



Our Top Ten Ideas for Virtual Coaching Sessions

Here at Special Olympics, we know how hard our coaches work. We know that you give up hours of your own time, sacrificing family time, vacation days, your own sport time, to give our athletes the best sporting experience possible. We know that without you, Special Olympics, simply does not happen.

We also know that right now, you are experiencing the same fears, challenges and frustrations as everyone. One of those may very well be what can I do for my athletes, now that we cannot train together? Here, we share 10 great ideas for Virtual Training Sessions.

TOP TIP: You do not have to lead every session. Group calls like this can be a great opportunity to invite your athletes to lead some or all of a session. You can work with your team to identify topics that each athlete could lead. You can provide as much or as little support as they want or need. *Great Leaders create more Leaders!*

If you need to learn how to set up a Virtual Training Session, click [here](#).

TOP TEN ideas for your Virtual Coaching Sessions

1	<p>WE ♥ SPORT</p> <p>Use the calls as an opportunity to talk about the things you miss about training and competing together.</p> <p>Not only are you acknowledging that this is a challenging time and sharing what you miss too, but you are building a bond between the team (and also learning some information about what they enjoy most (and least) about your training sessions! Valuable intelligence for any coach!</p>
2	<p>WHO ARE WE?</p> <p>In times like this, when we have never been further apart, we can come even closer together. You can use thing time to create a strong team spirit, but developing your own team motto, song or coat of arm. Challenge your athletes to share what being part of the team means to them and what does your team stand for? Even better, let your athletes lead the way!</p> <p>Share it out on social media, your website, or an email/postal newsletter to your families and community!</p>
3	<p>NOT ALL HEROS WEAR CAPES!</p> <p>When we face adversity, we often look to those who inspire us. Invite your athletes to share with you who their heroes are? Ask each athlete to share why their hero inspires them and challenge them to think of one thing they can do to emulate that hero.</p> <p>Similarly, you could ask your athletes to share their favourite sports book or movie! You could even recommend a great sports movie to watch and talk about it on your next call!</p>



4	<p>SHOW US YOUR SKILLS</p> <p>As Sports people, we have all learned many skills, both on and off the field of play. Use the call as an opportunity to encourage your athletes to talk about the skills they have learned through sport, that are helping them adjust to this new situation. It could be relaxation skills, learning to face a challenge, how to work as a team. Sport helps us develop confidence, resilience, determination and focus. What have your athletes learned?</p> <p>You can also set a challenge. Talk about 1 skill you each want to develop while you are practicing at home. You can set a team challenge (all the same) or give each athlete the chance to choose his or her own challenge. Invite your players to share a video of them performing a skill they have learned, or tell a story of how they have used it. The winner does not need to be the best skill; it could be the most improved, best trick, funniest video, the most creative story. The only limit is imagination!</p>
5	<p>GET YOUR HEARTS PUMPING!!!</p> <p>Do a virtual conditioning session. Set up your call. Everyone attends in sports gear and use great resources like Fit 5 or School of Strength to all join in a training session together.</p> <p>REMEMBER: If you do this, it is important to let your athletes know before the call, to be in sports gear and have sufficient space. And do not forget to warm up and cool down!!!</p>
6	<p>BINGO!!!</p> <p>Play Bingo (Make a list of 40-50 famous athletes or players in your sport), give them a number and each player should choose 20 of these. They can write them into a grid. The first person to have all their numbers called wins – you can do this just for fun, or have a prize. We got this great idea from Manchester Magic Basketball Coach Sergio-Lara Bercial @DrSergioLara_EU</p>
7	<p>QUIZ TIME!</p> <p>Create a team quiz. Using zoom, create breakout rooms where your players can work in groups of 3 or 4 to answer the quiz questions you set (you can invite families in on this too and mix athletes and families)</p>
8	<p>TALK SPORT!</p> <p>Use the calls as a way to refresh on team rules, strategies or other sport specific elements. Just because you are not on the playing field, it does not mean you cannot be coaching! You do not need to make things too complicated, but with a little preparation, you can have a great discussion – you can even make it into a game.</p>
9	<p>JUST CONNECT!</p> <p>Don't be afraid to use the call simply as a chance to connect. Talk about what you are doing, how are you keeping yourselves busy, fit? What is the most creative thing</p>



	<p>you have done? Are you feeling good? Special Olympics staff member and coach, Jamie, will have weekly video calls with her athletes. Together they will decide a topic per week. We love this idea – get your athletes involved on your first call and create this list together. You will learn a lot about what is important to them and what is on their minds.</p>
10	<p>LOOK AHEAD!</p> <p>Remind your athletes that this won't last forever, you have many more seasons ahead – use the calls as a chance to think about next season and what you would all like to focus on when training resumes. Start some discussions about individual and team goals for next season. What do they want to learn? What games or activities do they want to see more? Or less of? (It is a great way for you to get feedback on your sessions too!)</p>

REMEMBER – not all these ideas will work for you and your team! Some may work for some of your athletes and not for others. This is where your coaching skills come in. Take these ideas, adapt them, modify them, throw away the ones you don't like, add in ones you do!

The important thing is YOU ARE STILL THEIR COACH and your team needs you now, more than ever.

Share your ideas on social media and tag us @SpecialOlympics