Australian Rules

101

Coaching Handbook
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Introduction

Hi, my name is Jonathan Manzoney, or to 99% of this world Jono. I’ve been a coach for over 12 years, having coached athletes from the ages of 8 years to 38 years old. This includes all levels of senior coaching from 19’s to Senior’s, where I have helped build clubs and their lists from the bottom up. I have been able to do this through positive communication and player development, which has culminated with premierships at senior level. I have worked in the private sector in player development and coach mentor programs and finally in the TAC cup system, both as the head coach of a High Performance Academy as well as multiple roles in the U/18’s system.

Along this path, I have gained my AFL level 2, a Diploma of Management, Bachelor of Sports Coaching, Sports Science and am currently half way through my Masters of Teaching.

Having worked with a broad range of players both in age groups and diversity I have come to many conclusions over the years. None more than this, we can all teach our players so much better than we currently are. However it’s my belief that as coaches we need to put one question to the forefront of our minds, “How can I teach players to improve?”

Through senior and TAC cup systems I have coached players who had elite running abilities, they could run times under 10 minutes for a 3km time trial or a 14+ beep test, but their in game kicking efficiency was less than 50%. I’ve had kids that at age 14 could not hit a stationary target with a hand pass and yet had been playing for most of their life. But more than anything I see players who are missing key understandings of game knowledge, at an educated guess this would equate to 50% plus of players.

When I talk about key understanding I am talking basic game understanding. Nearly all players from ages 8 to 18 understand basic offense, but the opposite exists for defense. Many players have little awareness of how to work in congestion or “traffic” in a game. In “traffic” understanding is a skill that all invasion sports like AFL should develop in each player.

This occurs because as coaches we tend to have a fixed mindset, that this player is a goal kicker or this one a midfielder. Often I will coach a player who was told he was a full forward at 11 because he was taller than the other kids, by the time he reaches 14 they have all caught up and he wants to give football away because he hasn’t developed the key understanding skills of defense or how to play as a midfielder. To truly develop players, it is our job as coaches to ensure all players are exposed to a variety of positions on the ground to develop their own understanding of how to attack and defend, one on one, in space or congestion.

My name is Garry Ramsay and I have been involved in Coaching Football for 25 years. I have Coached Auskick, Junior, Representative, Development and Senior Teams. With my well-educated friend, Jono Manzoney, we have put together this Presentation to help educate Coaches of all age groups and increase the Retention and Participation of Coaches and Players in Football.
GETTING TO KNOW YOUR PLAYERS AND THEIR PARENTS.

TO THE PLAYERS

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Nickname: (if you have one) __________________________________________

1. Which A.F.L Football team do you barrack for?

2. Who is your favourite A.F.L Player?

3. What are the 2 things you like best about playing A.F.L Football?

4. What other sports do you play and how often do you play them?

TO THE PARENTS

Name(s): ____________________________________________________________

Contact number: _____________________________________________________

1. What are the reasons you would like your son/daughter to play A.F.L Football?

2. List the 2 main expectations you have of your sons'/daughters' coach?

3. (a) What do you believe is the best way to teach/educate your son/daughter?

   (b) What do you believe is the best way to deliver feedback to your son/daughter?

4. Is there anything else that you would like us to know about your child? (we can discuss in private if you like)
COMMUNICATION

DIFFERENT METHODS OF COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

VERBAL
- Give clear instructions and directions that are appropriate to the age level, attention span and ability of your players – an example of this may be to give no more than 2-3 instructions at a time
- Praise publicly and discipline privately.
- When giving feedback:
  - Start with Encouragement – this will ensure a greater chance of the player listening to all of your feedback.
  - Then explain WHAT the player needs to improve at.
  - Then explain HOW that improvement can be made.
  - Finish with a POSITIVE – Finish on a high
- Use varying tones of your voice to highlight Key Points or Instructions
- Seek feedback from your mentor/assistant on
  - How you could improve.
  - New Ideas that will help your players and you as a Coach

VISUAL
- Demonstrate what you are teaching - Show them as you explain.
- Show instructions and game plans on coaching whiteboards, www.coachsmart.com.au
- Watch players perform required tasks, give feedback as they go and points to remember at the end of the task.
- Positive body language will help create a positive environment.

WRITTEN
- Give Hand Outs that explain what is expected – Game day requirements or timelines.
- Use Books and Websites to gather information on training drills – keep copies to refer too.
- Keep Records of player feedback, here you can visit them anytime to promote consistent future development
HOW TO DELIVER A TRAINING SESSION

A well-planned training session will guarantee player skill acquisition/development, injury prevention and positive learning outcomes. Look to draught a plan for each session, it may look something like this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Drill</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Teaching Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Warm up</td>
<td>Get players warm, thinking about football.</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>Cones</td>
<td>Forwards and Backwards running. Lateral agility movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20pm</td>
<td>Small Balls</td>
<td>Handpassing over 1-2m, aim for chest.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Cones/Balls</td>
<td>Where to hit the ball to handpass correctly/focus on technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30pm</td>
<td>Full ground</td>
<td>Ball movement from defence to attack.</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>Cones/Balls</td>
<td>Kicking technique over 20m. Marking at the highest point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.50pm</td>
<td>Warm down</td>
<td>Warm down and give feedback.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Future learning intentions and session feedback.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A basic session will consist of these phases:

**Warm Up**
This is not an AFL specific dynamic warm up, but the physical activities are what we should apply to all forms of current day warm ups, you would adjust timing in-line with the age of the playing group. Another option is to add a ball drill in at the end of the cone, this is where the player would pick up and handball back to an assistant, this will assist with co-ordination and concentration.

**Examples:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTwnyS5NB6w

**Small Balls Drills**
Small balls applies to small group activities with balls, you want the players to touch the ball as much as possible, building confidence and hand eye co-ordination.

**Examples:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FepAeRKi_hM
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cKWSHvZ0yB

**Full Ground/Space Drills**
These are generally full or half ground drills, or you can use forward/back third of the ground. Here is where you will open-up a space to allow kicking into the drills.

**Examples:**

**Warm Down**
A warm down is essential for all ages; it promotes positive behaviors and greater transitions to the next training session or game.

**Examples:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxXUX_lFFJw
MAKING A GAME PLAN

KEY POINTS AND INSTRUCTIONS
Limit the amount of information you give, as young players have a short attention span. You want them to remember the most important points.

Here are some examples:

- Never argue with the umpire.
- Everyone defend when the opposition have the ball. Talk, Tackle, Shepherd.
- Forwards should lead fast and stay in front
- Interchange Players should watch the game and encourage their team mates

Any of your own.........

KICKING PATTERNS
Teach and instruct the players where to kick and they will quickly learn where to lead. Draw on the Coaching Whiteboard your Ball Movement Direction.

DEFENSIVE KICKING PATTERN
- Kick wide out of defence and wide into attack. LOW RISK=LOW REWARD

MODERATE KICKING PATTERN
- Kick wide out of defence and the middle into attack. MEDIUM RISK=MEDIUM REWARD

ATTACKING KICKING PATTERN
- Kick down the middle out of defence and the middle into attack. HIGH RISK=HIGH REWARD

OUR KICK-INS
Explain and show the Full Back where to kick, and other players where to stand. Draw on Coaching Whiteboards your structure and kick destination.

THEIR KICK-OUTS
Player on Player or ZONE (if ZONE, draw on Coaching Whiteboard to show players where to stand)
Game Plan: DEVELOPMENT

GAME PLAN

Instructions to Players
1) Never argue with the umpire.
2) Everyone defend when they have the ball.
3) Tackle, Shepherd, Talk.
4) Everyone run and call when we have the ball.
5) Forwards should lead fast and play in front.
6) Interchange players to watch game and encourage team mates.

Quarter, Half & Three Quarter Time Speeches
- Motivate and inspire.
- Praise publicly and discipline privately.
- Good tackling, kicking, shepherding, handballing, marking, discipline, team play.
- Re-inforce game plan.
- What is working well and what is not working well.
- Read out team for next quarter.

ADHERE TO AFL COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

After the Game
- Not every loss is due to a lack of effort.
- Quick summary of the game.
- Individual encouragement.
- Team encouragement.
- How we are going to improve next week.
- Finish with a positive.
- Training times and venues.

Club & Team Social Events

NOTES:

Yellow magnets for in-play or 25-30 player rotations

ONLY USE WHITEBOARD MARKERS

FORWARDS

MIDFIELD

BACKS
Game Plan: ADVANCED
Rotations: DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT – Board

A.F.L Coaches Code of Conduct that all Level 1 and 2 Coaches sign:

**No.6** I will avoid overplaying the talented players, aiming to maximise participation and enjoyment for all players regardless of ability. When I am responsible for players in the 5-12 year-old age group, I will ensure that all players gain equal playing time.

**No 12** I will ensure that players are involved in a positive environment where skill learning and development are priorities and not overshadowed by a desire to win.
Rotations: ADVANCED

• Make quarterly set rotations at the start of the game. This allows interchange players to watch the position/opponent that they are going on to.

• Every player knows exactly when they are coming On and Off and the Coach can focus on the Game, not the Bench;

• Adjustments can be made as the situation requires, (i.e injury, mismatch, change of tactics).
Position and Statistics: ADVANCED
NOTES