



***Special
Olympics
West Virginia***

**Coaching Clinic:
Making the Most Out of Your Practice**

“No lines, no laps, no lectures.”

Learning

If an athlete is coached with criticism, she learns to condemn;

If an athlete is coached with hostility, she learns to fight;

If an athlete is coached with ridicule, he learns to hate;

If an athlete is coached with shame, he learns to feel guilty;

If an athlete is coached with tolerance, she learns to be patient;

If an athlete is coached with encouragement, she learns to be confident;

If an athlete is coached with praise, he learns to appreciate;

If an athlete is coached with fairness, he learns justice;

If an athlete is coached with consistency, she learns to trust;

If an athlete is coached with respect, she learns to respect herself.

-Author unknown

The most successful coaches are excellent teachers.

The most successful teachers are lifelong students.

Excellent coaches analyze constantly and learn daily.

“No lines, no laps, no lectures.”

Making the Most of your Practice Agenda

- Developing a coaching philosophy: Who am I?
- Creating the team vision/ team culture/ nurturing the team environment
- Components of an effective practice
- Planning a practice session: Importance of a plan
- Understanding the three coaching styles: Which are you?
 - Command style (dictator)
 - Submissive style (babysitter)
 - Cooperative style (teacher)
- Working with your coaching staff
- Coaching the “Games Approach” way
- Technical, Tactical, Functional coaching
- Your Athletes’ Safety / know your athlete
- Experience an effective practice
- Plan an effective practice
- Coach your practice plan

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-Third Edition of Successful Coaching: ASEP - American Sports Education Program

-Special Olympics Coaching information periodicals and inserts

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DEVELOPING A COACHING PHILOSOPHY: Who am I?

Everything you do as a coach comes from who you are as a person. Your attitude, morals and ethics all contribute to your coaching style, philosophy, and your athletes' success. Remember:

Success is not always measured by the scoreboard

Situations will surely arise where your athletes face opportunities to learn appropriate ethical behavior. There will be occasions where we can make a moral judgment call at the expense of victory. This is character in coaching. If you model it, your athletes will learn from it and respect it.

Your coaching philosophy will refine as you continue through a season and through years. The key is to start with a philosophy you believe in and are prepared to live by.

As you work on your coaching philosophy, consider the following objectives:

- Athletes first, winning second
- Striving to win
- Ethical behavior
- Keeping winning in perspective
- Your personal objectives

As an athlete or a coach, can I control the outcome of the game?

Of course not, but a coach can control how athletes prepare and play. Strive to win with heart and encourage every athlete to be the best they can be.

My coaching philosophy is:

"No lines, no laps, no lectures."

WHY DO I COACH?

Exercise: Read through all reasons listed. Add any additional you think of, and evaluate how important they are to you.

My Personal Reasons for Coaching

Reason	Importance:		
	none	some	very
To be involved in a sport I like			
To earn a living			
To help secure another job			
To have power			
To be with people I like			
To give something back to a sport I love			
To gain public recognition			
To enjoy myself			
To demonstrate my knowledge and skill in the sport			
To make up for the fact that I was not a good athlete			
To travel			
To help athletes develop physically, psychologically, and socially			

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Part of developing your philosophy is learning to understand your coaching style. There are three main styles of coaching; most coaches lean toward one of them—the one most like your personality. If you attempt to use one that is not who you are, you may experience short term success, but more often than not your athletes will see right through you.

- Command Style (The dictator)
- Submissive Style (The babysitter)
- Cooperative Style (The teacher)

The fact that you are here says we can dismiss the submissive style! Although, if you look at any program of any age and competitive level, unfortunately will see some coaches who utilize the submissive style of coaching. These coaches usually don't last long.

How does each style affect the athlete?

Command Style:

What key words did you hear in correction or “coaching”?

Cooperative style:

What key words did you hear?

Which style is more motivating intrinsically?

Which style inspires creativity?

Which style helps the athlete buy in?

Strive hard not to judge but to INSPIRE

“No lines, no laps, no lectures.”

CREATING THE TEAM VISION/ TEAM CULTURE

Every coach must have a vision of what she/he wants for their team.

- Vision comes from intelligence and preparation which require understanding of your sport and your athletes. It requires the willingness to learn daily anything you can that can help inspire your team.
- Communicate the vision. Effective coaches appeal to the emotions and spirit of their teams and their athletes.
- Team culture refers to the *way* things are done. It's the social architecture that supports and nurtures the team and psyche of your athletes. These processes have great influence on the soul and spirit of your team.

Basic components of Team Culture

- Team tradition: A team that never quits, an attitude of fair play etc.
- Basic operating procedures: Athlete selection (assigning teams or events), rewards, practice procedures, utilization of coaching staff.
- Management of information: How should information be passed to you? How do you pass it on to your coaching staff? What about when the team is traveling or the off season?
- Power, influence, status and structure: Do you retain the majority of power or do you share it with your staff and athletes? The most successful team cultures inspire everyone connected with the team to “buy in” to believe that they are part owners, and all actions reflect positively on the team.
- Leadership style of the coach: This is the most important factor influencing the team culture. **Can you be the Cooperative Style Coach?**

Involve players and assistant coaches in defining team goals / give players and assistant coaches responsibilities they can accommodate / demonstrate your willingness to continue increasing your knowledge of the sport / treat coaching staff and athletes with respect/reward effort / teach athletes to reward each other.

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Coaching the Games Approach Way

From this point forward, refer to your drills as **ACTIVITIES** or **GAMES!**

Answer this all-important question:

Your athletes come to ____ the game.

The Traditional (“old” way) Coaching Approach: We will sometimes use parts and pieces of this standard approach, but you must develop the overall athlete as well. Some of the down sides to the Traditional Coaching Approach are:

- 1.) **Overemphasis on technical skills:** The athlete has no opportunity to practice the decision making skills needed to develop tactical skills. Drills to learn technical skills are often boring to the athlete and not engaging.
- 2.) **Overemphasis on direct instruction:** Some direct instruction can be useful, but remember it doesn’t do much for the development of thinking skills, problem solving and decision making.
- 3.) **Mindless drills:** Often teach technical and tactical skills of the sport outside the context of the game. It is one thing to learn a technical or tactical skill in a repetitive drill in which decisions are minimized and quite another to perform it in a game.
- 4.) **Boredom:** Make your activities more game like. How many times do you hear athletes say “I hate practice, but I love to play”? Make sure your practices include: **No lines, No Laps, No Lectures!**

“No lines, no laps, no lectures.”

The Essence of the Games Approach:

When your athletes understand the tactics they must use in a game or competition, it motivates them to learn and refine their technical skills. The games approach tries to align our practice with what actually occurs in a game or competitive situation.

This requires skillful analysis by you, the coach. It is not a “throw the ball out and let them play” situation. You will have to work hard to see the technical skills needed to improve and create the tactical decision making scenarios your athletes will see in the game. Keep the following in mind.

- **Shaping Play**

Rules define what we can and cannot do in a game or sport. You can change the rules in practice. Change the number of athletes to create imbalances to increase or decrease live pressure. Change the field size, alter goal size, etc.

- **Focusing Play**

Excellent coaches excel at focusing their players on the critical elements of the game as they practice. Focusing can be done by explaining, questioning and restarting.

- **Enhancing Play**

This can be achieved by creating a true competitive practice environment. You want athletes to practice at game speed, both mentally, physically and emotionally.

Technical – Tactical – Functional

Technical = the “how”

Tactical = the “why”

Functional = application of the how and why, as it applies to the game

Catch your athletes being good!

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Traditional Approach Compared with the Games Approach

Traditional Approach	Games Approach
Uses drills primarily to practice technical skills.	Uses drills that are closely aligned with the game to teach technical and tactical skills.
Teaches the specific elements of the game and then combines them into the whole.	Teaches the whole game and then refines the parts.
Coach-centered. (The coach uses direct instructional methods that may or may not consider the players' needs.)	Player-centered. (The coach creates a learning environment that focuses on the players' needs using a variety of teaching methods.)
Practices are often boring and therefore unmotivating to the players.	Practices are fun, relevant, and challenging, and therefore increases intrinsic motivation.
Players become highly dependent on the coach.	Players develop increasing independence from the coach by being actively involved in the learning process.
Through extensive drilling, coaches strive to develop automatic responses that promote mindlessness when playing.	Practices are designed to develop the thinking, understanding, and decision-making skills that are required to play well.
Players provide little or no input to the coach, who makes most or all of the decisions.	Players are encouraged to help each other master the skills of the sport.
Preferred approach of command-style coaches.	Preferred approach of cooperative- style coaches.

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A Games Approach to a Basketball Practice



Here's an example of how to use a games approach in basketball using the processes of shaping, focusing, and enhancing play. The coach identifies the purpose of the practice as follows:

- To improve passing and develop midrange set shot execution on offense
- To develop the defensive principles of putting pressure on the ball, providing defensive support by sagging, and recovering one's position.

The coach calls the game ***Slick Shot***. (It is useful to name your games to help your players remember them for future practices.) The aim of the game is for the offensive players to pass the ball and locate an unguarded team member who can put up a set shot within the designated area. The two defensive players work as a team to cover the passes and deny the shot. Each team gets five attempts to score on offense.

How the Coach Shapes Play

Playing area: The area is inside the 3 point line of the court and bounded by the baseline.

Numbers: Teams of three players. The game involves three offensive and two defensive players. The extra defender observes the others and then rotates into the defense. You can have as many of these games going on as your facility allows, with you and your assistant coaches moving from game to game.

Scoring: The offensive players score 1 point for shooting when unguarded (the defender must be a meter or more away) as well as for shooting from anywhere in the area outside the key and within the 3-point line. An additional 2 points are scored for sinking the basket. A maximum of 3 points can be scored with each attempt to score. The defending team scores points for intercepting the ball or for forcing the offensive team to make more than three passes before shooting. Each team keeps a record of the points it scores.

Rules of the game: The offensive players may not dribble, and they may only receive the ball in the designated area (outside the key and within the 3 point line). If the offensive players break this rule, they cannot score any points on that attempt. Defensive players may only intercept the pass; they cannot take the ball from the offensive players' hands. If they do, the offensive team gets to repeat the attempt to score.

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How the Coach Focuses Play

The coach focuses the offensive team's attention on the following:

- Scanning the court to identify the open player (by reminding players to look up)
- Moving into position to provide passing and shooting options
- Recognizing when a player is open for a shot, then receiving the pass and squaring up for a well-balanced shot

The coach focuses the defensive team's attention on the following:

- Applying pressure to the ball and then recovering
- Providing defensive support by sagging, and then moving "out" to pressure the ball

(The additional player on defense can be directed to observe these elements as the others are playing and then provide information to improve this aspect of play.)

The coach can use a variety of methods for focusing the play, including the following:

- Providing direct instruction and then giving feedback as play is observed
- "Freezing" play and asking questions of the players
- Giving the team time-outs so that players can reflect on and discuss their performances

How the Coach Enhances Play

Following some initial practice of the game, the coach announces that teams will now have a mini-competition titled the ***Slick Shot State Tournament***. The coach determines the number of divisions or levels of competition, and then the teams decide on their team names and in which division of competition they will play (e.g. Division 1 or 2). Results are recorded and awards and recognition given. During the competition, the coach focuses on catching players doing good.



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Athlete Behavior Characteristics & Strategies to Improve Learning

The goal of the chart below is to provide coaches with information (not labels) and strategies regarding different functional and learning behavioral characteristics (not labels) of athletes. The goal is for coaches to teach and coach Special Olympics athletes more effectively. However, a coach may have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior(s), the inappropriate behavior(s) may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating at the moment.

When possible, talk with parents, providers, teachers, former coaches, etc. about an athlete's characteristics and the successful strategies used to affect learning. Use the characteristics as a checklist. Ensure that one or more of the strategies opposite the respective characteristics are employed in each practice.

	Athlete Behavior	Strategies to Improve Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning occurs at a slower rate	1) Provide structure & train more frequently. 2) Provide repetition and review. 3) Break skills down into smaller parts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Short attention span	1) Train for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task. 2) Provide repetition & review (key to gaining new skill). 3) Work one-on-one (gain full attention).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resistance to change; stubborn	1) Structure training with clear rules, consistent routines, smooth transitions and signals for changing activities. 2) Establish routines (provide flexibility within routine); 3) Identify motivating factors; build on successes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Behavior problems – acting out; mood swings	1) Set clear rules, expectations and limits; specify location for individual to regain self-control. 2) Speak calmly, enforce rules but provide conditions for coming back. 3) Reinforce acceptable behaviors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal expression difficulties	1) Allow for additional time to express thoughts. 2) Use picture boards/other assistive devices. 3) Ask him or her to demonstrate or show what he/she means.
		1) Provide the appropriate level of instruction beginning with demonstration followed by physical prompt and physical assistance.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal interpretation difficulties	2) Keep verbal instructions to a minimum. 3) Use key words/cues, sign language or pictures to communicate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prone to seizures	1) Know signs and symptoms of different types of seizures. 2) Control atmosphere/triggers (heat, sun, sugar, loud noise, etc.) of seizures; respond appropriately. 3) Prepare teammates to respond appropriately should a seizure occur.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor muscle tone	1) Provide specific exercise and strengthening programs. 2) Stretch within normal range of motion. 3) Uneven surfaces increase risk of injury.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower pain threshold; sensitive to touch	1) Establish eye contact when talking, unless individual is autistic. 2) Use softer/adaptive equipment; minimize loud noises like whistles. 3) Forewarn if any touch is necessary; respect wishes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Failure to form social bonds	1) Work in small groups. 2) Have each child work in pairs (same 2 people for several weeks). 3) Provide highly structured and least distracting environment; expose to individual or dual sports.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Easily over-stimulated	1) Remove or lessen distracting stimuli (dim lights; soften sounds; remove unnecessary objects). 2) Train in separate room or smaller group; gradually add people. 3) Train with athletes who tend to be nonverbal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty with balance or stability	1) Provide physical support, as needed, via partner or other assistive device. 2) Broaden base of support such as sitting down or leaning against wall; minimize uneven surfaces. 3) Allow for extra time to complete a task.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compulsive eating	1) Remove food from practice/competition sites. 2) Do not use food as reward (especially for individuals with Prader Willi). 3) Provide structure and routine for eating.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor coordination	1) Break skills down into sequential tasks; substitute easier movement patterns such as walking instead of running. 2) Progress from athlete's current level of performance. 3) Allow additional time with one-on-one support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical limitations or impairments	1) Utilize those skills or parts of skills athlete can perform. 2) For those skills or parts of skills athlete is unable to perform, allow athlete to substitute other skills, have partner execute those skills or use assistive device. 3) Focus on activities that develop mobility and stability.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Visual impairments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use verbal cues, physical prompt and physical assistance. 2) Utilize sound or physical devices such as beep balls, guide rope along lane line, tether when running with partner, etc. 3) Provide precise and action-specific and feedback.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hearing impairments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish eye contact when talking. 2) Use signs, pictures or sign language; keep cochlear implants dry. 3) Demonstrate what is desired.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Autism spectrum disorders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Minimize verbal; emphasize visual (Board Maker) because of difficulty in processing sensory stimuli (over arousal); provide only one item per picture. 2) Individualize schedule with known start & known finish (predictability); use clear, consistent cues & prompts; cue transition from one activity to next. 3) Reduce sensory overload like whistles (some athletes are hypersensitive to noise).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hyperactivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use three or more sensory channels – tactile; kinesthetic; visual; auditory. 2) Set clear rules, consistent routines and smooth transitions with signals for changing activities with motivating reinforcement. 3) Keep directions simple; minimize information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lethargy (due to disability or medication)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide frequent rest intervals. 2) Expose to sports that provide natural rest periods, i.e. bocce, bowling, golf, etc. 3) Slowly progress to longer periods of activity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of motivation to push self	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Be aware that the greater the intellectual disability, the less motivated to continue activity once individual feels uncomfortable. 2) Add positive consequence/reward to continue activity such as peddling on stationary bike to drive power to TV or music player; transition to sport). 3) Reward even small improvements in performance.

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COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- Have a practice plan
- **WARM-UP:** Utilize a safe and effective dynamic warm up.
 - Begin with large muscle group activities (such as brisk walking or light jogging) to increase body core temperature before doing sprints or stretches.
 - Be sure to warm up sport specific muscle groups.
 - Utilize sports equipment for warm up activities when possible.
- **REVIEW:** After the warm-up, begin practice with a review of last session's skill instruction and/or components of the game or competition. Analyze constantly.
- **SKILLS INSTRUCTION:** Introduce new technical skills. Use skills progression to instruct.
 - Use skills progression to instruct.
 - Depending upon numbers and abilities, implementing skills stations is useful and effective.
 - Utilize assistant coaches, allowing them to contribute. (Keep in mind, they may want to be a Head Coach one day, so we must encourage, support and mentor our assistants so they're prepared to take over one day.)
- **COMPETITION:** Replicate the competition / small games through the big game.
- **COOL DOWN:** and injury prevention:
 - Slow heart rate down gradually, don't allow athletes to just stop brisk activity. Stretching is ideal during cool down for injury prevention.
 - This is also a good time to provide positive feedback and make announcements to the team.

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With all the preparation, planning, sleepless and nervous nights involved before the big game, it's helpful to remember that if you are coaching your athletes in the Games Approach way, they will ultimately be better prepared for their competition!

Developing your practice plan:

Remember the three stages of learning as you plan your sessions:

- Mental
- Practice
- Automatic

Teaching technical skills:

Introduce the technical skill – verbally, without using too much language or getting too deep into details. **Whole versus part:** Many technical skills need to be broken down into parts. The golf swing for example, the proper form for a basketball shot, passing and shooting a soccer ball. Be sure to break complicated skills down into small components, or “tasks”, that can then be sequenced together into the larger skill.

Demonstrate and explain the skill – being clear, concise, and consistent in your explanation.

Practice the skill – utilizing a variety of drills and games that will keep athletes active, involved and interested. Repetition is key, but repetition can be achieved with variety as well. Variety is critical for individuals with attention deficit challenges. It also helps keep individuals motivated to continue trying to achieve a new skill.

Correct errors – be cautious of trying to correct too much at once, and provide corrective feedback in a positive manner.

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Use Available Resources - if you are not a professional athlete, ask for help. You can work with your Sports Manager, H.S. or College coaches or athletes who may even visit your practice and demonstrate the skill.

Teaching a skill incorrectly is worse than not teaching it at all.

The 5 C's of Effective Communication

Clear

Use words that an athlete can understand or that an athlete has a point of reference such as “see the ball” as opposed to “find the target”. *(Addresses an athlete's need to understand what he/she is asked to do.)*

Concrete

Use words that are specific to something physical and/or real. Since athletes have a cognitive delay in processing information (especially words), the challenge is to make concepts concrete. For example, when teaching the 3-second line rule in basketball, a coach can use the physical words of “hot” and “cold” to assist an athlete learning the concept. “Hot” refers to the lane on offense; the athlete will burn up if he stops in the lane and does not move through it. “Cold” refers to the lane at the defensive end of the court. The lane is cool and the athlete's friend. *(Addresses difficulty in understanding concepts and desired actions.)*

Concise

Use a few descriptive “key words” or cues. Do not use long sentences or multi-part instructions. For example: “Reach for the sky”. *(Addresses an athlete's difficulty in understanding verbal instructions and desired actions.)*

Consistent

Use the same word or words for the same action. *(Addresses an athlete's need for repetition and reinforcement.)*

Command-oriented

Verbally reinforce the athlete immediately after a desired action. Make the reinforcement action-oriented and specific to the skill. What to DO, rather than what not to do. *(Addresses an athlete's need for frequent motivation and words associated with a physical action.)*

Additional Tips:

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- Make sure an athlete is looking at you when making a coaching point. When needed, respectfully prompt an athlete to look at you. (*Addresses difficulty in maintaining attention.*)
- Ask athletes questions rather than always provide directions. Lead them to think for themselves. Verify athlete responses. (*Addresses independence because they are not always asked to think.*)

Seven Principles for Technical Skills Practice

1. Have athletes practice the right technique.
2. Have athletes practice the technique in game-like conditions as soon as they can.
3. Keep practices short and frequent when teaching new techniques.
4. Use practice time efficiently.
5. Make optimal use of facilities and equipment.
6. Make sure athletes experience a reasonable amount of success at each practice.
7. Make practice FUN!

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TRAINING SESSION PLAN

Sport: _____ Date _____ # of athletes _____ # of coaches _____

Goal for training session: _____

Facility safety check: Equipment Playing Surface Layout Supervision

Time	Session	Specific Objectives	Activities (Drills)	Layout
	Warm-up Exercises:			
	Light stretching Exercises			
	Skills Instruction:			
	Competition Experience:			
	Scrimmage			

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	Cool Down/Stretch Team Talk	
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NOT TO SELF → CATCH THEM ²⁰ BEING GOOD!

TRAINING SESSION PLAN

Sport: SOCCER Date 5/31 # of athletes 8-10 # of coaches 2

Goal for training session: Dribbling/Passing (Build confidence w/ drib skill + Passing skill)
 (Use all surfaces both feet. HAVE FUN.)

Facility safety check: Equipment Playing Surface Layout Supervision
 BALLS/CONES/TAPES Field CATCH IT

Time	Session	Specific Objectives	Activities (Drills)	Layout
15-20	Warm-up Exercises: High knees, Butt kicks, Back pedal, Light stretching Exercises: High kicks, Lunges	UP BODY CORE TEMP Blood Flow to Muscles INTRO SKILLS	ALL PLAYERS w/ ball PROGRESSIVE BALL OUTSIDE OF SPACE	X 20 X 15
15	Skills Instruction: Demo: AS IN + DED	FIRST TOUCH HEAD UP BALL CLOSE CHANGE SPEED CHANGE DIRECTION ALL SURFACES OF FOOT BOTH FEET	Dribble Through TRAFFIC Kill IT Push Roll Pull & Push OUTSIDE CHOP Roll backs	X → ← X X → ← X X → ← X
30	Competition Experience: Scrimmage	ADD PRESSURE GAME LIKE Dribble AWAY FROM PRESSURE USE FOOT SKILLS BALL OUTSIDE FT.	SQUARES/NARROWS ATHLETES w/ BALL COACHES START AS STUNKS STEP OUT WHEN 2 ATHLETES ARE SQUARES	X X X X X X X X X
15	Cool Down/Stretch Easy DYNAMICS TO STATIC STRETCH Team Talk	LOOK FOR HELP Dribble OUT of Press ATTACK AT SPEED Dribble & PASSES	ONE GAME FIRST TEAM TO KICK OWN HALF OPEN PLAY CP ATHLETES SHAPE INTRO FOR NEXT WEEK Dribbling & Passing	A A A A A A A A A A A A

COACHES

COACHES

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ATHLETE SAFETY: “KNOW”

K

Know your athletes! Read and reread medical information. Be aware of allergies: food or insect such as bee stings, pollen, previous injuries, asthma conditions, previous broken bones, medications taken. All of these can and do affect the performance of your athlete and how the individual will respond best to your coaching. Be aware of any athletes with Down Syndrome who are not clear of Atlantoaxial Instability (AAI). If they are *not* clear of AAI, ensure that they adhere to required restrictions (activities that flex the neck and add pressure, such as alpine skiing, high jump, diving).

Know your volunteers. All volunteers working directly with athletes must be approved through the Class A process. If they are not cleared to be a Class A Volunteer, they are NEVER to be alone with an athlete. However, they may assist at practice in the presence of an approved Class A volunteer. If you have a volunteer with whom you are not comfortable, tell your Sports Manager.

N

No participation without proper equipment. Do your athletes have the proper safety equipment? Shin guards, proper shoes, socks, clothing appropriate for the sport and weather conditions.

O

Operational equipment. Do you have all the safety equipment you need within reason? First aid kit, on the field or court with you? You need not have a full blown paramedic’s kit or athletic trainer’s kit, but something a bit more substantial than your typical car first aid kit is necessary. This should become team gear that travels to every practice and every game. Your Sports Manager will help you obtain what is needed.

W

Walk your practice or game field or court, before every activity. No rocks, sticks, broken glass, bee’s nest, big holes, or the inevitable dog refuse. Ensure there is no water, gym bags, backpacks, water bottles etc. on the court or field, or even close to the sidelines. Be aware and analyze constantly. Is lighting appropriate? How far away are rest rooms? Are they in view to you or your coaching staff? Be aware of street proximity to practice area and athletes, particularly if you have athletes that like to wander or bolt. You and your coaches are the athletes’ safety net.

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YOUR COACHING “KIT”

Following is a brief checklist of not so common items that you will want to include:

- Assorted band aids...include large ones 2x2 etc.
- Pre-wrap
- Athletic tape
- Duct Tape
- Electrical tape
- Assorted rolls of gauze: 1 ½” - 4”
- Tampons and pads
- Assorted Ace Bandages: 2” – 4”
- Hand sanitizer
- Neosporin
- Medical gloves
- Moleskin
- Extra shoe laces
- Hair ties/ Pony tail ties
- Sun screen
- Working cell phone for emergencies
- Appropriate snack if you have any diabetic athletes
- Ice Packs

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Assessing your Technical Skill Knowledge

Take a moment to consider the following questions regarding your knowledge of and ability to coach the technical skills of your sport. Be honest in your assessment.

1. How knowledgeable are you about how to perform all of the technical skills of your sport?

Weak				Strong
1	2	3	4	5

2. How skillful are you at teaching technical skills to your players? Do you know how to break down the skills into the appropriate steps to optimize learning them, and how to guide your players in putting those steps together again to execute the whole skill?

Weak				Strong
1	2	3	4	5

3. How good are you at observing technique, understanding the cause of incorrect execution, and providing cues to your players to correct errors?

Weak				Strong
1	2	3	4	5

4. How knowledgeable are you about the biomechanics of your sport – the science that studies the principles of movement in sport?

Weak				Strong
1	2	3	4	5

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Identifying and Evaluating the Skills You'll Teach

Skills Identified	Essential Skill to Evaluate		Skill Rating				
			Weak				Strong
Technical Skills							
Skill 1	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Skill 2	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Skill 3	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Skill 4	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Skill 5	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Tactical Skills							
Ability to read the situation	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of the rules	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of team strategy	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of opponents	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of self	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of tactical options	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Decision making ability	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Physical training skills							
Strength	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Speed	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Power	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Endurance	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Flexibility	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Quickness	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Balance	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Agility	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Other	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Mental Skills							
Emotional control – anxiety	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional control – anger	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Self confidence	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation to achieve	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to concentrate	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Other	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Communication Skills							
Sends positive messages	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Sends accurate messages	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Listens to messages	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Understands messages	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Receives constructive criticism	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Receives praise and recognition	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Credibility with teammates	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Credibility with coaches	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

“No lines, no laps, no lectures.”

Skills Identified	Essential Skill to Evaluate		Skill Rating				
			Weak		Strong		
<i>Character skills</i>							
Trustworthiness	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Respect	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Responsibility	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Fairness	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Caring	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Citizenship	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Maturity and experience</i>							
Physical maturity	Immature		Fully Mature				
	1	2	3	4	5		
Emotional maturity	Immature		Fully Mature				
	1	2	3	4	5		
Social maturity	Immature		Fully Mature				
	1	2	3	4	5		
Playing experience	Immature		Fully Mature				
	1	2	3	4	5		

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Analyze Constantly

Analyzing constantly separates the good coaches from those that simply show up and blow the whistle.

It's important to remain flexible and adaptable.

Analyzing is important in practice as well as in competition.

At practice – are they learning the technical and tactical skills you're trying to teach?

At competition – are they prepared? Did they learn the necessary technical and tactical skills to compete successfully?

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS COACHING RESOURCES

Sports Rules

All SOI and SOWV sport rule modifications can be found on the specific sport page on the SONC website. From the home page www.sowv.org click "Sports", and then select your sport to access the sport page.

SOI Coaching Guides

These are an EXCELLENT resource. Some are quite long though, so you probably won't be printing them out. Some contain great videos showing a coach instructing athletes in various skills. It's also a great place to pick up some game and activity ideas for your practices. If your sport has a Quick Start Guide, it is highly recommended that you start there. They are thorough and more manageable in size than the full blown coaching guides, which can be overwhelming. Not all sports have a Quick Start Guide yet. To access these resources:

8-week training plan by sport:

Some sports have an 8-week training plan available for you. It won't completely replace your own plan, but it can give you a great head start. Your Sports Manager can provide those for you (if available for your sport) at your pre-season Coaches' Meeting.

Coach Certification Listing

Every two weeks Special Olympics West Virginia posts a listing of all certifications for coaches, indicating what has been complete as well as what certifications may be expired or missing. You are able to check this listing at any time. Please note however, that a certification completed, it will not immediately show.

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SOWV COACH CERTIFICATION LEVELS

Certification	Requirements	Coach is able to attend
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 requirements • CPR/First Aid training • Principals of Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Level Events • Regional/USA Games • World Games
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport Assistant requirements • Sport Specific Training School • 10 practicum hours • Coaching Special Olympic Athletes • Sportsmanship Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Level Events • Regional/USA Games
Sport Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Screening Form • Protective Behaviors Training • General Orientation • Concussion Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Level Events as a sport assistant. Not qualified as a certified coach. • Also required of all local program directors, committee members, chaperones.

Note: All training information, including direct link to all online available trainings can be found on the Coach Education page of the SOWV website.

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