

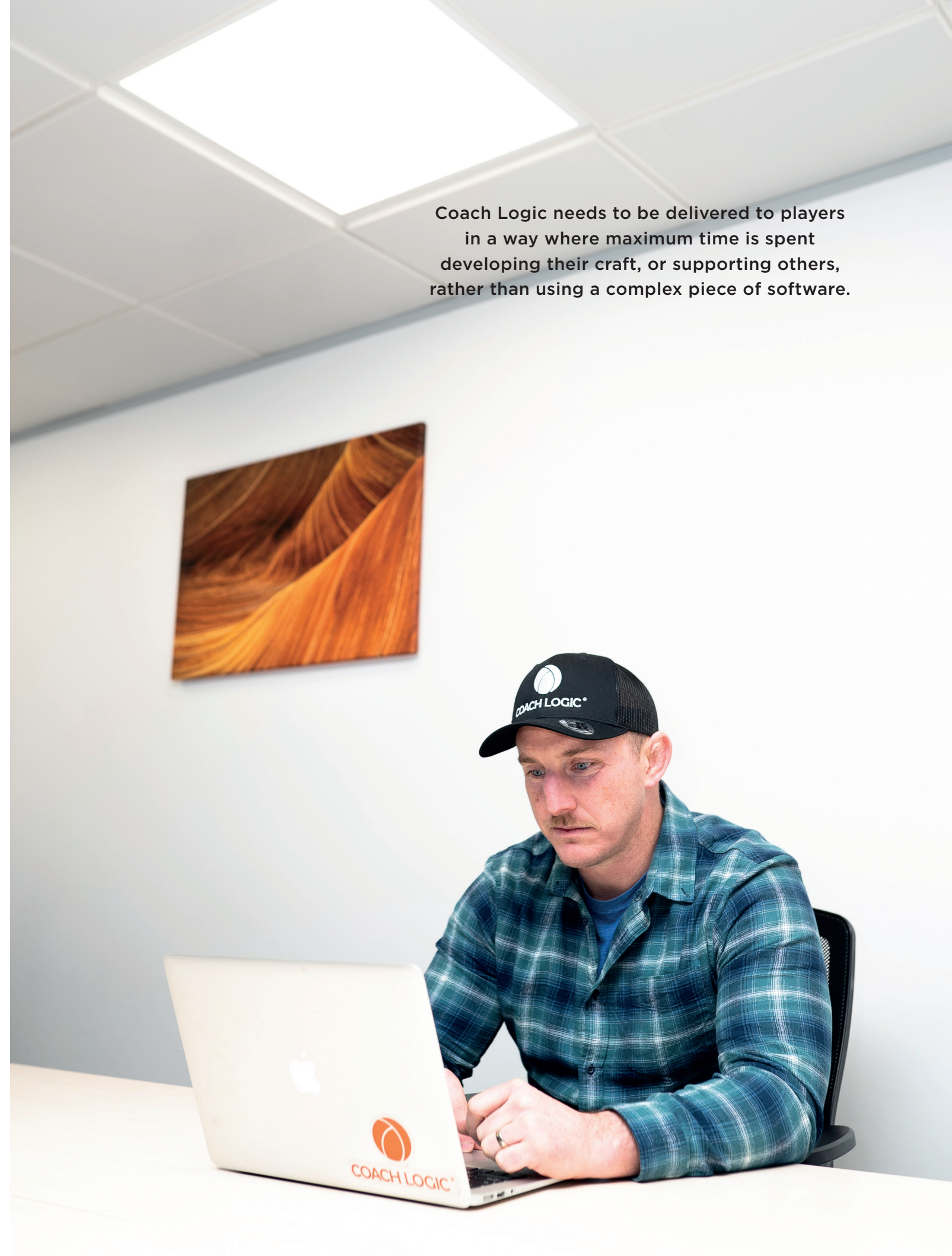
BY
JAMES MUIR

COACH LOGIC

EDITED BY
NAOMI PRAKASH

REX CLUB SPENDS A DAY WITH COACH LOGIC
FOUNDERS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE
INSPIRATION BEHIND THE PLATFORM

Coach Logic needs to be delivered to players
in a way where maximum time is spent
developing their craft, or supporting others,
rather than using a complex piece of software.





Coach Logic is a digital tool designed to bring coaching to the next level. By merging footage of real gameplay with a live online chat, Coach Logic allows players and coaches to spot crucial moments of a game, facilitating discussions of future improvements and appreciation of times of good play. To start the process, video footage of a practice or game is uploaded and accessed by the players and coaches: members can then note important moments, tag relevant players, and suggest alterations; plus coaches can share game plans, gym routines, and encourage consistent bonding throughout the team.



Founders Andy Muir and Mark Cairns are truly in love with sports: they met while both playing sports, both went on to work in sports, and now the two coach sports. Their partnership first began back in 2005, when they found themselves playing first team rugby together in Scotland's top club division at Currie Rugby Club (Andy was in the backs, Mark in the forwards). Later, after finishing their studies, they both sought out careers teaching sport; Mark became a P.E. Teacher at George Watson's college, and Andy worked at Edinburgh College as a Lecturer. It was at this point in their lives that they began to reflect on their collective experiences as coaches, players, and teachers, and realised that the current process of game analysis was ineffective. Not only was video analysis frustrating and time-consuming, but the players weren't involved in the process at all. From there, their idea of interactive digital gameplay analysis started to take form.

When video analysis platforms first hit the sports scene around twenty years ago, coaches were more independent from the game at that time. At the time, it made sense that they'd be the only people able to access videos and pass insights along to the players. Now, however, coaches are more interested in what their players can see, which demands their presence during the analytic phase. Andy and Mark know that our current use of technology is fast, immediate, and mainly smartphone based. So, they designed their interface to be mainly used from an app and feel informal, similar to a group chat on WhatsApp with all the players. On Coach Logic, the full match is divided into five minute segments and each player is given a slot to analyse. After that, the full match is accessible

The elite level can get hung up in short-term gains due to the pressure they are under to win, so players can often be viewed as commodities, but it's great to see the likes of Jurgen Klopp and Steven Hansen at the top of coaching being so successful with an obvious focus on building positive relationships with their players.

and annotatable from both smartphones and larger screens, and discussions about gameplay can commence. The quick, easy format means that fits into anyone's schedule, from pros to schoolchildren. Although Andy and Mark both come from a background of rugby, they've designed Coach Logic to work across all sports. During their time spent in different teaching careers, they both noticed that coaches and players in different sporting disciplines essentially needed similar things from technology. Each client needed pro-level capabilities, be it for use with schools, grassroots, amateur teams, or the pros themselves. Coach Logic platform allows a squad to use their time effectively, so they can actually spend more time playing and practising. Additionally, it encourages the development of many essential life skills, especially in younger teams. The format promotes, and in fact relies on: the ability to give and receive constructive feedback; the building of relationships within a squad, and with authoritative figures like coaches; and taking responsibility for mistakes and committing to improvement.

To our delight, it's also used as a tool for referees. Every sports player knows the frustration of a wrong call, so it seems totally intuitive that referees and players should analyse gameplay together. Andy and Mark believe that referees should be integrated into the team. Take, for example, the Umpires of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) World League. They have a match team that includes on-field and video Umpires, and they're also remotely supported by the Umpire development manager who supports match reflection using Coach Logic.

Given their extensive experience, Andy and Mark are the perfect people to understand the demands of those in different levels of sport. Mark has been involved at national level for Scotland sevens and club level as a player and coach, and believes that there's a lot that elite levels could learn from the top grassroots environments he's encountered. Notably, their proclivity to focus on long-term personal development and positive relationships. Andy and Mark's goal is to continue to facilitate a similarly collaborative working atmosphere in different teams across the country, using Coach Logic.

Prior to coaching and starting their business, Andy and Mark ended their playing careers whilst working in education. We wondered how they knew it was time to hang up their boots, and how they adjusted to the psychological leap from playing to coaching. It turns out that, coincidentally, that both men moved into coaching at a similar time following some injuries. Andy's took him straight out of play, so he began to focus his passion into coaching and the business. Mark decided, after one too many head-knocks, that he needed to be careful for the sake of his young family. Neither Andy nor Mark took this as a chance to slow down, though, throwing themselves straight into coaching commitments, business planning, social matches and sevens tournaments (after some recovery time!). For Andy, "there is still a massive desire to play", but he is comforted by the strength of the rugby community. While he may not be playing competitively, there are numerous ways for him to stay involved, connected and contributing to the sport he loves.



players need to be students of their own development

When we spoke to them, Mark and Andy had just returned from Japan after presenting at World Rugby's Training and Education Conference, following an invitation to highlight their work with the RFU Game Development pathways. We asked them how they keep on top of everything: travelling with Coach Logic isn't uncommon, plus they are both involved in grassroots sport and have young families, all on top of starting and running their business. Andy's philosophy is simple, to "try to avoid doing much on the weekends and keep them as work-free as possible". However, both men acknowledge that turning away from work isn't always that easy.

"It's probably more important to be aware of the mental switch-off from it all, that can be the bigger challenge", said Andy, a sentiment echoed by Mark. After spending hours thinking of nothing else, Mark can find it tricky to leave work behind and enjoy his evenings at home. He tries to practice some mindfulness by focusing his attention on the specific environment he's in, which often means he leaves his phone upstairs when at home so he can enjoy uninterrupted quality time with his young family. Andy finds that planning for and delivering his coaching sessions is helpful, as "when you have twenty 5-year-olds charging around in front of you, there's not much else on your mind!". Both men love

to coach, but part of that responsibility is appropriately delegating. Learning to spread the workload helps them balance their busy lives, and Coach Logic is the perfect tool for them to do that. As Mark said, "there would be no use creating Coach Logic and not living it".

Before we left, we asked Andy and Mark for any advice they'd give to players at school and junior levels. They both strongly believe that ambitious young players should keep playing other sports and have outside interests, too, as they've seen many get tired of their once-favourite game or fall prey to an injury. "I think players need to be students of their own development," Andy told us, "they should gain knowledge and understand why they are doing what they are doing". While knowledge of their chosen sport is important, he encourages learning about other facets of the sporting world like nutrition, strength and conditioning, and psychology. Mark shared a piece of advice that he recently heard: "value your future self". For him, this means taking himself into consideration before committing to things in the future. A final piece of advice from Mark was less profound, but equally passionate: "enjoy your hair while you have it!".

When we reflected upon the fact both men have young families, employees, and clients relying on them, we imagined

that it might be tempting for Andy and Mark to put their own sporting ambitions onto the back burner. However, after spending a day with them, we could see they were truly practicing what they were preaching. Mark, for example, was using the Coach Logic platform to manage his Head Coach position with the Currie Chieftains first 1st XV team, in addition to using other technology to help Coach Logic clients when traditionally he'd have been on "Currie time". At Rex Club, we see a lot of people in similar positions; it seems a passion for sports gives people a reason to organise their time well. This is especially important given the nature of sports fixtures and commercial opening hours, which means few of our clients are working traditional 9-5 hours. The ability to delegate tasks and organise time is as imperative to grassroots players as it is to pro teams, especially for those who do tremendous work voluntarily.

Coach Logic seems to have hit a sweet spot. Not only can coaches drastically reduce the amount of time they spend analysing footage, but by involving players in the process they are facilitating self-awareness, team-bonding, and responsibility. We can't help but imagine that this new format is also making coaching seem much more manageable and therefore more appealing, so perhaps the next generation of coaches will be reared from Coach Logic.