

Coaching and Training Curriculum

General Philosophy and Standards For Coaches, Teams, and Age Groups

- Develop the character of a player and model Godly character traits
 - Leadership – instill leadership qualities in players, empower players to be leaders
 - Respect – teach players to respect teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and fans
 - Responsibility – teach players to take responsibility for their effort and their mistakes
 - Discipline – do things the right way, in the right manner, and do the small things right.
 - Honesty – be an honest player, teammate and opponent.
- Training and coaching should emphasize total player development (global method of training)
 - Incorporate all of the elements of soccer (technique, tactics, fitness, mental) into all training sessions through relevant, game-like activities
- Value effort and hard work and teach players to train at a high work rate
 - Reward players who work hard consistently and refrain from giving special treatment to skillful players who are lazy
- Instill a love and passion for the game of soccer in your players
 - Encourage players to watch soccer on TV, to play at home with friends, and to practice on their own in their free time
 - Training sessions should enjoyable yet challenging and make the players want to come back to training and also practice at home
- Create training sessions that are high in intensity, which puts fitness demands on players that are similar to the game
- Create training sessions that are competitive and alter training activities to make them as competitive as possible (ie – always keeping track of score, record highest number of touches, moves, etc)
- All technical training should place demands on both feet and challenge the player according to his or her abilities
- Treat the game as an extension of the training session and use it to develop the player
 - Use the warm-up time to teach
 - Give specific teaching points before the game and at half-time
 - Always try to provide subs with instruction before they go into the game and give feedback to the players coming off of the field
 - Give instructional feedback to players on the field not directly involved in the play
 - Give the appropriate amount of playing time according to age group
- In training and in games stress the importance of being a complete player – use both feet, play offense/defense regardless of position, know how to play any position on the field, etc.
- Always remember that the focus of each training session and game is to help the player develop in order to prepare them for the next level

“Success is peace of mind which is the direct result of the self-satisfaction in knowing that you have made the effort to become the best of which you are capable of becoming” – John Wooden

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U8 Player

Traits of a U8 Player:

- Self-centered
- Love to play, don't like to watch
- Begin to work well in pairs
- Player learns through imitation
- Limited attention span, easily distracted
- Unable to understand most abstract concepts (ie – formations, combination play, runs off the ball)
- Extremely aware of adult reactions and seek adult approval

Necessary Qualities of a U8 Coach:

- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Ability to demonstrate or use older players
- Knowledge of the key factors of basic skills
- Gives encouragement and positive feedback
- Understanding of the age and limitations of the players

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Juggling (All body parts)
- Dribble with all sides of the foot (inside, outside, and laces)
- Introduce passing technique (Ankle lock and pass through the “equator” or the ball)
- Shooting technique (Stationary balls on ground facing the goal)
- Receiving balls from out of the air (All body parts using self service)
- Shielding (Body in between ball and opponent)
- Basic heading (Build self confidence, throw to ones self only)

Tactical concepts that should be taught:

- Pressure player with the ball
- Able to find space when dribbling or passing

Fitness:

- Balance, reaction, spatial awareness – through games

What training sessions should look like:

- Lots of touches on the ball individually or in pairs
- No long lines, laps, or speeches
- Keep demonstrations brief, allow player to experience the activity, then explain again
- Let the player become comfortable with the ball without fear of making mistakes
- Small sided games with multiple goals and balls
- Sessions should always be fun and game-oriented (with goals)
- Small sided and end games are 3v3 or 4v4 (no GK's/Field Size: 30 x 20 yards) with kick-ins not throw-ins

Match Coaching:

- Players experience multiple positions
- Gaining confidence on the ball – encourage creativity
- Coach free environment, let the game be the teacher!
- Minimum of 50% playing time

Quote:

“I don't believe skill was, or ever will be, the result of coaches. It is a result of a love affair between the child and the ball” – Manfred Schellscheidt (Seton Hall University Head Coach)

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U9-U10 Player

Traits of a U9-U10 Player:

- A crucial age for technique/skill development
- Can stay focused for longer periods of time
- Are now able to better understand time, space, and decision-making as it relates to teammates
- Still learn through doing and imitation rather than watching or listening
- Wide range of maturity levels

Necessary Qualities of a U9-U10 Coach:

- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Ability to demonstrate
- Knowledge of basic skills as well as simple tactics
- Can give brief, to the point, and purposeful instructions
- Understands age and limitations and is able to adapt to wide range of abilities

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Juggling (All body parts)
- Dribbling (All parts of foot, learning how to use dribble to beat an opponent)
- Passing (Varying distances – using different parts of foot)
- Shooting (Ball moving when striking)
- Receiving (Feet, thigh, chest)
- Volleys (Inside & Laces of feet, Thigh-Foot, and Chest-Foot)
- Crossing (Hips pointed where the ball is intended to go)
- Shielding (Body between opponent and ball)
- Heading (Offensive-down & Defensive-up)

Tactical concepts that should be taught:

- 1v1 concepts (Both offensive and defensive)
- 2v1 concepts (combination play)
- Supporting the player in possession of the ball (1st, 2nd and 3rd attackers)
- Keep-Away/Possession – play the simple pass to keep possession
- Introduce Goalkeeping
- Introduce how to attack and defend restarts (Free kick, corner, goal kick, kick-off)

Fitness:

- Balance, agility, coordination, quickness, varied movements – mostly through games

What training sessions should look like:

- Technical focus with sessions that are a “progression” of a skill
- Give the players simple problem solving opportunities as well as opportunities for players to express themselves through their ability with the ball
- Plenty of opportunities to score goals through simple, game-like activities
- A lot of touches on the ball
- Small sided and end games are 3v3 or 4v4 (no GK's/Field Size: 30 x 20 yards) with kick-ins not throw-ins, max size of 6v6 (with GKs and field size of 60 x 40 yards)

Match Coaching:

- All players should experience playing all the different spots on the field during the season
- Players rotate as goalkeeper
- Emphasize beating and stopping an opponent with combination play
- Encourage players to use individual skill and have confidence to beat/stop the opponent in 1v1 situations
- Begin to challenge the player to read the game and make decisions on their own
- Incorporate coaching into the first part of the games
- Minimum of 50% playing time

Quote:

"If you ask a concert pianist how he would improve, he would say by playing, not by running around a piano"

-Joe Cole (Liverpool and England, on why playing games beats fitness)

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U11-U12 Player

Traits of a U11-U12 Player:

- Most players can now fully understand abstract concepts – “dawn of tactics”
- Wide range of skill, coordination & maturity
- Can be sensitive (feelings hurt easily)
- Players are becoming more creative and should be encouraged to try new skills
- Must be entertained (Major age for drop out or burned out effect)
- Competition is becoming more important
- Increased muscle mass - need a proper warm-up and cool down

Necessary Qualities of a U11-U12 Coach:

- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Sensitive and patient
- Knowledge of team tactics
- Encouraging, gives positive feedback

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Repetition of previously learned skills
- Juggling - in groups, with more specific restrictions
- Dribbling – ability to have speed and close control in tight situations and when under pressure
- Passing – ability to drive, chip, loft the ball with different parts of the foot
- Receiving – opening hips, turning, receiving out of air
- Shooting/finishing – shooting for power vs finesse, finishing off of crosses
- Headers - difference between offensive and defensive heading

Tactical concepts that should be taught:

- Communication
- Changing fields/point of attack
- Creating angles
- Combination play (1-2, overlap, takeover)
- Passing for possession and penetration and when to do both
- Attacking from the width
- Team Shape (Height, Width, and Depth) – defensively and offensively

Fitness:

- Speed and change of pace/direction, agility (ladders, hoops, hurdles), balancing, core strength, with and without ball-totals 10% of training

What training sessions should look like:

- Constantly reminding about proper technique and its application
- Simple problem solving activities in individual and small group settings – increase tactical knowledge
- Players experiencing different positions, so they can problem solve and increase their anticipation and instincts during a game
- Getting players to understand and recognize numbers up, even numbers, and numbers down situations and the appropriate decisions based on each scenario
- Small-sided and end games are 4v4, 5v5, 6v6 and up (Use GK's) – make it competitive (tournaments, “champions league”)
- Always end your practice now incorporating what has been taught in a controlled environment into a real game situation

Match coaching:

- Teach tactics and make tactical adjustments based on the factors of the game
- All players should experience playing all the different spots on the field during the season, but help players develop roles on the team.
- Players rotate as keeper most games.
- Coach within the game
- Minimum of 35-40% playing time

Quote:

“What is good for a football manager is when a child who grows up in Japan likes to kick a ball as much as a child who grows up in France. And to find that pleasure as you travel all over the world is something that is still, for me, magical, that , how could it be that all over the world – you can go to China, you can go to Japan or France and give a kid the ball, and he is happy? And that explains the success of our game... (you must try in your) training sessions to give that joy to the people who practice, and you know you don’t necessarily need to speak the language. You give the players the possibility to express themselves – like when they were kids, and they become happy and they play.”

-Arsene Wenger (Arsenal FC Manager)

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U13-U14 Player

Traits of a U13-U14 Player:

- Understands “team concept”
- Players are deciding “what soccer means to them”
- Winning is becoming more important
- Player is going through increased physical & mental changes
- Player is better able to understand the game and make decisions on their own

Necessary Qualities of a U13-U14 Coach

- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Demanding, but also understanding
- Knowledgeable of 11v11 tactical concepts
- Strong personality
- Good communicator

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Continue work on all previous skills, but under more pressure, performed at game speed, and quicker decision making (ex. 2 –touch)
- Juggling – in groups
- Passing – more precise passing, ability to bend the ball
- Receiving – using the first touch to get out of pressure or to attack
- Shooting – striking from distance, bending the ball
- Heading - directional (use as a pass)

Tactical concepts that should be taught:

- Possession with a purpose
- Attacking from out wide
- Changing the point of attack and cues to recognize when to do it
- Set plays (Offensive and defensive, corners, free-kicks, throw-ins, kick-offs)
- Using your keeper as an outlet
- Transition from defense to offense and from offense to defense
- Attacking from the back, middle, and final third
- Functional training by positions, outside backs, wing midfielders, center backs, forwards, and central midfielders – shadow training
- Full team attacking and defending shape
- Team defending: pressure, cover, balance, depth and compactness

Fitness:

- Soccer specific running – shuttle runs, walk/jog/run, etc. Speed, agility (ladders, hoops, hurdles), strength, endurance, core strength, with and without ball-totals 15% of training

What Training Should Look Like:

- Technique can be covered in a warm-up and individual activities, but also focus on technique and its application within the context of small-sided games
- Most sessions should cover the themes of when and how to get the ball out of pressure in order to go forward as well as when and how to get the ball back
- A variety of small-sided games (4v4 – 8v8) with different demands and restrictions to encourage players to make decisions and solve problems that address particular themes within the game • A competitive environment is needed to get the most out of players
- Players should be taking more of a leadership role in training and be held accountable for their effort and decision-making within the training session • End games are 7v7 – 11v11(Use GK's)

Match Coaching:

- During this phase of the player's development they really need to start to understand their roles within the team and what is expected of them, and the players around them
- Focus on small group ideas (ie. – organization of back line or forwards working together) • Allow the game to flow, but coach within it on a more individual basis.
- Minimum playing time of 35%

Quote:

"I think that the key is to try and play quality soccer, soccer with imagination. In my view that's the path we need to follow. When you aim to keep possession of the ball and you play to win the game, that's when the victories really start to come your way"

-Cesare Prandelli (Italy National Team Manager)

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U15-U16 Player

Traits of a U15-U16 Player:

- Outgoing
- Confident
- Competitive
- Able to plan, think ahead, and to imagine options

Necessary Qualities of a U15-U16 Coach:

- Charismatic leader
- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Well-educated, continues to learn
- Experienced and knowledgeable
- Strong communicator
- Disciplinarian, respected by players

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Continual improvement of first touch
- How to apply technique within different game situations
- Striking the ball cleanly with different surfaces of the foot
- Fine-tuning technique with increased time and space demands

Tactical Concepts that should be taught:

- Positional responsibilities as it relates to the system of play
- Transitioning forward into the attack - getting numbers forward, how to win the ball back
- Attacking and defending in the final third
- Match related issues: playing different systems based on the game/situation, adapting to the opponent, when/how to pressure, etc.

Fitness:

- Soccer specific running – shuttle runs, walk/jog/run, etc. Speed, agility (ladders, hoops, hurdles), strength, endurance, with and without ball-totals 20% of training

What training sessions should look like:

- Can use as a warm-up geared towards main coaching topic
- Players are put in realistic game environments and work through challenges the game presents to them
- Addresses pre-game and post-game problems
- Incorporates generic training sessions that require high intensity and repetition
- Concepts and themes are taught through competitions which end with a winning and losing team
- End game is 8v8-11v11 (Use GKs)

Match Coaching:

- Addresses themes and concepts which are covered in training
- Player's individual ability and understanding of the game will dictate the formation that you play
- Concentration and focus is the key to the development of the players and team.
- Coach within the game
- Minimum of 35 % playing time

Quote:

"A coach shouldn't set limits on inspiration. Coaches aren't just there to organize but to bring on players with excellent individual skills and allow them to express themselves."

-Vicente del Bosque (Spain National Team Manager)

Coaching and Training Curriculum for the U17-U18 Player

Traits of a U17-U18 Player:

- Player has almost fully developed
- Tactical awareness, overall fitness, and attitude can still be improved
- The focus of the player can change depending on plans after high school

Necessary Qualities of a U17-U18 Coach

- Charismatic leader
- Enthusiastic and motivational
- Well-educated, continues to learn
- Experienced and knowledgeable
- Strong communicator
- Disciplinarian, respected by players

Technical skills that should be taught:

- Continual improvement of first touch
- Striking the ball cleanly with different surfaces of the foot
- Fine-tuning technique with increased time and space demands
- Position-specific technical training (ie – driven balls for backs, finishing for forwards)

Tactical concepts that should be taught:

- Teaching systems of play and positional responsibilities as it relates to each system
- Match related issues: playing different systems based on the game/situation, adapting to the opponent, when/how to pressure, etc.
- Possession and team shape based on the match score and desired outcome

Fitness:

- Soccer specific running – shuttle runs, walk/jog/run, etc. Speed and change of pace/direction, agility (ladders, hoops, hurdles), strength, endurance, core strength, with and without ball-totals 25% of training

What training sessions should look like:

- Small and large sided games that emphasize particular themes and problems
- Generic activities to address larger themes
- Focuses on technical precision, game insight, and individual's responsibility for improving their game
- Use to prepare for the next level
- End game is 8v8-11v11 (Use GKs)

Match Coaching:

- Addresses themes and concepts which are covered in training
- Players are given an organizational focus and the appropriate adjustments are made
- Demanding the most from your players is critical for the player to move onto the next level
- Coach within the game
- Minimum of 30% playing time

Quote:

"You can't build a team overnight as if by magic. We have to work hard day in, day out, while staying humble, professional and enthusiastic."

–Jose Mourinho(Real Madrid Manager)

References

National Soccer Coaches Association of America (2004). *The soccer coaching bible*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

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