

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEER COACHES

Coaches play a vital role in the sporting, and everyday life, of the participants they coach. Coaches are very influential in the lives of their players. Not only do they influence the skill development and enjoyment of the sport, but they also contribute to the development of the person. Whilst at times it can be challenging, coaching is also a very satisfying role.

Effective coaches are skilled in a number of areas. A coach needs knowledge of the sport, but more importantly, they need good interpersonal and communication skills. It is not **what** you coach but **how** you coach that is important. A coach needs to be well organised and prepared, so that they can adapt to the many and varied situations that they may find themselves in.

Coaches should:

- Treat everyone fairly, and include participants of all abilities, ages, genders, and ethnic backgrounds
- Show enthusiasm and enjoyment for the task of coaching – make it fun!
- Ensure the safety of all participants
- Behave ethically and dress appropriately
- Be very organised, not only for each session but for the entire season
- Be ready to justify, if necessary, why things are being done, or to ask for suggestions and help when unsure. To be a coach is to be on a continuous learning cycle.

PLANNING 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 should include:

- Session introduction
- Warm-up
- Games, skill and fitness activities
- Cool-down
- Review.

Further information: There is a sample session planner included in the 'Templates and forms for coaches' section of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) website at www.ausport.gov.au

GATHERING INFORMATION AND SETTING GOALS

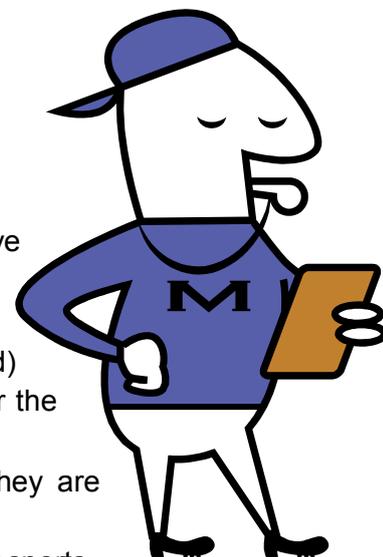
Before planning a training session, coaches should gather information about the participants, and set goals. If working with a new group, the type of information needed might include:

- 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
- Why they like to play the sport, what motivates them and their goals and aspirations
- Any illness, injury or medical condition that might restrict their ability to participate.

(see example medical form in the templates for coaches area of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) website at <http://www.ausport.gov.au>)

TIPS FOR SELECTING AND DESIGNING TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- Plan so that activities flow from one to the next smoothly. Have equipment organised, ensure that there is an adequate amount for small group work
- Consider a game sense philosophy (which most sports have adopted) with a distinct move away from drills to small sided games that mirror the decision making required in the sport
- Ask questions rather than tell participants. This will ensure that they are involved in their learning
- Seek new ideas for activities and games, including adapting from other sports
- Over-plan rather than under-plan. It is easier to omit activities than to add unplanned ones
- 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 games 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



*Further information: Game sense activity cards and
Playing for life resource, available at the AIS shop
section of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)
website at www.ausport.gov.au*

MAKING TRAINING SAFE AND FUN FOR ALL

Good coaches are safe coaches. They do this by:

- Being well planned and organised for all sessions
- Being aware of relevant illnesses, injuries or medical conditions (see example medical form in the templates for coaches area of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) website at <http://www.ausport.gov.au>)
- Ensuring participants warm up prior to activity
- Not mismatching participants (consider size/strength, not just age)
- Clearly establishing the rules for behaviour and activities
- Ensuring the safety of playing areas, facilities and equipment. Refer to the guidelines of your State Sporting Association (SSA)
- Requiring participants to use protective devices if applicable Refer to the guidelines of your State Sporting Association (SSA)
- Adapting activities for environmental conditions (eg. hot, humid, or cold, wet conditions). Refer to the guidelines of your State Sporting Association (SSA)
- Catering for individual needs
- Having a positive influence on minimising the abuse of officials and maximising the standard of officiating, by developing positive and supportive relationships with officials
- Being aware of their sport's Member Protection Policy (MPP) and child protection guidelines. Refer to the guidelines of your State Sporting Association (SSA)
- Adhering to, and distributing the Code of Conduct. Refer to Sport and Recreation Victoria's website - <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/sport/inclusive-sport/code-of-conduct>
- Ensuring that they know where the first aid kit is, what the emergency medical plan and procedure is and who is trained in first aid. Refer to Sports Medicine Australia's (Smartplay) website -<http://sma.org.au/2011/07/medical-emergency-planning-guide/>

COACHING CHILDREN

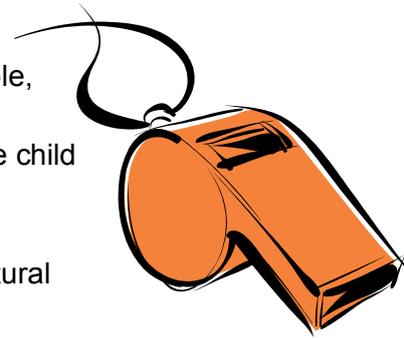
Coaches of children should remember that:

- Children's sport should be FUN! They are not little adults and need a broad range of modifications to the "adult" sport
- Children need lots of opportunities for unstructured play, a broad range of activities, and the opportunity for creativity
- Early sports specialisation and over training is not recommended for children
- Where possible "respect the person, reject the behaviour" if children are not behaving in an appropriate manner
- The social aspects of sport are highly valued by children
- Coaches should focus on skill development and individual improvement, rather than winning as the outcome
- All children deserve time and attention, not just the most talented
- *Further Information: Fundamental Motor Skills – Activities Resource –*
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/fmsactresource09.pdf>

TIPS FOR COACHES TO PROTECT CHILDREN

There are actions a coach can take to ensure children feel safe and protected when participating in sport. These good coaching practices include the following:

- Use positive reinforcement and acceptable language when talking about or to a child
- Develop a calm and non-confrontational behaviour management style
- Make any physical contact with children (or adults for that matter) in a way that makes them feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands and a congratulatory pat on the back. If a coach must make physical contact with participants as part of an activity, then they should explain the activity and what they will do, and ask the participant's permission to do that
- Avoid situations where an adult may be alone with a child, for example, dressing rooms or first aid rooms
- When children need to be transported, ensure there is more than one child (and, if possible, more than one adult) in the vehicle
- Manage allegations (disclosures) of child abuse through established processes and reporting lines to ensure there is due process and natural justice
- Document all incidents involving physical restraint of children or violence involving children
- Document all incidents that seem to be unusual or 'out of the ordinary'
- Coach children to be a 'good sport', recognise that they have a right to feel safe, and know what they can do if they do not feel safe (if they are abused, harassed or discriminated against)
- Never use punishments such as running laps or push-ups
- Use rewards, praise and acknowledgment to reinforce desired behaviours.



Further information: A summary of child-protection information relevant to the sport industry is available on the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) website at www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/egischild.asp and the Play by the Rules website at www.playbytherules.net.au

NOTE: Child-protection requirements vary for different states and territories. Coaches should seek out information about the child protection requirements in their state or territory.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

Parents play a vital role in sport. Parental expectations have a big influence on the attitudes of children towards participating in sport, on behaviour, levels of performance and enjoyment.

Effective communication with parents is important. Parents can contribute positively to a child's sporting experience so coaches should take time to interact with them and try to ensure they understand the coaching role and responsibilities.

A good strategy for working with parents is to provide them with an induction kit that includes the coach's contact details, when and where training will be held, how you will advise them if training is cancelled, what their children should wear for training and games, and game schedule. They must also be aware of and agree to the Code of Conduct. *Refer to Sport and Recreation Victoria's website - <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/sport/inclusive-sport/code-of-conduct>*

INCLUDING ALL PLAYERS

A coach can change any of the following to be able to cater for ALL levels of ability. The TREE acronym is an instant way of remembering HOW to change the activity to better cater for all.

Teaching/instructing or coaching style - In coaching there are a number of alternative techniques or different types of cues (visual, verbal, tactile) that may be used to cater for different learning styles and preferences. For example: use a questioning approach rather than telling/instruct; get players to pair up and coach each other, or get older students to help out at sessions as mentors.

Rules or the way that you have always done things - The rules of the game or skill/drill can be constantly modified. Rules should be redefined to enhance the chance of participant success in an activity. Remember, if the activity is not engaging the participant, then change the conditions/rules. For example: play many small sided games such as 3 vs 3, instead of a full match, use a range of challenging games as the lead up rather drill practice in lines.

Equipment - Using a range of related equipment is best coaching practice, which enhances participation. For example: possibly use lighter and softer balls (sponge, balloons, beach balls); use brightly colored cones to mark out the boundaries of the field or bright bands to distinguish different teams and groups; use low compression balls.

Environment - Activities or sports need not be restricted to their traditional place. For example football does not need to be played on a field etc. Try varying distance (ie: stand closer to the goals/target); vary speed (slower); use part of field only; play on a different surface, play indoors/outdoors etc.

RESOURCES – A Snapshot

- ◉ Australian Sports Commission www.ausport.gov.au
- ◉ Sport and Recreation Victoria www.sport.vic.gov.au
- ◉ Play By The Rules www.playbytherules.net.au
- ◉ Fair go sport www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au
- ◉ vicsport www.vicsport.asn.au
- ◉ Your State Sporting Association

vicsport acknowledges the above organisations for the resources and information referred to in the development of this Fact Sheet.



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