



**'Finding our way II'**

**Coaching Strategic Plan for the  
Sport of Orienteering  
in  
New Zealand**

**January 2007 - December 2008**

*Final Version, adopted NZOF Council, 2 December 2006*

# Coaching Strategic Plan for the Sport of Orienteering in New Zealand January 2007 – December 2008

*Excellence in sport requires excellence in coaching. Quality coaches have a huge impact on their communities. They have a positive influence on the life and values of those they come in contact with.* - Nicholas Hill, CEO, SPARC

## **(1) COACHING: A HOLISTIC VIEW**

The vision of the national strategic plan for orienteering, 2005-2008, is that, "All New Zealanders will recognise orienteering as a genuine sport or recreation, and will have the opportunity to experience and enjoy it."

Competition and recreation are therefore seen as equally important, whether elite or beginner, participating in the club environment or at school, learning at events or at designated training camps.

Coaching is at the heart of the development of any sport. Our holistic view of its relation to participation and enjoyment includes the following.

### Progressing members are happy members

Orienteers may or may not be concerned with their physical prowess, but we all like to improve our technique. Failure to progress leads to frustration and lack of motivation. Lack of motivation leads to decreased participation in all aspects of the sport. Coaching, on the other hand, aids technical progression.

### Included members are happy members

Members often join a club not only to progress in orienteering but also to enjoy the sport socially. Coaching breaks down barriers between new and experienced members, includes members on the periphery and creates club spirit.

### Happy members encourage more members

Happy members enthused by their progression and involvement in orienteering attract new members. New members increase their participation in the sport when they discover highly motivated members and experience club spirit.

### Skilled members shares the load

Investment in coaching leads to increased levels of orienteering skills inside a club. Increased skill levels lead inevitably to an increase in those capable of taking on skilled organisational orienteering roles, such as planning, controlling and mapping.

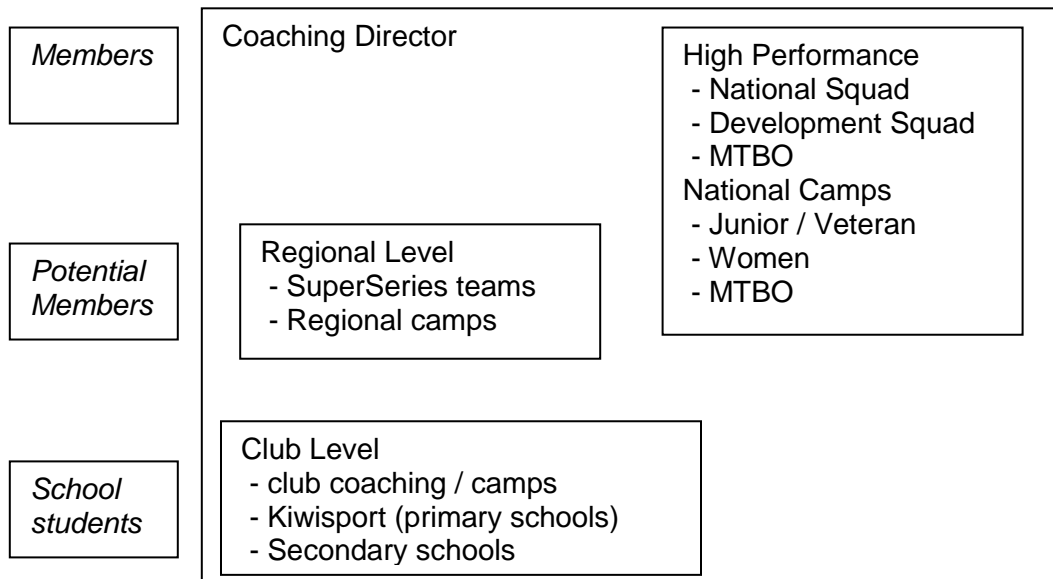
### Greater skill levels lead to increased efficiency

The more technically skilled a member is, the more efficiently they execute the organisational orienteering roles. The greater efficiency saves time, which can be put into other orienteering roles, or simply improve their enjoyment of the sport.

## (2) CURRENT NZOF COACHING SITUATION

### 2.1 Structure

The current structure of coaching across the federation can be summarised as follows.



This structure entails the following broad approach to create the „ideal“ of:

In addition to learning as part of normal events, every orienteer has access to regular training activities at their level. These are provided at club level but some groups are catered for at regional or national level.

Enough club members become coaches at all levels to carry out these coaching programmes and most receive coach training.

Orienteering is taught in schools, youth groups and outdoor centres.

The success of any coaching programme largely depends on the quality of the coaches.

The NZOF has a four tier coach accreditation system:

- Advanced
- Senior
- Intermediate
- Foundation

The need to review those currently accredited and bring the database up to date was highlighted by a survey of clubs, see below. A review throughout 2006 has reduced the list of accredited volunteer coaches from approximately 110 to about 94. Establishing whether all of these remain active remains an ongoing exercise.

## 2.2 Coaching needs

During early November 2005 a survey was sent to all clubs to ascertain coaching activity and needs. The response from clubs was disappointing with just under half of all NZOF clubs completing the survey. Those responding did, however, represent a good mix, including those with large and small memberships and clubs situated in both the North and South Islands.

A summary of the results of the survey follows:

Coaching is considered important to very important.

The majority of clubs have no coaching programme.

The number of coaching sessions held by clubs during 2005 ranged from nil to as high as 50. The average number of organised coaching sessions held for 2005 was between one and three.

All clubs agreed that more coaching sessions needed to be held.

The reasons for not holding more coaching sessions were; lack of available personnel and resources, little demand, little time, no leadership.

All clubs agreed that more qualified coaches were needed and that they would send people to a camp for coaches.

The number of qualified coaches per club ranged from nil to three. A number of clubs did not know what coaching qualifications were held by club members.

Clubs agreed that there needed to be more consistent coaching camps and that these should be a regular occurrence on the NZOF annual programme.

Various suggestions were made as to what the camps should cater for. For example, newcomers and less experienced, regional focus, coaching techniques for coaches, mountain bike orienteering. [A need for training on mapping, OCAD and course planning was also expressed.]

Clubs also had various suggestions on how the NZOF could assist each club in coaching. These ranged from the need to have coaching materials, videos, organised coaching seminars and workshops and the need to remunerate coaches.

## 2.3 National Strategic Plan

The national strategic plan for orienteering acknowledges the importance of coaching. Section 4.3.1 looks at coaching for non-elites, with elites being covered under the high performance section, 4.3.2. Section 4.3.1 identifies a need to increase coaching for all non-elites and that coaching strategies and activities be regularly reviewed so that they are meeting the needs of clubs and individuals. With regard to elite athletes, the national plan acknowledges the need to improve coaching capacity, targeting the development of a strategy to improve elite coaching resources.

### 4.3.1 COACHING

#### Expected Outcomes

Increase in coaching activity at club level for non-elite orienteers.

Coaching strategy and activities reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and needed.

### Specific Coaching Actions 2005-08

Group	Action	Person	Timing
<b>NZOF</b>	1. Schedule Coaching Forums every two years and encourage attendance by all clubs, particularly by accredited coaches.	Coaching Director	2006 and 2008
	2. Complete (in conjunction with clubs) a thorough review of Coaching strategy and activities.	Coaching Director	2006
	3. Investigate methods to provide support for coaching activity at local and regional level.	Coaching Director	Ongoing
	4. Ensure adequate training and education of all levels of coaches is supported and a succession plan is operating.	Coaching Director	2007
<b>Clubs in general</b>	1. Provide an appropriate amount of coaching activity at a local level.	Club Presidents	Ongoing
	2. Encourage attendance at national training camps.		Ongoing
	3. Identify and encourage potential coaches.		Ongoing

#### **Comment on Specific Actions**

##### **NZOF**

1. Coaching Forums – Identified for 2006. As the survey of clubs also identifies a need to have organised coaching camps/forum there needs to be some priority given to have a camp/forum organised this year and further that regular camps are held in ensuing years.
2. Coaching strategy – see section 4 of this document.
3. Coaching support – see section 4 of this document.
4. Education of coaching – see section 4 of this document.

##### **Clubs in general**

1. Coaching activity. While, in principle, clubs need to pay more attention to coaching at a local level and accept it as an integral part of their annual programme, the survey revealed constraints of time, resources and leadership. These issues need to be addressed at a strategic level. Furthermore, an outcome of forums held in each of the four recognised regions was that clubs be encouraged to co-ordinate coaching resources and activities at a regional level where possible.
2. Attendance at national training camps. The NZOF needs to organise national camps in order for club members to attend.

3. Potential coaches. Clubs need to take steps to identify their current level of qualified coaches and encourage members to become coaches.

## **2.4 Resources**

As a small sport our resources are limited. Coaches, other than the Coaching Director, are volunteers. Funding for the Coaching Director to support national, regional and club activities is severely constrained. For 2006 the budget for such activities is \$7,000. A further \$5,000 is also available for schools activities through the federation's development budget but much of this is earmarked for specific activities such as the Silva New Zealand Secondary School Championships and the New Zealand Schools team to Australia.

Accordingly the Coaching Director's funding priorities are support for: national squads, junior training camps, visits to clubs and training of coaches.

## **(3) SPARC'S COACHING STRATEGY**

The national coaching strategy produced by Sport and Recreation New Zealand focuses on the three following objectives:

1. More time: increase and improve the quality and quantity of time available for coaches to focus on coaching activities and coach education;
2. Increased recognition and status: increase the recognition and status of coaches to ensure they are valued and that coaching is seen as a rewarding experience;
3. Improved quality: continually improve the quality of the coach education process, ensuring that coaches have ongoing pathways for further development.

## **(4) CORE COACHING STRATEGY**

This strategy aims to weld together the objectives in the national plan, the objectives in SPARC's strategy and the needs revealed by the clubs. It concentrates mostly on coaching for the average club member. Coaching for elite orienteers is to be covered in a separate strategy, as per the national strategic plan, section 4.3.2. Coaching for schools, including the role of Kiwisport orienteering, will also be addressed at a later date.

### **Objective**

The objective of this strategy is to deliver coaching to orienteering club members in a way that really works for them, that is:

- When they want it;
- Where they want it;
- In a form that they want it, and;
- In a structure that actually does improve their performance over time.

### The need for a fresh approach

Previous strategies to put sustainable coaching in place in all clubs have not worked. Despite widespread recognition of the importance of coaching, to continue with these strategies alone will be to continue to fail.

While there will always be an invaluable place for weekend training camps, evening sessions, and one-on-one at events, they are only a part of the overall picture.

Hence we need a new approach and, where appropriate, we need to use new technology to assist us.

While it is educational jargon, we need to provide a „supportive learning environment for our club members.

### What does this mean?

At the most basic level we need to have a much better understanding of the fundamentals of how children and adults learn (which are quite different). Examples of this are determining where it is appropriate to be teaching abstract concepts as opposed to teaching by „doing . Where and for whom is it required to use repetition to continually reinforce skills in order to develop the right patterns of behaviour that the brain then does automatically?

We need to take into account the unique aspects of our sport – the logistical challenges and practicality issues of providing training and feedback to individuals. We don't meet at the clubrooms for a practice every Wednesday with a coach like other sports and our „playing field is never the same two weeks in a row. We can rarely be observed when undertaking our sport and even if followed it is impossible to see inside our heads to know where the real mistakes are being made. Certainly our coaches can't follow us around in a big competition and offer us guidance at half time.

We also need to cater for the huge differences in physical and technical ability of the individuals and their own patterns of learning and indeed motivation levels. A „one size fits all approach will not work when we are dealing with improving the skills of a diverse range of people, and our programmes need to take this into account.

### Best Practice

We need to take the best practice ideas from other sports and orienteering bodies overseas to help us with our coaching.

And locally we need to identify strategies where clubs have got things to work well (for example, PAPO with adults and Hawkes Bay with children) and understand why they have been successful so the underlying ideas can be used and adapted for use elsewhere.

## What is the Strategy then?

Given the stage of development that coaching in NZ is at, the core strategy is in fact not very flash, concentrating on getting the basics right and exploring new ways to deliver what is required.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>A</b>	Know how to teach.	Ensure we have a sound scientific foundation for our teaching methods. Get professional advice (where required) to really understand the best ways to teach the kind of skills we need to develop to the different audiences we have. Obtain the best practice methods of other similar (individual) sports and from the leading overseas countries.
<b>B</b>	Rethink delivery mechanisms.	Investigate the best ways to deliver training and how to combine them effectively. We can relook at the traditional methods (at events, special camps, some books, etc) and incorporate new technology such as web repositories of material and online interactive games and exercises.
<b>C</b>	Make more „self help tools available.	Recognising that many people will want to develop themselves, make sure we have a menu of tools available for them – such as analysis of strengths and weaknesses, diagnostic tools for understanding root causes of errors, a range of practical skills exercises to overcome basic weaknesses and technical flaws, training programmes, etc.
<b>D</b>	Clubs to put in place practical coaching structures.	Make sure clubs put in place systems that don't repeat the mistakes of the past that expect one person to be the coach for everyone. Get the workload spread out! Encourage more practical approaches such as the use of „buddy systems where experienced club members can mentor newer and younger members, giving 1:1 feedback and encouragement.
<b>E</b>	Making sure every club does not need to reinvent the wheel.	NZOF to provide a pool of resource materials and strategic guidance so that each club or club coach does not have to be a technical genius or highly experienced themselves to put in place the basic structures.
<b>F</b>	Provide much better support structures for individuals coaching at club level.	Have a national / regional support structure behind all the individuals so they have a person they can look to for guidance and get access to resources. Have someone interested in the club coach, their performance, development and enjoyment of the role. Make it easy to be a club coach, and remove the barriers that currently put many people off (for example, don't think they are good enough).

<b>G</b>	Test different ways of teaching and providing coaching.	Don't just stick with one approach. Keep innovating based on the needs of the audience. Get people continually (but not in a disruptive way) designing and testing techniques and formats. Not doing this in the past has led us to the position we are in now!
<b>H</b>	Increase the recognition and status of coaching.	Increase the awareness levels as to how important coaching is to the future of the sport. Make heroes out of coaches at a club and national level. Encourage clubs to see the importance having an active coaching programme.

If we get the core strategy right, then this will be far more effective than just increasing the quantity of what we are doing now.

#### **(5) COACHING ACTION PLAN 2007 -08**

These are based on the Core Strategy in section (4).

References to a "contract researcher" should be read in the context that it is there to signal that (a) it is a different person from the Coaching Director and that it may involve some payment.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Strategy Endorsement</b>		
1. That the coaching strategic plan be presented to the NZOF Council for adoption.	Coaching Director / General Manager	Dec 2006
<b>Know how to teach</b>		
2. Review available information on best ways to teach orienteering skills.	Coaching Director / Contract Researcher	June 2007
3. Research best practice methods of other similar (individual) sports and from the leading overseas countries.	Coaching Director / Contract Researcher	June 2007
<b>Rethinking Delivery Mechanisms</b>		
4. Following the research, investigate the best ways to deliver training and how to combine them effectively.	Coaching Director / Club Coaches	Sept 2007
<b>Make more self help tools available</b>		
5. Provide a suite of tools on the NZOF website for people to use.	Coaching Director	June 2007
6. Enhance this over time following the research results.	Coaching Director / Club Coaches	Ongoing

Regions/ clubs to put in place practical coaching structures		
7. Develop a two tier regional / club coaching structure that is sustainable and does not load all the work on one person.	Coaching Director / Club Presidents	Dec 2007
8. That all clubs either appoint people to coaching roles or have ready access to regional coaching resources.	Club Presidents	Dec 2007 Ongoing
9. That a database of accredited coaches be updated and maintained. **	Coaching Director	Dec 2006
10. That clubs update their list of accredited coaches.	Clubs	Ongoing
11. That regions / clubs organise regular coaching sessions for their members.	Clubs	Ongoing
Making sure every club does not need to reinvent the wheel		
12. That the coaching page on the NZOF website be maintained as an easily accessible pool of resource materials and strategic guidance for each club or club coach to draw on.	Coaching Director	Ongoing
13. That all coaching resources be updated and be promoted to clubs.	Coaching Director	Ongoing
14. That consideration be given to extending „The Little Book of Orienteering Techniques“.	Coaching Director	Sept 2007
Provide much better support structures for individuals coaching at club level		
15. Establish a formal direct reporting line from club coaches to the Coaching Director or Regional Coaching co-ordinator so there is a nationwide network of support for individual club coaches.	Coaching Director / Club Coaches	March 2007
16. Utilise this network for coach support, development, training, recruitment and communication.	Coaching Director / Club Coaches	Ongoing
17. That a national coaching refresher course for accredited coaches be held. **	Coaching Director	Feb 2007
18. That a national coaching camps for accredited and non accredited coaches be held.	Coaching Director	Annually in 2007 & 2008

Test different ways of teaching and providing coaching		
19. Ongoing research, innovation and testing of coaching techniques.	Coaching Director / Club Coaches	Ongoing
20. That annual regional camps for beginners and less experienced be tested.	Coaching Director	Annually in 2007 & 2008
Increased recognition and status		
21. That regular coaching articles appear in <i>New Zealand Orienteering</i> .	Coaching Director	Ongoing
Support Diversity at a coaching level		
22. That criteria for mountain bike orienteering coaching be set. **	Coaching Director / MTBO Committee	
23. That a national camp for mountain bike orienteering be held.	Coaching Director	2007

**Note:** Those actions suffixed with \*\* are also included in the Investment Schedule for 2006 agreed with SPARC (see Appendix 1).

**Appendix 1: Investment agreement with SPARC 2006**

**SPARC Investment Objective: To have the most effective sport and recreation systems**

Outcome	Strategies	Key Performance Indicators	
		schedule	strategic plan
1.Improved quality of our club coaching programmes so as to enable individuals to improve their performance.	<p>That a database of active and accredited coaches be updated and maintained.</p> <p>That the review of accreditation systems be completed.</p> <p>To deliver coach refresher opportunities to all currently active coaches.</p>	<p>1.1 Establish a baseline of currently active and accredited coaches.</p> <p>1.2 Hold first national coach refresher course, employing updated accreditation system.</p> <p>1.3 Maintain the number of elite coaches at 1.</p>	<p>1.1 Maintain the number of accredited coaches, 2006-2008, at not less than 100.</p> <p>1.2 Increase the number of elite coaches, 2006-2008, from 1 to 3.</p>
2.Improved quality of MTBO coaching programmes.	<p>So as to enable individuals to improve their performance, hold an MTBO coaching clinic, preferably in the North Island, on a similar basis to that held in the South Island in 2003.</p>	<p>2.1 Set criteria for accrediting of MTBO coaches.</p>	<p>2.1 Achieve first accredited MTBO coaches.</p>