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## Coaching in Aeromodelling

**In recent years, sports coaching has become increasingly important. In competitive sport, a significant proportion of success - or failure - is accredited to coaching. As it's not just physical performance that is important in aeromodelling, but particularly precision and the ability to concentrate, coaching methods vary.**

### Coaching in general

The coach of a sports club once defined coaching as "effective support tailored to the sportsperson". I would like to broaden this definition a bit

as focussing only on the person to be supported strikes me as being somewhat limited. Conditions, environment, organisation, etc. do have to be taken into account and it is hugely important to have set goals. The theory of this has been written about comprehensively, so let us remain practical.

### Let's begin with juniors Coaching



Aeromodelling is not a particularly trendy sport. We need to pay special attention to young people with an interest in aeromodelling, not least because the new EU drone laws can easily result in them acting illegally (unfortunately, I have no knowledge of restrictions to aeromodelling for young people in Eastern and Western countries). In my experience, many juniors have their first experiences of aeromodelling not in a club, but with their family, friends or at school, and only join a club once they have become completely fascinated. At this point, providing support and setting goals must not be left to chance.

### 1. General introduction

The first step should always be an introduction into the safe use of the airfield with clear rules being crucial. This is the club committee's responsibility. Ideally, a parent will be present at the beginning, not just for driving duties, but also to provide

individual support to their offspring. This involves far more than flying itself: Have you charged your transmitter or done the necessary repairs? Don't forget your sunglasses! And so on. The club itself also needs to provide someone to look after the youngster. Great, if a young member can be tasked with this.



## ***No one too small to be an aerobatic pilot***

### **2. The path to becoming a competition pilot**

For clubs that don't have members with an interest in competitions, supporting and guiding juniors along the path to competitive sport is difficult, if not impossible. If we neglect to support talented young people on their way to becoming competition pilots, we run the real risk of finding ourselves with only older pilots competing. I would therefore recommend that clubs without an interest in competing arrange to send their junior to a neighbouring club with experienced

competition pilots for training. Or, even better, the club invites an accomplished pilot.



### ***Mothers and fathers can be wonderful coaches***



### **3. Between criticism and encouragement**

Careers - and not just those of young competition pilots - never progress in a straight line but are shaped by setbacks and successes. The art of coaching involves helping to find a balance between absolute bliss and



### ***Coaching and training in groups is a very motivating concept, especially for juniors. This requires precise planning.***

the depths of despair. Clear objectives are crucial. Other central aspects of a young person's life such as education, family and friends must be taken into account. Organised group training events have shown themselves to be very successful and motivating for everyone. They also create a certain competitive pressure which requires subtle controlling by the coach.

### **4. Taking part in international competitions**

Only aeromodelling coaches with international experience can plan and support the participation of juniors at international competitions. This includes not just supporting the young people themselves, but also organising the involvement of parents and their role from the outset. Parents providing

direct assistance to their sons or daughters during a competition must also be unconditionally subject to the team leadership. Along with the ongoing actual coaching activities, coaches also have to provide leadership. Finding the right balance is challenging.



**Youth coaching is also a pedagogical leadership task and needs a lot of patience.**

**Aeromodelling coaches do not come out of nowhere**

Whoever reads the few bits of advice given in this report might easily come to the conclusion that supporting and guiding juniors is an almost impossible task. Apart from the high pressure of expectations, there is also the



***Coaching in a competitive environment is particularly demanding. Reliability and a cool head essential.***

burden of responsibility to be considered. It therefore doesn't surprise me that incompetent people are often sent as team leaders to large sporting events. I have encountered team managers at FAI World Championships who were not familiar with even the most important rules. This requires action. Many large national multisport associations offer coaching training courses which are kept fairly general. The aeromodelling associations can then take care of the specialist part. While junior coaching is a demanding task, it is also hugely rewarding and interesting in terms of

education and sports psychology. Good luck to all committed coaches - both male and female. Many thanks.



***Coach and pilot discuss the current situation before each competition flight: terrain, weather conditions, flight tactics, etc.***