

National Source Group Report on Coaching in Mountaineering

– A Possible Future for Coaching Awards

Version 5 including changes agreed by the Mountaineering Co-ordination Group at their meeting of 6th Sep 2008.

The National Source Group (NSG) met six times over a period of 15 months, and investigated the provision of Mountaineering coaching in Britain and Ireland. Gaps were identified between the content of the current awards and the variety of coaching being offered. The NSG felt that steps should be taken to bring Mountaineering in line with coaching good practice.

Table of Contents

Summary	3
1.0 Introduction.....	3
1.1 NSG Members.....	4
1.2 Historical perspective of Coaching within Mountaineering	4
1.3 What is coaching?	6
1.5 Present Coaching Situation	12
1.6 Current provision in Mountaineering coaching courses	13
1.7 UKCC and Adventure Sports.....	16
1.8 The Coaching Market.....	17
2.0 Drivers for change	19
2.1 sports coach UK and the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC).....	20
2.2. Government initiatives	21
2.3 Examination Boards	22
2.4 Youth Development	22
2.5 Schools and Colleges.....	23
2.6 College and University Courses	23
2.7 Sports Leader UK.....	23
2.8 ABC achievement Scheme (NICAS)	24
2.9 Competitions	24
2.10 Coaching in other ‘Adventure’ sports	25
2.11 Sport for Life	25
2.12 Risk Management: life skills.....	26
2.13 Finance	26
2.14 IOC recognition.....	26
3.0 Coaching Systems for Mountaineering: Possible solutions.....	27
3.1 Do nothing.....	27
3.2 Develop coach specific CPD courses.....	27
3.3 Develop a parallel coaching system in conjunction with the current MLT awards.....	28
3.4 Develop a separate coaching system.....	32
3.5 Creation of a replacement coaching system.....	32
4.0 Conclusion.....	32
The NSG make these specific recommendations:	33
Appendix 1	34
Attendance list for the six NSG meetings.	34
Appendix 2	35
National Occupational Standards	35

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Summary

The National Source Group (NSG) met six times over a period of 15 months, and investigated the provision of Mountaineering coaching in Britain and Ireland. Gaps were identified between the content of the current awards and the variety of coaching being offered. The NSG felt that steps should be taken to bring Mountaineering in line with coaching good practice.

To this end, the NSG recommend that the National Councils invest resources in developing a structured coaching system for Mountaineering. Such a system should support participant and coach pathways.

1.0 Introduction

In late 2006 the Mountaineering Coordination Group (MCG) established a working group, the NSG, to look at the issues of coaching within climbing/mountaineering in order to suggest a common and workable approach. The coaching of mountaineering has been discussed at various times over the last 10 years within the MCG and its constituent bodies but little progress towards an integrated approach had been made. The National Source Group was tasked to prepare a report for completion by early 2008. The NSG held its first meeting on 2nd December 2006.

The MCG directed that the NSG be constituted from representatives of the home nation training boards and mountaineering councils. The representatives nominated brought with them considerable experience of instructing and coaching climbing, mountaineering and other sports at a high level. In mid-2007 the group agreed to broaden representation, by co-opting Neil Gresham, to represent existing independent coaches, and by inviting representatives from Plas y Brenin and Glenmore Lodge.

In its terms of reference for the NSG the MCG set the NSG two main objectives:

1. To find a common approach to the issue of coaching within climbing/mountaineering and recommend this to the mountaineering councils via the (MCG);
2. To take on other tasks that concern the issue of coaching in climbing/mountaineering as directed by the mountaineering councils through MCG.

In order to meet these goals the group felt that it was necessary to set a definition for the term 'Coaching', in order to distinguish it from teaching, instruction and leadership. It was decided, as a good working definition, to adopt the Sports Coach UK definition of coaching:

'A coach is someone who uses sport as a vehicle for development of individuals, both as performers and as people' (What is Sports Coaching, Sports Coach UK, 2003).

This report covers much of the work carried out by the NSG, from discussions about the nature of coaching and the role of coaches, through the identification and definition of the drivers for change, along with past, present and the possible future provision of coaching in

climbing and mountaineering and concludes with a number of recommendations to the MCG, for future action.

Throughout this document the single term Mountaineering is used to encompass the activities for which the BMC, MCS and MCI are representative bodies: climbing, hill walking, mountaineering and ski mountaineering. Where the term “athlete” is used, it should be taken to mean the person (climber/mountaineer) who is being coached.

1.1 NSG Members

Brian Griffiths: Chairman

Steve Long (MLTUK & BMG): Secretary

Angela Carlin/Eddie Cooper (MCI)

Trevor Fisher (MLTNI, Tollymore)

Jon Garside (BMC & MLTE)

Dave Binney (BMC Coach)

Kevin Howett (MCofS S)

Dave Macleod (MCofS S Coach)

Allen Fyffe (MLTS)

Mark Reeves (BMC Cymru/Wales)

Neil Johnson (MLTW)

Neil Gresham (Independent Coach)

Martin Chester (PYB)

George McEwan (Glenmore Lodge)

See appendix 1 for a record of attendance at NSG meetings

1.2 Historical perspective of Coaching within Mountaineering

Whilst there is little formal background to coaching within climbing and mountaineering there is some evidence that coaching has taken place as far back as last century when Oscar Eckenstein not only wrote about balance theories in Rock Climbing but also demonstrated these skills in analytical bouldering sessions.

It was only after World War One, when the need to train large numbers of men to fight effectively was recognised, that the process of ‘coaching’ was looked at more formally and the earliest theories of how to teach technical skills were developed. These theories were put into practice when the mass training of troops was required during World War Two.

The need for national success in a variety of sports further developed coaching practice after the Second World War. As competition between east and west grew so did the practice and development of coaching within Olympic sports such that most sports now embrace Coaching theories and practices when training and assessing their coaches.

An example of coaching within outdoor adventure sports is provided by the British Canoe Union (BCU) which was established in 1936 in order to send a team to the Berlin Olympics. From the outset the BCU ethos was to produce high level athletes and a system of coaching awards was implemented from the 1950s onwards. While the ethos of the mountaineering councils is to promote the interests and freedoms of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, that of the BCU has always included the coaching of athletes for international competition. This is not to imply however, that this is all that the BCU does. Much of its work parallels that of the three mountaineering councils, namely lobbying for access for their recreational members.

While the BCU has prioritised coaching in its training schemes for many years, the main concern of the mountaineering councils was, through the Mountain Leader Training Boards (originally formed in 1964), the provision of training and assessment for leaders of groups in mountain walking and climbing. This came about largely in response to a series of high profile accidents concerning children in the care of others (e.g. the Cairngorm Tragedy in 1986). In addition to the training and leadership awards administered by the training boards, other training courses aimed at improving mountain safety have been run by the mountaineering councils and other bodies such as the Jonathon Conville Trust. Thus the focus has always been on safety and communication skills from a risk management perspective. Where coaching is included in the syllabus it has been at a fairly basic level.

Formal competition in climbing is a very recent phenomenon when compared to many other sports. Interestingly, Britain performed very well in early international competitions. Simon Nadin won the first ever World Cup in 1989 and Ian Vickers was European Champion in 1998. In recent years, Gaz Parry won the 2007 Arco Rockmaster bouldering competition, and both Mark Croxall and Andy Earl won rounds of the bouldering world cup in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

In youth competitions, Natalie Berry was third overall in the 2007 European Youth Series (EYS), including a win in one of the rounds while in 2008 Randy Roby won his age group category at the Arco Rock Juniors and Jonathan Stocking achieved 3rd place in one round of the EYS.

Britain clearly has some very talented competition climbers however; other nations consistently perform much better. For example, Austria took 5 of the 18 podium places, including 3 gold medals, at the 2007 World Youth Championships.

The coaching support that these climbers receive is largely provided by self-taught coaches some of whom have trained and performed at a high level within climbing. The British team also take a holistic approach to training, with two recent core body strength training sessions delivered by Phil Baker, an Olympic synchronised pairs diver.

As a response to demand for more climbing performance focussed training, British Team Coach Dave Binney together with Anne Arran and Mike Rosser, developed the BMC FUNdamentals of Climbing workshop (see page 7), Plas y Brenin has introduced a Coaching Processes (CP) course for mountaineering coaches developed from the former BCU Coaching Processes course and Neil Gresham delivers a course for climbing coaches. These CPD (Continual Professional Development) courses have evolved due to recognition that there is a demand for specific training not currently delivered within the existing NGB awards.

In addition to these practical steps, the mountaineering councils have, since the late 90's organised meetings and commissioned papers on coaching as applied to mountaineering. In particular, the following recent papers, initiated by the MCoFS were considered and discussed by the NSG:

- *Towards a UK Coaching Certificate in Climbing* by Kevin Howett (2005),
- *Coaching in Climbing in the UK: An investigation of current practice and recommendations for future content, delivery and integration with UK coaching structures* by Dave MacLeod (2007)
- *Towards a 'Coaching in Climbing' Award* by Scott Muir (2007)

The NSG also had presentations from:

- Loel Collins on his experience in helping to develop the new BCU UKCC compliant coaching scheme,
- Scott Muir on his above mentioned paper,
- Guy Jarvis on the implementation of the National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme (NICAS) by the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC),
- Martin Chester on the Coaching Processes course run by Plas y Brenin,
- Neil Gresham on his coaching master class including the use of video analysis.

In 2004 sportscoach UK invited the mountaineering councils to become involved in delivering UKCC qualifications. Representatives from the councils and the training boards attended a variety of meetings; the most recent UKCC meeting at which Mountaineering was present took place in July 2008.

Today there is an increased call for the development of coaching in all sports, highlighted in a recent report by sports coach UK where they set out their vision in **The UK Coaching Framework**¹. Integral to this is the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC), aimed at unifying coach education qualifications to a nationally agreed framework. The intention is that the UKCC will ensure that sports are delivering the best available coaching, and in due course reap the rewards of sporting success, both in performance and recreational long-term enjoyment of sport. This is discussed in greater detail in section 2.1

1.3 What is coaching?

The NSG discussed the process of coaching, and how it differs from instruction, teaching or leadership. In *A Coaching Philosophy* Carl Johnson and Gordon Adams¹ suggest that "Instruction touches on the fringes of teaching, and teaching itself is the genesis of coaching. The distinction between teaching and coaching is usually drawn somewhere along the line that teaching involves mass impregnation of fundamentals, whereas coaching is singular and specific". They go on to observe that "Most athletes benefit from both teaching and coaching, in one form or other, at some stage in their career."

¹ from Senior Coach Theory Manual 2nd Edition British Amateur Athletic Board

Opinions differed on what a “coaching” qualification in climbing or mountaineering should aim to achieve.

1.3.1 The Coaching Process

To understand the coaching process, it is first necessary to understand the difference between a technique and a skill. Guthrie in Barbara Knapp’s book *Skill in Sport*² defines skill as “the learned ability to bring about predetermined results with maximum certainty with the minimum outlay of time, energy or both”. A good example in climbing is tying a clove hitch, which is a technique, whereas using a clove hitch appropriately to construct a belay in a variety of situations is a skill.

The current range of NGB qualifications set out good practice for managing groups (leadership) and teaching basic techniques. Only a relatively small part of the awards is aimed at best practice in coaching in how to develop those techniques into skilful application. That said many instructor/leader behaviours can be described as coaching, and even instruction in rope work and other “technical” work require quite sophisticated coaching skills.

For example, ice-axe braking is a technique that requires skilful application to be effective. The goal is not winning, but survival: somebody who can stop a slide that has been set up under carefully controlled conditions needs to develop this technique considerably before it can be considered a skill and therefore effective in an emergency. By the time a Mountaineering Instructor Certificate (MIC) candidate has completed his or her assessment they will have undertaken at least two days³ of formal training and assessment in coaching this one skill set. This could be compared very easily with a kayak coach training paddlers to roll a kayak. For a white-water paddler, even 100% success rate in a pool is not skilful if it cannot be transferred to the river. Similarly for a competition climber, coaching might be required to help transfer excellent performance on practice days to the competition event. Many climbers perform brilliantly on a top-rope but need help transferring this to lead climbing. All of these situations require coaching rather than instruction if the athlete is to become genuinely skilful.

Effective coaching is also important in helping a climbing athlete train for strength, strength endurance or power, stamina etc. Appropriate knowledge of sport science is obviously an essential pre-requisite for the coach to be able to deliver such coaching at elite level. Evidence however, from the BCU and other sports shows that this knowledge is also needed at intermediate level, particularly with talented children. Therefore the coach must be able to structure coaching sessions such that they are relevant to the physiological requirements of an athlete (in particular children).

The coaching process concept stems from research⁴ in cognitive and motor skill development that has looked at how you can most effectively develop skilful performance. This research has shown three basic stages of learning: cognitive (beginner), associative (intermediate) and autonomous (elite). The journey through these stages is a linear one, however whilst you may be autonomous in one area of practice you may be associative in another. Each skill or technique can be sub-divided in to three areas cognitive

² Skill in Sport – Barbara Knapp – Routledge, Keegan, Paul

³ Spread over four half-days.

⁴ Initiated by the work of Dave Collins for the Lawn Tennis Association.

(thinking/psychological), biomechanical (neuro-muscular/movement) and physiological (strength, flexibility).

The first skill of a coach is to identify where an athlete is in terms of stages of learning, and whether a problem is cognitive, biomechanical or physiological. This observation and analysis is a key part of the coaching process, as well as instructional, it can involve simply watching an activity or more complex video analysis.

Having identified what needs working on and the stage of learning, the coach must then to decide how to communicate the goals, the required modifications to behaviour and then what type of practice to set up. At its most basic the communication would follow the process of introducing the activity, demonstrating it, explaining it, followed by an activity phase and finally a summary. The key elements are verbal, visual and kinaesthetic explanations and feedback, which depending on the type of learning environment, can occur in almost any order but will be more effective in the order that suits the different stages of learning according to individual learning styles.

Key to the communication of an activity is the way in which we learn. This is based upon a long accepted part of cognitive psychology that covers the limit of short term memory to a maximum of seven pieces or “chunks” of information before an individual becomes overloaded⁵. The demonstration and explanation phases cease to be effective if this is not taken into account. As a simple example, landline phone numbers are seven digits long (without the area code) and are easier to recall from short term memory than longer ten digit mobile phone numbers.

The stage of learning that an athlete has reached should dictate the type of practice to set. Blocked practice is better suited to beginners to enter the “ball-park” of a skill or technique (built into enjoyable exercises), whereas random and varied practice is suited to developing a robust skill that can be applied to a variety of situations. Similarly whether to break a skill down into parts or treat it as a whole is affected by both the athlete’s stage of learning and the complexity of the skill. Another choice that the coach has to make is whether to focus on right or left-handed practice or even climbing both up and down for confidence-building. This ambidextrous or bi-lateral practice can help aid skill acquisition together with balanced muscular-skeletal development.

The feedback that we give an athlete needs to alter between the stages of learning. A beginner will often need coach-directed feedback, but as they start to develop understanding, this feedback can increasingly take the form of questioning the athlete, which allows them to start to understand the skill and even start correcting their own faults.

The final and crucial coaching behaviour is reflective practice, in which the coach questions his/her own teaching and approach. Critically asking what worked or failed, why it worked or did not and how their coaching practice can be improved.

In addition to the process of effective teaching, there are other coaching practices that would need to be addressed by coaches regarding the long-term development of athletes, in terms of fitting performance to Istvan Bayli’s late specialisation model. For example there is growing evidence that young climbers should not be introduced to excessively fingery

⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests possibly less

training until their fingers reach maturity usually around age 18. Also the practice of wearing overly tight boots needs to be addressed in young climbers.

Further to this the understanding of the physiological, biomechanical and cognitive demands of Mountaineering needs to be understood better by coaches in order to address the challenge of devising long term training programmes for clients. Further to these hands-on skills, there are other more managerial roles of the coach that were highlighted by Lyle (2002):

Role Descriptor	Competence	Sub-processes
Direct Intervention	Training Management	Programme design, session management, organisation, administration, managing exercise loadings, implementing drills/exercises.
	Competition Management	Competition preparation, contest management, selection, recording.
Intervention support	Planning	Training programme, competition programme, individual programmes.
	Recording	Maintaining Database, Communication
	Personnel Management	Managing support team
	Athlete support	Counselling, development programme, goal setting, adherence management.
Constraints Management	Human Resources	Recruitment, 'Contracts', Development planning.
	Material Resources	Facility planning, financial management, equipment management.
	Extended Role	Organisational liaison, NGB Liaison, personal education and development, promotion.
Strategic Co-ordination	Strategic Planning	Goal setting, Integrated planning, prioritising, review and audit.
	Contingency Management	Contingency management, Implementing change.

Table 1. Potential coaching process competencies from Lyle (2002)

This managing of a participant's development will also include the need to identify and set effective goals. Much research points towards process orientated self-set goals being the most effective in terms of creating the motivation for a participant athlete to pursue those goals. One of the most effective ways to do this is through performance profiling.

Whilst many of the skills listed above may not be universally relevant to every coach, there is a need to provide training that covers the majority of these subjects and lays the foundations in coaching behaviours that Mountaineering presently lacks in any formal structured application.

1.4 What is a Coach?

"He's not a coach, he's a hearse!" – Tommy Docherty, Football Manager

This section attempts to summarise some of the attributes which an effective coach should exhibit.

Coaching means different things to different people. The UK Coaching Strategy describes the task as one which "Enables the athlete to achieve levels of performance to a degree that may not have been possible if left to their own endeavours".

People generally agree that coaches set exercises, practices and tasks to accelerate skill learning and produce improvements in performance. More enlightened coaches realise that they also have a responsibility towards the social, emotional, physical and moral development of their athletes. They coach people through sport rather than coaching the sport to people.

"The successful coach is a teacher, psychologist, motivator and diplomat all rolled into one."⁶

Coaches generally have an on-going relationship with their athletes. "Central to any coach athlete relationship is the ability to get along" and "central to any good relationship is belief in each other. This belief covers areas far beyond the technical knowledge of the coach, or the ability of the athlete, and relates particularly to the integrity and reliability of both."⁷

There is increasing evidence from the application of existentialist psychology to sport that many sports have been ignoring the value and strengths of 'personality' at the cost to attainment in the sport. One of the most important attributes of a coach is to act as a role model and inspire those they help train.⁸

Personality then is seen as an increasingly important part of a coach's armoury and gives core values and a level of authority to their work. A coach must also be able to explain what is required to the athlete in a clear and concise manner, which entails good communication skills and group control, i.e. Presence. Good communication involves the ability to give instruction both verbally and visually, receive feedback and listen to opinion.

⁶ "Track and Field Athletics" Wilf Paish - Lepus Books 1976

⁷ "Successful Track and Field Athletics" Tom McNab - Charles Letts & Co. Ltd 1982

⁸ "Coaches whom attain the skills and techniques needed for coaching but do not have the 'Personality' will fail" Dr M Nesti – York St John University, Scottish Sports Development Conference 2007

In addition to interpersonal skills the coach will have a deep knowledge of the psychological, physical and technical demands of the sport, its rules both written and unwritten, and its ethos. Using this knowledge together with his/her knowledge of the athlete's current levels of attainment and development together with their aspirations, the effective coach will be able make decisions regarding intermediate goals and plan the necessary actions that should lead to their achievement.

Since motivation derives from satisfaction and satisfaction from success, turning optimism into realism is an important part of coaching. Unrealistic optimism results in failure and failure brings with it dissatisfaction. Repeated dissatisfaction brings disenchantment.

Good coaches will be self critical and seeking constant improvement in their search for personal coaching excellence. They will have an open mind and be receptive to new ideas.⁹

Scott Muir's report sparked much debate within the NSG as to whether a coaches' personal climbing performance was an important factor; bearing in mind that currently to achieve a Mountaineering Instructor Award (MIA) only requires a candidate to climb VS. Scott Muir's report suggested F6b for sport climbing at introductory level. The importance of technical proficiency was also covered in Dave MacLeod's report where he suggested a minimum length of time in the sport to gain each award, and a minimum grade of E1 5b for a coach.

However, in contrast, evidence¹⁰ from abroad shows that coaches are able to transfer their skills to other sports: they can coach climbing, even when they know only the rudimentary basics of the sport in order for it to be safe in the usually preferred coach environment of a 'climbing gym'. It is also recognised that elite performers from any sport do not always make good coaches as their 'teaching' and other coach skills are lacking – inability to explain technique or structure a session for instance

Hence, this suggests that a coach is primarily required to have a variety of coaching skills (over and above knowledge of human physiology and subsequent correct training techniques) that would include teaching skills, personality and people skills. This coach need not be an elite climber or a specialist, nor even have advanced safety knowledge required outdoors. The question of personal performance level for the coach remains controversial, but it should be remembered that some of the world's most successful coaches are disabled and no longer able to give personal demonstrations.

In an attempt to suggest a structure that linked coaching skills with a coach's preferred climbing discipline (to specialise if they wished), Scott Muir's report put forward a system that would see over 13 different personal proficiency awards ("star" awards linked to discipline), assessed to 5 levels all of which would need syllabuses, trainers and assessors, used in conjunction with 5 levels of coaching award. This is similar to the old BCU system where there was also assessment of personal performance. This generated some more obscure coaching specialties that only ever saw a handful of people trained and assessed. This structure may be unnecessarily complicated given the transference of skills, but a coach who is a good performer in a discipline will bring additional authority to their sessions.

⁹ from "uka: analysing your coaching" – The National Coaching Foundation 1998

¹⁰ "Coaching Climbing" by Michelle Hurni – US Climbing Team Champ 1998-99 and coach on the US Climbing Team Pro Junior Team

Finally, parallel national developments are guiding the way in which coaching will develop in the UK over the coming decade. The overall vision of the UK Coaching Framework is to:

- create a cohesive, ethical, inclusive and valued coaching system where skilled coaches support children, players and athletes at all stages of their development
- become world number one by 2016

Mountaineering has not committed to the framework, but the first aspiration encapsulates many of the future hopes discussed by the NSG.

1.5 Present Coaching Situation

It quickly became apparent that within “mountaineering” the most pressing “drivers for change” are coming from climbing, especially indoor, bouldering, sport and competition climbing. Modern developments in “winter” climbing, particularly icefalls and dry-tooling are also creating an increased demand for coaching. The report commissioned by the MCoS (MacLeod, 2007) therefore focuses on rock climbing, but many of its suggestions can be applied in other disciplines within the “broad church” of Mountaineering.

“The situation is quite different to most other ‘mainstream’ sports, owing largely to the historical development of rock climbing disciplines from mountaineering. It should be remembered that sport climbing and bouldering, especially the indoor competitive form are extremely young disciplines which are evolving rapidly. The current range of coaching provision comes from:

- *Rock climbing instruction/guiding*
- *Rock climbing clubs*
- *Indoor climbing wall courses*
- *Freelance individual coaches*
- *Performance rock coaching companies*
- *Internet and print based written media on self-coaching”*

[Coaching Climbing in the UK; Dave MacLeod, 31 March 2007]

To this list should be added the work of the National Mountain Centres (Plas y Brenin, Glenmore Lodge and Tollymore) which run coaching courses at all levels in both summer and winter, (some several weeks in duration), and have been running overseas coaching holidays since the 1980’s

Dave MacLeod’s report flagged up several shortfalls in coaching provision within the current system, which can be identified in all aspects of mountaineering:

- The SPA, MIA, MIC, BMG qualifications have relatively little coaching content, but are the mainstay of provision within climbing education, due to their long history, quality of provision, relevance to educational safety provisions and general recognition.
- Climbing clubs across the country, affiliated to the national councils are not the fostering ground for talent and coaching development - unlike many other sports (for example football and rugby).

- Indoor climbing wall courses differ vastly from wall to wall and even from instructor to instructor depending on the individual's background and interest in coaching, as well as 'in-house' training opportunities.
- Opportunities for freelance coaches are mainly dominated by climbers with a very high level of personal performance or a background in formal sport science.
- Lack of standardisation between different coach training providers.
- Lack of application of sports science and established training theory among outlets for coaching in mountaineering, particularly in work with young people.
- Lack of application of a coaching process in both theory and practice.
- Limited leadership from governing body to provide guidance on good practice and sources of information for coaches or coaching award to give structure to the system.
- Potential coaches put off by the absence of any focused award for coaches, but limited relevance of much of the content of Mountain Instructor Awards (MIA, MIC) for a significant proportion of potential rock climbing coaches (e.g. wild camping, advanced navigation).
- Mountain Leader Training awards do not fit all of the demands for coaching.

Despite these shortcomings, it should be remembered that many thousands of people each year are safely and successfully coached at most levels in mountaineering, and the UK is regarded world-wide as a strong achiever in most aspects of mountaineering, including the training of leaders and teachers. The UK has a few performers operating at, or close to, top world levels within most "disciplines" of mountaineering; some of these have been documented in section 1.2.

Whilst coaching is often seen as being closely related to competitive sports, it is useful to consider recreational programmes activity programmes, the deliverers of which could benefit from being made aware of the coaching process. Using the Duke of Edinburgh Award as an example, there are over 275,000 young people in Britain participating in the scheme at any one time, almost 7% of all 14 – 17 years olds. All these young people will undertake at least one self-led group expedition, usually hill walking. This sort of organisation generally uses Mountain Leader Training awards in order to ensure that their volunteers are competent when working with these young groups. If these volunteers were able to improve their coaching skills, then it could lead to the young people getting more out the mountain activities that they undertake.

Just as a promising young competition climber will benefit from good climbing coaching, a young person training for their Award expedition or perhaps an "adventure" race will benefit from good navigation coaching. The level of coaching that they both receive will be vital with regard both to their immediate goals and their long term participation.

1.6 Current provision in Mountaineering coaching courses

This section reviews the current provision within climbing for coach training. These courses vary in length, content and objectives, so the paragraphs below are aimed at highlighting the content of each rather than providing a thorough critical analysis. What it does show however is that there is a great deal of somewhat *ad hoc* development taking place and that

there is a demand from instructors, leaders and coaches to use these courses to develop their coaching abilities further.

1.6.1 University courses in sport and exercise science

There are a wide variety of university courses offered throughout the UK that have outdoor sport specialisation at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Many of these courses cover cognitive and motor skill development, sport psychology, physiology, biomechanics, effective coaching practice and outdoor educational theories. The time and cost of these courses is often a barrier for their use as CPD.

1.6.2 BASES

The British Association of Sport and Exercise Scientists offer an accreditation process that includes three years supervised experience, whereby the candidate works with clients under the guidance of a qualified supervisor and can specialise in physiology or psychology. The process requires the student to follow scientific research that is both sport specific and generic, and deliver coaching sessions that support their research work. Many BASES coaches go on to coach at a high level, in a variety of sports. Again the course takes a great deal of commitment in time and money and is perhaps not totally suited to climbing.

1.6.3 Continuing Professional Development for MLT Award holders

There are already several CPD courses for MLT award holders, some of which have been previously mentioned in this report. Here we give a brief overview of their content.

i. PYB Coaching processes course for mountaineers

This course has been developed by providers of the BCU coaching processes course, but specifically tailored to the needs of the Mountaineering coaches. The mainstay of the course is the theory and practice of cognitive and motor skill development. The course examines through observation and analysis of athletes' ability in terms of cognitive, biomechanical and physiological development skill, the effective communication of lessons (Visual, Audio and Kinaesthetic elements), the ways in which students learn, the effective use of practice, basic goal setting and reflective practice. The course offers a model and theory in the best practice to satisfy the needs of the athlete, but does not look at the long-term development of the athlete and does not offer specific methods for the delivery of sport specific skills.

ii. BMC FUNdamentals of Climbing Workshop

The FUNdamentals workshop comprises both theoretical and practical elements. Children participating in climbing are at risk of injury due to inappropriate training techniques. The workshop looks at how instilling good practice from the start can lay a solid foundation for the future.

Much scientific research has been done on the developing child, the results of which have implications for the type of climbing activities in which children should participate. The theoretical element of the FUNdamentals workshop looks at the findings of this research and provides coaches with information to help them in their work.

Different climbing styles use different muscle groups to a greater or lesser extent. The leg muscles are stronger than the arm muscles and are best placed to push the climber up. The way in which body position and body awareness impact upon climbing efficiency forms the practical element of the workshop.

As the name suggests, this course focuses on work with young people at the

FUNdamental stage of the development, together with games that develop good technique whilst avoiding chronic injuries.

1.6.4 Neil Gresham's coaching course

This course that Neil runs at the Westway is aimed at all climbers or climbing instructors who wish to coach performance sport climbing and improve their own personal climbing skills. It is a 4 day residential course and the syllabus includes: coaching assessment, coaching of movement skills including video analysis, training to improve strength and endurance, planning a periodised programme, tactics for onsighting and redpointing, special coaching information for juniors and veterans and other performance issues such as healthcare and use of equipment. The minimum entry requirement is to be able to lead F6a+ easily and with good technique. As will be seen from the programme below, the course focuses on practical applications of technique, training and tactics, rather than processes. An assessment course is also offered but there is currently no external moderation system in place.

Contents:

Introduction:

- Efficient use of holds, hands.
- Efficient use of holds, feet
- General movement, feet, flow, pace.
- Steep rock specifics
- Slabs and features
- On-sight skills

Strength/power:

- Correct Practice
- Problem setting
- Supportive Training
- Campus and finger boards
- Weights

Endurance (Leading & circuits)

- Correct practice
- Use of the leading wall for training
- Use of the bouldering wall for training
- Competition training

Supporting Theory

- Special information for juniors & older climbers
- Nutrition
- Health / Social
- Psychology
- Programme setting and periodisation.

1.6.5 Courses run by mountaineering associations

The Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI), British Mountain Guides (BMG), British Association of International Mountain Leaders (BAIML) and the Mountain Leader Training Association (MLTA) all run CPD courses for their award-holding members, with content regularly focussing on coaching issues. The first three of these are self-governing and manage their own training needs whereas MLTA is managed and controlled by Mountain Leader Training. These courses are generally of one or two day duration and are not part of any integrated coach training programme. BMC / MLTE deliver disability awareness workshops.

1.6.6 Courses run by other bodies

Other bodies such as sportscoachUK and the Institute of Outdoor Learning deliver a range of courses aimed at coaches and outdoor practitioners.

1.7 UKCC and Adventure Sports

The NSG invited Loel Collins to share his experiences with the group in early 2007. He is a highly experienced paddlesport coach, has had a key involvement in getting the BCU coaching awards endorsed as UKCC qualifications. The BCU received funding from sportscoachUK to deliver UKCC qualifications, in part because it is the representative body for more than one Olympic discipline.

Loel's report gave quite a bleak overview of the UKCC approach. He felt that for recreational paddlers the process had seen the 'reinventing the wheel', disenfranchised existing coaches, proposed an inappropriate structure for adventure sports, indulged in over-consultation at each stage (slowing the process down), and had resulted to-date in a longer and more complicated coaching pathway. In particular Loel added that 'the sport needs to focus on its own needs rather than being dictated to by UKCC.'

One of the major barriers for the BCU was that the UKCC is an endorsement of a qualification, which is delivered by a QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) accredited body. It took time for the BCU to gain this accreditation, which in turn delayed the UKCC delivery process. It should be noted that MLTE is a QCA accredited body, with awards in the National Qualification Framework (NQF). As such, Mountain Leader Training has much experience in the process of aligning its awards with existing qualification frameworks.

Of the 31 sports approached by sportscoachUK to participate in the UKCC process the only 'adventure sports' are Sailing, Canoeing and Orienteering. Mountaineering is one of five sports (out of the 31) who are currently not developing UKCC qualifications.

Despite the many pitfalls that the UKCC approach offers, its model for coach education is a solid foundation in the wide and diverse subjects required for effective coaching at all levels. As such the general layout of the qualification is in theory a good one to follow. However, personnel and administrative resources, and thus funding, would be required to follow the UKCC endorsement process.

Other problems and concerns over following the UKCC approach are funding, and ascertaining where a sport like climbing would sit in a national level of priority against higher profile Olympic and TV-favoured sports. The initial money allocated by sportscoachUK to 21 sports to develop UKCC qualifications came directly from DCMS (Dept of Culture, Media and

Sport). This funding tranche ceased in April 2008. After that period, sports wanting to develop UKCC qualifications need to seek funding from elsewhere. The BMC, for example, would most naturally try to secure funding from Sport England, and the MCoFS from sportscotland.

1.8 The Coaching Market

Another consideration made by the group was that if coaching awards were introduced who would want to hold an award, and whom would they coach. The potential for coaching climbing and hill walking are now examined in further detail.

1.8.1 Coaching Climbing

Mountaineering has seen a steady rise in participation numbers over the years. This can partly be deduced by the increased membership of the national councils. For example, both the BMC and MCoFS have seen a doubling of membership over the last 10 years, the BMC currently has 63,000 members and the MCoFS 10,000. On top of this an explosion in the provision of climbing walls in the last twenty years from 40 in 1988 to over 450 has broadened the geographical access to climbing and enabled participants to train during the dark days of winter. These range in scale from a small wall at the end of a school gymnasium, to large commercial walls that may have upwards of 80,000 user visits per year. Many of these participants have bought an expectation from other sports of seeking both instruction and coaching for recreation and competition. .

Despite this steady increase in participation the number of serious injuries suffered through climbing has remained low, in part due to the good practice being widely disseminated for many years.

Climbing courses are delivered by a range of coaches, who may or may not hold an NGB award, and may or may not have received other training relevant to their work. It is clear that those delivering courses on both a voluntary and professional basis would benefit from having access to appropriate training.

For the clients on these courses it will not necessarily be clear if their coach has received any training on safety management, coaching principles or other specialist knowledge relevant to the work. As well as holding the relevant NGB award, some coaches will have received some form of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in coaching or may have transferred coaching skills from other sports, however this is currently very difficult to identify or compare.

Regarding qualifications in general, it is important to be aware that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognise four equal ways in which a coach can demonstrate his or her competence:

- to hold a relevant qualification
- to hold an equivalent qualification
- to have received appropriate in-house training
- to be competent through experience.

Within Mountaineering, coaching provision is currently available via all four of these routes. Qualifications such as the Mountain Leader award (or a future coaching certificate) should

be viewed as enabling awards in that they provide a route whereby a coach can demonstrate their competence. Some countries, such as France, make more rigid demands upon leaders and coaches, such as the necessity for them to hold a national qualification if they wish to work professionally. The UK is not unique in recognising that competence can be demonstrated in a number of ways, all of which are equally valid.

Self-employed coaches and companies offering coaching courses would benefit from having access to a larger pool of qualified mountaineering coaches. It would also allow existing self-appointed coaches to attain recognition for the work they do, and create new career pathways for other climbers who see the existing awards as not fully addressing their needs.

There is a growing market for the provision of coaches for youth development. Currently many children are coached over a number of years by staff with either in-house training, Single Pitch Awards (SPA) and the newly established Climbing Wall Award (CWA). This longer term athlete development needs careful consideration in light of the paper recently published by Morrison & Scoffl¹¹ and a greater understanding of the developmental constraints of young athletes by coaches is vitally important for the future.

As well as these formal routes there is also a potential market in climbing clubs and for parents who wish to become involved in coaching children.

1.8.2 Coaching Hill Walking

As many mountain users will testify, a chance experience exploring the mountains when a child, under the direction of a youth leader or teacher, often signals the beginning of a lifelong involvement.

As mentioned earlier, many young people participate in hill walking through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, with 161,000 new entrants per year (2005). In addition, there are many other voluntary groups who also take groups walking in the British hills. Even though exempt from licensing, many of these voluntary groups ensure that their leaders hold the Walking Group Leader, Mountain Leader or the Award in Basic Expedition Leadership (administered by Sport Leader UK).

Although participation in hill walking competitions is relatively low, the provision of events such as the KIMM, timed charity events and adventure races has increased in recent years. In all cases, there are many important skills to master in order to become a competent hill user. Both young and old people looking to become competent hill walkers would benefit from good coaching: 2007 saw Mountain Rescue teams in the Lake District break new records with 425 rescues but these are of course the sort of records which are best left unbroken.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important skills to master is navigation. Coaching navigation is largely about coaching a cognitive skill, as navigation requires processing information present on the map and then relating it to the information that can be gleaned from the ground. As such, it is very different to coaching movement, which is largely about coaching a bio-mechanical skill.

¹¹ "Review of the physiological responses to rock-climbing in young climbers" Morrison & Scoffl – British Journal of Sports Medicine 2007

It can hopefully be seen from this example, that simply recognising the difference between fundamental skills is very important for the coach when considering how to structure their practice.

Other important hill walking skills revolve around route-planning, which in many ways is not dissimilar to how a climber may plan a 30m on-sight from the ground. Coaching both these skills involves getting participants to gain information from what they can see (the map, the climb), and then helping participants in planning the execution of their route.

Finally, as has been mentioned earlier in this report, there is already much good coaching occurring within Mountaineering. However, the youth leader working in isolation, holding the ML award and coaching young people in expedition skills may be more effective if equipped with some specific coaching knowledge.

2.0 Drivers for change

The drivers for change identified by the NSG are listed below, and subsequently expanded to give a fuller picture of what these mean to mountaineering and the development of a coaching framework.

- The sports coach UK promotion of the UK Coaching Framework and the UK Coaching Certificate
- The influence of government initiatives such as SkillsActive, the National Skills Academy and National Occupational Standards
- Examination Boards, EDXCEL GCSE award which includes rock climbing in its syllabus but no NGB backing.
- The increasing number of young children being drawn into climbing, some of whom are participating at a high standard;
- Schools and Colleges developing their own facilities together with "The Outdoors Manifesto";
- Colleges: National Award in Sport (Outdoor Education);
- Sports Leader UK delivery of Award in Basic Expedition Leadership and proposed Day Walk Leader;
- Climbing walls and the National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS);
- Competitions, both formal and informal;
- Coaching structures developed in other "adventure" sports;
- Healthy lifestyles: Sport for Life;
- Risk Management and social trend to education rather than elimination of risk;
- Finance and the QCA: availability (or removal) of grants for students pursuing courses leading to Mountaineering leadership and instructional awards;
- The recognition of competition climbing by the IOC, as a possible precursor to climbing becoming an Olympic sport.

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2.1 sports coach UK and the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC)

sports coach UK, formerly the National Coaching Foundation, is a charitable organisation and is the lead agency for development of the UK Coaching System.

'The UK Coaching Certificate is an endorsement of sport specific coach education qualifications that are aligned to an agreed framework. By creating a recognised standard for coach education the UKCC will make it easier to identify a quality coach in any sport at any level and contribute immeasurably to the professionalization of coaching.¹²

2.1.1 Background

In March 2001, the Government published their Plan for Sport. This report highlighted coaching as a priority, leading to the creation of the Coaching Task Force (CTF) in June 2001. CTF members included the home nation sports councils, NGBs, LAs, training organisations, scUK and equity partners.

The CTF published a report of their findings in July 2002. They concluded that many coaches were volunteers, that there was a shortage of suitably skilled coaches, that many coaches were unqualified and that there was little harmonisation amongst sports regarding core coaching skills.

Included in the CTF's recommendations were the creation of the UKCC and Community Sports Coaches.

2.1.2 Structure of the UKCC

The UKCC is a four level qualification, with the coach displaying the following competencies:

Level 1 – Assist more qualified coaches, delivering aspects of coaching session, normally under direct supervision.

Level 2 – Plan for, deliver and review coaching session.

Level 3 – Plan, implement, analyse and revise annual coaching programmes.

Level 4 – Design, implement and evaluate the process and outcome of long-term/specialist coaching programmes.

Four adventurous activity sports are so far delivering UKCC qualifications, namely, Paddlesport, Orienteering, Sailing and Snowsports.

Paddlesport has replaced its previous scheme with UKCC qualifications, leading to some of their existing coaches feeling disenfranchised. Section 4.3 of this report outlines a possible model in which Mountaineering could retain its existing schemes, with a supplementary coaching system sitting alongside.

The new UKCC Paddlesport qualifications are longer and more expensive to undertake than their previous schemes. Investigating whether this is common across all sports delivering

¹²Source: ukcoachingcertificate.org

UKCC qualifications, would be just one factor to take into account when deciding upon the structure of any future Mountaineering coaching system.

Sailing has chosen not to implement Levels 1 and 2 in their coaching award scheme.

2.1.3 The UK Coaching Framework

In April 2008, sports coach UK launched the UK Coaching Framework. Made up of five strategic areas and 12 specific actions it will be implemented in three phases up until 2016. The vision of the framework is to:

”create a cohesive, ethical, inclusive and valued coaching system where skilled coaches support children, players and athletes at all stages of their development in sport and which is number one in the world by 2016.”¹³

Within the framework, the strategic areas and actions include coach and participant pathways, coaching support, CPD, the UKCC, licensing and R&D.

Sports looking to deliver UKCC qualifications would sign up for the UK Coaching Framework, and demonstrate how their own coaching strategy aligns with the UK model.

2.1.4 Mountaineering and the UKCC

The NSG was the first step towards considering what a Mountaineering coaching system could look like. If a UKCC route were adopted, then the Councils, as representative bodies, would need to sign up to the UK Coaching Framework.

If Mountaineering developed its own non-UKCC coaching system, consideration of the UKCC would be useful, as it may be decided to align to it at a later date.

2.2. Government initiatives

2.2.1 SkillsActive

SkillsActive is a government-backed organisation, termed the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning. This sector consists of sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork, the outdoors, and caravans. SkillsActive represents itself as working with these sub-sectors to “increase the demand for, the quality and the supply of skills provision, to bring all areas together in collaboration, and to lobby funding agencies and policy makers for improvements to the sector”. Unfortunately there has been little interaction with mountaineering in the past, and it has shown a tendency to focus on “entry-level” skills training, which for mountaineering has generally meant that funding for training has been targeted towards leaders who are not required to demonstrate commitment to an activity as a pre-requisite.

As the organisation that links employers with training providers, policy makers and individuals, SkillsActive is tasked to “ensure that the importance of skills needs are communicated and addressed, and that workforce development policies deliver what the active leisure and learning sector needs”. Over the last couple of years, partly due to its presence on AAIAC (Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee) SkillsActive has

¹³ The UK COACHING FRAMEWORK: A 3-7-11 year action plan

shown increasing recognition of the importance of the established qualifications framework for mountaineering, and has invited MLTUK onto its steering group for its outdoor section of the National Skills Academy. Time will tell whether this “virtual academy” will help secure funding to assist the development of mountaineering coaches.

2.2.2 National Skills Academy

SkillsActive aspires to create a National Skills Academy in each major sector of the economy, and is working in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to achieve this. Each regional “hub” will have an area of specialism where the plan is for employers to “shape all aspects of the design of National Skills Academies and the delivery of the training they provide”. The Outdoor Sector will be based in the Northwest of England but aims to service a wider area. At the present time the emphasis seems to be on producing an internet based careers advisory service and the advisory panel are still seeking assurances that this organisation will draw down government funding for existing and developing qualifications rather than adding an expensive additional tier of bureaucracy.

2.2.3 National Occupational Standards

These are described in Appendix 2.

2.3 Examination Boards

Several examination boards offer both GCSE and A-Level courses in Physical Education in which students can opt to use climbing as a medium for assessment. Whilst many schools call upon SPA and MIA award holders to deliver and help assess these courses, the contents and syllabus of the award are not developed in consultation with the National Councils.

With an increasing number of young participants being involved in climbing through indoor walls this section of the qualifications is likely to become more popular, especially with the growth of climbing wall provision in schools.

2.4 Youth Development

Youth development creates its own momentum, which in turn has resulted in just about all large climbing walls offering more in the way of youth climbing clubs. This in turn has resulted in the growing number of participants and increased standard of competition in the Youth Climbing Series. Over 500 competitors entered the competition in England and Wales in 2007 while Scotland has seen numbers increase from 50+ in 2005 to 100+ in 2007.

With support from the British Team and coaching at their local wall, the young climbers excelling in YCS have transferred their gains to international acclaim (e.g. Natalie Berry gaining 3rd in the European world cup and 4th in the World Youth Championships and Robert Mackenzie gaining 16th in the World Youth Championships). A more structured coaching system could see significantly more international gains, as well as providing coaching good practice. Many of these young climbers are now talented adult climbers on either a regional, national or international level. Talented climbers (e.g. Ben Bransby and Leo Houlding) participated in youth competitions, and then followed a different pathway when they became older. This is a world-wide trend that has also been followed by personalities such as Chris Sharma and Catherine Destivelle.

Many children participating in youth climbing clubs are currently climbing up to F7a indoors, a considerable achievement both personally for the climbers, but also the wider development of our sport. A coaching award could aid this youth development work.

2.5 Schools and Colleges

A growing number of schools from primary age upwards are starting to develop their own climbing facilities, from small traversing walls in playgrounds through to elaborate indoor walls suitable for top roping, bouldering and lead climbing. Many of these walls have been part-funded by lottery money, something that has led to their growing popularity in schools and colleges. For example, in Scotland there are presently (in 2008) 55 primary schools with traversing walls, giving access to climbing as part of play time activities for 5,200 children and more are in development, with a proposed Inter-Primary Schools climbing competition in the Highland Region.

On top of this the Government's 'Outdoor Manifesto' highlights the need and benefits for every child to be involved in some form of outdoor education. Its concept is that opportunities for rich, diverse and powerful learning experiences exist beyond the confines of a classroom. Its aim is to encourage teachers and schools to look at residential courses and other activities that include using outdoor pursuits to help young people develop both socially and emotionally. It also reports that some local authorities and regions are already working strategically to help develop support for both schools and other interested parties with regards to learning outside classroom.

With the growing number of indoor climbing walls, day or even afternoon trips are now becoming more popular. The Outdoor Manifesto will help schools to add focus to such trips in the future, as well as promote greater use of outdoor pursuits for educational ends.

2.6 College and University Courses

A growing number of colleges are offering a National Award in Sport (Outdoor Education); whilst these courses require much theoretical course work on the educational benefits of using outdoor activities, a significant proportion of the course relates practical experience to that theory.

Again many participants on these courses have little background in outdoor pursuits and as such this is another entry point to climbing and mountaineering; as well as an additional educational development for young potential coaches of the future. Individuals can choose to follow a possible progression through further and higher education, leading to diplomas and undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in sport science and outdoor education.

Coaching practice can be one of the topics covered in university courses. Students who have this knowledge could be very well placed to coach in the wider world once they have completed an appropriate NGB award. We can clearly benefit from looking at the topics that are covered in these courses.

2.7 Sports Leader UK

This organisation currently manages a portfolio of 8 awards that are run in schools, community halls, prisons or wherever there is a suitable venue. They incorporate both practical learning sessions and a period of volunteering in the local community and do not require experience or membership of a Governing Body to enrol. Aimed at young people

these courses often attract financial subsidies. The Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Award in Basic Expedition Leadership trains and qualifies teachers, youth workers and other members of the community to lead groups in lowland areas, take responsibility for the care of others when outdoors including day journeys and organise base and mobile camps

The award does not qualify people to lead groups in remote or mountainous areas, but it has the potential to be a significant “feeder” for people who become inspired by walking activities.

Sports Leader UK also offers an award in Key Skills and Sports Leadership Portfolios, which may also generate among its students some interest in coaching qualification pathways.

2.8 ABC achievement Scheme (NICAS)

The Association of British Climbing Walls is introducing a new National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS) in the summer of 2008. Previously many climbing walls that operated a youth club had developed their own scheme to help focus young people involved in the club to develop their own skills.

One question that the establishment of the award system raises is: who will teach and assess on the scheme. Much of the scheme is based on safety and technical competence, but the higher levels have an increasing performance element. At present it is delegated to individual climbing walls to decide who is suitable to deliver the course and they are already considering options as to who is appropriately qualified for delivering level 5, the top level.

2500 people have signed up with the ten walls that piloted the scheme and 20 walls have committed financial support for the initial creation of a self-funding charity. This has the potential to be a very popular scheme throughout the UK and must therefore be considered as a factor in designing any coaching award in order to include appropriate skills for delivering the scheme.

With this scheme a group of climbing walls have taken a proactive step to look at sporting development within indoor climbing, which from their own words was “responding to a call for there to be more structured approach, especially in youth work.” The scheme is not aimed at the elite but could have the potential to identify talent and inform the appropriate coaches.

2.9 Competitions

The success of many sports in the UK and beyond is judged solely on the performance of homeland athletes in international, national and regional competition.

The BMC, which, with the agreement of the MCofS, is responsible for entering UK teams in international competitions, currently has a competitions officer (Tony Ryan), as well as a structure in place to take elite athletes who operate at the international level and nurture the talent through the British Climbing Team. The selection is done at British competitions that serve as ideal events to discover new and rising talent.

Below this level there is a growing need for trained coaches to help feed the national team, as more young people work through NICAS and compete in YCS at increasing levels. At present, the coaching that these individuals receive depends on the background of their coaches, resulting in something of a lottery (pun intended!).

2.10 Coaching in other 'Adventure' sports

Several other adventure sports in the UK have embraced coaching terminology and methods for a long time. The BCU in particular has had a coaching award system since the 1950's, and has recently revised its coaching award scheme to meet the UKCC standard.

The British Orienteering Federation and the Royal Yachting Association have also embraced the UK Coaching Framework and started on the UKCC pathway to coach education.

What is important is that both the BCU and BOF coaching schemes include not only the coaching of technical aspects of performance but also examine the coaching process, thus making its coaches think about what they are teaching, how and why. The BCU has long had a Coaching Processes (CP) course, aimed at looking at how people learn and what the coach can do to aid that learning through coaching interactions and effective practice. The new BCU scheme does not include a CP course, as the principles are now embedded into the new awards. In developing their coaching awards, the RYA conducted a gap analysis to highlight the differences and similarities between their existing and highly successful scheme and the UKCC.

In essence many of these sports encourage the best possible coaching practices at the earliest point that a participant enters the sport, in order to encourage the best possible practice and performance from the start of an athlete's development.

2.11 Sport for Life

In recent years the government has been eager to encourage participation in sport and exercise for the 'health of the nation'. Whilst gym use, football, rugby and other mainstream sports capture the headlines and supporters, those involved with the sport tend to leave the sport as they age and become merely "armchair participants".

The need for activity outlets other than traditional sport was discussed in a report to Sport England on 'Lifestyle sports and national sports policy: an agenda for research' (Tomlinson *et al*, 2005). This report highlighted the fact that 'lifestyle sports' like climbing have "*the potential to contribute significantly to the achievement of Government's **Game Plan** activity targets*". The *Game Plan* by the DCMS/Strategy Unit highlights the importance of an active society and the need to get more people engaged in some form of physical activity, as it is estimated that £2 billion and over 6000 lives could be saved each year if an extra 10% of people took regular exercise.

The Tomlinson *et al* report on lifestyle sports highlighted a 2003 Mintel report that 10% of children from 11-14 years old had participated in rock climbing and that the gender split was also most equal unlike any other sport cited. It also reported adult participation in climbing was 2.3% in the 12 month period leading up to the National Statistics Office (NSO) household survey 2002 and 0.7% in 4 weeks immediately prior to the survey. The latter statistic is particularly interesting as it had a sample size of 10,000 people, and therefore has a great statistical power, and based on a population of 60 million people, would mean that around 420,000 people part take in climbing regularly.

Outdoor walking is more accessible than rock climbing. An afternoon walk in the Yorkshire Dales or the Peak District, for example, requires very little specialist equipment, and is a great family activity. As mentioned earlier 7% of 14 – 17 year olds go through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, with 700,000 people participating across the world at any one

time. Walking, even simply an outing to the shops, is seen as one important way in which people can adopt a more active lifestyle.

2.12 Risk Management: life skills

There has been concern from businesses through to government that modern school leavers and graduates have little concept of risk management. An artificially sanitised world where “if there is blame there’s a claim”, has lead people to avoid using their own experiences to make good judgements and instead look to producing and relying on “catch-all” rulings and policies that attempt to deal with all situations regardless of the many variables that real life throws up.

Many Outdoor Education Centres, Local Education and otherwise, use outdoor pursuits and climbing to introduce the concept of risk and how to manage it. This is seen as important because of the wider social and personal skills that outdoor education can develop.

All mountaineering activities require the development of risk management skills; a judgement that only comes from experience. The process can be used to both assess and take risks in personal and professional life. .

A coach can help athletes to make skilful decisions about risk management rather than simply following rule-dominated instructions, such as “*always use screw-gates for belays*”, or “*always take bearings when walking in the mountains*”. That is not to say such maxims represent bad practice but that there are many ways to proceed safely where the path chosen should be a personal judgement based on the risk and informed by experience.

2.13 Finance

Many local authorities offer grants or awards for teachers, volunteer leaders and other community based staff to attend courses that lead to qualifications like the Mountain Leader Award or Single Pitch Award.

Recently there have been reports that this has become problematic, in that at least one funding body has stopped supporting any coaching courses unless they are endorsed by the UKCC. This could have a real effect on community or education authority funded candidates, should this proliferate to other grant awarding and funding bodies.

2.14 IOC recognition

On the 12th December 2007 the International Federation of ¹⁴Sport Climbing (IFSC) was welcomed by the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to the Olympic movement. This may result in competition climbing becoming an Olympic sport in the future, with potentially greater funding for elite level athletes and coaches within the sport of climbing, as well as a need to identify, develop and nurture the future Olympic Athletes.

¹⁴ The title “sport” actually refers specifically to what UK climbers would describe as “competition”.

3.0 Coaching Systems for Mountaineering: Possible solutions

The NSG discussed a variety of ways forward. Five are discussed here.

3.1 Do nothing

Continue with the present range of qualifications. A variety of CPD courses already exist offering coach development, and the existing schemes are well respected, so it could be argued that nothing need be done. However, the various demands being made upon deliverers of Mountaineering training made it clear to the NSG that some form of development is desirable.

An additional factor is the UKCC, which demonstrates that many sports are developing their coaching systems in line with good practice. The NSG felt that Mountaineering should look at this good practice in relation to the training schemes it provides.

3.2 Develop coach specific CPD courses

In this option, coaching courses would be developed as CPD modules to sit alongside the existing award scheme. Such modules would be standalone i.e. not integrated and not approved as part of the UKCC. Current CPD courses include the BMC FUNDamentals of climbing, the MLTE / BMC Disability Awareness Workshop, the Coaching Processes for Mountaineering delivered by Plas y Brenin, Neil Gresham's 4 day course for climbing coaches and other courses delivered by professional associations for their members. This option may have a negative effect on future funding and probably doesn't meet the aspirations of some people currently involved in coaching. The effort and cost of developing these modules may not be much less than that of adopting option 3.3

3.2.1 CPD courses augmenting the existing award schemes

A body with expertise in quality assurance such as Mountain Leader Training could (theoretically) deliver accredited CPD courses. However, aligning them to sit alongside existing awards has the potential to exclude those people currently working outside the schemes. Creating barriers to coaching pathways would not be a positive step forward.

Courses administered by a Mountaineering body would deliver the message that certain skills were seen as desirable and appropriate, but being elective in nature reduces their potential impact. As an example, the FUNDamentals workshop is delivered by the BMC, and well received. However, it is elective and so a very small percentage of climbing award holders (CWA, SPA, MIA, MIC and BMG) have attended a workshop. This is not to imply that these award holders should attend, simply that time spent developing elective CPD workshops does not guarantee their content will eventually become accepted good practice

3.2.2 CPD courses outside the existing award schemes

Some coaches have no national awards but may either be site specifically trained, such as those working at a large climbing wall, or be competent through experience. The coaching of climbing is where there is probably the greatest number of such people, when compared to the other Mountaineering disciplines (hill walking & mountaineering)

A course looking at the coaching of climbing training for both recreational and competitive climbers is an example of one CPD course which could be appropriate for many climbing coaches (training principles form the backbone of Neil Gresham's four day course).

Furthermore, considering that traditional climbing, sport climbing, alpine climbing, winter climbing and bouldering all require the development of both generic and specialist skills, then those climbing at the highest standards possess much specialist knowledge. It is important to consider ways in which such people could access future schemes.

If working at a wall, then gaining the CWA is not a barrier. Exemption from training can be applied for, and an assessment course is only eight hours long. A further award for the teaching of leading is planned for 2009. This will provide a comprehensive competency scheme for teaching at artificial walls.

For those wanting to teach lead-climbing on non remote crags, such as Stanage or Tremadog, it is currently necessary to undertake both the ML and MIA schemes. A rock instructor award that allowed candidates to bypass the ML scheme, but still demonstrate their competence to instruct single and multi pitch climbing could remove one barrier for those people looking to teach 'roadside cragging'. The SPA provides a definition for crags where mountaineering expertise is not required; a suitable definition would appear to be much more difficult to produce for multi-pitch crags, as even roadside crags can require mountaineering skills to approach or escape – however this problem is not necessarily insurmountable.

It would be hard to envisage a coaching scheme which endorsed a coach for their knowledge, but made no assessment of their competency to manage clients in the terrain in which they proposed to work. At the same time, it's important to appreciate that the current MLT schemes do not support all coach pathways. If the current awards were to become an integral element of a future coaching system, then it would be important to address potential barriers and facilitate a greater variety of coach pathways.

In their discussions, the NSG identified coaching skills which they felt should be integrated in some way within a Mountaineering coaching system. As CPD courses are designed, in the main, for professionals to remain either current or gain further skills, they are not necessarily the most appropriate way to confer fundamental skills.

3.3 Develop a parallel coaching system in conjunction with the current MLT awards

The NSG recognised that:

1. the current awards work very well within certain parameters
2. there are gaps between the content of the current awards and the expectations of both coaches and participants

The current MLT awards provide instructional skills and generic teaching / coaching skills. The NSG did not believe they should be radically changed.

Creating a parallel coaching scheme would see the development of qualifications which used the MLT awards as a baseline for the demonstration of competence. The decision on whether to align to UKCC qualifications would need to be addressed as well.

The development of a parallel coaching scheme in conjunction with the existing MLT awards would allow for both to evolve in parallel, as they would assess and train very different skill sets – competency to manage clients and competency to coach clients.

Within a hierarchical coaching system there could be core modules for all disciplines, such as the coaching process, as well as discipline specific modules, such as competition climbing. The NSG discussed climbing more than the other disciplines (hill walking and mountaineering), as climbing was identified as a strong driver for change. Climbing would likely require a more extensive coaching system than the other disciplines.

A parallel system would allow for the development of two pathways: either coaching or leader / instructor qualifications. It would not disenfranchise existing award holders and minimise disruption.

As highlighted in the previous section, the way in which the current schemes support a variety of coach pathways would need to be addressed, so this approach does not imply that the existing schemes are 'immune' to change.

If aligned to the UKCC, then funding opportunities are potentially increased. The question of whether or not to align to the UKCC would require further investigation, and a summary of the UKCC is provided in section 3.6. Important points such as what an appropriate coaching system for Mountaineering would look like, and how its development would be funded, are just two issues requiring further work.

Below are two examples of how a parallel system could work.

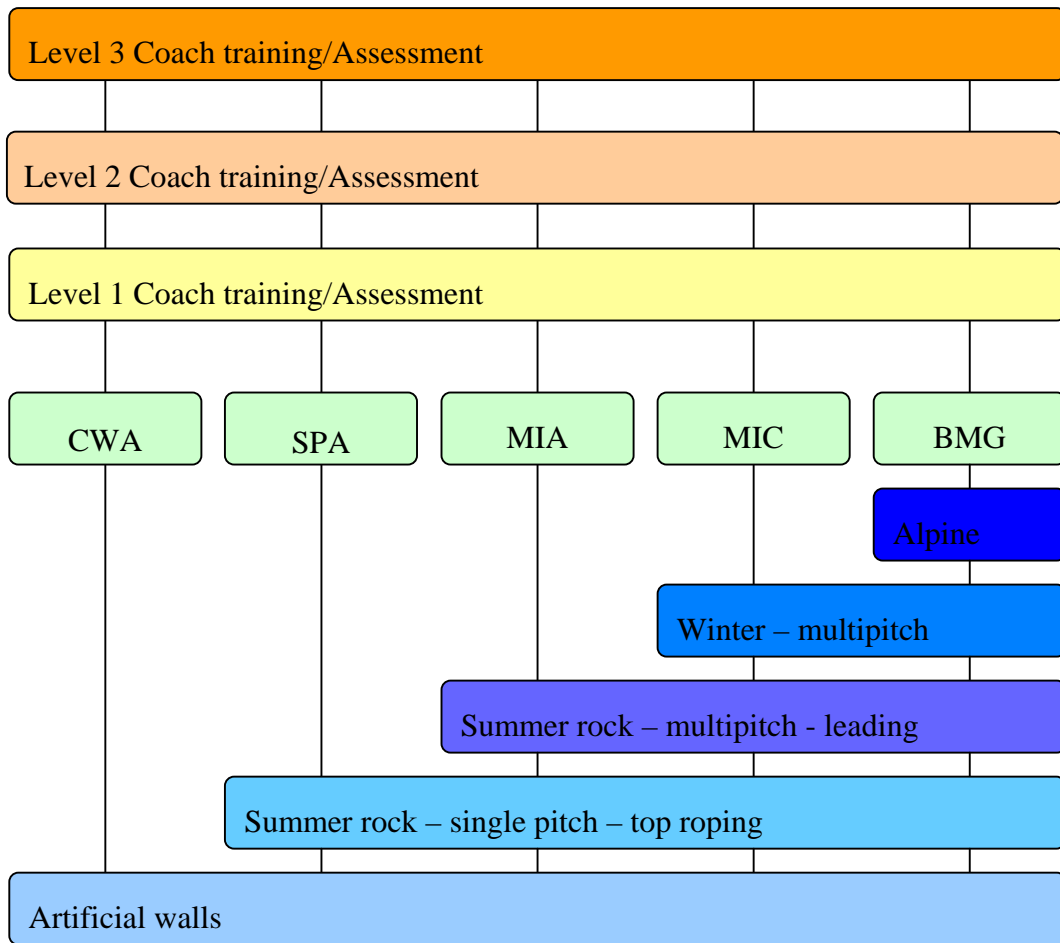


Figure 1 – Example of how a coaching scheme could work in parallel with the MLT awards for the coaching of climbing and roped mountaineering. Three levels are used as illustration only.

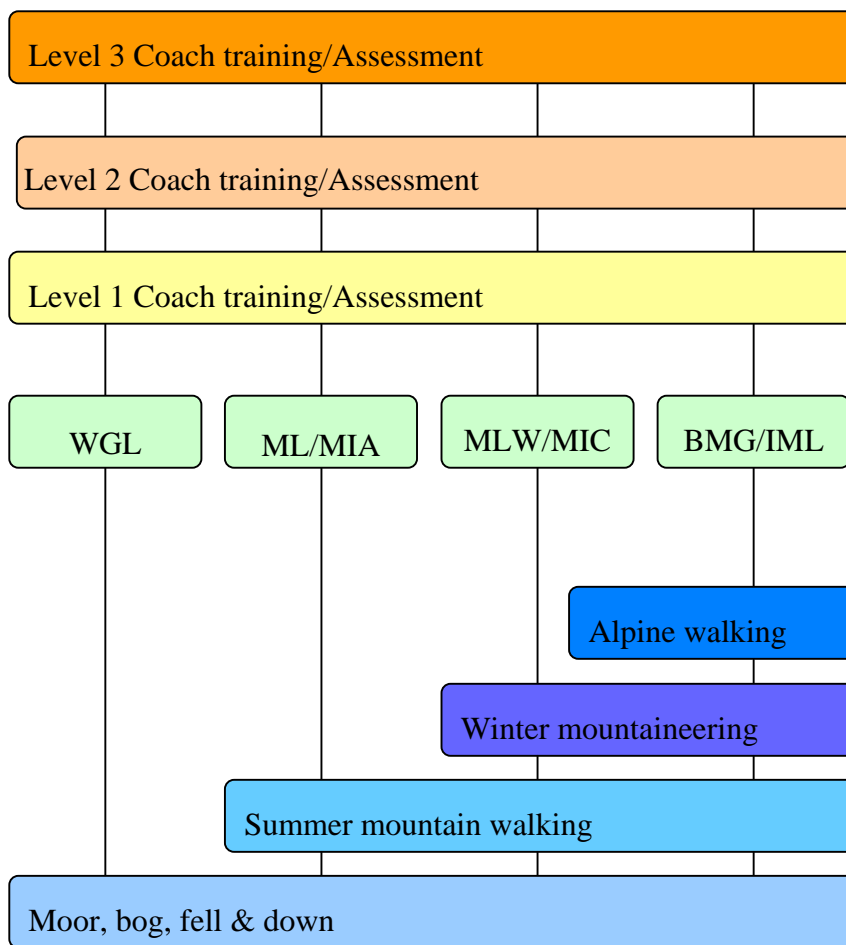


Figure 2 – Example of how a coaching scheme could work in parallel with the MLT awards for the coaching of walking and non-roped winter mountaineering. Three levels are used as illustration only.

3.4 Develop a separate coaching system

This approach would not use the existing MLT awards; instead, the client management competencies within the existing awards would be incorporated into a new scheme.

For example, imagine an indoor climbing coach qualification. Within the model discussed in the previous section, the CWA would be used to train competency in fundamental party management skills and the parallel coaching system to train coaching skills.

Conversely, in creating a separate coaching system, then using the same example, the contents of the CWA would be incorporated into an indoor climbing coach qualification.

The eventual outcome of parallel and separate coaching systems is the same. The difference is in how the skills are packaged up to be trained and assessed.

There would be much duplication of the existing awards within a separate coaching system, and so would likely not be the most effective use of resources.

3.5 Creation of a replacement coaching system

This approach would involve the eventual cessation of the existing awards and their replacement with an entirely new coaching system. The question of UKCC alignment would also have to be addressed.

In effect, this would be the same as developing a separate coaching system, discussed previously; the only difference is that the existing awards would stop being delivered. If the existing schemes were scrapped and replaced, it would be necessary to provide transfer courses. These would allow existing award holders to both up-skill and accredit their prior learning.

The BCU are re-developing their awards as UKCC qualifications and are also providing transfer courses. Such a major upheaval has understandably created much debate within the organisation. Major changes such as these are never easy and require clear marketing in order to ensure user and stake holder support.

A re-vamp of the entire award scheme would be both lengthy and expensive. Whilst it may allow for a shorter overall progression through a coaching system for some individuals, it could disenfranchise many existing award holders. Furthermore, MLT stakeholders such as outdoor education centres and voluntary youth organisations have great faith in the existing schemes, and have made no call for such radical changes.

4.0 Conclusion

The MCG tasked the NSG to look at the issue of coaching within climbing / mountaineering and to find a common and workable approach. Meeting for 15 months, the NSG was the first time a standing committee had been formed to investigate the issue coaching within Mountaineering.

The NSG consulted widely and sought opinions from a range of people, including freelance trainers and national centre staff. A watching brief was kept on national developments, namely the UKCC.

It became clear that much Mountaineering coaching has occurred for many years, but that the existing MLT awards do not fully address the needs of all trainers, leading to coaching knowledge being disseminated piecemeal.

The existing MLT schemes mirror the traditional mountaineer's apprenticeship: walking, then climbing, then winter mountaineering. However, this no longer reflects the way in which many people are introduced to Mountaineering.

The NSG felt that overhauling the existing schemes would, at this stage, be too much of a revolution, and that building upon existing foundations would likely be a better use of resources. To use a phrase coined by the chairman 'evolution not revolution' should be the aim.

The creation of a coaching system that enhances what is already in place provides flexibility, but it cannot be assumed that a seamless integration with the existing schemes is possible. Barriers to the coaching pathway would need to be addressed.

The development of an integrated coaching system for Mountaineering would require the agreement of the three councils and the five training boards. Endorsement of the NSG's findings at Board level within these organisations should be sought.

Creating a world class coaching system is seen as a priority within the UK, a desire which has not come about simply because of the 2012 Olympics. The UKCC pre-dates London's selection as host city, for example. Development requires funding, and now is a good time for Mountaineering to seek support from the home nation sports councils.

The NSG make these specific recommendations:

- Development of a coaching system to be recognised as a priority for Mountaineering.
- Funding is sought from the home nation sports councils to support coaching developments
- The NSG, or similar representative body, is tasked with:
 1. investigating the implications of adopting (or not) the UK Coaching Framework,
 2. producing detailed and costed plan(s) of the option(s) selected by the MCG. The options as highlighted in section 3 of this report.
 3. For the option(s) selected by the MCG, take account of the HSE recognition of the four equal methods of demonstrating competency:
 - to hold a relevant qualification
 - to hold an equivalent qualification
 - to have received appropriate in-house training
 - to be competent through experience.

Appendix 1

Attendance list for the six NSG meetings.

A black block indicates that a member attended the meeting. Three members (Neil Gresham, Martin Chester and George McEwan) were not invited to join the NSG until the August '08 meeting.

Members	2.12.2006	21.04.07	22.06.07	29.08.07	23.11.07	29.02.08
Brian Griffiths	█	█	█	█	█	█
Steve Long	█	█	█	█	█	█
Eddie Cooper				█		
Angela Carlin			█	█	█	
Trevor Fisher			█	█	█	
Jon Garside	█	█	█	█	█	█
Dave Binney	█	█	█	█	█	
Kevin Howett	█	█	█	█	█	█
Dave Macleod						
Allen Fyffe			█	█	█	█
Mark Reeves	█	█	█		█	█
Neil Johnson	█	█			█	█
Neil Gresham	N/A	N/A	N/A	█	█	█
Martin Chester	N/A	N/A	N/A	█	█	█
George McEwan	N/A	N/A	█	█	█	█
Andy Say - observer	█	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Phill Thomas - observer	N/A	N/A	█	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scott Muir - observer	N/A	N/A	█	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix 2

National Occupational Standards

1. Who invented them?

National Occupational Standards (NOS) for promoting physical activity have been developed by SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning, covering sport and fitness, play work, the outdoors and the caravan industry, in conjunction with employers and Health Scotland.

2. Why?

The improvement of the nation's health through increased physical activity is a key pillar of Department of Health policy. Key aims of which include:

- To ensure that people in all parts of society get the information that they need to understand the links between activity and better health;
- To develop and maintain long-lasting, high quality physical and social environments to support inactive people to become active.

SkillsActive and its partners believe that these National Occupational Standards in Promoting Physical Activity will contribute to these aims and can assist a variety of workers to make a positive impact on the health of the nation.

3. What are they?

National occupational standards are statements of skills, knowledge and understanding needed for effective performance in a job role and are expressed as outcomes of competent performance. NOS specify standards of performance that people are expected to achieve in their work. They are approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) which means that they are supported by government and cover the whole of the UK.

The standards offer a framework for good employment practice whether people are working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

NOS are not training courses.

4. How are they structured?

NOS are organised into units of competence. Each 'unit' describes an area of work and has a front page summary with the activities separated out into 'elements' with associated performance statements (what you must do). These are detailed descriptions of the activities which represent effective performance of the tasks within the unit, a range of situations or circumstances (what you must cover), and 'knowledge', the underpinning knowledge and understanding needed to effectively carry out tasks and responsibilities within the particular job role or function. The NOS for promoting physical activity do not have an N/SVQ qualification structure and therefore do not have levels.

5. Who will use them?

The NOS for promoting physical activity have been written in a generic way so as not to be prescriptive and so that they are relevant to a range of people in a range of paid or

unpaid jobs. The standards will be relevant to all categories of worker identified in the Scottish report on physical activity workforce development:

- Category 1 – those who promote activity as a core remit of their post (e.g. PE teachers);
- Category 2 – those for whom it forms a key part of their work but is not the main focus of their remit (e.g. nursery teachers);
- Category 3 – those who play a supporting role in the promotion of activity (e.g. classroom assistants).
-

6. Are they relevant?

Good question! SkillsActive consider that NOS units or elements can easily be turned into learning outcomes for training courses, simply by saying: "By the end of the course, candidates will know how to..." and then list the standards. The units which make up the NOS for promoting physical activity have not been accredited as an N/SNVQ.

7. How do I find out more?

- www.skillsactive.com
- www.exerciseregister.org
- www.healthscotland.com
- Let's make Scotland more active, A strategy for physical activity 2002, Scottish Physical Activity Task Force
- Choosing Health? Choosing Activity, A consultation on how to increase physical activity, 2004, Department of Health.

8. Acknowledgements

SkillsActive and Health Scotland from whose booklet "Promoting Physical Activity – A Guide to the National Occupational Standards" most of the foregoing was lifted.