



Developing the 5Cs over the Season

Planning for Psychological Development

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The focus of this article is to provide some ideas for how psychological development can be planned for and developed in an integrated and systematic way alongside technical work. This article focuses on planning for the season, with follow-up articles covering planning and 'doing' a session, with the final part of the series looking at how we can review the session and the season from a psychological perspective.

Whilst all the Cs are interactive, the easiest way to introduce and teach them initially is separately. There are elements and strategies of one C that can easily crossover into another, but coaching one C at a time will ensure that focus is maintained and intentionally developed in players, with a specific C becoming a reference point for the session. Nevertheless, we do acknowledge that coaches will be affecting each C, whether intentionally or not, during their training sessions, such is the interactive nature of the 5Cs.

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In order to get the full benefit of psychological practices and strategies, they need to be repeated on a regular basis

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5C's Seasonal Coaching Plan

In order to get the full benefit of psychological practices and strategies, they need to be repeated on a regular basis. With regular and structured work that is reinforced at every opportunity within your training sessions, you will find a shift in the use and ownership of the 5Cs behaviours and responses. This requires a long-term commitment to plan in advance what you want to achieve. Just like learning to pass forward with good vision, weight and timing, being able to show the skills and responses of the 5Cs in every training session and in every match takes time. One-off sessions that emphasise the principles of commitment or concentration are not going to automatically produce the ultimate committed and focused player.

Here, we provide a snapshot of a twelve month 5Cs coaching plan to help you integrate the 5Cs within your coaching. The twelve month plan is broken down into three phases: a one month pre-season, a ten month competitive season and a one month 'transition phase'.

To ensure a continued and systematic progression within one C and between the Cs, the twelve months have been split into two five month cycles. Each cycle follows the suggested development course starting with commitment, followed by communication, concentration, control, before concluding with confidence. Each monthly plan outlines a set of aims for the month that look to introduce and build the foundation of that C within the first month, and then develop it further in the second cycle.

It's up to you to build the weekly content itself which can include a C-related warm-up, helping the players to not only warm up physically but also psychologically for the session and practice/s geared towards developing the C. In this way you can incorporate the C within the overall technical focus of your training sessions.

As you and your players become more familiar and confident in all the C strategies, conducting practices focused solely on a C may become unnecessary, and using the strategies within your sessions as you see fit may be more appropriate in order to meet individual needs.

At the end of each training month we encourage you to include a practice of your choice from the previous months C coaching. In doing so you continue to reinforce the Cs and shape your players' view of them. In this way, you further enhance their attention to using the strategies and showing consistent C-related behaviours month to month.

The twelve month 5Cs plan is just one possible way in which each C could be organised and structured over a twelve month period. We encourage you to personalise and develop a plan to suit your team and club environment. You should also pay attention to the individual plans and objectives for each player when designing the specifics of each session.

Don't worry for now about the specifics of each practice (which will of course vary depending on ages and stages), it's the principles of planning a structured syllabus to develop mental skills alongside technical work that is most important.

Once that plan is in place, it's a case of focusing your coaching on the psychological factors that you observe, providing feedback to players on these responses, and not just technical factors. The checklist below gives you some ideas for how to adapt practices and your coaching to add this psychological component.

Commitment

Describes how motivated a player is

Communication

Describes how effectively a player listens, acknowledges and talks to coaches and teammates (verbally and non-verbally)

Concentration

Describes a player's ability to focus their attention on the right thing at the right time

Control

Describes how well a player can control and manage their emotions

Confidence

Describes a player's self-belief in their skills and ability to achieve goals

Further reading

Coaching psychological skills in youth football: Developing the 5Cs
Chris Harwood & Richard Anderson.
Bennion-Kearney Publishers.

5C coaching checklist

CONNECT

Promote the chosen 'C' skill in the same way you would introduce a technical or tactical skill. **Role-Model** the 'C' using good or bad examples from football to increase awareness of its importance. For example, using a player who has poor emotional control versus a player who has good control, highlighting the differences and outcomes.

ACTIVATE

Add the 'C' to practices to allow players to 'train' their 'Cs' over time alongside technical work.

DEMONSTRATE

Reinforce the 'C' by publicly **praising** those players who demonstrate the chosen 'C' skill or behaviour. Establish peer support (buddy system) based around the C by encouraging the players to praise each other for good actions. The coach should also build in opportunities within the session for players to feedback and support each other.

CONSOLIDATE

Engage players in game situations that 'test' the players 'C' skill **under pressure**. Finally, review the players' use of the C during the practice, game or session. Support this with peer-reviews and coach **reviews** in order to establish achievable goals for the next training session.

Commitment

- 1** Reward effort, attitude and intention over outcome. Encouragement of persistence after setbacks from coach and through positive peer climate
- 2** Skill specific feedback and personalised recognition when earned. Use of individually chosen goals and targets
- 3** Positive reinforcement and recognition when extra effort leads to a positive outcome
- 4** Ask players to assess commitment levels out of 10. 'Can we raise it a notch for the next 5 minutes?'
- 5** Give players ownership within practices – 'voice and choice'

Communication

- 1** Develop a specific practice that assesses communication (e.g., only 2 players can talk; swap every minute, silent soccer) to highlight importance
- 2** Include conditions that develop communication (e.g., putting a name on a pass, use of trigger words 'press' 'drop', silent soccer to emphasise non-verbal communication)
- 3** Recognise and reinforce when a player gives good praise, body language, feedback, information, or instruction to a teammate
- 4** Recognise and praise when a player acknowledges/listens to a teammate

Concentration

- 1** Highlight the cues that a player should be focusing on (on and off the ball)
- 2** Use a practice that challenges players to scan / switch focus effectively e.g. between ball, space, key players (check shoulder; control ball with peripheral vision, close eyes - 'where are your teammates?')
- 3** Overload and stretch players concentration through distraction training, extending practice when fatigued/ bored
- 4** Use of consistent individual, unit and team trigger words to reinforce concentration cues e.g. 'press', 'squeeze', 'drop'

Control

- 1** Highlight to players a negative emotional reaction – anger, self-criticism, bad body language, slow recovery, worry/negative thoughts – and impact on performance
- 2** Allow players to practice a negative reaction and switching states to a positive response (quick, involved, alert etc)
- 3** Use bad calls, consequences for losing control, pressure simulation ('ugly zone') in games
- 4** Encourage players to detach themselves from errors quickly by using a simple refocussing routine eg. Breathing, 'I'm back' or 'next chance', Thumbs up. 'Who can recover quickest!'
- 5** Reinforce use of mental preparation routine for pre-game, breaks in play, at set pieces – breath, visualise, trigger word (for both taker and receiver)

Confidence

- 1** Use first name when giving praise and specific feedback on individual accomplishments
- 2** Scaffold the session so individuals gain success at a challenging level. Use of PB's, targets and competition to embed success. 'Little improvements, big steps.'
- 3** Copying confidence. Setting up players to train like the confident player – copying their qualities/responses, body language. Reinforce whenever player behaves like confident role model
- 4** Use of imagery for player to mentally rehearse success, good execution and positive responses
- 5** Create no failure climate. Encourage players to express themselves, be creative and to keep trying new things even after mistakes
- 6** Offer players the chance to do their 'feel good' drills and practices to hone their strengths

5C 12 Month Plan: Overview



Seasonal Aims/Objectives

- To introduce and develop the 5Cs of commitment, communication, concentration, control and confidence at an individual and team level
- To integrate the 5Cs alongside the technical, tactical and physical syllabus of the team

CYCLE 1

Cycle Aims/Objectives

- Establish a positive learning environment to foster player development
- Promote the importance of the 5Cs amongst the players
- Introduce and teach the 5Cs specific to the age group
- Review the effectiveness in implementing the 5Cs on an individual and team level to inform content for cycle 2

CYCLE 2

Cycle Aims/Objectives

- Build a 'no fear of failure' environment to foster player development
- Continue to value the importance of the 5Cs as players and coaches
- Develop and progress the 5C behaviours and responses of the players
- Review the effectiveness in implementing the 5Cs on an individual and team level to inform content for next year

Cycle 1

Months:	July	August	September	October	November	December
Phase of Season:	Pre Season	Competitive Season				
Training Weeks:	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
The C:	Commitment	Communication	Concentration	Control	Confidence	Review

Cycle 2

Months:	January	February	March	April	May	June
Phase of Season:	Competitive Season					Transition
Training Weeks:	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
The C:	Commitment	Communication	Concentration	Control	Confidence	Review

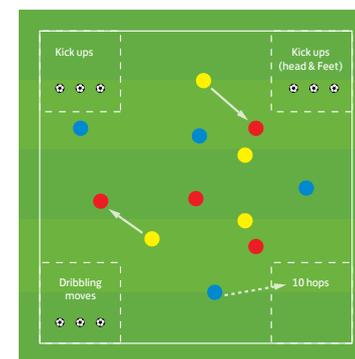
Monthly detail: July

Pre Season | July | Commitment

Aims/Objectives

- Establish a positive and enjoyable learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation
- Develop a task orientated climate where players feel in control of their own learning
- Value the importance of developing new skills at all times (more effort equals more improvement)
- Establish regular avenues of feedback with and between the players
- Encourage players to keep going when things get tough

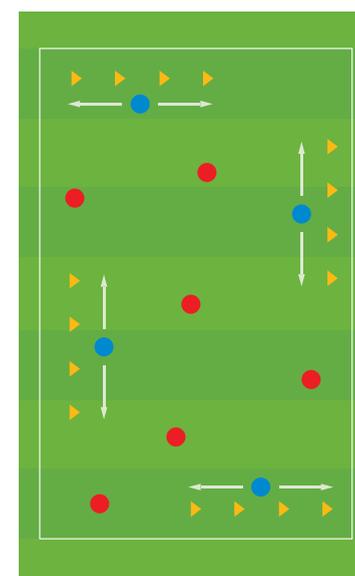
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
C Warm Up:	Tag Game with Corner Boxes	The Great Escape	Tag Game with Corner Boxes	The Great Escape
Commitment Exercise:	Dribbling and Support Play	Risky Business	Dribbling and Support Play	Risky Business



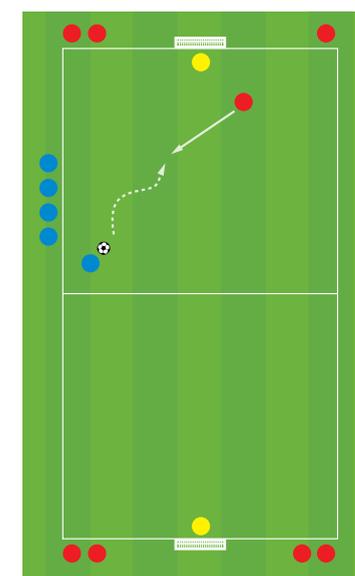
Tag Game with Corner Boxes

Checks

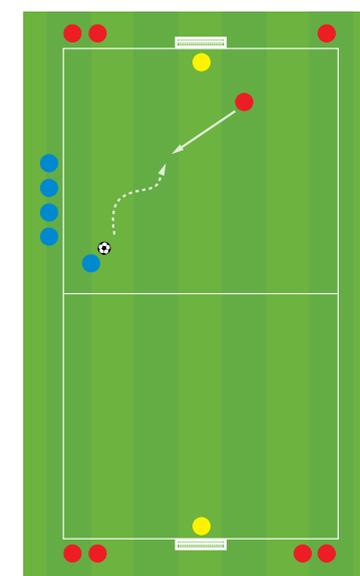
- Have the players set themselves goals for the coming sessions/weeks?
- Have the players shared these goals with the coach?
- Are the players engaged in the task/practice/game/challenge?
- Does the practice allow the players to feel in control of their learning?
- Does the practice allow the players to make their own decisions?
- Does the practice foster feelings of confidence in the player?
- Does the exercise allow the players to socially interact with one another?



The Great Escape



Dribbling and Support Play



Risky Business

*For full session plan detail please log onto The FA Licensed Coaches' Club website