



## ***Product Review – Online Skills Coach***

December 2, 2010

**Product:** Online Skills Coach

**Manufacturer Website:**

<http://www.onlineskillscoach.com/>

**Cost:** Varies (\$399 to \$650; Home version and Pro version. Additional Pro License fees apply)

**In summary:**

**Overall Rating:** *Very Good*

**Pros:** ease of use; cost; transportability

**Cons:** limited by web latency



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The growing popularity of video motion analysis software over the past decade and a half makes one wonder why it took so long to provide a simple to use, effective, cost-efficient solution for the larger masses. For the most part, this market has been dominated by systems costing several thousands of dollars with steep learning curves and considerable time investment required to prepare and manage clips. Well, wish no more as Online Skills Coach (OSC) has provided an option for a broad audience that avoids the high-cost and steep learning curves of other systems. OSC originally targeted mom & pop coaches, while offering enough features to appeal to high-performance coaches and athletes. It has since been incorporated into several leading training programs. It's a smart business model, and it's about time.



allow coach and athlete to easily and intuitively upload and share analyzed video creating value and staying in line with a typical coach's daily routine (things we love).

To view, all the user (coach or athlete) needs is a computer and a high speed internet connection and he/she has access to *all* videos in full HD (if recorded in HD) without having to store and manage them on local drives, and has access to the application tools to analyze them (since they're web-based). To capture and upload you have several options ranging from your iPhone recording at 18 frames per second (not HD) to a direct-feed camera recording at up-to 90 frames per second depending on the type of camera . Remarkably (and also something we love) a Kodak video camera shooting 720p HD at 60 frames per second is included with both the eCoachPro and eCoachHome versions. We applaud OSC for their efforts to increase value, reduce technology prep and setup time, and to do so at a relatively bargain price.

Many of the things we love about OSC also play into the things that we don't love. While the web-based platform allows for many of the beneficial ease-of-use features, web based video is still some time away from matching its local non-web based system siblings. Frame by frame analysis is challenging, especially when reversing and forwarding over a few frames. There are invariably annoying connection delays relative to a local (on one's computer rather than over the internet) version. Recently, though, OSC has launched a version that allows the user to perform the analysis locally on the operator's computer, then upload the analyzed video utilizing the applications web based advantages. I have not used this version of the application, but am ecstatic to see the feature added.

Despite any drawbacks, as Bill Gates said, the technology of today is already outdated (or something to that effect). OSC has a strong foot into web-based video analysis. Internet speeds will continue to improve, but Online Skills Coach isn't waiting. Even during the writing of this review, OSC has announced enhancements such as an "Extreme File Compression Tool" as well as the offline mode (mentioned above) to improve its feature base and value while focusing on ease-of-use and integration with cameras and storage capabilities. All this helps to improve the flow of video analysis communication between teacher and student. KC is giving OSC a *very good* rating. It's an excellent and affordable option for amateurs, and can provide useful and immediate feedback to the high-performance athlete.

OSC offers two versions, a "Pro" version and a "Home" version (a stripped down Pro version). Both versions use the same web-based technology with videos stored on OSC's internal servers. This makes communication between coach and athlete simple and easily transportable to new training and racing venues. In addition, features like the "Storage Locker" (offered for an additional annual fee of \$39.00 and, again, stored on OSC's internal