

SAMPLE

Game

CARD SORT FOR COACHING

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2

About the card sort

- The cards describe competencies, behaviours and qualities for coaches.
- The sort can be completed by a coach on their own, or in a conversation with a coach educator or mentor.
- The cards should be used to identify competencies to grow into super strengths or areas to work on.
- The development areas identified should go into your coach development plan.

Categories of competencies for coaches include:

- in-game and competition management
- personal qualities
- athlete management and development
- leadership; and
- hands-on coaching.

Turn over to see the full list of competencies.

In-Game & Competition Management	Personal Qualities	Athlete Management and Development	Leadership	Hands-On Coaching
Strategic Thinking	Passion for Coaching	Caring About Athletes	Creating a Shared Vision	Technical Knowledge
Team Selection	Resilience	Assessing Athlete Capability	Planning a Campaign	Performance Analysis
Creativity and Innovation	Self-Development	Athlete Progression	Managing a Dynamic Environment	Knowledge of Rules and Regulations
Composure	Coaching Career	Driving and Managing Change	Driven by Performance Priorities	Creating a Learning Environment
Decision-Making (in Competition)	Identity, Purpose and Self-Awareness	Creating a Performance Environment	Positive Leadership Under Pressure	Running an Effective Training Session
Preparing and Managing Athletes	Managing Time and Energy	Getting the Best out of Others	Continuous Growth	Presentation Skills for Team Meetings
	Sense of Humour	Fairness to Athletes	Building Strong Culture	Use of Data and Video
	Patience	Conflict Management	Systems	Functional Biomechanics
	Listening	Programme Cohesion	Setting High Standards	
	Approachability	Developing Leaders	Decision-Making	
	Ethics and Values	Developing Routines	Building a Management Group	
	Health	Ensuring Accountability	Networks	
	Mental Health		Influencing	
	Fast Learner		Personal Disclosure	
			Integrity and Trust	

2

How to use the cards

COACH

1

SORT FOR STRENGTHS

Sort the cards into roughly three even piles with the following black cards forming the top of each set:

- high/strength
- middle/average
- low/work-on; and
- not applicable.

Sort based on your highest level of coaching.

2

EXPLAIN/RECORD

Explain reasons for placement, focusing on strengths and areas to work on. Take a photo or fill in the worksheets to record placement to refer back to on review.

3

PRIORITISE

Once completed, pick up the cards sorted as areas to work on. You may also wish to select some strengths to include in your development plan that could become super strengths. Flip over the header cards and sort again for priorities for the next season or training block using the black cards (high, medium, low). Aim to narrow down to not more than two development priorities per category.

Please Turn Over

2

How to use the cards

COACH EDUCATOR/ MENTOR

1

INTRODUCTION

Explain the purpose of the process.

Explain the process (see website for more detail) and give assurances around confidentiality.

Check for comfort and questions.

2

GUIDE

Guide the process.

Question, clarify and summarise to help the coach identify the critical priorities.

Listen with an open mind, avoid making judgements.

3

PLAN

Record placement of cards with notes. Select priorities emerging from the second sort and identify development actions (see ideas on the back of cards) in collaboration with the coach.

Tip for the Coach Educator or Mentor: You can complete a separate card sort for comparative discussion if you have observed this coach over a period of time.

STRENGTH



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A STRENGTH AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

HIGH PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

MIDDLE/AVERAGE



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS MIDDLE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL
OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

MEDIUM PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A MEDIUM PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

WORK-ON



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS AN AREA TO WORK-ON AT THE HIGHEST
LEVEL OF COMPETITION, IN RELATION TO OTHER COMPETENCIES

LOW PRIORITY



COMPETENCIES ASSESSED AS A LOW PRIORITY FOR
THE NEXT COMPETITION AND TRAINING BLOCK

NOT APPLICABLE



THESE ARE EITHER NOT APPLICABLE OR TO BE SORTED AT A LATER DATE



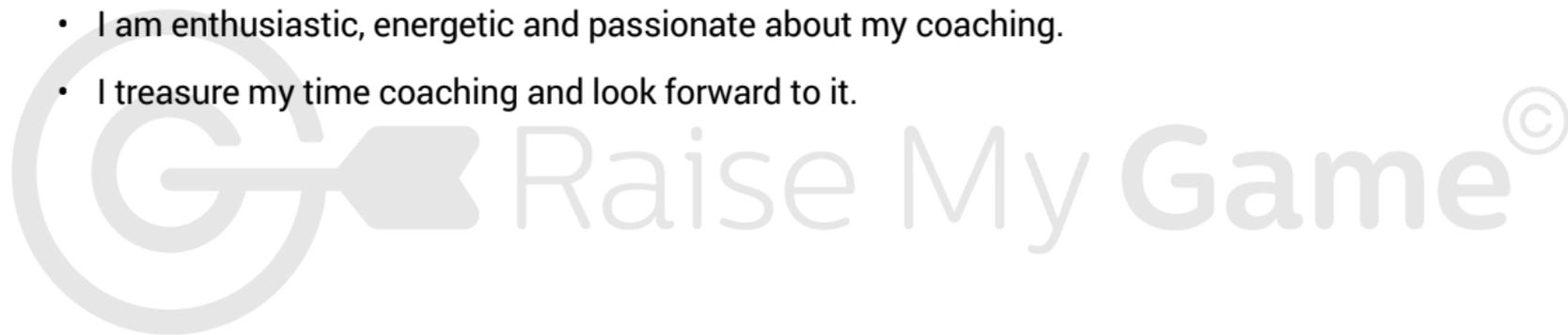
PERSONAL QUALITIES

— SORT CARDS —



Passion for Coaching

- I understand myself, the reasons I coach, what drives me, and I am clear on own coaching philosophy.
- I am enthusiastic, energetic and passionate about my coaching.
- I treasure my time coaching and look forward to it.



Developing Your Passion for Coaching

Reconnect with your purpose

When challenges arise, remind yourself why you coach. Knowing your 'why' can reignite your passion during difficult times. Also, write a purpose statement. For example: "I strive to inspire athletes to achieve their potential while instilling lifelong values of perseverance and teamwork".

Define your legacy

Ask yourself, "What do I want my athletes to remember about me in 10 years?" Articulate how this legacy statement guides your coaching approach.

What is your identity tagged to?

Are you clear on who you are as a whole person? Do you separate your results as a coach from your identity: 'coaching is what you do, not who you are'.

Focus on growth over outcomes

Take time to enjoy the journey and the process of coaching. Set goals based on skill development and team improvement rather than just wins and losses.

Build strong relationships

Spend time getting to know your athletes, their motivations, and personal goals. Engage in one-on-one conversations or team-building activities. Share laughter.

Recharging your passion

Seek inspiration from other inspirational coaching stories. Attend coaching workshops, read books, or listen to podcasts. Each week reflect on your coaching sessions and ask yourself: "What did I find most enjoyment in this week, what energised me?", "what inspired me?".

Balance fun, learning and performance

It is difficult to stay in 'learning' or 'performance' mode all the time. Incorporate fun into training (e.g., introduce creative drills, friendly competitions, or light hearted activities). Celebrate small wins.

Reflect on your coaching journey

Keep a journal to document memorable moments, challenges overcome, and lessons learned. Talk openly with your athletes about what coaching means to you. Your enthusiasm is contagious and helps create a culture where others focus on improvement and growth.

Bring energy to every session

Before every practice or game, spend 2–3 minutes visualising the energy and enthusiasm you want to bring.



Self-Development

- I use every coaching experience to help me learn and grow; looking for ways to challenge and stretch myself. I don't over-rely on my current skill set.
- I regularly reflect on where I could be better as a coach and I have an honest, insightful view of my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and limitations, seeking feedback from athletes and other coaches.
- I have a development plan and I know it is changing my approach to coaching every day. I have learning processes built into my week.
- I'm open to change and willing to take risks as part of the learning process.
- I know that I have to vary my approach depending on the team and the situation.
- I have a mentor.
- I set aside time to learn from research, best practice and other's experiences and approaches (formal and informal learning). I am considered in how I apply learning to my situation.

Self Development

Set your development compass

Narrow down to three areas you want to grow in as a coach. Then identify outcomes, action(s) and measure(s) for each. Now identify one action that you can take this week; make these actions small, achievable, and meaningful.

Self-reflection

Keep a coaching journal. After every practice or game, jot down one thing that went well and one thing you'd like to improve; or ask yourself helpful questions: "Am I on track against the critical priorities for success?", "What are my enablers and barriers?", "What should I keep/stop/start doing?", "Did I achieve my development goal for the week?"

Mentor check-in

Put in place processes to hold yourself accountable to the development plan that you build during this planning process; keeping it alive is the hard bit! e.g., ask your mentor or a colleague to meet regularly (e.g., once a month) to discuss progress against the plan. Make sure your plan is easily accessible and readable.

Using and building your network

Build a network of people that you can connect with to expand your thinking. Seek out new people that are strong critical thinkers.

Reading and listening

Ask for recommendations on books to read or podcasts to listen to that will expand your thinking.

360 degree feedback

Gather feedback from your organisation, peers and athletes. Set aside time after every training session to gather feedback. Set up a process to seek anonymous feedback.

Learn from others

Ask another coach if you can observe their session. Notice their approach, interactions, and strategies. Reflect on how their strengths could inform your development.

Embrace change

Challenge yourself to try something new in your coaching approach each month. Whether it's a new drill, communication style, or strategy, and reflect on what you learned from the experience.



ATHLETE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

SORT CARDS



Caring About Athletes

- I actively take the time to learn about the lives of my athletes outside of sport. I like to understand their upbringing, family values, culture, what drives them, and what is important to them. In showing that I care, I have found that I am able to build strong relationships and get the best out of them.
- I'm conscious of making myself available to athletes, deliberately setting aside time to build relationships, helping where appropriate.
- Athletes feel comfortable to discuss their plans, problems, questions, fears, frustrations and proud moments with me. I listen without pre-judging.
- I am perceptive and empathetic.
- When dealing with athletes, I never make them feel uncomfortable, dig too deep, or have favourites; maintaining enough distance to be able to be objective.
- I am observant. I notice how my athletes respond to pressure, challenges, feedback and criticism.

Deepening Your Care for Athletes

Learn about athletes beyond sport

Spend time understanding the unique aspects of your athletes' lives—family, values, culture, and personal goals. Use informal conversations or team-building activities to gather insights without overstepping boundaries.

Be approachable and available

Create structured opportunities to connect, such as regular one-on-one meetings or 'open-door' hours.

Practice empathy and observation

Tune into your athletes' non-verbal cues during high-pressure situations. Are they stressed, frustrated, or calm and focused? Reflect on how you can address these observations.

Balance connection and objectivity

Maintain enough professional distance to provide clear, unbiased guidance. This ensures athletes feel supported without favouritism affecting your coaching decisions.

Refine listening skills

Be an active listener. Refrain from interrupting or pre-judging. Reflect back what you hear to demonstrate understanding.

Research self-determination theory

Research and reflect on the importance of relatedness in self-determination theory. Self-determination theory suggests our three basic needs are autonomy (self-endorsed behaviour, being whole-heartedly behind what you are doing), competence (feeling effective and having a sense of mastery) and relatedness (feeling cared for and connected to others, belonging, giving to others and mattering in their lives).



Creating a Performance Environment

- I manage the environment to encourage a strong performance culture to emerge.
- I make sure people in the programme are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and accountable for them.
- I use important data (including performance analysis), equipment, technology and facilities to track progress against world class measures and enhance performance.
- I promote high standards, expectations and make sure these are maintained
- I don't accept weak excuses. I am staunch on demanding excellence.
- I try to learn faster and work harder than my competition.
- I celebrate and reward the behaviour and/or results we are aiming for.

Fostering a Performance Environment

Create a 'sport' or 'campaign' performance model/picture of performance

A performance model is an important start point for creating a performance culture. This will detail individual benchmark standards and expectations for technical, tactical, physical, mental, and life skills for an elite performer in your sport.

Set clear roles and expectations

Hold a kick-off meeting or workshop to define roles, responsibilities, and standards for your program. Use stories, visuals and processes to communicate and reinforce these expectations regularly.

Leverage performance data

Use technology, video analysis, or performance tracking tools to highlight progress against benchmarks. Share insights with athletes.

Reward excellence

Celebrate behaviours and milestones that align with your team's goals. Recognise achievements publicly and tie rewards to desired results to reinforce a high-performance culture.

Challenge excuses

When excuses arise, redirect the conversation toward problem-solving. Ask athletes, "What can we do to overcome this?" rather than accepting reasons for under performance.

Prioritise learning and adaptation

Study your competitors and industry trends. Stay ahead by committing to continuous improvement and implementing best practices in your program.

Research self-determination theory

Self-determination theory suggests our three basic needs are autonomy (self-endorsed behaviour, being whole-heartedly behind what you are doing), competence (feeling effective and having a sense of mastery) and relatedness (feeling cared for and connected to others, belonging, giving to others and mattering in their lives). Reflect on how each of these three aspects are important to create a performance environment.

Study high performing teams

Study high performing teams (e.g., in books, films, research, study tours, etc.). For example, check out Patrick Lencioni's book: The five dysfunctions of a team.



LEADERSHIP

— SORT CARDS —



Creating a Shared Vision

I can facilitate a team discussion that creates an inspirational picture of the future. I will then:

- galvanise the athlete/team to take ownership of making that picture become a reality.
- help the athlete(s) to simplify the 'vision' and achieve an emotional connection (hearts and minds).
- be deliberate and detailed in how each behaviour, each day, will contribute to the outcome goals.
- work with the senior athletes to influence others through what they say and do (and what they don't).
- work to get every last person on board, especially those that don't understand or share the vision at first (team sports).
- work to overcome barriers to achieving our vision and plan.
- regularly refer to our vision in an optimistic and positive light when I am talking to the athlete/team.

Tips for Building and Sustaining an Inspirational Shared Vision

Facilitate collective visioning

Work to collaboratively to define your aspirational vision. Your vision will serve as your guiding force. Use questions like, “What does success look like for us in five years?”, “Define the challenge?”, “What is unique about this campaign”, to spark discussion and engagement.

Foster emotional connection

Create a picture of what success will look like. Help your athlete(s) link the vision to their personal goals and values. In team discussions, consistently frame the vision in a hopeful and inspiring way. Share stories or examples that make the vision feel meaningful on an individual level.

Identify guiding values and principles

Brainstorm a list of ‘key principles’ that will guide you or create a ‘values statement’ that reflects your core principles and ethics.

Simplify and focus action

First, identify the critical few; that is, the priorities that you will attribute success to when you look back. Now develop daily or weekly behaviours and tasks that will support the critical priorities. Regularly highlight how these contribute to long-term success. Celebrate milestones that demonstrate progress toward achieving the vision.

Leverage senior athletes

In team sports, identify influential athletes who align with the vision and can lead by

example. Encourage them to advocate for the vision through their actions and communication.

Address resistance proactively

If you athlete(s) is hesitant or skeptical, take time to understand their concerns and collaboratively find ways to align their perspective with the vision. Open the door for them to get on, or off, the bus.

Navigate obstacles

Anticipate challenges that could hinder progress and develop solutions. Revisit and adapt the vision as needed to ensure it stays relevant and achievable.

Refer to the Raise My Game Campaign Planning Tools.



Building Strong Culture (Teams)

- When I bring a group together, I work to create a collective commitment to the group goals, a sense of belonging and an established culture with clearly defined behavioral expectations.
- I have worked with teams that have diverse cultural backgrounds or family values and have been able to unify them into a team, encouraging respect for each other.
- I use compliments and rewards effectively to reinforce the group's reliance on each other.
- I see the team/group culture in our language, behaviour, and processes everyday.
- I have worked with senior players to develop their leadership of the culture.
- I have built resilience within a group to ride through the ups and downs (e.g., poor results, upsets, change and tough challenges).
- I will make tough calls if I think someone is working against the culture of the team.

Tips for Creating, Sustaining, and Reinforcing a Strong Culture

Get on the same page

Highlight commonalities and differences, and discuss how you could use this information to work together better. Some questions to ask each other might be:

“How are we similar? How might this work for us and get in the way?”, “How are we different? How might this work for us and get in the way?”, “When we work well together, what are we both doing?”, “When we don’t work as well together, what are we both doing?”

Host a culture ‘kick-off’ session where the group defines what sort of team they are seen as, how they want to be seen, and how that would translate into behaviours.

Trust is a key foundation

Read Patrick Lencioni’s 5 functions of a high performing team. Lencioni states that teamwork begins by building trust, which requires vulnerability. An absence of trust this is followed by fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability and leads to inattention to results. How do you build trust in your team?

Reinforce culture through recognition

Use a reward system to acknowledge behaviours that align with the team’s values.

Embed culture into daily routines

Encourage consistent use of team language and behaviours that reflect the culture. Ensure processes, such as warm-ups, debriefs, and team meetings, embody shared values.

Develop senior player leadership

Engage senior players/experienced athletes to set the tone for team culture. Provide them with tools and coaching to lead by example and mentor others.

Build resilience as a team

Prepare the group to handle challenges by discussing strategies for bouncing forward from setbacks.

Address cultural misalignment decisively

If someone disrupts the team’s culture, have direct, respectful conversations to address concerns and, if necessary, make tough decisions.



HANDS-ON COACHING

SORT CARDS



Technical Knowledge

- I have functional, technical and/or specialist knowledge to teach skills for my sport.
- I can vary how I teach the skills for my sport, appropriate for the athlete's age and stage of development.
- I have taught skills by breaking them down and building them back up.
- I seek out technical specialists that I can learn from.
- I can teach nuances such as deception, variation, decision-making, changing first reactions, etc.
- I encourage my athletes to self-analyse.
- I use innovation, goal setting, competition and challenge to motivate skill development.

Building Technical Knowledge

Expand and refine your technical expertise

Stay current with your sport's technical advancements by attending workshops, conferences, and certifications. Seek out opportunities to observe and collaborate with specialists, analysing their methods for teaching and skill-building. Regularly review and update your own knowledge base to ensure your teaching remains relevant and effective.

Tailor teaching to the athlete

Adapt how you coach based on the athlete's age, experience, and developmental stage. For younger or less experienced athletes, focus on fundamental skills and use simple language or analogies. With advanced athletes, you can delve into the finer points (e.g., strategy, deception, decision-making, or variation).

Break down complex skills

When teaching challenging skills, deconstruct them into smaller components. Focus on one aspect at a time, gradually integrating them to build the complete skill. Use progressions to keep the process systematic and manageable for the athlete.

Encourage self-reflection

Promote athlete-driven learning by asking them to assess their own performances and identify areas for improvement. Teach them to recognise patterns and adapt their techniques independently, fostering autonomy.

Innovate and motivate

Incorporate challenges, games, or competitions into skill development sessions. Set specific, measurable goals and celebrate incremental progress. Explore new tools or technologies that might make learning more engaging and effective.



Performance Analysis

- I understand the components of a winning performance in detail.
- I use a disciplined, thorough, honest and diligent process to review performances. I don't jump to conclusions or judgments too soon.
- I can quickly identify the most important issues (big picture) and I don't get bogged down in too much detail (paralysis by analysis).
- I use performance analysis to inform strategy.
- Presentation of my analysis is structured, clear and concise.

Building Competence in Performance Analysis

Create a structured review process

Develop a collaborative, systematic framework for analysing performance, seeking feedback from the athlete(s) and other coaches and specialists. Begin with the big picture; what went well, what didn't, and why? Avoid rushing to conclusions; instead, focus on understanding the root causes of issues. Use this foundation to guide deeper analysis.

Focus on key issues

Avoid 'paralysis by analysis' by identifying the most impactful areas to address. Narrow your focus to a few key aspects that will drive improvement, and ensure that these align with your overarching competition/ game strategy.

Incorporate diverse tools

Leverage technology such as video analysis and performance tracking software to gain objective insights. Use these tools to highlight trends or patterns, making your feedback evidence-based and actionable.

Communicate findings effectively

When summarising the analysis, be clear, concise, and structured. Use visuals like charts or highlight reels to illustrate points to accommodate for different learning styles. Tailor your communication to your audience, ensuring they can easily understand and remember key takeaways.

Connect analysis to action

Make sure the reviews are meaningful by linking them directly to actionable steps. Clearly outline what needs to change and how it will be practiced in training or strategy adjustments. Always keep the focus on constructive growth and improvement.

Understand athlete differences

Some athletes thrive on detailed analysis, while others may benefit from emotional reassurance or logistical clarity. Build trust by checking in regularly about what support works best for them and adapting as their needs evolve.



IN-GAME & COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

SORT CARDS



Preparing and Managing Athletes

- I know what support my athlete(s) need leading in to, during and after competitions.
- I work to reduce distractions around competition(s).
- I know how well my athletes adapt in high pressure situations.
- I react quickly to changing circumstances, supporting technical/tactical adjustments under pressure if required.
- I provide timely feedback to my athlete(s) during and after competition.

Building Competence in Preparing and Managing Athletes

Understand individual needs

Take the time to build a performance plan with your athlete(s) to understand their support needs. This should allow you to link in the right people at the right time to support your athletes.

Build self reliance

Think about whether your programme is fostering opportunities for your athletes to take ownership and practice decision-making under pressure: “Don’t do for the athlete what they can do for themselves”.

Minimise distractions

Create a plan to shield athletes from unnecessary stressors. This could include managing media interactions, streamlining

logistical arrangements, or establishing routines to maintain focus. Develop a checklist for competition day that ensures nothing important is overlooked.

Scenario-based training

Train your athlete(s) to handle high-pressure situations by simulating them during training. Create drills or exercises that mirror the intensity and unpredictability of competitions. Discuss these scenarios in debriefs to identify what worked and what didn’t.

Competition debrief

Ask for athlete input during debriefs to foster a collaborative and constructive approach to improvement.

In-competition feedback

If you are giving feedback during competition, make sure it is concise and actionable. Use calm, direct language to highlight what needs to be adjusted and reinforce what is going well.

Adaptability in the moment

Work on your ability to assess changing circumstances quickly. Role-play situations where you must adjust tactics mid-game/ mid-competition, considering the psychological and physical state of your athlete(s). Discuss these scenarios with your support team or mentors to broaden your perspective.



Composure

- When under pressure, I am able to stay focused on the task at hand and appear calm and in control.
- I know if certain situations trigger an emotional reaction.
- My reactions are considered (i.e., I show self-control).
- I have processes to manage the stress and emotions that come with a big competition or match. It takes a lot for me to lose my cool.
- When others around me start to feel the heat, I can be counted on to show leadership and hold things together.
- I plan for the unexpected, and therefore find that I handle it better than I otherwise would.

Developing Composure

Recognise your triggers

Take time to reflect on what situations or behaviours provoke emotional responses in you. Write them down and consider why they affect you. Understanding triggers can help you anticipate and manage your reactions better.

Develop a pre-game stress plan

Create a personalised plan to manage stress before and during matches/competitions. Techniques could include linking in with your key people, deep breathing, visualisation, or positive self-talk. Incorporate these into your routine and refine them based on what works best.

Focus on the process, not the outcome

When the pressure is on, focus on controllable actions rather than the score/opposition or other external circumstances. Practice mindfulness techniques to stay in the present moment, concentrating on the task at hand (e.g., ask yourself: “where does my focus need to be right now?”).

Plan for the unexpected

Brainstorm potential challenges or disruptions and develop strategies for dealing with them. This could include an alternate game/race plan, or addressing an official’s decision calmly. Preparing for contingencies will enhance your ability to stay composed.

Model calm leadership under pressure

Model calmness and control for your athlete(s). Practice keeping a steady tone and composed body language in stressful situations. Encourage open communication to help others to express and manage their own emotions effectively.