

# GROUP MANAGEMENT

## Group Management Skills for Junior Coaches

NRL Coach Education



Series Number 3

## Coaching Kids Sport

Coaching kids sporting teams is a wonderful way to impart your knowledge back on younger generations. However, we find that it is becoming increasingly difficult to control kids behaviours, which ultimately impacts on a junior coaches ability to pass on this knowledge. This document will hopefully provide you with some practical group management skills that may help you as a junior coach to foster fun, enjoyment, development, and total involvement philosophies into your training sessions.

## Planning to Coach Kids

As a junior coach you should look for your training sessions to involve a number of the following characteristics.

- » Promotion of fun, teamwork and cooperation
- » Acknowledge individual differences and cater for all abilities
- » Introduce one thing at a time to avoid confusion
- » Use a variety of activities with maximum participation
- » Allow time for skills to develop
- » Listen to what children have to say
- » Be positive and provide good feedback

## Coaches Checklist

*All junior coaches should have the following to manage their group more effectively.*

- » Whistle
- » Footballs
- » Training Equipment
- » Variety of Activities
- » Planned Sessions
- » Volunteer Helpers – trainers, managers, & parent helpers
- » “Penalties” or “time out” systems to control behaviour



*Kids are more likely to misbehave if they are bored or are not involved. Training sessions that promote the constant involvement will help control behavior of your group*



# What do you need in a Training Session

## Whistle Skills

A whistle is the best way to control behaviour in your team as it can grab every ones attention instantly with one loud blow. This can be achieved by establishing what the whistle means through a game of “freeze” with the group. Have everyone run around inside a grid and when the whistle is blown loud, they have to stop and look at you quietly with their hands on their head. This will establish a “stop, look, and listen” tool for you. Only blow the whistle once, multiple whistles will loose its value.

**A whistle is one of the important group management tools for coaches**

## Training Equipment

Training equipment is essential to helping you manage your group. All coaches need to realise that if you only have two footballs per team and a few cones you are limited in what you can do. Some important equipment could include:

- » **Footballs** – As many as possible so that you are able to do activities that include everyone at once.
- » **Markers** – about 20 – 30 should be enough and preferably in 4 – 5 different colours.
- » **Agility poles** – apart form agility, these can help kids to look up when doing an activity. If they are running around a marker, they are looking at the ground. If it’s around a pole or tackle bag, they are looking up.
- » **Coloured Bibs** – when doing activities in teams, you can use a set of coloured bibs to clearly define the two teams.

## Colour Co-ordinate Marker’s

Some times kids may be confused by the layout of an activity or drill. This can be easily averted by colour coordinating cones in your activities and using them in combination with agility poles etc. A simple example of this would to be a relay with 4 lines using two markers per team. Each teams.

## Maximum Participation Activities

Kids are very active and always looking to have fun. When they are not involved or having fun, it’s usually when they start to misbehave to entertain themselves. Using maximum participation activities will reduce your risk of misbehaviour because there is no time for the kids to create trouble. This can be achieved by:

- » Increase the number of repetitions in the drill. This means that instead of having one line doing the activity with 12 kids, have 4 lines of 3 kids. This will reduce the downtime, while increasing the amount of repetitions they do and help improve their skill levels.
- » Using Skill Biased Game to teach skills and practice rather than refined drills or ball work. An example of this could be playing a Skill Biased Game of 6 v 6 rather than one team of 12 doing ball work unopposed.
- » Involving parents or helpers to assist with activities so you can better manage the group.

**For Rugby League Training Equipment**  
[www.playnrl.com](http://www.playnrl.com)



## Behaviour Management

Behaviour management is one of the hardest aspects of being a junior coach. If you can achieve this it will ensure your job is a lot easier and less stressful. Being a positive role model will help your players develop rugby league and life skills

### Causes of Misbehaviour

Misbehaviour is a very common theme in junior training sessions. It's important to understand why this happens and how we can fix it:

- » Not enough equipment for the amount of kids in the group
- » The coach showing a lack of interest and supervision
- » Too much talking from the coach
- » Activities that run too long
- » Kids waiting in long lines for a turn
- » Boring, non challenging activities
- » Unclear rules and expectations

### Well Structured Sessions

A well organized and structured session will assist in controlling a group's behavior. These include:

- » Planning your sessions
- » Arrive early and set up equipment
- » Bring the group in and sit down to explain the session. This is also good to help regroup after pre session socializing
- » Make the warm up an active fun game
- » Minimize down time and waiting
- » Have a strategy to move between activities. E.g. having the group form a straight line and follow you to the next activity is great.

## Strategies to Manage Behaviour

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

You can involve parents a number of ways to manage behavior. These include:

- » Asking parents to attend and watch sessions
- » Asking parents to help manage activities
- » If you have ongoing problems with the child, talk to the parents, as they may not know

### TIME OUTS

A "time out" involves withdrawing a misbehaving child from the activity and sitting them out in a place that you can still supervise them. If parents attend training, tell them about the "time out" system and area. If they see their child in that area, they are welcome to come over and talk to the child

### POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Praise and encouragement can be some of the best motivational tools for a junior coach. This can help a child develop self confidence as well as encourage the child to try harder in hope of receiving recognition from a role model or someone they look up to, like you the coach.



# Communication

## D.E.P.E Method

The D.E.P.E method of coaching is important because it will help reduce the amount of time spent talking before an activity and prevent boredom in the group. The D.E.P.E method is:

- » Demonstrate: demonstrate yourself or have a group of kids demonstrate the skill or activity, this should be done hand in hand with step two
- » Explain: during the demonstration, verbally explain the activity & what the outcome will be
- » Participation: allow the group attempt the activity without stopping the group to often to talk.
- » Evaluate: identify skill faults and give feedback individually without stopping the whole activity, unless its for the group.

## Communication Tips

- » Be positive and don't be afraid to have a laugh
- » Make eye contact when talking to someone
- » Ask questions & listen intently to player's responses rather than tell them what to do.
- » Be clear and concise when giving feedback
- » Non verbal communication such as frowning, laughing, smiling, and body position is important
- » Praise positive behaviour as well as disapprove of negative behaviour.

**Discipline doesn't mean being negative or nasty, it just means that you enforce the rules of the group**

## Discipline with Junior Teams

It's important to have some form of discipline within your group. This doesn't mean that you need to be a nasty or negative coach, it just mean you need to have boundaries set for the group. If they or any individual break the rules that have been set then you need to enforce the pre-determined penalties. E.g. if a player breaks a rule you need to enforce the penalty otherwise the other players will see there has been no penalty and will push the boundaries as well. Avoid empty threats, as kids will see right through you.

## Penalties & Reward's

All coaches need to create a penalty and reward system to encourage good behaviour and discourage bad behaviour. The penalties and rewards need to be immediate to have the desired effect.

## Penalties

- » Sitting in a time out
- » Your team loses possession in a game situation
- » Play a fun game and sit out the misbehaving player/s.

## Rewards

All coaches need to create a penalty and reward system to encourage good behaviour and discourage bad behaviour. The penalties and rewards need to be immediate to have the desired effect.

