



FC BIRRARUNG

The Discovery Phase

A guide to coaching U8 and U9 players

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What is the Discovery Phase ?

The Discovery Phase is the beginner level or beginning phase of coaching young players from ages 5-9. We encourage, facilitate and guide the players with games containing hidden skills. This way you get to know your players and have fun too.

Basically the Discovery Phase is all about 'FUN'. If your players are having fun, then that is all that matters.

What is in the Discovery Phase ?

The Discovery Phase sessions are divided into three segments :

- The Beginning
- The Middle
- The End

Each training session highlights one of the core skills:

- First touch
- Striking the ball (passing or shooting)
- Running with the ball
- 1v1(attacking or defending)

You will still perform all the core skills in your sessions, however highlighting one core skill at a time teaches your players to select the best core skill to use in a game situation.

The Beginning

The 'Beginning' is the warm up stage to introduce the selected core skill. These are FUN games to warm up the body **WITHOUT** :

- Lines
- Laps and
- Lectures

It can be done with or without a ball for the demonstration, then introduce the ball once you know the players understand how to play the game.

This segment is usually around 10 mins for one or two games.

Helpful hits:

- Examples of the 'Beginning' are on pages 26-51 of [FOOTBALL FOR KIDS](#) highlighted in green
- Explain while demonstrating the game for a quick start.

The Middle

In the 'Middle' we start to develop the selected core skill from your warm up and introduce opponents to create competition. This segment we focus on teaching the core skill within the game. Sneaky, but it's the best way to teach using what players like most - **playing games**.

Helpful hints:

- Stick to your core skill theme
- Explain while demonstrating the game for a quick start
- Run the game through twice before adding a variation (a harder or easier version of the game depending on your players skill level)
- Ask 1-2 questions for further understanding.
- Keep the rules simple and add incentives for team work.
- Everyone learns at their own pace so constantly encourage your players.
- Add water breaks to give the players time to understand the game.
- Remember if the game gets chaotic, don't panic, chaos is a checklist for coaches. What is needed or not needed. Embrace it.

This segment is usually around 20 mins, 10 mins per game if you choose two games. You can choose to do one game but add two variations.

Examples of the 'Middle ' are on pages 54 - 75 of [FOOTBALL FOR KIDS](#) highlighted in yellow

The End

Finally the 'End' - it's GAME TIME. Following on from the 'Middle' stage using the core skill you were developing, choose a fun game so players can practice what they learnt. Repetition is the key to understanding. The game can be as creative as you like with a method of scoring.

Helpful hints:

- Explain while demonstrating for a quick start
- Always encourage both sides
- If you see a player perform what you practiced, offer more points as an incentive
- Have fun

This segment is usually 20 mins. The final 10 mins is the final wrap up - coach's final thoughts to the team - highlight the key points using encouraging and positive language (no more than 2 mins) then ask the team to help pack up. Be mindful of the next team training in your spot.

Examples of the 'End' are on pages 79 - 87 of [FOOTBALL FOR KIDS](#) highlighted in red

Resources

Here are the Miniroos booklets and gameday rules to guide you through session planning. This is a tool to assist you. Remember coaching is also meant to be fun.

[ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR ALDI MINIROOS](#)

[FOOTBALL FOR KIDS](#)

[National Playing Formats and Rules](#)

[The NaTioNal FooTball curriculum](#) pages 92 - 130

Helpful hint - on page 93 in the National Curriculum click on session in the table and it will take you straight to that session

Enjoy creating your own sessions with these resources as your inspiration.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Question 1: What is the pitch size required for a Miniroos session?

Answer : In a Miniroos session, I like to set up a 30m by 20m rectangle pitch, that way I can split the pitch into 2 smaller pitches for smaller group games or into 4 quarter pitches for a game of Kings.

Question 2: What happens if the session doesn't go to plan?

Answer: Sometimes planning doesn't go to plan, in the football world it's called CHAOS, don't be afraid of it - embrace it. It's just a coaches checklist of what needs to be fixed for next time.

Question 3: What happens if the players do not listen?

Answer: Before the session starts, make sure you have your pitch set up. When you introduce your first game, demonstrate while you are explaining. Keep it short and sweet (no more than 2 mins). Run through each game twice, this way you get more time for the end game. I usually give the players a drink of water in between each segment, then quickly start into the next game. Remember not to raise your voice to a player, we want them to come back. You are the role model, they will look up to you.

Question 4: What happens if I planned my session for 10 players and only 7 show up?

Answer: Sessions can be adapted to any number attending the training session. However if you prefer the full 10 but only 7 attend, adapt the sessions in the resource links to a 4v3 game session but rotate the players around. I like to have plan A,B and C for just incase.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Question 5: If my players are struggling with the 'Middle' am I able to skip it ?

Answer: There is no harm in skipping a segment. As coaches we want to improve our players football ability, you can achieve that through repetition. You can repeat the 'Beginning' a few times then move straight to the 'End' or start slow with the 'Middle' and finish with a game. You could even just focus on the 'End' highlighting a core skill. My favourites are the mini world cup games and the 1v1 promotion relegation games. Learning from games is the best session for our players. To sum up, the first two segments are the technical aspect of a Miniroos session, you can choose when you'd like to introduce them in your sessions.

Question 6: What happens if one of my players refuses to join in ?

Answer: The player may have something on their mind, be patient with the player and ask if they would like to be your assistant coach. Then ask the player why they don't want to join in. We can only assume he or she may not feel like participating or maybe they may not like the game. Be mindful of their reasons and what they are feeling. I recommend your team manager or the assistant coach can take over your session once the game has commenced and you as the coach talk to your player. It's better coming from you the head coach. I would also inform your Coordinator to log this as a concern and personally inform the players parents.