

S2 E10: Polo and White Water Coaching

Ricky Snodgrass 0:00

Hello, and welcome to this episode of the coaching podcast from British canoeing.

Pete Cattrall 0:07

Welcome to the puddle sports coaching podcast. My name is Pete Carroll, the talent coach developer for British Canadian. And today I'm really pleased to have along alongside this is an old friend of mine, Ben Simmons, who I've known for a very long time, and actually makes me feel old now. But going along today to talk about his coaching and the coaching he does within his school and outside the school and just his development as a coach. And we'll probably talk around all sorts of other stuff around coaching and teaching and learning as we go. So what I'll do is I'll hand over to Ben just to give a bit of an introduction to himself. So if you could just Ben if you could just let us know kind of who you are a bit of your background occupation, paddle sport background coaching journey. Fill us in on who you are and how you've got to you got to where we have actually, that'll be good.

Ben Simmonds 0:56

Yeah. Thank you very much, Pete. So as you just said, my name is Ben Simmons, I was introduced to paddling around the age of 11 by my dad, and through the scouts really to begin with. And throughout my teenage years, my paddling skills improved. And as they improved, I kind of got an enthusiasm for white-water, and this was really spurred on to begin with, through a trip to the French Alps with Plessy Brennan, when I finished my GCSEs when I was about 16, I really enjoyed discovering new rivers. And since then, I've been white-water paddling in and around probably about 15 different countries all around the world. My first real introduction to disciplines other than white-water was at Durham University, mainly with river racing and Polo. But it's quite funny when I look back now, because at the time I didn't really have any interest in these and I didn't think that participating in them would really be a benefit to me. I compete in the inter University competitions, only really as someone who make up the numbers. After I finished university, I then became a teacher and for the past eight years I've taught physics at Hamlin school and me also run canoe Polo and white-water kayaking for the students. They're brilliant.

Pete Cattrall 2:02

So that's you got quite a quite a varied background, aren't you? We've all that, you know, the paddle sport stuff and obviously being a physics teacher, that's I'm sure they go hand in hand somehow but a lot of that's beyond me.

Ben Simmonds 2:16

And so you do a lot of coaching Polo at Abingdon School. So as what is like a typical coaching block look like the school for you guys. And to be honest, if we look probably look at a week is probably the easiest. So a normal week of paddle sport for us will probably involve a white-water session on one of the 10th wares in Abingdon, and then pretty much a separate hour of Polo for each year group in the school from year seven through to year 30. Looking towards the younger end, the youngest student sessions and more introductory kayaking type things, because a lot of students haven't been in a boat before. And then the Polo specific training becomes more intensive as they get older. Some of the older students are also lucky enough, they have a strength and conditioning session. And there's a nice structure in place as well, which means the SEC form students have gained the relevant qualifications and they can run Polo sessions for the younger year group. So for those sessions, I generally supervise in a coaching mental capacity rather than just coaching them directly. So the school is pretty supportive of paddle sports sound of it? Yes, definitely. We're really lucky in that there's a big emphasis on the extra curriculum. So the students aren't forced to do a particular sport. So they don't have to do rugby at any particular stage or they don't have to do football they can they can genuinely choose whatever sport it is they want to do at any particular age group.

Pete Cattrall 3:40

Wow. That's really yes. That's amazing, isn't it to get to get that and it's not just all about academic outcomes as good sport, and good options for sport in there as well. Well, yeah, definitely. I think I think the students really appreciate it. And one of one of the things, which I think is really nice is I think the point of school sports should be to find people a sport for life. I think all too often in school sport, people are forced to do things that they don't want to do, and they just get a negative view of sport. Whereas if you can become really enthusiastic

about something like kayaking, while you're at school, you'll probably go on and carry on doing that into your 40s and 50s. Maybe.

Ben Simmonds 4:16

Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more that you know, I do believe a lot of people say oh, I'm not very sporty. I just think they haven't found the right sport for them. Like there is, you know, sports a massive area, isn't it? And there's I think there's something for everybody. Whether it's competitive, non-competitive or sports, team sports, individual sports, I think there's something for everyone. I think you're absolutely right. Give people give people the big chance and opportunity to do something and they'll probably find something that that works for them. And I guess also some people don't like the word sport, and they'll call it something else. We call it a pastime or they're the thing they do their hobby or something. But yeah, it's there is always something for everybody I think.

Pete Cattrall 4:56

And, and so Polo, so you came from you know, I know pretty well, your paddling background, you came from an individual white-water background. And now you coach Polo and cope. Polo is obviously a team sport. So how you're coaching is developed? To be able to work with a team sport? How does how does that work? Because, you know, that's something I haven't got experienced with I haven't really worked in team sport at all. So how have you developed that from individual players but still keeping the team aspect?

Ben Simmonds 5:28

Well, it's quite a tricky question. To be honest, I think that good coaching is probably good coaching regardless. And I think if you probably took a great white-water coach, and you ask them to deliver a session, some polo players, you would be able to see some improvement in the polo players paddling and it just as you say, the difference is having that team environment, we both know that as a coach, when you structure some practice, you can change the individual the task, or the environment. And I think this applies regardless of discipline. And so I think it's really good with the British canoeing, coaching awards at the moment, you've got the core coat with lots of different disciplines,

then you can specialize later on. I think in the previous episode of this podcast, I think it was Dan Goddard, who was talking about feedback and said that the best sessions he coaches are for students are fewer, because it allows individualization and time for practice. I completely agree with this on white-water. But as you say, in Polo, the problem is, I'm probably standing on the bank, and I probably got two teams of five players, possibly with some substitutes at the same time. And so it becomes trickier. And I think, just like in the classroom, when I'm teaching on the COVID page, within those 12 players will be students with lots of different abilities, who probably be working together on the same task. And it's all about how you set up that task in order to get the right individualization. So I try and scaffold the task from the beginning to try and ensure that those individual students getting stressed at the task that they're trying to work on. Without feeling that it becomes boring for them. Like so to give you an example, like I might choose a position that particular students are playing dependent on their ability. Or I might think of other constraints which target the development of specific individuals within our club actually is quite interesting, the most well ingrained constraint, which has been going since the very start, is if you're not playing in one of our pink boats, which is the team colour boats, you can't be pushed in by the other players. And so provides a nice supportive environment for those who are newer to the sport to be able to experience the sport with those who've been playing a while, without feeling that there might be too much pressure for them. I'm kind of thinking about other bits and pieces. With that, I think obviously, coming back to the team ethos, which you were mentioning, is a really important aspect of any team sport, and something which I think I do really notice. When I'm coaching Polo compared to white-water. When I think of the most successful teams that I've coached, they're definitely the ones that are all moving towards the same goal and encourage each other to improve in a supportive way. And on those teams, it doesn't really matter who's the fastest or strongest, or probably the best at shooting, as long as everyone's committed to improvement. I think I have seen examples where as soon as players get into the habit of criticizing each other things fall apart pretty quickly. And I think a key thing for me as a coach is recognizing when this happens and acting on it. To give you an example, I can think of a few times where I told the best players, the next time a negative comment comes out of their mouth, they won't be there for the next session. And as long as you stamp on it pretty quick, then it can mean everything can kind of get back to the way you want it to be. And as I said earlier, it's nice for me when teams win games, but I get the most satisfaction when people actually just

get a genuine interest in kayaking and want to carry on. And I love it when five years down the line. You see them and they're still doing the same thing.

Pete Cattrall 8:44

It does. I mean, there's loads going on. I'm hearing all sorts of things. So and one question I did want to ask it was about so obviously you coach Polo. And you coach white-water, but you also, you know, pretty high level physics teacher. Do you see? Do you see that the way you teach and coach or teach in a classroom is different to the way you would coach maybe in a polo environment or in a white-water environment? Or do you just say all his teaching all this coaching? Watch it watch? What's your viewpoint on that? Where do you see teaching and coaching being the same or different? And how does that affect you? Do you think I've kind of waffled that question a little bit? So it's quite a tricky question to get out.

Ben Simmonds 9:28

But, yeah, it's definitely a sort of tricky question. It's actually something that I've reflected on quite a lot over the years. I think if I probably looked back probably six or seven years ago, I would have said that, in my opinion, coaching and teaching were the same thing. But over the last seven or eight years, my mind-sets changed quite a lot. I think when you think of the role of being a coach, whether you're a teacher or you've got any other sort of job, there's quite you people bring their own personal baggage to it. And For me in the classroom, probably everybody I teach if you if you spoke to them, they probably agree that I favour quite a direct style of explicit instruction. I do get good outcomes, and the kids get good a level results. I think part of this is that if you look at a level physics and you look at the sort of questions that the students have got to do, there's basically a recipe that needs to be followed. And if they don't take those points in the mark scheme, and they don't tackle the question, using the right skills in the right way, they won't necessarily get the marks. But if you look at situations on the water, let's think about Polo, for example, there's, there's lots of different successful ways of attacking and defending or white-water there's lots of different decisions, which could be made when looking at particular rapidly, which would all end up within the correct outcome. So I think it took me quite a long time to separate the fact that when I'm coaching, there's not when I'm talking about when I'm coaching paddle sport, here, there's not necessarily a correct outcome. And there are lots of different ways that a certain problem can

be solved. And therefore kind of a different approach is often more positive. In that regard, I don't mind reflecting on the fact that when I took my original performance coach assessment, I failed at the time, I just really couldn't see why. But when I look back now, I realize it was because I was basically doing my performance coach assessment in the same way that I teach my a level physics lesson, and saying, right, we're going to do this next. And then I know that in order to get better, in my opinion, you need to do this, which maybe may have been true for that particular person who I was coaching. But there may have been, I don't know, five other ways that they could have got through the same thing and ended up with an equally successful outcome. Kind of, on the flip side of that, I would say that I do now spend a lot of time kind of with a more participant's cantered approach to my coaching of paddle sport. I would also say there are times when I'm standing on the side, I'm coaching Polo, and I've got 15, let's say 11 year olds, and they're all trying to do something and in that, in that, in that sort of situation, I probably do revert to the sort of direct instruction, teacher style, but certainly once they get better, and they've got an individual goal, and they know where they want to go is a very much an individualized program. And I work with the students to try and kind of develop where they're going in terms of their mind-set.

Pete Catrall 12:19

Hmm, yeah, and I suppose you're used to, I don't know what class sizes you guys have having to but you're probably quite used to dealing with quite a few people at a time. So do you feel you can individually individualize on the water? Do you feel you can individualize in the classroom to the same extent, or is that you a bit more constraint with that?

Ben Simmonds 12:38

No, I'd say just to answer your first question we have, most classes are 24 students. So it is more difficult to individualize when you've got 24 students in the classroom compared to four out doing some white-water coaching. But it really depends on the way you go about your individualization. So in the classroom, when I'm teaching, I'll do a lot of differentiation by questioning. So I'll target specific students with specific questions. Because I know that that particular student needs that particular area of their knowledge to be focused on. Obviously, the way that you set up tasks as well as important. So whether I'm

setting up a task on the water for a group playing Polo, or I'm setting up a class, a class or a task in the classroom, I'm thinking about how other people who are at the lower end of disability spectrum, how are they going to be able to access the task? And what scaffolding do I need to put in place so that they can basically have some success in the task. But equally, those students in the classroom who are going to find that first bit easy is that that question at the end that they can do, where it's really kind of igniting their enthusiasm for the subject and basically giving them something extra that that really interest them in the subject matter we're doing at that particular point. And so in that respect, I do think there is quite an overlap in terms of sort of the coaching that I do on the water and the teaching that I do in the classroom. Because you have got to be able to cater for that whole ability range, and you have got to be able to target to the needs of those specific individuals, for them, and I guess you'll probably agree with me on this, that the only way you can do that is if you really understand the subject, so that you can put it across wherever we're talking, you know, a school classroom subject or paddle sport, that you've got a really good understanding of that as a teacher or coach. But you've also got to really understand the people in front of you as well, so that you can know who's going to who's going to be as What did you say that like, you know, really interested in something who's going to be the ones that you need to nurture along a little bit who you're going to need to make the task harder for who you're going to need to make the task easier for. That must be quite a challenge with big groups.

Pete Cattrall 14:54

Yeah, absolutely.

Ben Simmonds 14:56

But I think the lucky thing from my point of view, particularly in Teaching and the sorts of students I coach is that my teaching or coaching cycle is five to seven years long, because they either come in in year seven or year nine to the school. And I've got them for that period of time. So by the time I've kind of known them for a couple of years, for the next kind of four or five years after that, you've got an idea of what their strengths and the weaknesses are that person, hopefully you work with them, to try and develop them and try and get them through any potential areas for improvement. I think the other thing that you said in terms of subject knowledge, I absolutely agree with. When I think about my teaching, if I

haven't got great subject knowledge on a topic, particularly when I'm teaching academic students, they're not going to get the same level of output from it if I can't explain it to the highest possible level. And I say, that is something that I've actually found quite challenging about coaching the two different disciplines because as we said earlier, so like my traditional discipline, is white-water. But before I started coaching Polo, I haven't really done much of it apart from playing at university. And as I said, in those five to seven years, the students can become pretty good. And for me, it's just making sure that my subject knowledge is up there. And I find things really useful. I've got lots of friends who've played GB Polo, and I've kind of bring them up or sending Facebook messages, asking them for advice on particular things, or when would you use this particular tactic, and I said, something which I always laugh at, is, in the early days, when I was coaching Poland, some of the people listen to this will probably remember this, I think, no particular role, I made it up in one of our coaching sessions. And then we went to a tournament, and the boy got blown up by the referee for this thing that he done. And he started, like questioning the referee. And he said, No, the rules this and of course, it wasn't the rule, it was that I made up the rule wrongly before. And so I think it's really important to say, if you don't know some that you've got to hold your hands up, and you've got to say, No, I don't know, I'll get back to you. Because otherwise it will come out down the line to have a negative consequence or to bite you later on. I can just imagine you just like sneaking out the back of the room at that point go with somebody else. He's making it up. It wasn't me. That's brilliant. Yeah, subject knowledge is really important, isn't it? So, so important. And that's really interesting work. I've really thought about that the way you work that you work with people over you know, six to seven years, which is way more aligned to the group, I normally work with a group of coaches that we work with who work with people over, you know, multiple years, so that that long term, Coach athlete relationship, you've got that the same in the classroom, but you've also got that within your Polo as well. So that's really good. That's really good. And the collaboration side of things, well, phoning up other coaches is really interesting, you'll go in, tell people that you do or don't know the answer, and you're going to search it out somewhere else. Is that is that something that works at the school level as well? Yeah, so I would say at the school level, within the sort of the disciplines specific knowledge of Polo, no, because I'm the polar expert, really, within the school. But certainly, in terms of the teaching and the coaching, the sports coaches collaborate quite a lot on our coaching knowledge. And we have teaching and learning groups where we talk about kind of this kind of classroom specific, but what works in the classroom. And I tried out this particular thing, and this didn't work. And this

group of pupils was struggling with this particular aspect that I was working with. And one thing that I've become a real fan of recently, I do it in my coaching as well as my teaching. And it's something I recommend for anybody to have a go at, is to take a video of yourself, coaching. And quite often when you watch through the perspective of the video, how you think you come across and how you do come across can be quite different. And as I said before I can come across quite directly and quite often I've watched myself back and go, Oh, I read a bit more direct in that situation than I hope to be and sort of by watching yourself back through another lens, it's been really helpful in developing my kind of personal coaching skills. So it's been really beneficial for me.

Pete Cattrall 19:14

Yeah, yeah, I'd totally echo that those when I've done that I've done that in classroom sessions and in out on the water and out on a bike and all sorts and it is really enlightening, isn't it, watching yourself back and picking up on habits you've got things you commonly say?

Ben Simmonds 19:30

And yeah, it is, I think it's a really good you know, self-reflection tool is that and just recording yourself and even if it's just on your phone on your, you know, the voice recorder, just recording a bit of feedback that you're given or instruction that you're giving can be really useful, really, really useful. So just moving on from that. And I was on the receiving end of some coaching from you once well not coaching and teaching and it sort of gave me a bit of insight into your creativity as a as a teacher at A time when we were on a bridge in British Columbia, and you would teach me some physics. Don't ask me what it was because then it would be really bad advert for your coaches.

Pete Cattrall 20:08

But how do you keep that key? You're quite known for your creativity, I think within your workplace. And I've seen some of it recently on the internet, which we won't go into. But where does that creativity come from? Ben, do you? Does this does the school encourage it in your teaching? And or is it just something you naturally? Do you want to keep things entertaining and engaging? And where does that come from?

Ben Simmonds 20:35

Oh, that's quite a tricky question from think about. I think Firstly, I am very lucky that in the school I teaching teachers have the basic the trust is to deliver the product. And as long as you deliver the product, and people are happy with it, and you get good results. Whatever method you want to use, as long as it's kind of, obviously, within the confines of normal teaching that is fine. But within my teaching, and my coaching, I just, I just love being creative. And I think there's two reasons for that. One is, for me, as a coach or a teacher, it keeps it interesting for me. So if I turn up to coach A polo session, and I do the same thing every single time, or I've got a set, set of patterns that I go through, that I find, it tends to get quite stale, but also I tend to, you sort of anticipate the same problems occurring. So I think, I run this session, and then you start seeing the students are piling in a certain way. And you make a judgement of all that, or you always expect that based on last time, when I did this, this thing happened and it went wrong. And sometimes you can put those preconceived judgments on to the people that you're teaching, or coaching. So one thing for me is like, I don't think I would develop as a teacher or coach, without keep thinking of new creative ways to do it. And the other thing, of course, is I do, I always look back. And if I've, and I think reflective practice is really important. And I always think that when I look back the following year, let's say in back in the teaching environment, I'm teaching the same lesson again, I look back and often think Oh, actually, that wasn't a particularly good way to do it. And it's really annoying in some ways, because I ended up in kind of rewriting and reshuffling all the resources, and changing it all around. But if I don't do that, it doesn't break it up. And it doesn't make it interesting. And also, from the students point of view, I do think, often they've sat in the classroom all day, they've gone to various different teachers, if you can't kind of make it slightly different, and you can't bring in exciting different things. They're just going to be the same for them. I sometimes think certainly some students, there's two students who take I'm thinking of who I was their foreign tutor for four years, I taught them GCSE and a level physics and I coached them kayaking two or three times a week. For them, if there wasn't some sort of variation in the styles I used. I think they'd probably just got completely bored with the whole thing. Yeah, yeah. But, but it's still something that you've got to have built within you, isn't it? And, you know, you say about it keeps you interested as much as anyone else. Remember, it was either you or Bob Tim's that, that this little thing that they used to say that if you're bored, then you're probably boring, is what they say. So, and that was brilliant. It really

stuck with me that it's like, oh, yeah, like, I shouldn't be doing the same thing over and over in the same way. Because I'll become bored of it. And if I'm bored of it, that will that will really show in my coaching that and it will become boring.

Pete Cattrall 23:24

And that was kind of along those lines really isn't, isn't it that the keeping it fresh for yourself and challenging for yourself will probably keep it fresh, and probably keep it challenging and engaging for the people that we work with? It? It's actually got time to do that, isn't it? Because that all that creativity takes time and takes, you know, mental effort as well? Is that something that just Do you find that an effort? Or is it just something that just because you enjoy doing it, it's just part of what you do part of your prep?

Ben Simmonds 23:56

I find that if I have got a short deadline for something, I don't like it, and I find this effort and it's time, but I like nothing more than kind of sitting down for a week in the holidays with no deadline and thinking Oh, how I know that I'm going to teach and I'm thinking something I'm going to do. I'm going to do some white walls, safety rescue type stuff. There was some students next half term, kind of just sitting down and thinking, well, how can I? How can I deliver this in a fun way to the students? Based on how I've done it before, I've got to writing those resources and making those different activities and thinking Oh, that'd be fun for them. And I know that they sail so how can I bring in that rope what they do on sailing to what we're going to do kayaking, kind of thinking about those things with no particular deadline and quite a long way in advance just makes it interesting for me. There's some really interesting stuff that I feel like I want to do as my science teacher, and that was to be great. I'm not sure I'd like you as my science people. No, probably not. I keep going. Can you say that again? Please. So um so one of the things I wanted to talk about is the differences with coaching, team sports to take coach in individual. So there's going to be a lot of people listening that work with two or three people.

Pete Cattrall 25:19

But is there a mind what the question I'm after actually is? Do you think the same people that are drawn to maybe white-water could be persuaded to do

Polo? Or are they just different mind-sets? Because they are very different. I'm not naturally drawn to team sports. So is there a difference when you're coaching that in the way you're coach it because their team people compared to the difference you'd have with maybe white-water paddlers that are more in individual sport type people?

Ben Simmonds 25:52

Oh, that's quite interesting. With I think, in terms of the mind-set is, sometimes people, as you say, will say I'm not drawn to a team sport. But sometimes, I do think that it's the environment in which they were subjected to team sports, which means that they say that they don't like team sport. So to give you a couple of examples, I've seen it quite a few times where you take a white-water partner, and you put them onto a polo pitch. And as a white-water paddler, you'd like to think that you're pretty confident in your rolling. And depending on the situation, you'd be able to roll in all situations, but you put someone in a polo pitch, and you'd expect a polo player to be able to roll with one hand on the ball and no paddles. And all of a sudden, that person can feel out of their depth quite quickly. And so I think, from my point of view, when you see the crossover of the disciplines, I'm talking about what was wearing Polo here, specifically, it's all about ensuring that there's an optimum learning environment created for the person when they when they see that crossover, and I've seen it the other way as well, quite often use you take a polo player who's got an absolutely great, great role. They're really good, really handy in their boat skills. They go off to university, say, because they're pretty handy in their boat skills, and they're great at rolling, you all of a sudden see somebody saying, well, you can follow me down this piece of class for and then they end up having a nightmare and completely falling to pieces. And I think because of that, it's all about thinking, well, that person does have that paddle sport background, but they don't necessarily have the decision making skills in this particular situation. So as the coach, how are you going to bring those things together? I've had a couple of boys joins the school who we've done quite a lot of white-water before they join the school. And they've come to the podium. And again, it's they come to the Polo with mind-set, partly, rightly, partly, wrongly, maybe if I know what I'm doing, because I've done a lot of this paddling stuff before. But then sort of how they mesh into the team and kind of working on those maybe the softer skills and keeping an eye on the other people in the team whereabouts the ball is rather than just that more individual mind-set, possibly if I'm going to pull this rapid and try and get to the bottom. I realize that's quite a woefully answer. But I

hope that sort of gives my thoughts as I realized when I was asking the question, I was going in quite a woefully question as well. So that's a good one. Oh, yeah. I mean, that is really, it is really interesting, isn't it? How, how just personality types and bringing people into it. And you know, I've been a white-water coach, for an enormous amount of time, it feels that I spend a lot of my time trying to convince people that that is also a team sport for much of the time, in terms of looking after each other communication, common goals, you know, on expeditions I've been on. The reason those have been successful is because we've all had the same goal, which is the same as you know, we've got a ball in the back of the net, it doesn't matter what it is, if, like you said earlier is that that shared goal, that shared direction and how we as coaches, in this case, our we foster that and make sure people who turn up to maybe white-water realize that actually what they're really doing is an individual thing, but within it within a team environment. But it's just a good team environment. I think. I think the thing, which for me, which is quite interesting, as well, is seeing the development that people can get from that crossover. It's pretty common, I'm sure you'd agree that in the UK, you see the same white-water paddlers going to the same spots and doing the same moves. And within Polo, you often see the same polo players going to the same club playing the same people week in and week out. And if you actually compare the skills in terms of the boat skills that both those people are putting in in the on the piece of white water and the Polo base, they're probably doing mostly for partly some turning so matching, possibly a bit a rolling here and there. But by doing the same thing week in and week out, they're not really developing and so as we thought about before kind of you can change your individual you constrain to your environment to make something better. If you change the environment and you put them into the Polo picture, if you go into the white-water probably what's going to happen is your skills in that individual discipline will get better. And you'll find that by trying out a new situation, which is easy to do, let's say as a white-water party you might not get on much white-water, at certain points is quite difficult to do in the dark, but you could go to your local Polo Club, play in a swimming pool in the evening, and still develop those paddling skills and make your make your skills better in your preferred discipline. So I guess my overall message there really is to try a new discipline and see if it can have an impact on your preferred type of paddling because time on the water is time on the water.

Pete Cattrall 30:42

Yeah, yeah, I totally agree with that. I think Yeah, public good paddling is good paddling and it will breed it and I think if you look if you break it down, like you just did what are we doing? What are we paddled forward, we add we were aware of our surroundings, we're aware of where you know, rock stoppers, waves, trees, any river feature is and how we how we use that which is just like I need to know where my players are, I need to know where the goal is, I need to see where opportunities are to make the best of the situation, which is really similar. We have short bursts of acceleration. We have turned we have there's so much that that's mirrored so you've kind of answered my next question is I was going to say do you think white-water paddlers should all ever cut Polo? I think you're going to say yes, and it's not a recruitment drive, but it's definitely something to consider.

Ben Simmonds 31:32

I don't think this thing is polo either is if you live by the sea, and some people like sea kayaking, nearby go sea kayaking, if you live near to a lake and or some sprint guy can go sprint. I just think and it's funny when you when we reflect back and start this conversation, I reflect back to my own personal view, probably 15 years ago now, as a white-water paddler, I would never have said in a million years, I would get into a polo boat regularly. And now that's what I do most of the time. And, and is the way that I keep my skills in check. I live in Oxfordshire, there's not much white-water nearby. And it's been really beneficial to me. And I've seen so much benefit to others. I've got, for example, the current group of upper six students I've got at the moment for to mix it up a bit. And because there's not one, there's no Polo games going on. In the last year, we've been doing a lot more white-water and being going to the Nene and things. And the first session that we went to the knee, or six, those students managed to get every ad at the Nene surf every wave, just because of their previous experience they had with their confidence in their boat skills. Yes, it was the case that they can't read a river. And it's sort of, I need to I need to build up those skills with them. But in terms of saying, Oh, can you get that at there? Or can you move there, then they can absolutely do it every single time because their experience just for their paddling skills. That's, and that's great. Or maybe you tell me about that. And that was what was really nice about that was how excited you were about that transfer of knowledge and transfer of skill, which was, which was really good. I really enjoyed that.

Pete Cattrall 33:03

So and then we're coming to the end of our time. So I'm getting lots of messages here about creativity about cross discipline about reflective practice, which is all really good, which is all the sort of stuff I hear a lot from great coaches. So thanks. Thanks ever so much for your time on this. It'll be it's been really interesting. And, you know, I've known you for a long time. It's conversation we haven't really had before, which is, which a shame is really, because there's plenty to go out there. And I think we could probably do another one, another podcast at some point and take it in a different direction. But no, thanks so much for your time. I hope that you'll be back in a classroom teaching to actually get some face to face stuff rather than like we are now but I'm sure that the kids are looking forward to getting back to some face to face coaching with you and some teaching and learning with you. So yeah, thanks for your time, Ben and yeah, been a great chat. I enjoyed that one.