

For the Love of Sport: Companion Guide



Lifelong Sport

Welcome!

I am so honoured to have you here, joining me and hundreds of other coaches who are seeking a better way of coaching and a determination to ensure our players keep on playing.

When I first began coaching, I thought my job was to produce results. It took time—and a lot of listening—to realise that our true job is much bigger and much more important: to help people fall in love with sport, and to give them the tools and experiences that make them want to stay involved for life. That's the kind of impact that lasts far beyond a scoreboard.

This workbook is a space for reflection, exploration, and action. *For the Love of Sport* shared ideas about how we can build clubs that players never want to leave—places where enjoyment, challenge, growth, and community thrive. But reading is only the first step. This guide is designed to help you embed those ideas into your coaching practice, your club environment, and your day-to-day decisions.

You'll find prompts, exercises, and space to think, write, and dream. Some of it will confirm what you already know deep down. Some might challenge you. All of it is aimed at helping you make coaching more human, more joyful, and more sustainable—for you and for the people you lead.

This is your workbook. Use it in staff meetings, mentoring conversations, or solo reflection time. Scribble in the margins. Revisit sections when the season gets tough. Let it support your growth as much as you support the growth of your players.

Let's get to work—for the love of sport, and the future of everyone who plays it

SECTION 1: Your Club's Culture and First Impressions

Activity 1: Rate Your Club's Ability to Attract New Participants

- What makes your club welcoming to newcomers?
- Where are the friction points that might stop someone from joining?
- On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate your club's ability to attract new players? Why?
- What feedback have you heard from first-timers?
- What sets your club apart from other clubs within your sport? How are you different from other sports?

Reflection Prompt: What are three low-cost changes you could trial to improve the club's first impression?

Activity 2: Describe Your “Blue Sky” Club Vision

- Imagine your club five years from now—everything has gone brilliantly. What does it look like?
- What values would people feel when they stepped into your club?
- How would success be measured beyond trophies?
- Who would walk into your club and not instantly feel like they belonged?

Creative Prompt: Sketch or describe your ideal club environment. What does it sound, feel, and look like?

SECTION 2: Knowing Your Players

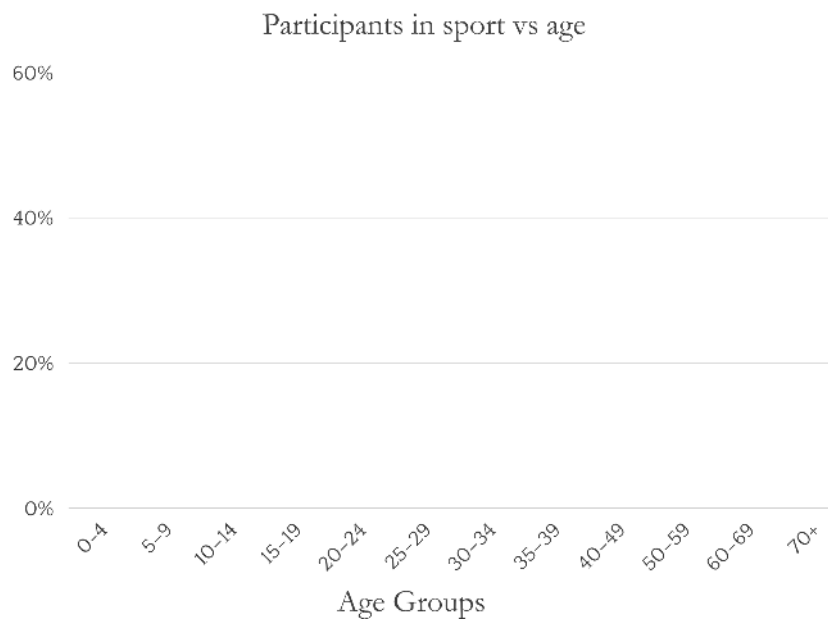
Activity 3: What Does Each Player Want from Sport?

- Choose 4-6 players and write a short profile for each.
- What motivates them? (e.g. social connection, competition, mastery, fun, belonging)
- Are you coaching them in a way that meets that need?
- How are you incorporating connectedness, competency and autonomy into your sessions or season?
- Are your players creating social bonds with other players from different age groups, officials, parents and/or competitors?

Journal Prompt: How often do you check in with players about their goals and experiences?

Activity 4: Player Lifecycle Map

- Map out a typical player's journey at your club.
- Complete the below participation chart such as the one in the Introduction of For the Love of Sport



- Where are the drop-off points? Why do they leave?
- What supports exist at each stage? What framework can you create at each of these exit points to support and retain your players?
- For the players that have been there for a few years: why do they keep coming back? Where are you succeeding? Where can you do better?

Planning Task: Identify one 'at-risk' stage and brainstorm ways to support players during that time.

SECTION 3: Coaching for Intrinsic Motivation

Activity 5: Self-Assessment – Are You Fostering Intrinsic Motivation?

Rate yourself from 1–5 on the following behaviours:

- I give players meaningful choices
- I focus on effort and improvement, not just results
- I show curiosity about why my players play
- I encourage reflection after sessions
- I show interest in my players lives outside of sport
- I am able to match skill with challenge and cater to individual skill levels within group training sessions

Action Prompt: Choose one behaviour to improve over the next month. Write down how you'll do it.

SECTION 4: Creating a Player-First Environment

Activity 6: Design a “Love of Sport” Session

- Create a session where the main goal is enjoyment, curiosity, or play—not performance.
- What would you include? What would you exclude?
- How would you know it was successful?

Debrief Prompt: What surprised you when you ran the session? What did the players say?

SECTION 5: Building Systems for Retention

Activity 7: Retention Audit

Track data or anecdotal evidence of player retention over the past 3 years.

- What patterns do you see?
- What frustrations are you experiencing and what are the exit points that you observe within your club?
- What exit feedback (if any) have you gathered? Is it possible for you to start collecting this?

Team Activity: Facilitate a discussion with other coaches about why players stay—or leave.

FINAL REFLECTION

What Kind of Legacy Do You Want to Leave?

Write a letter to your future self as a coach, describing the club culture you've helped build and how it feels to see players grow through sport. What are you prepared to go through or endure to achieve this for your club, your players and yourself?

Congratulations on taking the time to reflect, plan, and act with intention. That's the heart of what this workbook is about—creating space for the kind of thoughtful coaching that leads to lasting impact.

Throughout these pages, you've explored what makes your club welcoming, what your players truly want, and how to align your coaching with long-term motivation and enjoyment. You've also examined the systems, transitions, and touchpoints that shape the player journey.

None of us get it right all the time. But when we make the commitment to lead with love—for the game, for growth, and for each player as a whole person—we begin to create clubs and communities that people want to stay part of for life.

Keep returning to these reflections. Use them to guide team conversations, mentor new coaches, and develop initiatives that reflect your values. Most importantly, use them to keep your compass pointed toward what really matters.

Thank you for the work you do. Thank you for choosing to coach not just for performance, but for people.

This workbook—and the bigger mission behind it—is a living thing. Let it evolve with you.

For the love of sport—and for the players who fall in love with it because of you.

—Joshua Chant