



(5/19/11)

Three Rivers Soccer Club Coaching Curriculum

3RSC

Age Group Curriculum for Youth Player Development

Mission Statement:

The goal of Three Rivers Soccer Club is to develop players to their highest potential in a positive environment that is both instructive and fun. Our objective is to provide every player the greatest opportunity to develop their soccer skills in addition to important life skills such as discipline, physical fitness, sportsmanship and teamwork. This task is accomplished by hiring the most experienced and qualified coaches that have a passion for the game and the desire and the enthusiasm to educate young players and create a family environment. Each player in 3RSC is provided instruction based upon a proven curriculum that is age appropriate and commensurate with the skill level of the players. 3RSC also provides guidance and help for the elite level player looking to play soccer at the collegiate level or the State EPD system. Several coaches within 3RSC are current WYS Staff instructors and or former college and professional coaches/players with a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Players within 3RSC will receive the full range of development from 9 years old to 18 years of age.

Philosophy:

The development of a soccer player is a long process in which player's progress gradually from a simple to a more complex involvement in the game. This process cannot be rushed, but players should always compete at a level that is both challenging and demanding. Below is a list of elements that are essential for proper player development to 3RSC.

- ❖ Competitive training environment that is demanding, challenging, constantly changing, motivating, enjoyable, encouraging, stimulating and realistic to the game on a regular consistent basis.
- ❖ Quality coaching to help guide, direct and assist players through their youth careers from coaches who are pursuing a greater understanding of the game and how to teach through continuing coaching education.
- ❖ Ideal game environment that is age /ability appropriate against teams that will push the players to their maximum capabilities, where players receive "fear free" continuous playing time and are encouraged to go forward as much as possible. We believe the Regional Club league is the best opportunity in the state for this to occur.
- ❖ Competitive developmental environment where development is emphasized over results and where players and teams are placed on teams or put in leagues that will enhance their development. 3RSC offers RCL, Select, and US Club options for players to do this.
- ❖ Proper Equipment -proper boots, shin guards, properly inflated balls, proper dress and goals.
- ❖ Political pipeline of administrators, coaches, and referees that place great importance on player development when making decisions and policies.
- ❖ Player identification system that can find the top players and place them in the appropriate level and program, and promote kids to state EPD programs when appropriate.

There is no guarantee that a player will reach his or her potential, but at least we must give him or her opportunity to become "The Best They Can Be".



There is no magic formula or short cut to successful development, coaching at youth levels is all about working with players to improve performance. Soccer is a player's game and the player's should be considered first when political, administrative and coaching decisions are made.

U9 Fun Phase (The Turn On)

The fascination for the ball the desire to master it and the thrill of scoring goals provides the launching pad. The joy and pleasure of the game are best nurtured by encouraging freedom of expression and organizing children's play in small groups. The activities are best nurtured by allowing freedom of expression within small group situations, and encouraging games that promote goal scoring opportunities.

Games and trainings should be FUN for the coaches and players alike. We want our players to WANT to come back!

Coach: facilitator, friendly helper, organizer, stimulator, patient, enthusiastic, imaginative. USSF "E" certificate.

Technique/Tactics: learning through FUN games and age appropriate activities. Activities should be FUN and appropriate of the age. Promote decision making, encourage creativity and participation of all players.

Games: body awareness>maze games >target games.

Physical: physical/movement education through soccer body awareness. Balance

Coordination -eye hand and eye foot. Agility and changing direction while in motion.

Psychological: keep it FUN and ENJOYABLE to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation). Tend to one task at a time. Controlling the ball is a complex task (realistic expectations). This age group of players do not understand group or collective play, individual activities (all players with a ball), short attention span unless peaked, keep interest high.

Like to show what they can do, encourage to try new things.

Develop self esteem through activities that foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.

U10 Flux Phase (The Critical Transitional Period)

The motivation to learn basic skills is very high at this age level. Children gradually begin to change from being self-centered to being self-critical and develop the need for group and/or team games. The game itself should be central to all skills training. 11 a-side soccer is too sophisticated and complicated for young players. Small sided games, which provides the right amount of pressure for the child's level of development is more appropriate for this age group.

Coach: sensitive teacher, patient, enthusiastic, imaginative, ability to demonstrate, understanding of technique, preferably young.

Certificate: USSF "E" certificate or USSF "D" License.

Technique: repetition of technique through fun games and dynamic activities.

Dribbling: use of all surfaces, basic turns, basic moves to beat an opponent, speed dribbling into open space.

Receiving: body behind the ball, cushion ball, ground balls and all surfaces of the foot from pass, air balls from self service and service from others. Air balls should include controlling with the thigh, chest and top of the foot.

Shooting: proper striking technique (angle of approach, open body, position of plant foot, ankle locked, strike ball with laces, follow-through), hit moving ball.



Passing: proper technique for laces, inside, outside.

Heading: introduction, build confidence, does not hurt, hit ball with forehead (may need to use soft ball).

Tactics: fundamental tactical concepts. Play a variety of positions, develop the complete player Attacking 1 v 1, support, width, depth, 3 v 1 Shape.

Defending 1 v 1, goal side, immediate chase, pressure to the ball.

Physical: all fitness through activities, games with the ball, coordination, agility.

Psychological: keep it FUN and ENJOY ABLE to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation). Demonstrate increase self-responsibility, give responsibility for preparation, discipline can initiate play, let it happen, learn through self-discover/self-expression, enjoy competition, all activities should have objectives/method of scoring can work in groups, cooperative games and activities.

Individual Technical and Tactical Issues for U-9's and U-10's

Contacting the Ball

How many ways can the player kick or dribble or control the ball? There are six surfaces (inside, outside, instep, sole, toe and heel) used for kicking, dribbling or controlling a soccer ball. The ball can also be driven, chipped, volleyed, half-volleyed, side-volleyed, curled and lofted. The U-9/10 player should be challenged to expand their range of surfaces and textures (weights and spins) in an ongoing process of technical refinement.

Is the player two footed? Juggling and dribbling practice should always involve the use of both feet and young players must be encouraged to experiment with all six contact surfaces. For the more motivated players, juggling, kicking and Coerver's* are essential "homework" activities for developing a comfort level with the ball.

Passing

Does the player purposely pass the ball towards teammates? Players should be asked to control the ball and look for teammates rather than simply kicking the ball forward or to safety; it is often necessary to remind young players that the goalkeeper is always the most open player on the team when they are under pressure or no obvious forward passing options are available. At this age, the "thinking" behind a passing decision is often more telling than the outcome, and young players must be encouraged to attempt to maintain possession by passing (or dribbling) even as their limited range of techniques fail them.

How far can the player kick the ball accurately? Players should be encouraged to pass within their technical range. Technique, physical strength and the size and weight of the ball all impact kicking distance and accuracy. In the small-sided games environment, shorter passes should be expected and encouraged, with aimless "boots" to safety, or to the opposition regarded as wasted possessions.

Does the player use disguise and deception when passing? Encouraging more frequent passing (and dribbling) with the outside of the foot will help improve the level of subtlety in young players. The use of the hips to deceive opponents can also become a feature of play for nine and ten year olds.

Shooting

Does the player shoot, when possible? A player's first thought in possession should always be "Can I score a goal from here?" Goals in practice should be wide and high enough to encourage shots from various distances and angles and young players should be reminded that the objective of the game is to score more goals than the opponent in the time provided. Shots can be placed, driven, chipped, curled, volleyed, half-volleyed, side-volleyed, or improvised using any other legal body part.



Ball Control

How many touches does the player take to control the ball? The earlier a player decides what to do with the ball, the faster they will play; however, many U-9 and U-10 players will not look up before they have secured possession because their skill level will not allow them to concentrate on two things (the ball and the next action) at once. Time, space, vision of the field, and a comfort level with the ball are the most important elements in reducing the number of touches necessary to control the ball.

Does the player understand their tactical options before the ball is controlled? Vision for “What next?” is a key element in the positive use of the “first touch,” and coaches should challenge players to appreciate their immediate tactical situation as early as possible during play. Coaching should attempt to develop “pre-control” vision whenever possible by asking players to assess the availability of space around them before receiving a pass.

Does the player open their body when possible when controlling the ball? Players who open their body towards the opponent’s goal before receiving the ball take fewer touches and play faster. Players should only open their bodies when they have space to do so. This skill begins to emerge at the U-10 level, although some younger players can grasp the concept.

Dribbling

Does the player have the skill to dribble out of pressure, or past an opponent? Dribbling practice should include basic moves to turn away from pressure and also ideas on how to use changes in pace and direction to maintain possession or beat an opponent. As the most artistic aspect of soccer, young players must not be discouraged from learning to dribble the ball through early and repeated failures. At this age, repetition in practicing dribbling moves in isolation and in live tactical contexts is critical for developing touch and creativity.

Does the player run into open space with the ball? Running forward with the ball is important for making defenders commit to the ball, for shortening passing distances, for changing the rhythm of play and for creating shooting possibilities. Players must be encouraged to quickly dribble the ball into open space and also encouraged to use the outside surface of the foot when “speed dribbling.”

Does the player dribble with their head down and rarely look to pass or shoot? While it is important to encourage young players to quickly dribble the ball into open space, players must also be aware of their passing and shooting options. Given that the ball can travel faster when kicked, it is important to encourage dribbling players to look up during those moments when they are in open space and not touching the ball, and when they are momentarily clear of opponents.

Does the player use disguise and deception when dribbling? The most difficult opponents are “wrigglers” who are unpredictable in their dribbling. Players should be encouraged to combine dribbling moves and become comfortable making multiple, abrupt changes in direction.

Heading

Does the player head the ball? Heading becomes more common by ages nine and ten and practicing and playing with lighter balls will help overcome any initial fears of performing this difficult skill. It should also be stressed that there is.

Support

Does the player move with the game or do they pass and stand still? Young players should not be restricted in their movements on the field and moving “with the game” should become a natural extension of passing. Passing sequences involving two and three players should be encouraged and can be expected at this age. These beginning attempts at combination play will become essential elements of mature play. At the U-9 and U-10 levels, an increase in the speed of ball circulation, coupled with a more controlled rhythm of play can be expected from competent players.

Does the player move into open spaces when not in possession? Players should be encouraged to “find” new supporting positions away from teammates rather than be told where and when to move. By age ten, some children have started to think more abstractly about the use of space away from the ball;



however many others do not yet demonstrate this spatial awareness, making large-group positional instruction irrelevant for the vast majority of nine and ten year-olds. More advanced nine and ten year-olds will often appreciate supporting positions to the side of the field (width) while failing to demonstrate the importance of creating space downfield and ahead of the ball (depth).

Is the player more comfortable when facing the opponent's goal than when playing with their back to the opponent's goal? Some players are uncomfortable checking and receiving the ball with their back to goal. While older players will ultimately be selected to positions based on this skill, all young players should regularly experience this challenge as a natural part of their soccer education. Before the ability to play effectively with "back to goal" develops, young children must first learn to find passing lanes, judge when and how to run for the ball, learn how to control and turn with the ball, and learn how to disguise their movements. Because of the reduced technical and tactical demands, small-sided games create the only natural environments that provide repeated experiences in learning this difficult aspect of soccer.

Defending

Does the player try to recover the ball when possession is lost? "Defending" at this age should be no more complicated than encouraging young players to try and win the ball back when lost. The better players can grasp the concept of "marking" an opponent and "picking up" opponents when not in possession, and they will recover behind the ball as a group. However, in deference to the technical difficulties associated with attacking play for most nine and ten year-olds, any concentrated emphasis on "team" defending should be delayed until at least U-11.

Does the player simply kick at the ball when an opponent is in possession? Tackling for the ball can and should include efforts to regain possession. The player who routinely kicks the ball away should be encouraged to use their body and the open space away from the opponent to attempt to win the ball back.

Transition

Does the player mentally transition after a change in possession? When the ball turns over from the attacker to the defender or from the defender to the attacker, the game offers chances to demonstrate awareness of two very important concepts: immediate recovery of the ball and immediate counter-attack to goal. Players should be assessed on how well they understand these concepts and encouraged to react as quickly as possible to any change in possession. By extension, the players immediately in support of the ball can also be assessed on how well they react to help their teammates.

Creativity

Does the player improvise when solving tactical problems? Those players who use non-standard techniques to solve tactical problems are demonstrating signs of creativity. A "good" pass gets to its target at a pace that can be controlled, regardless of the technique used in the delivered; similarly, a goal is a goal, regardless of how it was propelled into the net. Young players who improvise should be encouraged, not scolded, and it must be remembered that for young players, the "thought" behind an action is generally more telling than the outcome, which is often limited by experience and technical range. Three elements impact creativity. The first is technique, the second is tactical awareness, and the third is confidence. Players who have the audacity to think and act out of the ordinary may be future stars of the game, and, while their techniques will be refined over time, their willingness to take risks must be nurtured at every level. Creative players are not always the easiest individuals to coach.

U11/12 Foundation Phase (The Romance)

Development of Individual Skills as well as Individual and Small Group Tactics

The effect of the model is very important at this stage of development. Hero worship identification with successful teams/players and a hunger of imaginative skills typify the mentality of this age. This is a time of transition from self-centered to self-critical. Players of this age have a high arousal level in relation to the training of basic skills. This is the "Golden Age of Learning" and the most important age of skill



development. Demonstration is very important and the players learn best by doing. This is also an appropriate time to introduce and teach basic principles of play. It is important to establish discipline from the beginning. It is also important to continue creating a FUN and positive environment where players leave wanting more.

Coach: sensitive teacher, enthusiastic, possess soccer awareness, ability to demonstrate, knowledge of the key factors of basic skills, give encouragement, preferably young. Certificate/License: "E" Certificate, "D" license or higher.

Technique: important to establish good strong solid skills. Development of individual skills under pressure of time, space and an opponent. Increase technical speed.

Dribbling: encourage risk taking. Moves to beat an opponent, keep possession, shielding/spin turns, change of speed and direction.

Receiving: ground and air balls. All surfaces from partner on the move.

Shooting: proper striking technique, partner serve from all angles, turns, cut backs, volleys, proper technique, laces, inside, outside, -short and long, crossing.

Heading: self serve, partner serve, jumping to head, turning the ball, partner juggling, tackling proper technique.

Tactics: "Dawn of tactical awareness" basic principles of play. Play a variety of positions, develop awareness/complete player. Promote attacking soccer, individual 1 v 1. Formation: 3-3-1 or 2-3-2.

Attacking: keep possession, encourage risk taking, take players on 1 v 1 in proper areas of the field.

Defending: proper pressure (in front and behind), channel player, immediate chase, *small group* 2 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 1, 3 v 2, 3 v 3.

* A great deal of coaching / training within 4 v 4 games is very important to add shape and balance to games *

Physical: all fitness should be with the ball: flexibility, static stretching and dynamic stretching.

Agility: coordination on the ball with speed.

Psychological: keep it fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation). Encourage decision making, imagination / creativity, increase demands and discipline. Encourage to watch high level soccer.

Anticipation: begins with awareness. At every instance, your players must observe where the ball is coming from and how it is traveling (in the air, on the ground, quickly, slowly, etc.) They must also have the ability to look beyond the ball, maintaining an awareness of the relative positioning of teammates and opposing players, and the direction in which the player is moving. The following coaching points will help you improve your players' awareness of their surroundings:

- ❖ **Keep your head up-** avoid looking down at the ball, and consequently not observing what is around and where players are in relation to one another.
- ❖ **Look before receiving-** anticipate the next pass **before** you receive a ball by looking over both shoulders and thinking ahead. For younger players, equate this to a bird on a fence looking around.
- ❖ **Maintain an "Open" Body Stance-** do this by turning "side on" (half turned) for greater peripheral vision, and by taking an angle of support that allows you to see most (if not all) of the other players on the field.
- ❖ **Focus on the First Touch-** relax (**be composed**) as you receive the ball so you can control it quickly, and move the ball **away** from pressure on your first touch to create more space and time.



- ❖ **Communicate to help the receiver-** use brief phrases like “Man on,” “Turn,” and “Time” so that players on the ball know whether or not they are about to be pressured by the opponent. Practice this type of verbal communication during non-competitive activities to stimulate game situations.

Anticipation also requires imagination: to anticipate their future options, players must first be able to imagine how their teammates and opponents are likely to react following each touch of the ball. They must also have insight into the use of the ball and how various techniques can be employed to both control the ball and play into different spaces. The next set of coaching points will help cultivate imagination and creativity among your players:

- ❖ **Change Pace-** when you receive the ball, accelerate with it to get away from nearby defenders.
- ❖ **Change Direction-** turn with the ball on your first touch to move off at new angles. A change of direction can be especially effective when combined with a change of pace.
- ❖ **Looking for opportunities to take a “big first touch”-** before the ball arrives, look for spaces away from both your current position and nearby opponents. Play the ball into these spaces on the first touch to “get behind” the defense quickly.
- ❖ **Move off the ball to provide support-** once you have made a pass, look to support others in possession so you can receive the ball again. **Avoid standing still** or “admiring your pass,” since this effectively takes you out of the game. Move aggressively to support the next pass as the ball is traveling to a teammate.
- ❖ **Switch the Play-** let the ball run **across your body** to change direction and switch play, saving a touch by using your upper body to disguise your movement and the pace of the pass to help you. Recognize the available space behind you before you receive the pass.
- ❖ **Take advantage of Crossover Runs-** instead of relying solely on the pass, create deception through takeovers and “fake-overs.” Use your inside foot to exchange (or keep) the ball, and accelerate away from the crossover point as a decoy run.
- ❖ **Alternate between One- and Two-Touch Play-** change the attacking rhythm frequently so that players must always think two (or more) moves ahead of the current situation. Supporting players must quickly find angles off each receiving player so the ball can be delivered with just one touch.
- ❖ **Play without Communication-** challenge your players to think for themselves with no help from others, i.e. no verbal or non-verbal help (such as calls of “Man on,” “Turn,” clapping, or pointing). Your players must rely on their anticipation, imagination, and awareness to aid their decision-making process.

Individual Technical and Tactical Issues for U-11's and U-12's

Contacting the Ball

How many ways can the player kick or dribble or control the ball? There are six surfaces (inside, outside, instep, sole, toe and heel) used for kicking, dribbling or controlling a soccer ball. The ball can also be driven, chipped, volleyed, half-volleyed, side-volleyed, curled and lofted. The U-11/12 player should be proficient in using a majority of surfaces with both feet, and be challenged to expand their ability to use different textures (weights and spins). The coach of the motivated U-11/12 player should intensify the refinement of these basic contacting skills through warm-up activities and tactically challenging practice games.

Finishing

How proficient is the player in front of goal? Shots can be placed, driven, chipped, curled, volleyed, half-volleyed, side-volleyed, or improvised using any other legal body part. Practice activities should refine these skills through individual, small group and small-sided activities. Practices should also include the varying ways of finishing with both feet.



Vision and Ball Control

How quickly does the player assess tactical options and execute ball control skills? Vision for “What next?” is a key element in the positive use of the “first touch,” and for improving speed of play. Coaches should challenge players to appreciate their immediate tactical situation as early, and as often, as possible by looking around and turning their bodies sideways-on to the game, whenever possible. The earlier a player decides what to do with the ball, the fewer touches they will take and the faster they will play. Practice activities should involve possession games and other live, competitive games in order to improve decision-making and speed of play.

Dribbling

Does the player have the skill and creativity to dribble out of pressure, or past an opponent? At the U-11/12 level, evading pressure and beating opponents are critical skills for complementing the passing game as team play emerges. Rapid and abrupt changes in speed and direction, and the use of the shoulders and hips to disguise intentions, become critical subtleties as dribbling sophistication responds to the improved skills of defenders.

Does the player maintain vision while dribbling? Improving speed of play, through cleaner technique and faster reading of the game, is the primary role of the coach at this stage. Dribbling should now be considered very much a means to an end, with the balance between shooting, passing and dribbling (decision-making) related to time and space and position on the field.

Heading

How diverse are the player’s heading skills? Heading to goal and heading away from goal are basic applications of this technique. In addition, the use of heading as a passing technique and as a response to crossing situations should also be stressed as viable applications of this difficult skill. The timing of heading techniques, relative to the balls’ pace, trajectory and time of flight, is the critical “next level” for most players of age eleven and beyond. Soccer balls should be kicked in the air over varying distances, whenever possible, to approximate realistic match situations, with hand-serves utilized as seldom as possible.

Tackling

How competent is the player in applying sliding techniques? In addition to tackling for the ball, sliding skills can be used to keep balls in play, to reach wayward passes, to cross balls from the goal line, and to extend reach. Players should be instructed in tackling techniques with both the inside and outside legs (relative to a defender), and in sliding to maintain possession, pass, or clear.

Combination Play: Support and Movement with the Game

Does the player move with the game and combine with others? At the U-10 level, an increase in the speed of ball circulation, coupled with a more controlled rhythm of play are common features of play. At the U-11/12 level, those qualities can be taken a step further with the expectation of more formal combination play. At eleven, take-over, wall passes and double passes are much more universal, and up-back-through combinations can be developed over time. Because of their still growing appreciation for midfield width and rhythm of play in large numbers, overlaps are still much less probable. All other combinations (passes to feet, passes to space, dribbling, and one-three’s) are already established at this age, meaning that eleven and twelve becomes the period when most of the combining elements in the game can be performed for the first time.

Use of Space

Does the player move with the game when not in possession? In general, attacking players try to open up the field in order to create possibilities for small-group play, while defenders try to limit the amount of time and space available for the attackers to either penetrate by passing or dribbling, or change the point of attack to a more open area. In both cases, individual players have responsibilities to move with the game relative to their position. Attacking players should be instructed how to play with their immediate small group or stay away from the ball, and defenders should be instructed how to move as a



defensive block. The attacking concepts of width, depth, support and mobility are critical applications of spatial awareness, as are the defensive concepts of cover, balance and compactness.

Playing with “Back to Goal”

Is the player more comfortable when facing the opponent’s goal than when playing with their back to the opponent’s goal? Many young players are uncomfortable checking and receiving the ball with their back to goal; however, 8v8 games provide many opportunities to expose young players to this important and difficult skill within a positional structure. To play effectively with back to goal, players must be aware of the tactical possibilities for receiving the ball to feet or into open space; they must learn to identify passing lanes or open spaces; they must learn to judge when and how to run for the ball; they must learn how to lay the ball off to a supporting player or turn with the ball; and they must learn how to disguise their movements and intentions. Playing with back to goal is an important concept for both midfielders and forwards and it is a disservice to encourage kickball, or exclusively direct soccer at this age. Body shape and preparation of who is around at the time is very important in this topic.

Defending

Does the player understand basic defensive concepts? When the ball is lost, a defender’s first instinct should be to try to win it back. If this is not possible, they should either look to recover goal-side behind the ball, or take up a new position for any counter-attacking possibilities. Individual decision-making in defense follows a basic hierarchy of thinking. First, try to win the ball and keep possession when it is passed to an immediate opponent. Second, try to knock the ball away from the immediate opponent. Third, try to deny the immediate opponent space to turn with the ball. Fourth, try to keep the immediate attacker running towards a sideline or into other defenders. Finally, when not in position to achieve any of the above, recover behind the ball and help the team defend.

Transition

Does the player mentally transition after a change in possession? At all levels, speed of transition is often a critical element in the scoring and preventing of goals. With that said, it is beneficial to use live practice activities that incorporate transition to and from goal. The issue of vision is closely related to transition in that a player’s first attacking thought should be to score a goal; if that is not possible, passing to the furthest player possible is the next best option.

Decision-Making

By U-11, many players can read the game with some degree of sophistication and can be helped to identify the “best” option for play, based on the following hierarchy. First, can the player shoot at goal? Second, can the player dribble into position to shoot at goal? Third, can the player pass to someone who can score a goal? Fourth, can the player pass the ball forward to a teammate to maintain possession?

Fifth, can the player pass the ball sideways or backwards to a teammate to maintain possession? Fifth, is the player under enough pressure to warrant a clearance?

Creativity

What is a creative team player? Three elements impact creativity. The first is technique, the second is tactical awareness, and the third is self-confidence. Players who have the audacity to think and act out of the ordinary may be future stars of the game and their willingness to take risks must be nurtured at every level. As players move towards the teen years, a critical paradox enters the coaching challenge. Creative players are necessary for making teams unpredictable and creative players are often frustrating to coach and play with because they rarely conform to standard team concepts. Creative players are not always the easiest individuals to coach, but creative players are worth their weight in gold and America has yet to produce a creative genius.



U14 Formal Phase (The Commitment)

Development of Individual Skills and Small Group Tactics

Adult standards and formal rules become the focal point during this period. The pace of development quickens at this level due to the acceleration of physical and mental maturation. The demands of skill training as well as training loads should increase thus provoking improvement in mental toughness, concentration and diligence. Awareness of tactics within the game becomes an important facet of the learning process. Players tend to be self-critical, rebellious but have a strong commitment to the team.

Coach: strong personality, soccer knowledgeable, enthusiastic License: USSF "C" License or higher.

Technique: build on the base, development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space and an opponent, increase technical speed.

Dribbling: encourage to take player on 1 v 1, feints / moves, keep possession, shielding / spin turns.

Receiving: quality first touch and take balls out of the air, turning, all surfaces shooting on the run, on the turn, from all angles and crosses, volleys.

Passing: short, long, bent, cross, driven, chipped, all surfaces, all on the run, heading to goal (shoot / glance), to pass, to clear, tackling using proper technique, slide and block tackle.

Tactics: increase tactical speed (decision making) individual 1 v 1.

Attacking: keep possession, encourage risk taking, take players on 1 v 1 in proper areas of the field, promote attacking soccer. Formations: 4-4-2, 3-4-3, 3-5-2, 4-3-3

Defending: pressure, cover balance, compactness, delay, tracking back, simple set plays.

* A great deal of coaching, teaching within 4 v 4 games *

Physical: all fitness work with the ball flexibility, static stretching, dynamic stretching, agility, coordination on the ball with speed.

Psychological: the game should remain fun and enjoyable. Players should have a passion for the game and show imagination. Creativity increase demands. Establish training targets maintain discipline and encourage players to watch high level soccer. Must be competitive in training and games.

U16 Fervid Phase (The Dedication) Development of Skill and Group Tactics

This is a critical time in a player's development. Many stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing opportunities, poor leadership or other reasons. Players tend to be mentally tough, self confident, but with a need for attention and security .There is a need for team spirit, leadership and discipline within the team. There is also a need for more commitment from parents, players and coaches. College showcase events and exposure to college coaches a must at this time for those wishing to go on and play at the collegiate level. For college recruiting and player information please contact DOC with any questions.

Coach: charismatic, experienced, knowledgeable, articulate, disciplinarian, managerial, know how, thoughtful persuader. License: USSF "B" license or higher.

Technique: skills should be mastered leading to artistry, all under match conditions, individual skill, covered during the warm-up, increase technical speed and strike balls cleanly over distance with accuracy under pressure. Speed of play should be increased by two-touch and one-touch play.

Tactics: increase tactical speed (decision making) group; 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 7v7.

Attacking: keep possession with a purpose, width, depth, support and combination play; wall pass, take over, overlap, double pass, third man running, penetration,



mobility and creativity, crossing with proper runs in the box set plays. Counter-attack and set plays.

Defending: pressure, cover balance (loose marking) compactness, delay tracking back communication (who, what, when, where) teach to enjoy, winning possession of the ball and defensive set plays.

* A great deal of coaching, teaching within 7v7 games *

Physical: fitness work with and without the ball. Simple plyometrics.

Flexibility: static and dynamic stretching before and after training and matches, agility exercises with and without the ball.

Endurance: aerobic and anaerobic strength, upper and lower body.

Nutrition: proper diet, pre-game, post-game, tournaments, etc. Prevention and care of injuries.

Psychological: increased concentration, leadership, player responsibilities, discipline respect for the game, goal setting, vary program, satisfy player's urge for competition. Must be competitive in training and games.

U 18/19 Final Phase -The Fulfillment (Flower in Full Bloom) Development of Positional and Team Play

Fulfillment of a player's potential depends on his or her own efforts, the support of his or her teammates and the unselfish guidance of his or her coach. He/she must be exposed to a playing and training environment which extends his/her mental, physical and technical capabilities to the limit. He/she must have a sound understanding of the game's principles and concepts. Players should show emotional stability when confronted with pressure situations. Demanding and challenging training sessions and competitive matches are essential.

Coach: charismatic, well informed, up to date, experienced, knowledgeable, articulate, disciplinarian, no doubt about his/her authority, managerial know how. License: USSF "B" license or higher.

Technique: mastered skills leading to artistry. All skills performed at speed under match conditions, demand excellence. Individual skill covered during the warm-up.

Tactics: increase tactical speed (decision making), increased pressure and competition. Understanding how to win a game. Comfortable and able to adapt to changes in tactics during games.

Functional: understanding of lines and linkage, attacking, possession with a purpose. Combination play with tactical implications, penetrations with creativity, counter attack, target play and creating chances and crossing with proper runs in the box, set plays.

Defending: man to man marking with sweeper behind and in front, zonal marking as in a flat back four, pressing (winning possession of the ball as an attacking concept) and set plays.

* A great deal of coaching, teaching within 8v8 and 11v11 games *

Physical: fitness, work with and without the ball.

Flexibility: static and dynamic stretching before and after training and matches, agility with and without the ball.

Endurance: Aerobic and anaerobic strength, upper and lower body. Weight training a must.

Nutrition: proper diet, pre-game, post-game, tournaments, etc.

Psychological: Increased concentration, leadership, increased player responsibilities and discipline. Respect for the game and self confidence, self motivation and goal setting. Vary program and satisfy player's urge for competition and will to win.



Goalkeeping

Age considerations for 4 -11

No permanent player "positions." Experience given to all players in most aspects of the game, including goalkeeping. Three main teaching considerations:

- ❖ Catching ball in front of the body with palms to the ball.
- ❖ Diving for shots and the tumbling involved.
- ❖ Kicking and throwing the ball to safe areas and/or to maintain possession.

Age considerations for 12 -15

Decisions by players and coaches now needed regarding "their positions." Care and discretion required in selection of "permanent" positions (future physique and development of abilities?). Players must not be "locked" into the goalkeeping position.

Practice and coaching for goalkeepers in:

- ❖ Shot stopping; crosses; through balls with an emphasis on technique work. Kicking and throwing are very important.
- ❖ Development of the understanding required for the goalkeeper's role.

Age Consideration for 16 +

"Putting it all together." Physique almost established, therefore, specialization in "positions". The tactical role of the goalkeeper. "Playing the position" understanding of the requirements.

Much practice involving decision making without ignoring basic techniques of:

- ❖ Shot Stopping
- ❖ Staying on Feet
- ❖ Narrowing Angles .Catching Crosses
- ❖ Kicking and Throwing.

THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF GOALKEEPING

I. The hands, Biggest Consideration

The feature that distinguishes the goalkeeper from the rest of the team is the ability of the goalkeeper to use the hands within the defending penalty area. No other player is legally allowed to use the hands (other than at a throw-in.)

Not only does this rule allow the goalkeeper a distinct advantage, it also becomes the biggest consideration in how the goalkeeper goes about the task of defending the goal.

THE HANDS ARE THE LEADERS

Both palms of the hands must always be turned outwards to the ball. Anatomically this means the body position will have to be adjusted to ensure that both palms and not just one can be in position to do just



that. The object is to present the maximum amount of palm and fingers to the ball. "W" Shape: A "W" configuration of the hands is used to collect the balls above head height.

The Main Consideration of both hands/palms being presented to the ball will only change in occasional circumstances. The three main ones being:

- ❖ When a goalkeeper is at full stretch and is only able to get full extension of the body by angling the shoulders to make the one-handed save.
- ❖ When a quick collapsing save for a shot close to the body permits only a quick one-handed deflection to the side of the goal.
- ❖ Where a goalkeeper elects to punch the ball with one fist or two when moving into heavy traffic or is forced to be fully extended.

HANDS-ARMS-SHOULDERS

In soccer, for field players, the "hand ball" rule does not just apply to the hands but to the arms as well.

In a similar way the goalkeeper must regard the arms and hands as the same thing. If the arms are not right the hands cannot do their job.

If an arm is pulled across the body the palm of the hand cannot do the job required of facing the ball. So the hands must lead but the rest of the body must follow the lead to allow the required hand position to take place. Once the ball is outside the line of the shoulders a more risky type of goalkeeping becomes necessary involving diving, leaping, perhaps one handed deflection saves.

The hands and arms lead to the shoulders and all goalkeepers (and their coaches) should be aware of the importance of shoulder position. If the shoulders are square to the ball (i.e. facing the ball) the goalkeeper's body position will not be far wrong.

In addition, the squareness of the shoulders allows the keeper to form a "window" so important to successful performance. If the "window" is closed there is a good chance of an imminent goalkeeping disaster.

Finally, with the hands leading in front of the body, yet not at full stretch (with the crooked elbow giving a strong yet shock absorbing effect) a margin for error is built in as we will see regarding the considerations of Absorption and Side Diving.

II. SHAPE

GORILLA SHAPE

The posture of the true goalkeeper would alienate any drill sergeant anywhere in the world. The best looking goalkeepers are always round shouldered and look more like a gorilla than a soldier at attention. This "concaving" of the body assists in every facet of the actions of the goalkeeper. Even when saving the ball on the ground, or in the air, the "concaving" principle and body shape are critically important.