

## **TFA Coaching Competencies**

### ***Introduction***

The key to improving player performance is primarily based on the quality of sport training and experiences provided by the coach. The simplest definition of a “coach” refers to an individual who assumes responsibility for players or athletes, actively trains them and coaches them in sporting competitions. Coaches may also have significant influence on the social development of individuals and indeed on general life skills.

The Touch Football Australia (TFA) Coach Development Program identifies basic standards and competencies necessary and essential for performing the duties of a sports coach at varying levels or streams. Standardization of essential knowledge and coaching proficiencies adds quality, credibility and consistency throughout the national program. TFA coaches will gain new or improved competencies that provide better training opportunities for their players.

### ***Coaching Quality***

The quality of a coach can be assessed by the knowledge a coach has and by the way the coach practically applies that knowledge. The TFA program is based on “competency based training” where the emphasis is more on the development of an “ability to do” rather than pure “knowledge transfer”.

The main goal is to make coaches better prepared to use the knowledge conveyed to them in solving specific problems in their own and their player’s environment. To achieve this, learning situations must be created that provide coaches with the opportunity to apply or enhance their skills such as problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, value appreciation, leadership, and importantly interaction.

### ***Core Competencies***

The following eleven core coaching competencies were developed to support greater understanding about the skills and approaches used within today’s coaching requirements. The competencies are used as the foundation for the TFA Coach Accreditation levels. The core competencies are grouped into four clusters according to those that fit together logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group. The groupings and individual competencies are not weighted i.e. they do not represent any kind of priority in that they are all core or critical for any competent coach to demonstrate.

#### ***Cluster A: Setting the foundation***

1. Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards
2. Establishing the coaching agreement

#### ***Cluster B: Co-creating the relationship***

3. Establishing trust and intimacy with the players
4. Coaching presence

*Cluster C: Communicating effectively*

5. Active listening
6. Powerful questioning
7. Direct communication and feedback

*Cluster D: Facilitate learning and performance*

8. Creating awareness
9. Designing actions
10. Planning and goal setting
11. Managing progress and accountability

Although in general, a coach should either be competent or not competent in a specific area, in practice there is a sliding scale from the least able to the very best. Details of these competencies are provided in the attached Appendix 1.

**Coaching Levels**

The TFA Coach Development Program is directed towards the betterment of coaching within Australia and utilizes four coaching accreditation levels. The coaching accreditation levels are used to characterize and develop coaches from beginners or the most junior to the highest level available. The relationship between coaching accreditation levels and core competencies is shown at Appendix 2. The levels are:

*Community Coach*

Most community level coaches share the following characteristics:

- They help to foster a love of the game in a climate of fun and safe conditions
- Most of them work with children or novices
- They encourage participation, whatever the skill level
- They operate in the recreational area of the sport or at a low competitive level
- They do not lend much importance to results in competition and they focus on ensuring players derive enjoyment from the game
- They can teach basic skills of the game

An example of a coach in a community context is the parent who decides to coach for a single season because his or her child is playing. This type of coach is not necessarily planning to coach on a continuing basis over a longer period.

*Level 1 Coach*

Most Level 1 coaches share the following characteristics:

- They undertake basic seasonal planning and team management activities
- They are directed towards skill development
- They plan and conduct simple training sessions
- They have good knowledge of the rules of the game and their application
- They may be player coaches in a park level or district competition
- They have some motivation for self-development

A simple example of a Level 1 coach is the more advanced player in a team who wants to achieve better competition results through individual skill development of his or her teammates. This type of coach may see coaching as a personal asset.

### *Level 2 Coach*

Most Level 2 coaches share the following characteristics:

- They have a strong knowledge of the sport and are keen to promote the coaching profession
- Their technical knowledge is very sound
- They have a better knowledge of coaching principles and are able to apply them to most situations
- They are better able to analyze and develop individual skills
- They have some expertise in tactical and strategic issues
- They are able to coordinate individual fitness and development programs
- They are often involved in coach development programs and course presentations
- They are highly motivated towards self-improvement and actively seek higher representative duties and further training

A typical example of a Level 2 coach is a representative coach of a Permit side competing in the National Touch League or Australian Championships. These coaches may also be involved in coaching open's division or very competitive teams at district or local level competitions.

### *Level 3 Coach*

Level 3 coaches generally share the following characteristics:

- They have very sound knowledge of all aspects of coaching, both theoretically and practically, and regularly demonstrate and apply quality coaching competencies
- They display the highest ethical and technical coaching qualities
- They are involved in coach education programs and mentor developing coaches
- They are very highly motivated towards self-development
- They are keen to apply for Australian representative coaching positions for international competitions
- They may have some input to the review and development of national coaching policies

Typically a Level 3 coach is a former, current or potential elite representative coach, perhaps an assistant Australian Coach, dedicated to maximizing the potential of all team players and directed towards competition success. The Level 3 coach has a long term interest in the TFA technical coaching arm, including aspects of technical coaching, mentoring, policy development, self-development and has a sound National perspective.

The Elite Coaching Competencies for Australian National Coaches are listed at Appendix 3.

## Detailed Coaching Competencies

Each competency listed on the following pages has a definition and related coaching behaviour. This behaviour can be classified as performance, attitude or actions that should be present and visible in any coaching interaction. These behaviours may also be specific or particular to certain coaching situations and may not always be visible in each or every coaching interaction.

### ***Cluster A: Setting the foundation***

1. Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards - understanding of coaching ethics and standards and demonstrating the ability to apply them appropriately in all coaching situations:
  - Understands and exhibits behaviour within all ASC / TFA Ethical Guidelines
  - Clearly communicates the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions
  - Refers individuals to another support professional as needed, knowing when this is needed and the resources that are available
2. Establishing the coaching agreement - ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new players about the coaching process and relationship:
  - Understands and effectively discusses with the players all the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship (e.g. administration, logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate)
  - Reaches agreement about what is appropriate in the relationship and what is not, what is and is not being offered, and about the players' and coach's responsibilities
  - Determines whether there is an effective match between his or her coaching method and the needs of the prospective team

### ***Cluster B: Co-creating the relationship***

3. Establishing trust, respect and intimacy with the players - ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust:
  - Shows genuine concern for players' welfare and future
  - Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity
  - Establishes clear agreements and always keeps promises
  - Demonstrates respect for individual perceptions, learning style, personal being
  - Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk taking and fear of failure
  - Encourages open discussion and seeks permission of players to coach in sensitive or new areas, with respect to playing age, gender and level
4. Coaching presence - ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationships with all players within a team, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident:
  - Is present and flexible during the coaching process
  - Accesses own intuition and trusts one's inner knowing - "goes with the gut"

- Is open to not knowing and is prepared to take risks
- Sees many ways to work with the players and chooses what is most effective
- Uses humour effectively to create lightness and energy
- Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities
- Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by emotions exhibited by the players

### ***Cluster C: Communicating effectively***

5. Active listening - ability to focus completely on what the players are saying and are not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the players' desires, and to support players' self-expression:
  - Attends to the team and the team's agenda rather than the coach's agenda for the team
  - Listens to and hears the team's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and is not possible
  - Demonstrates empathy and distinguishes between the words, the tone of voice, and the body language
  - Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, mirrors back what individuals have said to ensure clarity and understanding
  - Encourages, accepts, explores and reinforces individual player's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs, suggestions and other ideas
  - Integrates and builds on individual player's ideas and suggestions
  - "Bottom-lines" or understands the essence of the players' communication and helps the team get there rather than engaging in long descriptive stories
  - Allows individuals to vent or "clear" the situation without judgment or attachment in order to move on to next steps
6. Powerful questioning - ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the team as a whole:
  - Asks questions that reflect active listening from an individual's perspective
  - Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action, including those that challenge the team player's assumptions
  - Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility or new learning
  - Asks questions that move players towards what they desire, not questions that ask for a player to justify or look backwards
7. Direct communication and feedback - ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the players especially regarding skill development:
  - Communicates with clarity, articulates and directs in sharing and providing effective and constructive feedback
  - Reframes or articulates as necessary to help players understand from either another or different perspective
  - Clearly states coaching objectives and agenda, detailing the purpose of techniques or exercises
  - Uses language appropriate and respectful to the players (e.g. non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical, non-jargon and what is socially acceptable)
  - Uses metaphor and analogy to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture

**Cluster D: Facilitating learning and performance**

8. Creating awareness - ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information, and to make interpretations that help the players to gain awareness and thereby achieve agreed results:
  - Goes beyond what is said in assessing a player's concerns, not getting hooked by a player's description
  - Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness and clarity
  - Identifies for the players the coach's underlying concerns, typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself or herself and the world, differences between the facts and the interpretation, disparities between thoughts, feelings and action
  - Helps players to discover for themselves the new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods, etc. that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important to them
  - Communicates broader perspectives to players and inspires commitment to shift their viewpoints and find new possibilities for their action
  - Helps players to see the different, interrelated factors that affect them and their behaviours (e.g. thoughts, emotions, body and background)
  - Expresses insights to players in ways that are useful and meaningful
  - Identifies major strengths vs. major areas for learning and growth, and what is most important to address during coaching sessions
  - Asks the players to distinguish between trivial and significant issues, situational vs. recurring behaviors, when detecting a separation between what is being stated and what is being done
9. Designing actions - ability to create with the players opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching and in work / life / personal situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed coaching results
  - Brainstorms and assists the players to define actions that will enable them to demonstrate, practice and deepen new learning
  - Helps the players to focus on and systematically explore specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed coaching goals
  - Engages the players to explore alternative ideas and solutions, to evaluate options, and to make related decisions (Game Sense)
  - Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery, where the players are encouraged to apply what has been discussed and learned during sessions immediately afterwards in his or her work or life setting
  - Celebrates the successes of all players and their capabilities for future growth
  - Challenges players' assumptions and perspectives to provoke new ideas and find new possibilities for action
  - Advocates or brings forward points of view that are aligned with players' goals and without attachment, engages the players to consider them
  - Helps the players "Do it now" during the coaching session, providing immediate support with adequate patience for complex or higher level tasks
  - Encourages extensions and challenges but also establishes a comfortable pace of learning directed at the level of player ability



10. Planning and goal setting - ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the players:
  - Consolidates collected information and establishes a coaching plan and development goals with the players that address concerns and major areas for learning and development
  - Creates a plan with results that are attainable and realistic, measurable, specific and have target dates
  - Makes plan adjustments as warranted by the coaching process and by changes in circumstances, i.e. adaptation
  - Helps the players identify and access different resources for learning (e.g. videos, DVD, books, Internet, teammates. other professionals)
  - Identifies and targets early successes that are important to the players
11. Managing progress and accountability - ability to hold attention on what is important for each of the players and to transfer responsibility to the players to take appropriate action:
  - Clearly request from the players the actions that will move the players toward their stated and agreed goals
  - Demonstrates follow-through by asking the players about those actions that the players committed to during previous sessions
  - Acknowledges and provides feedback to players for what they have done, not done, learned or become aware of, since previous coaching sessions
  - Effectively prepares, organizes and reviews with players information obtained during sessions
  - Keeps the players on track between sessions by holding attention on the coaching plan and outcomes, agreed courses of action and topics for future sessions
  - Focuses on the coaching plan but is also open to adjusting behaviors and actions based on the coaching process and shifts in direction during sessions
  - Demonstrates flexibility and is able to move back and forth between the big picture of where the players are heading, setting a context for what is being discussed and what the players have identified as their final objective
  - Promotes player self-discipline and hold the players accountable for what they say they are going to do, for the results of an intended action, or for a specific plan with related time frames
  - Develops players' ability to make decisions, address key concerns, and develop themselves (to get feedback, to determine priorities and set the pace of learning, to reflect on and learn from experiences)
  - Positively confronts players with the fact that they did not take agreed actions as and when appropriate

**TFA Coach Development Program:  
Relationship between Competencies and Accreditation Levels**

COMPETENCY / COACHING LEVEL	COMMUNITY COACH	LEVEL 1 COACH	LEVEL 2 COACH	LEVEL 3 COACH
Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards	I / D	PR / M	E	E
Establishing the coaching agreement	I	D / PR	M / R	R / E
Establishing trust, respect and intimacy with the players	I	D / PR	M	R / E
Coaching presence	I	D / PR	M / R	E
Active listening	I	D / PR	M / R	E
Powerful questioning	I / D	M / R	R / E	E
Direct communication and feedback	I / D / PR	PR / M	M / R / E	E
Creating awareness	I	D / PR	PR / R	R / E
Designing actions	I	D / PR	PR / R	M / E
Planning and goal setting	I / D	PR / M	M / R / E	E
Managing progress and accountability	I	D / PR	PR / R	M / E

*Descriptive Key*

I : Introduced  
R : Refined

D : Developed  
E : Done with Excellence

PR : Practiced

M : Mastered



## **Elite Coaching Competencies - National Coaches**

1. Control and manage team activities during competitions:
  - Plan and supervise appropriate individual preparation activities
  - Delegate and monitor support coaching and management performances
  - Design, implement and monitor game plans, team strategies and tactics
  - Analysis of own and opposition performances (including players and coaches)
  - Display and demand quality leadership, ethical attitudes and motivation
2. Plan, design and implement training programs:
  - Physical fitness measurement, monitoring and updating
  - Skill development, maintenance and assessment processes
  - Oversee administration and logistic support elements
  - Communicate with support staff, satellite coaches, team members and others
  - Monitor and coordinate psychological preparation
  - Monitor and coordinate other program elements
3. Organize and conduct training sessions:
  - Design and manage skill development activities
  - Design and manage tactical drills and set plays
  - Oversee physical assessment programs
  - Coordinate satellite coach activities for remote sessions
  - Display innovative coaching techniques
4. Provide feedback, prepare and submit reports:
  - Manage individual player development programs
  - Provide verbal, written and other (e.g. video) feedback to players
  - Conduct analysis of, and provide written evaluation reports on activities
5. Liaison and communication activities:
  - Other elite coaches, particularly assistant and satellite coaches
  - NCD, National Technical Manager, ATA office and other staff
  - Mentor activities with developing coaches
  - Satellite coach network operations and maintenance
6. Meet other requirements of Coaching Contract or as required from time to time.