



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Behaviour Management

Good behaviour management and strategies to deal with misbehaviour are essential to carrying out a coaching session. Strategies aimed at conducting effective and safe sessions go a long way to preventing misbehaviour.

Common causes of misbehaviour

Inappropriate behaviour and/or a lack of interest and attention may be caused by:

- > insufficient equipment for group size
- > limited supervision and lack of interest shown by the coach
- > activities which are slow to start, due to too much talking by the coach
- > activities that run for too long
- > children waiting in long lines for their turn
- > activities that are boring and not challenging enough
- > unclear rules and expectations.

In other words, sometimes the coach's program, organisation or style can contribute to disruptive behaviour.

Strategies to prevent misbehaviour

- > Create a team atmosphere: be positive and encouraging and give feedback.
- > Ensure children have a clear understanding of rules, routines and appropriate behaviour. Manage inappropriate behaviour as soon as it occurs.

- > Understand pre-existing rules and routines, and what strategies and approaches work well with a particular group or individual.
- > Learn about any children with physical, behavioural, emotional or social problems.
- > Look for good behaviour and reward through praise and privileges.
- > Provide fun and variety, and high levels of activity.
- > Challenge more experienced children and make discrete allowances for those less skilled.
- > Use inclusive coaching practices, that is, adapt and modify coaching practices to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate.
- > Remember to use the CHANGE IT principle.
- > Plan activities that follow on from each other, thus reducing waiting time.



How to manage misbehaviour

The following table provides a suggested routine for dealing with misbehaviour. Ensure you are consistent and patient in following the suggestions as some misbehaviour may need time to correct.

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Misbehaviour presents | Quietly correct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Do so without delay. > Non-verbal cues may be appropriate. > Join in and partner with the misbehaving child without comment. > Divert the child's attention. > Ask a skill-related question, such as: 'How is that serve coming along?' > Remind the child discretely of group rules and appropriate behaviour. > Address the behaviour of the child, not their character. |
| Misbehaviour still an issue | The coach's next step... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Relate the problem back to team rules. > Explain how their behaviour is impacting others. > Ask the child: 'What are you doing?' and: 'Is this against the rules?'. Follow on with: 'What should you be doing?' |
| Misbehaviour continues | Explain the consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Be polite, calm, brief and specific. > Do not use punishment, blame, shame, sarcasm or cause pain. > Do not ignore the child. > Forgive and forget. > Remove the child from the activity; use a time-out away from other children but close enough to supervise. > Provide an opportunity for the child to rejoin the group, if they agree to abide by the rules. |
| Referral | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > If the problem is not rectified, refer the matter to an appropriate person. | |



Domineering Behaviour

All groups will include children of varying skill levels, abilities and experience, who may intentionally or unintentionally dominate sessions. This can become disruptive to the coach and affect the involvement of others.

Identifying behaviours

Children may:

- > Assume team leader roles and direct other children
- > Dominate discussions and questions by the coach
- > Continually influence the pace and direction of activities
- > Intentionally or unintentionally ignore those less skilled in the group
- > Dominate the games or activities

- > Highlight examples of cooperative play and issue bonus points to reward desirable behaviours.



What you can do

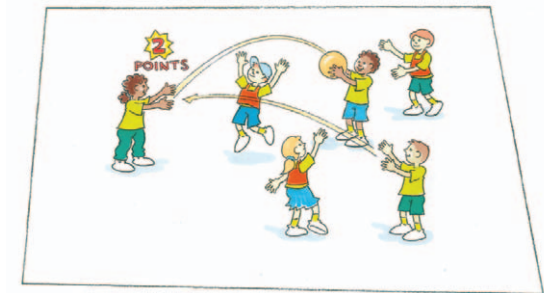
Simple changes to activities may help to address domineering behaviour in group activities. Remember to address a child's behaviour and not their character, and be a good role model at all times.

- > Use smaller groups and evenly space out more experienced children between teams.
- > Allow more experienced children to demonstrate a skill.

- > Score in a way that allows children to individually challenge themselves to achieve success.
- > When questioning children about changing an element of an activity, use responses such as: 'That was a very valuable suggestion, does anybody else have another idea that we could use?'. Recognising comments in this manner will help to increase esteem and create an environment in which others feel comfortable contributing.



- > Delegate extra roles to more experienced children as part of an activity, such as keeping count of the number of passes, to provide more of a challenge.



Example:

Susie decided that the children would play a game of hockey as part of the day's session. She knew that a couple of the children, Jodie and Ryan, had played for the school team and had a greater skill level than the others. Susie broke the group into two teams, with Jodie in one and Ryan in the other.

As the session progressed, Susie observed children losing interest and getting frustrated as Jodie and Ryan were dominating the game. Susie paused the game and asked the

group what changes could be made, to ensure every player got to touch the ball. They decided if the ball was passed to three different team-mates before scoring, that team should receive bonus points.

Once the game started again Susie saw a big change: Jodie and Ryan were doing their best to include their team-mates in order to get those bonus points.

ALTERNATIVES

