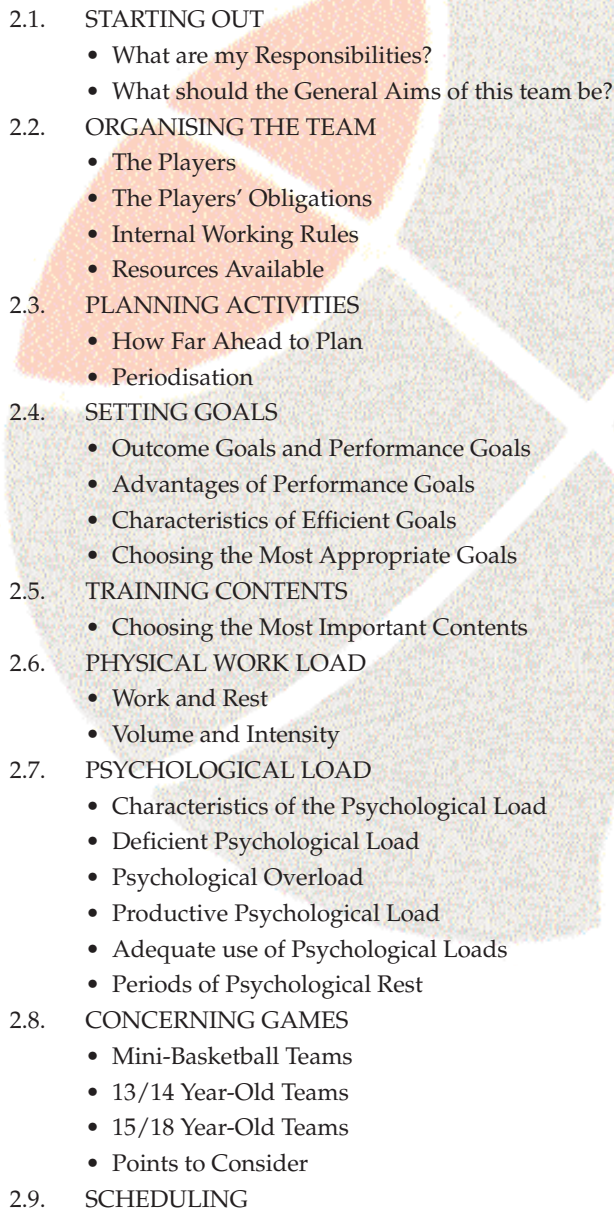


PLANNING BASKETBALL ACTIVITIES

Jose María Buceta

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2.1. STARTING OUT

What team am I going to coach?

This is a key question that every coach should ask himself/herself before starting, using the following questions as a guideline:

- Is it a mini-basketball team? A children's team? Is it a team up of promising young players? Is it a first-class élite team?
- What sort of organisation does the team belong to? Is it a school team? A club team? What sort of school or club?
- How good are the players? How long have they been playing? What is their potential?

The answer to these kinds of questions will help the coach to situate himself/herself within the corresponding context, thus avoiding errors that arise from not having a clear idea of the type of team he/she is coaching.

What are my Responsibilities?

Once the coach understands the type of team he/she will be coaching, he/she should ask himself/herself, «What are my responsibilities? Should I be contributing to the players' overall development? Should I focus on helping them improve as players and as people? Should I be aiming to help them do their best in the short run? Which of these aspects are most important?».

Obviously, a coach who is training young players should assume the responsibility of contributing to his/her players' *overall development* both in sports and human terms. He/she should never play at being an élite coach, interested only in short-term achievements.

What should the General Aims of this team be?

Taking into account all of the above, coaches should decide on their team's general objectives.

* For example: let's look at a coach training a mini-basketball school team. Some of the players will never have played before; some will have been playing for a year; in general, their level will be low. Such a coach's main priority will be to contribute to the development of these children as people. His/her general aims could be that the children enjoy themselves, that they improve their physical development, teaching them certain values (such as team work, respect for others, etc.), while at the same time working on overall improvement of basketball fundamentals (dribbling, passing, etc.).



Practical Exercise

- Think about the sort of team you are training, what your responsibilities are and what the general objectives of your team could be.

2.2. ORGANISING THE TEAM

The next step is to organise the team. How many players are there on the team? What will their obligations be? What internal working rules will be established? What resources are available (facilities, baskets, balls, etc.).

The Players

This will depend on the number available and the maximum number allowed in each case. However, if we are talking about young players, the coach should bear in mind the following:

- anyone interested should be allowed to play; if necessary, two or more teams can be formed so that everyone has a chance;
- there should be enough players per team to allow the activities to be carried out in the right conditions, but not so many as to make it difficult for all the players to participate;
- the level of all the players on one team should be similar. This is much more beneficial for all the players than including players of different levels on one team;
- if possible, mini-basketball teams (and sometimes teams made up of 13/14-year-olds) should be made up of players who already share other activities (for example, children from the same class who usually play together, etc.).

The Players' Obligations

Coaches should think about their players' obligations and ultimately decide which ones they consider most important. During which months is the activity carried out? How many days a week will the team train? How many games will be played? Are the games to be held on weekends? Will the players have to travel? And so forth.



These are key considerations because in many cases, the players' obligations are not made sufficiently clear or the coach establishes obligations that all or some of the players are not willing to fulfill. Sooner or later this will create a serious problem that will affect the way the team works.

The coach should establish obligations suitable to the team he/she is training rather than others that may perhaps be more appropriate for another type of team but not for his/hers.



Practical Exercise

- Considering the type of team you are training, think about what type of obligations would be reasonable for them.

One of the aspects of sports that is most important for achieving formative objectives when working with young athletes is that they accept and fulfill their commitments. The conditions of the commitment should be reasonable, based on the players' age and other characteristics, but the most important thing is that, to a greater or lesser degree, the athlete makes a commitment and fulfills it.

For this reason, it is not appropriate to organise a team in which the players will train or play only when they feel like it or when they have nothing better to do. Neither should unrealistic obligations be established that cannot be met.

In many cases, it would be a good idea for the coach to talk with the players, involving them in the decisions to be made concerning the obligations they are to accept. *If the coach and the players decide on this together, the players will feel more committed.*

However, it is true that the coach can establish minimum obligations he/she considers essential, especially with teams made up of 13/14-year-olds and even more so with 15/18-year-olds. If, for example, he/she feels that the team should train at least three days a week and if he/she considers this feasible, he/she should propose this to the players and, as the case may be, to their parents, explaining his/her reasons, his/her purpose being that the players commit themselves to training on the days specified.



Practical Exercise

- Bearing in mind how important it is for the players to make a firm commitment to the team and to fulfill this commitment, think again about the obligations that would be appropriate for your players.

Internal Working Rules

Working rules are a key element in the organisation of a team. As with the players' obligations, it is advisable that these rules be *few and very precise*; they should be *clearly defined* and should not give rise to doubts, arbitrary interpretation or conflictive situations when applied. Obviously they should be suited to the circumstances and level required of each team, keeping in mind the level of commitment undertaken by the players or the level that can be reasonably expected of them.

* For example: certain working rules can be established such as being ready to start the practice at the time agreed to, arriving one hour before the game properly dressed, taking turns collecting the balls at the end of the practice, etc.

Rules can also be set up for mini-basketball teams, related to participation in games. For example, a rotation system can be established so that all the children will play a minimum number of games throughout the season.

For these teams, it could also be appropriate to establish rules regulating the parents' behaviour, explaining the reasons behind these. For example, they should not tell the children what to do during games or sit on the bench with the team.



Practical Exercise

- Decide which working rules you consider most appropriate, keeping in mind the characteristics of your team.

Resources Available

The coach should know what resources he/she has available (courts, balls, hoops, etc.) in order to make the best use of these, using his/her imagination to make up for shortages.

First of all, coaches should take advantage of all available resources. For example, if there are four hoops, it would be a good idea to use all four of them rather than just two.

Secondly, it is often the case when training young players that the resources are limited (few balls, little court time, only half a court available, outdoor courts, etc.). For these reasons, coaches in these categories have to use their imagination in order to make up for these deficiencies.

* For example: if only a few balls are available, circuits can be organised for different types of drills, combining drills with and without the ball, attempting to make drills performed without the ball especially interesting. Coaches should never simply resign themselves to a limited situation by lining up all the players in a long line to wait until they finally have a turn with the ball.

* This is the time to explore what other possibilities are available to make up for the lack of resources. For example, the team may only have the use of one court with two hoops two days a week. The coach could consider the possibility of training a third day on a field without hoops, taking advantage of this session to do drills that do not require them.

The fewer the resources available to the coach, the more important it is for him/her to look for and find imaginative solutions to make up for it. A coach who resigns himself/herself to working with insufficient resources will not be a good coach for young players.



Practical Exercise

- Think about the resources you have available and about how you can make up for any limitations or shortages.

2.3. PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Planning activities (practice sessions and games) is an essential aspect of a coach's job.

Coaches who do not plan ahead tend to drift. At the beginning of the season, they are full of excitement, energy and «confidence», they have «great ideas» and they want to do many things at the same time. However, as they move further into the season, their excitement, energy and confidence wanes, they run out of new ideas and the practice sessions become routine and less beneficial.

Whenever there is an important game, they tend to once again feel their initial motivation and once again want the players to learn many things at once, correcting every error in just a few training sessions.

When the competition is even, the coach who has not thought ahead lives from day to day, thinking only of the next game and forgetting to carry out the work needed for his/her players to really progress.



On the other hand, if a coach maps out his/her work he/she will have a useful overall perspective that will help him/her to objectively evaluate which aspects are most important. From this perspective, coaches can make the right decisions and better organise the work that their team should perform.

Thanks to their planning, coaches find they have a goal and a clear idea of how to attain it; they know exactly where they want to go, the path they should follow and how to follow it, the problems they will encounter and how to overcome them.

How Far Ahead to Plan

A coach may plan for the long-term, medium-term and short-term, for several years, one season, from one to several months, for one or several weeks and, of course, each training session.

In a club made up of teams of different categories, it could be a good idea to make up a flexible, overall plan, covering several years for younger players (mini-basketball stage) and another or others for the older players (13 years old and up). This way, the work of each team's coach will be defined within a general outline that will make more overall sense.

Whether or not a coach carries out this long-term planning system, anyone coaching young players should keep in mind what their possible course may be in the future so as not to lose sight of what their daily work should be.

Periodisation

Usually mini-basketball and basketball coaches work with their teams for a season that lasts anywhere from six to ten months. Therefore, they should plan for this amount of time, known as a *macrocycle* or *cycle*.

Then, depending upon the specific circumstances of their team and the activities initially foreseen, they should divide the season into shorter periods defined by specific characteristics. These periods are called *mesocycles*.

Later, coaches can consider one- or two-week blocks within each mesocycle. These are called *microcycles*.

And finally, they should consider the unit that represents each *practice session*.

Each of these periods (the season's macrocycle, mesocycles, microcycles and individual training sessions) should be planned for in advance by the coach. Obviously, the outline for the longer periods should be more general and flexible in outlook than the more limited short-term periods.

In other words, the plan for the season will be more general than the plan carried out for each mesocycle, microcycle and training session. The plan

MONTH	MESOCYCLES	MICROCYCLES
SEP	1	1.1
		1.2.
OCT		1.3.
		1.4.
NOV		2
	2.1	
2.2.		
DEC	2.3.	
	2.4.	
	2.5.	
	2.6.	
	2.7.	
CHRISTMAS BREAK		
JAN	3	3.1.
		3.2.
FEB		3.3.
		3.4.
		3.5.
MAR	4	4.1.
		4.2.
		4.3.
		4.4.
EASTER BREAK		
APR	5	5.1.
		5.2.
		5.3.
MAY		5.4.
		5.5.
		5.6.

Table 1. Example of periods across the season. The macrocycle is the whole season from September to May. There are five mesocycles, each divided into microcycles of one or two weeks.

covering a mesocycle will be more general than that covering the microcycles and training sessions. And the plan for each microcycle will be more general than that covering each training session.

Therefore, the specific plan outlined for each training session should be situated within the more general context of a microcycle, which in turn should be situated within the even more general context of a mesocycle, situated within the yet more general context of a full season.

In this way, coaches will be able to make each drill performed by their young players contribute more thoroughly to the overall goals of their improvement as athletes and their human development.



Practical Exercise

- Think about the team you are coaching right now (or the last team you coached) and define the mesocycles into which the macrocycle of the entire season can be divided.

2.4. SETTING GOALS

This way, by looking first of all at the more extensive period (the entire season) and then at each of the remaining periods (mesocycles, microcycles and individual training sessions), the first thing a coach should do is decide **what goals his/her team should meet** both collectively and individually within that period.

- What should our goals be as a team, this season? Within this mesocycle? Within this microcycle? Within this training session?
- What should each player's goals be for this season? For this mesocycle? For this microcycle? For this training session?

The goals are the ones that the team and the individual players should achieve throughout the course of the season, thus defining the course of the coach's work.

Outcome Goals and Performance Goals

In order to establish the goals for each period of the season, the coach should make a distinction between *outcome goals* and *performance goals*.

Outcome goals refer to collective or individual *results*, such as for example, winning the league, obtaining more points or reducing the number of personal fouls. These goals may be divided into two types:

- *intra-subject* or *intra-group outcome goals*. This refers to a player's or the team's results with respect to himself/herself or itself such as, for example, the number of points made by a player (intra-subject) or the number of points made by the team (intra-group)
- *inter-subject* or *inter-group outcome goals*. This refers to a player's or the team's results with respect to other players or other teams such as, for example, being on the starting line-up (inter-subject) or winning a game (inter-group)

Performance goals include team or individual *behaviour*, the way the players should behave in order to achieve the desired results. For example, improving a chest pass, dominating two-step stops, shooting more often from specific positions on the court, blocking defensive rebounds or playing with the low post.

Fulfilling performance goals does not guarantee outcome results but does increase the probability of achieving the latter and is the only possible controlled route for achieving them.

* For example: shooting more often from ideal positions (performance goal) does not guarantee that more points will be made (outcome goal), but does increase the probability of making more points, and only by shooting more often from these positions will the player be able to control how to make more points.

In general, outcome goals work better at enhancing the players' interest, but performance goals are better at helping the players to understand that they can control the situations with which they are faced.

Both types of goals guide the coach's work and help to strengthen the players' motivation but outcome goals, especially inter-subject or inter-group outcome goals, can be very stressful (and therefore negative) for younger players.

In general, it is advisable to combine both types of goals depending on the players' age group, keeping in mind the following:

- *inter-subject and inter-group outcome goals* are advisable basically for teams made up of 15/18-year-olds and, to a lesser extent, for teams made up of 13/14-year-olds. They are not advisable for mini-basketball teams.

- *intra-subject and intra-group outcome goals* are advisable for teams made up of 15/18-year-olds and 13/14-year-olds, and sometimes for older mini-basketball teams (10/12-year-olds).
- *individual and collective performance goals* are highly recommended for all teams.



Practical Exercises

- Make a list of possible inter-group and intra-group outcome goals for the whole season, for 15/18-year-olds and for 13/14-year-olds.
- Make a list of possible collective and individual performance goals for a five-week mesocycle, for the following teams: 6/7-year-olds, 8/9-year olds, 10/12-year-olds, 13/14-year-olds, 15/16-year-olds, 17/18-year-olds.

Advantages of Performance Goals

Performance goals are extremely important for all young teams (as well as elite teams) for the following reasons:

- they emphasise the players' behaviour rather than the results of that behaviour. This means that these goals are centred on what the players do, on what depends on them, rather than on the consequences of what they do that does not depend as much on them;
- they help the players to focus on their own behaviour, allowing them to adopt a more productive and rewarding working system;
- they allow a more realistic evaluation of the feasibility of the goals;
- they facilitate a simple and reliable assessment of output;
- they permit the players to use their own behaviour to measure their progress;
- they allow the players to establish useful contingencies between their behaviour and its consequences;
- they favour increased self-confidence and motivation.

For all of these reasons, and because outcome goals can be very stressful and negative for children's teams, mini-basketball coaches training 6/7-year-olds and 8/9-year-olds should use only performance goals, avoiding the setting of outcome goals.



Mini-basketball coaches training 10/12-year-olds should also concentrate on performance goals but may include some intra-subject or intra-group outcome goals related to performance goals.

* For example: in order to work on the individual performance goal of improving lay-ups, the coach may establish an intra-subject outcome goal consisting of attempting to achieve a specific number of scored points in a test-drill.

For teams of 13/14-year-olds and 15/18-year-olds, the coach may incorporate outcome goals (more with older players than with younger players) being careful not to ignore performance goals. In fact, *it is important to establish performance goals related to each outcome goal so that the players always know what they must do to increase the probability of achieving the desired result.*

Furthermore, for these age groups and because we are talking about players whose work is long-term, the coach should establish some performance goals that may not be related with outcome goals attainable during that season but that can be achieved as the players progress, thus enabling them to opt for optimum results further down the line.

* For example: a coach may set the goal of improving low post moves (performance goal) which will not affect the present season's results, but hopefully, this goal will increase the probability of achieving better results the following season (longer-term outcome goal).



Test Exercise-4:

- Following is a list of possible goals. Indicate whether these are inter-subject or inter-group outcome goals (Inter), intra-subject or intra-group outcome goals (Intra) or performance goals (PG). The correct answers are at the back of the book.

	Inter	Intra	PG
1. Improve the team's previous year classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Get 10 rebounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Dribble with left hand while moving towards the left.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Look at the hoop when catching the ball.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Make a chest pass in a straight line.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Be the team's top scorer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Do not cross feet when playing defense.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Make 65% of the free throws.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Move quickly down the court to defend after losing possession of the ball.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Lift arms to block opposing team's shots.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Characteristics of Efficient Goals

In order to be efficient, goals should include the following characteristics:

- Closely linked *final goals* and *intermediate goals* should be established, *defining the time limit* for each.

Final goals should mark the final objective to be reached, while intermediate goals mark the stages to be covered in order to progressively move closer to and ultimately achieve the final goal. Both

PERIOD:			
	DEADLINE	OUTCOME GOALS	PERFORMANCE GOALS
FINAL GOAL			
INTERMEDIATE GOALS			

Table 2. Kind of tool to set outcome and related performance goals, both final and intermediate, for a specific period.

final goals as well as intermediate goals are necessary for maintaining high, stable motivation.

Attainment of intermediate short-term goals strengthens the players' motivation to continue to progress. It is therefore important to establish *short-term goals*.

- Goals should be *specific* and *clearly defined* rather than general and ambiguous.

Examples of specific, clearly define goals are: shooting with the left hand, dribbling the ball with the fingers or placing oneself in a specific defensive position enabling to watch both the ball and the opposing player at the same time. General, ambiguous goals are: shooting better or defending well.

- Goals should be *attractive* to the players but *realistic* as well.

Attractive goals are those that awaken the players' interest, but this interest can only be maintained if the players see that the goals are realistic enough to be achieved.

An attractive but unrealistic goal enhances the risk of future problems, drastically decreasing initial motivation if the player feels that he/she cannot achieve what he/she has set out to do. However, if the player feels that he/she can achieve the desired goal, he/she will work harder in order to do so.

Once the goal has been attained, the players' self-confidence and motivation will be strengthened when confronted with further goals. It is therefore important that the goals be attainable to the players.

- The goals should be *challenging* for the players at *proportionate cost*.

Goals that are too easy (requiring little effort) or that require too much effort, are not suitable. Goals should be challenging in such a way as to motivate the player; goals that are too easy, although attractive, are not challenging.

At the same time, a goal can be attractive, realistic and challenging but involve too high a cost for the players, in which case the players' motivation will decrease. Thus, the cost should be considered by the players proportionate to the value of the goal.

- In team sports, both *collective* as well as *individual goals* should be established.

If only collective goals have been established, individual motivation can easily diminish. And in teams made up of young players, it is important that each player be allowed to progress at his/her own pace; therefore, individual goals are important.



Practical Exercise

- Think about the team you are coaching (or the last team you coached) and look at the following:
 - ✓ Have you established outcome goals and performance goals?
 - ✓ Have you established final goals and intermediate goals?
 - ✓ Have you established short-term goals?
 - ✓ Are your goals specific and clearly defined?
 - ✓ Are they attractive?
 - ✓ Are they realistic?
 - ✓ Are they challenging?
 - ✓ Is achievement of these goals proportionate in terms of cost?
 - ✓ Have you established collective goals and individual goals?

Choosing the Most Appropriate Goals

Once the coach has decided which goals seem most appropriate, he/she must decide if these can be achieved within the coaching time available. In many cases, because of the lack of time, he/she will have to leave out certain goals that he/she considered initially interesting.

If this is the case (a common occurrence when coaching young teams), the coach has to choose which goals he/she considers most important, omitting the rest. In order to do this, he/she can use criteria such as the following:

- the *importance* of each goal, taking into account the type of team he/she is coaching and, based on this, the team's general goals; obviously those goals considered most important will take precedence;
- the *proximity* of each goal with respect to the present. In general, if the degree of importance is similar, those goals that can be achieved first should take precedence.
- the *relationship* between different objectives, bearing in mind whether the attainment of one goal is essential to achieving others. In general, the simplest goals that facilitate the attainment of later, more complex, goals should take precedence.

PERIOD:		
PLAYERS	PERFORMANCE GOALS	
	DEFENSE	OFFENSE
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
etc.		

Table 3. *Kind of tool to set performance goals for each player.*

Along these lines, it is interesting for the coach to combine offense and defense goals (for example, improve offense 1 on 1 fundamentals and improve defense 1 on 1 fundamentals). Both on an individual level as well as on a collective level, the development of offense and defense should follow a parallel progression;



- the *incompatibility* or *interference* between goals (to what degree will concentrating on achieving a goal be incompatible or interfere with the attainment of other goals). Clearly, if the importance of goals is similar, those goals that are not incompatible or do not interfere with each other will take precedence;
- the *cost* esteemed necessary in order to achieve each goal, defining cost as basically the dedication and the physical and psychological effort necessary for the achievement of the goal. In general, those goals requiring lower cost should take precedence;
- the *estimated probability* of achieving each goal, because even though all of the goals considered are attainable, some will be more so than others. Logically, those considered more probable should predominate over those less probable.



Practical Exercises

- Decide upon the goals that you could set for your team as a whole and for each of your players for the entire season.
- Do the same exercise, but concentrating now on the first mesocycle of the season.
- Do the same exercise, but concentrating now on the first microcycle of the previous mesocycle.
- Focus on any of these three periods, season, mesocycle or microcycle (only one of them) and establish the time available for coaching your team during that period. Then, taking into account the time available, choose goals from among those discussed above that you consider most important, bearing in mind the criteria listed (importance, proximity, relationship with other goals, estimated effort and probability of attainment).

2.5. TRAINING CONTENTS

Once the coach has defined his/her goals, he/she should define the specific work to be carried out in order to be able to achieve those goals. For this, the coach should assess exactly where the players are in relation with the goals and, from there, decide what their needs are and what kind of work is most appropriate.

Examples of contents are: plays with or without the ball to improve coordination; drills to perfect dribbling, shooting or any other of the fundamentals; drills to improve individual decisions in 2 on 2 or 3 on 3 situations, etc.

Just as with goals, coaches should be very realistic when defining the contents to be covered in the training session, asking themselves questions such as the following:

- ✓ Are the players prepared for these contents?
 - Coaches should not expose their players to contents for which they are not prepared at the time.
- ✓ If they are prepared, are these the most appropriate contents for this type of team?
 - Although coaches may have already asked themselves this question with respect to goals, it is advisable to ask themselves this again when thinking about the contents.
- ✓ Is it feasible to work with these contents within the time available?
 - Here again, estimation of time available is crucial.



Practical Exercises

- Make a list of possible goals for a five-week mesocycle for a team of either 15/18-year-olds, 13/14-year-olds, 10/12-year-olds or 6/9-year-olds, training for an hour and a half, three afternoons a week. Then, based on this, make up a list of contents needed to achieve those goals.
- Based on the previous exercise, try to answer the following questions:
 - ✓ Are the players prepared for these contents?
 - ✓ Even if they are prepared, are these contents the most appropriate for this kind of team?
 - ✓ Is it feasible to work with these contents within the time available?

	GOALS	CONTENTS
D E F E N S E		
O F F E N S E		
O T H E R S		

Table 4. Goals and related contents may be distributed in three categories: defense, offense and others.

Choosing the Most Important Contents

As with goals it is likely that, considering the time available, the coach will have to decide which contents should be included in his/her training plan, omitting the less important.

In order to establish the priority of the contents, the coach may consider the following criteria:

- *suitability* of the contents. Clearly, the coach should only take into account the most suitable contents, omitting any that are not appropriate;
- *specifics* of the contents with respect to the goal; the most specific with respect to the goal should take precedence;

* This does not mean that, for example, a mini-basketball coach should emphasise specific training (for example, drills focused on improving chest passes) to the detriment of more general work (drills to improve different kinds of passes and other related fundamentals); rather, once he/she has defined the goal (more or less global), the contents should be specific with respect to that goal. In the former case, a mini-basketball coach could establish overall improvement of different fundamentals as his/her goal and therefore, he/she would choose contents that are specifically focused on achieving that overall improvement.

- *simplicity* of the contents: in principle, the simplest contents should take precedence over more complex contents;
- *immediacy* of the contents: in general, the contents considered more immediate to the achievement of the goal in question should take precedence;
- *relationship* with other contents: contents that facilitate the future development of later contents should take precedence over neutral contents or contents that may have a negative effect on later work;



- the *integration* of the contents into the overall framework to be developed; the contents that fit in best should take precedence;
- the *cost* in terms of dedication and physical and mental effort; contents with a lower cost should take precedence.

Therefore, in order to achieve the goals of the plan, the coach should select contents that are suitable and specific to the goal and, from those contents, select the simplest, the most immediate for the achievement of that goal, those which facilitate work with later contents, those which fit in best with the overall work plan to be carried out and those which involve a lower cost in terms of dedication and effort.



Practical Exercises

- Choose a goal that the players must achieve within a specific time period and make a list of contents to be worked on in order to achieve that goal.
- Using the list from the previous exercise, decide which contents should take precedence, keeping in mind the criteria mentioned (suitability, specifics, simplicity, immediacy, relationship with other contents, integration into the overall work plan and cost in dedication and effort).

2.6. PHYSICAL WORK LOAD

When planning training sessions, the mini-basketball or basketball coach should not only consider technical and tactical contents (passing, dribbling, 3 on 3 drills, etc.) or contents related with the players' physical development (for example, drills to improve their coordination or speed)) but also the physical workload most suitable for each training period and session. The coach who makes use of the most appropriate workload can achieve the following benefits:

- *improve the physical condition of his/her players*, not only with the more specific physical work but also with the technical and tactical training which involve physical work (for example, when the players perform fast-break drills);
- *help the players to better assimilate techniques and tactics*, because they are performing in better physical shape;

- *avoid fatigue and burnout.* When young players are overtired, they no longer enjoy themselves, they learn less and there is a greater risk of injury; besides, given these conditions, they are more likely to perform poorly academically (an important aspect when working with young athletes). For all of these reasons, it is important that they be able to recuperate after every important effort;
- *help them to perform better during the games.* Although the most important objective of most young players' teams is not their performance during the games, the players should play in good physical shape (even if the conditions are not the best) in order to perform and benefit from the experience.

Therefore, when planning training sessions, the coach should keep in mind the physical workload at all times.

Work and Rest

In the first place, the coach must understand that his/her workplan should alternate work and rest throughout each training period and session.

- on the one hand, he/she should submit his/her players to physical work (with or without the ball, more general or more specific, according to the goals) so that they will be fit.
- but on the other hand, he/she should allow his/her players to rest enough to permit them to assimilate the work performed and to be in good shape for do more.

To control the *balance between physical work and rest*, coaches should consider both the sports work of their teams as well as the work involved in other activities that the players participate in. In teams where the players are youngsters, it is likely that they have physical education class, participate in other sports or play basketball in their free time, apart from the work they do with the team.

A mini-basketball coach should *integrate mini-basketball into the players' daily lives*, making it one more satisfying activity, not something that interferes with their other activities.

* For example: if the training sessions exhaust the children so much that they cannot do their homework, play with their friends or chat with their parents, this would be a serious problem.

So a mini-basketball coach should try to keep the workload in the training sessions from being excessive so that the players, considering all of their activities, have rest periods during the week and during the season.

Achieving the best physical shape for performing during the games should not be the main goal for either mini-basketball or 13/14-year-old teams. However, this could be a goal for some 15/18-year-old teams, if not for every game, at least for the key games of the season. In any case, it is a good idea that all of the players be able to perform acceptably in games, even if the main objective is not necessarily to win:



- in the first place, because for any minimally motivated player, playing a game is a very attractive situation in which he/she wants to perform to the best of his/her ability;
- in the second place, because those players who do perform well in the games (always adapting the criteria used to define «perform well» to each case) receive very positive psychological reinforcement from such an experience, strengthening their self-confidence and motivation;
- in the third place, because games make up part of the players' training, it is important to take the maximum advantage of them. Thus, a game will be a much more positive experience in every way if the players are in good shape than if they are tired and can hardly perform at all.

For these reasons, it is important to keep in mind that the *players should be rested before a game*. So, when planning training sessions, the physical workload of the previous two days should be light.

It is also important to remember that games require enormous physical effort after which the *players have to recuperate*. Therefore, when planning training sessions for the day after a game, the players should either rest or have another light session.

The balance between work and rest should also be kept in mind during each training session. The players should perform a series of drills (work) and

then be able to recuperate from the effort by either resting or doing drills that require less physical effort.

* For example: after a drill series of full court 1 on 1 (intensive exercise) the players will need to rest or do low-intensity drills (for example, free throws).

In general, for young teams (especially mini-basketball and 13/14-year-olds) it is recommended that the players not perform intensive drills for long periods and that they have enough time to recuperate each time, even within the drill itself.

* For example: within a full court 1 on 1 drill, players may do defense and offense (work) and then 30-40 seconds of recuperation (rest) until the next 1 on 1.



Practical Exercises

- Organise a training session of basketball drills for a mini-basketball team or a team of 13/14-year-olds, suitably combining work and rest.
- Work out a general programme for one week, for a mini-basketball team or a team of 13/14-year-olds, combining work and rest, keeping in mind that twice a week the players have gym class and that on one of those days (Thursday) they also have basketball practice.

Volume and Intensity

When estimating the physical workload, a distinction should be made between *volume* and *intensity*.

Volume is the total amount of physical work performed by the players.

Intensity refers to the physical work that the players do within a unit of time.

* For example: a drill consisting of a series of thirty fast-breaks has more volume than a drill involving twenty series. And both drills will be more intensive if the series are made in five minutes instead of eight minutes.

An adequate balance between volume and intensity throughout the season is an important element in coaching 15/18-year-old basketball teams, less important for 13/14-year-old teams, and barely significant for mini-basketball teams.

Volume is considered the base which supports the rest of an athlete's work and, upon that base, intensity acquires importance. For this reason, volume is key for young teams at the beginning of the season or after any period of inactivity.

Once appropriate volume has been achieved, intensity and rest are the key elements for reaching optimum physical shape. However, if for a prolonged period of time the player works only on intensity, he/she will probably lose in fitness. For this reason, *volume, intensity and rest should be suitably combined for those teams that wish to carefully maintain their physical shape* (top teams and, at specific periods, 15/18-year-olds).

Therefore, both the mini-basketball coach and the coach for a team of 13/14-year-olds should be basically concerned with volume rather than intensity, seeking the adequate balance between *volume* and *rest*.

This means that the most important factor for either a mini-basketball team or a team of 13/14-year-olds is to train in the appropriate measure (appropriate amount of workload), without considering their physical shape, for the purpose of adequately developing the players' physical qualities, preventing exhaustion and burnout, and performing to an acceptable degree for the formative experience of the games.

However, the coach working with 15/18-year-olds should be more aware of the balance between *volume* and *intensity*.

In general, as can be seen in Figure-1, volume should take precedence over intensity during the first months of the season, but intensity should increase in the second half, as volume decreases, so that the players are at peak physical condition when they should be performing best at games (assuming that the most important games are played at the end of the season).

For these teams (15/18-year-olds), the main thing is that throughout the season they combine the formative work necessary at these ages with the tune-up work that is also important in order for them to perform better for the most important games of the season.

Thus, far from the most important games volume should be higher and intensity lower, and when approaching those games, volume



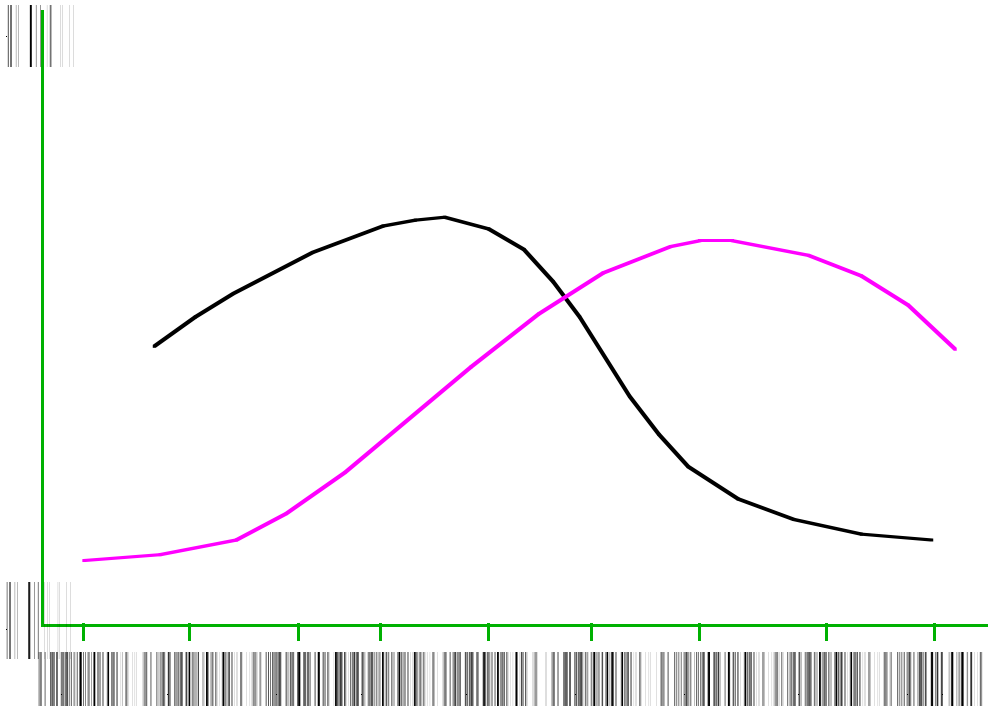


Figure 1. Example of Volume (—) and Intensity (—) loads during the whole season in a 15-18 year-old team.

should decrease and intensity increase, being very important to decrease the whole physical workload (both volume and intensity) and to increase the periods of rest just before the important games.



Practical Exercises

- Organise a coaching session with basketball drills for a team of 15/18-year-olds in which volume takes precedence over intensity.
- Organise a coaching session with basketball drills for a team of 15/18-year-olds in which intensity takes precedence over volume.
- Along general lines, plan the tendency of volume and intensity for the whole season for a team of 15/18-year-olds who should work on improving throughout the year, but whose performance is especially important for two blocks of games: one at the end of February and the other at the end of the season. The season begins in September and ends in May.

2.7. PSYCHOLOGICAL LOAD

Just as the coach should control the physical workload, he/she should also control the *psychological load*. In this way, the coach will help his/her young players to:

- make the best use of the training sessions;
- better assimilate the most complex technical and tactical concepts;
- deal properly with the extra physical workload involved in training sessions;
- recuperate properly between one practice and the next;
- be psychologically prepared for games;
- make use of practice sessions to develop psychological skills that will help them in sports and in life in general;
- not suffer mental exhaustion and burnout which leads to a decrease in motivation and attention, increasing the risk of injury, lowering their performance, worsening their health and, in many cases, increasing the risk of their giving up sports altogether.

Characteristics of the Psychological Load

The psychological load is related to such aspects of training as the following:

- the *players' commitment to their sport*; the greater the commitment, the greater the psychological load;
- *players' participation in the drills*; the greater their participation, the greater the psychological load;
- the *novelty, variety and complexity of the tasks* set during a session; the greater the degree of novelty, variety and complexity, the greater the mental effort required of the players;
- the *general demand required of the players*; the more required of them, the greater the psychological load;
- the *degree of attention demanded* of them; although any demand requires a psychological effort, those tasks requiring more intense attention include a greater psychological load than tasks requiring less attention;
- *stressful competitive situations*; exercises that pose stressful competitive situations (for example, playing a game with a time limit in which the winning team gets a prize) imply a greater psychological load;

- *evaluation of players' performance*; evaluating the players' performance during a training drill increases the psychological load;
- the *behaviour of the coach*; if the coach is on top of the drill, giving instructions, commenting, correcting, reinforcing, etc, the psychological load is greater. This is even truer if the coach's behaviour produces stress (for example, if the coach aggressively recriminates the players).



Practical Exercise

- Organise a 1 on 1 drill with a low psychological load and another 1 on 1 drill with a greater psychological load.

Deficient Psychological Load

Without a minimum psychological load, the training session is dull and boring, except in those sessions right before a game when the motivation produced by the upcoming game tends to eclipse any deficiency of the practice session.

Under deficient psychological load, many young players lose their initial motivation. They go to practice and are bored, they go again the next day and are bored again, day after day. For many of them, mini-basketball or basketball is no longer a stimulating activity.

Therefore monotonous sessions (doing the same drills again and again) where the players participate little (for example, a long line of players waiting for their turn) with a low general and attentional effort required, no competitive drills, no evaluation of their performance of any kind, and in which the coach is not involved in their work, lead the players to a sense of boredom, a loss of interest in mini-basketball or basketball, the incapacity to take advantage of the practice session, the impossibility of assimilating anything (or very little) and, in many cases, quitting the sport.



Practical Exercise

- Make a list of measures you can take with your mini-basketball, 13/14-year-olds or 15/18-year-olds to keep practice sessions from being boring.

Psychological Overload

At the other extreme, neither should there be permanent *psychological overload* because, in that case, the activity will be overly stressful and, if not handled properly, will produce negative effects.

When considering psychological overload, the coach should bear in mind the *quantitative overload* (too many psychological demands) and the *qualitative overload* (stressful demands that force the players to make an extreme effort).

Productive Psychological Load

A distinction should also be made between *productive load* and *unproductive load*. Productive load can be beneficial if handled correctly. Unproductive load, on the other hand, has no positive effects and can even be negative.



* For example: a coach who poses a challenging drill that the players can master by making an important effort, will be using a productive psychological load.

* However, a coach who insults a player who has made a mistake, will be producing an unproductive psychological load that could even, as in this case, have negative results.

Productive psychological loads are excellent opportunities to help the players' progress.

Their most important characteristic is that they provoke a *psychological effort* on the part of the players which helps them to control a difficult situation that can actually be controlled.

* For example: a mini-basketball coach divides her players into two groups and organises a shooting competition between them. If the players shoot from positions in which they can actually score and if the level of the two groups is similar, the drill will have a productive psychological load. The players will be concentrating on the task, they are faced with a competitive situation that they can handle, they will have to deal with the frustration of their mistakes in order to keep on trying, they will have to quickly assimilate successful shots in order to keep on shooting, and they will be faced with the success or failure of the final score (thus learning to control emotions related to success and failure), etc.

* However, if the coach organises the same drill but with the players shooting from positions from which they can barely reach the hoop, or where one team is much better than the other, the psychological load will be negative. In the first situation, after several failed attempts, the players will not be able to overcome the frustration produced by their mistakes because they will perceive that they are not controlling the situation; they will see that, no matter how hard they try, the goal of scoring is beyond their reach and, in these conditions, both motivation and effort will diminish. In the latter case, the better team will have to make little effort and the inferior team will follow suit once they realise that they are at a clear disadvantage.



Practical Exercises

- Imagine that you are coaching a mini-basketball team: develop a drill with a productive psychological load and one with a negative psychological load.
- Do the same thing, but this time for a team of 13/14-year-olds.
- Do the same exercise, but this time for a team of 15/18-year-olds.

Adequate Use of Psychological Loads

Just as physical workloads should be suited to the players' capabilities, psychological loads should also adapt to the players' possibilities so that they can control them.

Therefore, in general terms, the psychological load for **mini-basketball teams** should be moderate, avoiding very stressful drills and a stressful evaluation of the players' performance. In order to achieve an adequate load, the following should predominate:

- drills in which all of the players participate assiduously (thus avoiding situations where they are waiting a long time for their turn);
- simple drills which the players can easily assimilate;
- general contents that do not force the players to make a special effort to concentrate on very reduced stimuli;
- short drills to avoid the players' loss of attention;
- competitive drills, carefully monitored by the coach in such a way that successes and failures are evenly divided;
- very rewarding drills.

For these teams, the total volume of psychological load can be similar in most of the practice sessions. During each session, either drills of a similar load can be used or drills with a greater load compensated by others of a lesser load.

* For example: if a drill requires the players to be especially focused on a specific point, it should be followed by others that require less specific intensive attention.

For teams of **13/14-year-olds**, the psychological load can be greater and even more so for **15/18-year-olds** although, in both cases, greater and lesser loads should be alternated in practice sessions and in the drills performed during each session.

Let us consider, for example, a one-week plan of four practice sessions for a team of 15/18-year-olds:

- the first day, the coach introduces new offense contents that force the players to make an important mental effort (*medium-high* load);
- the second day, the same contents are repeated, using non-stressful drills (*medium-low* load);
- the third day, the coach uses competitive drills related to those contents and other contents that the players have already mastered; some drills may be stressful drills (*high-very high* load);
- the fourth day, contents are repeated using non-stressful drills (*low* load).

In general, just as with the physical workload, the *psychological load should not be high on days preceding games*. When planning each period of the season, this should be kept in mind for teams of 15/18-year-olds and on certain occasions for teams of 13/14-year-olds.



Practical Exercises

- Organise a practice of one hour for a mini-basketball team, keeping the psychological load moderate.
- Plan a week's training for a 15/18-year-old team within the first half of the season, using drills with different types of psychological loads (new contents, complex drills requiring intense concentration, non-stressful competitive drills, very stressful drills, etc.).

Periods of Psychological Rest

When planning the entire season, the mesocycles, microcycles and practice sessions, the coach should bear in mind the importance of psychological rest periods as well as physical rest periods, so that the players will be able to assimilate the work they have done and be in shape for new productive efforts.

It is therefore a good idea, during the macrocycle of the season, for young players, especially mini-basketball players and 13/14-year-olds, to have rest periods which involve taking a break from the basketball activity. It is advisable for them to divide their time between their sports activities and other physical, recreational and intellectual activities.

For example, the practice of an individual sport would be a good complement for a mini-basketball player already involved in a team sport at a formative age. This way, while developing qualities such as teamwork, inherent in mini-basketball, he/she can develop others such as assuming individual responsibility, inherent in individual sports.



It is also a good idea that, along with activities that require commitment on the part of the player, others are planned which require a less important commitment or none at all (excursions, days spent out in the country, etc.). Combining these kind of activities or others is a good formative experience for young players and helps them to rest from the psychological demands of basketball practices and games.

With 13/14-year-olds and 15/18-year-olds, this important aspect should also be taken into account.

* The coach of a junior team made the following mistake: the team travelled by bus for 3 hours for an away game after which, during the trip back, the coach made the players watch the video of the game. The coach considered that, since the players were seated, they could rest from the effort made during the game while watching the video.

It is clear that this coach did not take into account the psychological load of the game or the psychological load of watching a video of this type. A game involves a very high psychological load producing extreme psychological wear and tear, and requires a period of psychological rest so that the players can recuperate.

Under the conditions of psychological exhaustion that the player feels after a game, it is unlikely that he/she can make the mental effort needed to learn anything useful from a video. What is more, the effort of trying is highly unproductive and could even have a negative effect because, in a situation such as this, the players may reach erroneous conclusions, and they are being deprived of a needed rest period to be able to make further psychological efforts in future training sessions and games.

In this example, the coach should plan the video session for another time, respecting the psychological rest period needed by the players.



Practical Exercise

- Considering the macrocycle of a season, plan periods and activities of psychological rest for a mini-basketball team, a team of 13/14-year-olds, and a team of 15/18-year-olds for the entire macrocycle.

2.8. CONCERNING GAMES

Along with practice sessions, when organising their planning, coaches should not forget the games the team will be playing, irrespective of the importance they wish to assign each.

- First of all, games involve physical and psychological load that should be taken into account in the overall planning.
- Secondly, they involve technical and tactical contents that should also be taken into account.
- Thirdly, participation in a game is a highly attractive competitive experience for the players and full advantage should be taken of this experience.

Mini-Basketball Teams

For a mini-basketball team, the games should be seen only as a positive experience in the players' sports and human development. **Mini-basketball games should be considered an *educational opportunity* where winning is not the fundamental objective.** The children should learn to be good sports, respect the rules of the game, respect the referees and the opposing team, try their best, compete fully, etc., and they should enjoy this magnificent experience.

For this reason, the mini-basketball coach should organise the season's games in such a way that all the players have an equal chance to participate throughout the year.

They should divide playing time among all of the players who have reasonably fulfilled their commitment rather than allowing the best players to play the most and keeping the worst players on the bench.

Neither is it enough that all the players get onto the court. Participating in a game means that any player on the court should be able to express his/her initiatives, playing without restriction. For example, some coaches tend to let their best players have the ball and shoot while two or three other children are simply



«filling» up the court. Obviously, those children are not participating in the game.

The mini-basketball coach should plan all of the games of the season and each specific game, keeping in mind that all of the players should be able to participate sufficiently.

Moreover, the mini-basketball coach could use some game time to reward the players for attendance and punctuality at practices, for effort and even for positive behaviour at school or at home.

* For example: coaches could decide that the players who have attended the most practices and who have been the most punctual can play one period, and that the players who have done all of their homework that week can play another.

Likewise, it would not be a positive educational experience for a child who never goes to practice to play, in the same way as it would be very unreasonable to keep a child from playing if he has missed one day because he had to go with his parents to a family event.

Mini-basketball coaches should also try to make the games *rewarding experiences* rather than unpleasant ones, so it is important to present a game as just another day of activity rather than turning it into something overly important.

However, for 10/12-year-olds it could be interesting for the players to have a specific objective to aim for (this should always be a performance goal, not an outcome goal).

For mini-basketball teams, a game should not alter the educational training most appropriate for these ages but rather be part of this training.

Therefore, when planning the season, coaches should make sure that there is an adequate number of games (generally between 18 and 25) and if possible, against teams at a similar level or, at least, that not most of them be much better or much worse than their own team.



- If there are not enough games, the motivating element of games that is important for the children will be missing and if there are too many, the psychological load involved would be unsuitable for players of this age.
- In the same way, if the opponents are at a similar level or if the differences, both in favour and against, occur only occasionally, the experience of playing a game will be much more enriching.

Finally, mini-basketball coaches should integrate the games into the team's overall training plan without adapting their plan to the opponents of a particular upcoming game or spending training sessions to prepare specifically for any one game.



Practical Exercise

- Make up a schedule of games for the whole season that you consider most appropriate for mini-basketball teams of 6/7-year-olds, 8/9-year-olds and 10/12-year-olds.

13/14-Year-Old Teams

In the same way, for teams of 13/14-year-olds, the games should not be overly important but be part of the players' overall training process, although in this case, with more goals set (basically performance goals) than for mini-basketball teams.

The coach for 13/14-year-olds should also allow all the players who go to practice to play many minutes throughout the season, because otherwise, their motivation will decrease and it will be more likely that they quit the sport or make little effort.

With players of this age, the coach should use the games as an excellent *test* of the effectiveness of his/her work during training sessions. With this in mind, it is necessary to consider the following steps:

- before each game, coaches should establish the collective and/or individual performance goals (keeping them very realistic) that they consider most important for that game, taking into account the contents worked during that week or in preceding weeks;
- before the game, coaches should establish a simple procedure to evaluate whether or not those goals are achieved, and to what degree;

- during the game (or afterwards, if it has been recorded on video), the coach or a capable colleague should make note of the behaviours that constitute the performance goals;
- after the game, coaches should study the notes taken and assess what has occurred with the performance goals established before the game; this assessment will provide them with the information necessary to know how the players are assimilating the work done during training.

For example, the coach is working on screens during the training sessions and he/she wants to monitor how the players are assimilating these contents. In the next game, he/she establishes setting screens as a priority performance goal and draws up a worksheet like that shown in Table-5.

During the game, an assistant coach uses this worksheet to tick off each screen made by the team, noting down the player setting the screen and the player screened.

After the game, the coach can use this worksheet to see how many screens the team has set, which players set the most, which players were screened most often and which pairs of players set the most screens between them.

This information will be very useful in planning training sessions for the coming weeks. The coach could establish the same goal for the next game and use the same worksheet to see if there has been any improvement. Then he/she could do the same thing three or four games later.

Basically, the interaction between practice sessions and games, using the latter as test experiences, is a fundamental element for 13/14-year-old teams. The game goals established by the coach should mainly be *performance goals* because what he/she is interested in is observing the players' progress in the basketball fundamentals that make up the contents covered during practice.



Practical Exercise

- Choose two possible performance goals for a 13/14-year-old team to work on during a game and design a simple worksheet for evaluating those goals.

15/18-Year-Old Teams

At this age group, especially for juniors (17/18-year-olds), the results of the competition may be important without losing sight of the educational perspective that should still be present. Therefore, there are two types of game:

PLAYERS		PLAYER SCREENED									
		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S C R E E N E R	4										
	5										
	6										
	7										
	8										
	9										
	10										
	11										
	12										
	13										

Table 5. Example of simple tool to monitor the frequency of screening during games. Every time the team sets a screen, the assistant-coach may tick in the proper spot considering both the screener and the player screened.

- games in which the main objective is to win. This should generally not be more than 25% for 15/16-year-olds nor more than 40% for 17/18-year-olds;
- games in which the main objective is to consolidate the formative work carried out during training.

Games in which the main objective is to win, if used well, are also part of the formative work of young players, because they must learn to face the stress of such games. However, the existence of these games does not mean that the main priority of the training plan should be to prepare the team to win them (contrary to what happens with professional teams).

For these cadet or junior teams, the existence of games in which the main objective is to win should affect the training plan to a certain degree without altering the fundamental objective: *the players' advanced development.*

Basically, this means that the players of such a team should not limit themselves to strengthening their best individual and collective resources for the specific purpose of performing better at key games in the season, but to work on improving their weak points, thus enriching the players' repertoire of resources, keeping in mind their future.

This way, perhaps in some cases the team's performance will be lower in the short term, but the players will benefit more and the team will be fulfilling the formative task that should still predominate at this age.

Nevertheless, in order to get the most from the valuable experience of participating in a game, it is important that the coach take into consideration the opposing team and prepare for the game.

- If these are games in which the main objective is winning, the coach must prepare the players so that they have a better chance of achieving that goal and so that they can get used to such a situation, with all it implies.
- And for all other games, the coach must prepare the players so that they learn from them.



* For example: if the coach knows that a certain opposing team uses full-court man-to-man defense, even if his/her main objective is not to win this game, it provides an excellent opportunity to work on contents related with offense against this type of defense. Therefore, when planning the training sessions, he/she should keep this in mind.

The procedure that a coach for 15/18-year-olds could use in planning the entire season and each of its periods could be the following:

- decide which goals and contents he/she considers appropriate for the players to significantly improve their level;
- establish the proportion he/she considers appropriate between games in which the main objective is to win and other games (25% and 75%? 30% and 70%? 35% and 65%?..);
- on the calendar, situate the games in which the main objective is to win and, based on this, establish the physical and psychological workload for the practice;
- keeping these games in mind, situate the goals and contents most closely related to them on the training calendar (from among the goals and contents previously established);
- then, situate all of the other goals and contents on the calendar;
- for those weeks in which games to win are to be played, the coach can devote one or two practice sessions to preparing specifically for those games. The rest of the time, the coach should not use practice time for preparing for games;
- whatever the main objective of the game, the coach should establish *performance goals* for all of them. For those games in which the main objective is winning, performance goals increase the probability of achieving this result. And for other games, performance goals related with the players' individual or collective progress, help to achieve improvement.



Practical Exercise

- Think of a team of 15/16-year-olds or one of 17/18-year-olds and, following the steps outlined above, plan, in general terms, an eight-month season in which the team plays between 25 and 35 games.

Points to Consider

Whatever the team, coaches training young players should keep in mind two important aspects.

- First of all, they should think about what they require of their players during a game. Many coaches demand more than what their players can do, with the result that the games lose part of their formative value and become overly stressful and unproductive. However, those coaches who take into account their players' real possibilities make much better use of the valuable experience provided by each game.

Therefore, the coach should try to make each (or most) of the games rewarding experiences in which the players, whether they win or lose, perceive that they control or can control the different situations with which they are faced. *Perception of control* is an essential aspect in the development of a young player's self-confidence.

Thus, the goals established by the coach for each game should basically be *achievable* and very *realistic*.

- The other aspect is that coaches training young players *should not imitate* coaches training professional teams. This means that they should not plan the season with the sole objective of maximum performance in games, limiting their goals and contents to winning the greatest number of games, devoting most of the practice sessions to preparing games, etc.

Professional teams have one purpose and young players' teams have another objective; the coach should clearly understand this difference and plan the games and training sessions in consequence.



2.9. SCHEDULING

In each period of the season, the coach should schedule the goals and contents of the practices, taking into account, as the case may be, games, physical workload and psychological load.

As an example, see tools included in Tables-6 and 7.

In the first case (Table-6), the coach schedules the physical workload (volume and intensity) and the psychological load of training sessions for a five-week mesocycle, taking into account practice sessions available and games to be played. From there, the coach can suitably schedule the goals and contents of training sessions in that mesocycle.

MESOCYCLE PLANNING: WORK LOAD

PERIOD: FROM: 18-1 TO: 21-2

NUMBER OF TRAINING SESSIONS: 15 TOTAL TIME AVAILABLE: 22 h 30'

NUMBER OF GAMES : 5 (days 24, 31, 6, 13 and 21)

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	
1	DATES :	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	VOL :		HIGH (H)		MEDIUM (M)	L		
	INT :		LOW (L)		M	M		
	PSYCH :		H		M	L		
2	DATES :	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	VOL :		H		H	L		
	INT :		M		M	M		
	PSYCH :		M		L	L		
3	DATES :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	VOL :		M		L	L		
	INT :		M		H	L		
	PSYCH :		M		M	L		
4	DATES :	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	VOL :		M		L	L		
	INT :		M		H	L		
	PSYCH :		H		M	L		
5	DATES :	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	VOL :		H		M	L		
	INT :		L		M	M		
	PSYCH :		M		M	M		

Table 6. Example of tool to plan physical work load: Volume (VOL) and Intensity (INT), and psychological load (PSYCH) in a mesocycle of five weeks.

MICROCYCLE PLANNING

 PERIOD: FROM: 18-10 TO: 24-10

 NUMBER TRAINING SESSIONS: 3 TOTAL TIME AVAILABLE: 4 h 30'

 NUMBER GAMES : 1 (day 24)


WORK LOAD	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
VOLUME		HIGH		MEDIUM	LOW		
INTENSITY		LOW		MEDIUM	MEDIUM		
PSYCHOLOGICAL LOAD		HIGH		MEDIUM	LOW		

	GOALS	CONTENTS
D E F E N S E		
O F F E N S E		
O T H E R S		

Table 7. Example of tool to plan goals and contents in a microcycle of one week, considering time available, games, physical work load (volume and intensity) and psychological load.

In the second example (Table-7), the coach should schedule the goals and contents for a one-week microcycle, taking into account the practice sessions available, games to be played, the physical workload (volume and intensity) and the psychological load that he/she considers most appropriate for each training session.

Following the recommendations outlined in this chapter, coaches can schedule their team's activity for the whole season and for each period. Then they will have to organise each training session, taking into account aspects covered in the next chapter.

	Test Exercise-5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the information contained in this chapter, state whether the following are True or False. The correct answers are at the end of the book. 	
	True	False
1. When establishing the players' obligations, the coach and the players should make joint decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Working rules should only be established when problems arise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Mesocycles are the periods into which the season's macrocycle is divided.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Outcome goals are much more useful than performance goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Among other characteristics, goals should be both attractive and realistic for the players.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Controlling the physical workload is a key aspect that the coach should keep in mind when planning training sessions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. In general, the intensity of physical work should predominate over volume during the first weeks of the season.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The psychological load of a training session is not the coach's responsibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. In general, short drills help young players to avoid attentional fatigue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. At the end of the week, every coach should adapt his/her training programme to preparing upcoming games.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>