HUDDLE BUILDERS

Small activities. Stronger connections.

You don't need a team-building day to build a team.

Huddle Builders are simple 5–10 minute activities that can sit at the beginning, middle or end of a normal session. Used little and often, they create shared experiences, stimulate conversation and help athletes understand themselves and each other.

The aim is not to force 'team building'. It is to deliberately create small opportunities for fun, belonging, communication, support and understanding across the season.

CHOOSE WHAT YOUR HUDDLE NEEDS

PLAY	Create laughter, energy and shared experiences.
CONNECT	Learn about the people in the bibs, not just the players.
COMMUNICATE	Listen, explain, problem-solve and work together.
SUPPORT	Notice strengths, recognise others and build belonging.
UNDERSTAND	Explore roles, needs, behaviours and how the team works.

HOW TO USE THEM

- Keep it short. Five minutes can be enough. A Huddle Builder should add to the session, not take it over.
- Match it to the group. Change the language, challenge and depth – not necessarily the activity.
- Don't overcoach it. Some activities need a question afterwards. Some simply need a laugh and then you train. Both have value.
- Build over time. One small Huddle Builder each week can create a lot of connection across a season.

U9–U11 | START THE HUDDLE

FUN • PLAY • BELONG

Keep Huddle Builders simple, active and safe. Help children laugh together, learn names, feel included and begin to recognise what being a good teammate looks like.

Beat the Coach
PLAY

Choose a quick challenge – shooting, balance, reactions or a simple skill. Can the group beat the coach?

Rock Paper Scissors
PLAY

Play quick rounds. Winners collect supporters until the final has the whole group cheering.

Two Truths & a Lie
CONNECT

Share three simple facts – favourite food, pet, hobby or holiday. Teammates guess the lie.

Find the Jack
PLAY

Hide or pass the Jack/card and work together to find it. Add clues, teams or a time challenge.

Building Netball
COMMUNICATE

Give small groups equipment and a simple build/problem to solve together. Who listens? Who has ideas?

Team Playlist
CONNECT

One athlete chooses the warm-up song each week and tells the group why.

Common Ground
CONNECT

In small groups, find three things everyone has in common that are not 'we play netball'.

Pass the Praise
SUPPORT

Pass a ball around the circle and share one positive thing about the person receiving it.

Copy My Move
PLAY

One athlete creates a movement; everyone copies. Rotate the leader so everyone gets a turn.

Birthday Line-Up
COMMUNICATE

Without the coach organising them, line up by birthday month, height or another fun category.

Coach Says
PLAY

A netball version of Simon Says. Let athletes take turns being the leader.

Our Huddle
UNDERSTAND

Finish one simple sentence: 'A good teammate...' Collect the words and revisit them later.

COACH REFLECTION

Did everyone have an opportunity to connect, contribute and feel part of the Huddle?

GROW & STRENGTHEN THE HUDDLE

Progress the conversation as the athletes grow.

U12–U15 | CONNECT • COMMUNICATE • UNDERSTAND

Keep the fun, but begin to add ownership, reflection and an understanding of how individual behaviour affects the group.

Fill My Cup
SUPPORT

Each athlete receives positive words or strengths from teammates. Keep it specific and genuine.

Know Your Role
UNDERSTAND

What does your position contribute? What do the players around you need from you?

Silent Challenge
COMMUNICATE

Complete a team task without speaking. Afterwards ask: how did we communicate when words disappeared?

Secret Supporter
SUPPORT

Draw a teammate. During training notice something they do well, then share it at the end.

What I Bring
UNDERSTAND

Finish: 'One thing you can rely on me for in this team is...' Share in pairs or as a group.

Building Netball + Constraint
COMMUNICATE

Repeat a problem-solving task but remove a resource, leader or communication method. How does the group adapt?

U16–SENIOR | TRUST • SUPPORT • PERFORM

Make the Huddle Builder more performance-relevant: what do athletes need from each other, how do they behave under pressure and how does the group want to operate together?

What I Need From You
SUPPORT

'When I am at my best, this is what helps me from you.' Listen before responding.

Under Pressure
UNDERSTAND

Share what teammates might notice when you are under pressure – and what support is actually useful.

Different Lens
UNDERSTAND

Choose two connected positions. What does each need from the other to do their job well?

Team Non-Negotiables
COMMUNICATE

Small groups agree three behaviours they want to see consistently – then combine into a team view.

Strength Spotting
SUPPORT

Identify a strength another athlete brings when the game gets difficult. Explain the evidence you have seen.

Match-Day Needs
UNDERSTAND

Complete: 'On match day, I need...' Identify what the team can influence together.

COACH REFLECTION

What did you notice about how your athletes communicate, support and understand each other?