

Review of the Tandem Coach-athlete Relationship Tool

Published 06/10/15 by [Chris Chapman](#)

[Tandem](#) provides an online profile of a coach-athlete relationship. A number of options are available, which include the profile being completed by only one half of the relationship. On the two occasions I completed the profile, the athlete did too.

The profile is a diagnosis tool and provides a visual record of where both parties see the relationship at the current time. Through this and the recommended questions, you are able to reflect and begin an important coaching conversation with your athlete.

The Tandem website states that it helps to:

- better understand the current state of the relationship or a number of relationships (diagnosis)
- appreciate the potential of the relationship(s) over time (prognosis)
- highlight ways to develop and maintain a positive sporting environment (education) that is both fulfilling and successful.

[On registering with Tandem through the website](#), you are provided with your own dashboard where you can purchase, complete and review the profiles.

I found the website easy to use, clear and very visual. Once you have purchased a report, you are able to send an email link to the athlete for them to complete it. You also receive an email asking you to complete the assessment. This is very easy to do, asking you your thoughts and feelings on the relationship, as well as your view on how the athlete may perceive the relationship.

Shortly afterwards, you receive a generated report. I selected the option where both coach and athlete complete the assessment. I received three reports – two individual reports and a comparison report.

The reports are clearly presented, providing a blend of text and graphics. The sections within the reports are explained, as are the reasons for their inclusion and their importance to the relationship. This is followed by a breakdown of your personal scoring and how this may influence the relationship. Finally in each section, there is a series of questions, reflection areas, prompts and points that you may want to consider, along with a number of suggestions and ideas to help you progress your coach-athlete relationship.

Food for thought

I personally found the process very useful, not least because, as a team sport coach, I had to decide which two players to select. This in itself provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my existing relationships and where I could best utilise the report and insight.

The report doesn't suggest how frequently it should be utilised. I selected a new player to the group and a player I have been working with for a number of years, and I was interested in their perception of our coach-athlete relationship. I can see the value in the report – it utilises the **3C + 1 model** (**Closeness, Commitment, Complementarity** and **Co-orientation**) and reviews your communication against the **COMPAS model**.

I have used the report as a basis for a coaching conversation with both athletes, and we have begun to gain greater understanding of each other, ensuring we are on the same wavelength. Without betraying confidence, it is fair to say that the report created an opportunity for one athlete to disclose how they

were feeling following a team meeting. My intention at the meeting was obviously not conveyed. We have been able to move the situation forward, and I have learnt about the use of language and how this can be very misleading in a group setting to individuals within the group!

We have agreed areas of focus. The report provides a development plan in the form of a template with reflective questions. Both athletes wanted to add the areas to their existing development plans, but the questions were useful for me as a coach to frame and summarise the meeting.

Back for more

As relationships are dynamic and not static, I think I would use the report again during key transitions – a new player to the team, the start of a new programme, but also when I get a sense that we are not ‘connecting’. It does provide an opportunity for athletes to open up and share thoughts, feelings and potentially concerns that they may not otherwise do without something to focus the discussion on to the relationship.

I found the report and guidance from Tandem useful, and most importantly, it has had an impact on my performance, which should influence the individual and team positively. I will use the reports again.

One thing to consider for team coaches is whether you identify individuals within the team or ask the entire team to complete the reports. You need to factor in that they will complete the report once, but you will have one per player and therefore the subsequent reflections, follow-up and reviews to complete.

Nine out of ten

The ease of use, simple format and ability to gain feedback immediately are real pros for the Tandem tool. I think the only prohibitive factor for a coach is the fact the report costs. For a coach working on a one-to-one basis, the unit price is realistic. However, the costs for a team may be more challenging for a coach or club given that they may need to complete this twice in the season.

I would score the Tandem report tool (website) 9/10. It did exactly what is stated and provided me with valuable insight as a coach. It simply lost the final mark on the cost per report. A group or team discount may make this more accessible to a wider number of coaches, which we were able to initially secure for ConnectedCoaches members for a limited time only at the time of publishing this blog. With this discount I would score it 10/10!

If you're interested in reviewing your relationships with your athletes, you can find out more about Tandem on their [website](#).

Tandem Offer makes the profile 10/10 - *New exclusive offer (4 January 2017) - NOW EXPIRED*

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