



## RSA COACHING CLINIC - Coach Notes

8/18/2016

### PRE-MATCH WARM UPS

Pre-match warm up is an opportunity for a free training session as well as most importantly preparation for the upcoming game.

My pre-game always reminds players that ANYTHING that can happen throughout the game can also happen in the first minute. With this in mind all aspects of preparation are crucial and should be covered in warm up. Basically a player should not be doing their first sprint or pass in the game. This should all be done in the warm up and then when it is needed in the game it is not new to the body. If the body and mind have already been through most of the tougher elements of the game in the warm up there is an increased likelihood of success in the game.

A brief list of some realistic preparation points are listed below:

- Passing - short and long 2 to 1's add a competitive element - who was the quickest in warmup
- Shooting - passing back and forth - set an shoot
- Tackling - step up and downs on the ball call go -
- Jogging, sprinting, running backwards and sideways - All of this needs to be done with the ball -
- Throwing, heading, chest control - can be done in the throw in area, have players check away and to the ball, pass back
- Pure technical - juggling, inside outside, scissors, tricks (tell kids to be creative)
- Goal keeping - see below for a list

The bottom line is that the mind and the body should not be surprised by anything that happens in the first minute or the last. Have a check list and make sure that you mix up the pre-game activities to incorporate all of these.

Some subscribe to routine and repetition in warm up and many top athletes follow a well trodden path EVERY game. It is my belief that one shoe does not fit all but a compromise can be established with some routine and some freshness each time. Importantly however all aspects of the game should be covered in warm up.

***A rule of thumb, if it can happen in the first minute at some point it probably will!***

A great way to do warm up is to have some large or team group work, individual work and small group work. A coach should ALWAYS greet every player EVERY session and every game with a handshake or high five. You will get a really good sense of where each player is mentally and physically and they will also appreciate you paying attention and showing that you care.

BE PREPARED TO LOOSEN CONTROL - many coaches like to orchestrate all aspects of the warm up and game. This is a game however that is not like football and baseball. It is not all scripted. Therefore, not everything can be scripted. It is part of our responsibility as a coach to create soccer minds that can be creative and players that can think for themselves.

- Make sure that you have 1 ball per player or at least one between 2.
- As soon as players arrive have the players working with a ball or 1 between 2.

Eventually when everyone arrives bring the group together and give a 1 minute intro, hello, and here is how we are going to approach the warm up and game.

REMEMBER players will take in 60% of what you say in the first 30 seconds. 40% of what you say in the second 30 seconds and nothing after a minute. At this point you are droning on. I have an internal clock that HOPEFULLY shuts me off after 1 minute!

They didn't come to listen to you. They came to play and your job is to prepare them for that. At no point during the game will they have someone talking to them for a minute or more so no need to prepare them for that!

### **Station Exercise**

Select small groups to go to 4-5 stations.

- 1st group - passing short and long
- 2nd group - shooting
- 3rd group - doing throw ins- to each other and passing back
- 4th group - jogging and running with a ball
- 5th group - technical

2-3 players per station and rotate every 2-3 minutes and repeat the stations. At the end of each rotation bring the players back in and try to find something positive about what some of the players did at the stations. 1 minute and take a quick drink break if the players need it.

**Goal keeper warm up** - The keeper/s can be the keepers in the shooting area. I also like the starting strikers having a few shots and keeping the keeper busy. Much like the outfield players all aspects of the game for keepers should be covered in warm up. In the event that you are changing keepers at the half, make sure that you warm up the keeper at half time.

- High shot
- Low shot
- Cross
- Dive left
- Dive right
- Punt
- Goal kick
- Come/charge out

The best way to run/organize the stations is to run with the whole team (all with a ball) around the different stations and explain/show/have kids demo the activity.

Assign players to a station.

VERY important that coach then moves around the entire area watching individual activities close to them AND the other groups not so close! Make sure if possible that you touch base with every player again and try to find something good about their warm up AND SAY IT TO THEM

You will get a sense of the readiness of the players as the warm up goes on. Tell the players that you will be giving them the line up X minutes before kick off and throughout the warm up tell the players how long until kick off.

Players need to know what preparation feels like and the stages of it and mentally prepare for kick off.

Remember the warm up is designed to have the ready at kick off so be careful not to do a great warmup and then have the players standing around for 10 minutes.

Line drill warm up! The most common warm up that we see is a line drill where one ball is used and LOTS of kids wait on line. REMEMBER how you practice and prepare is how you will play.

Incorporating training sessions into the match warm-up program

It is common to see pro-level teams doing small sided games in warm ups. This can be very useful. It is not however important to play games that allow all of the team to be involved and not to play "keep away" type games.

- Creating a team keep away or a small 5 v 5 or 7 v 7 is a good idea.

It is also important for a coach to remember that a warm up is also a time to coach. Ideally coaches have a manager who handles all of the paperwork and referee "stuff"

Your focus needs to be on the warm up, players and kick off.

For the younger teams having small games that incorporate each element of the warm up will in some instances be more efficient-

- Circle warm up change places
- Games - defense vs attack - numbers up for attackers
- Throw head catch - every 5 yards must dribble
- Soccer marbles
- Freeze tag progressing - touch player, touch ball, win ball
- Mini 3 v 3 scrimmages - one of these groups can be in the box but outside of the six yard box - 2 passes gets a shot.

# TEAM FORMATIONS

Player positioning on the pitch as well as team formations

## 1-4-4-2

GK

RB	CB	CB	LB
RM	CM	CM	LM
	CF	CF	

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## 1-4-5-1

GK

RB	CB	CB	LB
		CM	
RM	CM	CM	LM
		CF	

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## 1-4-3-3

GK

RB	CB	CB	LB
	RM	CM	LM
RW		CF	LW

**Remember:**

It is good to rotate players but it is equally as important for players to be comfortable in areas of the field. Understand that you will have players that can do short bursts and you will have players that can last for longer

Spread your speed around the field. Having fast kids only up front is great but if the ball never gets to them then all of that speed will be harmlessly managed by slower defenders.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

Game management is one of the hardest aspects of coaching. It can be overwhelming.

One way to help is to plan. It is ok to sketch out starting line ups and place names next to switches. Burying your head in a clip board however is not the answer..... Coaching is to some extent a "gut reaction"

- A simple rule is to make substitutions in smaller groups rather than the whole bench at once.
- Make subs in different areas not one entire group at once.
- Greet every player off the field
- Good to have another parent on the side helping you manage times and rotations
- If the game allows try to talk with each player that comes off and say something positive
- Try not to sub a player directly after a "mistake"

**GENERAL GAME MANAGEMENT**

Young players watch coaches and adults as they seek to grow. Your actions and behaviors are always under scrutiny.

Players react to coaches that panic or don't know what they are doing. They also react to crazy coaches that yell and scream at officials and the opposition. Players need to know that the coach cares but is measured and that they are passionate yet controlled.

Over coaching versus under coaching - It is very important NOT to just watch the ball. As tempting as that may be you MUST watch the entire field! Simply commentating on the game feels good but it is not helpful for a player. If you want your voice to have an impact you must choose your coaching moments and not just have your voice be part of the background noise.

Books have been written on the ways of sideline coaching - NONE of these address the sideline of a game in North New Jersey played by RSA and anyone. That does not mean that the game doesn't mean anything but youth games in the US are unique and NOT the pros!

Typically young players like and seek encouragement and discourse throughout the game. Comment on things that they do well.

Personally I focus a LOT on my defense ensuring that they are organized. You can never lose if you don't concede a goal!

Space for the opposition is bad. Space for you is good. When the other team has the ball we are looking to close down space and players. When we have the ball we are looking to open up space and players. Think of your team like an accordion!

Scanning the field is crucial. Think about your team as if you are watching them from a helicopter. If you were to see your team from above the strongest shape is our starting positions. Recovering to those positions on defense and maintaining space on offense are crucial.

You can help with these shapes by cajoling and encouraging players. Identify players who are fatigued and cannot "re-shape" Get them out and let them rest for another shift.

Constantly evaluate your line up and the oppositions. Where are we overrunning them, where are we outmatched. Can I make switches to alter these match ups? Can I change my line up for a better match up?

Style - Playing a passing game is very in vogue. This IS the beautiful game and nothing is better BUT being predictable as a team is very damaging. Switching up styles such as short and long balls is a good thing.

- ***Game management apps - Soccer dad, Soccer teammate, Soccer coach- team sports manager***
- ***Team app - team communication portal***
- ***Team snap - team communication portal***

## **POST MATCH**

It is very important to meet the team and discuss the positive aspects of the game. Find the best in players. Players that have had a tough time don't need those mistakes compounded and time to think about it before they get another game or session and time to fix it.

Discuss the schedule and what good things I'll be doing at practice the next week.

Writing a one paragraph game report is also a fun thing to do. Make sure that if you are going to highlight individual performances that over the course of the season everyone gets a mention.

### **KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND LIVE BY THE 24 HOUR RULE**

NOTHING good ever comes out of a conversation with a player or a parent that is unhappy at the field.

The parent that wants to discuss playing time, where their child played or the result is already inflamed. NOTHING you are going to say or do is going to bring them down. They want their pound of flesh and they are going to try and take it. You will NEVER be able to rationalize with them and nor should you try.

Establish prior to the season that you will not discuss these issues at the game and that 24 hours will pass before you entertain said discussion. It is CRUCIAL that how you behave after a win is the same way we react after a loss or a tie. If you go to the parents after a win it is not ok to hide after a loss. Create a post match routine that you stick with. Polite, NO game conversation, I have to leave for an event needs to be on your tongue and if the conversations that you do have go south then invoke this and the 24 hour rule.