



SISSSC0001 CONDUCT SPORT COACHING SESSIONS WITH FOUNDATION LEVEL PARTICIPANTS

In this unit we will look at the following:

- preparing for, conducting, and completing sport-specific sessions with foundation level participants
- reviewing sport-specific sessions.



Assessment

For this unit, you will be assessed on the following:

- Assessment 1
 - Questions and Answers
- Assessment 2
 - Project (Part A)
- Assessment 3
 - Project (Part B)
- Assessment 4
 - Demonstration

A photograph of a male coach with grey hair, wearing a green jacket, standing on a grassy soccer field and talking to a group of female players. The players are wearing white jerseys with green numbers and black shorts. They are gathered in a circle, listening to the coach. In the background, there are residential buildings and a clear sky. The image is dimmed to make the text stand out.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COACH?

Introduction

If you'd asked someone in the past what a sports coach's job was, they'd say that it was to teach individuals and teams how to improve in sports related skills. Whilst that may have been an accurate summation in years gone by, it is far from reality of what is expected of sports coaches now. The role has certainly evolved greatly over time, with today's coach being required to do a lot more than just impart technical and tactical advice to individuals and teams.





Roles of a coach

Other roles a coach might find themselves needing to undertake as a part of their job may include being a:

- mentor
- friend
- counsellor
- organiser
- negotiator
- problem solver
- confidant
- role model.



Why do people coach?

People choose to become coaches for reasons that are as varied as the sports they may coach within. For most it's because they have a love of the game and a desire to impart some of the knowledge they have gained whilst being active participants themselves. Some coaches may still be playing, whilst for others, coaching is a way to stay involved in the sport they love once their own playing days are over.

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a black tank top and leggings, is assisting a man with a beard in a plank exercise. The man is wearing a dark t-shirt and leggings, and is in a forearm plank position on a paved surface. The woman is leaning over him, with her hands on his lower back to provide support and guidance. The background shows a modern building with large glass windows and a paved area.

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COACH?



Assistant coaches

An assistant coach works under a head coach to make sure players, equipment and facilities are well-prepared and organised. They should understand and implement the philosophies of the head coach.

Some assistants will have direct coaching responsibilities, others will respond to the directions given by the head coach. Many head coaches have started as assistant coaches and have worked to gain the knowledge and experience necessary to fully lead a team.

Assistant coaches (cont.)

As an assistant coach, you'll need to display many of the skills and attributes of a head coach, as well as showing a strong desire to learn. You'll need to have a solid understanding of what role the head coach wants you to take within the team, and he/she should model the way that they would want you to handle training or game day should they not be there.



Coaching styles

There are three styles of coaching in sports that are generally accepted. These are autocratic, democratic and holistic. There are benefits and drawbacks of each style, and it's important that coaches understand these. Each of the styles has been proven effective in its own right, but the kind of style that will be suitable for different teams, players and contexts will vary based on a number of factors.





WHAT IS A FOUNDATION LEVEL PARTICIPANT?



Foundation level participants

A foundation level participant is considered one who is at the point of learning base level skills. This could be general base level skills such as throwing and catching, or it could reflect base level skills in a new sport. For example, the participant might be a reasonable tennis player who has a good grasp of racquet skills and reasonable hand eye co-ordination, however if they take up basketball, they will need to learn a new set of baseline skills such as dribbling, shooting, etc.

Running sessions with foundation level participants

There is a lot of responsibility associated with running sporting sessions with foundation level participants. For the most part, as mentioned, these participants will be young and will be looking to you as a role model, and someone who can coach them effectively, often from a level where they know very little about the chosen sport or activity.

So, what are some of the first things that they, and others, will observe about you in your role as a coach or an assistant coach? How can you make sure you meet the expectations of the participants, their parents and the club/association that you're coaching within?

Running sessions with foundation level participants (cont.)

Considering these things should help you get off on the right foot.

- be punctual
- take care with personal presentation
- be approachable yet professional
- use appropriate language
- promote positive interaction and participation within the group:
- act in a non-discriminatory manner
- abide by a Code of Behaviour
- reflect on your performance.

Session locations

There are many places that you can run sessions for foundation level participants.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- schools
- before and after-school programs
- school holiday programs
- structured after-school programs run through community centres/councils/sporting clubs
- groups who run children's parties
- as an assistant to a senior coach in a sporting club.



Preparing for sessions

It is essential that you're fully prepared when undertaking your sessions; preparation in itself takes on many forms.

The first step in preparing is to make contact with the supervisor/head coach of the activity to confirm session details and your duties. This should be done around a week before the session is to take place. There are a host of questions that you'll need to ask, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- the time you should arrive
- how long you'll be required
- exactly where you should meet them on arrival.

Preparing for sessions (cont.)

Next you should ask about the activity you will run. If the session plan you will be using is one that they have created, you'll need to review this prior to the session to ensure you're prepared on the day. Ask if they can email this through to you to revise.

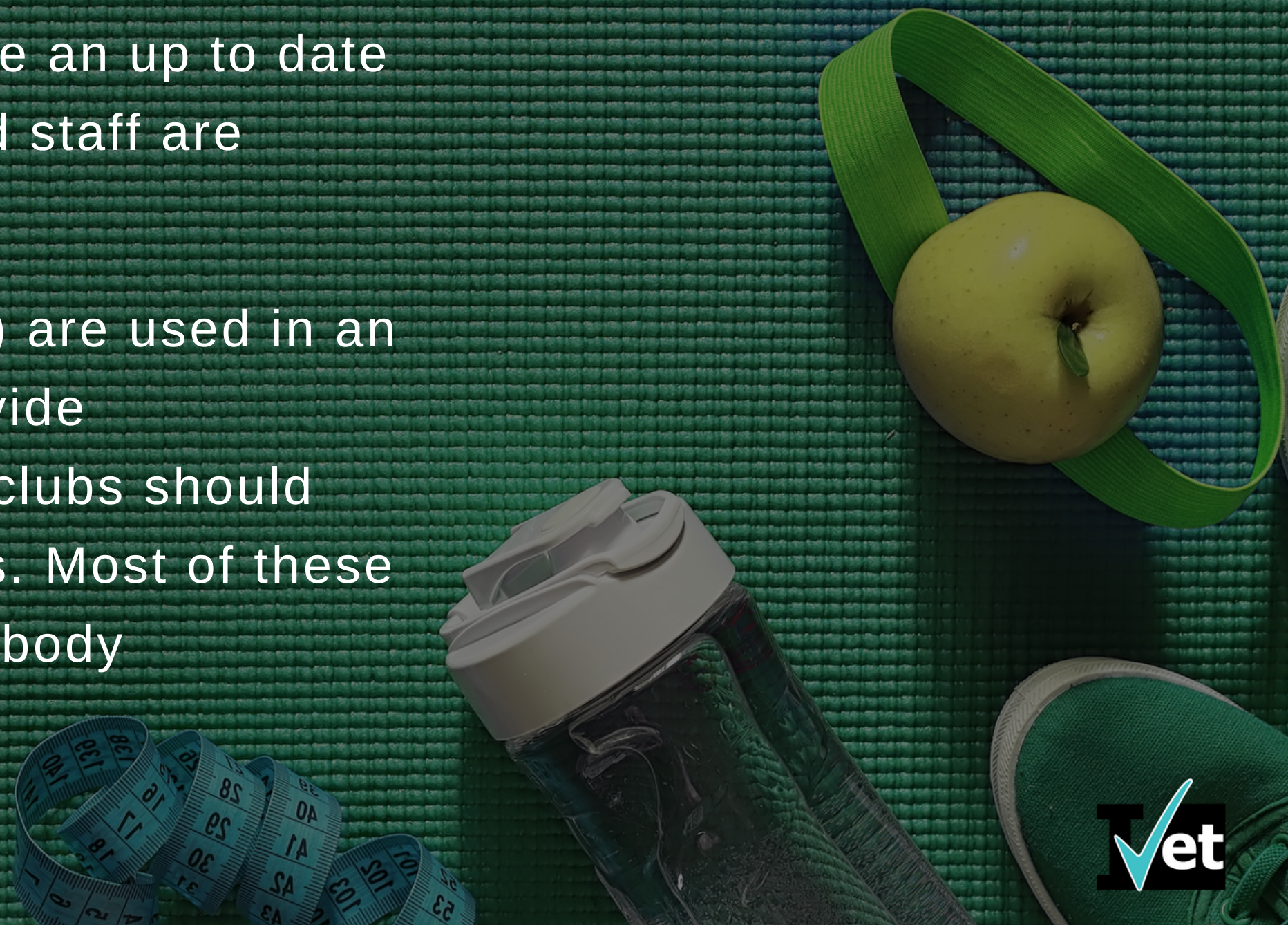
Revision of the plan might include factors such as:

- the date and time of the session
- what activities are included in the session
- the objectives and desired outcomes of the session
- what equipment will be used
- what are the specific set-up requirements.
- **<MORE?>**

Policies and procedures within sporting clubs?

Sportaus.gov.au explains what policies and procedures are, and why it's important for sporting clubs to have an up to date set that all coaches, participants, members and staff are aware of.

Policies and procedures (written and unwritten) are used in an organisation to guide decision making and provide transparency. Irrespective of size, all sporting clubs should adopt a series of basic policies and procedures. Most of these can be re-drafted or directly taken from parent body documents at state and/or national level.



How to plan your session

As a coach, you must take the time to plan each training session accordingly. When doing so, you should set session objectives that then guide the activities/drills that you include.

The following is an example.

OBJECTIVE: To get participants to improve their hand-eye co-ordination.

ACTIVITIES:

- wall bounce
- ball toss through hoop
- tennis ball dribble.



How to plan your session (cont.)

To set these objectives and then the subsequent activities and drills, you will need to answer the following questions:

- Who are the participants?
- What is their age?
- Do they have any special requirements including disabilities, culture, or language?
- What is their starting point or experience level?
- What is their current skill level?

How to plan your session (cont.)

- What has been taught in previous sessions?
- Where do they want to be and what do they want from me?
- How will I achieve this?
- What facilities and equipment will I need?
- How many participants will there be? This will affect the kinds of activities I can run.
- How will I/they know if they have improved?





How to plan your session (cont.)

Session plans for activities should also include:

- a session introduction
- a warm-up
- games as well as skill and fitness activities
- a cool-down.

The stages of skill acquisition

Before you can successfully coach participants at any level, you need to understand the stages of skill development.

This will allow you to identify where a participant is at in their learning and assist you in understanding what approach you should take when coaching them.

The three stages of skill acquisition are:

- cognitive
- associative
- autonomous.



The difference between techniques and tactics

To be able to plan a session effectively, you must have an understanding of your participants abilities as well as an awareness of both the technical and tactical requirements of the sport that you will be running sessions in.

Technical skills can be described as something that a person is required to move their body to perform. Some technical skills would be classified as general and would apply to most sports; these include a combination of running, jumping, throwing, catching, etc. Other skills are specific to only a handful, or even just one sport.

The difference between techniques and tactics (cont.)

Tactical skills, in contrast, are actions and strategies planned to achieve an overall objective; in a sport, that objective is generally to win! Tactics depend on numerous factors including the opposition, available players, the importance of the event and potentially even the weather for outdoor events.

Training to develop skills

Participants should practice all technical skills in the exact manner that is desired for optimum performance in game/match conditions, and coaches should continue to critique the technique of these until they are correct.

This should be done in an appropriate manner that continues to encourage the participant.

From an early stage, performance practice should also take into account tactical skills.



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white sports bra and grey shorts, is in a low lunge position against a teal wall. She is looking to her right, and her right arm is extended forward, touching her right foot. Her left leg is bent, and her left hand is resting on her left knee. She is wearing black and white sneakers.

What to do when the day arrives

So, it's now the day that you're going to be running the session with the foundation level participants. If it's the first session you've run, chances are you might be feeling a little nervous. Rest assured that this is perfectly normal. Knowing that you're well prepared should alleviate some of the nerves you're feeling, and the chances are that once you get started, you're going to be fine; who knows, you might even have some fun!

Hazard checks

Safety should also be a key consideration, and as such there are a variety of hazard checks you'll need to undertake before a session begins. Let's look at this in greater detail.

You should never start a session without doing adequate hazard checks first. This will ensure the safety of yourself, your participants and also any other third parties associated with the session.

The most important aspects to consider are:

- location/venue
- equipment
- weather and temperature.

Session introduction

The start of the session is a great time to lay foundations. These will include a brief run down of what the session will entail, as well as the expected levels of behaviour and participation. Consider including the following information:

- the objectives of the session
- taking attendance
- instructions and rules
- language and terminology
- setting behaviour standards
- safe use of equipment and PPE
- general housekeeping.

Promoting participation, cooperation and teamwork

It is important to promote cooperation, teamwork and fair play during sessions.

Coaches should do this by:

- re-enforcing the contribution that all children make to the group
- providing a supportive environment regardless of sex, age or ability
- showing sensitivity to individual differences.

Promoting participation, cooperation and teamwork (cont.)

When encouraging participation, coaches need to remember:

- children's sport should be based on fun.
- children need time for unstructured play across a range of sports.
- the social aspects of sport are enjoyed by children just as much as the competition.
- there should be a focus on skill development and individual improvement, rather than the result of the game.
- all children should be given equal attention and be made to feel included, regardless of their level of skill.

Warming up and cooling down

A warm-up and cool-down should be a part of any kind of physical activity.

Essentially, the body is at a heightened risk of injury unless it's been prepared for the intensity of activity it is about to undertake. This means you increase your chances of sustaining an injury if you do not take the premise of warming up and cooling down seriously.



A woman with long dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a coral tank top, dark blue shorts, and coral sneakers, is stretching her leg on a beach. She is holding a smartphone in her right hand and has earbuds in. The background is a beach scene with waves. A semi-transparent teal overlay covers the entire image.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF WARMING UP?

Teaching a skill

There are a number of different methods of instruction that have been designed to teach skills in both sporting and real-world situations. Many of these are based on acronyms to make it easy to remember the steps involved.

One such acronym is DEDICT. The DEDICT Model is a good fit for those teaching skills in the sporting world.

- Demonstrate
- Explain
- Demonstrate slowly/again
- Imitate
- Coach
- Trial/Test.

Types of practice

There are four main ways to practice skills. They are defined as:

- massed
- distributed
- fixed
- variable.





WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?

Giving feedback

Providing young participants with feedback that builds confidence, enhances self-esteem and improves performance is one of the fundamentals of good coaching.

We have previously discussed that as a coach or program leader, part of your job is to help young people learn and grow, and to do this, you have to provide both clear instructions and well-considered feedback. This may seem like a simple and straightforward task on the surface; however, providing players with feedback and easy to follow instructions is not always easy. And when you consider that not only is your role in helping the participants to learn, but to do so in a way that helps to build confidence and self-esteem while also having fun, the job gets even more complicated.

Giving feedback (cont.)

Below are some common challenges that are all too familiar for some coaches:

- You give instructions that you think are clear and straightforward, but the participant seems confused.
- The participant says they understand the instructions but then does not do what you have asked.
- You feel that you have given feedback to a participant in a positive way, but they are upset by what you
- have said.
- Participants seem to forget feedback for improvement between sessions.
- When you give feedback to your participants, some take it well, and others do not, even though it's been delivered in the same manner.

Closing the session

So, you've survived the session. If it's one of the first you've done, chances are you'll be feeling a range of emotions, but relief may be high on the list!

It's in these final minutes of the session that you should do a recap with the participants. Cover off what they have learned today, and what they can do at home to reinforce this learning.

This is also a fantastic opportunity to gather informal feedback from them. You can do this by asking questions such as:

- What was your favourite part of today's session?
- What would you like to do more of?
- What skills do you think we need to do more work on?

Packing up equipment

It's now time to pack up all equipment. Important points to note are:

- This should be done in a manner that reflects the appropriate organisational policies and procedures; obviously these will vary based on where you're running your session.
- Depending on how your sessions run, you may do this with the participants, or it may be done once they've left.
- If participants do assist you, you must provide them with clear instructions on where the equipment needs to go, and how this can be done in a safe manner e.g. not running with equipment and using appropriate carrying technique for heavy/awkward items.
- You will then need to follow up to ensure it has been packed away correctly, as the overall responsibility sits with you.

Formal and informal feedback

Once the session has been completed, it's time to seek feedback from those involved in the session.

As a junior coach or assistant coach, feedback is invaluable. You should never fear feedback, though human nature seems to tell us otherwise at times.

Feedback is one of the key ways that you can improve your performance. And it's not just when you're starting out either. Even the most experienced coaches need to take on feedback; without it, we stagnate and never evolve.

Formal and informal feedback (cont.)

It's important to remember that not all feedback is negative; people seem to have the misconception that it's only provided when things need improving.

Feedback may be sought from:

- the participants
- a senior/head coach
- a teacher
- a supervisor
- the parent group
- peers.

Self-reflection

Self-reflection is another way to improve your performance. It's an excellent way to evaluate and understand your skills, strengths and weaknesses.

A self-reflection exercise will help you to gain clarity and focus by exploring where you are currently placed and creating a pathway to where you want to get to. It's fitting to use this method reasonably soon after a session, so that the details are fresh in your mind.

