

## “Inclusion, Didactics and Education: “Fairer Coaching” as a training program for european coaches”

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### **Riassunto:**

La premessa teorica che circonda il concetto di *coaching* equo come obiettivo educativo centrale nella formazione degli allenatori in tutti i paesi europei, è fondata sulla comprensione che il ruolo di un allenatore vada oltre la semplice direzione delle prestazioni atletiche; si tratta di creare un ambiente inclusivo ed equo per tutti gli atleti, con l'obiettivo di far sì che gli stessi atleti possano fiorire come esseri umani.

**Parole chiave:** inclusione, didattica, educazione

**Abstract:** The theoretical premise surrounding the concept of fair coaching as a central educational focus in training coaches across European countries, is grounded in the understanding that a coach's role extends beyond merely directing athletic performance; it encompasses creating an inclusive, equitable environment for all athletes with the aim of letting the same athletes flourishing as human beings first.

**Keywords:** inclusion, didactics, education

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### **A Theoretical Premise**

The theoretical premise surrounding the concept of *fair coaching* as a central educational focus in training coaches across European countries, is grounded in the understanding that a coach's role extends beyond merely directing athletic performance; it encompasses creating an inclusive, equitable environment for all athletes with the aim of letting the same athletes flourishing as human beings first. A fundamental aspect of fair coaching is the practice of seeking input from various people, which not only enrich the decision-making process but also fosters an environment of respect and collaboration. The entire sport organizations also plays an important role in the knowing all these aspects of the coach-athlete relationship and as a consequence is very important to structure a pedagogy, firstly for coaches, about these themes (Cusano P., Ascione A., 2018).

Relevant literature can be found around this concept which is understood to be, especially in the contemporary era, as an urgent educational need; the Council of Europe, (Rhodes 1992)

quotes as such: “Any form of physical activity that, through organized or unorganized participation, has as its objective the improvement of physical or mental condition, the development of social relationships or the achievement of results in competitions at all levels”. (“Qualsiasi forma di attività fisica che, mediante una partecipazione organizzata o meno, abbia come obiettivo il miglioramento delle condizioni fisiche o psichiche, lo sviluppo delle relazioni sociali o il conseguimento di risultati nel corso di competizioni a tutti i livelli”). (Farnè R., 2022) The concept of fair coaching is deeply rooted in the philosophy of fair play, which emphasizes the importance of participation, respect, and ethical conduct in sports. This perspective holds that sport is not solely a competition but a moral endeavor that cultivates character and community. (“Libro Bianco sullo Sport”, 2007). The integration of Adams' equity theory of motivation highlights that for athletes to feel motivated, they must perceive the rewards and recognition they receive as equitable to their efforts and contributions. This notion underscores the significance of fair treatment and acknowledgment of each individual's role within the team dynamic.

Farné R states:” *Being an environment that educates the child, together with the school and the family, it is considered the ‘third educational agency in our country’.* (“Essendo un ambiente che educa il ragazzo, assieme alla scuola e alla famiglia, viene considerato la “terza agenzia educativa del nostro Paese”). (Farné R.; 2022) so is clearly that a full education for coaches about this theme must be done and well spread across the European countries. Inclusivity, as well integration and interculturality as mindset must be understood as prerequisite for a coach to be relevant for an athlete development, as Farné R. says: “*sporting discipline, in addition to teaching the athlete specifically, develops other ‘important formative aspects, such as cooperation, individual and collective co-responsibility, the sharing of rules and discipline, the dimensions of solidarity and fraternity’.* (“*la disciplina sportiva, oltre a dare un insegnamento specifico all'atleta, sviluppa altri “aspetti formativi importanti, come la cooperazione, la corresponsabilità individuale e collettiva, la condivisione delle regole e della disciplina, le dimensioni della solidarietà e della fraternità”*) (Farné R.; 2022). For this reason, it is important to also to understand the magnificent contribution that sport with its theory and practice and so coaching can give to the awareness of its participants of being full citizens of our world where “*no one is left behind*” (Agenda 2030).

A consistent education for coaches overcoming fragmentation and superficiality about existing educational programs for European coaches about these themes must be urgently done.

Valuable insights regarding the "Fair Coaching" project, which is dedicated to promoting

respect and core values among both professional and grassroots coaches and trainers. ([www.faircoaching.org](http://www.faircoaching.org)). This initiative was funded by the Erasmus+ Sport program, highlighting its commitment to enhancing the quality of coaching across Europe. The primary objectives of the project include fostering equality, inclusion, diversity, and fairness within the coaching landscape of the European sports system. By addressing these vital aspects, the project endeavors to create a more supportive and equitable environment for all athletes, regardless of their background or skill level.

Since the first project, a new Erasmus sport+ project was put forward: “*A Fairer Coaching*”, whose aim was to create an educational course for European coaches to let them learn to encompass all the principles of inclusivity in their coaching practices.

It is known that fair coaching represents a critical dimension of coach-athlete interactions, characterized by the athlete's perception of justice and equity in their relationship with the coach. This perception significantly influences the quality of athlete leadership and overall team feelings and ethics, thus the practice of fair coaching, as mentioned, requires a multifaceted approach, which includes actively seeking and valuing input from a diverse array of people involved in the sport organization and management (parents also), staff and athletes to ensure that all voices are heard and respected. (Bailey R. 2005). Metacognition and self-awareness on the part of coaches is essential, enabling them to reflect on their impact and ensure equitable treatment among all team members. Assuming a “fair coaching” mindset in sport represents a vital principle that embodies honesty, respect, and equality in the coach-player relationship. Coaches hold a considerable influence over the development of their athletes, and it is essential for them to uphold fairness in their interactions to foster a positive and nurturing environment. This work (as it can be seen in the e-course platform) will delve into the concept of fair coaching in sport and its significance in promoting ethical and inclusive coaching theory and practices.

A foundational aspect of fair coaching is the relationship that is built with the athlete considered as a person firstly (Perla, L. 2020). Coaches must be transparent and truthful in their communication with athletes and their families. By being forthright about expectations, feedback, and decisions, coaches can build trust and credibility with their players. As emphasized in the Fair Coaching project initiated in 2020, the promotion of respect and ethical values among coaches is crucial for fostering a culture of fairness in sports (Fair Coaching, 2020). Such transparency not only enhances the coach-athlete relationship but also instills a sense of mutual respect that is vital for team cohesion. As said, fair coaching involves avoiding biases and treating all players equally, so discrimination based on factors such as gender, race,

or skill level can undermine the integrity of the coaching process. Research indicates that coaches may unintentionally exhibit biases toward certain players, negatively impacting coaching effectiveness and athlete development (Smith et al., 2018). This underscores the necessity for coaches to reflect on their biases actively and strive to create an egalitarian atmosphere where every athlete has access to the same opportunities for growth and support. Moreover, effective fair coaching must consider the individual needs of each player. Recognizing and understanding the unique personality traits and preferences of athletes enables coaches to tailor their approach accordingly.

Personalized coaching (Perla. L., 2022) not only maximizes the potential and growth of each athlete but also cultivates a supportive and inclusive environment. Embedding ethical standards into coaching practices helps cultivate an environment of accountability and integrity. Coaches serve as role models, and their adherence to principles of fairness sets a powerful example for their athletes (Chelladurai & Riemer, 2020). Furthermore, self-awareness in coaching allows recognizing personal biases, ensuring that all players feel valued and engaged. Regular one-on-one meetings between coaches and players are vital to address any relational issue that might occur; they can provide a platform for open communication, enabling coaches to understand individual needs and motivations better while also allowing players to express their thoughts and feelings about their experiences. By consistently upholding these standards, coaches encourage athletes to embody similar values, thus shaping their character both within and beyond the realm of sport.

In conclusion, fair coaching in sport is a multifaceted concept that encompasses honesty, equality, and personalized support for athletes. Coaches play a crucial role in the development of the entire personality of the athletes and so advancing fairness and respect within the coaching process, ultimately contributes to the holistic development of them. By committing to the principles of fair coaching, coaches can create a positive and empowering atmosphere, which then will be a learning environment, in which athletes can flourish and realize their full potential. As a good practice, in a sort of metacognitive experience, to implement the project of constructing the educational course of “A fairer coaching”, regular online meetings between all the EU partners as well as transnational meetings have been done: these meetings served to create the full training program (and e-course) for coaches, to strengthen communication, allowing for candid discussions on performance, expectations, and areas for improvement, thereby reinforcing a sense of fairness and inclusion between us as partners of the project and as the core of the e-course designed for EU coaches.

All partners of the project came up with the belief that fair coaching is a holistic concept that encompasses effective communication, self-reflection, ethical principles, and motivational fairness, all aimed at fostering an environment –intended as a *learning environment* first-where every athlete can thrive and succeed as a person in the first place; this belief helped to identify six areas of educational needs for coaches which are the structure for “A Fairer coaching” training program for European coaches, and it has been designed as follows:

Module 1: A Holistic approach

Module 2: Relationship and communication

Module 3: Positive coaching behavior

Module 4: Responsibility and Safety

Module 5: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Module 6: Rules and Regulations

The common perception that springs up from the training program design is that sport coaches, nowadays, urgently need to be educated to develop “new competences” beside the technical ones related to the specific sport practiced.

### **1. New competences for contemporary coaches.**

#### **Affective Neuroscience, Emotional Intelligence and Inclusivity**

Following the premise above, the most insightful reflections that delve into the evolving competences required for sport coaches, are particularly related to two aspects that emphasize emotional intelligence and the wide paradigm of inclusivity. The last findings of affective neuroscience research (J. Panksepp et al, 2020) show that every human being is “holistic”: mind, emotions and body are a unique organism that breath in unison. The leaders of human thinking, belief systems and behaviors are the emotions: thus the findings of D. Goleman about Emotional Intelligence (D. Goleman, 2004) need to be included in training programs for coaches, since is strongly believed that they are the pre-conditions to develop the entire fair coaching skills -as well as a model of education-.

This knowledge that needs to become a full competence -through consistent training

programs for sport coaches-, is fundamental: a single word, mistreatment or abuse can cause and create a deep trauma in the athlete that lead to discomfort, from the invisible to the visible one, with the consequence of bad performance and even drop out (especially for young athletes or kids and grassroots sports). Thus, at the core of becoming an emotionally intelligent coach is developing, as mentioned, metacognitive skills and self-awareness. This fundamental skill entails a deep understanding of personal emotions and moods first and that of others, allowing coaches, as adults of reference, to respond thoughtfully to the young ones rather than react impulsively. Beside the awareness of the self, self-regulation, empathy and social skills –where inclusivity is the core- are the basics of emotional intelligence: it is well known that every element plays a pivotal role in fostering the thriving and supportive team environment that is discussed in this study. Inclusive coaching is not merely about accommodating diversity; it actively promotes empathy, cultural competence, and a commitment to equity and social justice and so it is of our understanding that by integrating these competencies well structured in “A Fairer coaching training program” into coaching practices, coaches will be able to create an environment that nurtures athletes' psychological, moral, emotional and social well-being, fostering their personal growth to reach even more athletic excellence.

A little deepening of the affective neuroscience findings will help to understand the reason why it is crucial to train coaches to these themes that are at the same time at the core of fair coaching but also constitute its foundations. Jaak Panksepp talked to us about the relationality of the brain: affective neuroscience has made a new beginning in offering a “*A new conception of the origins of the mental*” and “*seek to link the affective mind to the animal brain to relate subjective mental states, brain functions, and the natural (instinctive) emotional behaviors that all young mammals must exhibit early in life in order to survive.*” (J. Panksepp, pag.7). This triangulation makes it possible to discover and conceive of the existence of an “*ancient fundamental plane for mental life and the deep neural sources of our values—our primordial feelings.*” (ibi). In his work there is a representation of the Emotional Basic Systems that and it is necessary to instruct the coach of the contemporary era on this finding to let them understand better the structure of the mind, body and soul of each athlete as human being: a summary of the three general types of affects understood as three types of basic learning mechanism

and three representative functions of awareness that frame precisely, understood in general, the cognitive functions integrated and in some way interdependent to the emotional-affective ones along with the functions and capacities of self-awareness and reflexivity. So it is worth to point out how the concept of “basic emotional system” offers a new vision of the entire human being and also of that skill which is fundamental not only for athletes but also for coaches themselves: the “motivation” or what is called by the same author “desire” which is believed to be the starting point for any act or practice.

J. Panksepp, in fact, renames his finding as the Emotional "*System of Research*" or "*Desire*" also called the "*Seeking System*" : as mentioned, "*it seems pertinent to establish a link between the Seeking of the neuroscientific approach and the Secure Attachment behavior of which Bowlby and Ainsworth speak which refers to the "Exploration" typical of this type of attachment, tracing the movement of Desire* " (A.D.Savino, 2024)

The lack of motivation (which is precisely the “Desire System” or “Seeking system” in the neuroscientific findings) is one of the most important risks for an athlete and so it is crucial that coaches develop a strong knowledge about this area or dimension of the interiority of their athletes. The Desire system is located “*in neuronal circuits that arise from lower regions of the brain, including the ventral tegmental area (ventral segmenta area VTA) and the lateral hypothalamus,*” the system “*generates energetic exploration and searching*” along with the accompanying affects, described as “*euphoric arousal*” rather than the simple sensation of reward or pleasure that first behaviorists had spoken of (Ibi). This knowledge is always important for the double benefit that coaches can derive from it: to understand how their own Desire system works and to understand that of their learners-athletes. Involving the cognitive level, the typical feeling of the Desire System is that of “*anticipatory craving*” which, colored by a “*sense of expectation*”, simultaneously generates “*expectations*” (Ibi).

The above considerations lead Panksepp to affirm a fundamental assumption: “*the MFB-LH system is activated more when people are in a state of homeostatic need and there are opportunities to find good sensations in the environment*” (J. Panksepp, pag.91).

Therefore, it is important for the coach to know that in order for the system of Research or Desire to be “activated”, there must be a *state of need, even in a homeostatic sense*, on one hand, and on the other hand an *opportunity to find good sensations in the environment*: in other words, it is fundamental that the coach knows how to build always a positive sport environment since what is at risk first and foremost is the primary desire to do and continue the sport practice. The precious contribution of neuroscientific investigations to this analysis, then, has led us to believe that the subcortical structures are capable of providing this “gratifying affect” that “moves” the whole being of the person, generating a sort of “euphoric affective consciousness” stimulated by the idea of “anticipation” that launches and projects the athlete, child or adolescent or young athlete towards the future and making choices and actions, aimed at obtaining a feeling of general good and well-being, present and prospective.

The emotional-affective and ethical-relational level that lead to the building of the “*fair coaching competencies*” would be the fruitful and end point of this possible meta-cognitive path that is understood and conceived as essential to contemporary coaching development.

It is believed that such a training program and model of approach for EU coaches can lead coaches in incorporating the paradigm of inclusivity as well as emotional competences and interiority understanding of their athlete into their teaching sport practices.

To better understand all these issues and areas of improvements, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the designed program a **SWOT analysis table** has been created, taking in consideration all the previous EU courses that had some limitations, which will be highlighted below in the next dedicated section and tables; the SWOT tool to analyze the existing programs has been used to fully understand all the thematic sections it was needed to think about, explore and expand when reflecting on all the issues related to the ontological category of the “fair coaching”; an integral and virtuous intersection between the analysis of the literature with all the materials and experiences drawn from the existing training programs has been operated, offering relevant outcomes flowing in to the creation of the shared course “A Fairer Coaching” to fully raise the awareness of



the EU coaches who will impact on it and increase their competences on equality, fairness, inclusivity and holistic mindset.

## 2. Previous training programmes evaluated in Italy, Finland, Malta-UK, France, Bulgaria

### ITALY

Name of association providing the course	Name of the course and description	Physical	Online	Website Link & Contacts
Assist Associazione Nazionale Atlete	<p><b>L.E.A. the Leadership Empowerment Academy</b> is an idea of Assist Associazione Nazionale Atlete and consists of a theoretical, but also extremely pragmatic study path to make the ‘grassroots’ world a protagonist in the governance of Italian Sport. LEA wants to build and act a new way of managing sport in Italy, enhancing the talent and skills of women and men who work in sports associations and, more generally, wherever sport is practiced in its various forms.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>		X	<p><a href="https://www.assistitaly.eu/lea/associazionenazionaleatlete@gmail.com">https://www.assistitaly.eu/lea/associazionenazionaleatlete@gmail.com</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:luisarizzitelli.assist@gmail.com">m luisarizzitelli.assist@gmail.com</a></p>



**STRENGTHS:**

- The course is FREE
- The course is online and therefore a minimum of rapport is preserved with opportunities to ask questions live and engage in discussion with the lecturer.
- The course is very recent 2023-2024
- The course is divided by target group: Junior (under 18) and Senior (over 18).

**WEAKNESSES:**

- There is still no possibility to follow the lectures on demand if you cannot follow them live.
- A training platform has not yet been set up to access deferred content or to download materials.
- It is not yet possible to contact lecturers by e-mail, only the course secretariat.

	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is dedicated to all types of coaches of all sports at all levels. It can enable real change at all levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course has been funded by local authorities. Without these funds, change is left to the voluntary work of the Association.</li> </ul>			
Assist Associazione Nazionale Atlete	<p><b>Centro Studi Fair Coaching Cremona</b> The Municipality of Cremona and Assist, with the sponsorship of the University of Verona, created the Faircoaching project with the aim of raising the awareness of adults involved in sport</p>	X		<p><a href="https://www.assistitaly.eu/fair-coaching-cremona/">https://www.assistitaly.eu/fair-coaching-cremona/</a> <a href="mailto:associazionenazionaleatlete@gmail.com">associazionenazionaleatlete@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:luisarizzitelli.assist@gmail.com">luisarizzitelli.assist@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:antonellabellutti.assist@gmail.com">antonellabellutti.assist@gmail.com</a></p>

(trainers/coaches, managers, parents) to be positive examples and pro-social role models to foster the growth, development and expression of the potential of every person, especially young people.  
Training (one seminar for athletes\* and one seminar for coaches\* and managers).  
Participation in the seminars is free of charge.

**SWOT ANALYSIS**



**STRENGTHS:**


- The course is FREE
- The latest edition of the course is very recent 2023-2024
- The course is divided by target group
  - Coaches/managers and technicians
  - Athletes

**WEAKNESSES:**

- The course is face-to-face only.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is very short in duration.</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is for all types of coaches, managers, technicians and athletes of all sports at any level. It can enable real change at all levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course was funded by local authorities. Without these funds, change is left to the voluntary work of the Association.</li> <li>● The course is in-person only: it is replicable at a very high cost.</li> </ul>				
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## FINLAND

Name of association providing the course	Name of the course and description	Physical	Online	Website Link & Contacts
Finnish Olympic Committee	<p><b>Responsible Coach</b> Responsible coach online course introduces you to the principles of responsible and good coaching and to promoting a physically, mentally and socially safe environment. By completing this course, you will show your commitment to act responsibility as a coach. The course is intended for all instructors and coaches working in sports and physical activities. The duration is approximately 60–90 minutes.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>  <p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Made in cooperation with several sport organisations under the leadership of the Finnish Olympic Committee</li> <li>● The course is FREE</li> <li>● Contains the basics to help coaches understand their role as a coach</li> </ul>		X	<a href="https://oppimisareena.fi/enrol/index.php?id=35">https://oppimisareena.fi/enrol/index.php?id=35</a>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is well structured and designed</li> </ul> <p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is fully delivered online</li> <li>● There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches</li> <li>● The course was developed already some years ago. It will need renewing soon.</li> <li>● There is no follow-on course</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course provides a very accessible and affordable route for many coaches.</li> <li>● The course is dedicated to all types of coaches of all sports at all levels. It can enable real change at all levels.</li> </ul>				
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	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding for updating the course is unclear.</li> <li>● The course is too opaque and time-consuming for some coaches.</li> </ul>			
<p>Family Federation of Finland</p>	<p><b>Prevention of violence and harassment in sports clubs</b></p> <p>This online course, created by the Family Federation of Finland, is made for coaches, employees and volunteers of sports clubs. In this course, you will learn about preventing and addressing violence against children in sports clubs.</p> <p>It takes about one hour to complete the course. Through a link at the end of the course you can download all the materials and instructions which have been referenced throughout it. After completing the course, you receive a certificate of completion</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>		<p>X</p>	<p><a href="https://context.training/tms/vaestoliitto/prevention/">https://context.training/tms/vaestoliitto/prevention/</a></p>





**STRENGTHS:**

- Content expertise from outside sport
- The course is FREE
- The course is well structured and designed

**WEAKNESSES:**

- Content not directly replicable in other countries
- The course is fully delivered online. There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches.

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

- The course provides a very accessible and affordable route for many coaches.
- The course is dedicated to all types of coaches of all sports at all levels. It

	<p>can enable real change at all levels.</p> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sports organisations do not commit to promoting the course to their coaches.</li> <li>● Too detailed, and does not address people who have not encountered situations of inappropriate behaviour.</li> </ul>			
<p>Family Federation of Finland</p>	<p>Harassment in sport course for young people (This is only in Finnish)</p> <p>The Harassment in Sport online course for young people aged 13-25 is aimed at athletes, sports administrators, coaches and club officials involved in sports activities. The course is free of charge and can also be taken in parts. The course can also be used in training courses for young people, in schools and at youth sports camps.</p> <p>The Harassment in Sport e-learning course covers what constitutes sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. The course will provide tools to act if a young person encounters or perceives harassment in sport. The course will also reflect on the importance of personal</p>		X	<p><a href="https://www.hyvakysy.fi/kurssi/hairinta-urheilussa-kurssi-nuorille/">https://www.hyvakysy.fi/kurssi/hairinta-urheilussa-kurssi-nuorille/</a></p>

boundaries as part of well-being.

**SWOT ANALYSIS**



**STRENGTHS:**

- Content expertise from outside sport
- The course is FREE
- The course is well structured and designed
- The course is not very time consuming


**WEAKNESSES:**

- The course is fully delivered online. There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with others.

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

- The course is aimed at young operators and therefore appeals to this particular target group.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Easy to study without registration</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reaching young people can be difficult.</li> </ul>			
<p>MIELI Mental Health Finland</p>	<p>Mental Well-being for Young Athletes, Online Course for all Coaches</p> <p>The Mental Well-being for Young Athletes online course for all coaches (duration approx. 30 minutes) is designed for the club coaches of 10–15-year-old children and young people engaged in various sports. The course introduces methods that allow coaches to support and improve the mental well-being of young athletes in training</p> <p>In addition to coaches, the course is recommended for people who are involved in the activities of children’s and young people’s sports clubs, such as club management and guardians.</p>		X	<p><a href="https://mieli.fi/en/mental-well-being-for-young-athletes-online-course-for-all-coaches/">https://mieli.fi/en/mental-well-being-for-young-athletes-online-course-for-all-coaches/</a></p>

<p>MIELI Mental Health Finland</p>	<p><b>Mental Well-being for Young Athletes – Advanced Online Course</b> The Mental Well-being for Young Athletes – Advanced Online Course (duration approx. 3 hours) is designed for the coaches of 10–15-year-old children and young people engaged in various sports. The course explains how coaches can take the Mental Well-being for Young Athletes methods into use in a systematic manner to promote the mental well-being of young athletes.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>  <p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is FREE</li> <li>● Content expertise from outside sport</li> <li>● Very useful information for all coaches and also relevant for experienced coaches.</li> <li>● The course is well structured and designed</li> </ul>		<p>X</p>	<p><a href="https://mieli.fi/en/mental-well-being-for-young-athletes-advanced-online-course/">https://mieli.fi/en/mental-well-being-for-young-athletes-advanced-online-course/</a></p>
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	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is fully delivered online. There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course provides a very accessible and affordable route for many coaches.</li> <li>• The course is dedicated to all types of coaches of all sports at all levels. It can enable real change at all levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer coaches in particular may find it difficult to find three hours of time to complete the course.</li> </ul>			
<p>Finnish Coaches Association</p>	<p>These three 2-3 hour workshop-style training sessions will provide coaches and club staff with the knowledge and understanding to develop and implement people-centred coaching in a club environment. - Workshop 1: People-centred coaching</p>	<p>X</p>		<p><a href="https://www.suomenvalmentajat.fi/valmentajakoulutukset/kehittyvakoutsityopaja/">https://www.suomenvalmentajat.fi/valmentajakoulutukset/kehittyvakoutsityopaja/</a></p>

- Workshop 2: Evolving coaching culture  
- Workshop 3: Developing the athlete-coach relationship

**SWOT ANALYSIS**



**STRENGTHS:**

- Contains the basics to help coaches understand their role as a coach
- Provides a strong value base for people-oriented coaching and practical skills.
- The workshop provides an opportunity to discuss with other coaches and share experiences.
- The workshops are well structured and designed
- Educators are skilled and experienced

**WEAKNESSES:**

- Only a small number of coaches attend the workshop at a time. It takes several training groups and a lot of time

	<p>to raise awareness on a large scale.</p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides a real opportunity to learn and understand things in more depth.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The workshops are inexpensive, but there is still a charge.</li> </ul>			
<p>Sport Integrity Australia (this is example of other courses available</p>	<p><b>Play by the rules</b> Play by the Rules is now a unique collaboration between Sport Integrity Australia, Sport Australia, the Australian Human Rights Commission. Play by the Rules provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment, child safety, inclusion and integrity issues in sport.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">X</p>	<p><a href="https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/login/index.php">https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/login/index.php</a></p>



**SWOT ANALYSIS**



**STRENGTHS:**

- High expertise behind training course
- The course is FREE
- Contains the basics to help coaches understand their role in safeguarding young athletes

**WEAKNESSES:**


- The course is fully delivered online. There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches.

**OPPORTUNITIES:**


- Serves as a model for other trainings on the same topic
- The course provides a very accessible and affordable route for many coaches.

	<p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires registration , which can turn users away</li></ul>			
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## MALTA

Name of association providing the course	Name of the course and description	Physical	Online	Website Link & Contacts
ICOACHKIDS	<p>Making Sport Safe: This is a short introduction to safeguarding children and coaches in sport. The course is split into 6 short videos introducing the notion of safeguarding, the types of abuse, the symptoms, and what to do if we suspect a child is being abused. It also provides guidance for coaches so they can also keep themselves safe.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>  <p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is FREE</li> <li>• The course is not very time consuming and contains the basics to help coaches understand their role in safeguarding young athletes</li> </ul>		X	<a href="https://icoachkids.org/learn/safesport">https://icoachkids.org/learn/safesport</a>

	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is fully delivered online through videos.</li> <li>● There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches</li> <li>● The course was developed 6 years ago. It will need renewing soon.</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course provides a very accessible and affordable route into safeguarding for a large number of coaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Although the content is universal, it does not apply equally across countries and coaches need to interpret it and to familiarise themselves with their local and with national provision</li> </ul>		
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<p>UK Coaching</p>	<p>Safeguarding Children in Sport: This is a short introduction to safeguarding children in sport. The course introduces the notion of safeguarding in the context of UK law, the types of abuse, the symptoms, and what to do if child abuse is suspected. The course is compulsory for coaches working with children and vulnerable people in the UK.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>  <p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is not very time consuming and contains the basics to help coaches understand their role in safeguarding young athletes</li> <li>• The face to face version of the coach allows opportunities to ask questions and discuss the topic with other coaches</li> </ul>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p><a href="https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/workshops/safeguarding-protecting-children">https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/workshops/safeguarding-protecting-children</a></p>
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	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course was developed a few years ago. It will need renewing soon. The landscape in this area changes quickly.</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course provides a very accessible and affordable route into safeguarding for a large number of coaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is not free. There is an associated cost which may deter coaches from taking it</li> <li>• The course applies only to UK</li> </ul>			
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<p>Athlete 365 (IOC)</p>	<p><b>Beyond Performance: Empowering Athletes and Entourage</b></p> <p>This course is accessible through the Athlete365 portal of the International Olympic Committee. It proposes a new way to conceptualise working with young talented athletes. The main premise is that coaches have a responsibility to coach in a holistic manner which not only develops the athletic ability of the young athlete, but also safeguards their wellbeing and prepares them for life in and outside of sport.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>  <p><b>STRENGTHS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course is FREE</li> <li>• The course is not very time consuming and contains the basics to help coaches understand their role in coaching young athletes holistically</li> <li>• The course is based on latest research into this area</li> </ul>		<p>X</p>	<p><a href="https://olympics.com/athlete365/courses/beyond-performance-better-people-better-athletes/">https://olympics.com/athlete365/courses/beyond-performance-better-people-better-athletes/</a></p>
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	<p><b>WEAKNESSES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course is fully delivered online through videos.</li> <li>● There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches</li> <li>● The course is mostly focused towards elite athletes</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The course provides a very accessible and affordable route into holistic coaching for a large number of coaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many coaches will not consider themselves “performance coaches” and therefore may not access the Athlete365 resources.</li> <li>● Although the content is universal, it does not apply equally across</li> </ul>		
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	<p>countries and coaches need to</p> <p>interpret it in relation to their local and national provision</p>			
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## SWEDEN

Name of association providing the course	Name of the course and description	Physical	Online	Website Link & Contacts
ENGSO	<p><b>SCORE:</b> ‘Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality’ (SCORE) is a European project supported by the Erasmus+ Programme. Its toolkit/training aims at promoting equal opportunities, namely gender equality in coaching, and focuses on increasing the number of employed and volunteer women coaches at all levels of sport, as well as enhancing knowledge on gender equality in coach education. It is targeted at sports and coaching organizations at all levels, more specifically coaches, trainers, former athletes, volunteers and decision makers in the field of coaching.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote gender equality in coaching</li> <li>• To promote the representation of employed and volunteer women coaches in the coaching workforce</li> <li>• To increase the number of women coaches by creating tools to support women coaches to develop towards the coaching of high performance</li> <li>• To include evidence-based information about gender and gender equality in coach education appropriate to all levels</li> </ul>		X	<p><a href="https://www.engso-education.eu/projects/score/">https://www.engso-education.eu/projects/score/</a></p>

## SWOT ANALYSIS



### STRENGTHS:

- The course is free
- It's easily accessible
- Provides good insights on how to achieve gender equality in the sport clubs, overcome social barriers and develop a career in sport for females coaches
- Provides insights on how to evaluate

### WEAKNESSES:

- Not an online course, but a toolkit.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Provide tools to assess the context and plan
- Provides exercises and links to other tools or documents you can consult and deepen the knowledge and the expertise

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offers opportunity to develop own plan</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides a lot of good contents that might not be explored because of the format</li> </ul>			
Special Olympics	<p><b>Sport: Coaching Level 1 Sport Assistant (45 min):</b> Special Olympics is world's largest sports organization for athletes with intellectual disabilities (ID). This specific course is the first stage of training in the Special Olympics Global Coach Education System. It is based on the Special Olympics methodology of unified pairs. The course is designed to give volunteers an insight into the Sports Assistant role, to understand what is required of them, how they must conduct themselves, and how they can develop. It aims to equip trainees to be able to support coaches in and around the field of play during sport training and competition, with the specific focus of working with athletes with intellectual disabilities.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>		X	<a href="https://resources.specialolympics.org/online-learning-portal">https://resources.specialolympics.org/online-learning-portal</a>



**STRENGTHS:**

- It is developed through the same software used for the A Fairer Coaching e-learning training, so it's good for the consortium to have a good reference also for the technical process of development of the online course
- Accessible for people with visual impairments
- Gives you insights not only on how to be a good coach/sport assistant but also a good mentor
- It's a really clear visual identity that directly connects you with Special Olympics
- The contents are clear and the course is quite interactive

**WEAKNESSES:**

- Registration process is not difficult but a bit long
- You can only use it if you create a profile and register on the platform
- You can not skip or move around the modules of the training, so you need to go through the

	<p>whole course even if you already know some contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It can be quite long</li> </ul> <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Since it's based on Special Olympics' peer methodology, it offer contents that do not limited to being a good coach but also to improve your profile when it comes to inclusion</li> <li>● The methodology might allow you to develop a profile that is able to create coaching activities that are not readapted but are inclusive from the beginning and can be used with athletes with Intellectual Disabilities or not</li> <li>● 3 more levels of this training course are already provided</li> <li>● Provides people with takeaways and additional resources + you can test your knowledge at the end of the training course</li> </ul> <p><b>THREATS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The evaluation module is not particularly difficult to make so people could end the course and get certification without actually going through the whole contents</li> </ul>			
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Special Olympics	<p><b>And 2. Sport: Coaching Level 2 Coaching Assistant (75 min):</b></p> <p>Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for athletes with intellectual disabilities (ID). This specific course is the first stage of training in the Special Olympics Global Coach Education System. It is based on the Special Olympics methodology of unified pairs. Specifically, Level 2 provides coaches with a basic understanding of the principles of coaches coaching SO Athletes. It provides them with the knowledge to begin actively supporting a certified coach in training and competition environments, building an inclusive environment. Some topics highlighted in the lessons of the course are:</p> <p>Communication and Behaviour, Observation and feedback and Sport Assistants' role in coaching, Coaching the individual, Unified Sport and meaningful involvement, Supporting a lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity.</p>		X	<p><a href="https://resources.specialolympics.org/online-learning-portal">https://resources.specialolympics.org/online-learning-portal</a></p>
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ENGSO	<p><b>Come In:</b> It's an Erasmus+ funded project. The toolkit/training aims to offer the chance to create opportunities for sport entities at grassroot level to enable inclusion. The specific objective is to support coaches, educators, volunteers, youth workers and leaders to create inclusive sport experiences aiming to increase participation of young people with disabilities in sports.</p> <p>Inside the toolkit you might found: EU's context in the field of sport and disability, disability definitions, Special Olympics Unified Sports methodology, good practices, pilot activities and their feedback, obstacles, barriers and possible solutions, <i>How to create an inclusive sport session</i>, and finally advocacy argument to push the programme.</p>		X	<a href="https://www.comeinproject.com/toolkit/">https://www.comeinproject.com/toolkit/</a>
AMA	<p>The online training is dedicated to sports coaches. The training lasts half an hour up to an hour.</p> <p>The coaches will learn about positive coaching behaviors and how they can create a positive and motivational environment for the athletes.</p> <p><b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b></p>		x	<p>Module 3: Positive Coaching Behaviour - Create a Positive Motivational Climate - "A Fairer Coaching" eLearning course   Rise 360</p>





**STRENGTHS:**

- Uses a lot of real life examples
- Is based on coaches experience .  
Lots of pictures and videos to illustrate

**WEAKNESSES:**

- The course is fully delivered online
- There is no opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic with other coaches

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

- The course provides a very accessible and affordable route into positive coaching for a large number of coaches.

**THREATS:**

- Many coaches will not consider themselves as needing the training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before they follow the training there are aprioris about positive coaching being a bad influence on the performance of the athletes</li> <li>• The more competitive the coaches are the less interested they might be.</li> </ul>			
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### 3. A “fairer coaching” training program

It could be said that “A Fairer coaching” training program constitutes a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the multifaceted needs of young athletes that need to be known by a coach and prioritizes their overall and human development, achieving a delicate balance between excellence in sport and lifelong well-being: this attitude was the result of all the shared interactions occurred among partners debates and analysis of the previous training program, as shown above.

It also could be analyzed through a SWOT table this new course:



#### STRENGTHS:

- This training program overcomes the fragmentation of the EU existing training programs for coaches, it offers a shared vision on the competence of the “fair coaching”

- It creates a shared model of educational training for coaches
- It emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and fairness in coaching as the basic knowledge and competence of the coach for the full development of the athlete
- It offers a new holistic approach to the concept of coaching in sport
- It is not sport-specific and could be used in different sports in different levels
- It has been tested by coaches from different EU countries

#### WEAKNESSES

- There could be other contributions from other EU countries there are not present in this model
- There could be different aspects of different sports needs not taken in consideration in this model
- It is difficult to measure effectiveness of the course in EU level
- There is not tutoring/mentoring for the coaches on in connection to the of the course

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- It creates a strong net within the EU countries
- It fosters and creates a debate within the EU countries
- It fosters a flourishing of good practices of fair coaching
- It stimulates further research and debate about fair coaching
- It can be easily included to different coach educations/trainings
- It can be studied as a whole or splitted into modules

#### THREATS

- It could be understood as the only model of Fair coaching present in Europe

- It could be felt as still not complete as a model of education for EU coaches
- Coaches are not reached as much as wanted to join to the course
- Coaches might find the contents too theoretical and can't adapt the learnings to the practise
- Athlete-centered/holistic approach that course represents is too difficult to understand in some authoritarian coaching cultures

### **Conclusioni**

The Importance of a training program for EU Sport coaches “A Fairer Coaching”

By virtue of all the SWOT analysis of the existing programs conducted among partners through debates, meetings, social dialogues in a variety of different manners depicted above, in order to overcome the fragmentation, as said, and to enhance women and disables' participation to the entire sport life we ended up to design the “A Fairer Coaching” training program: it offers not only an enriched view and shared hermeneutics of all the previous programs but also a new way of conveying the ethical information and educational principles, thanks to a full and complete editing of the same course: a variety of means and tools such as graphs, videos, pictures, photos as well as texts, self-evaluation and progress tests are encompassed in the program to offer an utter vision and philosophy with practical examples and exercises of this sensitive and essential matter.

Coaching plays a crucial role in the development and success of athletes in the world of sports. A coach is not only responsible for teaching skills and strategies but also for shaping the character and values of their athletes as it is well described in Lyle's pivotal work (Lyle, J., 2002). Among the others, the first of the fundamental principles that guide effective coaching is the concept of fairness along with the holistic approach and mindset (C. Mattel, Lara-Bercial S., (2023). Fair coaching is essential for creating a positive and supportive environment where athletes can thrive and reach their full potential as it encompasses several key aspects that contribute to the overall well-being of athletes. Firstly, fair coaching involves treating all athletes with respect and dignity, regardless of their skill level or performance. A fair coach values each individual and provides equal opportunities for growth and improvement. It's crucial that coaches foster a culture of inclusivity and respect; when athletes feel appreciated and recognized,

they are far more motivated and empowered to excel in their sport. (Chelladurai, P., & Riemer, H. A. 2020).

Furthermore, fair coaching emphasizes transparency and honesty in all interactions. Coaches who are fair and transparent in their feedback and decision-making processes not only build trust with their athletes but also enhance the overall effectiveness of their coaching. This trust forms the foundation of a strong coach-athlete relationship, as in the principles of the Attachment theory, the trust also enables effective communication and collaboration toward shared goals. (Davis, L., et al. 2013). Athletes are more likely to respond positively to constructive criticism and guidance when they feel confident that their coach has their best interests at heart, as a reference figure for their whole development (Savino, A.D. 2024).

In addition, fair coaching promotes accountability and integrity both on and off the field. Coaches who uphold high ethical standards become role models for their athletes to emulate. By exemplifying fairness and integrity in their actions, coaches instill critical values such as sportsmanship, teamwork, and perseverance in their athletes. These values are essential, as they not only contribute to success in sports but also shape athletes into responsible and ethical individuals who will carry these lessons into their personal and professional lives.

Moreover, fair coaching involves creating a level playing field for all athletes, which is free from bias or discrimination. Coaches must remain vigilant of their own biases and make conscious efforts to treat all athletes equitably. By offering equal opportunities for development and advancement, coaches empower athletes to overcome challenges and achieve their goals based on merit and effort. This commitment to equity fosters an environment where all athletes can showcase their abilities and potential without fear of favoritism.

Ensuring fair coaching also means addressing and transforming any negative behaviors or cultures within sports teams. (Chelladurai, P., & Saleh, S. D., 1980). Coaches need to actively work on promoting an atmosphere where mutual respect prevails, thereby allowing athletes to feel secure and supported. This proactive stance helps in reducing instances of bullying or exclusion, further reinforcing an inclusive environment that is conducive to learning and growth.

In conclusion, fair coaching is a cornerstone of successful and impactful coaching in sports. (Bounous M. 2022). By embodying principles of respect, transparency, accountability, and equality, coaches can create a nurturing environment where athletes can not only enhance their

athletic performance but also grow as individuals. Fair coaching not only prepares athletes for success on the field but also equips them with vital life skills that they can carry beyond sports. As coaches strive to be fair and just in their approach, they contribute significantly to the growth and development of athletes, shaping them into not just accomplished competitors but also responsible citizens.

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