



Arlington Soccer Association – How to Run an Effective Session

Make sure each session has a clear theme and goal. For example, if the topic is shooting, there must be some type of connection to shooting in the warm up, activities, expanded to small sided, and the game. Every coach should have a written training session that can be handed to a Director at each session. Please see below for the structure of each session:

- **1st stage** - "Pre-training talk" - Explain to your players the topic of your session and what you want to achieve (goal).
- **2nd stage** - Warm up; needs to be related to the topic of the session. Choose a simple warm up that is easy to understand and explain. Get the players moving quickly and use the activity to create coaching points and corrections.

Do not offer the coaching points before the warm up, but during the activity when appropriate. There may be players that arrive late to your session and you may have to explain the session topic and goals more than once. Ask the players already there to assist with the explanation to confirm they were paying attention

- **3rd stage** -Activities 1 and 2 must have progression (from simple to complex): Example: "Shooting". Activity 1 = shooting without pressure / Activity 2 = Shooting under pressure.

Your technical session should focus on player's development. The majority of the coaching points on the mechanical break downs should be address here in this stage and demonstrated. You also must ensure both feet are being used when session calls for it.

- **4th stage** - "small sided" / "scrimmage" activity. The expanded small sided needs to be technical, tactical and psychological. You can start with a non-directional activity, but progress to directional. The tactical component must be present too. It needs to cover the three elements of soccer; defense, offense and the transition to defense and offense related to your topic. This is very important stage to be consistent. The success of the game will almost certainly be less than success in the activities. That is normal. You must still hold the players accountable for technique.

We need to see if the information that we have given out was received correctly and the players are able to use it to better themselves. This is important to develop a player's self-confidence on the topic and the coaches' ability to teach and to coach. By playing small sided or in a smaller area of the field, it enables the player to be in contact with the ball and make more decisions with the ball to develop faster.

- **5th stage** - "Post-training Talk" - Review of your session. Always give few minutes to recap your session (stage 1 - 4). Asking questions and reinforcing the topic of your session would help players understand better. Guided discovery is a good tool to use here. [Guided Discovery for Coaching Soccer](#)



Questions that you can ask the players about your activities that you provided:

- What – What is the reason we worked on this topic?
- How – How do you apply what we've learned during the game?
- When – When do you apply what we learned during the game?
- Where – What areas of the field would we apply this during the game?

Training Sessions - Guidelines

- Make your sessions: FUN! Active! Challenging! On the move!
- Competition is a great tool to make the sessions "Fun". There should be winners and losers. Consequences can be used to motivate and get the best effort from your players. Cone jumps, shuttle sprints, fitness with the ball
- Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate the activities. Both Feet and on the move!
- Coaches should be enthusiastic and positive with the players while still holding them accountable for what they've learned.
- Coaches should challenge players. If there are no technical or tactical mistakes being made, alter the session. Less space, more pressure, faster speed. We must create an environment that removes their comfort and pushes them beyond that.
- Coaches must direct comments or criticism at performance rather than the athlete provided the athlete is giving their very best effort.
- Demand of the players that they must have a properly inflated ball. No exceptions!
- Players must have all proper equipment and plenty of drinking water
- Coaches must dress like a coach (wear official club gear).
- Never leave a player on the field unattended.
- Ask players after the session what they learned that day. *See Guided Discovery Above*
- Play with the players when the opportunity occurs. They learn by what you say as well as what you do.
- Coaches should allow flow of training. Stop play only if there is confusion of the setup, correction of technique and decision making or increasing the intensity. Make sure the session is being done at game speed
- If a player gets hurt during the training session, the coach must inform the parents after the session.
- Coaches should use the same club terminology so that all sessions are consistent.
- Get off the field immediately at any sign of lightning and/or thunder.
- Coaches should be on the field 15 minutes prior to the session and have an activity set up for the players that arrive early (ZELMO, Soccer tennis, Skills ladder, group juggling, etc.).



- Minimize talking to other coaches during sessions unless it is something related to the session that needs to be addressed at that moment.
- No use of cell phones unless it is to communicate with parents or review an electronic session
- Assistant Coaches should contact the team's head coach at least a day before the session to learn the topic of the week so you can prepare yourself for the session.
- Make your session active! No waiting in lines!!!

