

MTBA Skills Coach Pre-course Reading

Part 2

Planning and Reviewing

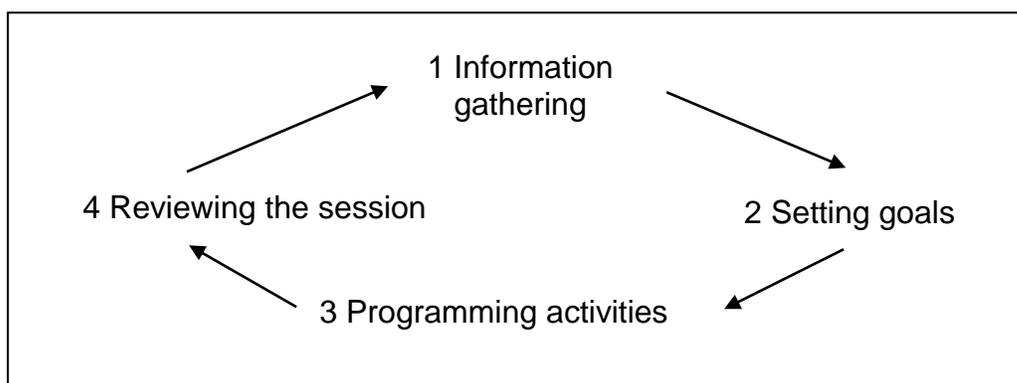
The Planning Process

Planning sessions prior to training helps coaches make the session more enjoyable and profitable for the participant, and helps to make maximum use of the time available. Planning does not need to be a lengthy and arduous process — with practice the coach can quickly consider the session goals, identify activities and select equipment that is needed. Planning can make an enormous difference to the effectiveness and enjoyment of training sessions.

Effective planning helps ensure that the coach:

- Has all the required resources available when they need them
- Provides a safe environment
- Maximises participation and makes effective use of the time available
- Provides challenging activities that allow for progressive skill development in all participants
- Includes all participants, regardless of their level of ability
- Maximises fun and enjoyment.

Good planning involves the following steps:



The cyclic nature of this process means that reviewing one session will help to provide information that helps to refine the goals and activities for the next session, and so on.

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Information Gathering

The first step in the planning process is to understand the individual needs of the participants. In order to do this, the coach must gather information about the participants, usually from a range of sources.

The kind of information gathered will depend on the demands of the sport, the age and level of development of the participant, and the level of sport at which they are involved. For beginners, the type of information required includes:

- Previous experience in the sport
- Level of development, both with the technical and tactical skills of the sport as well as their level of physical fitness
- Goals and aspirations in the sport
- Why they like to play the sport and what motivates them (for example, the fun of participating, being with their friends, learning new skills, competing, etc.)
- Any illness, injury or medical condition that might restrict their ability to participate
- Any support or modifications that might be required to allow them to participate to the best of their ability.

Coaches will also need to gather personal information such as contact details and medical information from the participant when they first join. Keeping accurate and current records, particularly of emergency contact details and relevant medical information, is crucial in case of an accident or injury. More information on gathering and recording medical information is contained in Chapter 3. Coaches should always take care to ensure that personal information about participants is kept confidential.

This type of information is best gathered directly from the participant and/or their parents (for children) at the start of the season or program. Many coaches use an enrolment form to gather the basic information and then might expand on this through a short discussion when the participant/parent hands in the form, or at the first training session. Other ways to gather the information needed might include:

- A simple skills activity at the first training session to help determine the level of development of the participant

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- Some fun games that elicit information from the participants — for example, passing a ball among the group and when each participant catches the ball, they have to answer a question such as ‘why do you like to play basketball?’, or ‘how many years/months have you played cricket?’

Where a participant has a medical condition or a disability, the coach might also need further information from their doctor, physiotherapist or other carer to gather more detailed information. This should only be done after discussions with the participant and their parents, and if their permission is given. The coach should focus on the abilities of the participant and any modifications that might need to be made to the program to allow them to participate to their maximum potential. Of course all such information **must** remain confidential.

Setting Goals

Goals should be established for each training session. They help to guide the program and provide a reference point to monitor participant progress throughout the season.

Session goals will be derived from the longer-term goals for the participant. For example, if one of the goals for the season is for the participants to reduce the number of mis-fielded balls in T-ball, then one of the session goals might be for participants to consistently position their feet and body effectively to catch the ball. This goal then helps to guide the programming for that session and aids in the selection of activities for that day.

Do not forget to include the participants wherever possible in the goal-setting process — if they have been involved and consulted on the goals for the program, they are more likely to be committed to achieving them. Even young children are able to express an opinion about what they would like to do at training.

When setting goals try to follow the SMART principle — goals should be **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-bound. Structuring goals in this way will assist in evaluating whether or not they have actually been achieved during the review phase.

Goals can relate to any part of sporting performance, or can be all-encompassing, such as ‘to win a championship’. However, coaches should predominately set performance goals (for example, aim to hit as many forehands as possible deeper than the service line, during this session) rather than outcome goals (for example, winning the championship). Focusing on performance improves skill development and reduces stress that participants can sometimes

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feel when focusing on outcome goals. Participants are able to control their own performance, but there are many external factors that can determine the outcome of a game.

Coaches must also be flexible and prepared to adjust goals to suit the sometimes unpredictable changes that can occur in any coaching situation. Session goals and training plans may need to be quickly adjusted if a participant is injured, the necessary equipment is no longer available, or the environment presents a safety hazard (for example, a slippery surface). This ability to quickly adapt your plans is one of the skills of a good coach. Being able to adapt and adjust if something is not working according to plan is a skill that is likely to develop as the coach gains more experience and a greater repertoire of games and activities.

Programming Activities

Before considering what to program into a session, coaches first need to understand the basic elements of a training session.

Elements of a Training Session

Each coach will develop their own approach to planning a session, however there is generally a pattern to the elements that are contained within a session for beginners. Training sessions should be developed from two or three goals that have been identified for that session. The session should begin with a brief introduction and warm-up, progress onto games and activities to develop technical and tactical skills and fitness, and finally the session should finish with a cool-down and some time for review. A good coach will be able to plan for each of these individual elements of the session, but make them flow smoothly, so participants are kept active and interested throughout the session.

Using this game-focused approach (the game sense approach), keeps up the interest of the participants, teaches technical skills, tactical awareness and decision-making, while at the same time developing fitness that is specific to the demands of the sport. For individual sports that involve few tactics and decision-making, a more traditional approach to planning may be more appropriate. For example, in sports such as swimming and rowing, coaches will place more emphasis on activities that focus on technique drills and the development of fitness and less emphasis on games.

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The elements of a training session that all coaches should include are:

- Session introduction
- Warm-up
- Skill and fitness activities
- Cool-down
- Review.

Session introduction

An overview of the training session should be presented to participants prior to the session starting. This can either be posted on a notice board or whiteboard, or communicated by the coach as the participants gather to commence training. Swimming coaches often list the training program on a board adjacent to the pool. This is effective as swimmers can commence their program as soon as they arrive at the pool and do not need to wait for other members of their squad. The coach can also get on with coaching, and not be compelled to have to stop and explain the session to each swimmer as they arrive.

Tips for conducting a session introduction

- Keep it short and focused
- Explain the goals for the session
- Establish the tone of the training session
- Detail the organisation for training (for example, what groupings the participants will be working in for the session)
- Relay any important messages (for example, changes to training times, etc.)

Warm-up

The warm-up should focus on low-intensity, skill-specific activities. There is now less emphasis on static stretching exercises and more emphasis on achieving readiness and ease of movement

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by slowly increasing the intensity of movement patterns and skills. For example, simple passing games in basketball and netball would form a good warm-up activity.

Active stretching can then easily be incorporated into these activities. A good example of this is after some general low-intensity movement activities, playing a 'freeze game' where, on a cue (either the command 'freeze' or being 'tipped' by another participant), the participants perform a stretching activity, until they become 'unfrozen' by another participant.

The length and structure of the warm-up varies among sports and the age and condition of participants, however its purpose is the same for all sports. It is designed to prepare the neuromuscular system for action, increase the blood flow throughout the body and prepare the mind for action. A good warm-up will decrease the risk of injury and increase the ability of muscles to work effectively throughout the session.

Skill and fitness activities

This segment of the session is very important and usually the most enjoyable part of the session. The use of game-like activities is a great way to develop skills and fitness. There are two reasons for this:

- Games, more often than not, increase the motivation levels in participants
- Skills practised in competition-related activities will transfer better than skills practised in non-competition-related situations.

This is essentially the theory behind the game sense approach.

The other option for this part of the training session is to design competition-related activities that focus on a particular skill and/or strategy. An example would be to do unit trainings in rugby union. Players would practise line outs, scrums and back line plays.

The amount of time devoted to these activities will be determined by the length of the training session and the age and level of the participants. However, these technique and tactical-related activities should make up the bulk of the session. Coaches should attempt to devote some of their time to raise the intensity and conditions to a level that closely resembles what will occur in real competition.

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Cool-down

A cool-down (sometimes referred to as the warm-down) of five to ten minutes helps to distribute waste products through the body, gradually returning the body to resting levels and reducing the sometimes harmful impact of dramatic changes to the body's activity level.

The cool-down occurs immediately after training activities have been completed and includes low-intensity body movement, such as slow jogging or walking (which, once again can be incorporated into low-key games to keep interest levels up), stretching exercises, shooting at goal or light rowing back to the shed. It is during this part of the session that more time can be spent on static stretching (that is, to improve flexibility levels).

The cool-down is often neglected but it is very important and must be included in each session and after competition.

Tips for stretching

When stretching muscles, it is important to ensure that the participants:

- Stretch warm muscles
- Are not bouncing during the stretch
- Stretch gently to the point of mild discomfort, not pain
- Hold static stretches for at least 10–15 seconds and repeat each stretch at least twice
- Stretch muscles on both sides of the body, beginning with the larger muscle groups
- Include stretches for muscles specific to the sport
- Do not make stretches competitive.

Review

The coach should review the training session with participants, highlighting important points from the session. This could occur either during or immediately following the cool-down.

The review also involves a discussion by coaches and participants about the important parts of the training session and should include some reflection on what worked, and what did not, during the session. This information then feeds into the planning process for future sessions.

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Further information on reviewing sessions, including strategies to help review coaching effectiveness, are included later in this chapter.

Selecting and designing training activities

When selecting or designing an activity, consider if the activity:

- Involves all participants most of the time
- Is motivating and/or fun
- Is safe
- Is relatively easy to organise
- Has a logical flow from previous activities.

When designing or modifying games and activities, always keep safety and participant activity levels in mind. Ensure that games encourage participation from everyone and modify the 'rules' of the games if necessary to allow everyone to participate fully, regardless of their skill or ability level.

Coaches can get ideas for activities from a variety of places. Most sports have sport-specific coaching manuals and resources that will include suggestions for activities for beginners. Many sports have developed modified rules for beginners and have also developed activity sheets or game cards. The Australian Sports Commission also has a range of activity and game cards available, including games suitable for people with a disability (see www.ausport.gov.au/publications).

Observing other coaches (both from your own sport and other sports) can also be a great source of inspiration. Never be afraid to invent activities as well. When designing an activity, focus on the outcome (for example, teaching children to move into open space to receive a pass), and then work backwards from there. Inventing 'rules' for the game helps to focus on the particular skill being worked on. For example, children may earn a point every time they receive a pass in free space during a game. This encourages them to find ways to break free of their opponent and learn ways to move into open space. Taking the points focus away from scoring a goal and moving it to encouraging children to find space re-focuses their attention on improving their skills rather than on the goal scoring outcome of the game.

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Equipment and resource considerations

When planning a session, it is important to consider the equipment and resource needs of the activities. If an activity needs particular equipment (for example, markers, balls, bibs, goal posts, etc.), then the coach needs to ensure that the equipment is available. Sometimes coaches need to share equipment with others, so they may need to coordinate with other coaches or other people to ensure that it is available. Try to plan activities so that particular equipment is used for sequential activities, so that time is not wasted on setting up or packing away equipment.

Inclusive coaching

One of the most challenging issues for a coach is dealing with multi-age groups and/or a wide range of sizes and ability. Good planning will help to focus on the individual needs of the participants and deal with these challenges. Inclusion works best when it is planned for.

All participants have different strengths and weaknesses, levels of ability, learning styles and different reasons for being involved in the sport. The role of the coach is to endeavour to meet all of their individual needs, while at the same time bringing them together as a team (or for individual sports, as a training squad) that works effectively together.

So how can the coach provide a safe, fun and challenging environment for everyone? Designing games and activities that can be modified to meet the needs of all participants is the key. The acronym CHANGE IT provides a tool that can be used to help modify the activity. Consider modifying the following factors to meet the individual needs of the participant:

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Coaching style — for example, demonstrations, or use of questions, role models and verbal instructions

How to score or win

Area — for example, size, shape or surface of the playing environment

Number of participants involved in the activity

Game rules — for example, number of bounces or passes

Equipment — for example, softer or larger balls, or lighter, smaller bats/racquets

Inclusion — for example, everyone has to touch the ball before the team can score

Time — for example, 'How many ... in 30 seconds?'

Case study

In flippaball (modified water polo for children), children play at the shallow end of the pool and are allowed to stand up during the game, while in the adult version of the game a player's feet must never touch the bottom of the pool.

For a group of young players with mixed swimming ability, the coach could easily modify the 'rules' during a flippaball training activity to provide a 'handicap' for players. The better players are only allowed to touch the bottom two times during the whole activity, mid-level players may only touch the bottom when catching or passing the ball, and new players may stand at any time.

Adjusting the rules in this way allows all players to participate to their maximum potential, without compromising the purpose of the activity. Indeed beginners are likely to learn that they

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are actually more mobile in the pool when they swim, rather than when walking on the bottom. This discovery will encourage them to swim more during the activity.

When including participants with a disability in a team or squad, the key guideline for coaches is to focus on their abilities, not their disabilities. Never assume what any individual is capable of. Always ask the participant what they can do and listen to their suggestions for modifying techniques or activities that will allow them to maximise participation. After all, they know their own capabilities better than anyone. When preparing a coaching program, examine what, if anything, needs to be adapted or modified. This can be done by

- Talking to parents, carers and significant others to further help understand specific needs
- Talking to your coaching peers, particularly if they coach people with disabilities
- Finding information about the impairment that may help the coach understand some general considerations relevant to their sport
- Considering the ability of the participant to perform the skills and movements of a particular sport or activity. In other words, what or how the participant can:
 - See (predominantly relevant to participants with vision impairment)
 - Hear (predominantly relevant to participants who are deaf or hearing impaired)
 - Move (predominantly relevant to participants with a physical disability)
 - Learn, recall or reproduce skills (predominantly relevant to participants with an intellectual disability)
 - Perform tasks and activities (relevant to all participants).

It is also very important to consider the social needs of participants as well as their physical and technical ones. Understanding why each participant is involved in the sport will improve the coach's ability to design activities that meet their social needs as well. Children, for example, often participate in sport to be with their friends. Because of this, it may be appropriate to group participants, at least during some training activities, based on their friendship groups, rather than skill ability or positions played during the game (for example, forwards/backs, etc.). Warm-ups and cool-downs are a great time to group children with their friends.

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Drop-out from sport in teenage girls has often been attributed to concerns regarding peer approval and self-image. Coaches working with this age group should therefore keep these issues in mind when planning activities, to ensure that they boost the participant's self-esteem, rather than undermining it by exposing them to failure and ridicule by their peers. Working in carefully selected groups can help to take the pressure off the less-confident participants at this age, particularly when introducing new skills.

Case study

Mike is a Level 1 Riding for the Disabled (RDA) coach. He works in a local RDA centre that provides lessons for horse riders with a range of disabilities as well as for some able-bodied riders. Riders are allocated to classes on the basis of their abilities, so Mike sometimes coaches classes with a mixture of both able-bodied riders and riders with a disability.

Mike has become concerned with the progress of his Tuesday afternoon class. This is a group of young teenagers who have been riding each week for a number of years and have mastered the basic skills of horse riding. However the group does not seem to be enjoying their lessons much any more and seem very bored with the activities he has been programming. There also seems to be divisions arising in the group, with the able-bodied riders tending to group together for activities and the riders with a disability also tending to choose to work together as a group. While understanding that the girls would choose to work in their friendship groups, Mike is not happy with the separation that seems to be forming in the group and decides to talk to the riders about it.

Initially Mike tackles the issue of boredom with the lessons. None of the riders has horses of their own, and only ever get to ride on the centre's horses once a week. Most of the group express frustration about this, as they do not feel they are progressing very quickly in their riding. They want to be able to ride at Pony Club events with their other friends who have their own horses, but recognise this is not possible without having a horse of their own.

Next, Mike tackles the trickier question of the groupings for activities. Mike discovers that a number of the riders with a disability lack confidence within the group and do not feel like they fit in very well. Mike asks the group for suggestions about how they could improve the situation and boost everyone's confidence and enjoyment. The girls suggest that Mike actually allocates riders to groups for activities in the future.

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Mike follows up on this suggestion in the following lessons, but does not feel that it has actually solved the problem, as he feels that he is artificially forcing the mix. He also notices that the girls gravitate back to their old groups when the lesson has finished.

Mike decides to take a bigger step and speaks to the centre manager about the possibility of him taking the girls to a Pony Club rally on the centre's horses. The manager works with Mike to arrange the necessary transport and assistance from parents and liaises with the local Pony Club about a suitable event for the group to get involved in. They decide to start slowly and just join in one of the local Pony Club's regular monthly rallies and participate in the training activities, but not enter any competitions.

At their outing to Pony Club, Mike and the girls join in with the activities and have a great time. They also watch one of the Pony Club mounted games teams do a demonstration barrel game race, which they had recently won at the state championship. This team's demonstration gives Mike an idea, so he speaks to the Pony Club coach about his group of riders coming more regularly to Pony Club and joining in the mounted games events.

Back at their Centre, the girls work hard on their skills and with this new goal driving them, they work fantastically as a team to help each other prepare for their outings to Pony Club rallies. In fact, they work so hard that in the first barrel game race they enter, they come third!

Mike is delighted with the outcome and the improvement in motivation within the group. However, he is even more delighted with the gradual breakdown in the division within the group and the new-found confidence that the riders with a disability have developed through a focus on teamwork that the Pony Club outings have created.

Progressing Activities Within and Across Sessions

Progressively building activities that develop skills and fitness will enhance performance. Each session should therefore build in intensity and consecutive sessions should continue to extend the participant. A review of the previous session will also assist the coach in progressing activities in the next session.

Steps should be incremental, however, and not place undue stress on the participant. As a beginner coach, the aim is to extend the participant, not exhaust them. This principle applies to skill learning as well as fitness. Tired or overloaded participants do not learn well. Introduce new

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skills and concepts early in the session and then build activities to practise them in increasingly competition-like situations.

When planning a session it is often helpful to identify some key questions that might be posed during the session. Well thought out questions can help participants to learn new concepts more quickly. Questions cause the participant to analyse their own performance and improve the participant's understanding of the game. Learning in this way helps to embed the concept more quickly than if the participant is simply told what to do. This in turn increases the likelihood of the participant choosing the right option when placed in that situation again in the future.

Careful consideration of the season goals for the participants will help the coach to build their coaching program throughout the season. Reviewing the participant's progress at regular intervals will allow the coach to check whether they are still on track to achieve their goals, or whether modifications to the program are needed. Coaches may also find that their initial goals may not have been realistic, in which case, they should not be afraid to re-assess the goals and modify the program, either within a session or throughout the season.

Sample Session Planner

The following sample session planner is a useful tool for coaches to use in planning their training sessions. It includes space for coaches to document their plans in a practical way and also serves as an excellent record of each training session. As the coach becomes more familiar with the planning process, they may want to modify this planner to suit the needs of their particular sport and their own personal planning style.



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Session planner

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Date: | Attendance: | Equipment needed: |
| Venue: | | |
| Duration: | | |
| Introduction (aims for session, reminders, etc.): | | |
| Warm-up activities: | Drills and games: | Cool-down activities: |
| Coaching tips/questions/challenges: | | Class management/energisers: |
| Review/evaluation (key points from session, what worked and what did not, modifications for next session, etc.) : | | |

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Tips for coaches when planning a training session

- 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
- Read manuals and books to get new ideas for activities and drills
- Drills and minor games from one sport can easily be adapted to suit another
- Over-plan rather than under-plan. It is easier to omit drills than to add unplanned drills
- Organise 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
- 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
- Plan drills so that participants have a good chance of success. This will improve motivation
- Even younger participants are capable of working independently in small groups. Develop activity station cards that explain the drill to be practised

Reviewing the session

It is very important to spend some time reviewing the effectiveness of each session. Ideally this will involve both self-reflection on the coach's part, but also gaining feedback from others will give a more balanced view of the coach's own performance. The participants, a coach or other person that you respect will be able to give constructive feedback. Do not be afraid to ask young children for their ideas. At the very least they will be able to tell you which their favourite activities were!

All coaches self-reflect, but rarely in a deliberate and systematic manner. There are a number of techniques that a coach can use to help them systematically reflect on their own performance. Three methods that can be used to self-reflect are the coaching diary, mentoring and video self-analysis. The value of these three methods is that they will help to structure self-reflection and relate it directly to the goal of improving your effectiveness.



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Coaching Diary

Diaries help people to remember, to gain a perspective on their life and to self-reflect. A coaching diary is a good way for the coach to record and describe coaching experiences that they can then use to evaluate what worked well and what was less effective. The session planner on page [XX] contains a space for some review points, however for a more detailed self-reflection, the sample diary page on page [XX] below illustrates one approach. It should be noted that the diary can take whatever form the coach feels most comfortable with.

Example self-reflection diary

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Date: | Session time: | Participants: |
| Session description (including aims): | | |
| Focus area: Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Managing <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(tick appropriate box)</i> | | |
| Things to improve: | Things to implement in the next session: | |
| | Follow up evaluation after the next session: | |

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Tips for using a coaching diary

A coaching diary is a very effective tool to aid self-reflection and evaluate coaching performance. Make sure that you:

- Keep entries simple and to the point
- Try to focus on your actions and behaviours rather than just describing the activities that occurred
- Include the things that you do well
- Use it to analyse and explain your coaching performance. For example, why was the session today successful? What specifically went well and why? How can you build on this? What did not work and what needs to be done to improve?

Case study

Sue is a gymnastics coach who works with a group of six to eight-year-old children. One of the children in the group, Hailey, has autism. Hailey is physically very able, but has difficulty relating to the other children and often withdraws from interaction with Sue as the session progresses. Once this occurs, Sue has great difficulty keeping Hailey's attention and motivation.

In attempting to learn what might cause Hailey's withdrawal, Sue starts keeping a coaching diary. In the diary she keeps brief notes on each session, including who attended, what activities the group did and, more importantly, what communication strategies she used (particularly with Hailey) and what effect they had. Over time, Sue realises that one of the triggers for Hailey was the level and type of communication she had with her. When Sue does a lot of individualised coaching with Hailey, giving her more intense one-to-one instruction, she tends to withdraw. If, however, she keeps her coaching more generalised and uses the other children to demonstrate a new concept or skill, Hailey's level of interaction with the group remains high and she stays interested in the session.

Using a diary helped to focus Sue's reflections and draw the connection between her coaching methods and Hailey's individual communication needs.

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Mentor Coaching

Sometimes it can be helpful to discuss an issue or a problem with a colleague or friend. It can also be helpful to have someone observe you in action to provide another perspective on your coaching methods. Mentor coaching makes self-reflection a social and interactive process. The coach reflects with another person through dialogue, rather than alone and in silence.

The mentor's role is not to judge, but to gain an understanding of the coach's methods so that they can provide the coach with informed feedback. The mentor is there to listen and guide, not to do the reflection for the coach.

Three steps to effectively utilising a mentor coach are:

- 1 Plan a preliminary discussion to consider your performance in the key areas of teaching, managing and communicating
- 2 Focus on the identification of a particular behaviour to change and the formulation of a practical plan of action
- 3 A follow-up discussion after you have implemented the action plan will help to confirm that you have made effective changes to your coaching.

Tips for working with a mentor coach

Working with a mentor will be more productive if these key points are followed:

- Focus on the goal of improving coaching effectiveness. Your discussions with your mentor may be quite wide ranging but should always be directed towards identifying areas of your coaching that need improvement and developing practical strategies to achieve this improvement
- Record the key points from your discussion with your mentor — particularly your plan of action for the next session
- Remember, improvement can be slow. Do not be afraid to discuss the same area of coaching behaviour again if the desired improvement is not evident.

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Video Self-Analysis

This method involves making a video recording of a coaching session and then analysing it to identify changes to be made. The coach might like to involve a mentor in the process to help in analysis and planning for improvement.

Using video allows the coach to see themselves in action. It also provides very detailed feedback. It has the advantages of being able to be replayed so that a particular segment can be watched again or analysed in slow motion. A video also allows the coach to focus on the participants' responses to their coaching styles. If necessary, the video might even be sent to a distant mentor who can advise on areas for improvement, assist to develop action plans for change and evaluate the implementation of plans formulated earlier.

Tips for using video self-analysis

- Do not just film the participants — be sure to include the coach in action
- View the tape, identify things to improve and devise a plan for change
- Record a subsequent session in which you implement your plans for change
- Undertake follow-up self-reflection. How did you go? What more needs to be done?

Evaluation questionnaire

To help evaluate coaching performance, a questionnaire such as the one on page [XX] can be used. Ideally, this questionnaire should be completed regularly during the season to monitor and evaluate coaching performance. If working with a mentor, have the mentor complete it also, and/or perhaps some of the participants.



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How do you rate as a coach?

| | Mostly | Sometimes | Never |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------|
| Communication | | | |
| 1 Did I reinforce the actions of the participants in a positive manner when they performed correctly? | | | |
| 2 Did I reward effort in addition to outcome? | | | |
| 3 Did I give compliments sincerely and honestly? | | | |
| 4 Did I use sarcasm to get my message across? | | | |
| 5 Did I give constructive and specific feedback? | | | |
| 6 Did what I said to the participants match my non-verbal actions towards them? | | | |
| 7 Was I consistent and fair in my treatment of all participants? | | | |
| 8 Did I over-coach during training/game by giving too many instructions? | | | |
| 9 Did I change my communication methods to suit the needs of the participants? | | | |
| 10 Did I encourage the participants to have an input into team decisions and did I listen to them when they had something to say? | | | |
| 11 Did I reinforce team rules fairly and consistently? | | | |
| Motivation | | | |
| 12 Did I show the enthusiasm while coaching that I expect from the participants? | | | |
| 13 Did the participants have fun during the training/game? | | | |
| 14 Was I aware of any anxiety or nervousness experienced by the participants and did I help to reduce this? | | | |
| 15 Did I emphasise winning too much? | | | |
| Leadership | | | |
| 16 Was I prompt in arriving at training/game? | | | |
| 17 Was I well prepared and organised for training sessions? | | | |



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| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 18 Was my training session varied and interesting so that it challenged all participants and developed self-esteem and confidence? | | | |
| 19 Did every participant have equal game time or did I over-play the more skilled participants? | | | |
| 20 Was I able to analyse skills and correct errors when they occurred? | | | |
| 21 Did I exercise self-control in situations that made me angry? | | | |
| 22 Was I sensitive to the individual needs of all the participants? | | | |
| 23 Did I personally demonstrate good sporting behaviour? | | | |
| 24 Did I argue with, or complain about, officials? | | | |
| 25 Did I encourage parents to attend games? | | | |
| 26 Was I patient and tolerant with all participants, regardless of individual skill levels? | | | |

Adapted from a questionnaire by Maureen Weiss, Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan, United States, published in AUSSIE SPORT ACTION, Spring 1992, page 25, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra.

Tips for using evaluation questionnaires

Completing a questionnaire focuses thoughts and provides an easy-to-use but effective form of evaluation for coaches.

- Tick one response per question
- Ask a mentor coach and participants to complete the questionnaire to independently evaluate your coaching performance
- Focus on a few areas of improvement at a time rather than trying to improve every aspect of your coaching
- Complete the questionnaire at regular intervals to monitor your improvement and coaching performance

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Part 2

Ideally, self-reflection is not a one-off thing. It should become a regular part of a coach's program. Checking performance through a diary, with the help of a mentor or by viewing a video recording, is a very good means of ensuring that the coach continues to improve.

No matter which self-reflection method, or combination of methods, is used remember that change can sometimes be slow. The coach may need to examine the same area of coaching (teaching, managing and communicating) a number of times.

It is a simple point, but one worth stressing — effective coaches take responsibility for their own effectiveness.

Summary

Planning is an important part of the coach's role. The main components of the planning process include:

- information gathering
 - Considering the type of information to gather
 - Looking at where it can be gathered from
 - Keeping the information confidential
 - Setting goals
 - Setting smart goals
 - Ensuring a mix of performance and outcome goals
 - Being a 'flexible' coach
 - Programming activities
 - Using a session planner
 - Including all the elements of a training session — session introduction, warm-up, skill and fitness activities, cool-down and review
 - Selecting and designing appropriate training activities
 - Being an inclusive coach



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Part 2

- Progressing activities within and across sessions
- Reviewing the session
- Considering what to review — including managing, teaching and communication
- How to review — including a coaching diary, using a mentor and video self-analysis.

References and further reading

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