

HOW TO PLANE YOUR SESSION - THE STEP FRAMEWORK

Think about the players you're responsible for. What's their age? Ability level? What skills do they need to work on most? Chances are, it's not the same across the board.

After all, players are individuals with individual needs. A practice that's fun and challenging for one person might be easy and boring for another.

Regardless of your coaching experience, to develop, motivate and build confidence in your players, it's best to steer clear of one-size-fits-all.

Instead, think about how you can help each player meet their own potential. Design sessions that include different degrees of difficulty to challenge players at the right level, whatever that is.

Need some ideas for how to do that? Start with STEP.

STEP stands for space, task, equipment and players. You can vary each of these things to meet different players' needs. Find out how below.

1. **SPACE**

Want to make a practice more or less challenging? Think about making the pitch smaller or bigger. Depending on what you're doing, the size of the pitch can change the difficulty level, so consider using two or three pitches to cater to everyone's abilities.

2. **TASK**

Keep the session focus the same for everyone but include a range of practices pitched at different individuals or groups. You could vary the task itself, the rules or conditions, or the time it takes, for example.

This technique is known as progression, and it requires you to know your players well. Another option is to set a range of tasks and let players pick which one they want to do.

3. **EQUIPMENT**

Change up the equipment to make a task easier or harder. For instance, think about adding more footballs or using different-sized balls. Or change the size of the goals. You could also use spots or cones to mark out zones as part of whatever challenge you've set.

4. **PLAYERS**

You're probably used to having the same number of players on each team. But why not try using underloads and overloads? By organising players into unequal groups, you can start to recreate situations that happen in real games. For example, two attackers charging forward against three defenders during a quick counter-attack, or a defender dealing with two attackers out wide.

To get the most out of this tactic, you need to understand your players. This allows you to mix individuals, pairs, groups and teams in the most powerful way.