

Tips for the Coach Developer

First contact

You need to establish a relationship with the Coach, who you may never have met before. What do you say and how do you say it?

Physical

- > Handshake
- > Smile and make eye contact
- > Open stance

Verbal

- > Find some common ground outside of coaching, something personal
- > Respond to the coach's views and challenges
- > Establish a clear understanding of your role as CD
- > Explore areas where you might assist
- > Don't jump in with your views at the start
- > More open questioning, less closed
- > Listen more, talk less

Before the session

Try to speak with the Coach before a training session starts. There will be distractions - the coach might be setting up equipment, parents and players will be arriving. What do you say and how do you say it?

Physical

- > Handshake
- > Smile and make eye contact
- > Open stance

Verbal

- > Recall that something personal
- > Find out how they've been going generally
- > Reaffirm that you are there to help
- > Explore areas where you might assist
- > Ask if there is anything they want or need
- > If nothing comes up, just say you will observe the Coach in action (and the participants) and let the Coach know what you see and offer some thoughts

- > More open questioning, less closed
- > Listen more, talk less

You should attend training on a reasonably regular basis. What would you say differently when you meet again a few weeks later?

- > Find out how they've been going generally
- > Recall what you were working on last time

During the session

You need to achieve a balance between providing encouragement, support and advice and getting in the way. A few tips:

- > Position yourself in the goldilocks zone (not too close, not too far away)
- > Pick your moment to talk to the coach, when there is activity and the coach is just observing
- > Keep discussion brief: maybe ask a question, provide an observation or a tip
- > Provide encouragement, particularly if the coach is struggling
- > Keep the clipboard in the bag, having one out makes a Coach think you're assessing them
- > The Coach's job is coaching the athletes, yours is to support the Coach. Avoid the temptation to coach players yourself
- > Avoid being critical, especially in earshot of athletes or parents
- > Mostly watch the Coach so that you can provide feedback, though keep an eye on the players so you can see what's working and what isn't

In general it is best not to be directly involved in the session. There are two situations where you might need to get involved:

- > If there is a safety or risk issue
- > If the Coach is struggling

After the session

A chat after the session is a good idea. There will be distractions - the Coach will want to clear out and might be packing up equipment, parents and players might be seeking a word with them. What do you say and how?

General strategies:

- > Positive start and finish
- > Pull more, push less - try to get the Coach to come up with solutions / ideas rather than telling them
- > If you have nothing to add, don't add anything

Specific content

- > Objectives
 - Follow up on the before the session chat
- > Review: What Was Good
 - What did you think went well?
 - What did you do to get that thing going so well?
- > Review: What Can Improve
 - What were you less happy about?
 - How could you do that differently?
- > Wind up:
 - Quick summary
 - Anything you want to ask me?
 - Arrangements for next meeting / session

