

SportsCode: Stepping out side of the box!



Innovative Sydney strength and conditioning coach Hayden Knowles has become expert at thinking outside the square and refining the components of technology in order to get the best out of his athletes.

Knowles' primary responsibility is to get his charges physically prepared for a range of sporting feats but it is the way he goes about it that sets him apart and makes him an invaluable link to the coach proper.

His work as the strength and conditioning coach with the Parramatta Eels National Rugby League (NRL) team, where he has been since 1999, involves extensive use of the SportsCode technology system. But Knowles has stepped away from using it purely as an analysis tool to a more technical one, where he now widely uses SportsCode for areas such as skill acquisition and speed drills.

"I use it for monitoring my players at moving at training," he said. "If I want to analyse their training movements that's what I use it for. My job is to make sure the players are physically ready so I may film some guys running and maybe do some sprint technique analysis or agility technique or that type of thing and relate it to their game. "Sometimes we get a piece of game footage and analyse that and then work out how we can improve it just in practice."

Knowles' ability with sports science has also been courted by boxing where he is now heavily involved with super middleweight Danny Green, where the use of SportsCode has helped provide the answers to many longstanding problems. Dissecting the action from a variety of suitably selected sparring partners, the program identifies and queues up any move Green and his coach want to examine.

"With Danny Green we basically analyse his sparring sessions like you would analyse an actual fight so we're probably taking the game analysis one step further in analysing training," Knowles said.

"For example, the boxer employs sparring partners that fight very similar to his upcoming opponent. We can then create edits out of his opponent and have all his opponent's movements coded and then we'll work out how he's going to fight against that. We then code the training, put it all together and see how he's looking."

"I'm not the boxing coach, I just believe in the SportsCode system as a coaching tool. It's a tool of the coach's trade if you like and I have just provided that to the coach. I don't profess to have the eye to how he should fight Anthony Mundine when he fights him in two months time. All I do is provide him with the tool, I film the training, I help him analyse it, that's all it is – a tool of the trade."

The reaction to computer science by the boxer and his Cuban coach Ismael Salas has been unanimous – they love it.

"This upcoming fight (against Mundine) is going to be the biggest fight in the history of Australian boxing and they're using it (SportsCode) to prepare," Knowles said. "They will watch every single punch his opponent's ever thrown, they'll watch his movements and while it doesn't guarantee the winning on the night it does make sure that they're thoroughly prepared."

Having tinkered with other systems, Knowles is fulsome in his praise of SportsCode and what it offers.

"SportsCode's years ahead," he said. "There's lots of different packages out there but SportsCode have it all in one."

Knowles is even more excited about the parent company SportsTec's latest innovation, Cronus -- an athlete management system.

"Every club has their ways of managing teams and keeping track of things but what I have seen of Cronus it's the complete package – it has the medical side, the training side, the coaching side, even the contractual side. It could be used across the whole club with everyone from the general manager down having a use for it," he said. coach Ismael Salas has been unanimous – they love it.