we do and we hope that you can share our vision of the future and be a part of growing the sport in exciting and engaging ways that have never been used in this country before.

We welcome those coaches with more experience and in fact urge you to update so you can help pass on those skills.



If as I believe you do, you truly love coaching our great sport then taking a Fundamental course to maintain your qualification as a starting point will allow you to do so.

I honestly did not expect to meet with so much reticence to move coaching forward in this country.

Fast track system.

There is a call for us to “granddaddy” coaches into the new system, it is not possible to do this for all the reasons laid out above but what we can do is offer the opportunity to update more quickly via our fast track system.

If you feel that you should be included in this system please contact me at andy.penny@btba.org.uk to discuss it further.

Thank you all for taking the time to read this.

Yours in sport,

Andy Penny
BTBA Director of Coaching

