

AusTouch Leader Introduction Information

Welcome to the Touch Football Australia AusTouch Leader Resource Kit. This resource is designed to compliment the junior program called AusTouch, more specifically for the Leaders who are responsible for the fun and exposure of children who are interested in playing Touch.

What is the AusTouch Program?

An Exciting New Out-of-School Hours Sports Program!

AUSTRALIA is No. 1 in the world for Touch Football – AusTouch is the pathway for kids to become our future CHAMPIONS!

Touch Football Australia (TFAI) has recognized the need to promote a greater understanding of the sport of Touch to the junior participation base of Australians. In an effort to achieve this, the ATA has introduced '**AusTouch**', developed with the assistance of the Australian Sports Commission's Targeted Sport Participation Growth Program (TSPGP). The **AusTouch** program is intended to bridge the gap between school and social participation into a structured community based sporting environment.

AusTouch is an out of school junior program for boys & girls of all ages. The program includes skill and game development allowing kids to experience all aspects of the sport of Touch Football.

The aim of **AusTouch** is to provide a fun and friendly activity, delivered by qualified instructors, to a target market of male and female children throughout Australia. The program will be delivered after school hours, at strategically located central venues throughout metropolitan and regional areas. It will be presented in accordance with the model adopted over a series of sessions, which maybe delivered weekly, during school holidays or in school. These sessions will progress from skill development expanding into a game format. The game sense approach uses modified and progressive games and activities to allow participants to learn how and when to use skills.

The delivery of the program will be minimal contact activities that develop Touch related skills. The structured delivery will include the basic skills of

Touch, such as pass, catch, and run and will be delivered using a game sense approach.

AusTouch Center's can be set-up at local affiliated competitions, schools, sports centers or public open spaces. To find out more information visit the **AusTouch** Website www.austouch.com.au and click on the AusTouch Logo.

Resource Overview & the Role AusTouch Leaders in Program

The AusTouch Leaders are the most important people in the overall AusTouch Program. They are responsible for developing a good relationship with both the participant and their parents/guardians. This relationship provides an opportunity for open communication and gives the participant a feeling of belonging. If a Leader does this area of their role well & then provides the participant with a positive and fun environment to learn. It gives the greatest chance of the participant continuing in the sport long after the program is over.

This resource has been designed to give AusTouch Leaders more information and understanding of the AusTouch Program. It aims to give an overview of the program, background in the program philosophy, some practical ideas for making the AusTouch sessions a success and finally helping leaders with some hints and tips throughout.

The AusTouch Program is about kids having fun enjoying Touch, which we all hope, will mean that they continue to participate in the sport for many years to come. The program provides Leaders with guidelines to assist in introducing the sport to participants. It also gives flexibility to make changes or alterations depending on the age group and skill level that a Leader is dealing with.

AusTouch Promotional Clip

The AusTouch Promotional Clip gives a wide overview of the AusTouch Program and is short enough that it could be used to show parents or participants to encourage their involvement in the program. This promotes understanding of what the program is about and helps to create expectations of what each session will involve.

Program Philosophy – Game Sense Principles

The AusTouch Program is based on Game Sense Principles. Game Sense is an approach to coaching that is 'game centred' rather than the traditional 'technique centred' approach. It makes the game the focus of the activity session. In this approach a Leader is more of a facilitator than a director. The Leader creates situations where the children have to find solutions for themselves. The design of activities and games progressively challenge and

motivate children to develop an understanding of the strategies, skills and rules required to succeed.

Why use this approach to the AusTouch Program?

Children love to play games – they ask for games even as soon as they are exposed to any sport. A good explanation to these requests might be – “that the whole program, and throughout every session we will be playing games, all touch related in some way”.

This approach has the following benefits for the AusTouch Program:

- Promotes maximum participation of a group – a key to their enjoyment levels.
- Promotes long-term learning – if the child learns something for themselves they are more likely to retain it, and apply it at a later stage of participation.
- Catering for all ability levels and age groups with minor modifications.
- Leaders do not need to have all the technical knowledge of a sport to be involved in the program.
- Behaviour management is often easier as children are having fun.
- Avoids developing children with inflexible techniques and promotes them to be ‘thinking’ participants rather than ‘robots’ in the long term.
- It encourages the child’s understanding of the need for rules.
- Provides a non-threatening environment for participation in physical activity without the pressure to be an expert at the sport.

In using and embracing the Game Sense Approach, we are providing more opportunity for children to maximally engage in the sport. Allowing all ability levels and ages to participate and contributes to their enjoyment and long-term learning. The overall outcome of this will mean that a child will choose to be involved in touch well after completion of the AusTouch program, and then potentially for the long-term.

Practical Ideas for Fun Activities

These are in addition to the AusTouch Session Plans that are provided for the program. They are broken into 4 separate areas being; Participant Relay, Group Challenge, Individual Challenge & Ball Handling. A summary of each activity area follows:

- **Section A – Participant Relay Activities**

Section A activities are more suited for the early sessions of an AusTouch program. In fact, it is recommended that the majority of a first and second

AusTouch session be taken from the Section A activities. The reason for this is to introduce participants to the basic skills and concepts of touch in a non-threatening manner, with a focus on having fun, enjoyment and competition in the 'relay' format.

- **Section B – Group Challenge Activities**

Section B activities are suitable to be used throughout the whole of an AusTouch program. In particular these group challenge activities are good at introducing touch concepts such as sliding defence, communication, teamwork, attacking decision making and peripheral vision. They are applicable for all ages and skill levels some can be used as warm-up grids, as well as skill development activities.

- **Section C – Individual Challenge Activities**

Section C activities are excellent activities for teaching participants basic skills and concepts in a competitive yet fun environment. Section C activities are individually based and this allows Leaders more opportunity to give feedback and attention to participants. It also allows participants to challenge themselves and build confidence in their abilities. These activities, while best suited to a younger age group (5-14) can be easily modified to accommodate higher skill levels or older age groups. All the activities in Section C are easily modified by moving a cone 1-2 metres or giving head starts for individuals that might not necessarily 'win' one on one contests. Section C activities maybe used from Session 2 onwards in the AusTouch program.

- **Section D – Ball Handling Activities**

Section D activities are fun and build on the skill of passing, particularly passing under pressure. The activities move through from unstructured passing grids to more structured touch orientated passing grids. The activities are also good for teaching participants decision making skills. The majority of the activities are suited to the younger or lower level participants to be used early in the AusTouch program. Some activities can be extended to cater for intermediate to a more advanced level of participant's skills.

Summary Booklets

Two booklets are also provided as part of the AusTouch Leader Resource Kit. The first is a summary of the individual Session Plans and contains abbreviated information on each of the program sessions. The second booklet is a summary of the Practical Ideas for Fun Activities separated into the four activity sections i.e. Participant Relay Activities, Group Challenge Activities, Individual Challenge Activities and Ball Handling Activities. Each of these publications is designed to provide Leaders with an easy and portable reference to program information.

Hints for AusTouch Leaders

This section provides some additional information to compliment the AusTouch Leader Training. There are Hints & Tips for dealing with Disabilities a participant may have, Emotional Difference in participants, Handling Misbehaviour, Providing a Staff Environment, Risk Management Strategies, Communication Strategies & some information on Bullying, what it is and some strategies for dealing with it should a Leader have it occur.

Further Information

To get additional information or to remain updated about the AusTouch Program, visit the AusTouch website: www.austouch.com.au and click on the AusTouch Logo. To speak to the National AusTouch Manager or State/Territory Manager, contact the Freecall Touch Football Australia number on 1800 654 951.

Acknowledgments & References

Touch Football Australia would like to acknowledge and thank the following Organisations & Individuals for contributing directly and indirectly in the production of this resource. The Australian Sports Commission also supported this resource through the funding of Touch Football Australia Incorporated in the Targeted Sports Participation Growth Program.

Organisational Contributors

Impact Images; Mike McLaughlin Sports Consultancy; John Bender Designs; Touch SA; TouchWest; Queensland Touch Association; South Australian Junior State Team Representatives and Junior Development Participants; Flinders University Touch Club; Flinders University Sports Association; Adelaide University Touch Club and Wollongong University.

Personal Contributors

Dennis Coffey, Marianne Maguire, Paul Webb, Colm Maguire, Peter Topp, Jeremy Smith, Adrian Sim, Jeff Dowsing, Megan Currie, Matthew Bamford, Gabe Hodges, Hayley Terrett, Gavin Macdonald, Brent Chambers, Karley Banks and Amelia Kent.

Reference List

Active After School Community Program - Community Coach Manual, TFA
Basic Coaching Manual, ASC (2005) website: www.ausport.gov.au ,
AFL AusKick Manual.