

The future of Australian football coaching, particularly at the youth level, is, in fact, "**NO COACHING.**"

A four-day workshop for coaching course presenters and instructors was run by Football Federation Australia in Sydney this past week. It explained how candidates at grassroots, junior, youth and senior licence courses are expected to perform.

It is revolutionary.

Football coaches in Australia will in future have two pathways, one at the advanced level and one at the community level.

The coaches, depending on their ambition and talent, can pursue either route.

This particular course centered on the community pathway, especially those coaches dealing with young players.

At future courses, candidates will be asked to set up practice sessions designed to enable players to not only teach themselves, but which will encourage players to think on their feet without outside interference.

The coach - I prefer to use the expression team leader - will **NOT** be permitted to step into the session to instruct as they would have done in the past. Instead, the leader will be expected to modify the session depending on whether or not the desired topic of the practice is taking place.

For example: A candidate has been asked to set up a 15 to 20 minute practice on dribbling. If, after a few minutes, the leader sees that dribbling is not taking place, or that the set-up is too difficult to allow dribbling, he or she will need to step in and change the organisation so that players do have the opportunity to dribble.

It may be, for example, that the area of the practice is too small for the players taking part, so that there is no room for dribbling. In that case, the leader would be expected to expand the area. The other option would be to reduce the number of players.

What the leader will **NOT** do, is tell players **HOW** to dribble. That task will be entirely up to the players themselves.

In fact, the leader may actually ask the players if they have an idea on how the session might be improved. That would be seen as good coaching.

In effect, it is putting into practice the words of Albert Einstein, who said he never taught his students, but would instead endeavour to create the conditions by which they would learn themselves.

It all leads back to street football, those days when kids set up games and without supervision honed their own techniques and skills.

In more recent decades, coaching in many parts of the world, especially first world nations, has reverted to trying to manufacture players, giving them far too many instructions and stopping practice sessions so often to make coaching points that the players are bored out of their minds and stop listening.

Coaching books in some cases are so complicated rocket scientists can't understand them, let alone a junior coach.

Here in Australia, there is a vowed intent to return the game to the players, with a huge emphasis on small sided games that allow players to experiment, be creative and, most importantly, teach themselves what works and what doesn't.

It is like reintroducing oxygen into a stale atmosphere. Everyone breathes easier.

As well as giving fresh air to players, it will be much easier for the thousands of volunteers who help teams.

Instead of being afraid or panicking at the idea of being a coach, they can relax in the knowledge that they will be shown how to organize training in such a way that they can virtually stand back and allow the game to be what it should be - the teacher.

It is the old style coach who will face the most difficulty. They will be constantly having to bite their tongue.

Instead of forever yelling **Stop, stand still**, they will need to learn to **Shut up and stand still**, both at training and games.

They should begin practising now, because let there be no doubt, the coaching revolution has kicked off.