

Case Study - Hockey Australia

It is no coincidence that Australia's outstanding success in men's and women's hockey over the past decade has gone hand-in-hand with the development of sports technology and SportsCode in particular. Hockey Australia was one of the early pioneers in the field of technology playing a more prominent role in sports analysis when a mutual interest between Don Prior – an international umpire and software developer – and national men's coach at the time Terry Walsh played a pivotal role in the initial development of SportsCode between 1996-2000.

Since those early days, Hockey Australia has embraced the on-going range of innovative information gathering offered by SportsCode across the board with its national men's and women's teams and all state teams using the product. This communal access throughout hockey has proved extremely beneficial.

"Primarily, it allows the direct transfer of accurate information to occur from the national programme to the training network," video analyst for the Australia men's team, Jeremy Davy said. "Therefore our coaches in each location can work with exactly the same information as the national coaches, especially where their own players are concerned. This also gives them firsthand footage of our national team and is mostly done by swapping external hard drives, making it very easy to move large data files around."

Interaction and the sharing of information provided by SportsCode are common between the national teams and this co-operation will occur more in the future with the state teams, providing a unique common element in growing the overall development and depth of the sport. Hockey uses a variety of the many applications offered by the system with the primary focus being review analysis.

"It is used to systematically index each event that occurs, where in the field and by whom," Davy said. "We cover every other game per tournament. We make use of the live replay feature, the matrix is very powerful and databasing is extensively used to grab the rich material from all that we capture."

The continued success of Australian hockey teams on the international scene is testament to the technical information gathered and how it has been used to keep ahead of the chasing pack. The men's team won the gold medal at the Athens Olympics and has been the most consistent performing team over all Olympic team events. In major competitions, such as the Olympics, the aim is to make use of SportsCode's

variety of features, enabling the coach and team to be in the best position to face all scenarios.

"The best one within a game is the live replay and making sure the coaches have access to this to assist in their decisions," Davy said. "Secondly, giving the playing group the best chance to view the gathered information is also very important. We have eight platforms available to the group on each tour, shared by a mobile server.

"Each tournament brings a slightly new focus and refinement, the edge is always being pushed a little further not only by ourselves but also by the teams we compete against. You can gather infinite information but the greatest improvements are in what you gather and how you relate it. Likewise, our network also drives many innovations in how they gather and use the information. Like players and coaches on the field, no one likes to stand still."

Davy said while it still up to the players and coaches to execute skills and tactics during a game, information in sport is now as integral as it is to any other part of the communication age.

"Many elite levels of sport make use of analysis software and the many other scientific items that are available to improve performance," he said. "Information on opponents we have played or are yet to play is now expected and the good/smart use of this information can make considerable differences to performance."

"I think software packages are always evolving and refining what they offer. We are extremely pleased with SportsCode for the many features it offers and the ease with which we are able to use them. It is certainly the most integral part of our performance review that we carry."

