

Soccer Coaching Tools: A Guide To Digital Software For Coaches



The working life of a Director of Coaching (DOC) is a busy one. From managing and supporting the development of a team of coaches to planning season-long training curriculums and developing a positive club culture, it can often feel like there simply aren't enough hours in the day to fit it all in.

Fortunately, overseeing the day-to-day operation of a soccer club doesn't have to be carried out solely via pen, paper and numerous spreadsheets. Digital software gives you the tools you need to spend less time on simple administrative tasks, while also streamlining the process of making long-term strategic decisions and communicating them to your coaching team.

This guide to digital software coaches will answer a host of questions, including:

- Which apps should you consider using?
- How can The Coaching Manual help you perform vital tasks like developing a coaching philosophy and building a season plan?
- What specific philosophies could you implement using The Coaching Manual's software?
- How can our software help you with time-consuming administrative tasks?



What is the Best Soccer Coaching Application?

Soccer coaching apps offer a world of functionality at your fingertips. But with so many to choose from, it's important you pick the one or two that best suit your needs. The last thing you want is to invest time and money in the wrong platform.

With that in mind, we've put together a list of our favourite soccer coaching apps, detailing their strengths, compatibility, pricing and key functions.

The Coaching Manual

Platform: Android and iOS

Rating: 4.6 on Google Play; 4.7 on Apple App Store

Price: From free

Description

We might be biased, but we truly believe our app is the ultimate tool for DOCs and their coaching teams. It's a one-stop-shop for all your strategy and planning needs, allowing you to:

- Build detailed season plans in just a few minutes, based on your specific needs
- Access hundreds of professional-standard soccer coaching sessions
- Design bespoke training sessions with our beautiful and easy-to-use diagram creator
- Quickly and easily share your plans with coaches and players



Standout feature

Our vast content library, which features professional-standard coaching videos filmed in broadcast quality with our partners at Premier League club Southampton FC.

Coach it Soccer

Platform: **iOS**

Rating: **4.8**

Price: **\$9.99 one-off payment**

Description

Exclusively developed for iPad, Coach it Soccer is an invaluable tool for your coaching team once gameday comes around. Users can create lineups and keep them up to date throughout the match by simply dragging a finger across the screen. Statistical input and reporting also help your coaches to identify areas for improvement on the training pitch.



Standout feature

Managing substitutions during a stressful game can be a real headache for coaches. With Coach it Soccer, drag-and-drop functionality allows coaches to populate a list of substitution players, who can then be swapped when the time comes. Timers also keep track of how long each player has spent on the pitch.

Soccer Coach – Team Sports Manager

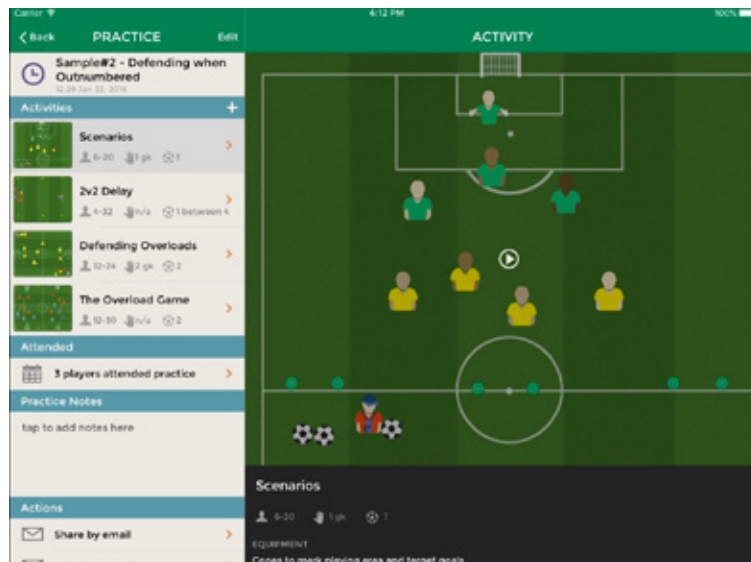
Platform: **iOS**

Rating: **3.7**

Price: **Free, but with in-app purchases**

Description

The Soccer Coach app boasts an array of club management, training and matchday functionality. Register players, plan formations, pick your starting lineup, and utilise 160 animated practice drills (N.B. around a quarter are available free of charge; additional drills must be purchased within the app).



Standout feature

Create leaderboards for an array of statistics, including minutes played, goals scored, and assists provided. Players will love competing to top the ladder, while parents will appreciate that your coaches are committed to ensuring equal playing time.

Mourinho Tactical Board Pro

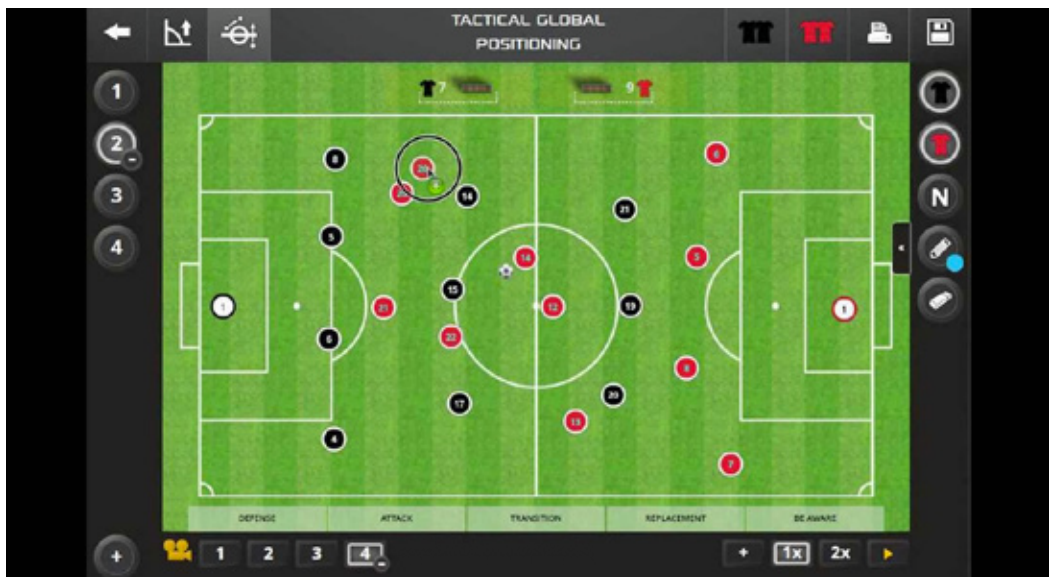
Platform: Android and iOS

Rating: 4.3 on Android

Price: €59.99 one-off payment

Description

Mourinho Tactical Board Pro is aimed at coaches, scouts and journalists who need to manage and retain information about matches, players and teams. A vast range of functionality is included, allowing users to set up teams for matchday, keep notes and statistics, access season stats, manage substitutions and more.



Standout feature

Individual notepads can be created for each player, allowing users to easily take detailed notes about individual performance to provide work-ons for future training sessions.

TacticalPad

Platform: Android and iOS

Rating: 4.3 on both Android and iOS

Price: \$63 per year

Description

As the name suggests, TacticalPad is all about planning training sessions, drawing matchday formations, and analysing the opposition. Once practice drills have been created, they can be watched back from a variety of views – 2D, 3D, animated and static.



Standout feature

Once created, all content can be shared as a video, image or PDF document, or as an editable project from within TacticalPad (although this feature is only available on Windows), making it simple to cascade your plans to coaches and players.

Football Tactic Board

Platform: **Android**

Rating: **4.5**

Price: **Free**

Description

Simple but effective, Football Tactic Board does exactly what the name suggests. Quickly and easily create tactics tailored to every match situation, then save them as either a single frame or a frame-by-frame animation.



Standout feature

A variety of pitch views are available, allowing you to tailor your tactics to specific scenarios. Choose from:

- Full field
- Half field
- Free kicks (left, right and straight)
- Corners (left and right)
- Penalties

My Football Coach

Platform: **iOS**

Rating: **5.0**

Price: **Free, with in-app purchases**

Description

Although basic, My Football Coach is a useful matchday companion. Coaches can use it to name their team, choose a formation, and slide players into the correct positions. Separate tactical setups for the first and second halves of a match can be planned in advance.



Standout feature

Up to 20 named players can be created for every team. If you've got a larger squad, more players can be added via in-app purchase (e.g. \$0.99 for 24 players).

How The Coaching Manual's Digital Software Can Help Soccer Clubs

As we've explained already, The Coaching Manual's suite of tools has been developed with DOCs in mind. But what does that mean in practice? Here's some more detail on the ways it can make your life easier:

Develop coaching sessions with ease

Building a new coaching session requires creativity and the ability to effectively communicate instructions to players. Once upon a time, this meant spending hours huddled around a whiteboard, painstakingly moving magnetic pieces and drawing marker lines.

Today, thanks to our Session Planning software, sessions can be plotted in advance, ready to present when they're needed. You can design and save as many sessions as you could ever realistically require. What's more, while our platform is built on state-of-the-art technology, it's simple to pick up and use straight away, so your coaches won't have to waste valuable hours trawling through a help manual.





Benefit from the experience of a global network of coaches

The best soccer coaches are able to draw on years of experience as well as their natural skill set. But what if your coaching team could learn from the accumulated wisdom of a global network of coaching experts?

Our content partners at The Coaching Manual include some of the biggest clubs and academies in the UK and the US, such as Rangers FC, Southampton FC and the New Mexico Youth Soccer Association. And we've got exclusive sessions from some of the world's most renowned coaches, including former Everton and Manchester United manager David Moyes. Use their vast experience at the top level of the game to educate and support your coaches.

Create a soccer coaching curriculum from scratch

Formulating a coaching curriculum spanning a full season can seem like a daunting prospect. Building a detailed plan with clear progression from session to session and week to week is challenging, not to mention time-consuming. And when you've finally pieced the puzzle together, you still have to communicate it clearly to your coaches.

With our Season Planning tool, it's possible to build a bespoke coaching curriculum in a matter of minutes. Follow our seven-step process to give us all the information we need - things like player age and the days of the week on which training takes place - and we'll create a tailor-made Season Plan leveraging our database of hundreds of training sessions.

Once we've done the hard work, you can use our digital platform to circulate your plans to coaches and players. The whole schedule can be viewed via an interactive calendar, letting you drill down into individual sessions and activities assigned to specific days.

Manage how coaches and players in your club learn

Different people learn in different ways. When it comes to disseminating complex information - like new training drills - to a group of coaches, some prefer it to be presented visually, while others would rather “learn by doing”.

In the past, DOCs had to either prepare multiple versions of the same presentation to communicate their ideas effectively, or risk their vision being misinterpreted. If you rely on paper handouts or a speech around a flipchart to get your message across, there is no guarantee that your coaches will understand the objectives of the session and deliver it in the way you intended.

With The Coaching Manual, we make it easy to combine video and digital tools to educate your coaching team. All sessions can then be shared and viewed at a later date, ensuring that important information is always available to your coaches and players when they need it.

Assist with day-to-day administrative tasks

Simple though it may sound, the ongoing task of ensuring that everyone - from coaches to players - has access to the right information when they need it can be time consuming and frustrating.

Worst of all, the longer you spend on admin activities such as this, the less time you have available to work on the things that really make a difference to your soccer club, like recruiting new coaches and developing your staff.

Our software allows you to share content - whether individual training sessions or entire Season Plans - with players and coaches at the click of a button. It may not be one of our most glamorous features, but it'll save you plenty of time and headaches down the line.

Implement a new coaching philosophy and playing style

A DOC's job isn't easy. Some of the most demanding elements of the role involve introducing a new philosophy and playing style at your club.

You could find yourself inadvertently battling against your own coaching staff, who may have spent their entire careers working within a given system. Change isn't easy at the best of times, so it can be extremely challenging to persuade an old-school coach well versed in the various iterations of 4-4-2 to transition to a more fluid system.

Fortunately, help is at hand. We offer a wealth of support in communicating hard-to-grasp ideas and radical new approaches to your coaching team. Say you want to start playing with inverted full-backs, or need your attackers to start pressing from the front; we've got the content to help you explain your philosophy and put it into practice on the pitch.



4 Different Coaching Philosophies That Can Be Taught Using The Coaching Manual

In the fast-paced, results-focused world of soccer, the idea of implementing a coaching philosophy is easy to dismiss. We've heard all the common complaints before – things like:

- It'll take too much work
- I don't understand the purpose
- It won't translate to the pitch

But a coaching philosophy is no longer a nice-to-have. According to a landmark study from the European Club Association, two-thirds of clubs have a coaching philosophy, while three-quarters of academies have a well-defined development vision. If you don't implement your own, you'll be left behind.

Fortunately, with The Coaching Manual, defining and introducing a coaching philosophy becomes far simpler.



What is a coaching philosophy?

First things first, it's important to understand what we're referring to here.

Rather than an abstract notion about how “taking part is more important than winning” (or similar), a coaching philosophy lays out the founding principles upon which your players are coached. It should span all age levels within your club or academy, allowing for clear progression from one team to the next.

Organisations with well-defined coaching philosophies will consistently develop better players, because those players intrinsically understand what's expected of them. The alternative is a group of teams that play under the same banner, but have little else in common.

4 coaching philosophies you can introduce at your club

Of course, introducing a new coaching philosophy isn't an easy process. It won't be achieved overnight. And you're likely to face a few challenges along the way.

But the results are worth it. If you need a little inspiration, check out these examples of clubs that have famously enjoyed success through forging their own paths. Each developed a coaching philosophy that fit their needs, and stuck with it regardless of results on the pitch.

Barcelona: The best time to win the ball back is NOW

To the untrained eye, the most important element of Barcelona's play is their unparalleled ability to maintain possession, forcing the opposition to lose their structure and tire themselves out chasing shadows.

In reality, that's only the second part of the Barça conundrum. The key factor is actually their intense focus on winning the ball back as soon as they lose it.

Their opponents are already drained – physically and psychologically – having spent much of the game vainly attempting to regain possession. Even when they do lose the ball, this gives the Catalan club a fantastic opportunity to win it back immediately.

Having won control of the ball again, Barcelona players are encouraged to quickly play a simple, low-risk pass, giving them the best chance of keeping hold of it. The only exception to this rule is if there's a clear chance of a counter-attack or an immediate opportunity to score.

Tottenham Hotspur: The IO-minute rule

The Spurs academy introduced the so-called "IO-minute rule" as the starting point of all training sessions, regardless of age level.

It's a simple premise. Each session kicks off with a IO-minute period in which players focus on a specific weakness, which must be agreed with the coaching staff. For instance, a left-footed goalkeeper might work on playing out from the back with their right foot.

It might not sound like much, but over the course of a season this adds up to a significant focus on addressing technical flaws. Older players have six training sessions per week, so this equates to 43 hours of additional work on weaknesses throughout a 43-week season.

Hoffenheim: Encouraging progressive independence

Despite being based in a village with a population of 3,000 people, Die Kraichgauer famously climbed from the fifth tier of German football to the heights of the Bundesliga in just eight seasons.

Of course, the financial clout of their billionaire owner Dietmar Hopp played a big part. But money alone is no guarantee of success.

Another key factor was their coaching philosophy, based on cultivating independence, creativity and motivation in youth players. Coaches are tasked with transforming athletically gifted youngsters into creative players with superb speed, reactions, decision-making and professional potential.

At each level, players are given more and more responsibility to make on-field decisions. Rather than being whistle-blowing taskmasters, coaches are on hand to encourage creativity and offer support when needed.

In its Philosophy of Youth Development, the club explains: “Youth players should emerge from our training program as resilient team players with great strength of character. We also want to inspire them to be lifelong learners and to prepare them for life.”



Ajax Amsterdam: The TIPS Model

Perhaps the club with the longest history of developing talented youngsters into world-class soccer players, Ajax base their academy approach around the TIPS Model:

- Technique – the ability to control the ball
- Insight – football intelligence and decision-making
- Personality – flair, discipline and ability to play as a team
- Speed – mobility, acceleration and pace over distance

The club believes that the final two factors – personality and speed – are naturally possessed by players, whereas the other two can be ingrained through long-term development.

As Marc Grune, former Head of Youth at Ajax Cape Town, explains: “The Ajax player has to have a very high level and broad base in all technical skills; he needs to be talented, skilful, tactically clever, fast, coachable and have a good personality.

“In other words he needs to be at the highest level in all fields (also off the pitch). This means that the development must start at an early age and continue for many years to achieve these huge demands.

“The coaching for every age group becomes extremely important to lay a firm base (at the youngest level) and continually expand, nurture and develop all necessary skills to the top level.”



How The Coaching Manual can help you implement a new philosophy

There's no point in taking the time and effort to define your approach to the game, only to abandon it after a few weeks. Fortunately, our software provides many of the tools you need to successfully implement your coaching philosophy:

- Develop bespoke curriculums spanning a whole season, allowing you to map out the long-term adoption of your approach across all teams
- Access expert content from professional academies, giving your coaching team the chance to learn from the best in the business
- Create new sessions from scratch with our session planner, designed to be as easy to use as pen and paper



How to Create and Deliver Season Plans for Your Coaches

You can't expect to implement a new coaching philosophy without first creating a detailed, season-long curriculum of training sessions. This is how you give your players the knowledge, skills and experience to adapt to your new approach.

That's why we introduced our Season Planning tool, which takes all the heavy lifting out of developing a season-long curriculum for your entire coaching team. Read on to find out more about Season Plans and the numerous benefits they provide to DOCs.

What are Season Plans and why are they effective?

A Season Plan is more or less what it sounds like - a season-long schedule of training sessions. Creating a Season Plan allows a DOC to understand what their coaching team is working on at any given time. It also makes it far easier to set clear and measurable goals on team performance and player development.

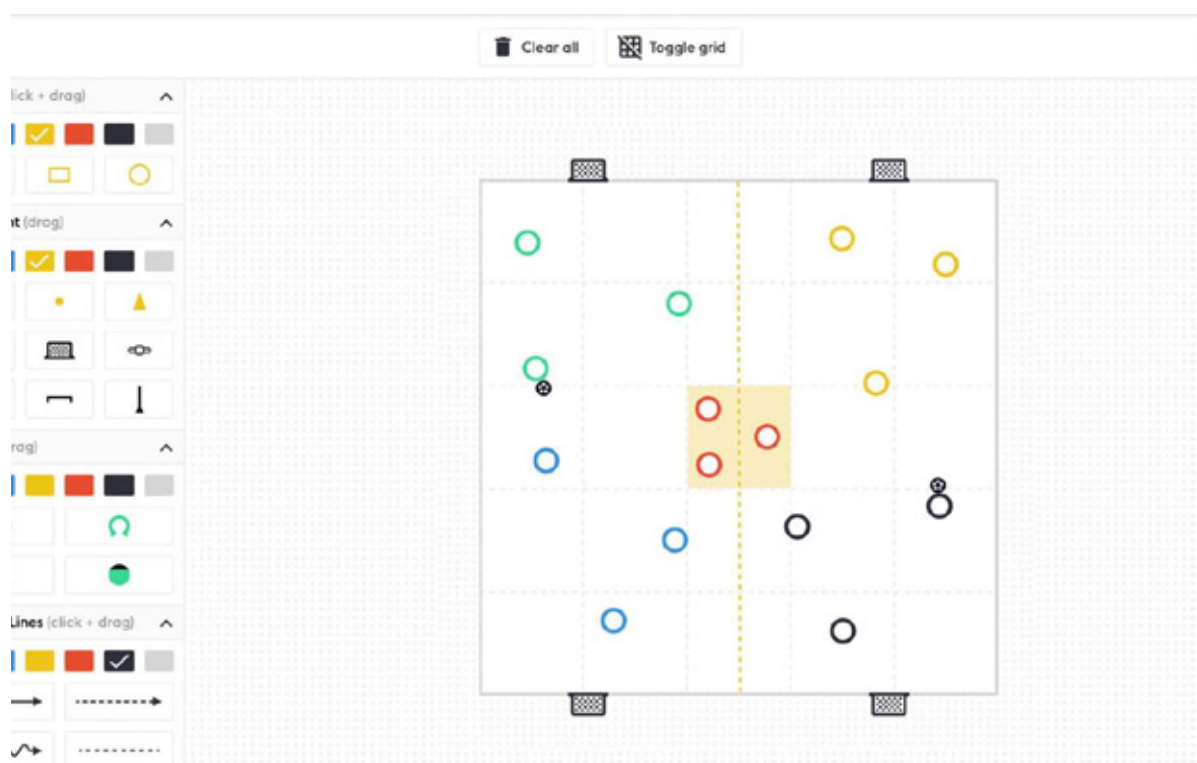
Regardless of player age or ability level, research shows that a structured training programme - with clear development throughout a season - has a marked impact on team performance. In short, a little upfront planning can yield positive results over the length of a season.

How does The Coaching Manual's Season Planning tool work?

Individual coaches may lack the time, skill or experience - or all three - to produce a coherent training plan spanning several months. What's more, if each of your coaches is tasked with producing their own curriculum, you potentially miss out on the benefits of a unified, centralised approach to planning. But building detailed plans for every age group is a huge undertaking for a DOC.

Fortunately, The Coaching Manual is here to help. With our Season Planning tool, you can access an entire season's worth of age-appropriate training in just a few minutes. Our seven-step system, combined with expert insights from our in-house coaching team, allows us to automate the process of creating a season plan.

The information we need from you is simple, ranging from the age group of the team in question to the days on which they train. Once you've given us those details, we'll build you a bespoke plan comprising hundreds of tried-and-tested drills and sessions. You'll then be able to quickly and easily identify the training planned for any given day via the interactive calendar.



What are the benefits to Directors of Coaching?

You've probably already identified several ways that our Season Planning tool can make your life easier, but here are a few of our favourite benefits:

Quick and easy-to-use software

You don't need a computer science degree to get the most out of Season Planning. It's extremely user-friendly - once you've completed the seven simple steps we mentioned above, we do the rest of the leg work.

Season Plans can be disseminated to all coaches

There's little point in a DOC building a detailed, structured training plan if it can't be easily briefed in to individual coaches. We understand that you could have thousands of individual coaches within your club or association, so we've made it easy to roll out your Season Plan to everyone within your team. And because we allow you to control access levels, you can even share it with players, giving them an understanding of what they'll be working on next.

Removes stress from the planning process

Our automation software takes all of the headaches out of planning a season-long training curriculum. That frees you up to concentrate on the areas where you can make the biggest difference - from evaluating coaches to monitoring player development.

Provides a structured training programme for the entire season

Knowing what's coming next makes it easier for coaches to concentrate on the specifics of delivering individual sessions. What's more, a structured plan allows you to set more effective goals around player and team-level performance.

Can be used for any level of coach

Whether your coaches are experienced professionals, dedicated amateur volunteers, or a combination of both, our Season Plans can help them to lead cohesive, high-quality and engaging training sessions.

Can be used for any age group

Coaching needs change dramatically from one age group to another. At under-six level, you'll want to plan fun sessions delivered with imagination and good humour; for over-15s, your coaches will be working hard on discipline and tactics alongside basic skills. Whatever the age group, we'll produce a bespoke training plan to meet your requirements.



Conclusion: Discover the Benefits Yourself

Obviously we think The Coaching Manual is a fantastic tool with a host of use cases that make it the perfect solution for busy DOCs and their coaching teams.

But why would you take our word for it when you could just find out for yourself?

We're currently running a 14-day free trial of our top-tier Enterprise package. No credit card details required; just dive in and discover the many ways our software can help you, including:

- Our huge library of professional-standard coaching sessions.
- Content-sharing facilities to easily disseminate plans to individual coaches and players, or across a whole club.
- Session Planning tools that allow coaches to create diagrams, practices and full sessions.
- Tools to help you define and implement your club's sporting philosophy.
- Apps for both Android and iOS devices.

Sign up and start enjoying the benefits today!

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