

# NUC

## Club Coaches Manual



**2020/2021**

**Goal:** *Get big outcomes from small changes in the way we teach and coach. Coach at the highest level possible to increase the number of NUC Juniors that will play in LNA.*

## **Vision: Who Do We Want To Be?**

Build a safe environment with empathy where players can take risks and play aggressively to promote learning and growth.

## **Coaches Standards: Be Who You Ask Your Players To Be**

### **Show Up On Time**

- Arrive 10 minutes prior to start time [when applicable]

### **Always Be In Uniform**

- NUC gear should be worn at all practices, strength training and NUC events

### **Communication Is Key**

- Schedule changes should be communicated as early as possible
- Athlete roles and team standards should be made very clear to both the athlete and their parents
- Changes to technical skills or game style should be explained with reasoning

### **Coach Player Interactions**

- The only acceptable form of contact is a high five or pat on the back. This is also to protect yourself. If you have to physically move a players body/ arm etc in order to teach a skill, ask permission first

## **Practice Structure**

**Note:** Start and end each practice with a huddle and “Ici c’est Neuch

### **Warm Up**

Each practice should begin with 5 to 10 minutes of warm up. The main goal would be to have shoulders ready to swing and legs ready to jump by the time the warm up is complete. It is usually helpful to begin or end the warm up with a fun/silly game to engage the athletes.

### **Game Like**

We are teaching the game of volleyball, this needs to be kept in mind at all times.

- As many people involved as possible in a game or drill
- Making drills as game like as possible by adding elements
- Athletes need to PLAY in order to learn (read, plan, do)
- Practise should be competitive when possible, increases engagement and is the nature of our sport
- Maximise touches! No long lines, no excessive talking
- For a young age, 3 on 3 mini games is game like and more touches than 6 on 6, both are necessary but keep ability and amount of touches in mind

### **Fun**

Don't be a kids last coach. We can't control everything or everyone, however we need to focus on player retention (players coming back year to year) in order to create the LNA players of the future. If the practises aren't enjoyable, kids will not come back, they have other activities they can be involved in. Some things you should consider to keep the practise “fun”:

- Compete. Competition is fun and enjoyable, and children like a challenge.

- Positive atmosphere. How you act, the feedback you give, and the general attitude you display impacts the environment for the athlete.
- Progress. Focus on teaching new skills, showing the players they have learnt and progressing when a player is already successful. Again, kids like to be challenged and pushed and you can set up your practices and drills to ensure they are always learning.

### **Random vs Blocked** *(Source: TrainUgly.com)*

Learning requires retention and transfer into matches, so how can we maximise that in practice? Our goal is to create better volleyball players over time and in competition - not to be good at practice

- Blocked practice = repetitions doing the same thing over and over, instant gratification, low transfer
- Random practice = randomised repetitions, no rep is the same, increases retention and learning, random will look worse in practice but has much higher retention at the "test" (competition)
- Blocked practise should be used to understand the skill then moving into something more random.
- An example progression for learning to shuffle and go into attack approach (shuffle shuffle 1,2,3,4)
  - 1) Footwork in WU without ball (blocked)
  - 2) Footwork after receiving a ball rolled from coach (blocked but adding a game element)
  - 3) Footwork after receiving a ball rolled from coach and attack after (more random)
  - 4) 3 on 3 mini game with the first ball rolled from coach, must receive, footwork and attack from setter (random, many elements but focus still on the footwork)
  - 5) 3 on 3 mini game with a serve from another player, must receive, footwork and attack (random, many elements but focus still on the footwork)
  - 6) 6 on 6 with first ball coming from a coach or a live serve and focus directly on the footwork (not useful if the team is not at the level to play 6 on 6, stay in the 3's so more girls get chances at skills!)

## **Feedback**

### **Simple**

It is very difficult to focus on too many skills (or pieces of feedback) at once. We want to put the focus on fewer skills or keys. Too much feedback detracts from performance.

- Eg: Sally is passing in the 1st round of a drill. Her coach tells her to focus on eye work and tracking the path of the ball. Within that first round Sally shanks a pass and the coach tells Sally to get her angle out earlier. Sally gets water and comes back for her 2nd round of passing and is not sure whether to focus more on eye work or her angle. She passes two and her coach tells her to stay balanced with her feet while moving to the ball.
- Sally has now been asked to focus on 3 things only within the skill of passing. Then she gets 3 more when attacking, 3 more when blocking and 3 more when serving
- We can see how quickly this can add up and hinder the speed of growth and learning of Sally

### **Positive**

Positive feedback is proven to be the most effective way to create change, help players learn and retain information and build motor pathways.

- Positive feedback helps kids becomes more aware of what they're doing well and are more eager to continue trying (volleyball is a hard game to master)

- Does not mean cheerleading or unnecessary praise (this feedback has a negative effect on learning).
- Focus on what was done right at times instead of always critiquing what was done incorrectly. Eg. If the focus of the practise is holding the platform after reception then look for that and say "great job holding your platform on that reception, look at the path of the ball and how it matches your angle".

## **Instructional**

We want to keep feedback as instructional as possible:

- "Why didn't you go for that ball" vs. "You should be watching the attacker and be in your ready position"
- "Come on keep the ball on our side" vs. "Angle your platform higher so you can keep the ball on our side"

## **Change the definition of success**

Feedback doesn't just come in the form of words. How we structure drills, score and punish players gives them very strong feedback.

We should avoid punishment for "errors". This may encourage students to focus on the immediate result and not the process needed to attain the result.

A typical example is punishment for service errors. If you are working towards having a flat and fast float serve and you punish players for errors, the immediate reaction will be an easy serve into the court. Are we really helping them learn a flat and fast float if their response to YOUR punishment is to change their serve to something we are not trying to attain?

We can also structure drills to give points when something we are focussed on is attained. For example, we are working with our setters and they have to be "facing the passer", so in this 3 on 3 game every time the setter is "facing the passer" when the reception occurs they get an extra point.

## **Give Your Athletes Choice + Ask Questions**

(Source: [OPTIMAL Theory of Motor Learning](#))

Giving athletes a choice, no matter the size, has been proven to influence learning through increased motivation. Whether it is choosing when to receive feedback or choosing what colour t-shirt the team wears that day, both have been proven to improve performance.

- "Do ten blocking reps" vs "How does 10 blocking reps sound?" or "Do you want to do 10 blocking reps or 10 approaches". This tiny change allows the athlete to have a say in the task and increase motivation
- Ask athletes to choose the order of 3 drills you have designed
- Allow athletes to play their own music during warmups
- Allow athletes to choose the colour of equipment for the day

Questions increase autonomy. Instead of repeating the same piece of feedback over and over, what question can you ask? We want athletes to try new things and experiment!

- What did you see?
- What did you feel?
- What led to that decision?

The end goal is for the athlete to be able to make corrections on their own without coach involvement, which means they need understanding of what happened, helping them to reflect internally achieves that.

## YOU Affect THEIR Learning

The culture begins with the coach. Athletes, especially kids look up to their coaches, learn from their coaches and imitate behaviour of their coaches. How you act, the mood you are in, and the attitude you have towards mistakes and learning will greatly affect the kids that you coach.

### Body Language

Do you know what you look like when you are coaching?

The kids will always see your dramatic movements, overreactions and facial expressions. This is instant feedback for them, and it can often be at a time when they are trying to learn a new process, and it is discouraging to a learning atmosphere.

### Be Direct, Avoid Sarcasm and Remember Your Influence

Not everyone has the same humour and things can get lost in translation even when we speak the same language. A joke to you might be taken very seriously by an athlete.

You are someone they look up to and respect, and anything you say about their body, looks, appearance or personal style/ behaviour can significantly impact their mental health. There are many examples of coaches or adults who have commented on a players weight in a joking/ casual manner and those athletes ended up developing eating disorders.

### Growth Mindset Attitude

(Source: *Growth Mindset* by Carol Dweck, LB has french version of the book).

Everything can be learned. It is important that you embody that. Praising effort over natural ability is important, and helping your kids understand that being persistent is one of the most important qualities to an athlete (we can find MANY examples of the guy/girl who made it despite their physical characteristics). The image to the right summarizes some important points:

