

Player Development



FUN
WHILE LEARNING

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The Soccer Learning Process



- 10-12 years to develop an established soccer player
- Thousands of touches per training session
- Demands of the game are changing faster than ever
- The Journey of development takes **time, patience, great understanding**, and a **plan**
- Basic fundamentals remain the essence of the game
- Players must be flexible in playing roles and adaptable to the constant changes
- Speed of execution is the key factor

Soccer Learning Process 1 vs 1 through 8 vs 8



- • 1 vs 1 – it's all on you
- • 2 vs 2 – now with a teammate
- • 3 vs 3 – first sign of shape (triangle)
- • 4 vs 4 – new shape – diamond – width and depth
- • 5 vs 5 – field players only, no keeper – add a player to the center of the diamond
- • 6 vs 6 – now include the keeper
- • 7 vs 7 – introduce wingers
- • 8 vs 8 – beginning of line play (backs-midfield-forwards)

The Learning Process



- The Learning process depends largely on practice. Soccer is best learned by playing, and the time children spend playing the game is important for their soccer development.
- Children need to learn the game and understand it **on their terms**. It must be meaningful to them. They must have involvement and recognize what is going on and participate accordingly
- Learning up to around age 11 or 12 is mostly **concrete** learning, the **abstract** learning starts to kick in around 11 or 12 for most children.
- The **golden age of learning** is considered between the ages of 9 and 11.

Simplify the Developmental Process



- If we were to simplify the developmental process to the most basic elements, this would be the platform: (**always with a goal of some sort to attack and defend**)
- 1) **master the ball** (creating a base to play and to play against others)
- 2) **playing together** (with teammates and against opponents - combining skills with insight)
- 3) **playing within a system** (team tactics, roles)

Some areas of concern



- 1) Young athletes under-train and over-compete. Training in the early years is heavily focused on outcomes (winning) rather than processes (overall child development).
- 3) It is estimated that approximately 70% of children quit sports by age 13.
- 4) In general, young soccer players require a certain amount of **uninterrupted play**. This allows them to experience soccer first-hand. They should be allowed the opportunity to experiment,

Physical Component



- Speed
- Quickness
- Agility
- Mobility
- The greatest amount of running in soccer is up to 10 yards
- The next greatest amount is 10-30 yards
- Beyond that, the amount drops dramatically
- Strength, power, endurance are all necessary as well

Physical - 2



- Soccer is an acyclical sport --
it does not have a continuous rhythm – it is combination of
 - standing
 - walking
 - jogging
 - jumping
 - turning
 - tackling
 - sprinting – short, medium and (seldom) long --
 - and usually some kind of steady movement,
but never the same type.

Physical - 3



- It is more about acceleration and deceleration
- The explosive movements over 3-5-10 yards
- Positions affect the amount and type of movement –
- Forwards and center backs more intense short sprints – (3-5-10 yards)
- Midfielders and outside backs running to cover more ground (10-20-30 yards) in some cases even more
- 2 different types of running patterns

Technical



- thousands of touches on the ball
- Hours of training, with team and on your own
- Becoming very comfortable with the ball in any situation or circumstance
- Receive, keep and use the ball effectively
- Keep ball vs give away
- Dribbling, moves, fakes, shooting, driving the ball
- **Passing with a high ball speed**
- Passing – short, medium, long – air and ground
- Receiving with a clean 1st touch

Tactics



- Decisions
- Solutions
- Options
- 3 R's

Recognize – Respond – Resolve

● Insight -- see the game unfold

- Being useful with the ball and playing without the ball – integrating with teammates
- The Right Moment – what to do When ??

Mental / Emotional



- Feelings
- Self
- Positive and comfortable vs negative and tense
- **Encourage creativity – allow for mistakes**
- Relationships with:

Coach, teammates, opponents, referee, parents, club

- Fun, not stressful
- Want to come back for more
- Always finish session with something FUN !!

Age Group Characteristics



- U 6 through U 18 represents a major part of the early life cycle -- be sensitive to the age level and stage of development
- Certain essential qualities and characteristics dominate each level of development –
- Take time to get to know what your age can do – physically, intellectually and emotionally
- **Think of what that aged person might be doing in school – relate soccer to their experiences whenever possible**

Mental / Emotional - 2



- Ability
- Attitude
- **Ambition**
- **Slanty line theory --**

everyone may not be at the same place, deal with them where they are –

don't set the bar so as to eliminate, but rather to give everyone a fair chance

Training Session and Playing To Goals



- Plan your session
- Know how many players you will need for the activities
- Know what equipment you will need -- bibs, balls, cones, saucers , goals
- Organize the time of each activity and allow for rest
- Have a progression of activities relating to the main topic of the session
- What are the coaching points ?
- What are the questions that may need to be asked ?

Playing to Goals



- Goals give direction and purpose
- Goals represent the essence of the real game
- Goals give an outcome
- **The real game is played between 2 goals with the object of the game being for 1 team to score more goals than the other team**
- Develop the mentality of attacking and defending a goal and the transitional moment of the ball changing from 1 team to the other
- Goals bring the game and the activity to life

Levels of Play and Involvement



- Fundamental
- Intermediate
- Advanced (elite)
- Grassroots Experience
- Recreational Fun
- Competitive Ambition
- Elite Talent, Performance

The Future of Soccer - the year 2020



- Faster game
- Based on higher levels of athleticism and technology
- More fluid and flexible game – not static
- **Must be able to play in 4 ways:**
 - 1) an open field game
 - 2) against a packed defense deep in the field
 - 3) against a pressing team high up field
 - 4) restarts
 - Different styles of play require different solutions

The Future of Soccer - 2



- Must adapt your game and playing style to opponent
- Systems may be playing without designated forwards
- 4-6-0 may be the system of the future with the midfield providing the buildup and the attack –
- Greater demand on players physically, technically, and tactically
- The game world wide, at the highest levels, is changing faster than ever before –
- The changing face of the game requires a change in the preparation and development of the player of the future

Final Comments



- If it takes 10-12 years to develop an established player, and if the game is changing at a rate never seen before, how will that impact training and developing players for the future?
- A 6 year old today, who aspires to be playing in 10-12 years from now, must be trained in way that will allow him to compete with the players of the future
- **If we stand still, we will be passed by --**
- We must stay current and not live in the past, we must be forward in our thinking and resourceful.

Soccer Education Resource



www.cbcdutchtouch.com