

Junior Sport – Factsheet

Conducting a training session

It is important that all training sessions are planned. This will ensure that the young people enjoy the session and achieve the maximum benefits. The following general points should be considered when planning a session.

- **Appropriate activities:** the activities chosen must be appropriate for the young people's ability and age.
- **Progression:** the activities should be broken into teachable elements which progress from simple to more complex movements.
- **Demonstration:** demonstrations by the coach or good athletes supplemented by videotape played at varying speeds.
- **Variety:** the session must have variety of activities to ensure the young people stay active and enthusiastic.
- **Practice:** ensure enough time for the young people to practice and experiment with activities. Practice in small-sided games is beneficial as it allows skills as well as technique to develop.
- **Supervision:** contribute to the development of the child's abilities by encouraging the child, reinforcing good behaviour and practice and providing feedback when appropriate.
- **Play:** give the young people time to play the activities - small-sided games are best.

The ideal coaching session for young people will last between 45 to 75 minutes, depending on the age of the athletes. Our plan is based on a 60-minute session but can be modified according to the time available.

1. Group organisation (5 mins)

Use this time to bring the athletes together. Talk to them about the session. It allows for latecomers to settle before beginning the planned activities.

2. Physical warm up (5 mins)

3. Skill warm up (10 mins)

Revise a skill taught in an earlier session and reinforce the key points as the athletes warm up. Remember to use praise and plenty of it.

4. Skill development (20 mins)

Demonstrate (or have someone else demonstrate) the new skill that you have planned for the session. Breaks the skill into parts if necessary but be sure to demonstrate the skill as a whole and at normal speed. Make sure everyone can see the demonstration and repeat it several times highlighting the key points.

Practice the skill, starting with the basic skill and work towards having the athletes end up practising the skill in game-like situations.

Observe all athletes so that you can praise good technique and spot basic errors. Re-demonstrate if necessary.

Coach the athletes who need correction. Be sure to be positive and supportive. Emphasise what to do rather than what not to do. Shouting and criticising won't achieve anything.

5. Modified games (15 mins)

Young people will want to play a game so set aside some time where they can practice the skill in a game situation without too much instruction from the coach. Make sure that everyone is involved and not sitting out for too long.

6. Concluding activity (5 mins)

Use this time to emphasise the key points from the skill introduced in this session. This revision can be done whilst the athletes are cooling down. Praise all the athletes and also use the time to talk about the next game and other organisations matters.

Some Key Points

Young people learn through activity and fun.

Select activities that provide variety.

Include challenges in each session.

Give lots of praise for improvement and effort.

Grade activities - early activities easy and later ones more difficult

Allow young people to be with their friends.

Allow young people to learn.

Vary type of activities to ensure an interesting program.

Suit the athlete's age, level of maturation, level of fitness and skill acquisition.

Be relevant to the level of competition.

Challenge young people.

Be flexible to deal with the available facilities and environmental conditions.