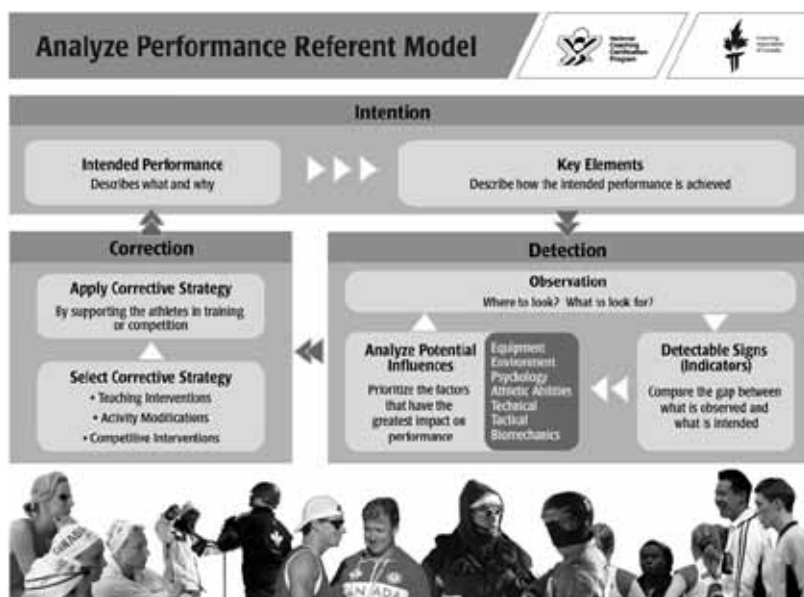


## Coaching Intervention: What's Your Referent?

One of the challenges in coaching is detecting and correcting athlete performance, knowing when to intervene and how to intervene. Many coaches rely on intuition or past experience when coaching in the daily training environment, but may not have a systematic basis for making key corrections in performance. Some of the challenges encountered in the coaching process include:

1. Detecting key performance indicators is often an internal coaching quality based on prior experience or intuition and is only validated upon observing a change in performance.
2. There may be a number of potential causes for performance decrements relating to skill execution.
3. The range of possible corrections is enormous, and it could be argued that any form of corrective measure would have an impact on performance.
4. Coaches may have differing perspectives of an athlete's performance and therefore a coach's decision to intervene, and the type of performance corrections, will vary.

Many of these factors distinguish the "art" of coaching and query whether there is an objective process that could assist coaches in making the most optimal intervention with their athletes. An effective coach must decide whether the deviation between the expected performance and the observed performance requires some type of intervention. Moreover, when does the gap between the observed performance and the intended outcome reach a point that makes an instructing intervention necessary?



One way of answering this question is for the coach to consider the referent by which they make decisions to intervene. Within the National Coaching Certification Program the concept of the "Referent Model" has been proposed to assist coaches to more effectively impact athlete performance.

Building a Referent Model requires the coach to identify the overall scope of the performance analysis in order to be more effective in selecting the potential causes impacting athlete performance. The process requires the coach to prioritize potential causes that could have an impact on performance including but not limited to: equipment; environment; affective; cognitive/mental; physical/motor; tactical and technical factors. The Referent Model proposes the coach avoid focussing on the technical elements, but rather reflect upon a prioritized series of preliminary causes based on the gap between the ideal performance outcome and what is actually observed. For example, the impact of a technical consideration may have very little affect on performance, if the gap in performance is due to an underlying cause (eg. equipment may have a direct impact on the performance outcome). Upon defining the potential factors impacting performance and their sport-specific indicators, the coach identifies corrections that could address the cause and how these corrections might be implemented. The key is to select an optimal corrective strategy based on the "true" cause of the performance execution. The application of a corrective measure could include teaching strategies, practice modifications or competitive interventions as identified in the model.

Having a detailed referent model is the first step in enhancing coaching effectiveness and providing an optimal daily training environment for athletes.

### POWERING PODIUM PERFORMANCES

Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, in partnership with the network of PacificSport Centres, delivers sport performance programs to help athletes and coaches win medals for Canada. Working in support of our national and provincial sport partners, Canadian SportCentre Pacific is creating a stronger system for the development of athletes, coaches, integrated support teams and sport performance facilities.

# Creating your Referent Model

*Courtesy of Coaching Association of Canada (2009) Analyze Technical and Tactical Performance: Module Template*

## The Intention Phase

Think of a skill or tactic that is commonly used in your sport, and then think about how athletes should perform the key elements — the details of skills that affect final performance — of each movement phase. This is the intended performance.

## The Detection Phase

The detection phase involves:

- Observing performance. The observation will require you to choose several vantage points to best identify the outcome and key elements. Different vantage points may reveal different key elements or other potential influences on performance. It is important that the observation strategy provide the best picture of the intended performance.
- Detecting gaps. As you observe performance, you will begin looking for gaps between observed and intended performance.
- Identifying reasons for the gaps. Reasons for gaps include equipment, the environment, psychology, athletic abilities, tactics, technique, and biomechanics.

You may cycle through these steps several times before making a decision on what to correct. The key question is: When does the gap between observed and intended performance reach a point that makes a coaching intervention necessary?

## The Correction Phase

The correction phase helps you close the gap between observed and intended performance. Corrective measures include teaching interventions, modifications of activities or drills, and competitive interventions. Applying the corrective measure requires that you consider how you will implement it in practice or competition.



## ANALYSIS FACTORS

EQUIPMENT	ENVIRONMENT	PSYCHOLOGY	ATHLETIC ABILITIES	TECHNICAL	TACTICAL	BIOMECHANICS
<input type="checkbox"/> FIT	<input type="checkbox"/> WEATHER	<input type="checkbox"/> FEAR	<input type="checkbox"/> STRENGTH	<input type="checkbox"/> KEY ELEMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/> DECISION MAKING	<input type="checkbox"/> PLANES OF MOTION
<input type="checkbox"/> TUNING	<input type="checkbox"/> SURFACE	<input type="checkbox"/> MOTIVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> STAMINA	<input type="checkbox"/> PHASES OF MOVEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPETITION PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/> BIOMECHANICAL PRINCIPLES
<input type="checkbox"/> TYPE	<input type="checkbox"/> LIGHTING	<input type="checkbox"/> SELF-EFFICACY	<input type="checkbox"/> SPEED		<input type="checkbox"/> SELECTION/SUBSTITUTION	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTITUDE	<input type="checkbox"/> BELIEF	<input type="checkbox"/> FLEXIBILITY			
	<input type="checkbox"/> POLLUTION	<input type="checkbox"/> CONCENTRATION				
		<input type="checkbox"/> FOCUS				
		<input type="checkbox"/> AROUSAL CONTROL				
		<input type="checkbox"/> CUE RECOGNITION				
		<input type="checkbox"/> PERCEPTION				

## DETECTABLE SIGNS OR INDICATORS OF GAPS

## CORRECTIVE MEASURES

TEACHING INTERVENTIONS	MODIFICATIONS OF ACTIVITIES OR DRILLS	COMPETITIVE INTERVENTIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> HELP OR REASSURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST EQUIPMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST EQUIPMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLAIN OR ASK QUESTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST TASK DEMANDS OR REPEAT	<input type="checkbox"/> CHANGING TACTICS OR GAME PLAN
<input type="checkbox"/> SIMPLIFY - REDUCE NUMBER OF VARIABLES TO PROCESS, OR USE EXAMPLES	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST PROGRESSION	<input type="checkbox"/> MAKING SUBSTITUTIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> USE MENTAL SKILLS STRATEGY (E.G. RE-FOCUSING, VISUALIZATION, OR GOAL SETTING)	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST SPEED OR TIMING	<input type="checkbox"/> CHANGE SELECTION
<input type="checkbox"/> DEMONSTRATE OR MODEL CORRECT PERFORMANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST SPACE OR CHANGE ENVIRONMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> USE MENTAL SKILLS STRATEGY (E.G. RE-FOCUSING, VISUALIZATION, OR GOAL SETTING)
<input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDE FEEDBACK OR RESULTS	<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST WORK/REST RATIOS OR INTENSITY	<input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDE FEEDBACK OR RESULTS
<input type="checkbox"/> ADJUST FOR ATHLETE LEARNING STYLES		