



## Case Study – Mal Pearson, Buderim QLD.

Buderim’s Mal Pearson always said he’d never be a sports coach to sons Mackenzie, 8 and Riley, 6. But as the boys tried an array of sports, Pearson found himself variously coaching children’s soccer, Australian Rules Auskick and cricket.

It was when he found himself at the tail end of a Chevallum Primary School cross country race motivating children who were struggling that the 40-year-old truly realised how important it was that children enjoyed what they were doing.

“Historically I think, and it’s certainly true of me when I was at school that you ran and ran and the mentality was that you had to win. I think that turned 80 per cent of kids away,” Pearson said.

“These days the philosophy should be about having fun.”

Pearson is one of the latest of 4000 people across Australia to complete the Australian Sports Commission’s online coaching course.

He became aware of the course shortly after running with the Chevallum students and said it completely complemented his thoughts on where children’s sports should be going.

“It really drove home the importance of not only having a safe physical environment but an environment where kids are safe from ridicule and they can really develop at their own pace.”

Pearson said the course was intense in that there was a lot of information and he took comprehensive notes, but at the same time it took him only two hours longer than the recommended six hours to complete the course.

“It was exceptional in that I could do it in my own time and in my own home. If I had to physically go somewhere, I probably would not have done it.”

Pearson said he appreciated the inclusive aspect of the coaching principles in one of the course modules. “It turned my thinking around about all kids having motor skills that develop at the same time. My work with Auskick has also reinforced a lot of that. “

He said that showing logical steps and tips for planning each session was a bonus, but it was in what seemed to be “small details” that he said he gained the most.

“It’s things like having goal posts padded or removing unsafe objects. I’m also conscious that if there are two children left to be picked up at the end of a training session and one parent arrives, I ask them to wait until the other parent shows up so that I’m not left alone with a child.

“You think that’s commonsense, but when you’re talking to the common man, those sorts of things aren’t always top of your psyche. Once you get into it, it’s good, useful stuff.”

After almost a decade in the building industry, Pearson is now studying at TAFE to be a teachers’ aide. He says the coaching course has also helped fire thoughts about introducing coaching into schools. “I think that’s the next level ... to go into schools during school time and play. I’d love to get something like that started here.”