

# The Archery Club Diaries —

## Coaching Structure for your Club

Implementing a coaching structure in your club can:

- Provide a structured on-boarding process for new members;
- Ensure that all new members are well-grounded in the basics, including safety;
- Give your coaches a framework to work within so that their time is spent coaching, not administering;
- Provide a pathway for members to progress once they've joined the club, regardless of whether they are social or competitive archers;
- As an option, provide your competitive archers with opportunities to join a team environment.

The structure of your coaching programme will necessarily change as your club grows, but any structure requires coaches, a beginner's programme, and it should include a provision for 'further coaching'.

### Training and Up-skilling the Coaches

"That's all well and good," you may ask, "but we have no coaches!" The first step for many clubs is to train up some coaches to enable them to provide beginner's courses. The ANZ coach training programme is under review, but that doesn't stop the existing courses being run:

- Basic Instructor – provides the candidate with expertise to run a 'have-a-go' course safely and have the students enjoy themselves, or;
- Level 1 Coach – provides the candidate with expertise to bring a new member into the club with a firm grounding in technique, and set them up to confidently get involved in club-level shooting and entry-level competition.

Contact the ANZ Coaching Commission at [coaches@archerynz.co.nz](mailto:coaches@archerynz.co.nz) to find an experienced coach in your area who can run a course in your region. For emerging clubs, I would recommend you encourage a second person to be trained as a coach. Without support coaches, your core coaches may get burnt out running beginners' courses, when they could be adding value elsewhere in the club as well.

Soon, higher levels of coaching courses will be developed and published, and encouraging your club coaches to up-skill will provide benefits to your club.

### Providing Beginner Instruction Courses

The Beginners' courses are probably the most important thing to get right in your club. 80% of members will come through these courses, and it has the single biggest impact on whether interested parties join your club, and if they do, whether they have a good enough grounding in technique to enjoy their first year and renew their membership. The quality of your coaches running the course is important, and clubs must do their best to support these coaches. Due to the benefit that we saw from up-skilling our coaches, our club made the decision to partly fund members looking to improve their coaching levels. Remember that it's not all about qualifications, though – coaches need to have interpersonal skills that will allow them to effectively communicate with the beginners. Clubs also need to decide whether their coaches are volunteers, or would be compensated for their time.

There are as many different types of coaching courses as there are clubs, so I will offer you options, and where relevant, my recommendations for structure.

Two key options for courses are set dates or a rolling system. Having set dates allows you more scope to plan attendance and have everyone in the course learning at roughly the same level. Having a rolling structure (where beginners can start at any time) allows the

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most flexibility for members of the public to try it out, though it does mean that the coaching would be a very regular arrangement, and you would need to juggle beginners at different levels. You do need to ensure that people don't stay on the novice coaching line forever too, give them a set period!

Each club has a different age limit, and that is something for each club to determine. My club suggests that children will get more out of the courses if they have better-developed motor skills and understanding of safety from at least 10 years old, but I know some clubs who have one or two very young kids who started around 5 years old under a lot of supervision, and seemed to be doing quite well. For distance, try starting them at 5m while they get to grips with the equipment and safety instructions. We generally only get to 15m by the end of the course, or 20m if everyone on the course can make the distance. The total time for a beginners' course will be a trade-off between how fast you can impart the level of knowledge you want to, and how many people you have waiting to get onto the next course – try somewhere from 10-12 hours of instruction as a starting point if you're unsure.

Some other things that are good to include in a beginners' course are:

- Demonstration of competition gear set ups for both recurve and compound, and a description of the benefits of each;
- Fun shoots – balloons, match play, etc.;
- Learning how to score correctly;
- A measuring up session for those who want to purchase equipment.

### Retaining your Members

For a lot of clubs with a good beginners' course, there can be a high joining rate, but the archers never seems to hang around for very long. After a structured coaching course, they may be sent out onto the shooting line and left to stagnate. The die-hard members will stay whatever you do, but to retain those who like a bit of structure, there are a number of options including an achievement programme, seminars, workshops and intermediate coaching.

The first I heard of an achievement programme (though likely other clubs have them too) was from Mana. They have some great methods of retaining members and are reaping the dividends. They run a 600 shoot regularly, where if you achieve the pin score of 600, the next time you are on a smaller face. This allows all members of the club to compete against each other. There is also the achievement programme where there are a range of shoots and pin scores, and you progress through the levels. This really helps to focus the new members, and they get a buzz out of achieving each of the levels. Well done Mana!! (I like a lot of their initiatives so much I have stolen a couple for my club – I'll have to pay royalties, soon...).

Another way of getting new members hooked is to encourage them to attend tournaments. With specific goals in mind, members are a lot more likely to continue coming to the club and enjoying themselves. At our club we decided we'd do something to encourage our juniors to try out a tournament. A few parents led the initiative, and all of a sudden, we had 26 people going to the indoor nationals, and for most it was their first tournament. Your new members will usually not know how to get into tournaments, and it's the responsibility of the senior club members to make them aware of what possibilities are out there, and encourage them to get involved! Try getting them started with League shoots – these are a great stepping stone to competitions.

Other things that can really add value to members are workshops where the focus is either on refresher coaching, or a Tips and Tricks session such as a skills day (fletching arrows, making a string, tuning etc.). Our members have found these invaluable, and they are now a

regular part of our annual calendar.

### Catering for your Competitive Archers

A recent workshop looked at ways that ANZ's coaching structure can better cater for all archers, including competitive archers. Mainly, supporting the competitive archers has been done on an ad-hoc basis by personal coaches spread around the country. I'd be interested to hear how you think clubs can better cater for their competitive archers, do let me know!

### Assistance

If you'd like to talk through what options are there for your club, you can contact the ANZ Coaching Commission at [coaches@archerynz.co.nz](mailto:coaches@archerynz.co.nz). We're here to help.

*Andrew Russell*

# Horseback Archery

## European Open Championships 2012

When Hungarians first arrived in Europe in the 9th Century AD, they surprised opposing armies with their Asian-style fighting, with lightweight bowmen on horseback riding circles around Teutonic knights in battles as far as Germany.

Their modern-day descendants have remade those battles into a sport and displayed their talent at the European Open Championship of Horseback Archery on August 29 through to September 2 in Veröce, Hungary.

The three-day event, which attracted ten nations to participate, featured athletes in colourful historic costumes, target shoots and spectators dressed in medieval attire. The Championships was founded by enthusiasts of the sport, hoping that it would link horse riding practitioners from around the world. Men and women compete and are classified under the same rules.

The tournament is a great place for the nations who regularly practice horseback archery to show off their skills and compete. Those there were the same nations that are regularly mentioned in history as having elite skills in this area, and it is encouraging to see that they have continued with the sport and it has had a modern revival. Mongolian, Turkish, Iranian, German, Polish, Japanese, Korean, Hungarian, Swedish and competitors even from South Africa came to compete.

"I live in a farm. I have horses and I do archery anyway, so for me this was a natural progression," said Daniel Griffin, who flew in from South Africa for the championship in which contestants can enter the events with no prior selection process.

Although only 14 countries have dedicated programs to teach horseback archery, the most successful nations, such as Korea, Japan, Turkey, Iran and Hungary, have long equestrian traditions. The skill has been likened to a martial art – hitting the target at a gallop is like "sitting in your car and shooting at a target with a pistol".

The competition consisted of up to nine gallops along a course up to 140m, which must be completed at a gallop. There are different types of events, most with three targets. The timed 1-shot, 2-shot and 3-shot runs in the Korean-style course; the forward-, side- and over-the-back unlimited shot Hungarian-style timed course; the Polish course, which is a cross-country course of several hundred metres and targets are placed at random around the track (unlimited shots); and the Mogu moving target run, where the target is dragged along by a horse and two archers chase it and shoot arrows.

Points are awarded according to the position of the arrow on the target face. Tears and other traces on the face is a miss. Line-cutters, as in other archery, score the higher score. Bounce-outs, or rebounds, are not counted.

The bows to be used can be made of synthetic or natural materials, with no draw weight limitations, but there can be no aids to aim – only a nocking point is allowed. Any arrow type can be used, but only target points fitted. For full explanation of these techniques, please visit [www.eocha.org](http://www.eocha.org).

