

PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

The starting point for every Coach is to develop a thorough understanding of the Principles of Team Play. Essentially, there are two phases to most team games.

ATTACK

Firstly, the principles of attacking play in modern GAA as presently understood are -

Depth:

- Make the pitch/area as long as possible both forward & back to create space
- Players as Targets
- Short & long passing options

Width:

Players move into wide positions to draw defenders away from each other and from central positions, thereby creating 1v1 opportunities and giving more space inside for the forwards to exploit.

Penetration:

Moving the ball through or into the opposition's defence, recognising when to do so at speed, and when to be patient awaiting the opening.

Mobility:

The movement of players in from or behind the ball, therefore moving defensive players out of position and causing disruption in their defence. Players making runs to create space for either themselves or others, and recognising the difference. Movement of players in opposite and rotational movement patterns.

Improvisation:

Players changing roles/positions.

Communication:

Supporting players giving verbal and non-verbal signals to the players in possession and to other players.

Scoring Zone:

The end product of an attacking move should be to shoot at goal within a scoring zone.

DEFENCE

Make The Forward Make The Decision:

Too often defenders commit or lunge into the tackle, without knowing what is going on behind them. A good defender will strive to get close enough to the attacker, to prevent a score being taken, but not too close to allow the forward to dummy or side-step them. The defender must always keep in mind that the forward can only take so many steps before making a play or getting rid of the ball.

Deny:

Deny your opponent possession by getting the ball first.

Delay:

Often defenders see their primary duty as dispossessing their opponent, sometimes resulting in a free being awarded, whereas the key function of good defence is to delay, and prevent the forward from doing what they wish to do. Also giving time for your defence to recover into correct defensive position.

Dispossess:

In the event that the forward gains possession, the role of the defender is to pressurise the attacker into making a mistake by:

- Keeping goal side
- Near hand tackling & putting pressure on the shot
- Forcing a mistake that results in dispossession

Balance:

Balance as a principle of play in defence is essential. With forwards being mobile, moving defenders around the pitch and attempting to pull them out of position. Defenders have to be coached to 'read' the game while at the same time working on their 'man marking' skills. Maintaining balance in defence is also about good Communication, Vision & Decision Making by the defender.

Concentration:

For effective defending, high levels of concentration are essential. Concentration is central to getting players behind the ball and into the key defensive area to provide cover and depth. Players must recognise the correct defensive position individually and collectively.

TRANSITION

Defence to Attack:

On dispossessing your opponent, the switch of mindset from defence where you have worked really hard to win the ball back into one of attack where you have to move the ball into the best position for your team to get reward from your turnover is extremely important. The quicker you transition, the better chance your team has of scoring. Players and teams that carry out this effectively can get a large number of scores from turnovers.

Attack to Defence:

On losing possession to an opposing team, the switch of mindset from attack back into defence is an area some players struggle with in teams. The ability to transition the mindset back into defensive mode quickly allows a much higher chance for the player to win back possession quickly. Players and teams that are competent in this transition prevent a lot of scores from turnovers.