

THE GAMES APPROACH

Learning While Having Fun

The **GAMES APPROACH** can be used to teach athletes what they should do, when they should do it, and how to do it. It is centered on the idea that:

**PRACTICE LIKE YOU PLAY,
AND YOUR ATHLETES WILL BE MORE LIKELY
TO PLAY LIKE THEY PRACTICE!**

THE BASICS

1 2 3 4

1 Gain a deep personal understanding

2 Develop the age appropriate technical skills in the participants.

3 Consider which tactics to teach based on the style of play desired for the team.

4 Use the strategies below during practice to best prepare your team for games.

SHAPING PLAY

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Change factors like size of the field, rules, method of scoring, or number of players in order to increase the number of touches each player has on the ball. Players love increased ball touches, and their skills improve more rapidly.

A SOCCER EXAMPLE
Divide a regulation sized field into several smaller fields, use practice goals, and have a series of 5v5 games going simultaneously.

A BASKETBALL EXAMPLE
Run two half-court games simultaneously and turn a practice into a round robin tournament.

FOCUSING PLAY

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1. Explain a single tactical skill
2. Periodically stop play to discuss and make suggestions
3. Ask guided questions to check players' understanding

A LACROSSE EXAMPLE
Too often, players are making a pass and then standing in place instead of moving to finding free space. Any time this occurs, stop practice and replay the pass with the athletes moving after the pass.

ENHANCING PLAY

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Present a unique challenge or handicap play to improve specific aspects of the game. Your only limit is your imagination.

To develop an up-tempo game, institute a 10 second shot clock in your practice games.

BASKETBALL EXAMPLES

To change consistency in setting screens, decide that a basket does not count until after three ball screens were set.

To strengthen the inside game, score baskets made from the post as three points.

SUMMARY

- The **GAMES APPROACH** is athlete-centered and emphasizes learning the game through game-like practice activities.
- The **GAMES APPROACH** helps players understand the game, how to play it, and how to make decisions without constant direction from the coach.
 - Athletes are empowered to learn and have fun while doing it.

REFERENCES :

ASEP (2006) Coaching Youth Soccer, Fourth Edition

Schoenstedt, L. J. (2010). Games Approach to Coaching. Xavier, University.

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