

# Essentials for Coaching Children

## Video Notes 1 : Keeping kids active

### Maximum participation (Soccer)

The first half: the **\*\*unsuccessful\*\*** soccer drill

**Why do you think the soccer activity wasn't working and what effect did it have on the players?**

- There was one big group – too many children waiting in the line. This gave them time to play up, get bored and lose focus.
- Most children (in all three positions) were standing around most of the time. Kids want and need to be kept busy.
- There were very few touches of the ball per child – improvement is slow this way.
- There was no rotation. Feeders and goalies didn't ever get a shot for the goal. It was boring for them and did not develop their skills of kicking for goal.
- There was no-one backing up the stray balls. Time was wasted and players were frustrated chasing loose balls.
- There was very little to challenge the children and very little enjoyment for them.
- The activity lost its focus and intention.



The second half: the **\*\*successful\*\*** soccer drill

**What changes did the coach make to improve the activity and what effect did the changes have on the players?**

- There were two smaller groups, which meant less waiting in lines and players more active.
- All three positions were rotated. All kids got a go at kicking for goal, feeding and defending.
- Backing up was built into the activity, which meant less wasted time and fewer frustrations for the kids.
- There was less time to stand around, lose focus, get bored or play up.
- There was more time to practise skills and moves, providing a greater chance for improvement.
- Players were challenged and enjoying the activity.
- The coach was enthusiastic, proud of the activity and encouraging of the children.

**The improvements are a result of the coach more thoroughly planning the activity.**

**Once players consistently experienced success with this activity, more game-like elements such as defenders, time pressure, etc could be introduced.**

**Proper Prior Planning  
Prevents Poor Performance**

# Essentials for Coaching Children

## Video Notes 2 : Keep it clear and simple

### Effective demonstrations (Softball)

#### The first half: the **\*\*unsuccessful\*\*** softball demonstration

##### **What were the actions of the coach that led to the chaos?**

- The coach started talking when some players were chatting or fiddling.
- There was a distraction behind the coach (sun) that made it hard to see/concentrate.
- There was no name or reason given for the activity – no relevance for the players.
- The activity was explained too briefly and quickly and it was repeated twice, once in the group and again out in the field. That wasted time.
- The coach did not emphasise 'following their throw' or 'backing up' before the activity started, so this caused delays and confusion.
- There was no demonstration.
- Equipment was not ready (stopwatch).
- Extra balls were dealt with too late.
- The coach didn't watch the activity as it got underway – and was unable to help.
- There was little feedback, direction and praise given during activity.

#### The second half: the **\*\*successful\*\*** softball demonstration

##### **What were the 10 or so improvements in the way the coach introduced this activity?**

- Equipment was considered – stopwatch was ready, excess balls were dealt with early.
- The coach positioned the players so they were not looking into the sun – less distraction.
- The coach made sure all could see her before commencing.
- The coach asked for their attention and waited until all were listening.
- The coach named the activity – Chase the Base.
- She gave a reason for the activity and related it to the game.
- The coach got players in field positions before beginning the detailed introduction.
- She walked through the activity first (demonstrated).
- She explained and demonstrated at the same time, in position.
- A few, brief cues were given and emphasis was on 'following their throw' and 'backing up'.
- There was much clearer introduction; it was slow, deliberate but still more time efficient.

# Effective demonstrations (Softball)

## General principles around effective demonstrations:

- Plan sessions including how you will introduce, demonstrate and explain each activity is important to their success.
- One deliberate, considered, clear and concise explanation/demonstration will save explaining it again or fixing it later when it isn't working.
- Explain and demonstrate at the same time. Get the players into the position in which the activity will take place and then begin to explain while you demonstrate (if the area is not too large for players to hear).
- Provide players with a very clear understanding of the requirements of an activity from the beginning so they can quickly and purposefully begin an activity.
- A well-organised and purposeful activity allows for the coach to concentrate on giving praise, positive reinforcement and constructive feedback to the players.



**Proper Prior Planning (of Demonstrations and Explanations also)  
Prevents Poor Performance!**



# Essentials for Coaching Children

## Video Notes 3 : Keep it clear and simple

### Practice progressions (Basketball)

**Components were added to the simple skill of dribbling a basketball to make it more game-like? These included:**

- movement – not dribbling on the spot
- skill development on both sides of the body – using both hands
- speed – jogging instead of walking
- awareness of others – looking up and not at the ball
- obstacles (cones)
- opposition
  - passive (loose) defence (1st attempt)
  - slightly tighter defence (2nd attempt)
  - active (tight) defence (3rd attempt)
- decision-making opportunities – how to dribble around an opponent
- time pressure – having to shoot within 10 seconds
- a goal to aim for – the goal
- pressure – a combination of the above
- strategy development opportunities – in 2 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 2. Players could be given an opportunity to discuss how they might 'beat' the opponent together.

**The major principles at work here were:**

- A very basic technique was introduced, but by gradually adding components to it, it became more and more like the real game.
- The progressions were smooth – each built upon the successful performance of the previous one.
- Each addition challenged the young players but without overwhelming or intimidating them.
- There were lots of opportunities for the coach to positively reinforce skill/tactic development.
- Sound planning resulted in logical, gradual progressions.
- Clear communication helped the players develop their skills.

**These same components can be considered to develop simple skills in other sports to gradually make them more game-like.**

**Proper Prior Planning (of Practice Progressions too)  
Prevents Poor Performance!**