

Lee Pooley 00:00:14

Hi everyone, and welcome to the British Canoeing Awarding Body Coaching Podcast. My name's Lee Pooley. I'm the director of Coaching and Qualifications and I'm joined again by Scott, Scott Hynds, who is the racing tech chair and very busy in that particular role. And I seem to keep you busy. Scott, and I would apologise, but actually the the work that's coming out of that group is actually first class.

But also you are you've started your new role as the Sprint coach developer within the Talent programme, which is absolutely fantastic. And it sounds like you're starting to get underway with that particular particular role. And in the next two weeks you'll be you'll be fully, fully into that particular role. So how are you how are you finding your first sort of couple of weeks within British canoeing?

Scott Hynds 00:01:03

So far it's been good, juggling plates. So as you say, I'm still in post currently, so I'm I'm transitioning. Yes, but it's good so far. Thank you.

Lee Pooley 00:01:15

Okay. Well, it's great to have you on board Scott and I do know and I'm very confident that you'll have a fantastic impact on the talent club coach programme. So, yeah, great to have you on board. What we what we're here today to talk about Scots is this particular podcast. We're going to be discussing coaching from the bank and specifically a pushbike.

And being an avid cyclist, this interests me, interests me loads. So why, Scott, are we we discussing this this evening and why is it important to discuss this particular topic?

Scott Hynds 00:01:49

It's quite interesting that, you know, you asked a simple question why. A lot of coaches will cycle along the bank. And what I find really amusing is that they cycled to the clubs on their £6,000 carbon road bike in all the gear and then get a rubbish old bike that's been pulled out of the river and cycle that along, struggling to keep up with their legs around their ears and everything.

So we're just going to hopefully go through the common practices that we all know but don't put in place, and then some of the finer things that you need to think about if you're new to cycling along: the boats, you know, watching the training, coaching and the do's and don'ts and what to watch out for.

Lee Pooley 00:02:37

So Scott, is this quite common practice for racing coaches to to operate from a pushbike?

Scott Hynds 00:02:43

I think it is for a lot of areas. Yeah. There are some areas where the coaches will be out on the water with slower groups. As the groups get faster, they either have to take themselves or you'll have a coach on a bike or and some obviously you're in a speedboat, but mostly bikes are cheaper.

Lee Pooley 00:03:03

Yeah, absolutely. And anyway, licenses and launches and probably time impacts as well isn't it. So what I you know, obviously, as most listeners know, listen to the podcast I've been involved with over the last couple of years is my passion is really within coaching. So I'm, I'm really keen to properly focus on that initially and probably see where the other things sit in, but in terms of the coaching practices, what what sort of things do we, the coaches need to be aware of or what are the things that they need to consider when setting up their bike appropriately for a good coaching session.

Scott Hynds 00:03:48

So if you're on a shared bike, yeah, you've got to take the time to actually make sure that it's ready to roll because usually you pull it out with 2 minutes to go and find that it's got a puncture and someone's put it away for you. All the saddle and everything's been changed. So I mean that's, that sounds silly, but it always happens and then it's in good working order.

It can be really hard to keep up with a group when you've only got one gear and it's usually the lowest gear. So just simple maintenance, but also when you're looking at the sessions, what is it you're actually doing? So if you're you've got multiple groups and you're setting them off at stages, it's it can be very hard to get back to the front group to say, you know, one minute, two minute, 3 minutes after you set the fastest group off, chasing them down.

So it's actually planning your sessions within your limitations, which I think when you people who've come from the river onto the bike think, well, it won't be a problem catching up and it can be quite, quite hard work harder than people imagine, especially if it's soft ground as well. That's another one. You know, you're cycling along a towpath and it's a nice flat tarmac towpath. Well, it's all wonderful, but when it's muddy, wet, slippery, it can be quite hard to actually catch up.

Lee Pooley 00:05:14

Yeah. And, you know, you know, within the racing world, you work with metrics and and data and and data collection. How does that work on your bike?

Scott Hynds 00:05:23

Well. One of the things I think you'll see some people do and I don't count myself in this is filming from their camera as they cycle along, which is fine, but obviously you're riding one handed and you're looking at the people that you're filming and not where you're going. So there are better ways to do that. I feel, and also with the watches as well.

So again, one handed cycling because you've got your watch on your arm and you're watching it and then you're watching the countdown as you're calling along. And it's a lot easier just to put the watch on the bike in front of you. And then you can be, you know, watching, looking forward and seeing where you're going. And the watch gives you a reason to look forward rather than just keeping looking at your paddlers beside you. So, yeah, I think simple tricks that someone doesn't tell you until you found out.

Lee Pooley 00:06:19

And I think that's one of the beauties of the podcast, isn't it? So, you know, some people might feel that it's stating the obvious, but actually we've all gone through some apprenticeship of we, Yeah, we've all learned, we've all learned through our, our mistakes or just adjustments and it is nice to actually give people a bit of a head start or a little bit of a foot up.

Scott Hynds 00:06:42

Those little light bulb moments, you think, Oh, that's how they do it.

Lee Pooley 00:06:46

I think it would be useful. Scott, if you could just give us a bit of an indication how you set it up, set yourself up for a successful coaching session from the bike, you know, from, you know, select in the selecting the bike. Is it yours or is it shared one all the way through to when you you get on and start cycling.

Scott Hynds 00:07:31

I tend to have a shared bike just because whenever I leave mine there it disappears. So I have a shared bike and I just make sure that it fits that all the tires are hard so sort all that out before. And I get my group on and I give them a warm up to do and tell them where I'll meet them.

And then the session will start from there. One of the nice things I think from a bike that you don't get on the water is you get an overview of the group and who's doing what within the group, within the effort. So you get a more in detail picture.

So if you're actually on the water coaching with them, you know you have to be behind to see what everybody's doing and then you have to be quite a lot quicker than the group to be able to do that. So on the bike you can actually watch who's doing what, who's moving around and who's paddling well, who's not.

The one difficulty is from the bike, you're obviously going to be a minimum of three or four feet taller than them. So you're looking down and sometimes, you know, you can be ten feet higher cycling along. So your view is not the same as when you're paddling beside them. So you're not getting to see the same angles of hands and suchlike that you would do if you were down low, you don't get to see the boat movement left and right if it's wrong in the same way.

So. So it has its advantages. But there are some caveats that, you know, you have to be aware every so often you're going to have to get down to eye level with them and see what they're doing as well. It also does mean you can go closer to them if you've got that. If they're coming up an edge, you can get close, then you can see and you know, you can video and such like as they come past and then catch up and then go ahead video come and then you can get feedback and suchlike.

So and then I try and make my rests in the places where I have to do the work. But if I have to cross over something or go around something, that's where the rest is. So that for the group, so that I can then get ahead and do my bits without interfering in the efforts.

Lee Pooley 00:09:30

And do you, do you have a sort of cycle ahead and to get to like a bridge so you can get a different angle or do you not do that type of stuff on the bike?

Scott Hynds 00:09:38

Yeah, I do on certain efforts. You know, they are set points where you can get to and then you can watch them come past and then watch them retreat as well. So you get a good viewpoint both high and low. So if you've got the opportunity, it's quite nice because when you're up high you can see different movements than when you're at eye level.

So yeah, I tried to do that and then I've got bridges as well. So like you say, go up to the bridge. You can see them coming underneath you, going away and getting various different viewpoints. A bit like when you see the drones at the Worlds. Yes, that's right. You know, you get all those different views.

Lee Pooley 00:10:19

And, you know, not to put you too much on the spot because we are talking about coaching for the bike. But how would you separate from what you can observe lower to what you can observe from a higher vantage point? What would you say is it you know, is it subtle differences? Is it big differences?

Scott Hynds 00:10:34

Well, sometimes people will be shorter on one side than the other. And I mean, you know, the entry will be closer to them. So they're limping in effect. You can't always see that so well, if they're showing you that good side. And then when they're showing you the bad side, you haven't got a reference as such to see it.

So, you know, it might only be a few centimeters or something, but you can see that they're limping, whereas when they're underneath you going underneath a bridge or something, you know, you've got that and they look like they're doing sort of the Charleston or whatever is this other thing. So you can actually see things like that. You can also see someone taking out too wide or too narrow, which you can't see from above.

So which you can see from above, not from the side, from the bank. So you get different viewpoints of of technique, but also, you know, wash hanging with someone sitting in too close to four, which you can see from above. But when you're sitting from the side, you can see the nose, the heights. So, you know, you can tell if someone's just popping over the back and falling off, which you can't always see from above.

So yeah, different different modes for different things.

Lee Pooley 00:11:53

Yeah. No, it's really interesting. I think, you know, that that might help, you know, some of the listeners and the coaches, you know, really consider of what they gain in from that particular, from that particular point, you know, from an elevation point to for one the side and I really like you when you say sometimes you may not be you might only be observing the side that they are they are good so good on and not getting the getting a view from the other particular aspect and you know today I mean people won't you know listeners won't be won't be saw registering this but today when we're doing this recording is the 21st of June is the longest day and one of the one of the aspects that we got throughout the summer is that we've got a lot of daylight, but we know that your racing training goes right throughout the year. How do you work how you work with the you know, in the in the winter months with less daylight hours? Because I'd imagine by the time you turn up to the club in the evening, it's dark.

Scott Hynds 00:12:52

I'm particularly lucky that it never gets dark, dark, dark where we are. So we have lots of orange light pollution. However, twilight is the hardest part. So when you cycling down the towpath with all the trees hanging over it, usually it's wet, so it's dark, it's slippery and the trees are lower because all the waterweight.

But we try. It's hard to do stopwatch stuff then, you know, specific distances at times and stuff like today. So it tends to be, you know, set times what beeping or races to places etc. Then in the dark, Yeah. You don't want to be cycling in the dark too much trying to watch a group because you'll have the towpath to yourself in the dark normally.

And if you haven't, it will be another cyclist or a rowing coach or a runner with lights on and suchlike like. But things jump out at you in the dark. And I don't mean people. I mean trees and bushes and banks because you know you're watching your group and you haven't got such a field of vision and also the road traffic that blinds you as they drive past on full beam, it's always a treat.

Lee Pooley 00:14:14

So so good to have a set of lights on. And that sounds like they'll be less less traffic on those paths compared to the summer months. So what are you seeing at the moment in the summer months in terms of things to things to be aware of?

Scott Hynds 00:14:29

So ironically, it's often more dangerous in the summer, it's more crowded. We have a lot more people walking along the towpath, enjoying the outdoors, enjoying the river, the beautiful landscapes and stuff. And they do question why you have to shout, Stop, go, that's you're cycling past them. But lots of dog walkers, lots of people walking along with kids on push bikes and stuff like that.

They're completely unaware of yourselves. It may be the only time that they visit the river, so they have no concept of the speed of your group, the speed that you have to go to catch up with them. And they are oblivious hugely, especially earpods. You can't tell if someone's got earpods and say you're ringing your bell, you're honking your horn and or whatever, and they jump out as you come past. So summer is actually a lot more busy, I think, And a lot more dangerous.

Pubs as well. I don't know if everybody has, but you know, this time of year, side of the river be filled with pubs and people swimming and so it's like having a good time. But they don't always appreciate you zooming through on a bike.

Lee Pooley 00:15:45

And yeah, so you know some, some way of trying to tell people that you're around like the use of a bell and a bell on your bike is probably a sensible option.

Scott Hynds 00:17:08:04 - 00:17:34:09

Yes. I mean, Bell's always seem a little bit old fashioned, but they are reasonably non-intrusive. It's people tend to hear a bell rather than when you're shouting they don't. So for some reason they don't hear you. Unless of course, you say stop, go. And they think, turn around and wonder why. But yeah, if you're calling to them or you asking them to stay left or stay right, just completely blank you in my experience. But you do have to be nice to them because, you know, you know, in 30 minutes or so, you're going to come back past the same people.

Lee Pooley 00:16:31

I was just going to say that, you know, it's you are going to probably come back. You're or if they're local as well, you know, boat owners, etc.. So it's almost just having that awareness that you will probably meet them again sometime.

Scott Hynds 00:16:4

Yes. Especially the boat owners. Yeah, they can be moored. And I learned this the hard way. And this is one, you know, if you do two races to places and somebody is moored up in the same place the whole time, they don't always appreciate you stopping right by their boat, especially in the morning sessions and the evening sessions as they sit there with their bubbles rocking as the waves all come pass and then you'll shouting go again. So you may have to adjust for harmony sake.

Lee Pooley 00:17:18

Yeah. Yeah. Shared space, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. And so in terms of, in terms of I mean this is a really, you know, really interesting that, you know, I think, you know, I think hopefully listeners will find it some useful tips and you talked about half an hour and now some coaching sessions could be a lot longer than that.

Do you have a do you ever take a bag with you with any supplies? Not just to yourself, Scott, but, you know.

Scott Hynds 00:17:44

So when I'm when I'm really good and I'm not often always really good, but when I'm really good, yeah, or in certain conditions, I'll take a bag with some extra kit for some of my paddlers and also sometimes for myself. So one of the things I found when I was on a bike was it's a lot hotter or it's a lot colder.

It's a lot harder to get the temperature right. So you know what you wear on the river at certain times of the year in certain sessions that, you know, you just practice, you go out on the bike, you know, in the summer in a t shirt and you're absolutely frozen because you're belting along and there's been a headwind.

And then in the winter, when it's really cold and you're dressed up, you're absolutely boiling, it's sweating away because there's only so much clothing you can take off and wrap around the waist without getting caught. So, yeah, a little bag does wonders. I again, that's something that you learn with experience because otherwise you end up with a bike with all your clothes tied to it and it's not very sensible and we've all done it.

But first time you go over the handlebars because your jumpers got caught in the front wheel, you think I'm going to bring a bag.

Lee Pooley 00:18:57

One of the things that the race in the racing community and the athletes and coaches are good at is looking after each other on the water, you know, and you know, but it is the it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure an appropriate safety framework in terms of, you know, your group, you know, the athletes that you are, got a level of responsibility within that within that coaching group.

They are reasonably good at, you know, maybe if someone capsizes, bring it to the side. But do you ever do you ever consider about, you know, carrying throw lines or other rescue efforts?

Scott Hynds 00:19:42

So I haven't carried throw lines. This is just me personally because of the area that I coach in. So yeah, but I understand and I do know a number of coaches that contributed to, you know, coaching from a bank, do as they're in a slightly different environment. So in certain situations, if people were to fall in and I'm coaching, they'd be 100 meters away from me and, you know, me throwing a throw line to them when they're ten feet from the bank wouldn't be very helpful.

But on the other hand, I do sometimes think it would be quite useful to be able to pull them in just a bit quicker. So I think that's a that's an individual's call in their location and the only reason I don't is because a lot of the time the people are either beside the bank where I am and that's fine, or they're on the other bank or they're going down the middle where I couldn't get to them with the throw line anyway.

And we've got a group around them that can rescue them. But in the winter I definitely take spare kit. You know, because it's just nice if you have had a swim. Okay.

Lee Pooley 00:20:57

So yeah, and I think it is, you know it's that thing that, you know, coaches do is, they consider they do a dynamic risk assessment and then they go, what is what is it I need today? Who is in the group? What's the weather, what's the environment like? And then, you know, I don't think there can ever be a thing that coaches need to do because actually it would either be not enough or too much.

So, actually, you know, I really support, you know, that that individualized safety framework consideration at the beginning of the session. And if the throwlines needed carry one, if it's not, then and so on so forth. But yeah, it's just interesting, in some areas there's quite high sides, isn't it, in canals. That would be, might be useful to actually carry a throwline for that particular purpose.

Scott Hynds 00:21:50

Yeah. And there are places as well that you know that are inaccessible to get out on my stretch with trees and everything. You know you can't get to the bank because the trees are hanging out 20/30 meters and you'd have to clamber through. So, you know, the option is you have to swim to somewhere else or self-rescue in the middle with other people.

So yeah, but then the same issue there is that you couldn't get to them with the throw line. But I do know some coaches who paddle through certain parts of built up London and they'd love a coach with a throw line. It sits just pull them along and get into another area. But yeah, as you say, it's dynamic isn't it.

Lee Pooley 00:22:34

Yeah, absolutely. I mean you've, you've, you've won several hats over the years, Scott. You know, you all you are a coach developer, you're a coach and have been and may be still an athlete, I'll leave it to you to tell stories but you, you've actually you have been on the receiving end of being coached and probably coaches that have been on a bike so, putting in the other shoe on your shoe on the other foot. What sort of things can you from a from an athlete perspective inform the understanding from a coach of what it feels like to be coach from that, from a, from a bike.

Scott Hynds 00:25:14

I liked it personally because you could be given instant feedback, you know, So I might have a conversation with my coach beforehand about certain aspects of my technique and then, you know,

I just get a shout, you know, relax or head up or, hand down and, and then the nice bit which you don't realize as an athlete is that everybody hears that and they think it's to them.

So everybody starts to paddle better, when actually it was directed at me, I'm sure. So yeah, you getting feedback in real time rather than at the end of it. It's limited feedback. You can only take so much on board, but certain things open your hand or relax your face, you know, So it's instantaneous. You haven't realized you gritting your teeth and you're tensed up and everything because if you had realized, you wouldn't do it.

So I'd say that kind of feedback is instant, and that was good. But also on certain efforts, you know how much time you've got left. So we would train without a watch. And in my day we didn't have GPS and suchlike, so you couldn't see boat speed, but so the coach had the watch. So you were counting strokes for.

And then when you get to the minute you'd start again, start again. And when that transfers across to the regatta course, you know how many strokes you're doing at a certain speed and suchlike. So that was, I mean we could have done that ourselves with a big, big watch. But you tend to find people watch the watch and the technique suffers because they're looking down and therefore the heads down and suchlike.

So you could concentrate on just what you were doing and the coach would be giving you feedback, giving you the times and stuff like so. But also in terms of tactical stuff, moving around the group, you could definitely be told quite quickly when you do things well or when you were doing things wrong or you know, So that kind of feedback I think is pretty instantaneous, but it has to be small it has to be chunks so that people can take it on board because they're under physical and possibly emotional stress at that point.

So limited feedback. They have to understand what it is they're being told as well. So decent feedback beforehand of what we're going to do, why we're going to do it, what's going on. And then you can give, you know, what sound like simple instructions or feedback as we're going along.

Lee Pooley 00:25:57

Yeah, Yeah. I think that's you know, it's a really good point, isn't it. You know, that, that preprogrammed that's that discussion right at the very beginning before people are getting onto the water with the athletes, with the paddlers to really go. This is what we're going to focus on today. These are the the areas that or the area or the areas that we're going to we're going to you know, we can look at today.

And then when they're on the water, as you rightly say, is it's the precision of feedback, isn't it? It's not about a lengthy discussion. It's about short, sharp. Precise feedback that that can be understood. Yeah. In an instant. But that only comes from the person on the water having that conversation at the early stages or the start.

Yeah. I think the really important. Yeah. So what I'm I think know for me this has been really interested in where I'm going to push you for is your five top tips from Scott on coaching from a bite.

Scott Hynds 00:29:17

So number one sounds a little bit silly, but get feedback from your group as to whether they can hear you or whether you're too loud because you have no understanding. You can be bellowing and they might not hear you or you can be bellowing and everybody in the county can hear you and they're like, Why is that idiot shouting at us?

So it's always good, I think, every day to check that they can hear you or if you're too loud, you don't need to be shouting because you can hear my voice now. So that's number one. Take a pump right this unless you get an absolute puncture you know, you can keep pumping it up in the offs and cycle along to the next one.

And so the efforts might get shorter and the rest get longer as the as you get tired pumping it up. But always take your pump with you. In the winter. Be prepared to be hot and cold and wet.

Having enough clothing with you for yourself and for the group, because the group generally is working hard enough to keep themselves warm and they're dressed appropriately. It's you that is standing around absolutely soaking and in a three minute off absolutely frozen, not doing any work. And then when you're cycling, you've got the wind blowing and you're not working hard enough to keep warm. So be very aware that having enough clothing.

Watch, make sure you watch is on the handlebars beeping away and if you need two watches have one on the handlebars and another one on your arm. But don't sit there cycling along watching the watch. All right? Because you're meant to be watching the group you're meant to be watching where you're going. Well, most people can't do three things. I can't do three things. So, yeah, watch on the handlebars.

And then lastly, and again, this sounds frivolous, but make sure your bike is going to be there when you turn up. See if you've got a shared bike you don't want someone to have taken it home to repair it for you and not told you, or even if it's your bike, make sure that someone isn't borrowing it for a session.

Because they got there 10 minutes before you did. So I'm not the kind of person that can cycle run alongside a group, so they'd have to be a very slow group. So yeah, make sure your bike is on the lot or everybody else knows that it's your bike and on pain of death, they don't borrow it.

Lee Pooley 00:29:30

Well, it sounds like thus you've learned they learned the hard way with number five.

Scott Hynds 00:29:36

It's following the big boy session on a BMX was. Yeah, you only do it once and make sure your bike's your bike.

Lee Pooley 00:29:46

Not the most ideal bike to do to do a racing session.

Scott Hynds 00:29:50

No a thousand meters on the BMX flat out.

Speaker 1 00:32:33:09 - 00:33:09:12

Oh Scott as as always really really enjoy our chats together and and I'm really pleased that we're able to record some of them. Obviously we don't record all our chats, but it's nice that we're able to record some of them that, you know, that go into these podcasts and that enables some people to listen to it. And it may be a it might be a nice little reminder for some of the experienced coaches, but it could be a real a real sort of tick in the box for new coaches coming through to go I need to set my bike up properly.

These are the things I need to consider. So really appreciate your time, Scott. And what I'm really pleased about is Scott and the Racing Technical Group, and others within the community have really helped and contributed to guidance documents that we will now be on the British canoeing, awarding Body Digital Library, and it's called bank based coaching from a bike.

So if you want to go into the library on the British canoeing awarding body website, you'll be able to download that document or view that document there. And it goes over some of the areas that we spoke about today. So, Scott, thanks very much for your time today and I hope everyone enjoyed listening to our chats.

Scott Hynds 00:31:18

Yeah, cheers, everybody.

Lee Pooley 00:31:19

Take care. Bye.