

TRAINING STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE OF A SESSION PLAN

It would be useful if we all worked at structuring our sessions along the same lines to ensure we provide the correct coaching for all the players in all the teams. The following presentation is one way to set it up and it helps you organize your time management for a session. This is how we want to do our winter training sessions for everyone. We have one hour per session you can change the amount of time spent on each phase depending on how long your session is.

1. Warm Up (10 min.): Ball each and / or Awareness workout. They must get lots of touches to get comfortable on the ball to begin the session.
2. Theme of the Day (35 min.)
3. Scrimmage (30 min.): To practice when, where, and how to apply the theme. They must be S.S.G's and preferably 3 v 3 game size.
4. Coordination and Speed Work (10 min.): Balance / quick feet. Also power work for the older ages.
5. Cool Down (5 min.): Ball each and / or Awareness workout if time allows.
6. Concluding Discussion: What did they learn today?

TOTAL = ONE HOUR AND 30 MINUTES

By using a structure you can focus the minds of yourself and the players thereby increasing the work time and decreasing the talk time. Players arrive for training and know what to expect and can get straight into the warm up without prompting.

More Demonstration and less Explanation works best. If you have time use the session planner to have a record of what you did; how it faired and what you may change for next time to make it better. Build up your own record of what you did over a season and from this you can plan a program for yourself in time.

COACHES CHECKLIST FOR A SESSION PLAN

To help you understand how important it is to structure your plan to ensure it is as effective as possible the following guidelines may help.

COACHES NAME:

TEAM AND AGE GROUP:

DATE:

SCORE 1 TO 6 (6 being the best)

SCALE 1 TO 6

- (6) Excellent
- (5) A Strength
- (4) Good
- (3) Average
- (2) Needs Improvement
- (1) Needs to work very hard to improve
- (0) Did not apply anything to the task in hand

- 1) PREPARATION
- 2) MANNER
- 3) ORGANIZATION
- 4) TECHNICAL
- 5) TACTICAL
- 6) OBSERVATION
- 7) COMMUNICATION
- 8) COOPERATION

9) COACHING EFFECTIVENESS

A) Preparation

- Produced a session plan (if creating his own plan)
- Organized facilities and equipment
- Outlined the theme to the players

B) Manner

- Encouraged two way communication with the players
- Coaching Demeanor: Demonstrated motivation and a positive attitude

C) Organization

- Demonstrated effective time management (having equipment set up on time and ready to go at the appropriate time)
- Effective Time management with regard to talking with the players during the training
- organized the space and the players appropriately

D) Technical

- Conducted a “theme relevant” warm up and cool down
- Produced technically sound information and appropriate skills practices for the Theme in a sequential manner
- Stayed with the theme throughout the exercise and did not gravitate from one Theme to another

E) Tactical

- Conducted relevant tactical themes for training including Functions and Phase plays to support the “Skills” training
- Finished with a Game Situation (up to 11 v 11) that was based on; and Specific to; the “Theme” of the days training

F) Observation

- Showed an ability to analyze the players
- Progressed to the needs of the players
- Correction of problems by adapting the practice to suit

G) Communication

- Provided accurate demonstrations
- Used guiding question and answer coaching style
- Finished with positive feedback in closing discussion
- Communication with the D.O.C.

H) Cooperation

- Adhered to the correct training program provided by the Academy Director of Coaching
- Showed willingness to adapt to a new training policy
- Employed the Continuums Development Training Model to Training

I) Coaching Effectiveness:

- Overall knowledge
- Identification of faults where applicable
- Effectiveness of the training

TOTAL SCORE:

COMMENTS FOR THE FUTURE:

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SESSION PLAN

- 1) Organize The Equipment (Bibs, Balls And Cones)
- 2) Coach Only One Team At A Time To Avoid Confusion
- 3) Coach (Affect The Attitude) Of Each Individual Player In That Team
- 4) Stick To The Same Theme
- 5) Use Designated Start Positions To Begin Each Practice To Paint The Picture You Want To Create
- 6) List The Key Coaching Points
- 7) Think Individual / Unit / Team – Simple To Complex And Develop Logical Progressions Into The Session
- 8) Specify The Size Of Area Used And Make It Relevant To The Numbers And Ability Of Players Used
- 9) Divide The Field Into Thirds For Easier Points Of Reference In Small - Sided Games
- 10) Use Target Goals, Target Players, Or Lines For Opponents To Play To In Phase Plays And Functions
- 11) Isolate The Areas And Players In Functional Practices To Keep It Specific
- 12) Use Offside Where Necessary For Realism
- 13) Coaching Method: Freeze The Coaching Moment (Stop, Stand Still), Review What Went Wrong, Re-Run Slowly (Can Be Walking Pace), Re-Create The Set Up And Go At Match Speed. Let Them Play
- 14) Use A Questioning / Guiding Coaching Method Rather Than Command
- 15) For Attacking Themes Limit The Number Of Touches The Opponents Have If They Win The Ball
- 16) For Defending Themes Limit The Number Of Touches The Defending Team You Are Coaching Has When They Win The Ball. This Ensures The Opponents Have The Ball For The Defenders To Try To Win Back

SESSION PLANNER NUMBER

Date:

Coach:

Team (Age, Ability Level, Gender):

No. Of Players Attending:

Title Of Session:

Session Objectives (Key Points):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Equipment Required:

No. Of Soccer Balls:

No. Of Goals:

Safety Factors To Observe:

Function / Phase / Ssg:

Organization Of The Session:

HOW TO SET UP A SMALL - SIDED GAME

This is a game of less than 11 v 11 that can be any number from 3 v 3 to 9 v 9. The general sizes of a game to establish team coaching themes are usually 6 v 6 or 8 v 8. I have included two examples of set ups for these sizes of games.

Session Plan

1. Only coach one team at a time.
2. Try to work with all the players on the team you are coaching, affecting each performance in a positive way.
3. Stick to one theme / topic at a time don't jump from one to another during the session this will only confuse the players.
4. Divide the field into thirds; defending, middle, attacking third, for easier points of reference (for 6 v 6 and upwards). Cone the thirds of the field off to show the boundaries.
5. Use specific start positions to get the session going.
6. Develop your theme using the key coaching points and use them as a base for referral to check you have covered them in the session.
7. List the key points in the order you perceive them in the process of building the session. For example in defending, pressure on the ball comes before support.
8. Move from simple to complex as you develop the session, for example in the theme defending from the front, coach individual play within the team concept first (working with one striker), move to coaching a unit of players (it could be the two strikers working together), then extend the numbers (it could be working with the strikers and midfield players then finish with coaching the whole team (strikers, midfielders, defenders, keeper).
9. This is individual, then unit, then team in this order building up the session from simple to complex in a logical order.
10. This is just an example to how it can be done in a logical order; it is up to the individual coach to develop his / her own method to suit their own style of coaching.

HOW TO BUILD A FUNCTIONAL SESSION

1. Coach only one set of players.
2. Work with all the players but work primarily with those players in the specific areas you are trying to affect. On a percentage scale consider 75% of the time with the specific players and 25% of the time with the supporting players on the same team.
3. Stick to the same theme.
4. Try to isolate the area of the field and the players who function within that area that you are trying to affect. For example the area to work in with central defenders would be centrally around the edge of the penalty area up to the half way line. For wide midfielders it would be on the wings of the field.
5. Use start positions to determine how the session begins. Servers can be used to start the session and also double up as targets to play to.
6. Develop your theme using the key coaching points and use them as a base for referral to check you have covered them in the session.
7. List the key points in the order you perceive them in the process of building the session.
8. Work with the individual then the pair or unit building up the number of players you work with at any one time.
9. Use the functional practice to work with a small number of players in key areas of the field. A functional practice is more specific than a small – sided game, phase play or an 11 v 11 and it isolates the players being coached.

HOW TO PRESENT A PHASE PLAY

1. Only coach one team at a time.
2. Try to work with all the players on the team you are coaching, affecting each performance in a positive way.
3. Stick to one theme / topic at a time don't jump from one to another during the session this will only confuse the players.
4. Include key coaching points you want to get into the session and list them with the session plan. Try to cover each point within the session itself.
5. Use specific start positions to begin the session.
6. The phase play is attacking one set of goals only with target goals for the opponents you aren't working with to play to, should they win the ball.
7. In defending phase plays where you are working with the defending team who protect the only goal, the team that needs to have the ball most of the time is the attacking team as it is the defending team's job to win it back. Once they win it they should get the ball to a target goal quickly and in as few passes as possible as we are coaching them when they haven't got the ball not when they have it in their possession. As soon as they have won it and have got it to a target the ball goes back to the attacking team and they begin a new attack. You can condition this by allowing the defending team only so many passes (maybe 5 passes) to get the ball to a target then they lose the ball and a new phase play is set up.
8. It can be numerous combinations of numbers of players ranging from 4 v 4 to 9 v 9, this can depend on the number of players you have to work with on any given day. Often the best number is a 7 v 7 or with an overload with the team you are working with perhaps to help gain initial success in the session (it could be a 7 v 5). For example in an attacking phase play have 7 attacking players against 4 defending players and a keeper to help the session have the chance be a positive experience for the players you are coaching and the theme to be successful.

Coaching Styles – Command, question and answer and guided discovery are the three methods of coaching to be used preferably the third one; guided discovery being the most used as it gets the players to think for themselves though there are always situations where each style is required to be used. Command is telling and / or showing them what to do (doesn't leave a lot of room for the players to think for themselves and understand), question and answer is just that; asking them to tell you what they think should happen, guided discovery is asking them to show you they understand a coaching point by moving themselves to the position you require them using their own decisions.