WORLD ASSOCIATION OF
BASKETBALL
COACHES

COACHES MANUAL

LEVEL 2

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF BASKETBALL COACHES

COACHES MANUAL

LEVEL 2

COACH

PLAYER

TEAM

LEVEL 2

COACH

CHAPTER 1

ROLES AND VALUES

CHAPTER 1

ROLES AND VALUES

1.1 LEADERSHIP

1.1.1 INCORPORATING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Coaches should encourage athletes to "dream big" and to have ambitious goals (e.g. playing professionally).

Similarly, the coach should have ambitious goals for the team to achieve, which may extend beyond the time when the coach is with the team (e.g. a coach of a junior team may have a goal that the players all progress to the club's senior squad).

A limiting factor in regards to ambitious goals is that they may seem unattainable or players may get discouraged when they do not achieve them – in either event, the player is unlikely to continue to strive toward reaching that objective.

The coach therefore should help the athlete to "break down" the larger (or longer-term) goal into a series of smaller (or shorter-term) goals that are important to ultimately achieving the larger goal.

These smaller (or shorter term) goals have the advantage of:

- providing a mechanism to measure progress toward the ultimate goal – this enables the player to experience success as they achieve each goal, which both rewards effort made to date and can motivate the athlete to continue working toward the next goal (and the ultimate goal);
- helping the athlete cope with disappointments (e.g. non selection to a team);
- enabling the athlete to realise when they reach the point where the ultimate goal may be out of reach but to still have a sense of success for what they achieved along the way;
- allowing the athlete to reassess their ambitious goals (e.g. a player that aspires to play at the Olympics may realise that is unlikely and then work toward becoming a coach or official).

There are situations where short-term goals may be contrary to long-term goals, and for coaches these are most likely to occur in regards to team selection and substitution patterns and style of play.

In considering players for selection, a coach will often be presented with a situation where one player may make an immediate impact upon the team, and another has greater potential in the long term but would have little impact immediately. This can happen with senior teams (choosing between "veterans" and "rookies") but is perhaps more commonplace with junior teams.

The decision a coach makes will depend upon both their own philosophy and that of the club. With junior athletes, coaches should certainly consider that "single measures or judgments about someone's athletic potential, especially before puberty, are likely to be influenced by factors such as physical maturity that could change over time".[1] Players that physically mature earlier (and are taller or stronger) than their teammates at the ages of 10-12 may not have that advantage a few years later and are often not the players that progress the most.

With young players, coaches should be as inclusive as possible and should encourage clubs to have other programs available for players that are not selected to teams.

The other decision where there may be a conflict for the coach between short and long term goals is in how a team plays. With young players (ages 10-14), some coaches make the mistake of focussing on structured play and early on this may lead to games being won. However, without a good understanding and development of individual skills and basic team concepts, these players (and teams) often do not experience success as they get older.

Coaches of young teams should forsake the goal of winning in the short term and instead concentrate on the development of players so that they are better equipped for winning later in their teen years. The coach's focus must be on success, which is measured in terms of development rather than simply games won.

1 US Anti-Doping Agency, True Sport: What We Stand to Lose in Our Obsession to Win, 2012, p47

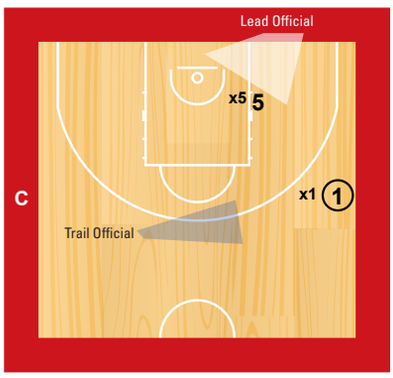
1.2 WORKING WITH OFFICIALS

1.2.1 REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES

COURT COVERAGE

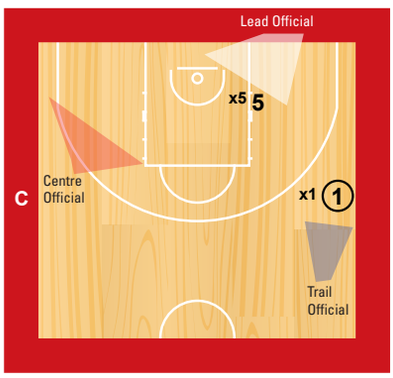
Whilst coaches do not need to have in-depth knowledge of the responsibilities that referees have, it is important that the coach understand that between them the referees are responsible for covering the whole court.

Accordingly, they may be looking at different areas of the court at any particular time and they both could be focussing on a different area than where the coach is looking.



In this situation the lead official is focussing on the post players (and the key) and the trail official is focused on the ball, which is in the wing position.

If the coach asks the trail official about something that happened in post, the trail official is probably unaware of what was happening – it is not their area of responsibility.



In "3-man officiating" the centre official (who is positioned closest to the coach) is responsible for what is happening off the ball, on their side of the court.

Accordingly, if the coach asks the centre official about what was happening in the ball-side low post, or on the ball, the centre official is probably unaware of what was happening.

Most importantly, coaches must appreciate that they are in a different position to the referees so will have a different view of what is happening on court. Not only will what they see be affected by where they are standing but also by the position of other players on the court, which may obscure what they can see.

A coach may therefore see something that the official misses just as often as the official will see things that the coach misses. Both coach and official have their job to do and they should support each other.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MECHANICS

Officials are taught specifically how to move around the court and these "mechanics" (or rules of movement) are designed to ensure that:

- there will be one official who has a view of any particular action that is occurring on the court (whether it is on ball or off the ball);
- that official will be in the best position to see the action and particularly to officiate:
  - who has caused any contact;
  - whether players are in a legal or illegal position.

The mechanics are a guideline for the official to help them to perform their role and to do so working in partnership with other officials. Officials are required to make hundreds of decisions every game – not just when to "make a call" but also when to "hold their whistle". They are officiating all ten players – moving in a relatively small area of court sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

They will undertake this role better if they are not also having to deal with coaches yelling and screaming on the sideline!

1.3 SPORT INTEGRITY COMPLIANCE

1.3.1 COACHING A CLEAN GAME

"Sometimes, the temptations must be talked about for them to remain only temptations."

RUDY FERNANDEZ, SPANISH INTERNATIONAL

COACHING A CLEAN GAME

In line with the IOC movement and since 2004 with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), FIBA has been actively engaged in the fight against doping in basketball. Since 1989, doping controls are regularly and increasingly performed at FIBA events.

In 2009, FIBA began implementing its own Out-of-Competition testing programme.

As more and more countries are ratifying the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport, FIBA's cooperation with its own National Federations and the National Anti-Doping Organizations in these matters has been constantly reinforced.

The Medical Corner on FIBA's website (www.fiba.com) is a very helpful tool for communication and cooperation with all stakeholders, giving access to detailed and up-to-date information on FIBA anti-doping activities.

While there is generally a good awareness of the wrongs of doping, there is often a knowledge gap in terms of the dangers faced by athletes and the importance of cultivating a healthy lifestyle. FIBA has included a series of short videos on both its YouTube page and its website (www.cleangame.fiba.com); players of all ages and all levels will benefit from the insights provided there by some of basketball's biggest stars.

Coaches have a responsibility to promote to their athletes the importance of participating in sport, without resorting to doping or banned substances. They must also make sure that their athletes understand that there is a process whereby the use of an otherwise banned substance can be approved on medical advice (a Therapeutic Use Exemption). Athletes can get more information on the FIBA website and should discuss any concerns with their medical practitioner.

"The best part of being an athlete is rising to the challenge, doing your best under the circumstances, and enjoying the process. The celebration of the human spirit, body and mind, is what we call the 'Spirit of Sport', and is characterized by health, fair play, honesty , respect for self and others, courage and dedication..."

"...Doping in sport is the complete antithesis of the Spirit of Sport. Doping destroys all that is good and noble about sport. It jeopardizes the health and well-being of athletes and erodes public confidence. In addition to risking serious health consequences, athletes who test positive for doping, ruin their good name and reputation and may lose their employment." [1]

HOW DOES THE WADA ANTI-DOPING SYSTEM WORK?

The World Anti-Doping Agency maintains a List of Prohibited Substances and Methods and a substance may be placed on it if it meets two out of these three criteria:

- it is performance-enhancing;
- it poses a danger to athletes' health;
- its use is against the spirit of sport.

A two year ban from competition is imposed on an athlete who is found to have violated the Anti-Doping Code. A rule of "strict liability" applies so that a violation occurs if a banned substance is found in a specimen (e.g. blood, urine) given by an athlete.

Whether or not the athlete intentionally or unintentionally used the substance is irrelevant.

Coaches should not give advice to players about what medications or supplements they can use or cannot use.

Coaches should ensure that players are aware of their responsibility under the Anti-Doping Code and that players know where they can seek advice if they need it.

1 Elizabeth Hunter, Anti-Doping: It's a Global Campaign, FIBA Assist

FOLLOW-UP

1. Discuss with your players their long-term goals.
   a. Do you believe those goals are realistic;
   b. Have they identified some shorter-term goals that will contribute toward achieving the long-term goal?
2. Have your players considered goals within the sport other than playing (e.g. officiating or coaching)?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague (from basketball or another sport) what education (if any) your athletes have had about drugs in sport? How would you get more information for them?
4. Watch a game of basketball with a referee and discuss with them what the referees are looking for or considering at various points in the game.

Notes

LEVEL 2

COACH

CHAPTER 2

KNOW-HOW

CHAPTER 2

KNOW-HOW

2.1 PLANNING

2.1.1 REVIEW - EVALUATING PRACTICE SESSIONS

Effective coaching is not only about helping your athletes to improve, it is also about constantly improving as a coach. Good coaches build on the things they do well and learn from their mistakes.

BROGAN BUNT[2]

Just like a team's performance at games, some practice sessions will be better than others and the coach should review each session to determine what worked well (and do it again) and what was not as effective (and vary it for next time). This is part of a coach's reflective cycle.

At the end of each practice session, coaches should make a brief evaluation of the session, which may include recording:

- performance in particular activities (e.g. number of lay-ups made in a certain time in an activity). This can be used from session to session to track improvement;
- any variations to an activity that the coach used, particularly if the activity had been too easy or too hard for the team;
- any particular areas that the coach believes need further work. It is very important in a training session to resist continuing with an activity until it is "perfect" – i.e. going for longer than planned. This will reduce the time available for other parts of the session. Instead, the coach can record what else needs to be done at the next practice session;
- where particular activities worked well, or did not work well;
- any observations regarding the performance of individual players and areas for continued work or progression of their skill learning;
- possible goals to emphasise at the next game;
- thoughts on particular activities or skills that need to be a focus in the next practice.

It can be very effective to film a practice session and to review the video. Obviously, this will help the coach to identify skill areas that may need to improve (individual and team); but more importantly, it can help the coach to identify:

- how well players were involved in the practice – were they standing around too long?
- how effective the coach was in giving instructions – could all players hear? Where all players listening?
- whether the players were given sufficient opportunity to practice – or did the coach talk for too long?

Many coaches will not have the luxury of being able to film practice sessions, but having a colleague watch a practice session, or asking players for feedback, can be just as beneficial. This person watching does not necessarily need to understand the specific basketball activities or skills as their observation

2 Brogan Bunt, Video Self Analysis – A Lens on Coaching, Australian Sports Commission

as to how the session was conducted is not basketball-specific.

The coach should also keep a record of who attended the session and any injuries or restrictions on players being able to participate.

The coach may want to look specifically at their own performance rather than just the overall practice session and to do this it is very helpful to have video footage of the session, or have a colleague observe the session. The aim of this detailed analysis is to determine:

- what coaching task the coach is performing;
- what were their specific coaching actions?
- what is the context?

COACHING TASKS

There are 3 main coaching tasks. The degree to which a coach will do each task in any given practice will depend upon the goals of that practice and the resources available.

MANAGING

This is the organisational side of coaching. It is all the practical things that a coach does to make sure the training session runs smoothly.

Sometimes a coach may delegate tasks to an assistant or even the players.

TEACHING

Is what coaches do to develop the skills and strategic understanding of their athletes.

COMMUNICATING

This refers to the human relations dimension of coaching. It is how the coach relates to the athletes and the type of social climate that the coach's style of coaching fosters.

Coaching tasks often overlap. Teaching and managing are closely linked and communicating is a broader task, relating to almost everything that you do. Below are some examples of coaching tasks:

Managing:

"Give me 3 groups on the baseline, each group needs a ball."

Teaching:

"Chin the ball, never bring it below shoulder height when you are in the key"

Communicating:

"Happy birthday Jaz, did you get some good presents?"

In analysing their performance, a coach must look at how much time they spend on each type of task. Often, coaches spend more time managing activities (e.g. telling players where to run, where to pass etc.) than on teaching.

COACHING ACTIONS

Coaching actions are all the observable things that a coach does when they are performing their role as a coach, whether those things they are verbal or non-verbal.

ACTION	EXAMPLE
EXPLAINING	"This session we are going to work on our defensive footwork against a post player."
INFORMING	"You need to straighten your arm as you shoot the ball."
PRAISING	Patting a player on the back after a good performance.
CORRECTING	"You need to pass to your left, with your left hand. If you use your right hand, the defender will be able to easily deflect the pass."
QUESTIONING	"When you move toward the basket, which foot should you move first?"

COACHING CONTEXT

The final factor that is relevant when evaluating a coach's performance is the context, which is the background to the coach's actions. The coaching context will often impact what the coaches want to do, how they do it and how effective it is.

Clearly, the same action taken in different contexts can lead to very different results. For example, the coach raising their voice and yelling may be OK when coaching an experienced team of older players but may have a very detrimental effect on very young players.

However, the coaching context for this purpose is more about the context that impacts upon the coach. For example:

- What is happening?
- Who are the participants?
- When? What part of the season? What part of the training session?
- Where? Does the space/location and equipment affect your coaching?
- Why? Are there any other factors to explain aspects of the coach's behaviour?

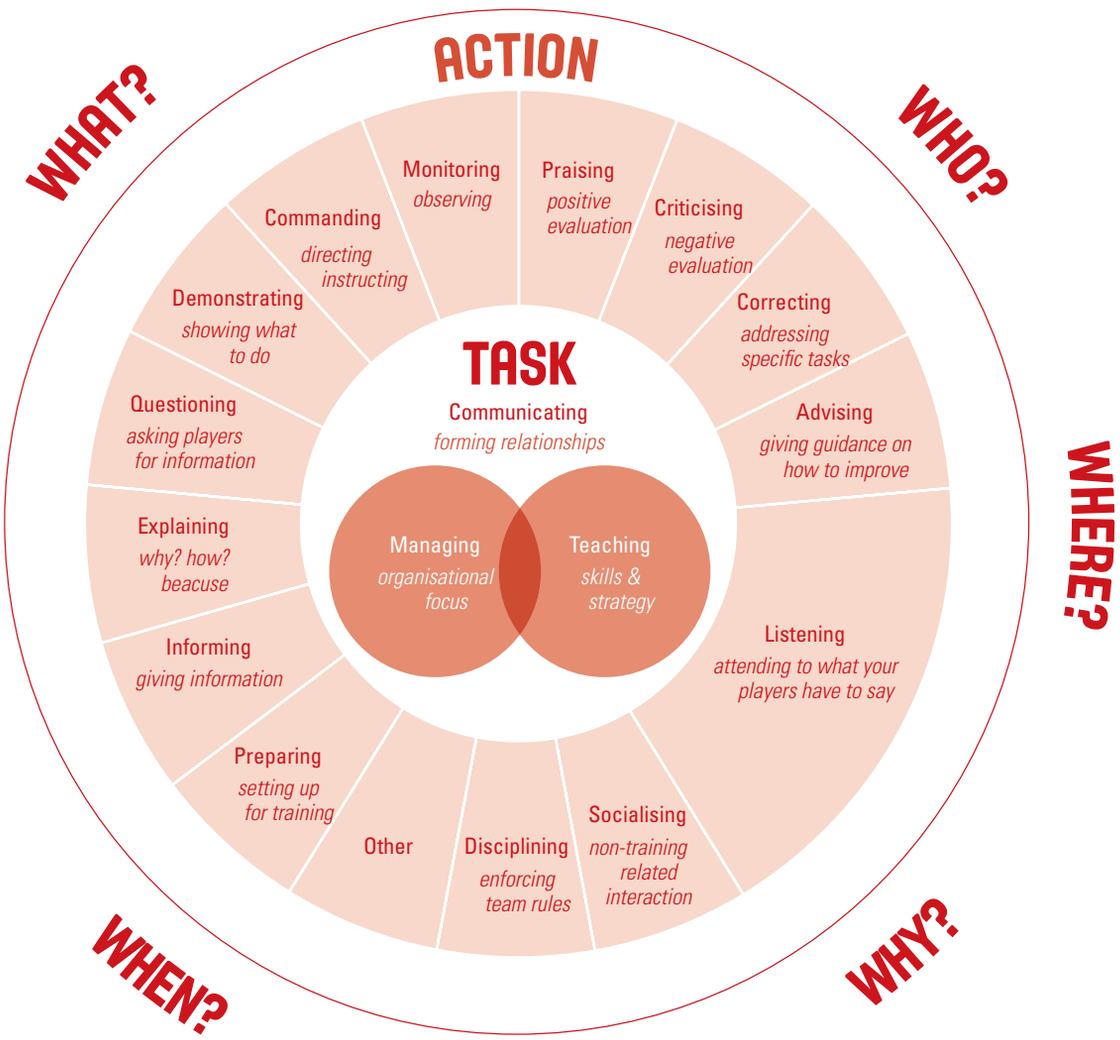
In some practice sessions the coach may do very little teaching because the focus of the session may be on having players execute skills that they can already perform well in training and need to improve under "game-like" pressure.

COACH EVALUATION MODEL

The following model maps out the relevant features of actions, tasks and context which are considered when evaluating coaching. The three coaching tasks are placed at the centre – with managing and teaching overlapping, and communicating being a broader function that includes the other two. Of the various coaching actions , listening is deliberately the largest and this reflects its critical importance.

The coach should try to be objective when analysing their coaching – this could simply be looking at what they are doing and not considering whether or not it is being done well. This will help the coach to ensure that they don't overlook the various aspects of what they are doing.

In identifying what they were doing, a coach may identify that they did not undertake certain coaching actions. This is quite normal, as not every action will be involved in every session. And some actions (e.g. preparing) may be mostly done prior to the session.



However, subject to any particular context, the coach should expect to spend most of their time teaching, rather than managing. If they find that they are doing a lot of managing tasks then they may wish to identify if some tasks could:

- be delegated to someone else (e.g. assistant coach, team manager, players or parents);
- be done more effectively by conducting a smaller number of activities but varying the activities to increase complexity and to address different teaching points;
- allow more time before stopping an activity – observe and see if the players can figure out how to do the activity;
- use cue words more effectively;
- be planned differently – e.g. by designating which groups players will be in before training, or having a team rule that half the team must wear white and half a different colour shirt (to help dividing into groups);
- use similar activities from one training to another so that they are not constantly needing to explain how a new activity works.

2.1.2 MANAGING PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL LOAD FROM ONE SESSION TO THE NEXT

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that players get sufficient recovery time between sessions; this is just as important from a psychological viewpoint as it is from a physical viewpoint.

The aim is to keep players fresh so that they can give an optimal performance each time.

The first step is to understand what load the players are coping with, which will obviously be affected by activities outside of the team environment and over which the coach may have no control.

For example, physical load may be affected by commitments to other teams or school/work and psychological load will be impacted by what is happening at school/work or in their family life.

To help to understand the load that players are experiencing, the coach can:

- have players keep a diary of their activities and regularly review it with the player;
- have players keep a calendar where they include key dates (e.g. exam dates, holidays, when presentations/work is due). The coach should review this particularly to identify times that are likely to be particularly stressful and to reduce commitments during these times if possible;
- liaise with other coaches to determine what their requirements for the athlete are. Can anything be consolidated so that the athlete does not have to duplicate training?
- assess at training the physical load of each activity, which is both a factor of the activity itself (e.g. sprinting full court in a lay-up drill or short sprints in a "close-out" drill) and also the number of repetitions that a player does;
- have the player record in the diary how much sleep they got each night and assess how they feel – an example of some checkboxes is given below.

TODAY I FEEL...(TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ Awful	☐ Tired	☐ Sore	☐ Upset	☐ Angry	☐ Sick
☐ Alright	☐ Good	☐ Great	☐ Confident	☐ Happy	☐ Motivated

In preparing the plan for the season, the coach should be prepared to schedule breaks at times of heavy physical load, and this may include resting some players but not others (e.g. players that are involved in national programs as well as the club program may be given some rest after a national program commitment).

The coach should continuously assess during the season how players are coping with physical loads and be prepared to make alterations if there are signs of physical fatigue (which may be caused by other factors, not just the coach's program). Changes might include reducing the length of practice sessions, changing the content of sessions (to less physically stressful activities) or cancelling a session.

Coaches should ensure that players understand the importance of physical recovery and may need to schedule aspects into their program such as doing a pool recovery session as a group.

Psychological fatigue can have just as serious an impact upon performance, although it is not necessarily as easy to predict or detect. Stress from work, school or family will impact performance and coaches may need to make adjustments to the program for individual athletes at these times (e.g. players may not train in the week of school exams).

Players may need "downtime" or a break from the coach or from the program altogether, particularly during a long season. There are many ways that a coach can address this, such as:

- have some sessions taken by assistant coaches so that the players are not only hearing the coach's voice. It can also be worthwhile to have a coach from outside the program take a session from time to time (e.g. the senior club coach taking a session with a junior team);
- use "cross training", where practice involves other sports. This is particularly common when working on fitness, however can also work for technical skills (e.g. "pass and cut" and "screening" are effective in soccer as well as basketball);
- schedule a social event (e.g. team dinner) instead of practice from time to time;
- have players lead activities in practice – this could be them choosing activities that they wish to do (from a list provided by the coach) or a free choice of activities.

2.1.3 CONDUCTING INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

It is often difficult in team practice sessions to improve the skills and techniques of each individual athlete and this is often best done in an individual session with the athlete or in small groups of 3 or 4 athletes.

Some coaches will set aside some team practice sessions to focus on individual skills, however unless there are a number of assistant coaches it can still be difficult to provide sufficient feedback to each athlete.

Individual sessions are generally much shorter than a team practice session (45 minutes to one hour) and should include both offensive and defensive techniques. Coaches may use the sessions to introduce new skills or to refine and develop existing skills.

Some guidelines to assist with preparing and conducting individual sessions are:

1. Make it contested or as "game-like" as possible

   The ultimate aim of any practice is for players to transfer the skills practiced into a game environment and this is maximised by the practice having "game-realistic" factors included (for example, having a defender stand in front of a player learning to shoot). These may include:

   - Playing against the coach or other players;
   - Specific game situations (e.g. rather than shooting 10 free throws in a row, players shoot 2 or 3 and then run sprints before shooting another 2 or 3);
   - Having specific consequences at times (e.g. if the third shot is missed the player's score returns to zero);
   - Have an offensive effort followed by a defensive effort (e.g. player takes a shot, rebounds their shot, passes to another player and "closes out" to pressure that player's shot);
   - Keep score. This can be done between players or against an imaginary opponent. For example, a player takes the following shots, rebounding their own shot and moving to the next shot. Their opponent scores points every time the player misses. Continue for a set time or until the player (or their opponent) reach a set score:
     - Free throw (opponent gets 4 points if missed)
     - Lay-up (opponent gets 3 points if missed)
     - 2 point shot outside key (opponent gets 2 points if missed)
     - 3 point shot (opponent gets 1 point if missed).
2. Change what needs to be changed and leave the rest alone. Many athletes will develop technique that is not "textbook" but may well be effective in a game. Changing any habit is difficult and coaches should prioritise the importance of any changes that they are considering.
3. Repetition. An individual session is the opportunity for the player to develop their skills by executing them many, many times. Coaches should limit how much they talk and focus on ensuring the player gets a lot of repetitions. An individual session is a good time to establish a rapport with a player so coaches should take time before or after the session to speak with the player.
4. Intensity is more important than time spent. Players should operate at a game-like intensity throughout an individual session. Schedule breaks that are game-realistic (e.g. 1 minute).
5. Be specific – an individual session is the opportunity to instruct players on correct technique. Coaches must make sure that the players understand the "fine detail" (e.g. foot position, head position). Using video can help the player to understand changes that they need to make.

2.1.4 SEASON PLANS

The first step to creating a season plan is to start with a calendar and identify key dates, such as:

- when the season starts and finishes (including when finals or play-offs start and finish);
- when practice commences;
- when the team is selected (particularly if trials are being held);
- when practice sessions can be scheduled (this may depend upon court availability);
- game schedule (once known) and likely travel (which will often depend upon how the team travels – whether by bus, individual car, plane etc).

	MARCH															
	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
PUBLIC HOLIDAY																
SELECTION TRIAL																
WEIGHTS																
TEAM PRACTICE						9am	7pm	9am	3pm		4pm	7pm				9am
INDIVIDUALS																
GAMES														Away 7pm		Home 2pm
PLAY-OFFS																
TRAVEL													9am		11am	

The coach can then include into the calendar other important dates that may impact when they or the players are available (e.g. representative commitments, school holidays)

	APRIL															
	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
PUBLIC HOLIDAY																
SELECTION TRIAL																
WEIGHTS																
TEAM PRACTICE	10am							9am	3pm		10am	11am				
INDIVIDUALS																
GAMES	Home 7pm	Away 5pm														
PLAY-OFFS																
TRAVEL		11am														
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS																
U18 CHAMPS																

Lastly, on the calendar, the coach may note other dates such as:

- other games that they wish to "scout";
- venue availability (particularly if there are blocks of time when venues are unavailable);
- factors impacting upon game preparation (e.g. if a game is to be televised), teams may not be able to access the court at certain times or may have to do additional media commitments);
- "Pre-season" or "Off-season" dates (particularly if players are given programs or monitored during these times).

From the calendar, the coach can determine:

- how many practice sessions they have;
- conflicting commitments (either for the coach or the player);
- the likely physical load that players will have throughout the season.

The coach then needs to determine the "technical program" for the team and individual players – what they want to teach and when it will be introduced. Whilst a coach might like to have everything in place prior to the first game, this is often not possible and the coach must prioritise when they introduce the various tactics and strategies.

Whenever possible, the coach should work with other staff (e.g. conditioning coaches) to finalise the season plan. As with any plan, the coach needs to review the plan as the season progresses and make variations as required.

2.1.5 SAFETY WHEN TRAVELLING

In many programs, coaches will have assistance in making travel arrangements or the coach may not be involved in this at all – whether because parents plan travel for their children or because the team has a manager that makes the arrangements.

However, all coaches need to understand the basic considerations that should be taken into account when teams are travelling:

1. Physical Safety
2. Safe Food and Drink
3. Safekeeping of Documents

1. PHYSICAL SAFETY

Travelling to other cities or countries can be an exciting part of being involved in sport, particularly a sport as popular as basketball is throughout the world. Whenever travelling, the physical safety of all members of the team must be paramount. Accordingly:

- Many governments issue "Travel Advisory" notes regarding travel to certain countries. Coaches should be familiar with these and seek further information from the club or competition organisers;
- When travelling overseas, check with a doctor whether particular vaccinations or other precautions are advised;
- All cities have areas that are not as safe for tourists. Before booking hotels, find out which areas of the city are recommended to avoid. Speaking with coaches of other teams (that either live in the city or may have played there before) can help;
- Players should never leave the hotel by themselves and should always make sure that others know when they are leaving and where they are going;
- Take the time to find out about specific customs that exist. This can avoid the team being involved in an embarrassing situation! Travel websites are often a good source of information;
- If travelling by car or mini-bus, coaches must take care to know distances to be travelled. Fatigue is a very common cause of road accidents and coaches should avoid driving long distances overnight. Wherever possible have at least two drivers and if travel is more than 4 or 5 hours factor in a specific "travel day" rather than travelling after the game;
- Assign players "buddies", with each having responsibility to make sure their "buddy" knows important logistic arrangements (e.g. when the bus leaves) and that they are on time.

2. SAFE FOOD AND DRINK

There are many instances where a team's performance has been adversely affected by players being ill due to something they have eaten or drunk when travelling. An equally common problem, but less recognized, is when athletes find the food when travelling unpalatable and simply do not eat enough.

Accordingly, precautions need to be taken:

- Find out whether or not tap water is safe for drinking and if in doubt use bottled water. Bottled water should also be used when brushing teeth;
- Identify restaurants that have food similar to what the players are used to. Other coaches may be able assist with this. Many cities also have a tourist advisory service (often available through the internet) which may be able to assist;
- If possible, take some food items with you (e.g. many Australian teams take Vegemite);
- Monitor how much food players are eating at meals.

3. SAFEKEEPING OF DOCUMENTS

Passports and visas are critical documents when travelling, which may not be easily replaced and must be kept safe at all times. At tournaments, the accreditation that enables team members to access the playing venue and accommodation are equally important.

These documents (and other valuables such as phones, watches etc.) need to be kept safe from being stolen but equally need to be kept safe from simply being left behind inadvertently. Some steps that can be taken are:

- Take copies of all passports and visas. These can be kept electronically as well as a team manager or coach keeping copies;
- Team manager or coach collects all passports after arrival in a country and keeps them together (using hotel safes where possible);
- Don't leave valuables (including accreditation cards) in changing rooms at the playing venue. Instead, have them collected by a coach or manager and kept in a bag that is with them all the time;
- Pack away computer equipment when it is left in hotel rooms (e.g. in the bottom of a bag);
- Have a checklist of all equipment that the team has (e.g. balls, cameras, first aid kit) and have someone check that all items have been collected before leaving a venue.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Discuss with a coaching colleague how they review their practice sessions. Are there elements that they include that you would like to incorporate?
2. Plan a week of training sessions and assess what you think are the physical and psychological loads of each activity. Discuss with your players how they felt after each session. Discuss with the players any discrepancy between your estimate and their assessment.
3. Watch another coach conduct a "skills-based" small group (or individual session). Write down what you think were their important teaching points and then discuss with the coach.
4. Do you have a plan spanning a complete season? Are your athletes progressing to that plan?

2.2 TEACHING

2.2.1 ADVANCED PRINCIPLES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

This chapter has been prepared by:

DR ADAM D. GORMAN,
University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia).

SKILL ACQUISITION

The advice of a suitably qualified person should be sought before anyone uses or relies upon the information contained in this chapter. The chapter offers general information only and is not specific to any individual or team.

The content may require a certain level of skill and expertise, and may need to be adapted and/or modified to suit the needs of different individuals and different teams. The content may not be suitable for all individuals.

Neither the author, nor FIBA, accepts any liability or responsibility for any loss, damage, injury, illness or otherwise caused by the use of, or reliance upon, the information in this publication, including instances where the information contains errors or omissions.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

The highly dynamic and fast-paced nature of the sport of basketball requires competitors to be able to perform a range of different skills. This section provides an overview of some of the key principles from the discipline of skill acquisition that can be used to guide the design and implementation of practice sessions to help facilitate skill learning and performance.

It is important to acknowledge that the content within this section may require a certain level of skill and expertise and may not be suitable for all individuals. The content may need to be adapted and/or modified to suit the needs of different individuals and different teams.

STAGES OF SKILL ACQUISITION

There are various stages through which performers will progress as they increase in skill level.[1] Outlined below is a summary of some of the main components that are included in Newell's[2] model of motor learning (see also[3,4]).

THE FIRST STAGE: COORDINATION

During the first stage of skill acquisition, the learner typically attempts to explore a range of different methods for achieving a particular outcome.[2-4] As a result, this stage is often characterised by frequent changes from one movement pattern to another.[2-6]

For example, when first attempting to execute a basketball shot, beginner players may initiate their shot from around waist height during their early attempts, but suddenly transition towards an overhead shot when competing against a defender (see [3,7,8]).

This exploratory process is believed to be important for allowing the formation of a movement pattern that is most suited to the individual.[3,9] That is, the learner's previous experiences and current movement capabilities will tend to influence the way in which the pattern is formed.[3,10]

The role of the coach is therefore important in helping to shape the learning environment in such a way as to allow the learner to (safely) experience a broad array of situations[9,11] (see also the section in this chapter on exploration and self-organisation), rather than restricting the search process by teaching players to use a predetermined or idealised technique that assumes all players are identical.[7,12]

The use of highly prescriptive technical instructions may restrict the search process, encouraging the learner to explore only a narrow subset of possible movement patterns.[7,12]

THE SECOND STAGE: CONTROL

In the second stage of skill learning, the individual has typically acquired the underlying movement patterns and is now attempting to learn how to adjust those patterns to better suit changes that occur within the environment.[2,4] In essence, learners attempt to adapt their movements to accommodate for the diversity of situations that may occur during different situations in games and practice sessions.[3]

For example, basketball players at the control stage may learn to successfully adjust the speed and force of a pass so that it can be accurately delivered to team-mates positioned at different distances.[2,4] Players may also learn to recognise certain cues within the environment, such as the proximity of a defender, allowing them to adjust their movement accordingly.[2,13,14]

It is therefore important to use practice tasks that resemble the demands of competition so that players learn to recognise and understand the key sources of information that exist in the typical competitive environment.[11,15,16]

THE FINAL STAGE: SKILL

The skills of experts are often described as being energy efficient, highly consistent, and extremely adaptable.[2-4,17] In the dynamic environment of basketball, adaptability is likely to be a particularly important quality because it can allow a player to adjust to a vast array of different game situations.[4,10,16,18]

For instance, a basketball player who can maintain shooting accuracy under varying intensities of defensive pressure is likely to be better able to cope with the demands of most game scenarios, including those experienced in higher level competitions.[7,10]

Research has highlighted many other qualities that provide experienced players with a distinct advantage over their less skilled counterparts (e.g., see[19]). For example, the use of visual-perceptual information (i.e., information that the player sees) may be an important quality that allows an expert player to predict the play.[20-24]

By recognising critical cues such as the locations of certain team-mates or the foot position of an immediate defender, the experienced player is able to accurately determine the best possible course of action.[14,25,26] Many of these cues may be quite subtle[27] and it is likely that repeated exposure to the cues is required before the performer can fully appreciate their meaning.[28] These factors highlight the importance of using appropriate practice tasks that contain opportunities for players to experience the types of variables that may be encountered during games.[16,29]

Another prominent quality of expert performance is related to the use of what are typically termed "situational probabilities".[29] Based upon prior knowledge of a particular team or individual player, experienced performers are better able to predict the likelihood of certain events[30] (see also[29,31]).

This knowledge is often acquired during previous games against a certain team, or after competing against a specific player.[29] These situational probabilities typically form the basis for team scouting meetings where players are given information on an upcoming opponent, often using edited video clips showing specific patterns of play.[29]

However, this information could also be delivered within carefully designed on-court sessions where practice activities are structured in such a way as to allow players to gain first-hand knowledge of the likely scenarios they will experience against a particular team[29] (see also[32]). Given that expertise takes many years and many hours of dedicated practice[33,34] the judicious use

of carefully designed practice tasks may help to optimise the benefits gained from skill practice sessions.[3,12,32]

DESIGNING SUITABLE ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE SKILL

There are many factors that should be considered in the design and implementation of skill practice sessions. The following section is aimed at providing an underpinning philosophical approach towards skill acquisition that can assist in the formulation of an appropriate practice environment. Thus, rather than providing an extensive repertoire of prescriptive drills, the following section is intended to provide coaches with the necessary tools to be able to create and refine their own activities, specifically tailored to the needs of their team.

EXPLORATION AND SELF-ORGANISATION

As described earlier, the initial phase of skill acquisition is often characterised by an exploratory process whereby beginners attempt to explore a variety of different movement patterns[4] (see also[2]). Although this process is often associated with beginners, exploration can be beneficial for all skill levels, including experts competing at the highest level.[3,4,16]

It is therefore important for players to be given opportunities to safely search through a broad range of movement variations, allowing them to find and refine movement patterns that best suit their capabilities, as well as providing opportunities to learn when and how those patterns should be adapted.[4,7,10,11,16]

The notion of self-organisation is a critical part of the exploratory process because it suggests that learners are largely responsible for finding their own solutions, without constant direction from an external source such as a coach.[3,35] Practice activities that are excessively constrained or overly directed may restrict the search process and discourage players from finding optimal and adaptable movement patterns.[4,12]

In the opposite extreme, practice activities that are completely random and/or excessively unstructured may be unsafe, and may also require large amounts of time before players find suitable solutions.[4] For these reasons, the role of the coach is critical in helping to design safe and appropriate practice tasks that guide players towards optimal movement patterns.[4,16]

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVING AND DOING (PERCEPTION-ACTION COUPLING)

The relationship between perceiving and doing (termed the "perception-action coupling") demonstrates that what a person perceives (via senses such as vision, hearing, and touch) will influence what that person does, and what a person does will influence what that person perceives.[16,36]

For instance, a basketball player standing on the 3-point line with the ball may use visual information to identify an open passing lane before delivering the pass.[16,36] In this situation, what the person perceived (an open passing lane) influenced the nature of the movement (the type and location of the pass).[16,36] Alternatively, if the perimeter player dribbles towards the baseline, the player may see a different passing lane.[16,36] Here, the player's movement (dribbling towards the baseline) influenced the type of information that was perceived (a different passing lane).[16,36]

The coordination patterns exhibited when performing tasks that diminish or remove the relationship between perceiving and doing, often tend to be quite different to those that occur when the same tasks are performed in their natural state[37,38] (see also[39]).

For example, when the defender is removed from a basketball shooting task, certain aspects of the shooter's action start to change, such as the release angle of the ball, compared to when the defender is present[8] (see also[40]).

Similarly, the common approach of breaking down a skill into smaller parts (such as learning to shoot a basketball by practicing the load phase in the absence of the extension and release phases) may alter many of the movement characteristics that are important for performance.[15,16,41,42]

While in some instances these changes may be relatively subtle, even small alterations to the coordination pattern in practice tasks may influence the extent to which the skill transfers into a game environment.[8,15,16,41]

It is therefore important for coaches to utilise a practice strategy that maintains the critical links between perception and action.[43,44] A useful approach for applying this strategy, while simultaneously reducing the complexity of a given task to make it easier for players to perform, is to use the concept of "task simplification".[3,16,43,45]

As the name suggests, this strategy involves either simplifying the skill itself, simplifying the environment in which the skill is performed, or a combination of both.[16,43]

Typical approaches towards task simplification often involve reducing player numbers, constraining the roles of certain players, or changing the size of the playing area.[16,46] For example, rather than practicing completely uncontested shots, players could be asked to shoot against a defender who, depending upon the skill level of the shooter, could simply stand still with a hand raised into the air for the shooter to avoid, or for more skilled shooters, could advance towards the shooter from a specified distance to defend the shot.[8,16,47]

To teach offensive decision-making to inexperienced players, practice games could be simplified by including a greater number of attackers than defenders, thereby allowing players to execute their skills with reduced defensive pressure.[16,48,49] An alternative approach could be to constrain the movements of certain players by creating a rule that only permits the defensive team to have two players inside the key at any one time.[43,48,49]

The important point is that wherever appropriate, practice activities should be designed to allow players to learn the critical links between perception and action, rather than breaking a skill into parts or removing important information sources such as defenders.[8,15,16,41,43] The ultimate aim is to help ensure that the skills acquired in practice sessions will transfer readily to a game situation.[15,16,50]

VARIABILITY

One way to promote skill acquisition is to use increased levels of variability in practice.[7,51] In this context, variability may simply be considered as the number of variations and changes that occur within a given practice activity or practice environment[52] (see also[51]). Practice activities that are low in variability tend to be very stable, highly predictable, and often quite repetitive in nature.[52]

This creates a practice environment that is not only considerably different to that of a typical basketball game, but it is also likely to result in situations where there is very little impetus for players to explore or adapt their skills.[18,53]

Conversely, practice activities that are high in variability tend to be considerably less predictable and include more frequent changes.[52] In highly variable practice tasks, performers must continually adapt their skills to cope with the constant changes.[18]

Research evidence has revealed a phenomenon referred to as "functional variability" which basically refers to the capability of highly skilled performers to make ongoing changes to a movement as it unfolds, allowing the desired outcome of the skill to be achieved with greater consistency.[16,54]

In this instance, the variability within the movement allows the performer

to adjust the execution of the skill as required.[54] In the absence of functional variability, players would be likely to experience greater difficulty in adapting to changes in the environment, thereby leading to inconsistent (and probably inaccurate) outcomes.[16,54,55] This suggests that practice sessions should provide opportunities for players to learn how to adapt their movements to cope with the subtle changes that exist in the competitive setting.[3,7,8,55]

Variability can be implemented in a number of ways but the common approaches include varying the organisation of the repetitions of the skill itself or varying the environment in which the skill is performed.[1,7,11,16]

For example, if the goal of a given practice activity is to enhance the skills of shooting, dribbling, and passing, all three skills could be organised to occur in a highly variable manner by frequently changing between the three tasks (this is also an example of what is commonly referred to as "random practice").[1,56,57] The other approach is to vary the performance environment.[11]

For example, rather than having players shoot uncontested lay-ups, the coach could elect to include a defender within the activity so that the variable movements of the defender will act to increase the variability of the activity (as well as maintain the links between perception and action to improve the likelihood of transfer to a game context).[8,13,16,58] For inexperienced players, the defender could be replaced by the coach who simply stands inside the key to provide a "static" stimulus for players to evade.[7,11,47]

The use of variable environments in practice games may also prove to be a useful strategy for promoting the development of creativity.[16,43] The increased variability may encourage players to search for a wider range of decision-making options, thus promoting more creative solutions.[59]

Research has shown that while a variable approach may result in reduced performance gains in the short-term, there are likely to be long-term gains to learning.[57,60,61] In contrast, practice activities that are low in variability, such as drills where players simply repeat the same solution over and over again with minimal changes (commonly referred to as "blocked practice"), may often result in better performance gains initially, but are less likely to provide long-term benefits that transfer into game situations.[1,57,60,61]

However, low variability activities may still represent an important practice activity[62,63] (see also[7]). For example, beginners who are attempting a skill for the first time may require more predictable and stable practice activities so that they can achieve a basic understanding of the skill without being overwhelmed.[7,47,57,62,64] The early gains achieved by low variability activities may also help players to increase their confidence, encouraging them to continue with the task.[12,65]

Once a certain degree of proficiency has been achieved, the amount of variability can be progressively increased so that the player can benefit from the enhanced learning that typically occurs with higher levels of variable practice.[7,47,57,62,63]

"CHALLENGE POINT" FRAMEWORK

One of the approaches that can be used to guide the design and implementation of practice activities is to use the challenge point framework outlined by Guadagnoli and Lee.[47] The underlying premise of the approach is based upon finding the ideal balance between two factors: the current skill level of the performer and the relative difficulty of a given task.[47]

The framework suggests that optimal learning is likely to occur when the difficulty of the task is matched to the skill level of the performer.[47] A task that is too easy or too difficult may be less beneficial for learning compared to a task that offers an optimal balance in

Evidence suggests that teaching players to use a pre-determined technique may not necessarily provide the best possible outcome for motor skill acquisition.[3,12,51,74-77]

terms of its level of challenge for a given individual.[47] Thus, to optimise learning, one of the important roles for coaches is to design practice tasks that are ideally suited to the challenge point of the players in their team.[7,47,48,66]

The challenge point concept also provides a set of guidelines that can be used to help determine the appropriate amount of variability to be used in practice activities[47] (see also[7]). A performer who is at the beginning stages of the sport may be sufficiently challenged by low levels of variability whereas an Olympic level player may only be sufficiently challenged when exposed to higher levels of variability.[7,47]

However, if that same Olympic level player is attempting to change an existing technique or learn a new skill, the optimal challenge point may be similar to that of a beginner (e.g., relatively low levels of variability).[7,47]

While this concept appears to be rather intuitive, research evidence suggests that some coaches may devote a greater proportion of practice time to activities that are less likely to benefit competitive performance[50] (see also[67]). This information suggests that coaches may be well advised to critically evaluate the content and structure of their practice sessions to determine whether principles such as challenge point could be better utilised.[12]

CONSTRAINTS-LED COACHING APPROACH

The careful manipulation of key constraints can be a versatile strategy that coaches can use to enhance skill acquisition[43,46]. Essentially, constraints are the features that guide the way in which coordination patterns are performed.[3,68] There are three categories of constraints:[3,4,68]

- task (e.g., rules, court boundaries, playing equipment)
- environment (e.g., playing surface, weather conditions), and
- performer (e.g., emotions, height).[3,4,68]

In a basketball practice setting, task constraints are arguably the easiest category to manipulate[4] in order to encourage certain types of outcomes to emerge in a practice setting.[11,46,68] For example, research has shown that simply reducing the mass of the basketball to 440 grams can significantly increase the number of one-on-one situations that occur in a junior basketball game.[69]

Varying another task constraint, in this instance, the diameter of the ring, has also been shown to influence shooting performance.[70,71] When the diameter of the ring was reduced during free throw shooting over a 10-week training program, research showed that players exhibited a significant increase in ball release angle and shooting accuracy compared to a training group who practiced using a normal sized ring.[71]

Other task constraints could also be varied by manipulating the rules or instructions used in a game.[48,58,72] For example, to encourage players to focus greater attention towards possible passing options in a practice activity, a new rule could be introduced that prevents players from dribbling the ball[73] (see also[48]). This simple change to a key task constraint could achieve a number of positive outcomes such as encouraging greater movement of offensive players, increasing the number of off-ball screens, helping to promote greater team-work, and/or reducing the reliance on dribbling.[46,73]

In a broader sense, the rule change may encourage players to explore different types of offensive and defensive solutions, helping them to find creative ways to achieve successful outcomes.[7,16,59]

COACHING THAT CATERS FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND THE DEMANDS OF COMPETITION

Given the numerous variations in physical attributes and prior experiences that exist across each player in a basketball team, it makes sense for players to learn movement patterns that are best suited to their capabilities.[3,7,54,74] Evidence suggests that teaching players to use a pre-determined technique may not necessarily provide the best possible outcome for motor skill acquisition.[3,12,51,74-77]

This does not mean that coaches should avoid helping players to find a certain type of coordination pattern.[4,9] The coach's role is to guide the learner, providing suitable opportunities for players to explore a range of different movement forms so that the acquired movement pattern is optimal for the individual.[3,7]

An important characteristic of most, if not all techniques in basketball is that the technique holds up under a range of different conditions.[10] A "perfect" technique is only of value if it allows a player to consistently achieve a desired outcome in all of the potential situations to which that person is likely to be subjected.[3,54,78]

For instance, a technique should ideally be able to cope with factors such as high levels of defensive pressure, increased fatigue, heightened anxiety, and variability in game scenarios.[10] Anecdotally, one of the common features that can be observed in the shooting technique of inexperienced players is the tendency to adopt a relatively slow shooting action see also[8]).

In the context of a game, the increased time required to perform a shot may severely restrict a player's shooting options. While undesired techniques may develop for a range of reasons, it is possible that a slowed shooting action may evolve as a result of performing large amounts of shooting practice in the absence of a defender (see[8,50]). It is therefore important for coaches to allow players to refine their technique in game-like environments, where appropriate, so that skills can become more robust to the demands of competition.[8,10,50]

FEEDBACK, INSTRUCTIONS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The information provided by coaches can have an extremely powerful influence on performance.[79-81] When given correctly, that influence can be highly beneficial; but in other situations, even relatively minor differences in the delivery of information can have a potentially negative impact.[79-81]

The following section is primarily aimed at providing coaches with a broad overview of the key considerations surrounding the use of feedback, instructions, and demonstrations when coaching basketball players.

FEEDBACK

In general, it has been suggested that feedback should only be provided when the information is likely to be of use to the performer, and when the information cannot be obtained in some other manner.[3] In situations where the coach deems that feedback is appropriate, Magill and Anderson[82] suggest that one of the important considerations is to ensure that the feedback is meaningful to the player (see also[1,3]).

That is, irrespective of the skill level of the players, coaches should determine whether the provision of feedback will be useful in helping players to enhance their performance.[82] If the information is somewhat redundant, it may be better for coaches to offer no information at all.[3]

While this statement is relatively obvious, coaches will have no doubt observed many instances where information provided to players was either completely unnecessary, or it was delivered in a way that made it difficult for the players to understand.

Magill and Anderson[82] believe that another important consideration in relation to feedback is the amount of information that is provided. They propose that only one piece of feedback should be provided to the learner to avoid overloading the individual with excessive details[82] (see also[53,83]). The logical question for coaches is how to isolate a single piece of feedback from amongst the vast multitude that could be delivered after the performance of a skill.[1,82]

The suggestion is for coaches to identify and then prioritise the underlying core components for successful completion of the skill, and use that as the basis for selecting the type of feedback that is provided[82,84] (see also[53,85]).

For a task such as basketball dribbling, the list of core components may include features such as the following:

1. Ball is able to be controlled while moving at different speeds
2. Dribbler is able to avoid a defender
3. Ball is able to be controlled equally proficiently with either hand
4. Player keeps eyes up while dribbling
5. Stance is balanced

When feedback is provided to the player learning to dribble the ball, the information is directed towards the error that is associated with the highest priority component on the list.[82] This helps to ensure that the feedback is isolated to a single component of performance, and that the chosen component is the most important aspect for enhancing the overall execution of the skill[82] (see also[86]).

In terms of the content of the feedback, research suggests that providing the learner with information on the task goal to be achieved can be more beneficial for learning compared to specific information on the underlying movement patterns required to perform the task (i.e., the process)[3,76,77,87] (see also[82]).

For example, if the coach determines that players need to snap their wrist to achieve greater backspin on the ball during the shooting action, the coach could simply ask players to shoot so that the ball spins backwards through the air (see[76]). To achieve this task goal, players must explore different movement patterns, thereby gaining valuable information regarding the underlying processes required to impart backspin on the ball.[7] The focus upon an outcome goal allows the learner to explore the necessary adjustments to the processes required to perform the coordination pattern, without being constrained by specific information on how those changes should be achieved.[3,76]

One of the critical issues surrounding the use of any form of feedback is the potential for dependency[88] (see also[1,89]). If players become overly reliant upon feedback, it is possible for performance to deteriorate when that feedback is no longer available[88] (see also[1,89]). In basketball, the excessive provision of feedback from coaches, in practice and in games, may encourage players to rely upon information that is not always available, rather than encouraging players to learn how to extract and utilise their own sources of information.[12,50,88]

For example, coaches who regularly call out the desired offensive structure to be employed by their team during the course of play in a basketball game, may be creating a situation where players learn to rely more upon the coach's interpretation of the game, rather than allowing players to learn how to "read" the game for themselves.[12,88]

Similarly, when performing a specific skill such as shooting, continuous feedback may create a situation where players become excessively reliant upon the guidance of the coach, thereby making it difficult for the player to correct the skill without the external assistance.[1,12,88]

While there are certain situations that are more likely to be susceptible to dependency than others, it is clearly

Instructions should ideally be worded in a manner that explains the outcome that is desirable, rather than explaining the outcome that needs to be avoided (see [80,101]).

important for coaches to consider the frequency with which they deliver feedback to determine whether they are inadvertently preventing players from learning how to self-correct their skills.[12,82,88,89]

One approach for avoiding dependency is to use the strategy of "self-selected feedback" which simply involves allowing players to select when they would like to receive feedback[86,90] (for other strategies, see[1,89]).

For example, the coach may explain to the team that feedback will only be provided during practice when players specifically request additional information (such as verbal feedback from the coach or visual feedback from a video replay).[86] This strategy is not only likely to help reduce the frequency of information provided during practice sessions, and hence reduce the potential for dependency, but it also has the added advantage of empowering players by engaging them in the learning process and giving them the opportunity to solve problems[86] (see also[12]).

However, when the player requires assistance, the coach is still available to help guide players to suitable solutions[86] (see also[12]).

USING QUESTIONING TO ENHANCE LEARNING

The use of suitable questions is a strategy that can be applied to encourage players to detect and correct their own errors, thereby helping to avoid an over-reliance on the coach.[12,73] It can also be used to promote discovery learning and problem-solving.[73,91] By asking players to answer carefully constructed questions about a certain event or task, coaches can create opportunities for players to solve skill-related problems concerning a range of different factors.[92]

For example, coaches may ask players to briefly explain why a defender just blocked their shot, or why they chose to pass to the post player rather than reversing the ball (see[73,91]).

Questioning should consider the capability and skill level of the performer.[7,47,93] Players who are just starting to understand the basic concepts of the sport may require different types of questions compared to players with more experience.[7,47] Beginners may be sufficiently challenged by questions related to the basic principles of basketball, whereas experienced players may require questions that challenge them to consider the game at a deeper level[47] (see also[7,93]).

USING TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

The increasing availability of technology such as video cameras and biomechanical measurement tools offers unique opportunities for coaches to provide highly detailed feedback to players.[94] However, there are some important considerations when using such forms of feedback.[95]

For instance, it is possible that the amount of information provided by video replays may be so vast that beginner players may be unable to discern many of the critical features that exist within the visual display.[95] Beginners are therefore likely to benefit from the support of a coach who can direct the attention of players to the most pertinent details required for enhancing performance on the given task.[95-97]

More experienced players are likely to be quite advanced in their comprehension of the skills and tactics of their sport[98] and so although these individuals are still likely to benefit from feedback, they may not require the same degree of involvement on the part of the coach as that required for a beginner.[1,53,95]

INSTRUCTIONS

A large proportion of the information provided by coaches is categorized as being instructional in nature.[50,67,99] This section of the chapter discusses a number of the factors that can impact

the optimal use of instructions when coaching basketball players (for reviews, see[81,100,101]).

Research has shown that when an instruction asks a person to avoid performing in a certain way, the person may, under certain circumstances, perform in a manner that was contrary to the actual instructions[80,101] (see also[102]).

For instance, a basketball player who is asked to avoid passing the ball too high to a post player during a game may in fact execute passes to the post player that are too high (see[80,101]). This phenomenon suggests that instructions should ideally be worded in a manner that explains the outcome that is desirable, rather than explaining the outcome that needs to be avoided (see[80,101]). In the previous example, a better instruction may be to simply ask the player to "pass so that the post player can easily catch the ball" (see[80,101]). Although the difference is relatively subtle, it may nonetheless result in a better outcome (see[80,101]).

When instructions include quite specific details on the types of tactical decisions that should be employed within a game, players may fail to notice other potentially important information[79,103] (see also[104,105]). In fact, evidence has shown that people will often miss an obvious opportunity to pass to a team-mate when their attention is focused towards specific tactical information, even if that information is intended to assist the player to identify available passing options.[79]

In basketball, an example of a specific tactical instruction could involve asking players to "look to pass to the player coming off the double screen" (see[79]). This may create a narrowed focus of attention, leading to situations where players fail to notice other passing opportunities.[79] The use of overly specific tactical instructions is believed to narrow the attentional focus of the performer, and this influences the capability to pick-up information that is necessary for the performer to identify a broader range of appropriate options.[59,79]

Attention-broadening instructions tend to have the opposite effect by helping players to expand their attentional focus.[59,79] An example of an attention-broadening instruction could simply involve asking players to "look for open players in offence" (see[79]).

There is also evidence to show that broad instructions may help to enhance creativity.[59] By giving instructions that are based primarily upon the overall principles that govern decision-making, rather than instructions that are overly specific, players may be encouraged to explore a larger variety of possible solutions.[59,79] For instance, asking players to use broad tactical strategies such as "look for high percentage scoring opportunities", may elicit more creative solutions compared to narrower instructions that ask players to "pass around the perimeter of the 3-point line and then look to make a pass to the post player".[59,79]

Instructions that direct players to focus upon something that is external to their body, or that is associated with the outcome or effects of a movement, have generally been shown to be more beneficial for motor learning and performance compared to instructions that direct players towards the internal features or underlying mechanics of their movements.[81,106]

In basketball, examples of externally focused instructions could include asking players to direct their attention towards the ring while shooting,[107] or to monitor the flight path of the ball as it moves through the air when attempting to receive a pass (for an example in golf, see[108]). Examples of internally focused instructions include asking players to focus upon their wrist snap when executing a shot,[107] or to focus upon the location of their feet on the floor when defending the ball carrier (for an example using a balance task, see[109]).

Basically, instructions that encourage players to focus on something that is

external to their body tend to be better than instructions that focus the attention of players towards their body movements.[81]

One of the easiest strategies for employing an external focus of attention in basketball is to provide players with instructions that emphasise the actual task goal of the skill[81] (see also[76,110]). That is, the instruction should ideally provide players with the objective to achieve, rather than the process to achieve that objective[81] (see also[111]).

For example, asking a player to shoot the ball so that it moves through the air in a high arc may be a better approach than instructions that focus the attention of the learner upon features such as elbow angles, knee bend, or wrist snap.[81,106,107]

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT LEARNING

"Implicit learning" generally refers to situations where information is acquired without the person being aware of the fact that something has been learned, and without being able to verbalise the information that was learned.[112-118] In contrast, "explicit learning" refers to situations where a person is aware of the information that has been learned, and the person is able to verbalise the information.[113-119]

Explicit learning often involves the provision of step-by-step information on the preferred movements of a task, such as delivering a series of detailed instructions to a player on how to perform a basketball free throw.[120-123] Implicitly acquired information has been shown to have a number of advantages, including better performance of the skill under fatigue[124] and greater resilience of the skill when the performer is experiencing psychological stress.[125]

In contrast, researchers have suggested that explicit learning may disrupt the motor system by encouraging learners to consciously control their movements.[116,117,119,126]

One of the easiest methods that can be used by basketball coaches to promote implicit learning is to apply the strategy of analogy learning where instructions are provided in the form of a simple analogy that summarises a vast amount of technical information.[117,120,121,125,127]
A common analogy used to teach shooting technique in basketball is to ask players to imagine that they are reaching into the top shelf of the pantry to take a biscuit/cookie from a jar.[120,121,128] This statement gives an approximate movement pattern that helps players to understand the ways in which the shooting arm and shooting hand should be moved during the execution of the shot[120,121,128] (see also[125,127]).

Importantly, such statements encapsulate much of the critical information required to perform the skill, but without delivering it in a highly explicit, step-by-step manner.[125,127]

DEMONSTRATIONS

The use of a demonstration can significantly enhance skill acquisition (for reviews of this area, see[77,111,129,130]). However, there are certain situations where a demonstration may provide no benefit at all, or could even be somewhat detrimental to the learning process.[77,131,132]

In general, demonstrations may be of particular benefit when attempting to learn a task that requires a specific form of movement patterning, or a certain series of movements[12,77,111] (see also[1,132]). In situations where the task requires the attainment of a certain outcome goal, without necessarily requiring a specific form of movement patterning (such as successfully shooting a ball into a basket), a demonstration may be less effective[12,77,111] (see also[1,132]).

Demonstrations may also act to constrain learners by encouraging them to emulate the specific movement pattern employed by the demonstrator.[12,76,77,87,131] For instance, after observing a demonstration of a particular basketball shooting technique, the learner may attempt to exactly copy the observed technique, without attempting to engage in an exploratory

process to search for a technique that is more suitable to the learner's own movement capabilities.[7,12,76,77,87]

It has therefore been suggested that demonstrations should be interspersed with periods of actual physical practice so that learners are able to devote time to solving problems and trialing different variations of the demonstrator's movements.[87,130,133,134] Another suggestion is for the quantity and timing of demonstrations to be self-selected by the learner which may reduce the overall volume of demonstrations, and may possibly fade the use of demonstrations as learning progresses[135,136] (see also[130]).

A different strategy that may encourage the learner to engage in greater problem-solving, and help to alleviate the tendency to imitate the exact technique of the demonstrator, is for coaches to focus the attention of the observer upon the intended outcome goal of the task being demonstrated[12,76] (see also[137]).

For example, when players are observing a demonstration of a shooting action, coaches may highlight the way the basketball spins through the air, rather than focusing solely upon the specific mechanics of the movement[12,77,138,139]. This may help the learner to attempt to use the demonstrator's technique as a guide towards achieving a certain movement outcome, rather than simply copying the demonstrator's process for achieving that outcome.[12,77]

Finally, by using several different demonstrators, the variations that exist in each demonstrator's movements may further encourage players to try a variety of different techniques, rather than settling upon a single, idealised movement that may not be entirely suitable for the individual[12] (see also[131]).

All reading references for 2.2 Teaching can be found on pages 44-51, at the end of this section.

2.2.2 CORRECTING TECHNIQUES ("BREAKING HABITS")

A coach will often have an athlete in their team who has poor technique (e.g. an individual skill such as shooting technique) or has a habit in how they play (e.g. a team skill such as not denying a pass on the perimeter). There may be a number of causes for a habit:

- The skill was developed through repetition without specific instruction (this is often the case with individual skills);
- Specific instruction from a previous coach (e.g. a previous coach may have specifically instructed not to deny passes on the perimeter);
- They are unaware of the "correct technique" or that their current technique is deficient;
- They lack the physical fitness to play to a certain style (arguably this is not a bad "habit").

The cause of the habit is less important than the fact that the habit exists, however. A habit is not simply "muscle memory"; it is a physical response in the brain – the connection between brain cells (the "synapse") strengthens and as we learn, the brain increases in size. The stronger the connection between cells, the more automatic is the performance of the skill until we reach the stage of "unconscious competence" when we are able to perform the skill without thinking.

Changing any technique is difficult and will take time. Below are some helpful tips on how to do it most effectively:

1. TEACH A NEW HABIT RATHER THAN CHANGE AN OLD HABIT

Rather than changing an existing habit (which, simply put, requires changing the physical connection between some brain cells and replacing it with a new connection) it will often be more effective to teach a new habit:

- Give the old technique a specific name (e.g. "Miss Shot");
- Give the new technique a specific name (e.g. "Good Shot");
- Teach the new skill as you would to a beginner;
- Use descriptive teaching points that are different to any the athlete previously used (e.g. "high elbow").

By teaching a new habit, you are creating new connections between brain cells rather than trying to change the existing (and strong) connections. Encourage the athlete in practice and in a game where appropriate (e.g. prior to a free throw) to say the new name or teaching point (e.g. "Good Shot" or "High Elbow") to themselves as this can help to change their mindset and focus them on using the new technique.

2. USE VISUALIZATION

When athletes use visualization to practice a skill it has the same effect on the brain (strengthening the connection between cells) as does physical practice. Particularly when trying to change an athlete's technique, visualization can be very effective as it enables the athlete to practice the skill without the old habit impacting upon their performance.

Effective use of visualization also helps the athlete to complete the high number of repetitions that are required to make anything a habit because it means they can do it at home, at school or anywhere that they have some time to do a focused visualization of the skill.

To help with visualization, have the athlete perform the skill with their eyes shut and concentrate on how their body feels, the position of their head, arms, legs etc. This practice will also help them to identify (by "feel") when they perform the skill incorrectly.

3. IF YOU MUST CORRECT AN OLD HABIT, CHANGE ONLY WHAT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

When working with an athlete to change how they perform a technique, change as little as possible and change whatever will give the best effect. For example, the best scorers in the world have a range of different techniques in how they shoot. Individual technique depends upon a number of factors, including flexibility and range of motion.

When trying to change shooting technique, the coach should focus on what is most important, not all the things that may be needed to replicate a "textbook" technique.

4. REASSURE THE ATHLETE THAT IT IS NORMAL TO "GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER"

Often athletes experience great frustration when trying to change their technique (particularly an individual skill) because they may go through a period where they are not as successful. For example, with shooting technique, they may go through a period where the new technique feels very awkward and even where they have less accuracy.

Feeling "awkward" is perfectly normal and can be an indication that they are moving from "unconscious incompetence" (in the new skill) to "conscious incompetence". This is to be expected and is a part of learning any new skill. Having the athlete repeat the key teaching points (e.g. "High Elbow") or name of the new skill can also help them to get to a level of consciousness.

5. EXPECT ERRORS, PARTICULARLY IN GAMES

To change or correct a technique takes a considerable number of repetitions. Some suggest that it takes 10,000 repetitions before a skill becomes "muscle memory". There is no precise calculation and it will differ between athletes.

A coach should not be surprised when an athlete is able to perform the new technique in a particularly activity but then reverts to the old technique in a game (or contested activity at practice). Learning a skill is always in context, and an athlete may reach "unconscious competence" in an isolated activity without pressure and at the same time be "consciously incompetent" in a pressured situation.

To assist the progression from executing the skill without pressure to doing so with pressure, the coach should introduce game-realistic factors as soon as possible as the athlete learns the new skill and also make contested situations in practice as "game-realistic" as possible.

6. USE VIDEO

Some athletes will be assisted by seeing video of themselves performing the skill at various stages of learning the skill.

First, seeing video may assist them to appreciate that they are executing the skill incorrectly. This may be done by also showing them video of the skill being properly executed or discussing with them the important elements of a skill (e.g. "high elbow") and then comparing their performance to that.

Secondly, as the athlete is learning the new technique it may be useful for them to see examples (in practice or a game) so that they can see when they have done it correctly and when they have reverted to their previous habit. This can be particularly useful for team skills, which often involve positioning on the court rather than something the athlete can "feel" (e.g. elbow position after shooting).

7. SET "PROCESS" GOALS

As the athlete practices it is important that they experience "success". With shooting, this can be seen as whether or not the shot goes in, however in the context of correcting technique it should be more about whether the new technique was used (this is an example of a "process"goal rather than an "outcome" goal).

The coach must give feedback on the "process" goals, which initially may require a high degree of feedback. For example, when an athlete learns to shoot a lay-up with their non-preferred hand they may both have the footwork incorrect and shoot with the wrong hand! The coach may require them to complete 10 lay-ups with correct footwork, regardless of whether or not the shot goes in. At the early stages the coach may need to tell the athlete whether or not the footwork is correct and they will then progress to when they know they have done it wrong.

As the athlete becomes more proficient at the process goals, outcome goals can also be introduced (e.g. correct footwork is 1 point, correct footwork and score is 3 points, incorrect footwork is -1 point whether or not the shot goes in).

FOLLOW-UP

1. Reflect on a particular skill (either an individual or team skill).
   a. How did you learn that skill (as a player)?
   b. How did you first learn to teach that skill?
   c. Reflect upon how you now teach that skill and the extent to which it has been influenced by factors other than how you were taught.
   d. Discuss with another coaching colleague how they teach the skill – are there any differences?
2. Choose 2 or 3 training sessions that you delivered recently. How "game-realistic" were each of the activities that you used? If upon reflection you believe some were not "game-realistic", how well does your team perform those skills in games?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague from another sport what steps they take when they want to alter a player's technique. Discuss any discrepancy in approach from what you would do.
4. Review a recent practice plan. How would you alter the activities having now read the article on skill acquisition?

REFERENCES

1. Magill, R. A., & Anderson, D. I. (2014). Motor learning and control: Concepts and applications (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
2. Newell, K. M. (1985). Coordination, control and skill. In D. Goodman, R. B. Wilberg & I. M. Franks (Eds.), Differing perspectives in motor learning, memory, and control (pp. 295-317). Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers.
3. Davids, K., Button, C., & Bennett, S. (2008). Dynamics of skill acquisition: A constraints-led approach. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
4. Handford, C., Davids, K., Bennett, S., & Button, C. (1997). Skill acquisition in sport: Some applications of an evolving practice ecology. Journal of Sports Sciences, 15, 621-640.
5. Newell, K. M., Liu, Y.-T., & Mayer-Kress, G. (2001). Time scales in motor learning and development. Psychological Review, 108, 57-82.
6. Scully, D. M., & Newell, K. M. (1985). Observational learning and the acquisition of motor skills: Toward a visual perception perspective. Journal of Human Movement Studies, 11, 169-186.
7. Davids, K., Araújo, D., Hristovski, R., Passos, P., & Chow, J. Y. (2012). Ecological dynamics and motor learning in sport. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 112-130). London: Routledge.
8. Rojas, F. J., Cepero, M., Oña, A., & Gutierrez, M. (2000). Kinematic adjustments in the basketball jump shot against an opponent. Ergonomics, 43, 1651-1660.
9. Newell, K. M. (2003). Change in motor learning: A coordination and control perspective. Motriz, Rio Claro, 9, 1-6.
10. Araújo, D., & Davids, K. (2011). What exactly is acquired during skill acquisition? Journal of Consciousness Studies, 18, 7-23.
11. Chow, J. Y., Davids, K., Button, C., Shuttleworth, R., Renshaw, I., & Araújo, D. (2006). Nonlinear pedagogy: A constraints-led framework for understanding emergence of game play and movement skills. Non-Linear Dynamics, Psychology and Life Sciences, 10, 71-103.
12. Williams, A. M., & Hodges, N. J. (2005). Practice, instruction and skill acquisition in soccer: Challenging tradition. Journal of Sports Sciences, 23, 637-650.
13. Araújo, D., Davids, K., Bennett, S. J., Button, C., & Chapman, G. (2004). Emergence of sports skills under constraints. In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 409-433). London: Routledge.
14. Esteves, P. T., de Oliveira, R. F., & Araújo, D. (2011). Posture-related affordances guide attacks in basketball. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 12, 639-644.
15. Pinder, R. A., Davids, K., Renshaw, I., & Araújo, D. (2011). Representative learning design and functionality of research and practice in sport. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 33, 146-155.
16. Renshaw, I., Davids, K., Shuttleworth, R., & Chow, J. Y. (2009). Insights from ecological psychology and dynamic systems theory can underpin a philosophy of coaching. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 40, 580-602.
17. Fitts, P.M. & Posner, M. I. (1967). Human performance. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

18. Davids, K., Araújo, D., Button, C., & Renshaw, I. (2007). Degenerate brains, indeterminate behaviour; and representative tasks. In G. Tenenbaum & R. C. Eklund (Eds.), Handbook of sport psychology (3rd ed.). London: John Wiley & Sons.
19. Starkes, J. L., & Ericsson, K. A. (Eds.). (2003). Expert performance in sports: Advances in research on sport expertise. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
20. Didierjean, A., & Marmèche, E. (2005). Anticipatory representation of visual basketball scenes by novice and expert players. Visual Cognition, 12, 265-283.
21. Farrow, D., McCrae, J., Gross, J., & Abernethy, B. (2010). Revisiting the relationship between pattern recall and anticipatory skill. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 41, 91-106.
22. Gorman, A. D., Abernethy, B., & Farrow, D. (2012). Classical pattern recall tests and the prospective nature of expert performance. The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 65, 1151-1160.
23. Starkes, J., Allard, F., Lindley, S., & O'Reilly, K. (1994). Abilities and skill in basketball. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 25, 249-265.
24. Williams, M., & Davids, K. (1995). Declarative knowledge in sport: A by-product of experience or a characteristic of expertise? Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 17, 259-275.
25. Allard, F., Graham, S., & Paarsalu, M. E. (1980). Perception in sport: Basketball. Journal of Sport Psychology, 2, 14-21.
26. Gorman, A. D., Abernethy, B., & Farrow, D. (2013). Is the relationship between pattern recall and decision-making influenced by anticipatory recall? The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 66, 2219-2236.
27. Abernethy, B., Farrow, D., Gorman, A. D., & Mann, D. L. (2012). Anticipatory behaviour and expert performance. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 287-305). London: Routledge.
28. Gobet, F., & Simon, H. A. (1996). Templates in chess memory: A mechanism for recalling several boards. Cognitive Psychology, 31, 1-40.
29. Williams, A. M., Ward, P., & Smeeton, N. J. (2004). Perceptual and cognitive expertise in sport: Implications for skill acquisition and performance enhancement. In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 328-347). London: Routledge.
30. Alain, C., & Proteau, L. (1980). Decision making in sport. In C. H. Nadeau, W. R. Halliwell, K. M. Newell, & G. C. Roberts (Eds.), Psychology of motor behaviour and sport (pp. 465-477). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
31. Ward, P., & Williams, A. M. (2003). Perceptual and cognitive skill development in soccer: The multidimensional nature of expert performance. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 25, 93-111.
32. Williams, A. M., & Ward, P. (2003). Perceptual expertise: Development in sport. In J. L. Starkes, & K. A. Ericsson (Eds.), Expert performance in sports: Advances in research on sport expertise (pp. 219–249). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
33. Ericsson, K. A. (2006). The influence of experience and deliberate practice on the development of superior expert performance. In K. A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P. J. Feltovich, & R. R. Hoffman (Eds.), The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance (pp. 683-703). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
34. Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. Psychological Review, 100, 363-406.

35. Barton, S. (1994). Chaos, self-organization, and psychology. American Psychologist, 49, 5-14.
36. Gibson, J. J. (1979). The ecological approach to visual perception. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
37. Farrow, D., & Abernethy, B. (2003). Do expertise and the degree of perception-action coupling affect natural anticipatory performance? Perception, 32, 1127-1139.
38. Pinder, R. A., Renshaw, I., & Davids, K. (2009). Information-movement coupling in developing cricketers under changing ecological practice constraints. Human Movement Science, 28, 468-479.
39. Travassos, B., Duarte, R., Vilar, L., Davids, K., & Araújo, D. (2012). Practice task design in team sports: Representativeness enhanced by increasing opportunities for action. Journal of Sports Sciences, 30, 1447-1454.
40. Farrow, D., Pyne, D., & Gabbett, T. (2008). Skill and physiological demands of open and closed training drills in Australian football. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 3, 485-495.
41. Davids, K., Kingsbury, D., Bennett, S., & Handford, C. (2001). Information-movement coupling: Implications for the organization of research and practice during skill acquisition of self-paced extrinsic timing skills. Journal of Sports Sciences, 19, 117-127.
42. Renshaw, I., Oldham, A. R. H., Davids, K., & Golds, T. (2007). Changing ecological constraints of practice alters coordination of dynamic interceptive actions. European Journal of Sport Science, 7, 157-167.
43. Renshaw, I., Chow, J. Y., Davids, K., & Hammond, J. (2010). A constraints-led perspective to understanding skill acquisition and game play: A basis for integration of motor learning theory and physical education praxis? Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 15, 117-137.
44. Renshaw, I., Oldham, A. R., & Bawden, M. (2012). Nonlinear pedagogy underpins intrinsic motivation in sports coaching. The Open Sports Sciences Journal, 5, 88-99.
45. Davids, K. (2010). The constraints-based approach to motor learning: Implications for a non-linear pedagogy in sport and physical education. In I. Renshaw, K. Davids, & G. J. P. Savelsbergh (Eds.), Motor learning in practice: A constraints-led approach (pp. 3-16). London: Routledge.
46. Renshaw, I., Davids, K., & Savelsbergh, G. J. P. (Eds.). (2010). Motor learning in practice: A constraints-led approach. London: Routledge.
47. Guadagnoli, M. A., & Lee, T. D. (2004). Challenge point: A framework for conceptualizing the effects of various practice conditions in motor learning. Journal of Motor Behaviour, 36, 212-224.
48. Passos, P., Araújo, D., Davids, K., & Shuttleworth, R. (2008). Manipulating constraints to train decision making in rugby union. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 3, 125-140.
49. Passos, P., Araújo, D., Davids, K., & Shuttleworth, R. (2010). Manipulating tasks constraints to improve tactical knowledge and collective decision-making in rugby union. In I. Renshaw, K. Davids, & G. J. P. Savelsbergh (Eds.), Motor learning in practice: A constraints-led approach (pp. 120-130). London: Routledge.
50. Ford, P. R., Yates, I., & Williams, A. M. (2010). An analysis of practice activities and instructional behaviours used by youth soccer coaches during practice: Exploring the link between science and application. Journal of Sports Sciences, 28, 483-495.

51. Schöllhorn, W. I., Beckman, H., Michelbrink, M., Sechelmann, M., Trockel, M., & Davids, K. (2006). Does noise provide a basis for the unification of motor learning theories? International Journal of Sport Psychology, 37, 186-206.
52. Rose, D. J., & Christina, R. W. (2006). A multilevel approach to the study of motor control and learning (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Pearson & Benjamin Cummings.
53. Schmidt, R. A., & Wrisberg, C. A. (2004). Motor learning and performance: A problem-based learning approach (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
54. Davids, K., Glazier, P., Araújo, D., & Bartlett, R. (2003). Movement systems as dynamical systems: The functional role of variability and its implications for sports medicine. Sports Medicine, 33, 245-260.
55. Wilson, C., Simpson, S. E., Van Emmerik, R. E. A., & Hamill, J. (2008). Coordination variability and skill development in expert triple jumpers. Sports Biomechanics, 7, 2-9.
56. Goode, S., & Magill, R. A. (1986). Contextual interference effects in learning three badminton serves. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 57, 308-314.
57. Magill, R. A., & Hall, K. G. (1990). A review of the contextual interference effect in motor skill acquisition. Human Movement Science, 9, 241-289.
58. Cordovil, R., Araújo, D., Davids, K., Gouveia, L., Barreiros, J., Fernandes, O., & Serpa, S. (2009). The influence of instructions and body-scaling as constraints on decision-making processes in team sports. European Journal of Sport Science, 9, 169-179.
59. Memmert, D. (2007). Can creativity be improved by an attention-broadening training program? An exploratory study focusing on team sports. Creativity Research Journal, 19, 281-291.
60. Brady, F. (1998). A theoretical and empirical review of the contextual interference effect and the learning of motor skills. Quest, 50, 266-293.
61. Lee, T. D. (2012). Contextual interference: Generalizability and limitations. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 79-93). London: Routledge.
62. Shea, C. H., Kohl, R., & Indermill, C. (1990). Contextual interference: Contributions of practice. Acta Psychologica, 73, 145-157.
63. Wulf, G., & Shea, C. H. (2002). Principles derived from the study of simple skills do not generalize to complex skill learning. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 9, 185-211.
64. Hebert, E. P., Landin, D., & Solmon, M. A. (1996). Practice schedule effects on the performance and learning of low- and high-skilled students: An applied study. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 67, 52-58.
65. Simon, D. A., & Bjork, R. A. (2001). Metacognition in motor learning. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 27, 907-912.
66. Handford, C. (2006). Serving up variability and stability. In K. Davids, S. Bennett, & K. M. Newell (Eds.), Movement system variability (pp. 73-84). Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics.
67. Partington, M., & Cushion, C. (2013). An investigation of the practice activities and coaching behaviours of professional top-level youth soccer coaches. Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports, 23, 374-382.
68. Newell, K. M. (1986). Constraints on the development of coordination. In M. G. Wade & H. T. A. Whiting (Eds.), Motor skill acquisition in children: Aspects of coordination and control (pp. 341-360). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff.

69. Arias, J. L., Argudo, F. M., & Alonso, J. I. (2012). Effect of the ball mass on the one-on-one game situation in 9-11 year old boys' basketball. European Journal of Sport Science, 12, 225-230.
70. Khlifa, R., Aouadi, R., Hermassi, S., Chelly, M. S., Jlid, C., & Gabbett, T. J. (2012). Kinematic adjustments in the basketball free throw performed with a reduced hoop diameter rim. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 2, 371–381.
71. Khlifa, R., Aouadi, R., Shephard, R., Chelly, M. S., Hermassi, S., & Gabbett, T. J. (2013). Effects of a shoot training programme with a reduced hoop diameter rim on free-throw performance and kinematics in young basketball players. Journal of Sports Sciences, 31, 497-504.
72. Dellal, A., Chamari, K., Owen, A. L., Wong, D. P., Lago-Penas, C., & Hill-Haas, S. (2011). Influence of technical instructions on the physiological and physical demands of small-sided soccer games. European Journal of Sport Science, 11, 341-346.
73. Martens, R. (2012). Successful coaching (4th ed.). Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics.
74. Brisson, T. A., & Alain, C. (1996). Should common optimal movement patterns be identified as the criterion to be achieved? Journal of Motor Behaviour, 28, 211-223.
75. Glazier, P. Davids, K., Renshaw, I., & Button, C. (2005). Uncovering the secrets of the Don: Bradman reassessed. Sport Health, 22, 16-21.
76. Hodges, N. J., & Franks, I. M. (2001). Learning a coordination skill: Interactive effects of instruction and feedback. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 72, 132-142.
77. Hodges, N. J., & Franks, I. M. (2002). Modelling coaching practice: The role of instruction and demonstration. Journal of Sports Sciences, 20, 793-811.
78. Turner, A., & Martinek, T. J. (1999). An investigation into teaching games for understanding: Effects on skill, knowledge, and game play. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 70, 286-296.
79. Memmert, D., & Furley, P. (2007). "I spy with my little eye!": Breadth of attention, inattentional blindness, and tactical decision making in team sports. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 29, 365-381.
80. Wegner, D. M., Ansfield, M., & Pilloff, D. (1998). The putt and the pendulum: Ironic effects of the mental control of action. Psychological Science, 9, 196-199.
81. Wulf, G. (2013). Attentional focus and motor learning: a review of 15 years. International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 6, 77-104.
82. Magill, R. A., & Anderson, D. I. (2012). The roles and uses of augmented feedback in motor skill acquisition. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 3-21). London: Routledge.
83. Ives, J. C. (2014). Motor behaviour: Connecting mind and body for optimal performance. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Health – Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
84. Weeks, D. L., & Kordus, R. N. (1998). Relative frequency of knowledge of performance and motor skill learning. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 69, 224-230.
85. Arend, S., & Higgins, J. R. (1976). A strategy for the classification, subjective analysis, and observation of human movement. Journal of Human Movement Studies, 2, 36-52.

86. Janelle, C. M., Barba, D. A., Frehlich, S. G., Tennant, L. K., & Cauraugh, J. H. (1997). Maximizing performance feedback effectiveness through videotape replay and a self-controlled learning environment. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 68, 269-279.
87. Hodges, N. J., & Franks, I. M. (2004). Instructions, demonstrations and the learning process: Creating and constraining movement options. In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 145-174). London: Routledge.
88. Salmoni, A. W., Schmidt, R. A., & Walter, C. B. (1984). Knowledge of results and motor learning: A review and critical reappraisal. Psychological Bulletin, 95, 355-386.
89. Wulf, G., & Shea, C. H. (2004). Understanding the role of augmented feedback: The good, the bad and the ugly. In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 121-144). London: Routledge.
90. Chiviacowsky, S., Wulf, G., Laroque de Medeiros, F. L., Kaefer, A., & Tani, G. (2008). Learning benefits of self-controlled knowledge of results in 10-year-old children. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 79, 405-410.
91. Chambers, K. L., & Vickers, J. N. (2006). Effects of bandwidth feedback and questioning on the performance of competitive swimmers. The Sport Psychologist, 20, 184-197.
92. Liu, J., & Wrisberg, C. A. (1997). The effect of knowledge of results delay and the subjective estimation of movement form on the acquisition and retention of a motor skill. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 68, 145-151.
93. Sellappah, S., Hussey, T., Blackmore, A. M., & McMurray, A. (1998). The use of questioning strategies by clinical teachers. Journal of advanced Nursing, 28, 142-148.
94. Williams, A. M., & Ericsson, K. A. (2005). Perceptual-cognitive expertise in sport: Some considerations when applying the expert performance approach. Human Movement Science, 24, 283-307.
95. Rothstein, A. L., & Arnold, R. K. (1976). Bridging the gap: Application of research on videotape feedback and bowling. Motor Skills: Theory into Practice, 1, 36-61.
96. Guadagnoli, M., Holcomb, W., & Davis, M. (2002). The efficacy of video feedback for learning the golf swing. Journal of Sports Sciences, 20, 615-622.
97. Kernodle, M. W., & Carlton, L. G. (1992). Information feedback and the learning of multiple-degree-of-freedom activities. Journal of Motor Behaviour, 24, 187-196.
98. McPherson, S. L. (2000). Expert-novice differences in planning strategies during collegiate singles tennis competition. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 22, 39-62.
99. Cushion, C. J., & Jones, R. L. (2001). A systematic observation of professional top-level youth soccer coaches. Journal of Sport Behaviour, 24, 354-376.
100. Memmert, D. (2009). Pay attention! A review of visual attentional expertise in sport. International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 2, 119-138.
101. Wegner, D. M. (1994). Ironic processes of mental control. Psychological Review, 101, 34-52.
102. Wegner, D. M., Schneider, D. J., Carter, S. R., III, & White, T. L. (1987). Paradoxical effects of thought suppression. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53, 5-13.

103. Furley, P., Memmert, D., & Heller, C. (2010). The dark side of visual awareness in sport: Inattentional blindness in a real-world basketball task. Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics, 72, 1327-1337.
104. Simons, D. J., & Chabris, C. F. (1999). Gorillas in our midst: Sustained inattentional blindness for dynamic events. Perception, 28, 1059-1074.
105. Simons, D. J., & Levin, D. T. (1997). Change blindness. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 7, 261-267.
106. Wulf, G., & Prinz, W. (2001). Directing attention to movement effects enhances learning: A review. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 8, 648-660.
107. Zachry, T., Wulf, G., Mercer, J., & Bezodis, N. (2005). Increased movement accuracy and reduced EMG activity as the result of adopting an external focus of attention. Brain Research Bulletin, 67, 304-309.
108. Bell, J. J., & Hardy, J. (2009). Effects of attentional focus on skilled performance in golf. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 21, 163-177.
109. Wulf G., HößM & Prinz, W. (1998). Instructions for motor learning: Differential effects if internal versus external focus of attention. Journal of Motor Behaviour, 30, 169-179.
110. Jackson, R. C., Ashford, K. J., & Norsworthy, G. (2006). Attentional focus, dispositional reinvestment, and skilled motor performance under pressure. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 28, 49-68.
111. Ashford, D., Bennett, S. J., & Davids, K. (2006). Observational modeling effects for movement dynamics and movement outcome measures across differing task constraints: A meta-analysis. Journal of Motor Behaviour, 38, 185-205.
112. Berry, D. C., & Dienes, Z. (1993). Implicit learning: Theoretical and empirical issues. Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
113. Cleeremans, A., Destrebecqz, A., & Boyer, M. (1998). Implicit learning: News from the front. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 2, 406-416.
114. Jackson, R. C., & Farrow, D. (2005). Implicit perceptual training: How, when, and why? Human Movement Science, 24, 308-325.
115. Magill, R. A. (1998). Knowledge is more than we can talk about: Implicit learning in motor skill acquisition. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 69, 104-110.
116. Masters, R. S. W. (1992). Knowledge, knerves and know-how: The role of explicit versus implicit knowledge in the breakdown of a complex motor skill under pressure. British Journal of Psychology, 83, 343-358.
117. Masters, R. S. W., & Poolton, J. M. (2012). Advances in implicit motor learning. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 59-75). London: Routledge.
118. Seger, C. A. (1994). Implicit learning. Psychological Bulletin, 115, 163-196.
119. Masters, R. S. W., & Maxwell, J. P. (2004). Implicit motor learning, reinvestment and movement disruption: What you don't know won't hurt you? In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 207–228). London: Routledge.
120. Lam, W. K., Maxwell, J. P., & Masters, R. (2009). Analogy learning and the performance of motor skills under pressure. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 31, 337-357.
121. Lam, W. K., Maxwell, J. P., & Masters, R. S. W. (2009). Analogy versus explicit learning of a modified basketball shooting task: Performance and kinematic outcomes. Journal of Sports Sciences, 27, 179-191.

122. Liao, C. M., & Masters, R. S. W. (2002). Self-focused attention and performance failure under psychological stress. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 24, 289–305.

123. Masters, R. S. W., Poolton, J. M., Maxwell, J. P., & Raab, M. (2008). Implicit motor learning and complex decision making in time-constrained environments. Journal of Motor behaviour, 40, 71-79.

124. Masters, R. S. W., Poolton, J. M., & Maxwell, J. P. (2008). Stable implicit processes despite aerobic locomotor fatigue. Consciousness and Cognition, 17, 335-338.

125. Liao, C. M., & Masters, R. S. W. (2001). Analogy learning: A means to implicit motor learning. Journal of Sports Sciences, 19, 307–319.

126. Masters, R., & Maxwell, J. (2008). The theory of reinvestment. International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 1, 160-183.

127. Masters, R. S. W. (2000). Theoretical aspects of implicit learning in sport. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 31, 530–541.

128. Krause, J. V., Meyer, D., & Meyer, J. (1999). Basketball skills & drills (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

129. Horn, R. R., & Williams, A. M. (2004). Observational learning: Is it time we took another look? In A. M. Williams & N. J. Hodges (Eds.), Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (pp. 175-206). London: Routledge.

130. Ong, N. T., & Hodges, N. J. (2012). Mixing it up a little: How to schedule observational practice. In N. J. Hodges & A. M. Williams (Eds.). Skill acquisition in sport: Research, theory and practice (2nd ed.) (pp. 22-39). London: Routledge.

131. Ashford, D., Davids, K., & Bennett, S. J. (2007). Developmental effects influencing observational modelling: A meta-analysis. Journal of Sports Sciences, 25, 547-558.

132. Magill, R. A., & Schoenfelder-Zohdi, B. (1996). A visual model and knowledge of performance as sources of information for learning a rhythmic gymnastics skill. International Journal of Sport Psychology, 27, 7-22.

133. Shea, C. H., Wright, D. L., Wulf, G., & Whitacre, C. (2000). Physical and observational practice afford unique learning opportunities. Journal of Motor Behaviour, 32, 27-36.

134. Weeks, D. L., & Anderson, L. P. (2000). The interaction of observational learning with overt practice: Effects on motor skill learning. Acta Psychologica, 104, 259-271.

135. Wrisberg, C. A., & Pein, R. L. (2002). Note on learners' control of the frequency of model presentation during skill acquisition. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 94, 792-794.

136. Wulf, G., Raupach, M., & Pfeiffer, F. (2005). Self-controlled observational practice enhances learning. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 76, 107-111.

137. Horn, R. R., Williams, A. M., & Scott, M. A. (2002). Learning from demonstrations: The role of visual search during observational learning from video and point-light models. Journal of Sports Sciences, 20, 253-269.

138. Hodges, N. J., Hayes, S., Breslin, G., & Williams, A. M. (2005). An evaluation of the minimal constraining information during movement observation and reproduction. Acta Psychologica, 119, 264-282.

139. Hodges, N. J., Williams, A. M., Hayes, S. J., & Breslin, G. (2007). What is modelled during observational learning? Journal of Sports Sciences, 25, 531-545

2.3 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE SESSIONS

2.3.1 CONDUCTING THE SESSION - MAXIMISE SKILL TRANSFER BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

MAXIMISE SKILL TRANSFER

Most coaches will have experienced frustration where a team performs a particular skill well in a particular activity (e.g. passing) but then in a subsequent activity they perform the same skill poorly (e.g. poor passes in a shooting activity).

The transfer of skills from one activity to another (and from practice to practice and from practice to a game) is the coach's ultimate goal! When there is a lack of skill transfer it may indicate that the players are still at a stage of "incompetence" in learning the skill – it is important for the coach to remember that this is an important stage in learning any skill.

This probably means that the coach needs to be explicit about the execution of the skill in the new activity by:

- having a teaching point in regards to the skill (i.e. "good passes make good shooters");
- varying the rules to emphasise the skill (e.g. deduct a point if the pass to the shooter was poor, regardless of whether or not the shot went in).

The following approaches can also help skill transfer to occur:

- Progressively modify an activity to add elements to it;
- Conduct an activity that builds upon the skills from an earlier activity close to when the earlier activity was done;
- Use "cue words" in each activity, to remind players of the key teaching points of the earlier activity without needing to stop the latter activity;
- Do the basic activity (e.g. passing) for a short period of time, then move to a more complicated activity (e.g. shooting drill), then return to the basic activity. Then move to another complicated activity that uses the same basic skill;
- Ask players to identify what they did poorly in the more complicated activity and then have them identify what needs to be done better (directing their attention to the earlier activity as necessary);
- Set goals in the more complicated activity that specifically refer to the basic activity;
- Select players that performed the basic activity well, praise them for doing that and then use them to demonstrate the more complicated activity - again, praising them if (hopefully when) they perform the skill well in the demonstration.

What coaches should avoid is simply stopping the more complicated activity and speaking at length to the players about their lack of skill transfer. The coach's goal should be to focus the attention of the athletes on transferring the skill from one activity to another and then to provide lots of opportunity to do that.

DEMONSTRATION RATHER THAN DICTATION!

Young players tend to learn through imitation – they will constantly strive to emulate their sporting heroes. For this reason, modelling is a very useful strategy both in strengthening the players' motivation to learn and also showing them what is to be learned.

Basically, modelling consists of presenting the player or the team with a role model as an example to imitate, emphasising or demonstrating the specific behaviour to be imitated.

For example, the coach of a mini-basketball team teaching a chest pass could:

1. Describe the skill:
    - start with your hands on the side of the ball, thumbs at the back pointing toward each other;
    - step forward;
    - at the same time, push both arms forward;
    - finish with straight arms (elbows locked), thumbs pointing to the ground and fingers pointing to the person you were throwing to.
2. Throw a chest pass themselves (using the technique described above) and emphasizing the specific teaching points (thumbs pointing at each other, step forward, thumbs down and fingers point);
3. Have one of the players perform the skill, whilst the coach describes each step.

Often, showing the players (and then giving them a chance to do it) will be the most effective way to teach.

When using role models to demonstrate a skill, a distinction should be made between two types of role models: expert models and mastery models. Expert models are prestigious players or teams. Mastery models are players or teams closer to the players themselves who, although not yet recognised experts, have a higher skill level than the players being coached.

For example: an international player could be an expert model, while a player on a cadet team (15/16-year-olds) who was on the 13/14-year-old team in the same club two years earlier, could be a good mastery model.

The example of an expert model can be very motivating at first, but if it is a superior player who is too distant, the players may consider imitation of this model impossible. For this reason, it is a good idea to use expert models to increase the players' motivation and at the same time, find mastery models that the players identify with. In this way, interest in imitating the model is linked with the perception that it is really possible to imitate.

Thus, before starting an activity, the coach can demonstrate a specific movement for the players to imitate indicating, at the same time, that this is one of the fundamentals most often used by a famous player (as long as this is true). This strategy can be very useful for young players.

Sometimes, models can be found within the team itself. In fact, many players learn by observing and imitating their teammates.

KEEPING A RECORD

At times, it can be useful to record either the team's performance or the performance of individual players doing the activity. It can also help them concentrate when they know a record is being kept.

For example, the coach may record, on a board or a sheet of paper, the times that each target behaviour is performed during a drill (specific passes, blocks, shots, etc.). In order to achieve this positive effect, the criteria to be used for recording should be very clear.

When dealing with behaviours to be learned, the criteria selected should refer to the players' specific behaviour, rather than the results obtained.

For instance, a record can be kept of the number of times 15/16-year-olds screen correctly (behaviour), regardless of whether the screen results in a basket (the result of the behaviour). In this way, the players will concentrate more intensely on the target behaviour of the drill which, in this case, is screening.

However, when dealing with the repetitive practice of behaviours that have already been mastered, it might be more appropriate to record the results of such behaviours as a way of measuring their performance. However, any measurement should always be based on the result of the behaviour that the players are working on.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Have a coaching colleague observe 2 or 3 practice sessions and ask them to comment upon whether they believe there was a good level of skill transfer between activities and between training sessions.
2. Discuss with your colleague what you could alter to improve the level of skill transfer.

2.4 COMMUNICATION

2.4.1 COMMUNICATION WITH ADMINISTRATORS

Coaches are usually focused on the on-court performance of the team and the many factors that can impact that. In that focus, they often forget the importance of maintaining good communication with the administrators of the club.

Often, administrators relay messages that the coach is unhappy about (e.g. players are unavailable for practice because of sponsor commitments, a practice venue is unavailable, etc.), but having a good relationship with the club administrators is important.

The following are some considerations in developing a good relationship with administrators:

- Don't just speak to administrators when you want something. Take the time to get to know them. Often, administrators are involved in sport because they are passionate about the sport – if that's the case, talk to them about how the team is going;
- Say "please" and "thank you" and listen more than you speak;
- Understand that what is a high priority for the team or coach may be only one of a number of competing priorities that the administrator is dealing with – the better the relationship the coach has with administrators, the more likely that they will put other matters aside to assist the coach;
- When asked to do something, find ways to be able to do it rather than reasons not to do it;
- Understand that when an administrator has bad news it may be because there are factors that are out of their control. Take the time to understand what pressures they are under and discuss with them whether there are other options that could be explored;
- If incidents occur (or mistakes are made) notify administrators as soon as possible. It is far better that they hear about incidents from the coach than from parents or the media.
- In many clubs the administrators are volunteers who will have limited time, balanced around their other commitments. Give them as much notice as possible when you require something.

2.4.2 REPRESENTING THE CLUB

A coach may represent their club in many forums such as media interviews, presenting at coaching clinics and during games, and the coach's contract (or code of conduct when a volunteer) will often require that the coach does not bring the club (or the sport) into "disrepute".

As a representative of the club, that coach should not contradict decisions that the club has made and if the coach disagrees with any decisions they should raise that within the appropriate channels in the club. However, any public comments should support the decision that has been made. Particularly if a decision is seen to be contentious, media will often ask questions designed to have the coach disagree and therefore create a controversy. Such questions can be answered by reiterating that the club has made the decision.

Coaches need to understand that even if they purport to give a personal view, people will often still link it to the club. This is particularly relevant on social media platforms (such as Twitter or Facebook) and coaches should recognize that whatever they post will be read as being by them as a representative of the club.

2.4.3 CONTACT WITH SENIOR ATHLETES

The relationship between a coach and adult athletes is similar to a manager and their staff in a workplace. A high-performing team will be characterized by respect and a sense of purpose being shared between the coach and the players.

This does not mean that the coach is necessarily friends with the players and they may not socialize with the players outside of team commitments. At some stage the coach may need to discipline, or even dismiss, players and this can test the strength of even the best of friendships. It is not that coaches and players cannot be friends, however many coaches prefer to keep the relationship on a more business-like level.

The players need the coach to care about them as people, not just as an athletes. Senior players usually want to hear news (particularly bad news) from the coach, not some delegate, and senior players usually want to have input into decisions about the team. The extent to which the coach is willing to do this will depend upon their coaching style and personality.

Increasingly, people connect and communicate electronically through social media platforms and the coach must decide whether or not they wish to do so with their athletes. Some coaches will do so as they feel it gives them an insight into the player's personality and lives. Other coaches choose not to do so, preferring not to mix social and business relationships.

FOLLOW-UP

1. How well do you keep club administrators informed about your program?
2. If one of your athletes was injured at practice when they slipped in a puddle of water on the floor, who would you inform? How would you do this?
3. Discuss with a coaching colleague to what extent you would communicate differently with senior players than you would with junior players.
4. Does your club have a code of conduct for coaches? What obligation does it place upon you in relation to speaking about the program?

2.5 REVIEWING THE TEAM

2.5.1 ESTABLISHING AND EVALUATING KPIS

It is impossible to know when a journey has ended unless you know what your destination was. Similarly, a team's success depends upon the goals that are set for a team to achieve. A coach must clearly articulate and communicate the goals they have for a team so that their performance can be assessed according to these criteria.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are simply the criteria by which success (and progress) can be measured. It is unrealistic to simply adopt a singular KPI of winning the championship. Only one team will win the championship and failing to do so does not mean that the team did not experience some success.

Where a team does not win the championship, having other KPIs will enable the coach to evaluate whether the team is on the right path and can legitimately contest for a championship in the future or whether changes need to be made.

The coach should select KPIs that measure the effectiveness of the game style utilized by the team. For example:

- Shot selection – where on the court shots are being taken, where is the opponent shooting from, are the team's "key scorers" the players taking the most shots;
- Tempo of game – number of shots taken, time taken to get the ball into front court;
- Ball movement – number of assists, number of "score involvements"[3] and "scoring opportunities"[4];
- Responding to trends – how well does the team defend common offensive patterns of play used by opponents;
- Defensive assists – number of times the team stops their opponent from scoring (either a missed shot or a "non shot") through team defence (double-team, defensive rotation etc);
- Open shots – how often do opponents take "open" or uncontested shots;
- Effective ball use – when in the shot clock is the team shooting, how many shots are taken in "broken play" (e.g. following an opponent's turnover or an offensive rebound) compared with how many shots result from use of the team's offensive rules.

3 "Score involvement" is a pass that contributes to the team scoring. For example, a player who is double-teamed may pass to a teammate who then makes a second pass to a teammate who scores. Only the second pass is regarded as an assist, but the first pass is a "score involvement"

4 "Scoring opportunity" is when the team takes a "good shot" (as defined by the coach) regardless of whether or not the shot is made. This can be contrasted with the total number of shots taken.

Often the official game stats are not sufficient for assessing the team's performance, and the coach will also need to determine how they will obtain the data that they are looking for. They may delegate collecting or recording the information to an assistant coach (or even a parent) and in doing so must make it as objective as possible.

It is not simply a matter of measuring a statistic, the coach must have a benchmark that the team is trying to achieve and this benchmark will need to be relative to what the teams that are contesting for championships achieve. It does not mean that the team must play the same game style as those teams, however ultimately the team must be able to:

- ensure that games are played to its preferred game style;
- defeat opponents with their preferred game style.

The KPIs will also enable the coach to evaluate whether there are gaps in the skills of their players. For example, a team may be able to create open 3 point shots but shoot a very low percentage. The coach must then determine whether existing players can improve this ability or whether they need to recruit better shooters.

With junior teams, the coach should focus more on KPIs that indicate how well the players are developing their overall skills (both individual and team skills) that will stand them in good stead in the future, in preference to what is required to win a championship in that particular year. Understanding what the team needs to improve to win games remains important but not at the expense of long-term development of junior players.

LEVEL 2

COACH

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

3.1.1 UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

Basketball has changed significantly over the years, indeed dribbling was not allowed in the original rules created by Dr James Naismith.[5]

Changes are influenced by a number of things:

- Athleticism and skill level of players – as offensive skills change, so too do the defensive tactics employed to counter them;
- Team tactics – e.g. the "pack line defence" was developed to stop dribble penetration.

Coaches should resist the temptation to constantly change what they do with their teams based upon trends that they see. Junior players need to have a foundation of basic offensive and defensive skills, which can then be applied to any particular pattern or team concept.

5 The rule allowing dribbling was included in response to the tactic employed by players of dropping the ball, moving their position and then picking up or catching the ball.

HOWEVER, IT CAN BE INSTRUCTIVE FOR COACHES TO OBSERVE THE VARIOUS TRENDS IN BASKETBALL AND THIS CAN BE DONE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.

1	Observe games. It is possible to watch games from various leagues and championships both through FIBA's YouTube channel (http://www.youtube.com/user/FIBAWorld) and also FIBA's partner www.livebasketball.tv.
2	Review trends evident at the Olympics and World Championships. In addition to watching games, FIBA has a statistical analysis prepared from each tournament and also "scouting" reports on each of the teams. This information can be accessed through FIBA's website (www.fiba.com).
3	Attend coaching clinics. FIBA's World Association of Basketball Coaches regularly conducts clinics in each of the FIBA zones and these are also available to watch online. The WABC website also has information on upcoming clinics (www.fiba.com/wabc).
4	Observe other coaches coaching. Many coaches are happy to allow coaches to observe their practice sessions – you just have to ask! When watching another practice session, remember that the teaching points that the coach uses are the most important thing to focus on. Rather than spend time trying to diagram a particular activity, watch the activity and then note the teaching points.
5	Go online. There are many sites that contain a wealth of coaching information. Some sites offer paid services, however there is also a considerable number of sites offering free information.
6	Books/DVDs. There are many books and DVDs available, featuring many Olympic and World Championship winning coaches.
7	Coaching Association. There are many coaching associations, some of which are conducted by national federations, whilst others are independent bodies. Associations may also conduct coaching courses or have information regarding general issues in coaching.

FOLLOW-UP

1. How do you measure the success of your programme? What data or statistics do you use?
2. Discuss with a coaching colleague how they assess the success of their program.
   Discuss with them what data they use.
3. List what steps you have taken in the last 12 months to inform yourself of trends in basketball.
4. Discuss with a coaching colleague what you can do over the next 12 months.

3.2 COACHING STYLE AND PHILOSOPHY

3.2.1 WHAT IS A COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

What is a coaching philosophy? There is much discussion about the importance of having a coaching philosophy and the varied factors that will influence it, but there are few definitions given for what a coaching philosophy is.

It can simply be defined as "an attitude held by a coach that acts as the guiding principle for the training and development of a team".

WHAT IS A COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

A coaching philosophy includes extrinsic factors such as:

- how the coach wants their team to approach and play the game;
- how the coach wants players to interact with each other both formally (e.g. leadership groups) and informally (e.g. in the locker room).

A coaching philosophy also includes intrinsic factors such as:

- how the coach communicates with players, team management, parents etc.;
- the relationship the coach has with players;
- the coach's core values.

FACTORS THAT IMPACT UPON A COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Arguably, a coach does not develop a coaching philosophy, they discover what their philosophy is through conscious reflection. The starting point should be to ask themselves "why do you coach?" Once a coach understands this, they are on the way to developing (or discovering) their own coaching philosophy.

A coach's general approach or philosophy towards coaching should ensure a consistent, positive impact on their players. A coaching philosophy is individual and reflects both the coach's personality and their coaching objectives.

A coaching philosophy incorporates aspects such as teaching style, communication, strategy, leadership style and managing the group dynamic. There are a number of factors that will influence a coach's philosophy, including:

Experiences

- experience as a participant in sport (whether basketball or another sport);
- coaches that they have had;
- the level they reached as a player;
- the influence of coaches and mentors when an assistant coach;
- opportunities to observe experienced coaches and experience different styles of play.

Training and Education

- attendance at coaching courses or clinics;
- formal qualifications such as degrees or diplomas;
- professional development opportunities – observing other coaches, observing other sports.

Mentors

- the influence of "coaches" who have had a profound impact during their life (including school teachers and managers in business);
- learning from a mentor in a formal setting (e.g. working with a more experienced basketball coach).

Personality

- the coach's natural communication style;
- the coach's approach to the game – e.g. conservative, aggressive, risk taking.

The following principles may assist a coach to develop their overall coaching philosophy:

1. Be yourself
2. Be consistent
3. Define coaching objectives – why do you coach? Why do your players play?
4. Establish rules
5. Build and nurture relationships with athletes
6. Be organized
7. You will need help – how do you involve assistant coaches, team management, club administration
8. Help athletes manage stress
9. Focus on the big picture

DOES YOUR PHILOSOPHY DIFFER BETWEEN TEAMS?

A coaching philosophy should be reasonably constant over time and apply equally to different groups of players. The goals of each player or group may vary and the strategies developed to achieve those goals may also vary, but the underlying philosophy of your coaching is likely to be the same.

An area where the philosophy may seem different is that with junior teams the philosophy may be to focus on development and with senior teams winning is more of a focus.

However, the coach's philosophy is not changing, just the context in which they are coaching.

3.2.2 HOW ARE COACHING STYLE AND PHILOSOPHY LINKED?

A coach's style and philosophy are certainly linked and both will be a reflection of the coach's personality. The philosophy is focused more on the team:

(a) how the team plays on court;

(b) how the members of the team (players, coaches and officials) work together off the court;

(c) how the team rules are enforced.

The coach's style will dictate how they make decisions and how they provide feedback to players, and the coach may certainly use different styles in different situations or between different players. The coaching philosophy does not change from one situation to another, although a coach may approach teams differently according to their context (e.g. development of players is the objective with a junior team whereas winning may be the focus of a senior professional team). Similarly, they may approach a junior representative team differently to a junior club team.

3.2.3 DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY

A coach will develop their coaching philosophy over a number of years and initially it will be very much impacted by their experiences as a player (if applicable), of other coaches that they have observed or worked with (including from other sports) and of successful teams that they have observed.

With young teams, the coaching philosophy should focus on long term development of players – giving them all the opportunity to play "post" and "perimeter" and focusing on principles of offensive and defensive movement and spacing rather than "set plays".

However, with adult teams the coach must consider factors such as:

(a) What tempo do they prefer the team to play (offensively and defensively)?

(b) Do they wish to utilise post play?

(c) How do they wish to defend specific situations (e.g. "pick and roll")?

(d) What "risk profile" do they want for the team (e.g. pressure defence will at times present the opponent with open lay-ups)?

The skills and attributes of players on the team will impact upon the team's playing style. If the coach has the ability to recruit specific players they can recruit toward being able to play a certain style, however it may still take a number of seasons before they have the team they fully desire.

Other factors that will influence a coach's philosophy are:

- how comfortably they are able teach various aspects of the game;
- the degree of control they want over what their team does;
- the development stage of the players they are coaching;
- how the coach was taught to play themselves.

Some coaches adopt a defensively-minded philosophy – preferring to focus first on restricting an opponent from scoring. Other coaches have an offensively-minded philosophy, focusing on the team's ability to score. Neither philosophy is right or wrong and what is most important is the coach's ability to instruct their team in how they want the game to be played.

FOLLOW-UP

1. How would you describe your coaching style? Discuss with a colleague who is familiar with your coaching (e.g. a previous assistant coach) how they assess your style.
2. Ask a coaching colleague (from a sport other than basketball) to observe a practice or game. Discuss with them any discrepancy between how you describe your coaching style and what they observed.
3. Reflect upon a coach that you have played under or worked with and describe their coaching style and philosophy – how does it compare to yours?
4. How would you describe your coaching philosophy? What do you think has influenced that?

3.3 OWN COACHING DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1 WORKING WITH A MENTOR

A mentor is a confidant, a teacher, a guide, a listener and a problem solver. Most most people have mentors in their lives, even if they do not formally recognise the relationship as such.

A coach's mentor may understand basketball or may be someone who has never even seen a game. However, if the relationship is to work there will be a high degree of trust and respect between a coach and their mentor.

A mentor can be of assistance in many different situations, for example where a coach:

- lacks self-confidence (e.g. losing a series of games, being sacked or having conflict with a player);
- may be unsure of how to deal with a situation (e.g. discipline of a player, choosing whether or not to accept a job);
- may be unaware of how they should act or what role they need to perform (e.g. starting a new role or at a new club);
- needs guidance on how to act or behave (e.g. curbing abuse toward referees) and may or may not be aware of how they are currently viewed;
- is unaware of matters of ethics or etiquette (e.g. whether or not to continue with pressure defence once a significant lead is established);
- would benefit from technical instruction or development.

In some of these situations, the coach may have a question that they wish to discuss and can raise that specifically with a mentor. At other times (e.g. where the coach's behaviour is at issue) it may be that the mentor makes the coach aware that their behaviour may need to improve.

A mentor may be formally appointed (e.g. when a coach is first appointed to a national team they may be assisted by a former national team coach) or may simply be someone within the coach's network that the coach is comfortable talking with.

However a mentor is found, to get the most out of the relationship the coach should:

- keep in contact with their mentor regularly, not just when they need to discuss something. Having regular contact builds the personal relationship;
- listen to the mentor – remember that a mentor is not someone that will always agree with you – and be prepared to try something different or to view a situation differently;
- acknowledge and thank mentors;
- not expect the mentor to solve all problems – ultimately, it is for the coach to make their own decisions. Similarly, the coach should not blame a mentor if something goes wrong. The coach must take responsibility for what they do and any consequences that follow;
- be honest and open;
- ask about them – take the time to learn about the mentor's experience as this not only builds the personal relationship but may help the coach to see other areas for their own development;
- be prepared to ask for help. There are often people that can help or provide a useful perspective to situations that the coach is grappling with, although they may not offer help until asked. They may not be able to help but may be able to introduce the coach to someone else who can;
- not abuse the relationship. A mentor may be willing to assist a coach but may not want to have other of the coach's colleagues contact them. A coach should not then share the mentor's details unless the mentor agrees for them to do so.

Many mentor relationships are informal and can come about simply through sharing information and experiences and this can often be done at clinics or conferences or simply by attending practices of other teams within their own club. The more open a coach is to working with other coaches, the stronger will be their network of mentors.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Do you have people that you consider mentors? If so, how often do you speak with them?
2. How approachable are you to other coaches in your club?
3. With whom do you discuss the performance of your team? How do you feel after speaking with them?
4. Whom would you speak with (if anyone) if you had players fighting with each other to the extent that you believed it was affecting overall team performance? Can you identify anyone else that you could discuss this situation with?

LEVEL 2

COACH

CHAPTER 4

MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 4

MANAGEMENT

4.1 COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1.1 WORKING WITH ASSISTANT COACHES

It is important that a head coach define their expectations for their assistant coaches and players. Assistant coaches ought to be given meaningful roles (within their skill and expertise).

Roles that an assistant coach may perform are:

- scouting upcoming opponents;
- complementing the coach's areas of strength (e.g. a head coach may be particularly good at teaching "point guard play" and an assistant may be a good "post coach");
- arranging logistics in regards to practice (e.g. sourcing venues, setting up for practice, communicating with players);
- focusing on particular areas during a game (e.g. one assistant coach may focus on an opponent's offence and another focuses on the opponent's defence) and reporting information to the head coach. Some head coaches will simply ask for information and others will require the assistant coach to make recommendations;
- keeping statistics during games;
- conducting individual or small group sessions with players;
- keeping in touch with players and reporting to the head coach if there is dissatisfaction or unhappiness.

Whatever roles a head coach wants an assistant to perform need to be clearly defined, as does the level of responsibility that the assistant coach has.

For example, if an assistant coach is scouting upcoming opponents, will they present that information to the team? Do they need to discuss specific recommendations with the head coach first?

The level of responsibility that an assistant coach has will depend both upon their skills and experience and also the head coach's preference. In determining roles, the head coach should consider that:

- the less they (the head coach) delegate, the more the head coach has to do;
- assistant coaches with low levels of responsibility may become disenchanted with the role and look to move;
- assistant coaches may have expectations of what the role will involve which may differ from what the head coach wants. If any difference in expectations is allowed to continue it is likely that neither the head coach nor the assistant coach will be happy.

It may not be possible for the head coach to exhaustively define everything they want from the assistant coach and instead (like any relationship) it may evolve over time. Some considerations that the head coach can address:

- If possible, meet with assistants prior to practice (or at least provide them with a copy of the practice plan) so that they understand the objectives for practice and what activities are to be done. Involving assistant coaches in planning practice increases their understanding of what the head coach wants to achieve;

- Having assistant coaches present parts of practice enables the head coach to observe players from a different perspective. It will also increase the "credibility" of the assistant coach with the players;
- Debrief with assistant coaches following practice and games. Seek their opinion, do not just present your own opinion;
- Be honest. If you were unhappy that an assistant coach communicated a defensive switch directly to players during the game, address that with the assistant coach. Be precise – are you unhappy because you want the assistant coach to communicate suggestions to you rather than directly to players? Or, are you happy for them to communicate directly to players but you believe that particular decision was a mistake?
- Seek opinions from the assistant coaches and be prepared to consider something that they suggest which is different to your own opinion. When assistant coaches believe that their opinions are valued by the head coach, they will more willingly contribute. Ultimately, the head coach makes the decisions and assistant coaches must understand that they will make some suggestions that are not accepted by the head coach.

4.2 HELPING ATHLETES MANAGE THEMSELVES

4.2.1 COACHES OF OTHER TEAMS

WORKING WITH OTHER COACHES

One of the roles of a coach is to prepare their team to perform as well as possible against opponents and in this context the coaches of the two teams are opponents. However, there are many contexts where it is beneficial for coaches to share information and work with other coaches.

When coaching a representative team (whether regional or national) a coach is working with athletes who probably spend more of their time with another team and another coach. In this situation the two coaches should discuss:

- workload and injury management for the player – both coaches should make the welfare of the player the paramount consideration;
- conflicts in schedules – whether or not they can be avoided and, if not avoided, how are they best managed;
- the player's role in each of the teams – is there an opportunity at club level to work on skills that will be needed in the representative team (if the player's role is different for each team);
- the current form of the player.

It will not always be possible to avoid conflicts between a representative team and a club team, however, if the coaches can speak with each other differences can at least be both understood and minimised.

There are also other ways that coaches can work together, for example:

- sharing information about other opponents;
- sharing information about accommodation, travel or other logistics;
- working together in scheduling games (e.g. pre-season or exhibition games);
- participating in coaching clinics or other education and development activities;
- discussing common issues or pressures that they face in their coaching.

Finally, having a friendship with other coaches provides a colleague with whom you can discuss trends in the game, different tactical approaches to the game and key factors in development (amongst many other things).

4.3 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

4.3.1 BUDGETS

The level of financial responsibility that a coach has will vary from team to team, from club to club and from coach to coach.

Some coaches may be conducting a business and therefore need to keep accurate accounts and have ultimate responsibility for the finances. Other coaches may be given a Programme budget to administer, requiring approval from management for any variations.

BE CONSCIOUS OF COST

Many coaches of junior teams will not have an involvement in the budget but should still be conscious of the cost that the players and their families incur to play with the team. The coach may want to schedule extra trainings or travel to play an extra game and these will probably cost the players something (if only in their time).

PREPARING BUDGETS

In preparing a budget coaches should:

- obtain specific information about expenses, not make assumptions. For example, flights vary in cost depending upon the time of year. If possible, written quotations should be obtained (which may simply be an email from a provider);
- if specific information is not available, make the best estimation based upon as much information as is available. Keep a record of what information was available, so that parameters that may change are easily identified;
- list everything that they can think of and have someone else check the list to see if something has been overlooked;
- even items that are not currently an expense (e.g. uniforms may be provided by a sponsor) should be listed, with it noted that it is a currently a nil expense;
- make an allowance for unforeseen increases in cost or unforeseen expenses. This should be clearly identified and the aim should be not to spend it;
- make clear all assumptions that are a part of the budget (e.g. income may be dependent upon number of players);
- obtain more than one quote for expenses where appropriate (for example, the fee for entry of a team into a competition will be fixed);
- document any reasons for the choice ultimately made. The cheapest quote is not necessarily the best for the programme. It also helps to have criteria (e.g. minimum facilities for a hotel when travelling with the team) and the criteria may demonstrate why a cheaper quote was not preferred;
- the budget should also identify at what point it is expected that money will be received or spent.

MANAGING THE BUDGET

To effectively manage a budget (or to assist with management of the budget if the coach is not directly responsible for its management), coaches should:

- keep receipts and note on each receipt specifically what it was for (if the receipt itself does not identify this). Receipts should also be kept in an organised manner (e.g. by month) or submitted to the relevant manager as quickly as possible;
- check the budget before spending money to make sure sufficient money was allocated;
- review the budget regularly, including not just the specific numbers but any assumptions upon which the budget was based. For example, are the number of players assumed in the budget actually participating in the Programme? A coach should set aside time every month for this purpose;
- document any changes to a budget and make sure that whatever approvals are needed are obtained.

The coach also needs to understand that "cash flow" is very different to a budget. "Cash flow" is simply when an organisation receives money, whereas many budgets only identify what will be received and spent but not necessarily when.

Sometimes expenses will be incurred before money is received. Coaches should check that there are sufficient funds at the time the expense is to be paid.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Have your assistant coaches list (a) their strengths and (b) their weaknesses. Discuss their assessment with them and, in particular, any differences in how you would assess them.
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a coach? How does this compare with the strengths and weakness of your assistant coaches – do they complement your skill set?
3. Do you share information with coaches from other teams? If not, why not?

LEVEL 2

PLAYER

CHAPTER 1

DEFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS

CHAPTER 1

DEFENSIVE BASKETBALL SKILLS

1.1 INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT AND POSITIONS

1.1 INDIVIDUAL DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT AND POSITIONS

1.1.1 ADVANCED CLOSING OUT TECHNIQUE

ADVANCED CLOSING-OUT

When players are first introduced to the skill of "closing-out", the key principle is for them to get into a good defensive position to guard their opponent as they catch the ball. Typically, they should be within arm's length however they must be balanced to ensure that they can move laterally to contain the dribbler.

It is recommended that at the end of the "close-out" the player lifts both hands as this will help to centre their balance.

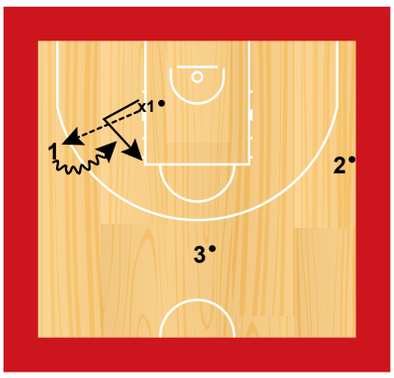
With more experienced players they may adjust their close-out depending upon whether the opponent is a "shooter" or a "driver", based upon either a pre-game "scout" or their performance earlier in the game. A pre-game scout should identify for each of an opponent's players:

a) Whether they tend to drive or shoot when catching the ball on the perimeter
b) Which hand they shoot with
c) Which side they prefer to dribble (sometimes a right hand dribbler will tend to drive left first)
d) Which hand they prefer to dribble with
e) Whether they prefer to drive to the basket and shoot or tend to drive and pass

CLOSING-OUT A DRIVER

If the opponent is a driver, the defender will close out "short", giving themselves more room to move laterally to stop the dribbler's penetration. The defender should move to a position that is consistent with the team's defensive rules (e.g. the team may "force middle" and so the defender should close out to a position that is outside the opponent's baseline foot).

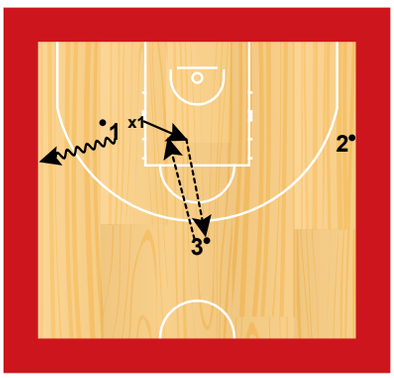
TO PRACTICE CLOSING OUT A DRIVER



CLOSE OUT 3

3 offensive players and one defender (x1). x1 passes the ball to 1, and must start with their feet in the key. 1 may start anywhere and must penetrate when they receive the ball (max 3 dribbles).

Offence attempt to penetrate into the key using a 2 foot stop. If they do not get into the key, x1 receives 1 point.



Once 1 has finished dribbling (whether or not in the key), they dribble back to the perimeter. x1 receives the ball from one of the perimeter players and then passes it back and closes out. Again, the offensive player must penetrate.

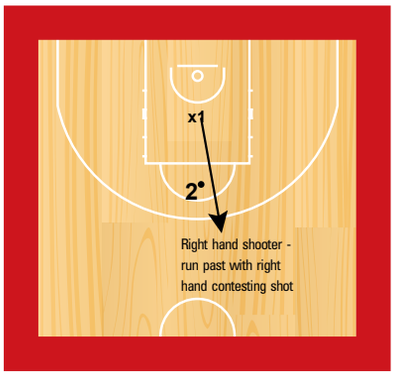
Activity can be played with each player on defence for a certain amount of time (e.g. 1-2 minutes) the winner being the player with the most points. Importantly, the defender scores points equally whether it was "bad offence" or "good defence".

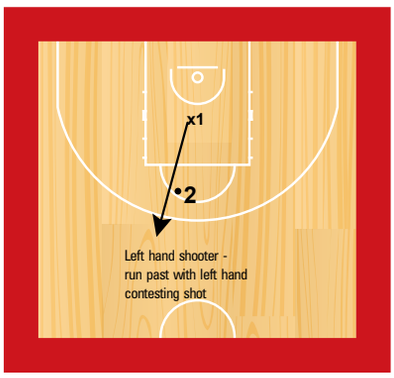
Alternatively, play for a set time (e.g. 3 minutes) where if the offensive player makes the key, they become the next defender and remain on defence until another offensive player gets into the key.

CLOSING OUT A SHOOTER

When closing out a shooter, the defender will sprint toward the offensive player reaching with one hand to put pressure on the shot. The defender may even run past the shooter. By having one hand outstretched the defender is likely able to put more pressure on the shot than with a close-out where they have two hands in front.

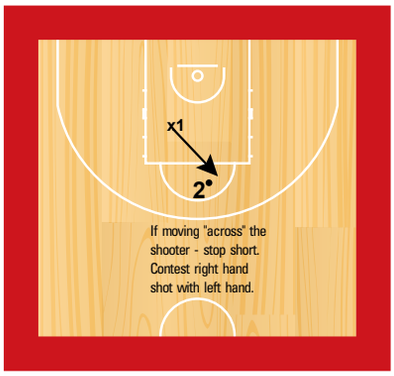
However, the drawback of reaching on a close-out is that the defender's balance is affected and they will not be able to quickly move laterally to defend a drive. This technique is also called "running at the shooter". In doing this, the defender must ensure they do not foul the shooter.





The defender should run past the "shooting shoulder" reaching with the hand closest to the shooter (i.e. have the right hand extended when running at a right handed shoulder).

This ensures that the defender's body will run past, not into, the shooter. When closing out on a shooter it is important not to foul the shooter.

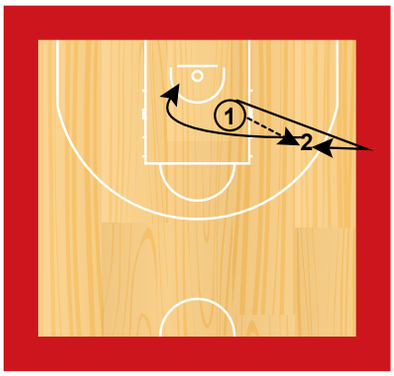


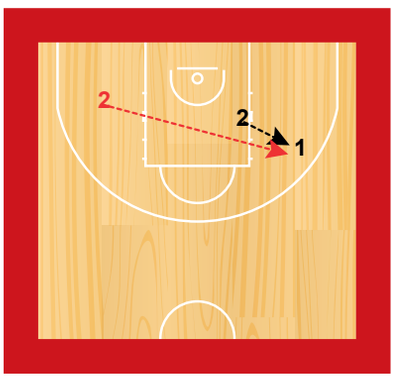
If the defender must move across the body of the shooter (for example, if they are closing out from opposite the shooter's hand), they should reach with their opposite hand (i.e. if it is a left handed shooter, reach with the right hand).

This turns the defender's body away from the shooter which again reduces the likelihood of contact.

Every shooting activity that is done in practice also presents an opportunity to practice closing out a shooter. This will both help create the habit in the defence to contest every shot and will as well as the offensive player's ability to concentrate on the basket when they are shooting.

TO PRACTICE CLOSING OUT A SHOOTER:





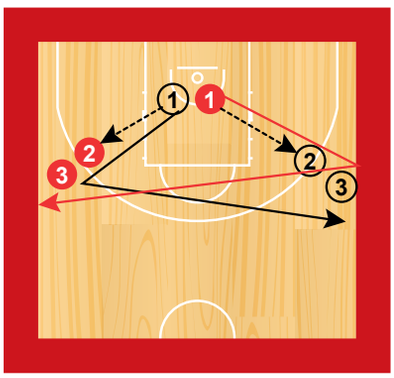
CLOSE OUT SHOOTER

This can be done in groups of 2 or 3. One player passes the ball to the shooter and then runs at them to contest the shot. They get a point if they can "tip" the shot or if they can cause a "shot fake".

The defender runs past the shooter and touches the sideline to return to be the next shooter. The shooter rebounds their shot and passes from wherever they receive the ball.

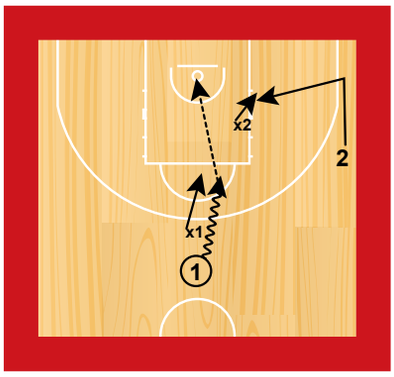
Shooters are encouraged to use a shot fake if necessary, rather than take a bad shot. By making their shot, it keeps the score even. Deduct one point for any bad pass to the shooter.

The pass to the shooter is made from wherever the rebounder got the ball. This may mean that they are very close to the shooter, and the shooter will need to fake (shown in black) or that they are a significant distance away but must still "hustle" to get in to their next shooting position (shown in red).



The same activity can be done with two groups. The shooter rebounds their ball, then passes it to the next person in the other group and runs at them to contest the shot.

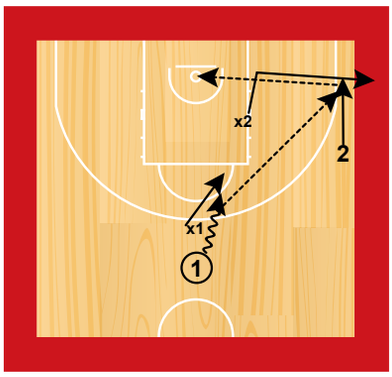
Scoring is the same. Continue for a set time or until one group has reached a particular score. Teams can win either by making a basket or by getting a defensive point.



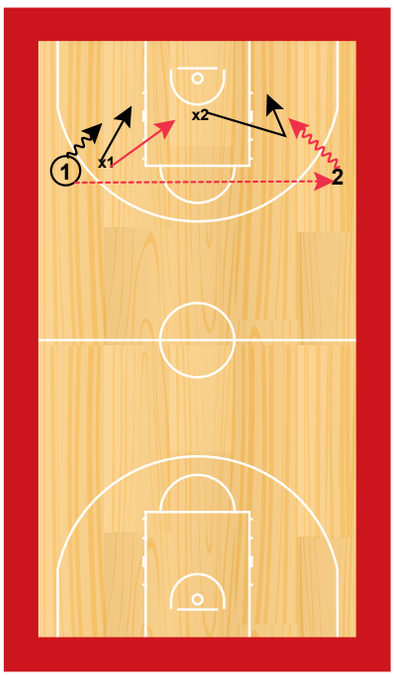
CLOSE OUT – BOX OUT

x1 defends the ball and x2 must have at least one foot in the key.

If 1 is able to dribble into the key, they shoot and 2 must contest the rebound. x2 must "box out" 2.



If x1 is able to contain 1, then 1 passes to 2, who is sliding to the corner and will catch and shoot. x2 closes out the shooter, making sure that they run past the shooter's hand.

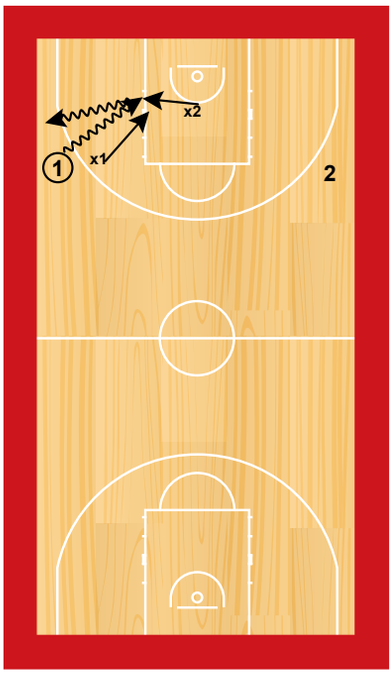


CLOSE OUT – BOX OUT, 2V2

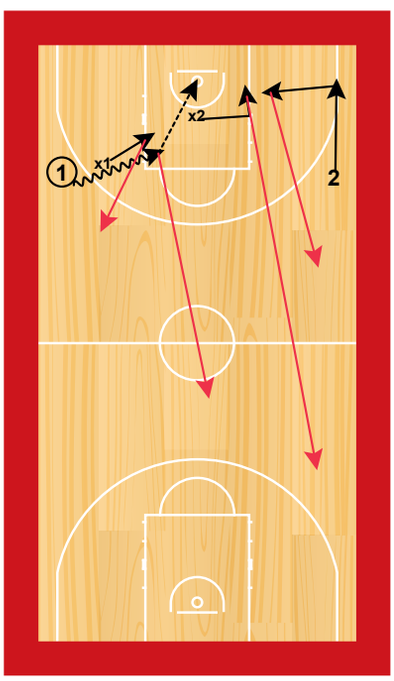
1 starts with the ball on the wing and 2 is on the other wing. The two defenders adopt the usual position.

1 can either drive or pass the ball to 2, who drives.

x1 and x2 defend accordingly.

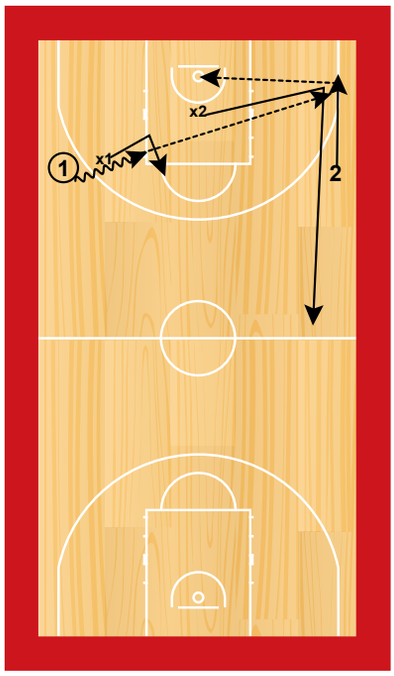


If 1 is able to beat x1 to the baseline, x2 must rotate to stop any penetration into the key. 1 should then retreat to the perimeter, and x2 returns to the split line (although the coach could allow the defenders to switch).



If 1 is able to beat x1 to the middle, x1 shoots as they penetrate the key. x2 must box out 2. If the offensive players rebound the ball, they may shoot again.

Once the defenders secure the ball, they push the ball down the floor looking to get an advantage. The teams play 2x2 in transition.



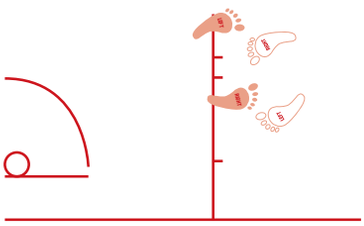
Another tactic when closing out the shooter is to "hit and run". In doing this the defender runs toward the shooter and stops without running past them. Once the shot has been made (and the shooter has landed), the defender "checks" or "hits" them with an arm bar and then sprints the floor.

The "check" or "hit" is to stop that player getting to the rebound contest. Importantly, it is done by stepping into the shooter and making contact with an arm bar.

The defender should not reach beyond their cylinder nor hit the shooter before they have landed, as both will result in a foul.

This technique can be practiced using the same activity as above.

1.1.2 OFF-BALL DEFENCE - FRONTING THE POST

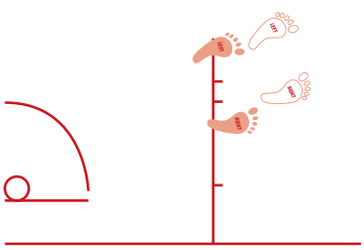


POST DEFENCE – FRONTING (TOES IN)

"Fronting" the post player means that the defender stands between the post player and the perimeter player that has the ball. There are two methods – "toes in" and "toes out".

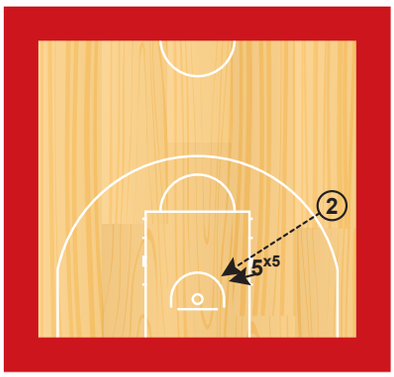
With toes in, the defender's back faces the potential passer. This position potentially makes it easier to adjust position if the ball is passed to another teammate on the perimeter. The defender puts their "chin to shoulder" so that they can see the passer and the post player.

"Fronting defence" requires both good pressure on the person with the ball and also "split line" help, which is a defender standing near the basket that can intercept any attempted lob pass.

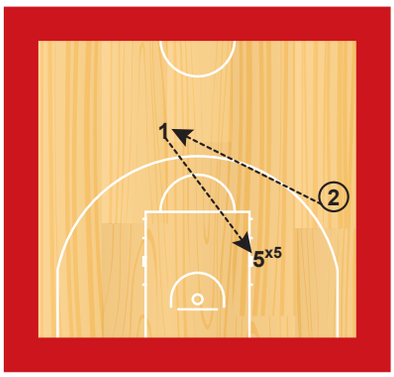


POST DEFENCE – FRONTING (TOES OUT)

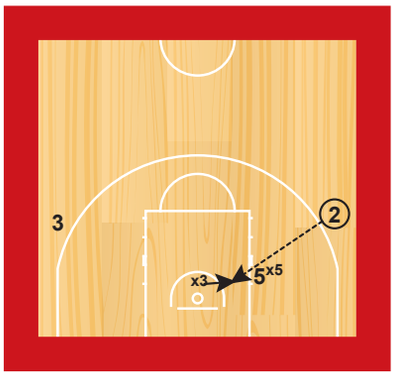
Toes Out fronting is where the defender faces the perimeter player that has the ball. The defender needs to keep a low, balanced stance – keeping contact with the post player with shoulders and elbows.



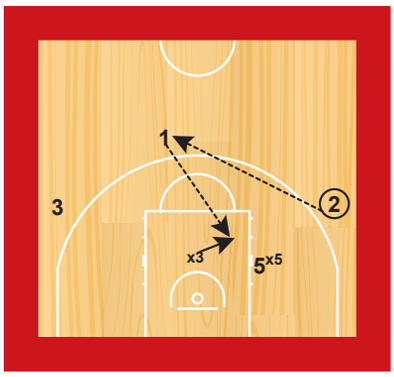
When the defence "fronts" a low post player, the offence can make a lob pass over the head of the defender.



The offence can also "reverse" the ball to a player that can then pass to the low post player.

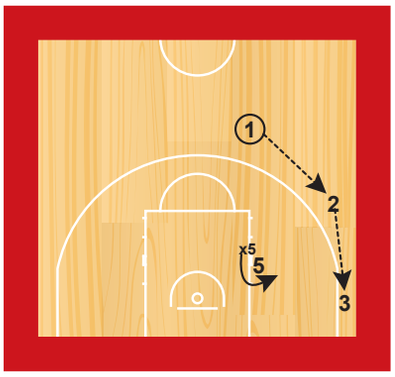


Having a split line defender (x3) is key to stopping passes to a low post player that is "fronted". x3 must be ready to move and intercept the pass if possible

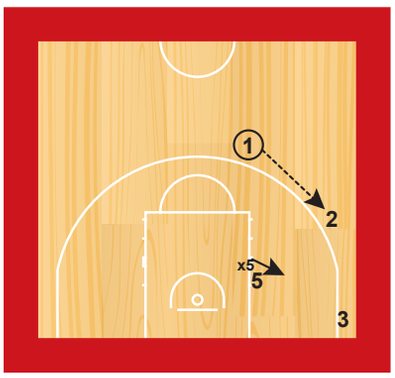


On a reversal pass, x3 may hold in the key so they are able to intercept a pass to the low post player. x3 does not move to deny their own player until the post defender has re-established position (or another defender has rotated into the key).

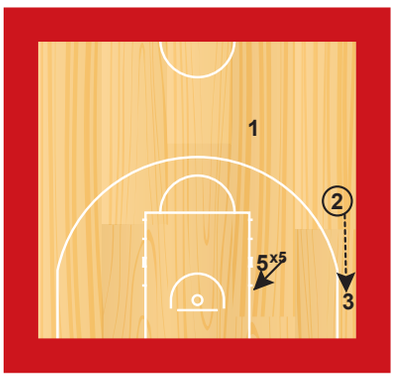
If 3 is a good shooter, they may have to move earlier and the defence need to have another player rotate to the key.



Many teams do not "front" the low post and instead a defender will move behind the post defender as they move from denying a pass by 1 (playing on the high side) to denying a pass by 3 (playing on the low side).



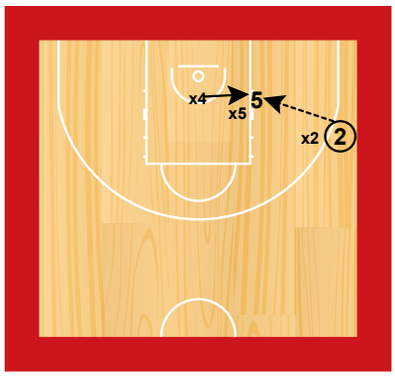
"Fronting" the post is often done when the passer is at the wing, denying passes from the top or the corner.



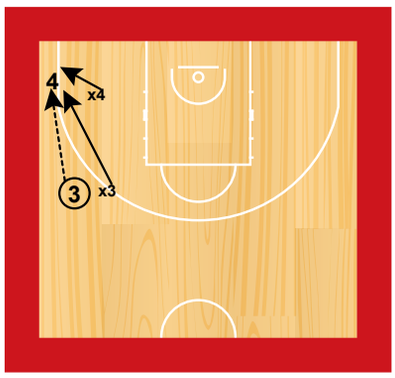
1.1.3 DEFENDING THE BALL - DOUBLE TEAM TECHNIQUE

There are many different situations where a defensive team may use a "double team" (where two defenders will defend the player with the ball) . Generally situations fall into three categories:

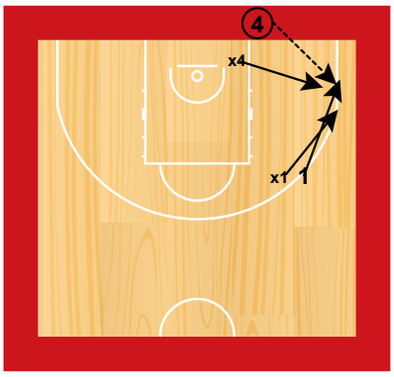
- Double team a player as they catch the ball;
- Double team a moving dribbler;
- Double team the dribbler in a ball screen.



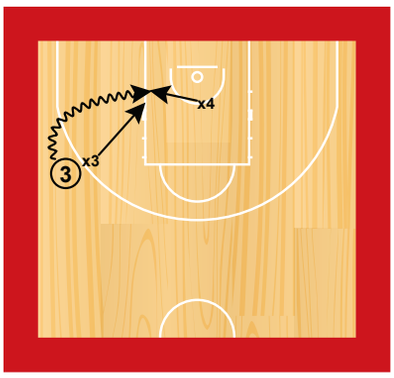
Teams will commonly double team a low post player as they receive a pass.



In both zone and man-to-man defences, teams often double team players when they receive the ball in the corner.



When applying full court pressure, teams may double team as the ball is passed into the court. Here, x1 forces 1 toward the sideline and then moves from beside them to behind them. This movement is important as it allows a space for x4 to move across and set the double team.



A double team can also be used to help a defender that has been beaten, with x4 moving from the split line to stop 3 from penetrating in the key. Although beaten, x3 runs beside 3 to form a double team.