

Gosper and Scholes launch positive sports coaching course © PSC

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Kevan Gosper learned the value of quality coaching during a 57-year involvement with the Olympic movement. Now the former vice-president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) wants to impart the merits of positive psychology throughout the sporting world.

Gosper last December became an honorary member of the IOC, having reached the age limit of 80. But the 1956 Melbourne Games silver medallist is not a perfunctory person.

On Wednesday, in his capacity as Oceania Australia Foundation (OAF) chairman, Gosper launched an initiative he hopes will make a global impact. The OAF and the Organisation of Sport Federations of Oceania (OSFO) rolled out a free online positive sports coaching course in Melbourne.

To access the course, [click here](#)

Designed by Matthew Scholes, the focus is on developing mental fitness and building resilience. The lessons apply to every sport. They are useful for school coaches, elite mentors and everything in between.

Withering sprays of yesteryear are out. Instead, Scholes encourages participants to keep their cool and look for positives while using an optimistic mindset to deal with negatives. Scholes suggests the evidence-based approach helps players perform at their peak.

“The research is really conclusive ... the case is compelling, under pressure it’s optimistic teams that win pressure games,” he said.

“It doesn’t make you a better player ... it just keeps you at your highest level.” Positive psychology can also improve coaches’ and athletes’ well-being and their ability to cope with life after sport.

Scholes, director of education at AFL Sportsready, will present the initiative at a meeting of Oceania Olympic members in Fiji next year.

“We believe if it becomes a success, we can then have it picked up at the international level,” Gosper told AAP. “Either by way of the IOC’s Olympic Solidarity division, or its education division.

“It would be a great achievement for Oceania ... and it would give me great satisfaction because a whole lot of my life events have stemmed from great coaching.

“Coaches have taught me a lot about life.”

Gosper suggested it was the responsibility of sporting organisations around the world to focus on the “wellbeing of their athletes”.

“Many coaches are technically competent, they just don’t understand the importance of being positive,” he said.

“This doesn’t mean we’re advocating soft coaching, we want firm coaching ... but delivered in a way that builds confidence.”

From AAP