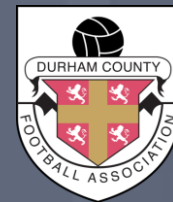


# Name: Mark Kelly

## FA Level 2 in Coaching Football Learner Journey



### My FA Level 2 in coaching football

Over the course of this series I will be posting 3 blogs, each detailing my experience, thoughts and reflections of my FA level 2 in coaching football course with Durham County FA. The purpose of this is to give you all an idea of the course, the people taking it, the tutors delivering it, how it has affected me and how I am developing as a coach. I decided to take the FA level 2 course as I was becoming uncertain as to whether I was coaching in the correct way having only completed Level 1 previously. I also wanted to look for answers to the many challenges I had faced as the boys I coach have grown from 9v9 to 11v11, moved from junior school to senior school and grown both physically and emotionally in what has seemed like huge degrees in some cases and barely noticeable in others.

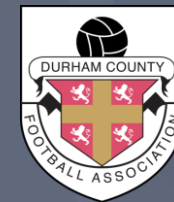
#### Block 1

Arriving at the Durham FA headquarters I was nervous yet looking forward to the course and hoping to get answers to the various challenges I had faced in the 2 years of coaching. Their offices are within the grounds of Durham's international cricket facility with 3G pitches being used for all practical activities and the top floor classroom for theory work.

The classroom was full of unfamiliar faces but we were all quickly put at ease by the Lead tutor Andy Lowe who gave quick introductions of himself and Richard Shuffleton, then threw us straight into some fun activities that broke the ice for everyone.

Our course was full of local grassroots coaches and sports science students working towards their degree qualifications, most of which were also part time coaches in the area.





***“Day 2 was a great day for me as this was a challenge I faced regularly, so to see the way Andy and Richard made their sessions cover all 4 corners but most importantly making them all fun, challenging and socially engaging to everyone participating was a big step forward for me. I have since changed all my warm up sessions with great results.”***

## Day 1

### NEW LEVEL 2 AND THE ROLE OF THE COACH

We started with Andy introducing the learning outcomes of this new level 2 course, giving out our learning Journals and explaining what was expected of us during the course and in our projects.

We looked at the role of the coach at level 2 and how it links with the England DNA before exploring our own personal philosophy and coaching philosophies before taking part in 3 more practical sessions demonstrating our days learning.

It was evident from this first day that the new level 2 course was going to provide lots of new challenges as a coach but also give us the solid foundation to develop from. In this first day it had us challenging our thinking of our philosophy, why we coach and what are we trying to coach. This wasn't something any of us had really given much thought to prior to the course, not really understanding the underpinning implication it has on what we are trying to achieve as a coach.

## Day 2

### THE SOCIAL CORNER AND HELPING PLAYERS LEARN

Day 2 started with a quick refresher of day 1 learning, then focused our attentions on the social side of the game and the effects of our actions, session designs and communications have on our players behaviours and attitudes.

We then had a few Tutor led practical sessions demonstrating an alternative approach to session design of warm up activities and game related sessions promoting behaviours that develop the social corner traits whilst still covering many aspects of the other 3 corners.

Later in the day we worked on classroom group tasks set around Constraints based coaching before the tutors took us through a few more practical sessions designed to show their effect on a session's outcome.

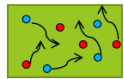
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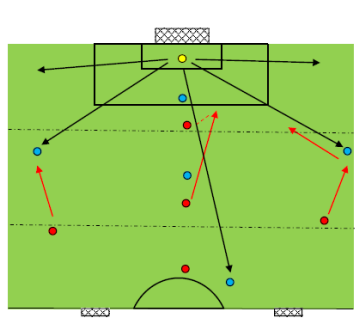
I have since changed all my warm up sessions with great results.



# Session Plan Defending - In Possession / Playing out from the back – counter attack

Individual player considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defending position</li> <li>Receiving on the back foot</li> <li>Passing accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dribbling</li> <li>Finishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision making</li> <li>Understanding</li> <li>Awareness</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speed</li> <li>Agility</li> <li>stretching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication</li> </ul>	

- Warm up**
- 
- Challenges**
- Players to dribble in space avoiding each other
  - Pair up and shadow player with ball
  - Tricks on the ball-forward reverse toe taps, side to side, outside foot
  - Stop on command & find another ball
  - Tig while carrying ball – pairs
  - Tig without ball – free players through legs



- End Game**
- Try to counter attack from the back
  - Try to be in position to receive the ball
  - Try to be in a position to support if the short pass is made
  - Can we Transition quickly

- Set Up**
- Two Teams on half pitch
  - Initial game is free play to see how Blue team chooses to build from the back and how red team choose to attack
  - Pitch is split into 3 zones
  - Each zone has a different value
  - Blue team have 2 small goals to score in, Red team have main goal to score in.

- Rules**
- Play is given away by red team & GK is in possession
  - Blue team must aim to turn defence to attack as quickly as possible
  - Depending on where the blue team build from the value of the goal will be between 1-3
  - The blue team
  - Red Team to apply pressure & on winning ball can move to score in main goal – normal play.

- Progressions**
- Add goal values to encourage starting positions
  - GK to distribute the ball in a variety of ways (roll out, javelin, driven pass)
  - Can the full backs try to make 1-2's with the midfield to build the attack
  - Can players be in position to receive the ball from GK in zones

## Example Session Plan – Mark Kelly



## Day 4 PRACTICE SPECTRUM AND DEVELOPING SKILL

Our final day of block 1 was to again review the previous days learning before continuing from where we left off with the practice spectrum before some Tutor led practical sessions demonstrating constant, variable and random in design and how we can use techniques such as scenario based challenges to create extra motivation, increase challenge and give empowerment to the individual and the group in an activity to great effect.

Later in the day we worked on developing skill and the importance of linking it to our session design in game real scenarios.

We finished block 1 reviewing what our project would look like for our level 2 course. Putting pen to paper explaining who we are, why we coach, how we support our players and what we are trying to achieve at the end of it all. We then support this in our recording of training session planning and appraisals linked to our match day planning and appraisal which will reflect the person and coach we are. This task for me is vital in order to put a peg in the ground of where I am now. To see how far I have come to get to this place and set a footing for everything I learn and deliver going forward.

I have seen a change in myself “the coach” already from this course, in how I talk to my players as a person before being their coach. How I set out and review my sessions. How I am trying to plan my sessions now for maximum fun, game realism and social engagement. How I have changed the way I challenge individual’s just as much as I challenge the group now. I am certain I will still face a lot of the problems I have already faced but I now have some extra tools in the box to face them head on.

## Day 3 MOTIVATION AND SELF ESTEEM

After a brief review of day 2 activity we spent the morning looking at motivation and self-esteem, what it might look like and how our interaction and practice design can effect both in a positive and negative way. Again the coaches worked in small groups to develop session plans to demonstrate the effects they can have on motivation and self-esteem before delivering some of the sessions in the later practical activity.

We finished day 3 with a starting look at the practice spectrum and the effects of constant, variable & random in the coaches sessions.

Today’s session really helped me understand the importance of “they don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” and how we as coaches effect that with how we communicate and deliver to the individual and the group. We as coaches have a great opportunity to affect our player’s lives every time we coach, not just their football for an hour but their whole day/week.