Box'Tag Information Guide

Ideas for Coaches and Athletes

Paul Perkins

Box'Tag Information Guide – Ideas for coaches and athletes

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Chapter One: Summary

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to assist with the growth and development of the new and emerging sport of Box'Tag. This guide also presents training ideas for coaches, athletes and other interested persons.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this guide is to provide an informative document for coaches and athletes, which can be used by individuals or groups.

1.3 Concept of Box'Tag

Box'Tag is the art and science of striking without being struck.

1.4 Values of Box'Tag

Box'Tag is underpinned by five core values:

- Safety
- Accountability
- Engaging
- Belonging
- Respect

1.5 Mission of Box'Tag

To provide a place of belonging for everyone who is involved with the sport, while providing a sense of purpose for their training.

1.6 Scope

Information for this guide was gathered over a twelve-month period, during a field study that was conducted at the Erindale Activity Centre, Canberra Police Community Youth Club Inc (CPCYC). **Professor Allan Hahn** of the University of Canberra provided support and guidance during this period, with additional support and mentoring by **Mr Bodo Andreass**, Head Coach of Boxing Australia and **Professor Keith Lyons**, also of the University of Canberra.

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The technical and tactical information contained in this guide is based on the **Cuban Boxing System, 'el paso'** (**the step**), combined with the coaching and teaching philosophies of Mr **Bodo Andreass**.

1.7 Methodology

An 'action research' approach was adopted, using non-intrusive measures to collect and gather the information. The iterative action research methodology entailed repeated cycles of 'reflect, plan, implement and evaluate'. The reflective and planning stages were informed by widespread consultation with interested parties. For the evaluation phases of the research, formal survey techniques and semi-structured interviews were employed. In addition, a diary was maintained that recorded experiences in planning, conducting and monitoring Box'Tag training sessions and competitions.

1.8 Terminology

The technical terminology used in this guide is from the Amateur International Boxing Association's (AIBA) coaching manual (October 2010) and should be used when coaching, instructing and/or discussing Box'Tag.

1.9 Intention

This guide is not intended to be a coaching manual; rather it is an attempt to share information about the new and emerging sport of Box'Tag.

1.10 Potential users

Potential users of this guide may include:

- Coaches and athletes interested in Box'Tag
- People wanting more information about Box'Tag
- Coaches and athletes from Olympic-style boxing
- Coaches and athlete from other sporting programs
- Strength and conditioning coaches
- Fitness professionals
- Other interested people

1.11 Maximising use of this guide

To maximise the use of this guide links are provided, which will enable reader(s) to view practical demonstrations of drills, exercises and training ideas.

Box'Tag promo

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGEO7C6obKc

The speed and excitement of Box'Tag competition

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrmRv3cp5Mo&feature=youtu.be
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD59CpwC_Io

Suggestions on coaching

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAitmfLXC-M
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_bxmSH-_2o
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj1Ue4JwG4s

Ideas on planning:

http://www.managementstudyguide.com/planning_advantages.htm
http://www.ausport.gov.au/sportscoachmag/planning/planning_for_the_individual_in_a_squad_environment

Recommended before training

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVn-G-HklLY
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzBCI13rJmA
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYR3hpkkG5A

Learning new skills and technical development

http://www.brianmac.co.uk/tech.htm
http://www.ausport.gov.au/sportscoachmag/coaching_processes/implicit_learning_an_alternative_approach_to_instruction
http://www.pponline.co.uk/encyc/coaching-young-athletes-to-produce-future-stars-41432
http://keithlyons.me/feedforward/

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Technical components
http://www.myboxingcoach.com/stance-and-on-guard/

Stepping with and without strikes
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQy4L4q_IFc
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbptoaHXyKw
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMUAZU-yY-0&feature=youtu.be
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l331fpC-OrQ
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKdJFttqGlU

Developing coordinated movement patterns
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3tgUNeh9ao

Assisting with attacking and defensive actions, anticipation and reaction
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-TKNLOAXfM

Physical preparation
http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/circuit-training.html
http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/boxing-training.html
http://www.grapplersgym.com/public/images/strength%20training%20for%20boxing.pdf
http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/anatomyandphysiology/a/Endurance.htm

Chapter Two: Introduction

Box'Tag started as an idea when Losh Mathews, Lisa Gilbert and Alicia Cavanagh from Strongarm Boxing & Fitness (Sydney) wanted to create a safe, fun and modified form of boxing so their 'boxing for fitness' participants would be able to experience the challenge and excitement of competition. This idea found expression through the introduction of Box'Tag, a sport in which success depends on skill, speed and physical conditioning and not an ability to hurt the opponent.

Technological advances enabled Box'Tag to develop and evolve into a sport, which provides an opportunity for participants of all ages and fitness levels to enjoy the benefits of regular exercise, while developing new skills. In 2012, Box'Tag was adopted by Boxing Australia and is now their community participation program. It is described as a safe, fun and modified version of traditional Olympic-style boxing, where striking to the opponent's head is prohibited, while points are recorded by using minimal low-force strikes to the body and upper arms.

During competition athletes must wear full protection, including headgear, gloves and mouthguards. In addition, it is mandatory for all male competitors to wear groin protection, while females must use breast protection. Box'Tag bouts typically consist of three rounds of one to two minutes duration, with a one-minute rest period separating the rounds.

Scoring during competition is accomplished through the use of an automated system initially developed by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in conjunction with the Cooperative Research Centre for Microtechnology, and later improved through scientific and technical inputs from the AIS, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the small Melbourne research and development (R&D) company PWP Designs. This system was intended to be an analytical tool for use in the AIS Boxing program and other high-performance boxing programs, but has proven to also be ideal for the purpose of Box'Tag.

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The scoring system is built around sensors that have been placed on the scoring part of the gloves and specially constructed vests. The sensors transmit data via wireless mechanisms to a ringside computer, and dedicated software enables the detection of simultaneous impacts from a glove of one competitor and the vest of the other. In Box'Tag a competitor is awarded a point when he/she successfully strikes the target area of the opponent's vests, with scores being displayed in real time on a large screen.

It's our intention that people wanting to compete must first undergo a training program, designed to develop the physical qualities, skill levels and the concept of the sport.

You may like to view our Box'Tag promo at this address:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGEO7C6obKc

Chapter Three: Competition

3.1 Concept

The concept of Box'Tag competition is to strike without being struck.

3.2 Purpose

The purpose of competition is to provide an opportunity for athletes to experience the fun and excitement of competition, while demonstrating their concept of the sport and current skill level.

3.3 Rules

Under the rules of Box'Tag high-impact strikes lead to deduction of points and, if repeated, to immediate disqualification. The same applies to striking the head of an opponent. Using low-impact strikes to the target area (torso and upper-arm region of the vests) leads to the awarding of points. During competition athletes must follow the referee's instructions and suggestions at all times.

3.4 Conduct and behavior

When competing it is expected athletes will do so with high levels of passion and enthusiasm, while remaining true to the beliefs and values on which Box'Tag was founded.

3.5 Prerequisites

Registration with Box'Tag Australia
Completion of Box'Tag training

3.6 Preferred distance

Long distance boxing is the preferred method for all competitors participating in Box'Tag.

3.7 Preferred attacking actions

Long, straight strikes and long hooks are the preferred striking methods during competition and we prefer athletes use 'a strike and assess approach' instead of multiple strikes thrown in a combination, or a series of the same strikes.

3.8 Preferred defensive actions

When avoiding an opponent's strikes and/or attacking actions the preferred defensive actions should include: sidestepping, slipping, the step back and the layback. Other defensive measures, which may be appropriate, include the downward parry and the catch/block action.

3.9 Tactical appreciations

Athletes need to develop an appreciation of the tactical considerations that are involved in a space-invading sport like Box'Tag. Athletes might find it beneficial to follow these four steps, suggested by Doctor Ric Charlesworth when developing their tactical appreciations.

1. Improve your strengths and develop an understanding of the sport
2. Search for the opposition's weaknesses
3. Deny their strengths
4. Exploit their deficiencies.

3.10 Technical aspects

When competing athletes will be required to demonstrate similar technical skills to that of an Olympic-style boxer. Some of the skills an athlete will be required to demonstrate include:

- Maintaining a balanced boxing stance that minimizes the target area
- Good feet positioning when guarding and moving
- Good arm positioning when attacking or defending
- Coordinated movement patterns
- Simultaneous foot strike and arm extension when striking
- Accurate execution of arm movement when striking
- Rotation of body during arm extension
- Arm retraction along its original path
- Use of appropriate defensive actions against different strikes
- Accurate execution of movement patterns in defence

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrmRv3cp5Mo&feature=youtu.be and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD59CpwC_Io provide a demonstration of the speed and excitement of competition.

3.11 Uniforms

In competition athletes are assigned to either the red or blue corner and must compete in the appropriate coloured vest, with matching coloured trunks and gloves. To increase ankle support and stability we encourage athletes to also wear boxing boots when they compete.

Photo: Athletes in full uniform

3.12 Protective equipment

During competition athletes must wear full protection, this includes headgear, gloves and mouthguards. In addition, it is mandatory for all male competitors to wear groin protection, while females must use breast protection.

Wearing High quality head gear is compulsory during competition

Box'Tag competition gloves with conductive patches

Quality mouthguards are essential

Groin protection is mandatory for male athletes

Female athletes must wear breast protection

Chapter Four: Training

4.1 Purpose

Box'Tag training provides an opportunity for athletes to improve their physical qualities, develop their technical skills and mental conditioning, while increasing their tactical awareness.

4.2 Athlete's expectations

Athletes can expect well-structured, professional training sessions, with the aim of developing and improving the physical, tactical, technical and mental skills of each individual.

4.3 Coach's expectations

Coaches should expect every individual to commit to their training with high levels of motivation, enthusiasm and passion.

4.4 Role of the coach

There has been a lot written about the role of the coach. In fact you can read almost any publication on coaching and there will be a section on the role of the coach. In most cases the focus is on the skills that are required to be an effective coach and not the role of the coach. Here are some ideas about the role of a Box'Tag coach; maybe these suggestions will help provoke more ideas in regard to what the role of the coach is.

- Is it the role of the coach to create an environment where athletes can grow and develop themselves physically, technically, mentally and socially, while inspiring them to constantly aim for higher levels of athletic and technical performance?
- Should coaches be expected to know 'what to coach' and 'how to coach it'? Is there a need for coaches to combine 'the art of coaching' with 'the science of coaching'?
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAitmfLXC-M
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_bxmSH-_2o
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj1Ue4JwG4s

4.5 What to coach

A recent study has shown that Box'Tag is just as physically demanding as traditional Olympic-style boxing. Therefore, the physical preparation of athletes must be a high priority. The technical aspect of Box'Tag is also very similar to Olympic-style boxing, and with both sports sharing similar tactical appreciations. Decision-making and technical development should also be a high priority when coaching.

4.6 Suggestions for coaching

These quotes might provide an insight into coaching:

'The most important factor in coaching is to be yourself. A lot of coaches try to copy other coaches or other programs. There's a lot of discussion on whether a coach should be scientific or whether one should be coach as if it's an art. Every coach should find a personal way of coaching… the way that is best for oneself, because, first of all coaching is the art of communication'.

Gennadi Touretski, coach of Alexandre Popov, 1992 and 1996 Olympic champion for 50 and 100 metres freestyle, and Michael Klim, 1998 World champion for 100 metres butterfly and 200 metres freestyle

'So much coaching is hit and miss, coaches giving you sessions without knowing why. Everything should have a reason, a scientific base. Every time I went out the door, the session had a purpose, a means to an end. That is where so many get it wrong'.

Wendy Sly, 1983 Olympic 3,000 metre silver medallist

'Training must be systematic, which means it must be thorough, regular and organised'.

Connie Carpenter, 1984 Olympic cycling road race champion

'The thinking must be done first, before training begins'.

Peter Coe, Coach and Father of Lord Sebastian Coe, two-time Olympic Champion and Gold Medallist 1980 and 1984

Coaches and athletes wanting more information, might find reading 'Peak Performance' by **John Hawley** and **Louise Burke** beneficial? This book is described as *"a one-stop text for coaches, athletes and students of sports science who want to improve their knowledge and sporting performance by the application of scientific training and nutritional principles".*

4.7 Ideas on training

Coaches and athletes may find the following approach to training valuable:

1. Think objectively about training
2. Never get angry, depressed or frustrated by training
3. Instead, objectively identify areas of improvement
4. Indicate corrections
5. Focus on these corrections at future training sessions

4.8 Scientific principles of physical training

The quotes below serve to highlight some of the important principles of physical training.

4.8.1 Planning

'I couldn't believe that so many athletes were working without a training plan, and simply by instinct, which typically was to do too much'.

David Martin, AIS exercise physiologist and advisor to Lord Sebastian Coe

'A systematic approach to training is one of the key factors in becoming a successful athlete. It is not enough to know how to do something, you must know why you're doing it.'

Greg LeMond, three-times winner of the Tour de France

'It's not always the best athletes who wins on the day it's the best-prepared ones, those who are completely ready on the vital day.'

Arthur Lydiard, New Zealand distance running coach

4.8.2 Progressive overload

'Nature has given the human body a wonderful engine management system. It actually responds to stress by adapting to cope with it better.'

Peter Keen, exercise physiologist and coach of Chris Boardman, World champion British cyclist

4.8.3 Volume overload: How much?

'It's a foolish idea that if you do a little more, faster, then you'll get better than the rest. It ignores the fact that you must train at optimal level, not your maximum level.'

Rob de Castella, Australian champion marathon runner (2:08:18)

'He or she who trains the most does not necessarily improve the most or perform the best.'

Connie Carpenter, Twelve-time US cyclist champion

'It was hard to envisage spending any more time training.'

Oxford University rower

4.8.4 Intensity overload: How hard?

'Quality running rather than quantity is what will make you a better runner, no matter what your ability level.'

Grete Waitz, nine time winner of the New York City marathon

'The idea that the harder you work the better you are going to be is just garbage. The greatest improvement is made by the man who works the most intelligently.'

Bill Bowerman, running coach at the University of Oregon

4.8.5 Frequency overload: How often?

'Train little, hard and often.'

Jim Peters, first man to run under 2:20 for the marathon

'If time allows, it is advisable to train two or three times a day, provided there is no imbalance between aerobic and anaerobic efforts.'

Arthur Lydiard, New Zealand distance running coach

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4.8.6 Training specificity

'Running is, without question, the best exercise for runners.'
Arthur Lydiard, New Zealand distance running coach

'*All that cycling 100 miles a day would make me good at is cycling 100 miles a day. The more specific your training is, the better.'*
Graham Obree, world 4,000 metres pursuit cycling champion

'Long slow distance running makes long slow distance runners.'
Jim Bush, head track coach at the University of California

'We would warm up by running around the field as much as 14 times. I can never remember running a lap of the field during a match.'
Andy Haden, New Zealand All Black Rugby Union player

4.8.7 Recovery

'The bottom line is the body does not get fitter through exercise; it gets fitter through recovering from exercise.'
Peter Keen, coach of Chris Boardman

'I have had many outstanding races after a forced rest. This illustrates the critical role rest and recovery play in getting the most from training.'
Emil Zatopek, five time Olympic medal-winning runner, holder of eighteen world records

Chapter Five: Planning

Planning for a session allows coaches to maximize the use of floor space, equipment and time in an orderly and systematic manner. http://www.managementstudyguide.com/planning_advantages.htm and http://www.ausport.gov.au/sportscoachmag/planning/planning_for_the_individual_in_a_squad_environment provide more information into some of the benefits of planning.

5.1 The planning process

Following a process can be beneficial for coaches when planning for a session. This four-step process might be useful in assisting coaches to develop effective training sessions:

1. **Identify the factors that will affect a training session**
2. **Determine the purpose of the session**
3. **Delivery of session**
4. **Evaluate the session**

1. Identify the factors that will affect a training session

The three main factors that will affect any training session are:

- **a.** The coach
- **b.** The athlete
- **c.** The environment

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a. The coach

Coaches are responsible for setting and maintaining the professional standards of each and every session. Remember a coach's attitude will affect his/her behaviour, which will affect the athletes' attitude and behaviour.

b. The athletes

Athletes should take responsibility for their personal learning and self-development before, during and after sessions, while up holding the values and respecting the standards of the coach.

c. The environment

A Box'Tag training environment should be a positive and exciting place to train, but safety should also be taken into account when thinking of training environments. Training areas should be clear of any potential trip-hazards, obstructions or potential risks. Before training it is important that all appropriate steps have been taken to minimize the risk of injury, but a clear emergency procedure should also be in place.

2. Purpose of session

Has the session been designed to acquire a new skill or develop an existing one? Or has it been designed to improve a certain physical quality or qualities? One of the most effective and efficient ways to coach Box'Tag is to conduct separate sessions for physical preparation and skill development.

a. Physical preparation

These sessions are designed to improve the physical qualities of the athletes, including:

- Muscle endurance
- Speed endurance
- Reactive power
- Aerobic capacity
- Resistance to injury

b. Skill development

These sessions are designed to develop the technical skills of the athletes while increasing their understanding of the tactical appreciations of the sport. From a technical and tactical perspective athletes need to:

- Develop and maintain a suitable stance that minimizes the target area
- Display good technique when applying an attacking or defensive action
- Make appropriate decisions in attack and defence
- Learn coordinated movement patterns
- Develop good ring-orientation and positioning
- Develop situational awareness
- Understand the Box'Tag concept

3. Delivery of session

These principles might assist coaches when they are going to deliver a session:

- Be professional
- Be prepared
- Be consistent
- Be flexible
- Remain true to your beliefs
- Up hold your values
- Use plenty of variety with drills and exercises
- Minimize time wasting by proper planning
- Provide a challenging, but rewarding experience

4. Evaluation of the session

The fourth and final step in the planning process is the evaluation of a session. Honest evaluation is important, as the information can asssit with the planning and delivery of more effective sessions in the future. Evaluating a session can be done using a number of inexpensive tools, including:

- Questionnaires completed by athletes and parents
- Performance reviews
- Written and verbal feedback from athletes and other coaches
- Video review of session
- Self-analysis
- Support and advice from mentors

5.2 Session plan

To assist with the delivery of a session, coaches may find a session plan to be an effective tool. The effectiveness of a session plan depends on the amount of time spent preparing it, as well as the experience of the writer. **James Michael Lee** provides a good definition of a session plan and although it was written for teachers, it is still very relevant to coaching. James believes a session plan is *'an organized statement of general and specific educational goals together with the specific means by which these goals are to attained by the learners under the guidance of the teacher on a given day.'* **N.L.Bossing** also provides a comprehensive definition of lesson plan. *'Lesson plan is the title given to a statement of the achievement to be realized and the specific meaning by which these are to be attained as a result of the activities engaged during the period'.*

5.3 Components of a session plan

The session plan used in this guide has five components and is based on the format used by Mr **Bodo Andreass**, Head Coach of Boxing Australia.

1. Line-up and Introduction to session

Sessions should begin with a line-up of the athletes. This provides an opportunity for coaches to formally introduce the session, while providing a brief outline of the content and outcomes they hope to achieve. Take time to explain the purpose and reason behind each of the activities, drills and/or exercises.

2. Warm-up

Warm-ups need to be dynamic, progressive and functional; they also need to be specific for the content of the session. Warm-ups are designed to physically and mentally prepare the athletes to perform at their best, while reducing the risk of injury.

3. Main component

The main component of a session can focus on physical preparation or skill development. When you are developing new skills limit the number of key points to two or three and use plenty of demonstrations and explanations so the athletes will understand why these points are important.

When the main component is focussing on physical preparation, coaches will need to place sufficient physical demands on to the athletes to get the desired effect.

4. Cool-down

This is an important part of the recovery process and should be performed after each session. Cooling down after a session is simply reducing the level of intensity, slowly and gradually. A good cool-down will assist the heart rate and breathing patterns to return to normal levels, help with the removal of waste products (such as lactic acid) from the muscles, help with blood flow and prevent blood pooling.

5. End of session line up

Finishing with a line-up is a formal way of bringing the session to a close. This is the appropriate time for coaches to athletes to reflect and share information about the session as part of an information sharing process.

Note

An information sharing process (ISP) is a method used to establish training outcomes and indentify areas of improvement. This process involves the coach and athletes engaging in open and honest discussions at the end of each session and providing feedback when it is appropriate and wanted. In addition, fortnightly questionnaires and performance reviews are used to provide an honest appraisal of the performance of the coach and the athletes.

Following this process also helps to challenge the athlete's attitude and thinking towards their training, because it provides the athletes with greater levels of responsibility and accountability for their personal learning and development.

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5.4 Example of a session plan

Training session
01/09/2012
14:00 – 15:00
Canberra PCYC and University of Canberra Research and Development Centre

Line-up and introduction
Today's session is a technical and tactical session. We will be using 8 rounds of semi-structured tasks involving partner work to see if we can improve the decision making process

Warm-up
15 minutes of individual warm-up (Athletes should imitate how they prepare for competition and ensure they warm up physically and mentally)

Main component
8 rounds of 3-minute duration involving semi-structured partner work with 1-minute rest between rounds

Key
PA – Partner A
PB – Partner B
SLH – Straight lead hand
LHH – Lead hand hook
LHU – Lead hand uppercut
VLH – Varied lead hand
SRH – Straight rear hand
VRH – Varied rear hand

Format and content

Rd 1: PA: SLHA **PB:** No reply-Reverse roles at 1:30
Rd 2: PA: SLH and SRH **PB:** Up to 1 reply-Reverse roles at 1:30
Rd 3: PA: VLH or VRH **PB:** Up to 2 replies – Reverse roles at 1:30
Rd 4: PA: SLH and SRH with option of 3rd strike (must be LHH or LHU) **PB:** Up to 2 replies
Rd 5: Reverse roles
Rd 6: PA: Open-light sparring (free sparring using all strikes) **PB:** VLH
Rd 7: Reverse roles
Rd 8: Both partners open-light sparring

Cool down

Individual with the following suggestions:
Slow skipping
Slow shadow boxing
Arm rotations and leg lifts
Re-hydration

End of session line up

Opportunity for athletes to discuss their perception of session and provide information to each other and to the coach

Outcomes

This session was designed to test the athlete's ability to complete specific tasks, while making tactical decisions under pressure using 8 rounds of Box'Tag. To aid this process 1 round of open-light sparring was included

Methodology

Use task orientation drills to observe the athlete's technical skills when applying an attacking or defensive action
Provide options with the tasks - this may assist athletes when making decisions under pressure
Provide minimal feedback to encourage athletes to 'self-discover' their learning outcomes. (The ability to solve problems under pressure may assist in real competition).

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Observation notes

Component	Mentally	Physically	Technically	Tactically
Warm-up	PA:2 PB:4	PA:4 PB:4	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2
Rd 1	PA:1 PB:4	PA:3 PB:4	PA:2 PB:2	PA:3 PB:2
Rd 2	PA:2 PB:4	PA:3 PB:3	PA:3 PB:1	PA:3 PB:1
Rd 3	PA:3 PB:2	PA:3 PB:2	PA:3 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2
Rd 4	PA:3 PB:1	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2
Rd 5	PA:4 PB:1	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:1
Rd 6	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:1	PA:3 PB:2	PA:4 PB:1
Rd 7	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:1	PA:3 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2
Rd 8	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:2	PA:4 PB:1

Index/Key

1: Poor standard

2: Average

3: Good

4: Very good

Results and discussion points

1. PA appeared distracted during the warm-up. Did this affect his performance in the early stages of training? **PB** appeared focussed and performed a very good warm-up, but his technical demonstration was poor and he constantly made the wrong tactical decisions.

2. PA's mental approach improved as session went on (improved levels of concentration and anticipation) need to monitor **PA's** warm-up to identify potential problems with this process. An increase in mental approach equalled an improvement in technical display and tactical awareness.

3. PB was under constant pressure by **PA** and as a result he was constantly denied any time to enter the direct space**. PB** failed to recognise the situation and continued with the same tactics. **PB** demonstrated a complete lack of knowledge of the various phases of an attacking action.

5.5 Planning ideas for athletes

Athletes may find it useful and beneficial to plan for a session as well. Some elite athletes believe planning and preparing thoroughly before each and every session improves their performance, while reducing the risk of injury.

Maybe these suggestions will assist athletes when preparing for training:

- Be professional in your approach to training
- Maintain the highest levels of concentration and motivation
- Keep a training journal with an accurate account of your feelings and performances
- Establish training goals at every session
- Train with the appropriate level of intensity
- Always do your best
- Strive for constant improvement
- Acknowledge achievements and milestones

Some people might find watching http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVn-G-HklLY inspirational before training http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzBCI13rJmA might also be beneficial when preparing for training, while http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYR3hpkkG5A demonstrates perfectly the level of motivation and determination that is required to become 'the best athlete/person you can be.'

Chapter Six: Technical Training

6.1 Definition

Ozolin, N defines technique *'as the most rational and effective form to perform exercises'*, while **Grosser, M** believes *'technique is the ideal model of a movement relative to a specific sport activity'*.

6.2 Developing technique and skill

http://www.brianmac.co.uk/tech.htm provides an understanding of the learning process involved in developing new skills and techniques, while Damian Farrow, Skill Acquisition Specialist at the Australian Institute of Sport and Victoria University, talks about implicit learning when coaching a new skill. You can find Damian's ideas at: http://www.ausport.gov.au/sportscoachmag/coaching_processes/implicit_learning_an_alternative_approach_to_instruction. The information from these links might be helpful in our approach to coaching the technical components of Box'Tag.

Ideas on *"doing the 'right' training at the 'right' time with a young child to maximize their future potential as an adult"* can be found at: http://www.pponline.co.uk/encyc/coaching-young-athletes-to-produce-future-stars-41432 this information may also be useful when coaching or developing the technical skills involved in Box'Tag.

6.3 Coaching technique and skill

Maybe coaches could adopt a 'feed forward approach' when teaching a new skill and/or assisting athletes to develop existing ones. **Professor Keith Lyons** shares some ideas on self-modeling and feedforward at: http://keithlyons.me/feedforward/

6.4 Terminology

Orthodox athlete – Right-handed person

Southpaw athlete – Left-handed person

Lead hand – Non-dominant hand

Rear hand – Dominant hand

Striking – An attacking action similar to punching

Defensive action – Physically stopping, or disrupting an opponent's strike to regain the initiative

To prevent confusion among orthodox and southpaw athletes the terms "lead hand" and "rear hand" should be used when coaching. For an orthodox athlete the lead hand will be the left hand, while the rear hand will be the right hand. The opposite will apply to a southpaw athlete meaning the right hand will be the lead hand and the left hand will be the rear hand.

6.5 Technical components

6.5.1 Stance

What are some of the key points in developing and maintaining a technically sound Box'Tag stance? http://www.myboxingcoach.com/stance-and-on-guard/ provides a compressive answer for Olympic-style boxers, which could also be used to great effect in Box'Tag.

Discussion points

Are the athletes in the photos (next page) demonstrating a stance that has a strong, athletic and balanced platform to operate from, and that minimizes the target area while promoting mobility, agility and stability?

Box'Tag Information Guide – Ideas for coaches and athletes

Athletes demonstrating their interpretation of a suitable and appropriate Box'Tag stance. Southpaw stance, Orthodox stance

6.5.2 Striking

The AIBA Coaches manual (2.5.3) says *'In the early stages of learning technique, all punches, straight punches, hook, and uppercut must be practised and mastered in standing position before training with boxing steps'.* Box'Tag can adopt the same approach when teaching strikes by progressing from a stationary 'on-guard' position to stepping forwards and backwards with strikes. Introducing lateral stepping with strikes, and combining stepping in all four directions while striking can make further progression, but these progressions should be introduced slowly and gradually. The following suggestions from **Coach Bodo** might be useful when coaching and/or developing a striking action. **Coach Bodo** *believes that the critical elements that affect the quality of a strike are:*

- Simultaneous foot strike and arm extension when striking
- Accurate execution of arm movement when striking
- Rotation of body during arm extension
- Arm retraction along its original path

Coaching tip

To minimize the amount of force that can be applied when striking, greater emphasis should be placed on the 'retraction phase'. Adopting a 'strike and assess approach' when applying an attacking action, instead of making multiple strikes, might also be something to consider when coaching and developing a suitable striking action for Box'Tag. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2MttpX9zS4 provides a demonstration of 'peg boxing'. **Alex Hines**, a strength and conditioning coach for Tennis Australia, introduced this training idea when emphasizing the 'retraction phase'. In this drill both athletes have three clothes pegs attached to them, one on each shoulder and a third one located on the stomach region. The object is to snatch the peg of the opponent without losing any of your own.

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6.5.3 Stepping

Stepping forward and backwards, as well as stepping to the lead-hand and rear-hand sides, are the basic steps that need to be coached and developed. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQy4L4q_IFc provides a demonstration of athletes stepping forward, backwards, to the lead-hand side and to the rear-hand side without striking, while http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbptoaHXyKw and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMUAZU-yY-0&feature=youtu.be demonstrate a progression of the same drill by introducing striking when stepping.

Coach Bodo has identified 5 common faults when athletes step. These might need to be considered when coaching and/or developing this skill:

1. Feet not taking the same size step
2. Stepping with flat feet
3. Stepping with heel first
4. Narrowing and widening of feet after stepping
5. Body weight not evenly distributed

Coaching

It might be an advantage to develop this skill by stepping without striking until a 'suitable level of development' is established. A suitable level could be attained when athletes can demonstrate stepping in all directions without faults. Here is a progressive method which outlines the sequence of drills for developing stepping:

- Step forwards and backwards without striking
- Step to the lead-hand side and rear-hand side without striking
- Step in all four directions without striking
- Step forward and backwards using a straight lead hand (SLH)
- Step to the lead-hand side and rear-hand side using a SLH
- Step in all four directions using a SLH
- Step in all four directions using a SLH and straight rear-hand (SRH)
- Step in all four directions using two SLH
- Step in all four directions using any two strikes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l331fpC-OrQ and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKdJFttqGlU provide examples of more advanced ways of developing striking and stepping.

6.5.4 Developing coordinated movement patterns

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrmRv3cp5Mo&feature=youtu.be demonstrates how athletes are required to move in various directions, while using high levels of coordination between the arms and legs. To improve the coordination and linkage between the arms and legs, coaches and athletes might like to use http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3tgUNeh9ao.

Coach Bodo terms this movement pattern *'parallel movement forward and backwards'.*

Definition

Parallel movement forward: Is the term used to describe the coordinated movement forward of stepping and striking at the same time using the same arm and leg – left arm with left leg and right arm with right leg.

Parallel movement backwards: Is the term used to describe the coordinated movement backwards of stepping and striking at the same time with the opposite arm and leg - Left arm with right leg, or right arm with left leg.

Athletes may also use another coordinated movement pattern when moving forward and backwards. **Coach Bodo** calls this *'diagonal movement forward and backwards'.*

Diagonal movement forward: Is the term used to describe the coordinated movement forward of stepping and striking at the same with the opposite hand and foot: Left arm with right leg, or right arm with left leg.

Diagonal movement backwards: Is the term used to describe the coordinated movement backwards of stepping and striking at the same time with the same hand and foot: left arm with left leg or right arm with right leg.

Applications

Parallel and diagonal movement forward and backwards can be used as part of a specific warm-up activity, or introduced into the main component of training to develop movement patterns while completing specific tasks.

Box'Tag Information Guide – Ideas for coaches and athletes

6.5.5 Defensive actions

The AIBA Coaches manual (2.5.4) says *'in the early stages of learning technique, all defences must be taught and trained after mastering particular punches. In order to teach and train basic defences effectively, start the teaching of defence in a standing (stationary) position, then with a partner. The partner can perform basic punches while the boxer defends him/herself using basic defences'.* Teaching and learning defensive actions for Box'Tag should be done using the same progressive format. Perhaps awareness of five common mistakes identified by **Coach Bodo** can assist with the coaching and development of defensive actions. These common mistakes are:

1. Loss of eye contact with opponent
2. Defensive action performed too early, or too late
3. Non- appropriate defensive action against a particular strike
4. Defensive action performed with stiff movement
5. Not returning to 'on-guard' position after making defensive action

Photos

The information and photos on the following pages may provide a guide for developing defensive actions. In the photos the athlete in the red uniform is attacking, while the athlete in the blue uniform is applying the defensive actions.

Note

The athletes in the photos are demonstrating their interpretation of applying correct technique when using an attacking or defensive action. The process the athletes followed to develop their technical skill involved completing a theory component, stationary drills followed by partner drills and finally a series of 'live drills'.

In this photo the red athlete is making a single attack using a straight lead hand (SLH) to the shoulder target of the opponent. The blue athlete is applying the defensive action, in this case a **'downward parry'** to disrupt the strike from the original course. In Box'Tag the 'downward parry' is a more appropriate action than the 'upward parry' as it will limit the risk of the in coming strike being deflected to the head.

Coaching and developing the downward parry

Athletes can develop situational awareness by positioning and performing this drill at the correct distance (long distance).

Athletes making the defensive action need to prepare and brace for the impact of the incoming strike by slightly bending the knees, while lowering the rear foot to form a stable base.

As the strike approaches the defending athlete should engage with the lead hand, making a downward-knocking action to disrupt the strike, before returning to the original 'on guard' position.

Suitable to use against:

Straight lead hand and straight rear hand attacks to the upper-arm target.

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In this photo the red athlete is making an attack using a straight lead hand (SLH) to the torso target of the opponent. The blue athlete is applying the defensive action, in this case an '**elbow block'** with his lead arm to stop the strike from reaching the target.

Coaching and developing the elbow block

Perform this drill at a distance, which allows the attacking athlete to step in with the strike.
Defending athletes need to remain relaxed, while anticipating the attack.
As the strike approaches the defending athlete needs to prepare for the attack by bending the knees, lowering the rear foot and rotating the torso towards the rear-hand side, while holding the arm in front of the body.
When applying this defensive action, athletes need to coordinate the bending of the knees with the rotation of the upper body.

Suitable to use against:

Straight lead hand and straight rear hand attacks to the torso.
Lead hand and rear hand uppercuts to the torso.

In this photo the red athlete is making a single attack using a lead hand hook (LLH) to the shoulder target of the opponent. The blue athlete is applying the defensive action in this case a '**lead hand block'** to prevent the attack reaching the target.

Coaching and developing the lead hand block

When developing this skill it is recommended athletes perform the drill at mid-range.

When the strike approaches, the defending athlete needs to bend the knees, lower the rear foot and rotate the torso towards the rear-hand side, while using the lead hand to deflect the strike off its original path by pushing it to the outside.

The defending athlete needs to develop the coordination and timing of the knee bend, torso rotation and blocking action to be successful with this skill.

Suitable to use against:

Lead hand hook to the upper-arm target

Straight lead hand to the upper-arm target

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In this photo the red athlete is making a single attack using a straight lead hand (SLH) to the shoulder target of the opponent. The blue athlete is applying the defensive action, in this case avoiding the oncoming strike by '**Side-stepping'** to prevent the strike being successful.

Coaching and developing the side step

When coaching and developing this skill, athletes should practice at long-distance. The defending athlete needs to step to the outside of the on-coming strike, while transferring the body-weight.

The defending athlete needs to develop the timing of the weight transfer to match the arrival of the strike, while protecting the upper-arm target with the glove.

Suitable to use against:

Straight lead hand to the upper-arm target

Straight rear hand to the upper-arm target

6.6 Further development

Coaches and athletes should consider developing more defensive actions. Other suitable and appropriate actions include: slipping, catching, stepping back and swaying/lay back.

When coaching and/or developing defensive actions it is important to understand the reasons why they are used. Here are some of the considerations about defensive actions:

- Develop lead-hand side and rear-hand side defensive actions
- Use the most appropriate action(s) against the strike or attack
- Use a variety of actions to limit the opponent's ability to study any preferred action
- Defensive actions can be used to deny the opponent's strengths
- Use a defensive action to regain the initiative as quickly as possible, by disrupting and disturbing the opponent's attacking action(s)
- A defensive action is only complete when a strike has been used by the defending athlete

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-TKNLOAXfM is one way athletes can practice developing their attacking and defensive actions. In this drill athletes may only engage with a single strike, when part of the lead foot is over the line (piece of tape). When one of the athletes attacks the other must try to apply the most appropriate defensive action. This drill may also help to develop situational awareness, reaction time and decision-making in both athletes.

Chapter Seven: Physical Training

One of the aims of Box'Tag training is to improve the physical qualities of the athletes, while providing a sense of purpose for their training. To achieve this coaches must employ a variety of exercises, using diverse formats, so athletes will find the training challenging but rewarding.

7.1 Physical qualities

As previously stated in section **4.5 What to coach**: *'A recent study has shown that Box'Tag is just as physically demanding as traditional Olympic-style boxing. Therefore, the physical preparation of athletes must be a high priority'.* Here is a list of the physical qualities that need to be developed.

- Muscle endurance
- Speed endurance
- Reactive power
- Aerobic capacity
- Resistance to injury

7.2 Developing physical qualities

Circuit training is a popular, efficient and effective way to train a group, team or individual with many proven benefits. http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/circuit-training.html says '*Circuit training is an efficient and challenging form of conditioning. It works well for developing strength, endurance (both aerobic and anaerobic), flexibility and coordination. Its versatility has made it popular with the general public right through to elite athletes. For sports men and women, it can be used during the closed season and early pre-season to help develop a solid base of fitness and prepare the body for more stressful subsequent training.*
A well-designed circuit can help to correct the imbalances that occur in any sport played to a high level. It can also be one of the best types of training for improving strength endurance be it for a sport such as soccer or a classic endurance event like the triathlon.

If you haven't quite reached "elite athlete" status yet, circuit training is superb for general fitness and caters for a wide variety of fitness levels. A great time saver, it can be a refreshing and fun change from the more monotonous types of exercise'.

7.3 Prior knowledge

A majority of coaches, trainers and athletes who have been involved with sport and/or the fitness industry would have the knowledge, experience and skills to develop individual sessions and/or programs aimed at improving and developing the physical qualities that are needed for Box'Tag.

Coaches and trainers are encouraged to be creative with exercise selection when planning and developing strength and conditioning sessions, with the aim of delivering sessions that are challenging, but rewarding and exceed the expectation of every athlete, while providing a sense of purpose for their training.

The following links may provide more information on physical preparation and development:

http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com/boxing-training.html

http://www.grapplersgym.com/public/images/strength%20training%20for%20boxing.pdf

http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/anatomyandphysiology/a/Endurance.htm