



RECREATIONAL PRACTICES IDEALOGY

All recreational soccer practices should key on development in a low-stress, fun-filled environment to give you an organized structure from which you may apply to the particular needs of your team. You should be able to create your own sessions once you understand the essential ingredients.

The following are the Principles of Youth Coaching and should be considered as you put together your practice.

1. Developmentally appropriate

Are your activities appropriate for the players you are dealing with?

2. Clear, concise, correct information - brevity, clarity, relevance

Make sure you are giving the players information in a way they can understand. It is also important that the information you give them is in fact correct.

3. Simple to complex

Your practice should begin simple and build into complex activities.

4. Safe and appropriate training area

Make sure the area is safe for the players to play in and the size of the area is appropriate for their level of play.

5. Decision making

The players should be put into decision-making situations. There should be a large number of decisions made on the field by the players not the adult directed. Let the players take ownership of the game.

6. Implications for the game

Do the activities make sense in terms of the game of soccer?

Coaching Activity Checklist

Are the activities fun?

Are the activities organized?

Are the players involved in the activities?

Is creativity and decision making being used?

Are the spaces used appropriate?

Is the coach's feedback appropriate?

Is the coach guiding or controlling the players in the activity?

Are there implications for the game?

The successful coach at this level is the one who can imagine these activities through a player's eyes. A coach at this level must try to create a fun-filled environment.



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Characteristics of U6-U7 players

Short attention span.
Most are individually oriented
(me, my, mine).
Activities based on characteristics
should be individually based.
Constantly in motion.
Goes flat out.*
Psychologically easily bruised.
Little or no concern for team
activities.
Physical and psychological
development for boys and girls
quite similar.
Eye/hand or eye/foot
coordination most primitive.
Love to run and jump.
Catching skills not developed.
Can balance on good foot.

*This refers to their racing about in games until
complete exhaustion sets in, at which point they stop,
breathe, then restart at a torrid pace again

Characteristics of U8-U9 players

Attention span beyond U-7 but
still not extended.
Inclined more toward group
activities.
Still in motion.
Still very sensitive. Dislike personal
failure in front of peers.
Beginning to develop physical
coordination.
Still enjoy running, jumping,
climbing and rolling.
Prefer real balls through imitation
of the big guys. Sports heroes
becoming important.
Still lack sense of pace. Go flat out.
Activities should be individually
based and with pairs of players.

Try as a coach to be open to the needs (physical and psychological) of your players. Understand that soccer is just another vehicle through which we all try to add to the lives of those who participate. Certainly we hope to develop players with a wealth of talent, but at the same time we hope to promote good character and responsibility in young people.

Don't let the value of winning completely overshadow the value of learning. Don't assume that every training method must directly correlate with the game of soccer. For example, games that involve movement and the use of hands can be of value to the coordination of your players. The two are not meant to be the same. A young player must go through years of preparation before he can begin to imitate top flight soccer. Give players a chance to learn and enjoy the very special years of their growth.