



NETBALL COACHING TOP TIPS



TRAINING SESSIONS

1. Training Session Plans – “Fail to plan, plan to fail”

- Creating a session plan each week before each session is incredibly helpful and important.
- To create one, you could use the Training Session Plan template that will be provided to you via email in a ‘Coaching Resources’ Package.
- You could select a warmup from the 5 page list of warmups that is also contained in the resource package, or perhaps create your own or find one that is in line with your lessons focus.
- As for planning the bulk of the training session, you could use one of the many papers in the resource package that provides drills for teaching specific skills, and there are also papers which provide a 7 step progression of drills that work to develop a particular netball skill. An explanation of the 7 Steps of Skill Progression is provided on the next page, and on the page after that there is an example of one of the many papers in the resource package that uses this model to teach a specific skill.
- Towards the end of a session, it’s always great to finish off with either half court, a modified netball game (if possible, one that aligns with your sessions focus) or a scratch match with another team with ‘freeze frame’ for feedback where necessary.

2. Warm ups –

- Also referred to as the ‘hook’, warmups are the most effective at engaging the team when they are a fun and/or competitive game/activity.
- If possible, try to make it in line with the training session’s focus e.g. if the focus is dodging, perhaps do a form of chasey such as the game ‘octopus’ or have the girls each have a bib slightly tucked into their clothes and someone be ‘it’ with the aim of grabbing as many ‘tail’ bibs as possible (i.e. ‘tail tag’), and if they lose their bib they are ‘out’.

3. Fitness –

- Throughout the season, it is important to incorporate fitness improving components into your session plan. Especially if netball is the only form of fitness that all or most of your girls are doing during the week.
- You can either incorporate drills and games into the session that involve a lot of running/sprinting and/or other strenuous forms of activity.
- Or you may, towards the end of the session, leave 10-20mins for fitness focussed activities. This also ensures that they are mentally focussed and not drained for your drills that involve demonstration and explaining, which they likely will be if you did the fitness components at the start of the session and then went into drills that require focus i.e. drills first, then fitness.
- Some fitness focussed activity examples include
 - Hill sprints/100m sprints in relay teams to make it competitive - you could say that the team that comes last has to do 5 burpees or an extra sprint cause they are the ones that need it the most.
 - A whole team HIIT workout to improve muscular endurance.

- Fartlek
- 'Bring Sally Up Squat Challenge' – a fun fitness component for the end of a session where the girls stand in a circle and do squats by following along to a video/song. The video can be found on youtube (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bql6slU2A7k>).

4. Set Plays -

- Throughout the season, practicing set plays in training sessions is very important for the tactical development of each player and the team.
- Examples of set plays include a baseline throw-in from the GK or GS, a sideline throw in, centre pass, a turnover in the centre or goal third and the list goes on. The more variety you can have the girls practice, the better.
- Repetition – It is important to revisit and practice the various set plays throughout the season in order to solidify them into each player's subconscious.

5. Cool downs –

- A cool downs help to prevent the build up of lactic acid which causes muscle stiffness and soreness, and blood pooling. They also help to reduce the risk of injury and help a player to perform at their best at the next training session, game or other physical activities. Plus it has major benefits for their body's in the long term.
- A cool down is all about slowing the body down and helping it to recover. An excellent way to cool down is to do some static stretches. Static exercises - also known as isometrics - exert muscles at high intensities without movement of the joints. Importantly, static stretches need to be held for approximately 20 or 30 seconds in order to be effective.

THE FIRST TRAINING SESSION

Below are some suggestions of what to do for the first training session.

1. Introduction/Icebreaker

- Introduce yourself to the girls and then do an icebreaker such as 2 truths and a lie, or 'whats your name, favourite position, and holiday destination (or food)? etc.

2. Set Goals for Season

- Setting goals is important as they bring focus to each training session, the whole season and set the tone for it. If you can, bring a piece of paper to the first session and some pens/textas. Then ask whom would like to scribe, and ask that they split the page into two columns. Next, ask the whole team: what do you think our goals are for this season, on and off the court? Scribe writes down answers in the first column.
 - Examples:
 - To win the grand final or be undefeated.
 - To improve in terms of our fitness and netball skills, and tactics/strategies.
 - To have fun.
 - To bond strongly as a team.
- Next, ask: What do you think we should expect of ourselves and the whole team in order to achieve these goals, or how are we going to achieve them? Scribe writes down answers in the second column.
 - Examples:
 - To have fun but also know when it's time to be serious.
 - Respect one another.

- Be understanding of one another.
- What is said in the group, stays in the group.
- Aim to be at training and games on time.
- Communicate well with each other.
- You can also tell them what you, the Coach, expect of yourself to help the team achieve their goals?
 - Examples:
 - To run engaging and enjoyable training sessions where you (the girls!) are all given the opportunities to improve on your fitness and netball skills.
 - To try to help each individual to reach their potential.
 - To be someone you can talk to if any of you need.
 - To create a safe and welcoming environment.

3. Communication

- It's good to have a discussion in regards to communication right of the bat. You may discuss with the girls how communication is going to work, what is expected of each individual in terms of it. If they are a...
 - Young team (approx. Y9 and below) - you will most likely only be communicating with their parents. So you could just emphasise to them that if they are running late to a training session or game, to make sure their parents to let yourself know asap (it'd be best to also discuss communication in an email to the parents), that way you are not waiting on them to warmup. That they or their parents should also let you know as soon as they do, if they will be away or have another commitment and so won't be at a training session or game – as you will be planning your training session and Saturday's position allocation according to who's going to be there.
 - Older team (approx. Y10 and above) – the girls will likely be communicating to you directly as they me responsible enough to. If so, make sure you get all their numbers by the end of the training session if you haven't already. Try to place an emphasise on the importance of communication, that they need to let you know if they will be late to a training session or game, as soon as they know, so you are not waiting on them to begin warming up. To also let you know as soon as they know, if they will be away or have another commitment and so won't be at a training session or game – as you will be planning your training session and Saturday's position allocation according to who's going to be there.

4. Warmup activity(s)/game(s)

5. Diagnostic Assessment - Half Court and/or Netball Game Vs Other Team (15 min)

- If you have Coached all or most of the team before, then you likely know where they are at and so could get straight into going over/practising the basic skills.
- However, if you haven't, a diagnostic assessment (to diagnose/determine where they are at in terms...) of their fitness, and netball skills/tactics/strategies will be helpful in regard to deciding what steps to take next in regards to their training.
- In the email coaching resources package, there will be a template which you could use to complete such an assessment.

GAME DAYS

1. Plan an Inspirational Speech, the warmup and positions etc.

2. Inspirational Speech –

- Before the beginning of the warmup, it's good to give the girls a bit of an inspirational speech.
- It helps to get the girls in the right mindset/attitude and increase their motivation so that they put in their best effort throughout the warmup and game.
- You could ask the team how much they aim to beat the team they are versing today by e.g. say last time you versed them you won by 2 goals, aim to win by more than 6 this time. This gives them something to have as a focus in the back of their mind, a source of motivation, as long as the goal is realistic and achievable of course.

3. Warm Up

- Use 'knee program' (will be contained in 'Coaching Resources' email)
- As well as a few drills that go over the basics, and then some set plays – a sample of a pre-game warm-up will be provided in the coaching resources package.

4. Goal Scoring – you may want to ask a spectator or parent to record the number or attempts at goal(s) and goal(s) scored by each shooter on the team. The girls can find out their results at the game's end. It will help to keep them accountable and motivated to improve throughout the season.

5. Feedback – try to give praise where its due, as well as constructive criticism.

TEAM BONDING

1. Bonding Sessions Outside of Netball

- Team bonding will help the group feel closer, more tight-knit, and will assist in the development of trust between each another. Plus, they provide opportunities for the team to create some great memories together. You will likely find that after a few team-bonding sessions, the flow and comradery on court will also be greater.
- Some examples of team bonding sessions include:
 - Lunch/Dinner – you could bring a hat/container that contains pieces of paper with a variety of questions/topics to discuss written on them. Then pass the hat around and each individual would pick one randomly and then answer the question/share their thoughts on the topic.
 - Bowling, Ice Skating, Rollerblading, Laser Tag etc.
 - Sleepover
 - Games Night – with prizes for individual games and team games, each player could put in some money to give the individual organising the event e.g. \$10 each, and then they would use the money to buy food and/or prizes.
 - Training sessions that are cancelled because of weather can be turned into a bonding session –positive/negatives of each team member's week, reflect on how season is going so far, games etc.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. YOUR VOICE IS YOUR GREATEST TOOL!!!!!! – as a coach, you are an authority figure. When coaching/instructing your team, try to use a deep but kind voice – this should bring respect and confidence, and also show that you have the best intentions at heart.