

The Coaching Plan is the teaching tool of the coach. Each Training Session is dependent on a plan to have a positive outcome. With a routine that allows for warm-up, instruction, rehearsal and recovery the plan should engage the child and sustain the athlete's attention for a period of time based on the child's age



Planning a Training Session

How to structure a training session It's very important that the coach takes the time to plan each training session. Training sessions should be developed from two or three goals that have been identified for that session. The elements of a training session that all coaches should include are:

- o session introduction
- o warm-up
- o skill and fitness activities
- o cool-down
- o review.

Gathering information and setting goals Before planning a training session, coaches should gather information about the participants, and set goals. If you are working with a new group, the type of information you might need includes:

- o previous experience in the sport
- o level of development, both with the technical and tactical skills of the sport as well as their level of physical fitness
- o why they like to play the sport and what motivates them
- o goals and aspirations in the sport
- o any illness, injury or medical condition that might restrict their ability to participate.

Goals should be established for the season as well as each training session. Goals help to guide the program and provide a reference point to monitor progress throughout the season. Important elements of goal setting include:

- o involving the participants wherever possible in the goal-setting process
- o using session goals to help guide the selection of activities for that session
- o setting SMART goals - goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound.

Tips for selecting and designing training activities

- o Plan so that activities flow from one to the next smoothly. Have equipment close at hand and develop routines so that participants know what to do next
- o Read manuals and books to get new ideas for activities and drills
- o Drills and minor games from one sport can easily be adapted to suit another
- o Over-plan rather than under-plan. It is easier to omit drills than to add unplanned drills

- o Organize training sessions so that participants are actively involved. Use more groups with a small number of participants rather than a few groups containing large numbers
- o Avoid activities that require inactivity or drills that eliminate participants. It is likely that the participants to be first eliminated will be the less skilled, exactly the participants who need most practice
- o Plan drills so that participants have a good chance of success. This will improve motivation
- o Even younger participants are capable of working independently in small groups. Develop activity station cards that explain the drill to be practiced.

Organizing a Group

1. Establishing Routines By establishing routines and giving the responsibility for routines to the participants the coach can devote more time to nurturing the sport skill development of the players. Coaches should:
 - o Establish 'set up' and 'put away' systems that participants can assist with for the equipment and facility. These must be supervised by the coach
 - o Use consistent warm-up and warm-down routines • set up areas and equipment in advance for specific elements of the program
 - o Use more experienced participants to take help the less experienced ones
 - o Have a consistent routine for moving between coach instruction and activity to reduce management time. If the players know where to go, how quickly they need to be there and what behavior is expected of them on arrival, then more time can be devoted to activity.
2. Formations Coaches should position themselves so that they can observe all participants. To maintain a formation, particularly when introduced for the first time, it is recommended that coaches use markers to define the formation. Care should be taken that the markers don't hinder performance by distracting the participant or causing an injury.
3. Engaging the participant The following strategies can be used to engage participants:
 - o Voice and expression – by varying voice quality and volume to suit the situation coaches can gain the participants attention, and add qualities such as excitement, concern and annoyance
 - o Eye contact - by maintaining eye contact, the coach can personalize things, give the impression of confidence, and add expression to the message
 - o Signal for attention - some coaches use a whistle and others use a variety of commands Whatever the method, it should be loud, different and gain attention. Ironically it is possible to gain attention by being quiet. This usually happens when players are expecting noise and it doesn't happen.
 - o Ask questions- using questioning and discussion techniques shifts the focus from the coach to the participant. The participant takes on some responsibility and becomes more involved in the learning process.
 - o Praise and compliment - sincere and equitable praise and compliments to the group and individuals provides incentive and motivation to the participant.
 - o Quality instructions - Combining brief clear instructions with demonstrations enables the coach to maintain the interest of participants. One of the most difficult things for many coaches is to limit instructions to one or two key points and then return to the activity.
 - o Increase participation - long lines of participants waiting for a turn, and 'adult' games with large playing areas and large numbers of players on each team, greatly reduces the opportunities for players to be actively involved and the level of enjoyment for participants.