Coach the athlete. Develop the person.

Develop better players. Build better teams. Grow better people.

Your time with them matters

IMPACT helps coaches develop capable athletes and thoughtful, confident, responsible people. We use sport to build athletic skills, character, connection and the ways young people think, respond to challenges and treat others, in sport and beyond it.

Your time with athletes matters. How you welcome them, respond to a mistake, set a standard and recognize a contribution gives them an example to practice. Make those moments intentional, from the first team meeting through the final game.

Your drills. An intentional way to coach.

Choose the sport skill you want to teach and one IMPACT action to practice alongside it. Use your own drills, keep the challenge and competition, and add a brief cue, truthful feedback and a chance to reflect.

The six pillars

Intention

Make choices with purpose.

In sport: Choose one cue for the next repetition.
Beyond: Choose a first step in a school or home task.

Movement

Choose a useful next action or request help, rest or adaptation.

In sport: Take a supported next step after a mistake.
Beyond: Ask for help or a manageable way to restart.

Playmaking

See opportunities and create positive outcomes.

In sport: Create a passing option or help someone rejoin.
Beyond: Find a useful way to contribute to a group.

Awareness

Understand yourself, others and what is happening around you.

In sport: Notice space, teammates or your need for a break.
Beyond: Notice what a task or another person needs.

Communication

Give and receive useful information through a method others can access.

In sport: Use an agreed word, sign, gesture, visual or AAC cue.
Beyond: Share information in a way the other person can use.

Teamwork

Contribute to something bigger than yourself.

In sport: Include, inform, encourage or help someone rejoin.
Beyond: Take a meaningful role in a shared task.

The IMPACT practice loop

A worked example: Communication in partner passing

Spread the loop across practice. Connect and teach at the start, play and notice within activities, then reflect and transfer at the close. You do not need to stop every drill to repeat every step.

01 / Connect

At arrival or the opening huddle

Welcome athletes by name or agreed cue. Offer a partner connection or meaningful role.

"What signal will help your partner know you are ready?"

02 / Teach

Before the activity

Name one focus and demonstrate an action athletes can try. Explain how it helps in the sport.

"Show your ready signal, then check your partner received it."

03 / Play

Within a drill you choose

Create a real opportunity to practice the focus. Use one brief cue and adapt the challenge.

Run your usual partner-passing drill with the agreed signal.

04 / Notice

During natural breaks in play

Name what the athlete did and how it helped. Offer a useful adjustment for the next attempt.

"You waited for their signal, so they knew the pass was coming."

05 / Reflect

At a brief pause or closing huddle

Ask one question about what happened. Allow different ways to respond or a pass.

"What helped you understand each other?"

06 / Transfer

At the close; revisit next practice

Invite one related action at home, school or with friends. Ask later what helped.

"Where else could checking understanding help this week?"

Keep the sport goal and one IMPACT action connected. The coaching guide for each weekly focus offers cues and several ways to apply it.

Make the first meeting count.

Welcome players. Build connection. Explain the purpose.

1. Welcome the players. Give a brief introduction, then learn about the athletes. Use names or agreed cues and make sure each person has a place in the group.

2. Help teammates connect. Offer a simple shared-interest question, partner exchange or meaningful role. Allow a gesture, private response or pass.

3. Explain what the season is for. Name athletic development and character development together. Tell players that how they learn, treat people and help the team matters.

4. Teach three team standards. Everyone belongs. We learn from mistakes with feedback and support. We make teammates better. Model a specific action for each.

5. Put the message into play. Begin a familiar activity, give specific feedback on a helpful action and close with one reflection and a connection beyond sport.

An opening huddle you can adapt

"This season we will get better in our sport and grow as people. We will practice how we make choices, handle challenges, treat others and help our teammates. Everyone here has something to contribute. My job is to teach you, challenge you and help you find your next step."

Keep developing your coaching

Before first use: Ask a site lead or coaching partner to model one example. Rehearse your cue, response to a mistake and accessible reflection question, then use feedback to adjust.

During the season: Review the weekly focus and arrange a brief observation with a site lead or coaching partner. Discuss one observed action, athlete feedback and one useful next adjustment.

Around Weeks 2, 5 and 8: Schedule short check-ins or boosters. Record the support delivered, a coach need and the next follow-up. Add support whenever observation or athlete feedback reveals a gap.

These check-ins are the pilot support plan, not a research-validated training dose. Reading the introduction once is a starting point; practice, observation and feedback continue across the season.

Before practice: choose your sport goal, one IMPACT action, a cue and a reflection question. Rehearse a response and agree on a feedback partner.

Challenge with support.

Clear standards. Athlete voice. Meaningful participation.

Set a demanding, supportive standard: Keep demanding standards, explain their purpose and offer meaningful choices within clear boundaries. Teach the skill, give specific feedback and support a useful adjustment. Choice and structure belong together; competition, scoring and challenge remain part of practice.

Teach responsibility and repair: Do not use punitive benching, humiliation, yelling or conditioning to punish ordinary mistakes. Explain legitimate boundaries, teach a practical repair and support a safe return. Necessary safety stops, planned conditioning, rest and support serve different purposes from punishment.

Coach the peer climate: Teach teammates to Include, Inform, Encourage and Help Rejoin. Ask whether support is welcome and useful. Stop ridicule and exclusion; the coach is responsible for restoring a safe, meaningful opportunity, rather than leaving the excluded athlete to fix the group.

Check barriers before judging effort: Before calling an athlete unmotivated, check understanding, skill challenge, sensory and motor access, communication, equipment, pain or fatigue, roles and relationships. Ask what would help; adapt with the athlete instead of assuming a motive.

Support recovery: After difficulty, notice a useful next action, adjustment or request for help, rest or adaptation. Breathing is optional. Allow recovery time and a supported return; do not judge recovery by speed, silence, facial expression or instant calm.

Make communication accessible: Use speech, sign, gesture, visuals, writing, demonstration or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Agree on ready, wait and help signals; allow processing time and check that the partner received the message. Keep supports available. Eye contact, touch, public speech and personal disclosure are optional.

A strong performance in a drill does not tell us that a skill has carried into daily life. Invite a specific action beyond sport, make room for an optional follow-up and ask what support helped. Practice records show what was coached; they do not score a young person's character.

Use age bands as starting points. Adapt to experience, disability access, communication and individual support needs. Timing and activity progressions are pilot design choices to review with your athletes.