4

COACHING STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING SESSIONS
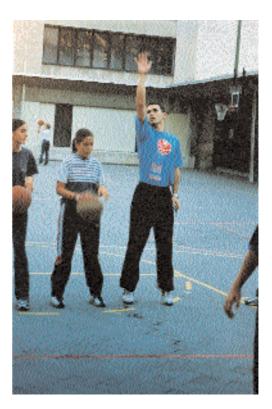
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Besides planning and evaluating training sessions, it is also important that the coach manages the players' work efficiently during each session. The following strategies can be used for this purpose.

4.1.   CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE

In general, coaches should have a *constructive attitude* when leading their team´s practice sessions. Their job is not to reprimand the players when they do something wrong, nor should they be in a bad mood, and they certainly should not insult players, make fun of them or ridicule them.

During training sessions, the coach´s job is to help the players achieve the established goals, and to do this, it is essential that his/her constructive attitude be reflected in aspects such as the following:

- create a pleasant working environment in which attractive and achievable challenges and positive comments predominate;

- accept the fact that the players are not perfect and will therefore make mistakes;

- accept the fact that the players' mistakes make up part of their training and that, therefore, there will always be mistakes;

- realise that one or several explanations will not be enough to get the players to do what they want. In many cases, showing players what they mean will be more appropriate and even then, a period of training will be necessary before the players assimilate and master the information they receive;

- understand that each young player learns at his/her own pace, and they must help each one, respecting that pace, without underestimating those who learn more slowly or with greater difficulty;

- always have a realistic perspective concerning what they can and should require of the players;

- appreciate and emphasise the efforts made by the players more than the results obtained. If the players try, and the coach controls the training process, sooner or later he/she will see an improvement;

- notice and highlight improvements rather than defects;

- be patient when things do not turn out as expected and encourage the players to try again;

- objectively analyse the players' mistakes and difficult situations that arise during the training process in order to reach productive conclusions. Mistakes and difficult situations are excellent opportunities to know how things are going, what aspects have to be worked on or what should be modified;

- always treat the players with respect and affection, no matter what happens.

This behaviour will allow coaches to win the respect of their young players and carry out their work more efficiently.

Practical Exercise

- Think about how you usually lead your team´s training sessions and whether your attitude could be more constructive.

4.2. LEADING DRILLS

To lead training drills, the coach may follow a procedure such as the following:

- explain the drill and its purpose to the players;

- in some cases, give a practical demonstration of what is to be done so that the players can watch and better understand the goal;

- establish the working rules of the drill;

- at the beginning of the drill, observe if the players have understood what it is about; if they have not, stop the drill and explain again;

- if they have understood the drill, leave them to do it for a while without correcting them. This way, the coach can evaluate the level at which the aim of the drill stands, as well as the players' attentional level;

- this evaluation enables the coach to see if he/she has introduced too many stimuli at the same time, making it difficult for the players to concentrate on the aim of the drill. In this case, he/she should redo the drill, eliminating stimuli that can perhaps be reintroduced later on, once the players have assimilated key concepts;

- during the drill, the coach should not disturb the players' concentration with his/her instructions and comments, but use these to centre their attention on key aspects of the drill;

- the coach should not act like a *radio commentator*, broadcasting minute-by-minute instructions to the players, but rather allow them to produce their own mental processes necessary for the development of the drill;

- the coach should talk to the players during breaks in the drill rather than while they are actively participating (for example, wait until the player has completed a fast-break before correcting him/her);

- the coach should use appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour (for example, look at the players when speaking to them, using the appropriate volume);

- the coach should ask the appropriate questions and make suitable reminders to help the players' concentration;

- the coach should give the players feedback on their behaviour;

- if necessary, the coach may record the players' performance;

- the coach must reinforce the players in order to strengthen the learning process and give them credit for their efforts.

Some of these strategies have been discussed in the previous chapter (explaining the purpose of a drill, establishing working rules). Others will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.   MODELING

Young players tend to *observe* the coach´s behaviour and that of other players, learning through *imitation.* For this reason, modeling is a very useful strategy for strengthening the players' motivation and showing them what is to be learned.

Basically, modeling consists of presenting the player or the team with a *significant model* as an example to imitate, emphasising or demonstrating the specific behaviour to be imitated.

> ***** For example: the coach of a mini-basketball team (significant model) can show his/her players how to pass the ball so that they imitate him/her. This way, it will be easier for the players to understand what the coach wants them to do.

> ***** Another example: the coach of a team of 13/14-year-olds can talk to his/her players about other players who are significant to them (top-class players or 15/18-year-olds on a team in the same club) to explain that these players too had to do the defense drills that they are now doing. This way, the young players will be much more motivated for a task, defense drills, that at first was not very attractive to them.

A distinction should be made between two types of models: *expert models* and *mastery models.* Expert models are prestigious players or teams. Mastery models are players or teams closer to the players themselves who, although not yet recognised experts, have a higher level.

> ***** For example: an international player could be an *expert model*, while a player on a cadet team (15/16-year-olds) who was on the 13/14-year-old team in the same club two years earlier, could be a good *mastery model*.

The example of an *expert model* can be very motivating at first, but if it is a superior player who is too distant, the players may consider imitation of this model impossible. For this reason, it is a good idea to use *expert models* to increase the players' motivation and at the same time, find *mastery models* that the players feel more identified with. In this way, interest in imitating the model is linked with the perception that it is really *possible to imitate.*

Young players tend to imitate any behaviour of the models they find attractive. However, it is important that coaches emphasise the behaviour they consider most relevant within the context of the training session. It is not a question of simply talking about the best players but rather emphasising their basket-

ball behaviours and hard work, making them an example for the players to imitate, and reinforcing these comments with examples of closer models.

> * Thus, before starting a drill, the coach can demonstrate a specific movement for the players to imitate indicating, at the same time, that this is one of the fundamentals most often used by a famous player (as long as this is true). This strategy can be very useful for young players.

> * Taking advantage of the players' interest in a particular player, the coach can emphasise the specific behaviour that helps this player to be successful, demonstrating it himself /herself or getting an older player to demonstrate it.

Sometimes, models can be found within the team itself. In fact, many players learn by observing and imitating their teammates.

As we have already seen, *the coach can also be an excellent model.* The coach of a young team, especially mini-basketball and 13/14-year-old teams, should be able to demonstrate basketball fundamentals (passing, dribbling, etc.) so that his/her players can observe and imitate the correct movements.

Sometimes, as a complement, the coach can use videos showing expert and mastery models to be imitated.

Practical Exercise

- Make up a list of fundamentals you can show your players, acting as a model yourself.

4.4.   INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMENTS TO THE PLAYERS

Instructions and comments made to the players during practice sessions should be *short*, *clear* and *precise*, avoiding long, ambiguous and vague instructions and comments. The coach should concentrate on what he/she wants to say, and say it clearly so that the players understand him/her and concentrate on the task at hand.

For this purpose, he/she should adapt the language he/she uses to the players' level, avoiding the use of words or concepts that they have not mastered, or talking to them as if he/she were giving a clinic or taking part in a meeting with other coaches.

> * For example: if, when explaining a 2 on 2 drill, the coach refers to *faking*, he/she should make sure that the players understand exactly what he/she means by this.

If the coach´s instructions and comments centre solely, specifically and clearly on the purpose of every drill, it is much more likely that the players will concentrate on the important aspects of the drill and thus perform better.

However, the opposite will occur if the coach interferes in the players' concentration by giving them instructions and making comments related to other aspects.

> * For example: if the purpose of a drill is for the players to move quickly to fast-break, the most appropriate thing during the drill is for the coach to refer only to this aspect, without suddenly deciding to correct or comment on other aspects of the game. This way, the coach will help the players to concentrate on the goal of the drill.

Along these lines, the coach should concentrate on the players' *target behaviours*, not on results, because the coach should directly influence the sports behaviour (what the players do) and not the results (what the players achieve with their behaviour).

> * For example: the players are doing a 1 on 1 drill. The coach should centre his/her instructions and comments on the decisions and/or the execution of the movements involved, not on baskets scored.

It is also useful for the coach to give instructions that are directly related with the *attentional behaviour* the players should use.

> * For example: «Watch the player and the ball at the same time!», «Concentrate on the centre!», etc.

This way, the coach reminds the players of the attentional demands of the task and influences their attentional behaviour.

4.5. QUESTIONS AND REMINDERS

Usually, when a coach corrects a player, he/she should tell him/her what he/she has done wrong or what he/she should do to improve next time; in other words, the coach gives solutions that the player can assimilate to mistakes made.

In many cases, this behaviour is appropriate, especially when the players do not know the correct solutions and this is the only way for them to learn. However, if the players already know the solutions, an efficient strategy for centring their attention on the goal of the drill and make them assimilate the information is to **ask questions** so that the players themselves find the correct answers.

> ***** For example: let´s take a lay-up learning drill for mini-basketball children. The coach wants them to step on their right foot when receiving the ball. A child does a lay-up and does not do this. Instead of pointing this out, the coach asks him/her, «What foot did you step with?»... «Which foot should you have used?»... «Are you sure?.., etc. This type of questions forces the child to find the answer himself/herself, thus leading him/her to pay more attention the next time.

Maybe the first time the coach asks the question the player will not know the answer because he/she was not paying enough attention, but his/her concentration will increase from then on in order to correctly answer successive questions. Besides, his/her teammates' concentration will probably improve too, once they assimilate the fact that the coach may ask them questions too.

The questions system can be complemented by reminding the player what he/she has to do immediately before he/she begins («Remember that the aim is to step with your right foot when receiving the ball»). If the player has enough information, this **previous reminder** can also take the form of a question («What foot should you use when receiving the ball?»); in both cases, the players will centre their attention on the key aspect of the drill right before starting.

Both strategies, *questions* and *reminders*, are especially useful when dealing with unconsolidated skills requiring *more intense conscious attention,* or at specific moments when the coach perceives attention deficits.

The *questions* should follow the player´s behaviour as soon as possible (*immediately after* the player acts), and *previous reminders* (with or without a question) should precede the following actions *immediately before* the action takes place.

4.6. RECORDING PLAYERS' PERFORMANCE

Recording of the players' performance during training drills help them to concentrate on the behaviour recorded.

> * For example: if the coach records, on a board or a sheet of paper, the times that each target behaviour is performed during a drill (specific passes, blocks, shots, etc.), the players will pay more attention to these behaviours and produce them more frequently. The same will occur if the coach accumulates records of the behaviours he/she considers more important.

In order to achieve this positive effect, the criteria to be used for recording should be very clear.

When dealing with *behaviours to be learned,* the criteria selected should refer to the players' specific behaviour, rather than the results obtained.

> * For instance: a record can be kept of the number of times 15/16-year-olds screen correctly (behaviour), regardless of whether the screen serves to make a basket (the result of the behaviour). In this way, the players will concentrate more intensely on the target behaviour of the drill which, in this case, is screening.

As an example, Table-11 includes a tool that can be used to take note of the players' target behaviours.

However, when dealing with the *repetitive practice* of behaviours that have already been mastered, it might be more appropriate to record the *results of such behaviours;* these should always be results that depend on the behaviour that the players are working on.

> * For example: during a repetitive shooting drill performed by a team of 17/18-year-olds, made baskets can be recorded. This way, it is more likely that the players will concentrate on the drill and not shoot carelessly.

Practical Exercise

- Devise a worksheet to record the frequency of a target behaviour in a practice drill.

PLAYERS	PASSING AND MOVING AWAY		
	DRILL-1	DRILL-2	DRILL-3
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

Table 11. *Example of tool to record the frecuency of the behaviour «passing and moving away» in three drills during one training session.*

4.7.   FEEDBACK

Feedback is the information the players receive concerning what they are doing. For example, a player decides to use a specific pass to a teammate and the coach comments on that pass. In this case, the coach is providing the player with *feedback* on the pass used.

Feedback is an important element in maintaining and strengthening the players' motivation, and in helping them to learn. This way, a player or a team that is motivated for a specific goal (for example, improving their fast-break) and that is making the effort to achieve this goal, needs precise information on their behaviour in order to strengthen their motivation and make the goal more attainable.

Feedback allows players, even very young ones, to control their own progress towards the goals established.

- When feedback is favourable, it is rewarding, indicating that the action performed is correct and that, therefore, it should be repeated, thus strengthening motivation to continue making the effort.

- When it is unfavourable, it helps the player to know which specific behaviour should be improved and how to do it; it also motivates him/her if he/she perceives that improvement is within his/her reach. Unfavourable feedback should include information the players need to know in order to improve in successive attempts.

Players may receive feedback from different sources. For example, by means of results obtained, by watching a video, through comments made by others or by their own feelings. However, to apply it as a technique means that the coach should control it properly, avoiding or minimising incorrect indications that the players may receive.

Basically, the coach can use verbal feedback, videos (properly controlled), appropriate objective recording of performance, and any other procedure that provides immediate information on the target behaviour.

* For example: in order to improve precision in passing, the coach can place a target at a specific distance (a mark on a wall) and establish the goal of «hitting the target». The result of each throw (hitting the target, getting close, throwing to one side, etc.) will be excellent feedback for the players taking part in this drill.

* Another example: the coach wants the players to keep their shooting arm elbow at its side when shooting, so he/she places them parallel to a wall, with their shooting arm next to it. From there, they must shoot into an imaginary or real basket. The player who sticks out his/her elbow will hit the wall, while the player who keeps his/her elbow in the proper position will not. In both cases, the players are getting excellent feedback.

Using a video to film certain parts of the practice that are especially important can also be used, basically with 15/18-year-olds. Later, the coach revises the video, choosing certain parts to show the players.

The viewing session should be set up before the next practice in which the players will again be working on the aspects filmed. In this way, the players will receive information on one or several behaviours that they will have to perform on the court immediately afterwards. These viewing sessions should not be long (in general, between five and ten minutes) nor frequent. If they are short and sporadic, they will be more meaningful to the players and therefore more valuable.

> *For example: the coach of a junior team (17/18-year-olds) feels that it is important to provide feedback to his centres on their movements on the high post. He sets up a drill for this purpose and an assistant coach films it. Later, the assistant coach selects some parts of the video.
>
> Another drill to work on this same aspect has been programmed for two days later. Before the session, the centres meet with the coach or his assistant coach and watch the selected images for five minutes. The coach takes advantage of the moment to comment on what they are seeing and invites the players to air their doubts and make suggestions.
>
> When the meeting ends, the players go out onto the court and join their teammates. Later, when the coach organises drills to work on high post movements, the players will be focused and their performance will improve.

Practical Exercise

- Think of three examples of procedures that may provide immediate feedback to the players of a mini-basketball team or a team of 13/14-year-olds during a training session.

4.8.   CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT

The use of *rewarding* or *aversive stimuli* contingent on players' behaviour (that is, as a *result* of this behaviour) is a very efficient strategy to enhance or reduce target behaviours.

> ***** For example: the coach can congratulate a player, in which case he/she is making use of a rewarding stimulus, or he/she can decide that a particular player has to pick up the balls after practice, applying, in this case, an aversive stimulus.

The principal purpose of the psychological techniques undertaken by this strategy is to contribute to *learning* relevant behaviours.

- If the purpose of the learning process is the *adquisition* or *perfecting* of behaviour (for example, improving shooting technique), as soon as possible after a player produces proper behaviour, either a rewarding stimulus should be applied *(positive reinforcement)* or an aversive stimulus should be withdrawn *(negative reinforcement)* in order to *reinforce* the behaviour so that the player will repeat it.

- In the same way, if the aim is to *eliminate* a certain kind of behaviour (for example, protesting to the referee), when the player produces this behaviour an aversive stimulus should be applied *(positive punishment)* or a rewarding stimulus should be withdrawn *(negative punishment)* so that the behaviour will be less likely to be produced in the future.

In both cases, rewarding and aversive stimuli *should only be applied contingent upon the athletes' behaviour*, never on their results (that is, behaviour

will be reinforced or punished, not the results of that behaviour). Several examples follow:

> * A 13-year-old player makes a decision that the coach considers correct in a 3 on 3 situation. The coach immediately congratulates her (rewarding stimuli), applying *positive reinforcement* so that the player will repeat the decision in the future.

> * The players of a team of 17/18-year-olds are carrying out a very intense defense drill and they are tired. A player performs a defensive help that the coach wants to develop. As a reward, the coach allows the player to rest for a few minutes. In this case, the coach is withdrawing an aversive stimulus (performing such an intense drill when the players are tired), applying *negative reinforcement* so that the player will repeat the defensive help.

> * The coach wants a 17-year-old to defend without making personal fouls. Besides showing him the corresponding technique, he sets up a drill in which the player gets a point every time he makes a foul. At the end of the practice, the player will have to stay on for a three-minute defense drill for every point accumulated.
>
> In this case, the coach is using an aversive stimulus (the point given and having to stay on to do defense drills) as a means of applying *positive punishment* to help eliminate the behaviour of making personal fouls.
>
> At the same time, every time the player defends without making a foul, the coach reinforces him by saying «well done!» to strengthen correct defensive behaviour.

> * The coach of a team of 15/16-year-olds organises a half court 3 on 3 game in which she does not want the players to use their right hand when they should use their left. Every time a player uses her right hand when she shouldn´t, her team loses possession of the ball.
>
> This way, the coach is withdrawing a rewarding stimulus (the ball), applying *negative punishment* to eliminate the behaviour (using the right hand).
>
> At the same time, when the players do use their left hand, the coach applies social reinforcement («well done!») for the purpose of strengthening this correct behaviour.

As can be seen, *reinforcement* is used to strengthen desired behaviour and *punishment* is used to eliminate undesired behaviour. Also, when punishment is applied, it is very important to reinforce alternative behaviour to substitute the undesired behaviour at the same time (in the previous examples, defensive behaviour without fouling and using the left hand).

Mainly, it is better to work with reinforcement to strengthen behaviour rather than punishment to eliminate behaviour, especially with younger players. However, properly applied punishment can be very valuable in the training of young players.

Practical Exercises

- Think of a way of reinforcing behaviour you wish to strengthen. Clearly define the behaviour, the stimuli to be applied contingently and the means of applying these stimuli. Remember that the stimuli should be applied as soon as possible.

- Think of a way of punishing behaviour you wish to eliminate. Clearly define the behaviour, the stimuli to be applied contingently and the means of applying these stimuli. Remember that, at the same time, you should reinforce alternative behaviour to substitute the behaviour to be eliminated. Define this alternative behaviour and the stimuli to be applied contingently in order to reinforce it.

Using Reinforcement

Frequent reinforcement helps the players obtain a high *level of gratification*. This is a valuable benefit which strengthens their motivation to the sport and helps them learn target behaviours. This is why it is so important for coaches to use reinforcement frequently.

Stimuli used to reinforce are called *reinforcers,* with a distinction being made between *social* and *material* reinforcers.

- *Social reinforcers* include respect, recognition, approval and the coach´s attention; for example, the coach appreciates the effort made by a player to recuperate the ball, «Well done!», «That´s the way!», «Good!».

- *Material reinforcers* are tangible objects that should be important to the players; for example, rest periods, being able to skip a difficult or boring drill, choosing the drill they want to do, winning a cup, etc.

Both types of reinforcers are compatible and can be perfectly combined.

> ***** For example: the coach of a junior team (17/18-year-olds) can recognise the players' efforts in a very intense drill (social reinforcement) and simultaneously end the practice early (material reinforcement).

> Reinforcers should not be applied arbitrarily but rather as a *consequence of the players' behaviour.* In fact, the key to reinforcement is that the players *perceive that they are obtaining something thanks to what they are doing.*

This way, they achieve very valuable personal gratification and will know how to achieve it again in the future.

And, as has already been pointed out, the most valuable reinforcement is that which is *given immediately after the behaviour* which is being rewarded is produced.

For all of these reasons, the coach should apply the reinforcement *as soon as possible*, *stating the reason* for which it is being applied in order to avoid any confusion.

> ***** For example: after a good fake by a player, the coach could say, «Good, Peter, that was a good fake!».

Social Reinforcement

As with material reinforcement, social reinforcement should be applied *immediately* after the behaviour which the coach wishes to strengthen.

> ***** For example: the coach wants the players on a mini-basketball team to look at the hoop every time they receive the ball; whenever this behaviour is performed, the coach says aloud, «That´s the way, good!».

Social reinforcement should not be applied indiscriminately but rather as a consequence of the behaviour that has improved (even slightly) in the personal progress of each player.

> ***** For example: a mini-basketball player who does not usually go down to defend runs back at the same time as her teammates during a particular play. This is an excellent opportunity for the coach to apply social reinforcement with this player: «Well done Julia!».

It is important for coaches working with young players to *be alert to opportunities* to apply social reinforcement. This way they will be correctly using a very efficient tool.

During training sessions, social reinforcement is very valuable for three reasons:

- it provides the player with information on his/her behaviour (feedback);
- it is very rewarding, because the player appreciates the coach´s recognition;
- it contributes to the creation of a positive atmosphere within the training environment.

For these reasons, social reinforcement influences the players' motivation and concentration, making it a work tool that the coach should use generously.

> Social reinforcement is especially important for children´s teams and in fact, those coaches who use it frequently make the experience of sports more satisfying and productive in every sense for the children.

Social reinforcement also helps children to learn the target behaviours programmed; therefore, their sports performance improves significantly when this strategy is used.

Practical Exercise

- Watch a children´s coach and note down the number of times he/she uses social reinforcement with his/her players. Take note too of the chances he/she has to use this strategy but doesn´t.

Token Economy

On one hand, we know how important it is to apply reinforcement as soon as possible. But on the other hand, the coach cannot continuously stop the practice in order to apply reinforcement. The technique known as *Token Economy* solves this problem.

Every time the target behaviour is produced, a point is given. The points are added up and allow the player to obtain an attractive reward later. Thus, each point reinforces the target behaviour.

> * For example: the coach wants 15/16-year-olds to pass the ball more often to the post from specific positions on the court, and he organises a 4 on 4 half court game for this purpose. He establishes that, every time a player passes the ball to the post from those positions, the player´s team gets a point. At the end of the game, which lasts ten minutes, the team that has made a minimum of seven points will have a five-minute break.

> * Points will have to be noted immediately after each time the *behaviour* of «passing the ball to the post» is produced. To do this, every time the ball is passed from the established positions, the coach should yell out, «point!», and note down the corresponding point, if possible on a board visible to the players.

To make this technique work, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- The reward should be *attractive.*
  - For example, it would be attractive for the players to be able to rest during an intense training session or play a game where they can pick their teammates. Meeting the challenge posed by the drill (in the previous example, achieving a minimum of seven points) would also be attractive.

- To make this strategy more valuable, the coach should take into account the age of his/her players and what he/she knows about them (what do they like?). He/she should consider that, in general, an *infrequent stimulus will be more attractive* to them than a frequent one; for example, it will be more attractive for them to play a game with no rules, in which they choose their teammates, if they do not often do this than if they have already played several games like this during the same practice.

- The total number of points needed to obtain the final award should be *attainable* in the time allowed and under the conditions of the drill.

  - In the previous example, there should be enough time so that, under the conditions set for this drill (space in which the game is played, number of players, specific rules) the players have the opportunity to pass to the post as often (and more) as the points needed to achieve the goal.

- The precise behaviour and the antecedent stimuli necessary to obtain points should be made *very clear.*

  - In the previous example, the behaviour is to «pass the ball to the post» and the antecedent stimuli are the areas established by the coach (and no others) from which the ball should be passed. *Only* when the behaviour is produced under these antecedent stimuli will the point be granted; that is, only when the ball is passed to the post from those positions on the court.

- Before starting the drill, the players should know exactly what the *time limit* and the *goals* are, and the *conditions* of the *Token Economy* programme; that is, the *target behaviour* (including antecedent stimuli) by which they can obtain points, the *final reward* and *the number of points* necessary to obtain it.

- The concession of each point should be *immediate.*

  - For this, without stopping the drill, the coach or assistant coach assigned to this task should yell out, «Point!» *as soon as the target behaviour is produced, without waiting for the result.* In the previous example, the coach would yell, «Point!» as soon as a player passes the ball to the post from the established positions and preferably before knowing the result of the action (for example, before noting if the post took advantage of the pass to score).

- Sometimes, to *clarify* the *relationship between* the *behaviour* and the *point,* it would be a good idea for the coach to call out the point and the reason it has been given; for example, «Point for passing the ball!».

- It is advisable to use a scoreboard or blackboard that is visible to all of the players for *registering points.* If a scoreboard or blackboard is not available, the coach can note down the points on a piece of paper and

every once in awhile, whenever there is a pause, indicate to the players the number of points they have accumulated.

Practical Exercises

- Design a Token Economy programme for a mini-basketball training session.

- Design a Token Economy programme for a training session of 13/14-year-olds.

- Design a Token Economy programme for a training session of 15/16-year-olds or 17/18-year-olds.

Using Aversive Stimuli

We have said that a coach who is working with young players should predominately apply reinforcement, but the psychological technique of *punishment* can also be useful and educational, as long as it fulfills the following conditions:

- it should be proportionate in value and basically symbolic;

- it should be previously established, defining as clearly as possible *what* it involves and *why* it is being applied (rather than having the coach decide arbitrarily);

- it should serve the purpose of increasing the players' interest in challenging goals related to avoiding the punishment;

- avoiding the punishment should be within the reach of the players' performance capabilities;

- at the same time, reinforcement should be applied to strengthen alternative behaviour.

> ***** For example: before starting a 3 on 3 game, the coach could establish that every time a player dribbles with the wrong hand she gets a negative point and that, at the end of the game, the team with the most points will have to carry the other team on piggyback.

Avoidance of this basically symbolic aversive contingency will increase the players' motivation towards the goal of the drill and will help them to concentrate on not dribbling with the wrong hand. At the same time, the coach can use social reinforcement («Well done!») every time a player uses the correct hand.

> Therefore, the importance of punishment is not to penalise the players to make the coach look «tough» or show that he/she is strict, but rather to provoke that *avoiding punishment constitute a motivating challenge* for the players, getting them to concentrate particularly on the behaviour to be eliminated.

4.9. RECORDING COACH´S BEHAVIOUR

Recording the behaviour of the coach leading the training session is an interesting exercise. A trusted observer can do this or the practice session can be recorded on video for the coach to later watch. For this purpose, a tool like that shown in Table-12 can be used.

This type of observation is useful for the coach to know how he/she trains and to think about changes he/she should adopt to improve his/her methods.

Using this or other procedures, it is important for coaches to periodically assess their behaviour if they want to perfect their working methods and improve their performance as a coach.

Practical Exercise

- Observe a coach during a training session and record his/her behaviour, using a tool similar to that shown in Table-12.

DATE:
TYPE OF TRAINING:

COACH´S BEHAVIOUR DURING TRAINING DRILLS	TRAINING DRILLS						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Explains the goal of the drill							
2. Explains the drill´s working rules							
3. Looks at the players when speaking to them							
4. Acts as model to demonstrate the target behaviour							
5. Centres his/her verbal behaviour on the goal of the drill							
6. Gives clear, unambiguous instructions							
7. Gives precise, to-the-point instructions							
8. Uses appropriate tone, volume and speed of voice							
9. Centres on the players´ behaviour, not their results							
10. Highlights the relevant antecedent stimuli							
11. Uses questions when the players already have the information they need							
12. Makes a distinction between decision and execution							
13. Provides immediate, constructive feedback							
14. Correctly uses social reinforcement							
15. Correctly applies reinforcement and punishment							
16. Uses objective performance recording							
17. Encourages the players							
18. (Other)							
19. (Other)							

Table 12. *Tool for registering the coach´s behaviour during training drills. Taken from Psicología del Entrenamiento Deportivo, by J.M. Buceta. Madrid: Dykinson, 1998.*

Test Exercise-7:

- *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. Ridiculing a player in front of teammates is a good motivating strategy.	○	○
2. Once the coach has explained to the players what they have to do, they usually do it immediately.	○	○
3. The coach should assess and emphasise players' behaviour more than their results.	○	○
4. When a star player is used as a role model, it is important to highlight specific behaviour that young players should imitate.	○	○
5. While the players are doing drills, the coach should correct any mistakes he/she sees.	○	○
6. Players learn more quickly if the coach is constantly telling them what they have to do.	○	○
7. Recording of performance during training drills helps the players to concentrate on the behaviour recorded.	○	○
8. Feedback allows players, even very young ones, to control their progress.	○	○
9. Positive reinforcement helps to acquire or perfect behaviour, and negative reinforcement to eliminate behaviour.	○	○
10. Reinforcement should be applied as soon as possible after the behaviour which the coach wants to strengthen is produced.	○	○
11. Coaches who work with young players should be generous in their use of social reinforcement.	○	○
12. Token Economy should only be used with 15/18-year-olds.	○	○
13. The purpose of punishment is for the players to get used to discipline.	○	○
14. When applying punishment to eliminate behaviour, reinforcement to strengthen alternative behaviour should be applied simultaneously.	○	○