Over the last 20 years, there has undoubtedly been increasing discourse relating to sports coaching in government policy and academic literature. By analysing key UK sport policy documents such as Raising the Game (Department of National Heritage [DNH], 1995) and Game Plan (Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DMCS]/Strategy Unit, 2002) alongside core coaching policy e.g. Coaching Matters (Coaching Review Panel, 2001); Coaching Task Force Final Report (Coaching Task Force, 2002) and the UK Action Plan for Coaching (National Coaching Foundation [NCF], 2008) a clear appreciation of the development of the performer, the emergence and importance of ethical (coaching) practice and the philosophical positioning of competition can be constructed.

However, with the 2012 Olympics firmly in sight, the latest iteration of sport policy - Playing to Win (DCMS, 2008), appears to present a conceptual, political and philosophical step change in government’s understanding of sport which has considerable implications for the development of sports coaching in the UK.
Utilising a framework of ethical practice, participant development and the philosophical positioning of competition, this paper discusses the development of UK sport policy since the publication of Raising the Game (DNH, 1995) in terms of the implications for sports coaching. By analysing the conceptual, political and philosophical development of UK sport policy it becomes clear that the largely progressive and positive developmental journey travelled by Sports Coaching over the last 20 years is challenged and ultimately undermined by Playing to Win (DCMS, 2008). Furthermore, in light of the Conservative Manifesto for Sport, published prior to the 2010 General Election, this paper challenges the coalition to more carefully consider the place and nature of competition in UK sport policy.