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Coach Talk

Phil Economidis ARL 1997 Coach of the Year

This is the first in a series of interviews with NRL coaches. Each edition will feature an insight into how coaches operate and go about their role and what individual qualities they possess that have made them successful.

Our first article features Gold Coast Chargers coach Phil Economidis. Phil is a product of the Australian Rugby League National Coaching Scheme and has a deep passion and love for the game.

In 1997 Phil received the Australian Rugby League Coach of the Year Award. The Coaching Magazine congratulates Phil on his achievement.

During his time as coach of the Gold Coast Phil has managed to bring the Chargers to a standard of play respected by all opposing clubs.

During this interview Phil made a quote which we believe encapsulates the philosophy of Phil Economidis and the Chargers and is well worth noting by all aspiring players, coaches and young administrators,

"Any nobody is a future somebody if they work hard".

Q. Why did the team performed so well in 1997?

A. *You must have the talent available but my role is to maximise the potential. Getting players to play better than they think they can. Players have to believe in themselves and not be intimidated by other players who are established household names.*

Q. What qualities do you have that you consider have contributed to this success?

A. *I consider my overall strength to be communication. I find common ground with each individual and try to communicate with him on his level. Each player has his own intellectual ability and I endeavour to know and understand what it is, I believe that I do this very well.*

Q. Most players at this level have a good skill base, how do you develop the talent?

A. *The players are put through a gruelling process of physical work as I want them to be able to perform while they are fatigued and under pressure. Our*

programme purposely mixes up skills work and physical conditioning as I expect players to be able to think while tired and be able to control possession because if they don't then technique suffers, the situation compounds and ultimately so does their performance.

Q. How much work do you do on skills and their application in the game?

A. *Every session has a skill component and we work on confidence building blocks. I will identify a game situation and develop and refine drills and practices for this situation. For example - If I want speed off the ground in play-the-ball then the appropriate drills are practised. This year we have a 30m x 30m sand pit to develop and refine tackling technique. Teaching players how to fall properly working from basics to build confidence. Everything the players do is a progression in terms of building confidence. All my drills start with basics and progress.*

Q. Do you have game plans and patterns of play?

A. *We have a structured pattern in both attack and defence to give the players some broad direction. Players have to adapt and react to situations in the game, make decisions, and take the appropriate action. If the door opens I would expect the players I have to be able to take it. During a training session I will devote equal time to both defence and attack, correcting and refining errors. Most of the structured plays would be in the Red Zone, particularly to minimise errors. When in the Green Zone play is more impulsive, reaction to the situation, allowing players the freedom to express themselves. Our big players are used to bunch up the defence toward the middle allowing the playmakers to work their plays and be creative.*

Q. Do you have a philosophy about the game?

A. *I work on the philosophy of playing an attractive style of attacking football. The principle being that we need to score more points than the opposition. If they scored thirty points then we need to score thirty-one.*

Q. Allowing players the freedom to attack by reacting to the situation requires players to be able to read play and anticipate, have you an opinion on this particular skill in players.

A. *Rugby League is a thinking game, and players need to develop a thorough understanding of plays etc to have the skill to read play. Players who listen, and even though they maybe slow improvers, if they work hard they will succeed.*

Q. What do you think of the current standard of play?

A. *During 1997 I thought the First Grade standard was very good then dropped off in Second Grade, but in general I was happy with what I saw.*

Q. Could you give us an opinion on the future of the game?

A. *I may sound a little hypocritical to a certain extent, but only to the extent that there is talk on one hand of expanding the game, but then on the other hand reducing the number of teams in the National Competition, over the next two years. I believe the expansion in areas where other football codes have well established strongholds will be hard. It will be difficult to promote Rugby League in these areas, expecting good crowds and support on a regular basis and having a top game in these areas every second week. In general there are enough quality players around and given the right coaches the future of the game is very sound.*

Q. How will you handle the expectation of your supporters in the coming season as a result of last year's success?

A. *Two years ago we played in a twenty team competition and under the circumstances at the time our performance was very good. In terms of preparation and professionalism we are light years ahead for 1998. We are now functioning on a full time professional basis giving me more time to educate the players through more contact with them. My goal is to develop fitter and smarter players. Travel has a big bearing on performance these days, it is easier to play teams at home and last years results gave us seven (7) wins from eleven (11) home games. The Chargers are always playing for their future and adversity builds character. I am confident that our supporters will be very pleased with our performance in the coming season.*

Q. Have you any advice to young coaches who would be looking to coach at a senior level?

A. *Yes — Serve a long apprenticeship. My coaching started with juniors and then progressed to Junior Coaching Director at club level, to senior coaching positions and assisting in Queensland Rugby League coaching panel work. I have always listened and tried to learn from other coaches and always worked to the best of my ability. I hope that I have been able to show aspiring coaches that there is a pathway to senior coaching even though you may not have been a highly successful player. Coaching has certain skills and qualities that are separate from playing.*

NOTES

Match Day

By Don Oxenham
ARL Level 4 Coach

For a coach, match day is the most important day of the week, for once the game starts, all the week's planning and preparation depends on the players. It is an important time which does not receive enough attention and the coach is often left to educate himself. A coach's prime aim is to have his players performing to the best of their ability each time they play.

Although coaches spend much of their training sessions preparing their teams to play, the performance of the team can depend on the adequate preparation of players on game day. Obviously, the type of preparation will vary depending on the age group of the players involved. It is not the intention in this article to present coaches with a defined procedure and list of things to do on game day. Each coach must adjust his method and procedure based on his understanding or his relationship, with his players. Not a lot is written about the coach's role on game day, the aim here is to bring an awareness of the responsibility of this role.

There are four (4) areas of consideration in looking at this role:

1. Pre game procedure;
2. Half time break;
3. During the game;
4. Post game relationship.

1. PRE GAME PROCEDURE

(a) Motivation

Children are motivated merely by the fact that they are playing the game. Senior players at the top level are normally motivated for different reasons and incentives. Coaches dealing with players somewhere in between these two extremes will need to develop motivational techniques best suited to their players. Players of all ages, during their game, attain great satisfaction from performing skills to the best of their ability. Junior players involved in a lot of skills work at training sessions will be looking to transfer them into the game. If juniors become over-excited, their performance may well be below their best but a suitable warm up with some basic skills work could best prepare them.

(b) Instructions

When children are brought together before the game, talk should be brief and to the point, considering the amount of information the player is capable of retaining. Practice through the week should provide guidelines for the game and the coach need only have to mention a few points on game day. Children become excited about playing and their attention span and short term memory is limited, hence involved and lengthy directions and instructions on ground surface, the referee, patterns of play, tactics, strengths and weaknesses of the opposition etc are unlikely to be followed. Instructions are normally directed at individuals or the team in an attempt to enhance performance.

2. HALFTIMEBREAK

The half time break provides a time for:

- (a) players to rest and regather their thoughts;
- (b) the coach to make adjustments;
- (c) giving player support
- (d) providing direction

This is only a short time association but how the coach handles it is of extreme importance as it may have a bearing on the final result of the game. The shortness of the time compels you to be thoroughly organised down to the finest detail. The handling of the team will depend on the circumstances and the situation of the game.

Watching the game as a 'coach' and not as a spectator, identifying the factors within the game which have led to the situation. Players will be looking to the coach at half time to provide them with some positive feedback about the situation they may be in.

The content of the half time talk is based on the coaches' observations of the first half and is aided by game statistics. Comments concerning a child's performance should be constructive and positive rather than destructive and critical.

An astute coach can evaluate a game performance and provide appropriate feedback to his players, to re-emphasise certain aspects of the play and remind players of their role.

Talk must be kept to a minimum, making the point simply and emphasising the three (3) or four (4) major areas of concern and giving players definite instructions.

A coach can be responsible for losing games as well as winning, through damage caused at half time.

3. DURING THE GAME

Whereas senior players can absorb instructions while playing, as a general rule, coaches of juniors should refrain from issuing instructions from the sideline while the game is in progress. There is no point in trying to influence the junior players because they are concentrating so hard on what they have to that their capacity for making decisions does not permit them to listen to the coach at the same time.

This form of coach behaviour can be more of a distraction than a help.

4. POST GAME RELATIONSHIP

A coach's reaction after a game is particularly important as it often demonstrates the relationship he

has with his players. It is important and players expect their coach to say something about the result of the game. Rather than being critical, the coach should emphasise the positive and constructive aspects of the game and present an encouraging coaching style.

A talk to each player or just an encouraging pat on the back or a "good effort" can mean a lot to a player and is essential in developing a supportive relationship between coach and players.

The manner in which players, particularly juniors, participate in the game often reflects the way the coach has prepared his players during training. If a coach feels he needs to direct his players during actual playing of the game, he should carefully analyse his training programme. Coaches of senior teams will concentrate their instructions on factors which they identify as having an effect on the result of the game such as weather conditions, opposition strengths and weaknesses, referee decisions, game plans etc.

If a coach feels he needs to direct his players during actual playing of the game, he should carefully analyse his training programme.

NOTES

Preparing The Junior Representative Team

Part One

By Matt O'Hanlon - Level 3 ARL Coach

Often when faced with coaching a junior representative team, the first concern for the coach is the importance of the first meeting. Normally after selections are complete it is a case of ..."here is the coach, he'll look after you from here". This is not the best introduction and because after the trial games and the representative selections have been made, parents and players are ready to go back to their regional areas. The job of providing an outline of what is expected and details of tours etc., is often difficult and the confusion generated here can cause much stress later.

There are steps that can be taken to ensure that this pre-training but vital preparation stage can proceed unhindered.

1. Usher everyone else out of the room except the players and officials. Parents and well wishers can prove to be a distraction and this may effect the dissemination of information.
2. Have the manager prepare a complete booklet that outlines every aspect of the season. This should include all forms required, outfitting instructions, contact phone numbers, game venues and times, accommodation policy, names of officials and any other information likely to be required by parents or players, introduce the manager and let him run this short session completely so that players are aware of the divide between coaching and managerial responsibility.
3. Prepare a players handout. Include areas for players to set goals for their present representative season. Include a training diagram for the period leading up to the competition (see table 1) where players can record (in diary form) the extra training they are doing as a result of their selection, get players to send in their maximal push up scores, 12 minute run times and other data required. Players can also send in match reports that their local coaches have filled in (see player performance profile). Provide these in a handout asking for specific information e.g.. Tackles, hit ups,

mistakes, supports, coaches rating and individual rating, It is important to include a return addressed envelope so that players have no excuse for not replying.

4. If training days are prior to games or a camp, provide outlines of the session and especially where they are being held (with map if necessary) so that players can't get lost, 2 or 3 players missing from these preparatory sessions can have a lasting effect on team performance.

All this information, provided at the initial session will be invaluable in the overall function of the team and will give a most professional look to the coach. Players will take note of this professionalism and will know that he is 'fair dinkum'. Players will also be given cause to begin to analyse the way they play and this will be invaluable to them as the season progresses.

Introduce your players to some mental preparation drills. Many players will not have been involved with these and some simple practises will not only introduce players to mental rehearsal but also give you a chance to start using these practices in coaching strategies. These skills can be acquired in their most basic form through many texts that now deal with the subject or through any of the coach and development officers in any of the various districts. Once again use a hand-out that outlines some visualisation and relaxation strategies. The end result is that players will feel the professionalism as a result of your efforts and will respond with greater enthusiasm. (see mental preparation sheet)

Players will now be ready for assembly at training days and/or camps aware that everything will be well organised. *Part 2 in this series will deal with how to team build at these training days.* Regardless of a team's end result the coach and managers guaranteeing that the trip and time spent will be a worthwhile and valuable Rugby League experience.

Current Performance Indicators

Please fill in all three

Match: Your team V

Grade/Competition

Coach's Rating on Performance:



Personal Rating:



Defence Stats:

Tackles.....Doubles.....Triples.....Bone Rattlers.....

Personal Evaluation:

Things I did well.....
.....
.....

Things I have to work on.....
.....

How I am working on problem areas.....
.....

Players Mental Preparation

It is possible to improve performance by mentally rehearsing or perfectly reconstructing ideal performance via an imagined experience. Some may scoff or laugh about this, but those who are aware of the performance of top class players and athletes know that mental preparation is as essential to performance as preparation in skills, speed, stamina and strategies.

For games played over the representative season take time to rehearse your involvement. Set yourself up in a quiet peaceful environment and relax. Use deep breathing techniques if you are familiar with them.

When visualising remember the following points:

1. Think positively only
2. Imagine vividly - try to get a feel for the game

Some visualisations should include

- breaking through tackles
- drawing a man
- clearing to a support player
- backing up
- making a try saving tackle
- doing a "big hit" that jolts the ball free
- successfully calling and using a team play

Make up others that are specific to **your** game. Write down four or five situations here in the spaces provided:

-
-
-
-
-

Make sure visualisations are at the game speed and not in slow motion.

Some principles to follow:

1. Relax.
2. You need to practice regularly before you see value - practise for the six weeks prior to the games so that when the team gets together this skill can be further developed.
3. Rehearsals must be vivid.
4. Select a skill or segment and rehearse it in full
5. Develop your **own** performance plan and use it in rehearsal (ask your club coach what he expects from you then add your own goals for each game to develop your performance plan).
6. Perfect practice makes perfect - in mental rehearsal you have complete control over your performance. Eliminate self doubt by rehearsing perfectly.
7. The more times you positively rehearse something e.g. "a perfect try saving cover tackle", the better you will be able to handle it when the time comes.
8. Rehearse at game speed.
9. BE POSITIVE

FOR REHEARSAL go over your role in Attack, Defence, Support, Communication and Leadership.



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Training Schedule

RUGBY LEAGUE
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Coach..... Manager.....

The Greater Your Effort Now, The Greater Your Return Later

Extra Training Required

STRENGTH (ST)	3 X 25 Push ups, 3 X 25 Sit ups, 3 X 10 Chin ups: 5 sessions/week
ENDURANCE (EN)	6 min out, 6 min back: 2 sessions/week (measure distance)
SPEED (SP)	Stretching, sprint session, 10m, 20m, 50m, 100m: 2 sessions/week
SKILLS (SK)	Club and School Training
GAMES (GA)	Concentrate on defence, ask someone to watch your club defence: Tackle Counts

TRAINING DAIRY:

Fill in using letters above and bring with you to training camp. Enter tackle counts from all games into your training diary. Have a parent or friend to do a tackle count if your club or school does not keep records.

Week Ending	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Attacking From The Free Kick *(Tap From Penalties)*

By Shane McNally

When devising 'plays' or 'moves' from tap kicks it is important to look at a full set of six tackles and beyond, rather than one big 'play' or move.

Reliance on the 'big move' to score, often leaves teams disappointed and disorganised if the move fails.

It is essential therefore to incorporate a full set of six tackles into the planning and to allow for individual players to read play and then act to over ride the set play if the situation suits.

Here is an example for a tap on the left hand side of the field with consideration given to the fact that most players are right handed and therefore able to pass further and more accurately right to left.

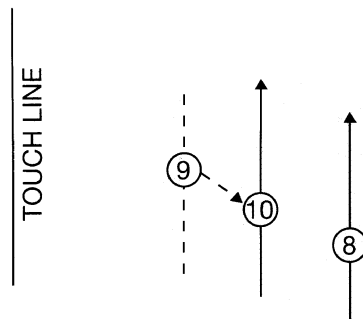
The object of this 'set' is to quickly move the football wide of the ruck so as to reach the far side of the field in three Play-the-Balls. This is an attempt to keep the defence from adjusting positionally. (ie. you want opposition forwards marking your backs) and then by spreading the football back, from right to left with a full set of backs in the attacking line.

Tap penalty left hand side of the field:

Best used 30-50m out from opposition try line.

Play 1

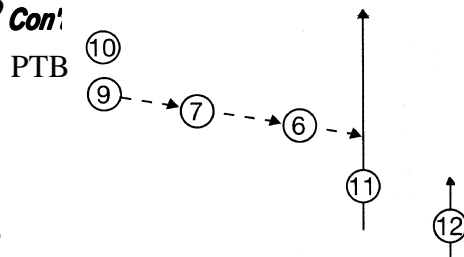
Tap taken by hooker - pass to front row with other front row in support with the option to pass - TACKLE 1.



Play 2

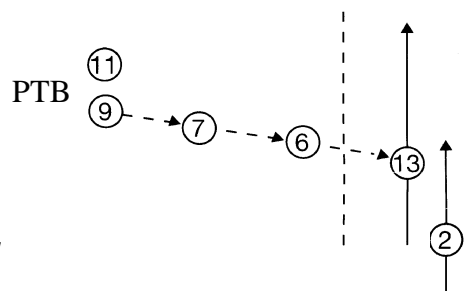
PTB pass to 1/2 and 5/8 standing wide and flat, 5/8 passes to second row with with other second row in support with the option to pass - TACKLE 2.

Play 2 Con!



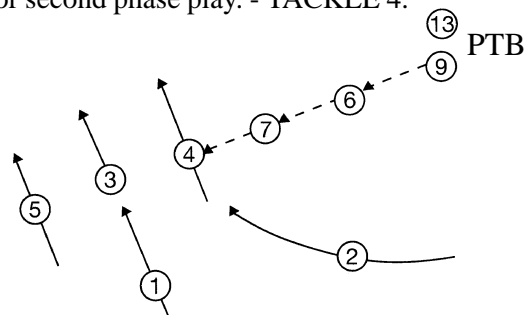
Play 3

PTB pass to 1/2 and 5/8 still wide and flat, 5/8 passes to lock with right wing in support (this winger will recover to take up position in behind backline on next play) - TACKLE 3



Play 4

The football is now moved through the hands of the backline, plenty of width with the first two or three passes is essential. The fullback and the right winger give options and or second phase play. - TACKLE 4.



Play 5

The next play is dependant on the result of the previous play and how the defence has reacted. Some options maybe:

1. To spread the ball back from left to right.
2. Work to centre field to set up for kick and chase (ground kick into the ingoal - preferred option)
3. Kick into ingoal if fullback has been involved in cover defence from previous play.

Another set of six tackles with further attacking patterns will apply if possession is regained from the kick. (ie. opposition touches the ball from the kick or goal line drop out is forced).

Some basic key points need to apply to gain maximum advantage.

1. Quick play the balls - forwards should not struggle in early tackles (first three) but concentrate on regaining their feet and performing a quality play the ball.
2. On the backline play the 1/2 and 5/8 must backup inside after passing as a stretched defence in this instance may provide an opportunity for an inside pass.
3. Forwards to position themselves as a backline ready for the option of spreading the football back after tackle 4.
4. Support runners must be aware of opportunities on the first three tackles
5. The tap should be orchestrated to have a 'play' on each tackle looking to score as a result from any one of the six planned plays in the set. □

So how do we achieve a successful mechanism in a Rugby League team?

PART TWO

By Vic Mellors

This is part two to the story headed 'Performance & Motivation' which appears in Book 4.

Answer: By learning to understand ourselves psychologically through the following equation and developing autonomous behaviour.

Personality X Stress X Perceptions X Lifestyle = Successful Rugby League Performance

This equation in everyday language terms means that these four factors; personality, stress, perceptions and lifestyle contribute to Rugby League performance. The multiplication signs that they can interact and effect each other. For example, if a Rugby League player has a personality that makes or predisposes him to react inappropriately with stress, it could effect the way he thinks and feels about himself and it could lead him to undertake such problematic behaviours as excessive drinking, smoking, nightclubbing or antisocial behaviour. This could then effect his performance on the playing field. In other words he acts out his feelings.

Personality X Stress

Personality and stress can interact depending on the personality type and the type and intensity of stress bearing down on the player. By personality type, it is meant that each person has different character traits, attributes or personal qualities that they bring to a situation or social occasion. In relation to Rugby League performance, the intensity, duration and quality of performance can be governed by the interaction of the players personality and any internal or external stressors that may be occurring in his life.

For example, an internal stressor maybe the way a Rugby League player prejudices himself or feels how he may perform during a match. An external stressor could be the daily problems of life or a personal stressor that occurs during the week before a football game. In all, personality differences along with stress may effect motivation and can explain why players prepare and react differently before a football game.

So how do we measure personality

Through sport psychologists, individual differences in personality can be measured by the administration of psychometric/psychological tests. For example, two such personality types that are different are introverts and extraverts. They are different in relation to the psychological character traits and human behaviour.

“The typical extravert is outgoing. He is sociable, likes parties, has many friends, needs to have people to talk to, and does not like reading or studying by himself. He craves excitement, often sticks his neck out, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. He is fond of practical jokes, always has a ready answer, and generally likes change; he is carefree, easy going, optimistic, and likes to ‘laugh and be merry’. He prefers to keep moving and doing things, tends to be aggressive and lose his temper quickly; altogether his feelings are not kept under tight control, and he is not always a reliable person”.

Alternatively, and behaviourally, the typical introvert can be best described as:

A quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; he is reserved and distant except to intimate friends. He tends to plan ahead, “looks before he leaps” and distrusts the impulse of the moment/ He does not like excitement, takes matter of everyday life with proper caution and seriousness, and likes a well-ordered mode of life. He keeps his feelings under close control, seldom behaves in an aggressive manner, and does not lose his temper easily. He is reliable, somewhat pessimistic, and places great value on ethical standards.

In between, these two extremes of personality is ambiversion.

The EPQ (1975) manual describes this personality structure as halfway between extraversion and introversion. The typical ambivert displays characteristics of both introversion and extraversion. Their behaviour is more situationally determined or “field dependent” than other personality structures.

For example, with introverts and extraverts, a coach knows reasonably well what to expect from these two extreme personality types. Their performance is more predictable. However, an ambivert’s performance may be determined more by the importance of the event e.g. a club game or an international match so they are more situationally determined than extraverts and introverts.

high (N) individual has to be described in one word, one might say that he is a worrier; his main characteristic is a constant preoccupation with what might go wrong, and a strong emotional reaction of anxiety to these thoughts.

“The stable individual, on the (N) scale on the other hand, tends to respond emotionally slowly and generally weakly, and to return to base line quickly after emotional arousal; he is usually calm, even tempered, controlled and unworried: (EPQ 1975, p.10).

When a Rugby League player says he fears having a bad game or has these self doubts he may have high trait neuroticism. Moderate to high levels of neuroticism need not always be viewed as a negative or self defeating characteristic. Viewed more positively neuroticism could be called emotionality or even drive

The role of a sports psychologist is to apply psychological tests that can assist the coach in describing, explaining and predicting the behaviour of his players in a Rugby League match.

By identifying different personalities in a football team, it assists the coach to understand his players better and to mould the team together.

In psychology, there are many theories of personality but the one that to be discussed in this article is the late Professor Hans Eysenck's 1967 theory of personality. Personality structure can be measured in three dimensional space by using psychometric/psychological pen and pencil tests. A dimension is simply a straight line or a vector along which and extraversion and introversion can be measured, for example.

Extraverts—x——x———x——x—Introverts

Another dimension of personality in three dimensional space is Stability - Neuroticism. The neurotic high (N) factor can be best described in these terms:

As “being an anxious, worrying individual, moody and frequently depressed. Likely to sleep badly and suffer from various psychosomatic disorders. He is overly emotional, reacting too strongly to all kinds of stimuli and finds it difficult to get back on an even keel after each emotionally arousing experience. His emotional reactions interfere with his proper adjustment, making him react in irrational, sometimes rigid ways. If the

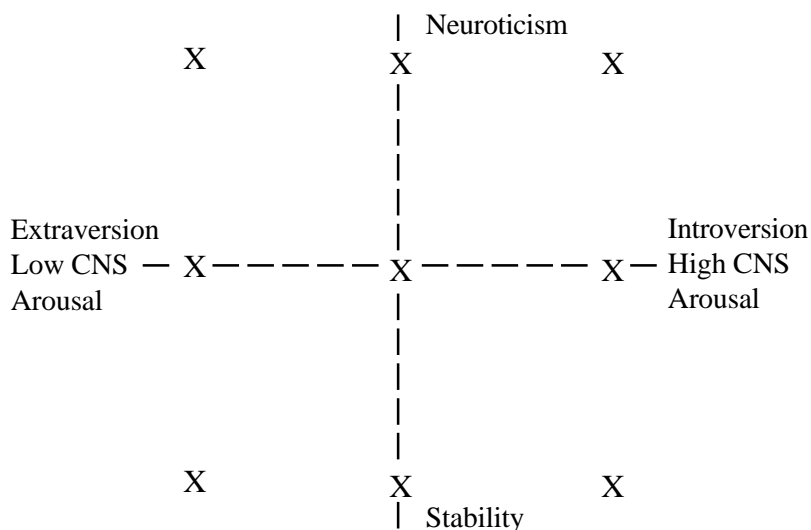
level. Neuroticism is usually called drive level when it works for, rather than against the individual and his significant others. If a Rugby League player converts nervous energy into action or task oriented behaviour, this nervous energy can act in the player’s favour and reduce anxiety.

Having a high trait neuroticism is like have “brittle bones”. If you play a body contact sport, there is a chance you will break your bones. Similarly, having high trait neuroticism makes you psychologically vulnerable under extreme stress to such neurotic symptoms as anxiety, worry and depression.

From a coaching perspective, if a team has a majority of high Neuroticism scorers, it means that the coach has to get to know these players individually and make sure they convert their emotionality into staying calm before the match and directing it into action or task oriented behaviour on the field. As NIKE says "Just Do It" instead of becoming preoccupied with worry and anxiety before a match.

In rugby league players, high scorers of trait Neuroticism (N factor) have a complex relationship with Rugby League success depending on the individuals scores on Extraversion and Introversion and the next dimension of personality to be discussed

(Psychoticism) (P factor). Shown below is Neuroticism in relation to the personality dimension of extraversion and Introversion. this complex relationship will be explained in terms of the two nervous systems of the body; the Central Nervous System (CNS) and the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).



The idea of this diagram is to show that there are four major personality structures along with two other types: (1) the Stable Extravert (2) the Stable Introvert (3) the Neurotic Extravert (4) the Neurotic Introvert and finally (5) and (6) the Neurotic and Stable Ambivert. The ambiverted traits are located more around the middle of the Extraversion/Introversion dimension (indicated between brackets).

In relation to the Extraversion/Introversion dimension, research has shown that this dimension is related to Central Nervous System/Cortical arousal (CNS) i.e. introverts have higher cortical arousal than extraverts. The Central Nervous system is a voluntary nervous system in that we have conscious control over it. For example, if a player sees an opposition player about to hit him with a head high tackle, he is able to process this information and hopefully duck his head in time.

In cortical arousal term, it means that Introverts are more highly aroused in the cortex area of the brain than Extraverts. Consequently, Introverts may not need as much psychological "working up" before a football game than an Extravert. This then leads to the complex relationship that exists with Neuroticism and the Autonomic Nervous System.

The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) is an involuntary nervous system that controls our breathing and heart rate. It does not need conscious control and it keeps the vital organs of the body such as the heart

and lungs functioning while we are asleep. The Autonomic Nervous system is comprised of two sub nervous systems called the Sympathetic and the Parasympathetic Nervous Systems.

The Sympathetic Nervous System prepares us for "fight or flight" if there is a perceived or very real threat present. This nervous system pumps adrenaline to increase our heart and breathing rate, oxygen and blood flow to the large musculature of the body and thus prepare us for "fight or flight" of impending danger. In Rugby League terms, this commences when the players start to warm up before the game. Caution has to be taken that they do not become too worked up before a game, otherwise they could pump too much adrenaline and become sluggish in mind or body.

The Parasympathetic Nervous System calms us down after we have either escaped some impending danger or emotionally arousing event. This Nervous System pumps a body chemical called acetylcholine which calms down the breathing and heart rate after the "fight or flight" situation and returns the body to equilibrium. The relationship between high Neuroticism and high Autonomic Nervous System Arousal is that it can indicate if a Rugby League player has a vulnerability to be too highly aroused before a football game or to become too preoccupied with worry and concern on how he will perform.

It is therefore very important for a coach to know the personality of his players as shown in the above graph. For example, a Neurotic Introverted player does not need to be "too worked" up before a game because he already has high CNS arousal as well as high ANS arousal. In contrast, a stable Extravert would be different because he not only has low CNS arousal but low ANS arousal. A good example of explaining this difference in personality is like a person driving a car where the "revs" are already high and ready to use compared to using another car where the "revs" have to be brought up to a level ready to use.

Consequently, this explains the importance of understanding the personality of your Rugby League players in terms of their personality and the underlying strength of their nervous systems. The role of the sports psychologist is to apply psychological tests that can assist the coach in describing, explaining and predicting the behaviour of his players in a Rugby League match.

So far, I have explained how the complex relationship between the Neuroticism/Stability and the

Extraversion/Introversion dimensions operates and how high Neuroticism can effect Rugby League performance. However, if a player with high Neuroticism finds himself not performing in a Rugby League match, it's the next dimension of personality to be discussed that decides if he has the toughmindedness to overcome the adversities and difficulties that are affecting his performance.

This final dimension of personality that has relevance to Rugby League performance, is called the psychoticism/Superego Strength dimension. What determines this dimension of personality and it's behavioural consequences is the hormonal system related to the male androgens in the body. This hormonal system manufactures high or low levels of testosterone.

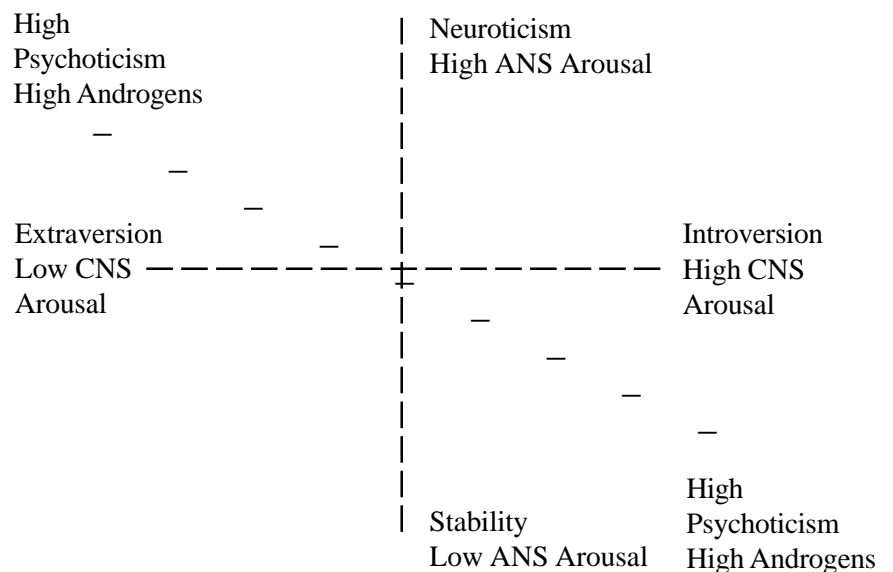
Males high on testosterone (and uric acid) can be violent, unpredictable and have many difficulties associated with antisocial and bizarre behaviours, poor learning, poor socializability and poor conditionability. In Rugby League terms it means that extremely high scorers on this dimension of personality are difficult to coach and they may do irrational and violent things on a football field. This dimension of personality can also be measured with psychometric/ psychological testing.

The high Psychoticism (P) scorer may be described as, "being solitary, not caring for people; often troublesome, not fitting in anywhere. He may be cruel and inhumane, lacking in feeling and empathy, and altogether insensitive. He is hostile to others, even his own kith and kin, and aggressive, even to loved ones."

Too high a score of Psychoticism can make a player too highly impulsive, aggressive and sensation-seeking on the football field. High Psychoticism factor correlates with substance and alcohol abuse, criminality and violence. In coaching terms, this player often gives off a "cold distant" attitude, is often self-centred, hard to communicate with or to coach. What differentiates this player from a low Psychoticism/high Neuroticism player is once the become emotionally upset the harder it is to stop their aggression. They tend to do more stupid things on the football field when they become emotionally upset.

In summary, high (P) scores means that coachability can be difficult especially when it is associated with the other two dimensions of personality Extraversion/Introversion, Neuroticism/Stability. Moderate scores of (P) factor from psychometric tests i.e. slightly above average are best in Rugby League players rather than extreme scores. Associated with these moderate scores are such desirable traits as controlled aggression, toughmindedness, creativity and "getting the job done".

Shown below is the completed model of personality and the underlying biological systems that effect human behaviour.



The aim of this section has been to present a model of personality that helps a coach describe, explain and predict the behaviour of his players under both coaching and playing situation. The value of such a model is that it can assist a coach to quickly observe those traits that align with Introversion/Extraversion or Ambiversion in addition to those mentioned under Neuroticism. By using these first two dimensions of personality i.e. Extraversion/Introversion, Neuroticism/Stability, it quickly allows the coach to understand the temperament of his players.

In conclusion, the deciding and most important dimension of personality is Psychoticism/Superego Strength. Whilst the other two dimensions show how emotional a player may be, it is the third dimension which determines how coachable and toughminded a player is. A player too high on Psychoticism could be self destructive to the team whereas a moderate level is desirable. In Part 3 Personality, Arousal, Motivation and Performance will be discussed in detail.

How to do a Statistics Sheet

By Shane McNally

A coach needs to be able to constantly assess a player's performance, both within his own team and maybe that of the opposition.

Use of statistics compiled from "what happens in a game" can be a useful tool in the evaluation of player and team performance. It allows for measurable and concise feedback to be given to both the player and the team. This information if applied correctly can be used to help motivate goal setting through individual players and the team.

For the coach, the information gained helps in planning training sessions and devising game strategies. Training sessions can then target areas in need of improvement and/or refinement. Further information that may be obtained will provide the coach with knowledge of opposition teams.

The first steps in devising a "statistics sheet" is to decide what information you want and how you are going to use it.

A sample of a simple statistics sheet is provided in this article. From this sheet the following information can be compiled:

1. A progressive record of what happened when the team was in possession of the ball.
2. Team list of players.
3. Number of effective tackles.
4. Number of missed or ineffective tackles.
5. Number of times each player handled the ball.
6. Number of times each player played the ball and/or was tackled effectively.
7. Number of errors, being dropped ball, bad passes, forward passes, penalties
8. Number of kicks in general play made by each player.
9. Scrum count. (scrums won or lost with or against the feed indicated by circling).
10. Penalties. (scrum penalties indicated by circling).

NOTE: Items No.1 to No.4 are recorded as game progresses.

Items No.5 to No.10 are obtained from information in No.1 after the game and from the recorded information.

Here is a short extract from a game with appropriate explanation.

S.K.O. Souths kick off to commence game
13 No. 13 for Easts gets the ball and is tackled

6 No.6 runs from dummy half and is tackled
9 12 No. 9 at dummy half passes to No.12 who is tackled
9 11 No. 9 at dummy half passes to No.11 who is tackled
S ball 123 Souths ball with three P.T.B.'s
Pen S Penalty awarded to Souths
S ball 1234K Souths ball with four P.T.B.'s then kicked
ball dead by 1 No. 1 for Easts takes ball dead
G/L D/O Goal line drop out for Easts
S ball 123 Souths ball with three P.T.B.'s
Pen S Penalty awarded to Souths
missed goal Goal attempt misses
20 M/DO 20 metre drop out Easts

As can be seen the game can be easily recorded. Some common abbreviations used are as follows:-

G/L - goal line	K - Kick
D/O - drop out	Pen - penalty
C/O - Change over	PTB - Play the Ball
DB - dropped ball	BP - Bad Pass
FP - forward pass	IT - in touch
T - Touch	TY - Try

Any abbreviations can be adopted to allow for easier recording.

What to put in is only limited by imagination and by the ability of your recorders and the method used to capture information,

Some of the important information gained from a team performance point of view are:- the number of times possession was gained; how many tackles the ball was held for each time possession was gained; number of unforced errors made.

Further to this individual players statistics can be obtained.

For instance, the number of times the ball was handled/tackles/ missed tackles/times played the ball/errors/ kicks in general play can be recorded. This all gives an good indication of each players involvement.

Particular points can be drawn from this, e.g. is the D/H getting into position often enough? Are your centres getting sufficient ball from the 5/8?

The example shown is from an actual game.

Some of the information derived from the sheet is:-
Number of times possession was gained.

East	FIRST HALF	18 times
	SECOND HALF	18 times
South	FIRST HALF	17 times
	SECOND HALF	19 times

Turn overs of possession:

	FIRST HALF	SECOND HALF
East	2	3
South	4	3

The coach of the Easts side could recognise the following things from the statistics about his teams performance.

1. Ball control was excellent. Possession was obtained 36 times during the match with only 5 turnovers of possession. The ball was held for the full 6 tackles on 7 occasions and for 5 tackles, 10 times, accounting for 60% of possession. Four tackles 4 times; 3 tackles 4 times; 2 tackles 5 times; 1 tackle 4 times; with errors being made on tackles numbers 3,1,3,1,5.
2. The coach can see easily that his team's defence was excellent during the game because possession was evenly shared. Easts 36 and Souths 36. Turn overs of possession, Easts 5 and Souths 7. Penalties favoured Souths 20-11 but Easts won the game 36-8 and led 20-4 at half time.
3. The general attacking game plan from Easts was to attack Souths around the middle of the ruck using quick play the balls, ruck variations to beat their marker defence and to cause indecisiveness in their middle of the ruck defence. Easts backs assisted the forwards with this plan. e.g. Easts five-eight ran the ball from a ruck situation 7 times while their centre ran 9 times. This had a further effect of taking pressure off Easts forwards allowing them to be more effective in their defensive effort.

The win in this game by Easts was effected by controlled and disciplined football with a low mistake rate and sound defence.

The win was convincing for Easts and the team played well, factors such as tackling, handling, unloading, were all good.

As a consequence not a great deal was left to work with from the sheets. However, they did show that one area of the game that needed to be addressed during the week was the penalty count. The majority of penalties against Easts were for offside and not clearing the tackled player quickly enough.

As a result, some training drills to sight the referee and reform the defensive line one metre behind him were undertaken.

Work to clear the player was also introduced.

Both practices helped and the penalty count for the next three games was 13-14 (for), 6-10 (for), 7-10 (for).

Methods of Obtaining Information

There are three ways to put the sheet together.

1. Use two people, one as the penciller the other as a caller or spotter. Alternatively use several people each recording one of the listed different parts.
2. Recording the information from a video. This is probably the most reliable way of recording as you can check back on any part of the statistics, e.g. a player with a low tackle count maybe explained after viewing the video and seeing that the opposition did not attack to that particular player's position.
3. Recording the information from an audio tape of the game.

Some important points regarding statistics:

To obtain a full statistics sheet of any game would require two sheets being compiled. One for each team involved.

As far as individual player performance is concerned, statistics should be viewed over a number of weeks. In this way trends can be detected and this can prevent any premature decisions that may adversely affect a player.

Statistics should always be selectively "let out" to the players/parents/ media etc.

They should where ever possible be used in a constructive and positive manner, never to down grade or embarrass a player.



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EASTS vs SOUTHS ①

S K/O	13	S ball 20m tap	9	4	Change over	E36S4	
13	7	S ball 1234 K	131 Kick	6	S ball 12345K	S K/O	
6	9 6 10	kick out	S ball 12	98	2	6	
9 12	9 8	scrum E feed	Pen S	91	14	4	
9 11	8 try	76 D.B.	S ball 12345K	2	97 11	9 13	
9 1 kick	E8 SO	S ball 12345	Pen S	Pen E	915 touched ball	9 11	
S ball 123	S K/O	Pen S	missed goal	9 14	9	9 14	
Pen S	12	S ball 12 try	3	9 11	1 7	9 1 kick out	
S ball 1234 K	4	E14 S4	HALFTIME E20 S4	9 8	Pen E	Scrum S feed	
ball dead by 1	98 D.B.	E K/O	E K/O	9 11	9 15	S ball 12345K	
G/L D/O	S ball 1	S ball 1	S ball 12345K	91 kick	9 13	Pen S	
S ball 123	Pen S	Pen S	2	S ball 12345	9 try	S ball 123	
Pen S	missed goal	did not find	4	Pen S	E26 S4	Pen S	
missed goal	20m D/O	touch	98(obstruct)	Shall 1	S K/O	S ball try	
20m D/O	S ball 1234K	5	Pen S	Pen E	15	E36 S8	
Pen S	5	12	S ball 123456	98	4	E K/O	
missed goal	3	98	change over	9 14	9 15	S ball 12345K	
20m D/O	4	9 10	4 1	9	9 7 13	ball dead by 1	
S ball 12345K	98	97 Kick	6	6 13 7 13	9 10	G/L D/O	
out on full	9	Pen S	7	7 11	Pen E	S ball 12345K	
change over	10 1 kick	S ball 123	9 13	5 7kick	9	20m tap	
12 9 8	S ball 123DB	Pen S	9 8	S ball 123K	13 14	9 10	
9	Scrum E feed	S ball 123 DB	91 kick	out	9 11	9 7	
Pen E	Pen S	Scrum E feed	S ball 1234	Scrum E fed	9 7 6 1	9 13 11	
9 8	S ball 1 DB	7	Pen S	S ball 1234	6 7 10 try	6 10	
9 10	Scrum E feed	6	S ball 123K	Pen S	E30 S4	9 15 9 BP	
9 12	7 6	Pen E	13	S ball out	S K/O	S ball 1	
9 7	Pen E	9 8	5	Scrum E feed	1 13	Pen S	
Pen E	9 8	9 13	13 3	7 2	4	S ball kick	
E2 S0	9 7 6 try	9 11	Pen E	6	9 14 15	S ball 1	
S K/O	E14 S0	9 try	9 14 DTB off mark	Pen E	9	FULL TIME E36 S6	
11	S K/O	E20 S4	Pen S	13	14 1 kick		
9 12	8	S K/O	S ball 123	14 15	Pen E		
9 6	12	12	Pen S	9 13	9 15		
9 7 10	4	4	S ball 123456	9 14 11	9 14		
9 1 kick out	9 10	9 11	change over	9 7 15	9		
Scrum S feed	9 1 kick dead	9 8	2 3	9 7 6 4 2	14 try		

Referee Competencies

By Richard Johnson

Wayne Bennett stated that coaching was like riding a motor bike, the longer you are there the greater the chance of falling off or being killed. It has been said of referees that a good referee is one that when the game is over people don't know who he was - that a referee is only as good as his last game and that a game of rugby league is a competition between 26 players and not between 26 players and the man in the middle.

For years lecturers have spoken about the 5C's, 7C's and 10C's eg. Control, Consistency, Condition, Communication, Concentration, Commonsense, Continuity, Coping, Candour etc. We also know that to aspire to be at the top there is a series of givens eg. Condition, Knowledge of rules. To simply master the rules will not prepare you for the rigours of the game as refereeing is really an exercise in interpersonal skills ie. people management. A referee who is not in control of himself cannot be relied upon to control 26 players.

In today's game the focus is upon referee preparation. Successful referees are active listeners, good communicators, devoid of sarcasm focussing upon behaviour and not character. The outcome of a game can often depend upon referee competence, so the referee of today must be able to communicate, respond, analyse, assess, run, concentrate, interpret, anticipate etc. etc. To master the craft is the challenge. □

Accepting The Challenge in Refereeing

All referees have one of those games they hope to forget. It is when such a game arises you never want that taste in your mouth again nor that hole in your stomach. This is the time when a referee must focus and work on his game and set a reasonable goal that can be realistically achieved. Many referees want to be number one, but because this position is not attained does not mean they have not been successful. As long as you have given of your best, you have had some accomplishments. For those who want to achieve, ask questions, read and listen.

In the role of refereeing, many suffer from the illusion of fear, The fear of failure. However, nothing is really standing in your way if you adopt a positive approach and find fear in any failure. Quite often failure actually gets you closer to where you want to be. It is vital that referees approach practices the same way they approach a game for you are, how you train. If you are not committed, you can say all the right things but all you will be doing is looking for reasons instead of answers. Part of this commitment is responsibility.

Finally, never overlook the fundamentals as they will always be the most crucial part of the craft of refereeing. You can't skip the fundamentals if you want to be successful. There are plenty of referees with potential but if they are not prepared to apply those skills to a particular situation they will never achieve their true potential. Referees must monitor the fundamentals constantly, as the only thing that changes is their attention to them. Get the fundamentals down and the level of everything you do will rise. □

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