

Essentials for Coaching Children

Coaching Tips 5

Great coach planning - training session

Pre-training things to consider

Planning a training session? Fail to prepare, prepare to fail!

Planning each training session helps ensure you:

- Provide a valuable learning experience that is fun.
- Don't forget anything.
- Give a confident presentation.
- Make the most of the time you have.
- Focus on what is important for the team/athletes.

Planning gets easier and quicker with practice – it's worth putting in the time.

Training session components

As a coach, there are many things to consider before every training session:

1. Aim of the session
 - What do you want to focus on – issues from the last game/competition, new skills or tactics?
 - What do they need to learn/work on?
2. Number of participants
 - If expecting 12 athletes and 6 show up, or vice versa, what will you do?
 - The number of participants affects the amount of equipment and space and the activities you choose.
3. Area needed/available
 - How much space and what facilities are available to you? ie do you have 1 or 2 courts, half a court, 1 or 2 goals or no goals? This will again impact your activity choices.
 - Are other teams/athletes in this space too? How will you share it?
 - Is the surface safe? What type is it (asphalt vs indoor)?
 - Can you make effective use of the space you have?
4. Time needed/available
 - What is the length of the session?
 - When will you train – beginning/end of day? Will this make a difference?
 - What time do you realistically have to train?
 - Did you factor in time for drink breaks?



5. Equipment needed/available/in good condition

- What equipment do you need?
- What do you have?
- Where is it? Pre-arrange easy access to equipment or keep it with you.
- Is the equipment useable and safe – e.g. balls pumped up?
- How will you look after the equipment? Check and count the number of items you use – both at the beginning and end of a session.
- Develop a routine where everybody helps collect the equipment after training – encourage kids to take responsibility for it.

6. Ability/experience of group

- Choose age/level appropriate activities.
- Choose activities relevant to your game.
- Do you have strategies for determining ability (ask kids, previous coaches, etc.)?

7. Makeup of the group

- Any issues you need to know about such as social, behavioral or medical?

8. Choosing a variety of skills/drills/games

- Choose activities to suit the aim of the session.
- Keep activities relevant, enjoyable.
- Plan to transition between activities quickly to keep the kids active.
- Do the activities relate to the real competition?

9. Other considerations:

- Assistance – Will anyone be helping you? Can you ask for an assistant coach?
- Routines/rules – Any established that you should know?
- Framework – Is there a basic coaching structure that is expected?
- Grouping kids – What should coaches consider when getting kids into groups?
 - those that may get left out/excluded
 - unbalanced pairs or groups (ability/size wise)
 - making it fair, quick and fuss free.

Session plan template and timing

Session plan template and timing	
Pre-session chat	2-3 mins
Warm up	5-10 mins
Mini games/skill development	10-15 mins
Drinks break	2-5 mins
Application/full game	20-25 mins
Cool down	5 mins
Conclusion	2-3 mins

Considerations:

Pre-session chat

- focus the children,
- let them know your plan for the session,
- talk about their previous competition.

Warm up

- aims to increase the blood flow, breathing and heart rate, and prepare the body and muscles for exercise,
- for children, a warm up should include fun running/chasey/tag games,
- stretching (if any) should keep the heart rate up, ie be ballistic, dynamic and not static. (Studies comparing a warm-up that includes static stretching, with a warm-up that does not include static stretching, have shown that pre-exercise static stretching improves flexibility, but its effect on injury prevention remains unclear).

Mini-games/skill development

- small-sided, high-involvement, game-like situations involving challenges and decision-making,
- individual, pair or group practice on a game-related skill/concept,
- avoid 'drills' that do not relate directly to the game.

Drinks break

- important to factor this in, to keep children hydrated.

Application/ full game

- practice the full game under competition-like conditions, ie use timing, add challenges, etc

Cool down

- this could include static stretching

Conclusion

- ask the children what they learned,
- prepare them for the next competition.

Evaluate each session

At the end of each training session ask yourself:

- Was the session fun for everyone (including me)?
- Did the participants learn anything?
- Was each individual active most of the time?
- What can I do to improve the session?

Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance