



# Netball Coaching Framework

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## Netball Coaching Framework For Netball Coaches

### **Introduction**

This Netball Coaching Framework is a guide to support coaches on what they might want to achieve at each age and stage of a netballer's journey. The guide includes thoughts around the training environment we might wish to create in our sessions and to provide ideas on coaching content within each age group. This is just a starting point and intended to be helpful for coaches to use to develop their own within the organisations they represent.

The stages set out in this Netball Coaching Framework are only a guide for delivery and something I use to help coaches within any structure I work with to support age group expectations. How this is coached and delivered is up to the coach leading any session or age group.

We set each stage as a principle. As players develop at different rates, some will often plateau on a stage of their development and will need to revisit skills. With the younger age groups there can be lots of revisiting, therefore it's important that the coach delivers creatively so players don't get bored at any skill that is repeated over and over again.

I have put together a guide of what a player's netball journey might look like from starting participation in primary school through the lifelong participation.

1. Mini netball – Primary school activity
2. U12's
3. U13's and U14's
4. U15's and U16's
5. Seniors

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### Example structure of components in a practice session

- **Introduction** – An overview of the training session aims
- **Warm up** – To include both netball specific and general movement skills, activation, stability exercises and landing skills
- **Fitness capacity** – To improve health and to get the group familiar with this requirement, may include a fun game, fitness work, ball work integrated
- **Movement/footwork** – Activities are to be designed to teach efficient movement patterns, normally with the session's theme in mind. Such as quick decisive footwork, with or without a ball
- **Passing and ball handling** – emphasis here is on catching and throwing skills to include a variety of styles and release points off both sides of the body
- **Skill in attack or defence**  
Attacking -Partner and small group activities concentrate on effective decision making, spatial relations and timing  
Defence – Opportunities for all athletes to learn a variety of defending skills relating to starting position, creating pressure, winning ball and working as units
- **Game understanding/situation** – Practice games that may have conditions and game situations focused on sessional focus, use this time to emphasise the key points covered in the session
- **Cool down** – This time allows for slow jogging and walking activities to be interspersed with stretches. Players and coaches can also use this part of the session to reflect on what they might feedback
- **Conclusion** – Review the session and communicate arrangements for future sessions -mix of player and coach led feedback
- **Life skills** – What are we trying to achieve with the groups we are working with? Quality people, good cultures and great training environments need to evolve throughout the stages.

## Mini Netball

### **Starters with little or no understanding of netball 5-8 years old**

The coach's role – Every child should experience a fun environment where they are learning and developing the ability to move, catch and throw. Many of the players in the group are new to netball and playing time should work a rotation giving everyone an equal opportunity in all positions to develop their overall understanding of the game.

### **Key things to cover and master:**

#### **Warm up**

- Fun games

#### **Fitness**

- Team challenges

#### **Movement**

- Running forwards at pace with driving arms
- Sprint
- Peddle backwards
- Running on angles
- High knees, heel flicks and fast feet
- Stand up tall
- Use of arms – head up- eyes up

#### **Footwork**

- Landing one foot with follow through of the other foot always being in front of landing foot
- Strong stance with body up
- Pivot

#### **Passing**

- Overhead pass
- Chest pass
- Target areas – on the letter, laser beams - not rainbows

#### **Skill**

- Catching with two hands
- Quick release ball comes in and goes out – no dropping the ball low, body nice and tall – no crossing arms
- Different objects to catch with different angles
- Shooting technique often two hands for power

### **Attack or defence work**

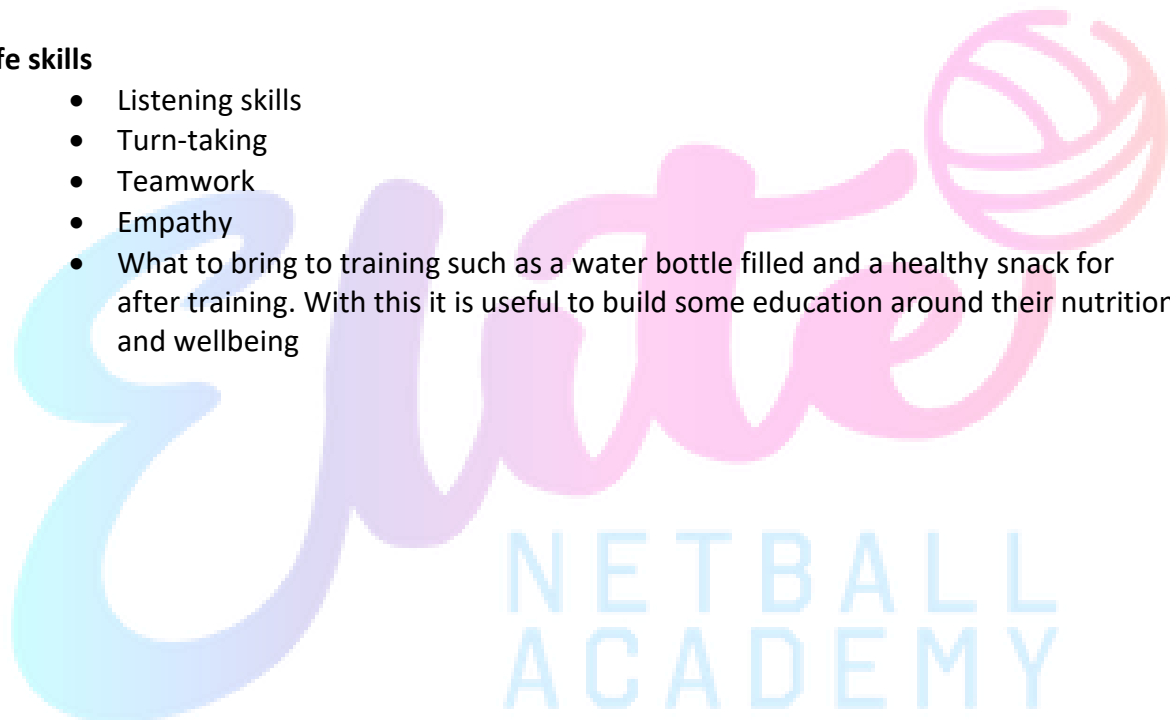
- Understanding what attack is i.e., trying to keep possession and get the ball to goal
- Understanding what defence is i.e., trying to gain possession from the attacking team ball
- How do you do this?

### **Game understanding**

- What positions there are in netball
- What the positions do
- Where positions are allowed to go
- Try all positions – focus on one each session
- Starting to integrate understanding of the rules
- Games that involve attack and defence e.g., small-sided games

### **Life skills**

- Listening skills
- Turn-taking
- Teamwork
- Empathy
- What to bring to training such as a water bottle filled and a healthy snack for after training. With this it is useful to build some education around their nutrition and wellbeing



## Development Stages

### **Starter - Basic understanding of the game 8 – 11 years old**

The coach's role – to get every child to experience a fun environment where they are learning and developing the ability to move, catch, and throw with game play. All players should play and work a rotation giving everyone equal opportunity to play all positions and continue to develop their game understanding as a whole.

#### **Key things to cover and master:**

##### **Warm up**

- As outlined
- Fun games

##### **Fitness**

- Netball circuit and races

##### **Movement**

- Sprinting with good technique
- Side steps
- Cross oversteps
- Two-foot jumping
- Change of direction
- Standing up tall
- Use of arms, head up, eyes up
- Change of pace

##### **Footwork**

- Right side, right foot landing – head up standing tall
- Left side, left foot landing – head up standing tall
- Open body position with non -landing foot always in front of landing foot
- Solid base – question can you be pushed over?

##### **Passing**

- Target areas flat ball (laser beam) and over-ball (rainbow)
- Practice both in situations
- Start adding a defender so feeder can make a passing decision

##### **Skill**

- Right hand control
- Left hand control
- Use of different balls to support single arm control i.e., tennis ball
- Catch-high ball and low ball, catching early and under pressure

- Year 5/6 start players on single arm shooting technique

#### **Attack or defence work**

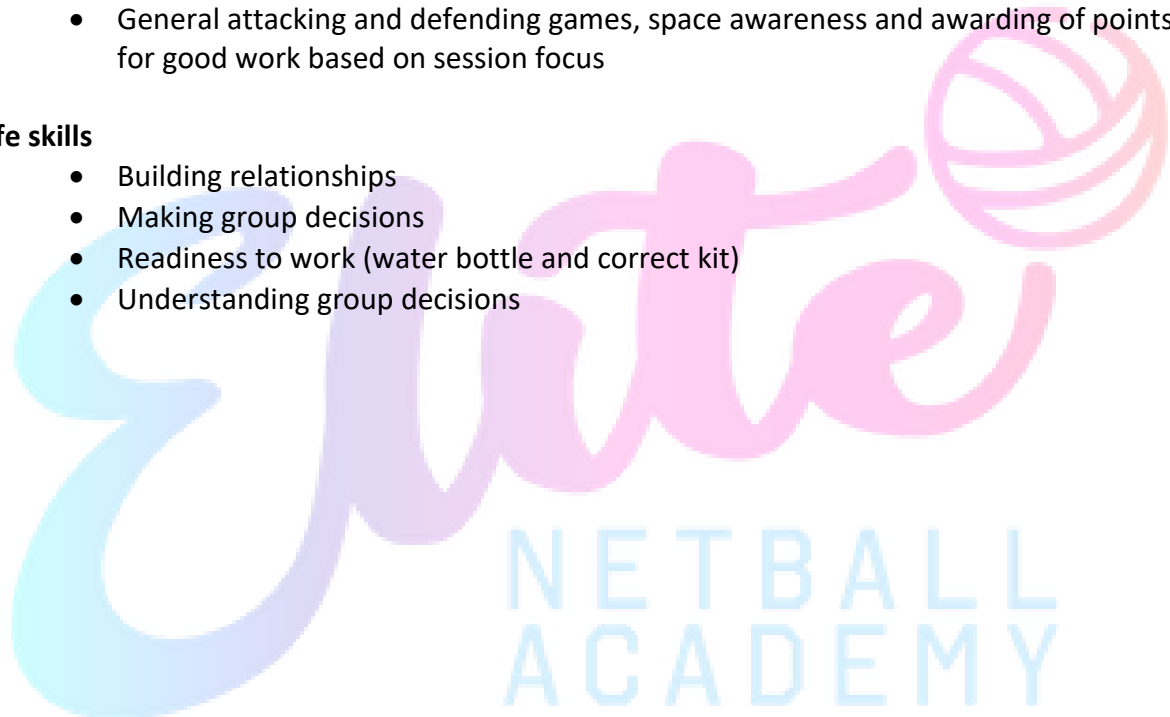
- Stage 1 defence - Man to man defence / first ball contest
- Stage 2 defence – arms over using different techniques
- Attacking – Driving into space for the ball - options
- Attacking – Change of Direction

#### **Game understanding**

- Play all positions
- Understanding attack – making a lead, change of direction, balance with other players
- Understanding defence – man on man, stage 2 defence
- Start to advance and vary game play but adding conditions
- General attacking and defending games, space awareness and awarding of points for good work based on session focus

#### **Life skills**

- Building relationships
- Making group decisions
- Readiness to work (water bottle and correct kit)
- Understanding group decisions



## **Main Stages 1**

### **Good basic skills and doing more regular netball - U12's**

Think about what you want to achieve and what your philosophy is at this point. Maybe choose the competition that fits the right experience, some balanced teams and other competition teams, you give your more experienced girls a run out. Ensure that you are clear to players and parents what the aims are throughout the season. Players to play at least a half game and squads to work a rotation, players still get equal opportunity.

#### **Key things to cover and master:**

##### **Warm up**

- Players can take more of a lead at this point

##### **Fitness**

- Fitness and/or circuits with netball focus
- Ball work, testing basics
- Fitness plans
- Fitness testing
- Health support
- Well-being support

##### **Movement**

- Co-ordination of movement and variety of footwork skills
- Fast dynamic movement, efficiency while under fatigue
- Include a ball
- Always encouraging feet to ball and first foot attack

##### **Footwork**

- Turning fully in the air (both inside and outside) in a balanced position with a tall body
- Landing inside leg
- Use of outside leg
- Two foot take-off
- One foot take-off

##### **Passing**

- Shoulder right
- Shoulder left
- Bounce
- Catch and pass wherever ball is caught
- Shift defender for an open passing channel



### **Skill**

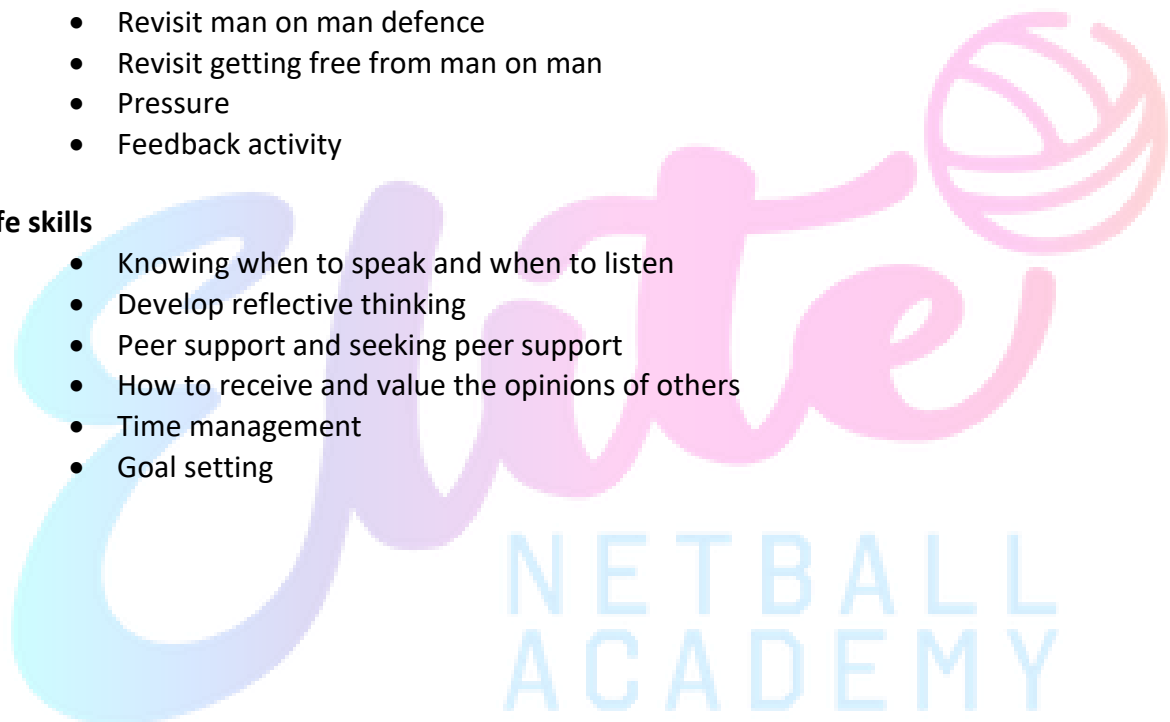
- Full extension control on right and left hand
- Body Management

### **Game understanding**

- Players start to focus on positions they wish to progress in but no specialisation yet
- Adapt to situations quickly and communicate to others
- Input basic set plays
- Attacking – options down court, opposition positioning, type of pass, manipulate defence to create opportunities
- Defence - stage 2 variety, blocking players up court or away from the ball, different defence set ups – open and closed etc
- Basic set plays
- Revisit man on man defence
- Revisit getting free from man on man
- Pressure
- Feedback activity

### **Life skills**

- Knowing when to speak and when to listen
- Develop reflective thinking
- Peer support and seeking peer support
- How to receive and value the opinions of others
- Time management
- Goal setting



## **Main Stages 2**

### **Good skill level and understands the game along with their role - U13's and U14's**

The coach's role – to develop a group ready for National Clubs or National schools- play all players to develop a strong squad but prioritise some competitions.

Develop an u13's group to prepare for National Clubs/schools in a year's time each player selected to play half a game, continue to build a strong squad.

### **Key things to cover and master:**

#### **Warm up**

- Players lead more and team drills for the captain to lead on

#### **Fitness**

- Fatigue work with a ball
- Challenges and pressure
- Speed and Agility drills
- Fitness plans
- Fitness testing
- Physical Robustness
- Health support
- Performance Lifestyle education

#### **Movement**

- Combination movements with defence pressure on ball catch

#### **Footwork**

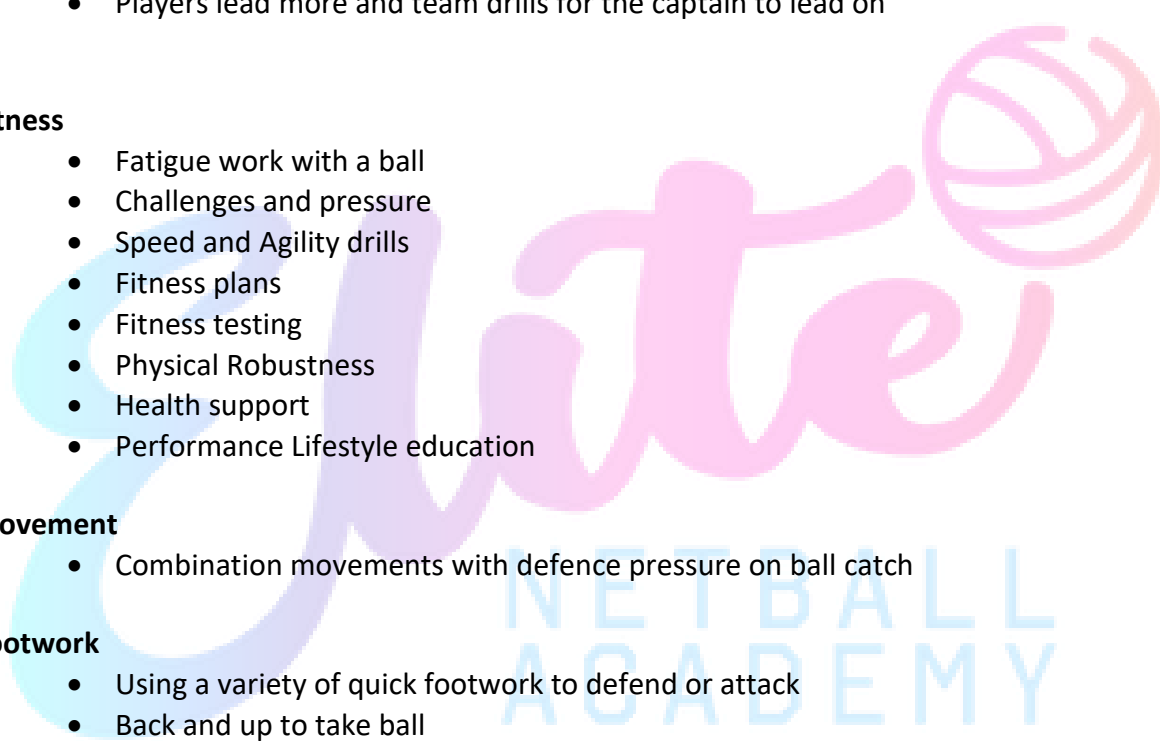
- Using a variety of quick footwork to defend or attack
- Back and up to take ball
- Start thinking about combining pass and feet in relation to defender

#### **Passing**

- Catch and pass wherever ball is caught using a variety of passing – if ball shifts do they know why?
- Release ball around 3ft mark
- Width of vision
- Depth of vision
- Placement of path of ball, feeder lead and receiver lead expectations

#### **Skill**

- Reverse hand
- Catching ball under pressure

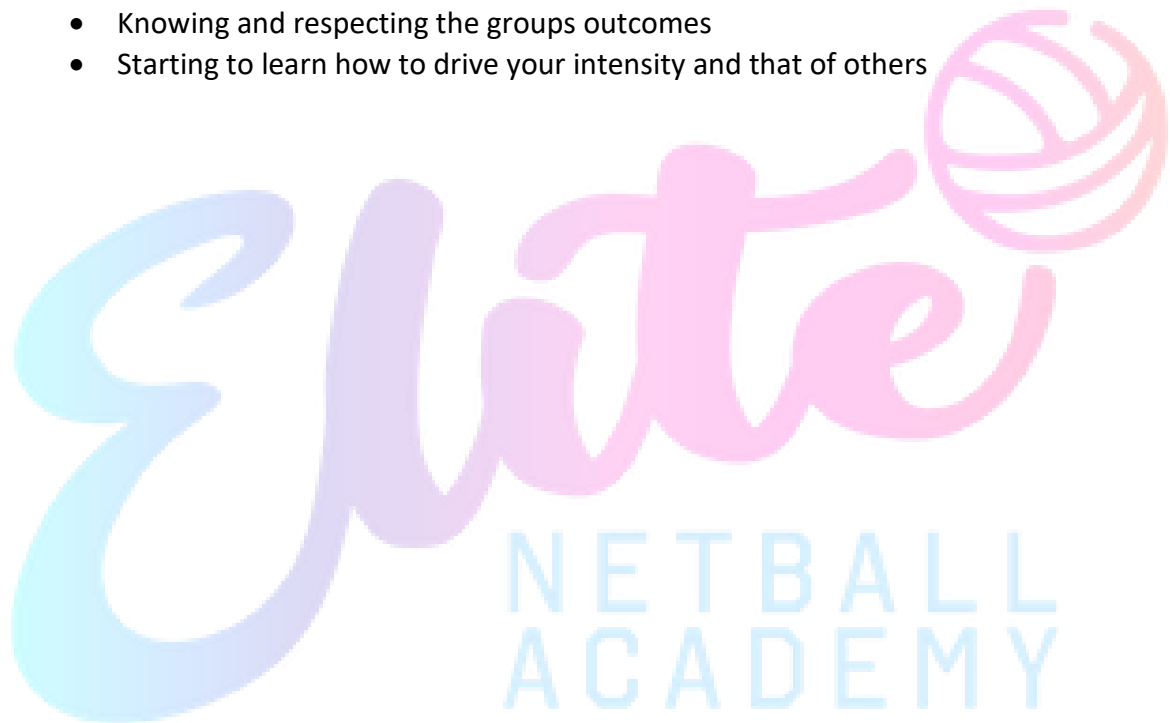


### **Game understanding**

- Players focused on positions – minimum of two
- Set plays executed under pressure – add layers through season
- Attacking court balance and mixing it up
- Defence holding a player up
- Defence principles – contained in How we play
- Attacking principles - contained in How we play
- Introduction of more sophisticated set plays – tested under conditions
- Use of clips
- Feedback contribution of games

### **Life skills**

- Developing independent learning skills such as making informed choices and extra practice
- Knowing and respecting the groups outcomes
- Starting to learn how to drive your intensity and that of others



### **Main Stages 3**

**Excellent skill level, understands the game, their role and can execute these under pressure - U15's and U16's**

The coach's role – to develop a group ready for u16's National Clubs/schools play all players to develop a strong squad but prioritise some competition. Develop an u15's group to prepare for National Clubs/school in a year's time each player selected to play half a game. Individuals may play up into senior competition to receive stretch – this is considered carefully.

**Key things to cover and master:**

#### **Warm up**

- Player and coaches leading

#### **Fitness**

- Delivered by a strength and conditioner
- Speed and agility drills again include a ball while working under fatigue
- Plyometrics

#### **Movement**

- Identifying personal movement work, from game analysis, you may add defence and ball depending on your starting point.

#### **Footwork**

- Related to positional specific work and highlighting areas of weakness to work on independently or in small groups – continue on strengths in this area to make a super strength (don't just focus on work on)
- Encourage creativity on what they would like to do or try

#### **Passing**

- Type of pass- situational with right touch on ball
- Placement of pass in relation to defender
- Player should be able to weight the ball into space and add the right touch

#### **Skill**

- Execute positional role under different pressures

#### **Game understanding**

- Scene setting and coping strategies – pressure cooker
- Set plays executed under pressure and under a variety of conditions (fatigue)
- Attacking variation of through court set ups
- Defence working off- line defence
- Defence principles

- Attacking principles
- Clips
- Higher level of game analysis

**Life skills**

- Players focusing on their own individual improvements both at and away from team practice
- Superpowers to be targeted
- Players driving the team's vision and being accountable
- Be able to assess session and feedback



## Further Stages and Elite Performance

Excellent skill level, understands the game & their role, executes under pressure, needs pushing in each component of the game and feedback on development needs to be more individualised.

### **Key things to cover and master:**

#### **Warm up**

- Combination of player, coach, and conditioner

#### **Fitness**

- Provided by strength and conditioner, positional and individual adapted and focused
- Speed and agility drills more individualised and positionally specific

#### **Movement**

- Positional specific movement adding the pressure with ball and defenders

#### **Footwork**

- Related to positional specific work and highlighting areas of weakness to work on independently and superpowers stretched

#### **Passing**

- Player should be able to weight the ball into space and add the right touch
- Feeder lead and receiver lead decisions
- Low error rate

#### **Skill**

- Execute positional role under different overloaded pressures

#### **Game understanding**

- Scene setting and coping strategies
- Set plays executed under pressure and under different conditions
- Attacking variation of through court set ups
- Defence principles
- Attacking principles
- Video Clips and level of feedback more routine
- Individual, unit, and team progress monitored

#### **Life skills**

- **Attitude** - A player's demonstration of characteristics such as determination, persistence, commitment, positivity, and personal responsibility in relation to their development

- **Motivation** - A player's internal motivation in relation to their development, including factors such as enjoyment and desire for success
- **Resilience** - A player's ability to overcome and recover quickly ("bounce back") from setbacks and adversity and continue on the pathway to successful development.
- **Confidence** - a player's belief that she has the ability to succeed and carry out the necessary skills/behaviours associated with the success. This relates to both a general and situation-specific belief.
- **Control** - a player's ability to control her thoughts, emotions, reactions and behaviour in order to facilitate peak performance.
- **Communication** - A player's ability to communicate well with others, both on the court and off the court.



## How We Might Play

The above section is more focused on the 'what you might coach'. This section should help you think about why you coach the way you do and what vision you have on how you want your teams to play. Start at the end and work backwards to create your starting point. If the five-year-olds are the entry point at your club or school, they are the starting point to this vision and journey through to senior netball and it's important all coaches in your environment know what the expectations are from the Head Coach or Director of Netball. Coaches want direction and clarity!

### **Attacking Examples**

Overall Aims:

- Get our GS's into 1v1 situations & personal high percentage shooting positions
  - CP strategies to isolate 1v1: a) GA taking 1<sup>st</sup> phase; b) WD/GD taking 1<sup>st</sup> phase close to attacking third line; c) delayed entry into goal circle by GA
- Attackers into attack – GD/WD bringing ball through-court to get driving ball to attackers in goal third
- Speed of ball – increase mid-court attack ability to move ball to expose circle defenders, BUT also work ball to available GS/GA space
- GS/GA understanding of individual holds/movement that will expose defenders but also understanding as a pair regarding overload, screens, roles in different situations.

### **Defence Examples**

Overall Aims:

- Win more clean ball – through increased individual skill development and team strategy – ensuring everyone is on the same page!
- Create & go for lateral ball, lifted ball OR long diagonal ball – HOW?
- Win ball higher up the court – type of strategy for GS-C? How can we be most effective at applying pressure & turning over ball? Do our WD/GD need to sit higher? Can we recover in time to regain team strategy?
- Man2Man v Off Marking v Half/Half (mid-court man 2 man – circle defenders running switches/split circle/off marking? – Assess strengths of players within squad. Are our mid-court more effective man2man BUT circle D more effective off marking! Whatever we do, it we need to be a) winning ball or b) shutting down options.
- Creating FORWARD intercepts (rather than back & ups) through running switches, long diagonals – how do we 'tempt' to make something look open? Needs increased awareness/understanding. Lack of understanding/application will lead to defense end being exposed!



## What do we need to work on?

Simple basics even for World Class Players

### Attack

- Delivery of driving ball
- Speed of ball, turn, movement
- GS/GA understanding – individual & pair
- Confidence to let ball go
- Confidence & knowledge of each other to know where they want it & how far they can be pushed

### Defence

- Intercepting the ball
- GK/GD understanding – individual and pair
- Confidence to go for ball
- Confidence to go for ball and back each other up

### Attack Centre Pass Structure

- Wide start position – get WD/GD through the middle to play WA to the top. GA to stay wide and allow 1:1 to happen
- GA take the line – WA prepare for 2<sup>nd</sup> phase
- WA taking 1<sup>st</sup> phase – use of C in goal third OR WD/GD lateral to play self/C onto goal circle.
- Use of screens at the front (WA/GA) to eliminate GD – drive the ball through the WD/GD at the back and place either WA/GA towards the circle edge and expose 1v1 in the circle.
- Look at ways of creating a miss-match with GD on WA. Cross over, screen, interchange at the line?

### Defence Centre Pass Structure

- A lot of teams have a tall, target GS so the aim must be to win ball early! Pressurize 1st & 2nd phase.
- Get opposition WA/GA both over the line – preferably GA taking 1st phase ball high and wide. Can we win it? If not, let it land and shut down/win ball on 2nd phase – HOW? Create lateral, diagonal or lifted opportunities.
- 2v1 on WA, 1v1 on GA but running them high & wide.
- Look at our effectiveness of a 3 over – all 3 front and 2 back defenders must be on the same page. Could be effective due to range of our defenders & the pressure it applies on 1st phase. WA/GA must not allow driving ball to their WD/GD as it will allow easy 2nd phase option. Question – are we good at recovering to 2nd phase positions?
- Tall/holding GS – could we look at a running switch – GK come out early on sweeping GA, GD time run to cover GS? (an 'every now & then' tactic).

### Through Court Attack Structure

- GA/WA switching roles within through court – GA playing higher than WA. Must ensure GA does not sag back & cut off WA space – discussion from Saturday's game of starting in original position, but WA peeling off allowing GA to come up and WA overlap? PREVIOUS FEEDBACK USEFUL TO SHARE
- GD/WD principles to bring ball through to halfway line – principle of when/how to proactively use a lateral/swing ball to open up the court & allow attackers to get ahead.
- Proactive use of the line - WA, C using GD, WD. Need to practice this versus only using it when we get into trouble?

### Through Court Defence Structure

- Do we look to have WD/GD sitting higher until a certain point i.e. ball gets into Centre third? Will this enable us to challenge ball higher up the court/put more pressure on weaker attacking units? Must have the ability to recover quickly if it is broken?
- Look at the role of the GS-C. Man 2 Man (but leaving ball carrier to shut down short option & open up long diagonal for WD/GD) or Off Marking/Zone to create different challenge to attacking opposition.
- Options within the goal third – Mid-Court forcing off the circle edge with circle defenders tempting long diagonal? Arms over/leave ball carrier? Ensuring no cuts to ball to create lifted ball?



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## **Positional Responsibilities**

(Non-negotiables)

### **Goal Shooter**

- 90% shooting accuracy (seniors)
- Availability when CC hit circle edge in an advantageous position
- Exits circle when necessary to provide option
- Can deliver accurate S2S ball
- Good awareness of TOP & BASE options in circle
- Work with GA to set up penalty situations
- Immediate transition into defense & dictate to opponent limiting their involvement / availability

### **Goal Attack**

- 90% accuracy (seniors)
- Available for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> phase CP as appropriate
- Takes on defenders 1 v 1
- Aware of correct entry point into circle working effectively with GS to provide best options
- Can deliver S2S ball
- Work with GS to set up penalty situations
- Immediate transition into defense preventing GD availability and limit backup options

### **Wing Attack**

- Available for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> phase CP as appropriate
- Gets free 1v1 / 2v1 in required time moving into most appropriate space ensuring width & depth
- Lose defenders to arrive on circle edge free
- Accurate feeding of circle (using variety of passes)
- Repositions on circle edge after pass or non-receipt
- Set up in effective position for defense of backline until ball in a position where no longer effective
- Take interceptions

### **Centre**

- 100% accurate delivery of CP (both forward & back options) and through court passes
- Provide constant link from Defense to Attack
- Lose defender 1v1 / 2v1 moving into most appropriate space ensuring width & depth
- Accurate feeding of circle (using variety of passes) repositioning on circle edge after pass or non-receipt
- Recognize least advantageous space for attacker
- Work effectively with WD/GD on 1<sup>st</sup> phase of CP to limit options or gain possession

### **Wing Defence**

- Effective Stage 2 marking dictating subsequent movement e.g., Prevent 1:2 particularly around circle edge
- Take interceptions 1v1 at CP or force WA receipt high & wide
- Takes interceptions off own and other opponents
- Good communication with effective use of C for 2v1 at CP
- Quick transition from defense to attack
- Provide 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase option at CP
- Good positioning as backup option on attacking 1/3 line

### **Goal Defence**

- Dictates movement of GA in relation to ball, GS and other defenders
- Works consistently with GK to limit availability of shooters in circle
- Can take interceptions 1v1 at CP or forces GA receipt high & wide and take interceptions off own & other opponents
- Provide 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase option at CP
- Quick transition from defense to attack including backline set up & good positioning as backup option on attacking 1/3 line

### **Goalkeeper**

- Dictates availability of GS and confuses space for feeders
- Effective 1v1 marking
- Varied defense of shot
- Works consistently with GD to limit availability of shooters in the circle
- Takes interceptions IN & OUT of circle
- 100% accurate delivery of backline pass
- Quick transition from defense to attack providing appropriate option within goal 1/3
- Be able to catch under pressure, catch difficult balls and move balls quickly into passing position

### **Team – keep it simple**

- Excellent physical ability to accelerate, change direction, and elevate from a run
- Land balanced
- Turns to goal
- Deliver correct pass accurately
- Outstanding catching under pressure
- Ability to catch difficult passes
- Move ball quickly into passing position