

6x WEEK OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE PROGRAMME



WEEK 4

Honouring the Game:

Page 2 - Softball in NZ & Around the World

Position Focus:

Page 5 - Outfield

Hitting Focus:

Page 12 - Bunting

Base Running:

Page 17- Sliding

INTRODUCTION & HONOURING THE GAME

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome the players To provide insights and a greater understanding of the game in New Zealand and around the world.
Coaches Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the information below on softball in New Zealand and the game around the world.
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 mins
	00:00 – 00:05

SOFTBALL IN NEW ZEALAND AND AROUND THE WORLD

Softball Around the World

- Softball was invented in 1887 in Chicago, USA as an indoor game.
- In 1888, the game had spread outdoors. It was originally called either mushball, kittenball or indoor baseball, but by the 1920s it had acquired the name of softball
- Softball spread slowly to the rest of the world with, perhaps, its biggest push coming from American servicemen playing and teaching the game on the far-flung fields of World War II.
- Softball is played by more than 30 million participants worldwide in over 127 countries.
- Women's softball became a Summer Olympic sport in 1996, but it and baseball were dropped from the 2012 Games but have been reinstated for the 2020 Games.
- Softball is governed by the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC). The WBSC coordinates World Championships for Men's and Women, U23 Men, U18 Boys and Girls and U15 Girls.



White Sox team members presented each of their Kenyan counterparts with a new pair of softball cleats and three bats for the Africans' team gear bag. Photo: New Zealand and Kenyan teams at the WBSC Women's World Championships in Canada, 2016.


Softball in New Zealand

- Softball has been played in New Zealand since the late 1930's with Wellington Softball being recorded as the first Association in 1938.
- Softball is regarded as a gender neutral sport meaning both male and female compete in the sport equally.
- Softball NZ oversees 19 Associations with a membership of approximately 26,000.
- Auckland, Hutt Valley, Wellington and Canterbury have enjoyed the most successes since National Tournaments started in 1939.
- Auckland and Canterbury are the two largest Associations in New Zealand.
- New Zealand has host 5 World Championship events since 1976; Men's (1976, 2004, 2013), Women's (1986) and Junior Boys (1993). The U18 Boys World Cup will be played in Palmerston North in 2020 and the Men's in Auckland in 2021.




Poneke Kilbirnie (Wellington) and Mount Albert Ramblers (Auckland) men's teams batting It out.

WARM UP – DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic stretching means you are moving as you stretch and is important as it activates muscles during your workout, improves range of motion, improves body awareness and enhances muscular performance and power. 		
Coaches Notes:	<p> Example of dynamic warm up exercises Refer to the “Coach Support Notes” page 4</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lateral Shuffle High Knees Butt Kicks Trunk Rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward Lunges Arm Circles Leg Swings Shuttles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretch Shoulders & Back Squats Add additional dynamic stretches if needed
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 mins 	00:05 – 00:15	

WARM UP – THROWING MECHANICS & LONG TOSS

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the importance of using this time to develop and embed good throwing mechanics versus just throwing the ball around to warm up. As a coach utilising this time to check and address good throwing mechanics will save you time during the drills. 		
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to the “Coach Support Notes” pages 7 – 10 for the detail relating to good throwing mechanics.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grip Arm Action Underhand Toss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step/Stride Release / Wrist Action Overhand Toss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hip / Shoulder Rotation Follow Through / Glove Arm Movement Long Toss
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 mins 	00:15 – 00:25	



FIELDING DRILLS

FOCUS: OUTFIELD

WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick water break • Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening. 	
Coaches Notes:	<p>📖 Split the team into 4 groups the ideal size is of groups is 4. For larger groups you may need to allocate more time for this drill.</p>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins 	00:25 – 00:30

STATION 1: ROLE AND FIELD AWARENESS (ALL)

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard (ideal but not necessary) 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

STATION 2: DROP STEP

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cones and balls 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

STATION 3: CROW HOP & THROW

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls, bases and bat. 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

STATION 4: THE CUT-OFF (ALL)

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balls, bases and bat 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	6 mins	00:30 – 01:00

STATION 1: ROLE AND FIELD AWARENESS (ALL) (6 mins)

Role of the Outfielders	<p>The three outfielders are evenly spaced apart behind the infield, at varying depths depending on the situation. Outfielders catch fly balls as well as field and return ground balls and line drives that make it through the infield. Outfielders are expected to back-up the infielders during plays at a base, in case a ball gets by an infielder. Outfielders are also expected to back one another up; and make a throw with both accuracy and velocity to the correct base or cut-off man.</p> <p>Left fielders are responsible for fielding the ball in the left field area, backing up centre field, and the third and second bases. Left fielders have the shortest throw to third base of any outfield positions. The left fielder will stand behind the shortstop in the outfield, to the left of the centre fielder between second and third base.</p> <p>Centre fielders are responsible for fielding the ball in the centre field area, backing up left and right field, and backing up second base. They must cover the greatest area of any player on defence, requiring them to be one of the fastest players on the team. They are the captain of the outfield and have catching priority over any other outfielder and infielder. They will stand directly behind second base in the outfield, in between the left and right fielder.</p> <p>Right fielders are responsible for fielding the ball in the right field area, backing up centre field, and backing up second and first bases. They see the least amount of balls of any of the outfielders but are still required to cover lots of ground. They are most likely to be the fielder that can prevent potential triples that are hit in the right centerfield gap or down the right field line. They will stand behind the second baseman in the outfield, to the right of the centre fielder between first and second base.</p>
Physical Qualities of Outfielders	<p>Physical Qualities of a Left Fielder - Arm strength, Quick reactions.</p> <p>Physical Qualities of a Centre Fielder - Arm strength, Quick reactions, Tracking, Speed</p> <p>Physical Qualities of a Right Fielder - Arm strength, Quick reactions.</p>

DRILL:

Objective:

To develop greater awareness of backing up for different game situations.

Task:

In groups of 3-4 ask the following questions allowing the groups to reply and demonstrate where they would position themselves and why.

Note: Outfielders will do one of two things 1) Field the ball or 2) back up the fielder or a base

No One on Base

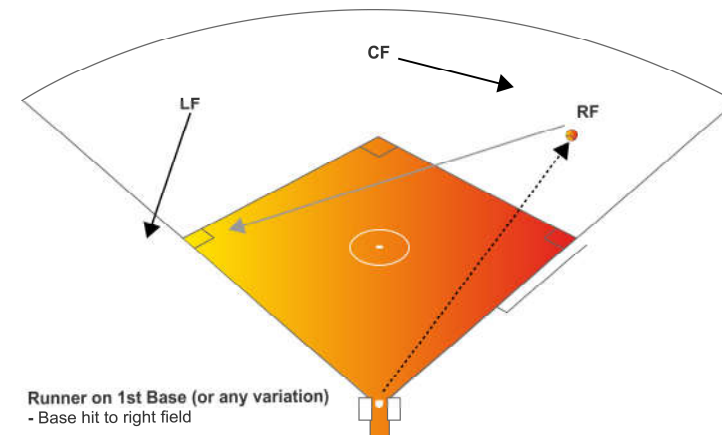
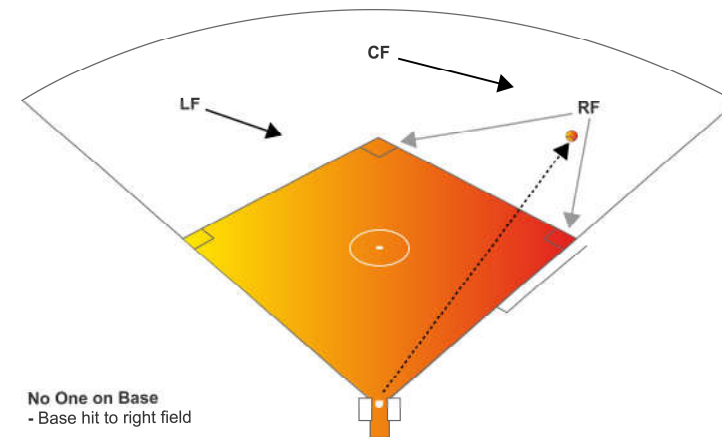
Base hit to right field	
Right Fielder:	Fields the ball and throws to second or first base.
Centre Fielder:	Backs up the right fielder.
Left Fielder:	Backs up second base, watching the throw come from the right field line. Being in a straight line from where the ball is thrown to where it is being caught.

Base hit to centre field	
Right & Left Fielder:	Backs up the centre fielder.

Base hit to left field	
Right Fielder:	Backs up second base, watching the throw and be in line from where the left fielder throws the ball to where the 2nd baseman catches the ball.
Centre Fielder:	Back up left fielder.

Runner at 1st Base (or any variation, 1st and 2nd or bases loaded)

Base hit to right field	
Right Fielder:	Fields the ball and throws to home or third base.
Centre Fielder:	Backs up right fielder.
Left Fielder:	Backs up third base.



STATION 2: DROP STEP (6 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

- To teach outfielders to pivot and run to the ball quickly and
- To be able to adjust to the ball as it moves in the air.

Task:

1. Outfielders line up behind a cone 5m in front and facing the coach.
 2. Coach says, "Ready Position."
 3. Fielder stands with feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, elbows are bent, glove is up, eyes looking in at the imaginary batter.
- The coach then points (while holding the softball) to the left or right, the player will pivot with their hip to start running back into that direction.
 - The fielder should take one step backwards, turn their body and run. They should continue to watch the ball over their shoulder.
 - After the fielder has taken a few steps, the coach will move the ball to the opposite direction. The fielder will turn their hips and run the other direction. This represents the wind moving the fly ball around.
 - Turn the player once more.
 - The coach will then throw the ball over the shoulder the fielder is watching from.
 - The fielder catches the ball and returns it to the coach.



Fielders should:

- When running, make believe the glove is part of their arm and keep it closed i.e. tuck the glove under the arm. Running with arm extended and glove open will slow them down.
- Run on their toes not their heels, which would make the ball appear to be bouncing in the air.

STATION 3: CROW HOP & THROW (6 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To help outfielders create momentum during the transition of fielding and throwing the ball.

Task 1:

1. Player tosses ball up in the air.
2. Then catches it with two hands out in front of their face.
3. The crow hop movement begins by bringing the back foot forward while separating the hands.
4. Player then points glove-side elbow at the target for an accurate throw. Body should be sideways to the target at this point.
5. Player pushes off back foot to add power to throwing motion.
6. Player pretends to throw the ball to a base but doesn't release the ball from their hand.
7. Repeat the drill until outfielders have mastered the skill.

Task 2:

1. Coach rolls a ball to an outfielder (remaining outfielders are in a line directly behind)
2. Player fields the ball one-handed to the side of their body and come up throwing immediately, crow hops and throws to a receiver on second base.

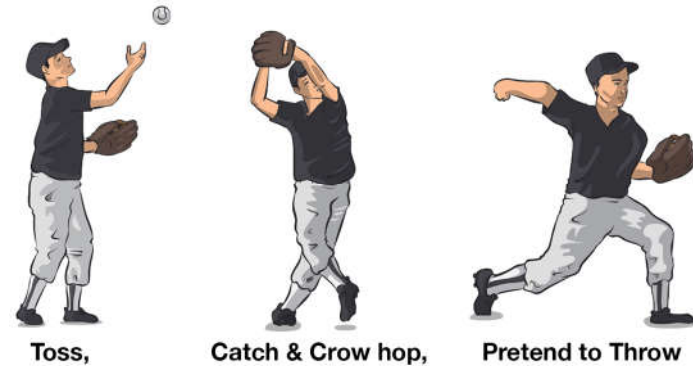
Task 3:

1. Coach hits a ball to an outfielder (remaining outfielders are in a line directly behind)
2. Player fields ball, crow hops and throws to a receiver on third base.

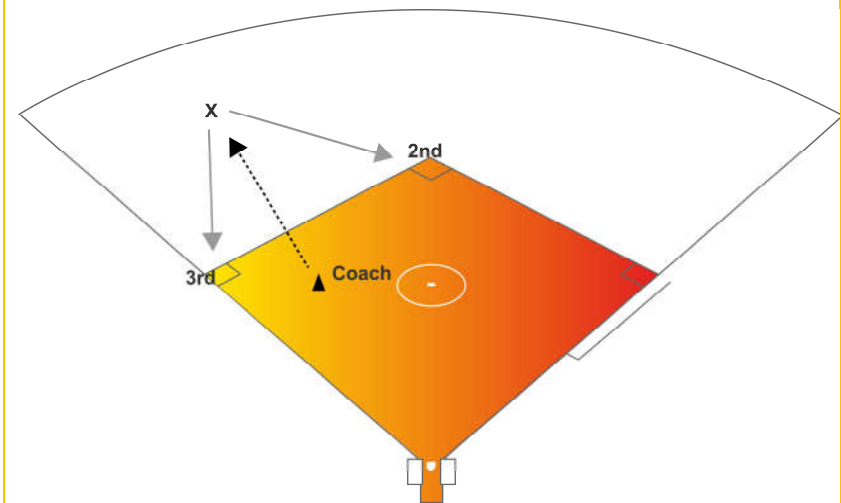
Observations notes:

It's important to get momentum during the crow hop movement. Players should be pushing off the legs and getting up in the air so that the throw can generate more power.

Task 1 – Example



Task 2 & 3 – Example



STATION 4: THE CUT-OFF (6 mins)

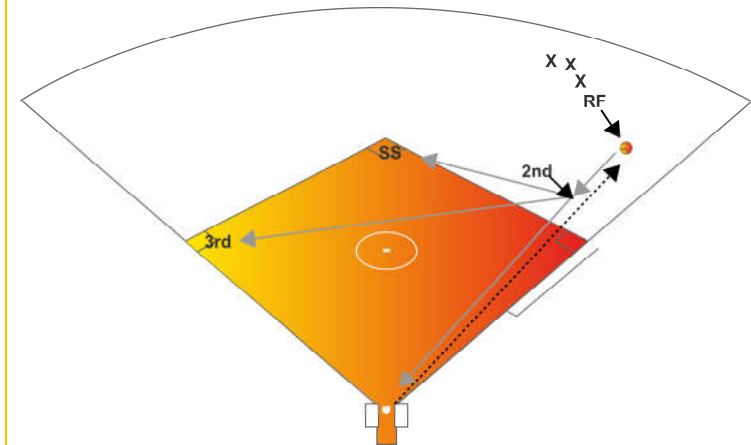
DRILL:

Objective:

The objective of this drill is to work on getting the ball from the outfield into the infield.

Task

1. This drill requires a fielder at second, at third, a catcher, a cut-off man, and outfielders.
2. The coach will begin the drill by hitting the ball (in the air or on the ground) to the outfielder.
3. The outfielder will field the ball and throw the ball on a line to the cut-off man (the ball should be aimed at the cut-off's head). The cut-off should go out to the outfield grass and line-up between home and the outfielder.
4. Once the ball is hit, the coach should tell the catcher where the ball should be thrown. First base is 1, second is 2, third is 3, and home is 4. As the outfielder throws the ball to the cut-off, the catcher recognises if the cut-off man needs to catch the throw or not.
5. If the throw doesn't need to be caught, then the catcher doesn't yell anything. If the ball needs to be caught or "cut" then the catcher needs to yell "cut" and then the number of the base.
6. For example, if the coach wants the ball thrown to third (because that's where the runner might be thrown out) then the catcher should yell "cut 3!" If the cut-off doesn't hear anything then he should just let the ball go. If the catcher does yell "cut" and then a number, then the cut-off needs to catch the ball and then throw to the correct base.



Observations notes:


- Coaches should look to make sure the outfielder is receiving the ball with two hands. Then the outfielder should use a crow-hop to throw to the cut-off man.
- The cut-off should line-up directly between the ball and home (or the base where the leading runner will be going for).
- The coach should make sure the cut-off man catches with two hands. Preferably the cut-off should already be turning as he catches the ball. Then the cut-off should use the crow-hop and throw to the base that the catcher called.
- The catcher needs to make the call loudly and in plenty of time, so the cut-off man knows.
- It is important coaches read the instructions in full and explain the role clearly to the fielders. Walk through the exercise in slow motion so they understand the importance of the role between cut-off and catcher.



HITTING DRILLS

FOCUS: BUNTING

WATER BREAK & SET UP

Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick water break • Setup stations and ensure those leading those stations are clear on what is happening. 	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to pages 22 and 23 of the “Coach Support Notes” for an overview of fundamental bunting and push bunt mechanics.</p>	
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 mins 	01:00 – 01:04

STATION 1: BUNT & PUSH BUNT FUNDAMENTALS (ALL)

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone should have a bat and share a plate between 2-3 players. 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 2: SACRIFICE BUNT TARGET GAME

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plate, balls, bat, cones and a bat 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 3: DEADEN THE BALL

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees, balls, wiffle balls, bats, screen and cones 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 4: PUSH BUNT

Equipment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backstop or screen, bats, balls, tees 	
Coaches Notes:		
Timeframe:	7 mins	01:05 – 01:40

STATION 1: BUNTING AND PUSH BUNT FUNDAMENTALS (ALL) (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To cover the fundamentals of bunting and push bunt.

Task:

Work through the setup and mechanics of these two short game offensive options. Hitters to work through mechanics as the coach observes and covers key areas.

STATION 2: SACRIFICE BUNT TARGET GAME (7 mins)

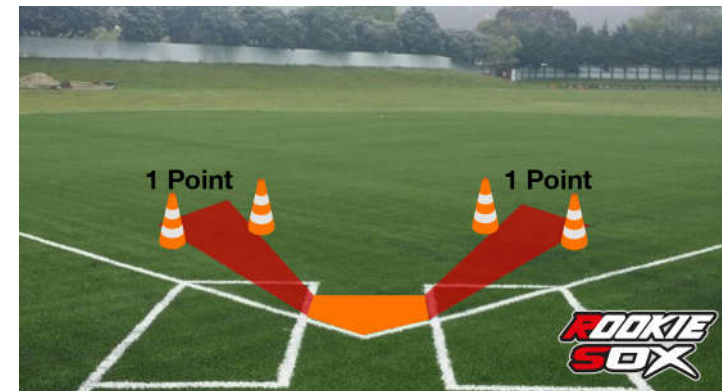
DRILL:

Objective:

A fun game that helps players execute the sacrifice bunt and place the ball in a desired location.

Task:

1. Place 2 cones on the first base side and 2 cones on the 3rd base side. These will serve as the target for the player bunting the ball.
2. One player will bat and gets 10 pitches. The player doesn't have to bunt a bad pitch. 3 fielders are the umpires for strikes and balls.
3. The player in the middle will act as the pitcher.
4. Each bunt that makes it between the cones is worth a point.
5. After 10 pitches the players will rotate one position. After all players have had 10 bunts the player with the most points is the winner.



STATION 3: DEADEN THE BALL (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

Another game, this one aimed at deadening the ball to force the field (including the catcher) to get field the ball.

Task:

1. Two teams (or pairs).
2. Markers/cones are set up 1 metre from the plate.
3. 5 pitches per player or ten per team.
4. For every bunted ball that lands within the markers the team gets one point.
5. The team (or pair) with the most points wins.

Hitters Should:

Make connection with the ball at the top end of the bat (Balls that hit the sweet spot will travel too far into the diamond).



STATION 4: PUSH BUNT (7 mins)

DRILL:

Objective:

To help hitters execute the push bunt and to guide the ball beyond the pitcher and the second and first baseman.

Task:

1. Place cones by the pitcher, second and first baseman to form a triangle. The cones will serve as the target for the player push bunting the ball.
2. Each player will receive 10 pitches. The player doesn't have to push bunt a bad pitch.
3. The player in the middle will act as the pitcher.
4. After 10 pitches the players will rotate one position.

Note: This drill can also be used as a game with points being awarded for balls that roll into the triangle. However, it is important that the execution and the mechanics of the push bunt are mastered first.





BASE RUNNING

FOCUS: SLIDING

STATION: EVERY BASE SLIDDING (15 mins)

DRILL:

Coaches Notes:

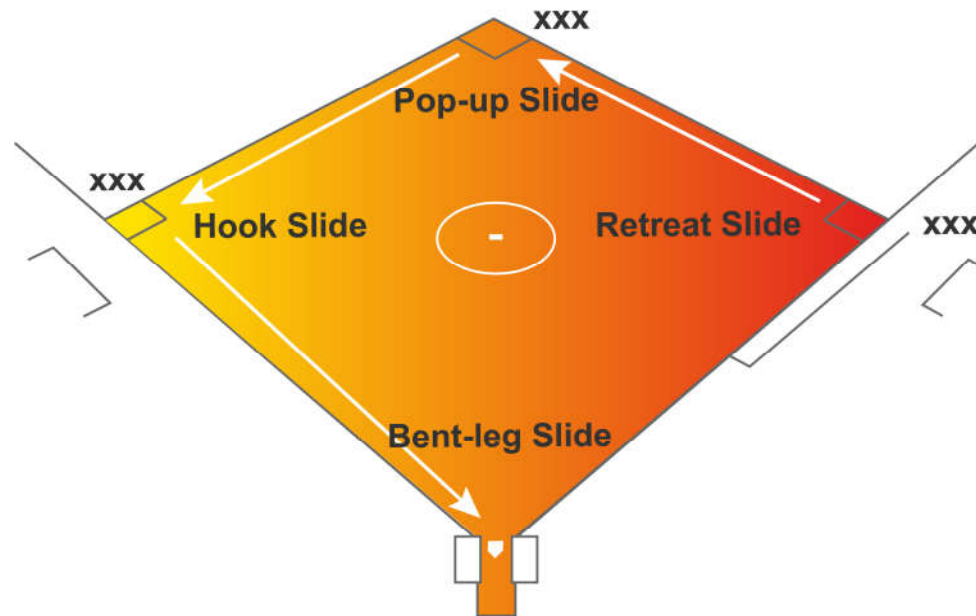
📖 Refer to pages 25 and 26 of the “Coach Support Notes” for an overview of sliding.

Objective:


To improve execution of various types of slides at each base, these include; retreat slide, pop-up slide, hook slide and bent leg slide.

Task:

1. Three or more runners are at each base.
2. 1st base – Retreat slide, the runner takes a lead and then dives back to the bag on a call of “Back” from the coach at first.
3. When the coach says “Go,” the runner at each base runs to the next base and performs the following slides
2nd base – Pop-up slide
3rd base – Hook slide
Home plate – Bent-leg slide.
4. Runners then go to the end of the line to continue the drill and slide to the next base.



WARM DOWN

Cool Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooling down after a workout is as important as warming up. After physical activity, your heart is still beating faster than normal, your body temperature is higher, and your blood vessels are dilated. This means if you stop too fast, you could pass out or feel sick. A cool-down after physical activity allows a gradual decrease at the end of the episode. It's good to stretch when you're cooling down because your limbs, muscles and joints are still warm. Stretching can help reduce the build-up of lactic acid, which can lead to muscles cramping and stiffness. 	
Coaches Notes:	<p> Refer to the “Coach Support Notes” page 27 for the detail relating to warm down</p>	
	<p>Stretching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold each stretch 10 to 30 seconds. If you feel you need more, stretch the other side and return for another set of stretching The stretch should be strong, but not painful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not bounce. Breathe while you're stretching. Exhale as you stretch, inhale while holding the stretch
Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 mins 	1:50 – 2:00

REVIEW OF WEEK 4:

How successful was Week 4? Areas to consider; your delivery, preparation, feedback from players and coaches.

What areas would you change to ensure future sessions are a greater success?
