Here are five principles of reinforcement for sport coaches. The first column explains the principle. The second column gives ideas to guide your implementation of this feedback ("DO THIS"), while the third column shows some common mistakes you might make in trying to implement the principle ("DON'T DO THIS").

**Directions:** Grade yourself on each principle of reinforcement. Ask a colleague for a second-opinion. Provide some rationale for your grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Do this…</th>
<th>Don’t do this</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Rationale &amp; Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>By identifying what behaviors need to reinforce, you will appropriately constrain your attention during practice. Requires much attention before practice starts.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Before a training session, plan specifically what athlete behaviors you will “capture” and reinforce during practice.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Give rationale for the grade you chose</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reinforce exactly the behavior you are looking for… nothing else.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Say “good job” when it’s not a good job.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contingency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Give reinforcement when the desired behavior is performed. Give encouragement or instruction following a mistake.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use superlatives (e.g., “that was amazing!”) Provide excessive commentary Provide judgment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parsimony</strong></td>
<td><strong>Keep praise objective, simple, short</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use a clap or other short way to signal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Short and simple phrases (e.g., Got it! Bingo!) Use a clap or other short way to signal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Necessity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Determine if feedback from coach is necessary, or if feedback could come from the activity itself</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feedback is needed for learning complicated behaviors, when the learning process is long, or when sensory feedback is ambiguous or not possible</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>When teaching simple behaviors When sensory feedback is easily available, clear, and strong</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Principle**

**Do this…**
- Reinforce behaviors from all players
- Have a variety of behaviors you could reinforce for different players (e.g., showing initiative or leadership, persistent effort) to make it easier to distribute reinforcement

**Don’t do this**
- Give reinforcement and attention exclusively to low-skilled athletes or high-skilled athletes

**Grade**
- A - F

**Rationale & Notes**
- Give rationale for the grade you chose

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**Distribution**

*Reinforcement should be distributed throughout a session and equitably amongst players.*

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**Final Grade**

**Do this…**
- What are you doing well?

**Don’t do this**
- What do you need to change?

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**Reflection.** Explain some important realizations you had about the types of reinforcement you use.