

Optimal Coaching

TECHNIQUE
MANAGEMENT
MENTAL
PHYSIOLOGY
EXCELLENCE
FUN



Sometimes, there is a fashion these days to have a big 'coaching team' around a player. LET Player Mel Reid, from England, was at one time working with 15 specialists headed by Olympic High Performance Director Clive Woodward. But this, like many other 'team coaching' arrangements has failed to deliver, and she has now pruned her team to just 4 coaches!

It's understandable, as players do not want to leave no stone unturned in their quest for success, but in my opinion this approach is **counterproductive** - *Why?*

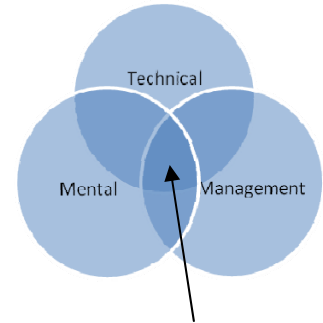
A critical point, and something I have seen a lot at elite level, is that the big picture (the player's performance or results) gets overlooked for the smaller picture, and often this is because of too much direct information and over-coaching - **as each of the team of coaches is preoccupied with their area of expertise** and then just 'hope' this will bring the results - and sometimes it will, but it will be much more sporadic than someone who is 'responsible' or focused on the big picture, i.e. results.

Developing a player and coaching successfully is like baking a cake—you need the right ingredients in the right quantities (the key information's applicable to that player), but then you also need to follow the right processes (steps) in order to get the end product perfect.

What's the optimal coaching arrangement?

The first thing to be said is that there is not one formula that fits every player, but a general principle would be to have **one 'golf' coach and then one 'physical coach'**.

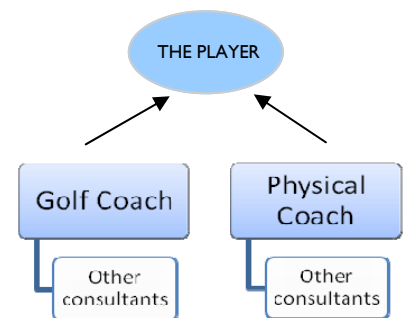
These two people are then the 'ever-presents' and who the player deals with on a week to week, month to month basis. That does not mean that from time to time the golf coach, or the physical coach (often a physiotherapist) may not bring in other consultants—that's what we do at our Academy and experts such as Ryan Lumsden (Biomechanics consultant) and Dr Patrick Cohn (PGA Tour Psychologist) have added critical input to some of our players development, as have other consultants we use.



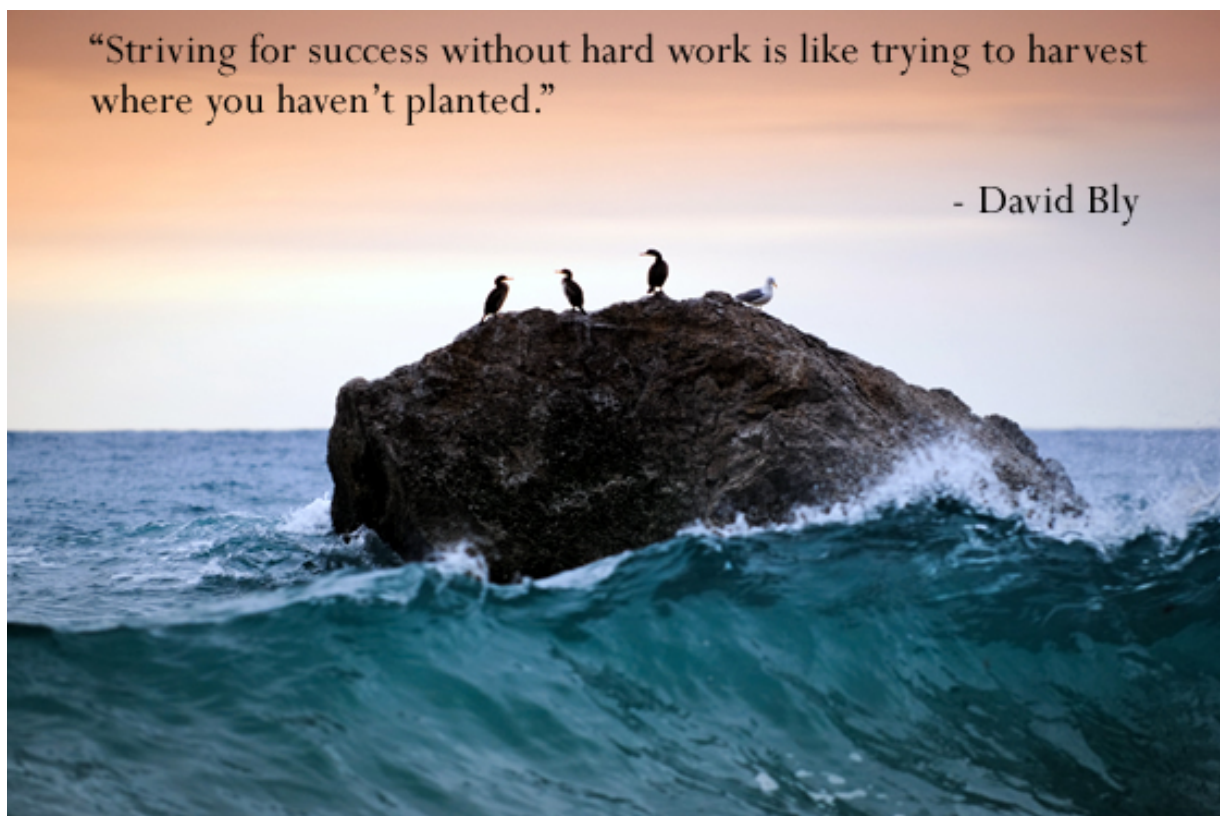
THE OPTIMAL GOLF COACH

The 'golf coach' needs to have a strong understanding of the technical, mental and management areas of the game. Technical excellence cannot be achieved without the correct mental processes present. **Performance excellence** is achieved through a **FUSION OF THESE THREE ELEMENTS** on the golf side. The best golf coaches recognise this in their work - Butch Harmon talks as much to his students on getting the right attitude and philosophy as he does on the technical nuances of the swing. Coaches that have concentrated purely on the swing or purely on the mental game have only ever had patchy success as they are leaving other key elements to chance.

The 'physical coach' is then responsible for all aspects of a player's conditioning. This may include corrective physiological work (improving posture and symmetry), strength and flexibility training, aerobic training, nutrition etc



Certainly history suggests this has been the **most successful formula**—players such as Greg Norman, Tiger Woods, Annika Sorenstam, Loreana Ochoa have largely operated with only two key coaches, one for golf and one for physical conditioning.



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Nicolas D'Incau and Ken Benz, elite amateurs at our Winter Program in Australia