

Best Practices For Practice

1. Never forget everyone is choosing to spend their valuable time to be there. Make it worth their time.
2. Unless working with small children, get your players as involved as possible including with the decision making process of what to work on and how to get better.
3. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of people. Make it clear that their boundaries should always come first and they can always opt out of anything, but make sure they know it's their own responsibility to say no so that you can focus on what's best for the team.
4. Assume the best intentions in everyone, but always be on the lookout for people who struggle with authority or enjoy conflict, and try to speak with them privately to be clear about your expectations and try to find appropriate common ground.
5. Find ways to make it fun. Traditions, inside jokes, mascot-themed code words, chants, and anything else that will let people be themselves and bring more character to the team are always a big positive.

Growth/Fixed Mindset

One way to understand how people think about themselves is that some people have a more fixed mindset and others have a more growth mindset. The reality is that few things are completely one way or the other (your height is an obvious example of fixed mindset being accurate, you won't get taller just by trying; a child's height is an obvious example of growth mindset in that everyone knows children grow and get taller). Many people underestimate how hard quidditch is at first, or underestimate how much better they can get at it with practice. It is vital to bring a growth mindset to practice and emphasize even small growth moments to help people get comfortable with the idea of going from being bad at a sport to being good at it. It is essential for a coach to be very growth-oriented.



Small Practice Guide



A guide to running a small quidditch practice. For more information on how to play, visit <https://howtoplayquidditch.org>
Handbook available for free at <https://package.howtoplayquidditch.org>

As with any practice, you must keep all of the following factors in balance with each other to be successful:

FUN: People will not come back if they're not having fun. Fun can come from the novelty of the activity, the human interaction, the joy of success, and/or the feeling of belonging.

CHALLENGE: Prospective quidditch players must be introduced to the realities of the sport, so that they may make an informed decision on whether they want to play the sport.

DEVELOPMENT: Playing quidditch is a unique experience that your brain must adapt to over time. Providing opportunities to learn new techniques and then apply them with positive results is deeply satisfying but takes a lot of effort.

Be sure that at the beginning, middle, and end of every drill, ask yourself two questions: what is everyone getting out of this? And what part of the game is this drill reflecting? Do NOT be afraid to cut a drill short if it isn't working. It won't reflect as badly on you as it would if you got stubborn and stuck with something that wasn't working!

New Players

New players always come with their own goals, prior experiences, motivations, questions, and skills, so get to know them right away. Set the tone with whatever coaching style you are most comfortable with and the players who are best suited to your style are the most likely to stick around. To gain a larger team, you will have to adapt your style to as many players as you can. One thing that can help this is to have a larger leadership group, and not have one person run everything, so that there is a higher chance for compatibility.

Experienced Players

People who have already played quidditch before are a valuable resource as they help model many of the skills and behaviors that are common in quidditch players and help new people more rapidly absorb the culture of quidditch. If they are coming from a different program and especially a different region, try to publicly value their experience by asking them to introduce some of the drills they did in their area that you might be less familiar with.

Practice Size

The exact number of people at a small practice is not the only thing that should determine your strategy. Just as important is how many of the people are brand new or are still relative novices. A practice with five veterans will look very different from a practice with one veteran and four new people. It is wise to set the tone for your entire team that the new people are a top priority for development and acceptance.

Positional Practice

New players should be encouraged to try all the positions for different drills, and should not be invited to specialize except at their own discretion. Experienced players must be counted on to have positional flexibility, as many drills require a specific number of certain positions in order to work.

Descriptions of specific drills

*Based on what you want to get better at
For two, three, or four players*

“Our chasers need more offensive skills”

2 people: Alley-oop: player 1 practices floating a pass at player 2, who starts well behind the hoops and runs toward them, leaping up to make a two-handed catch and instant score.

3 people: Three-man weave: three players start at one side of the field and run to the other side, passing the ball to each other and then running behind the recipient as they go.

4 people: Diamond drill vs. air: The players are evenly spaced around the hoops. Players must complete a certain number of successful passes with no drops and while remaining in motion before scoring.

“We have someone who wants to get better at beating”

2 people: Do the Nasty: based on the play style of Mario Nasta, this is a two-handed blocking drill where the player crouches and holds their bludger in a defensive position. The other player tries to beat them from long, medium, and close range at full power, and the defending beater must learn to block without flinching and switch to a counterattacking throw quickly when called for.

3 people: 2-on-1: Two chasers try to score on one beater. For added challenge to the chasers, use a countdown. For added challenge to the beater, have them start on the hoops so they have to judge the spacing themselves.

4 people: Lane drill: Best with a single hoop, two beaters but only one bludger on defense, and an empty-handed beater on offense escorting a ball-carrying chaser. The empty-handed defending beater must screen out the attacking beater to create a lane for the beater on defense.

Five-Person Practices

Similar to 3-person, can build up to a 3-on-2 game or 3v2 setpiece play. Can also do 3v2 with 2 beaters on defense and 2 beaters and a chaser on offense to improve beater coordination. Most of the 4-person drills also work with 5 people as well, so the various techniques of the sport can be practiced.

Six- and Seven-Person Practices

Many ideal drills and scrimmages become possible at 6/7 people, including a 3-on-3 scrimmage and several team coordination drills. Starting with 8 people or more, quidditch practices can become more centered around scrimmages, but the larger groups can be split into smaller groups to work on specific skills and get players more individual attention from coaches.

Do Not Fear The Small Practice

Often people dread having a small practice, and it is not without merit to worry that you will not have enough people to (A) work on a particular drill you have in mind or (B) play a free scrimmage (as many people find scrimmaging far more satisfying than set play or drills). However, success in small practices can lead to larger and more effective practices in the future so do not approach them with dread but instead as opportunities to improve. The people who are there have set aside their time to improve themselves and the team, and they should be appreciated, as well as rewarded with key attention to their skills and support for their development. This is a huge opportunity to build loyalty and make the team stronger in the long run!

Remember: coaching is an art and a science, you must derive pride and satisfaction from everyone else having fun and getting better, only then are you doing your job.

Chaser Drills

- Pass and score (2+): Thrower and receiver of the quaffle, can develop more complex routes
- Chaser defense (3+): Thrower and receiver with a defender, either a keeper blocking shots or a chaser in man coverage on the receiver
- Live passing drill (4+): Chasers in man coverage defending, the offense chasers must complete a certain number of passes before being able to score
- Screen drills (3+): Practice on-ball and off-ball screens

Beater Drills

- Turn beat (2+): Beater practices throwing a bludger at a target behind them, works better with 3 as the beater must read a pass to a receiver behind them
- Beater battle drills (3+): Beaters directly battle each other 1-on-1 (can also use 2-on-1 with only 1 bludger to simulate regaining bludger control or 2 beaters with 1 bludger on defense vs empty-handed beater and chaser for practicing 1.5 beater attack)
- Beater accuracy (3+): see Issue #3 of the JBMS
- 2-on-1 (3+): 2 chasers attempt to score on a beater defending the hoops
- Full beater battle (5-7): Two beaters with bludgers on defense, two beaters without bludger control on offense, ideally 2 chasers on offense and 1 keeper but can make do with fewer quaffle players

Seeker Drills

- Basic seeker practice (2): 1 seeker vs 1 snitch
- Seeker defense practice (3) 2 seekers vs 1 snitch, possibly with a coach calling which seeker is defending
- Snitch on pitch practice (7): 2 beaters and 1 seeker per team with a snitch, live play to try and pull the snitch.

“Our team needs more physicality”

2 players: Tackling practice: 1-on-1 drive to a single hoop on a defender to score. After each play, briefly break down how both sides can improve and capitalize on strengths.

3 players: 2-on-1: As above, but two defenders against one player attempting to score. Whoever is behind in goals or steals the ball gets the next shot. Work on gang tackling and spacing on defense. On offense, practice both speed and power.

4 players: 2-on-2: All chasers, one hoop. With a single hoop, passing is a limited option, and so the empty-handed offense chaser can help by screening out one of the opponents.

“Our chasers and beaters need to work together better.”

2 players: Scheming: The chaser and the beater can verbally plan out their attack based on a number of hypothetical scenarios, using the space to illustrate their strategy.

3 players: 2-on-1: One beater with a bludger on defense, a beater and a ball carrying chaser on offense. The chaser will have to learn spacing and timing. The offensive beater either has or does not have a bludger, the drill is radically different depending on which is the case but both are valid ways to practice.

4 players: 2-on-2: Same as above but add a keeper, or two beaters with only one bludger on defense, to put pressure on the offensive beater and chaser.

“Our beaters keep losing bludger control.”

2 players: Steal the ball: a beater without a bludger trying to steal from a beater with a bludger. One way to make this less terrible for the empty handed beater is force the beater with the bludger to constantly make eye contact with a cone/etc.

3 players: Taking the Hill: Two beaters with only one bludger go against a beater with a bludger. Practice teamwork. Whoever “wins” becomes the solo beater, so as to rotate.

4 players: 4-player Ninja Duel: Written up in JBMS issue #2.

Two-Person Practices

If only two people are present at practice, this is still an opportunity to learn the game, improve physically and mentally, and bond with your teammate. Select from <http://train.howtoplayquidditch.org> a number of partner practices to develop skills and get stronger.

Three-Person Practices

A number of excellent drills work with three people. Many of these skills translate well to live play applicability:

*All experienced: strategize together on how to grow the team and improve skills. Vary the drills to remain active and engaged. Put yourselves to the test and work on all aspects of the game if possible.

*At least 1 brand new player: run through essentials of the sport by building up to chasing and beating drills, including 2-on-1 scoring sets such as 2 chasers vs. beater, 2 chasers vs. keeper with a timed countdown, or seeking against a snitch.

*Novice but not brand new players: an excellent opportunity to help players start to find their identity of what position(s) they prefer to play. Mix in physically demanding drills to help begin the conditioning process.

Four-Person Practices

Similar to 3-person but you can work up to a 2-on-2 scrimmage with a keeper and beater on each team, or sets of 2 chasers vs. beater and keeper. Can also work on more specific drills to improve specific techniques, such as:

- Turn beats
- Chaser man defense
- Passing drills
- 1.5 beater attack drill
- Chaser screen drills
- Tackling drills