

# Coach observation essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The activity that will be analysed is Futsal. It is a format of small sided football that is recognised and supported by FIFA and UEFA with World and European Championships for club and National teams. It is played between two teams of five players, one of whom is the goalkeeper, and up to seven substitutes per team. The game is played on a hard court surface delimited by lines; walls or boards are not used. Futsal is also played with a smaller ball with less bounce than a normal football. The objective of the game is the same as football; to manoeuvre the ball into the oppositions goal, and the team with the most goals wins. However certain rules create an emphasis on improvisation, creativity and technique as well as ball control and passing in small places.

The coach that is going to be observed is a qualified FA Futsal coach who also has FA level 1 and FA level 2 football certificates, an FA child protection certificate and an FA Emergency First Aid certificate. His philosophy is; ‘simplicity is genius’ but he also has an attacking mentality, as he told me that he doesn’t mind if they concede as long as they score goals. He coaches the Sheffield and Hallamshire Futsal team which competes in the FA Futsal League North. The league is a club level standard with varying talents. Using the Scale of Sports Participation (Alderson, 1996. Cited in Beashel, P. and Taylor J.) the level is representative competition.

The team consists of 16 players, most of which are not English, which may show that Futsal is more recognised in other countries than in England. Their standard is very good, the goalkeeper for example used to play professionally in Italy and Brazil. The training sessions that are going to be observed happen twice a week and will take place at various locations. On

the Thursday night between 8 – 9. 30, it will take place at Ponds Forge sports hall, and on the Monday session between 8 – 9 it will take place at Parkway Academy. They play their games on Sundays at Hillsborough Leisure Centre.

In a typical two hour coaching session, performers arrive and carry out an independent warm-up with little input from the coach. This is then followed by a different routine preparing the performers for development of skills and routines. The coach then leads drills, either tactical or skill specific. This will focus on performance enhancing and will then end with a small sided game and then a short cool down.

When coaching or teaching, it is essential to construct an environment in which the performer is able to experience pleasure, growth and mastery (Weinberg and Gould 2007). Most professional coaches consider feedback to be the key to creating this environment (Kidman and Hanrahan 2005).

Relative to coaching practice, feedback is the most commonly used tool to enhance performance and also one of the most misused (Williams and Hodges 2004). This outlines the reasoning behind observing a high level coach and the feedback they issue.

This interests me about the coach because he is a Brazilian coach and has players from all around Europe under his wing. For example; how do you communicate with a Finnish goalkeeper and an Italian midfielder at the same time? Effective coaching behavior implies that the role of the coach revolves around the direction and management of the process of improvement (Lyle 2002). Franz Stampfl (1955) as cited in Pyke (1981) believed a good coach

must have more than knowledge; he must be a guide, philosopher and friend.

### Literature review

It is generally agreed that coaching is a process that primarily aids athletes achieve their peak performance in competition (Woodman, 1993; Bompa, 1994). To fulfil this objective the coach is engaged in a wide range of roles, and is required to apply a vast array of skills to a range of problems (Abraham & Collins, 1998; Lyle, 1993; More, McGary, Partridge & Franks, 1996). Indeed, the complexity of the task is underlined by Jones, Housner and Kornspan (1997) who identified 37 standards to describe the coaching process, confirming the assertion that the requirements of effective coaching are both wide ranging and specialized (Blundell, 1985).

Feedback allows an athlete to evaluate the effectiveness of a movement they have performed (Williams and Hodges 2004). Chiviacowsky (2007) suggests that the most effective form of feedback should be of good quality and promote absolute task orientation from the performer. Two forms of feedback have been identified by Weinberg and Gould (2007). The first, knowledge of results, is where the performer receives specific feedback regarding the correctness of their response. The second form, knowledge of performance, relates to how the performer undertook their response.

Positive feedback can act as both a reward for correct behaviour, and as a tool providing performance feedback (Starkes and Ericsson, 2003). When presented at a suitable time, feedback can assist drastically in improving

performance (Weinberg and Gould 2007). The timing and the manner of delivery of the feedback is essential to its effects (Chivacowsky 2007).

Performance related feedback given by a coach can benefit participants in one of two ways – it can motivate or instruct (Kidman and Hanrahan 2004).

Instructional feedback provides information about how the skill should be undertaken and how proficient the performer is at producing the skill (Weinberg and Gould 2007). Motivational feedback facilitates the growth of confidence and encourages greater effort (Weinberg and Gould 2007).

Research has shown that learners prefer to receive feedback after they believe they had a “ good” rather than “ poor” trial (Chiviacowsky 2007).

The guidance hypothesis suggests that if the coach offers feedback to the performer too often, the individual will become over-dependant and will constantly seek guidance (Salmoni, Schmidt and Walter 1984). When providing technical support through feedback the coach should only correct one error at time to prevent overload, particularly in novice performers (Martens 2004). In terms of the quality of feedback offered, poor quality feedback can impair skill acquisition and damage long term performance enhancement (Buekers, Magill and Hall 1992). Supporting this theory, Martens (2004) believes that providing the wrong feedback or poor advice will harm the learning process more than providing no feedback at all. Conversely, Bilodeau and Bilodeau (1958) suggest that good quality feedback is essential for skill acquisition.

Feedback can be general (an example is praise such as ‘ good’ or ‘ well done’) or specific, which is more technical to the situation. Feedback can also

be positive or negative – although it has been suggested that negative feedback can be debilitating to performance (Martens 2004). Feedback can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic feedback relates to the performer, and in particular, proprioception. Proprioception occurs when the performer ‘feels’ that the skill movement was correct, and because of this, usually only occurs within autonomous performers (Weinberg and Gould 2007). Extrinsic feedback is from an external source, such as the coach, crowd or knowledge of result (Whitmore 2003). Feedback can be verbal or non-verbal – examples of non-verbal feedback (from a coach) include clapping, punching the air and hanging their head.

## Method

The futsal coach was chosen because he is a high level coach with experience in both a coaching and performance background. This level of expertise ensures the appropriateness of the feedback delivered is of a high level with the knowledge of prior experience as well as continued professional development in terms of improved coaching skills. In terms of observations this means that those skills demonstrated by the coach are inline with the present standards expected by the governing body.

Prior to the observation of any session a preliminary risk assessment was conducted to ensure the safety of the session. In total three sessions were observed which enabled me to observe a variety of different coaching sessions whilst providing diversity. During the observation sessions both qualitative and quantitative research data was collected. This allowed an analysis to be conducted in depth.

The collection of qualitative data involved the direct observation of the coach with key feedback points being recorded in note form. This was carried out for the entirety of the session and provided the back bone for analysis. This was conducted as it is an effective way to record large amounts of generalised information needed for analysis and provided an in depth form of feedback data in terms of quotations for example. Another form of qualitative feedback utilised was in the form of an interview.

This is an additional form of qualitative analysis because they allow in depth personal data to be collected which quantitative analysis does not offer. An interview was provided for the coach and took place in the last week of observation and took approximately 10 minutes. The questions were open ended allowing a greater depth of understanding to be gained. The questions which were asked to the coach are displayed in appendix.

The collection of quantitative data involved systematic observation. This systematic observation was conducted to provide a measurable, numerical data form. Langsdorf (1979) suggests that this method provides a valid system whereby observer reliability is nearly guaranteed. This included a frequency count of three separate data sets (Darst 1989). These included: concurrent vs. terminal feedback, technical vs. general motivational feedback, single word vs. sentence feedback.

In terms of ensuring validity and reliability the following measures were taken. Prior to any observations the coach was informed about the reasoning behind our presence, no detail was however released about the main focus of the study.