



Alistair Smith is the Chairman of Alite Ltd, a UK based company specialising in human motivation and learning. Alite Ltd are the designated learning consultants to FA Learning. Alistair has helped the FA develop their unique approach to learning and coaching. To find out more about Alistair and Alite visit the website at www.alite.co.uk

LEARNING

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'VE PUT OUT THE CONES?

You spent all the previous evening with a writing pad and a pen plotting out the best possible coaching session. You stayed up late to do so and missed your favourite television programme. However, the sacrifice will be worth while if you manage to get your points across and the team performs better on match day. Here we go. It's a nice morning. The team's on the field, the cones are in place and the coloured tops handed out. Deep breath.

A familiar enough scenario for many of you. Even though coaching is maturing as a profession, there's still a bit of hit and miss about it. There's still a worry that something will happen to sabotage your plans. A constant nagging that you'll get it wrong. So here's some hints to help along the way

- plan every session from the basis of what you want them to learn and not from what you want them to do: ask yourself 'as a result of this session what will they be able to do differently'
- don't get too busy too soon:
- start by sharing with the group what you are doing and why, how you are going to work and what the benefits for them are
- build in as much problem solving from the participants point of view as possible: get them involved!
- individual, function and phase work should all be focused on solutions
- changing behaviours takes time: spaced rehearsal is best, so go for familiar routines but a little and often. Creativity only occurs where there's high technical competence alongside freedom to innovate: overbearing coaches kill creativity dead
- always review at the end but, do so by more involvement from them: what solutions did we find? When will these solutions be useful? What should we focus on next?

The next thing to do is get onto an FA Learning course where these, and other sound principles, are demonstrated in practice.

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