



Management



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Team Management

Introduction



Team Management deals with factors other than coaching skills and principles of the game. It involves handling issues with players and parents such as playing time and behavioral expectations on the sidelines. It is the attention to detail in areas such as pre-game, half time and post game preparation. It encompasses a wide variety of topics, which are crucial to the harmony, and structure of the team.

In this manual you will find management tips for practice, games, players, parents and for evaluations.



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Practice - Try to motivate players to come to practice by making it fun.



Practice Attendance Policy

You really can't punish a child in a recreational league for not coming to practice because it's usually the parent's fault. However, it is fair to tell them that because soccer is a team sport, it is only natural that those who come to practice the most might play the most and might get first preference for the positions they prefer to play. Try to motivate players to come to practice by making it fun. Also, explain that soccer is a team sport and that the team will play better and have more fun if everyone comes to practice.

Equipment Check List - The following is a check list for your practice sessions and games.

- Prepared written practice session.
- Copies of practice session for Assistant Coaches.
- Player Attendance Form.
- Clip Board with plastic cover.
- Stop Watch.
- Cell Phone for emergencies.
- Whistle.
- Soccer Balls (# _____).
- Practice Vests (# _____).
- Cones (# _____).
- Portable Goals/Nets.
- Water, Ice and Cooler.
- Medical Kit.
- Coaches Kit Bag, Rain Gear, Towel, Inflator and Pin.

Games - Always be a sportsman regardless of the result.



There are important considerations to make during game day. A thorough warm up must be implemented, considerations of team line-ups and who starts and doesn't and crucial team talks at keys moments.

This section addresses all these areas and provides you with ideas to help.

Pre-Game

Before the game starts you should consider the following:

Equipment needs for the game and warm up

For the game

- 📍 Uniforms (what color? home or away?)
- 📍 Game Balls (4 recommended)
- 📍 Pump and Inflator
- 📍 Corner Flags (6)
- 📍 Goal Nets
- 📍 First Aid Kit
- 📍 Medical Release Forms
- 📍 Cell Phone
- 📍 Player Passes
- 📍 Ice and Cooler
- 📍 Water

For the warm up

- 🕒 Warm up "T" shirts
- 🕒 Balls
- 🕒 Cones
- 🕒 Training Vests

Field Inspection

- 🕒 Make sure field markings are visible.
- 🕒 Check goal nets
- 🕒 Select best suited footwear for the playing conditions. Screw-ins for wet surfaces, molded soles for dry conditions.

Find your Half Time Location

- 🕒 Find out before the game where you will regroup at half time.
- 🕒 Look for a shaded area in hot conditions.
- 🕒 Look for shelter on wet days.

Check on Injured Players

- 🕒 Before you can select a team line up you may have to check on the injury status.

Decide on a line-up — Submit Team Roster

- 🕒 Time to decide on your team line up. Some leagues may require that you submit a team roster or show player ID's before the game commences.

Pre-game team talk

- 🕒 Keep the pre-game team talk brief and to the point. Identify a few main goals for the team to accomplish. You can be specific to each player minutes leading up to the game.

Warm up

- 🕒 Allow 25 to 30 minutes for a team and goalkeeper warm up.
- 🕒 Younger players under 10 may only need about 10 minutes.

Greet Officials

- 🕒 Greet the officials before the game. It's a good way to get to know them on a personal level.

Coin Toss

- 🕒 Captain to decide which side to select. Always take the advantage in the first half.
For example, play with the wind in the first half, it may die down in the second half.

Half Time

At the interval you should consider the following:

Meet at your half time location

- 🕒 Look for a shaded area in hot conditions.
- 🕒 Look for shelter on wet days.

Rest

- 🕒 Have your players sit down on the ground and relax.
- 🕒 You are allowed a maximum of 15 minutes rest period in eleven-a-side games. Sometimes the referee may ask for 10 minutes.
- 🕒 Take the full 15 minutes if your players are tired, you have only a few substitutes or if the weather is hot.
- 🕒 Agree to 10 if minutes the weather is cold or conditions are deteriorating.

Fluids

- 🕒 Players should have a small drink of water. Avoid drinking too much.
- 🕒 Have drinks ready in paper cups or bottles to save time.

Check Injuries

- 🕒 Check for any new injuries or recurring injuries to your players.
- 🕒 Get treatment if necessary.

Review first half performance

- 🕒 Because of the short time, limit your talk to 3 to 4 points.
- 🕒 Be specific and clear.
- 🕒 Make appropriate adjustments tactically based on your first half observations. Refer to your notes and confer with your assistant coaches.

Warm Up

- 🕒 Use two minutes of your half time break for a quick stretch.

Post Game

At the conclusion of the game you should consider the following:

Shake hands with opposing team and officials

- 🕒 At the end of the game, players and coaches usually line up facing each other on the halfway line, walk past each other and touch hands and say "good game". Coaches are usually last in line and shake hands.
- 🕒 Always be a sportsman regardless of the result.
- 🕒 It is also a nice gesture and sets a good example for the coach to seek out the referee and assistant referees and thank them.

Fluids

- 🕒 Players should have a drink of water to replenish fluid lost during the game.
- 🕒 Have drinks ready in paper cups or bottles to save time.
- 🕒 Parents usually take turns providing refreshments after games.

Check Injuries

- 🕒 Check for any new injuries or recurring injuries to your players.
- 🕒 Get treatment if necessary.

Cool Down

- 🌀 Players should perform a brief 5-minute cool down after each game.
- 🌀 Keep this a routine, even when you lose.

Review game briefly

- 🌀 Review the game very briefly and only emphasize the positives. Your next practice session is the place to be detailed and comprehensive. Sometime after a loss, frustration can rule. It is good policy to restrain your comments until you have had an opportunity to reflect on the game.

Team announcements

- 🌀 Make appropriate announcements for your next practice or game to parents and players.

Collect and check equipment

- 🌀 Make sure all the equipment is collected and accounted for.
- 🌀 Have the team captain and several players be responsible for this duty.

Replenishment

- 🌀 Thirty minutes after any competition suggest your players eat a meal high in complex carbohydrates to help restore your body's blood sugar (glycogen levels).

Players - The captain is an extension of the coaching staff and should serve as a “go between” for the players.



This section provides you with information on outlining players responsibilities during the season, how to handle disruptive players and suggestions for selecting your team captain.

PLAYERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Hand to your players at first team meeting.

Ready to Play

Players should bring the following with them to every training session:

- 👤 Inflated ball.
- 👤 Their own cool water (cool water is absorbed faster).
- 👤 Shin guards.
- 👤 Soccer shoes and indoor shoes (be prepared for the weather).
- 👤 Tape.
- 👤 Extra shoe laces.
- 👤 Emergency phone #'s.
- 👤 A complete change of clothes (especially socks).
- 👤 Keepers bring gloves, shirt and long pants in case the field is poor.

In short, you should be ready for anything! Put these items in your bag the night before your session so that you do not have to hunt them down and thus be late for training the next morning! Be at practice 10 - 15 minutes early, in time to get your gear on so that you are ready to start on time.

Practicing on your own

The best thing that you can do is get your friends together, set up a field, choose sides and play. Sometimes, invite players that are older than you, and better. The most important thing is that

you play, whether it is 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 4 v 4, or even 2 v 3. It doesn't matter, just play.

If you can not get others to join you, spend as much time with the ball as you can. Find a wall to kick against, invent juggling games for yourself, try to chip a ball into a garbage can from various distances, be creative, have fun. You have to claim responsibility for your own development. Once you realize how much fun it is to play the game with skill, you may never want to stop

SELECTING A TEAM CAPTAIN

Careful consideration should apply when selecting your team captain. Some coaches allow the players to vote for their captain. However, this can become a popularity contest and sometimes result in the wrong player being selected. The captain is an extension of the coaching staff and should serve as a "go between" for the players. On occasion players feel a little uneasy talking directly to the coach, so relaying their concerns through the team captain is an alternative.

The captain should have several attributes. Below is a checklist of the qualities you should look for in a team captain:

A team captain must:

- Be a leader on and off the field.
- Be a starter on the team.
- Be positive and encouraging to teammates.
- Be vocal.
- Be respected.
- Be honest.
- Be a good sportsman.
- Be level headed and not get into fights on the field.
- Be reliable.
- Be loyal.

Once you have made your choice of team captain, an individual meeting should be arranged. During the meeting you should explain the roles and responsibilities of being the captain.

Here are some assignments for your team captain:

- Take the team for warm ups during practice and pre-game.
- Greet game officials.
- Coin toss
- Selecting sides for kick off.
- Hold informal team meetings.
- Help collect equipment at end of practice.

Parents - The role that parents play in the life of a soccer player has a tremendous impact on their experience.



The role that parents play in the life of a soccer player has a tremendous impact on their experience. With this in mind, we have taken some time to write down some helpful reminders for all of us as we approach the upcoming season. If you should have any questions about these thoughts, please feel free to discuss it with us, the coaches.

PARENTAL SUPPORT – THE KEY TO PEAK PERFORMANCE

1. Let the coach's coach:

Leave the coaching to the coaches. You have entrusted the care of your player to these coaches and they need to be free to do their job. If a player has too many coaches, it is confusing for them and their performance usually declines.

2. Support the program:

Get involved. Volunteer. Help out with fundraisers, car-pool; anything to support the program.

3. Be your child's best fan:

Support your child unconditionally.

4. Support and root for all players on the team:

Foster teamwork. Your child's teammates *are not* the enemy. When they are playing better than your child, your child now has a wonderful opportunity to learn.

5. Encourage your child to talk with the coaches:

If your child is having difficulties in practice or games, or can't make a practice, etc., encourage *them* to speak directly to the coaches. This "responsibility taking" is a big part of becoming a responsible player. By handling the off-field tasks, your child is claiming ownership of all aspects of the game - preparation for as well as playing the game.

6. Understand and display appropriate game behavior:

Remember, your child's self esteem and game performance is at stake. Be supportive, cheer, and be appropriate. To perform to the best of their abilities, a player needs to focus on the parts of the game that they can control (their fitness, positioning, decision making, skill, and aggressiveness, what the game is presenting them). If they start focusing on what they can not control (the condition of the field, the referee, the weather, the opponent, even the outcome of the game at times), they will not play up to their ability. If they hear a lot of people telling them what to do, or yelling at the referee, it diverts their attention away from the task at hand.

7. Monitor your child's stress level at home:

Keep an eye on the child to make sure that they are handling stress effectively from the various activities in their life.

8. Monitor eating and sleeping habits:

Be sure your child is eating the proper foods and getting adequate rest.

9. Help your child keep their priorities straight:

Help your child maintain a focus on schoolwork, relationships and the other things in life beside soccer. Also, if your child has made a commitment to soccer, help him fulfill his obligation to the team.

10. Reality test:

If your child has come off the field when their team has lost, but they have played their best, help them to see this as a "win". Remind them that they are to focus on "process" and not "results". Their fun and satisfaction should be derived from "striving to win". Conversely, they should be as satisfied from success that occurs despite inadequate preparation and performance.

11. Keep soccer in its proper perspective:

Soccer should not be larger than life for you. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them.

Remember your relationship will continue with your children *long after* their competitive soccer days are over. Keep *your* goals and needs separate from your child's experience.

12. Have fun: That is what we will be trying to do! We will try to challenge your child to reach past their "*comfort level*" and improve themselves as a player, and thus, a person. We will attempt to do this in environments that are fun, yet challenging. We look forward to this process. We hope you do too!

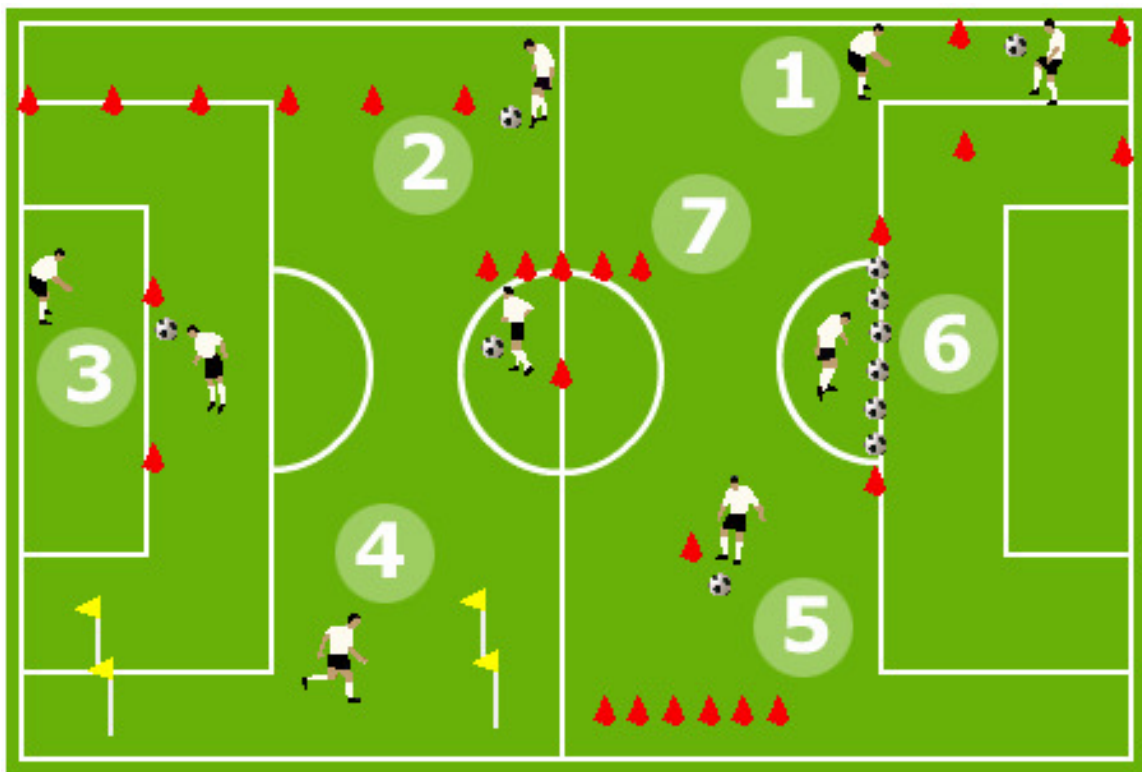
Courtesy - Jeff Pill

Skill Evaluation



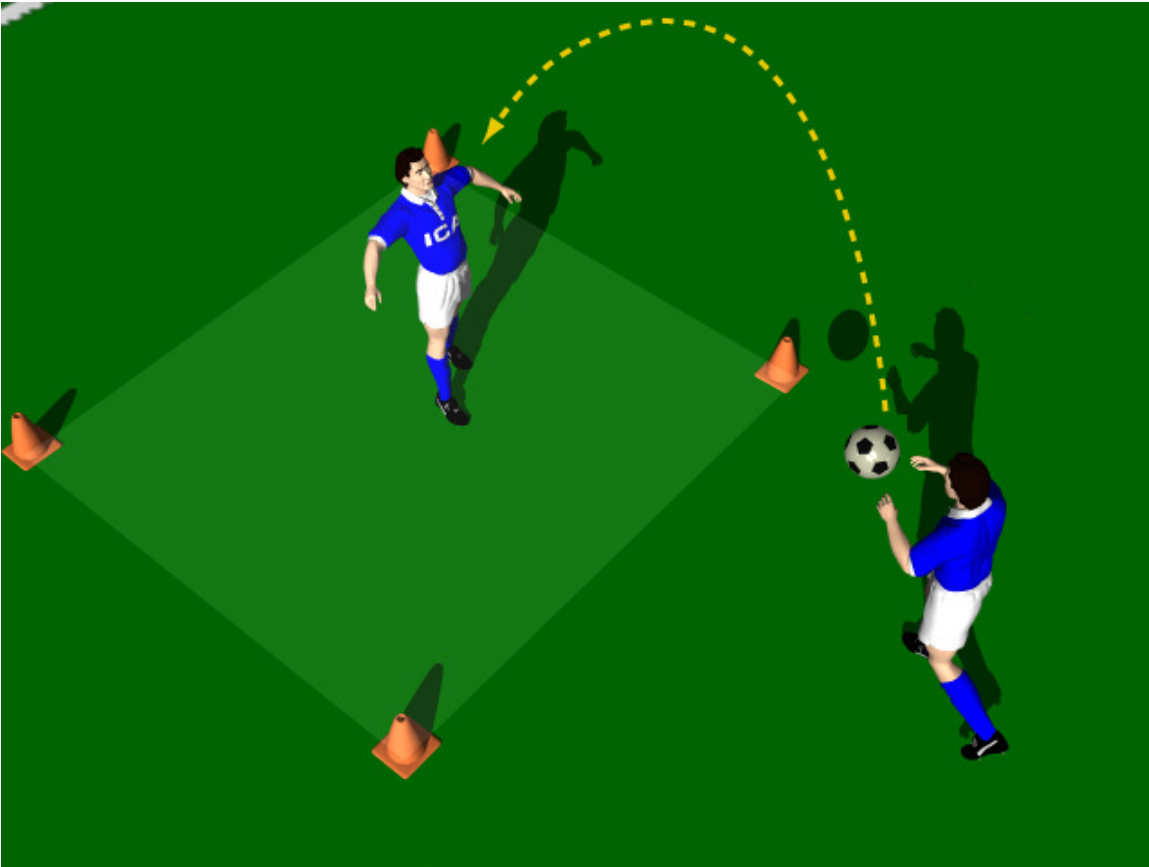
One of the most difficult tasks for a youth coach during a try out is to objectively assess each players talent within a short period of time. It is recommended that a series of skills be measured to provide feedback in an objective manner for both the player and parents. Small sided or full games should be the final test in measuring any players ability.

Use these stations to assist you in objectively evaluating your players. Ensure all scores are recorded properly.



Sample of how to set up an evaluation stations on a full field.

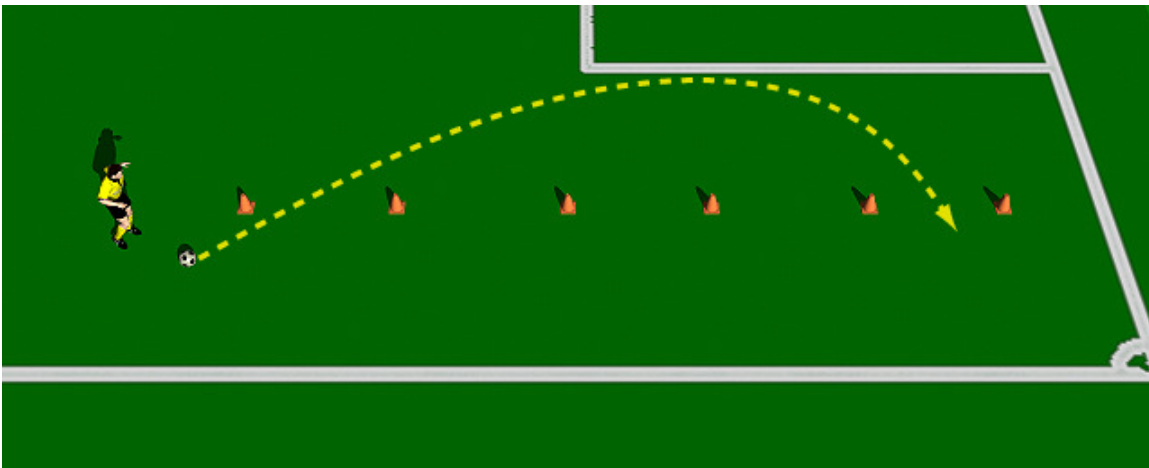
Station One – Ball Control



Serve 6 high lofted throws for player to control with head, chest, thighs or feet. Ball must not drop within the square before controlling. Award (10pts) for each successful attempt.

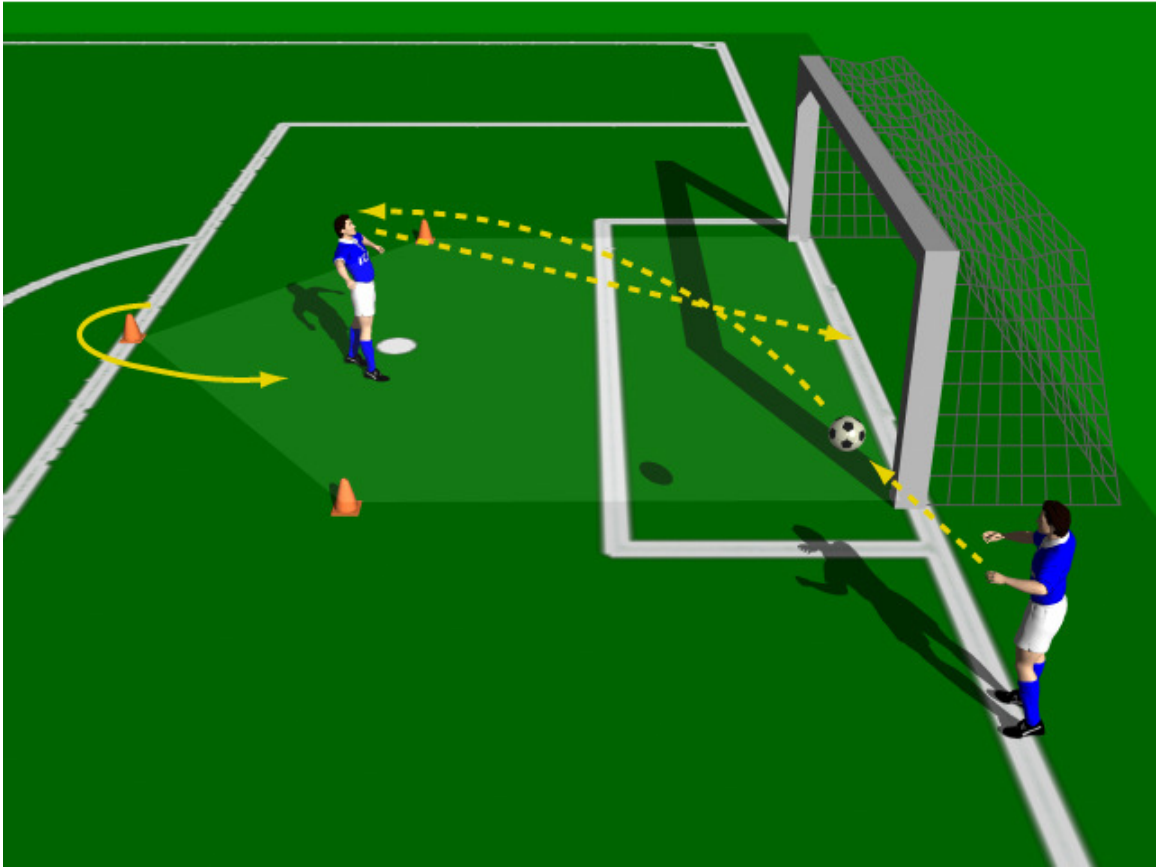
Equipment: 4 cones, 1 ball.

Station Two – Aerial Passing



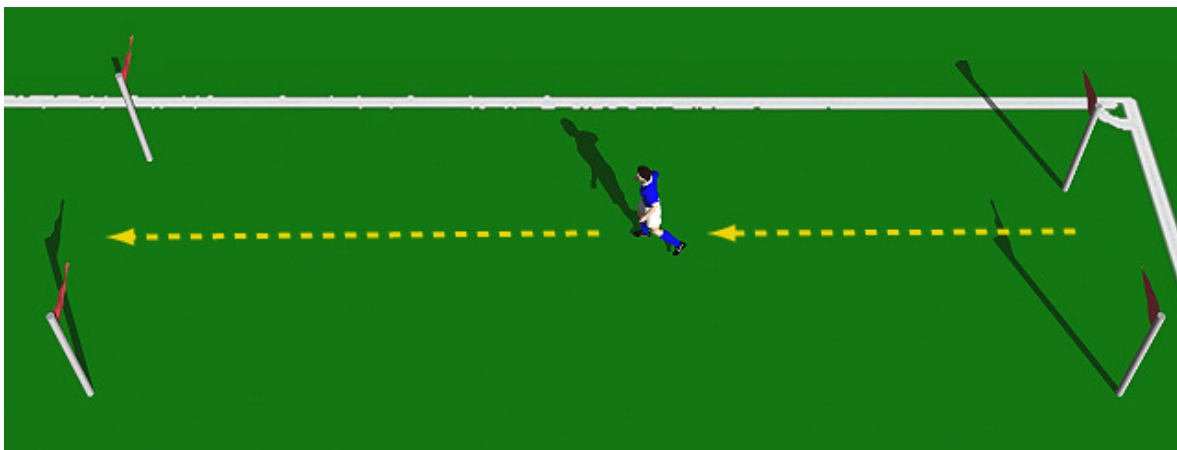
Using the lofted pass (aerial), kick 3 balls for distance with each foot. Cones are placed at 10 yard intervals. Record length of kicks for each foot. **Equipment:** 6 cones, 6 balls.

Station Three – Heading



Head 6 balls served at head height into an undefended goal.
Record number of goals scored. **Equipment:** 6 balls.

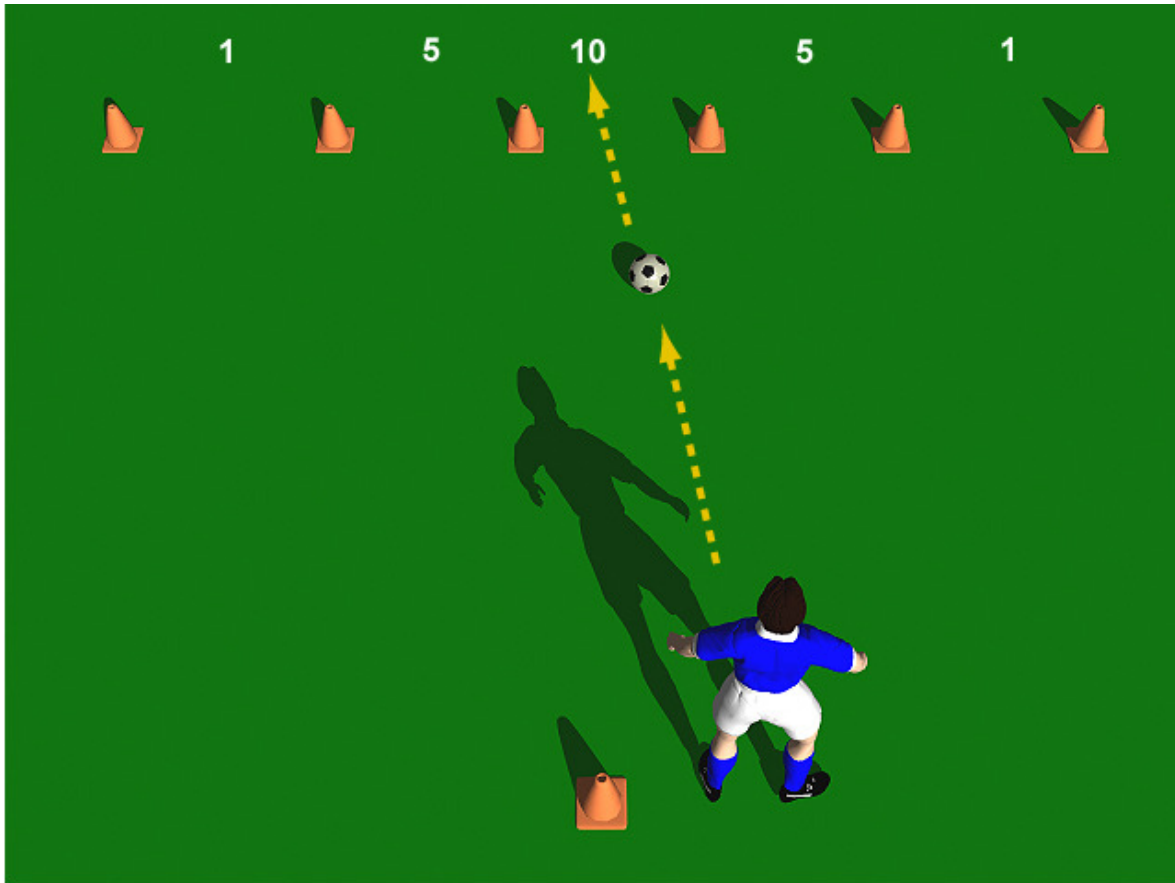
Station Four – The 40 Yard Dash



Line up and run 40 yards. Record time.

Equipment: Stopwatch, 4 cones or flags.

Station Five – Passing



Pass three balls accurately using the "push pass", with each foot. Aim for the middle slot. Indicate slots hit (10pts,5pts,1pt).

Equipment: 6 balls, 6 cones.

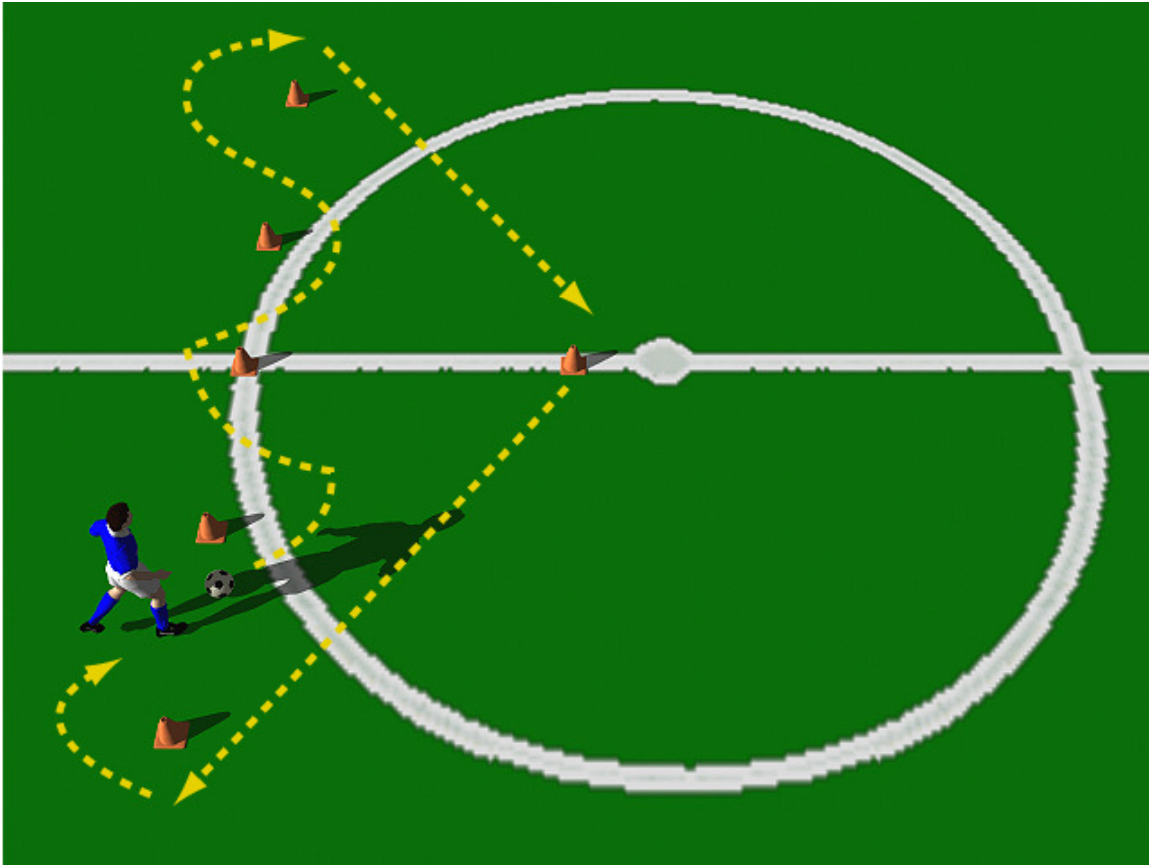
Station Six – Shooting



Shoot 6 balls into an undefended goal. Record number of goals scored.

Equipment: 6 balls. Goal with Nets

Station Seven – Shooting



Dribble from the middle cone, weave through slalom course and back to middle cone. Record total time.

Equipment: 6 cones, 1 ball.

Interpreting the Motivation/Feedback Data

Analysis of Coaches *by Chris Jones and Erin Boyce*

The purpose of the research project comes in two parts. Part one is to analyze how two coaches vary in the form of presenting motivation and feedback during a halftime speech. Part two is to analyze how the information given to the players during a practice would and/or could be different than a halftime speech.

The data comprises of the following categories and is explained as follows:

Instructions: Verbal statements about what to do and how to do them

Example: "When they do... We need to do...", "Pass the ball to the outside player more"

This area also includes devising tactics and creating game plays

Hustles: Verbal statements to activate or intensify previously instructed behavior

Example: "You're doing well, keep at it", "You can do it", "Keep working hard", "Step it up", "Faster!"

Modeling-Positive: Demonstration of how to perform

Example: Coach shows players what they are to do and how to do it.

Modeling-Negative: Demonstration of how not to perform

Example: Coach shows players what they should not do or instances to avoid during the game or practice.

Praises: Verbal complements

Example: "Good Job" "I like the way you're..." "Working/Playing well"

Scolds: Verbal statements of displeasure

Example: "You can't keep doing that!" "You need to improve now" "I have higher expectations for you"

Nonverbal Reward: Nonverbal compliments or encouragements

Example: Clapping hands, high fives, thumbs up, pat on the back, handshake

Nonverbal Punishment: Scowls, gestures of despair, and temporary removal of a player from practice/scrimmage or sent off to practice on own.

Example: Shaking head in displeasure, turning back and walking away, throwing arms in air, kicking dirt, throwing clipboard or water bottle

Scold/Reinstruction: Single verbal behavior that refers to a specific act, contains a clear scold, and reasserts a previously instructed behavior

Example: "You need to stop passing into the middle, when you get the ball turn and look to the outside"

Other: Any behavior not falling into the above categories

Example: Comparing the team/player(s) to those in the professional ranks

Uncodable: Behavior not clearly heard or seen

Example: Uncodables would include feedback that cannot be easily recognized. An example may include the coach yelling at the official in protest of the opposition solely to benefit their team or player(s) involved.

Enhancing the Quality of Practice by Dr. Mike Voight



This article details methods that coaches could utilize to improve upon their players' and team's practice performances. Being a former Division I soccer coach I know firsthand the frustrations that coaches go through trying to motivate players day in and day out. The particular focus will be on empowering athletes with quality practice skills. I devised and have worked off of a quality of practice model which was derived from the theoretical, empirical, and practical work from numerous disciplines, including motor learning, pedagogy, coaching, and sport psychology. Specific topics included deliberate practice, practice distribution and variability, practice methods, simulation, transfer, and efficiency of feedback (Butler & Winne, 1995; Ericsson, 1996; Ericsson, 2003; Fischman & Oxendine, 1998; Magill, 2001; Schmidt & Wrisberg, 2000). The model encompasses four main factors: (1) adopting a quality attitude; (2) utilizing quality preparation procedures prior to the lesson; (3) incorporating quality execution strategies during class activities, and then (4) taking the time and effort for quality control or evaluation of their performance of the activity or game.

Quality Attitude

USC football coach, Pete Carroll, a recognized "educator" at both the professional and collegiate levels, spoke at a sport psychology conference (Carroll, 1999) on quality of practice issues, most notably the attitude that participants bring to the practice. In an interview (and subsequent article) Coach Carroll noted a distinction between two types of athletes, mediocre attitude versus professional-attitude athletes. "Mediocre-attitude players wonder 'what is coach going to do to us today'? Players in this mindset go through the motions, put in their time, and just want to complete the drills and get out of there. Professional-attitude players consider practice as an opportunity for improvement and refinement, and not something forced onto them" (Voight and Carroll, 2006, p. 328). Do you have many students who fit into these particular categories? To change the mindset of a 'mediocre-attitude' student-athlete it is important to do the following:

- 1.) Get to know your students as more than just "players" who are put through drills and games for a class period. Getting to know the students will let them know you care, and chances are they will give more of themselves since you have done so.
- 2.) Knowing them in this way will also enable you to be aware of student preferences for specific teaching behaviors, namely, types and timing of feedback, and their motives for participation. The coaching literature shows those players not receiving their preferred feedback or having their primary motives met will be dissatisfied (Chelladurai, 1990; Voight & Callaghan, 2006).
- 3.) Today's generation of students want to feel part of the process, so providing them with as much instructional information regarding the purposes behind the activities and how it relates to the game will go a long way to improving upon their attitude.

Quality Preparation

How many players actually prepare for practice? Most players probably shove down a burger, race to the locker room, busily put on their gear, get to the practice field, and wait until they are told what to do. Sounds like a mediocre-attitude athlete. A professional-attitude athlete will attempt to find a way to prepare better for practice. Actually having a set routine to follow, made up of proper eating (fueling up) and rest, as well as finding a way to let go of non-soccer-related problems (school, friends, significant others) can ensure that the two hours of practice can be dedicated solely to quality execution. The ability to park distractions is an important skill to acquire. It is very difficult to truly commit and focus on practice if outside stressors are brought onto the field. One routine that has worked with several top players is to write down the stressors that are nagging them, and, prior to walking onto the field, shredding or throwing this paper away, symbolically throwing away the stressors so that the player can focus on practice objectives.

Coaches can be a great help in assisting athletes with their practice preparation by setting up pre-practice routines, such as arriving to the field prior to the start of practice to perform a wide array of warm-up activities. Players who do this routine can be truly ready to begin practice once the coaches arrive. Also, athletes can prepare better for practice by setting standards of performance (goals) for each week's practice or individual session (e.g., "What do I want to accomplish by the first preseason scrimmage? What do I want to accomplish in this defending drill?"). In addition to setting standards, players can visualize what they want to accomplish prior to physically and technically executing the drill. Another strategy that top players have used is to mentally picture themselves executing their most important roles and responsibilities over and over again, often the night before practice or prior to practice. Strikers would shoot 100 shots a night before bedtime in their mind's eye. Keepers would make crossed-ball saves and block a certain amount of shots. Each position could easily do this type of "homework" every day or night. Visualizing these actions help to devise a mental blueprint that is used during real, physical training. The more often players perform their particular actions, both in their heads and with a real ball, the more reps they are putting in.

Quality Execution

Mediocre-attitude athletes often go through the motions and do just enough during practice so they do not get yelled at or called out. Professional-attitude athletes have set purposes and objectives for each practice session and view practice as a valuable opportunity. They also utilize techniques geared toward their own quality execution, whereas the "mediocres" attempt to survive the session. It is important that coaches not just let practice end; instead, coaches should make sure that players finish practice. Examples of quality execution techniques used by professional-attitude athletes include the following:

- Taking notes during a team meeting, or after practice sessions, regarding specific points they find important, especially coaching points on technical and tactical elements.
- Evaluating practice performance "on the fly" or during practice, so they can be more aware of what is working versus what is not. "Mediocres" just want to get to the end of practice and are not aware of how they are doing.
- Devising competitions with themselves to increase the quality of execution. For example, if a professional-attitude athlete is doing sprint work, he attempts to chase down a teammate instead of just trying to survive the running. During technical work, a professional-attitude athlete counts the number of successful attempts made instead of just doing the drill until the coach stops it (again, merely surviving).

- Utilizing preset routines when concentration begins to drift during practice. Professional-attitude athletes utilize refocusing routines to ensure that when focus fades they have a routine from which to draw.
- Knowing exactly why they are doing a certain drill, what the end result should look like, and what they should be focusing on during execution. This knowledge can have a big impact on the quality of effort and execution. These issues should be discussed prior to drill execution. Although this responsibility primarily lies with the coaches, players should ask if they do know the answer to these pertinent questions.

Quality Control

Once practice is done, do players evaluate their performance? Professional-attitude players ask themselves the following questions:

- How was my physical, technical, and tactical execution?
- How was my work rate?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of my play?
- What will I do differently during my next practice?
- What should I do in preparation for the next practice?
- What helped to motivate me for practice today?
- How did I refocus and stay focused today?
- What did the coaches say to me regarding my practice performance?

Mediocre-attitude players do not ask these questions. They are simply pleased that practice is over. Using standards and goals is very helpful, especially if a coach has players who evaluate their progress. If players accomplish a particular goal, they should take pride in their accomplishment and press on with higher goals. If goals are not accomplished, players should then reevaluate their performance (positives/negatives), and either start fresh to accomplish the goal the next day or revise the goal.

A survey has been developed to assess the use of the essential quality practice techniques by top players in their respective sports (contact the author directly for a copy of this survey). Obtaining this feedback can be an excellent springboard for discussion with individual players and the team. Players should be informed of the results, with the trust that they will only be used to assist the athletes in their play and not as a punishment in any way. For example, no player should be called out for having low scores on the subscales. Players will derive the appropriate feedback if they score it themselves as well, but this survey will be more valuable if the coach is active in the process. As with any questionnaire, players can record answers that they know the coach wants to see, but this practice can be limited if the coach explains the importance of honest responses, and that the results will only be used to better each player's training habits.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: For more information on improving upon the quality of individual-team practice, leadership training for captains, team building, coaching today's athletes, or performance-enhancement information, visit my website [www.drMikeVoight.com] or contact me directly [e: voightmir@ccsu.edu]

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Dr. Mike Voight

Assistant Professor

Sport Psychology-Team Consultant (Private Practice)

Central Connecticut State University

E: voightmir@ccsu.edu

Website: www.drmikevoight.com