



YOUTH COACHING CURRICULUM



SECTION 1

RATIONALE

The Junior Coaching Curriculum (JCC) was developed to increase player transition and retention from NAB AFL Auskick to Junior Football by providing coaches with a resource of prescribed training sessions that are age and developmentally appropriate for players aged 7-12 years.

The Youth Coaching Curriculum (YCC) is an extension of the Junior Coaching Curriculum (JCC). It offers essential guiding principles to assist coaches in nurturing the growth of players and teams within the 13-18 age range, where a wide spectrum of developmental maturity exists among the players.

SECTION 2

IMPACT OF THE COACH

The impact of a coach is significant on both the participation and retention of players as they transition from Junior Football into Youth football. Research suggests the drop out of players from within this age group can be reflective of a poor football experience. Namely:

- » Players aren't having fun
- » The training and/or playing experience isn't engaging enough (negative)
- » Training is boring
- » Lack of game time
- » The Coach places too much importance on winning
- » The Coach yells or puts the team down,
- » The Coach favours some players
- » Players haven't been taught fundamental skills (competence)
- » Players lack confidence (lack of experience and exposure playing in different positions or lack of positive reinforcement)



IMPACT OF THE COACH

Failing to create an enjoyable and positive training and playing environment can lead to players losing interest and not finding fulfillment in their participation. This is evident where Coaches with a 'win at all costs' mentality focus on the outcome of games, consequently compromising the development of youth players in both their team and those in the opposition. One-sided games in youth football can negatively impact both teams - no one wants to play sport when they are getting beaten heavily by the opposition.

WHAT IS GOOD YOUTH COACHING?

1 INSPIRING A LOVE FOR THE GAME

- Focus on enjoyment
- Training is simple & Fun
- Training is high energy, there is lots of encouragement & drills move quickly
- The experience is fun and develops players' abilities

2 KNOWING THE PLAYERS

- The coach understands the developmental differences between players
- The coach shows engagement & care
- The coach has a more holistic focus on the development of the person as well as the player, developing: (refer to the 4 C's)

3 TEACHING THE GAME

- The coach is organised with a systematic approach to training and activities
- Training is well designed and facilitated
- There is a high percentage of game-based activities
- There is maximum involvement for all players
- All players get maximum touches
- The coach is careful not to talk too much

WHAT ARE THE 4C'S?

COMPETENCE · CONFIDENCE · CONNECTION · CHARACTER

Competence - Sport specific technical and tactical skills, performance skills, improved health & fitness, and healthy training habits

Confidence - Internal sense of overall positive self worth

Connection - Positive bonds and social relationships with people inside and outside of sport

Character - respect for the sport and others, integrity, empathy and responsibility

SECTION 3 UNDERSTANDING & CONNECTING WITH YOUTH PLAYERS

Youth players transitioning from Junior football vary significantly in their physical, psychological, emotional and cognitive stages of development. Regardless of a player's current shape, size or maturity, it's imperative that coaches provide the same developmental opportunities and positive and meaningful playing experiences for all their players.

RELATIVE AGE EFFECT

Within specific age group divisions of Youth football, there can be significant discrepancies in the maturation of players, particularly in those born in the early months of the year compared to those born later in the year. A player born in January may have an additional 10 months of physical, psychological, emotional and cognitive developmental advantage by virtue of being born in January or February compared to a player born in mid-December.

Coaches need to be aware of the difference between capacity for performance and maturity - the older player within the same age division may be selected in various representative programs or be given greater game time and exposure in key positions because they have matured earlier. We all know the type. They look 2 or 3 years older than their peers - physically bigger, stronger, faster and dominant in games. An example might be where a coach positions this player only in the forward line where they kick 'bags of goals' every week. From a developmental perspective, promoting or permitting players

of this nature to depend solely on their superior athleticism may prove detrimental in the long term. In years to come, these players may have acquired undesirable habits and may lack the versatility and proficiency required in other facets of their game.

Youth coaches need to keep a bigger picture view that extends beyond just the current season to ensure all players, regardless of their current stage of development/maturation, are given the same developmental opportunities and positive and meaningful playing experiences.



EARLY SPECIALISATION

Players should be encouraged to engage in multiple sports throughout their teenage years. Participation studies suggest, in addition to the physical and psychological benefits of trying out or sampling multiple sports, this approach also builds player engagement and is the foundation of optimal sports development. Early specialisation leads to less enjoyment, burnout, injuries and participation drop out.

In consultation with players and parents of those that play multiple sports, it is recommended to monitor the training loads from a welfare perspective and modify an activity or session to allow a lower intensity or volume component to be included if required.

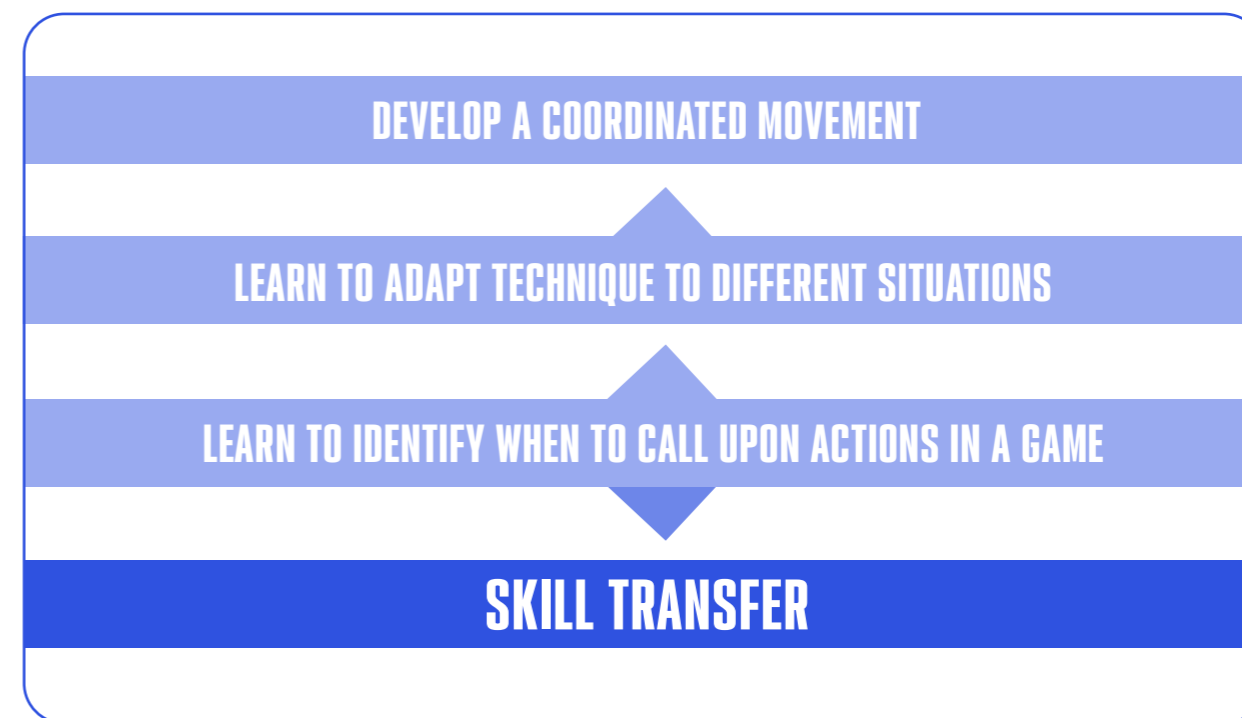
CONNECTION

Building connections and relationships with players is the cornerstone of coaching. Strong relationships enhance communication, trust, motivation and overall player development. Youth coaches act as role models and mentors for their players - often one of the most impactful in their lives.

A key component in building connections is to get to know the players individually. Learn about their interests, strengths and create an environment where players feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves and asking questions.

Provide recognition and praise for effort or actions that are valued within the team, such as sportsmanship or teamwork. All coaches are responsible for the crucial role of safeguarding children, ensuring a nurturing and safe environment that prioritizes their physical, emotional, and social well-being, fostering a culture of respect, inclusivity, and protection within the team and broader community.

The challenge with the traditional approach to coaching is that there is minimal transfer of learning from training to game day. Within a player-centered approach with a focus on development, players will have the opportunity to experiment and create solutions by problem-solving individually and collectively through trial & error. Players need to be able to make decisions both with and without the ball and see the cues that resemble scenarios that can happen in a game. Training can look messy and mistakes will happen. As coaches, the message to players needs to be encouraging, embracing the struggle and empowering them to keep trying.



Transfer of learning from training to game day depends on the extent to which training resembles game day.

SECTION 4 CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

PLAYER CENTERED APPROACH VS COACH CENTERED APPROACH

Traditional training environments, through a Coach-centered approach, typically see a coach constantly shouting instructions and solving problems - telling players where to run, when to run and why, or having players stationary behind cones waiting for their turn to kick the ball in a repetitive drill. The coach talks, the athletes listen, and they do what the coach tells them. Sessions are aesthetically pleasing, with kick-to-cone heavy orientated activities where there is an emphasis of 'don't let the balls hit the deck!'

QUESTIONING

Guided and open questions can be used to initiate discussion between the players and coach to gauge their understanding such as the purpose of an activity or specific actions or outcomes required. It enables players to reflect on their previous experiences or prior knowledge to problem-solve and think critically. Facilitating these discussions with both individuals and as a collective can help build team cohesion and stronger peer-to-peer communication in training and games. Additionally, players will feel valued within the team and are more engaged and motivated if they are given the opportunity to share their input.

- » Plan questions in advance for probing, extending, revising and reflecting.
- » Questions are used as an immediate source of feedback to track progress/ understanding.
- » Questioning is most successful when coaches maintain a respectful, trusting learning environment in which players feel confident to contribute. If a coach is negative or shoots down a response from a player, it's highly unlikely that player (or others) will contribute openly again.

COACH CENTERED APPROACH	PLAYER CENTERED APPROACH
Players conform to his/her ways of doing	Makes each player feel capable of succeeding
Speaks to rather than listens to players	Learns about his/her athletes, takes a personal interest in each one and gets to know them
Does not accept player's opinions or input	Asks questions of his/her players; encourages problem solving and critical thinking
Asks closed and redundant, or few questions	Answers questions, encourages players to ask questions and to seek knowledge
Is a disciplinarian	Is flexible and open-ended
Promotes fear of failure	Through athlete responsibility, establishes reasonable limits for behaviour
Promotes dictatorship and win-at-all costs	Is purposeful and provides meaning to learning
Criticises mistakes	Is empathetic and caring towards his/her players
Loses cool, uses threats or punishment to coerce players into following coaches' expectations of behaviour	Gives players responsibility to encourage accountability for their actions



EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Effective Coaches use two-way feedback to gather information about their players' understanding, to assist players to advance their own learning and development, while also being able to verify the impact of their own coaching practices. Feedback is more effective if it focuses on the task, not the person and has a greater impact when it is given for a familiar activity where a player already holds a certain level of comprehension.

Feedback must provide details, such as, 'You achieved a good outcome hitting that target because you...', rather than just, 'That was a good kick or poor decision'. Providing specific guidance on how to improve, and framed to encourage and support further effort is more effective than just telling the players what they are doing wrong or providing feedback that is about the person not the action.

DELIVERING POSITIVE FEEDBACK IS DEMONSTRATED WHEN PLAYERS:

- » Understand what they need to do to improve
- » Feel encouraged and supported to achieve their goals
- » Use feedback to monitor and self-regulate their development

COACH FEEDBACK SERIES

- » The Coach Feedback Series provides coaches with insights on effective techniques on providing and receiving feedback
- » See more on page 47

SECTION 5 CURRICULUM FOR YOUTH

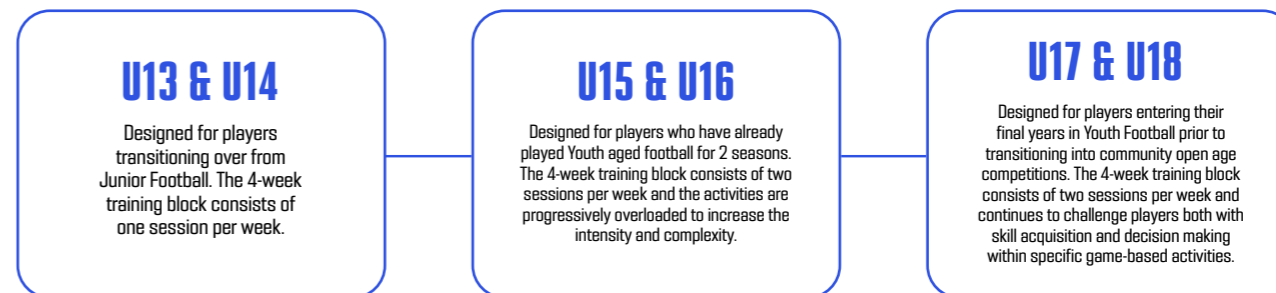
THE CURRICULUM

The Youth Coaching Curriculum is designed to extend the skill development progressions from the already established Junior Coaching Curriculum (7-12-year-olds) targeting 3 specific age groups. Each curriculum age group will consist of a 4-week training block with session learning focuses, activity instructions, Change it Harder/Change it Easier coaching constraints and additional key coaching points. The structure of a training session is broken into 5 sections designed to sequentially build players' fundamental and game-based skills.

	DURATION	FOCUS	
PRE-GAME	Up to 15min	Fun, Play & Exploration (No coaching!)	▶ Unstructured play is important for skill Acquisition, particularly with regards to developing creativity
QUARTER 1	10min	Energizer (Warm-Up)	▶ The aim is to have a fun warm-up with an emphasis on fundamental movements
QUARTER 2	10min	Fundamental Skills (High Repetition)	▶ The aim is to practice the fundamentals skills of football with lots of repetition
	10min	Decision Making Task	
QUARTER 3	15min	Team Task	▶ Opportunity to practice applying the fundamental skills to game situations when working as a team
QUARTER 4	10min	Game	▶ Opportunity to play the game, whilst rules are applied to emphasise specific skills

TOTAL DURATION **70** MINUTES

LEVELS OF PROGRESSION



THE CURRICULUM DESIGN

The Youth Coaching Curriculum in alignment with the Junior Coaching Curriculum, has been designed around the principles of play which describe the three phases of the game and follows the premise of 'using the game to teach the game'.

PHASES OF THE GAME

1. ATTACK

We've got the ball

2. DEFENCE

They've got the ball

3. CONTEST

Ball is in dispute

Each training session in the Youth Coaching Curriculum targets one or more principles.



PRINCIPLES OF PLAY GLOSSARY

	WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?	HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS CONCEPT TO YOUTH PLAYERS'
ATTACK	PENETRATION	Advancing the ball towards the goals Get the ball moving forward
	POSSESSION	Keeping control of the ball by either holding it up or making simple lateral passes until better options are available "Play keeping's off until you see a chance to move the ball forward".
	SUPPORT	Provide support and safe passing options to the player with the ball "Help the player with the ball find space or create a passing option by finding space yourself and calling for the ball"
	MOVEMENT	Moving to create space for both yourself and others "Continuous movement to find space and get the ball"
DEFENCE	DELAY	Positioning of the defender closest to the player with the ball to slow the attack by preventing the ball being moved forward "Make it hard for the player with the ball to pass or move quickly"
	PRESSURE	Quickly closing down the player with the ball to minimize the time and space in which the ball can be controlled, with the aim of causing a poor decision "Get close to the player with the ball to pressure and cause a turnover"
	COVER	Denying passing options to the player with the ball by covering attackers offering support "If you're not closest to the player with the ball, your role is to cover the passing options"
	DEPTH BALANCE	Helping the defence remain compact by closing gaps as they arise (i.e., zone defence) "Cover free space in front of the player with the ball by maintaining a similar distance between all defenders"
CONTEST	GAIN ADVANTAGE	Anticipate and prepare for the contest through body positioning relative to the ball, teammates and the opposition "Move your body so you have the best chance to win possession, support your teammates or defend the opposition"
	OUTNUMBER	Identifying opportunities to outnumber a contest by positioning yourself to support teammates to win possession. "Move over to the contest so you can support your teammates to win the ball"

DESIGN YOUR OWN

Design your own! Included in each guidebook is a template you can use to design your own Training activity and session. For support developing specific skills within a team, check out the Coaching Skills Series¹.

TRAINING ACTIVITY

The Training Activity template will help you articulate the learning focus, what type of skills you want the players to get better at and the specific phase of the game and principles of play that they relate to. The template will also allow you to explore variations to make the activity harder or easier and reflect post session whether the activity worked as planned or needs to be modified.

TRAINING SESSION

The Training Session template provides you with a framework of five different sections; pre-game activity followed by Quarter 1 though to Quarter 4. Each section has a specific emphasis or type of activity to facilitate to ensure there is an adequate mix of fundamental skills work, decision making, team and game-based activities. Aligning with the training activity template, there is an overall training session learning focus and emphasis on linking previous sessions.

WHAT IS SKILL?

$$\text{SKILL} = \frac{\text{PRESSURE}}{\text{TECHNIQUE} + \text{ADAPTABILITY}}$$

WHAT SKILLS ARE WE AIMING TO IMPROVE?

The aim of training sessions within the Youth Curriculum is to ensure players are primarily having fun, are being engaged in developmentally appropriate activities and are improving their skills in a training environment that replicates the demands of the game. By 'skills' here we mean the opportunity to develop quality repetitions of fundamental skills and learning when to execute those skills within game-based scenarios (decision-making).



CHANGE IT

C COACHING STYLE

Use questions to set challenges for specific aspects of a game, e.g. 'When should you move to receive a pass?'. Provide discreet coaching, without interrupting the game, where required, use player role models to highlight skillful play. Vary how you communicate (simple or more complex language; visual, auditory or kinesthetic cues) according to player needs (such as age, cultural background, intellectual and sensory ability).

H HOW YOU SCORE/WIN

Increase opportunities to score, e.g. allow passing to a player to score or pass into an end zone, instead of shooting at a goal; vary the size of/ distance to a target.

A AREA

Increase or decrease game difficulty by changing the shape and/or size of the playing area, e.g. long and narrow, short and wide, smaller/larger.

N NUMBERS

Consider using different team sizes or varying the number of turns, e.g. decreasing team sizes can increase player involvement by maximising participation. When introducing defence into a game, 3 v 1 or 4 v 2 gives attackers more options to deal with an added defender, increasing the number of turns helps players develop new skills.

G GAME RULES

Change the rules slightly, e.g. introduce a no-tackling rule to give children more time to dispose of the ball; allow 2 bounces before catching or stopping the ball; specify that 3 team members must touch the ball before scoring a point, allow a player to roll rather than throw the ball, or walk rather than run.

E EQUIPMENT

Vary the size and type of equipment used, e.g. change to a larger and/or softer ball if a player is having difficulty catching or to a smaller ball if they are having problems throwing; introduce a stationary ball if a player is having difficulty kicking a moving ball.

I INCLUSION

Engage individuals in modifying the activities using any of the outlined game elements (or others) to maximise their involvement. Ask individuals what would improve the game for them and/or how their involvement could be increased; or provide options they could choose from to encourage ownership.

T TIME

Reduce or extend the time to perform actions, e.g. see how many passes players can complete in 5 or 30 seconds. Increase possession time to allow players more time to make a decision about what to do next.

CHANGE IT

Vary any one or more of the game elements to maximise participation and better meet player needs and game objectives.



HELPFUL TIP

It is more important to remember the concept of CHANGE IT than to remember what each letter represents. If it's not working... CHANGE IT!

SECTION 6 IMPROVING YOUR OWN COACHING

COACHING BETTER

POSITIVE COACHING

- » A coaching philosophy focused on fun and development.
- » A group where all players feel they improved their football skills and abilities.
- » A group where all players are excited to return to participate in the following session

GOOD COMMUNICATION

- » Speak loudly and clearly, and make your voice engaging.
- » Ensure that everyone can hear you before commencing your instruction.
- » Focus on 'what to do', rather than 'what not to do.'
- » Highlight the main points of the activity. Try not to give players more than two or three main points at a time.

GROUP MANAGEMENT

- » Face the group away from distractions such as the sun, traffic or other groups.
- » A simple semi-circle pattern is effective or using features such as marked lines.
- » The group can be standing or, if conditions allow, kneeling or sitting. Both you and the group must be able to see each other.
- » Making eye contact is an effective way to hold attention, and it helps you judge if your players are still engaged and listening.

It is essential to wait until the group is ready before communicating to reduce the need to repeat instructions.

COACHING APPROACH

- » Good coaches work with players to set goals, to challenge them and to provide motivation.
- » The coach who always tells players what to do, or gives instructions all the time, is more likely to lose their players' interest and engagement in the game.
- » The aim is to work with the players, rather than being directive all the time.



SESSION PLANNING

Effective session management has a significant impact on starting activities, forming groups, activity levels, safety, setting new tasks, including all and your ability to maintain an engaging session.

SUCCESSFUL SESSION MANAGEMENT

- » Use the example session plans or create your own to help guide the flow of your session.
- » Ensure you have all the training gear ready and easily accessible.
- » Continually review, modify and experiment.

PLAN WITH PURPOSE

- » **ORGANISED** - session plan, purpose and context
- » **SAFE** - enough space, small groups, the right equipment
- » **ENGAGING** - 60 plus touches of the ball for every player, every session.
- » **FUN** - lots of games, movement (no long queues etc.)
- » The coach should also communicate the purpose of each drill or games centred activity so that they can relate it to playing a game of footy

PERSONAL LEARNING AND REFLECTION

A great coach reflects on their coaching practice and constantly seeks opportunities for learning to ensure continuous growth. This can be both formal and informal learning, such as exploring resources within COACHAFL, attending coaching workshops/masterclasses, engaging with a mentor or networking with fellow coaches within your club and share your ideas, challenges, experiences and learning from each other.

Reflection can take place post training sessions, games and at the conclusion of the season. Below are three simple self-reflection questions coaches should answer to assess and enhance their coaching practice.

Rehearse in your mind, things like:

- » Starting an activity
- » Transitions
- » Forming participants into groups
- » Finish up

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- » Ideally, every player has a foot-ball or share 1 between 2
- » Each player has 60 touches of the ball every training session
- » All players are engaged and having fun

REMEMBER: NO LAPS, LINES OR LECTURES



HELPFUL TIP

If time and space permits, have all your games and cones set-up prior to the players arriving to ensure no time is wasted during the training session. You can then just rotate through the activities on the go.

- » **ASK YOURSELF**
- » What worked well?
- » What was challenging and didn't work so well?
- » What will I continue to work on?

MENTORING

Having a coaching mentor is an invaluable resource to support you and your coaching development. The role of the mentor is to build rapport, ask questions, listen and elicit the coach's own wisdom. The mentor is a sounding board, someone you can have a purposeful conversation with and will assist you to reflect on your own experiences, problem-solve, make informed decisions and act upon the ideas that are generated.

Mentors can play a wide variety of roles. Some of these include:

- » Developing a coach's knowledge and skills.
- » Being a role model.
- » Building the confidence of the coach they are working with.
- » Being a resource - either sharing their own knowledge or directing coaches to other sources of information.
- » Enabling the coach to review and reflect on their current coaching practice.
- » Providing introductions to other people who can help.

SELECTING A MENTOR

Factors to consider when selecting your mentor include:

- » Their understanding of coaching pedagogy (i.e. how to teach people to coach)
- » Their ability to communicate with you one-on-one.
- » Their willingness to be involved as a mentor - they must be motivated to help you to improve.
- » Their experience in and knowledge of the sport



QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

Effective Mentors possess and demonstrate appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge may include their understanding of technical coaching matters, understanding people and what makes them tick, their understanding of the coaching process, their political awareness etc. Mentoring skills might include honesty, empathy, planning, goal setting, time management, people and process management, and the ability to communicate one to one with individuals.

Attitudes might relate to the process of mentoring, their philosophy towards coaching, their attitudes to the club or association they work within, as well as their general outlook on life.

Some of the key qualities you might look for in potential mentors include:

- » An ability to focus on the coaching process, rather than the footballer's performance.
- » A willingness to assist in another person's (your) growth and development and create a positive environment for learning.
- » Good communication and feedback skills.
- » Current technical coaching skills and experience.
- » Being trustworthy and able to maintain confidences.
- » Being flexible and open to new ideas.
- » Having a strong network of contacts.
- » Availability to commit to mentoring and being easily accessible.
- » Capable of handling conflict.

SECTION 7

DESIGNING TRAINING SESSIONS

SESSION PLANNING

Effective session management has a significant impact on starting activities, forming groups, activity levels, safety, setting new tasks, including all and your ability to maintain an engaging session.

SUCCESSFUL SESSION MANAGEMENT

- » Good coaches work with players to set goals, to challenge them and to provide motivation.
- » The coach who always tells players what to do, or gives instructions all the time, is more likely to lose their players' interest and engagement in the game.
- » The aim is to work with the players, rather than being directive all the time.

COACH AFL & ROOKIE ME

Access Coach AFL to gain or update accreditation, complete online learning, sign up to workshops and view additional resources!

As part of your Coach AFL membership & accreditation, you will automatically receive access to the innovative RM Coach Training Activities platform by signing in through your Coach AFL account. The platform will support you with access to all activities in the YCC that are tailored to the age & skill level of the players you coach. Using the built-in CHANGE IT feature, you can make additional variations to the activities to ensure the challenge point is appropriate.

If it's your first-time using Rookie Me, you'll be asked to create a team that includes the age and skill level of your playing group. This will align you with the appropriate curriculum and then you're good to go!



You can view the Rookie Me Coach Training Activities Platform for your specific youth team clicking below.

- » [13's and 14's](#)
- » [15's and 16's](#)
- » [17's and 18's](#)

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Get in touch with the CoachAFL Team by contacting us at coaching@afl.com.au

You can also find us across social media, via the following handles.



TRAINING ACTIVITY TEMPLATE

WATCH: DESIGNING A TRAINING ACTIVITY

This video outlines how you can use the Training Activity Template to design an activity to include in your training session



1. LEARNING FOCUS

What would you like the players to learn? What are you focussing on in this activity?

Section	Phases of the Game and Principles of Play							
	Attack		Defence		Contest		Transition	
Pre-Game								
Q1	Penetration		Delay		Gain Advantage		Attack to Defence	
Q2	Possession		Pressure					
Q3	Support		Cover		Outnumber		Defence to Attack	
Q4	Movement		Depth Balance					

2. DESIGN

Use the space below to design the activity.

Make the activity as gamelike as possible, but match the difficulty (challenge point) to your players' abilities.

What skills do players need to learn? What situations do players need to experience when performing their skills?

	What are you looking for during the activity?
	What questions can you ask players?

3. VARIATIONS

How can you encourage players to explore/adapt? How can you increase/decrease difficulty?

Variation for exploration and adaptability	Variation for exploration and adaptability
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4. REFLECTIONS

Did the activity work as planned to achieve your aim? Does anything need to change?

TRAINING ACTIVITY TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

1. LEARNING FOCUS

What would you like the players to learn? What are you focusing on in this activity?

The aim of this activity is for players to learn how to kick the ball to a team-mate under pressure inside the forward 50.

Section	Phases of the Game and Principles of Play							
	Attack		Defence		Contest		Transition	
Pre-Game								
Q1	Penetration	X	Delay		Gain Advantage	X	Attack to Defence	
Q2	Possession		Pressure					
Q3	Support		Cover		Outnumber		Defence to Attack	
Q4	Movement	X	Depth Balance	X				

2. DESIGN

Use the space below to design the activity.

Make the activity as game like as possible, but match the difficulty (challenge point) to your players' abilities.

What skills do players need to learn? What situations do players need to experience when performing their skills?

	<p>What are you looking for during the activity?</p> <p>Forwards working together to create space and to time their movements with each other.</p>
<p>-Ball starts on the forward flank from a live ball. -The aim is to kick the ball to the forwards. -Players cannot move outside the area denoted by the dashed lines. -Players inside the forward 50 area quickly transition to the opposite side after each attempt.</p>	<p>What questions can you ask players?</p> <p>How can you create space? What strategies are working best for creating space?</p> <p>What are some strategies that you haven't tried yet?</p>

3. VARIATIONS

How can you encourage players to explore/adapt? How can you increase/decrease difficulty?

Variation for exploration and adaptability - Start the ball on the wing or half back flank. - Allow one attacker to move outside the dashed area and lead to the opposite side of the 50m arc.	Variation for exploration and adaptability - Add extra defender in the groups on the flanks. - Use extra floating defender in the forward 50 area. - Increase or decrease space denoted by dashed lines.
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4. REFLECTIONS

Did the activity work as planned to achieve your aim? Does anything need to change?

Players found the activity too challenging initially and so the number of defenders inside the 50m arc was reduced to 1 to create a 2 v 1 scenario. This was then extended to a 2 v 2 scenario.

TRAINING SESSION TEMPLATE

WATCH: DESIGNING A TRAINING SESSION

A training session includes several different training activities that are designed to achieve an overall learning focus, learn more in this clip.



LEARNING FOCUS

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

How does this session build upon the previous session?

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

PRE-GAME

Activity Name		Duration	
Learning Focus			

QUARTER ONE

Activity Name		Duration	
Learning Focus			

QUARTER TWO

Activity Name		Duration	
Learning Focus			

QUARTER THREE

Activity Name		Duration	
Learning Focus			

QUARTER FOUR

Activity Name		Duration	
Learning Focus			

TRAINING SESSION TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

Provide opportunities for the players to learn how to perform their skills under increased defensive pressure.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session includes variations of the activities of the previous session to encourage players to adapt their skills to new situations.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = Talk to every player; Involve = No waiting in lines; Believe = Players choose their own match-ups; Inspire = A parent explains how hard they worked to learn to kick with both feet, but how it helped them in games.

Pre-Game

Activity Name		Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			

Quarter One

Activity Name		Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			

Quarter Two

Activity Name		Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			

Quarter Three

Activity Name		Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			

Quarter Four

Activity Name		Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			

WEEK 1 (SESSION 1) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

To provide introductory activities to help players to develop their handball skills in game contexts. The games will include defensive pressure, but the pressure and complexity (i.e., challenge point) will generally be quite low.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

Previous sessions included introductory handball skills - This session adds defensive pressure in game contexts.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = Talk to at least 5 different players one-to-one to get to know them better.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Repeated Groundballs	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
To learn how to gather the football off the ground, and learn how to perform "underground" handballs.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Island Tag	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
A fun game where players learn to recognise space to evade a defender.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Pairs Fundamentals Kicking & Outnumbered Handball Grid	Duration	20 minutes
Learning Focus			
To provide lots of repetitions of kicking in preparation for later sessions; To learn how to handball in a simple game involving decision-making.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Handball Game - 5 v 3 Using Two Permanent Attackers	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To learn how to handball under low defensive pressure and to advance the ball using handballs in a game setting.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Goal Assist Game - 5 v 3 Using Two Permanent Attackers	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To encourage players to learn how to use handballs in the forward line to set-up a score attempt for a team-mate			

WEEK 2 (SESSION 2) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

Provide opportunities for the players to continue to advance their handball skills. Include more kicking activities in game-like settings to improve kicking under pressure and to also add some inter-skill variability in the session.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session includes variations of the activities of the previous session to encourage players to adapt their skills to new situations.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Involve = Ensure that all players are actively engaged in all activities i.e., no waiting for a turn.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Dribble Kicking Challenge	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
To encourage players to explore different ways to kick for goal. Give players the option of scoring to create competition with a partner.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Repeated Groundballs with Bump Bag	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
To learn how to gather the football off the ground while being bumped by a defender with a bump bag.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Random Feeds & Outnumbered Handball Grid Rotations	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To provide lots of repetitions of handballing in congestion; To extend the activity from last week by providing opportunities to handball in a game situation involving decision-making.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Handball Game - 5 v 4 Using One Permanent Attacker	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To challenge the handball skills of the players by increasing the amount of defensive pressure.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Goal Assist Game - 5 v 3 (2 Attackers & Time Limit)	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
To encourage players to learn to use handballs to create a score attempt under time pressure.			

WEEK 3 (SESSION 3) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

Include activities that provide opportunities for players to perform their handballing and kicking skills in different situations to promote exploration.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session includes a contested activity involving tackling, plus an even numbers activity.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Believe = Explain to players that the final activity in this session is challenging because it is an even numbers game, but I know the players will work as a team to support each other.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Magic Marks	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
To encourage players to explore different marking techniques with scoreboard pressure.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Goalie	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To learn how to pick-up ground balls, and to learn how to accurately kick the ball along the ground.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Directional Handball (w2 defenders & 3 v 2 in the middle)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To use an end-to-end handballing game that requires players to learn how to move the ball down the ground under defensive pressure.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Handball Game - 5 v 4 Using One Permanent Attacker	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To challenge the handball skills of the players by increasing the amount of defensive pressure.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	End ball (with even number of players in each team)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To challenge players to handball and kick under more defensive pressure, and to introduce opportunities for transitions from attack to defence and from defence to attack.			

WEEK 4 (SESSION 4) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The overall aim is to challenge players' skills by using different game situations and by increasing the number of defenders so that there is reduced time and space to make decisions and perform skills.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

The final three activities include even number contests to further challenge players' skills under defensive pressure.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Inspire = Share a story at the start of training about how one of my team-mates struggled with their skills in their early years, but worked hard at training to eventually make it to AFL level.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Rapid Fire (kickers vary angles, distances, and kick types)	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
Players explore different ways to kick and mark the ball.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Players' Choice (Goalie, Repeated Groundballs, Island Tag)	Duration	10 minutes
Learning Focus			
Provide autonomy to players to increase intrinsic motivation early in the training session.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Tennis Ball Challenge & Outnumbered Handball Grid	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To encourage exploration and adaptability in kicking skill; To extend the activity from last week by increasing the defensive pressure to reduce time and space of attackers.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Directional Handball (even numbers & time limit)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To challenge the handball skills of the players by increasing defensive pressure and time pressure.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	End ball (with even number of players in each team)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
To challenge players to handball and kick under more defensive pressure, and to introduce opportunities for transitions from attack to defence and from defence to attack.			

U15 & U16 TRAINING BLOCKS

WEEK 1 (SESSION 1) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The overall focus for this session is **ATTACK**, but with specific emphases on goal-kicking and on transitioning the ball between defence and attack and vice versa.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session includes more goal-kicking opportunities and also more opportunities to learn to transition the ball in attack.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = Describe my favourite backyard game that I played when I was a child, and ask two other players to share their favourite backyard game.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Golf	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
To provide a simple and engaging activity to improve goal-kicking under mild scoreboard pressure.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Zone Football	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is to provide opportunities for players to perform their skills in a game environment including transitions between attack and defence and vice versa.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Scoring Game (change It Harder #3) & Attacking and Defensive Ball- Up Game (Change It Harder #3)	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
To practice rapid transition from defence to attack to finish with a shot at goal. To practice contesting for the ball in the forward 50 to gain possession and kick snapshots at goal.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Awareness Football	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is for players to learn to compete and transition the ball while emphasising the need for players to learn to increase their awareness of the positioning of team-mates and opponents.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Precise Kicking Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is for players to practice transitioning under defensive pressure from attack to defence and vice versa, and to also practice goal kicking. The small number of players in the game increases the number of repetitions.			



You can view the Rookie Me Coach Training Activities for U15's and U16's Groups by scanning the QR code.

WEEK 1 (SESSION 2) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

This session has an ATTACKING focus with the aim of improving contested marking.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session adds more opportunities for players to work on their marking skills in contested situations.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Involve = I will reduce the defensive pressure of the marking activities for the players who struggled with their marking in Session 1.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Magic Marks	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
To encourage players to explore different ways of marking the ball (use Change It Harder #5 for advanced players).			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Keepings Off (Using 3 Teams)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn how to maintain possession under lower levels of defensive pressure. This game naturally adds some variability (by the attacking and defending teams changing fairly frequently) to promote adaptability.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Outnumbered Marking Game & Back End Kicking	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Learn to mark the ball in contested pack situations, but with lower defensive pressure; To learn how to select the best option, and to practice marking while transitioning from defence into attack.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Precise Kicking Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Learn to mark the ball in contested pack situations, but with lower defensive pressure; To learn how to select the best option, and to practice marking while transitioning from defence into attack.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Zone Football	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This is a small-sided game that allows players to practice marking in a game situation under higher defensive pressure.			

WEEK 2 (SESSION 3) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The overall aim is to improve ATTACKING play by recognising the loose player and getting the ball to that player to use the advantage.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session advances the players' attacking skills by helping them to learn how to kick accurately to an open team-mate.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Believe = During the team-based games, give each team brief time-outs to discuss possible changes they could make to their playing tactics.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Cross The River	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A fun and engaging activity that allows players to explore different ways of advancing the ball using handball against an opponent.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Scanning for the Free Player	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A simple activity that focusses on recognising the free player and kicking accurately to that player while under pressure.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Escape & Using the Loose Player	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
Lots of repetitions of picking up ground balls under pressure; Players learn to quickly recognise and take advantage of loose team-mates in different parts of the forward half of the ground.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Loose Player Decision-Making	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on recognising loose attacking players and loose defenders and learning how to exploit or avoid those players in a game situation.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Coast to Coast	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to recognise loose players and/or outnumber situations and to take advantage of these while transitioning from defence to attack.			

WEEK 2 (SESSION 4) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

This session has a DEFENSIVE emphasis that aims to help players to learn how to perform a defensive spoil.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session helps to improve the capability of players to mark the ball in a way that makes it difficult for a defender to spoil the mark. It also advances previous sessions by focussing on learning how to spoil a mark.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Inspire = Show players some video examples from the previous game or training session that demonstrate good teamwork and comradery.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Golden Fist	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is for players to learn different ways to spoil the mark, and to also learn how to mark the ball in a way that prevents the defender from spoiling.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Zone Football	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This game was last used in Q4 in Session 2 and so the aim here is to present the game earlier in the practice session to allow players to practice marking and spoiling in a game situation.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Penetrating Kick-In (Rebound) & Short or Long Options	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Practice spoiling the ball when the player is leading; Attackers learn to quickly recognise short and long kicking options, while defenders learn to spoil a short kick and a long kick.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Defensive Transition 1 on 1 Accountability	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to defend and spoil the mark in 1-on-1 situations and in situations where the attacking and defensive teams start in a more unstructured formation.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Precise Kicking Game (Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This game has been used in two previous sessions, but this version has reduced space and so the focus is on attackers moving the ball under more defensive pressure, and for defenders to have more opportunities to spoil marks.			

WEEK 3 (SESSION 5) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim is to improve the CONTEST by using activities that encourage players to learn how to pick-up groundballs, especially when under defensive pressure.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

Players have improved their capability to spoil and contest the mark in previous sessions, and so this session helps players to learn how to contest groundballs under pressure.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = I will choose one or two of the players with whom I have not yet connected, and will challenge them to a friendly competition in the "Goalie" Pre-Game activity.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Goalie	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This is a fun and competitive activity that focusses on picking up ground balls.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Outnumbered Marking Game (Change It Easier #1)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This game uses a scoring system that encourages players to get groundballs from marking contests.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Escape (Change It Harder #4) & Short or Long Options (Change It Harder #1)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
Focus on picking up contested groundballs in a 2-on-2 situation; Focus on contesting for marks and contesting for groundballs that have occurred from marking contests.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Loose Player Decision-Making (Change It Harder #2 - Extra Player in Defensive End Only)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
This game builds upon the previous week by encouraging players to avoid the loose defensive player. The additional defender is likely to create more contested groundballs in the defensive end.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Zone Football (Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 minutes
Learning Focus			
This game creates more contested groundballs by using a smaller playing area compared to the previous sessions where this game was used.			

WEEK 3 (SESSION 6) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim is to improve players' skills in *CONTESTING* for the ball by using lots of competitive gameplay.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session uses lots of competitive games to improve contesting, but where required, the teams will be slightly unbalanced in favour of the attacking team to provide a little more time and space for attackers to use the ball.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Involve = Reduce the number of players on each team in team-based games to provide more opportunities for each player to practice their skills.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Corner Ball	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This session starts with a competitive handball game to provide lots of contests for the ball, but without the added pressure of the defenders performing tackles.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Extra Players Game	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This game creates an outnumber in favour of the attacking team which encourages the defending team to learn how to work with a reduced number of players to contest for the ball.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Penetrating Kick-In (Rebound) & Back End Kicking (Change It Harder #1 - More Defenders at Each Location)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Provide lots of opportunities to contest for marks on the lead; Decision-making game that focusses on contesting marks on the lead in a game situation.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Keepings Off (Using 3 Teams) (Include 3 Scoring Zones & Change It Harder #3)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Include three scoring zones on different sides of the playing area where players score by kicking or handballing the ball to a team-mate who is standing inside the zone. Players must always play-on after a mark to create a faster moving game with more contests.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	30 Second Goal Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to compete in a game situation under time pressure and learn to advance the ball quickly.			

WEEK 4 (SESSION 7) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim of this session is to improve the players' skills in *TRANSITIONING* from attack to defence and vice versa.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

Previous sessions have focussed on attacking and defending, but this session starts to build a stronger focus on transitioning between different playing roles.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Believe = Ask players to choose a team-mate and to work with that team-mate throughout the session by providing each other with supportive and helpful feedback.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Dribble Kicking Challenge	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A fun game that challenges players to explore different methods of accurately kicking the ball along the ground.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Cross The River	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A simple transition game that focusses on advancing the ball from defence to attack in 2 v 1 scenarios.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Scoring Game (Change It Harder #2) & Going to the Fat (Empty) Side (Change It Harder #2 and #3)	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
Lots of repetitions of transitioning the ball in a simple situation against defenders; Transitioning the ball by switching play to the fat side of the ground against defensive pressure.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Defensive Transition 1 on 1 Accountability	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on learning to transition the ball into attack from the backline in more unstructured situations.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Coast to Coast	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to recognise loose players and/or outnumber situations and to take advantage of these while transitioning from defence to attack.			

WEEK 4 (SESSION 8) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

This session includes many of the same activities as the previous session to provide players with more opportunities to explore how to TRANSITION between attacking and defensive phases of the game.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session provides opportunities for players to advance their transition skills by exploring new strategies.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Inspire = Show players some game statistics that show how they have improved as a team over the past 3 weeks.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Tennis Ball Challenge	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A game that focusses on exploring different ways to kick the ball to a team-mate.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Player's Choice	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
Players choose any of the Q1 games that have been used during the training block. The aim is to provide players with some autonomy to help them to continue to engage in the training sessions.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Scoring Game (Change It Harder #2 & #6) & Defensive Transition 1 on 1 Accountability (Change It Harder #2 & #3)	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
A fast-paced competitive game that encourages players to rapidly transition the ball under defensive pressure; The focus is on transitioning the ball quickly in a game situation where the defenders start in random locations.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Going to the Fat (Empty) Side (Change It Harder #2 and #3)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is to give players more chances to explore how to switch the ball to the fat side of the ground when transitioning from defence into attack.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	30 Second Goal Game (Starting with Centre Bounce)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on transitioning the ball quickly into the forward line after a centre bounce.			

U13 & U14 TRAINING BLOCKS



You can view the Rookie Me Coach Training Activities for U17's and U18's Groups by scanning the QR code.

WEEK 1 (SESSION 1) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The primary aim of this session is for players to learn how to ATTACK in and around the 50-metre zone, but players will also be given opportunities to learn how to defend in that same area.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session includes more variability and more challenging attacking situations compared to previous sessions.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = Ask players to state their favourite player to the group and to briefly explain something about that player that they admire.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Magic Marks	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
The aim is to promote problem-solving, exploration, and competition from the very first activity. This activity also aims to provide opportunities for players to develop their marking skills in preparation for the subsequent activities.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Golden Fist (Change It Harder #1)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
The focus for this activity is for players to learn how to take highly contested marks.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Cross the River & Hitting the Corridor Lead	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to handball in pairs to transition the ball against a defender; Learning to kick the ball to a leading forward inside 50 metres, and to defend the leading forward.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Follow-Up to Create Outnumber Going Forward	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on moving the ball through the centre of the ground to find a target inside 50 metres.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Coast to Coast	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players transition the ball into the forward line using loose players to create a scoring attempt.			

WEEK 1 (SESSION 2) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

This session has a DEFENSIVE emphasis, with a specific focus on helping players to learn how to defend the lead.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session shifts the focus to defence, and in doing so, challenges the attackers to enhance their leading and marking skills, as well as their kicking skills.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Involve = Ensure that all players have an opportunity to practice defending the lead, even if those players usually play in the forward line.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Tennis Ball Challenge	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
An activity designed to challenge and encourage players to explore different ways of kicking the ball.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Tackler (Change It Easier #1 and Change It Harder #1)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
Defenders have lots of opportunities to learn to tackle in a competitive setting.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Defending the Lead & Back End Kicking (Change It Harder #1)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Defenders have lots of repetitions in a simple scenario to learn how to defend a leading forward; Defenders learn to defend the lead in more variable and challenging situations where the attacker can lead in different directions.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Endzone Possession Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players learn to defend and attack in a game that has rapid transitions from defence to attack.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	30 Second Goal Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
A game of rapid ball movement that provides lots of opportunities to practice transitioning from attack to defence and vice versa, as well as practicing defensive skills such as defending the lead in game situations.			

WEEK 2 (SESSION 3) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

To focus on ATTACKING principles, especially attacking in relation to centre clearances.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session further advances the players' attacking skills from the previous week, but with an emphasis on attacking from centre bounces.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Believe = Encourage players to try implementing different team tactics and to acknowledge and support their creativity.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Goalie	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A competitive game that challenges players to pick-up a variety of different groundballs.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Cross the River (Change It Harder #3)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Kicking Race (Change It Harder #3) & Corner Ball (Change It Harder #4)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The first activity focusses on advancing the ball from the centre square quickly against a defender; The corner ball game provides lots of contested centre clearance opportunities in a dynamic game setting, but without tackling.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Centre Bounce Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This activity challenges players to achieve contested centre clearances that result in clean possession in the forward line.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	30 Second Goal Game (Starting with Centre Bounce) (Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Players are challenged to clear the ball quickly and effectively in long and narrow and wide and short playing areas that will encourage players to adapt their skills.			

WEEK 2 (SESSION 4) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim for this session is to advance the players' DEFENSIVE skills by focussing on defending stoppages.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

The previous session worked on centre clearances and so this session advances these skills by working on stoppages that include more variability.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Inspire = Share a story about a prominent sportsperson who demonstrates the importance of enjoying sport and physical activity.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Player's Choice	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
Players are given autonomy to choose their preferred activity to help generate more intrinsic motivation.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Ball Get with Body Contact	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This activity is a primer for the subsequent activities in the session by including lots of body contact while attempting to secure possession of a groundball.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Defensive Stoppage Game & Centre Bounce Game (Change It Easier #1)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on securing the ball at a stoppage in the forward 50 zone to score a goal or clear the ball; Players learn to secure possession at a centre stoppage in an outnumber advantage or disadvantage.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Endzone Possession Game (Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This game uses a smaller field to generate lots of congestion and lots of stoppages to challenge players to work together to learn to clear the ball from a stoppage.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Stoppage Simulation Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus is on providing players with lots of opportunities to work on clearing the ball from stoppages in a game that uses normal football rules.			

WEEK 3 (SESSION 5) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

To provide opportunities for players to improve their CONTESTING skills. The activities include a variety of different situations that will require players to learn to contest the ball in different ways (building adaptability).

How does this session build upon the previous session?

The previous sessions included opportunities for contesting the ball, but this session adds lots of variability to the contest to increase the challenge point.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Connect = Share a funny story about my own experiences when I was a junior player.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Outnumbered Marking Game	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
The focus of this activity is to improve marking in contested situations. If players need to be challenged, create even numbers in the contest.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Corner Ball (Change It Harder #2, #3, and #4)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A fun activity that promotes lots of handballing in a congested game. Consider introducing a touch rule where players cannot run while in the possession of the ball once they have been tagged by the opposition.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Defending the Lead (Change It Harder #2 and #4) & Crumbing Close to Goal	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Defenders learn how to defend the lead in an outnumber situation; Players contest for the ball in the forward line to gain possession to score a goal or to clear the ball outside 50 metres.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Keepings Off (Using 3 Teams) (Include 3 Scoring Zones & Change It Harder #3)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This is a dynamic game with lots of contested possessions. Include three scoring zones on different sides of the playing area where players score by kicking or handballing the ball to a team-mate who is standing inside the zone.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Stoppage Simulation Game (Change It Harder #3)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This activity was used in the previous session, but the aim this time is to create an outnumber for one team so that the opposing team must learn to operate with reduced numbers.			

WEEK 3 (SESSION 6) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

This session focusses on the principle of TRANSITION FROM ATTACK TO DEFENCE and uses activities that encourage players to rapidly re-organise their playing structure.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

The previous sessions included attacking and defending situations, but this session advances players' skills by providing opportunities to learn how to transition from attack to defence.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Involve = In the final two activities, provide opportunities for the quieter players to offer tactical suggestions that could be implemented for their team.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Dribble Kicking Challenge	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A challenging game that promotes exploration of different ways of kicking the ball accurately along the ground.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Keepings Off (Using 3 Teams) (Include 3 Scoring Zones & Change It Harder #3)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
This is a highly engaging decision-making task where players must rapidly transition from attack to defence. Placing the activity earlier in the session helps to act as a primer for players' decision-making and creativity.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Scoring Game (Change It Harder #2) & Going to the Fat (Empty) Side (Change It Harder #2 and #3)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
Lots of repetitions using a relatively simple scenario to practice transitioning the ball against defenders; A transition game where players learn to rapidly move between attacking and defending roles.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	End Ball	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This team game allows players to rapidly switch the play to transition to either end of the ground to score.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Counter-Attack (With Team 2 Having the Number Advantage)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This game creates opportunities for the attacking team to learn to transition into defence.			

WEEK 4 (SESSION 7) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim of this session is to provide an opportunity for players to revisit the activities from the previous CONTEST session in Week 3 (session 5), but to advance the activities by increasing the challenge point.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session adds a higher level of challenge to situations that require players to contest for the ball.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Inspire = Ask one of the well-known local senior players to assist with coaching the session.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Player's Choice	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
To help build intrinsic motivation, players are given autonomy to choose their own pre-game activity.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	Corner Ball (Change It Harder #3 and #4)	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
Players have another opportunity to experience this game and attempt different team and individual strategies to manage the contests.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Defending the Lead (Change It Harder #2 and #6) & Crumbing Close to Goal (With Increased Attacking Advantage)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This version of the defending the lead game includes more variability to challenge the players' skills and decision-making; The crumbing game advances the version used in earlier sessions by creating an outnumber in favour of the attacking team to challenge the defenders to stay goal-side.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Keepings Off (Using 3 Teams) (Include 3 Scoring Zones & Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This game aims to create lots of contests where the defenders outnumber the attackers. The aim is to challenge the attackers to operate under high levels of defensive pressure and to use the three scoring zones to their advantage.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Extra Players Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
The focus of this activity is for players to learn to adapt to situations when their team is advantaged or disadvantaged by player numbers.			

WEEK 4 (SESSION 8) - EXAMPLE

Learning Focus

What is your overall aim for this session? What would you like the players to learn in this session?

The aim is to advance the previous session by focussing on TRANSITIONING FROM DEFENCE TO ATTACK.

How does this session build upon the previous session?

This session provides opportunities for players to advance their transition skills by learning how to switch from defending to attacking.

How are you going to connect with players, involve all players in activities, show that you believe in and/or inspire the players?

Believe = Explain the rules for the Q1 energiser activity (End Ball), but then allow the players to organise themselves for the activity.

Pre-Game

Activity Name	Golf	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A competitive goal-kicking game that is engaging and generates scoreboard pressure on the kicks.			

Quarter One

Activity Name	End Ball	Duration	10 min
Learning Focus			
A game that primes players to think creatively by switching play and transitioning to different ends of the field to score.			

Quarter Two

Activity Name	Rotations - Goal Scoring Game (Change It Harder #2 and #6) & Going to the Fat (Empty) Side	Duration	20 min
Learning Focus			
High number of transitions from defence to attack under time pressure and defensive pressure; The second rotation focusses on transitioning by switching play to the opposite side of the field to use the space.			

Quarter Three

Activity Name	Counter-Attack (Change It Harder #2)	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This game focusses on fast counter-attacks from the backline, but the "change it" variation also promotes rapid counter-attacks after a turnover by introducing a time limit.			

Quarter Four

Activity Name	Normal Game	Duration	15 min
Learning Focus			
This session finishes with a normal game where players are encouraged to use the skills they have learned throughout the training block.			

REFERENCES

FURTHER RESOURCES

1. COACH SKILLS SERIES

The Coach Skills Series covers a range of skill based activities to develop player strengths and weaknesses.



2. COACH FEEDBACK SERIES

The Coach Feedback Series provides coaches with insights on effective techniques on providing and receiving feedback



3. DESIGNING A TRAINING SESSION

A training session includes several different training activities that are designed to achieve an overall learning focus, learn more in this clip.



4. DESIGNING A TRAINING ACTIVITY

This video outlines how you can use the Training Activity Template to design an activity to include in your training session



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