



Planning a training session

How to structure a training session

It is important a coach takes time to plan each training session. Training sessions should be developed from two or three goals that have been identified for that session. The elements of a training session that all coaches should include are:

- session introduction
- **warm up**
- games, skill and fitness activities
- **cool down**
- review

Gathering information and setting goals

Before planning a training session, coaches should gather information about the participants, and set goals. If you are working with a new group, the type of information you might need includes:

- previous experience in the sport
- level of development, both with the technical and tactical skills of the sport as well as their level of physical fitness
- why they like to play the sport and what motivates them
- goals and aspirations in the sport
- any illness, injury or medical condition that might restrict their ability to participate.

Goals should be established for the season as well as each training session. Goals help to guide the program and provide a reference point to monitor progress throughout the season.

Tips for planning training activities

- **Session content:**
 - Over-plan rather than under-plan. It is easier to omit drills than to add unplanned drills.
 - The session must have variety of activities to ensure the participants stay active and enthusiastic. Look for new ideas and adapt old favourites or games from other sports.
- **Appropriate activities:**
 - Avoid activities that require inactivity or drills that eliminate participants. It is likely that the participants to be first eliminated will be the less skilled, who are the ones that need most practice.
 - Use more groups with a small number of participants rather than a few groups containing large numbers.
 - The activities must be appropriate for the participant's ability and age.
 - Even younger participants are capable of working independently in small groups. Develop activity station cards that explain the drill to be practised.
- **Progression:**
 - Plan so that activities flow from one to the next smoothly. Have equipment close at hand and develop routines so that participants know what to do next.
- **Practice:**
 - Ensure enough time for participants to practice and experiment with activities. Practice in small sided games is beneficial as it allows skills as well as technique to develop.