

CPD: Innovative & Interesting Practice Drills

CPD Level: Level 2 (suitable also as bridging content towards Level 3)

Session Duration: 2 hours total (45 mins Theory / 1 hr 15 mins Practical Application)

Session Aim

To inspire coaches to create and adapt innovative practice drills that keep players engaged, develop specific skills purposefully, and link practices to realistic game situations.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, participating coaches will be able to:

- Understand how purposeful practice differs from repetitive practice.
- Design and adapt practice drills that maintain interest while targeting technical, tactical, or mental development.
- Apply creative and game-related practice formats to individual and group coaching.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a drill through observation and feedback.
- Share and reflect on innovative practices for different ability levels.

Target Audience

Club and Level 2 Coaches working with improver, intermediate, or club-level players.

Resources Required

- Mats, jacks, bowls (indoors or outdoors)
- Cones, discs, markers, hoops
- Score sheets or mini task cards
- Whiteboard/flip chart for group idea sharing
- Stopwatch / mobile timer

Session Outline

1. Introduction & Discussion (Theory – 45 mins)

Objective: Explore what makes a practice innovative and purposeful.

Key Discussion Points:

- Difference between repetition and purposeful repetition (EBCS principle).
- How to maintain engagement — progression, competition, variation, feedback.
- Use of measurable scoring systems to motivate players.
- Linking drills to skill objectives (draw, trail, weight control, positional play).
- Adapting existing practices (e.g., 'Diamond', 'Square', 'Beat the Shot') into new formats.
- Encouraging player ownership — self-set challenges and peer scoring.

Example Prompts:

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Berkshire Bowls Coaching Scheme



- What is the difference between a good drill and a memorable drill?
- How can we adapt drills for juniors, seniors, or para-bowlers?
- How can a single practice address both skill and tactical thinking?

Coach Reflection Task: Each coach notes down two current drills they use and how they could make them more game-like or engaging.

2. Practical Application (1 hr 15 mins)

Objective: Experiment with and evaluate new drill concepts.

Format: Divide coaches into small groups (2–4). Each group selects or designs one 'innovative drill' around a target theme.

Theme	Example Drill Concept	Purpose
Accuracy & Focus	3-Zone Challenge – place cones at 1m, 2m, 3m from the jack. Bowl into target zones for progressive points.	Develops consistency and fine weight control.
Positional Play	The Square Plus – modify the 'Square' practice with offset jacks and moving target bowls.	Builds awareness of angles and the second bowl cover.
Pressure Drills	Last Bowl Wins – one shot each, sudden-death scoring.	Encourages decision making and composure under pressure.
Tactical Awareness	Head Builder Challenge – simulate head; teams draw, trail, and defend positions.	Links technical drills to tactical game play.
Player Creativity	Player-Designed Drill – each group invents a unique drill and explains its purpose.	Encourages innovation and coaching creativity.

Observation Tasks:

- Is the drill measurable?
- Does it replicate match pressure or conditions?
- How does it promote decision making?
- Can it be adapted for different abilities?

Peer Review: Each group presents and demonstrates their chosen drill. Group discussion follows on adaptability and relevance.

3. Reflection & Evaluation (15 mins)

Wrap-Up Discussion:

- Which drills could you integrate into your next coaching session?
- How can you record player improvement through these practices?
- What makes a drill 'stick' in players' memory?

Takeaway: Each participant drafts one innovative drill to include in their club's practice library, noting its aim, setup, scoring, and variation ideas.

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Suggested Assessment / Follow-Up Task

- Coaches to trial one new practice drill at their club session.
- Record observations on engagement, player feedback, and outcomes.
- Share results at the next CPD or online peer forum.

Session Summary

This CPD encourages creative thinking in practice design, rooted in purposeful repetition and progressive challenge. Coaches will leave with practical, adaptable ideas that improve motivation, skill transfer, and enjoyment for their players.

