

18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## Coaching

**"Go call a coach, and let a coach be called;  
And let the man who calleth be the caller;  
And in his calling let him nothing call  
But "Coach! Coach! Coach! Oh for a coach, ye gods!"**  
Henry Carey, *Chrononhotonthologos*

*Chrononhotonthologos* is a 1734 satirical play by Henry Carey, an English poet and songwriter and one of the possible authors of *God Save the King*. The play is mostly nonsense verse, and was seen as a satire on Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, and Queen Caroline, wife of King George II.

The play concerns King Chrononhotonthologos and Queen Fadladinida of Queerummania who face an invasion by the Antipodeans. Chrononhotonthologos defeats the Antipodean army and takes their king prisoner. Queen Fadladinida sees the captive king and falls deeply in love. The remainder of the play is so stupid it's not really worth detailing here.

But I *do* like the quote above. It refers, of course, to the kind of coach a king would be expected to ride in. But I *really* wish it referred to a different kind of coach, the kind regularly in evidence in the recent TV coverage of the World Indoor Athletic Championships from Glasgow. *Every* athlete had a coach. In the long jump, for example, an athlete would take a jump, and whether it was good or bad, would go to the edge of the arena to consult a coach. Heads were nodded; arms were waved; diagrams were drawn in the air; video-clips were viewed on an iPhone; smiles were exchanged. And only then would the athlete return to the long jump area, ready for their next jump. The coach would have determined the training and prepared the athlete for competition. But the coach was *still* there for consultation, advice and encouragement as the competition unfolded.

If *you* are calling for a coach, it's because it's not all done once the training is over. In professional life, relationships, beliefs, and much more besides, you'll have had your trusted and experienced coaches. But the coach's job is *never* finished. The coach still needs to be there. And if you're a coach of any kind, I hope you'll go on being available for consultation and encouragement. For even the best prepared athletes – and fictional kings, it seems – can make use of a coach at any time at all.

### A prayer for today

*If I need a coach, I should ask. And if I'm to be a good coach, I should be patient. Amen*