

Meet the Coach Development group 22-23

The British Weight Lifting (BWL) Coach Development Programme identifies coaches from across the UK who have the potential to develop the next generation of international lifter and take athletes to international competition.

Programme Information:

The BWL Coach Development Program acts as a peer learning group for coaches to use other coaches' experiences to facilitate learning about becoming a high-performing coach in the sport of weightlifting.

The aim of the sessions is to uncover what it is the coaches do well at and seek ways to challenge and develop their coaching. By discussing central themes in high-performance coaching, the group solidify existing good practice and are supported to push their development.

In the same way a coach would expect their athletes to grow and develop, this program will help the cohort grow and develop as coaches.

The coaches:

The coaches on the programme were selected from a pool of applicants based on their experience and coaching interests. A total of 12 coaches made it onto the free programme, run by Hugh Gilmore - Psychologist and BWL Coach Development Manager:

Amy Kirby-Saunders

Andrew Griffiths

Benedict Millson

Garry Jackson

Heather Flannery

Khrys Speed

Luke Stopford

Mark Hill

Mike Webb

Roman Bychyk

Steve Sharp

Tom Jolly

Get to know some of the coaches:

Amy Kirkby-Saunders has been involved in the sport of weightlifting for ten years and gravitated towards coaching others. Amy founded her club Resilience Weightlifting in Bath after identifying that there were no clubs in her region, and she aspired to give new and current weightlifters a club and a community to be a part of, and to help them achieve their full potential within the sport.

Roman Bychyk has been weightlifting for over thirty years, has competed internationally, and has over twenty years coaching under his belt. He first began coaching in 1999 at the Lviv Polytechnic National University in Ukraine, where he was a student. Once in the UK, Roman worked as an assistant coach at Brunel Weightlifting Club in 2004. He currently works as the Youth Coach for Hallam Barbell Weightlifting Club in Sheffield.

Benedict Millson first began coaching out of Bounce Gym in 2018 after following his passion for weightlifting. After gaining experience at Bounce, he worked on developing his own coaching practice and online services. At present, Benedict coaches for Ronin Barbell Club and Mems Weightlifting Club.

Heather Flannery opened Pride Performance with Andy Griffiths in 2018 whilst working full time and studying. She began supporting Andy with his coaching, realising it was an area she enjoyed, and quickly gained confidence. Since then, Heather has thrown herself into coaching and has discovered her favourite coaching area is in-competition coaching.

Luke Stopford started coaching early on in his life. He was just aged 16 when he first began working as a coach to pay his way after being kicked out of his home. Today, Luke is the owner of Yorkshire Strength. He regularly runs Tier 3 competitions and has continued to develop his coaching practices.

Tom Jolly began coaching ten years ago after being introduced to the sport of weightlifting through a beginners course. He was hooked, enjoying the challenge of the complex movements, and found that he wanted to further challenge himself by coaching the movements to others.

Mike Webb had a coaching background for a range of sports and got into weightlifting coaching during his Biomechanics masters at Loughborough. He progressed from helping some of the athletes to coaching the club, eventually taking on athletes from outside the club. Mike is now helping coach the British Weight Lifting Talent Transfer cohort.

Steve Sharp established North Tyneside Barbells in 2015 after realising that the North East of England had very little in the form of Weightlifting clubs. His club's motto is 'Strong people build strong societies'. His aim is to build young individuals into positive, impactful members of society through strength training and competitive sport.

Mark Hill got involved in weightlifting fifteen years ago and in his words 'was fortunate' to train alongside some 'very good weightlifters' at Woking Weightlifting Club. He would often help out in the back room at competitions, taking on more responsibility when his head coach Brian Hamill became unwell. This experience inspired him to start his own club, Locker 27, in 2014 which is still going strong today.

Currently, the group of coaches has engaged with two sessions. We asked them about their experiences with the programme so far. This is what they had to say:

Why did you apply for the Coach Development Programme?

Amy: I applied to the coach development course as I was looking for access to mentoring to help me develop as a coach, to have and be part of a support network and an opportunity to build relationships with other coaches.

Roman: I applied for Coach Development Programme because I am looking for new experiences and want to discover the standard to meet national coach standards.

Benedict: Any chance to develop myself as a coach I take.

Heather: Despite my achievements as a coach so far, I can feel like I know less now than I did at the beginning. The deeper we delve, the more there is to know and this gives me the opportunity to continue to progress my knowledge and work with other likeminded coaches to reflect, discuss, share ideas and learn from each other.

Luke: I applied to the coach development course to progress my knowledge and experience for my gym and lifters.

Tom: I applied for the Coach Development Course because I wanted to connect with other coaches and advance my own knowledge.

Mike: I applied to the coach development programme when I took on the talent transfer coach role with BWL, I thought it'd be a good time to develop a wider range of skills (rather than purely the coaching) to aid with this role.

Steve: I joined the coach development programme to broaden my horizons within the industry and pursue my goal of continuing to help North East weightlifters rise into the realms of elite level sport, nationally and internationally.

Mark: There were 3 main reasons. To engage with and learn from my peers; there is limited opportunity to catch up with other coaches when we see each other at competitions, as everyone is usually busy coaching! To collaborate with the coach development lead, Hugh Gilmore; I've known Hugh for a long time and always enjoyed and benefited from the discussions we've had in the past. With my BWL hat on: To gather insight from some of our leading coaches to help improve our coach education at British Weight Lifting and support the next generation of weightlifting coaches.

Do you have any notes on your experiences so far with the programme?

Amy: So far I have enjoyed having discussions with other coaches from all around the country. It has been interesting to learn from others and see how they operate and approach coaching and running clubs in different ways. It is nice to see a wide variety of coaches, all with different experiences and goals, be part of this programme. I am looking forward to seeing how the programme progresses over the coming year.

Benedict: So far it's been good it's always awesome when you get to discuss new ideas with other likeminded people. I've enjoyed Hugh really prompting us into deep thinking about our own values and practices it's taught me a lot about my own self-reflection.

Heather: I found that from the beginning, it's really made me think whether it be on a personal level or professional, and it has both reinforced things and made me look further afield for other things. From writing my application to my first meeting with Hugh and then our group calls.

Luke: It has certainly had made me think more in depth around certain subjects, and has been awesome to listen and learn from peers in the field.

Tom: A lot of the challenges that coaches face on a day to day basis aren't covered in a text book as they are a mixture of building a business, getting the best out of relationships, imposter syndrome and ensuring you believe in yourself enough to keep going.

Having a network of coaches has allowed us to come together to problem solve.

Mike: Being completely honest, I wasn't so sure of it at first, I don't know what I expected particularly coming in but if you'd asked me this wouldn't have been my answer. Although, I'm happy enough being proved wrong because I've found speaking to other experienced coaches around the country super interesting and the sessions are more insightful each time. I think the real value I've gotten is developing more of a network of other coaches (and Hugh) that I feel like I soundboard ideas with.

Steve: It has been a fantastic learning opportunity already, only being 3 months into the programme, being able to share information with some of the country's top coaches really motivates me to bring something to the table each time we meet.

Mark: One of the challenges I have experienced is that sometimes you can feel a little isolated as a coach. Connecting with people around you who are going through similar challenges has been really helpful. At different times the other coaches have been able to offer different perspectives; and it is also nice to know that it's not only you who experiences some of these challenges!

Being part of discussions led by Hugh has also promoted diverse thinking; conversations driven by various prompts that result in different views has helped to inspire new ways of looking at a situation, as well as helping to stimulate new ideas.

Want to get in touch with the coaches we have featured in this article? Find their details below:

Amy Kirby-Saunders



Club: Resilience Weightlifting (based in Bath)

Instagram: @resilience_weightlifting

<https://resilienceweightlifting.com/>

Roman Bychyk



Club: Mettler/Hallam Barbell

Instagram: @roman_bychyk @hallambarbell

<https://www.mettler.zone/>

Benedict Millson



Bounce Gym, Ronin Barbell Club, Mems Weightlifting Club

Instagram - @mrbigfriday

Heather Flannery



Club- Pride Performance

Instagram- @prideperformancweightlifting

<https://www.pride-performance.co.uk/>

Luke Stopford



Club- Yorkshire Strength

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Tom Jolly



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Mike Webb



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Steve Sharp



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