

Football Coach interview questions

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What to expect

Football coaching interviews tend to mix a panel conversation with a practical element, and the questions probe how you plan, how you read a game and how you handle the people around the team. Clubs and schools want to know you can run a safe, well-organised program and that parents, players and committee members will find you straightforward to deal with.

- **Technical and tactical:** Questions about periodisation, session design, playing style and how you build a game model for a squad at a particular age or level.
- **Behavioural:** Past-tense questions about player management, conflict, selection decisions and how you have handled a difficult season.
- **Scenario:** Match-day and mid-season situations where you have to make a call with incomplete information and limited time, such as a losing half time or a player returning from injury.
- **Data and analysis:** Questions about how you use video, GPS and simple spreadsheets to inform training rather than just collect numbers.
- **Safety and safeguarding:** Checks on your understanding of member protection, child-safe practice, first aid and anti-doping responsibilities.
- **Stakeholder communication:** How you work with parents, club committees, officials and support staff, including the conversations nobody enjoys.

Expect a first conversation with the club's coaching coordinator, technical director or school sport coordinator, covering your licence, experience and availability, often by phone or video. A second stage is usually in person and may include a practical component: running part of a session with a squad, presenting a training block, or walking the panel through footage they have given you beforehand. Some clubs add a short panel with a committee member or parent representative, and a final conversation about remuneration, hours and the season calendar. Working with Children Check, first aid currency and references are typically verified before an offer.

1. Walk us through how you plan a training week for a squad that plays on Saturday.

Why they ask

This is the core planning question. Interviewers want to see a repeatable process, not a list of favourite drills, and they want to hear how you balance technical work, physical load and recovery across the week.

How to structure your answer

Run a chronological walk-through: start from the fixture and the previous match review, move through each day, explain the theme and load of each session, and finish with how you confirm the plan with support staff. Keep it to a clear sequence and name the constraints you plan around.

Example answer

"I start from the previous match review and the next opponent, then work backwards from Saturday. Monday is recovery and review for the seniors, so it is low intensity, mostly walking through what we did well and the two or three things we need to fix. Tuesday is the main technical and physical session, the biggest load of the week, and it carries the unit work we identified from the review. Wednesday is a lighter session focused on the opposition, usually shape and set pieces. Thursday is the sharpest session, short and quick with finishing and transition, then Friday is a captain's run and set piece walk-through. I check the load with the physio and use Catapult data to pull back anyone who is carrying a lot of minutes, and I post the week's plan in TeamSnap so players and parents know

what is coming. If we have a midweek fixture, the whole week compresses and Tuesday becomes the recovery day instead."

2. Tell me about a time a player was not responding to your feedback. What did you do?

Why they ask

Player management is most of the job and interviewers are testing whether you adapt your approach or just repeat yourself louder. They also want evidence you can hold a standard without losing the person.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Set the situation and the player's role in the squad, describe the specific feedback that was not landing, explain the action you took, and give the result with what changed in their performance or attitude.

Example answer

"I had a left winger in an under-16 squad who kept drifting inside and leaving our fullback exposed. I had told him in three separate reviews to hold the width, and it was not changing anything. I sat down with him away from the group and asked what he saw on the field, and it turned out he was moving inside because he did not think he would get the ball out wide, so he was chasing involvement. We agreed on a rule with the midfielders about early switches, and I gave him one clip a week to watch with a specific question: where is the space before you receive. Over the next six weeks his touches in wide areas went up and the fullback stopped getting caught two on one. The lesson for me was that repeating the instruction was not coaching, understanding why he was doing it was."

3. You are a goal down at half time and your most dangerous attacker is carrying a knock. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

This is a judgement-under-pressure question. The panel is watching how you weigh player welfare against the result, and whether you can make a decision and communicate it clearly in a short window.

How to structure your answer

State your principle first, then work through the information you would gather, the options you would consider, the decision and how you would communicate it to the player and the group. Finish with the contingency if the situation changes.

Example answer

"Player welfare comes first, so the starting point is a straight conversation with the player and the physio: can he move freely, is he compensating, and what is the risk of making it worse. If he can play but is limited, I would not start him in the second half and would keep him for a defined window later if we still need a goal. If he is clear to continue, I would change his role rather than ask him to do the same running, move him narrower and put the width on a fresher player. Either way I tell the group the plan in two sentences: what changes, who is doing what, and what we are trying to force in the first ten minutes. I would also set a checkpoint at the sixty-minute mark to review, so we are not making the call purely on emotion at half time."

4. How do you use video and GPS data to change what you actually train?

Why they ask

Clubs increasingly expect coaches to work with Hudl, Sportscore and Catapult data. The question is not whether you can collect numbers but whether you turn them into training decisions players understand.

How to structure your answer

Describe your method as a cycle: the question you are trying to answer, the data you pull, what you change in the session, and how you check whether it worked. Give one concrete example with a tool named.

Example answer

"I start with a question rather than a dashboard. Early last season we were conceding in the ten minutes after half time, so I pulled the GPS data and clipped the first five minutes of the second half in Sportscode. The pattern was clear: our high intensity running dropped sharply straight after the break and we were slow to press. That changed the warm-up, we moved from a static talk in the sheds to a short re-activation on the pitch before kick-off, and we brought the first substitution forward by about ten minutes. Over the back half of the season we stopped conceding in that window, and the players could see why the change was made because I showed them the clip. I keep the reporting simple in Excel so the committee and parents get a one-page summary, not a wall of graphs."

5. What does a safe and inclusive training environment look like in practice?

Why they ask

Community clubs and schools carry real safeguarding obligations. This question tests whether you know the framework in Australia and whether you treat member protection as part of coaching rather than paperwork.

How to structure your answer

Give your values in one sentence, then move to concrete practices: checks, ratios, first aid, reporting, and how you handle language and behaviour. Close with what you would do if something went wrong.

Example answer

"It starts with the practical things being current and visible. Every coach and volunteer in my sessions has a Working with Children Check and a first aid certificate, I keep a register of who is on the pitch and who is responsible for which group, and I do not put myself in a position where I am alone with a player out of sight of others. Beyond that, the standard I set is about how people speak to each other. I tell players early in the season what I expect when someone makes a mistake, and I pull up anything that targets a person rather than the play. If a parent raises a concern about behaviour or safety, I write it down the same day and pass it to the club's member protection officer rather than trying to settle it informally, because that protects the player and it protects the coach."

6. How do you handle a parent who is unhappy about their child's playing time?

Why they ask

This is a real weekly task in community football and it tests your communication, your boundaries and whether you can hold a selection decision while keeping a family onside.

How to structure your answer

Explain your approach in steps: listen, explain the selection reasoning with evidence, set out what the player needs to work on, and define the next review point. Show that you know where the club's policy sits and what you would not do.

Example answer

"I try to have the conversation in person rather than over messages, and I start by listening because there is often something behind it, whether it is a long drive to training or a conversation the player has had at home. Then I am specific about selection: what the player in front of their child is doing well, what their child needs to add, and the timeline we are working to. I would rather show them the footage than argue about it, so I usually offer a short review session with the player and the parent where we look at two or three clips together. I never promise minutes in advance and I do not discuss another player's performance. If it escalates or the parent wants to take it further, I point them to the club's member protection policy and the coaching coordinator, and I keep a note of what was said and what we agreed."