

## 2.3 HOW TO USE A GAME-BASED APPROACH

First, coaches should get players participating in an activity as quickly as possible. Set out the basic rules and let them play!

After players have been active in an activity for 4-5 minutes, the coach asks questions to guide the conceptual, strategic and tactical requirements of the game. The coach then makes any modifications they want to the activity. This approach also enables the coach to identify areas where the players may have misunderstood the activity or “rules” that are important for “success” in the activity.

Importantly, the coach may stop the whole activity to ask questions of the group or may take a player from the activity to work with them specifically. This is also an opportunity to work with the player on skill execution as necessary.

Through this approach as the players develop skills they do so within the context of the game, which enhances their ability to perform the skill under “game-like” pressure.

An example of how to introduce basketball using a game-based approach:

### ACTIVITY - PASSING GAME

- Two teams (with the same number of players) have one ball each.
- Players must stand within a set area of court (e.g. within 3 point line, half court etc.) – the more players there are the bigger the space needs to be
- Players cannot pass to the person that passed to them
- Teams count each pass to see which team gets to the set target first (e.g. 20 passes)
- If the ball touches the ground, the team lose one point

After 3 or 4 minutes, the coach stops the activity to ask:

- What do you have to do with your body to catch the ball (possible answers – hands up, keep watching the ball, let the ball come into your hands)
- How do you make sure that your pass reaches the person and does not touch the ground (possible answers – not try to pass too far, step forward when passing, pass from chest not above the head)

The coach then varies the rules of the activity to:

- Players must now move and catch the ball
- Players must stop when they catch the ball

After a further period of playing, the coach asks other questions (and during this questioning is when the coach may provide some technical instruction):

- What do you need to look at to make a successful pass (possible answer – position of all players on court)
- Where do you throw the ball (possible answer – in front of the team mate)
- What do you need to get the ball (possible answers – move to the ball, hands up, call for the ball)

The coach could then make a further variation to the activity:

- Only one ball and the team without the ball attempts to intercept passes (they cannot take the ball from a player's hands)
- If the ball hits the floor, or is intercepted, the other team immediately make passes to attempt to reach the target

At the conclusion of the activity the coach asks further questions:

- What can you do to avoid someone that is putting pressure on the person with the ball (possible answers – pivot, pass fake, move towards the teammate or even behind them)
- What is the best position to try and intercept the pass (possible answers – distance from opponent, staying between them and the ball)

Another advantage of the game-based approach is that skills are not learnt in isolation or a "closed" context but are learnt under some game like conditions.