

Module 4. Relaying Information to Coaches & Players. What To Do and What Not To Do



☰ 4.1 Who Are the Coaches & Players? Defining Roles and Implications Beyond Unit 4.1

☰ 4.2 Case Studies: Decisions Impacting Key Performance Goals

☰ References

☰ Download

4.1 Who Are the Coaches & Players? Defining Roles and Implications Beyond Unit 4.1

The fact that players and coaches have been saved for last in this module should not represent or reflect their level of importance. Quite the opposite is true, as players are truly the epicentre of sport, since without them there is no 'game' or performance. The number of resources, energy, and time geared towards creating the conditions for players to be successful is significant, and as such, spending time on the direct service and implications around communication is critical. Next to that is the role of the coach, who influences, more directly than any others, the climate around the player, both directly and indirectly. From selection in games to direct coaching, conversation, and feedback, to more indirect means as the motivational climate the coach creates, like a focus on winning, versus a climate on mastery and development.

4.1.1 Coaches

The road to becoming a coach can be widely varied, but very often begins when players who retire, then transition into coaching as a natural evolution of their experiences and passion for the game. However, this is not always the case, and there are more routes and opportunities as video analysis and analytics have begun encouraging more diversity into coaching. North America also has limited licensing and certifications available for professional coaching, except for US soccer. While many sports across the world supplement education with pedagogy, skill acquisition, psychology, biomechanics, and other technical and tactical knowledge, there are very few of these programs required in professional sports in the United States. Exposure to the sport sciences have also been very limited for many of these individuals, who, with many as former players, experienced very traditional North American approaches to athletic training and strength and conditioning. This is partially the reason the evolution to integrating more sport science within the pro sport landscape has taken longer than in much of Europe, Australasia, and the rest of the world.

The pressures and expectations on coaches are significant, as is at the professional level across the world. Results are the ultimate in accountability, and it is often less expensive to fire and terminate a coach, than it is with a player. For this reason, the trust of a coach to other members of the support team can be especially challenging. What might seem like a low risk to you as a sport scientist, trailing something that might influence a performance, could have significant career and impact to the livelihood of a coach. Awareness of these factors and timing around conversations and perceived risk taking can go a long way to building an effective relationship with staff.

4.1.2 Players

As with all discussion about the roles of stakeholders, be aware of the assumptions that you have about a role versus the human in front of you. Fans, media, family, teammates, front office can all create different kinds of pressures and expectations on a player, although often the pressure a player puts on themselves is the greatest of all. Asking a player about their goals, what success looks like for them, what motivates them, and why they play the game, can give tremendous insight and connection, as well as challenge the assumptions that both you, and they have. Frequently, the information collected by the sport science team can influence a player's status in the line-up and whether they play, and the implications can affect both their livelihood and the pressure they experience. That could be reaching bonus money in their contract for a certain number of appearances, or opportunity to achieve performance goals. Or simply a chance to help their teammates and the competitive nature of a player.

The road to professional and elite level sport can look very different for different players. Many have been the very best athlete on every team they have played on since they were children, where the spotlight, expectation, and pressure have been practically all they have known and experienced. Others took a longer road to that success, with broader perspectives and every so often a traditional education and professional options. Sports like baseball also mean that even the best players spend some of their early professional career developing in minor league play, getting used to professional routines and a different environment before full status is achieved. Professional football and basketball (NFL and NBA) typically see high draft picks and rookies make their full debut sooner in their developmental journey, which can also have implications on their readiness and ability to deal with pressure and inexperience.

Being aware and conscious of your relationships, how you communicate and the implications of communication with both players and coaching staff are among the most pivotal that you will have in your role. We have left these stakeholders for last because we feel that, given the context of all the other scenarios you have thought and worked through, you are now ready to tackle some of the most challenging scenarios you might encounter in your role. The professional sport environment can be very unforgiving, and while these key stakeholders may seem to be the easiest of all stakeholders to communicate with, they can also be the hardest, and most catastrophic when they go wrong.

Worth mentioning, in close relation to players, is the role of agents. Typically, these are legal representatives, who work to procure and negotiate employment and endorsement contracts for their clients. Many agencies are representing players and can range from well-known large corporate structures to independent family friends. Many agents look after and advise players of their financial and future investments, and will often advise players closely when it comes to health and sharing information with an organization. With these two-factors related to data privacy and ethics alone, there may be scepticism whether your interest is in helping the athlete or the organization, and as a result, it can come in between you and the player. Therefore, the following scenarios are designed to help you prepare you for successful and effective communication with these key stakeholders.

The most successful teams and environments are ones where trust is established across all domains. Where there is not an 'us' versus 'them' sentiment. Where players do not trust the front office, or coaching staff, and where coaches

can trust players and performance staff to put the team first and focus on doing their job to the best of their ability. As simple as that sounds, the external pressures, assumptions and poor communication can lead to breakdowns in trust and make complex situations all but impossible. These challenges are part of what makes these situations incredibly rewarding, as well as incredibly difficult. The following case studies provide some examples of the complex interactions and subtleties of interacting with players and coaches, and some thoughts of how you might explore these.

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4.2 Case Studies: Decisions Impacting Key Performance Goals

4.2.1 Health Scenario

Consider the case of Player "Placeholder", an 18-year-old goalkeeper in professional soccer, who is 6'0", and 250 lbs. He has got great potential, however, dual x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) and International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK) assessments support that he is overweight and will benefit from managing his body composition to reduce his risk of injury, but also maximise his continued playing development. The head coach has tried doing weigh-ins and talks to him about body weight regularly, without any success or change.

The player comes to you, the first team's sports scientist, and confides that he is stressed out and depressed at the nutritionist, strength coach as well as coaches shaming him, and that he is trying to make changes, but nothing seems to work. What do you do?

- 1 Tell him this is a tough, result-driven sport, and we are all accountable to doing our job.
- 2 You empathise and agree that the coach's behaviour is not OK, but that it is typical in sport, and he should simply suck it up and prove them all wrong.
- 3 You agree that this behaviour is not OK, and that you will help him by talking to the staff on his behalf.
- 4 You empathise with the fact that he is struggling and ask him questions to clarify what he thinks is happening, both in terms of stressors he is dealing with, what he has tried in terms of communicating with coaching staff, and interventions he says have failed. While you say you cannot promise to fix things, you will help to be there for him to navigate the next steps.

- Potential outcomes for each of the possible responses:

- 1 While all sports are result-driven at some point, this approach may likely distance the player from you and reduce trust. This could be a 'tough love' approach, but there is the potential for many assumptions, a lack of understanding and reduced likelihood of the player communicating things back to you or anyone on staff.

2

As with option (1), there are many assumptions being made, and the potential to lose a lot of trust with the player, but also the coaching staff. It also has the potential to reduce autonomy, increase learned helplessness and enable a toxic environment and preventing the feedback and awareness that these perceived behaviours are causing. None of which are good.

3

While the urge to help to support may increase trust in the relationship between the player and the sports scientist, the player is also being robbed of the opportunity to communicate and be empowered to deal with hard conversations. There is likely the need to prepare, whether that is through thinking, rehearsing, role playing, scripting, or all sorts of methods; however, the player being supported through a process to communicate for themselves and navigate complexity could be valuable. There is also the opportunity to lose trust with the coaching staff involved and miss a lot of the assumptions and misunderstandings between both parties if the player is not directly involved in articulating and talking these through.

4

This seems like the option that sets the player, the sports scientist, and coaching staff most up for success. Asking clarifying questions and gathering more information, not only for yourself, but for the player to consider, gives you both a richer canvas and understanding of what is happening as well as their mental and emotional response. You are not offering to solve everything, but to help them gather and plan of action is empowering and provides you the ability to increase trust with all stakeholders and potentially identify opportunities for collaboration and gaps in existing information.

4.2.2. Performance Scenario

The main goal for any sports team is to win, and for each athlete to perform at their best level any given day. Of course, this is easier said than done, but the job of the performance team is to help prepare their players for this and create an environment for them to be successful. The interplay between coaches, players, and performance staff, in particular the sports scientist, are critical to a healthy environment and successful season.

Player "Placeholder" is a 22-year-old professional baseball jug. The team is one game out of playoff contention with only weeks away from the end of the season. In a season with 162 games, durability and managing volume is a key topic for staff. The implications of making the playoff has created a lot of intensity and pressure. As the sports scientist, you oversee the fatigue profiles for the players and workload monitoring. Player "Placeholder" is scheduled to start in a key match up tomorrow, but you see his jump score trends flag some concern. This player has a very explosive profile and has an average fast ball velocity close to 100 mph. His peak power, and peak velocity numbers have been trending down, but his in-game metrics have remained steady (fast ball velocity average, range, and spin rates). You know his role on the team is critical, and even though the player says he is fine, the manager asks you for some insights given the data. What do you think the best options are?

Potential approach:

1

You re-check the monitoring data you have and bring the discussion to the pitching coach and ask for his advice on next steps, knowing there is potentially a small window before the player's next start, and you would rather not waste any time to raise a potential issue.

2

You review the monitoring data and look at historical trends for this time of year. You decide to reach out to the PT and discuss possible scenarios before you talk to the pitching coach, and other staff before talking to the player.

3

You are with the player when he is being assessed and is performing the jump. He inquires about the results and you read the results off with him and discuss the downward trend. Despite his attempts to reassure you he feels "great", you push and challenge him on the risks of hiding fatigue and the potential of injury at such an important time of year.

4

You re-check the monitoring data and have concerns about the fatigue profile. Realizing his availability is important to the team, you float the idea of him potentially missing a start to the pitching coach, who responds strongly that you should keep that information to yourself. You realize his on-field performances have not been impacted yet, so you decide to wait until the next monitoring session to bring it to the rest of the staff.

Potential outcomes for each of the possible responses:

1

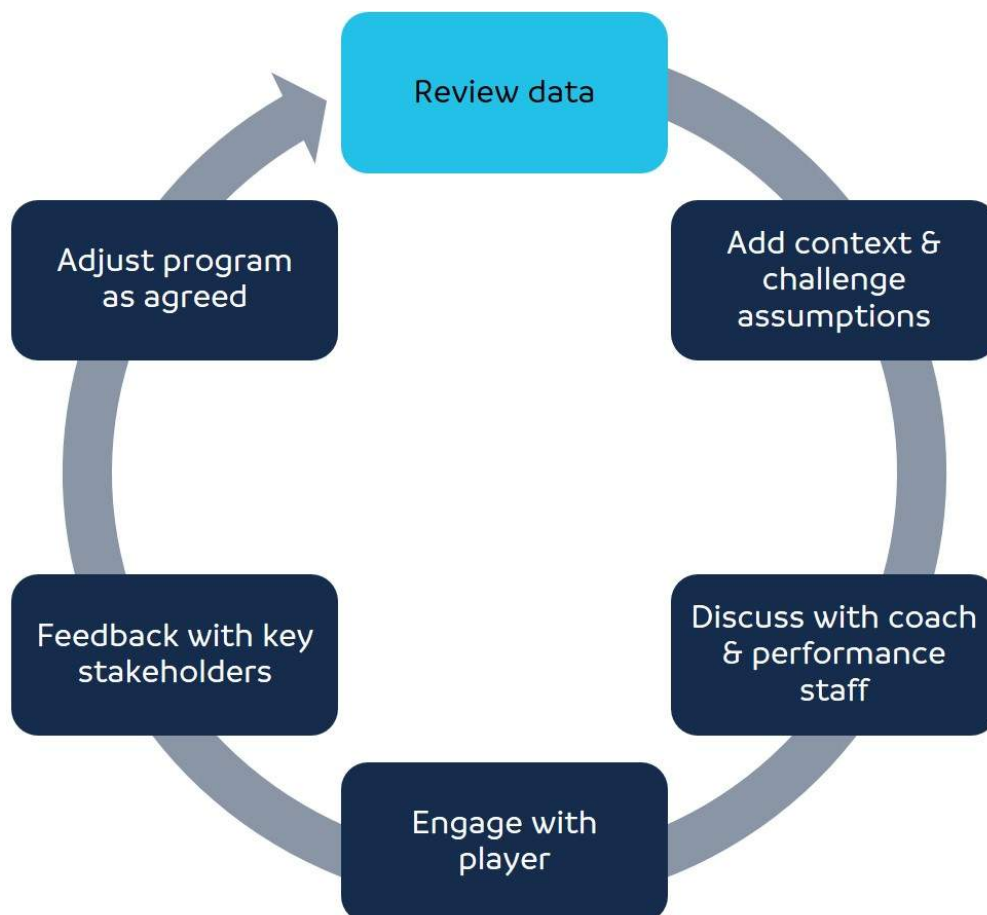
Involving the pitching coach will be an important step, and relevant to cross-reference the force plate (jump) data, along with performance metrics to get a comprehensive profile. The time between having concerns and bringing information to the rest of the group is also an important consideration. Waiting too long can mean reducing the decision-making window and for the manager and GM who are ultimately responsible for selecting the player to make a rushed decision. However, similarly going to the key stakeholders with incomplete or wrong information can be just as damaging. These are good scenarios to discuss with a manager, and GM in pre-season and away from pressurized windows so that they can be objectively discussed and thought through as hypotheticals. Every scenario is different and cannot be prepared ahead of time with accuracy. However, it is recommended to be aware of the data you have and to have a pulse for what may be desired by the coaches and players, therefore timeliness of information that may be incomplete, but impact the availability of a player is a typical scenario, although the context and magnitude of a win (e.g., in a playoff race), and the level of acceptable risk to a player with uncertain criteria may change depending on the context. Keep in mind, although it is complex, this scenario also presents a risk for loss of trust among the performance staff, particularly the medical staff, especially if you are going to a coach before they have had time and visibility of this data or discussion around injury risk.

2

Reviewing the data and putting it in historical context (if you have it), is helpful to paint a more comprehensive picture. Given injury risk is likely more significant than pure performance risk, discussing with the medical staff is a recommended initial step. Adding their insight into injury history,

presenting problems, treatments, and recent context to this picture will help you be more prepared and supported going to the next step of collaboration and discussion. Being aligned and going to the coaching staff alongside the PT allows for a more robust discussion and likelihood of appropriate follow through. In these kinds of discussions, there may be a misalignment and pressure to not take the information further, however, knowing your boundaries of expertise and what you agree to share with action steps is an important principle, to not find yourself pitted against the other staff member, but allow a process to be followed. Ideally, the process is set ahead of time, but it can be hard to prepare for every scenario. For example, the other staff member is not available, and the decision-making window is very narrow. Being able to come back to an agreed set of values and ways of working, can help navigate scenarios where we must adapt outside the norms if that is not possible. The following process below might be an optimal design that is agreed and allows for a debrief and learning when certain steps cannot be followed, or when exceptions may apply.

Figure 1: Process for possible injury risk



Source: Own source.

3

Speaking with the player as part of the sense check and context is a normal and practical first step in this process, especially if data and feedback is relayed in real-time. Engagement and discussion with the player are ideal, since a lack of understanding and discussion can also lead to lack of buy-in. It is important for there to be an essence of education, and self-awareness on how they take care of their body and their general readiness. When this foundation is laid, the quality of communication is also more likely to be positive and, consequentially, there is a lesser probability of lying or covering up fatigue or pain. Trust continues to be the most important asset for the sport scientist, and this is a great example that directly ties to cooperation and compliance from players, when they feel respected and are clear that the goal is to help keep them on the field, and make adjustments to the preparation and recovery that gives them the best chance to compete. However, in this scenario, we go beyond discussion, and into more of an analysis and recommendation methodology without consulting the rest of the performance and coaching staff. Instead, the ideal response could be something like this:

Sounds like you feel good, and have been pitching well, but it is good to get some objective feedback from the force plates to make sure we keep you healthy and on the field. All these games are super important, such that we want to keep our eyes on this, so we can give you the best recovery options and work with the staff to keep you in your sweet spot. It is not just about making the play-offs, but also having you help us win down this stretch too. I will talk to the staff and circle back with you on some of our thoughts and information in the next 24 hours, and we can look and see if there is anything in your routine we can tweak and how to stay on top of things. How does that sound? Do you have any questions, or things I can dig into more?

Notice that you are not setting yourself up for the player to give permission to share with other staff, since it is not uncommon for a player to create a trust scenario to not tell a coach or medical staff. Instead, you present that appropriate sharing is the default option and opting out of that is a less optimal path. It is also important that you do not create a scenario where you are promising he will or will not be made available or that his data will not be used 'against' him. Instead, without making promises, you convey the default process is that the data is being used to help us adjust the programs to help him be ready. Our absolute last resort is to recommend him not to play, but with good communication and timely interventions, we can do more to increase the likelihood of him being able to play and play at a high level. Good communication is the key to being able to make this happen, and this will involve more people than just the player and sports scientist. By creating a time commitment, you are also holding yourself accountable to having a realistic and concrete deliverable, rather than further ambiguity and uncertainty that could lead to more confusion and opportunities for miscommunication and distrust.

4

Getting yourself into a situation where someone is asking or telling you to keep information quiet is a worst-case scenario. Discretion can be important, and who you tell are important considerations. However, it is not uncommon for things to go wrong despite the best intentions, and when information comes out after the fact that people were not made aware can be catastrophic and where

people lose their jobs, significant damage can happen. These are very real and difficult situations to navigate, especially since the intentions and context around not sharing information can seem like the ethical and right thing to do at the time. Again, it is worth iterating why it is important to create agreed processes before you are in these kinds of sensitive moments, and a reminder on why it is helpful to build in feedback mechanisms and reviews so that you can learn from challenging and complex cases. At a simple level though, not putting people in a corner or empowering them with deciding on the sharing of information, but instead creating an environment and process of sensitivity and trust means that you are bringing trusted team members into a communication loop for visibility as a default, and not as a means of power and withholding information. This is not a decision, but information sharing and discussion in a timely manner.

Below is an example of what a pre-formulate decision-making rubric may look like in baseball, where the scale metric is predetermined based on agreed objective and subjective scores, but that ultimately, they are providing a criteria colour code that fosters safe discussion around their status. A manager is the ultimate one with sign off for selection, but there is still room for discussion on how these are weighed and the context of each variable. Note that the metrics and normal ranges would be determined by your process, data you collect, analysis and recommendations you make, but the design of a system to share that provides a recommendation and shared decision-making system for the coaching staff is significant. The desired result of the information and communication is to help decide, so we should design a process that helps deliver exactly that, but adds context and a framework that allows for discussion, but a consistent and repeatable process.

Table 1: Decision-making rubric

Grade	What	Starting Pitcher	Relief Pitcher	Position Player
'Go'	At or above average for all metrics	Fully cleared, normal routines		
'Watch'	1 metric out of normal	Can pitch, normal fatigue present	Can pitch, known fatigue present	Play, adjust based on findings
'Discuss'	2 metrics	Possible pitch, but above normal fatigue present, discuss & adjust routine	Recommend down for today's game, above normal fatigue present	Play with caution & discussion
'Risk'	Recommend not playing due to injury or illness			

4.2.3 Development Scenario

One of the key functions of the performance staff and an organization is developing and maximising the potential of an athlete. From a talent management perspective, each player is a valued asset, and the ideal is this asset increases in value over time. Some organizations have even developed an economically viable model of developing young players in an academy setting, and being able to trade, transfer, or sell these players at significant profit, allowing them to generate revenue for the organization and remain competitive without having deep capital of their own. Development is at the heart of coaching, and these opportunities can come across physical, mental, and fundamental sport skill domains; however, the interactions can be complex. Therefore, organizing development can require patience and focus on both individual impact and systematic programming. Addressing each case with a developmental, individual and systems perspective can be a key aspect of the sports scientist role.

Player "Placeholder" is a 22-year-old professional basketball player who is a point guard and very high prospect with a lot of potential. He is learning to play at the very highest level, but has recently been struggling to make good decisions under pressure, particularly with his shooting. The head coach is pressured to send him back down to the development league, but wants to provide every solution he can to help the player perform to his maximum ability.

The manager asks you as the sports scientist how you would approach supporting the player, finding out what is going on and how you would help him manage the situation, which option would you propose:

- 1 Tell the head coach that this is beyond your scope, and he should talk to the coaching staff.
- 2 Inform the head coach that this is a development problem, not a performance one. He should send the player back down to the development leagues where he can focus on some development goals and learn how to make better decisions without the pressure to perform.
- 3 You agree to help gather the performance team to work with the coaching staff on what some interventions could look like, and present back some potential plans for him and the player to consider.

- Potential outcomes for each of the possible responses:

- 1 While it may be true that your scope to provide valid and reliable opinions on the future of this player's situation is limited, not providing any feedback to the head coach who is asking for your help and opinion would be a mistake. You can certainly share why your opinions are limited, listening to the head coach's concerns and questions are important, and you can help organize those concerns

and questions in a way to come back with more accurate representation from the performance staff stakeholders concerned. This may be more of the role of the performance director, or other stakeholder, but you have been asked a question by the manager, with which it is OK to provide some support and feedback. Walking away from this interaction and just passing the buck to the coaching staff may well reduce trust with your relationship and their perception or feeling that you are not helpful.

2

It may be a true statement that the problem the player is experiencing is largely developmental; however, it is important to be careful to acknowledge the assumptions you are making without all the information. This may not be the time or place to have a long discussion about each aspect of your rationale, but acknowledging assumptions and clarifying the question to check for understanding might be important. For example,

It is a great question to see what we can do to help the player. It seems like an important step would be (i) to clarify whether this is more of an issue with him over thinking and mentally managing performing under pressure, (ii) a mechanical change to his shot, (iii) something restricting his physical ability right now (iv) or something else. Depending on which one of those is a driving factor, we may choose to handle it differently.

Would it be helpful for me to gather some feedback and present to you some of these options and thoughts, and if so, when is most helpful to you and is there anything else we should be thinking about or bringing into the discussion?

While not perfect, this raises awareness of the assumptions we are making about what the breakdowns could be, and the fact other stakeholders will have opinions, but also asking the manager some questions to clarify that he can influence the next steps, and to check for understanding on how and when he would like that feedback.

3

The option of listening, offering support and to organize feedback in a timely manner is likely the best scenario. Building trust with the head coach to ask questions, share his concerns and seek support and feedback is critical to the overall success of the team. Understanding the time constraints and factors at play is equally important because there may not be time for an exhaustive process to take place, and you may have to make judgment calls on how quickly you respond, and with how much visibility or collaboration you can reasonably make. This is the nature of the dynamic world of pro sport, and why developing ongoing and dynamic systems with the rest of the performance team is so important, and why building everything from a foundation of trust allows the flexibility and freedom to operate where there are not always black and white options to choose from.

4.2.4. Acquisition Scenario

The North American sports market is fiercely competitive and with strong development lines in high school and college ranks. Part of this has led to a scouting-based approach for many sports teams that know if the development of a player does not go as expected, they can continue to rely on scouting and player acquisition for a continued

stream of talent. However, as organizations become more savvy and smarter in how they invest in analytics, as well as player development, this emphasis has become more comprehensive. With as much data that is collected in the scouting process, it is not uncommon for much of that information to never make it to the player development staff, or even to the player. This may be surprising since part of the goal of the scouting evaluation is to measure the future potential of that player. Performance and sports science intersect with the career timeline from prospect to player all the way through their lifecycle, and so connecting these aspects of their career create a valuable opportunity.

You are the sports scientist for an NFL football team, and your first-round draft pick had dropped in value because they lost half of their senior year to a surgery. The performance team have been involved in evaluating the risks of acquiring him, which you all supported. At rookie camp, you sit in with his position coach (quarterback), offensive coordinator and head coach, as well as the PT that will be working with him in rehab. The head coach asked you to facilitate the discussion about his transition into the team, and the implications of his injury in his first year of being a pro.

- Potential approach:

1 You tell the coach that while you are flattered, you think it is more important that coaches drive the discussion and that you are more comfortable answering questions and sharing some data where it is appropriate.

2 You say how much you appreciate the trust and ask what he feels are the most important questions he has and what things he wants to get out of the meeting? You say that you will circle back with each stakeholder and prepare for the meeting, but check in with him to run through the key points.

3 You spent a lot of time with the scouts and analysts through the draft process, so you already feel like you have a good understanding of the player's potential and contributing factors. You acknowledge the coach's wishes, and ask if there is anything he would like you to make sure and touch on. You add that since he is still in a critical rehab stage, that you would like to lead the meeting with the PT, so they can discuss his current stage and build into what he can expect over the coming season and set the stage for questions and having them all on the same page.

- Potential outcomes for each of the possible responses:

1 The reality of many situations is that the coaching staff will take the lead and ask for minimal input from sports science in this scenario, or simply do these meetings separately. There is something to be said for the emotional intelligence and reading the context and non-verbal communication alignment to the content of what they are saying here. To turn down the opportunity to lead a discussion at the

request of the coach is not a great idea. While it might not be the ideal setup, perhaps explore ways to acknowledge and appreciate the opportunity and understand the intent and how you can best help them achieve that. By not stepping up and responding to this show of faith may limit the future opportunities you get.

2

By acknowledging the trust, you are also showing respect and trust and that this is significant. However, checking for understanding and acknowledging your assumptions, you are immediately taking the role of facilitator to make sure you have alignment and that you are honouring what is expected. You also recognize that, while you have been asked to run this, being prepared and getting the perspectives of what everyone else needs from the meeting further helps you set the conditions for success, and also helps you potentially design a meeting that can be efficient and meet the expectations of each person, while also letting you think about the player's experience and what the outcomes are. For example, are the primary objectives for the player to feel welcome and belong to the team's culture and tribe? Or is it primarily to share information, or create expectations of what the first steps will be? Getting clear on these ideas and what each perspective is on the experience are important aspects to investigate. While you might not get this one hundred percent right, however, the extra level of preparation and stakeholder management will likely give you a better result.

3

As previously described, checking for understanding with the coach and acknowledging the role to facilitate is an appropriate first step. Having the context and knowledge from the scouting process, both from the combine event, but also from scouting, is an optimal approach. In fact, involving scouts in this dialogue may also be worth consideration, and provides more insight and feedback to scouting as well about the perspectives and feedback performance staff and coaches have with the player also. Setting the stage alongside the PT is again the optimal move. This is a case where the risk assessment and rehab process are especially important and relevant, and may also elevate the trust level with the medical department and less likely to create an ego battle for whom the head coach values or is more important. People can become insecure when other members are asked to contribute in this fashion, and worry about their status or voice. Be cautious of these scenarios and how others may perceive things, especially with a high leverage individual like a first-round pick, since others may feel vulnerable and not seen so being able to approach in a collaborative way can go a long way to increasing trust and safety within the group, as well as most importantly getting alignment and better coordination and messaging to the player. In this case, with a long rehab, the collaboration between medical, strength and conditioning, and coaching are key, but especially when thinking about how to prepare, compete, and recover throughout the rehab process and building into the season, mentally, physically, and fundamentally.

Conclusion

The drive to create more effective, data informed decision-making in sport has and is currently transforming the sports business, and the need for courses, modules and learning opportunities like this. Understanding the questions that most likely lead to successful outcomes are critical, and the steps outlined in this course aim to provide rich context, processes, and ideas to help guide you to taking a team or organization through these steps. This does not

guarantee success. The decisions themselves are left to humans in empowered leadership roles, and this is where much of the art, science, and competitive advantage sits. Providing these roles with the best information, to inform the decision-making process in the best way possible is the goal, but the decision is subject to many other influences and context.

The business theorist, Ari de Geus, famously said, “the ability to learn faster than competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage” (1988, para. 11). Employing applied sport science is certainly one way for sports teams to better understand areas that drive performance outcomes, but the essence of what de Geus is saying is that creating feedback loops and learning within this framework is also part of the process. Learning does not finish once data is collected. In fact, the efficacy and effectiveness of the whole decision-making process includes how information is communicated, and understanding the impact and opportunity with each of the stakeholders. This module has asked you to broadly consider these roles from players, coaches, front office, performance staff and others and how the information you have learned across this ecosystem is important in a true learning organization. If the experiences managing COVID-19 across 2020 and beyond have taught us anything, it is that we do not live in a controlled environment, and that applying a scientific process to learning and a growth mindset towards change and evolution, is the best way for us to not just find a competitive advantage to win, but to also evolve, thrive and see exactly how great we can make our people and teams be.

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References

Geus, A. P. (1988). Planning As Learning. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 70-74. <https://hbr.org/1988/03/planning-as-learning>

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