

Using Tactical Games

To be successful in game play requires players to do more than execute sport-specific movement skills well. Players must be able to read the game situation off the ball, respond with appropriate movement to relocate themselves for the advantage of their team or self, react to produce appropriate skill execution, and recover with off-the-ball movement to set up further game involvement. Coaching using a tactical games approach facilitates the development of player understanding of this totality of game play, whereas traditional direct instruction drill approaches primarily center on skill execution in isolation.

Manipulation of game components, such as rules, number of players, dimensions of the playing space and movement within the playing space, provides the tools to create games and 'play practice' scenarios that develop tactical understanding and the application of movement skills for intelligent play. Used in conjunction with questioning to guide player problem solving and their development of game understanding, teaching and coaching sport performance moves from the limited focus on movement skill proficiency to the development of intelligent play.

Below is an example of a tactical training session

Tactical problem	How do you support the player with the ball when in an off-the-ball position?
Focus	<p>Understand that in order to maintain possession off-the-ball players must be open (create a passing lane) to receive a pass.</p> <p>Understand that in order to maintain possession the player with the ball must choose and execute the correct passing option.</p>
Modified game	3v3 Give and Go
Examples of developmental questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the players without the ball help the player with the ball? • What should off-the-ball players be doing in support of their team-mate with the ball? • What should you do after you pass the ball? • What happens to the space when you move? And what does that mean for your team-mates? • What happens to the space if you do not move? And what does that mean for your team-mates? • How can you indicate that you are open to receive the ball? • How can you use space to your advantage in maintaining possession?
Practice task	Give and Go 3v1 or 3v2 with passive defence.
Return to modified game	3v3 Give and Go.
Conclusion	What game principles did you apply in order to successfully maintain possession?