

CFSC U13-14 Player Development Curriculum

suggested practice: 2-3 days, 90-120min. plus footskills

What follows is a curriculum of what should be taught to players at this age based on U.S. Soccer's "Best Practices for Coaching Soccer" Guide, the USSF "D" license course manual and other local soccer clubs.

Technical Training – the teaching of the techniques of soccer (ball mastery). These physical skills should always be taught with one ball per player or one per pair. They should be taught with little pressure at first (pressure refers to time and space dictated by defense) and then a gradual building of pressure as mastery improves. The idea is if they cannot perform the skill without pressure they certainly will not be able to perform when pressure exists in the games. So take it slow and make sure there is great repetition and most important that it is fun! Demonstrations for all of the following can be found on the websites included.

Dribbling/Shielding – controlling the ball in and out of space

- Players at this age should have been taught the basic moves listed below and begin to execute them during match play. The coach needs to continue repetition at match speed and reward when executed properly in the match.
- Coaching points:
 - Changing speed and direction (rapid and abrupt) – with a change of directions needs to come a change of speed
 - Using all parts of the foot (inside, outside, sole, heel and toe)
 - Encourage risk taking – coaches and players should understand with high risk comes high reward
 - Encourage creativity
 - Get head up when on the dribble AND teach them to attack the outside of the "dead leg" of the defender. The "dead leg" is the forward leg of the defender that he has his weight on.
 - Shielding techniques
 - The use of knees, hips, arms, and shoulders to disguise moves
- Moves to be taught: (teach yourself these moves by going to youtube.com and typing in the move)
 - The drag or roll; The pull back; Simple feints or fakes (the "matthews" or "single cut"); The step over and scissors and the "cruyff" – these should all have been taught at the u8/10 level and you should continue to work on mastery of these moves. Adding a "double cut" to the "single cut" they already learned is great too.
 - Travel coaches can continue teaching different moves such as the "Maradona" and the "nutmeg" but the keys are to execute the above moves at game speed, for players to find ones they are comfortable using, to learn where on the field these are appropriate AND in what situations they are appropriate. For example, is the player trying to advance the ball, turn the ball, or shield the ball?

Passing – playing the ball to a teammate

- Players should pass with both feet using 3 proper techniques
 1. Inside of foot "push pass" – plant foot is close and pointed in the direction kicking; passing foot should make contact on the top half of the ball w/ankle locked to ensure it does not become elevated
 2. Outside of foot – used to finesse the ball, disguise a pass or bend the ball
 3. Shoe lace pass – used for longer distances; be sure to approach from a 45 degree angle
- Crossing the ball to near and far post targets with bent passes toward and away from goal
- Chipping the ball

Receiving – the ability to control a ball that is played to you

- Receiving ground balls away from pressure w/ both inside and outside of foot (a player's first touch should be away from the defenders not into them)

- Techniques for receiving balls with back to the goal
- Teaching the value of being “sideways on” before receiving a pass
- Taking a flighted ball out of air from a partner; on the foot, thigh and chest while still and moving
- Get head up before receiving the ball in order to find the space or someone to pass to

Heading – the act of striking a ball either away from goal or toward the goal with your head

- Progress from self serve, to partner to serve, to jumping
- Proper technique is required to avoid injury
- Contact point on the ball determines if the ball will be cleared up and out or down at a target
- Teach how to score (including diving head balls), how to flick (pass), how/where to clear (defensive)

Shooting – the act of striking the ball into the goal

- Proper striking techniques using the inside of foot and laces (see passing above) AND when to which
- Shooters should be served balls from all angles with high repetitions
- Shooters should develop the technique of turning and shooting and shooting off of a cut

Defending – the act of slowing down the opponent’s attack and *perhaps* stealing the ball

- Proper pressure – 2 to 3 feet from the ball
- Proper stance – stand sideways on while also to the left or right of the ball with your feet close together and the knees slightly bent
- How to channel an attacker in order to reduce his/her space with proper speed and angle of approach
- Proper tackling – using the strength of your body to tackle instead of using your foot or leg
- How to slide tackle – which leg to use when

Best Practices for a U13-14 Coach:

- Players should have plenty of opportunity to experience the ball at their own pace
- Training sessions should be built accordingly: drills with unrestricted space; drills with restricted space; drills that simulate game situations with small goals, target players or lines to cross; and then end with an actual game where players can try to apply what they have learned *without* input from the coach
- Modify drills to fit the lesson being taught by: changing the size or shape of the field, the numbers involved, the number of touches, how score is kept, or by keeping players in zones
- Players should be encouraged not to fear the ball by dealing with balls on the ground and in the air
- Come prepared with what you want to teach at practice, be able to model it, and have players summarize it at the end of practice

Best Qualities for a U13-14 Coach:

- Understand the capabilities and limitation of this age
- Learn by watching the players play
- Be able to demonstrate proper technique or bring someone who can
- Emphasize fun at all times and foster a sense of love for the sport – develop competition in your practices that creates a fun but challenging environment

Best places for designing and planning your practices or training sessions:

<http://www.youtube.com> just type in soccer drills or be as specific as you want “matthews move”

<http://www.expertvillage.com>

<http://www.soccerxpert.com/>

<http://www.soccerclub.com/training/drills/default.asp>

http://www.finesoccer.com/finesoccer_drills_archive.htm

http://www.insidesoccer.com/learn_it/coaches/drills_practices

<http://www.strongsoccer.com/Kingdrills/clipspractice.htm>

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Tactical Training – the teaching of the tactics (decision making) within the game. There are three types of tactics to be taught: Individual, Small group and Team. At this age practice should be 50% technical and 50% tactical training.

Individual Tactics – the decision making when playing 1v1

- Attacking
 - transition quickly, take chances and keep possession (in that order); risk vs. reward idea
 - taking players on in the proper thirds of the field
 - taking players on when there is SPACE behind the defender
- Defending
 - GOAL SIDE (between the opponent and your goal) should be understood at this stage
 - transition quickly and apply the *proper* pressure, the *proper* stance, at the *proper* angle in order to either *properly* channel the attacker or make a *proper* tackle

Small Group Tactics – the decision making when playing 2v1 or 1v2; 3v2 or 2v3; etc. You can start thinking about these groups as "lines" in your team formation (i.e. your 3 defenders or 3 midfielders as small groups).

Attacking – Begin teaching about First attacker (player with ball), Second attacker (immediate support), and Third attacker (all others providing balance/options).

In Attacking - transition quickly, take chances and keep possession (in that order)

- First Attacker asks - When/where do you take players on 1v1?; risk vs. reward idea (knowledge of the thirds of the field and space behind defenders is important)
- Second Attacker asks - Where and how do you provide immediate "support" when you are the player without the ball? (concepts of "width" and "depth" are introduced with the crossing and dropping of the ball)
- This results in basic combination play: wall passes, overlaps, take-overs, etc.
- Third Attacker has to recognize where and when to make runs or support without the ball
- Begin identifying passing lanes and where open space can be exploited on the field
- Also begin teaching the role all of the above have within the concept of offsides
- Teach players the follow hierarchy of thinking while attacking
 - Can the player shoot?
 - Can the player dribble into a position to shoot?
 - Can the player pass to someone who can shoot?
 - Can the player pass ball forward to a teammate to maintain possession?
 - Can the player pass ball sideways or backwards to maintain possession?

Defending - Begin teaching about First defender (player providing immediate pressure), Second defender (immediate coverage), and Third defender (all others providing balance).

In Defending - transition quickly and apply the *proper* pressure, coverage and balance

- First Defender has to provide the *proper* pressure, the *proper* stance, at the *proper* angle in order to either *properly* channel the attacker or make a *proper* tackle
- Second Defender has to cover the first defender at a proper distance and angle
- Third Defenders have to worry about the balance, depth, compactness and weak side
- The technique of a "recovery run" – a run by a defender back toward the goal after they have been beat by the opponent in order to provide cover was taught at the u10 level

- Teach the concept of offsides as valued by defense: pushing up, denying space, offsides trap
- Teach small groups to press defensively as a group
- Teach players the following hierarchy of thinking on defense
 - Try to win ball and keep possession
 - Try to knock ball away from opponent
 - Try to deny the opponent space to turn with the ball
 - Try to keep the opponent running toward the sideline or into other defenders
 - When not in a position to achieve any of the above, recover behind the ball and help the team defend

Team Tactics – team tactics start to play a role as players prepare for high school

- Positions should be introduced and understood in terms of how they fit into the small group and team tactical decisions
- Players should be playing a variety of positions still
- How will your team organize itself on goal kicks, corner kicks and throw-ins offensively and defensively
- Teach players how to take direct and indirect kicks and how to defend them with a wall and marking up

Attacking

- Team balance and shape must be maintained within the given team system
- Fluid interchanging of positions on the field during the course of play
- The goal keeper should be an integral part in the attack through drops and distribution

Defending

- Players continue to learn how to tactically maintain leads in close games
- Zonal defensive concepts should be introduced
- Team understanding of the system’s “line of confrontation” (midfield, defensive third, etc.)
- Team pressure, cover, balance (first, second and third defenders) and the value of the offsides trap

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