



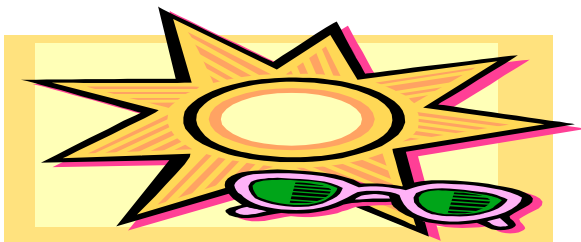
**Cuala coaching newsletter
June 2008**

Section 1

**Don't forget the Cuala
Summer Camps**

**Football June 30th – July 11th.
Hurling July 14th – July 25th.**

**Advanced Football 7th – 11th July
Advanced Hurling 14th – 18th July.**



A,B,C'S – improving balance.

Balance in gaelic games is the ability to stay on your feet and perform a skill when you might be required to move in different directions.

In order to improve and develop a players balance the coach needs to know that the key to balance is

the player's centre of gravity. This is the area that is around the player's hips.

When working on a player's balance incorporate activities into short fun activities as part of the warm ups. Remember the following key points and remind the players of them when they are doing activities.

- Bend your knees to keep a low centre of gravity.
- Keep your head still and use your arms to keep your balance.
- Keep your hips over your toes, i.e. keep your centre of gravity over where you are in contact with the ground.
- When doing any balance activities focus on a stationary object as this will help improve your balance.



Try the following fun activities with your teams to help improve their balance.

Blind balance

Lie your players on the ground with their eyes closed. Get them to stand up keeping their eyes closed. Add in the following variations and see how hard it actually is.

- Lie on their front and back.
- Stand on one leg, alternating.
- Stand up without using their arms.

Heel to toe walk

Walk heel-to-toe. Position your heel just in front of the toes of the opposite foot each time you take a step. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.

Up and downs

Stand up and sit down without using your hands.

One legged skills.

Perform a skill when standing on 1 leg, alternate between the left and right sides. A skill to start on would be the handpass.

The nursery section of the FunDo programme is full of balance activities. These are presented in

the manuals with the appropriate instructions and on the DVDs that accompany the pack.

Some of the older teams would get great fun and enjoyment working with agility discs and wobble boards.

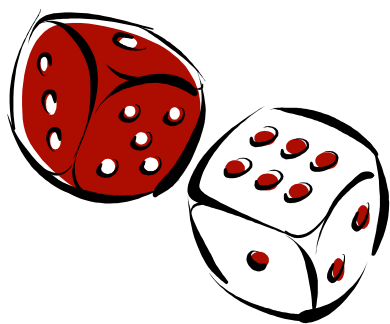
“Double or Quits”

Here's a game from the Ulster coach, John Morrison. He could have kept it to himself but he chose to share it, so that others may try it and benefit from it.

If you want your 'free' takers to practise in a realistic environment, where they've been running in the game, making tackles, breaking tackles, passing, shooting etc., and if you want to recreate a degree of pressure on the 'free' taker, do the following:-

Set up a practice game between two teams on a full pitch or near enough a full pitch [teams from 10v10 up to 15 v15].

Before the game starts, scatter five or six flexible fleximarkers [not the domes!] in an area between the 13m line and about 40m from goal. Do likewise at the opposite end.



Play the game as normal until one team gets a score from play. Now let a 'free' taker choose which marker to shoot from and let him take a 'free' from that spot. If he scores add this point to the original one scored from play. If he misses, take away the original point.

If he scores, remove the marker from that spot. This forces him to choose another marker next time. If he misses, leave the marker there, so that he'll have to take a 'free' from that spot again sometime later in the game [i.e. pressure] To ensure that the game flows and there is not a lengthy delay as the 'free' taker prepares, have at least two balls behind the goal. Let the 'keeper

set up a ball ready for the kick out or puck out, while the 'free' taker is getting set. Once the shot is taken, the other ball should be out in play.

Think about it. The 'free' taker has the added pressure of doubling the score rather than the double whammy of missing and wiping out the original one that earned him the 'free'.

Try it. It works a treat!

Section 2

Training session V's Coaching session

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”
Benjamin Franklin.

When looking at a player perform in a match coaches can often be heard say in exasperation, “Why does he always do that?”, “There she goes again same mistake every week” or words to that effect. Maybe the question that really needs to be asked is “Why has the coach not worked with the player in order to correct a flaw in their game?”

It does seem to be a bit insane to constantly moan about a player's errors, a team's poor performance or missed opportunities and not make any effort to correct them in a structured manner.

Some people have suggested that teams actually need more coaching sessions than training sessions. A training session concentrates on getting a player fitter, sharper, faster whereas a coaching session works on developing them as a player. Coaching sessions aim to teach skills that a player will keep for their entire career.

So how do we organise a coaching session?

- **Plan your session**

Simple planning that you understand will keep the session flowing and cut down on wasted time.

- **Pick a theme**

A coaching session should be based around a central theme, pick a skill and work to improve that skill during the session. The Australian institute of Sport would suggest that you need to repeat a skill over 200 times to improve it. The first 200 repetitions warm up your muscles and

nerves and subsequent repetitions improve the skill.

- **Give your players key words.**

Break down the skill into 3-4 key movements, some coaches suggest head, hands and feet. Give your players key phrases or words to try and remember skill points.

- **Graduated drills**

Start with simple drills and move to more complex and challenging drills. During these drills ensure a ball between 2-3 players, remind players of the key points and correct any mistakes. The Fun Do packs are full of drills for all ages to perform all the skills of the games.

- **Practice in a game situation.**

Drills usually don't replicate match conditions. In order to see if a player has truly mastered a skill they must be able to perform it under match conditions to a high standard. Small sided conditioned games are best to develop this element of the skills. Players should have plenty of opportunity to perform the skills in conditions similar to a match.



So the next time you are on the sideline watching your team play and you see a player making an all too familiar error before you shout and give out ask yourself “ What have you done as a coach to try and correct that flaw in the player’s game?”

Remember if you are still employing the same training methods over and over again and your team still makes the same mistakes over and over you are flirting with insanity to believe it will just change.

Mixing drink and sport.

By Dr Giles Warrington (Physiologist and lecturer in the School of Health and Human Performance DCU)

We are all well aware that alcohol inhibits sporting performance, in spite of this however many athletes still drink excessively when they are preparing to compete in sports. The following points illustrate the effects of alcohol on sporting performance.



- Alcohol has little nutritional value, a pint of beer has 180 calories but of these only 12 are in the form of carbohydrate.
- Alcohol is low in essential nutrients it takes the place of more nutritious food in the diet.
- Alcohol is a diuretic, it promotes dehydration. Dehydration levels of 5% or more of body weight in fluids have been shown to decrease performance by about 30%.
- Taking alcohol has a negative influence on psychomotor skills such as reaction time, balance and accuracy.
- Acute ingestion of alcohol will most likely affect physical capacity in areas such as speed, power and strength.
- Abuse of alcohol can elicit changes in the liver heart, brain and muscle which can be fatal.

The recommended maximum intake of alcohol per week is 21 units for men and 14 units for women. For any person who is serious about sport they should get no more than 5% of their calorie intake from alcohol and ideally a lot less.

THANK YOU.

Since last September Ken Fitzgerald and Caroline Kenny have been working tirelessly with the schools in our area. They have coached thousands of children in the skills of hurling and football and created a huge positive image for Cuala in the community. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for all their hard work. They can now look forward to a long restful summer running the Cuala summer camps and advanced camp!

Listen to Lombardi

Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.