



# CHAPTER 1

## Training Program

*"If you really enjoy your sport, you'll  
enjoy teaching it to others."  
(Howard Ferguson — College Wrestling)*

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### TRAINING PROGRAM

The key to a successful training program, is knowing your playing group so that you can plan accordingly.

- Make it fun, interesting and varied.
- Is it challenging?
- Is it purposeful?
- Is the training schedule suitable for your playing group? Can they cope with the content? Have you got the resources to assist your training plan? How much can the playing group handle?
- How do your players learn best?
- Is it the same way you learn best? Are you prepared to adapt?

With every drill you do, have a purpose: why are you doing this? Is it benefitting the group? How does this relate to a game?

**It's important to give each drill a name so that players can relate quicker.**

After every drill, review it with the group by asking these 3 questions:

- What are the key things that we did well?
- How could we get better?
- Where might we see this in a game?
- Give ownership to the group

You will notice in the Curriculum Overview section, that there are many skill areas that need to be covered. The sequence and speed at which you complete them will depend on your group's capabilities. Use the opportunity to immediately draw out the positives and areas to improve (SNAPSHOT) immediately after a game because it is a fantastic learning opportunity. Equally important is that it will establish a plan of attack regarding your key focus areas for the upcoming week. What worked well? Where can we improve? The planning of your training program (drills) should be linked into this and support your key learning intentions.

**Do not be afraid to be creative with your drills. (Design your own as long as they are purposeful). Your own drills are often the best ones because more thought has gone into them.**

When designing and creating drills, it is an important practice to develop a core component, so that you can keep building on it by adding a variable each time. The speed to which you do this will depend on the playing group's capabilities and their ability to embrace new challenges and changes. This may vary from session to session, or from week to week. Scaffolding drills in a sequential way provides familiarity for the group, and will save you time in the long term because you are not wasting time having to explain the whole drill all over again. All that is needed is for you to be able to make reference to the drill, but ultimately focus on the new element of the same drill.

In Chapter 5 (Drills and Skills), each training drill provides ways in which the activity can be varied. It is up to the coach's discretion as to whether they use these or add in a variable of their own that they have created.

### Benefits of Game Based Training

In the **Underlying Stage**, it is imperative that your training program involves many different rotational activities, so that the younger children are remaining active, while working in smaller groups. Each activity should run for no more than 8-10 minutes, as the children at this age tend to have a short attention span and can lose concentration pretty quickly. Therefore, when planning, provide many different types of minor games to engage them. In some cases, it is better to have more planned with regard to drills and games than less, as you can always have something to fall back on if you sense that the group is unsettled. In this edition, many minor games have been designed to assist the coach to cater for this age group.

The use of small rotational activities/stations is much more practical and beneficial with regard to fast tracking the children with their skill development.

Also, at this stage, it is really important to have assistance (helpers), to take charge of a small group and make it easier to handle.

**Handy Tips when Designing an Effective Training Program:**

- Be inclusive of all players so that they are actively involved.
- Know your playing group as this will enable you to pitch the drill accordingly.
- Your training drills need to be purposeful and meaningful. They need to be planned and carefully thought out.
- Provide clear, explicit and simple instructions when explaining the drills. Avoid over-complicating your explanations.
- Maintain the pace of the training session. Prevent your players from standing around too long. Keep them on the move.
- Model how the drill is to work. This could be done either by drawing its mechanics on a whiteboard prior to running out onto the ground, or walking it through slowly before increasing the intensity.
- Consistently provide positive feedback. Avoid focusing on the negatives.
- Create an environment that is fun, interesting, enjoyable and challenging.
- Give all of your drills a name so that players can relate to them. This will save you time in the long term, as it creates familiarity with players.
- Keep varying your drills, even though they may be covering the same teaching points. Variety is very important for maintaining engagement.
- Create progression with your training drills, starting with simple concepts and build on these to more complex ones. Remember the rate at which you introduce a new core component will depend on your group's capabilities.
- Plan your training program according to the resources available to you e.g. personnel available and equipment.
- Cater for all learning styles when creating and designing your training program. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, do not assume that everyone learns in the same way.
- You need to be flexible. As a coach, do not be afraid to change things during training if you feel that they are not going according to plan.
- Ask questions and allow your playing group to work through problems by designing game based drills that require decision making.
- Have a whistle. This is important for maintaining the pace of the training session and keeping the players in check.