

Basic Loofball Coaching Manual



Basic Loofball Coaching Manual

**A Complete
Guide to Coaching Athletes**

Published By



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FOREWARD

This coaching manual has been developed by Loofball Sport Development Initiative (LSDI) as part of her commitment to ensuring the success of loofball at the grassroots level as well as the seamless implementation of the organization's programmes and policies.

The manual provides coaches and trainers with relevant information on how to properly coach loofball so that athletes can enjoy the maximum benefits of playing the sport - getting physically active, healthy and fit. It also provides information on managing practice sessions, basic skills development and best approaches to coaching children.

Coaches and trainers are therefore required to utilize this resource to coach in line with the expectations of LSDI and ensure that young athletes are being taught the correct skills and attitudes in a fun and friendly environment.

LSDI would like to express her sincere appreciation to the drafting committee, her ever-supportive patrons and some of the volunteers, who contributed in a way to ensuring the success of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Introduction	1
• Coaches Code of Ethics	1
• Your Role as a Coach	2
• Skills Required of a Coach	4
• Understanding the Game	5
• Rules of the Game	6
• Teaching Loofball Skills	10
• Systems of Play	17
• Coaching in Practice Sessions	22
• Warm-Up and Skills Drills	24
• Coaching in Matches	30
• Talent Identification	31
• Player Development Model	33
• Coaching Children	36
• Injury Management	37
• Player Evaluation	40

Introduction

Sport and physical activity is a fundamental aspect of human life. The benefits that come from it are multidimensional. Sport and physical activity is often seen as a medium through which valuable life skills such as teamwork, dedication, perseverance and healthy lifestyles can be taught. The health, social and economic importance of physical activity in particular cannot be overstated. Evidence shows that lack of physical activity increases the risk of heart disease, colon and breast cancer, diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, anxiety and depression, hypertension and other life-threatening diseases.

Loofball is a scientific sport designed with health and safety considerations to meaningfully engage participants. It is the coach, however, who shapes the experiences of players and steers both their athletic and individual development, hence the need for this coaching guide.

This Basic Loofball Coaching Manual has been developed as a guide for coaches to ensure that young players are taught the correct skills and attitudes the right way, and that progress is made in the sport. The document will be of interest to all loofball coaches and trainers, school officials, teachers, researchers, parents, sports organizations and anyone interested in sport and physical activity.

Coaches Code of Ethics

LSDI is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects her coaches to act in a manner that contributes to the overall mission and goals of the organization. Coaches must realize that they are not only instructors but critical partners who contribute to both athletic and individual development of players. This is vital to note because how a player regards a sport is often dependent on the behavior of the coach. The following Code of Ethics outlines the responsibilities of coaches and serves as an important guide in developing players as well as enabling them become better both as athletes and individuals.

Coaches have the responsibility to:

- Be aware of, and always comply with, the LSDI's safety policies and guidelines. The safety, health and welfare of players should always come first.

- Treat everyone fairly regardless of gender or gender identity, age, ethnicity, disability, political, religious or social background. Bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind is forbidden in loofball.
- Be aware of, and always comply with the LSDI Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of the rules of the game.
- Actively discourage unsportsmanlike behaviour of players.
- Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- Direct comments or criticism at the performance rather than the athlete.
- Ensure that the activity being undertaken is suitable for the age, experience, ability and fitness level of athletes.
- At no time become intimately or sexually involved with their athletes. This includes requests for sexual favors or threat of reprisal for the rejection of such requests.
- Not act in a way that may adversely affect or bring you, your team, organization or the game into disrepute or discredit.
- Not encourage, promote or turn a blind eye to any fixing or attempt to compromise the outcome of a match at any given time.
- Disclose any incident that does or has the potential to render you unfit to be a registered coach or violates LSDI's core values, irrespective of when such event took place.

Your Role as a Coach

A Role Model

The coach has to be a good role model to the athletes. The way you conduct yourself whilst in the presence of your athletes provides an example of how they should behave. Being a good role model will help, for example, make the players listen and take in what you've got to say. A coach has to be someone who other individuals would aspire to be like, either in the present or future.

An Innovator

A successful coach develops training techniques and styles that are appropriate for teams and/or players. A coach should be able to invent practice methods that build on and encourage teamwork and skills development. A coach's creativity can inspire his team to perform better both individually and as a group.

An Educator

It is important to note that athletes learn in different ways, and that learning is a process of adaptation. A good coach tries to train athletes and provide instruction that is adapted to the athlete's level. It is the coach's responsibility to try to help young athletes to grow and become better both as athletes and individuals.

Athletes may face temptations and could feel pressure to take part in unhealthy or delinquent activities such as usage of drugs, alcohol etc. The coach should be there to guide them into making the correct decision when these kinds of temptations occur.

A Motivator

The coach is required to create the environment and opportunity for athlete to express their motivation in all they do. The coach should refrain from just using insults and bad language to achieve this; instead he should establish a player-friendly strategy to get the best out of players. It is the strength and the character that allows athletes to overcome adversity, setbacks, disappointments and injuries. For instance when a player does something wrong, the coach can explain and advice them how to do it next time; it could also be an off the pitch situation wherein the coach advises his players. The players need to see the coach as someone they can look up to and can lead them into success.

A Friend

It is always important to be a friend to your players as, at the end of the day, we're all humans. Being a friend can make a player feel better when receiving criticism because they know it's only about improvement which is important. The coach must, however, ensure the player knows the boundaries and still respects their authority.

Duty of Care

Coaches have a duty of care to safeguard children and young people from harm. Every child has the right to experience and enjoy sport in a safe environment without fear of bullying or abuse from others around them. As a coach, you have the obligation to ensure that this environment is created. The physical, emotional and psychological well-being of athletes should always be a top priority for any loofball coach.

Health and Safety

Coaches must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to create a safe sporting environment. A good coach should try to ascertain the well-being and safety of his athletes at all times. Ensuring athletes' safety can be achieved by inspecting playing court before games or sessions, monitoring players both on and off the court, asking questions when need be as well as having good knowledge of abnormal body signs.

Professionalism

Coaches are required to display high personal standards and always show a favorable image of the game and of coaching to athletes, other coaches, spectators and the public. Coaches should treat all athletes with absolute dignity and respect as free and equal individuals. They should encourage athletes to act in a similar manner, including ensuring dignified behaviour in victory and defeat. The coach must not exert undue influence over the athlete in order to obtain personal benefit whatsoever.

Equal opportunities

It is important to make sure that everyone is given the same chance to make it into the team. Factors such as race, religion, gender, social or economic status and ability should never impact the coach's decision on when a player should be given an opportunity to learn the sport. It is important to make sure there is equal opportunity as you never know where fresh talent is going to come from. During a training session, the coach should cater to the needs of all players and not give preference to a selected few. This is because it will make the segregated ones feel unwelcome. In terms of competitions, however, selection should be based only on skill and attitude.

Skills Required of a Coach

Communication

A coach should have good communication skills which involve talking clearly to athletes and also listening to what they have to say. Merely giving instructions to players isn't enough. The coach should ensure players clearly comprehend and understand exactly what he's saying.

Organization

Planning and organization can help keep athletes engaged and enthusiastic. The coach will need to have a system of conducting sessions to help athletes improve and master basic skills. This will include planning sessions before hand and making sure they run smoothly.

Time management

As a coach, you need to be good at managing time, for example knowing where the players need to be at a certain time. Time management of a session can vary depending on the intensity or seriousness of the session. The coach needs to know when enough's enough, and also the time it could take to get to a venue leaving enough time to warm up and get ready for the game.

Self-Awareness

The coach needs to maintain self-awareness and humility at all times. Coaches who are self-aware and humble set model behavior for their players to follow. Through a coach's analysis of themselves and their players, innovative coaching methods can be discovered to improve and enhance player and team performance.

Understanding the Game

Loofball is an interesting non-contact sport which is played over a net with a furry ball by five players on each side of the court. A game or play begins with a serve and ends with a scoring or fault. A loofball match is won by the first team to win two sets. The first two sets are played for 25 points, whereas the third set is played for 20 points.

A Brief History of Loofball

The game's origin dates back to 2017, when it was played as a pastime by school kids in Numan, Adamawa State, North-East Nigeria. The game was initially played over an extended rope between two to five players until early 2018, when ropes were replaced with nets. However, the game evolved rapidly and enjoyed significant popularity among youths in neighboring states and the Federal Capital Territory.

In a society accustomed to more established sports like football, basketball and volleyball, loofball needed a holistic and organized approach to succeed. To this

end, the Loofball Coaching Team, a group of passionate volunteers, was formed in 2018 to develop and propagate the sport at the grassroots level. The group, which would be later incorporated as a non-profit organization with the official name - Loofball Sport Development Initiative, made remarkable strides in developing as well as administering the sport by using systems and strategies that apply to the modern context.

The rules of the game were first drafted by Engr. Winner Vidiyeno Matahula, a safety and health expert, an avid sportsman and writer.

Aim of the Game

The objective of the game is to launch the ball over the net with such speed and direction so that the opponent fails to catch or return it. There are basically three phases of play: service, attack and defense. During service, the team with the ball serves into the opponent's home zone. Attack happens when a team tries to down the ball on the opponent's court, whilst the opponent tries to defend or prevent the attacking team from scoring. A team scores a point when the ball lands on the appropriate zone or section of the opponent's court, or when the opponent fails to return the ball by committing a fault.

Safety

As a non-contact sport, the likelihood of physical contact in loofball is very low. This, however, does not prevent the likelihood of injury. Players should be encouraged to always stick to the rules of the game at least as a preventive measure against avoidable injuries.

Most likely injuries in loofball include sprained shoulder, sprained ankle and knee injury. (See Injury Management)

Rules of the Game

As a fast-paced non-contact sport, loofball requires athletes and coaches to understand and master the rules of the game, to avoid errors or simply put, gifting points to the opponents. Below are basic play rules of loofball.

Rules of Play

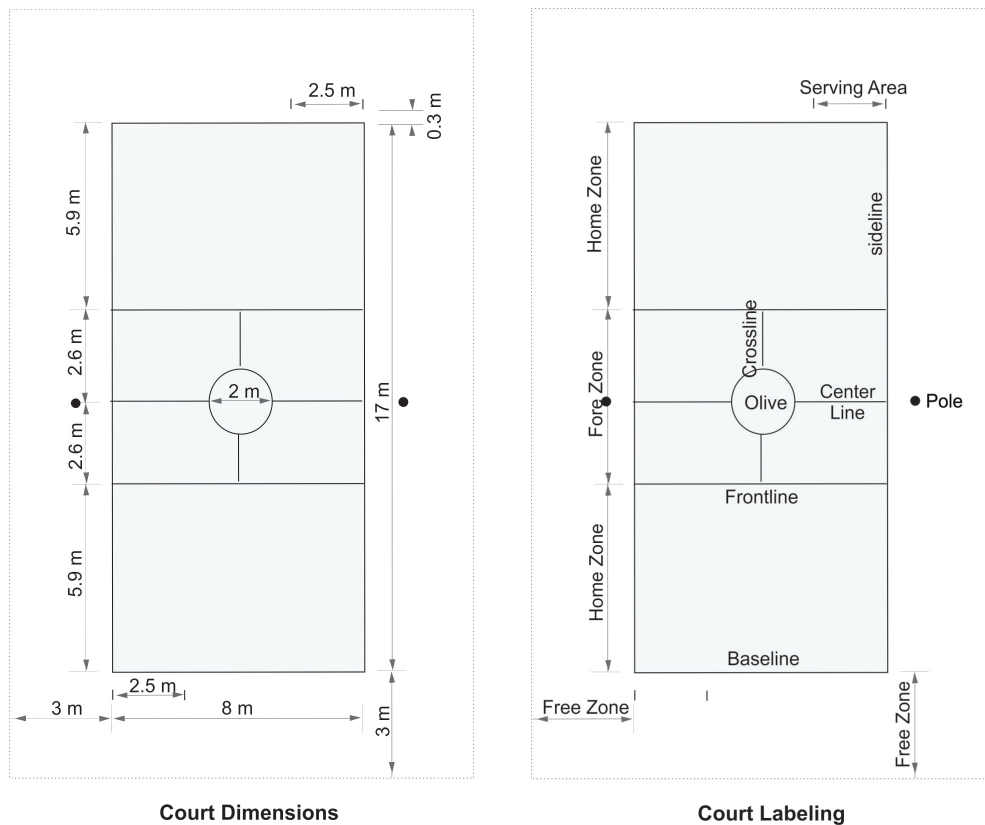
- There are five players on each side of the court.
- Before service, players arrange themselves (within the home zone) in rows - three players in the front and two at the back.
- Contact with the ball is by the hand or forearm. In other words, the ball must not touch a part of the body other than the hand and forearm before it is held.
- A player takes no more than two steps with the ball.
- A player does not hold or throw the ball more than once within a turn.
- A shot or serve is launched with one hand.
- A shot launched from the home zone (called 'home shot') is valid only when it reaches the opponent's home zone.
- A lob is valid only when it reaches the diagonally opposite section of the fore zone or the opponent's home zone.
- A player must not overreach the net when lobbing or jump-shooting.
- Jump-shooting (during play) is allowed only within the home zone.
- Minimum of two and maximum of three throws in a turn.
- A player must not hold the ball beyond 3 seconds.
- In a set, the winning team serves next.
- A 'line ball' is in.
- Only one player is allowed to catch or hold the ball at a time.
- A serve is valid only when it reaches the opponent's home zone. Moreover, a serve must not result in a 'net ball' nor 'high-ball'.

Scoring

A match is played as best of three sets i.e. winning the first two sets wins the match. The first two sets are played to 25 points whereas the third set is played to 20. A set must be won by a point margin of 2. A team earns a point for winning a game. To win a game, the opponent must commit a fault or fail to return the ball.

Court size

Loofball is played on a rectangular court measuring 17m by 8m separated by a net in the middle. The home zone on each side of the court measures 5.9m x 8m. The fore zone, a quadripartite region separating the home zones, measures 5.2m x 8m. The fore zone also incorporates a 2m diameter sub-region (called Olive) at its centre.



Net Size and Height

A net, preferably of white or black color, 1 m wide and 8.5 m long with mesh size of 10 cm x 10 cm may be used. The net height (measured at the center) above the turf should be 2.30 m for men and 2.28 m for women and young people (say between 13 and 20 years). The net height, alongside the above court dimensions, may be scaled down by 20 or 40 percent for young people below 13 years.

Ball

A standard size 2 loofball should have a circumference of 59.7 – 62.8cm and a weight of 190 – 240g when inflated to the required hardness. An inflated size 1 or mini loofball, on the other hand, should have a circumference between 50.3 – 53.4cm and a weight between 150g and 190g. The pile length of the furry surface must not exceed 2.5cm.

Toss

Before the start of a match, the opposing captains are required to take part in a toss. The captain who wins the toss may choose either a side of the court or to make the first serve. If the winner chooses a side, the other team makes the first serve. And if the winner chooses to make the first serve, the other team chooses a side.

Intervals

Loofball allows a break of two minutes between sets. A break begins with the referee's whistle at the end of a set and ends with same whistle just before players reposition for the next set.

Change of Sides

In loofball, teams change ends at the end of the first set. A new coin toss is done to determine sides when a match reaches third set.

Change of Player Positions

Players may change or switch positions when the ball is out of play. This is usually done at the discretion of the coach, and as quickly as possible in order not to interrupt the game. Players must, however, maintain the 3-2 formation when changing or switching positions.

Timeouts

Official loofball rules allow only one timeout of 30 seconds per team in a set. Only the referee is authorized to grant a timeout request. A timeout begins with the referee's whistle at the end of a game and ends with same whistle just before players reposition for the next game.

Net Ball

In loofball, a 'net ball' occurs when a serve or shot contacts the net such that it changes speed or direction afterwards. A net ball is forbidden when serving (constitutes a foul serve). However, a shot or lob is allowed to contact the net provided other rules are observed.

Ball In and Ball Out

A ball is said to be 'in' when it lands on the appropriate region of the opponent's court, and 'out' when otherwise. A 'ball in' is a scoring by the sending team whereas a 'ball out' is a scoring by the receiving team.

Substitution

Loofball allows up to four substitutions per team in a match. A player of the starting line-up may leave the court and re-enter only once in a match. A substitute player may enter the court only once in a match.

Uniforms

During a match, a team is required to use uniforms or jerseys which are distinct in color from those of the opponent. Official loofball rules stipulate that uniforms must be numbered between 11 and 25. Numbers should be written on both the

front and back. The design and size of uniforms may vary according to the requirements of the event, league or tournament.

Misconduct and Sanctions

Misconduct or unsportsmanlike behavior may constitute a fault. In other words, a team could lose a game when their player or players do not behave properly. Use of offensive or immoral words and gestures is strongly forbidden in a match. Moreover, the referee is authorized to stop a game in order to make a ruling when he or she deems fit.

A first misconduct attracts a verbal warning, which carries no penalty. A subsequent misconduct attracts a yellow card, which carries a point penalty. A third misconduct attracts a red card, which carries both a point penalty and disqualification. A player disqualified must leave the court without replacement. In summary, sanctioning in loofball is done in the following order:

Verbal Warning < Yellow card + a point to the opponent < Red card + a point to the opponent + Disqualification

(To learn the comprehensive rules of the game, Please refer to the official rule book of loofball)

Teaching Loofball Skills

Basic Skills in Loofball

Loofball is a technical sport that is mastered through consistent practice of its skills. Athletes should be encouraged to get acquainted with all the skills, as they are the essentials that enable athletes to execute the physical requirements of the sport. The most basic of these skills include:

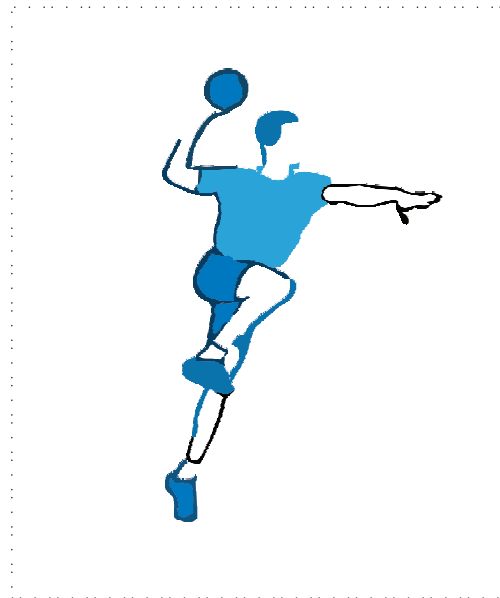
- Jump-shooting
- Catching
- Lobbing
- Serving
- Chest-passing
- Setting
- Digging
- Dodging

Jump-shooting

Jump-shooting has to do with height and agility. Although shooting without jumping isn't a fault, but as the loofball slogan goes: "beauty is in the jump", players should be encouraged to always jump-shoot, unless when lobbing or attacking from the fore zone.

How to Jump-shoot

Grip the ball with the dominant hand, take two quick steps starting with the opposite foot. Then leap on the other foot and shoot the ball over the net.



Catching

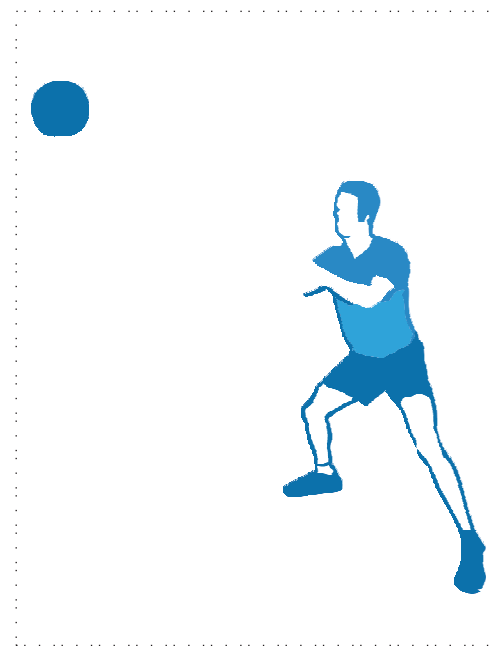
Catching either a pass or a shot is an important skill in loofball, as it prevents the opponents from scoring. Encourage players to keep their eyes on the ball at all times.

How to Catch

Whilst anticipating the ball, keep both arms outstretched towards it with fingers spread.

When receiving a shot, the arms should bend at the elbows so as to absorb the force of the ball. Players may also jump to catch the ball if need be. Teach players to land safely (should they jump) by bending their knees and hips as they make contact with the ground.

For lobs and light throws, a player should simply follow the ball with the eyes while reaching with the hands. For shots deemed too strong or quick to catch, a player may dig or punch the ball calmly towards a teammate.



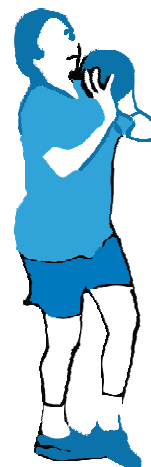
Chest-passing

Teach players to always chest-pass when passing the ball to a teammate.

How to chest-pass

This is done by gripping the ball on the sides with the thumbs behind the ball and brought together at the centre, fingers comfortably spread out and elbows bent and tucked in. The ball is then sent forward by straightening the elbows, fingers and thumbs, so as to give it a push.

It is important to keep eyes focused on the teammate receiving the pass. Given the short distance between teammates, a chest-pass should not go high in order not to slow the game.



Serving

This is simply the act of putting the ball in play. A serving player must learn the basic techniques and rules of serving. For instance, taking at least two steps before jumping to shoot is recommended when serving.

Throwing the ball (from the serving area) hard and high enough to reach the opponents' home zone without touching net, but not enough to cause a high ball or an out-ball should be the aim. Furthermore, a server must learn to wait for the referee's whistle before serving.

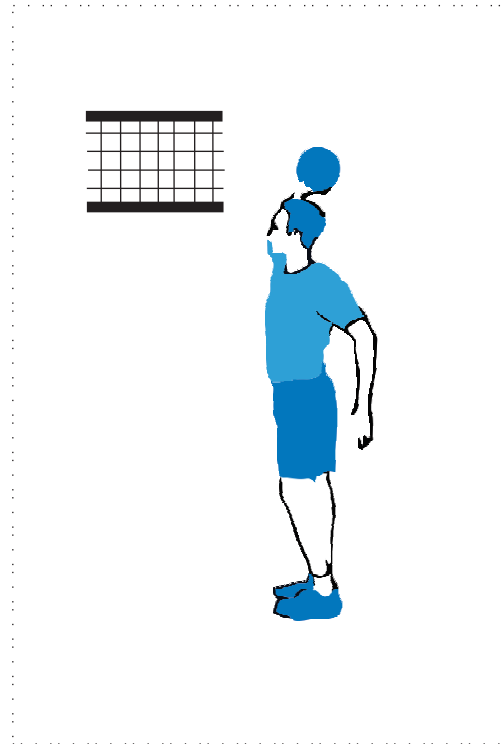


Lobbing

Lobbing is an important offensive weapon used to catch the opponents unawares. This is mostly used when executing a fore zone attack.

The aim is to calmly throw the ball; hard enough to enable it go over the net and beyond the directly opposite half of opponents' fore zone, but not hard enough to go beyond the diagonally opposite half of the opponents' fore zone.

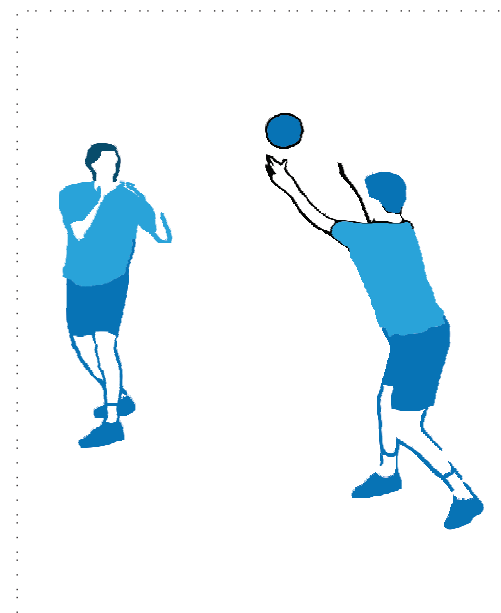
Lobbing can also be useful when jump-shooting. For example, the front rowplayers tend to drift backwards when expecting a shot from their attacking counterparts. In such a situation, the jump-shooter may chose to lob the ball in a bid to take advantage of the little space created in front of the players.



Setting

This is also an offensive strategy. Setting basically implies a quick motion that positions the ball in air for a teammate, preferably a back row player to launch an attack. Setting often precedes a jump-shoot from a back row player.

Teach players how to accurately place the ball where it needs to be. A perfect setting is achieved by correctly judging the distance from and/or speed of the attacking player. Communication between players is very important while setting.



Digging

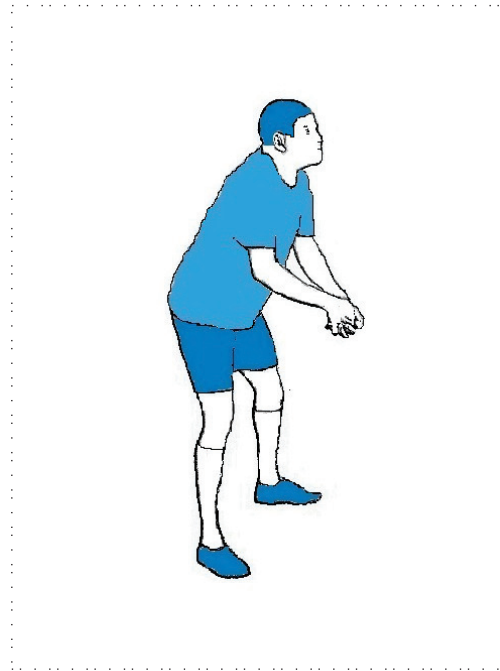
This skill is sometimes used instead of catching to recover the ball from a steep downward trajectory, precisely when receiving a shot.

How to Dig

Bend with feet beyond shoulder-width apart, knees over the toes, shoulders forward and relaxed, and arms joined in front of body. A dig is then achieved by calmly hitting the ball with the fleshy parts of the forearm.

One-arm Dig

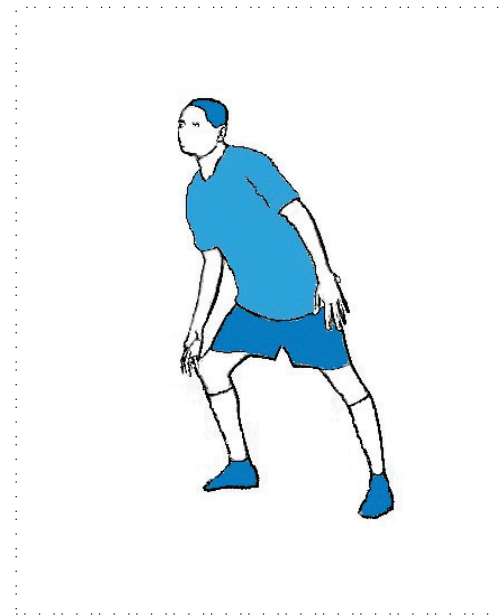
Depending on the speed and direction of or proximity to the ball, a player may apply the one-arm dig in a bid to 'save' the ball. Doing a pancake or fisting can help keep the ball in play provided a teammate is there to catch it.



Dodging

Playing as a back row player requires that one easily predicts when a shot is outbound. Players must have a good sense of judgment on the ball at all times. This underscores the importance of always keeping eyes focused on the ball.

To properly dodge a shot, a player moves sideways or bends in a quick fashion to avoid getting hit. A player may also take any posture in a bid to avoid the ball.



Other Skills

Other skills such as One-hand Pass, Jump Pass, tricking and positioning are also important in the game.

One-hand Pass

The one-hand pass is usually used when passing over long distances or when a chest pass is not feasible. For instance, a left back (position 4 player) may apply the one-hand pass when passing to the right wing (position 3 player) or to a teammate in the fore zone. The light weight of the ball makes this skill easy to perform especially when a player is on both feet.

To perform a one-hand pass, the player grips the ball with one hand, with fingers spread across the ball and elbow bent. Applying momentum, the player then pushes forward the forearm as he releases the ball straight to a teammate.

Jump Pass

This is a one-hand sort of pass made by an attacker during an attempt to jump-shoot. It is a deceptive pass meant to disrupt the opponents' positioning and/or allow another player to attack. To perform a jump pass, a player simply jumps in an attempt to shoot, and then passes to a teammate. For successful execution, this skill requires prior communication between the passer and the player receiving the ball.

Tricking

Tricking simply implies any move by players meant to deceive or trick the opponent with a view to scoring a point. This basically happens in a buildup to an attack, either from the home zone or fore zone, and could be in form of passing pattern, movement and/or positioning of players. This team skill requires thorough training and understanding between players; and communication is also important whilst making such a move.

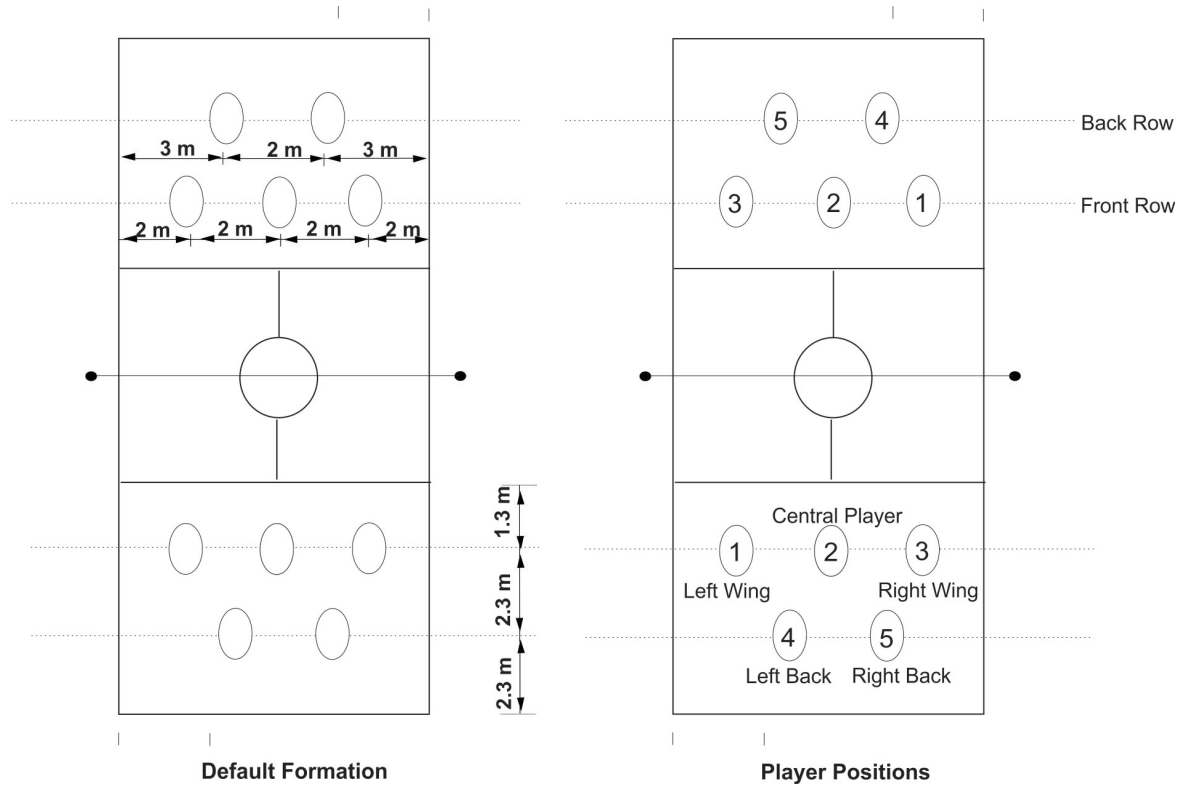
Positioning

This is considered a team skill in that it has to do with a player's position relative to a teammate. The manner in which players position themselves during play, especially when defending will have a direct consequence on their performance. Players must learn to take appropriate positions whenever the ball is at the other side of the net.

Formation and Positions

For correct positioning, athletes are required to be familiar with the right formation and player positions. An effective attack or defense has much to do

with knowledge of player positions and movements, which forms the basis for any tactics or game concepts. The 3-2 formation is the recommended formation in loofball and must be maintained at all times. The default formation and player positions in loofball are depicted as shown below.



Footwork Rule

The footwork rule is established to keep athletes informed on how to properly take steps to avoid infringement or injury as well as ensuring the safety and general wellness of participants. The rule applies when an attacker possesses the ball and attempts to jump-shoot, or when a server jumps to serve.

According to the rule;

- A player must take two steps before jumping to shoot; starting with the right foot (for the right-hander) or left foot (for the left-hander).
- A right-hander must lift with the left foot whereas a left-hander must lift with the right foot.
- Should a player jump to attack or serve, he must then release the ball before landing on either one or both feet.

Players should learn to land gently when jump-shooting. This will help the jump-shooter to safely absorb his body weight when landing, thereby gaining balance or poise to reposition.

Systems of Play

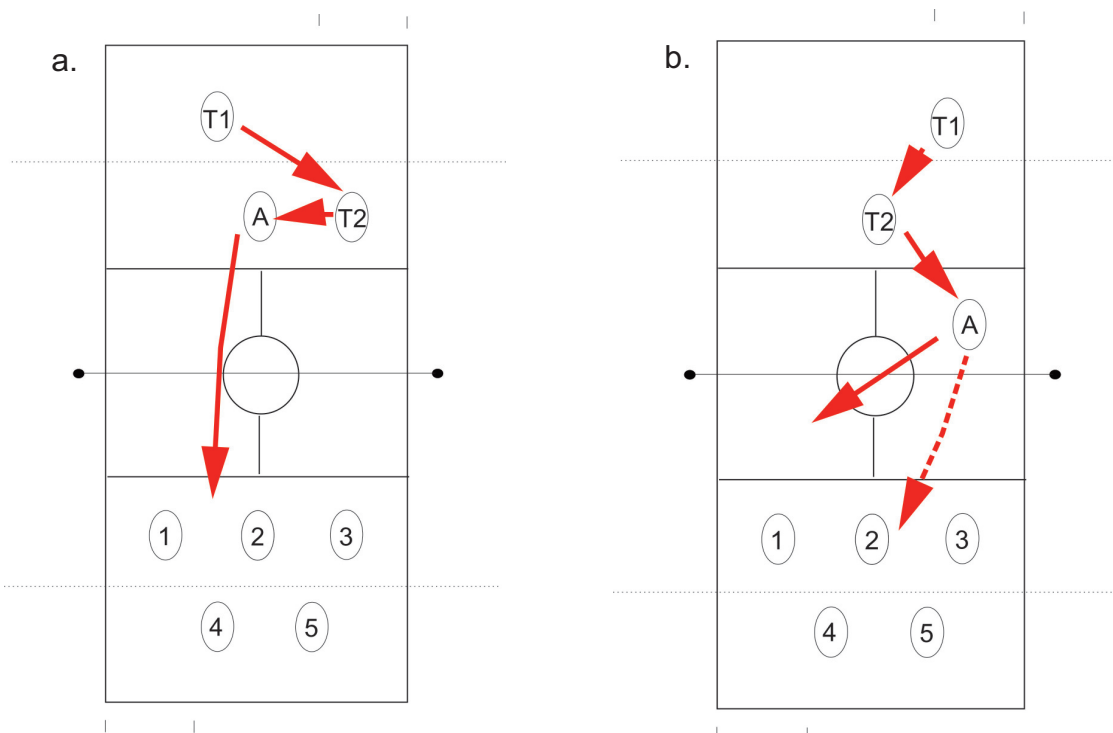
In a loofball game, both individual and team skills must be brought to bear when playing to achieve victory. This involves the use of creativity, strategies and tactics which, for the purpose of this manual, are based on two systems of play namely; attacking and defending.

Attacking

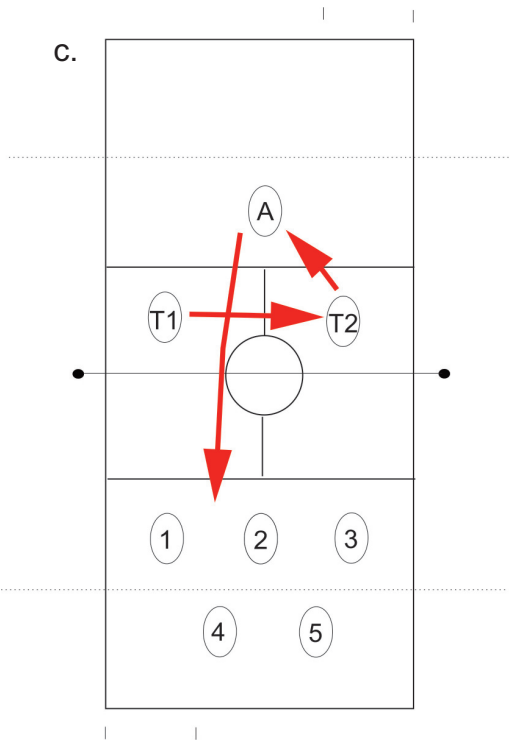
An attack simply implies any movement or action that sends or aims to send the ball to the opponents' court. It is basically the main mission for the team in possession of the ball. Serving is considered to some extent as a form of attack, as failure of the opponent to catch or return the ball counts as a point against them.

The nature of an attack often determines the skill used. For instance, executing a fore zone attack requires one to lob the ball over the net, whereas attacking from the home zone requires other skills such as jump-shooting and setting. This is where game concepts and tactics come into play. Executing specific attacking skills and tricks can make a huge difference in the game. Below are illustrations of basic attacking patterns.

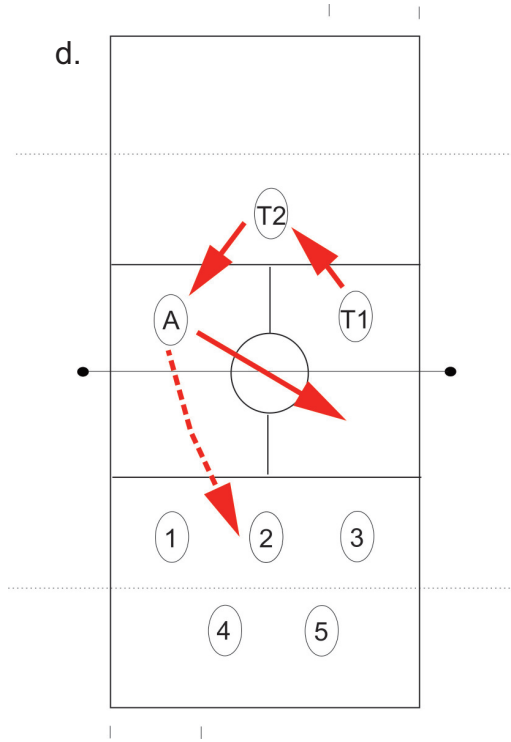
3-Touch Play



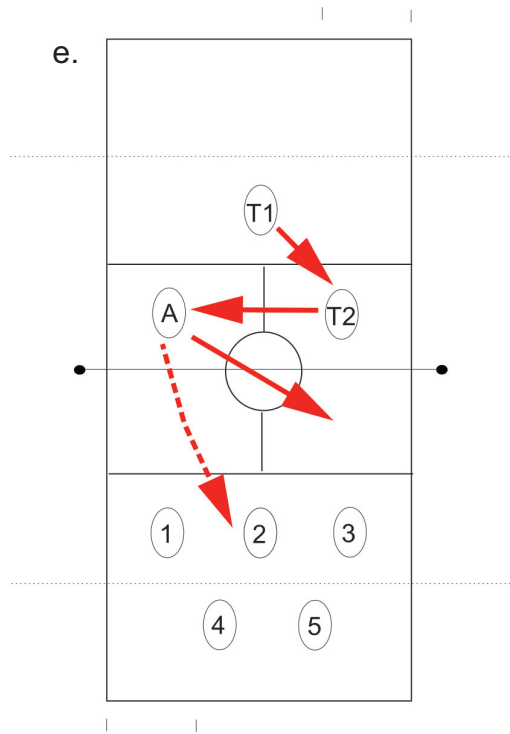
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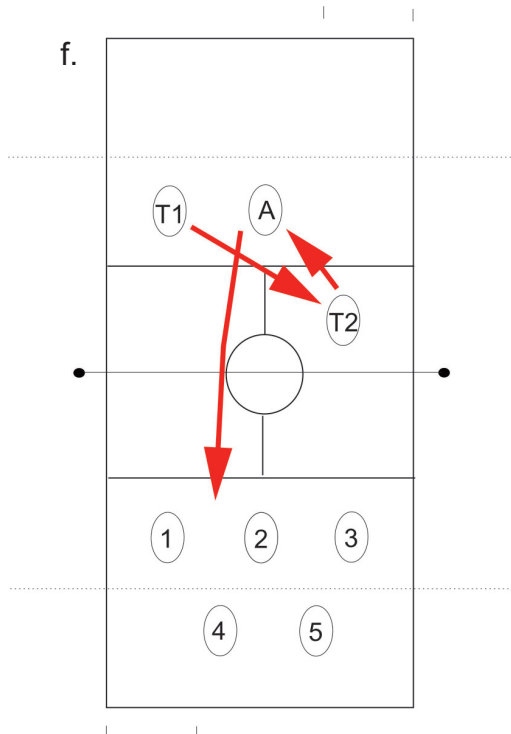
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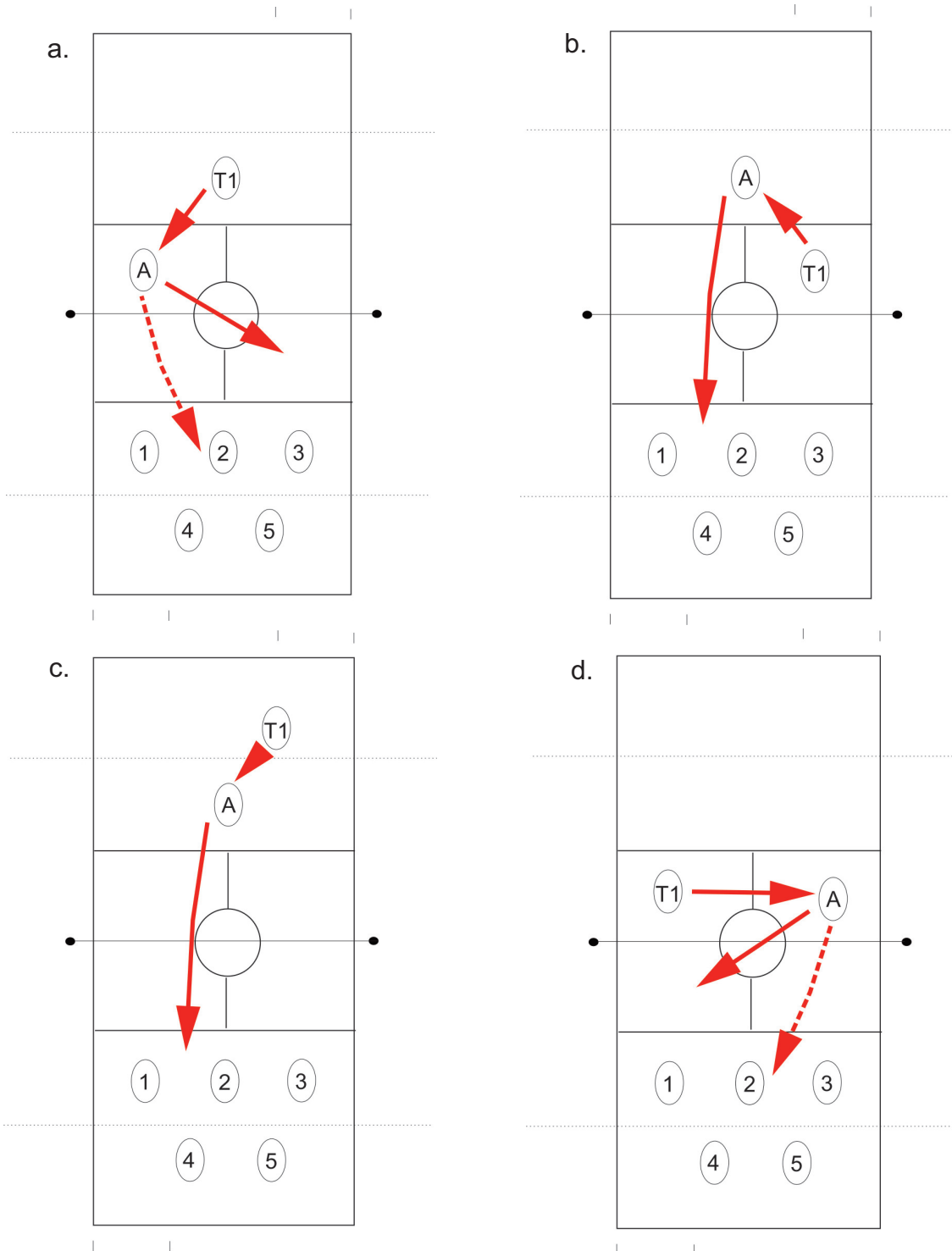
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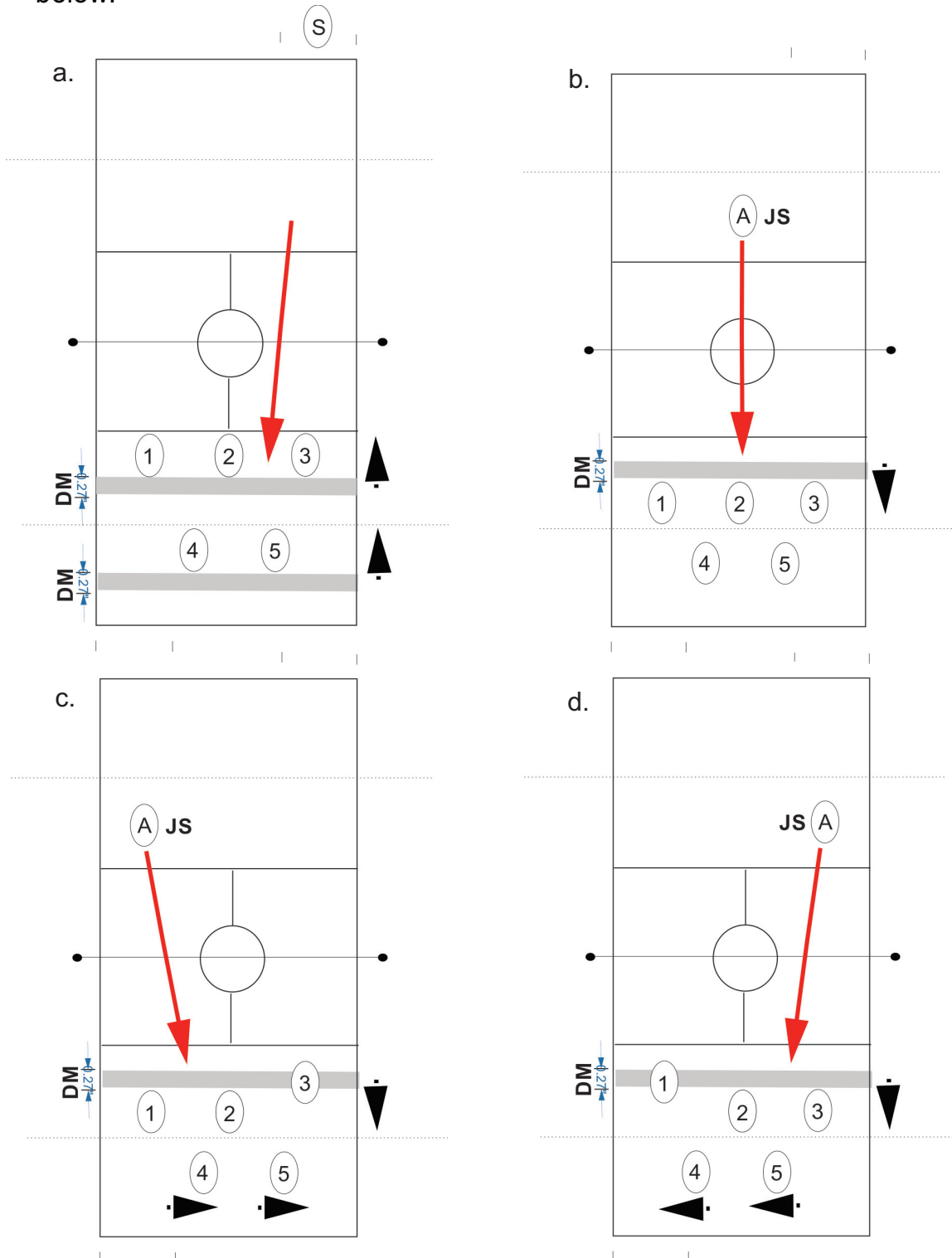
2-Touch Play

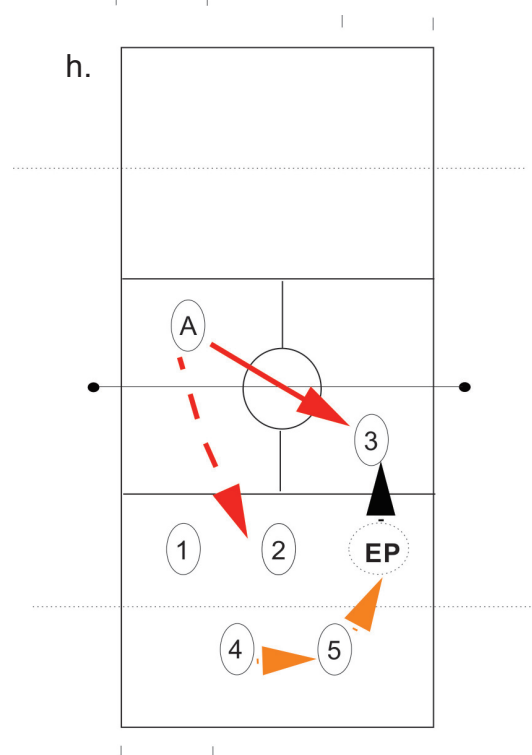
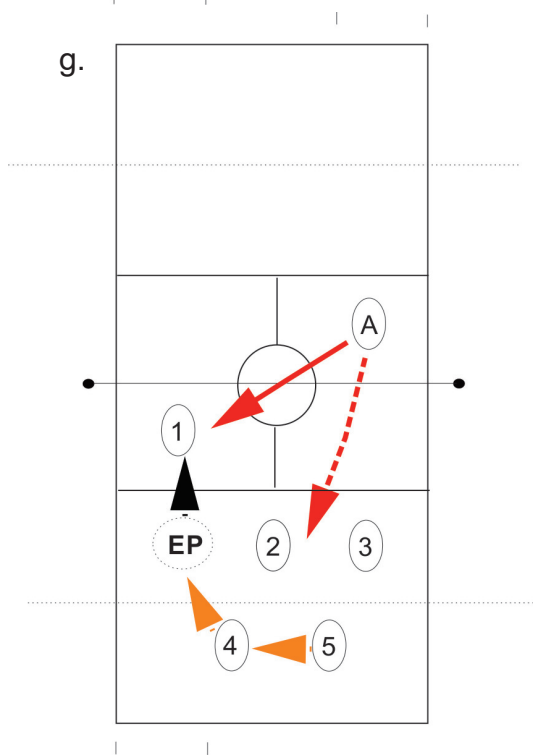
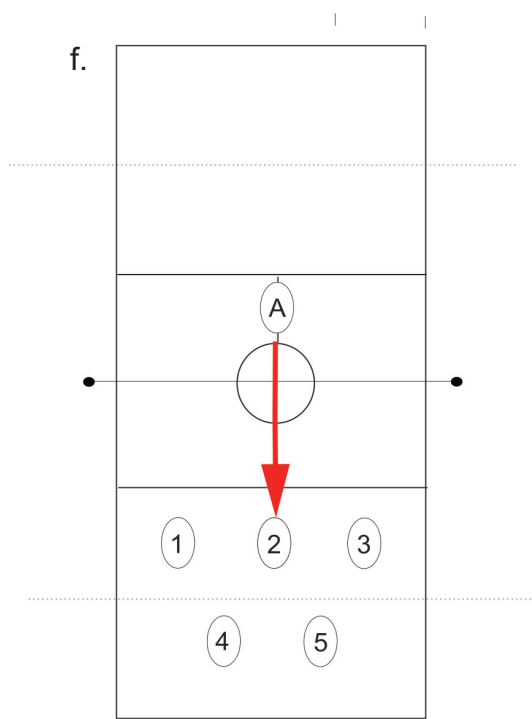
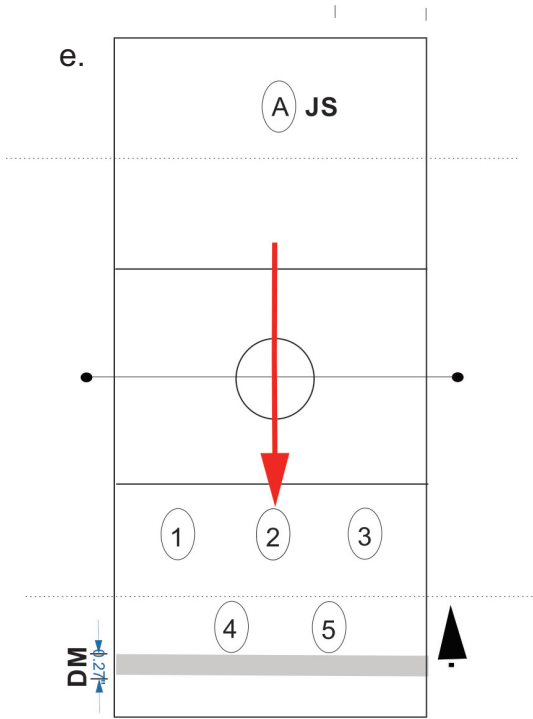


Defending

Defending is equally as important as attacking in loofball. It is the counteractive move that prevents the opponent from scoring and resultantly creates the avenue to attack back. This phase of play often requires a combination of team skills and

dodging ought to be mastered by the entire team, so as to minimize defensive errors. A good defending is usually characterized by correct positioning or player movement, which is a function of the attacker's position and strategy. The different defensive patterns or movements in loofball are illustrated as shown below.





	Point of focus		Primary ball path	DM: Drift margin
	Player path		Optional ball path	JS: Jump-shooter
	Player	S:	Server	EP: Empty position
A:	Attacker	T1:	First Touch	T2: Second Touch

Coaching in Practice Sessions

Checklist for the Coach

- Wear proper coaching attire.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide simple coaching tips to help your players grasp the skills.
- Stress the importance of fair play and good sportsmanship - respecting rules, teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials.
- Criticize performance, not the individual.
- Celebrate and accept individual differences.
- Be ready to participate.
- Provide players with the appropriate opportunities needed to improve their skill development.
- Make the playing experience fun and positive.
- Be supportive and encouraging at all times.
- Be enthusiastic.

Physical Preparation of Athletes

Loofball is a fast-paced and energetic non-contact sport. As such, adequate physical preparation of participants is necessary. Participants must be engaged in warm-up sessions for at least 20 minutes so that they are physically prepared for the game. However, the preparation should be done in ways that create an avenue for fun and quality experience.

Planning Your Practice

Planning your practice is essential in ensuring a successful practice session. Always draft your practice plan prior to the training session, listing skill drills or moves to be performed and the time allocated for each.

The coach should concentrate on the different aspects of the game including positioning, ball catching, chest passing, jump shooting, game awareness, body movements and other important skills or tricks.

Coaches are required to utilize their creativity and time management skills to make the most of their practice time. Sticking to a practice framework that covers vital aspects of training can help both the coach and athletes tremendously. Below is an activity plan for an effective loofball practice session.

Activity	Description	Duration
Warm-up	An act of stretching or exercise carried out to prepare the body for the game or session.	20minutes
Skill drills	This involves practicing skills one at a time. The time spent on a skill will depend on the progress made by the athletes. Talent identification often begins at this stage.	20minutes
Game time	A brief match whereby athletes compete and demonstrate skills learnt or developed and also get acquainted with proper game play; an opportunity for the coach to ensure athletes understand the game rules and other important aspects of play.	40minutes
Warm-down	Stretching or exercise carried out after the match, basically to return the body gradually to its normal state. This may involve slow-pace walk or jogging.	5minutes
Closing remarks	Speech given by the coach at the end of a practice session in order to reinforce key lessons of the practice, and to give further information or instructions. The coach should always end his speech on a positive note.	5minutes
Total		90minutes

Communicating with players

- Use words or language that players will understand.
- Allow players to express themselves.
- Ask questions.
- Be a good listener.
- Use both verbal and non-verbal communication (smile, thumbs-up, wink, nod, high five, pat on the back, etc.).
- Demonstrate or use illustrations.
- Involve everyone.

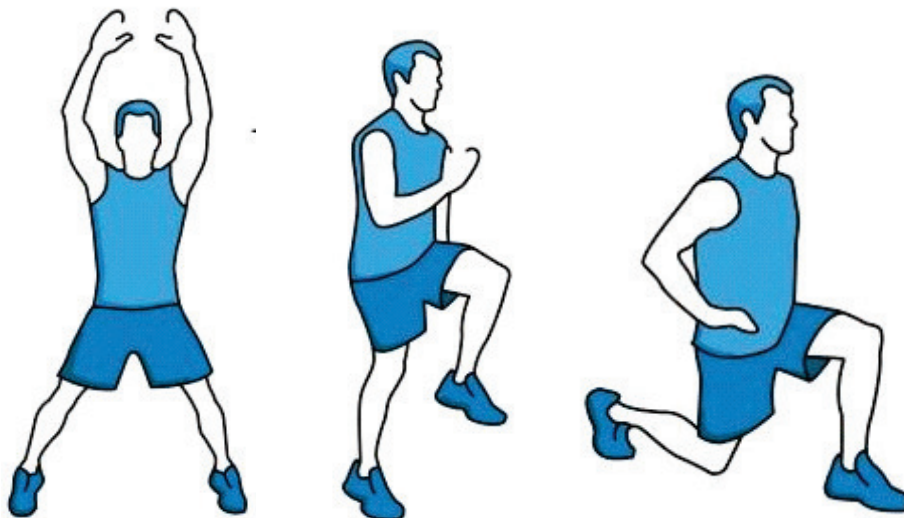
Tips for Leading an Effective Practice Session

- Try to keep all players engaged.
- Focus on improving skills and performance.
- Be innovative.
- Create a positive atmosphere.
- Ensure enough equipment is available.
- Ensure playing environment is safe and free of hazards.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Challenge your players.
- Ensure players are fully kitted.
- Arrive at least 10 minutes early; ask players to arrive early as well.
- End session on a positive note.

Warm-Up and Skills Drills

Warm-Up Activities

It is scientifically proven that warm-up prior to a more strenuous activity or competition helps to both prevent injury and improve athletic performance. Warm-up exercises are said to reduce muscle stiffness, increase blood flow and aid better movement and balance. Research shows that warming up not only prepares athletes for a match, but also creates awareness of certain skills required to play the sport. Doing a warm-up also keeps athletes mentally focused on the practice session or competition. A loofball match should not be played without doing the appropriate warm-up activities.



Below are recommended warm-up exercises, some of which may be carried out to warm athletes up, depending on their level of ability. Other warm-up exercises may also be tried as appropriate.

Jumping jacks

How to do activity: Stand with feet together. Jump and spread feet beyond shoulder-width apart with hands going overhead. Jump and return to starting position by lowering both hands and bringing feet together.

Jogging:

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. With arms flexed in front of body, slowly jog forward while moving the opposite arm to leg.

Lunges

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hands on hips. Take a large step forward. Slowly drop pelvis toward floor. Raise the body and repeat with the opposite leg.

Walking knee hug:

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. With each step, raise the knee up to the hip height or higher and “hug” it with both arms pulling toward your belly and chest.

Shoulder stretching

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bring one arm in front across upper body, holding with opposite arm just below or above the elbow. Hold the stretch and then release. Repeat procedure starting with the other arm.

Backpedalling

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and arms flexed. Slowly jog backwards. Add speed when comfortable.

High knees

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Raise one knee to hip height. Lower it and quickly raise the other. Continue steps moving forward.

Side shuffle

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend slightly with arms flexed in front of body. With knees slightly bent and weight on toes, move one leg to side. Quickly follow with other leg in same direction.

Sumo squat

How to do activity: Stand with feet a little beyond shoulder-width apart, toes forward and arms at sides. Slowly squat down by bending at hips and knees and sitting back. Keep lowering until thighs are parallel to the ground. Stand and return to starting position. Repeat procedure.

High skips

How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Hop on right foot, lifting left knee. Swing right arm forward. Step forward with left foot and hop, lifting right foot. Repeat moving forward.

Body Twist

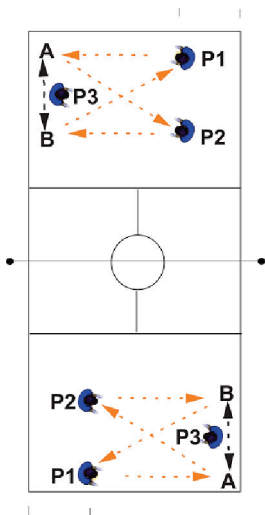
How to do activity: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and toes pointed forward. Bend elbows. Raise arms to shoulder height. Rotate upper body from side to side while looking forward.

Skills Drills

Skills drill is an essential component of an effective practice session. It is required to improve individual player skills and better team performance. Drills should be done in ways that enable athletes to perfect basic loofball skills and techniques.

The coach should lead drills with enthusiasm and intensity, encouraging athletes and providing them with positive feedback. The coach should also be creative and able to design specific drills to fit player needs and abilities.

The following drills are aimed at teaching young athletes the basics of the game, enabling them to grow in confidence and apply the right skills when executing attack or defending.



Chest-Pass Drill

Description:

Players 1 and 2 are stationary.

Player 3 moves to and from point A and B.

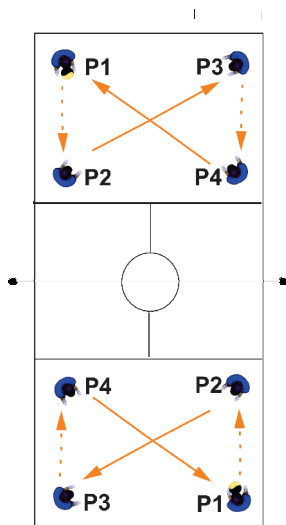
Player 1 passes to Player 3 at point A.

Player 2 passes to Player 3 at point B.

Player 3 catches the ball and chest-passes diagonally.

This is repeated for a stipulated number of passes or moves.

Players then change positions afterwards.



Shoot and Pass Drill

Description:

All players are stationary.

Player 1 passes to Player 2.

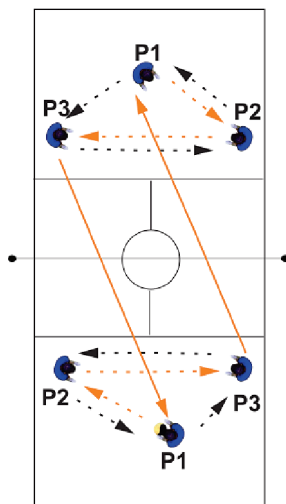
Player 2 shoots to Player 3.

Player 3 passes to Player 4.

Player 4 shoots to Player 1.

This is repeated for a stipulated number of rounds.

Players rotate afterwards.



Three-A-Side Drill

Description:

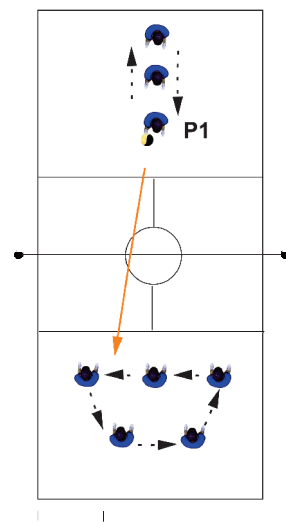
Player 1 passes to Player 2.

Player 2 passes to Player 3.

Player 3 jump-shoots to Players 1 of the other side.

Players rotate before the other side attacks.

NB: Ensure Footwork Rule is observed.



Positioning Drill

Description:

On one side, five players make 3-2

formation within the home zone.

On the other side, a queue of at least three players is formed parallel to the sideline and within the home zone.

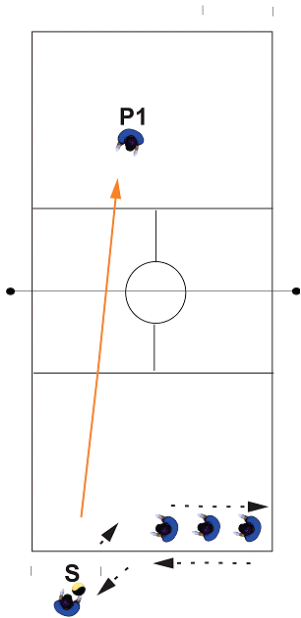
Player 1 jump-shoots to score, then rejoins the queue at the back.

The defensive side tries to catch the ball.

The player who catches the ball quickly returns it to the attacking side.

Players rotate after every attack.

NB: Ensure Footwork Rule is observed.



Service Drill

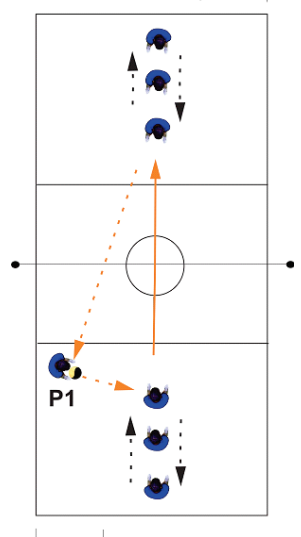
Description:

Player 1 is stationary.

Other Players form a queue near the baseline.

The players serve, one after the other, to Player 1 from point S in a rotating fashion.

NB: Ensure Footwork Rule is observed.



Face-To-Face Drill

Description:

Player 1 is stationary.

Queues of at least 3 players are formed in each home zone.

Player 1 passes the ball to the front player.

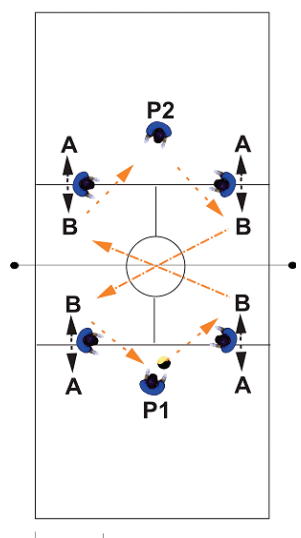
The front player jump-shoots to the opposite front player and then rejoins the queue at the back.

The opposite front player catches the ball, throws back to Player 1, and then rejoins the queue at the back.

This is repeated for a stipulated number of shots.

The other queue then takes over the attack, with Player 1 moving to their side.

NB: Ensure Footwork Rule is observed.



Fore Zoner Drill 1

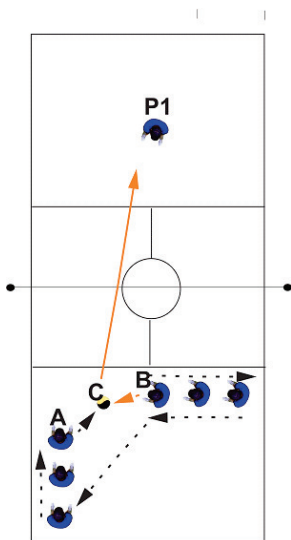
Description:

Players 1 and 2 are stationary.

Other players move to and from point A and B, attacking/defending at point B.

Other players, on defending the ball, pass to Player 1/Player 2.

NB: Ensure players return to point A after every attack or defense.



Setting Drill

Description:

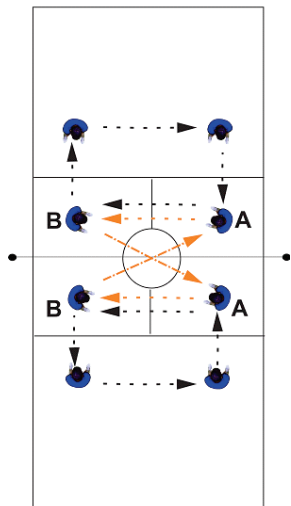
Player 1 is stationary.

2 queues of at least 3 players are formed within the home zone, one parallel to the sideline and the other to the frontline.

A player at point B sets the ball at point C, and then joins the attacking queue at the back.

A player at point A goes for the ball and jump-shoots to Player 1, and then joins the setting queue at the back.

NB: Ensure Footwork Rule is observed.

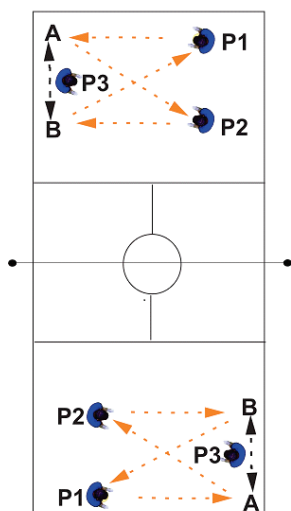


Fore Zoner Drill 2

Description:

A player at point A passes the ball to player at point B, who then lobs diagonally to point A.

Players rotate after every attack.



Digging Drill

Description:

Players 1 and 2 are stationary.

Player 3 moves to and from point A and B.

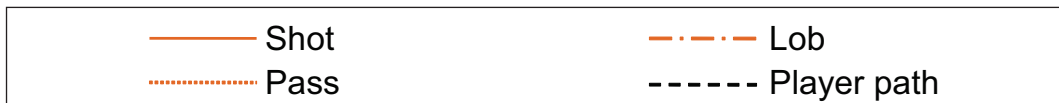
Player 1 passes to Player 3 at point A.

Player 2 passes to Player 3 at point B.

Player 3 digs the ball diagonally.

This is repeated for a stipulated number of digs.

Players then change positions afterwards.



Coaching in Matches

Checklist for the Coach

- Prepare ahead of time, select athletes that will play - 5 as starters and 4 as subs. Plan your substitution strategy.
- Wear proper coaching attire.
- Analyze, innovate, encourage, motivate, praise and teach.

Before The Game

- Follow a schedule or plan.
- Focus on the game.
- Spell out match objectives and game concepts for the team or players.
- Provide a ball-centered warm up.

During The Game

- Give clear instructions and ensure players follow them. Use illustrations if possible.
- Observe and analyze individual performance or actions of players and make timely corrections or adjustments if need be.
- Use a lot of praise and encouraging words.
- Write some main points of feedback to give players during timeout.

Timeouts

- Get eye contact with and ensure every player is listening before speaking.
- Do not criticize players for performing poorly. But instead, encourage and provide constructive adjustments and instill confidence in the team.
- Keep discussions brief during timeouts. Information or instructions should be simple and easy to grasp by the players.
- Engage players by asking questions.
- End the timeout on a positive note.

Substitutions

The coach should make it a practice to inform players that they need to work to earn a spot on the 'starting line-up'. Skill and attitude are the factors to always consider when selecting players for a match.

During the match, substitution should be made only when:

- i. a starter is performing poorly or injured
- ii. the team needs energy

- iii. the match needs to see something different
- iv. a starter requests to be substituted for other just reasons

The coach should always let the players know that putting the team ahead of oneself is critical to success, and as such, should not be bitter or resentful when they are substituted or fail to make the 'starting line-up'.

After The Game

Provide positive feedback, encourage and praise players for achieving a match objective or trying certain skills or concepts.

Always dwell on the positives rather than the negatives, especially when the team suffers defeat. Let the players know that a match is a just game, and should thus be positive and focus on improving their performance regardless of the match outcome.

Ensure players warm down before they leave. You may as well give further instructions or announcements regarding the next practice session or match.

Talent Identification

Talent identification is a key area in sport development. The purpose of talent identification is to detect, capture, select and promote the athlete who has the skills and competence and thus the potential to achieve competitive success.

It is important to note that good players are not created overnight, as coaching is based on nurturing athletes to enable them fulfill their potential. Coaches have a direct influence on the development of the players they work with, and can determine how far an athlete can go in the sport.

Identifying talent is more than just viewing athletes in trial games or practice sessions, whereby players aim to impress the coach. The coach is required to concentrate on measuring physical, physiological, psychological, cognitive and social attributes as well as technical abilities when identifying and/or selecting players.

Characteristics or skills examined and developed during practice sessions must be based on those required during games. The table below shows some vital attributes and skills that should be observed and nurtured in players.

Skill / Attribute	Definition	How Important
Catching the ball	Preventing the ball from reaching the ground or parts of the body other than the hands, by catching it with one or both hands.	Very important
Chest-passing	Passing the ball to a teammate with both hands from the chest level	Very important
Love of the game	Knows and plays loofball; self-educates by watching the game; loves the game and trains self; a fan of loofball	Very important
Jump-shooting	Jumping and shooting the ball over the net with one hand, typically with speed	Very important
Serving	Putting the ball in play	Very important
Digging	'Saving' the ball by scooping or digging it with one or both hands	Moderately important
Lobbing	Throwing the ball gently over the net with precision	Very important
Coachability	Ability to be coached; willing to learn; being a good learner; responsive to coaches	Very important
Positive attitude	Positive reaction after a mistake; how a player handles disappointments; resilience; ability to overcome adversities; not giving up	Very Important
Decision-making	Making good decisions; smart; intelligent; accurately playing the best option, identifying where to shoot or lob the ball	Very Important
Agility / Balance	Good body movement; mobility; quickness; balanced with the ball	Very Important
Concentration	Ability to focus during practice sessions and games	Very Important
Competitive	strong willed; determined; having winning mentality	Very Important
Confidence	Confident within a team; brave; wants to be involved; wants the ball; have the guts to try and fail and do something different; belief in oneself	Very Important
Discipline	Disciplined; hard working; wants to win the right way, heeds instructions	Very Important
Speed	Speed, quick reaction; able to quickly reposition, anticipate and catch a shot or lob	Very Important
Strength	Jump-shoots the ball with power; able to catch a strong shot	Very Important
General Game Understanding	Understands the game tactically; smart with and without the ball; correct positioning; being in the right place at the right time	Very Important

Player Development Model

The loofball player development model is a stepwise approach designed to ensure proper athletic as well as individual development of athletes.

The table below provides a guide as to what coaches should focus on and the skills to be taught at various stages of learning.

Stage of Learning	Focus	Skills	Age Group
Beginner	Basic skill development	Serving	Below 10 years
		Catching the ball	
		Chest-passing	
		Shooting	
		Positioning and general game awareness	
	Fun		
	Motivation		
	Basic rules knowledge		
	Team play		
Intermediate	Tactical awareness	Jump-shooting	10 - 14 years
		Lobbing	
		Digging	
		Dodging	
	Body movement		
	Team play	Passing	
		Positioning	
Knowledge of general rules			
Graduate	Game concepts	Setting	14-18 years
		Tricks	
		Positioning	
	General skills		
	Knowledge of general rules		

Stages of Learning

a. The Beginner Stage

Fun should be the main focus at this stage. Only basic skills such as chest-passing, catching and shooting should be required in games or practice/PE sessions. Coaches should lay more emphasis on performing skills correctly rather than competition, using lots of encouraging words and providing positive feedback to the kids.

The kids love it when the rules of the game are made easy to both understand and remember. Demonstrating skills, making them simple and more appealing to kids are the main objectives at this stage.

b. The Intermediate Stage

Games or sessions should be more fun than competitive also for players at this stage. Sessions and games should be designed for players to practice and learn major skills and also consolidate skills already taught at the Beginner stage.

Skills such as Jump-shooting, lobbing, digging, dodging and other skills like passing and positioning should be taught more illustratively and in simple terms. Coaches should also lay more emphasis on performing skills correctly, this time being a little bit strict with the players.

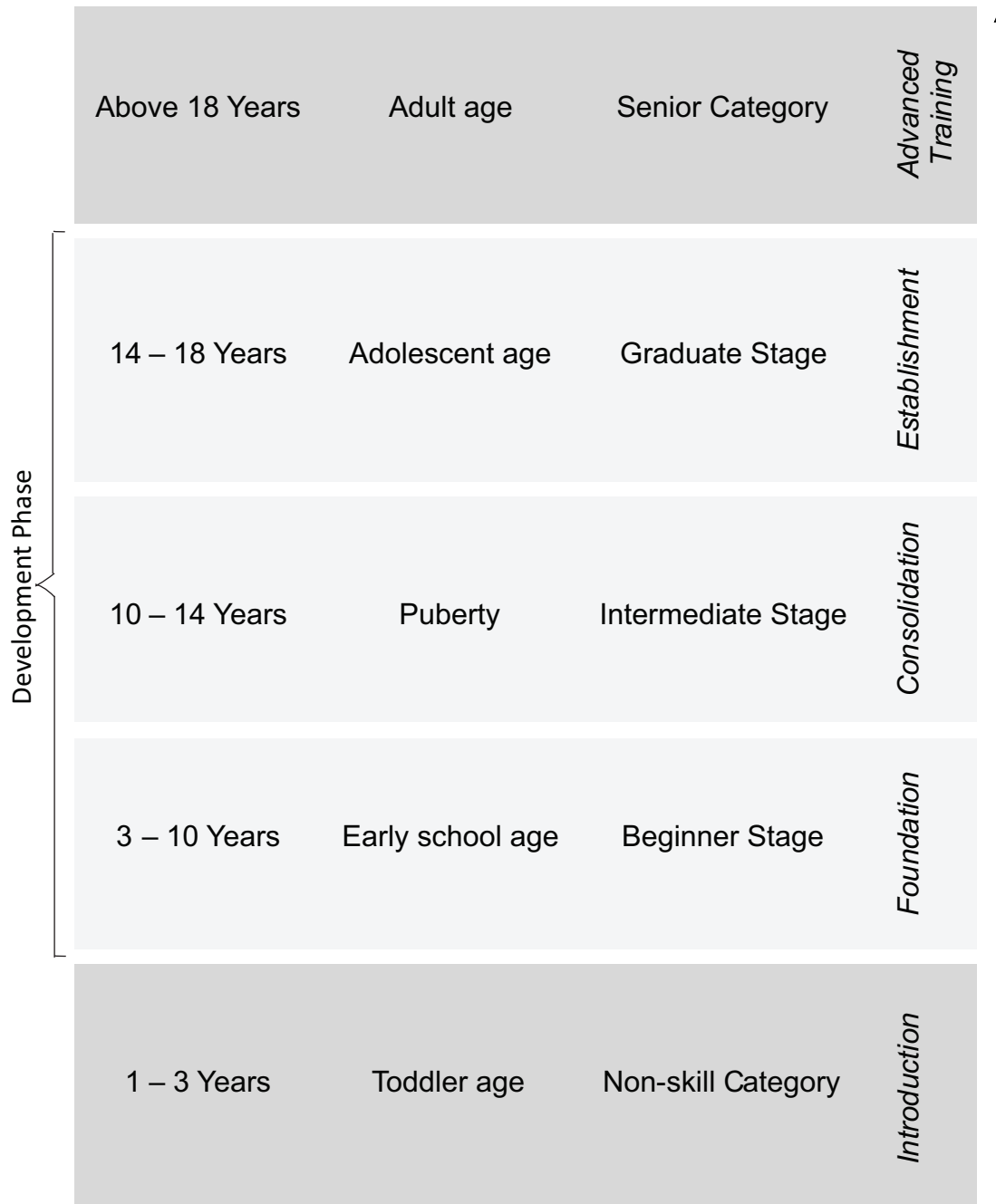
Using encouraging words at this stage is essential to the players' progress. Every good try by a player should be accompanied with a positive feedback from the coach. This will help keep players enthusiastic with their performance and motivated to improve even further.

c. The Graduate Stage

The emphasis at this stage of player development should be on establishing the players in the game. Players should be taught to master basic loofball skills and learn more advanced skills such as setting and tricking.

To help players learn more easily, it is imperative that the coach sets simple and achievable skills drills. Players should learn to perform skills more correctly and have general knowledge of the game. At this stage, players should also be encouraged as much as possible. Providing players with positive feedback would not only help their confidence, but also keep them competitive, motivated and passionate in the game.

Player Development Chart



Coaching Children

It is important to note that children want different things from their participation in sport, and as such, require different approaches given their stage of mental and physical development.

Research has shown that most children play sport to have fun, make friends, learn new skills, enjoy competition and be challenged, rather than coming first. That is to say, intrinsic rewards like spending time with friends mean more to children than extrinsic rewards like trophies and medals. Unlike adults, the match result, league position and general competitive spirit to win at all costs aren't as strong or priorities for kids.

The Coach and Child Relationship

The coach-child relationship is one of the most important relationships in a child's life. If done right, this relationship can help children develop the life skills and attributes required to work through and overcome some tough challenges and decisions in life.



Coaches are required to set and maintain appropriate boundaries, especially when handling children. In as much as the coach tries to impart knowledge and create fun experience, it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that sporting etiquettes are observed. The coach needs to make participants feel safe and welcome but also know that he is in control.

How to effectively coach children

i. Maintain a Model Appearance

It is very important for coaches engaging children to maintain a role model appearance. This is because children are very impressionable. If the coach shows bad traits, then the kids may also develop them too. Being a role

model isn't just about sport but how you carry yourself off the pitch as well. This can mean not fighting or doing anything stupid that would give you and the sport a bad name.

i. Make Fun the Goal

Children learn best when the activity is fun. While it is important to enforce certain rules of the game, coaching efforts should always be centered on creating an enjoyable experience. Introducing mini contests or skills challenge can spice up the entire training session.

ii. Encourage effort and good behavior

Rather than focusing on performance, the coach should encourage other aspects of sport like effort and good sportsmanship when engaging children. Focus on things like how hard they should try and how they should behave when they win or lose.

iii. Be consistent and enthusiastic

The mood of the coach more often than not affects how young people enjoy their participation in sport. The environment a coach creates, what they say and how they say it, should be consistent, caring and enthusiastic. This would not only guarantee a fun and enjoyable experience, but also build trust and a sense of security on the side of participants.

Tips for managing young players

- Promote cooperation, teamwork and fair play during activities.
- Use skilful players to demonstrate good performance.
- Introduce one thing at a time; keep instructions or questions short and simple.
- Allow time for children to absorb information and practice skills.
- Provide a supportive environment and show sensitivity to individual differences.

Injury Management

Albeit a non-contact sport, there are possible situations where one can suffer from minor to severe injuries in loofball. Quick movements, agility, ball throws, jumps and landings are all factors that increase the risk of injury. Other causes may include poor training practices and insufficient warm-up.

Possible Injuries

Possible injuries include:

- Shoulder sprain or dislocation
- Ankle sprain
- Knee sprain
- Finger injury
- Back pain

i. **Shoulder injury**

This is the most common injury in loofball. A typical sort is the shoulder sprain, which occurs when a ligament in the shoulder is inflamed or damaged and is usually characterized by pain around the shoulder joint. This may be attributed to repeated throws, overstretching, impact, or some other force. An athlete can also have a dislocated shoulder as a result of fall or collision.

ii. **Ankle/Knee Sprain**

Like the shoulder sprain, this occurs when a ligament around the ankle or knee is overstretching or torn and can cause mild to severe pains in the affected area. Possible causes in loofball include repeated jumps, fall and loss of balance or footing.

iii. **Finger injury**

A finger injury may occur when a player mishandles a shot due to impact, thereby jamming or dislocating his finger, or when a player falls accidentally on one or both hands. Like other sprains, pain and swelling are usually the symptoms of finger injury.

iv. **Back pain**

Back pain is a common phenomenon in most sports and physical activities. Even though it often happens for no apparent reason, experts believe back pain sometimes may be associated with injury such as sprain or strain. The pain also ranges from mild to severe.

Treatment

The PRICE principle is often recommended for immediate treatment of most on-field injuries. PRICE is an acronym for 'protection', 'rest', 'ice', 'compression' and 'elevation'. This therapy is meant to reduce pain and swelling as well as hastening the recovery and rehabilitation process.

It is the best way to treat injuries such as joint sprains and muscle strains. The key elements of the PRICE principle are explained as follows:

a. Protection

Protection here implies taking off the injured athlete to prevent further injury, or in other words, preventing the injured area from suffering further damage.

b. Rest

This means reducing regular physical activity to allow time for the injured area to settle and heal. An athlete injured should not engage in any activity until he fully recovers. Experts recommend offloading the knee during the first 24 hours. Using crutches or a walking stick afterwards may also help speed the recovery process.

c. Ice

Applying ice on an inflamed area often helps in reducing pain. Placing an ice pack on the affected area for 10 to 15 minutes up to eight times a day can be very useful. It is recommended to have a damp towel or similar material around the ice pack so as to avoid ice burn on the skin.

d. Compression

This is arguably the most important thing to do immediately after an injury. Compression helps to prevent swelling and inflammation. It also helps to limit the effects an injury might be having on neighboring areas. Elastic bandages are used in most first aid treatments for on-field injuries. Caution should be applied when wrapping a bandage around the damaged area. The bandage should be tight enough to reduce swelling and increase blood circulation but not enough to cause swelling, numbness or increased pain in the affected area.

e. Elevation

For both upper and lower limb injuries, it is equally important to keep the injured limb elevated to limit swelling. This is particularly important in the first few hours of injury. This exercise, combined with compression, allows for excess fluid to be pumped back into the blood vessel system, thereby preventing further swelling from occurring.

While some injuries may call for physical therapy or surgery, most loofball injuries may be handled by use of over-the-counter pain relievers and rest. In situations

where a more serious injury is suspected, please contact emergency services immediately.

Tips to Prevent Injuries

- i. Warm-up properly: Athletes should not start the game in a 'cold' state. Doing a bit of simple muscular exercises including jogging and stretching of the arms and legs can help one to loosen up and prepare the body for the game.
- ii. Use the right equipment: Athletes should make sure their shoes are comfortable and fit well. Wearing warm, dry clothing and well fitting socks can also be useful.
- iii. Obey game rules: Sticking to the rules of play can also prevent or limit the risk of injuries. The footwork rule when heeded, for example, may reduce the risk of ankle or knee sprains.
- iv. Avoid playing when feeling tired or pain: This is often a warning signal for an avoidable injury. Pain indicates a problem. Playing in pain can lead to even more pain or injury.
- v. Eat and sleep well: Eating balance diet and having adequate night rest have been proven to boost immune system and relieve the body of stress.

Player Evaluation

Evaluation of players is an important aspect of coaching in loofball. At every practice session, the coach will have to observe and look for players who are grasping the skills and those who are battling with certain aspects of the game. This is important at every stage of player development, as it helps the coach identify and work on those who need special attention.

The player skills inventory below may be used for quick evaluation of athletes based on performance. Performance should be rated between 1 and 5, with 1 denoting 'poor', 2 denoting 'below average', 3 denoting 'average', 4 denoting 'above average' and 5 denoting 'excellent'.

Player Assessment Sheet

Name of Player: _____

Date: _____

1 (poor) 2 (below average) 3 (average) 4 (above average) 5 (excellent)

	Rating				
Ball Catching					
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Alertness	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Chest-Passing					
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Jump-shooting					
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Agility	1	2	3	4	5
Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Serving					
Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Lobbing					
Alertness	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Positioning					
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Alertness	1	2	3	4	5
Dodging					
Alertness	1	2	3	4	5
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Setting					
Alertness	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
Digging					
Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5

Coach's Remarks: _____

