



## Get to Know You Activities

Creating a team space where players feel supported, valued, and acknowledged through positive, caring relationships is the foundation of a developmental sports experience. Players have an opportunity to build strong connections amongst themselves; to learn different perspectives and offer support to peers.

Coaches can intentionally design their programs to ensure players have opportunities to build these connections. One way of doing so is to incorporate "Get to Know You" activities - activities that help players learn more about each other. These can be done before practice, during warm-ups, or even incorporated into sport-specific activities.

### Implementing Get to Know You Activities

#### Before Practice

- As players arrive, encourage them to lightly warm-up while having time to catch up with each other. Be mindful of groupings and ensure no one is left out. Help players ease into conversation by providing a topic: "Find out your partner's favorite sports team while you kick the ball around."
- Choose team captains ahead of time and ask them to share something about themselves before practice starts.
- Assign players 'water buddies' for practice - a teammate that they will grab water with throughout practice.

#### During Practice

- **Two Circles** - Divide players into two groups. Ask group one to make circle. Ask group two to make a circle inside group one's circle and have them face someone from group one. Provide players with a prompt, i.e. "Tell your partner your favorite ice cream flavor and why." Give players 30 seconds to tell each other their answers, then have the inner circle rotate to the right. Repeat until all players are able to talk to each other. Ask 1-3 players to share something they learned about a teammate during this exercise.
  - **Variation:** For each interaction, assign a fitness or skill. I.e. With your first partner, do 5 jumping jacks, then find out their favorite color. Rotate to your next partner, do 10 high knees, and tell that person your favorite food.
- **High Five, Low Ten, Secret Handshake** - Pair players up using different personal facts. Start off with: "As quick as you can, find someone who was born in the same season as you. This is your high five buddy." Ask them to learn something quick about their high five buddy. Then have them look for another partner - "Find someone who likes the same type of fruit. This is your low ten buddy." Once they learn something about their low ten buddy, match them up once more and ask them to develop a secret hand shake. Throughout practice, when you yell out high five, low ten, or secret handshake, players should find their partner as quick as they can and do a high five, low ten, or secret handshake.
  - **For a socially distant version** - substitute high fives, low tens, and secret hand shakes with elbow bumps, foot taps, and secret dances.

