

Coach the Coach Workshop October 14, 2020

Outline: This workshop looks at 3 case studies of regional, school and club coaching programs. Most of the programs focus on Golf Croquet, and there is also some reference to Association and Gateball. Presenters outline their coaching methodology, look at what has worked well and share examples of coaching programs. There will be time for questions and comments, and for sharing other club coaching programs.

Welcome and protocols

Presenters: Pam Gentle, Maitland Croquet Club, recently retired Coaching Director, Croquet NSW.

Ruth Bridger, Strathfield Croquet Club, Club Coach and School Croquet Coordinator.

Kate McLoughlin, Canberra Croquet Club, Coaching Co-ordinator.

Case Studies:

1. Pam Gentle will talk about a regional coaching program she has undertaken in the Maitland area. Resource: selection of coaching drills.
2. Ruth Bridger discusses the development of coaching at the Strathfield Club, with a focus on the school coaching program. Resources: school coaching program samples.
3. Kate McLoughlin outlines the coaching program at Canberra Croquet Club, focussing on Beginners lessons, club coaching and development of division based coaching.

ACA Coaching accreditation: an introduction (Pam Gentle)

Questions and comments (please raise your hand)

Other coaching experiences

Thank you, and feedback and catching up with the session.

Next workshop: Running Tournaments, David Stanton, 4 November

Coach the Coach Workshop October 2020

Regional Coaching in the Hunter Region, Pam Gentle

My talk is on the Golf Croquet coaching I have been doing in the Hunter region. Unfortunately there has been no coaching this year – for obvious reasons – but for the past couple of years I have been running monthly sessions directed at Division 2 and 3 Golf Croquet players.

The Hunter region is lucky in that we have 4 clubs with 4 lawns – Maitland, Newcastle, Toronto and EDSACC, and now with Nelson Bay's 2 new lawns, 5 clubs. I hold the sessions at a different venue each month.

The original intention was to provide a time for games of singles, as from my observation this was missing from club days – certainly at my club mostly doubles is played on GC days. With this in mind, I limit the number of players at each session to 16, and require players to book in beforehand. Usually we have the full 16, often with a waiting list! It soon became clear that players wanted coaching as well as singles games, so the sessions have evolved into a combination of coaching and playing.

The sessions last for 3 hours – for the first hour we do drill practice, 2 or 3 different drills each time from the list sent out. The second and third hour are games of singles, with emphasis on the drills practiced at the beginning of the session, eg if we have practiced hoop running, we may have a game of “see hoop run hoop”, if we have practiced clearing shots, then we play that oppo balls must be cleared if they are in front of the hoop, if we have practiced placement shots the emphasis is on perfect hoop position, etc. During these games I wander about from lawn to lawn making suggestions and asking questions on why a particular shot or tactic was played. Anything to get the players thinking!

I try to arrange the games of singles with players from different clubs and similar handicaps. As players have booked in to the session beforehand, I can have that already prepared.

While I try to have different skills to work on each time, the monthly session is a stand-alone, as I don't expect all players to come every month. Some come only to the session held at their own club, or within easy driving distance, some come to every session no matter how far they have to drive!

I feel there is a great need for this type of get-together. New players to Golf Croquet are given their 3 or 4 introductory lessons, and then get sent off to play with their club members, which is fine, but often there is no follow-up coaching to correct any bad habits that may have formed with grips, swings, tactics, etc.

I finish off every time with 10 minutes or so of jump shots. Even the newest players, once they are able to hit a ball from one end of the lawn to the other, can be taught how to do a jump shot, and it's great to end a session with success at what many think is a difficult shot.

My main emphasis, and the thing I think is the most important thing in succeeding in croquet, is on stroke routine. Everyone should know exactly what their stroke routine is, and follow it for every shot not only in a game but for every drill practice shot as well.

Even though I have been coaching for a long time, and playing for even longer, I am not running these sessions with any special expertise. Any one of you, as coaches, could be doing this in your own region, either individually or as a group to share the coaching load. One thing I have found while doing this, and while travelling around the state, is that there is a great demand for coaching.

Reference books – Golf Croquet Tactics, Michael Hague, available sales@croquet.org.uk

Through the Hoops, Greg Bury, available from Croquet Queensland

Golf Croquet Drill Practice

Always keep a record of your success rate (how many times out of 10 did you succeed at the drill). This will help you decide during a game whether to attempt, for example, a 3 yard hoop.

Use your shot routine for every shot – particularly important during practice. Shot routine should include grip, stalk, stance, visualisation of successful shot, swing, follow through, head down (keep your eyes on where the ball was) and BREATHE!

- 1 Clearance shot from 1 yard, 2 yards, 3 yards, up to 7 yards
- 2 Hit ball from corner 4 to a position to make hoop 1. Make the hoop
- 3 Hit a peg at hoop 5 from 1 yard behind hoop 4 (10 yard shot)
- 4 Play a shot from 1 yard behind hoop 12 to hoop 13, and make the hoop
- 5 Jump shot from ½ yard
- 6 Jump shot from 1 yard
- 7 Jump shot from 1 ½ yards
- 8 Play a shot from a penalty area to a far hoop, and make the hoop
- 9 Place a ball 1 yard in front of a hoop, then with the striker's ball 1 yard to the side of hoop play a stun shot so that the striker's ball holds position, and make the hoop
- 10 Run a hoop from 1 yard
- 11 Run a hoop from 2 yards
- 12 Run a hoop from 3 yards
- 13 Run a hoop from 3 yards at 30° angle
- 14 Jaws a ball from 1 yard and 50° angle
- 15 Make hoop 1 from the boundary (7 yard shot)
- 16 Play ball from near hoop 1 to hoop running position at hoop 2 (and then to hoop running position at hoop 3, 4 etc)
- 17 Run hoop 1 from 1 yard out to end up at least half way to hoop 2

Pam Gentle
October 2020

2020 'COACH THE COACH' VIA THE SGHS PROGRAM

IDEAS AND TIPS ALONG THE WAY

Ruth Bridger, Coach at Strathfield Croquet Club (6/10/20)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for that introduction. I was delighted when Kate informed me that CNSW was organising a Coaching Workshop and invited me to share with you, one method we use at Strathfield that provides a 'Coach the Coach' experience for its accredited and non-accredited coaches. We do this, via our School Croquet Program. However, Coaching occurs in a larger context as well. So it will also be helpful for you to know how Coaching Development evolved at our club. Whether you are a member of a small or large club; conduct a school program or not, I hope that my talk will be meaningful to you, and a catalyst for questions and discussion in the Q and A segment following the talk. If you could save your questions till then.

STAGE ONE: (2006-2010). COACH DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY DAYS

I joined the club in 2006, when Strathfield's prime period as a club of excellence, appeared well and truly over. Developers fought for the land in the nineties but lost. In 2004, the Club celebrated its Centenary. My first impressions of the club was that it had an extremely small membership of AC players, who had little connection with other croquet clubs. I held that view for some time, until in 2009, when our club hosted a National Competition titled the 'Mens Plate'. The more experienced members handled that, but for me it was 'a light bulb' moment. I had finally experienced, what possibly was on offer 'out there'.

Earlier concerns that the club's viability was at risk, led to change, which was mainly driven by the membership (including new players with essential attributes) who joined as a result of publicity drives. These changes were supported by Committee and led to Strathfield becoming the great club it is today. Such concerns as we had, were good motivators.

I like the adage 'the past informs your future', and kept that concept in mind as we began our changes. In 2009, the Committee agreed to re-establish the Role of Publicity Officer (which I took on) and soon, there were more new players to coach.

It may also surprise some of you to know that until 2011, Strathfield had no accredited coaches. My awareness and the competencies acquired in my previous career, assisted me to start coaching, as someone had to do it. I was unaware of any existing coach programs during this period, and did understand my limitations. So over the years, I began gathering coach resources, and with committee support, created an environment more amenable to change!

THE FIRST BIG CHANGES ON THE LAWNS OCCURRED IN 2010

Most people find change difficult, so I found a way to make change easier for the other club members and myself. In 2010, I made several suggestions to the Committee.

First, I suggested we introduce afternoon sessions, and this is where all the coaching I did, began in earnest. Whilst there were fears these am/pm sessions would divide the club, these fears lessened over time. In a 12 month period, twenty new players joined the club...so I was kept busy but motivated.

Second, I introduced new games to the club. Namely, Golf Croquet (from Cheltenham) and Ricochet (from Eastwood) WHY- because they were easier games for me to learn, coach and play. Remember, I was not an accredited coach, and certainly couldn't coach AC! Also, croquet literature suggested that these newer, shorter games were proving to be popular, and saving clubs at risk. What could we lose? Well, I did appreciate that Members were worried about the risk to AC viability with newer, shorter games! Gradually, other like-minded club members started to assist me to conduct croquet sessions for various Community Groups. I experimented with croquet course design, and pleasingly, the Membership continued to grow. Hopefully, I didn't create any major problems for the next coach, whom the player might engage, as the newbies became more experienced players.

Third Suggestion to Committee-Accept an ACU invitation to coach their students.

Luck played a major role here-Alleluia!! Our skills and commitment did the rest. How did this happen? Geoff Boyce and I were the only ones at the club, when Dr. Stephen Burke, a Senior Lecturer at the School of Exercise and Health Science, called into our club and asked if our Club would be interested in having his students, coached by us, in a game of croquet. This croquet experience would form part of their Target Sports Module. For the next four years, we provided a 1.5 hour Ricochet session for

about four hundred undergraduate students. If luck hadn't prevailed to initiate this project, I did plan to contact nearby Universities, as I used to work at one of them.

Imagine the ripple effect for years to come from the University Sector-and it has started!

STAGE TWO: (2011-20) THE MOVE FROM TERTIARY TO SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR

Coaching at the Tertiary level gave us the confidence as coaches to undertake our next Challenge. The coaching program ceased when Dr Burke left ACU, and the curriculum changed. It meant we were free to accept an invitation to join the Strathfield Girls High School's Sports Program. What an opportunity! The timing was an amazing stroke of luck in another way as well. That year, Ann Shaddick and I had begun to explore ways to attract the Youth market. Here it was on a plate!

In addition to our increased confidence, many more of our members attended coaching courses now offered. The first held was in 2011, conducted by Heather Smallbone – A Beginner Coaching Course, which enabled several of us to become accredited Coaches. Strathfield started to host new inter-club Coach Courses for the ACA. The first Foundation Coach Course (FC1) was conducted by Greg Whymark and resulted in some renewals and some newly accredited coaches. In 2019, Pam Gentle conducted an FC1 Course that led to more coach accreditations. Strathfield now has seven accredited coaches, with all endorsed to coach new players/new members, but not all endorsed across all four games played. Currently, our club membership is forty five with near 100% active players- a far cry from the small group in 2006.

School Croquet Program used as a coaching tool, a process, and much more

Our club conducted the first school program in 2015. Initially, the program had an AC game focus, which was designed and managed by Heather Smallbone. The following year, the Strathfield Management Committee decided to use Golf Croquet as the game to be taught. I was asked by them to design this program and manage it, which I did. Whilst Golf Croquet continues to be the main focus on this Program, in 2018, we expanded the program content to include Gateball.

There were many reasons for this.

Gateball that year had just been introduced to our club. It provided an opportunity to teach/coach many more member coaches at our club, in a new game, and for them to become familiar with the

game, its equipment, GB strokes (those in common with the other games, and those that were specific). The coaches would then, under supervision, coach the schoolchildren. Another reason was, that we could potentially introduce an Asian derived game to students and their families (the latter group came mainly from Asia). I knew that the school has about 85% of their students whose families are from overseas. One year I asked the school which o/s countries were represented that year. What a rich mix it was:

Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Burma, China, Egypt and Turkey

The profile of the student group, also reflected several of our club's aims, which were to have more culturally diverse groups use our lawns, and another aim was to provide opportunities for players in minority groups, such as the disability sector. This it also did.

Steps in the Process 2016-2019

Gradual conversion of weekly Session Plans to the ACA Session Plan Format.

In 2016, I prepared the ten week program in stages. In 2017, I transferred that content to the ACA Session Planner provided to me on FC1 Coach Course. You will have already received a couple of these Session Plans, and if not, contact Kate and/or myself. Any questions arising, can be sorted later.

Creating a School Croquet Coach Team

I gathered together a team of up to eight Club volunteers, who played Golf Croquet and could coach or potentially coach students. All coaches would need WWCC Certification. A copy is kept by the Club, and one copy forwarded to CNSW for verification. The School receives a copy if requested.

Prior to commencement of the program, all School Team Coaches are given an overview of the program, and a Timetable which identifies when they partake, have a break, and/or are substituted. Then Coaches receive weekly Session Plans and relevant resources. Their total Resource Kit would cover topics such as: the game(s) briefly and clearly explained; specific elements of a basic skill being taught; basic game rules; attention to safety/behaviours on the lawns; and examples of specific game strategies.

In program design, I ensured learnings were incremental for both student and coach. Not all coaches come from teaching or accredited coaching backgrounds. A learner-centred approach was preferred,

and needed to be modelled. Students were gradually encouraged to self-evaluate rather than rely on immediate feedback. Extra assistance was always provided to new members of our team. In addition, the Team normally met about an hour before the students arrived, and we sorted out any concerns re content/application. We also use part of that time to get equipment/resources placed in relevant locations.

Each year since, we have improved as GB Coaches in both categories (accredited/non-accredited).

Continued modification to the program and its implications

There will always be reasons why the program content is modified. In 2018, there was the Introduction to Gateball (two sessions). Then in January 2019, the New 'Golf Croquet' Rules came into effect in Australia. This certainly was a steep learning curve for all, on both occasions. These two changes meant modification to both Session Content and relevant Resources. Information had to be conveyed in easy to understand language, and rules gradually illustrated during play, when a rule seemed to have been broken, or was about to be broken. Which session to bring in the rules, had to be anticipated by me, in the course design.

Continued liaison with the School's Sports Coordinator occurred to remain aware of certain restraints and school policies such as:

-the minimum and maximum number of students the school could send -The need to reduce -the workload of SCC coach team, which we did, by decreasing our original involvement from two Terms to one Term. We chose Term 3

-Understand the School's policy re permission when taking photographs of students, and understand when and how they can be used. I continue to check with them if uncertain.

One aspect as course designer, I didn't anticipate so early on, was that we would have a composite group of both new and returning croquet players. I had assumed it was school policy to do a new sport each term. I thought some schools did that. Also, maybe I/others had presumed our students would be 'Tail end Charlies' that looked at the noticeboard late, and signed up to what was left. Whilst, it is true that these students have such a marvellous range of sports from which they choose, and croquet competes, many choose croquet. There are about four to five student returnees annually. This mixed level of player experience amongst the student participants, we used to advantage, and for the

common good. However, it is extra work to incorporate activities which involve both these groups effectively.

To recap: First- I coached our volunteer coaches. Then, they in turn, coached the school students. One process mirrored the other. I am delighted to say, that what started as an experiment, worked. It was not a new concept, but my use of it, by me, in a sports context and on a large scale, was new, and carried risks, especially as I was also new to Gateball. We all learnt so much.

Student Feedback and Program Evaluation

Feedback was sought from members of the coaching team, about student experiences and their reactions during a session. This meant that adjustments to session plans could be made, and any issues addressed. Also, at their last session, after play, they come into the clubhouse, complete their program evaluation form (rated very highly). Students have afternoon tea, and are then presented with their Participation Certificate and a Resource file. The latter includes a reading list, and snippets from articles (on all aspects) used by the Coaching team throughout the program.

Highlights for me have been:

The Students having fun playing croquet; a student with special needs who experienced two games whilst in the program, and two more games were added, when she became a Junior Member- learnt RC, before transitioning to AC under the continued tutelage of Ann Shaddick; one of our new Coaches became a GB REFEREE; I retained contact with Stephen Burke re varied croquet projects, long after he left ACU. Then, four years later (2018) other staff from that same faculty/School Staff, held their Xmas party at the Club. Their Deputy Head of School, organised a Croquet Competition, and gave their winners, bespoke 'Golden Mallet Trophies'. We are still on the ACU radar!

My final highlight (in 2018) was to experience the concept of a Junior Member Award Process crystallise, and result in SCC accepting its first three Junior Members in our recorded history.

To Conclude:

Coaching covers aspects beyond skills development. A learner-centred approach is preferred, and this value continued post-course on the lawns amongst our players/coaches. Coaching is demanding, so it was important to carry out our roles/tasks in meaningful and efficient ways. It paid to have a vision, be courageous, experiment, evaluate, and enjoy the rewards of goal attainment. Most of our

volunteer coaches became more standardised in their approach to coaching/playing, as they developed their skills and those of others. All volunteer Coaches became familiar with the ACA Coach Session Plan format. I am happy to say, that over the years, the coaching team has retained many of its original members and we have encouraged new players, who show potential, to join our team, and this has occurred.

Coaching at Canberra Croquet Club

Coach the Coach Workshop October 14, 2020

Canberra Club: 130 members, with a diverse range of players. Been going since 1928.

Annual coaching calendar.

Beginners Coaching courses from 6 – 4 weeks, covers Golf and Association (copy provided)

Focus on swing, stance and grip, and drills. Challenge of effectively introducing AC. Some drills and skills to assess their performance.

Coaching has come on since we have increased the number of coaches, and we have focussed on developing strong pennants teams at all levels. It has taken time to build, so that we now have over 10 competitive Div 1 GC players, and good contingents of Div 2 and 3 players. We encourage players to compete. We introduced coaching programs leading up to Pennants play, and we now have regular Division 2 and 3 coaching sessions based on drills and tactics. This has been given a terrific boost by the PPEP program that Alix and Pam and Peter Landrebe were involved in last year.

We have built on the Div 1 GC strength by holding a weekly training session. It's mostly informal, where Div 1 players meet, share skills and exercises, and play each other.

We have also tried to foster knowledge of and adherence to the rules and to fairness in play by offering Rules and Etiquette sessions every year. We also run sessions on how to use extra turns and bisques prior to club Handicap comps.

Gateball: the Club has a healthy gateball contingent, and has regular training sessions and learn to play Gateball modules, which attracts new club members to add Gateball to their repertoire.

Challenges: identifying and training coaches. As Ruth has said, we have used experienced players as assistants to qualified coaches in order to meet the demand for coaches.

Identifying skills and drills to stimulate interest and build the skills of our increasingly proficient club members. We have recently bought a tripod to encourage videoing for players to be able to examine their own stroke and do some self correction.

Promoting AC: we are looking to transition interested GC players to AC by offering club sessions aimed at less experienced players. But increasing AC numbers remains one of our challenges.

Focussing on issues such as the psychology of competition, and handling your mood and temperament in play.

Kate McLoughlin

Coaching Co-ordinator, Canberra Croquet Club

October 2020