



Softball Canada's What To Coach Clinic

Introductory Module: Reference Material

NCCP Context: Competition - Introduction



The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.

Partners in Coach Education and Training



The programs of this organization are funded in part by Sport Canada.



© This document is copyrighted by the Coaching Association of Canada (2007) and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Printed in Canada.





National
Coaching
Certification
Program

Programme
national de
certification des
entraîneurs

The Regional Coach Introduction to Clinic 1 – *What to Coach* Reference Material

The NCCP Philosophy

In the National Coaching Certification Program, coaching is about helping other people improve and achieve their goals in and through sport, and creating an environment in which this can take place.

The aim of the NCCP is to:

1. Provide every participant in a sport program with a positive experience.
2. Provide an opportunity for participants to achieve their full potential through sport.
3. Use sport as a personal development tool.

1- Provide every participant in a sport program with a positive experience

Every individual who chooses to participate in a sport program must have the opportunity to have a positive experience. The benefits and satisfaction must be such that they will be motivated to continue participating.

2- Provide an opportunity for participants to achieve their full potential through sport

Each individual has unique interests, abilities, and talents that characterize him/her. Each participant must be provided equal opportunity to explore his/her interests and to develop his/her skills and abilities. Sport programs must represent a suitable challenge to each participant, given his/her goals and capabilities.

3- Use sport as a personal development tool

Sport enables a participant to challenge him/herself, the environment, and others. It also gives the participant an opportunity to interact with others. In itself, sport is neither good nor bad, however it can be a vehicle for good.

Summary Of Istvan Balyi's Article ¹

OVERVIEW OF THE ATHLETE'S LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

Key Program Elements	Community Sport	Introduction to Competition	Competition – Development	Competition – High Performance
Age Group <i>Between () and in italics: early specialization sports</i>	Chronological / biological Boy: 6-10 years Girls: 6-10 years	Biological Boys: 10-14 years Girls: 10-13 years (10-11)	Chronological / biological Boys: 14-18 years Girls: 13-17 years (12-15)	Chronological Men: 18 years + Women: 17 years + (16 +)
General Orientation	Have fun in sports	Train to train	Train to compete	Train to compete and win
Objectives	Fun and participation; general development; experiment with new forms of sport activities	General development of athletic abilities and some limited form of sport-specific conditioning; acquisition and consolidation of appropriate technical and tactical elements; first serious competitive experience	Consolidation and/or development of physical, tactical, technical, and mental abilities and skills in order to perform successfully in provincial and national competitions	Maintenance of physical abilities at a high level and improvement of tactical, technical and mental skills in order to reach peak performance in national and international level competitions
Type of Periodisation	Not applicable	Single periodisation	Double periodisation	Triple or multiple periodisation; frequent recovery breaks
Length of Program *	A few weeks (6-12)	20 – 30 weeks	35 – 45 weeks	45 – 50 weeks
Ratio of Practice (Training) to Competition	Very large majority of time devoted to games and activities to develop motor skills; competition and results are not a priority	75% of the time devoted to sports participation should be spent training and 25% to competing (these percentages may vary slightly depending on the sport)	50% of the time devoted to sports participation should be spent developing physical conditioning and tactical and technical skills, and the other 50% in sport-specific preparation for competitions	75% of the time should be devoted to sport-specific preparation and to participation in competitions
Number of Practices per Week	Athlete's preferred sport: 1-2 per week; participation in other sports 2-4 times per week	Sport-specific training 3-4 times per week plus participation in other sports	6 - 9 times per week	9 - 12 times per week

* Information not included in the original article

¹ Balyi, I. "Sport System Building and Long-Term Athlete Development in Canada: The Situation and the Solutions", *Coaches Report*, Vol. 8 No. 1, Summer 2001.

Summary Of Istvan Balyi's Article

OVERVIEW OF THE ATHLETE'S LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

Key Elements of the Programs	Community Sport	Introduction to Competition	Competition - Development	Competition – High Performance
Age group <i>Between () and in italics: early specialization sports</i>	Chronological / biological Boys: 6-10 years Girls: 6-10 years	Biological Boys: 10-14 years Girls: 10-13 years (10-11)	Chronological / biological Boys: 14-18 years Girls: 13-17 years (12-15)	Chronological Men: 18 years + Women: 17 years + (16 +)
Specialisation	None; participation in different sports	Participation in complementary sports (similar movements and demands); preferred sport becomes more important	Sport-specific technical, tactical, and physical preparation; specialisation in a discipline, or in a position	Sport-specific technical, tactical, and physical preparation
Training Priorities – Physical Preparation	Speed, power, and endurance acquired through fun and games	General physical conditioning	General development of athletic abilities; individualised sport-specific conditioning	Highly individualized sport-specific physical conditioning; slight improvements sought, if possible
Training Priorities – Motor Development	Agility, balance, coordination, and speed	Agility, balance, coordination, and speed		
Training Priorities – Technical Development	Running, jumping, and throwing techniques	Progressive acquisition and consolidation of basic sport-specific skills	Advanced technical preparation	Refinement of advanced technical skills, where necessary
Training Priorities – Tactical Development	Introduction to the basic rules and ethics of sport	Basic tactical preparation; correct decision-making in frequently encountered competitive situations	Development of national level tactical skills and decision-making abilities	Development of international level tactical skills and decision-making abilities
Training Priorities – Mental Skills	Do your best, keep trying	Basic mental skills	Advanced psychological preparation	Advanced psychological preparation; highly individualised approach
Training Means and Methods	Games; fun activities; medicine ball activities; activities with Swiss balls; general resistance training exercises using body weight to improve strength and strength-endurance	Frequent use of general exercises; sport-specific physical conditioning and technical preparation	Frequent use of sport-specific exercises and competition-specific exercises	Patterning of every possible aspect of training and performance; individualisation of all aspects of training and competitive preparation

Participants' Reasons for Being in Sport

The athlete or participant comes to the sport situation with his/her own needs, interests, and reasons for being involved. Some coaches spend more time with an athlete than a teacher, or even parents in some instances. Because of the significant influence they have on the development of participants, both from an athletic and human point of view, coaches must seek to identify if the reasons why they are coaching are consistent with what athletes want or need.

This section provides an overview of the main reasons why people are involved in sport, and of certain expectations athletes and parents may have of sport and of coaches. Coaches must *recognize* and *respect* individual differences in this area because participants *drop out* when programs do not match their reasons for being in sport. In other words, coaches need to be *fair* to participants — either work to give them the program they want OR recommend a program that will better meet their needs.

In general, people participate in sport for one or more of the following four reasons:

1. **A desire for *achievement*** — A wish to improve, master new skills, and pursue excellence.
2. **A need for *affiliation*** — A desire to have positive and friendly relations with others.
3. **A desire for *sensation*** — A desire to experience the sights, sounds, and physical feelings *surrounding* a sport or the excitement in a sport.
4. **A desire for *self-direction*** — A wish to feel a sense of control, to feel in charge.

Achievement-Motivated Participants: Coaching Tips

You can enhance participants' motivation to improve and to stay in sport programs by providing *personal experiences of success*. One way of doing this is to set realistic, progressive goals based on past performances. Participants then see their progress as they strive to improve.

Here are a few more ideas for making sure that participants' needs for achievement are fulfilled:

- Point out individual improvement.
- Keep written records of progress in diaries, logs, etc.
- Schedule games or meets with suitable opponents
- Meet regularly to discuss progress and reevaluate goals.

Affiliation-Motivated Participants: Coaching Tips

The affiliation motive – the wish to be *part of* a group and feel *accepted* by it – is probably the strongest and most common motive for continued participation in sport. Working as a unit, setting goals together, having fun with others, feeling appreciated by a group, and sharing with others can all help satisfy the desire for meaningful interaction.

Here are a few suggestions for making sure that the need for affiliation is satisfied:

- Make interaction with others a part of each practice; for example, have participants do partner drills, encourage partner stretching, or have participants coach each other.
- Have team talks after each practice. Keep these talks informal, and encourage participants to be open and honest.
- Provide opportunities for social get-togethers after games or meets.
- Encourage participants to help one another and to do things together.
- Have team parties.
- Remind participants that *everyone* is a valued member of the team.

Sensation-Motivated Participants: Coaching Tips

Experiences that excite the senses – for example, the sights and smells along a beautiful country trail, the feeling of being fit, the desire to move and be active, and the excitement of sport itself – can be very important motivators. Here are a few tips on fulfilling participants' needs in this area:

- Try to arrange workouts in areas with pleasant sights, sounds, smells, and physical feelings.
- Have participants warm up to music.
- Provide enough activity for everyone – not too much, not too little.
- Break monotony *regularly* with fun or novelty events.
- Vary workouts – change the normal routines.
- Let participants work on exciting new moves.
- Set up close games and interesting challenges.
- Ask participants how they feel when they really *flow*.

Self-Direction-Motivated Participants: Coaching Tips

Sport gives people a rare opportunity to *make decisions* about what they are going to do – and to deal with the consequences in a non-threatening situation. As a result, there are *many* things you can do to assist those motivated by self-direction. For example, you can let participants make up their own routines, moves, or plays; assess their own progress; set and adjust their own goals; or decide what play to run in a game.

In general, letting participants make their own decisions builds greater commitment – and so increases motivation. The following pointers should help you satisfy participants' needs for self-direction:

- Put participants in positions of leadership. Have them lead warm-ups, choose drills to develop certain skills, etc.
- Give participants chances during practices or competitions to make *their own* decisions about what strategy to use (what pitch to throw, what play to run, etc.).
- Above all, let participants make decisions *when it really matters* – when decisions will affect outcomes or when parents and friends are in the stands, for example. This approach helps participants learn to enjoy competition, and it encourages their development as true competitors.

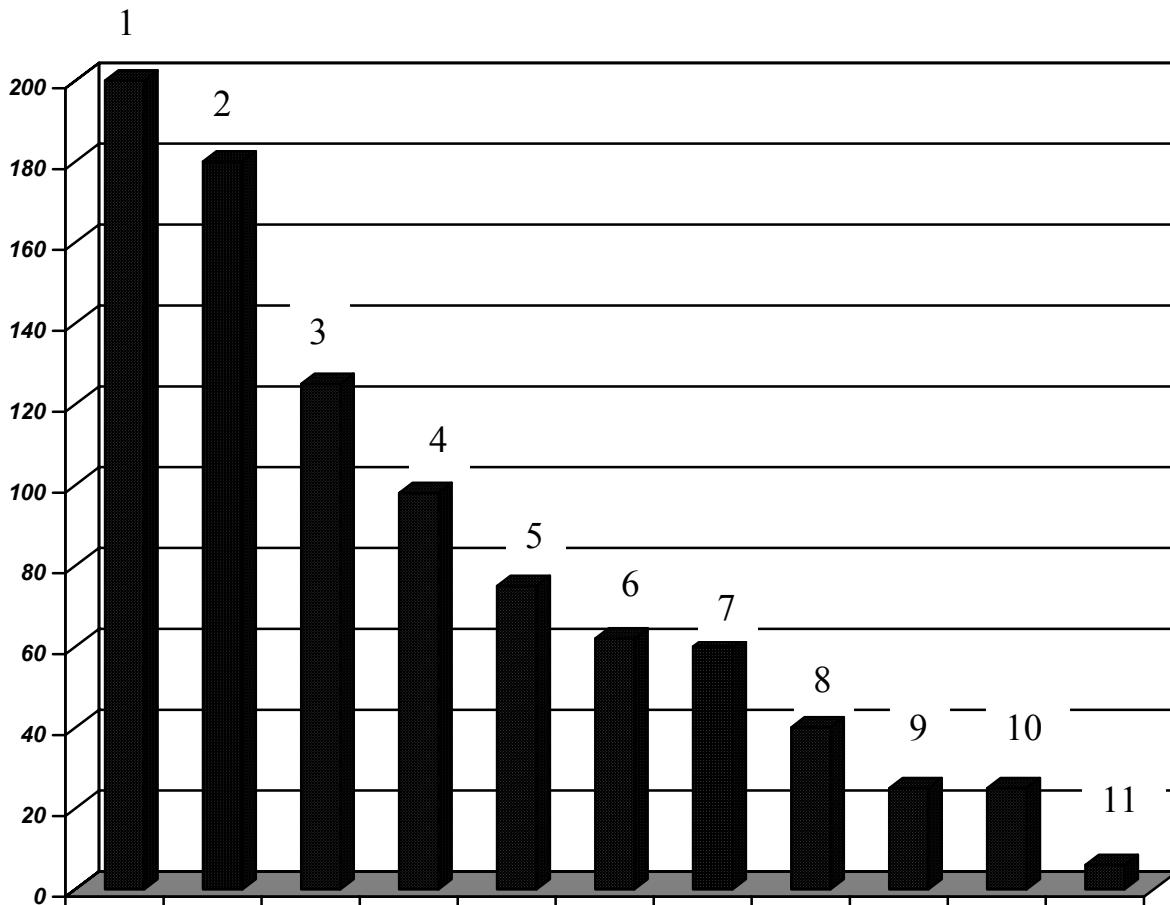
Reasons Why Children Participate in their Favorite Sport

In a study of 2,000 boys and 1,900 girls from 7th to 12th grade, Ewing & Seefeldt (1987) asked the children to prioritize what motivated them to participate in their favorite sport in school. The top ten reasons were:

1. To have fun.
2. To improve their skills.
3. To stay fit.
4. To participate in an activity at which they succeed.
5. To have fun competing with others.
6. To exercise.
7. To be part of a team.
8. To compete.
9. To learn new abilities.
10. To win.

Important Conclusions from the British Columbia Sport Parent Survey:²

WHAT PARENTS EXPECT OF COACHES



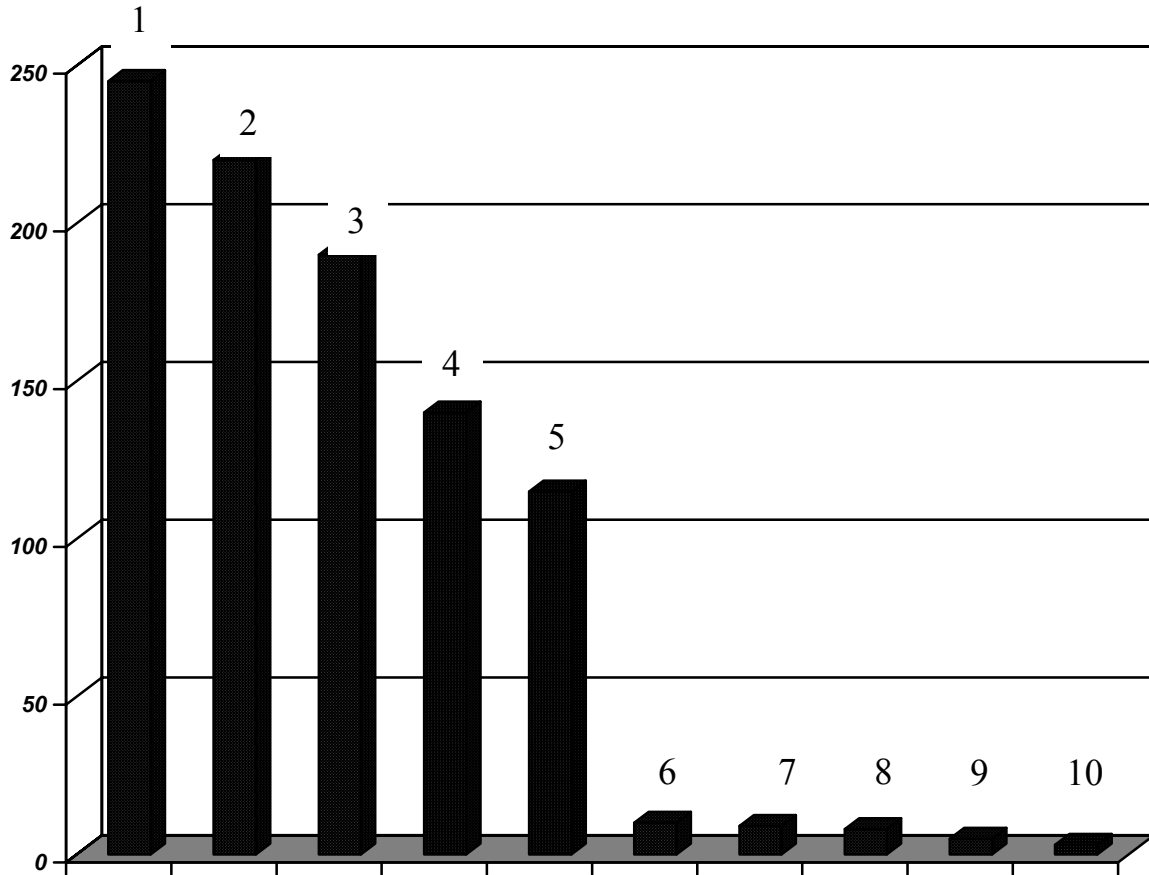
Legend

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Make sport enjoyable | 7. Respect rules and officials |
| 2. Respect children as individuals | 8. Give equal opportunity for playing time |
| 3. Be a knowledgeable leader | 9. Plan activities effectively |
| 4. Be safety-conscious | 10. Be approachable |
| 5. Act in a mature and adult manner | 11. Strive to win |
| 6. Be fair | |

² Sport Parent Survey. Ministry of Government Services, Sports and Commonwealth Games Division, Government of BC. (1994)

Important Conclusions from the British Columbia Sport Parent Survey:³

WHAT PARENTS EXPECT OF SPORT



Legend

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. To build self-esteem | 6. Other |
| 2. To have fun | 7. To have a professional career |
| 3. To develop skills | 8. To play on a winning team |
| 4. To increase fitness | 9. To win awards |
| 5. To make new friends | 10. To go to the Olympics |

³ Sport Parent Survey. Ministry of Government Services, Sports and Commonwealth Games Division, Government of BC. (1994)

Promoting Continued Participation in Sport: General Tips

Participants often drop out of sport because they don't get to play regularly or because achievement is *overemphasized*. Too serious a program, too little fun, too few chances to play, and too much criticism are all common reasons for dropping out of sport.

Since people participate in sport for different reasons, programs need to satisfy these various motives. In other words, a balanced approach that allows for personal achievement and meets participants' needs for affiliation, sensation, and self-direction is necessary.

Coach-Parent Relationships

Parents play a key role in the sport experience of many participants. In many cases, it is the parents who initiate the child's involvement in sport. As a result, coach-parents relationships also have a major effect – positive and negative – on participants' experience in sport. It is therefore important for coaches to:

1. Develop *positive* and *meaningful* relationships with participants' parents.
2. Seek to influence parents and guide them in order that they can have a positive and supportive influence on their child's sport experience.

Following are some suggestions for developing such relationships:

- Organize a formal meeting with parents to discuss the objectives of your program and your approach to coaching.
- Describe to parents – in detail – the behavior you will be reinforcing in participants. For example, if you plan to reward effort rather than performance, let parents know.
- Explain to parents the behavior you expect *from them*. For instance, make it clear that you expect them to show respect for officials, that you do NOT want them to yell instructions to players.
- Recognize the need for *regular, open* communication with parents. Since misunderstandings between coaches and parents are usually the result of poor communication, it is important to work hard at such communication.
- Be positive and open about feedback – it will build parents' trust in you and lead to an even better program.

Coaching Functions and Tasks: Master List

Developing the Program: In my Coaching Context, I...

1. Determine the vision and philosophy of the program
2. Determine the objectives of the practice sessions and/or activities
3. Put together a plan for the practice sessions and activities
4. Put together a plan for a series of practice sessions and activities
5. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the program for which I am responsible

Managing the Program: In my Coaching Context, I...

1. Identify the facility needs
2. Keep an inventory of equipments
3. Manage the equipments
4. Deal with transportation to competitions
5. Manage training time
6. Interact with parents
7. Interact with other coaches
8. Interact with referees and officials
9. Recruit participants/athletes for the program
10. Recruit volunteers

Support to Participants/Athletes in Competition: In my Coaching Context, I...

1. Make sure facilities and equipments are safe
2. Supervise physical and mental preparation before competition (warm-up)
3. Manage the participants/athletes in competition
4. Keep the participants/athletes focused on the task
5. Manage the volunteers, parents, assistants during competition
6. Make sure there is enough appropriate equipments
7. Check the equipments that will be used in competition
8. Participate as a referee or official
9. Make frequent adjustments to meet the needs of unexpected situations

Support to Participants/Athletes in Training: In my Coaching Context, I...

1. Motivate the participants/athletes to practice and learn
2. Get equipments ready for activity
3. Make sure that there is appropriate equipments
4. Make sure that the environment is safe
5. Make sure that the equipments are safe
6. Run the practice sessions
7. Adjust my instruction to meet the needs of the participants/athletes
8. Analyze the participants/athletes performance
9. Look for participants/athletes performance errors
10. Analyze technical errors/problems
11. Recommend corrective measures
12. Give feedback to participants/athletes
13. Direct/supervise warm-up activities
14. Set up activities to develop team spirit
15. Teach basic techniques and technical progressions
16. Teach basic tactics for competition
17. Demonstrate technical skills
18. Teach the rules/laws of the game or sport
19. Administer basic first aid

Social Support to Participants/Athletes: In my Coaching Context, I...

1. Teach values through sport
2. Develop activities to improve self-esteem
3. Listen to participants/athletes
4. Motivate participants/athletes to learn
5. Have a positive influence on team spirit
6. Promote and model ethical behaviour
7. Manage conflict
8. Encourage the participants/athletes to persevere
9. Advise parents about their involvement
10. Promote participation in sport
11. Make sure activities are fun
12. Make sure all participants are given the opportunity for equal involvement
13. Give equal time to all participants/athletes
14. Organize/coordinate awards ceremonies/social activities