

Organise a successful Rugby Practice

To organise a successful rugby practice the coach/teacher should answer the following questions:-

- How many will be at the session?
- How can I make the warm up fun, interesting and meaningful?
- How long will the session last?
- What theme will I work on?
- What skills will I emphasise?
- What equipment is required? i.e. number of rugby balls, cones tackle bags etc

Always be aware of the sun, wind, group size and ground conditions.

Setting up your coaching area

The use of marked grids channels and squares can be beneficial when working with youngsters as it keeps them in a manageable area. Coaches must remember, however, that grids are only a part of a session and usually used for warm up purposes.

Grids

In a simple grid, the players run across a square carrying a ball and pass it on to the first person at the opposite cone joining the end of that queue and prepare to go again. There could be 2-4 players at each cone and a ball at each cone. Obviously the fewer players the harder they are working. This is the basic criss/cross grid and there are innumerable practices that stem from this.

Channels

Channels give defined areas for players to work in – usually it is used to encourage direct running keeping players running in a straight line. To increase the pressure you can include defenders in the channel to have two groups running against each other. The width of the channel would depend on the number of players. Flags could be used as well/instead of cones.

DO

- Be clear when you are coaching
- Be aware of the effect you have upon growing children
- Listen to the players
- Provide learning experiences: teach
- Make practice and competition fun; it needn't be silly
- Set challenging goals tailored to the individual
- Recognise the value of friendships between children
- Show your approval whenever you can
- Examine your own coaching style and communication skills
- Find out as much as you can about rugby; we can always learn more
- Relax and enjoy yourself
- Be firm, fair and organised
- Give credit where it is due and give help where it is needed
- Be consistent
- Make sure you are aware of Club / School Child Protection Policy and SRU Fair Play Codes

DON'T

- Be unnecessarily critical
- Shout and humiliate players
- Ignore children when they need some support
- Blind them with science they don't need
- Overdo praise; they won't believe you

Communication

The essential aspects of effective communication with young players.

- **Communication must be clear and precise**
- **Be specific with the information you give**
- **Strive to be reasonable**
- **Be reliable, fair and consistent**
- **Keep your word**
- **Have genuine regard for the development of the players and their well being**
- **Be natural and enthusiastic**
- **Give plenty praise and encouragement**
- **Be a good listener**

Communication skills before sessions and games

Always ensure you control your enthusiasm. Often the most successful approach is to adopt a quiet, unruffled style that gives security and confidence to the young players.

Some worthwhile messages might include:-

- **Encourage players to 'test' out the skills they have been taught**
- **Encourage them to set goals**
- **Encourage them to enjoy themselves!**

Communication skills during the game

"Do not speak if you cannot improve on silence."

If you do decide to talk, be sure to:-

- **Be positive**
- **Be courteous to all**
- **Set a good example**
- **Provide positive, constructive feedback**
- **Plenty of praise and encouragement**

Communication skills after the game/session

Some suggested feedback areas are:-

- What did we do well?
- What did the opposition do well?
- What areas can we improve on?
- How can we improve?

Communicating with Parents

Be as objective as possible. Parents have a great influence on players and their positive support should be encouraged. The coach should, however, always bear in mind that some parents can be a little biased and do not always see the full picture!

Communicating with Referees

At Foundation Level it is useful to have the referee offer advice on occasions during the game. This can be a useful development for individual and team play.

The coach must respect the referee and show acceptance that while referee errors will take place, they are far less frequent than those made by the players. Similarly individual players and the team as a whole must show similar respect.

Coaching Approaches

Conducting the session

- **Have a defined practice area**
- **Have a set way of calling players together e.g. whistle**
- **Be polite but firm**
- **Do not allow disruptive influences**
- **Keep instructions simple using simple familiar words**
- **Be aware of all safety issues**

Coaches should arrange players so that they can all see and hear, taking into account (and adjusting to):-

- **The number of players**
- **The elements – wind, sun, rain**
- **Potential distractions**

Introducing the Skill

Naming the skill e.g:- Passing (short, pop pass)
Tackling

- Explain the skill and how it links to the game
- Demonstrate before involving players
- "A picture paints a thousand words"

DO IT YOURSELF IF YOU ARE COMPETENT

OR

USE SOMEONE WHO IS COMPETENT

OR

SHOW ON VIDEO

- Identify the key points
- Link the skill to the game
- Answer player questions
- Guide player Discovery: Ask Why?

Practising the Skill

"Children are easily motivated and enjoy a variety of activities ... it is a matter of capturing this desire to be active and of structuring the learning environment to provide challenging, enjoyable athletic experiences"

From "Acquiring Skill in Sport" Bob Sharp (O'Neill 1991)

The coach should work at maintaining the flow of the session by:-

- Presenting the skill in an easily understood manner
- Being aware of the level of competence of the players
- Modifying the approach to the skill if needed
- Correcting common faults
- Correcting individual faults

Effect of Coaching Method

“Skills must be practised in an environment that relates to the game, otherwise it becomes artificial”

Try when you talk to players to be **CLEAR** and **CONCISE**. Don't make too many points. Step by step practice, can be much better than too much explanation.

Providing Feedback to Correct Errors

- The coach should observe and correct faults (Key Factor Analysis), at the earliest opportunity
- Balance fault correction against maintaining session continuity
- Work on one problem at a time
- Make the correction brief and simple, ensuring the player understands the feedback
- Frequent feedback should be available

Developing Skills

EXPLANATION – 3%

DEMONSTRATION – 7%

PRACTICE – 90%

Practise the skill in a 'game-like' situation as soon as possible.

Example

Practice skill in a non-pressure unopposed situation

Increase speed at which skill is performed

Restrict area within which the skill is performed

Provide static opposition

Provide live opposition

Limit your objectives

Within the context of practising a skill, the playing of the game can often develop the required skills, as players have to 'find' the answers. Appropriate input from the coach in simulated/small sided games, can help this type of learning.

Practice should be short and frequent when learning a new skill . . .

Be aware that frustration and tiredness can affect the practising of a skill.

Examples..

Use breaks to correct errors, mix new skill practice with familiar skills, use small groups.

Players should feel they have achieved some progress at each session . . .

- Do not persist with a practice the players cannot handle, - return to it at a later stage
- Recognition should be given of good performance or a sincere effort
- Create an atmosphere in which players are not afraid to make mistakes

"Mistakes are a coach's 'bread'; their 'butter' is the ability to correct them"

Practices should be FUN and ENJOYABLE, with skill development being a key component.

Chaining

Chaining involves breaking down an action into a series of simple steps. Each step is practised to perfection before the next step is shown. Eventually all the phases of the skill are added together to perform the whole skill.

An example of chaining would be introducing the rugby spin-pass.

- Step 1-** "Hold the ball across one hand – swing your arm back and throw the ball to your partner, let the ball roll off your fingers as you release it"
- Step 2 -** "Turn your body sideways and do the same, however, before releasing the ball turn your hand so the ball travels point first"
- Step 3 -** "Use your other hand now to help control the ball and to help direct the ball to your partner"
- Step 4 -** "Follow through with your hands after releasing the ball"

The choice of method is up to the coach, the skill being introduced and the children's level of ability.

Remember

Big movements are easier to learn than small accurate ones.

Frequent changes during practices are essential to keep the players' attention and enthusiasm.

Patience is a virtue, especially when youngsters seem slow to achieve new skills.

Once skills have been learned in isolation, they can be joined with other skills and pressure introduced to enhance decision making.

The players will make many mistakes. To help them gain confidence, pose them problems to solve e.g. 2 v 1, 3 v 2. The objective is to score by taking advantage of the extra player.

The players will find the best method to achieve a score, however, some suggestions from you as you move around the groups will obviously be beneficial. This method of discovery learning will help the player think about what they are doing rather than just following instructions.

Refining Skills

After new skills have been introduced, refining and developing these skills with young players will take time and patience, therefore give time to a particular skill or theme over a number of weeks. Ask questions of the young players to encourage them to work out problems for themselves, and to help build up an understanding of how/where a particular skill is utilised within the game.

Pressure on Skills

Once a skill can be performed to a reasonable standard in a non-pressure situation, pressure must be introduced through structured practices and game-like situations to allow the skill to develop.

Reducing the area i.e. grids, channels, team races, or against the clock, and semi-opposed, games are all ways of putting pressure on skills.

Decision Making

Young players faced with complex choices may simply seize up, therefore initially plan practice sessions which have limited choices, with time for them to choose and use the correct skill. As they improve introduce options which, in time, will increase their ability to make good decisions in the game situation.

Getting them into a game!

Using the Game On! section and the booklets on Tag, New Image Rugby and Mini Rugby, coaches should become experienced at leading players into games relatively quickly.

- Simply explanation of what game will be played and approximately how long it will last
- Outline the key laws, aims and pitch area size i.e. try lines and touch lines
- Divide players into groups / teams i.e. 4v4, 8v8
- Start the game and let them play
- Stop game on occasions (but not too often) to advise on techniques and methods of play
Ask for player feedback / appropriate questioning
- Finish game with feedback session

“READY FOR RUGBY”!!!

LETS COACH!!

COACHES PLANNER

As a coach you can never cover everything in one session, pick and choose key areas that you feel will develop your players from the Ford Foundation Coaching Pack.

PHOTOCOPY AS REQUIRED

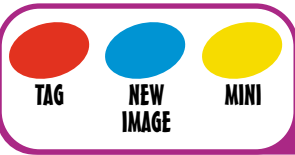
Aim/Theme of Session (limit objectives):

Warm up (preparation):

Game On:

The Vitals / Keep it Alive:

“D-Fence” / Start the Attack:



Coaching Skills & Organisation