



## Planning a Training Session

### How to structure a training session

It's very important that the coach takes the time to plan each training session. Training sessions should be developed from two or three goals that have been identified for that session. The elements of a training session that all coaches should include are:

- session introduction
- warm-up
- skill and fitness activities
- cool-down
- review.

*Note: There is a sample session planner included in the 'Templates and forms for coaches' section of these web pages that you can download and use to plan training sessions.*

### Gathering information and setting goals

Before planning a training session, coaches should gather information about the participants, and set goals. If you are working with a new group, the type of information you might need includes:

- previous experience in the sport
- level of development, both with the technical and tactical skills of the sport as well as their level of physical fitness
- why they like to play the sport and what motivates them
- goals and aspirations in the sport
- any illness, injury or medical condition that might restrict their ability to participate.

Goals should be established for the season as well as each training session. Goals help to guide the program and provide a reference point to monitor progress throughout the season. Important elements of goal setting include:

- involving the participants wherever possible in the goal-setting process
- using session goals to help guide the selection of activities for that session
- setting SMART goals - goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime bound.

### Tips for selecting and designing training activities

- Plan so that activities flow from one to the next smoothly. Have equipment close at hand and develop routines so that participants know what to do next
- Read manuals and books to get new ideas for activities and drills
- Drills and minor games from one sport can easily be adapted to suit another
- Over-plan rather than under-plan. It is easier to omit drills than to add unplanned drills
- Organise training sessions so that participants are actively involved. Use more groups with a small number of participants rather than a few groups containing large numbers
- Avoid activities that require inactivity or drills that eliminate participants. It is likely that the participants to be first eliminated will be the less skilled, exactly the participants who need most practice
- Plan drills so that participants have a good chance of success. This will improve motivation
- Even younger participants are capable of working independently in small groups. Develop activity station cards that explain the drill to be practised.