

Overview

Despite players being born in the same calendar year, physical, social and/or mental maturities can range by as much as three years. You will therefore encounter a wide range of levels in these areas in each player and from player to player. Try to create an environment in which all the players are playing soccer related games with lots of opportunity with the ball. Playing small sided games will allow this to happen. A player playing 3 v 3 will have many more opportunities with the ball versus a player who is playing 11 v 11.

Players should be placed in an environment that will allow them to learn by trial and error. Studies reveal that a child who is able to make their own decisions will learn 60% more than a child who is told what to do with the ball. Coaches should allow unstructured play and alleviate any pressure to perform. Every player should be challenged according to their physical, social and mental development. Any correction should be made in a positive manner without any inference that an error occurred. Each player should bring a ball to practice.

Keep things fun and keep things moving.

U-12

With the introduction to 11 a-side play, it will soon become obvious which players are best suited for specific positions. Nevertheless, the avoidance of typecasting players into specific position will help assist in their all-around development.

Along with the continued development of dribbling, finishing and passing, we can spend more time on playing and receiving balls in the air. Defending in pairs changing the point of attack and combination play should be introduced.

Small sided training games are still the basis for teaching. Flexibility training takes on added importance, both for aiding the ability to perform and for avoiding injuries.

Practice sessions should last 1.5 hour. Placing players in training games that demand problem solving will pay dividends. Remember that even at this level it is better to ask them to solve a challenge then to always solve it for them

U-15

As a wider range of skills provides the player with significantly improved control over the ball in varied situations, the player can now apply fundamental tactics to the game. Again emphasis in small sided training should continue. Team defending, team attacking and speed of play should be introduced.

U-19

Continuation of team tactics should be continued. Put players in game situations and have them solve the problem the game demands.