

SERVICE - GENESYS SCHOOL SPORTS SERVICE

1. There is a great sense of excitement and nervousness that floods you every time you start a new activity, a new task or embark on a new journey. The first day of service was something along the same lines, I was getting prepared to meet the children of the Genesys School. Our service leader Ms. Nikki Tipins had previously briefed us on our first meeting about the special care and attention these children need. We gathered at the tent plaza and awaited the arrival of the cohort of Genesys children, very much enthusiastically but a little scared/nervous. I couldn't help but think about how I must behave with them, how I must conduct myself, what I should say?, what if the child I am working with dislikes me?, thoughts like these caused me to feel very exaggerated. Nikki, introduced me to the children who although shy at first were trying to mask their excitement and big smiles on being here and being coached on how to play sports. It was then that I realised how grateful I should be for the opportunities and exposure I have revied being at UWC, that these children were unable to experience. I too smiled, feeling more relaxed and comfortable. I was paired up with Sriram, a 13 year old boy. Srirama at first was a little shy and unresponsive, which proved as a challenge for the first session. Hence, beyond anything my aim for the first session was to simply help Sriram be more comfortable around me, because more than being his coach I had to first become his friend.
2. Two sessions have passed now, and Sriram and I have become good buddies. I have come to enjoy his company and I feel he too has started to recognize me as a friend. Our first unit of study is basketball and I focused the last two sessions on shooting and passing. I started Sriram with a simple drill of throwing the ball into a hoop not more than 1m away to gauge his ability. To my surprise, Sriram successfully scored the shot. This was our first success as a team and I felt content looking at Sriram making that shot. We started to eventually increase the distance and put hoops in between that he would jump into to shoot, giving him some more movement and a little more of a challenge. This proved to be a slight problem, as it was still hard for him, but with practice through the whole session he was able to do it finally. A skill I picked up from this was how communication is individual to each person and for Sriram more than telling him how to shoot it was showing/demonstrating how to. We spent the last few minutes chatting about his day and what he will go back to and eat as a snack and said goodbye to each other.
3. Patience, if I have to reflect on the most important quality I learnt, it would be patience. Although Sriram was progressing, we had now reached the point where his motivation slowly diminished and he would ask for more breaks and be reluctant to do the drills I was setting up for him. I too felt frustrated and lost and I realise this was a weakness for me at the time. It was then I had to find new ways of motivating Sriram, I tried a combination of things. Firstly, I approached a friend of mine Nico and his buddy Dain to work with Srirmam and I, so that he would feel more motivated with a little bit of competition and one more person. Rightly so it worked, we focused on shooting and passing as well as tried to introduce a little dribbling. Nico and I were very pleased with the results, in two sessions they had almost doubled their shots on target and started being more interactive. I think looking back one day Sriram lost a shooting challenge to Dain and this caused him to be extremely upset, and he wanted to give up and was very reluctant to continue working. At this point I attempted to console him and speak to him and make him understand that it didn't matter that he lost to Dain and that he was still a good shooter. I tried to make the lesson more fun, Nico and I started playing a fun game that connected the skills we were teaching

them. Simple games like monkey in the middle helped improve their catching skills while simultaneously keeping them engaged.

4. Sriram and I have now developed a very good relationship and I have come to feel very content with his progress. My greatest reward from working with Sriram is this innate sense of satisfaction I felt every time he did a task, like catching a ball or scoring 3 times in a row, his smile, his expression and his joy were priceless and brought me a rush of warmth just thinking about them. It is not to say that we did not have our obstacles and challenges, but what makes me proud is that we were able to overcome them. Furthermore, it taught me important qualities like resilience, patience and communication. I can imbibe these qualities into all other walks of life and use them in any of the challenges I will face in the future. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 we were unable to continue physical contact with Genesys and I was no longer able to work with Sriram. Hence, in light of these events I started to help as an assistant coach with the U12 football team at my school.
5. The U12 children were completely different to Sriram, who was a little shy but still obedient and respectful, the U12 children were bursts of energy, always chit chatting and active. This being both good and bad. Although I worked with these children for a short period of time I feel it was very rewarding and helpful. My second session, Nico and I were tasked to come up with an effective warm up and drills for the students. We felt it better to discuss this previously and had spoken during lunch and formatted a plan for the session. I have realised with little children it is all give and take, if you give them the incentive of a reward they will try just that little harder doing their task. Hence, in an attempt to allow them to complete the drills with high precision we would incentivize them with shooting and games after. At which point Nico and I would be the keepers on either team. As the weeks passed the sessions became more competitive and the students more motivated and obedient, it was good to actually see them following my instructions. Coach Liam would task us to work on a specific outcome for each session, such as passing, shooting, coordination. Organization played a key role and Nico's and my planning came into great aid in this situation, allowing us to focus on specific goals. The students responded well to my teaching techniques and I implemented what I learnt about showing and not telling from Sriram, by showing them demonstrations of each drill and with a few words of motivation, a match at the end and just a little fun, our relationship and coaching flourished.