

Foundation for Leadership through Sport workshop

Flsport.net

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Old College, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Introduction (Bob Reeves):

- The aim of FLS is to grow and nurture leaders for sport and beyond
- Currently there is no systematic leadership development and many questions around sustained success; once you get to the top how do you stay there?
- We believe that winning teams must sit within world class organisations and therefore sports organisations could learn a great deal from great businesses and the military
- What is the army's take on developing leaders? How do they maximise capability and peak performance? What can sport and business learn?

Introduction to RMAS and Army Leadership (Major General Stuart Skeates):

- RMAS is the officers training corps, a vehicle to develop young people as leaders
- There are growing opportunities to shape young leaders and imbue values in the organisation
- Framing the problem: use of the 6th Airborne Division at Normandy in 1944 as a leadership case study to throw practical problems at cadets and how watch how they deliver solutions
- This is used as a vehicle to familiarise them with 7 Questions and the realities of war, the importance of reacting and responding to unforeseen circumstances, and staying true to your values under unimaginable stress and pressure
- How do you conduct an amoral business with a strong set of values?
- The army has had to evolve and develop as the world's threats change, they are not simply combative but have to respond the complex and uncertain threats that now face us; how do they operate in changing environments?
- By being true to their values-based approach leadership. This is a way to overcome the adversaries of tomorrow. They are not simply recognised by everyone at Sandhurst, but truly lived. They are not a cult, simply parroted values, but embedded in all practices and aspects of life at Sandhurst.
- The values define the ethos and codifies ethical behaviours; this is only possible by applying standards and not just knowing them
- Where is the army heading? To produce leaders who not only survive in complexity and uncertainty, but who thrive and improve
- Leadership = kaisen (continuous improvement), learning leadership skills is the red thread through life at Sandhurst. It is institutionalised in everyday life
- How do you define the British military ethic? It is wrapped up in the notion of Purpose, heritage/history and culture. From this they derive values and

standards and an understanding of how to transpose this into behaviour
(Army Leadership Code, outlines methodologies and techniques)

Selecting Leaders (Colonel Tim Sandiford):

- They are looking for potential and not performance
- Multiple test and multiple assessors (to remove unconscious bias)
- Standard measures of ability, but the computer doesn't simply say no, this is a baseline of evidence
- They are not looking for individuals to make an immediate contribution, they have a year of training ahead, unlike in business
- They have a role as guardians of the standard, will not drop it purely for numbers; it is absolute
- The tests aim to put candidates under pressure to see what good and bad behaviours they manifest
- Personality is a dominant assessment element, looked for at every stage of the process
- At this stage it is a matter of mass production, not looking for one leader but 200 (creating a base level of leaders)
- Peer review is used throughout career (affectionately coined 'slate a mate') to raise self-awareness and EQ

British Army Leadership Development (Major Chris Head):

- The army is a reference point for good leadership
- There is a need to recognise the responsibility that comes with that reputation
- How do you move from good to great?
- 3 tiered approach: what are they, what do they know, what do they do (character, knowledge, action)
- Leadership is something you learn through experience, it can't just be taught. Participation is crucial
- From the start candidates' character is tested, they are taken out of their comfort zone, incremental physical challenge is applied, they are confronted with uncertainty and increasing complexity
- The Army Leadership Code: society expects them to live up to their own standards, they have to be authentic 24/7, on and off duty
- This is not new, it has been done for centuries; subconsciously practised, never articulated. Intellectualising what is instinctive and intrinsic in the army already
- The values are engrained like writing on a stick of rock, not matter where you cut it, the words run through the core of the organisation, at every level of the hierarchy
- A balance between transactional and transformational leadership is needed (carrot and stick to inspiration). It's about codifying best practice in a soldierly manner

Wider discussion:

- Women and diversity; improves operational effectiveness, what messages are needed to attract the right talent?
- Looking beyond a CV; looking for *people*

- Being 'British' is often a challenge in sport, what can we learn from the army? What if you don't have a history? Can you create legacy?
- Notion of being custodians of a sports shirt and passing it down; role models, responsibility of reputation, leading to sustained success and trust
- Freedom to play to express yourself and not to defend your job – it's all about mind set
- We are creating relationship between people, therefore trust is imperative. Should we be creating institutions instead of organisations? In these institutions values are led by the governing bodies
- No matter how technically brilliant you are, you cannot be considered a good soldier unless you truly live your values. It's written into the very fabric of Sandhurst and guides their actions on a day to day basis. Sports and business could learn from this confidence to express their Purpose