

Cowboys, Chaos and Coyotes

Presented by Dr Martin Buchheit, Head of Performance for Paris Saint-Germain

Dr Martin Buchheit is a sport scientist, a strength and conditioning coach, and the current Head of Performance for Paris Saint-Germain. Prior to his role here Martin worked as an exercise physiologist for ASPIRE Academy in Qatar, and he has served as a lecturer, consultant, and strength and conditioning coach for various other sports organizations.

Martin who has spent the past 20 years working in elite sport, uses his experience to cover the controversial question of what matters more in the world of elite sport - experience or knowledge? From this presentation you can learn how to successfully integrate sports science and research into real world, elite environments in a way that will make an impact to your program.

All information presented here is not representative of Martin's current role, but rather his experience over the last 20 years.

- There are inherent differences - language, expectations, focus, interests - between coaches and players to performance staff. As performance staff it is naive to believe that you will always be able to manage or connect with these other parties, so you must instead listen and learn how to effectively communicate on their level.
- Check your ego - sometimes being successful in your job means that you have to be prepared to throw away research or processes that you have spent years working on.
- Sometimes it also means that you have to do things that you don't really believe in, out of respect for the other parties or your colleagues.
- Performing poor practices in your team environment is more likely lose you credit with players and coaches. Examples of this are employing practices that go against evidence or go against common sense such as i.e. testing players in pre-season but not using the data.
- To deal with the chaos that can occur in elite sport (constantly changing schedules, nutrition, involvement of commercial business, etc) - it is important to be flexible and focus on what you can deliver for player health and performance - not always what you 'must' deliver.
- Learning to become adaptable and agile on a daily basis - with players, coaches, external events – is very important.
- When building a performance framework - remember to check your ego – it's not about you, it's about the coach and the player.
- You will be able to ask the right questions of your performance program, by first understanding the gaps and needs of your team

- “No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care” -don’t underestimate the value of developing relationships - with colleagues, coaches and players. Sometimes going out of your way to show that you care (i.e. learn a player’s native language) can be the best way to connect and get buy in from others.
- Operating with context, pragmatism, common sense and best practices is more effective than depending on oversimplified research
- Technologies such as iPad questionnaires are important but don’t underestimate the insights you may receive from your athletes by using interpersonal and soft skills (asking ‘how are you today’).
- When presenting your data - remember your audience! What will coaches and players actually care about? Tailor and adapt metrics or even visuals within your presentation to make it more meaningful for them.
- When it comes to supplements, remember to balance evidence (benefits to performance/health) with feasibility (is consumption too complicated or likely to be forgotten by player).
- SportsPerfSciR a sports research forum that is co-founded by Martin. This forum aims to make real data and real field questions accessible to everyone without the timely and complicated process of more traditional peer-reviewed journals. For more information visit <https://sportperfsci.com/>