

INTRODUCTION

This new chapter "Introduction" will give you a general picture of the coaching philosophy applied to the various teaching conditions. This philosophy will be the connecting thread between the different technical and demonstrative chapters of the manual.

Manual Objective

Some general preliminary comments are necessary to understand the main considerations in the coaching of our sport. People using this manual should consider, first of all, that this is not a technical publication intended to improve the shooting level of the readers, but a document written with the purpose of explaining the teaching process of archery and the fundamentals of coaching within the sport of archery. There is a clear difference between these two objectives which will become evident later in this manual.

In comparison to many available publications that explain how to properly handle the bow & arrows, the objective of this manual is to provide suggestions on how to teach novice archers, that means how to transfer our know-how to other persons.

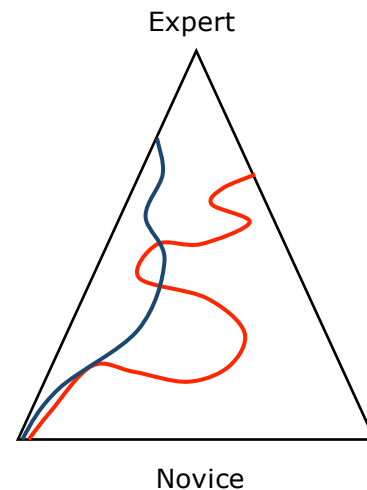
It has been found that people who understand the technical fundamentals and can demonstrate them correctly are usually good coaches. Therefore, in this manual, the priority has been on good teaching with a strong emphasis on the visualization and demonstration of the different technical steps.

The Archery Coach Candidate

Even in countries that have only recently become involved in archery, technical information has been widely disseminated through several types of media, including the WORLD ARCHERY website, the Internet, or specific archery publications. This dissemination of information could incite and help some archers to become archery coaches. It may even inspire them to participate in a level 1 coaching course. However a minimum level of expertise (practical experience, technical competencies, competition background...) is a considerable bonus in guiding the development of the novices. The archery expertise of the

coach candidates and how it can contribute to their becoming efficient coaches is discussed below.

Each former archer has reached a certain level of proficiency through a progression path. (The red line in the illustration below.)



Those who have subsequently become coaches, wish their students to both achieve a better level than they themselves did and to do so through a straighter path. (The blue line illustrated above.)

The Novice archer

A "novice" is defined as a person who has little or no background in our sport. The level 1 archery coach could possibly encounter persons that already have had some experience in archery (even if only from Summer Camps). This experience, which is usually technically incomplete, could be a bonus but sometimes is not, as possible incorrect habits and techniques would have to be replaced by correct ones.

Archery is accessible to a large range of ages, to both genders without any barrier, and also to most people who have some physical or mental impairment. The level 1 coach should be able to properly introduce any of these profiles of novice to archery.

National Coaching Education Program

The levels

Each country sets the structure and coaching levels of their national system to suit their own needs and may cover from two to five levels.

Each level should have a justified existence with a specific definition of the different interactions between the archery/training fundamentals, the coach and the level/goal of the archer.

The WORLD ARCHERY Coaching Committee considers the coach's role as helping in the archer's development over three steps; hence three coaching levels have been set.

Level 1

This coaching level has been designed according to the usual needs of novices. Since we do not know what type of bow or which discipline the novices will choose in the future, they need to learn the common basics of archery. This allows them to be able to adapt easily to, and practice, any type of archery in the future. This means – any type of bow and in any discipline. Hence the entry level archery coach has to be trained in:

- teaching
 - safety
 - equipment selection, setting and maintenance
 - common technical bases of archery
 - session preparation and management
 - entry level program preparation and management
 - connected developments
 - serving:
 - any novice: young, teenager, adult, elder, disabled
 - an individual novice as well as to a group of novices
 - in various environments: in an archery club, at school, in a community centre, in a rehabilitation centre, in a resort centre...
- This list is not exhaustive.

It is also important to remember that at the novice level, the coach can, and will, meet different kinds of potential archers, defining the two main categories of students:

- 1) People approaching archery mainly for fun or as a recreational/social pastime.
- 2) People approaching archery as a sporting discipline.

Level 2

This coaching level has been designed according to the usual needs of the archers who have completed the level one program and who have decided which bow and optionally which archery discipline they will shoot. Hence the coach's task is to improve a person's archery skills in one or two archery "specialities", which would be in a combination of Bow divisions and Disciplines. Level 2 mainly provides technical knowledge.

At this intermediate level, it is important to realise that some archers will turn to recreational archery and some to competitive shooting.

Level 3

At this level coaches are responsible for coaching/managing archers who have decided to specialize in one or two archery disciplines, who are dedicated and are striving to perform to the best of their ability, many of whom will have the ambition of representing their country at the international level. For some strong clubs and/or Provincial archery associations it could be at the provincial and/or National levels. Some of these archers will progress into professional/semi-professional training, i.e. more than one session per day, but most will be dedicated amateurs training up to 5 or 6 times a week. Whatever their status the archers at this level need some coaching assistance in several areas such as:

- Training plan
- Connected developments
- Preparation of important events
- Fine tuning of the equipment

This list is not exhaustive

This manual will only refer to Level 1

Efficiency of the program and the trained coach

The content of this manual strives to suggest how to improve the coaching skills of those in charge of novice archers. Coach efficiency can be achieved through:

- A good initial coaching education consisting mostly of a coaching course alternating between theory and practical education. It is usually conducted over several (approximately 4) week-ends or several days in a row (at least 7), with an evaluation of each candidate at the end of the course.
- Continuing education which can be proposed by an archery organization, an organization of generic sport, etc. but must also be the responsibility of every archery coach.

This second pillar of coaching education is particularly important since we are referring to a very long lasting process.

A 2007 survey showed that an average of 7 years was required to bring a novice to a world elite level (for those who were "lucky enough" to reach that level). For a high level archery coach, the development period is even longer. Hence becoming certified after a week of training does not mean that now this person is instantly a good archery coach. It just acknowledges the good disposition of the new trainer to become a good archery coach, but there is still a long road ahead.

What is a good/efficient coach?

Of course each level has its specific goals as outlined above. For the level 1 archery coach there are some priorities such as safe practice, social integration, basic archery skills, etc. Beyond that, one can generalize that a good/efficient coach helps their student(s) progress; not only with sport specific performance, but also with themselves and their personality.

Also, we should keep in mind that one of the most important objectives for an archery club is to get archers who progress to the regional archery elite. The same applies to the Provincial/State Archery Association for the national level and to the National Archery Federation for the international level.

"Being a good coach is not enough to get good results"

Experience shows that there are several "good" coaches who are not "efficient", since they do not produce top archers. While some "average" level coaches get excellent results. These two contradictory situations seem to be due to the sporting/working environment. Thus we have written down below the usual components of an efficient working environment for an archery coach.

CRITERIA FOR EFFICIENCY IN THE SPORT OF ARCHERY:

- 1) Efficient coaching assistance.
- 2) High level training services and access.
- 3) Broad network of competitions.
- 4) Good administration.
- 5) Contracts of objectives/services between the club, the archer and the coach.

We strongly invite any archery coach, including level 1 coaches (even though this matter is

more appropriate for level 2 and 3 coaches) to also contribute in improving these criteria in addition to their own coaching/technical skills. See below some details on these criteria.

Criteria 1: Efficient Coaching Assistance.

- A good initial Coaching Certification Program;
- A strong continuing Coaching Education Program;
- Available access to professional coaches;
- Coaching assistance commensurate with the needs of the archers at their various development steps;

This list is not exhaustive

Criteria 2: High level Training services and access.

Among others:

- Good archery facilities and equipment;
- Accessible archery facilities throughout the year;
- Adapted to the schedule and commitments of work/school;
- Generic sport facilities such as gymnasium, strengthening room, swimming pool, etc.;
- Support staff in generic sport development: strengthening, psychology, medical assistance, etc.;

Criteria 3: Broad Network of competitions.

- Tournaments of various competitive levels to fit the archer's current competitive level;
- Tournaments of different organizational standards to prepare the archers for any competition level;
- Access to many tournaments, to allow personalized schedule of competitions;
- Skilled Judges;
- Fair (clean) competition;

Among other things.

Criteria 4: Good Administration.

In any organization, there is no lasting efficiency without a good administrative management.

- Fair and understandable decision-making processes;
- Good communication at all levels;
- Transparency in all activities;
- Budget management skills;

This list is not exhaustive

Criteria 5: Contracts of Objectives & Services.

Contracts are generally unnecessary at the novice level. Once the athlete has committed to a path of excellence, a contract can define the goals and conditions of partnership between the Athlete, Association/Federation, Coach, etc. This document outlines what happens in the case of the achievement of failure of prepared objectives, among other things.

Your time and energy to contribute in improving the above criteria of an efficient working environment for an archery coach, will pay back.

We would like to encourage all coaches to read this manual and to use it as a main tool in their coaching activities.

Enjoy your reading!