

An Introduction to Korfball Coaching for Teachers

Korfball was invented by a school teacher at the beginning of the 19th century with the idea of developing a game where both male and female could play together with no disadvantage to either. The idea was developed further by having rules which encouraged

- All-round ability rather than specialisation
- The development of maximum co-operation between players
- Ball handling, movement and limited contact skills

Korfball coaching then is about developing the knowledge, skills and behaviour of individual players and teams to have success in playing but in a situation where both sexes have to play a part together. Theories of coaching can support the coach and enable greater insight by players of their actions. Two examples are relevant for the korfball coach.

1. Game based theory

This Australian developed theory suggests that players will develop more quickly if there is a game-based approach to learning in which the knowledge and skills required in the game are introduced and practised in game type situations. This is seen by players as being more relevant and therefore more motivating. In addition it puts the player closer to seeing how he/she has progressed and /or what they need to do to improve. The coach can therefore centre his/her coaching around game based situations. It is sometimes referred to as a “game sense” approach.

2. Action Theory

This korfball based theory has strong similarities to the game sense approach but is more attuned to the needs of higher level players. It has deeper and more explicit features since its design is to meet the needs of top international competition. However, it can be the foundation for coaching at any level provided it is used in the context of the level of maturity and requirements of the players.

Action theory	Examples in practise for the coach (and players)
Korfball movements should be understood as the sum of technique, physical condition and mental aspects	What is influencing the passing and catching in attack that is leading to many interceptions? (check technique, physical condition of group and individuals, frame of mind, understanding of what was happening)
The intention of the movement is required to be understood	Were the players aware of what was causing the interceptions of the ball in attack? (check as above but also what they as players felt were influencing factors)
A coach's job is to train players' bodies and minds to perform and to improve his/her players' korfball abilities by increasing their performance within a given environment.	<p>Let's look at the attack interception issue at our next training. What are the possible problems causing it? What is it we need to consider?</p> <p>What can we do? – e.g. in a training situation, to prepare ourselves better for the task (e.g. conditioning, mental state.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possible changes in the training activity (e.g. quicker movements to receive the pass, slower build up to taking a shot) - in preparation for the next game (e.g. pre-game talk and mental conditioning element for players)?
Action theory is supported by neuropsychological findings	<p>Internal perceptions, such as thoughts and feelings can have a positive or negative effect on playing so need to be considered in relation to performance.</p> <p>External sensory perceptions (through sight, touch, hearing, sound) can influence our reactions so we need to keep these positive (e.g. recognising in each other in the division of our contribution by sight and/or touch)</p> <p>Acting intentionally is based on information available (e.g. where to move when building up an attack)</p>

Some **insights** for teaching and learning coming from Action Theory

and Game Based Theory are

- Korfball training can only be effective when the coach organises korfball game- like situations.
- Playing matches is probably the best situation for learning; a hard match is the most effective training method.
- Players can improve their skills only by stiff competition – for individual players and team
- Variability in learning is a must because this teaches the player flexibility in the ways to reach his/her goals.

But keep in mind the comments above relate to those wanting to be top performers but can be used with any group if modified according to the maturity and aims of players.

Skill acquisition

In a skilled movement there is the process of **perception** in which the player determines what is occurring with regard to team mates and opponents and what is happening in their own body. From this information gathered a **decision is made** of what response is required.

In korfball, perceptual skill is the player's ability to "read the play" (that is, be aware of the current positioning and movement on the court and be able to project forward) and in skill acquisition terminology this is "pattern recognition". A korfball player needs to not only read the patterns of their own team in attack or defence but also of their opponents.

It is the role of the coach to train perception and decision making skills and the best way to do this is to focus on developing these in game like situations. This too relates to the skill acquisitions of passing, catching and shooting.

To do all this well requires the coach to have an understanding of the stages of player development and an analysis of the major skills and tactics required in korfball.

Internationally the movement at the moment is to follow the approach covered by foremost international coach and educator **Ben Crum** in the ***IKF Guide to Korfball Coaching*** so it focuses more on development towards higher level playing and coaching current in the most advanced korfball playing countries. But it is also relevant to any level of coaching in Australia with the provision that first and foremost the maturity, needs and aspirations of the players involved are being met.

The basics of coaching korfball

(from *Korfball Made Simple* by Ben Crum, KNKV, Zeist)

1. Relate to korfball objectives

- Scoring
- Building up to scoring through collective play
- Preventing scoring
- Play first, then practice elements

2. Extensive repetition

- Many opportunities
- No long waits
- Easy organisation
- Sufficient resources – balls, korfs, markers

3. Consideration for the group

- Age appropriate
- Pitched to the players' ability level
- Motivation (recreational or top sport)

4. Proper coaching/influencing

- Understanding the objectives of the game
- Be able to demonstrate, join in, explain
- Be able to adapt the rules
- Pose questions to players and get answers. Come up with solutions.

While the above is especially relevant to coaching young players it is relevant to any group, especially new players of whatever age but also the foundation for korfball coaching for any level.

Analysing korfball

Korfball, like all sports, is about winning so this analysis assumes coaching and playing is about trying to win. The activities in a korfball game can be seen to be this;

Team A	Team B
Attack: scoring goals	Defence; preventing scoring
Attack: building-up to score	Defence: disrupting the build-up
Attack: preventing interception	Defence: winning the ball
Defence; preventing scoring	Attack: scoring goals
Defence: disrupting the build-up	Attack: building –up to score
Defence: winning the ball	Attack: preventing interception

The 5 C's

Korfball is a mixed sport and the rules are such that to be successful players need to have

1. **Coordination** – a level of technical coordination such as techniques for shooting goals of different types.
2. **Co-operation** – needed to create scoring chances through such things as passing, catching positioning, getting away from opponents.
3. **Communication** – involves verbal and non-verbal and relates to space and time such where to position, when to pass, run etc.

4. **Competing** – players have to train to compete and this will be a development of learning a technique or specific skill
5. **Control** – insight into the game is necessary to know what actions to take in particular situations

The 5 C's can become the basis for tracking the progress of individuals and groups.

The following outlines some of the skills and strategies and uses of the 5C's in game situations. A more detailed account can be found in Section 2 of *The IKF Guide to Korfball Coaching*.

Using the 5 C's in attacking play

The 5 basic shot techniques all players should have are;-

Long shot	50%
Running in shot	10%
V shot (or veering off shot)	15%
Penalty shot	20%
Free pass	5%

The approximate proportion of these types of shots in top korfball league games are shown above. They suggest the relative importance of improving different types of shots.

For the

long shot:

- **Coordination** - positioning the ball, the body, the movement during the shot, concentration.
- **Control** - the coordination aspects and psychological conditioning for improved accuracy

Running-in shot:

- **Coordination** - collecting the ball, taking the steps and releasing the ball
- **Cooperation** - the timing of the pass from the feeder,
- **Competing** - outwitting the defender and/or showing superior movements to get into a position to take a shot

V-shot:

- **Coordination** – with a quick power step to pull away from opponent and collect the ball and make an instant shot

- **Cooperation** – critical that the assist passes at the correct time

Penalty shot:

- **Coordination** – of the take-off and movement up towards the basket
- **Control** – because it appears easy because there is no physical pressure psychological pressure can be crucial so taking time to prepare for the shot most important.

Free-pass:

- All **5C's** relevant to setting up and execution of the free-pass
- **Rules** must be understood by all players and the coach to maximise chances of scoring or preventing scoring.

Movement and creating space:

- **Coordination and Competing** - This involves having variety in direction of movement and variations in speed since it is a one-on-one duel with an opponent
- **Cooperation and Communication** – for keeping in mind the position of the ball, korf and team-mates and what action to take.

Passing:

For all types of passing **coordination** to ensure the pass is accurate and **cooperation** with team-mates is essential if the pass, or a series of passes, is to result in a goal attempt.

Different types of passes are required for different situations including

- **Two-handed overhead pass** e.g. assist over a defender to player
- **One-handed overhead pass** e.g. for side passing
- **Chest pass** – for quick passes where there is no defender

Catching the ball:

There needs to be good passing and good catching for success. It includes **coordination** to receive the ball, *cooperation* and **communication** with the passer of the ball.

The Rebound

This is a special way of catching the ball after a shot.

To catch the ball the rebounder needs to

- Read the shot
- Take a position to get the shot
- Time the movement to collect the rebound
- Learn about the likely movement of the ball off the basket

The defender/opponent is in a competing role.

Rebounds are

- attacking rebounds - when attacker blocks out defender by positioning between the defender and the post
- defensive rebounds – when the defender will try to get a better position

Defence

This is as important as attack since poor defending can lead to more goals being scored against a team than for it and hence a loss of the game.

Competing is a priority and coordination is important to be in a competing position.

Defence priorities are:

- Prevent shooting attempts by close marking
- Block attempts to score
- Hinder attempts by putting pressure on the shooter thereby influencing accuracy
- Ensure that no running-in shots are possible
- Provide assistance to fellow defenders, e.g. with front defence.
- Intercept the ball

The one-on-one defence

Has the defender in a

- defending position
- keeping a low centre of gravity – so can move easily
- increasing distance further away from the post
- if tall and confident can position to jump and block a long shot
- triangle defending (so can see assist and attacker) when close to korf.

In Ben Crum's Guide he takes a view of developing distinctive profiles and roles for individuals in a team and applies these to the high level (top/elite korfball) play situation. At this time we do not contemplate taking on those profiles. However, there are some very good ideas in this section of his book that could be adapted without the use of Ben's terminology and level of classification of players.

The IKF Guide to Korfball Coaching by Ben Crum and published by the International Korfball Federation, Zeist, The Netherlands 2012, pages 59-66

Exercises that relate to the approach can be found in

Video of korfball shooting techniques <http://www.ikf.org/ikf/coachingkorfball/>

For more information on stages of development of children relevant to korfball, including rationale and broader implications see ***Korfball Youth Development*** published by Korfball Australia and available on the website at au.korfball.org.au

For information on the ***Korfball Youth Leadership Award*** contact YouthLeadersAward@korfball.org.au

In Australia, older lesson programs are available on the Korfball Australia website including the 1001 Korfball Exercises under Resources> Teaching These are scanned documents. For further information contact

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