

Preparing For Premier League Coaching

I really enjoyed the item on the Bowls Victoria BV website, March 2020, where one of our Victorian premier league bowls clubs advertised for a head coach.

Of the 10 clubs comprising premier league, to my knowledge, one club has a coach in the true sense of the word, where the other clubs nominate their gun paid recruit in the role of coach without too much done in the craft of coaching (teams).

This was the guts of the role, objectives as advertised with these 5 points:

- Work with our other accredited coaches to develop and implement coaching programs for all members, with a focus on team development, the role in a team and game plans.
- Improve member skills and knowledge of the game, as well as enjoyment.
- Operate in a team environment, liaising with fellow coaches and selection committees.
- Provide both group and individual coaching.
- Strong communication, planning and people skills.

I have had such a gig as head coach of a premier league club three times over the years.

My observations on the five points above in order are thus:

1. In every instance I found fellow coaches only wanted to learn from me how to play better and shrank from sharing a load in coaching; and when we read team development that can mean many things to many people and this is where some PD as in service seminars and workshops from BA/ STA and our NCAG can provide the direction, provide the competencies for these aspiring coaches especially as it should be stuff in sync. with the national interpretation and direction. I really liked reading the reference to team role and game plans essential ingredients for successful teams. But if the applicant coach has reservations about their knowledge and skill, why do we not have PD programs on offer occasionally on these very topics.

Lachlan Tighe
Path to Premier league coaching

2. All coaches would do this facet quite adequately.
3. Again even in lower grades, coaches will encounter this aspect.
4. My experience shows that most coaches really have little idea on conducting sessions for sizable groups; they are good at one on one coaching or even very small groups; another PD topic of a practical nature for coaches interested in a pathway to elite performance coaching.
5. We read this, strong communication, but do those at management know what is strong communication? I am unsure what is meant by the term! For me this point 5 is unnecessary as coaches have to be able to communicate to be credible in the role.

I would add a separate point in an advert to those above and stated thus:

- Be capable of making a positive difference for and with the club as an indicator of your leadership qualities.

My home state, Victoria, has 10 premier league clubs and forty division one clubs as the next tier of competition level below premier.

Add to that 16 regions with male and female representative teams vying for the state championship, all of whom should have a coach as elite representative teams. That amounts to a possible 32 coaches having an opportunity to coach at elite level.

Thus BV has maybe a capacity of an audience of 82 prospective coaches able to use some PD to elevate their skills to be even better coaches, elite level even, and to be comfortable enough to apply for premier league coach positions knowing they satisfy those points from the club above.

How good would that be to know as a club you had 82 suitable applicants for your head coach position?

Fantastic!!!

Great to read (the premier clubs initiative), but it caused me to wonder about the leadership role of BV here.

Is BV preparing coaches for the future role as a premier league (elite) coach?

Lachlan Tighe
Path to Premier league coaching

Is BV able to identify prospects for any future state coach position?
Has BV a coach committee to direct a program?
Has BV a HP committee wherein coaches are in their scope of activity and plans?

A suggestion in answer to my own questions above.

BV could host an annual one day Coach program (seminar / practical workshop / conference) with the topics in that advert by the premier league club as a start for content. Next they could refer to their joint BA Pathway coach advert content as extra topics for the future. Then BV has activated a tangible role for their HP and coaches committee and even integrate their new CoachForce project as a part of the annual program.

Maybe such an annual program could be held the day before the BV Open in Shepparton, gives focus to the coaches, may attract more participant coaches to compete in the Open.

Remember this annual program would be planned by a committee separate from the Open event committee thus ensuring no overload on the same old hard workers.

And if November is not timely, look to another month and whatever is done look and produce a workshop or conference, whatever the term, as is warranted.

And cost is not an issue as PD in professions is a member paid expectation. The recipient member is getting the benefit hence they pay for their own development. No different with the bowls coach.

And as all this is part and parcel of the overall HP feeder system for elite coaches it implies for me that BA, with BV as our STA, using the expertise of the NCAG within BA has the pivotal role to provide PD for relevant coaches in their elite feeder system.

And just as I was finalizing this article late May 2020 I read the BV website again for some information and discovered that, Essendon club

Lachlan Tighe
Path to Premier league coaching

included, there are eight Victorian clubs who are using the BV website to advertise for a head coach or similar role.

BV has the ammunition cited above to fire at BA to say let's provide PD for coaches with elite level aspirations as part of our mutual responsibility as controlling bowls bodies to give credence to pathways for coaches in bowls within the state, within Australia.

Would it be a beautiful day when all premier league teams and all Regional teams in Victoria have a well trained elite coach to service their aspirations.

And those coaches at clubs below Premier level should know there is a pathway for them from their current club position to be a contender for a future position with a premier league club as part of their pathway as coaches.

And there are ongoing PD programs for coaches to help advance their aspirations.

Gee even other states would, should, relish that service, that resource, for such coaches.

I look forward to that day, sooner than later too.

Go to it BV!

Lachlan Tighe, 2020