

Coaching Observation Tool
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This observation tool is provided as a guide for those seeking to enhance the pedagogical skills of fellow coaches. It was initially constructed for the Region II Girls Olympic Development Program camp and used to assess the performance of regional staff coaches working with state teams. The information also provides for coaches to develop self-evaluation skills when no local mentoring program is available.

Organization of Players and Playing Spaces

- Are the playing numbers in each activity appropriate for the session focus?
- Are the playing spaces for each activity appropriate for the ability level?
- Is the playing shape and field orientation for each activity appropriate for the session focus?
- Where possible, are the playing spaces marked out in advance?
- Are all the players included in the activities, or frequently rotated?
- Are the goalkeepers included in the activities?
- Are the goalkeepers involved as goalkeepers or field players?

Introduction of Activities

- How long does the coach take to organize players and introduce activities?
- Is overly detailed coaching information given during the introduction of activities?
- Is the coach demonstrating or walking through any new activities to help facilitate player understanding?
- Are the players aware of the game duration and how to win?

Development of Activities

- Are the activities allowed to develop a flow?
- Do the activities allow for natural transitions between attacking and defending?
- Is there a reasonable balance between challenge and success?
- Are any imposed conditions appropriate for the session focus?
- Are the conditions changed, where necessary, to improve quality?
- Are adjustments made to the playing spaces, where necessary, to improve quality?
- Does the sequence of selected activities flow together?

Stoppages

- How frequently are the activities being stopped?
- Is the timing of stoppages appropriate to the session focus and activity flow?
- Are the stoppages generally addressing the most relevant problems?
- Are the stoppages addressing "structural/tactical" (macro) or "technical" (micro) issues?
- Are the activities being stopped more or less often as the practice session develops?
- What is the ratio of coaching time to playing time?
- How are the activities started and stopped?
- How are the activities restarted after a coaching stoppage?

To what degree is the "freeze" method predominant in the coaching style?
To what degree is cueing utilized as a coaching tool?

Information

Is the coach providing relevant information?
Does the coach ask for player input?
Is the coach consistent in his/her comments, relative to the session focus?
To what degree are the players being allowed to make their own tactical decisions?
Is the coach continuing to provide information during the large group phase of practice?
Are the "Big Picture," regional coaching themes being recognized and reinforced within each activity?
Are the large group activities addressing tactical functional problems?
To what degree, if at all, is the coach "cheerleading?"
To what degree, if at all, is the coach providing an overload of information?

Coaching Mannerisms and Demeanor

Is the coach's appearance professional?
Is the coach relating to the players in a professional manner?
Is the coach's position enhancing his/her ability to observe as many players as possible?
Is the coach's body language suggesting confidence or uncertainty?
To what degree is the coach's voice impacting intensity?
Is the coaches' level of enthusiasm impacting intensity?
Is the coach using any overly repetitive phrases, such as "OK?"
Is the coach occasionally or frequently participating in play?

Regional Coaching Themes

The regional camp is generally a four-day event, which provides very little opportunity to develop stable technical change. The coaching focus of the regional camp, therefore, is always the development of individual and collective tactical understanding.

The regional playing themes are the general guidelines used by each regional team in competition. There is no formal regional system of play, although 4-4-2 and 4-3-3 are the most commonly used formations. With an eye towards the national style of play, we always encourage our players to:

- Play forward to keep possession, when possible, relative to the time remaining and score
- Play constructively through midfield, when possible, relative to the time remaining and score
- Understand their basic roles and functions
- Constantly adjust their supporting positions around the ball
- Constantly adjust their "stretching" positions away from the ball
- Constantly anticipate opportunities to penetrate without the ball
- Individually or collectively control and change the rhythm of play
- Use the goalkeeper to relieve pressure or change the PoA.
- "Arrive" in attacking spaces, rather than stand in them

- Press, when possible
- Defend as a block
- Use offside space to help defend
- Constantly look and communicate