



# FIT

## General Coaching Principles Course Manual





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## **UNIT 1 Role of the coach**

Coaches play an important role not only in the sporting life, but also the everyday life, of the players they coach. Coaches influence not only the development of sport specific skills and sporting performance, but also the participants development as a person and their approach to other aspects of their life. While at times it can be challenging, coaching is also very rewarding.

### Characteristics of a coach

To be an effective coach you will need many skills and “characteristics”.

Coaches should always be a good role model for their players, spectators, family members, observers, and all sports participants.

Coaches should always be enthusiastic and should always try to make sport enjoyable.

Coaches should also always be self- confident, assertive when necessary, consistent in their actions and decisions, and competent in all that they do.

Some other characteristics include:

- Good Communicator
- Good Motivator
- Good Facilitator
- Organised/well planned
- Good demonstrator
- Knowledgeable
- Reliable
- Honest
- Ethical
- Punctual
- Patient
- Polite
- Approachable
- Good listener



## Coaching philosophy

Coaches get into coaching for a variety of reasons and this will impact on your own personal philosophy for coaching. It may be because you:

- Like to work with others
- Like to pass on knowledge you have obtained
- Can no longer participate as a player
- Want to achieve at a higher level

In developing your coaching philosophy some aspects to consider include:

- Will you include everyone irrespective of ability or background?
- What are your thoughts on winning, losing and cheating?
- Will you seek to remain current and constantly improve your coaching knowledge and skill?

Your coaching philosophy will then, ultimately, determine how you coach and what you want to achieve as a result

## Coaches Community Interactions

As well as working with your team, as a coach you will also have contact with a wide range of people outside of the team. It is important that you know how to interact with these people to the benefit of your team and not cause unnecessary conflict.

Some of the people you come in to contact with may include:

- Opposition players
- Referees
- Parents
- Community officials
- Club officials
- Sponsors
- Spectators
- Other coaches



## Coach Responsibilities

As a coach, you will be in charge of a group of people who will rely on you to provide meaningful instructions in a safe environment. It will be your responsibility to ensure:

- You are well planned – for both the season and individual sessions
- You attend and run your sessions to the best of your ability
- That training and games are conducted in a safe physical environment
- That training and games are enjoyable for the participants
- That you provide learning opportunities for all your players
- That you keep up to date with the latest trends/practices associated with your sport

## Coach Self-development

Coaches also need to learn and develop themselves. Any coach, from the elite International coach to the beginner should look to self-development processes to improve their coaching quality. Coaches, like players, will improve performance over time, given necessary motivation and feedback.

Coach self-development should focus on the following questions:

- What did I do well?
- What was not effective?
- What do I need to improve?

There are many ways that a coach can develop, the most common being through networking and mentoring. It can also be achieved by simply watching other coaches and adapting ways in which they perform or having other coaches watch you and providing feedback.

Some other self-development processes include:

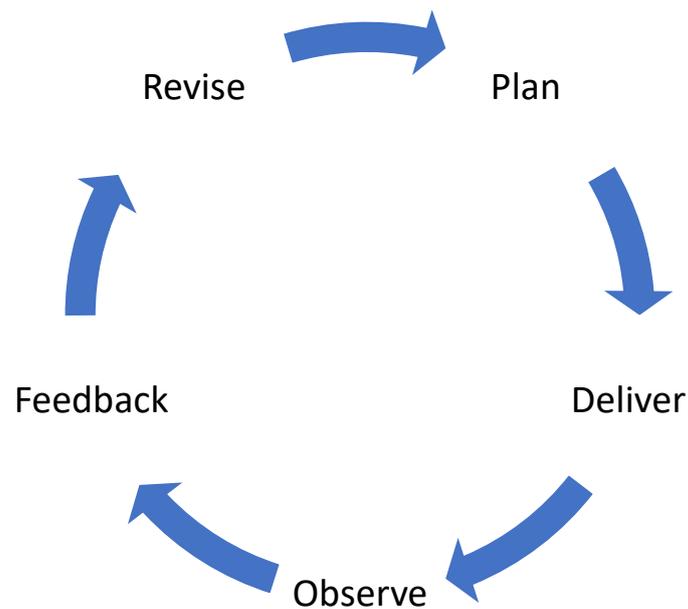
- Assessment (by mentors, peers, or others)
- Observation - having another person (not necessarily from your sport) watch you and provide you with feedback
- Video analysis
- Player / participant feedback

Finally, while the basic principles of coaching generally remain constant, your own coaching methods need to evolve to ensure you maintain relevancy with the changing nature of the game and the players you work with.

## Coaching Processes

The coaching process is an ongoing and constantly changing cycle that you need to follow to ensure the best results for your team.

One of the most well-known methods is as follows:



*Plan*- Plan your sessions, directing activities at identified and agreed objectives.

*Deliver*- Coordinate and involve your players in activities that are directed towards skill development in an enjoyable environment

*Observe* – Observe your players practising the activities and analyse their performance

*Feedback*- Provide feedback to individuals and to groups so they can continue to improve their game skills. Also take on feedback as the coach to improve your own performance

*Revise* – Analyse the session to look for ways to improve it in the future

And then the cycle begins again.



## UNIT 2 - Communication

Good coaching is a result of meaningful communication that is, getting your message across to your players.

### Types of Communication

There are 2 types of communication- verbal and non-verbal

#### *Verbal- the use of the spoken word*

A good coach will be able to:

- ask open and closed questions
- seek opinions and suggestions
- encourage expressions

Good listening is also a vital part of good communication. Everyone loves to be listened to and it is probably the hardest part of good communication. It takes time and practice to become a good listener.

One of the best ways of getting your players to express their true feelings is to show a genuine interest in them and what they are saying. This can be done by:

- asking their opinion
- being attentive to their response
- looking at them when they speak
- showing an interest in them
- talk to players individually

#### *Non-verbal- the use of other body indicators*

Coaches need to be aware of the impact of non-verbals on players such as body language, proximity etc. How we stand, react, gesture, and even make facial expressions can be very relevant in transferring a message.

Quite often, as a coach, or generally in life, we can be quite unaware of the “non-verbal” communicators that we use or display.

The ability to recognise your own “non-verbals” and their impact on others, as well as being able to see and understand any non-verbals that your players display will invariably affect your ability to succeed as a coach



## Effective Feedback

Feedback is essential for every player's motivation, learning and self-image. It is an important key to successful coaching as your feedback can influence a player's attitude and long-term involvement in the game.

Feedback can be both verbal or non-verbal, from a simple word of praise or "thumb up" for a job well done to more detailed explanations of ways to improve performance.

Some key points in providing effective feedback include:

- Corrective feedback should be given as soon as possible after the player's actions are observed by the coach
- Feedback must always be constructive so that players are prepared to listen and accept what is being said
- Feedback must always be provided in a positive and informative way, not be negative or of no use to the recipient
- Feedback should be specific to the aspect that needs to be improved and directed so the player understands what is needed.
- After feedback is provided it is essential that the coach then checks that the recipient fully understands what has been said



## UNIT 3 Group Management

### Organising and Controlling Sessions

Effective group management will enhance the sporting experience for both the coach and players while behavioural problems can destroy the learning experiences. However, a knowledgeable coach who provides fun, active and fully participatory sessions that develop skills will not be confronted too often with difficult situations.

Most problems can be avoided if coaches plan sessions properly and a clear code of behaviour is established and reinforced at the outset. Player inattention, lack of motivation or disruption is often a symptom of your program not meeting the player's needs. Also, teaching players to manage themselves will reduce your workload and assist them away from the sport.

Some ways to avoid difficult situations include:

- Establish a code of behaviour at the first training session
  - Explain and agree on the rules and penalties for breaking them
  - When dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour, focus on the behaviour not the person
  - Discipline firmly, fairly, and consistently
  - Do not insult, ridicule, or embarrass players
  - Establish a signal to gain attention (e.g. whistle)
- Early intervention can avoid escalation of potential problems
  - Managing behaviour quickly, firmly, and fairly can also prevent escalation
- Cater for individual differences in your preparation
  - Discipline the individual, not the whole group
  - Use activities commensurate to the players ability
- Encourage self- management and self-control in your players
  - Set challenges that require player solutions and decisions
  - Acknowledge players that assist with team management and organisation
  - Ask for players input for both on and off field behaviours
  - Discuss the consequences of poor behaviour with the players
  - Allocate responsibilities within the team
- Use praise and compliments to reinforce correct behaviour
- Provide quality instruction
  - Establish formations and routines
- Engage the players and maintain their interest

### Engaging Players

Engaging players is probably the most vital aspect of team management and can be achieved by:

- Using your voice and expressions
- Establishing and maintaining eye contact
- Asking questions to seek understanding
- Providing quality feedback to everyone
- Work at quality of performance, not quantity
- Asking the opinion of team members on codes of conduct or “team rules” – greater commitment will come from standards set by the players themselves



The type and quality of training will also impact on the engagement of players

During training (or when planning training) coaches need to ask themselves “what is the purpose of the activity” – and if the primary outcome is not being met or the challenge is incorrect, then they may need to make changes and add variety during the session.

### Grids

A common coaching organisational or player management system is in the use of grids. These grids are simply squares or regions marked on the ground so that the players can work or practise safely in specified areas under the coordination and observation of the coach.

Players operating in grids tend to get much more time practising game skills. A grid can be any size and is dependent on the number of players and the type of activity.

Training drills/grids that look to practise certain parts of a game can be copied from other coaches, developed by innovative coaches, or adjusted/varied from those in other sports, noting the purpose of the activity.

Grids and drills are especially valuable in activities that do not require all members of a team. Many skills only involve 2 or 3 players, and these can be best developed in grids.

Coaches should make and record grids and drills that they develop and find useful, particularly ones that the players find challenging and are effective in their outcomes.

Examples of formations with multiple grids include:

- The Big C – (5 grids set out like the letter C) This allows a coach to move up and down the gaps between grids to give instructions and feedback
- The 6 Pack – (2 rows with 3 grids in each row) This allows more individual interaction with players in each grid
- The Circle – places the coach in the centre of the group but does mean some groups will be out of sight at certain times

Coaches should always position themselves so that they can observe all players. Initially it is best if you use markers to define the formation (or grid) that you want to run. A variety of colours in the markers can also be very beneficial to help players understand correct areas or lines to move in.

Ensure that the markers are not a safety hazard, nor do they impede or distract the participants.

In summary Grids should:

- Allow for high activity levels
- Enable good observation of players
- Provide variety
- Allow control of large numbers
- Can be adapted to most game elements



## UNIT 4 Safe Environment

Providing a safe environment is about giving thought to what might go wrong and acting to prevent possible accidents and undesirable events. It is about being alert to danger and taking preventative action by establishing risk management processes to avert danger as much as possible.

### Legal Responsibilities

As a coach, you will have certain legal responsibilities that you must adhere to. These can include:

- Accreditation – to be covered in Introductory Coaching Course
- Following relevant legislation of your country/region
- Codes of Conduct of specific sport – accessible on FIT website ([www.internationaltouch.org](http://www.internationaltouch.org))

### Duty of Care

This requires that you take reasonable care to avoid risks of which you can reasonably foresee. This may include:

- Provision of a safe environment
- Planning and implementing “safe” activities
- Providing adequate supervision
- Considering the suitability of equipment and/or facilities
- Maintaining records
- Being aware of basic First Aid procedures
- Establishing clear rules of conduct
- Evaluating participants for illness and/or injury
- Not “mismatching” participants
- Warning participants of any risk in the sport
- The use of COMMON SENSE

### Risk Management Strategies

As part of your Duty of Care you should also carry out a Risk assessment which should look at aspects such as:

- Time – can include time of day (heat/cold) and/or length of the session
- Location – proximity to roads, buildings etc.
- Environment - the playing or training surface
- Equipment – not damaged or likely to cause injury
- Competitions and Teammates – level must be commensurate to ability
- Anti- Harassment Strategies – all players must be treated equally and fairly



## Coaching Children

Children participating in a sport like Touch have a lot to gain. They learn to take the risk of accepting new challenges while they are tested to the limit of their capabilities. They also learn about cooperation with team mates and about healthy competition. They should learn to take pride in honest effort and achievement, learn about respect for others and humility regardless of victory or defeat.

Touch can help children develop new physical and psychological skills and has a limited risk of physical injury. There are many identified advantages in the healthy stress of normal competition to help children mature both physically and emotionally. Through an active sport, like Touch, children can develop an enthusiasm for participating in sporting activity, which can become the basis for a lifelong interest in personal fitness and health.

To make the sport an enjoyable and rewarding one for the child there are several things one can consider:

- The “Fun” aspect
- Children need lots of opportunity for unstructured play and a broad range of activities
- Don’t “specialise” too early
- The social aspect of sport is highly valued by children- they like being with their friends
- The need to focus on individual skill development rather than just “winning”
- That all children deserve time and attention, not just the most talented
- That children are not “small adults” they have their own special needs
- That everything is important to them
- That they often have too much to do in too little time
- That they have no idea about “quality” performance

### *Things we need to vary*

Remembering that children are NOT “little adults” we need to be able to vary the conditions to suit the age and experience of the players:

- Time – game length or training session length
- Intensity – lower intense to avoid injuries
- Rules – to increase participation and enjoyment
- Rest periods- need to be more often to break up a session

### *Tips for coaching children:*

- Use positive reinforcement and acceptable language when talking about or to a child
- Develop a calm and non-confrontational behaviour management style
- Ensure variety in any session
- Children will tend to take comments “to heart” so be mindful of how criticism is phrased



### *Child Protection Legislation*

Child protection involves separate legislation, policies, and practices to keep children safe from harm, to protect them from people who are unsuitable to supervise or work with children and to ensure that a child's wellbeing and best interests are the paramount considerations.

Every sporting organisation has a legal duty to care and a moral responsibility to ensure everyone who takes part in the organisations programs and activities is protected from all foreseeable risks of harm. This is a common law responsibility that covers both actions and inactions and is mandatory.

There are set requirements under child protection legislation for organisations and individuals that work or have contact with children. As a coach, it is your responsibility to know and understand the Legislation that is current in your country or region.

Some general tips when coaching children include:

- Do not make any physical contact with children in a way that may make them feel uncomfortable. If physical contact is required, the coach should explain why and ask permission
- Try to avoid situations where an adult is alone with a child e.g. dressing room
- When a child needs transport, ensure there is more than 1 child or, if possible, more than 2 adults in the vehicle
- Know and understand any religious or cultural impediments to a child participation