



Fact Sheet

Coaching

1. Use demonstrations

Where possible, demonstrate techniques or corrections rather than rely on verbal explanations. In order to conduct effective demonstrations, coaches should present one or two key points of a skill at a time and use athletes where possible to demonstrate.

2. Visual aids

Display information visually wherever possible, such as whiteboards during team meetings / halftime, written game plans and instructions before games / training and so on. This type of communication is best practice and will benefit all in the team.

3. Check for understanding

If a deaf person does not reply or seems to have difficulty in understanding, rephrase what you just said / demonstrated before moving on. A deaf person will usually confirm they understand by a nod of the head and conversely you should do the same.

4. Ask the athlete to teach you sport specific signs

There are a number of simple sport specific signs that a deaf athlete can teach members of your sporting club to assist with communication during matches and training.

5. Don't make the athlete stand out

Make all attempts to avoid making the deaf person look conspicuous (eg don't continually ask them in front of the group if they understand).

6. Effective positioning

In group situations encourage the deaf athlete/s to position themselves where they feel most comfortable such as in front of the coach and at the front of the group.

7. Identifying signals

Make sure that the deaf athlete/s can identify essential signals in your sport (eg visual equivalents to whistles or guns), a simple example could include a referee / starter putting an arm up, then down at the same time as the whistle / gun.

8. Involve the team

It will be useful to discuss the general hints described above with squad members, parents and/or assistants prior to or shortly after the deaf athlete joining the team. The coach/manager can also educate umpires about what can be done to assist the athlete.

To find out more visit www.deafsports.org.au email dsa@deafsports.org.au or call (03) 9473 1191 (voice) (03) 9473 1154 (tty)



Fact Sheet

Communication

1. Don't be afraid to ask

Ask the deaf person how they would like to communicate and don't just assume. There are a variety of ways to communicate and the person will tell you what works best for them. To get things started try communicating through basic gestures or use a pen and notepad.

2. Face to face communication

Communication with a deaf person will be enhanced if you ensure that you are standing where they can clearly see your face. Speak clearly without shouting, and with normal inflection and timing.

3. Use touch to gain attention

Attract the deaf person's attention before speaking to them or else they may not realise you are talking to them. A tap on the shoulder or a wave is acceptable.

4. Display information visually

Display information visually wherever possible, such as whiteboards, written notes, electronic signs, use of laptops and so on.

5. The importance of light

Always try and maintain a well lighted environment and use lights (flash on and off) to gain a deaf person's attention, particularly when communicating with a large audience.

6. Confirm that your message is understood

If a deaf person does not reply or seems to have difficulty in understanding, rephrase what you just said before moving on. A deaf person will usually confirm they understand what you are saying by a nod of the head and conversely you should do the same.

7. Learn Australian Sign Language (Auslan)

There are a range of courses and educational material available to help you learn Auslan. To start you can learn basic finger spelling and numbers. Contact Deaf Sports Australia or your State Deaf Society to find out where to start.

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Fact Sheet

Myths and Facts

Do all deaf people see themselves as disabled?

No, many deaf people see themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural minority and do not see themselves as disabled.

Deaf people are always unhappy about their deafness

Deaf people are rarely unhappy about being deaf, though they may feel frustrated by discrimination and obstruction in certain areas of society.

How do deaf people communicate?

Many deaf people use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and many are bilingual - they use Auslan and written/spoken English with varying levels of competence in their lives.

What is Auslan?

Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is the language of the Deaf community of Australia. Auslan is a visual, gestural language that is made up of linguistic elements that are identified as handshape, orientation, location, movement and expression. Auslan grammar and structure is different to English.

How many deaf and hard of hearing people in Australia?

16% of the Australian population have a hearing loss of more than 25 decibels (mild hearing loss). This equates to over three million Australians.

All deaf people can lip read

Not everyone can read lips, even the best lip-readers can only pick up 30-40% of words.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants make hearing “normal”

These devices do not correct hearing loss in the way glasses correct vision. They amplify sound to varying degrees, however, the wearer is still deaf or hard of hearing.

Why do the deaf community not compete at the Paralympics

Deaf athletes are physically able-bodied and can compete in sport without any restrictions apart from communication barriers that may occur when playing sport with people who can hear. There are no unique sports for deaf athletes. International sporting regulations are used for competitions - the only consideration is to make auditory cues visible.

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Sport Modifications

Deaf athletes participate in all sports, with very little if any modifications. The following simple modifications can easily be incorporated into an integrated setting.

1. Use lights to start and end a race

In sports such as swimming lights will be used to start the race. The lights can be found on the side of the pool directly under the swimmer which is connected to the starters' gun. When the gun is fired, the lights go on to indicate the start of the race. This system can be used for other sports to substitute for the traditional starters gun / siren. Another alternative if lights are not available would be to simply raise/drop arm to start a race.

2. Referees to use visual signs to gain attention

Referees can use visual signals to gain the attention of an athlete during competition using flags or basic gesturing such as waving.

3. Use a tap on the shoulder to gain attention

A deaf captain might need attention from the referee when requesting an explanation about a rule during the play. It is more likely the captain will touch the referee on his/her shoulder for attention. It is an acceptable thing for deaf people to tap people for attention.

4. Visual aids for scoring

Visual aids for scoring should be used at all times such as electronic scoreboards or whiteboards / blackboards.

5. A few seconds to explain

A deaf athlete playing sport with hearing players will usually stop if everyone else around them has stopped, such as when a referee has stopped play. A few extra seconds should be taken, where practical, to explain the referee's decisions to the deaf athlete.

6. Contact Deaf Sports Australia for further information

You can contact Deaf Sports Australia in order to obtain details regarding the specific rules and modifications available for the particular sport in which you are involved.

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