IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPPORT COACH/MENTOR ROLE.
This guide is designed to help you provide the best possible support to the trainee coach who has asked you be their mentor through their supported practice. To do this you should be qualified to at least Level 2 or equivalent and really want to help the new coach improve their coaching style, knowledge and confidence.

The trainee coaches will have finished their course with a wealth of new ideas and thoughts on coaching. They will have had some opportunity to practice and receive feedback from their tutors and peers on the course and now need the chance to practice further so that they can continue their improvement before assessment. To help with this process they need a mentor who will give them fair and honest feedback along the way making the role of support coach a very important one in the formative stages of any new coach. A well supported coach at this stage will improve quickly and be a great benefit to the team and club that they work with but without great support the trainee will quickly return to type and progress will be slow if at all.

The coach education courses have changed since the autumn of 2013 and you might be a little concerned as to how you can perform the role of mentor if you have been through a different process. Firstly I am sure that your experience will tell you what is good and poor coaching practice and you would recognise this in any era and any sport. You have the ‘Observation Templates’ that can be found in the trainee’s folder which will help your observations and conversations. Essentially your role is to reinforce the trainee’s good practice and help them improve their areas that need developing. To help you further an outline of the key elements of the new course has been provided.

Please take on the role of support coach seriously and you will also find that it helps your coaching as you reflect on your own practice along the way. Seeing a trainee improve through the time that you mentor them will provide a great source of pride to yourself as well as help them through assessment and the rest of their coaching careers.

Before starting as a support coach/mentor it may be useful to reflect on your own coaching practice as you read through the key elements of the ‘Coaching Certificate Courses’ (Level 2)

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ‘COACHING CERTIFICATE’
New coaches receive a Flash Drive called Howzat that has a plethora of information including practices, technical information and so on. It would be a good idea to get your trainee coach to show you round this is it will be central to their planning and delivery.
WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COACHING CHILDREN (CC) AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS (YPA) COURSES?

The CC and YPA are parallel courses and all coaches that qualify as either of these are equal and can be referred to as holding the Coaching Certificate or level 2. The difference between the two will be that the CC coach will have received more information and experience in coaching 6-13 year olds and the YPA the same for 14+ thus making them better equipped to coach in that domain. A new coach will be qualified to coach any age group they will just have an expertise and experience in a particular domain.

PLAYER – OUTCOME – PRACTICE (POP)

The ECB Player Centred Coaching approach

PLAYER: who is the player?
- Name? Age? Experience?
- The whole person (beyond cricket)?
- Individuality (what can they already do- natural movements/ current outcomes/ how do they do it)?
- Safety (is how they currently perform the skill safe)?
- Stage of Development (ECB PDM- Early/ Basic/ Enhanced)?
- Role- Batting/ Bowling/ Fielding/ Wicketkeeping/ Captain?
- What do they want/ need to learn?
- Is the activity enjoyable?
- Is the activity appropriate?

OUTCOME: what outcomes will we achieve?
- Which part of the game will we develop- Technical? Tactical? Physical? Mental?
- Which core principles will we enhance and develop?
- How will we continue to enhance existing strengths?
- Which part of the game did the activity focus on (Technical/Tactical/Physical/ Mental; Batting/ Bowling/ Fielding/ Wicket Keeping)? What equipment is used? Is the activity challenging?

PRACTICE: what type of practice and coaching tools will I use?
- Where on the continuum of practice- Fixed? Variable? Cricket Game Based Learning?
- What does it sound like?
- What sorts of activities happen?
- How much activity happens?
POP is about, knowing your players’ characters, likes, dislikes etc working out what areas of the game they would most benefit from working on and then creating a practice that achieves the desired outcomes because it has been designed and delivered with the players and outcomes in mind. This gives coaches a framework against which to check their practices and make sure they achieve what they are designed for. Experienced coaches have always followed this process and now less experienced ones can think in the same way.

PRACTICE TYPES
Practices are arranged on a continuum that has three broad categories Fixed, Variable and Cricket Game Based Learning arranged along it. Each practice type has its own strengths and weaknesses which should be considered when developing practice sessions.

FIXED Practice:
- Activities that require players to repeatedly perform the same skill or movement
- For example: batting - repeated front foot drive to constant feed; bowling - repeat stock ball - same line, length and trajectory
- Able to maximise practice repetitions within any session
- Suitable for the introduction of new or complex skills
- Can improve players immediate performance and confidence in practice
- Has potentially limited impact on learning and transfer of skills developed in practice into game situations

VARIABLE Practice:
- Activities that require players to perform the skill or movement differently from one attempt to the next (no repetition)
- For example: batting - randomised front and back foot attacking shots; bowling - stock-ball, slower-ball and Yorker are all practised in a random order
- Attempt to replicate the random demands associated with the actual game
- Can enhance players learning and development of game-specific skills
- Can be challenging and can lead to reduced practice performance and player confidence

CRICKET GAME BASED LEARNING (CGBL) Practice:
- Scenarios that attempt to replicate the random demands associated with the actual game
- Typically delivered via small-sided or conditioned games (e.g. last 4 overs, batting on a turning pitch etc.)
- Encourages the ‘holistic’ development of skills (integration of technical, tactical, physical and mental elements of the game)
• Allows a ‘hands-off’ coaching approach and encourages players to self-discover
• Promotes the potential transfer of skills developed in this type of practice to the actual game
• Players immediate performance may be limited (in comparison to a fixed practice)
• Potentially a challenging approach for coaches (based on: confidence/ time/ space/ organisation/ differentiation/ practice repetitions etc.)

Current thinking would argue that the further towards CGBL the coach can get with every practice the more complete the learning will be for the player and ultimately create better, more adaptable, self reliant players.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL (PDM)
As players improve they move through developmental stages and those that are covered within the two coaching certificate courses are Early, Basic and Enhanced with CC coaches working in early and into Basic and YPA coaches starting in Basic then into Enhanced.

EARLY stage of player development - ‘The Ignition Stage’. Activities should be fun; develop a broad base of general movement and simple cricket skills, include game based learning, offer an affinity with simple tactical elements and expose players to a very wide range of experiences. Most importantly the EARLY Skill stage should ignite a lifelong love of the game.

BASIC stage of player development - ‘The Development Stage’ Activities should be fun, develop a player’s physicality, build upon and develop cricket specific skills, offer a wide range of experiences, explore simple rules, tactics and strategies through game based learning and competitive opportunities. Players should be encouraged to become inquisitive about their own development and seek to improve their own performance through integrated holistic programmes.

ENHANCED stage of player development - ‘The Refinement Stage’. For players in the Enhanced Skill stage of player development should begin to develop specialist cricket skills. Players should work hard to ensure they address their own individual needs, encompassing Technical, Tactical, Mental, Physical and Lifestyle preparation and individualised training programme. This stage is characterised by deliberate practice and a broad range of competitive opportunities, players should be developing their athletic prowess and above all embark on a quest for excellence whilst still being enjoyable.

COACHING TOOLS
For those that took the UKCC qualifications the Coaching Tools replace the bugs and you will see that many of them are the same. The major difference is how and when they are applied. Knowing the players and having developed a practice that they will enjoy and help them improve the coach now needs to decide how to deliver the session and which tools they will use most. For example with players in Early the coach might use a lot of Demonstration as a method to describe what a skill might look like. As players move
through the PDM then the use of Questioning might be a more appropriate tool to use to get players to work out how a skill might be performed. Using POP the coach decides which blend and balance of the coaching tools are most appropriate to the session they are planning.

The Coaching tools are:

- **Instruct**- Is the information and task clear? Is the information and my language simple? Are the outcomes clear? Can the players tell me what they’re about to do?
- **Demonstrate**- What will I achieve with my demo? Can everyone see my demo? What’s my best option: Me? A peer? A player? A video (HOWZAT!)? Which bit of the demo will I focus the players on?
- **Observe**- Have I taken enough TIME to observe (during practice and games)? What are the players trying to do and what is the outcome? Is the skill safe (players)? Have I observed from different positions?
- **Analyse**- What are the players trying to do? What is the outcome and are they succeeding? Can I help them all to develop super-strengths? How can I maintain the players’ confidence whilst helping them develop? What will I do?
- **Intervene**- What will I do - leave alone, use silence, simple instructions, praise, demo, feedback or ask questions? When should I time any planned intervention? What outcomes are the players working on? What kind of practice are we using? Can I help them to continue to develop?
- **Praise**- Am I praising the whole group or an individual? What specifically have they done well? When is the best time to praise? Am I praising effort or performance?
- **Use Silence**- What are the players trying to do? Are they on task and engaged? If I say anything now will it help? What else can I be doing when I am silent (Observe/Analyse)?
- **Question**- What do I want to find out? Closed or Open? What do I do with the answer? Can I develop the players’ self-awareness?
- **Feedback**- What do the players need to know- what will I tell them? Is it about the outcome or the process? How will they improve because of it? Am I feeding back in relation to effort or performance?

**CORE PRINCIPLES**

The ‘Core Principles’ represent an attempt to simplify technique and address the foundations or the ‘basics’ of Batting, Bowling, Fielding and Wicket Keeping. As long as the Core Principles are in place then it does not matter how the player achieves them although all the coaching points that you have gathered over the years are available to you to help players work towards them.
**BATTING**

- Balanced and comfortable ‘set-up’- enabling a ‘ready to move quickly’ position
- Head in optimal position for you (player)- allowing you to see the ball at release and throughout
- Decisive body movements to establish a stable and balanced base
- Co-ordinated body movements (hips/ shoulders/ arms/ hands) to enable clean contact with the ball
- Present full face of the bat to promote clean contact

**BOWLING**

- Rhythmical, balanced and aligned approach to crease
- Head in optimal position for you (player)- to enable focus on target area (adaptable) throughout action
- Jump and gather towards target
- Strong, tall and aligned (hips and shoulders) at back foot contact (throughout action to release)
- Increase energy towards target throughout delivery
- Maximum energy from the action transferred to ball at point of release (to enhance pace, seam, swing or spin)
- Energy continues towards target through to full completion of action and follow-through

**WICKET KEEPING**

- Head in optimal position for you (player)- allowing you to see the ball (maintained throughout)
- Strong body posture to enable quick and decisive movements
- Establish a strong and balanced position to receive the ball
- Present a comfortable and maximal catching area with head and hands in line with the ball

**FIELDING**

**General:**

- Establish ‘ready position’ (position specific) which allows you (player) to see the ball and move dynamically in any direction required
- Decisive, balanced and controlled movement towards the line of the ball

**Catching:**

- Establish a strong and balanced position to receive the ball
- Present a comfortable and maximal catching area with head and hands in line with the ball

**Throwing:**

- Establish grip that enables controlled throw
• Select and then focus on appropriate target
• Establish a strong and balanced base to throw the ball
• Maximum energy transferred to the ball and towards the target

SUPPORTED PRACTICE PROCESS
This is similar to as it was under the UKCC2 system.
1. Trainee Coach to lead on six minimum 30 minute long coaching sessions. Four of these sessions should be linked and progressive – see below
2. The sessions should have been planned using Howzat and the plans inserted into their folders.
3. The trainee should also complete an outline plan for the linked and progressive sessions and a risk assessment for each venue used.
4. Mentor and trainee talk about the session with the feedback being recorded on the sheets supplied in the folders. These sheets should be then placed back in the folder
5. Trainee coach should also include the printouts from their online learning and MCQ result
6. This folder will be required by the assessors approximately 10 days before the final day of the course (modules 7 and 8) and will be contacted to make the necessary arrangements.

DEFINITION OF LINKED AND PROGRESSIVE SESSIONS
Linked sessions should be based on the same theme. Examples include the front foot drive, spin bowling or attacking fielding. Progression is the building on a previous session with the next making it more advanced and challenging for the players. An example is given below.

EG of Bowling Progression within Howzat for CC
2. Early – Games and Practices – Conestrike. Variable practice if players are asked to aim at different sets of cones
4. Basic – Tactical and Mental - Dots vs Runs. CGBL where bowling skills are put into context

EG of Front Foot Drive Progression within Howzat for YPA
4. Enhanced – Tactical and Mental – Opening Up. CGBL where batting skills are put into context
Below is some guidance for the mentor when faced with a supported practice feedback form.

### ECB Coach Education Certificate in Coaching Children’s Cricket

**ECB Coach Education Certificate in Coaching Children’s Cricket - Supported Practice ‘Applied Coaching Sessions’ Observation template:**

**MENTOR/ SUPPORT COACH:** Please note that this observation form is to make BRIEF NOTES (bullet points etc.) relating to the session that you observe to support the coach’s on-going development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning themes for observation</th>
<th>GUIDANCE NOTES for Mentor/support coach observations and notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What number session is this (X of 6 applied sessions)?</td>
<td>GUIDANCE NOTES: This refers to the number of applied coaching sessions. Which session is this in the sequence of 6 coaching sessions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What ‘learning theme’ is the coach addressing in this session (the coach will be able to tell you what they are focusing on)? | GUIDANCE NOTES: Expect the coach to focus on one of the following ‘learning themes’ during the session:  
1. Stage appropriate content (from either EARLY or BASIC stage of player development)- covering Batting, Bowling, Fielding and Wicketkeeping via 6 sessions  
2. Use of the ‘core principles’  
3. Use of Fixed practices- including the planning and use of appropriate Fixed practice COACHING TOOLS  
4. Use of Variable practices- including the planning and use of appropriate Variable practice COACHING TOOLS  
5. Use of Cricket Game Based Learning (CGBL) practices- including the planning and use of appropriate CGBL practice COACHING TOOLS  
6. Use of Integrated practices- Integration of Technical, Tactical, Physical and Mental activities |
| How did the coach plan and monitor SAFETY? | GUIDANCE NOTES: How did the coach organise the players in the task so that they remain safe?  
- How do they organise the players in the task so that they remain safe?  
- What environmental factors do they check to ensure safety?  
- Is the equipment being used safe? |
| Who were the PLAYERS in this session? | GUIDANCE NOTES: This refers to the players that the coach is working with. Please note their age and stage of development (and any other considerations). The stage of development refers to the ECB Player Development Model (contains the Early, Basic or Enhanced stages of development). When working with children the players will typically fall within either the EARLY or BASIC stage of development. The coach or the ECB HOWZAT! resource can support you with this information. 
- The coach needs to demonstrate the use of appropriate (Early or Basic) content to meet group needs |
| What OUTCOMES did you observe the coach focusing on during the session: what outcomes will we achieve? | GUIDANCE NOTES: This will require the coach being observed to:  
- Use relevant Technical, Tactical, Physical or Mental (or combination of) content from the EARLY or BASIC stage of PDM/HOWZAT!  
- Use relevant Batting/Bowling/Fielding/Wicket Keeping (or combination of) content from the EARLY or BASIC stage of PDM/HOWZAT! |

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PROMPT QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION
The following prompt questions will provide a useful way of helping you self reflect. There are a lot of them but a quick read through should make you think about your own coaching and how to communicate with your trainee coach.

How and when do I plan my coaching sessions? Do I have clear goals for my players as well as myself? How smoothly do my sessions run?

How do I gain the players’ attention? Does it work? How frequently do I have to shout or talk over the top of them? Do I wait until they are focused?

Are my instructions always helpful? How often do I check the players have understood my instructions and explanations?

How disciplined are my players? Who starts warming up as soon as they arrive or who waits for me? Do I need to discipline my players? When, why and how? Do I put them down or do I focus on their behaviour rather than the person?

Am I sufficiently aware of safety? How often do I make the necessary checks (playing areas, players, equipment, first aid provision)

What impression do I give? What sort of role model am I? Does it match my philosophy?

Do I give each player time? How much do I know about each player?

How do I communicate? Do I do a lot of telling? Do I talk more than I listen?

Do I offer more praise than criticism? When? Under what circumstances?

How often do I give appropriate and informative feedback? How effective was it?

What was the reason I intervened?

How did I feel as it was happening? How do I know how they felt?

What internal factors influenced my decision (ie related to my feelings, style and personality)? What external factors influenced my decision? What should have influenced my decision?

How do I feel now about the experience? What have I learnt? How will it affect my future practice - what will I do differently next time?

How could I have dealt better with that situation? What other choices did I have?

How often and how well do I plan the way I will coach a technique? Does it follow a logical pattern?

Do I provide the right amount of information, too much or too little? How often do I limit myself to one or two teaching points? How clear and effective are my demonstrations? Are they visible to all? Is it on the correct things? Was the demonstration appropriate? How effective was it?

How effective are my practices? Do I design them to achieve a specific purpose or do I simply take them from my repertoire? Do I give players enough time to practise before I intervene?

How effectively and appropriately do my practices challenge every player?

How much do I focus on the most talented and ignore the less able? How do I assess whether or not each practice has been effective? Do I use decision making drills?

Does every player gain sufficient and appropriate feedback to help them improve? Do I encourage them to analyse their own skills and use all the available feedback? How much do they rely on me?

How well do I use questioning as a teaching style? How well do I use it to raise their awareness? How well do I use it challenge their thinking and encourage them to make decisions and take responsibility?