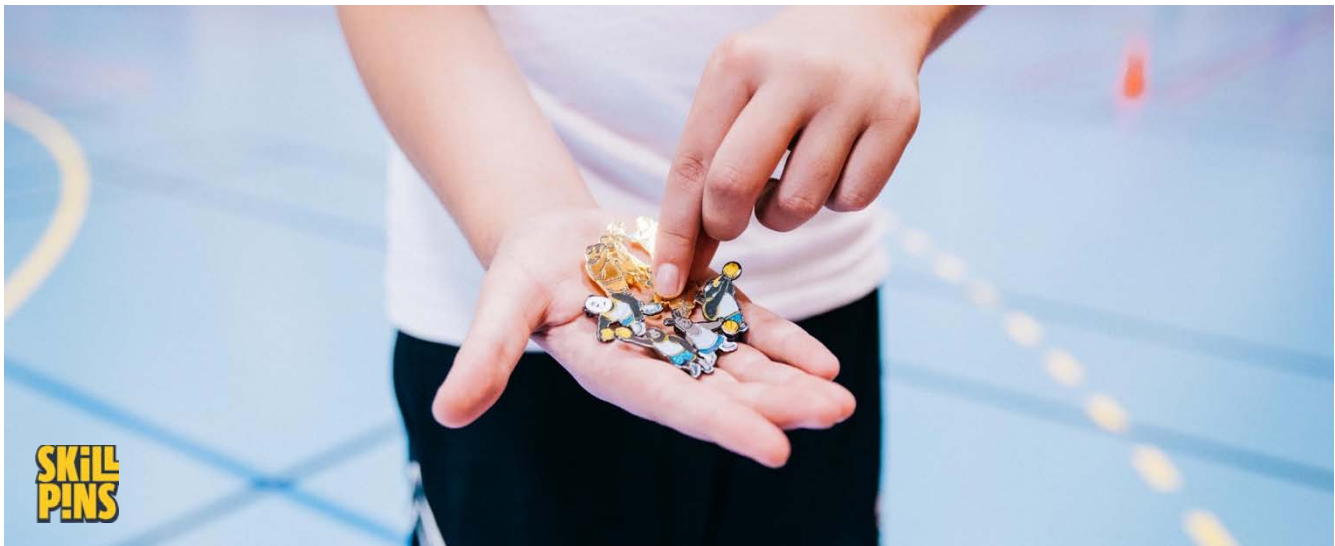




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New Swedish initiative aims to inspire young basketball players to train between practices

After four years of development, Skillpins is launching, a Swedish player development system that combines clear challenges, visible progression and rewards to make individual training more motivating.

After four years of development, Skillpins is now launching. The system helps young basketball players train between practices through concrete challenges, clear progression and physical pins that make their development visible.

As players become more confident in their fundamental skills, more of the limited team practice time can be spent on different phases of the game, game understanding, tactics and decision-making. The principles behind Skillpins are supported by research into what makes sport enjoyable and motivating for children, while also aligning well with the Swedish Basketball Federation's approach to player development.

For clubs, Skillpins can also create engagement and provide a new opportunity to generate revenue.

What is skillpins?

Skillpins is a player development system built around clear challenges in four fundamental skill areas: ball handling, shooting, finishing and defense.

Each area contains ten individual challenges with four levels of difficulty. Players choose their level, complete the challenges and collect points towards Bronze, Silver, Gold and Elite.

The system makes it clear what players can work on between practices, what their next step is and how their own development is progressing.



The pins provide a visible symbol of the player's time, effort and development. But the pin itself is not the most important part. What matters is giving players concrete goals and helping them feel that their training is taking them somewhere.

Individual development that makes the team stronger

The idea for Skillpins began when founder Tomas Pernek was coaching his daughter's basketball team.

The players were engaged and enjoyed training when the team was together. Between practices, however, they trained far less frequently. At the same time, much of the team's limited time in the gym was spent repeating individual fundamental skills.

It raised a question that many youth coaches will recognize:

How do we get more young basketball players to want to train between practices?

The idea was that concrete challenges, clear goals and visible progression could make it easier for players to continue training even when the team was not together.

"I didn't want to create more drills. I wanted to create a clear reason for kids to keep training between practices," says Tomas Pernek, founder of Skillpins.

Value for players, coaches and clubs

For players, Skillpins creates clear goals, visible progression and the feeling that their own training is taking them forward.

For coaches, it becomes easier to work systematically with individual player development. When players are more confident in their fundamental skills, they are better able to take on coaching and apply those skills within the context of the game.

For clubs, Skillpins provides a ready-to-use player development tool. The sale of pins can also create an additional source of revenue and help fund parts of the club's activities.

The system also includes **Spela Schysst**, a Fair Play concept designed to help clubs promote respect, team spirit and positive behavior during practice, games and away from the court.

Experience supported by research

Skillpins began as a practical idea from the basketball court. During its development, its underlying principles have also found support in research into what makes sport enjoyable and motivating for children.

In the Swedish study *Den roliga idrotten* ("The Fun in Sport"), 71 children were asked to rate factors that contribute to making sport fun. Among the highest-rated factors were doing your best, training and being active, having positive coaches who allow mistakes, learning new skills, challenging yourself, and setting and achieving goals.

These findings closely reflect the principles behind Skillpins.



Players receive a challenge appropriate to their level, a clear goal and the opportunity to see their training lead to progress. The pin reinforces that experience, but the most important reward is the feeling of achieving something that was previously difficult.

Skillpins therefore works even if a player chooses not to purchase a pin. The core of the system is the challenges, the progression and the feeling of getting better.

Aligned with the Swedish approach to player development

The principles behind Skillpins align well with the Swedish Basketball Federation's modern approach to player development, where learning starts from the game itself.

A basketball game can be divided into four phases: offense, transition to defense, defense and transition to offense. Within these phases, players need to read the game, make decisions, communicate and apply their skills in the right context.

When players develop more confident individual fundamentals between practices, more of the team's time together can be used for game understanding, decision-making, collaboration and team development.

Skillpins is not a replacement for game-based practice. It is a complement that helps players build the individual toolkit they need to become **more coachable** and develop the other parts of their game.

Developed over four years and tested in a real club environment

Skillpins has been developed step by step over four years.

During the first stage of development, the focus was on the concept itself, the challenges, the progression system and the pins. The goal was to find an approach that could inspire young players to train between practices and make their development visible.

This was followed by several years of practical testing with players and coaches at Stenungsunds Basket in Sweden.

During that period, the target age group was adjusted, the challenges refined and the system adapted to work as a natural part of a club's regular activities throughout the season.

During the first half of 2026, Skillpins was tested in the same format in which the system is now being launched. Many children completed challenges, collected points and earned pins.

The packaging has also been developed around the everyday needs of coaches.

The first pins arrived in separate small boxes, while the challenge sheets were printed in A4 format. In practice, this made the system cumbersome to organize, carry and use in the gym.

Today, Skillpins is delivered in robust, organized coach cases containing both the pins and clear A5 challenge cards. The cases make it easy for coaches to bring the complete system to practice and keep everything organized.

"We realized that it wasn't enough for the challenges and pins to be good. The entire system had to be easy to understand, easy to carry and easy to use as part of regular team activities," says Tomas Pernek.



Motivation you can wear

The pins are designed to appeal to the target audience, drawing inspiration from basketball culture, street basketball and street art.

The ambition has been to create characters and pins that young players think are cool and want to show off. The idea is for the pins to feel just as natural on a gym bag, hoodie, cap or beanie as they do as part of a collection.

They do more than show the level a player has reached. They represent the training, effort and development behind the achievement, something to be proud of.

"I believe every child wants to improve. Our job as coaches is to make that development visible, inspiring and possible to follow. When players have clear goals between practices, it becomes easier to keep training and build confident fundamentals. That also makes it easier for them to take on coaching and understand the game," says Tomas Pernek.

About skillpins

Skillpins is a Swedish basketball player development system designed to motivate players to train between practices through clear challenges, visible progression and physical pins.

The system has been developed over four years and tested in practice with players and coaches. It is designed to give players better opportunities to develop, make them better prepared for coaching and team play, help coaches use practice time more effectively and create additional value for clubs.

At launch, Skillpins is available in three ready-made packages. **Starter Kit** includes Bronze and Silver, **All Star Kit** includes Gold and Elite, and **Champion Bundle** combines both kits and includes all Skillpins levels. This makes it easy for clubs to choose a solution based on their players' skill level and the needs of their program.

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Press Release Images Skillpins

For high resolution images please contact tomas@skillpins.com



Skillpins in gold and elite level. All included in the All-Star-kit.



Skillpins in bronze and silver level. All included in the Starter-kit



Skillpins carry case for the Starter and All-Star kit.



The carry case has room for Skillpins, challenge cards & Fair Play Pins.



Skillpins challenge card for Dribble category.



All levels in the dribble category





Underneath the challenge cards is the Fair Play pins.



Fair Play Everyday pin



Skillpins fits nicely onto a gym bag



Skillpins fits nicely on a cap



Tomas Pernek – Founder Skillpins.



Tomas Pernek holding the Skillpins Starter Kit

