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this issue

0	MAXIMISING YOUR
	COACHING SESSIONS

ITS YOUR CALL

NEWS ROUND UP 10



British Canoeing in North America

British Canoeing is pleased to announce the confirmation of long standing and hitherto informal arrangements with paddlesports enthusiasts in North America.

While previously operating as BCU North America the new Paddlesports North America (PNA) is incorporated in New York State as a not-for-profit organization and an affiliate organisation member of British Canoeing. In this role PNA will now continue to administer and oversee BCU Personal Performance courses and awarding in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Further to this PNA's role in the delivery of British Canoeing Coaching Awards in North America is also formalised with PNA now recognised as the formal delivery centre for British Canoeing coaching qualifications in North America. In this role PNA will provide and quality assure course delivery in order to ensure and maintain the standards required by British Canoeing.

PNA's mission is to make British
Canoeing's training and education
programs accessible to all, and specific to
the needs of paddlers within North
America, in order to promote paddler
development, safety and stewardship of
the environment. PNA also aim to expand
knowledge and awareness of all
paddlesport-related activities, and
encourage lifetime participation in the
sport through delivery of a long-term
paddler development program.

If I'm based in North America what's in this for me?

With the launch of the PNA, you will have the following initial benefits:

- Discounts on fees for British Canoeing's paddler and coaching awards
- A website www.paddlesportsnorth america.org containing all information needed by paddlers and coaches to progress through British Canoeing's paddlesport system, which is recognized as the gold standard in paddlesport training and education.
- A database that keeps track of PNA members' awards and certifications, as well as membership status.

 A seamless transition in the processing of memberships, awards and certifications.

PNA are also working on additional member benefits, which will be annouced in due course.

If reading this as a paddler or coach based in North America visit www.paddlesportsnorthamerica.org for more information and guidance.

What does this mean in terms of course provision?

In reality, whatever, your current position in terms of award or coaching qualification delivery might be there will be little difference to what should already be happening. This is, however, an opportunity to remind and clarify the position.

All British Canoeing recognised course providers (including those based outside of North America*) wishing to run courses in North America should ensure that you are registered (and if appropriate licensed as Coach educators) with Paddlesports North America (PNA) to do so and that all courses requiring authorisation (3 / 4 / 5 Star Leader training and assessment, FSRT, Moderate and Advanced Water, all foundation and intermediate modules and Level 1 / 2 Coaching Paddlesports qualifications) are authorised through PNA.

What does this mean if I'm a British Coach resident in UK and wanting to run courses in North America.

*British Coaches (including all non resident North American BC Coaches) invited to run courses in North America should initially apply to British Canoeing to complete an annual agreement as an Overseas Deliverer. There is no additional training requirement or fee associated with this, however, you must meet

current Coach update requirements and, in the case of Coach Education courses must hold a Coach Educator License Agreement with your Home Nation.

Once in place you will be able to seek authorisation, where required, through PNA who will be responsible for delivery and the internal verification of courses.

British Coaches (including all non resident North American BC Coaches) should note that without this agreement in place insurance cover is not extended to activity in North America.

British Coaches wishing to apply for this additional agreement to their endorsed delivery status should contact - joanne. simpson@bcu.org.uk

NB - British Coaches should also note that their activities in North America may be considered by North American Border Control agencies as sitting outside standard travel permit agreements and require green card status.

All British Canoeing recognised coaches wishing to seek course authorisation or clarification of course delivery requirements in North America should contact –

Scott Fairty who will be PNA's Interim Administrator and he can be reached at info@paddlesportsnorthamerica.org or 515-999-5762. Please contact Scott for all courses requiring course authorisation.

All British Canoeing recognised course providers invited to run, or wishing to run courses at other international venues (other than in North America) should contact BCU AB for further information or course authorisation –

joanne.simpson@bcu.org.uk

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This is the third article in a series of four that aims to examine how the current motor (movement) learning literature would suggest we best maximise the effectiveness of our coaching sessions. The articles are all linked and although I have tried to make them work as stand alone articles you may find it helpful to read the previous ones.



A quick re-cap of what we have looked at so far

Structuring practice:

- Learning is a 'problem solving' process (Schmitd, 1975).
- There is an optimal level of challenge that facilitates learning (Guadagnoli and Lee 2004).
- As coaches, we need to be able to identify the skill level of the performer, the functional task difficultly of the skill we are coaching and the added challenge of the environment.
- By manipulating the practice environment effectively (using contextual interference and variability of practice) we can further influence the overall challenge (task difficulty) and facilitate learning.
- How we decide to manipulate contextual interference and variability of practice will also depend on whether our learner needs to be able to reduce movement errors, adapt performance to their environment, or quickly and skilfully choose different responses.
- Systematically and gradually increasing the contextual interference in practice sessions will enable the learner to continually be challenged at an optimum level (Porter and Magill, 2010).
- The 'contextual interference effect' highlights how important it is to assess learning after a period of retention/ consolidation, as skill fade is not a linear phenomenon.

Conveying Information

- Actions are best planned and controlled using the movement outcome rather than form (Prinz, 1997).
- Verbal instructions should therefore be related to intended outcome rather than form or kinesthetic information.
- Try to match the skill level for demonstrations, then gender if possible.
- Frame a demonstration so that the learner can focus their attention on the required information. Include verbal cues and outcome related feedback.
- Match the information you give to the needs of the performer. For example, what stage of learning are they in? Are they able to produce the basic movement pattern, sequence and timing of events? Are they focusing on and utilizing the relevant information from their environment?
- Remember that we are usually aiming to help our performer produce a kinesthetic skill, in a constantly changing environment, with as little conscious control as possible. Less information is more!

A detailed explanation of contextual interference, variability of practice, generalised motor programmes, and schema development was given in the first article and an understanding of them is assumed in this one.

DIRECTING THE PERFORMERS FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Those of you who are paying attention will have noticed that I have changed the order of the last two articles. Whilst writing the previous article on 'conveying information' I realised that 'focus of attention' actually related mainly to giving verbal information, so it made sense to cover this next.

In the previous article we looked at how we convey information to those we are coaching through verbal instructions, demonstrations (or other observational learning tools), and practice. Here we will focus a little more on the research relating to the verbal information you give to your performer regarding their focus of attention - F.O.A.



So what do we focus on whilst learning?

The question of what learners should be instructed to focus or achieve it. In other words, the correct form or technique. The basic assumption has been that making learners aware of what they are doing is a requisite for successful performance (Baumeister, 1984). Even in the field of sport psychology to pay explicit attention to technical

WHAT DOES THE CURRENT RESEARCH

There is a trend in current research suggesting that instructing performers to be consciously aware of their body movements during skill execution is not a very effective learning strategy, and can actually undermine performance, learning and reduce automaticity of movements (Baumeister, 1984; Hardy et al. 1996; Jackson et al. 2006; Masters, 1992; Mullen and Hardy, 2000). Even complete novices have varying levels of automicity in their performance; this could just be postural, or good balance, co-ordination and agility. Verbal cues that are related to the effects that our movements have on the environment (an external focus of attention e.g. the movement of the blade, the movement of the boat, the movement of the helmet we are wearing) have been found to be consistently more effective for learning than cues related to the

movement of the body (e.g. the movement of the arms, the movement of the hips, the movement of the head) (Lawrence, Gottwald, Khan & Kramer, 2012; Wulf, Hob, & Prinz, 1998).

ERNAL AND TERNAL FOCUS

A possible explanation for these benefits is provided by Prinz's (1997) action effect hypothesis (covered in the last article), which suggests that actions are most effectively planned and controlled by their intended effects. Adopting an external focus of attention enhances automaticity between movements and their effects and allows the learner to focus on and use relevant information from the environment.

By combining the action-effect principle with research supporting the promotion of an external focus of attention, Wulf at al. (2001) proposed the constrained action hypothesis (CAH). The CAH suggests that adopting an external focus of attention helps to promote automatic processing and efficient motor programming.

Most coaches would agree that skillful performance is characterised by 'automatic' or consciously effortless performance. However, as a coach, how do we help

beginners to attempt to perform a skill as though it were automatic?

Research also suggests that the negative self-focused attention effect is not exclusive to beginners. As

mentioned in the previous article, there is considerable evidence that under certain conditions (e.g. high stress) the automatic control processes utilised by expert performers are overridden by the desire to ensure success. Masters (1992) coined the phrase 'conscious processing' to describe this behavior. Here, the performer tries to consciously control their movement, thus adopting a mode of control primarily associated with the

early stages of learning (Fitts & Posner, 1967), resulting in less effective performance.

As with everything in life, there have been findings that are not as clear, or that contradict the support of promoting an external FOA. Lawrence et al (2010) found an internal FOA was supported for sports where the environment did not change, there was no equipment, and the outcome was purely 'form' based (for example, gymnastics).

ARE THE APLICATIONS FOR AS A COACH

If too much explicit knowledge is detrimental for learning a skill, and also leaves more experienced performers susceptible to negative stress effects caused by conscious processing, how do we facilitate high levels of performance? One strategy to promote implicit learning is to coach by analogy. The objective of analogous coaching is to encourage athletes to perform the skill being learned using a general analogical rule that acts as a movement metaphor and that, by default, incorporates the technical rules necessary for successful execution of the skill (Masters 2000). This idea is not new; the series of Inner Game books focused on analogous

coaching and are still worth a read. The key with analogies is for the coach to be creative and insure that the metaphor itself is



paddlesports coaches, from slicing pizza medals (trunk rotation). Many are in the BCU Coaching Handbook if you need a little inspiration to get started.

Another strategy is to use the environment to guide movement outcomes. For example, the movement could be

going sideways rather than focusing on a paddle-stroke (performing a technically correct draw stroke). The use of simple outcome goals with an external focus of attention not only allows for individual differences but also starts to develop the flexibility to consistently achieve a movement goal in a dynamic sporting environment. As paddlesports coaches we want our learners to develop the ability to produce novel motor solutions that will enable skilled performance in a dynamic environment. Even for complete novices, an external focus of attention will allow flexible and more automated responses. As coaches, if we adopt this approach from the very beginning, we are ensuring that our performers are learning to focus on the perceptual

information that will facilitate skilled performance. Also, by looking where they are going, and focusing on relevant environmental cues for performance, our paddlers should automatically adopt an appropriate posture.

Simply distracting the performer is another useful strategy that can be used effectively to prevent an internal focus of attention. Giving performers nonsense rhymes to recite, or secondary, cognitively demanding tasks (like asking them to

coach has skillfully promoted a more effective posture and allowed the movement to become more reflexive, automatic and self-organising. This strategy is particularly effective when the performer is already able to physically perform the required task.

WHAT IF OUR LEARMERS ARE STRUGGLING OR USE VERY POOR TECHNIQUE

While analogies give learners the general idea of the movement without the use of explicit rules they may not give the learner enough information to evaluate their performance effectively, or alter an unsuccessful performance (Bennett, 2000). Sometimes, for more complex skills it may be important that learners have some knowledge of the fundamentals of the skill to be performed in order that they can monitor and evaluate their performance. Such fundamentals can be taught by coaches through facilitating an intrinsic or

kinaesthetic (i.e. bodily movement) appreciation in athletes of the desired technique with little recourse to explicit rules.

Often coaches focus on teaching the correct 'technical' aspects of a skill or movement because they are not familiar with basic, or sports specific,

movement fundamentals. Within paddlesports we can focus on the sports specific fundamentals (posture, connectivity, power transfer, and feel). If these are not readily understood or cannot be performed you may need to focus on the fundaments of movement (balance, co-ordination and agility). CANI have just finished developing a great new support module 'Fundamentals of Movement for Paddlesport' which is about to be rolled out across all the Home Nations. This module is designed to facilitate the coaches appreciation and recognition of

fundamental movement problems and provide some ideas of how to solve these.



A few questions to ponder?

- 1. What is the most effective 'focus of attention' for learning?
- 2. Why?
- 3. How could you structure an introductory session to use as little explicit form, technique or internal focus as possible? You should be thinking not only of goals, tasks and cues that will promote successful adaptive performance; but also appropriate kit, equipment, blade size and style, environment, other group members, coaching tools, movement and sport fundamentals, and everything else that either hinders or promotes learning!
- 4. What is the action-effect principle?
- 5. What is 'conscious processing'? The 'constrained action hypothesis'?



listen out for specific sounds), concurrent with the skill they are learning, have been used extensively in motor learning research (Beilock at al 2002). This research supports the CAH and the de-automisation of skills when the performer tries to focus internally. Many paddlesports coaches use this tactic effectively. An example would be throwing a stone in the water upstream of someone on a surf wave. By distracting them and encouraging them to look up stream, the

WHAT ABOUT VERY SKILLED PERFORMERS AND COACHES WHO PERFORM

For more capable/skilled performers, coaches can be left in a tricky situation. With too much explicit knowledge, they are likely to be susceptible to negative stress effects caused by conscious processing (Masters, 1992). However, without it, it is unlikely that they will achieve high levels of performance. A solution is to ensure that skilled performers have strategies in place to negate the tendency (under stressful conditions) to use explicit rules inappropriately when attempting to ensure task success (as these undermine rather than support successful task execution).

One coping strategy that has received widespread support is that of pre-performance routines (Jackson et al. 2006). These are most relevant in sports that have closed-skill elements (i.e. where the environment is stable, as in golf). Clearly this does not relate to many paddlesport disciplines!

An alternative strategy is to focus on an isolated aspect of the skill that, if executed effectively, will permit successful performance. This is known as a process goal in the sport psychology literature (Kingston & Hardy, 1997). However, despite supportive evidence that focusing on isolated aspects of technique might facilitate performance, such a process focus has been questioned. Finally, more global strategies to reduce the tendency for performers to engage in self-focused attention during potentially stressful

situations might be to focus on psychological elements that promote focus, trust (Moore and Stevenson, 1994) and self-confidence.

Sports psychology for coaches is a subject that is beyond this article but would be good to cover in the future.



SUMMARY

- An external focus of attention facilitates increased performance, learning and automaticity of movement.
- Focusing on outcome, or the effect an action has (movement of a blade or boat in relation to the environment), helps the learner develop more flexible, adaptable and automated responses.
- Coach movements (forwards, sideways, turning), rather than isolated paddle strokes.
- This also helps the development of perceptual-motor coupling; the ability to automatically interpret environmental information in terms of what it means for movement/performance.
- Coaching by analogy is a useful way to facilitate learning and automatic movement production.
- Distracting the performer is also a good way of preventing an internal FOA and is most effective when the performer can already physically produce the motor skill.
- If your learner is really struggling; analyze and fix the movement fundamentals first. Have they got good balance, co-ordination and agility? Are they effective with and understand, posture, connectivity, power transfer, and feel?
- ▶ Ditto for basic physical fitness (remember TTPP?)

- You may still need to use some explicit internal focus of attention cues. Sometimes they are necessary for developing self-evaluation skills in both novice and skilled performers.
- If your performer is struggling with skill breakdown under pressure due to attempting to consciously constrain normally automatic movement patterns, you may need to look at a sports psychology focused intervention. This may be through using techniques such as pre-performance routines, process goals, confidence, focus, or arousal interventions.
-I'm thinking of my own 'broken' white water roll!

If you would like a full reference list please contact Marianne at marianne.davies@canoewales.com

Marianne Davies
Coaching Workforce Manager, Canoe Wales.

Dr. Gavin Lawrence Motor Control and Learning School of Sport, Health, and Exercise Sciences Institute for the Psychology of Elite Performance Bangor University

It's Your Call!

o, your day's been going from bad to worse and now you're in the middle of nowhere, some way offshore, and it's all gone wrong. The weather has been steadily worsening, your friends are cold and tired and what's more you've got a serious casualty to deal with. You've managed the situation pretty well up to this point but it's time to accept that you need help and you need it right away. Even though it's just a mates trip; you've done everything by the book and left a passage plan with the Coastguard. You got plenty of stick for filling in those forms but now it's reassuring to know they hold all your details on file. Hang on though; no one will raise any alarm yet because the group isn't due back for hours.

Sod's law - there's no mobile coverage here; at least you can rely on the VHF radio to call for help. Moments later you have talked with the Coastguard and feel a huge sense of relief. The Coastguard was so calm; but so are you now. They now know you have a problem, what sort of problem it is and where you are. They've even dispatched professional help out to join you, what's more a fishing boat and a yacht have joined in to say they are close and could help – aren't people great! That VHF set is worth every penny! They've called again now just to check where you are and how things have developed. It won't be long now - you're sure you can see the lifeboat; oh yes there they are calling us up on the radio. Imagine how things could have gone. No radio, no mobile coverage, no one to see a flare!!

It may surprise you to learn that getting a marine VHF radio and learning how to use it properly isn't difficult or expensive. You'll need to buy a radio of course, but a basic set is a lot less than you might think. Good quality brand new sets can cost less than £50 (considerably less than this for second hand brand named units on your favourite 'internet auction site'). There are two main types of marine VHF radio. The first type, generally newer, are Digital Selective Call (DSC) radios and these have in-built features like push button distress calls, GPS, they are waterproof and float. The second type is the standard VHF radio; the vast majority of VHF sets in use today are like this. They are basically the same as the DSC sets without all the add-ons. At present there are plenty of bargains to be had because the market is very competitive and as the better-off users upgrade to DSC sets the standard units tend to cost a lot less.

Having a basic VHF radio set (maybe as well as a mobile phone) means you can stay in touch and it isn't just useful for when things go wrong. You can listen to the



Did you know that even if you don't have a licence you can still legally operate a VHF radio when accompanied by a licenced operator? So if your mate has a radio, from time to time, practice calling-up the coastguard. It will give you practice and will be indispensable should the licenced operator need help. The system uses a pre-arranged structure and phrases to make sure that the most important calls and the most important parts of those calls get through, particularly in adverse circumstances. So learning how to talk on the radio is important (and this includes how to give a position in latitude and longitude).

regular inshore and shipping weather forecast broadcasts, receive information about any hazards in your area, including port operations and updates about marine traffic, and have a chat with other kayakers or in fact anyone else turned-on and tuned-in.

It's a pretty impressive list which shows that the radios are versatile and useful on a whole number of levels. So if they're cheap and so useful there must be some other major barrier to having one. Is it that you need a licence? You can get a licence by attending a one day course. The course will cover how to say things when on the radio and can cover the DSC aspects too. This means you can get a unique DSC identity known as a Mimsy number (MMSI - Maritime Mobile Service Identity). There will be a separate article on the advantages to paddlers of the DSC system.

As paddlers we tend to be in closer contact with the sea compared to most other water users. So the radio is likely to get wet. By putting the handset inside a protective waterproof case you can make an inexpensive set water proof and ensure it floats. It can then be kept handy in a buoyancy aid pocket (it won't be much use buried in the bottom of a watertight compartment). When choosing what to buy, think about the ease of use (e.g. imagine you are swimming and have numb fingers). Waterproof sets can be small enough to clip to a shoulder strap on the front of your body. Think about extended trips too. Keeping the radio

charged on expedition can be a challenge. Most manufacturers offer an optional battery pack as an accessory. These take AA batteries and a fresh set of batteries can be fitted in the campsite when required. This is a lot easier than trying to keep your mobile 'phone charged throughout a two week trip!

Sea paddling offers all sorts of opportunities to see great natural spectacles and get close to wildlife. So learning how to set-up the receiver (using what's called the squelch control) will avoid having an annoying noise maker blaring out sound like that of a sizable waterfall; particularly when you are trying to get close to wildlife. You are in control, and apart from the volume and squelch settings, can choose to turn the set on and off as you like. One way of keeping the radio off most of the time, whilst working with others, is to pre-arrange to turn on for an agreed 10 minutes say on the odd numbered hours. There are plenty of options.

Having the ability to use a VHF set is important to British canoeing, so much so that there are plans to include VHF training as a valid British Canoeing coach update. Soon you'll be able to attend a sea kayak symposium, learn how to use a radio, get a licence and a coaching update and all for a modest fee. While you're at it, why not learn how to use GPS sets properly too! There is plenty of help on offer to make sure you can continue to safely enjoy your paddling. Make the most of what's out there - It's your call.



News round-up

COACHING REPRESENTATIVE ELECTIONS and VACANCIES

Regional Coaching Representative

Elections & Vacancies

The following RCR positions are up for election and we invite nominations:

North East East Midlands Devon & Cornwall Channel Islands

Our congratulations go to Adam-Peter Gair, the newly elected **Yorkshire RCR**, Ian Bell who has been reelected as the **North West RCR** and Gary Denton who will be continuing as the **Eastern RCR**

Area Coaching Representative Elections & Vacancies

The following ACR positions are currently up for election and we invite nominations:

Team North: Team Central:

Durham Bedfordshire

North Yorkshire & Luton

Cheshire Suffolk

South West Cumbria Lincolnshire

North Derbyshire

Team South:

East London Central London
Oxfordshire Berkshire
Dorset Gloucestershire
Isle of Wight

The Hertfordshire ACR, Essex ACR and South Derbyshire ACR are up for election and we invite alternative nominations.

Our congratulations go to the following newly elected ACRs: Lee Wilson, Northumberland ACR, Helen James, Tyne and Wear ACR and Guy Smith, East Sussex ACR.

Please get in touch! If you (or someone you know) are interested in taking on one of these roles please contact Natasha Devonshire natasha.devonshire @canoe-england.org.uk who can help answer your questions.

All applicants must submit a profile (not more than 200 words) and must be proposed by two current RCRs/ACRs or by five other coaches. These coaches must meet the British Canoeing Coach Update Scheme requirements and live, work or be a member of a canoe club in the respective area. These all need to be received by Natasha Devonshire in the British Canoeing Office by 4:00pm on 6th October 2014 – so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you are keen.

Note - before nominating anyone, please ensure you have discussed this with them and that they are willing to stand.

Dynamic Coaching – An expanding skill set

British Canoeing Coaching Conference 22nd -23rd November 2014 Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire

We are delighted to announce that the theme for the 2014 British Canoeing Coaching Conference is Dynamic Coaching – An expanding skill set

Taking place at the excellent facilities offered by Wyboston Lakes, this year's coaching conference will turn the spotlight back on to developing coaching skills and behaviours. The event will offer a range of workshops which look at taking existing skill sets to the next level or applying existing skill sets into new contexts, as well as offering development in some new areas.

Booking for this event opens on the 15th September, until then you can register your interest on www.canoe-england.org. uk/coaching/coaching-conferences-/ to receive exclusive updates and offers, including confirmed speakers and workshops ahead of the full programme announcement.



Regional Coaching Officers

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RCO Highlands and Islands	Steve Mackinnon	07775 682034	rco.highlands@canoescotland.org

British Canoeing England Coach Updates

► West Midlands - Burton Canoe Club, Staffordshire

14th September 2014

Details available from Mark Brian coaching.staffordshire@canoe-england.org.uk

■ North West - Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre

21st September 2014

Details available from George Haisman ghaisman@talktalk.net

► London - Location TBC 11th October 2014

Details available from Mickey Gordon coaching.london@canoe-england.org.uk

■ South East - Wey Kayak Club Guildford

26th October 2014

Details available from Andy Hall coaching.southeast@canoe-england.org.uk

West Midlands - Wychavon, Worcestershire

15th November 2014

Details available from Ian Dallaway coaching.westmidlands@canoe-england.org.uk

South West - Launceston

23rd November 2014

Details available from Darren Joy coaching.devonandcornwall@canoe-england.org.uk

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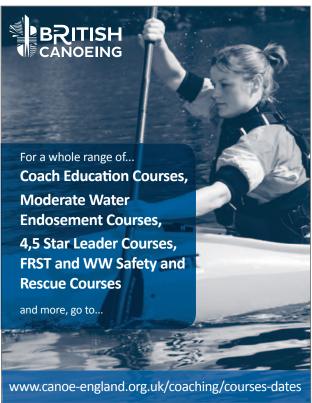




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Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, situated on the edge of the Mournes, is Northern Ireland's National Centre for Mountaineering and Canoeing Activities and is funded and managed by Sport Northern Ireland







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Email: info@ciww.com



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*If funding is a genuine barrier to gaining a qualification we offer a range of potential sources of financial support that could in some cases mean you receive your training free. Majority of funding only available to volunteer coaches or leaders living in Scotland.

www.glenmorelodge.org.uk/sources-funding.asp

