



## Basic Coaching Principles

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When working with young athletes/teams, there are some basic guiding principles that coaches can use to help get the most out of their athletes/teams during sessions. These basic coaching principles are as follows:

- Creating an enjoyable environment
- Core components and basic teaching points
- Session adaptability
- Providing Feedback
- Questioning Athletes
- Maximising time on task

### **Creating an enjoyable and controlled environment:**

When working with young athletes/teams, it is important that sessions are both enjoyable and controlled. An enjoyable experience is also a memorable one, so if this can be attached to a key learning point or skill, athletes will be more likely to retain and reflect on the information that was associated with that experience.

### **Core components and basic teaching points:**

When delivering a session, it is important to keep things clear and concise. All skills can be broken down into core components that will ensure the skill is performed correctly, and it is these core components that should be focused on first. When working on core components, basic teaching points can help provide useful feedback to athletes that they can use to adjust how they perform a skill. E.g. "When having a shot at goal, try to have the ball moving towards goal first." These basic teaching points should be limited to 2 or 3 key points to avoid overloading the athlete with information.

### **Session Adaptability:**

Aside from pre-planning sessions, it is important to be adaptable within a set session plan. If athletes require more time on a certain exercise, allow the exercise to continue. If the athletes pick up the exercise quickly, add an extension to the exercise. Although the core components of an exercise may stay the same for each skill, drills should still be adapted to the ability of the athletes. E.g. Shortening/Lengthening passing distance or playing field. Furthermore, coaching points and complexity should be adapted to suit the age of the athletes/team you are working with.

### **Providing Feedback:**

Feedback plays a very important part in an athlete's development. Feedback can be used to provide athletes with advice during and after the session to help develop understanding. The 3 main types of feedback that can be given are as follows: **Verbal, Visual** and **Written**. Feedback should always be constructive e.g. "Try shooting at goal with the ball moving towards goal first." as opposed to "Don't shoot at goal with the ball moving away from you."

### **Questioning Athletes:**

Questioning athletes is a great way to test athlete understanding/knowledge and it also promotes engagement. Questions that are open ended are often more effective at challenging athletes to think further into a question and provide reasoning for an answer. It is important to note that questioning in both a group setting and one on one has its merits, as you can often find athletes that are not so comfortable speaking in a group environment. Similar to providing feedback, questioning should be done constructively and in a way that assists athletes to provide an engaged and thoughtful response.

### **Maximising time on task:**

Time on task for athletes can be considered as the time that athletes spend physically performing a skill. Turf time is limited, so it is important that whenever athletes are at training, they are maximising their time on task. Splitting teams into smaller groups and removing drills that have athletes waiting for long periods of time are both examples of maximising athletes time on task.